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ABSTRACT

THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE LOVE IN THE CONTEXT

OF THE GOD-WORLD RELATIONSHIP

by

John C. Peckham

Adviser: Fernando Canale

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE LOVE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GOD-WORLD
RELATIONSHIP

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The love of God is central to God's relationship to the world. This dissertation addresses
the conflict of interpretation between the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist
models regarding divine love in the context of the God-world relationship by applying a
canonical methodology. Chapter 1 introduces the background, purpose, problem, scope, and plan
of study as well as the final-form canonical theological method employed in the investigation.
Chapter 2 briefly surveys the historical theology of love, tracing the central conceptions of divine
love and the God-world relationship by selected, highly influential thinkers. Chapter 3 presents
and analyzes the irreconcilable interpretations of divine love in relation to the world, and the
ontologies that ground them, in the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models.
In the former model, divine love is a unilateral, unmotivated, willed benevolence, while in the
latter model divine love is essentially relational, emotional, and primarily passive. Subsequently,
a sample of recent reactions to both models demonstrates the current dissatisfaction regarding the

conflict of interpretations, indicating the potential for paradigm change in the theological model of interpreting God's love to the world.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 shift to the investigation of a canonical and systematic model which addresses the issues raised by the conflict of interpretations through the identification and explanation of five primary aspects of God's love in relation to the world derived from inductive examination of the canon: the volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally relational aspects. Chapters 4 and 5 present the data from a canonical investigation of the data regarding divine love in the OT and NT respectively. The material from the biblical investigation of divine love is utilized to construct a model of divine love that addresses the conflict of interpretations seen in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 6 summarizes and explains the broad outline of a canonical and systematic model of divine love in relation to the world, with implications for divine ontology and the nature of God's relationship to the world. The dissertation concludes by summarizing the findings and conclusions of the study and making some recommendations for further study.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE LOVE IN THE CONTEXT OF

THE GOD-WORLD RELATIONSHIP

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

John C. Peckham

July 2012

Volume 1

THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE LOVE IN THE CONTEXT

OF THE GOD-WORLD RELATIONSHIP

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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John C. Peckham

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB   Anchor Bible

ABD   *Anchor Bible Dictionary*

AnBib   Analecta biblica

ANE   Ancient Near East

ANET   *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*

ANF   *Anti-Nicene Fathers*

ANTC   Abingdon New Testament Commentaries

BA   *Biblical Archaeologist*

BASOR   *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

BDAG   Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 2d ed. Chicago, 1979.

BDB   Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*

BECNT   Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

BETL   Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium

Bib   *Biblica*

BNTC   Baker's New Testament Commentaries

BSac   *Bibliotheca sacra*

CBQ   *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

ChrCent   *Christian Century*

CNT   Commentaire du Nouveau Testament

CSR   *Christian Scholar's Review*

EDNT	*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
GBWW	Great Books of the Western World
GNB	Good News Bible
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IB	*Interpreter's Bible*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IKZ	*Internationale katholische Zeitschrift*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JRE	Journal of Religious Ethics
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*

JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KD	*Kerygma und Dogma*
L&N	*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. 2d ed. New York, 1989.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
MAJT	*Mid-America Journal of Theology*
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NAC	The New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDNTT	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*
NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
NT	New Testament
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library

PNTC	Pelican New Testament Commentaries
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
RB	*Revue biblique*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RTR	*Reformed Theological Review*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTA	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
ST	*Studia theologica*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
Them	*Themelios*
ThTo	*Theology Today*
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TLNT	*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*
UBS	United Bible Societies
UBS[4]	*The Greek New Testament*, United Bible Societies, 4th ed.
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WPC	Westminister Pelican Commentaries

WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

What is the nature of divine love? The importance of this question is apparent by way of

the prominence of the concept of divine love in diverse paradigms, worldviews, and theological

systems. Many theologians consider divine love to be a central component of God's

nature/character, if not the very essence of God itself. Accordingly, the conflict of interpretations

regarding the nature of divine love has large repercussions in the wider doctrine of God and

systematic theology. However, there are significant conflicts in contemporary theology with

regard to the nature of divine love, the very definition of which is prone to considerable semantic

and conceptual ambiguity.[1] While conceptions of divine love vary widely across a vast spectrum,

the primary features of the debate over divine love may be illuminated by examination of the

differences between two prominent and recent models of divine love in contemporary theology,

which I have called the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models.[2]

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[1] Many have recognized this lack of clarity. "Christian theologians have themselves been somewhat indifferent—inattentive, neutral—with regard to the concept of the love of God, if we are to judge from their often oblique, indistinct, or awkward treatments of the subject." Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Introduction: The Love of God—Its Place, Meaning, and Function in Systematic Theology," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 1. "Talk of the love of God, and indeed any Christian talk of God, is anything but self-explanatory, despite the ease with which theologians are wont to use familiar phrases." George M. Newlands, *Theology of the Love of God* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 136.

[2] The transcendent-voluntarist model depicts a form of classic theism and the immanent-experientialist model represents a form of panentheism. Since neither classic theism nor panentheism is a monolithic category (that is, there are other conceptions that fit within classic theism and panentheism), I have identified these models more narrowly. Of course, there are also numerous other models that would not fit within either of these models nor under classic theism or panentheism. However, the issues raised by these two models are issues that must be addressed in any model of divine love that pays attention to the

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The transcendent-voluntarist model is, in many ways, an offspring of the classical doctrine of God, which described God as utterly transcendent and incapable of pathos. This model of divine love emphasizes the distinction between God and the world, specifically, sovereignty and transcendence. The contemporary proponents of this model reject emotionless impassibility, yet find difficulty in reconciling God's love with the sovereignty and immutability of God's will.[3] For this model, love originates in the sovereign will of God.[4] God's love is not merited or elicited by humans, but is totally gratuitous, nearly identical with grace. Accordingly, God's love is unmotivated by external factors, and human love toward God does not bring him value.[5] The immanent-experientialist model, on the other hand, stresses that divine love is relational, emotional, and supremely affected.[6] This model of divine love emphasizes the immanent and essential relationship of God with the world. Proponents of this model claim that the problem with the classical view of divine love is a metaphysic which fails to allow for dynamic, relational, and reciprocal love.[7] In contrast, this model posits a loving relationship of

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contemporary debate.

[3] Donald A. Carson frames the issue well when he asks, "What does such love look like in a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, sovereign, and transcendent (i.e., above space and time)?" *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000), 45.

[4] "God's *agape* is comprehended in voluntary relationships that stem from his creative and compassionate personality. As represented in the Bible God's love presupposes the exclusive voluntary initiative of the sovereign divine being whom no external power can manipulate." Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (6 vols.; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976), 6:349. This love is inherently rational and primarily volitional.

[5] "Here the Lover does not seek to satisfy some personal lack or to remedy an inner need, for God has none, but bestows a benefit on the one he gratuitously loves." Ibid., 343. The love of God is the motivation of His redemptive work, but it is a purely internal motivation. "We do not bring anything valuable to God—in fact, we acquire value only because we are the recipients of his love." Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 142.

[6] The mutuality of such love is stressed as Charles Hartshorne states, "To love is to rejoice with the joys and sorrow with the sorrow of others. Thus it is to be influenced by those who are loved." *A Natural Theology for Our Time* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), 75.

[7] "Using the word 'love', they emptied it of its most essential kernel, the element of sympathy, of the feeling of others' feelings. It became mere beneficence, totally unmoved (to use their own word) by the sufferings or joys of the creatures. . . . A heartless benefit machine is less than a friend." Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984),

"communion in freedom" which changes the participants.[8] Thus, God's love is in the shared experience of suffering (pathos) with the world. Not only is God free but the world is free: "there is an aspect of real *chance* in what happens" since freedom is seen as the only context for authentic love.[9]

These models depict mutually exclusive conceptions of love as well as mutually exclusive ontologies of God. Moreover, as shall be examined below, the concept of divine love of both models is a logical outgrowth of their respective, competing, divine ontologies. This amounts to an impasse at the level of fundamental theology. In what way, then, could such an impasse be addressed in a productive manner, not only with regard to these models but with regard to the wider issue of divine love? On what basis should theologians decide whether God should be conceived as the Sovereign Will, as the self-surpassing surpasser of all, or as something in between? Many models of love tend to move from divine ontology to particular divine characteristics, the latter being constrained and shaped by the former. However, what if a canonical methodology was applied that afforded epistemological primacy to Scripture, sought the particular characteristics of God therein and, only then, asked: What is God like? This dissertation will do just that by taking the central issue of the nature of divine love and seeking a canonical model which then might shed light on the wider doctrine of God.

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29. For this model, *agape* and *eros* "are not necessarily opposed." Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 9.

[8] D. D. Williams, *Spirit*, 3. "But we do not love unless our personal being is transformed through the relation to the other." Ibid., 117. "God and the nondivine creatures genuinely participate in the free self-creation of one another." Mark Lloyd Taylor, *God Is Love: A Study in the Theology of Karl Rahner* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 345.

[9] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 18. "The traditional assertion that the will of God is the ultimate cause of every event cannot be preserved without qualification, because a will which allows no effective power to any other cannot be a loving will." D. D. Williams, *Spirit*, 128. Moreover, "predestination, in the sense of determination by something less than personal will, would destroy the meaning of love." Ibid., 116.

Problem Statement

The concept of the love of God occupies an important place within the doctrine of God, with abundant implications regarding theology proper and, consequently, wider systematic theology. The specific problem to be addressed in this dissertation is the significant contemporary theological conflict regarding the precise nature of divine love. The transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models assert irreconcilable interpretations of divine love in the context of the God-world relationship. In the former model, divine love is a unilateral, unmotivated, willed benevolence, while in the latter model divine love is essentially relational, emotional, and primarily passive. The nature of the conflict between these two models highlights the primary issues regarding the nature of love throughout contemporary theology.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the conflict of interpretation between the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models regarding the conception of divine love within the context of the God-world relationship. Specifically, this research seeks to analyze the nature of the conflict of interpretations between the two representative models, investigates the source and causes of that conflict, and applies a canonical method as a means to address the conflict of interpretations and better understand the broader issue of divine love.

Scope and Delimitations

A comprehensive investigation of the historical theology of divine love is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Accordingly, after a brief survey of the historical theology of love by way of a few major exemplars, the issues will be addressed within models which themselves will be approached through highly regarded representatives of the respective positions, along with selected input from other proponents.[10] Carl F. H. Henry will represent the transcendent-

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[10] The use of models as an aid to grasping and dealing with major streams of thought is well

voluntarist model due to the immense influence and wide impact of his theology.[11] Charles

Hartshorne will represent the immanent-experientialist model, since his highly influential view of

process ontology is laid out extensively in direct opposition to classical ontology.[12] Exemplars of

other, nuanced positions will also be engaged. An exhaustive analysis of these theologians will

not be attempted. Rather, the focus of the analysis will be on their expressed concept of divine

love with emphasis on the God-world relationship.

Rather than approaching the entire conception of love, or even that of divine love, this

dissertation is interested specifically in the love of God in the context of the God-world

relationship. Metaphysical, ontological, and epistemological issues will be addressed only as they

relate to the conception of divine love. Moreover, the large and growing field of trinitarian

theology is not the focus of this study. Intra-trinitarian theology is addressed to the extent that it

sheds light on the nature of God's love in relationship to the world. Although the reality of intra-

trinitarian divine love entails vital information, the nature and operation of this love is secondary,

in this research, to the love between God and other than God. Moreover, the loving actions of

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attested. For instance, David Tracy comments that the use of models becomes imperative due to the
complex situation of theology and thus "a widely accepted dictum in contemporary theology is the need to
develop certain basic models or types for understanding the specific task of the contemporary theologian."
David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975),
22. D. D. Williams employs a similar methodology, with regard to historical analysis, to this topic of divine
love which he calls a "typological method" as "an instrument of analysis . . . to sharpen and organize
significant aspects of the data." *Spirit*, 52. Excellent examples of a similar use of models or types include
Vincent Brümmer, *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge
University Press, 1993); Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992); Justo L.
González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Present Day* (Peabody, Mass.: Prince Press,
1999); and H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper, 1951). For a further discussion of
the use of models, see Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca,
N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962); Frederick Ferré, *Language, Logic and God* (New York: Harper,
1961); and Ian T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

[11] In his six-volume work *God, Revelation, and Authority*, C. F. H. Henry explicitly lays out both
his ontology and his conception of divine love thus providing excellent material to explore the
interrelationship of ontological suppositions and the meaning and nature of divine love. The contours of his
thought on these issues are representative of the scholars in the *transcendent-voluntarist* model.

[12] Moreover, Hartshorne adopts love as the central category of being and explicitly identifies this
with the nature of God in numerous discussions. His thought forms much of the foundation that other
scholars of the *immanent-experientialist* model build on.

God are not focused upon due to the lack of an objective way to delimit which actions would receive treatment. Indeed, one could make the case that all God's actions are loving. That is, God's actions are always good and appropriate to the state of affairs in accordance with his love. It should be noted here, then, that God's love is consistently manifested in action throughout the canon, though such actions are not identical with love itself. In this work, actions appear as they relate to the specific questions of this dissertation.

The investigation of canonical data will be limited to information that relates to the conception of divine love in relationship to the world. Accordingly, the texts to be examined will be selected in relationship to questions that directly bear on integral aspects of the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models.[13] Furthermore, a full exegesis of each text will not be attempted, nor will this dissertation attempt to produce an exhaustive conception of divine love. Rather, this study is limited to the articulation of the outline of a biblical model that may serve as a blueprint of divine love in the God-world relationship.[14]

Plan of Study

Methodological Steps

The first methodological goal will be an analytical description of each model's view of divine love in order to clearly identify the conflict of interpretation. The second methodological goal will seek to uncover the causes that are explicitly or implicitly involved in the construction of these two conceptions of divine love in the context of the God-world relationship. Closely related to the main conflict of these models are the issues of divine ontology. The nature of God and God's relationship to the world has come under increasing debate in scholarship, which has

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[13] These questions are extracted from the conflict of interpretations investigated in chapter 3. See the brief discussion of these questions below in this chapter.

[14] Such a model will outline the contours of divine love in a systematic manner and will serve as a heuristic tool, with the recognition that it will not be exhaustive and includes the potential for distortion. In this way, the model itself is open to and encourages revision based on the implications of continued biblical research by myself and others.

pointed out the vital importance of underlying ontological suppositions.[15] Furthermore, it is

increasingly recognized that by nature, conceptions of divine love are directly related to these

ontological suppositions.[16] This suggests the possibility that conceptions of divine love may be

by-products of the underlying epistemology and ontology, which themselves are often derived

from presupposed philosophical systems.[17] Both the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-

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[15] Theologians are increasingly recognizing that "talk of God is dependent on a concept of the world, which can be established only through metaphysical reflection." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 6. The call for ontological work has long existed in philosophical works. For an overview see Henry Ruf, ed., *Religion, Ontotheology, and Deconstruction* (New York: Paragon House, 1989). Process theologians have been quite vocal in criticizing the ontological issues of classical theism. See, for instance, Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence* and *Reality as Social Process; Studies in Metaphysics and Religion* (New York: Hafner, 1971). Distinct from this philosophy, Fernando Canale criticized the ontological presuppositions in theology in *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987). More recently he has called specifically for attention to ontology in the construction of theology in "The Quest for the Biblical Ontological Ground of Christian Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 16 (2005): 1–20. Open theism has also lodged a critique against the dependence of the doctrine of God on Greek philosophical suppositions, specifically relating to the nature of God. See Clark H. Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994), and Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001). Colin E. Gunton states that "it is one of the tragedies—one could almost say crimes—of Christian theological history that the Old Testament was effectively displaced by Greek philosophy as the theological basis of the doctrine of God." *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 3. Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (5 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1:53. Gerald Bray, a classical theist, is aware of the ontological issues regarding the doctrine of God but claims that classical theism has not been corrupted by Greek thought in Gerald Lewis Bray, *The Doctrine of God* (Contours of Christian Theology 2; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993). Another classical theist, Norman Geisler, also recognizes a connection but argues for the usage of classical categories in *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991). The debate about the impact of ontological presuppositions is ongoing. Cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 18; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[16] D. D. Williams states, "In Christian faith all thought about love leads to the nature of God, and therefore the reconception of love leads to the question of the being of God." *Spirit*, 90. Others concur that a "new paradigm for contrasting the love of God entails nothing less than a revision of the God-world relationship itself, which is to say, a revision of the whole of theology." Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 3. Moreover, "an exploration of the content of the concept of love opens up wide theological questions relating to the being of God and the nature of human being in relation to God." Gary D. Badcock, "The Concept of Love: Divine and Human," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 31.

[17] The concept of divine love holds many implications in the realm of metaphysics. Conversely, metaphysics is capable of dominating the concept of divine love. Of prime significance is the nature of reality, specifically the nature (ontology) of God. Ontological suppositions may easily determine one

experientialist models repeatedly employ ontological language in their descriptions of divine love. In this way, both appeal to ontological suppositions, whether explicitly or implicitly, to support and express their respective conceptions of divine love.[18] Therefore, the conflict of interpretation regarding the conception of divine love seems to spring from a deeper, underlying conflict of ontological interpretations about the being of God and God's relation to the being of the world.

The present conversation about divine love is by no means limited to these two models (as shall be seen in chapter 3) and a survey of this issue suggests significant dissatisfaction with the status quo. The growing interest and research regarding ontological suppositions in theology, coupled with the contemporary conflicts regarding divine love specifically, signifies the emergent potential for a paradigm change as it relates to this issue.

As a third methodological goal, this dissertation proposes to seek a way out of the conflict of interpretations on divine love by analyzing the biblical data regarding divine love. This will consist of a fresh study of the biblical text regarding divine love, which does not assume either ontology of models in question, but rather, intentionally brackets out (*epoché*) extra-biblical ontological presuppositions relating to divine love.[19] This should expose a model of divine love, situated within an ontology that is implied in the Bible, which may help overcome

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concept of divine love and preclude another. Accordingly, certain aspects of divine love may call for a revision of ontological suppositions. In the unraveling of these issues, methodology plays a prime role.

[18] In the immanent-experientialist model such language is explicitly and intentionally used to critique the classical ontology. The transcendent-voluntarist model may not explicitly identify the underlying assumptions of God's timelessness and perfection with ontology. Nevertheless, whether used implicitly or explicitly, underlying conceptions regarding God's nature are, by definition, ontological.

[19] *Epoché* refers to suspension of judgment and is used philosophically to describe the intent to describe phenomena apart from presuppositions. Farber states on such a method "phenomenological reduction makes possible the final elucidation of all elements of knowledge and experience by enabling us to get back and to the bottom of all presuppositions" which "makes possible a truly descriptive philosophy." Marvin Farber, "The Ideal of a Presuppositionless Philosophy," in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* (ed. Marvin Farber; New York: Greenwood, 1968), 62. For a further discussion of *epoché* see Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965).

the theological conflict. This inverts the prevalent order by investigating the nature of divine love

prior to the supposition of a pre-existing and developed ontology.[20] In the interpretation and

analysis of the biblical data, a final-form canonical approach will be utilized, which will employ

tota scriptura on the concept of divine love.[21] In this way, the canon as a whole will provide the

content for a model of divine love which sheds light on an implicit biblical ontology and provides

implications for the God-world relationship.

Annotated Outline

After this chapter, the study continues in chapter 2 with a brief historical survey of divine

love which traces the central conceptions of divine love and the God-world relationship by a few

selected, highly influential, thinkers. Next, in chapter 3, the exemplars of the transcendent-

voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models will be engaged to analyze their views on divine

love in relation to the world as well as the ontologies that ground their conceptions. Subsequently,

a sample of recent reactions to both models will demonstrate the current dissatisfaction regarding

the conflict of interpretations, indicating the potential for paradigm change in the theological

model of interpreting God's love to the world. In chapters 4, 5, and 6 the study will shift to the

investigation of a canonical and systematic model that addresses the issues raised by the conflict

of interpretations. Chapters 4 and 5 present the data from an extensive canonical investigation of

the data regarding divine love in the OT and NT respectively. The material from the biblical

investigation of divine love is then utilized in the construction of a model of divine love that

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[20] As Vanhoozer notes, "There has been a tendency in Western theology to discuss the divine attributes—the properties or qualities that make God God—in abstraction from the biblical stories about God's speaking and acting in the history of Israel and Jesus Christ." *Remythologizing*, 70. In his project to remythologize theology Vanhoozer asks: "What must God be like in order to do what the Bible depicts him as doing with words: creating, commanding, promising, consoling?" Ibid., 3. This work asks a similar question with regard to the nature of divine love.

[21] This approach looks for a unified worldview (specifically on divine love) that may be discovered in the biblical data, due to a belief in the inherent unity of Scripture, due to its divine revelation and inspiration. This methodology will be discussed in more detail below.

addresses the conflict of interpretations seen in chapter 3. Chapter 6 will then reveal the broad

outline of a canonical and systematic model of divine love in relation to the world, with

implications for divine ontology and God's relationship to the world. Finally, the dissertation will

conclude with the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Theological Method: A Final-Form Canonical Approach

In order to seek a systematic model of divine love that might address the issues raised by

the conflict of interpretations this study utilizes a final-form[22] canonical[23] approach to systematic

theology.[24] This approach accepts the biblical canon as the basis of Christian doctrine and thus

reserves epistemological primacy for the canon as divine self-revelation.[25]

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[22] A final-form approach means that the canonical text is approached in the extant form(s) available due to the lack of access to a complete, original, final form. As such, attention is directed to the received corpus of canonical texts and not to non-manuscript-based reconstructions of the text(s). At the same time, the best findings of textual criticism in recovering the original text should not be excluded.

[23] Here, the "canon" refers to the 66 OT and NT books that are recognized most widely throughout Christianity. While some may wish to include other books or traditions, the authority of the 66 books finds wide agreement since the 39 OT books are accepted as canonical throughout Judaism and Christianity and the 27 NT books are accepted across Christian denominations. I believe the 66 book canon has been correctly recognized (intrinsic canon) but not determined by the community (community canon) as I have described elsewhere. See John C. Peckham, "The Canon and Biblical Authority: A Critical Comparison of Two Models of Canonicity," *TJ* 28, no. 2 (2007): 229–49, and "Intrinsic Canonicity and the Inadequacy of the Community Approach to Canon Determination," *Them* 36 (2011): 203–15. Nevertheless, one need not subscribe to this view of the scope of the canon in order to implement the approach suggested here.

[24] Much of what follows in the description of the theological method of this dissertation is dependent upon my article: John C. Peckham, "The Analogy of Scripture Revisited: A Final Form Canonical Approach to Systematic Theology," *MAJT* 22 (2011): 41–53.

[25] Although it is beyond the scope of this work to justify the authority of Scripture in systematic theology, there are plausible reasons for such a selection, not least of which is the conviction of the vast majority of Christians who attribute some degree of authority to Scripture. Moreover, calls for further collaboration of biblical theology in systematics have been growing. Here the selection of Scripture is admittedly a presupposition, the validity of which is open to question; nevertheless it seems at least as valid as any other starting point. In this regard, it is worth noting that postmodern epistemology has overcome the strictures of logical positivism, thus opening an alternative to evidentialism, that of faith. As Vanhoozer puts it: "Instead of making robust claims to absolute knowledge, even natural scientists now view their theories as interpretations." Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998), 19. Cf. Fernando Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2001), 9. As such, all epistemology requires the selection of a starting point. This is not to say that all choices are equally adequate or valuable but, rather, that it is not necessary (and perhaps not possible) to provide a defense of one's epistemological starting point *a priori*. Therefore, as Canale states, "If the

Canonical Correspondence and Coherence

Two criteria of adequacy pertain to this canonical approach: correspondence to the canon

and internal coherence.[26] Canonical coherence seeks a system that is internally consistent and

lucid.[27] Such an approach entails a sympathetic reading of the canon where the congruity of

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meaning of the ultimate framework for intelligibility rests on human choice, why not choose divine revelation as available in Scripture?" Ibid., 10. Further, the objection that theism should not be selected as a starting point also founders in light of postmodern epistemology since, as Anthony C. Thiselton points out, "non-theism or positivism is no more value-free than *theism.*" "Canon, Community, and Theological Construction," in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006), 4. This is not necessarily the same as epistemological presuppositionalism, a perspective that nevertheless is of interest and could be compatible with this approach. See Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1969), and Gordon Haddon Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation* (2d ed.; Jefferson, Md.: Trinity Foundation, 1986). C. F. H. Henry, the exemplar of the transcendent-voluntarist model, explicitly adopts Scripture as the ground of theology saying: "The legitimacy of what we may say about God's being, essence, nature, substance, attributes, or whatever else, stems solely from the living God who makes himself known and from the divinely inspired Scriptures." *God, Revelation,* 5:49. On the other hand, Hartshorne (the exemplar of the immanent-experientialist model) does not himself recognize the normativity of the canonical text but does recognize its potential (but not *a priori* validity) for theological reflection: "A theology which in principle accepts revelation as affording knowledge to those able to assimilate it *may* have light to throw upon truths otherwise likely or perhaps certain to be missed or seen less clearly." *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1964), 67. For him, however, nature "is the real 'word of God' concerning the general structure of the cosmos." *Omnipotence*, 73.

The reservation of epistemological primacy for the canon as divine self-revelation contrasts with the turn toward tradition/community for confessional systematic theology. In this conception, "legitimate *traditio*, which recognizes the importance of the community as receptor and preserver, is built into the final form canon itself." Peckham, "Analogy," 45. For a brief discussion of this approach in relationship to and distinction from other canonical approaches such as those of Brevard Childs and James A. Sanders, see ibid., 43-46. Cf. Thiselton, "Canon," and C. F. H. Henry, "Canonical Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 8 (1990): 76–108. There I explain that my canonical approach differs from that of both Brevard S. Childs and James A. Sanders in that it does not rely on speculative reconstruction of the tradition history of the canonical text(s). See James A. Sanders, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 67, and Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 54. Further, I reject Sanders's view that the canon is fluid, agreeing with Childs that the focus of interpretation should be on the final canonical form as a unified and interrelated document that is recognized, not determined, by humans. See Sanders, *Canon*, 25, 31, 35, and *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 17–20, and Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 105, 189–91, and "*Sensus Literalis* of Scripture: An Ancient and Modern Problem," in *Beiträge Zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift Für Walther Zimmerli* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 80–93.

[26] Compare Grant R. Osborne's criteria of validity according to his critical realism, including the "criteria of coherence, comprehensiveness, adequacy, and consistency" and, he adds, durability. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (2d ed.; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006), 398.

[27] Coherence is a necessary but not sufficient criterion for adequacy since, short of exhaustive knowledge, more than one system can at least appear to be internally coherent.

diverse texts is sought without injury to the meaning of individual texts and pericopes. As a

starting point, then, this approach subscribes to the canon's own claims to internal coherence and

thus looks for internal consistency "while conscientiously dealing with areas of perceived or

apparent tension."[28] The historical rationale for approaching the canonical text, written by

numerous different authors in different times and places, as mutually consistent and

complementary stems from the view that canonical texts were written from within the stream of

canon that preceded them such that their successive human authors were overtly influenced,

having their preunderstanding shaped by existing canon and consciously intended faithfulness to

preceding canonical writings.[29] The theological rationale for such an approach affirms the

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[28] Peckham, "Analogy," 49. On the other hand, some have suggested that, for the sake of legitimate, critical study, any presupposition of the truthfulness of the text should be set aside. See John Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2007). However, why not first look for the coherence and consistency in the text, not assuming it uncritically, but looking for it rigorously? It seems that a decision to approach the text in this manner is no less arbitrary than the decision to expect incongruence in the text. Where apparent problems arise they should be duly noted and not glossed over but oftentimes even these, in light of further examination, do not rule out overall consistency (not simplistic identicality). In this way, the diversity and polyphony of the text does not necessarily equate with a cacophony of voices. Daniel J. Treier, "Scripture, Unity of," *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 733. On the other hand, James Sanders contends, "Consistency is a mark of small minds." *Canon*, 46. However, the rush to judgment of naiveté or simplicity against those who look for unity and coherence in the canon might be premature and at times may even rely upon a hyper positivistic and simplistic reading— a kind of reverse proof-texting intended to prove disunity, which is no more helpful than the out-of-context proof text in favor of consistency that ignores the textually conveyed and controlled intentions of the canon. Indeed: "Critical scholarship in this sense is often more 'literalistic' than are conservative scholars in that it often assumes that any so-called contradiction or difference between biblical writers removes the basis for a deeper theological unity between them." Osborne, *Hermeneutical*, 350. On the contrary, where tensions arise there might be an "underlying unity," despite a "different level of perception." I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 30. So Osborne, *Hermeneutical*, 357. As such, the canon may be approached as a unified composition while recognizing the diversity stemming from human authorship and various historical contexts. On the other hand, one who does not subscribe to the divine revelation and/or inspiration of the canon may still follow such an approach by (temporarily) suspending judgment about the congruity of the canon.

[29] This does not necessarily mean that congruity exists (though I believe it does), nor does it exclude diversity and multivalency, but nevertheless points to the legitimacy of looking for coherence in the canon since earlier parts of the canon provided the context and contributed to the shaping of later parts of the canon. For example, when Isaiah writes and calls for correspondence to the "law and to the prophets" he is appealing to the in-process "canon" as the context of proper prophetic speech (Isa 8:20). Thiselton comments, "Intertextual resonances form part of the hermeneutic of the biblical traditions themselves." "Canon," 5. Cf. Gerhard Maier, *The End of the Historical-Critical Method* (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1977), 71. The apparent congruity of the canon has been recognized elsewhere. Consider David Noel Freedman's hypothesis of a "Master Weaver or Editor who has skillfully woven into Israel's history a

canonical claim that Scripture is divinely revealed and inspired and is, as such, a unified (though

not monolithic) document; not merely the words of humans but the word of God (cf. 2 Tim 3:16;

1 Thess 2:13).[30] The canon itself contains numerous examples that provide the basis of something

like a canonical approach.[31]

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message" such that the "the whole work, almost exactly half of the Hebrew Bible, was the end product of [a] single mind or compiler (or a very small committee, like the one that produced the famous King James Version of the Bible)." David Noel Freedman, Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, and Michael M. Homan, *The Nine Commandments: Uncovering a Hidden Pattern of Crime and Punishment in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1, 164. Contra Sanders who dismisses any "discreet genius" redactor or master weaver hypothesis. *Canon*, 29-30. Consider also Hans W. Frei's proposal of the unity of narrative, which gathers Scripture as part of an overarching story, a realistic narrative in contrast to referential reading, in *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974).

[30] Kermode proposes that "the books within the biblical canon form a 'separate cognitive zone' and are 'interrelated like the parts of a single book.'" "The Canon," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, 605-6, quoted in Vanhoozer, *Meaning,* 134. Vanhoozer refers to the "Bible as a unified canonical whole," which should "ultimately count as a divine communicative work" that comprises "the entire length and breadth of the canon." *Remythologizing*, 12. Cf. Charles J. Scalise, *From Scripture to Theology: A Canonical Journey into Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996), 64; Paul McGlasson, *Invitation to Dogmatic Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos, 2006), 28; and Neil B. MacDonald, *Metaphysics and the God of Israel: Systematic Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006). Maier contends that "biblical writers seek consciously to recede into the background. They point away from themselves to *God as the author* of their message." *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994), 22. See also Treier, "Scripture," 733. Consider also Nicholas Wolterstorff's suggestion of a "unity behind the text," that is, the canon "authorized" as a work. "The Unity Behind the "Canon," in *One Scripture or Many? Canon from Biblical, Theological, and Philosophical Perspectives* (ed. Christine Helmer and Christof Landmesser; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 220, 228. He has elsewhere proposed that God is Scripture's ultimate authorizer. See idem, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[31] The canonical writings themselves contain the notion of canon in the limited sense of "rule" or "standard." The intention recognized in the Bible to be read as canon does not itself prove its canonicity but does provide the necessary condition for such a canonical approach. Many instances of the OT demonstrate the intention for the writings to have a continuing, authoritative function like unto a rule or standard. Perhaps the capstone statement comes from Isa 8:16, 20, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples" (Here and elsewhere, unless otherwise noted all biblical quotations are from the NASB). Verse 20 adds, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." Moses, per divine instruction (Exod 17:14), wrote the law and gave it to the priests (Deut 31:9) who were to assemble the people to encourage them "to be careful to observe all the words of this law" (Deut 31:12). Cf. Josh 1:8; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; Neh 8:8–18; 9:3. Throughout the OT, the prophets continually called the people to "hear the word of the Lord" (Amos 3:1; Jer 2:4; Ezek 6:3; Hos 4:1). Furthermore, over and over NT writers appeal to OT writings as authoritative (Rom 4:3), including Jesus himself (Luke 10:26). In the NT, 2 Tim 1:13 exhorts to "retain the standards of sound words which you have heard from me" (Cf. 2 Thess 2:15; 3:14; Titus 1:9; 2 John 9–10; Jude 3). Jesus counseled to hear his words and do them, likening those who do to one who builds on the rock and one who does not to one who builds his house on the sand (Matt 7:24, 26). Moreover, Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, utilizes Moses and all the prophets to explain "the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27, 44; cf. Matt

Beyond coherence, this approach seeks discernible correspondence to the canonical data.[32] That is, this canonical and systematic approach seeks the maximum achievable correspondence to the intention *in* the text that is discernible, demonstrable, and defensible.[33] As such, theological construction must not be isolated from exegetical considerations but based upon them while at the same time taking care to avoid extra-canonical presuppositions that might unduly affect interpretation.[34] The intention *in* the text is the effect of authorial (divine and human) intent in writing that text but not identical to authorial intent. While the text inscripturates, to some degree, authorial intention, one has only the effect of that intention (the text) as object of investigation.[35] It is thus the job of the interpreter to find the intent that is

5:17–18). Elsewhere Jesus teaches that the Scriptures testify of him and that one who believes Moses should believe him; conversely if one does not believe Moses it is clear why one does not believe him (John 5:39, 46–47). Paul contends that he believes "everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets" (Acts 24:14; cf. 2 Cor 4:2). Moreover, belief is to be in accordance with the gospel preached by the apostles, which is not their own message but itself received from the Lord (Gal 1:8–12). In this way, the early Christians were "continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42; cf. Titus 3:8). In 1 Thess 2:13 it states, "we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God." In Acts 17:11 the Bereans are commended for their commitment to the Scriptures, "for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so." The importance of Scripture, its inspiration and essential function, is also unequivocally stated in 2 Tim 3:16 (cf. 2 Pet 1:19).

[32] The importance of correspondence to Scripture is widely recognized. For example, Wayne A. Grudem states, "Theology should be explicitly based on the claims of Scripture." *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 15. Cf. Scalise, *Scripture*, 17.

[33] There is no method that will mechanically distinguish adequate interpretations from inadequate ones. Thus, it is acknowledged that subjectivity as to what is adequate will remain, but the interpreter attempts to provide interpretation that might be discernible by, and demonstrable to, others. Such interpretations should continually be subjected back to the text in a hermeneutical spiral.

[34] In this regard, see the discussion of hermeneutical and phenomenological exegesis below.

[35] However, the text itself is not identical to the complexity, comprehensiveness, and exhaustiveness of the author's intention including the author's consciousness at the time of writing. Since the author's consciousness at the time of writing is not an available object of examination (indeed it is lost even to the human author in subsequent moments), appeal to intent that is beyond or behind the text (that is, not textually discernible) is speculative. So Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 73. This approach thus rejects the unfortunate dichotomy between what the text *meant* and what the text *means*. The former is unrecoverable in its entirety but is the cause of the text, itself the grounding of the latter. As such, the legitimate contemporary meaning in the text cannot be separated from the original meaning *in* the text insofar as that can be discovered. Consider the debate between Krister Stendahl and Avery Dulles on this issue, especially the

preserved and discernible in the text and thereby interpret the meaning *in* the text, insofar as

possible.[36] Accordingly, this approach adopts a hermeneutical (critical) realist perspective[37]

"while recognizing that the interpreter brings his/her own horizon to the text such that explicating

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latter's concerns regarding the potential separation of biblical theology from systematics. Stendahl, "Biblical Theology, Contemporary," *IDB,* 1:425, and Dulles, "Response to Krister Stendahl's Method in Theology," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* (ed. J. Philip Hyatt; New York: Abingdon, 1965), 210-216. Cf. Osborne, *Hermeneutical*, 32. See also the compelling criticism of this distinction in favor of a canonical biblical theology in Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology," *TJ* 5 (1984): 113–27.

[36] While authorial intention is itself unrecoverable *en toto* "the text should be read with the recognition that the author is the unquestioned cause of the text, which was itself written for some purpose." Peckham, "Analogy," 50. Thus, as differentiated from reader response theories, a canonical reading "shares a concern for the objective reality of the text and for its intentional direction and ruled character." Christopher Seitz, "Canonical Approach," *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 100. Cf. Seitz, "The Canonical Approach and Theological Interpretation," in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006). See also Vanhoozer's approach to the text as a communicative act, based on the speech-act theory of Austin and Searle. *Meaning,* 26. Cf. Vincent Brümmer, *Theology and Philosophical Inquiry: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminister, 1982). Therein Vanhoozer points out that pebbles formed by waves into words would not be considered text by anyone. Rather, text requires an ordering agent, the author. Thus, for him, "'the sense of the text' is logically inseparable from 'the intention of the author.'" *Meaning,* 109.

[37] "The 'hermeneutic realist' holds that there is something prior to interpretation, something 'there' in the text, which can be known and to which the interpreter is accountable. By contrast, the hermeneutic nonrealist (e.g., Derrida, Fish) denies that meaning precedes interpretive activity; the truth of an interpretation depends on the response of the reader." Vanhoozer, *Meaning,* 26. In other words, hermeneutical realism believes that there is meaning in the text that exists objectively (independent of the interpreter). Cf. Stephen Mailloux, "Rhetorical Hermeneutics," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1985): 620-641, and E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967). Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer's seminal view that meaning is not located merely in authorial intent but in a "fusion" of the textual and interpreter's horizons such that the reader cannot fully recover the meaning of the text objectively since the interpreter's horizon always contributes to the interpretation due one's historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*), in *Truth and Method* (trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall; New York: Continuum, 2004). For a variation of the issue of the horizon or intention of the text see Paul Ricœur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 30. While this canonical approach recognizes that one's interpretation is always more than the objective meaning of the text due to the horizon of the interpreter, it insists that the interpreter's horizon is not a valid contributor to meaning but should continually be subjected to the text. Here, the search is for the meaning *in* the text, which is an important nuance beyond the approach that seeks the determinate meaning of authorial intention itself. See C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation,* 5:403, and Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), 32. Their view is largely in keeping with the view of Hirsch in *Validity*. Such attempts to reach the author's intent have been roundly criticized; consider the seminal article by William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), 3–18. For an excellent discussion of the various issues involved with regard to intention and the location of meaning see Vanhoozer, *Meaning*.

the meaning in the text is an imperfect, complex, and continual process, which the interpreter must recognize and apply in an ongoing hermeneutical spiral."[38] In this approach the text as canon is always the source that the interpreter seeks to understand rather than replace as well as the objective control to which interpretation seeks to conform. Accordingly, in the absence of either internal coherence or canonical correspondence, the interpreter should return to the canonical data to identify and correct any discrepancy.

Since this approach focuses on textual and intertextual interpretation of the canon as a unified, literary document in accordance with the analogy of Scripture (*analogia Scripturae*) less consideration is given to questions of introduction (isagogics) and more consideration to the theological interpretation of Scripture.[39] Accordingly, the canonical approach includes exegesis as a crucial starting point for the gleaning of biblical data but transcends its limitations, especially in looking "beyond (without overlooking) the limits of individual texts and pericopes, toward the entire canon."[40] It further transcends biblical theology insofar as that discipline refers to the compilation and summary of an exegesis of particular books or themes. It includes such exegesis and compilation of biblical data but utilizes that data in the quest for the "patterns and inner logic of the *texts* in relation to the whole canonical *text*" without dismissing the complexity of the

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[38] Peckham, "Analogy," 51. Here and elsewhere, I use the term "spiral" in Osborne's sense to refer to the process of going back and forth between various components (i.e., text and context, interpreter's horizon and the text's horizon), which mutually correct one another, avoiding vicious circle and thereby moving closer and closer to the intended meaning in the text. In this way, "continuous interaction between text and system forms a spiral upward to theological truth." Osborne, *Hermeneutical*, 392. That the text is distinguished from its author and from its interpreter(s) should not lead to separation or autonomy, but differentiation; what we have is the text, nothing more, nothing less. Thus the text is to be interpreted without naïvely believing one's interpretation always gets past one's own limited horizon while nevertheless seeking the horizon (the thought world) of the text, not to get behind the text but to make sense of it. "The goal of understanding better, conceived in terms of an unreachable telos and the impossibility of complete understanding, bears witness to the fact that the endeavor to interpret more deeply is always worthwhile." Grondin, *Introduction*, 71.

[39] This in no way excludes the importance of isagogics and other, related disciplines but simply limits (at least at first) the focus of the canonical investigation to the text itself. See Meir Weiss, *The Bible from Within: The Method of Total Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984).

[40] Peckham, "Analogy," 46.

texts.[41] As such, the product of such a canonical approach is not merely an outline of biblical

data. Rather, the systematician asks theological questions of the canon and seeks text-based and

text-controlled answers from the canonical data itself rather than from extra-biblical sources or

presuppositions.[42]

Hermeneutical and Phenomenological Exegesis

This process is further clarified by Fernando Canale's distinction between hermeneutical

and phenomenological exegesis.[43] Hermeneutical exegesis refers to the philological and historical

dimensions of the exegetical method, whereas phenomenological exegesis refers to interpretation

that goes beyond a particular pericope in seeking the canonical horizon that impacts the meaning

of the text(s).[44] As such, phenomenological exegesis utilizes exegetically derived canonical data

in order to uncover the first principles of reality that are implicit in the canon and, in so doing,

addresses the conflict between the interpreter's presupposed (whether conscious or unconscious)

metaphysical framework and that which is constitutive of the internal logic of the canon by

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[41] Ibid. Canonical primacy here includes high regard for the canonical details, which means that one should not flatten the meaning of individual texts in order to fit them within a broader system. Rather, both limited texts and pericopes and broad, overarching readings are utilized to inform one another. All the while, this approach recognizes that a method of analogy "can lead to an overemphasis on the unity of biblical texts," resulting in "'artificial conformity' that ignores the diversity of expression and emphasis between divergent statements in the Bible." Donald A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983), 361. Cf. James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999); John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996); and Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2008).

[42] That is, the answers to theological questions must be demonstrably derived from the canonical data. On the importance of questions to meaning see Gadamer's contention regarding the dialectic of question and answer that makes up the "'*hermeneutic urphenomenon*': 'no assertion is possible that cannot be understood as an answer to a question, and assertions can *only* be understood in this way." Gadamer, *Truth*, 11.

[43] See Canale, *Revelation-Inspiration*, 149.

[44] See ibid., 148. It is essential to note that this phenomenological method differs from the ontological suppositions of Husserl, particularly his premise that reality is grounded in human perception. Here phenomenological methodology responds to the need to continually criticize and re-form (and in this way suspend) one's preunderstanding on the basis of the engagement of the phenomena of the canonical text.

continually subjecting the interpreter's horizon to the canonical horizon.[45] Accordingly, this

approach "brackets out [*epoché*], as much as possible, the interpreter's preunderstanding in favor

of the preunderstanding required by the text in its pericope as well as the text as canon, thus

allowing the canon to provide its own metaphysical framework."[46] In this way, phenomenological

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[45] As such, the first principles of theology are not presupposed or derived from existing philosophical systems. Fernando Canale has correctly criticized the apparent priority given to philosophical systems "as the main provider of the 'system' or intellectual framework for the development of Protestant theology." *Revelation-Inspiration*, 53. Similarly, Brevard S. Childs adds, "For systematic theologians the overarching categories are frequently philosophical. The same is often the case for biblical scholars even when cloaked under the guise of a theory of history." *Biblical*, 158. Osborne similarly recognizes that "all decisions are filtered through a network of tradition and preunderstanding, which itself exerts tremendous influence on our interpretations and choices. To this extent, each decision we make is provisional, and we must establish a continual dialogue between tradition and biblical text in the spiral upward to truth." Osborne, *Hermeneutical*, 396. Canale thus contends: "Inner coherence should drive Christian theology to conceive and formulate its presuppositional structure employing a biblical rather than philosophical or scientific interpretation." *Revelation-Inspiration*, 149. Here, while the tools of philosophy, especially with regard to questions and analysis, may be utilized, the "data" and "answers" of philosophical systems are not afforded epistemological weight but always subjected to the canon. Compare Jay Wesley Richards's contention that the Christian doctrine of God must be derived "not simply from general metaphysical intuitions . . . but from unique, contingent things that God has done in history and, in particular, in Jesus Christ." *The Untamed God: A Philosophical Exploration of Divine Perfection, Immutability, and Simplicity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003), 30. He adds that such a concept of God must be biblically normative and affirm the principle of perfection and the sovereignty-aseity of God. Ibid., 32–33. However, what if the "Principle of Perfection" and/or the "Sovereignty-Aseity Conviction" conflicts with a canonical ontology of God? On this, see the brief discussion of the way of eminence later in this chapter. As Maier puts it: "Every hermeneutic will be grounded in certain metaphysical convictions. . . . The question is 'which presuppositions are justified?' The question is 'which assumptions are legitimate?'" *Biblical*, 46.

[46] Again, *epoché* refers to suspension of judgment and is used philosophically to describe the intent to describe phenomena without presuppositions (see the brief discussion above). As Canale states, "In this phase of data interpretation, exegetes and theologians cancel out all previously inherited theories that could prove to be hindrances to the understanding of Scripture." *Revelation-Inspiration*, 149. Osborne adds, "The key is to 'bracket' out our own beliefs and to allow the other side to challenge our preferred positions. This will drive us to examine the biblical data anew and to allow all passages on the topic to have equal weight." *Hermeneutical*, 373. In this vein, Vanzhoozer speaks of the interpreter "indwelling" the text, which means that "interpreters pour themselves out, at least temporarily, for the sake of understanding the other." *Meaning*, 349. To be sure, despite the intent to overcome them, preunderstandings remain and that is why the hermeneutical spiral is ongoing and never complete, ever moving toward a more canonical metaphysical framework in place of the interpreter's horizon. Thus, while looking at the text hermeneutically to ascertain the textual intent (both divine and human) it also looks at the ontological suppositions that provide the framework (environment) for the text's communication. The understanding of this implicit worldview will only add to, not reduce, the hermeneutical content. As such, this approach contrasts with *Sachkritik* or content criticism, which makes the interpreter supplement the meaning of the author. Here, the interpreter merely seeks the answers to metaphysical questions that the text requires, which of course is a complex task considering there may be multiple metaphysical options that could fit a text, which again magnifies the usefulness of the canonical context as a whole. For an Evangelical criticism of *Sachkritik* see I. Howard Marshall, "An Evangelical Approach to 'Theological Criticism,'" *Them* 13 (1988): 79–85. Likewise, this approach takes care to avoid the imposition of a "canon within the canon" in favor of *tota scriptura*, cognizant of the criticism that all theological communities supposedly make use of

exegesis complements, rather than excludes, hermeneutical exegesis by way of reciprocal

interdependence since the former keeps the canonical horizon in view while the latter's focus on

individual verses and pericopes "contributes to and corrects the wider metaphysical framework"

of the interpreter in an ongoing spiral that does not subvert the multivalency of the text(s).[47]

Therefore, these complementary categories of exegesis address the two hermeneutical circles

(that of the text and the interpreter as well as the canonical parts and whole) from the standpoint

of the epistemological primacy of the final-form canon for systematic theology.

Overall, this final-form canonical approach uses the canon as the theological source from

which answers are derived to theological questions toward the articulation of a coherent system

that corresponds to the text as nearly as achievable while continually subjecting the interpreter's

horizon to that of the canon in a hermeneutical spiral. The extracted canonical and systematic

model is by no means the final word but remains secondary to the canonical text, which further

corrects the system by way of ongoing canonical investigation. "Hence, the system will never

exhaust the canonical text but endeavors to persistently move toward thorough correspondence

and rigorous inner coherence."[48] Therefore, the model of divine love, sought in this study by way

of canonical investigation, intentionally moves away from presupposing an ontology grounded in

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a canon within the canon. See Eugene Ulrich, "The Notion and Definition of "Canon," in *The Canon Debate* (ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 29; James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1990), and "Has the Canon a Continuing Function?" in *Canon Debate* (ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002); and Barr, *Concept*. Here, whatever community constructs that may function as a canon within a canon should be continually corrected according to the canonical text itself.

[47] Peckham, "Analogy," 53. In other words, "while looking at the text hermeneutically to ascertain the textual intent" this canonical approach "also looks for the biblical ontological suppositions that provide the framework for the text's communication" such that "phenomenological exegesis and hermeneutical exegesis function concurrently in an ongoing, reciprocally correcting manner." Ibid., 52. Thus, while "phenomenological answers are logically prior to hermeneutical ones, they are actually recognized from within the ongoing, reciprocal, correcting task of interpretation." Ibid., 52–53. Such a derived framework is always open to, and should be continually subjected to, further analysis on the basis of canonical investigation.

[48] Ibid., 53.

tradition(s) in search of rigorous correspondence to the text as canon.[49] This is accomplished by first ascertaining the canonical description of divine love and thereafter asking what must God be like in order to cohere with the canonical description.[50] Thus, the prevalent order of presupposing ontology then reasoning to divine characteristics is inverted by investigating the nature of divine love prior to the supposition of a pre-existing and developed ontology.[51]

Method of Investigation and Presentation of the Canonical Data

The canonical approach described above is implemented specifically with regard to the scope and delimitations of this dissertation by first conducting an inductive reading of the entire canon and grouping the data under the canonical rubrics of OT and NT. This reading analyzed any texts and/or passages that might contribute to potential answers to the systematic questions

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[49] Of course, this approach does not rule out from the outset the possibility that the canonical data could affirm an existing traditional viewpoint but merely does not assume the veracity of any particular existing viewpoint. Further, this approach contrasts with the contention of Thomas Jay Oord that "the Bible does not provide an internally consistent witness to love's meaning. Biblical writers talk about love in different ways and give it differing meanings. If love is to play the leading role in biblically oriented Christian theology, an adequate theology of love must admit this diversity." *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice, 2010), 12. To be sure, there is a great diversity regarding the meaning and usage of love within the canon. However, I do not believe it is true that the canon is internally inconsistent in this regard. Rather, as I hope to demonstrate, there is a consistent (though not monolithic or simple) canonical view of divine love. In a canonical approach one is not at liberty to select one aspect of love and declare it the "the meaning of love dominant in the biblical witness." Ibid., 13.

[50] Compare Vanhoozer's question, which he phrases in numerous ways throughout his project, "What must God be like if he is actually the speaking and acting agent depicted in the Bible?" *Remythologizing,* 23. Elsewhere, "What must God be in order truthfully to be represented as repenting, grieving, compassionate?" Ibid., 50. Cf. ibid., 3, 13. He attempts to avoid ontotheology in favor of theo-ontology, that is, to avoid "'bad' metaphysics" which impose "a system of categories on God without attending to God's own self-communication." Ibid., 8. Cf. ibid., 36, 175. In his view, "the character, and fate, of theism depends on how one relates biblical representations (the dramatic mythos) to metaphysical conceptualizations (logos). Metaphysics plays a magisterial role (i.e., system-building) in ontotheology (i.e., perfect being analysis). By contrast, a theo-ontology that hearkens first of all to God's self-naming in the biblical record (i.e., mythos) accords metaphysics the more modest, ministerial vole of conceptual elaboration." Ibid., 104. In this way, Vanhoozer has made a call to "reform metaphysics along biblical lines," which does not follow "the five speculative 'ways' of Aquinas . . . but the biblical account of the 'ways' of God." Ibid., 9, 23.

[51] By inverting the method in this way I propose that the particulars in the economy of God's revelation logically have epistemological priority. In other words, if we operate with a view of divine revelation then it follows that we come to know about God by what he reveals, and he reveals himself in particulars. Any ontology must take into account these particular revelations, rather than assuming a broad ontology that necessitates strained interpretations of the particular revelation.

raised by the conflict of interpretations in chapters 2 and 3, which revolve around the question of whether divine love is unilateral or whether God and humans may share a reciprocal (though unequal) relationship of love.[52] The data extracted from this reading were then analyzed and grouped in an ongoing spiral, which included both narrowing and expansion of the data when themes became more or less significant than originally thought.

Within this process, a number of prominent terms that hold significant implications for potential answers to the systematic questions became apparent.[53] These were investigated from the standpoint of a synchronic-canonical approach. Here the inherent limitations of semantic studies with regard to systematic investigation are recognized, especially the fact that meanings of words vary depending upon their context and usage. Accordingly, it is not the intention of these semantic surveys to reduce the terms to simple definitions, nor to assume that a nuance of meaning in one location can be extrapolated to all other occurrences of a given term (illegitimate totality transfer). Rather, such surveys seek to identify and summarize the basic meaning denoted by word groups as well as the polysemy and the multivalency of their semantic range and usage within the canon in order to provide the crucial background for engaging the wider canonical themes regarding divine love.

While the OT and NT data were investigated inductively, chapters 4 and 5 present the OT and NT data deductively by grouping the pertinent content under five rubrics that respond to the

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[52] Relative to this broad issue, five questions are identified in chapter 3 as standing at the center of the conflict of interpretations. First, is God the sole giver but never the receiver? In other words, is divine love only arbitrarily willed, pure beneficence (thematic *agape*), or may it include desire or enjoyment (thematic *eros*)? Second, does God only bestow and/or create value or might he also appraise, appreciate, and receive value? Third, does God's love include affection and/or emotionality such that God is concerned for the world, sympathetically or otherwise? Fourth, does God choose to fully love only some, or does he choose to love all, or is he essentially related to all such that he necessarily loves all? Fifth, bound up with this is the question of whether divine love is unconditional or conditional, ungrounded or grounded, and so on. While these questions relate to the theological conflict of interpretations presented (especially in chapter 3) the questions themselves were also shaped and altered by the canonical investigation itself.

[53] The terms included in this study have not been selected arbitrarily but in conjunction with the inductive reading of the canon and the subsequent shaping of the canonical analysis. Further, as will be seen in chapters 4 and 5, many such terms interrelate quite closely both semantically and thematically.

systematic questions derived from the conflict of interpretations. As such, the order of presentation differs from the order of investigation and it must be understood that such rubrics are themselves derived from the canonical data and not presupposed. Under each of the five categories the data are further organized according to the various sections of the OT and NT canon. Such diacanonical presentation respects the canonical groupings of the text without entering into the speculative field regarding the authorship and dating of specific passages and texts.[54] Of course, the large amount of data precludes an exhaustive presentation of its analysis. As such, the thematic presentation in chapters 4 and 5 consists of but a survey of the research conducted.

The data that make up chapters 4 and 5 are used to address the systematic questions regarding the conflict of interpretations regarding the nature of divine love toward a canonical and systematic model of divine love. This model is outlined and briefly explained in chapter 6 along with some implications for a wider ontology of God. In all, this dissertation does not attempt to produce an exhaustive conception of divine love. Rather, this study is limited to the articulation of the outline of a canonical and systematic model that may serve as a blueprint of divine love in the God-world relationship. At the same time, the model itself is open to and encourages revision based on the implications of continued canonical investigation.

Methodological Issues of the Canonical Investigation

With the broad framework of this canonical approach in mind it is necessary to address some methodological issues that pertain to the canonical investigation of a systematic model of divine love in particular: (1) accommodative language and figurative expressions, (2) the

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[54] In each canonical section themes recur and serve the purpose of presenting aspects of divine love from within their own canonical context, but also demonstrating, in retrospect, a striking continuity throughout the canon with regard to the concept of divine love.

treatment of data derived from the revelation of Christ incarnate, and (3) the agency of love and ambiguous genitive constructions in the NT.

<div align="center">Accommodative Language and Figurative Expressions</div>

All canonical language about God is necessarily accommodative language since all such language corresponds to human language. What, then, is to be done with regard to the applicability of canonical language to the nature of God as he actually is? Three approaches are generally recognized. One might treat such language as if it applies to God univocally, analogically, or equivocally. Since all available language is subject to the limitations and imperfections of human beings, it does not seem that such language could apply strictly univocally to God. On the other hand, if one receives the canon as divine self-revelation (as in this approach) such language cannot be equivocal but must apply to God in some manner.[55] In this way, it is recognized from the outset that canonical language, as human (but not merely human) language, is partially univocal and, in this way, analogical.[56] Importantly, the precision of

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[55] As such, the supposition of the utter ineffability of God and the consequent apophatic theology is rejected in favor of cataphatic, or positive, theology based on divine self-revelation, not least of which is that manifest in the incarnate Christ. See Insole's warning that apophatic theology also easily falls prey to anthropomorphic projection. Christopher J. Insole, "Anthropomorphism and the Apophatic God," *Modern Theology* 17 (2001): 475–83. At the same time, humility about one's understanding of God is nevertheless maintained such that one recognizes the imperfection of one's picture of God. C. F. H. Henry affirms the "incomprehensibility" of God but not "God's unknowability," meaning that we have incomplete knowledge of God. *God, Revelation,* 5:375. Nevertheless, it may be misleading (even if unintentionally so) to speak of God as "wholly other." The ontological and qualitative distinction between God as Creator and creatures is to be maintained along with the recognition that humans were created in the image of God (*imago dei*) in accordance with the canonical data on both points. Thus, Michael Scott Horton comments: "God is therefore neither 'wholly other' nor 'wholly identical' to human experience." *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 8. Murray A. Rae likewise cautions: "The reality of God's personal presence with humanity must not be sacrificed to a form of deference for the infinity and transcendence of God that would preclude us from speaking of God at all." "Anthropomorphism," *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 49.

[56] By speaking of such language as both partially univocal and analogical it is recognized that the language does not correspond perfectly to God (since the language is itself imperfect) but may correspond to God to the extent that human language is capable in light of a common reality created by God and experienced by creatures. That is, the canonical language used of God is analogical but, on the basis of the canonical assertions themselves, much closer to being univocal than to being equivocal. Compare William Alston's argument for "partial univocity" of "divine and human action" by which he means there is "a

the correspondence between divine self-revelation in human language and God as he actually is cannot be determined prior to the eschaton due to the epistemic distance (but not detachment) between God and humans as well as human limitations and imperfections. In light of this, the canon, as divine self-revelation in human (but not merely human) language, is the prime available source of theology in the absence of direct divine self-revelation and, though it includes analogical language, is nevertheless the trustworthy source and guide of theology (cf. 2 Tim 3:16).[57] "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully" (1 Cor 13:12).

In light of the fact that all available language is human, and thus accommodative, it must be recognized that not all canonical language is intended literally, though one should take care to not dismiss or "demythologize" language that is intended literally, especially by way of extra-canonical presuppositions or pressures.[58] On the contrary, some language is figurative whether by

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partial overlap between concepts of divine and human action" such that there is "some commonality between our thought of human and divine action and motivation." "Divine and Human Action," in *Divine and Human Action: Essays in the Metaphysics of Theism* (ed. Thomas V. Morris; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), 258, 266, 273. Cf. Horton, *Covenant*, 8, and Alan J. Torrance, "Analogy," *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 114–37. Pinnock similarly comments: "I do not take every biblical metaphor literally but I do try to take them all seriously." *Mover*, 62. In this regard, Vanhoozer writes: "Theological pride overestimates the adequacy of human language and thought; theological sloth underestimates the importance of responding to the provocations of God's self-revelation." *Remythologizing*, 16. The approach taken here hopes to avoid both of these extremes of dogmatism and skepticism.

It is also highly interesting that C. F. H. Henry (the exemplar of the transcendent-voluntarist model surveyed in chapter 3) generally requires "univocal meaning" in order to "avoid agnosticism and skepticism" as well as "equivocation." *God*, 5:87. He thus asks, "Does a relational likeness of goodness when predicated of God and man make sense if its ascriptions to both the divine and the human have no univocal overlap? When thus conceived the analogy of proportionality channels into equivocation and hence into agnosticism." Ibid., 5:86. However, elsewhere he asserts that "when all due allowance is made for the literal and objective truth conveyed by figurative statements, divine repentance is itself an anthropomorphic representation." Ibid., 5:304. This, of course, requires a break from univocal language about God. How, then, does he know what is "anthropomorphic" and what is "ontological teaching"?

[57] It is folly, therefore, to try to go behind the canonical data by way of other sources or human reasoning since all such sources and reasoning are subject to the same limitations while also not the products of divine inspiration. "All the language we use of God will be inadequate . . . yet the treasure is entrusted—by God himself—to earthen vessels." Rae, "Anthropomorphism," 49.

[58] By literal I mean that "words are used literally when they are meant to be understood in their primary, matter-of-fact sense" in contrast to figuratively or metaphorically. See G. B. Caird, *The Language*

way of metaphor, idiom, hyperbole, and the like.[59] It is not always easy to identify such language but, to the extent that it can be identified, the interpreter should treat such language according to the intention *in* the text with attention to the genre, context, and other textual and contextual clues to its intended correspondence to its referent(s).

Within this context, one of the most pressing problems pursuant to a canonical and systematic model of divine love is the issue of the interpretation of figurative expressions relative to God's nature and/or actions. In particular, the interpretation of so-called anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms is of crucial importance to a canonical approach to theology proper. An anthropomorphism (*anthropos + morphos*) is the attribution of human form (or behavior) to a non-human entity.[60] Anthropopathisms (*anthropos + pathos*) more specifically ascribe human pathos, emotions, to non-human entities when they do not possess such traits. In the realm of theology, such monikers are often applied to particular canonical language in order to convey the notion that such phraseology should not be taken to accurately depict God, that is, that such language ascribes human characteristics to God that do not actually correspond to him.[61]

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and Imagery of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 133.

[59] This is not a judgment against the truth value of the language but a recognition of the intention in the text, which is often figurative rather than literal. This is sometimes spoken of as interpreting the text not by way of naïve literalism but literally, that is, with a view toward the maximum achievable correspondence to text. See Osborne, *Hermeneutical*.

[60] A broader definition is sometimes used that sees an anthropomorphism as "any attribution of human characteristics to that which is not human." Caird, *Language*, 172.

[61] Examples of this interpretive maneuver abound, only a few of which will be mentioned here. John W. Cooper states, "God does not learn, have his feelings aroused, or realize that he must revise his plans. . . . Biblical assertions of God's reactions are anthropopathic." *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers: From Plato to the Present* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 332. Elsewhere, H. A. Brongers speaks of divine jealousy as "a crude anthropopathism" from which the interpreter would like to spare God. "Der Eifer des Herrn Zebaoth," *VT* 13 (1963): 276. Cf. to a lesser degree, G. Sauer, "קנא," *TLOT* (ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 1147, and Nathan M. Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (The JPS Torah Commentary 2; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 110. Similarly, in response to passages that speak of divine repentance Erickson comments: "Some of them are to be understood as anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms. They are simply descriptions of God's actions and feelings in human terms, and from a human perspective." Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998), 304. So C. F. H. Henry, *God*, 5:304. Wilson agrees and adds in this regard:

Any dismissal of canonical language as anthropomorphic/pathic poses great difficulty for a coherent theological method and is mutually exclusive to the final-form canonical approach posited above.[62] Specifically, to dismiss the value of figurative language in illuminating the nature of God *a priori*, because it is "human" language, runs into a number of problems. First, it appears to overlook the fact that all language to which the interpreter is privy is human language.[63] Indeed, as explained above, all divine self-revelation is accommodative. The fact of

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"From man's limited, earthly, finite perspective it only appears that God's purposes have changed." Marvin R. Wilson, "נחם," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (ed. R. Laird Harris; Chicago: Moody, 1999), 570–1. Cf. William A. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1979), 57, and Nathan M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with New JPS Translation* (The JPS Torah Commentary 1; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 47. Luther took a similar position with regard to divine grief in Gen 6:7 stating: "Such an emotion is attributed to God, not as though He were thus moved, but the holy prophets, Moses, and Noah conceived of Him in this way." Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann; 55 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999), 17:358. Further he states, "One should not imagine that God has a heart or that He can grieve. But when the spirit of Noah, of Lamech, and of Methuselah is grieved, God Himself is said to be grieved. Thus we should understand this grief to refer to its effect, not to the divine essence." Ibid., 2:47. See also Calvin's view of this with regard to Hos 11 below. Recently, Phillip R. Johnson contended that though anthropopathisms "mean *something* we were meant to understand . . . we must also confess that there is something they *do not mean*. They do not mean that God is literally subject to mood swings or melancholy, spasms of passion or temper tantrums" for "absolute immutability is one of God's transcendent characteristics." "God without Mood Swings," in *Bound Only Once: The Failure of Open Rheism* (ed. Douglas Wilson; Moscow, Idaho: Canon, 2001), 116.

[62] To a large extent, the dismissal of so-called anthropomorphisms/pathisms is due to the desire to avoid criticisms of God being anthropomorphized, that is, theology as merely the projection of humanity. This issue of humans crafting God in their own image is not merely responsive to Feuerbachian criticisms of projection but has been an issue from early on in Christian history. Thus, Vanhoozer states, "Cultured Greeks like Plato and Aristotle had an aversion to anthropomorphism when myths attributed to gods things that were immoral and shameful, such as theft or adultery." *Remythologizing*, 60. Cf. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 344–45, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Anthropomorphism in Hellenism and in Judaism," *BSac* 127 (1970): 212–22, and "Anthropomorphism in Ancient Religions," *BSac* 125 (1968): 29–44. In this regard, Hartshorne believes: "A well-meaning attempt to purify theology anthropomorphisms purified it of any genuine, consistent meaning at all." *Omnipotence*, 29. See also, in this regard, Edmond La Beaume Cherbonnier, "The Logic of Biblical "Anthropomorphism," *HTR* 55, no. 3 (1962): 187–206. However, the solution to the tendency toward human projection in theology is not to try to remove "human" language but to purposefully do theology in a way that rigorously corresponds to the canon. Thus, "if we are not to fall into the arms of Feuerbach at the very first step . . . we must think of God as the subject." Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 21. Further, "unless we accord priority to God's own self-presentation in theodramatic activity, Christian theology is but smoke and mirrors—a human projection of religious affections and special effects." Ibid., 23.

[63] For example, "the classic understanding is that God speaks about himself anthropomorphically or analogically all the way through Scripture—not just in a few places. In every noun, verb, and adjective God has used to present Himself, certain notions of limitation and moral inadequacy apply to the human world that must be deleted when we apply it to God." "God vs. God: Two Competing Theologies Vie for the Future of Evangelicalism," *Christianity Today* 44, no. 2 (2000): 35. The problem is not with the

accommodative language cannot then be used (in and of itself) to distinguish between canonical (or any other) language that corresponds to God and that which does not. In other words, it is inappropriate to sideline particular canonical language about God based on the premise that it corresponds imperfectly to God as accommodative language since this is true of all available language.[64] Second, such dismissal of canonical language as inappropriate to God appears to assume that the interpreter already knows what God is like and can thus differentiate between language that actually corresponds to God's being and/or actions and that which does not.[65] This runs the risk of presupposing a doctrine of God rather than investigating it from the canonical data.[66]

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recognition that divine revelation is accommodative but with the idea that the human should then "delete" some of this information from one's conception of God as if extra-canonical human language is more appropriate to God. Vanhoozer comments, "While we have no alternative but to employ human language and categories to understand God, it remains illegitimate to make the human condition the measure of God's being." *Remythologizing*, 22. Yet, though one need not measure God's being by way of human language, such language is necessary if humans are to speak of God at all.

[64] Indeed, Caird states, "We have no other language besides metaphor with which to speak about God." *Language*, 174. So John C. L. Gibson, *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998), 26. "The only choice open to us, therefore, is whether we derive our metaphors from the human realm or from the non-human, and it is important to note that the biblical writers use both kinds." Caird, *Language*, 174. In this vein, Terence E. Fretheim comments: "Metaphors do reveal an essential continuity with the reality which is God; they do in fact contain information about God. At the same time, they disclose that which is discontinuous with the divine reality"; the danger is "either interpreting metaphors literally in every respect or (more commonly today) denying any essential relationship between the metaphor and God." "The Repentance of God: A Key to Evaluating Old Testament God-Talk," *HBT* 10, no. 1 (1988): 51.

[65] Thus, Vanhoozer states, "One common Jewish and early Christian strategy for dealing with anthropomorphic language was to distinguish God as depicted in the Bible from God as he actually is. The procedure assumes, of course, that one already knows what God is like (e.g., the most perfect being)." *Remythologizing*, 60. "The church fathers had their own special device—the axiom of divine immutability—for deciding when to take anthropomorphisms literally and when to spiritualize them." Ibid. Hartshorne criticizes that those who dismissed such language must have "thought they knew better than the naïve writers of scripture what concepts do and what do not literally apply to deity." *Omnipotence*, 76.

[66] Consider, for example, the tension evident in Cooper's contentions that "biblical assertions of God's reactions are anthropopathic" while, on the other hand, recognizing that "Scripture presents God as acting and responding in ways that are analogous to humans." *Panentheism*, 322–23. This tension is addressed by so-called modified classical theists (such as William Lane Craig and Nicholas Wolterstorff) by asserting that God is temporally everlasting. In this way, Cooper states, "by allowing that God is, to some extent, in time, the modified version can read Scripture's narrative of God's mighty acts in history more straightforwardly and less anthropomorphically than the traditional version requires." Ibid., 343. On the other hand, Cooper comments: "Admittedly, it is more complicated for traditional classical theism to

For instance, the assertion that particular canonical language is anthropomorphic/pathic may be asserted on the basis of the presupposition of impassibility. Insofar as one claims to appeal to biblical data for one's doctrine of God, such an interpretive procedure falls prey to circular reasoning if the biblical data for divine passibility are excluded on the basis of the premise that God is impassible. Absent a compelling canonical argument which asserts that emotive language should not actually apply to God as he truly is, one who subscribes to a final-form canonical approach is not at liberty to dismiss the language of divine emotions (among other language of God), however unsettling it may be for the proponent of traditional divine ontology.[67] With this in mind, two broad principles might be posited that address these problems from a canonical approach. First, since all language available to the interpreter is human language, the dismissal of figurative language for this reason is self-defeating.[68] Second, it is inappropriate to assume that the interpreter knows what God is like prior to and/or independent of the canonical data itself and use such assumptions to qualify and/or dismiss canonical language regarding God.

Thus, from a canonical approach, the burden of proof is on those who rule out so-called anthropomorphisms/pathisms as descriptions of what God is like.[69] In my view, such a maneuver

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treat this presentation as completely anthropomorphic and explain how a wholly eternal, immutable God acts sequentially in history and interacts with creatures." Ibid., 323. See also Canale's contention for divine (analogical) temporarily in *Criticism*.

[67] Here is not the place to discuss whether a compelling canonical argument for divine impassibility exists. The issue will be taken up below. Absent particular canonical data one might posit that a divine ontology needs only internal coherence. However, the approach of a coherence theory of truth is insufficient since there are many apparently internally coherent pictures and even if one thought they had arrived at the singular coherent picture of God, the reality of human imperfections and limitations of reasoning should give one reason for pause.

[68] Further, according to a canonical approach, the favoring of abstract language over figurative language as it relates to one's description of God should be demonstrated in accordance with the canonical data itself or discarded.

[69] With regard to canonical language of divine emotion: "The weight of traditional theological wisdom is on the side of the nay-sayers: nothing that happens in the world, say classical theists like Aquinas, can affect God's emotional life, much, less his knowledge and will." Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 77. On the other hand, many recent theologians argue that divine passibility, including relationality, is necessary to love such that God is the "deeply moved 'first mover.'" Barry L. Callen, *Discerning the Divine: God in Christian Theology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 23.

lacks a consistent and compelling rationale for determining which canonical data accurately

depict God's nature and which canonical data are to be dismissed as merely accommodative

language.[70] In sum, unless there are some canonical data to the contrary, the literary thrust of

canonical revelation should not be cast aside as merely human accommodation.[71]

This brings us to a third issue, which is only indirectly addressed by the two broad

principles explained above, that is, the supposed rationale for the dismissal of anthropomorphisms

and/or anthropathisms based on the argument that such figurative language utilizes the language

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See also Richard Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (ed. Clark H. Pinnock et al.; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994). With regard to the former position, whence is the criterion that provides the rationale for "non-literal interpretations of biblical passages about God changing and suffering?" Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 84. Wolterstorff helpfully states that "an implication of accepting Scripture as canonical is that one affirm, as literally true, Scripture's representation of God unless, on some point, one has good reason not to do so. Put it like this: the burden of proof, for those who accept Scripture as canonical, is on those who hold that Scripture's representation of God is not literally true at some point." Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Could Not God Sorrow If We Do?" in *The Papers of the Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology* (ed. Christopher I. Wilkins; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 2002), 140. As Vanhoozer states, "There is more than a superficial resemblance between the urge to do away with anthropomorphism and the urge to demythologize." *Remythologizing*, 60.

[70] In all this, one must have a mechanism grounded in more than the reader's response (subjectivity) if one is to attempt to approach the meaning "in" the text. Does the text contain the intention that God has no emotions? How could that be derived from the text itself (immediate or wider canonical context)? How does the reader know, from the canon, that the language is anthropopathic?

[71] In this canonical approach, divine characteristics cannot be asserted on the basis of some conception of God *a priori* but must be derived from, and able to be demonstrated on the basis of, the canonical data. Further, the ways of natural theology do not suffice since all of them circumvent the criterion of correspondence to the canon (see the explanation of this criterion above). Moreover, the way of analogy is imprecise and prone to error, especially human projection (whether of human qualities or supposedly pious abstractions) as well as an endless conflict of theological interpretations. Likewise, the way of negation (*via negativa*) assumes that one possesses at least some correct knowledge of God already in order to identify what God is not like and founders for lack of objective data or criteria for appeal when various individuals wish to negate different characteristics of God. Similarly, the way of eminence, favored in analytic philosophy, can be applied with various resultant conceptions of God since "intuitions about perfection differ, a fact that is arguably the Achilles heel of perfect being theology." Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 96. As an example, see the discussion of Hartshorne's utilization of the way of eminence, with conclusions that depart widely from those of others who argue from the infinity or perfection of God's being such as the denial of God's immutability and omnipotence, in chapter 3. Vanhoozer contends that "early modern philosophical theism projects human conceptions of perfection onto God as 'highest being' and makes the fatal Feuerbachian slip, thus amounting to nothing more than conceptual idolatry, a chasing after wind." Ibid., 105.

of anatomy that is not proper to God as incorporeal.[72] There are many significant figurative

expressions used of God that are often classified as anthropomorphic and/or anthropopathic, only

a few of which will be examined here toward a working approach to such figurative language.

One of the most striking images of divine emotion appears in Hos 11:8-9 when God states, "How

can I give you up, O Ephraim? . . . My heart [לֵב] is turned over [הפך] within Me, All My

compassions [נחם] are kindled [כמר]. I will not execute My fierce anger [אַף]; I will not destroy

Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in

wrath."[73]

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[72] The question of the incorporeality of God in itself is beyond the scope of this dissertation. One might question whether the canonical data are not interpreted to say more than they do in this regard. That "God is Spirit" need not mean that God is excluded from taking form, human or otherwise. That God can and does take form is implied in the scriptural data in many instances, not least of which is the incarnation. If one means by the incorporeality of God that God is not essentially physical or material, by which one means that God is not bound to any particular, material form, such a supposition would seem to accord with scriptural data. However, this is not the same as saying God cannot take form.

[73] Compare the contrast between Calvin and Finney in the interpretation of this passage. Calvin dismisses the language of emotion stating: "God, we know, is subject to no passions, and we know that no change takes place in him. What then do these expressions mean, by which he appears to be changeable? Doubtless he accommodates himself to our ignorances whenever he puts on a character foreign to himself." First, he rejects the implication that humans have free will. Rather, "we know that what he [God] will do is certain, and that his decree depends not on the free-will of men. . . . God then does not deliberate as to himself, but with reference to men." Further, "when he says that his *heart was changed,* and that his *repentings were brought back again,* the same mode of speaking after the manner of men is adopted; for we know that these feelings belong not to God; he cannot be touched with repentance, and his heart cannot undergo changes." John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1950), 400–401. Finney, on the contrary, contends that "God really exercises all the affections ascribed to him in the Bible." Particularly pertinent to this dissertation he asks: "When [God] professes to love his creatures, are we to understand that he does not really love them, but that he merely acts as we do when we love?" Indeed: "If this language does not mean what it says, what does it mean?" Further, "If God be not what the Bible represents him to be, then what is he, and who knows him? If these are not his real feelings then we are infinitely mistaken about his character. . . . If these are not the feelings of God, then we have no true revelation of God." Charles Grandeson Finney, "Lecture XVIII:Affections and Emotions of God," *The Oberlin Evangelist* 1, no. 22 (October 9, 1839): 170. Although Vanhoozer comes to a different conclusion, this is akin to his striking question and the method adopted in this dissertation: "What must God be in order truthfully to be represented as repenting, grieving, compassionate?" *Remythologizing*, 50. Vanhoozer himself refers to "the pained voice of God as he appears to wrestle with himself." Ibid., 49. Wilhelm Vischer points out: "If one finds it unsuitable that God should" speak as he does in these verses "the same goes for all declarations of his mercy, his grace, and his love" such as Exod 34:6; Jer 31:20 and others. "Words and the Word: The Anthropomorphisms of the Biblical Revelation," *Int* 3, no. 1 (1949): 3. See the discussion of this verse in chapter 4.

Here, notice the anatomical language of "heart" (לֵב) and "nose" (אַף) used in reference to compassion and anger. Both anatomical idioms are also used of human agency with the clear intent of conveying intense emotions.[74] Further, it is obvious that the idiom does not refer to the physical turning (the literal meaning of הִפֵּךְ) of one's heart, whether in reference to God or humans, but is an idiomatic description of profound emotion. Similarly, in Jer 31:20 God declares: "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly *still* remember him; Therefore My heart [מעה] yearns [המה] for him; I will surely have mercy [רחם] on him."

Here, notice the anatomical language of "heart," which in the Hebrew literally refers to intestines, bowels, a common idiom of the seat of emotions in the ANE, as well as the term for "mercy" (רחם), which derives from the root that literally refers to one's "womb" or "belly" and thus refers idiomatically to a profoundly compassionate love.[75] Here again, the idiom does not refer to one's bowels literally murmuring or growling (the literal meaning of המה) but idiomatically refers to the emotional intensity of divine compassion.

Elsewhere, God is repeatedly depicted by anatomical language including (among others) that of ears,[76] eyes,[77] nose,[78] mouth,[79] face,[80] hands,[81] arms,[82] and heart[83] by way of idiomatic

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[74] See the list below. The intensity of the emotionality conveyed here is evident by comparison to the similar imagery of human agents in Gen 43:30 and 1 Kgs 3:6, the only two other instances where the term כמר relates to emotions; only in one other instance does it appear at all, of skin becoming hot in the sun (Lam 5:10). Cf. Mike Butterworth, "רחם," *NIDOTTE* 3:1093, and H. J. Stoebe, "רחם," *TLOT* 3:1226.

[75] With human agency see Gen 43:30. See further the discussion of the רחם word group in chapter 4. For an extra-canonical example of language of internal organs as the seat of emotions and/or dispositions, consider the Anuak use of "liver." See Eugene A. Nida, *Exploring Semantic Structures* (Internationale Bibliothek für allgemeine Linguistik Bd. 11; Munich: Fink, 1975), 127. Compare also this idiomatic syntagm of "murmuring innards" in Isa 63:15. The word here translated "heart" (מֵעֶה) literally refers to internal organs, inward parts, bowels, belly and is often used in the sense of womb and stomach. It is used in instances of intense physiological pain (Job 30:27; Ps 22:15) but more frequently to denote intense human emotions (Isa 16:11; Jer 4:19; Lam 1:20; 2:11). Stoebe thus correctly sees this as "expanded parallelism" which "approximate[s] *rahamim*." "רחם," 1226. The collocation of מֵעֶה and המה or הֲמוֹן murmur, roar, sometimes meaning arouse appears five times (Isa 16:11; 63:15; Jer 4:19; 31:20; Cant 5:4) of strong emotions.

[76] For example, consider the idiom of inclining one's ear [אֹזֶן + נטה] that refers to attentively

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phraseology that is not only used of God but humans as well.[84] In all of these examples it is

readily apparent that the intended meaning of the idiomatic expressions is independent of the

literal anatomical references, both with regard to human and divine agency.[85] Thus, when

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listening, which is used with both divine (2 Kgs 19:16) and human agency (Prov 5:1).

[77] Consider the frequent idiom of finding favor (מצא + חֵן + עַיִן) in one's sight used of both divine and human agency (Gen 6:8; 32:5). The term עַיִן literally refers to one's eyes but here neither refers to one's eyes nor necessarily to literal sight but to favorable appraisal and/or the bestowal of grace. See the further discussion of this idiom in chapter 4. Consider also the idiom that is often rendered by the English idiom "apple" of the "eye," which in Hebrew literally means "little man [אִישׁוֹן] of the eye [עַיִן]" and appears with both divine and human agency (Deut 32:10; Zech 2:8; Prov 7:2). For many other idioms by language of the eyes and other anatomical idioms in the OT see Jeffery D. Griffin, "An Investigation of Idiomatic Expressions in the Hebrew Bible with a Case Study of Anatomical Idioms" (Ph.D. diss., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999), 111; cf. Caird, *Language*, 175.

[78] For example, God is said to be literally "long of nose" (אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם) which is translated "slow to anger" (Exod 34:6) and may be used of human agency (Prov 14:29). The idiom comes from seeing the nose as the locus of anger (think red). A "long nose" thus signifies one who would take longer to become angry. See Walter Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *Genesis to Leviticus* (vol. 1 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1994), 946. Consider also the description of divine anger as the "heat of my nostrils" in Exod 32:10, 12. Here and elsewhere the term אַף, literally "nose," idiomatically refers to anger by metonymy as it does also with human agency (Gen 30:2; Exod 32:10). On the other hand a human may be "quick-tempered," that is "short of nose" (Prov 14:17).

[79] Frequently the "mouth" (פֶּה) of someone idiomatically refers to their speech in the sense of command and/or proclamation, both of God and humans (Gen 45:21; Deut 8:3; 2 Sam 14:19).

[80] The term that literally refers to one's face (פָּנֶה) may be used idiomatically of one's presence (Exod 33:14), both divine and human (Exod 10:11). Consider also the concept of "hiding" one's "face," which is a sign of displeasure, used with divine (Deut 31:17-18) and human agency (Isa 53:3). See Mayer I. Gruber, "The Many Faces of Hebrew *nāśāʾ pānîm* 'Lift Up the Face,'" *ZAW* 95, no. 2 (1983): 252–60.

[81] Reference to one's "hand" (יד) may be used idiomatically in various ways, including action, receiving or giving, etc. It is also used idiomatically of both God and humans. See Gen 14:20; 49:24.

[82] Language of "arm" (זְרוֹעַ) may refer to one's strength or power, also of both God and humans (Exod 6:6; 15:16; Job 35:9; 40:9). See the frequent language of God's "outstretched arm" with reference to his mighty acts of deliverance (Exod 6:6), often along with reference to his "mighty hand" (Deut 4:34).

[83] In Hebrew the word that literally refers to one's "heart" [לֵב] is a rich term of the totality of human disposition. It may idiomatically describe many different mental aspects including one's thoughts, will, and/or emotions and is used of both divine and human agency (Gen 6:5-6). See also Griffin, "Investigation," 90.

[84] There is an evident "proclivity" in Semitic languages "to utilize anatomical terms in the creation of new idioms." Ibid., 39. Cf. E. Dhorme, *L'emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps en hébreu et en akkadien* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1963). Caird adds, "In all languages a considerable proportion of the word stock of daily speech is supplied by the metaphorical use of words which literally connote parts of the human body." *Language*, 172–73.

[85] That is, the non-literal nature of the language does not relate to the question of

someone finds favor in the eyes of someone else, the idiom corresponds to favor in one's

estimation. The anatomical referent is beside the point for both humans and God. The idiom is not

dependent upon the physiological phenomena that might undergird the original metaphor. It is

thus fallacious to dismiss the intended reference of such language due to anatomical language. It

will not do to merely assert God has no body parts, therefore the language is non-literal, and

therefore it does not correspond to God. The language is idiomatic of both divine and human

subjects and is, as such, non-literal, but is nevertheless intended to convey true content about its

referent(s).

As such, one should not assume that since God has no "innards" therefore the idiomatic

language that uses the literal terminology of "innards" does not convey any truth value that

corresponds to God as he actually is.[86] If one were inclined to dismiss the intended reference of

such idiomatic language because of the use of anatomical language, consistency would require

that the identical idioms with reference to human agency also be interpreted either as literal

references to anatomy or as expressions that do not actually correspond to the human agents.[87]

Obviously, neither of these options would be applied by competent interpreters when such idioms

are used of human agency.[88] Therefore, why should references to divine agency be divested of the

intended meaning of well-understood idiomatic phraseology? In other words, that such language

is idiomatic does not mean that it does not correspond to God any more than emotions applied to

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corporeality/incorporeality since the idiom itself is not with reference to the literal anatomical parts therein.

[86] Thus, with regard to action Vanhoozer recognizes: "While it is a contingent fact about human beings that we can only act or bring about changes in the world through some bodily movement, the latter is not a necessary part of the meaning of the concept." *Remythologizing*, 58. Should not the same principle be applied to emotionality?

[87] In other words, if language referring to God is to be dismissed as non-revelatory or severely flawed communication and thus dismissed, one should also logically dismiss such language with reference to humans.

[88] Although Caird is not referring to the point made here, his observation fits this issue well: "Only captious pedantry or childish humour will find it necessary to remark that the eye of a needle cannot see or a tongue of land speak." *Language*, 173. Similarly, the use of idiomatic language of anatomy to describe

humans by idioms do not refer to human emotions. The question of whether God has emotions

cannot then be answered *a priori* but must be engaged *a posteriori* to the canonical text.[89] Absent

a compelling, canonical rationale, such interpretive maneuvers appear to stem not from textual or

canonical, but dogmatic and presuppositional, rationales.

With such examples in mind, we may identify two further principles that address this

proposed rationale for the dismissal of anatomical expressions relative to God. First, it is worth

noting that according to the canon, humans were created in the image of God (*imago dei*).[90] Thus,

it may be more accurate to say that humans are theomorphic and, perhaps, theopathic, than to say

that language of God that is also used of humans is anthropomorphic/pathic.[91] Second, as clearly

evidenced by the examples above, the fact that figurative anatomical expressions of emotion(s),

for instance, are non-literal does not mean that they do not convey direct truth content about their

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divine feelings does not pertain to the issue of divine corporeality vs. incorporeality.

[89] Thus Graham Cole contends that "an anthropopathism such as God's grief is to be given its face value. God does not merely *seem* to have grief in Genesis 6:6; He is grieved, contra *Calvin*. In other words, there is some counterpart to our emotional life in God. To argue otherwise is to beg the question of why we should not dismiss references to the divine love and compassion also as mere anthropopathisms." Graham A. Cole, "The Living God: Anthropomorphic or Anthropopathic?" *RTR* 59, no. 1 (2000): 23. See also Robert B. Chisholm's argument that while so-called anthropomorphic language is metaphorical, it conveys the reality that God enters into real relationship with his creatures. "Anatomy of an Anthropomorphism: Does God Discover Facts?," *BSac* 164 (2007): 3-20. Cf. Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Overtures to Biblical Theology 14; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 99.

[90] While the precise nature of the correspondence between God and human nature posited by the *imago Dei* is widely disputed and not particularly clear by way of the canonical data, the recognition of this point should be a control and caution against the suggestion that humans are totally unlike God.

[91] So Vanhoozer who adds that the "human capacities to know, will, and love are themselves theomorphic." *Remythologizing*, 64. Thus, he asks, "who is in the image or morphe of whom?" Ibid. Likewise, he adds, "In light of the doctrine of the imago Dei, then, perhaps the Bible's depiction of divine suffering is less a matter of anthropopathic projection than it is a case of human suffering being theopathic (God-like)." Ibid., 77–78. Indeed, Silva adds, "our human qualities are themselves but a reflection of God's person and attributes." Moisés Silva, *God, Language, and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics* (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 4; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1990), 22. Caneday cautions, however: "The fallacy is to forget that we are analogues of God and to regard ourselves as the fundamental reference point for ascriptions concerning God." "Veiled Glory? God's Self-Revelation in Human Likeness—A Biblical Theology of God's Anthropomorphic Self-Disclosure," in *Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity* (ed. John Piper, Justin Taylor, and Paul Kjoss Helseth; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2003), 153. Cf. Heschel, *Prophets*, 349.

referent(s).[92] On the contrary, such figurative language is idiomatic and is used, as such, of both

God and humans.[93] As such, it is evident that the anatomical language is not intended to refer to

literal anatomy but to dispositions and/or actions with either divine or human agency. Hence, one

should not dismiss the well-known meaning of the idiom as it applies to God without compelling

canonical data. Indeed, if one insists on dismissing such language as anthropomorphic and/or

anthropopathic, consistency would also require that one rule out divine speech, which is also

often conveyed by anatomical idiom.[94] At what point would one draw the line with regard to

which language actually applies to God and is useful in the construction of theology proper and

which is not?[95] Does such figurative language, then, truly apply to God and to what extent? The

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[92] See Herbert M. Wolf, "When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate," in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (ed. Edwin H. Palmer and Kenneth J. Barker; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1986), 134–36. Cf. James Barr, "Literality," *Faith and Philosophy* 6 (1989): 412–28, and Eugene Albert Nida, *Componential Analysis of Meaning: An Introduction to Semantic Structures* (Approaches to Semiotics 57; The Hague: Mouton, 1975). See also Ricoeur's classic consideration of the referential function of language by way of living metaphor, which corresponds to reality but neither univocally nor equivocally. *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

[93] Here and elsewhere I used the term "idiomatic" to refer simply to a common use of a phrase (or term in Hebrew) that has figurative meaning divergent from the literal meaning of its component term(s). In English, idioms consist of more than one word but in Hebrew a single term may be idiomatic. See Griffin, "Investigation," 22.

[94] According to Vanhoozer, "There is a true but only partial, appropriate but only approximate correspondence between divine and human speaking." *Remythologizing*, 58. The question is, how does one know what part is part of the partial correspondence?

[95] Vanhoozer states, "Feuerbach got it partly right. Human beings are in the image of God and so, in one sense, all language about God may be seen to be anthropomorphic. Yet one can also appeal to the imago Dei in the opposite direction to argue not that we are projecting our image upon God but that God is projecting his image onto us. Relationality would be in this case not a human projection onto God but a theomorphic projection onto humanity. The difficulty, of course, is in the details: how do we know which forms (morphe) of human life image God and which do not?" Ibid., 161. He further states elsewhere: "Those who equate anthropomorphism with the system of Feuerbachian projection overlook the extent to which the former is a legitimate cognitive instrument. Cf. ibid., 61. D. M. Beegle adds, "It is precisely in the area of the personal that theism, as expressed in Christianity, must ever think in anthropomorphic terms. To regard God solely as Absolute Being of the Great Unknown is to refer to *him* or *it*, but to think of God as literally personal, one with whom we can fellowship, is to say *Thou*." "Anthropomorphism," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 1984), 54. Gibson adds that the "issue in biblical anthropomorphisms is understanding them, not approving or disapproving them." *Language*, 26. Cf. Garrett Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination: The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206.

canonical approach maintains that, as divine self-revelation, such language conveys meaningful and accurate (albeit analogical) data about God as he is in himself.[96]

The meaning of such figurative language with respect to God need not be interpreted arbitrarily. Rather, the wider canonical information provides insight that assists in the interpretation of such imagery within the context of the wider, canonical horizon of divine ontology. To take one example, God's jealousy is commonly dismissed as anthropopathic in some theological circles. However, in light of the principles above, a canonical approach must take the language of divine jealousy/passion seriously. In light of the overall evidence of the canon, it is evident that divine jealousy differs from human jealousy not in the sense that it is "wholly other" but in the sense that divine jealousy portrays none of the negative characteristics manifest in human jealousy.[97] While human jealousy includes envy, divine jealousy never does. God's jealousy is always appropriate and in reference to his passion for that which rightfully belongs to him.[98] Likewise, divine hatred and wrath is never petty or arbitrary but always

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[96] K. A. Matthews correctly points out in this regard: "When we consider the metaphor of God as a feeling person who loves, is angry, and grieves, the aim of the figure is to point to a mitigated correspondence between human experience and God. This does not say that the emotions of humans and God are equivalent in their entirety either in intensity or in quality, for God does not grieve in the same way as men and women. Nor is he angry in the same fashion as sinful mortals, but to conclude that such language reveals nothing of God's essential personhood makes all such language pointless. For what purpose is there in describing God in any terms understandable to us other than to reveal something of God's mysterious nature?" *Genesis 1–11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 344. Hamilton adds, "It is easy, of course, to dismiss such allusions as anthropopathisms, and to feel that they can tell us nothing about the essential nature of God. But verses like this remind us that the God of the OT is not beyond the capability of feeling pain, chagrin, remorse." Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 274.

[97] While one might extrapolate the apparently theologically sound principle that used of God such things only apply in their positive aspects, such a principle is incapable of objective usefulness since different interpreters will find different characteristics "good." See the discussion of the way of eminence above and Hartshorne's departure from traditional views of God on the basis of his arguments for that which is maximally good discussed in chapter 3. Thus, even if one adopts the truism that only good characteristics apply to God, it would be of no use in determining many of the thornier issues with regard to the correspondence of canonical language to God since some characteristics are thought to be good and appropriate by some and deficient and inappropriate by others.

[98] See the word studies of the language of jealousy in the OT and NT in chapters 4 and 5 respectively. E. Reuter rightly points out the dismissal of divine jealousy as a so-called anthropopathism "only serves the Stoic notion of divine impassibility, which is inconsistent with the biblical understanding

corresponds to an accurate appraisal of the state of affairs.[99] Throughout the canon, God's

emotions are depicted as perfectly corresponding to the state of affairs. As such, the wider canon

itself provides the controls with regard to the interpretation of the language used of God,

figurative and otherwise.[100] Along these lines, it is notable that in Hos 11:8-9 (see above) the

immediate text itself provides the control by stating that God is "not man" and, as such, the

imagery here should not be applied univocally. On the other hand, such language is also not

equivocal. It is idiomatic language which refers throughout the canon to emotionality (of humans

as well) that, absent compelling canonical reasons to the contrary, should be applied as analogous

(that is, partially univocal) to God as he is and as he feels.[101]

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of God but is often espoused nevertheless by both Christian and Jewish theology, creating problems of exegesis." "קנא," *TDOT* 13:53. Cf. Jeffery H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (The JPS Torah Commentary 5; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 66. Vischer adds, "The LORD is a jealous God, whether this anthropomorphism pleases us or not. . . . In the act of creating man in his image, after his likeness he placed the intercourse (Gegenüber) of 'I' and 'thou,' of love, between God and man." "Words," 13.

[99] On this, see chapters 4 and 5. Likewise, divine repentance differs from human repentance since "God is never said to have committed any sin of which God needs to repent." Fretheim, "Repentance," 50. See the discussion of divine repentance in chapter 4.

[100] Interestingly, C. F. H. Henry states, "Scripture itself authorizes and requires a distinction between what we may say literally or figuratively about God." *God, Revelation,* 5:197. Caird adds that "the biblical writers at least were alert to the possible abuses of such [figurative] language and at pains to guard against them." *Language*, 175. He points to the passages that guard against univocal attribution by reminding that God is not human (1 Sam 15:29; Isa 55:8; Hos 11:9; Mal 3:6). Likewise, human judges may be corrupted (1 Sam 8:3) but God always judges righteously (Gen 18:25), human love may fail but God's exceeds all expectations (Isa 49:15), Israel's lovingkindness is transient (Hos 6:4) but God's is everlasting (Ps 100:5). In this vein, Vanhoozer adds, "If anthropomorphism highlights God's likeness to human beings, the doctrine of creation acts as an important counterbalance, safeguarding God's transcendence." *Remythologizing*, 65. Consider Yamauchi's compelling argument that "upon closer inspection . . . in spite of the apparent similarity in expression to pagan religions the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament reveal all the more remarkably a sharply contrasting concept of deity." Yamauchi, "Ancient Religions," 29. See also the discussion of the canonical approach and the analogy of Scripture above.

[101] There is here a "dynamic tension between 'is' and 'is not'" which requires careful consideration since "even those who appreciate the cognitive value of biblical metaphors . . . differ over the criteria for discerning what truly, though partially, describes God's reality ('is') and what belongs to the merely figurative dross ('is not')." Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 61. Further; "Anthropomorphic language confronts theologians with the task of distinguishing the 'is' from the 'is not.' For example, those who wish to consider descriptions of God's bodily parts as mere projection—and hence as ripe fodder for demythologization—must explain why they are unwilling to apply the same approach to passages concerning God's love and mercy. Conversely, those who insist on taking God's relenting or responding at face value must also deal with images that emphasize God's authority and control or that describe an act of divine violence that injures, kills, or otherwise 'violates the personhood' of another." Ibid., 62. He thus

In all this, ascribing emotions to God (as the canon does) need not entail that God experiences emotions that are univocal to human emotions. Rather, absent canonical evidence that suggests otherwise, such language is here treated as analogical (i.e., partially univocal).[102] That is, God reveals himself throughout the canon as having emotions that are analogical to human emotions (or vice versa) but his are wholly good, appropriate, and without fault.[103] Thus, it is recognized that God cannot be fully comprehended by the finite, human mind and, therefore, God reveals himself in a way that accommodates the human level of understanding. At the same time, the limitations of human cognition and language continue to plague the contemporary interpreter and, therefore, it is not prudent to try to "get behind" this accommodative language. In other words, the canonical approach takes the position that God depicts himself as accurately as possible in human language via the divine self-revelation inscripturated in the canon. The universal accommodative nature of Scripture, therefore, should not be used to dismiss the direct

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asks: "What exactly are these anthropomorphic metaphors saying if they are not to be taken literally? It is helpful to keep in mind that metaphors assert both 'is' and 'is not,' and thus may be indicative not of sheer contradiction . . . but partial description." Ibid. While I agree with Vanhoozer's contention here that such language is both like and not-like God, it is not the job of the human interpreter (since it is beyond one's abilities) to specify what the not-like consists of apart from canonical information and absent direct divine self-revelation that reveals that which is like and not-like.

[102] As mentioned above, since the level of correspondence between such analogical language and God as he is is beyond investigation absent direct divine self-revelation, such analogical data derived from God's canonical self-revelation amount to the most accurate picture of God available to humans. Thus, it is practically spoken of as corresponding quite accurately to God with the recognition that in the eschaton we will see God as he truly is and surely find our view of God, at best, imprecise and incomplete and likely filled with errors. However, such appropriate humility with regard to theology should not deter one from the quest for rigorous correspondence to God's canonical self-revelation, despite the recognition that our conceptions will still fall far short of perfect correspondence to God. Beyond this one cannot go within the framework of a canonical approach. To those who wish to speculate beyond Scripture such a canonical approach encourages the submission (and continuing re-submission) of all analytical and philosophical theology to the claims of the canon as a whole. If it does not fit, however beautiful the analysis appears, it should not be dogmatically accepted. It may be a model of how it "could" function but not how it "does" function (principle of humility).

[103] This is not an extra-canonical presupposition but is derived from the frequent, canon-wide data that describe God as always, and in all things, good (omnibenevolent). Again, one cannot objectively use the concept of divine "perfection" to impose extra-biblical notions of perfection or infinite being since such criteria leave wide room for interpretation. See the brief discussion of the way of eminence above and in chapter 3.

statements of God about himself, but such statements must continually be understood in the light

of the canon as a whole within the ongoing spiral of interpretation.[104]

Communicatio Idiomatum?

In dealing with the NT data regarding divine love, especially that which pertains to the

question of the emotionality of divine love, a decision had to be made with regard to the data

relative to the agency of Christ as incarnate. For instance, should the feelings and emotions that

Christ experiences as incarnate be utilized as evidence with regard to the nature of divine love?

Some might be predisposed to dismiss many of Christ's experiences as merely human

and not divine, much in the same way that many figurative expressions of divine passibility are

dismissed as anthropomorphic/anthropopathic.[105] However, questions and problems similar to

those raised with regard to that interpretive maneuver pertain here. Specifically, what method or

rationale would be employed in order to differentiate that which pertains to Christ's divine and

human natures, respectively, or both? It seems to me that a consistent and compelling method for

such distinctions is not found within the canon and, as argued above, a canonical approach does

not afford theological weight to extra-canonical suppositions beyond the level of commentary that

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[104] This issue is of great importance to the theological conception of divine love due to the common presupposition that divine love is not emotive, evaluative, or motivated but a purposive, willed, indifferent love totally distinct from any need or desire. Biblical expressions of divine emotion "are on this view merely crude anthropomorphisms." Badcock, "Concept," 40.

[105] This inclination has deep roots in Christian tradition in opposition to the claims such as those made by Celsus, a 2nd-century critic of Christianity, that Jesus' lamentation and prayer in Gethsemane proved that he was not truly divine. Origen, *The Trinity* 4.2.23–26 (*ANF* 4:441–43). Notably, this is akin to the impetus for the dismissal of so-called anthropomorphisms/pathisms. C. F. H. Henry, on the basis of his view of divine immutability, rejects the idea of God suffering based on what he considers "its express incompatibility with Scripture." *God*, 6:290. Cf. ibid., 5:292. In short, he contends: "The premise that Christ who suffered is true God and true man does not require the conclusion that God suffers." Ibid., 6:291. Other contemporary interpreters maintain that the emotions displayed by Jesus are purely human emotions (so, for example, James A. Brooks, *Mark* [NAC 23; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001], 55) while others believe that Christ's emotions (at least some of them) express divine emotions. See, for example, with regard to Christ's anger, William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 123. With regard to Christ's compassion as divine compassion, see Peter Thomas O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon* (WBC 44; Dallas: Word, 2002), 199.

is to be subjected back to canonical claims.[106] Thus, it seems to be imprudent and ungrounded to

assert a dichotomy between the human and divine natures of Christ such that one may distinguish

which dispositions and/or actions correspond to his divine and/or human natures.[107]

Indeed, according to the canonical data, Christ is himself the ultimate revelation of God.

Indeed, Christ came to reveal God and proclaimed in no uncertain terms: "He who has seen Me

has seen the Father" (John 14:9; cf. 1:14; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3).[108] With this in view, a

canonical approach is obliged to take seriously the manifestation of divinity set forth in the

person of Christ.[109] But how can this be done without collapsing the divine nature into the merely

human? In a tentative attempt to address this issue, without delving into the myriad of interpretive

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[106] Moreover, it is questionable how much assistance extra-canonical suppositions would provide considering that the issue of the relationship of the divine and human natures of Christ have been the subject of enormous (both in quantity and intensity) debates throughout the history of Christian theology, not least of which the Christological controversies.

[107] One should not confuse them in such a way that tends toward the obliteration of one or the other but one must also not separate them such that Christ's statement in John 14:9 becomes obsolete.

[108] For Vanhoozer "the history of anthropomorphism takes a dramatic new turn in the New Testament with the apostolic claim that Jesus is 'the exact representation of God's being' (Heb. 1:3), a claim that echoes Jesus' own" in John 14:9. *Remythologizing*, 64. He further states, "The Son's humanity is the ultimate form of God's self-presentation, Jesus is God's definitive word and in his person and history corresponds to what it is that makes God God. The Son is not only spoken by God but speaks as God: he is the Word made flesh, upholding creation with his own word." Ibid., 51. Thomas R. Schreiner adds, "To separate the Father from the Son in the act of self-giving would grossly distort the NT." *Romans* (BECNT 6; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998), 260. For Leon Morris, "Christ's action is God's action. Christ's love is God's love" (Nygren)." *The Epistle to the Romans* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 224. In all this, "if our language about God is to be anything more than anthropological projection, then it must be christomorphic. To speak well of God one must draw not from the repertoire of our best human experiences, but from the recital of the economy of salvation." Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 162. However, he qualifies: "What remains to be thought, however, is how, and to what the extent, the suffering of Jesus, including his emotional life is equally an event in the life of God." Ibid., 78.

[109] As Alan J. Torrance puts it, "there can be no dichotomy between the divine and human *agape* in Christ." "Is Love the Essence of God?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 135. Oord adds, "We can safely assume that Jesus' sorrow and joy testify to a God who feels the feelings of others and cares about them." *Nature*, 118. Likewise, Newlands contends: "God's feeling for us is understood through God's involvement in death through the death and resurrection of Jesus." *Theology*, 101. Gerald L. Borchert also puts it well in stating: "The actions of Jesus, therefore, were the actions of the Father because in Jesus the Father was in fact acting. One of the great heresies among Christians is to split Jesus from God in such a way that somehow God does not participate in the work (and death) of Jesus. However one interprets the great mystery of the incarnate work of Jesus, it must never be separated from the fact that Jesus was the agent of God." *John 1-11* (NAC 25A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 238.

problems and disagreements regarding the application of the communication of properties

(*communicatio idiomatum*)[110] between Christ's divine and human natures, the canonical

investigation of this dissertation operates on the basis of the working hypothesis that the divine

nature of Christ is capable of experiencing that which the incarnate Christ experienced. In other

words, while the experiences of the incarnate Christ are certainly not "normal" to divinity, God is

not incapable of such experiences.

Significantly, it need not be assumed that the experiences of the incarnate Christ are

univocal to those of regular humans. To ascribe all the experiences of Jesus univocally to God

would require the conclusion that God becomes hungry, thirsty, tired, etc. But this is not

necessary to the working approach proposed here. It is only necessary, in this working approach,

to posit that divinity is capable of feeling hunger, thirst, fatigue, etc.[111] Here, the predication of

the experiences of Christ to a doctrine of God should be interpreted in light of the wider canonical

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[110] Consider, for instance, Luther's view of the *communicatio idiomatum* in the discussion of his view of divine love in chapter 2. My use of the phrase *communicatio idiomatum*, however, departs in significant ways from Luther's, especially when it comes to divine passibility. In my view, the canonical text points toward the divine nature's capacity to experience all that the human nature experiences, as I will briefly explain further below.

[111] That is, while the divine nature does not normally become "tired" in accordance with divine omnipotence, God might lower himself to a state in which fatigue can be felt. In one sense, God is said to be wearied (יָגַע) by the sins of his people (Isa 43:24; Mal 2:17). On the other hand, normally, the "everlasting God . . . does not become weary [יִיעַף] or tired [יִיגָע]" (Isa 40:28). The former appears to refer to God's emotional response to the continual rebellion of his creatures while the latter is in the context of divine power as the one who has no equal. In this way, the wider canonical data allow for some sense of divine "weariness" but disqualifies another sense from God as he is in himself. In this way, it is clear canonically that the analogue attributed to God is not univocal. That is, God's "weariness" in Jeremiah is not like human weariness, but what it does consist of, who can tell? However, Isa 40:28 does not require that God is incapable of assuming a form in which he can feel fatigue (at least analogically), as Jesus did, but appears to mean that God as he is in himself does not become fatigued. Far from depreciating God's omnipotence this view actually radically affirms it since, here, God is not rendered incapable of feeling things such as fatigue but possesses the power to assume a form (voluntary and temporary self-limitation) in which such things, normally alien to God, may be experienced. That such self-limitation does not necessarily amount to divesting of divine power is apparent in the devil's temptations of Christ to turn stones into bread, etc. Thus, such condescension is not the removal of power by self-limitation but the willful control of one's own power and impulses. Accordingly, Anthony C. Thiselton comments: "If the sovereign, transcendent God freely chooses or decrees to allow himself to suffer, this is an enhancement, not a diminution, of his sovereign freedom to choose how he will act." *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 478.

data, though a significant degree of mystery will nevertheless remain. Here, again, it should be remembered that the precision of the correspondence between the understanding of such revelation and God as he actually is cannot be determined prior to the eschaton due to the epistemic distance between God and humans and other human limitations (cf. 1 Cor 13:12).

The provisional nature of this approach must be emphasized. Indeed, to deal with this issue sufficiently would require its own dissertation (indeed, probably many dissertations). Nevertheless, the canonical rationale for taking the tentative approach that the divine nature of Christ is capable of experiencing that which the incarnate Christ experienced is twofold. First, it will prevent canonical data regarding the incarnate Christ from being dismissed from one's conception of what God is like, in accordance with the claims of Christ that he reveals the Father (cf. John 14:9). Second, this approach is strongly supported by the wider canonical data, especially in relation to the data pertinent to the canonical and systematic model of divine love. The most powerful evidence is the correspondence between the characteristics of divine love of Jesus and that exhibited by YHWH in the OT, especially the display of emotions with regard to both (see chapters 4 and 5). For example, the divine compassion in the OT is strikingly similar to that manifested by Christ in the Gospels.[112] Similarly, the NT also suggests considerable overlap in this regard. In some cases the same "compassion" is predicated simultaneously of the Father and the Son (cf. Luke 1:58). Likewise, in numerous NT instances the love of Jesus is presented as being of an identical quality and nature as that of the Father (cf. Rom 8:35, 39), complementing the overlap between the descriptions of such love in the OT and NT.[113]

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[112] Of the instances of Christ's compassion in the Gospels W. Gunther and H. G. Link write: "The mercy and compassion shown by Jesus reveals the mercy and love of God." "αγαπαω," *NIDNTT* 2:543. So Helmut Köster, "σπλαγχνον, σπλαγχνιζομαι, ευσπλαγχνος, πολυσπλαγχνος, ασπλαγχνος," *TDNT* 7:554, and N. Walter, "σπλαγχνιζομαι," *EDNT* 3:265. On the emotions of Jesus see also Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1950), 91–145.

[113] In Rom 8:35, 39 the love of God and Christ are equated. G. Johnston comments, "God's love is precisely the same as Christ's love (Rom. 8:28–39)." "Love in the NT," in *IDB* 3:171. So Ethelbert Stauffer, "αγαπάω, αγάπη, αγαπητός," *TDNT* 1:49, and William Hendriksen, *The Gospel According to John* (BNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1953), 2:282. For Douglas J. Moo, the "fact this love is identified

Moreover, many of the passages that speak of Christ's love and compassion for humans not only correspond to the OT depictions of YHWH and the wider NT data, but the thrust of such passages would also seem to be impoverished if they are taken to apply only to the human nature. For example, Christ laments over his people: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling" (Matt 23:37; cf. Luke 13:34; 19:41).[114] What is this display intended to communicate if not the passionate love of God for his people? If it is taken merely as an outburst of Christ's humanity it would not correspond to God's concern for his people and may even suggest that Jesus was more compassionate than God by suggesting that the human nature of Jesus was compassionate but not his divine nature. On the contrary, merely human compassion does not seem to do justice to the canonical intent of a verse such as this. Indeed, notice the striking continuity between the display of God's profound and compassionate love with those in Hos 11:8-9 and Jer 31:20. Considering that Jesus is himself the

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specifically as 'the love of Christ' in v. 35 and 'the love of God' here [v. 39] only shows again how much Paul joined (without equating) God and Christ in the experience of the believer." *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996), 547. Cf. Morris, *Romans*, 338, and Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 442. Schreiner adds in this regard: "No ultimate separation should be erected between Christ's love and God's love." *Romans*, 6:464. Cf. James D. G. Gunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 2002), 504. See also John 5:20; 15:9 (indeed all of John 14-16); Rom 5:8; Eph 5:1-2; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 Pet 2:3. With regard to 1 Pet 2:3 Beyreuther comments: "In Jesus Christ God's fatherly kindness can be seen as in a mirror." E Beyreuther, "χρηστος," *NIDNTT* 2:106.

[114] Matthews comments in this regard: "In Christ we see God so moved by grief and love that he chooses to take upon himself the very suffering of our sins. Do we not appeal to the incarnational role of Christ as our vision of the nature of his Father (cf. Matt 23:37 par.)? God is not a dispassionate accountant overseeing the books of human endeavor." *Genesis 1–11:26,* 344. In this verse the question of the correspondence of Christ's will to God's will is also raised. Here and elsewhere the will (at least the ideal will, see chapter 6) of Christ is clearly unfulfilled (cf. Mark 7:24). Some attribute this merely to Christ's human will but not his "omnipotent will." Gottlob Schrenk, "θελω, θελημα, θελησις," *TDNT* 3:48. However, without delving into this extremely thorny issue of the nature and correspondence of the divine and human natures at it relates to will, this is problematic with regard to Christology and hermeneutics since there seems to be no objective, text-based, interpretive mechanism to determine what corresponds to divinity and what corresponds to humanity (as is the case with regard to other aspects above). Therefore, no artificial separation between the two is imposed on the data in chapter 5. See also the discussion of the nature of divine will (especially in chapters 4 and 5), which supports a significant level of correspondence between the divine will in the OT and elsewhere in the NT with Christ's will on earth, even when unfulfilled.

ultimate revelation of God and that he manifests the same or similar emotions of love that are

elicited of YHWH in the OT in similar circumstances, does it not stand to reason that such love

corresponds not merely to Christ's human nature but to his divine nature?

In all this, the canonical data strongly suggest correspondence between the nature of

divine love (especially with regard to the emotionality thereof) exhibited by Christ in the Gospels

and those that pertain to the divine nature according to the wider canonical data. For these

reasons, the manifestation of data with regard to divine love in the incarnation of Christ has not

been separated from the other manifestations of divine love in the canon. Rather, they are here

taken to accurately represent divine love. However, it should be recognized that the findings of

this dissertation do not hinge on this point since, with regard to the emotionality of divine love,

there is enough evidence of the emotionality of God's love even without including the emotions

manifested by Jesus as incarnate. That is, with regard to this and the other aspects of divine love,

the canonical and systematic model of divine love posited by the non-incarnational data coheres

with that depicted in the incarnation but is not wholly dependent upon it. The NT data of Christ's

incarnation and the wider canonical data of divine love are mutually supportive.

I am under no illusion that this issue is dealt with comprehensively or settled by this brief

excursus. Hopefully, however, this brief treatment of my working approach provides an

understandable rationale (if not agreeable to all) for why I have treated the passages pertaining to

Christ's incarnation in the way that I have in chapters 5 and 6. Overall, it should be remembered

that Christ is the true anthropomorph, not in the sense that he is attributed with characteristics that

he did not possess but in the sense that he was truly God who became truly human without

divesting himself of divinity.[115] The data from the incarnation thus demand attention with regard

to the wider doctrine of God and his love.

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[115] So Vischer, "Words," 9. As Vanhoozer writes: "The incarnation both ratifies and corrects all previous anthropomorphism: the New Testament does not speak of God as though he were like a human being but rather as a human being: Jesus Christ." *Remythologizing*, 65. Cf. Rae, "Anthropomorphism," 49.

The Agency of Love and Ambiguous Genitives

Finally, a brief word should be said about the issue of the ambiguity of the agency of love in some instances. This generally occurs in two ways. First, related to the previous discussion of the *communicatio idiomatum*, it is not always clear whether the Father or Son is the intended agent of love, especially when the term "Lord" is used (cf. 1 Tim 1:12-14). Scholars generally agree that in most cases the term "Lord" in the NT refers to Christ, though it is not clear that this is always the case. As seen above, however, the canon strongly suggests that the love of the Father and Christ is identical. Therefore, I am not aware of any significant import with regard to such instances of ambiguous agency. Secondly, the NT contains a plethora of ambiguous genitives (genitives that might be subjective or objective), leaving the agency of love uncertain in some statements which may be significant for divine love. The intended agency in some of these instances can be decided with reasonable certainty, and these have been briefly treated in footnotes throughout the NT chapter (chapter 5). However, others present significant uncertainty and disagreement among scholars. Therefore, I thought it best to not depend upon one interpretation or the other with regard to these ambiguities. Further, I am not aware of any significant issues with regard to the canonical and systematic model of divine love derived from the canonical data (see chapter 6) that would hinge upon one or the other interpretation of these genitives. While such texts are by no means insignificant, the information that they would convey as subjective or objective genitives is already apparent in other, clearer passages. With this background, we now turn to a survey of the theological conceptions of divine love in the next two chapters before turning to the canonical data to address the conflict of interpretations.

"The question, then, is who is in the image or morphe of whom?" Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 64. Eberhard Jüngel adds, "If 'dogmatic' anthropomorphism speaks of God *like* a man, the no less fatal 'symbolic' anthropomorphism forbids speaking of God *as* a man. Thus it contradicts what the Christian faith asserts to be true: that God was among men as the man Jesus." This "excludes in its uniqueness one speaking of God arbitrarily *like* a man, but also opposes the prohibition of speaking of God *as* this particular man." *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), 297.

CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF SURVEY OF DIVINE LOVE IN HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Plato's Conception of Love

The purpose of this survey is to introduce the main themes and issues regarding divine

love and provide a glimpse of the long history that will offer context for this study. To serve this

purpose, major figures have been selected that demonstrate the nature of the issues involved.[1] The

issue of divine love in systematic theology has a long history, including a discernible connection

to Greek philosophy. Therefore, the roots of the discussion of divine love generally begin with

Plato.[2] At least three main points of Plato's doctrine are essential to this study: (1) his ontology of

the two worlds, the supersensible and sensible, especially the veneration of timelessness,

simplicity, immutability, self-sufficiency, and perfection; (2) the notion of the highest love as

rational desire for the Good, the *proton philon*; and (3) the prominence of insufficiency and need

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[1] Given the nature of this study, the historical survey is limited to a few thinkers who exemplify the major issues and have had a large impact on the historical theology of divine love. An exhaustive historical analysis of the issue of divine love would require a dissertation unto itself and is beyond the scope of this work. The major figures have been chosen for their prominence and influence regarding divine love down through the ages of Western thought. While others could have been included, these figures provide an introduction that suitably frames the issues of primary interest to this dissertation, an introduction that would not be significantly improved by an analysis of other historical figures. For more on the historical theology of love see Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974); Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (trans. P. S. Watson; London: S.P.C.K., 1953); Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love* (vol. 1 of *The Nature of Love*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); John M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche: Studies in Plato, Plotinus, and Origen* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964); John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine.* The Hulsean Lectures for 1938 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960); Martin Cyril D'Arcy, *The Mind and Heart of Love* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954); Liz Carmichael, *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004); Brümmer, *Model.*

[2] "In the philosophy of love . . . I am convinced that every discussion must *start* with Plato." Singer, *Nature,* 47.

as conditions of desirous love, which is limited to human love in contrast to divine love. Among

other things, for Plato, *eros* is of a rational, purposive character and emotion is downplayed.[3]

"The Platonic lover rises above . . . leaving emotionality behind: his love is not an attempt to

express or purify sensuous feelings but rather to supplant them by sheer rationality."[4] This fits

with Plato's idealization of reason and the reflective life of the philosopher.[5] Perhaps Plato's most

discussed contribution, however, is the apparent emphasis on desirous love.[6] This conception of

love is discussed both in the *Symposium* and the *Lysis*. At the outset it is important to mention

that it is difficult to extract Plato's own view from his writings with any certainty. Especially as it

regards the *Symposium* and the *Lysis*, numerous ambiguities arise.[7] For instance, the Lysis ends

by stating that no definition of friendship has been ascertained; the positions set forth before are

flawed somehow. But, it is not altogether clear what elements of Socrates' conception remain and

what elements have been dismissed. In both the *Symposium* and the *Lysis*, Socrates is the primary

spokesperson, as is common in Platonic dialogues. However, at times the view of Socrates

himself is difficult to discern and beyond that, whether Socrates represents the viewpoint of

Plato.[8]

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[3] For instance the ideal is "Socrates [who] is emotionally cool, unimpassioned, involved in the life about him but also at a distance from it." Ibid., 49. Accordingly, "Plato's highest love is predominantly intellectual." Ibid., 73.

[4] Ibid. Thus, "wherever possible, Plato avoids the language of feeling." Ibid.

[5] The true philosopher contemplates the world of unchanging forms. See Plato, *Resp.*

[6] This does not mean, however, that the motif originated with Plato. See, for instance, Nygren, *Agape,* 162.

[7] The Symposium is a dialogue regarding love set at the house of Agathon (one of the characters) and thus presents a diversity of opinions. Many interpret Diotima's perspective to be the position of Plato because Socrates does not overtly object to it and thus appears to accept it.

[8] Also, it is not always clear to what extent Socrates and/or Plato accepts the views of other speakers and interlocutors. See Plato, *Symp.* 198d–e. For perspectives on Plato's view of love, numerous excellent, though conflicting, interpretations are available. See, for instance, Rist, *Eros*; Brümmer, *Model*; David L. Norton and Mary F. Kille, *Philosophies of Love* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1971); Catherine Osborne, *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989); Gregory Vlastos, "The Individual as an

The Symposium and Lysis

In the *Symposium,* love (*eros*) is presented as desire for the "everlasting possession of the good." This notion will be re-visited below since this, coupled with the above ontology, functions as the lynchpin of Platonic influence on the conception of divine love in Christian theology. Before this conception of love is unpacked, two important points must be kept in mind. First, in Plato's two-worlds ontology the world of the forms (*eidon*) is the world of reality. The sensible, material world is merely a shadow of the real world of the forms, which is a realm of timelessness and immutability.[9] Change is evidence of imperfection since anything that changes must change either for the better or for the worse, meaning it was either already less than perfect or would become so in changing.[10] The Good is the ultimate, and as such the Good is perfect, self-sufficient, immutable, timeless, etc.[11] Secondly, if love includes desire, whatever else love means for Plato (and regardless of whether *eros* is selfish), then love signifies a lack (of some kind) in the subject of that love. Thus, desirous love is itself an evidence of imperfection and change.

At this point, the conception of love (*eros*) as desire warrants examination.[12] A fundamental feature of *eros* (in Diotima's view related in the *Symposium*) is that it is directed

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Object of Love in Plato," in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 3–34.

[9] See, for instance, Plato's allegory of the cave in *Resp.* 2.7.514–520a. See also the analogy of the divided line. Ibid., 6.509d–513e.

[10] Self-sufficiency is axiomatic to perfection in the classical view of Plato and Aristotle, developed in Christianity especially in the scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas. Cf. Plato, *Resp.* (Benjamin Jowett, *The Works of Plato* [New York: Tudor, 1937], 79); Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 1074b; Aquinas, *Summa theologica* 1.1.9 (Fathers of the English Dominican Province, *Summa theologica* [3 vols.; Books for the Ages; Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software, 1997], 1:92–96).

[11] Thus Singer states that the "Good is not like any other object. It is the principle of value and would retain its form whether or not anyone desired it." *Nature,* 86.

[12] However, it must be remembered that Plato is clear that not all things that are called love are equivalent, or love in the same sense. Plato's Socrates states, "We have singled out a certain form of love, and applying thereto the name of the whole, we call it love; and there are other names that we commonly abuse." Plato*, Symp.* 205b (Lamb, LCL). For instance, "those who resort to him in various other ways—in money-making, an inclination to sports, or philosophy—are not described either as loving or as lovers, all those who pursue him seriously in one of his several forms obtain, as loving and as lovers, the name of the whole." Ibid. 205c–d. Plato also relates the view of Pausanius that love "is not one . . . it would be more

toward that which is good; it is desire for the good and, ultimately, for happiness (*eudaimonia*).[13]

Accordingly, Diotima can assert that love (*eros*) is desire for the "everlasting possession of the good."[14] Here, love is always directed toward something good or desirable, and as such, it entails that the lover lacks (deficiency) that which she desires.[15] Hence, Diotima describes *Eros* not as a god, but as a *daimon* whose mother is Poverty (*Penia*), and whose father is Resource or Plenty (*Poros*).[16] *Eros* does not possess beauty or goodness,[17] but rather desires the beautiful and good,

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correct to have it previously announced what sort we ought to praise." Ibid. 180c–d.

[13] "Generically, indeed, it [*eros*] is all that desire of good things and of being happy—Love most mighty and all-beguiling." Ibid., 205c–d. Diotima and Socrates dialogue on this: "'What is the love of the lover of good things?' 'That they may be his,' I replied. 'And what will he have who gets good things?' . . . 'he will be happy.' 'Yes,' she said, 'the happy are happy by acquisition of good things, and we have no more need to ask for what end a man wishes to be happy, when such is his wish: the answer seems to be ultimate.'" Furthermore, this "wish or this love [*eros*] . . . is common to all." Ibid., 204e–205a.

[14] Plato, *Symp*. (Jowett, *Apology,* 197). The reasoning goes like this: since men cherish what they think is good Diotima asserts to Socrates that "what men love is simply and solely the good." Plato, *Symp*. 206a (Lamb, LCL). Moreover, men don't merely love the good but also desire that the good be their eternal possession. In this way, Diotima and Socrates arrive at the definition (in another translation) that "love loves the good to be one's own forever.'" Ibid. Eternal possession of the good thus relates to eternal happiness and here Brümmer sees a clear connection to Eudaemonistic ethics. "In this way Plato's views on love are directly connected with his eudaemonism in which the aim of all moral action is the perfection of the soul which is ultimate happiness. In this way Platonic love becomes man's greatest effort toward self-perfection or *arete*." Brümmer, *Model*, 111. Nygren, however, sees *eros* as a wholly acquisitive love: "The most obvious thing about *Eros* is that it is a desire, a longing, a striving." *Agape*, 175.

[15] "Love is a love directed to what is fair; so that Love must needs be a friend of wisdom, and, as such, must be between wise and ignorant." Plato, *Symp*. 204b (Lamb, LCL). Thus, "all who feel desire, feel it for what is not provided or present; for something they have not or are not or lack; and that sort of thing is the object of desire and love." Ibid., 200e. Further, Socrates argues, "'Has he or has he not the object of his desire and love before he desires and loves it?' 'He does not have it. . . . the desiring subject must have desire for something it lacks, and again, no desire if it has no lack.'" Ibid., 200a–b. Thus a tall man does not desire to be tall, a strong man to be strong, etc. Ibid., 200b–c. Nygren criticizes that "the logical consequence is that love must inevitably die away when the possession of its object is secured." *Agape*, 176.

[16] Plato, *Symp*. 203c–d (Lamb, LCL). Eros desires and lacks the beautiful and good but the gods do not. Therefore, Eros cannot be a god, as Agathon had supposed earlier in the *Symposium*, but must be a *daimon*, an intermediary being. Ibid., 202c–d. Therefore Eros is "between a mortal and an immortal . . . a great spirit [Δαίμων μέγας], Socrates: for the whole of the spiritual [δαιμόνιον] is between divine and mortal." Ibid., 202e. *Daimons* are the intermediaries between gods and men, since "God with man does not mingle." Ibid., 203a.

[17] However, this does not mean that Eros is wholly ugly or evil, but something in between. Ibid., 202b.

and all desire presumes a deficiency, lack, or need in the desirous lover.[18] Since Eros desires

good, he must not be absolutely self-sufficient; he has need, like his mother, Poverty. Since love

includes desire, and desire entails a lack of the thing desired, love according to Plato is always

poor but never wholly resourceless.[19] In this description, then, both need (or poverty) and desire

are fundamental to *eros* love. Although, this presents no difficulty for human love, it presents a

seemingly insoluble difficulty for divine love, as shall be seen.

Beyond this, the *Symposium* also presents a distinction between two kinds of desirous

love, or two Aphrodites.[20] Pausanius, another speaker at the gathering, presents an elder

Aphrodite, the daughter of heaven, whom he calls Heavenly; and a younger daughter of Zeus and

Dione, whom he calls Popular. The latter is the lesser love, a lover of the body rather than the

soul, a crude kind of love.[21] The former is the superior; it loves "what abides in the body" and

"compels lover and beloved alike to feel a zealous concern for their own virtue."[22] While it is not

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[18] Though one cannot desire what he possesses, he may desire that he possess his possessions eternally. If one says he desires things he already possesses he is "merely saying—*I wish these things now present to be present also in the future*." Ibid., 200d.

[19] "Now, as the son of Resource and Poverty, Love is in a peculiar case. First, he is ever poor, and far from tender or beautiful as most suppose him: rather is he hard and parched, shoeless and homeless . . . he ever dwells with want." Ibid., 203c–d. Moreover, "the resources that he gets will ever be ebbing away; so that Love is at no time either resourceless or wealthy, and furthermore he stands midway betwixt wisdom and ignorance." Ibid., 203e.

[20] Once again, it is not clear to what extent (if at all) Plato subscribes to such a view. It is placed in the mouth of Pausanius rather than Socrates. Nevertheless, the conception is both influential and controversial and must be introduced. Nygren traces the view of higher and lower loves as the heavenly ladder (see discussion further below) down through the ages. He is highly critical of any such ascending love and his analysis often appears biased thereby; but there seems to be little doubt that ideas similar to the one related by Pausanius influenced some Christian thinkers. Nygren, *Agape*, 170.

[21] This "is the love that we see in the meaner sort of men; who, in the first place, love women as well as boys; secondly, where they love, they are set on the body more than the soul." Plato, *Symp*. 181b (Lamb, LCL). This love is shallow and fleeting, it "flutters off" as soon as the "loved begins to fade." Ibid., 183e.

[22] Ibid., 185b–c. Not only Pausanius holds this but also Eryximachus who speaks regarding this better, heavenly love saying, "This is the sort we should preserve; this is the noble, the Heavenly Love, sprung from the Heavenly Muse. But the Popular Love comes from the Queen of Various Song; in applying him we must proceed with all caution, that no debauchery be implanted with the reaping of his pleasure." Ibid., 187d–e.

altogether clear that Plato shares the view of Pausanius, the distinction between a heavenly love

and a lower, earthy love fits Plato's two-worlds ontology, as well as the conception of *eros*

related by Socrates in the *Symposium*. For instance, Socrates speaks of ascending a ladder of

loves, a metaphor that depends upon the notion of higher and lower loves. He does not position

these loves in absolute dichotomy but as stepping stones to the higher, truer love.[23] Thus, the

ladder is an upward path to the supersensible world of forms, in contrast to a downward path

toward materiality.[24] This is directed toward an ultimate object of love (*proton philon*), which is

self-sufficient.[25] Furthermore, it calls to mind the notion of the idealization of reason and rational

love. The soul that is led by reason will love the *proton philon* whereas those held captive by

appetite or spirit will desire lesser objects.[26]

Some have harshly criticized Plato's view, holding that *eros* love is a wholly, self-

centered, self-gratifying desire that seeks to pull itself upwards. However, others have contended

that Plato's view of love should not be reduced to selfishness or even desirous love.[27] One

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[23] The ascension is set forth thus. The true lover must first "make himself a lover of all beautiful bodies. . . . But his next advance will be to set a higher value on the beauty of souls than on that of the body." Ibid., 210b. Eventually he is to "estimate the body's beauty as a slight affair." Ibid., 210c. Therefore, "beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty." Ibid., 211c–d.

[24] This is Nygren's major criticism of what he will call the *eros* motif. For him, "Eros is man's conversion from the sensible to the super-sensible; it is the upward tendency of the human soul; it is a real force, which drives the soul in the direction of the Ideal world." *Agape*, 170. Nygren's very influential conception of *agape* and *eros* will be discussed further below.

[25] "In Plato's view, there are therefore two kinds of love: *eros* for the *proton philon* which is to be desired for its own sake since only the possession of the *proton philon* constitutes eternal happiness; and *eros* for everything else (including other people)." Brümmer, *Model,* 113. See more on this, related to divine love, below.

[26] Consider Plato's analogy of the chariot where the charioteer represents the rational, guiding part of the soul, a white horse represents the rational part of the passionate nature, and a black horse represents the irrational passions of the soul. The charioteer attempts to direct upwards toward the heavenly from which the pre-existent soul had once fallen. Plato, *Phaedr.* 246a–254e (Fowler, LCL).

[27] See the discussion further below.

primary basis for this latter assertion is the contents of the *Lysis*, to which we now turn. In this

dialogue, Socrates discusses the issue of friendship love (*philia*) with two boys, Lysis and

Menexenus.[28] He mentions the fact that Lysis believes with certainty that his parents love (*philei*)

him.[29] However, he turns this conclusion on its head by arguing that no one loves someone who is

useless, but loves one who may address a need with skill, thus Lysis's parents do not actually

love him.[30] To be loved, he counsels, Lysis should become wise, otherwise no one will love

him.[31] Here friendship love is clearly predicated upon utility on the part of the loved and need or

lack, which provides the context for usefulness, on the part of the lover.[32] Socrates also raises the

question of the mutuality of love. He seems to contend that friendship love need not be mutual

but can be unrequited, even to the extent of the loved one hating the lover.[33] But, then, who (if

anyone) is the friend (*philos*) in friendship?[34] Socrates appears to find logical difficulties with all

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[28] Unless otherwise noted, it should be assumed that the word "love" as quoted or discussed regarding the Lysis is from the *philia* root.

[29] "I suppose, Lysis, your father and mother are exceedingly fond [φιλεῖ] of you? Yes, to be sure, he replied. Then if your father and mother are fond [φιλεῖ] of you, and desire to see you happy, it is perfectly plain that they are anxious to secure your happiness." Plato, *Lysis* 207d–e (Lamb, LCL).

[30] "Then will anyone count us his friends [φίλοι] or have any affection [φιλήσει] for us in those matters for which we are useless? Surely not, he said. So now, you see, your father does not love [φιλεῖ] you, nor does anyone love anyone else, so far as one is useless. Apparently not, he said." Ibid., 210c.

[31] "Then if you can become wise, my boy, everybody will be your friend [φίλοι], everyone will be intimate with you, since you will be useful and good; otherwise, no one at all, not your father, nor your mother, nor your intimate connexions, will be your friends." Ibid., 210c–d.

[32] This fits well with Plato's view of the ideal society in the *Republic* where people love (*philia*) the city as their own family. Here each one "must contribute to the well-being of the city and in this way love the city and are loved for their contribution." Brümmer, *Model*, 114.

[33] He states, "When one person loves another, which of the two becomes friend of the other—the loving of the loved, or the loved of the loving? Or is there no difference? There is none, he replied, in my opinion. How is that? I said; do you mean that both become friends mutually, when there is only one loving the other? Yes, I think so, he replied. But I ask you, is it not possible for one loving not to be loved in return by him whom he loves? It is. But again, may he not be even hated while loving?" Plato, *Lysis* 212a–b (Lamb, LCL).

[34] "Now in such a case, I went on, the one loves and the other is loved? Yes. Which of the two, then, is a friend of the other? . . . Or again, is neither of them in such a case friend of the other, if both do not love mutually?" Ibid., 212c–d.

combinations, whether the friend be the lover, the loved, or both.[35] Perhaps, then, there is something wrong with the question.[36] He thus turns to the issue of the subject and object of love as either alike or different.[37] Yet, once again, Socrates finds difficulties with the available positions, arriving at yet another apparent impasse. For instance, those alike, insofar as they are alike, have no need or lack (and thus no desire) for the qualities of the other.[38] Once again, it is emphasized that "if a man has no need of anything he will not cherish [ἀγαπῷη] anything. . . . And that which does not cherish [ἀγαπῷη] will not love."[39]

On the other hand, if the like loves that which is opposite, one must say that the lover must love the hater, being its opposite.[40] But the bad cannot love; thus suppose that a third

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[35] He maintains that if friendship requires mutuality, then the lover cannot be friend of a loved one who does not return that love. Moreover, the loved object can also not be a friend to the lover. But it seems that love does not always require mutuality. This ends in confusion. "What then are we to make of it, I asked, if neither the loving are to be friends, nor the loved, nor both the loving and loved together? For apart from these, are there any others left for us to cite as becoming friends to one another?" Ibid., 213c.

[36] "Can it be, Menexenus, I asked, that all through there has been something wrong with our inquiry?" Ibid., 213c–d.

[37] He quotes Homer, "Yea, ever like and like together God doth draw." Ibid., 214a.

[38] "Is like friend to like in so far as he is like, and is such an one useful to his fellow?" Ibid., 214d. He goes, "when anything whatever is like anything else, what benefit can it offer, or what harm can it do, to its like, which it could not offer or do to itself? Or what could be done to it that could not be done to it by itself? How can such things be cherished [ἀγαπηθείη] by each other, when they can bring no mutual succour? Is it at all possible? No. And how can that be a friend, which is not cherished [ἀγαπῷτο]? By no means." Ibid., 214d–215a. Moreover, "but, granting that like is not friend to like, the good may still be friend to the good in so far as he is good, not as he is like? Perhaps. But again, will not the good, in so far as he is good, be in that measure sufficient to himself? Yes. And the sufficient has no need of anything, by virtue of his sufficiency. Of course." Ibid., 215a–b.

[39] Ibid., 215b. Notice the use of the *agapao* word group, as in the footnote above. In parallel fashion, one who has no use cannot be valued either. "So how can we say that the good will be friends to the good at all, when neither in absence do they long for one another? How can it be contrived that such persons shall value each other highly? By no means, he said. And if they do not set a high value on each other, they cannot be friends. True." Ibid., 215b–c.

[40] Socrates states the possibility, "for it was between things most opposed that friendship was chiefly to be found, since everything desired [ἐπιθυμεῖν] its opposite, not its like." Ibid., 215d–e. Thus, "the unlikest things [must be filled] with friendship: since the poor man must needs be friendly to the rich, and the weak to the strong, for the sake of their assistance, and also the sick man to the doctor; and every ignorant person had to cherish [ἀγαπᾶν] the well-informed, and love [φιλεῖν] him." Ibid., 215d. Yet, this leads to absurdity, Socrates says, because "at once these well-accomplished logic-choppers will delightedly pounce on us and ask whether hatred is not the most opposite thing to friendship." Ibid., 216a.

category, that which is neither good nor bad loves the good.[41] He utilizes the analogy of a body

that is neither good nor bad, which loves medicine. But, he adds, it seems that the body loves the

medicine because of the presence of evil, for if there were no evil, the body would have no need

of medicine and, hence, would not love it.[42] Socrates remains unsatisfied and raises the question

of motivations. To avoid an infinite regression of causes of love, he proposes the *proton philon*

such that "the truly dear or ultimate principle of friendship (*proton philon*) is not for the sake of

any other or further dear. . . . The truly dear is that in which all these so-called friendships

terminate."[43] Thus, evil is not the cause of love, but the "desires which are neither good nor bad

will exist even when the bad things are abolished."[44] Thus, rather than evil, he suggests that desire

itself is the cause of friendship love.[45] Notably, the notion of desirous love is well represented in

the *Lysis*, here and elsewhere.[46] Moreover, desire as the possible cause of love, as in the

Symposium, requires deficiency and lack, specifically lack of that which is natural or congenial to

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[41] Thus he states, "One view then remains: if anything is friendly to anything, that which is neither good nor bad is friendly to either the good or what is of the same quality as itself. For I presume nothing could be found friendly to the bad. True." Ibid., 216e. Earlier he had clarified, "the bad never enters into true friendship with either good or bad." Ibid., 214d.

[42] Ibid., 217a–218b. For example, "those who are already wise no longer love wisdom, whether they be gods or men; nor again can those be lovers of wisdom who are in such ignorance as to be bad: for we know that a bad and stupid man is no lover of wisdom." Ibid., 218a.

[43] Plato, *Lysis* 220a–b (Jowett, *Works*, 75). He suggests that perhaps there is one thing that is the true friend and other things are loved for the sake of that friend. An "original friend, for whose sake all the other things can be said to be friends?" *Lysis* 219c–d (Lamb, LCL). The other things "which we cited as friends for the sake of that one thing, may be deceiving us like so many phantoms of it, while that original thing may be the veritable friend." Ibid., 219d.

[44] Ibid., 221b.

[45] "Can it really be then, as we were saying just now, that desire [ἐπιθυμία] is the cause of friendship [φιλίας], and the desiring thing is a friend to that which it desires, and is so at any time of desiring; while our earlier statement about friends was all mere drivel, like a poem strung out for more length?" Ibid., 221c–d. He states, "Is it possible for a man, when he desires [ἐπιθυμοῦντα] and loves [ἐρῶντα], to have no friendly feeling [φιλεῖν] towards that which he desires and loves? I think not." Ibid., 221b.

[46] Socrates states, "There is a certain possession I have desired ['ἐπιθημῶν] from my childhood . . . for the possession of friends I have quite a passionate longing ['ἐρωτικῶς], and would rather obtain a good friend than the best quail or cock in the world." Ibid., 211d–e.

the lover.[47] Here again, Socrates purports to find an insoluble difficulty and thus ends his ruminations on friendship explicitly acknowledging that "what a 'friend' is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering."[48]

Despite the plethora of logical cul-de-sacs throughout the *Lysis*, a number of points are important to understanding the issues that relate to divine love. For instance, it is significant that Plato utilizes the *eros, philia*, and even *agapao* word group in his discussions, and in a way that shows close relationships between them.[49] For instance, need is the prerequisite for desire (ἐπιθυμία), and without need one will not cherish (ἀγαπῴη), and the one who does not cherish (ἀγαπῴη) will not love (φιλοῖ), and the one who is not cherished (ἀγαπῷτο) cannot be a friend (φίλος).[50] Accordingly, desire (ἐπιθυμία) seems to be the requisite of friendship love (φιλίας); it is not possible for a man who "desires (ἐπιθυμοῦντα) and loves (ἐρῶντα), to have no friendly feeling (φιλεῖν) towards that which he desires and loves."[51] Nevertheless, there is reason for caution regarding the precise identification of Plato's own view of these loves. For instance, Socrates is explicitly unable to arrive at a settled position in the *Lysis*. On the contrary, he presents and refutes many possible positions. Nevertheless, despite the lack of a clearly defined definition in

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[47] He suggests, "the desiring thing desires that in which it is deficient, does it not? Yes. And the deficient is a friend to that in which it is deficient? I suppose so. And it becomes deficient in that of which it suffers a deprivation. To be sure. So it is one's own belongings [things that are proper or congenial to one], it seems, that are the objects of love and friendship and desire; so it appears, Menexenus and Lysis." Ibid., 221e.

[48] Ibid., 223b. The nature of the difficulty here relates to the distinction, or lack thereof, between the congenial and the like. Having ruled out that the like loves the like, there must be a distinction between the congenial and the like to avoid equivocation here. Yet, Socrates supposes that the good is congenial to the good, the bad to the bad, and that which is neither good nor bad to that which is neither good nor bad and thus the reasoning appears to arrive at an impasse. Ibid. He thus states, "If neither the loved nor the loving, nor the like nor the unlike, nor the good nor the belonging, nor all the rest that we have tried in turn . . . if none of these is a friend, I am at a loss for anything further to say." Ibid., 222e.

[49] The precise nature of the interrelationship of the linguistics is beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to note, however, that although the words are used distinctively, they are not set in opposition.

[50] Ibid., 214d–215b.

[51] Ibid., 221b.

the *Lysis*, some facets of Platonic logic are clearly represented and remain influential, in consideration of their continued prevalence in later discussions of these issues.[52] For instance, in the *Lysis*, as in the *Symposium*, the issue of deficiency and lack as a prerequisite for desirous love rises to the fore.[53] Plato also presents the question regarding mutuality, or the lack thereof, in friendship love.

It is possible, though it seems to me unlikely, that Plato intends to present the recurrent issues related to desirous love in order to question the centrality of that presumed conception(s).[54] Conversely, he could be endorsing the position or calling into question other facets of that or any number of conventional conceptions of love that were prevalent in his day. For instance, it is not clear if Plato wishes to show that the popular conventions (such as the initially assumed parental love for Lysis) regarding love are false, or that the view of love as desire is simplistic, or something else entirely. Or does Plato wish to state that friendship is, in fact, inexplicable? There appears to be no way to determine Plato's own intent with certainty. Nevertheless, one can

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[52] See the remainder of this chapter and the next.

[53] This issue is clearly seen regarding the love of Lysis's parents for him, where utility is raised, presuming deficiency. Price agrees that these emphases remain, saying, "For all its ostensible failures, the Lysis ends its investigation of the grounds of desire . . . with two suggestions that Plato was not later to take back: the object of desire is that which one lacks, and that which one lacks is that which one is deprived of." *Love*, 12. What remains unresolved, says Price, is how mutual friendship can exist, and how the notions of likeness and goodness relate. Ibid. Incidentally, Price believes that Plato's own view is represented in these dialogues of Socrates.

[54] For instance, C. Osborne believes that the *Lysis* rules out *eros* as acquisitive love. To support her view, she contends that the *Lysis* includes "three examples of love [that] are shown to be impossible on the assumption that love is something self-seeking that expects to gain something of benefit to the lover." *Eros*, 58. Those three are Hippothales as unrequited lover of Lysis, Lysis and Menexenus as "like" friends, and the love of Lysis's parents for him. These three kinds of love are dismissed by Socrates, but she suggests that this shows not that these kinds of love are false, but rather that the notions about love have gone terribly wrong. She states, "Because we perceive that these are the most classic examples of love, and that if they are inexplicable something has gone seriously wrong with the analysis of love." Ibid., 59. Thus "Plato could convincingly represent the common assumptions of Athenians about love as being incompatible with an acquisitive analysis of love." Ibid., 60. However, it is equally possible that Plato did not view these types of love as true or adequate but was intending to criticize the Athenian notions. Although he never does reconcile his own view here it does seem to assume many facets of desirous love predicated on need and deficiency and this fits with Plato's overall ontology. However, one cannot be sure of either interpretation.

recognize here the issues that are repeatedly raised in the discussions of love after Plato, including

the issues of perfection and self-sufficiency as opposed to desirous love that presumes

insufficiency, the priority of rational love for the heavenly over against vulgar love of the earthy,

and the parties and relationship (mutuality and reciprocality) of true friendship.

The Question of Egocentric Love in Plato

The ongoing debate regarding the Platonic conception of love must be further addressed.

As has been briefly mentioned, some interpret Plato's conception of *eros* love to be acquisitive

love as represented by Diotima's account in the *Symposium*. For some, this conception becomes

synonymous with thematic *eros*, a self-centered acquisitive love. Some contend that elements in

this account present a thoroughgoing egocentrism where a lover only loves for some expected

benefit that will address deficiency.[55] This kind of love is motivated purely by self-interest in

accordance with eudaimonistic ethics.[56] This stands opposed to the notion of love as

beneficence.[57] On the other hand, it is sometimes argued that Platonic *eros* does not amount to

selfishness per se, but rather that loving others is inseparably connected to one's own benefit

based on the interdependent nature of the world.[58] Some, however, present Plato's view as a

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[55] For instance, the body loves medicine so that it can be improved. Plato, *Lysis* 215d. Even parental love of children is chalked up to the desire for immortality in the *Symposium*, as is the willingness for self-sacrifice of Alcestis and Achilles in mythology. Plato, *Symp.* 208c–d.

[56] Nygren criticizes, "*The very* fact that Eros is acquisitive love is sufficient to show its egocentric character; for all desire, or appetite, and longing is more or less egocentric. But the clearest proof of the egocentric nature of Eros is its intimate connection with *eudaemonia.*" *Agape*, 180. "Of such a love it could scarcely be said that it 'seeketh not its own.'" Ibid., 181.

[57] "An Eros that was rich, and had everything it wanted, would be a contradiction in terms; and the same is true, fundamentally, of any thought of Eros as freely giving anything away." Ibid., 176.

[58] For Brümmer, Platonic "*eros* is love for the ideal humanity which all men share." *Model*, 124. As such, it is not selfish, even though it is self-love such that "I do not love you for yourself alone, but only in order to achieve ultimate happiness for myself. In this sense all love is self-love." Ibid., 115. Thus, while it is true that "Platonic love was in the final analysis an eudaemonistic effort toward achieving for yourself *arete* or that self-perfection which is identical with ultimate happiness." Ibid. Nevertheless, "this does not mean that love is selfish. It does not seek personal advantage at the expense of other people. On the contrary, seeking my own good involves seeking the good of society as a whole and even of the universe as a whole, since all these goods are intimately connected." Ibid.

deficient love for universals rather than persons, while others see it as love for the potential

(rather than actual) goodness of persons (self and others).[59] Still others question whether Plato's

view must be interpreted as acquisitive at all. Might Platonic love, and thus *eros,* rather be

inexplicable, as is perhaps implied by the inconclusive conclusion of the *Lysis*?[60] For instance, in

the *Lysis* and even in the *Symposium* there are brief implications of other-centered love.[61] Perhaps

love is multifaceted such that an attempted reduction of it to one or two elements results in

absurdity.

Whatever the case may be, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to enter into the

further intricacies of interpreting Plato's own view. Nevertheless, the briefly examined

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[59] Vlastos, in "Individual," supposes Platonic love to be directed toward the eternal forms or ideas and only secondarily for individuals, and then only as an instance, or exemplification, of the eternal forms or ideas. This he finds to be the "cardinal flaw" in Plato's theory, lack of true personal love but rather limited to "love in persons . . . the 'image' of the Idea in them." Vlastos, "Individual," 31. Norton and Kille, on the other hand, see Platonic love not as egocentric, which is directed toward love of the actual self (actuality), but as a love directed toward the "indwelling ideal" (potentiality) and its growth. *Philosophies*, 82. Because all of humanity is connected, this same love can also be directed toward the "ideal possibility within the beloved which it is his or her destiny to fulfill." Ibid., 81. It is not concerned with the present imperfect condition but looks toward the perfect potentiality.

[60] C. Osborne contends that eros is not acquisitive love or love motivated by desire or self-interest but is inexplicable according to the pattern of the Cupid mythology of arrows. For her, "the inexplicability of loving someone is central to the traditional notion of *eros.*" *Eros,* 72. She does concede that, "if the speech of Socrates in the *Symposium* is taken as an exposition of *Platonic* doctrine, it is easy to assume that Plato's principle analysis of love is akin to what Nygren identified as Eros, a selfish desire to possess an inanimate good." Ibid., 54. However, she does not take the Symposium to be a vehicle of Plato's own view. Rather, she contends that "Plato himself suggests the reasons why it [the *Symposium*] should not be taken as suggesting that love is motivated by self-interest, or explained by appeal to the desirable nature of the object of acquisitive love." Ibid., 56. She believes the *Lysis* "effectively undermines the notion of love that Nygren and many others have found in Diotima's speech." Ibid., 57. For her, it "make the uncritical, acquisitive, reading of the *Symposium* impossible." Ibid., 58. Rist, on the other hand, does see Diotima's account as including an acquisitive love that Plato would affirm, yet he also allows for some instances of non-egoistic love in Plato's writings, noting that Plato was not consistent in his system and allowed for multiple positions that cannot be made into "a totally harmonious position." *Eros,* 54. See further, ibid., 26, 33–37, 55.

[61] Though it is not from the mouth of Socrates, Phaedrus states, "Only such as are in love will consent to die for others." Plato, *Symp.* 179b (Lamb, LCL). He contends that the lover avoids the shameful in order to be viewed more favorably by his beloved, thus making for a better citizen, and a better society. Thus, even here there is some emphasis on utility. Moreover, in the *Lysis*, love from parent to child is briefly mentioned as love that desires happiness for the beloved, though this parental love is itself questioned. Plato, *Lysis* 207d. In another instance, according to Diotima, the beautiful may be partaken of by lesser things, which does not detract from the self-sufficiency of the Beautiful. Plato, *Symp.* 211b.

conflicting interpretations do shed light on what became major questions in the historical

theology of love. For example, should love in its highest and purest sense be limited to altruism

and beneficence or is there room for at least some degree of egocentrism? In other words, must

love empty itself of valuation and desire nothing for itself? These questions become very

prominent, and it does not seem necessary to pinpoint Plato's own view to appreciate his

influence in highlighting these issues. Although Plato speaks primarily of human love, and that is

the locus of these questions for him, Christian theology will wrestle with these definitions as it

relates to divine love. Presently, we turn to the Platonic framework, which suggests the

impossibility of divine love.

Divine Love

The words of Socrates related by Plato in both the *Symposium* and the *Lysis* imply that

there is only one true object of love, the Good, the *proton philon*.[62] For instance, Plato writes,

"What men love is simply and solely the good."[63] The *proton philon*, the supreme object of love,

is the ultimate Good.[64] This relates to the aforementioned analogy of progress toward higher and

better forms of love as "rungs on a ladder" toward the ultimate, singular, object of love.[65] In this

way, everything that is loved is loved for the good that it participates in or imitates, until we reach

the *proton philon*, that "for whose sake all the other things" are loved.[66] In this ascent toward

higher love, the ultimate object of love is "the final object of all those previous toils . . . existing

ever in singularity of form independent by itself, while all the multitude of beautiful things

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[62] Plato, *Lysis* 219c. For Plato "all lovers are really in love with the absolute." Singer, *Nature,* 21.

[63] Plato, *Symp.* 206a (Lamb, LCL).

[64] Singer, *Nature,* 54.

[65] Plato, *Symp.* 210b–c (Lamb, LCL).

[66] Plato, *Lysis* 219c (Lamb, LCL). This translation reads, "for whose sake all other things can be said to be friends." however, it can also be translated for whose sake all other things are loved (φίλα εἶναι).

partake of it in such wise that, though all of them are coming to be and perishing, it grows neither greater nor less, and is affected [πάσχειν] by nothing."[67] This "hierarchy of loves culminat[es] in the *proton philon* which is the only object to be loved for its own sake," the eternal ultimate form.[68] The God of Christianity would later be associated with this *proton philon*, the impassible one who desires nothing but is the true desire of all.

The Platonic ontology makes it clear that love as desire or utility is not appropriate to divinity.[69] As we have seen, love as desire suggests a lack or need in the lover that may be satisfied by an object of love such that the lover is "ever poor" and in need.[70] However, the Good is the ultimate, and thus perfect, self-sufficient, immutable, timeless, etc.[71] Thus, divinity as perfect must be completely self-sufficient and, consequently, "a god cannot love, since the gods lack nothing."[72] Moreover, there could be no relational or friendship love between God and man

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[67] Plato, *Symp.* 211a–b (Lamb, LCL). It is "ever-existent and neither comes to be nor perishes, neither waxes nor wanes; next, it is not beautiful in part and in part ugly, nor is it such at such a time and other at another, nor in one respect beautiful and in another ugly, nor so affected by positions as to seem beautiful to some and ugly to others." It is not in any instance, description, or location "but existing ever in singularity of form independent by itself, while all the multitude of beautiful things partake of it in such a wise that, although all of them are coming to be and perishing, it grows neither greater nor less, and is affected by nothing." Ibid.

[68] Brümmer, *Model,* 112.

[69] At least in the sense of the absolute Good, the *proton philon* who is self-sufficient and "affected by nothing." Plato*, Symp.* 211b (Lamb, LCL). Rist draws attention to a number of possible instances of outward-focused benevolence; Plato speaks of gods such as Zeus caring (in the sense of providing) for all (*Phaedr.* 246e), an age past of divine or semi-divine philanthropy (*Leg.* 713d) and a fatherly description of the Demiurge (*Tim.* 28c, 37c). He suggests that "Plato has not worked out his thought into a fully coherent system, but left some striking contradictions." Rist, *Eros,* 33. Even if inconsistent with other elements of Platonic ontology, such infrequent instances still cannot remove Plato's overwhelming emphasis on the timelessness, self-sufficiency, and impassibility that is central to the *proton philon*.

[70] Plato*, Symp.* 203c–d (Lamb, LCL).

[71] "But again, will not the good, in so far as he is good, be in that measure sufficient to himself? Yes. And the sufficient has no need of anything, by virtue of his sufficiency. Of course." Plato, *Lysis* 215a–b (Lamb, LCL). Thus Singer states that the "Good is not like any other object. It is the principle of value and would retain its form whether or not anyone desired it." *Nature,* 86**.**

[72] Brümmer, *Model,* 111. Thus, Diotima states, "No gods ensue wisdom or desire to be made wise: such they are already; nor does anyone else that is wise ensue it." Plato, *Symp.* 204a (Lamb, LCL). Moreover, she dialogues with Plato, "'Tell me, do you not say that all gods are happy and beautiful? Or

for "God with man does not mingle."[73] Thus divinity is never the active agent of love (lover) but may only be the object of love (loved).[74]

As shall be seen, the concept of *eros* as desire or as love for the useful becomes significant in Christian theology. Thus, when Christians adapted Plato's theory of the Good or the *proton philon* to correspond to the Christian God, the issue of divine love became problematic. For instance, the Good is absolutely simple, timeless, self-sufficient, immutable, and altogether perfect. This means, of course, that the Good is in need of nothing, indeed incapable of need. The *proton philon* is the object of all love but cannot be subject; since it already possesses the object of all desire, it makes no sense to consider it a subject of desire; it lacks nothing. If God is conceived in these terms, it follows that God cannot have any desire, and thus cannot exhibit the kind of love that Plato described; if there is divine love it cannot have any semblance of the supposedly Platonic *eros* love of desire; it must be something altogether different. This created a great difficulty to Christianity, which must hold divine love of some sort to make any sense of the gospel. One major attempt to overcome this difficulty will be seen in Augustine's theory of divine love. But first, the view of Aristotle must be considered.

Aristotle's Conception of Love

The influence of Plato on Aristotle's conception of love is vast, yet Aristotle broke from his teacher in significant ways including the fact that he further emphasized rational love and

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will you dare to deny that any god is beautiful and happy?' 'Bless me!' I exclaimed, 'not I.' 'And do you not call those happy who possess good and beautiful things?' 'Certainly I do.' 'But you have admitted that Love, from very lack of good and beautiful things, desires these very things that he lacks.' 'Yes, I have.' 'How then can he be a god, if he is devoid of things beautiful and good?' 'By no means, it appears.'" Ibid., 202c–d.

[73] Rather, the *daimons* are "the means of all society and converse of men with gods and of gods with men, whether waking or asleep." Ibid., 203a. Thus C. Osborne states, "It seems that Diotima's universe would be in danger of falling into two parts if intermediates were denied, due to a kind of dualism that treats what are properly contraries as if they were contradictories." *Eros*, 110.

[74] "The relation between the two worlds is entirely one-sided; the movement is all in one direction, from below upwards." Nygren, *Agape*, 170.

added nuance to Plato's distinctions.[75] Essential to understanding Aristotle's conception of love is the ontology that underlies all of his thought. Aristotle's ontology is one of substance. Substance is a composite of form and matter (*hylomorphe*).[76] In opposition to Plato's two-world ontology, universals inhere in substances and do not exist independently. The form is the essence (what it is made into) and the matter is what the substance is made of. There are essential qualities without which something would not be what it is and also accidental qualities that are not necessary to that particular thing. Aristotle further develops his ontology regarding the question of change by employing the categories of actuality (*energeia*) and potentiality (*dunamis*), the former being what something is and the latter being what something could become.[77]

Despite Aristotle's break from Plato's two-world ontology and his development of the ontology of substance and change, the veneration of timelessness, simplicity, immutability, self-sufficiency, and perfection remain constant in the foundation of Aristotle's ontology.[78] Specifically, they are essential to the unmoved mover who is wholly impassible and immutable, immovable and unalterable, pure act with no potentiality and wholly immaterial, without parts.[79]

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[75] "Even more than Plato, Aristotle associates love with reason as against emotion." Singer, *Nature,* 91. Nygren comments, "The relation between the Aristotelian and the Platonic theory of Eros might be formulated briefly as follows: Aristotle presents us with an expansion of the Platonic theory, in which the idea of Eros acquires cosmic significance." *Agape*, 183.

[76] See Aristotle, *Metaph.* 7.

[77] Actuality has priority over potentiality as its ground such that "the actually existence is generated from the potentially existent by something which is actually existence" but there is no infinite regress for "there is always a prime mover; and that which initiates motion exists already in actuality." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 9.8.5 (Tredennick, LCL). Nygren comments, "The whole process of nature is seen by Aristotle as a movement, a successive ascent from matter to Form, from imperfection to perfection of being, from potentiality to actuality." *Agape*, 184.

[78] The "prime mover, which is immovable, is one both in formula and number." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 7.8.18 (Tredennick, LCL). "The first principle and primary reality is immovable, both essentially and accidentally, but it excites the primary form of motion, which is one and eternal." Ibid., 7.8.3. See also ibid., 7.9.2.

[79] For the logic regarding the notion of the prime mover see ibid., 7.8.3–4. The ultimate reality, the unmoved mover, is Mind (*nous*) and the mind is wholly unaffected and undetermined by external reality. Ibid., 7.9.1–2. It does not change, for the change would be for the worse, and anything of this kind would immediately imply some sort of motion." Ibid., 7.9.3. The unmoved, or prime mover, is the ultimate

Once again, such a conception of the ultimate being greatly impacts the conception of divine

love, and in Aristotle's case, the lack thereof. First, however, his conception of love must be

briefly examined.

Friendship Love

When discussing love, Aristotle prefers the term *philia*, which connotes a "rationalistic

friendship love" whereas the word *eros* he uses to connote sexual love.[80] Friendship love is

rational as opposed to the fleeting love of emotion or "excess of feeling."[81] However, despite the

difference in the nuance of preferred wording, a great deal of Plato's conception of love towards a

worthy object remains.[82] For instance, Aristotle contends that the object of love must be useful,

beautiful (or pleasant), and/or good.[83] In this way he posits three kinds of friendship love (*philia*).

Friendship love based on utility is concerned with an expected benefit to the lover.[84] Love of the

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substance, separate from potentiality and materiality. Aristotle describes it thus: "There is some substance which is eternal and immovable and separate from sensible things; and it has been shown that this substance can have no magnitude, but is impartible and indivisible (for it causes motion for infinite time, and nothing finite has infinite potentiality . . .); and moreover that it is impassive and unalterable; for all the other kinds of motion are posterior to spatial motion." Ibid., 7.7.12–13. This mind is entirely self-sufficient and thinks only itself: "Therefore Mind thinks itself, if it is that which is best; and its thinking is a thinking of thinking." Ibid., 7.9.4.

[80] Singer, *Nature,* 92. Aristotle "restricts the meaning of Plato's word *eros*, using it only for the lesser relationship of sexual love. For what he really wishes to recommend, friendship, he adopts the term *philia*." Ibid.

[81] Aristotle, *Metaph*. 8.6 (David Ross, *Metaphysics* [Oxford World's Classics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 201). Again, for Aristotle the best love (friendship love or *philia*) is rational and purposive as opposed to the fleeting love (*philesis*) of emotion. In fact, Rackham translates it as: "Liking [φίλησις] seems to be an emotion [πάθει], friendship [φιλία] a fixed disposition, for liking can be felt even for inanimate things, but reciprocal liking involves deliberate choice, and this springs from a fixed disposition." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.5.5 (Tredennick, LCL). The love based on feelings is fleeting, but rational love remains.

[82] In fact, the majority of the difference in semantics relates to Aristotle's usage of the category of *eros*. As has been seen, *philia* and its word group was used by Plato to discuss friendship in similar fashion to Aristotle.

[83] "It seems that not everything is loved [φιλεῖσθαι], but only what is lovable [φιλητόν], and that this is either what is good, or pleasant, or useful." Ibid., 8.2.1.

[84] "Thus friends whose affection is based on utility do not love each other in themselves, but in so far as some benefit accrues to them from each other. And similarly with those whose friendship is based on

beautiful (pleasant) is likewise concerned with personal advantage. The first two kinds of

friendship love are thus closely connected as imperfect and inferior kinds of friendship.[85] In

discussing these types of friendships, Aristotle conveys his distaste for friendship based on

emotion, temporary pleasure, or profit. Notably, he ties the friendship (*philia*) based on emotion

with *eros* love.[86] Likewise, he ties friendship of utility not to mutual love but mutual profit.[87] He

thus somewhat reticently applies the term friendship (*philia*) to these first two types, finally

acknowledging that they are only friendships in an "analogical sense."[88]

In contrast to these first two types is the love of the good and virtuous, not merely for the

sake of utility but for those who are morally virtuous. This third kind of love amounts to perfect

friendship (*philia*), the highest kind of love.[89] Whereas the first two kinds are fleeting, the rare,

perfect friendship remains constant since it is based on the stability of virtue.[90] Moreover, perfect

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pleasure." Ibid., 8.3.1.

[85] Such friendships are imperfect not only because they are based on temporary advantage (use of pleasure) but because such attachments are "accidental" and thus fleeting. Ibid., 8.3.2–3. These friendships are easily broken off: "if no longer pleasant or useful to each other, they cease to love each other." Ibid., 8.3.4.

[86] The young, he says, tend to form friendships of pleasure based on "emotion" (πάθος). "Hence they both form friendships and drop them quickly, since their affections alter with what gives them pleasure, and the tastes of youth change quickly. Also the youth are prone to fall in love [ἐρωτικοὶ], as love [ἐρωοτικῆς] is chiefly guided by emotion [παθός], and grounded on pleasure ['ηδονὴν]. . . . Hence they form attachments quickly and give them up quickly, often changing before the day is out." Ibid. 8.2.5.

[87] "A friendship based on utility dissolves as soon as its profit ceases; for the friends did not love [φίλοι] each other, but what they got out of each other." Ibid., 8.4.2.

[88] People use the word friendship for the lesser kinds thus "we must say that there are several sorts of friendship, that between good men, as good, being friendship in the primary and proper meaning of the term, while the other kinds are friendships in an analogical sense." Ibid., 8.4.4.

[89] "The perfect [τελεία] form of friendship [φιλία] is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue [ἀρετήν 'ομοίων]." Ibid., 8.3.6. Thus, "perfect, complete friendship (*teleia philia*) is contingent on virtue in both partners." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 17. Singer questions this as a basis of love, however, noting: "Reason may force us to recognize the virtuous character of a good man; but nothing can force us to love him." *Nature,* 96.

[90] "Hence the friendship of these lasts as long as they continue to be good; and virtue is a permanent quality." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.3.6 (Tredennick, LCL). "Because virtue is a stable state, friendship based on it will have the perfection of permanence." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 17. Singer comments, "Perfect friendship is a state of justice because it enables good men to take cognizance of each

friendship is not based merely on relative goods (that which is good in the view of the lover) but absolute goods (that which is good regardless of perspective), and the virtuous lover recognizes the absolute good.[91] This type of friendship affords both utility and pleasure, though these benefits are not its grounds, since the good man derives both benefits from the good that he loves.[92] However, this friendship remains explicitly grounded on the worth of the object; its superiority to the other two is based on loving what is higher, the worthy virtue, rather than the baser, temporary attributes.[93] Accordingly, despite perfect friendship being superior to imperfect friendships, it is not thereby purely altruistic, as shall be seen below. All three types of love are directed toward something lovable or worthy of love (useful, beautiful, or good) and thus valuable to the lover.[94]

Accordingly, the question is raised, is perfect friendship altruistic and other-centered? Notably, Aristotle seems to explicitly appeal to other-regarding love. Specifically, he mentions friendship love as "wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his, and being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about."[95] In another place he

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other's character, thereby according one another the love that virtue deserves." Singer, *Nature,* 95.

[91] "All affection [φιλία] is based on good or on pleasure, either absolute or relative to the person who feels it, and is prompted by similarity of some sort; but this friendship possesses all these attributes in the friends themselves, they are alike, et cetera, in that way." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.3.7 (Tredennick, LCL). "Also, when men wish the good of those they love for their own sakes, their goodwill does not depend on emotion but on a fixed disposition." Ibid., 8.5.5.

[92] Thus, "it is between good men that affection [φιλεῖν] and friendship [φιλία] exist in their fullest and best form." Ibid., 8.3.7.

[93] Aristotle explicitly frames this friendship on worthiness stating, "You cannot admit him to friendship or really be friends, before each has shown the other that he is worthy of friendship and has won his confidence." Ibid., 8.3.8.

[94] Singer contends that for Aristotle love "is always a response to external merit." *Nature,* 97. Thus Singer believes that for Aristotle as for Plato "love remains the search for an objective goodness in the object." Ibid. For this reason he believes that, "for all his originality, Aristotle still belongs to what is often called (using Plato's terminology) the eros tradition." Ibid., 106.

[95] Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1380b-1381a (W. Rhys Roberts, *Rhetoric* [2 vols.; GBWW; Chicago, Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 1990], 2:626). Moreover, Aristotle does recognize that the benefactor in a relationship loves more deeply than the one benefitted, like an artist loves his work more than it could love

states that love involves "goodwill and wishing well to each other."[96] Thus, Aristotle clearly

includes well-wishing and acting for the other's good as a part of friendship, yet the question

remains, is regard for others the motivation of friendship love? This issue is further illuminated

by Aristotle's brief discussion of self-sacrifice, stating, the good man "will if necessary lay down

his life in the behalf of friends and country."[97] However, for Aristotle, such self-sacrifice is rooted

in the self-interest of gaining nobility thereby.[98] Elsewhere, Aristotle makes it explicitly clear that

in friendship each "loves his own good and also makes an equivalent return by wishing the

other's good."[99]

Nevertheless, despite the appearance of benevolence (well-wishing), some have criticized

Aristotle's conception, saying that loving others is not really for the sake of those others but

ultimately originated out of self-interest.[100] Accordingly, Aristotle has been criticized for the

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him if it were alive. Aristotle, *Metaph.* 9.7.3–4.

[96] Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.2 (Ross, *Metaphysics*, 194).

[97] Aristotle, *Metaph.* 9.8.9 (Tredennick, LCL).

[98] He states, "For he will surrender wealth and power and all the goods that men struggled to win, if he can secure nobility for himself. . . . And this is doubtless the case with those who give their lives for others; thus they choose great nobility for themselves." Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 8.5.5. Aristotle does state, "For these friends wish each alike the other's good in respect of their goodness, and they are good in themselves; but it is those who wish the good of their friends for their friends' sake who are friends in the fullest sense, since they love each other for themselves and not accidentally." Ibid., 8.3.6. However, this does not seem to refer to altruism but rather to love based on recognition of virtue in the other. Thus, rather than being based on the accidents of utility or pleasure, this kind of love is based on the person himself, specifically his virtue. It does not seem to mean that the good man loves the other good man in order to benefit the other good man, although such benefit does mutually accrue, but rather because it is the rational and virtuous course to love the good and virtuous. This is readily apparent when Aristotle comments, "And in loving [φιλοῦντες] their friend [φίλον] they love their own good, for the good man in becoming dear to another becomes that other's good. Each party therefore both loves his own good and also makes an equivalent return by wishing the other's good, and by affording him pleasure; for there is a saying, 'Amity [φιλότης] is equality [ἰσότης],' and this is most fully realized in the friendships of the good." Ibid., 8.5.5.

[100] For instance, "the criticism is not," comments Richard Norman, "that Plato and Aristotle exclude altruism. It is that, because they justify it by reference to the agent's own happiness, they reduce it to a kind of enlightened self-interest, and so deprive it of its moral value." *The Moral Philosophers: An Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 57. For instance, consider H. A. Prichard's seminal criticism of self-interest, *Moral Obligation and Duty and Interest: Essays and Lectures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). However, Norman contends that perhaps Aristotle presents

semblance of overarching self-interest.[101] Others, however, contend that Aristotle's love is not

selfish but, simply, consistently directs itself towards that which is worthy of love, that is, the

good in the self or in others.[102] Aristotle does explicitly emphasize the priority of self-love, saying

that every man "is his own best friend and ought to love himself best."[103] For Aristotle, even

parental love is an example of self-love; parents love children as offspring of their own self.[104]

However, the right kind of self-love is rational and directed toward virtue for the self.[105] This is in

accord with the Eudaimonistic ethics of Aristotle that one is best served by being good and

virtuous.[106] Aristotle frames all action directed at happiness as the ultimate end, and happiness is

acting in accordance with reason, which itself is virtuous action.[107] In this limited way, love for

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concern for others as "constitutive of one's own happiness" which for him would make their account "no more suspect than the altruism of one who simply enjoys helping others." *Moral,* 59. Nonetheless, Norman remains unsatisfied and detects a form of egoism here. Cf. C. Osborne, *Eros,* 144.

[101] For instance, C. Osborne critiques: Aristotle's "persistent preoccupation with what you get out of a relationship, and whether you or the other person are getting as much as you give, seems to fit ill with our notion of how friends regard each other." *Eros*, 144. Nygren comments that even "the nobler form of love, is built in the last resort, according to Aristotle, on self-love." *Agape*, 186.

[102] "In perfect friendship the apparent object of love is the goodness which the excellent person instantiates." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 22.

[103] Aristotle*, Metaph.* 9.8 (Ross, *Metaphysics,* 235).

[104] Aristotle states, "For parents love [στέργουσι] their children as part of themselves." *Metaph.* 8.12.2 (Tredennick, LCL).

[105] Ibid., 9.8.4–6. In fact, Aristotle contends that the wrong kind of self-love, specifically that which tries to assign "the larger share of money, honours, or bodily pleasures," has given it a bad name. Ibid., 9.8.4. Carmichael believes that "capacity for friendship depends on right self-love, which is free of selfishness in that the good I will for myself is the good of virtue, and the virtuous person is free of self-seeking passion, and acts according to intelligent reason (*nous*)." *Friendship*, 22.

[106] "By suggesting that self-interest is best served by ministering to the higher elements of the self, and that this is done by doing good, which itself benefits others as well as the self, he can argue that serving others not only follows from looking after number one but also contributes to that task." C. Osborne, *Eros,* 151. C. Osborne contends that "Aristotle's analysis of *philia* is not concerned with loving others" but "co-operating with, or befriending, others in such a way as to operate in society as if their goals were your own goals, or as if the pair of you, or group of you, had joint goals." Ibid.

[107] "Now happiness above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense, since we always choose it for its own sake and never as a means to something else." Aristotle*, Metaph.* 1.7.5 (Tredennick, LCL). "Happiness, therefore, being found to be something final and self-sufficient, is the End at which all actions aim." Ibid., 1.7.8. For Aristotle, "Happiness consists in acting in accordance with reason." Norman, *Moral,* 39. In fact, the ultimate human function is to act rationally. This is the highest good toward

others is like love for one's self.[108] Thus, for Aristotle, self-love presents no problem since it is both rational and virtuous to direct love toward that which is good, thus the "good man ought to be a lover of himself" since love is directed toward a worthy object and the good man is worthy of self-love.[109]

Mutuality and Community

For Aristotle, mutuality is an essential feature of all three types of friendship.[110] This mutuality includes equality whether it be exchange of equal pleasure, utility, or goodness.[111] Because friendship is a relationship of mutuality, it also requires likeness as well as nearness.[112]

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happiness. Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1.7.14.

[108] For Aristotle, "the extreme of friendship is likened to one's love for oneself." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 9.4 (Ross, *Metaphysics,* 228). Carmichael comments that there seem two possibilities: "self-love is the exemplar for all other loves, or that all love is fundamentally self-love. The exemplary meaning is foremost when he says that very strong friendship 'is likened to' one's friendship for one's self." *Friendship*, 21.

[109] Aristotle, *Metaph.* 9.8.7 (Tredennick, LCL). Moreover, as good "he will then both benefit himself by acting nobly and aid his fellows." Ibid. Thus, here again, the action is for nobility and a by-product is the benefit of others.

[110] Thus "the term Friendship [φιλία] is not applied to love [φιλήσει] for inanimate objects, since here there is no return of affection [ἀντιφίλησις], and also no wish for the good of the object—for instance, it would be ridiculous to wish to a bottle of wine. . . . Whereas we are told that we ought to wish our friend well for his own sake. But persons who wish another good for his own sake, if the feeling is not reciprocated, are merely said to feel goodwill [εὔνους] for him: only when mutual is such goodwill termed friendship." Ibid., 8.2.3. Moreover, the goodwill must be known, for mutual goodwill unknown cannot be called friendship. Ibid., 8.2.4. Therefore he can state the three requisites of friendship, that "men must (1) feel goodwill for each other, that is, wish each other's good, and (2) be aware of each other's goodwill, and (3) the cause of their goodwill must be one of the lovable qualities mentioned above." Ibid.

[111] Thus, "the forms of friendship of which we have spoken are friendships of equality, for both parties render the same benefit and wish the same good to each other, or else exchange two different benefits, for instance pleasure and profit." Ibid., 8.6.7. Aristotle does recognize that there are unequal friendships and includes among them that of father-son, husband-wife, ruler-ruled. Ibid., 8.7.1. However, he proposes that such should be balanced out by the 'lesser' bestowing more affection on the more deserving party. "The affection rendered in these various unequal friendships should also be proportionate: the better of the two parties, for instance, or the more useful or otherwise superior as the case may be, should receive more affection than he bestows; since when affection rendered is proportionate to desert, this produces equality in a sense between the parties, and equality is felt to be an essential element of friendship." Ibid., 8.7.2.

[112] Ibid., 8.5.5. Singer thus criticizes that Aristotle neglects "the joy or loving those who are not like ourselves, persons who are not extensions of our own personality, but are really different, separate, autonomous." *Nature,* 102.

In this way, reciprocal friendship love is predicated upon the parties of the relationship being part of the community.[113] Thus, Aristotle states, "community is the essence of friendship."[114] In fact, friendship love is what holds the community together. Moreover, the proper functioning community is one of justice, and each actual society will "involve friendship just in so far as it involves justice."[115] Justice includes love directly proportioned to merit, which "is what Aristotelian justice demands, and friendship cannot be authentic if it goes against justice."[116] In this way, it seems that the notion of unmerited love (bestowal) is foreign to Aristotle.[117]

Purposive Love

Another important characteristic of Aristotle's conception is volition. For Aristotle, higher love is not a passionate impulse or merely affection, but rather a deliberate choice. *Philia* love is not directed by feelings of *pathos*; rather, Aristotle writes, "Mutual love involves choice and choice springs from a state; and men wish well to those whom they love, for their sake, not as a result of passion, but as a result of state."[118] Here again we see the importance of *philia* as a rational, willed love.[119] The rational man chooses to love objects that are worthy of love, and the

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[113] This is "an ontological precondition or ground for friendship, the sharing in some kind of 'communion' (*koinonia*), which of itself engenders friendship between its participants." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 17. Therefore "when persons approve of each other without seeking such other's society, this seems to be goodwill rather than friendship. Nothing is more characteristic of friends than that they seek each other's society." Aristotle, *Metaph* 8.4.3 (Tredennick, LCL).

[114] Ibid., 8.9.1. Alternately translated, "friendship depends on community." The Greek reads ἐν κοινωνίᾳ γὰρ 'η φιλία.

[115] Aristotle, *Metaph.* 8.11 (Ross, *Metaphysics,* 112).

[116] Singer, *Nature,* 95.

[117] This does not rule out benevolence as part of the love relationship, but love still must be grounded upon some worth in the object (usefulness, pleasantness, or goodness) and cannot thus be wholly unmerited.

[118] Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.5.30–32 (Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: the Revised Oxford Translation* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1984], 1829).

[119] He states, "A man of defective self-restraint acts from desire but not from choice; and on the contrary a self-restrained man acts from choice and not from desire." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 3.2.4 (Tredennick, LCL). "Still less is choice the same as passion. Acts done from passion seem very far from being done of

most rational man loves the highest good.[120] Yet questions are also raised as to the apparent lack

of emotion in Aristotle's conception of higher love. Aristotle makes a distinction between the

higher form of friendship love (*philia*) which is rational and purposive and the fleeting love

(*philesis*) of emotion.[121] Catherine Osborne contends that this friendship love is thus really a

pragmatic relationship of mutual benefit in society, less love than partnership or alliance.[122] Why

does Aristotle not give more prominence to feeling love (*philesis*)? Osborne comments, "The

occasions on which Aristotle actually discusses whether the parties are fond of each other

(*stergousi*) are not many, though he occasionally takes it for granted that they would be,

particularly in relationships due to pleasure such as love affairs."[123] Nevertheless, it has already

been seen that affection is a byproduct of perfect friendship, but likewise Aristotle is clear that the

best kind of love (*philia*) is predicated not on affection but on choice.[124] The rational and

purposive nature of friendship love (*philia*) is again evidenced in Aristotle's reservation of this

kind of love to human beings. *Philesis* (or other "phil" words) may be used to refer to affection or

fondness for lesser beings, and even inanimate things, but *philia* is reserved for reciprocal

relationships between rational beings that are capable of assessing and valuing the worthy object

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deliberate choice." Ibid., 3.2.6. For one thing, "Where love is governed by feeling, Aristotle remarks, one can never be assured of reciprocity." Singer, *Nature,* 93.

[120] The best one lives "by principle" based on reason rather than "by passion." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 9.8.6 (Tredennick, LCL).

[121] This distinction in the semantics is clearly apparent, "Liking [φίλησις] seems to be an emotion [πάθει], friendship [φιλία] a fixed disposition, for liking can be felt even for inanimate things, but reciprocal liking involves deliberate choice, and this springs from a fixed disposition." Ibid., 8.5.5.

[122] She proposes that *philia* is "co-operation" which is different from love (*philesis*). C. Osborne, *Eros,* 148. Here "the emphasis is not on feelings but on practical behaviour and choices." Ibid., 149. Osborne comments, "How the parties feel about each other is not directly relevant to the practical and social implications of such partnerships." Ibid., 151. Thus she believes perfect friendship is better not because it is more virtuous but because of pragmatic cooperation.

[123] Ibid., 148.

[124] C. Osborne contends that "love is relevant, then, but it is not the proper explanation of the co-operative behavior of the partners in the resulting alliance." Ibid., 149.

of love.[125] Therefore, the good man loves the virtuous rationally and purposely, not based on fleeting emotions, pleasures, or profit, for such feelings change, but based on the purposive state of appreciation for virtue for virtue's sake.

Divine Love

For Aristotle, no less than Plato, the notion of divine love is impossible; such would imply a lack of perfection, a need in the divine, which is impossible for the unmoved mover.[126] As has been seen, the absolute Mind is wholly self-sufficient and could attain no benefit (utility, pleasure, or goodness) from any object of love.[127] Moreover, God is altogether removed from the creaturely realm, taking no action *ad extra*. Thus, there can thus be no friendship (*philia*) between humans and God and certainly no mutual relations or fellowship. Aristotle states this clearly saying, "When one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases."[128] Thus God is an object of love but cannot be the subject of love. Aristotle's God does

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[125] "*Philein* and other phil-words may be used to indicate a 'love' or liking (*philesis*), even for inaminate things such as wine; but love for inanimate things is not called 'philia', for two distinct reasons: there is no return of love and no wishing well to the object for its own sake. We do not wish good to a friend 'for his sake' . . . and this is only possible with a human being." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 15–16. Carmichael believes that "clearly underlying it is the intuition that only a human being can be loved 'for their own sake' because only a human person can be, not only the *object* of love but also a *subject* in their own right; but neither Aristotle nor any other ancient writer made this intuition explicit." Ibid., 16.

[126] Rather, God always enjoys his own happiness. "God is a living being, eternal, most good; and therefore life and a continuous eternal existence belong to God; for that is what God is." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 12.7.8 (Tredennick, LCL).

[127] For both "Plato and Aristotle . . . the idea of mutual love between man and God would have been blasphemous." Singer, *Nature,* 107. Aristotle "rejects the very idea that God can love the world. God is perfect and self-sufficient being and contains in himself all that he needs. For God to love anything outside himself could only reflect some inner defect or deficiency." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343. In one place, Aristotle does give a hint of divine love, but this is qualified by the hypothetical assertion regarding the deities of man's conception. He writes, "It seems likely that the man who pursues intellectual activity . . . is also the man most beloved of the gods. For if, as is generally believed, the gods exercise some superintendence over human affairs, then it will be reasonable to suppose that they take pleasure in that part of man which is best and most akin to themselves." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 10.8.13 (Tredennick, LCL). However, it seems that this statement is not intended to say anything about the actual ultimate divine being but about the value of rationality.

[128] Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.7.4–5 (Barnes, 1831). Thus there is no mutual love between God and man. Nygren notes that there can be no friendship with God for that "presupposes an equality between Divine and human love which does not exist." *Agape*, 92.

not enter into relationship because this would mean that the divine is dependent on other than

God in some manner. But there can be no relationship between God (as so conceived) and man.

God is eternally *a se*, never interacting with others, entirely timeless, immutable, and

impassible.[129]

God is the unmoved mover, but he does not create motion by moving, but by being the

object of love. Thus, the final cause "causes motion as being an object of love [ἐρώμενον],

whereas all other things cause motion because they themselves are in motion."[130] Notice, the love

that humans have for God is also not friendship love, for that requires mutuality, including

likeness, nearness, and equality, but God is absolutely superior and remote, and thus there can be

no such thing between God and man.[131] Not only is mutual love ruled out, there can be no love

from God towards humans, for God thinks only of himself in absolute self-sufficiency.[132]

Just as Plato (through neo-Platonism) provides the philosophical groundwork for

Augustine, Aristotle has a thoroughgoing impact on the intricate systematic theology of Thomas

Aquinas, who masterfully incorporates Aristotle's conception of the divine and of love into the

Christian tradition. In both cases, modifications are required, however, to allow for divine love in

contrast to both Plato and Aristotle. Other elements of Aristotle's conception shed light on issues

that will recur regarding divine love. For instance, his emphasis on rational, purposive love is

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[129] Aristotle, *Metaph.* 12.9.1–3 (Tredennick, LCL). See the discussion above.

[130] Ibid., 12.7.4. The most moved mover "causes movement in virtue of being an object of desire" C. Osborne, *Eros,* 132. He goes on to explain, "Since there is something which moves while itself unmoved, existing actually, this can in no way be otherwise than it is." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 12.7.7–8 (Barnes, 1694).

[131] Nygren comments, "We thus find in Aristotle the Eros of Plato raised to the level of a cosmic force." *Agape*, 184. Further, although he is different from Plato otherwise, "with regard to the idea of Eros he is Plato's faithful disciple." Ibid., 185.

[132] Once again, God is entirely self-sufficient and thinks only of himself: "Therefore Mind thinks itself, if it is that which is best; and its thinking is a thinking of thinking." Aristotle, *Metaph.* 12.9.4 (Tredennick, LCL). This is because "the final good must be a thing sufficient in itself. . . . We take a self-sufficient thing to mean a thing which merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable and lacking in nothing, and such a thing we deem happiness to be." Ibid., 1.7.6–7.

continued by some theologians (see below) as the ideal, even for divinity. While Aristotle's God

does not love, later Christian theologians would propose that he does, but as wholly rational. For

instance, is self-love inappropriate or even wicked? If it is, can God love himself or, in Christian

theology, the trinitarian persons? Moreover, if somehow the absolute separation between God and

humanity would be overcome, would God's love be based on the worthiness of humans? Is love

for God from humans necessarily based on worth? Moreover, if God and man could enter into a

loving friendship, what degree of mutuality would such a relationship entail, if any? These and

other questions repeatedly rise to the fore, as shall be seen.

Augustine's Conception of Love

The importance of Augustine's contribution to Christian theology can hardly be

overstated.[133] One of his many lasting contributions was in the area of Christian love.[134] However,

Augustine did not approach the issue of love in a vacuum. The similarity of his ontology to

Platonic thought patterns (through neoplatonism) has been widely recognized.[135] For Augustine,

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[133] "It is no exaggeration to say that the essential philosophical framework of Western Christianity for at least the next thousand years is owed to him." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 56.

[134] Oord states, "For Augustine, love is the center of Christianity, and it is primarily due to him that both Catholic and Evangelical Christianity take it as axiomatic that Christianity is a religion of love." "Matching Theology and Piety: An Evangelical Process Theology of Love" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate University, 1999), 120.

[135] For instance, Plotinus continued the emphasis on the impassibility of the One from which the many emanate downwards toward the earthly but desire to return upwards toward the heavenly. See Plotinus, *Enn.* (trans. Stephen McKenna; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 191–201. Specifically, "In Plotinus' theology no god could suffer, nor love." C. Osborne, *Eros,* 115. Despite emanation downward the Divine Being is utterly self-sufficient and impassible and does not descend downward. See Plotinus, *Enn.*, 361–62. God is Eros but as the ultimate object of desire, never himself desiring, thus the Divine Being is *erasmon*, the only one worthy of love. Cf. Nygren, *Agape,* 198–99; Singer, *Nature,* 117; J. C. M. van Winden, "What Is Love? Eros and Agape in Early Christian Thought," in *Arché: A Collection of Patristic Studies* (ed. J. D. Boeft and D. T. Runia; Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1997). This amounts to a sharp dualism between God and matter, sometimes referred to as the Alexandrian world-scheme and the divide is bridged by a plethora of intermediary beings (*daimones*). For an overview of neoplatonic conceptions of divine love from the perspective of Plotinus, see Rist, *Eros*. Nygren states, "When the Eros motif found its way into Christianity it was not exclusively, nor even primarily, in the form given to it by Plato; it was primarily in the form, on the one hand, of Mystery-piety (as can be seen above all in Gnosticism), and, on the other hand, of Aristotelian and Neo-platonic Eros-theory." *Agape*, 183.

God is absolutely timeless, self-sufficient, perfect, immutable, and simple.[136] As such, nothing

can act upon God, for God is utterly impassible.[137] Furthermore, God is himself the absolute

good, having no need and no desire.[138] Moreover, for Augustine, love is an ontological category,

the essence of God, thus "love is God."[139] Augustine describes love as the bond of the Trinity

(specifically the Holy Spirit).[140] By extension, love is the grounding of all created beings.[141]

However, beyond love as the ground of being itself, Augustine deals carefully with the love of

persons: love proper and improper, given and received.

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[136] For instance, Augustine speaks of God "whose being is perfect: it discerns also that the perfection of His being is consummate because He is immutable, and therefore neither gains nor loses." Augustine, *Letters of St. Augustin* 118.3.15 (*NPNF* 1:877). Moreover, God has an "ineffably simple nature." *Trin.* 15.19.37 (*NPNF* 3:424). He is the "unchangeably eternal" one. *Conf.* 11.31.41 (*NPNF* 1:319). Further, he is the "eternal, spiritual, and unchangeable good." *Civ.* 15.22 (*NPNF* 2:648).

[137] Singer attributes this at least partially to the need to avoid an anthropomorphic conception of God. Singer, *Nature,* 168. In fact, nothing at all happens that is not determined by the eternal divine will. This is explicit when Augustine speaks of the divine "will of His which is eternal as His foreknowledge, certainly He has already done all things in heaven and on earth that He has willed, — not only past and present things, but even things still future." *Civ.* 22.2 (*NPNF* 2:1013). He states elsewhere that, "nothing, therefore, happens but by the will of the Omnipotent, He either permitting it to be done, or Himself doing it." *Enchir.* 95 (*NPNF* 3:523). Moreover, he states, "But however strong may be the purposes either of angels or of men, whether of good or bad, whether these purposes fall in with the will of God or run counter to it, the will of the Omnipotent is never defeated." Ibid., 102 (*NPNF* 3:529). Augustine did, however, attempt to maintain some semblance of free will alongside predestination. See *Civ.* 5.9 (*NPNF* 2:207–11).

[138] For Augustine, all good is predicated on the "unchangeable good" and any good which changes is not good in itself. *Civ.* 8.3.5 (*NPNF* 3:218–19). He cannot increase in goodness in any way.

[139] Lewis Ayres, "Augustine, Christology, and God As Love: An Introduction to the Homilies on 1 John," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 86.

[140] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to deal with Augustine's trinitarian ontology. However it is interesting to note that Augustine frames the Trinity according to God as lover, beloved, and love itself. *Civ.* 9.2.2 (*NPNF* 3:235). Thus intra-trinitarian love is described as love between the Father and the Son (both functioning as lover and beloved), with the Holy Spirit as the bond of love. In this way eternal divine love is self-love, with no need or desire for any love outside of the perfectly self-sufficient Trinity. See ibid., 15.19.37 (*NPNF* 3:423–24).

[141] Augustine's view "proclaimed that man's creation, in fact the creation of everything, originates from an infinite source of love; and it offered the commandment to return love for love as the single but thoroughly sufficient means of attaining salvation." Singer, *Nature,* 164.

Human Love

Only God is self-sufficient and thus has no desires, yet all others have desire, and such

desire is neither good nor bad in itself.[142] The quality of love is determined according to the

object of desire.[143] In this way, love may be positive or negative depending upon its intended

object.[144] *Caritas* is love for an appropriate object whereas *cupiditas* is love for an inappropriate

object.[145] In every case, God is the sole appropriate object of love (*caritas*) because he is the only

one having goodness in himself and the sole creator of all value.[146] Anything else, as an object of

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[142] For Augustine, human "love is a kind of desire." Moreover, "that which is loved necessarily affects with itself that which loves, it follows that what is eternal, loved in this way, affects the soul with eternity." Augustine, *Div. quaest.* 83.35.2 (David L. Mosher, *Eighty-three Different Questions* [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982], 67). "Like Plato, Augustine approached the concept of love from an eudaemonistic point of view: love is essentially the desire for ultimate happiness." Brümmer, *Model,* 118. "The key difference between them, from *which* all other differences follow, was in their view on what constitutes eternal happiness. For Plato ultimate happiness consists in knowing the Good; for Augustine it consists in enjoying God." Ibid.

[143] "The right will is, therefore, well-directed love [*amor*], and the wrong will is ill-directed love [*amor*]. Love [*amor*], then, yearning to have what is loved, is desire [*cupiditas*]; and having and enjoying [*frui*] it, is joy; fleeing what is opposed to it, it is fear; and feeling what is opposed to it, when it has befallen it, it is sadness. Now these motions are evil if the love [*amor*] is evil; good if the love [*amor*] is good." Augustine, *Civ.* 14.7 (*NPNF* 2:574). Interestingly, he specifically defines that "charity [*caritas*] denotes that whereby one loves those things whose worth, in comparison to the lover itself, must not be thought to be of lesser value." Augustine, *Div. quaest.* 83.36.1 (Mosher, *Questions*, 67).

[144] Augustine is often noted for his so-called *caritas* synthesis. However, it should be noted that he also uses *amor* and *dilectio* interchangeably with *caritas*. He states, "Some are of opinion that charity [*caritas*] or regard [*dilectio*] is one thing, love [*amor*] another. They say that *dilectio* is used of a good affection, *amor* of an evil love. But it is very certain that even secular literature knows no such distinction." *Civ.* 14.7 (*NPNF* 2:573–74). Just previous to this Augustine shows the interchangeable use of the terms in a Latin translation of John 21:15–17 in an attempt to prove that Scripture also makes no distinction between these terms. Nygren took this view as a *caritas* synthesis of *agape* and *eros*. Carmichael points out, "In Latin translations of the Bible, *agape* had been rendered by two broadly interchangeable words, *caritas* and *dilectio*, the latter being a post-classical coinage from the verb *diligere,* 'to love' with overtones of choosing or regarding the beloved above others. *Caritas, dilectio*, and *amor* would all be used by theologians down the centuries as close or exact synonyms, with *caritas* alone gaining the honour of use in an exclusively 'good' sense and becoming the primary term for Christian love." *Friendship*, 45.

[145] Augustine defines *caritas* thusly, "I mean by charity that affection [*motum*] of the mind which aims at the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbor in subordination to God; by lust [*cupiditas*] I mean that affection [*motum*] of the mind which aims at enjoying one's self and one's neighbor, and other corporeal things, without reference to God." *Doctr. chr.* 3.10.16 (*NPNF* 2:1173). He states, "Love, but see to it *what* you love. Love to God and love to neighbor is called Caritas; love to the world and love of temporal things is called Cupiditas." Augustine, *Enarrat. Ps*. 31.2.5, quoted in Nygren, *Agape,* 495.

[146] Notice the similarity to Plato's conception of the *proton philon*. "For He is the fountain of our

love (*cupiditas*) in itself, is inappropriate.[147] Thus Augustine states, "God then alone is to be

loved; and all this world, that is, all sensible things, are to be despised,—while, however, they are

to be used as this life requires."[148] Thus, similar to Plato, proper human love (*caritas*) is directed

upwards whereas improper love (*cupiditas*) is directed downwards.

Nevertheless, though God is the only proper object of love in himself, this does not

exclude a proper kind of love for self and for neighbor. The key is that proper love's ultimate

object is God, and all other lesser objects of love are loved for God's sake, according to the order

of love (*ordo amoris*).[149] Thus, one who truly loves God loves self and neighbor, but always with

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happiness, He the end of all our desires. Being attached to Him, or rather let me say, reattached,—for we had detached ourselves and lost hold of Him,—being, I say, re-attached to Him, we tend towards Him by love, that we may rest in Him. . . . For our good . . . is nothing else than to be united to God." Augustine, *Civ.* 10.3 (*NPNF* 2:397). For Augustine, the only one worthy of love in himself is God because only the unchangeable, eternal, and perfect being is a proper object of love. Moreover, God is the source of all goodness which might be loved. Thus he cautions not to love the gift (other than God) more than the giver (God). "In the same manner, my brethren, as if a bridegroom should make a ring for his bride, and she having received the ring, should love it more than she loves the bridegroom who made the ring for her: would not her soul be found guilty of adultery in the very gift of the bridegroom, albeit she did but love what the bridegroom gave her? By all means let her love what the bridegroom gave: yet should she say, "This ring is enough for me, I do not wish to see his face now: what sort of woman would she be? Who would not detest such folly? who not pronounce her guilty of an adulterous mind?" *Tract. ep. Jo.* 2.11 (*NPNF* 7:941). "Well then, God gave thee all these things: love Him that made them." Ibid.

[147] Augustine states, "Therefore let each one question himself as to what he loveth: and he shall find of which he is a citizen: and if he shall have found himself to be a citizen of Babylon, let him root out cupidity, implant charity: but if he shall have found himself a citizen of Jerusalem, let him endure captivity, hope for liberty." *Enarrat. Ps.* 65.2 (*NPNF* 8:590). He writes in another place, "[Conceived] therefore, either by desire or by love: not that the creature ought not to be loved; but if that love [of the creature] is referred to the Creator, then it will not be desire (cupiditas), but love (charitas). For it is desire when the creature is loved for itself." *Trin.* 9.8 (*NPNF* 3:244).

[148] Augustine, *Mor. eccl.* 20 (*NPNF* 4:86). As Oord describes it, "*Cupiditas* seeks happiness or rest in that which is incapable of providing happiness and rest: created things." "Matching," 171.

[149] Augustine states, "No sinner is to be loved [*dilectio*] as a sinner; and every man is to be loved [*dilectio*] as a man for God's sake; but God is to be loved [*dilectio*] for His own sake. And if God is to be loved [*dilectio*] more than any man, each man ought to love [*dilectio*] God more than himself. Likewise we ought to love [*dilectio*] another man better than our own body, because all things are to be loved [*dilectio*] in reference to God, and another man can have fellowship with us in the enjoyment [*frui*] of God, whereas our body cannot; for the body only lives through the soul, and it is by the soul that we enjoy [*frui*] God." *Doctr. chr.* 1.27.28 (*NPNF* 2:1105). The importance of love as enjoyment (*frui*) will be discussed further below.

God as the proper and ultimate object of love.[150] God is the only object of love as enjoyment

(*frui*). Others should only be the objects of love as use (*uti*).[151] Therefore, proper human love of

God is enjoyment (*frui*) but God is not to be loved as use (*uti*). Proper human love of humans is

use (*uti*) but never enjoyment (*frui*).[152] Love outside of these boundaries (misdirected love) is the

cause of all disorder in the world.[153]

Divine Love

Divine love, however, is quite different from human love. God is the only appropriate

object of love because he is the Good, absolutely unchanging and fixed.[154] In classical ontology,

as has been seen, such a being would be incapable of love (*eros* or *philia*) towards the world.

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[150] "For it is impossible for one who loves [*dilectio*] God not to love [*dilectio*] himself. For he alone has a proper love [*dilectio*] for himself who aims diligently at the attainment of the chief and true good; and if this is nothing else but God." Augustine, *Mor. eccl.* 26.48 (*NPNF* 4:92). In this way "you love [*dilectio*] yourself suitably when you love [*dilectio*] God better than yourself." Ibid., 26.49 (*NPNF* 4:92). On love of neighbors he adds, "Yea, verily; so that we can think of no surer step towards the love [*amor*] of God than the love [*caritas*] of man to man." Ibid., 26.48 (*NPNF* 4:92). Further, "What, then, you aim at in yourself you must aim at in your neighbor, namely, that he may love [*dilectio*] God with a perfect affection [*amor*]. For you do not love [*dilectio*] him as yourself, unless you try to draw him to that good which you are yourself pursuing." Ibid., 26.49 (*NPNF* 4:92).

[151] Humans are not to be loved for their own sakes, for if one is loved "for his own sake, we enjoy him; if it is for the sake of something else, we use him." Augustine, *Doctr. chr.* 1.22.20 (*NPNF* 2:1100). Moreover, "no one ought to love even himself for his own sake, but for the sake of Him who is the true object of enjoyment." Ibid., 1.22.21 (*NPNF* 2:1100). Rather, God is the sole object of enjoyment because "those only are the true objects of enjoyment which we have spoken of as eternal and unchangeable. The rest are for use, that we may be able to arrive at the full enjoyment of the former." Ibid., 1.22.20 (*NPNF* 2:1100). Thus, the "true objects of enjoyment, then, are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are at the same time the Trinity, one Being, supreme above all, and common to all who enjoy Him." Ibid., 1.5.5 (*NPNF* 2:1090).

[152] Carmichael notes that "Augustine soon ceased employing the language of 'use' and 'enjoyment', but the popularity of *De doctrina christiana* [On Christian Doctrine] ensured its persistence within the philosophical deposit he bequeathed to the Middle Ages." *Friendship*, 65.

[153] See Augustine, *Civ.* 12.8 (*NPNF* 2:498–99). On the other hand virtue is "the order of love." Ibid., 15.22 (*NPNF* 2:649). For Augustine disorder stems from misdirected love regarding the creature's love for other than God. See ibid., 12.8 (*NPNF* 2:498–99). Moreover, "two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self." Ibid., 14.28 (*NPNF* 2:608).

[154] For Augustine God alone is to be enjoyed, for Augustine states, "Among all these things, then, those only are the true objects of enjoyment which we have spoken of as eternal and unchangeable." Ibid., 1.22.20 (*NPNF* 2:1100). Thus, all proper human love is ultimately love for God.

However, for Augustine God does love human beings and this is an indispensable tenet of

Christianity.[155] Moreover, God even makes humans into friends.[156] However, due to his adoption

of the classical ontology (immutability, timelessness, and self-sufficiency), divine love must be

defined (re-defined) accordingly. Specifically, divine love cannot be acquisitive or evaluative, for

God can neither acquire anything nor increase in value. He has no need nor desire, being entirely

impassible and self-sufficient in perfection.[157] In what way, then, does God love the world?

Augustine's ontology thus prohibits a dynamic, reciprocal relationship between God and

creature. This again utilizes the distinction between love as enjoyment (*frui*) and love as use (*uti*).

Augustine writes,

> In what way then does He [God] love us? As objects of use or as objects of enjoyment? If He
> enjoys us, He must be in need of good from us, and no sane man will say that; for all the good
> we enjoy is either Himself, or what comes from Himself. And no one can be ignorant or in
> doubt as to the fact that the light stands in no need of the glitter of the things it has itself lit
> up. . . . He does not enjoy us then, but makes use of us. For if He neither enjoys nor uses us, I
> am at a loss to discover in what way He can love us.[158]

Even in use love, God does not love any external goodness, but his own goodness.[159] In this way,

divine love is totally indifferent to its object; even use love is not at all advantageous to God.[160]

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[155] "For had not God loved sinners, He would not have come down from heaven to earth."
Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 94.5 (*NPNF* 7:542).

[156] See ibid., 85 (*NPNF* 7:704–5).

[157] Divine love cannot be evaluative because God already possesses all value and there is no value
that was not created by God himself. "It is entirely through God's will that value comes into being, he says,
yet by his very nature God is necessarily good." Singer, *Nature,* 168. Augustine states, "God has no need,
not only of cattle, or any other earthly and material thing, but even of man's righteousness, and that
whatever right worship is paid to God profits not Him, but man. For no man would say he did a benefit to a
fountain by drinking, or to the light by seeing." *Civ.* 10.5 (*NPNF* 2:399).

[158] Augustine, *Doctr. chr.* 1.31.34 (*NPNF* 2:1109). For Augustine, "to enjoy a thing is to rest with
satisfaction in it for its own sake. To use, on the other hand, is to employ whatever means are at one's
disposal to obtain what one desires." Ibid., 1.4.4 (*NPNF* 2:1090). Moreover, even God's use of humans
God "has reference to His own goodness. . . . God is said to make of us has no reference to His own
advantage, but to ours only; and, so far as He is concerned, has reference only to His goodness." Ibid., 1.32
(*NPNF* 2:1109–10).

[159] "But neither does He use after our fashion of using. For when we use objects, we do so with a
view to the full enjoyment of the goodness of God. God, however, in His use of us, has reference to His
own goodness." Ibid., 1.32.35 (*NPNF* 2:1109).

Thus God cannot receive any enjoyment or value from human beings or the world.[161] God loves the world only in the sense of use, with reference to his own goodness.

Divine love beyond the trinitarian relationship is simply the unilateral beneficence from God to humans, exclusive of reciprocal or mutual love.[162] God bestows gracious love downward, and humans love (desire) God as the good, the ultimate end of all desires. Not only does God receive no benefit from human love, human love is itself the product of divine action, a divine gift. God not only implanted the desire but himself determines who will love him.[163] God is thus the only proper subject and object of love since only he is worthy of love and all love flows from him.[164] Augustine's view would function as the dominant view of Christian love down through the ages.

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[160] Rather, "that use, then, which God is said to make of us has no reference to His own advantage, but to ours only; and, so far as He is concerned, has reference only to His goodness." Ibid.,1.32.35 (*NPNF* 2:1110). "In other words, because of God's self-sufficient perfection, his love for us can in no way be a form of need-love. It is purely gift-love, or *agape*." Brümmer, *Model,* 125.

[161] "Finally, it is not to God's advantage (or disadvantage) that we love our neighbour and bring him to love God. Like Plato, Augustine held that, since divine perfection entails that God is self-sufficient and lacks nothing, he can in no way be in need of my love or that of my neighbour." Ibid., 124.

[162] Burnaby considers this restriction of God's love to a "one-way" relationship, one of giving without any receiving, is "strangely inadequate." *Amor,* 307.

[163] "When God gives Himself to us in Christ, He gives us at once the object we are to love and the caritas with which to love it. The object we are to love is Himself, but Caritas is also Himself, who by the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in our hearts. Even the fact that we love God is itself entirely a gift of God." Augustine, quoted in D'Arcy, *Mind,* 77. Cf. Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 17.6 (*NPNF* 7:223). For Augustine "no one has a desire for God—not a scintilla of it—who has not been predestined by God to have it." James Wetzel, "Predestination, Pelagianism, and Foreknowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53. Specifically, "The Grace of God makes a willing man out of an unwilling one." Augustine, *C. Jul. op. imp* 3.122 quoted in Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 528 (Nygren's translation).

[164] Oord comments, "The relation between love of God, self-love, and love for neighbor is complicated in Augustine's thought. Sometimes he speaks of self-love as the root of sin; this is *cupiditas.* Sometimes he speaks of self-love as a natural condition whereby one *uti* loves oneself. The most authentic love of self, however, is *caritas* whereby one seeks one's own good in seeking God." "Matching," 174. Accordingly, some scholars have asked, on this basis, whether all love is self-seeking love for Augustine. This is the famous criticism of Nygren who decried the inclusion of desire (aimed at ascending toward God) in Christian love, calling it the *caritas* synthesis of the motifs of *agape* and *eros*. See Nygren, *Agape,* 449–558. Singer interprets Augustine to mean that "all love, even the love of God, is self-love inasmuch as the lover seeks his own good." Singer, *Nature,* 85. Thus Singer also contends that Augustine "perceived it with the eyes and ears of the eros tradition that his father represented. Platonic love was thus converted to

Thomas Aquinas's Conception of Love

In the middle ages, Aquinas continues the basic Augustinian premise regarding divine

love and the God-world relationship while adapting Aristotelian metaphysics and ethics to

medieval Christianity.[165] In keeping with classical divine ontology, God is self-sufficient and

utterly immutable. He is the first, unmoved, mover. God's existence is utterly necessary, and he is

the same as his essence of nature, purely act with no potentiality.[166] Moreover, God's essence is

his existence. The divine essence and existence are identical, corresponding to potentiality and

actuality, respectively. Since God has no potentiality and is pure actuality there is nothing to

differentiate his essence from his existence, his essence being fully actualized.[167] As such, God is

absolutely simple, having no parts or composite nature.[168] It follows that God is thus absolutely

perfect, he is the absolutely simple, fully actualized, lacking nothing, the infinite one.[169] God

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Christianity while the Christian love of God assumed the configurations of Platonistic philosophy. Thereafter neither would ever be the same." Ibid., 164. Brümmer, on the other hand, sees Augustine's view not as a self-motivated love. He states, "It is important to note that for Augustine our own advantage is not the purpose but 'a sort of natural consequence' of loving our neighbour." *Model*, 124. He goes on, "If the *Summum Bonum* is by its very nature the *bonum commune,* a good which can be possessed only by being shared, then the desire and pursuit of it can never be the desire and pursuit of a *bonum privatum*." Ibid. See the discussion of Nygren below.

[165] Aquinas adopts Aristotle's metaphysics as well as the definition of love in his ethics and utilizes them to present a conception of friendship, human and divine, presented below. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa* 2.2.23.5 (Ages 3:264–65). "The theology of St. Thomas is the Platonist theology of Augustine, shaped into a closer philosophical consistency by the use of two or three fundamental principles derived from Aristotle, and resting ultimately upon the Hebrew-Christian doctrine of creation, accepted and thought through with a more radical completeness than ever before." Burnaby, *Amor,* 264. Burnaby notes further, "St Thomas did not abandon the Platonism of Augustine, but he replaced Augustine's degrees of existence; the varying participations in true being, by the *analogia entis*, in which man's being is neither part nor equivalent of God's, but a created likeness of it." Ibid., 40–41.

[166] In this way, he is pure form, but not matter at all since matter is potentiality and there is no potentiality in God. Aquinas, *Summa* 1.1.3.1–2 (Ages 1:33–35). Aquinas methodically adopts and frames Aristotle's ontological conceptions. "The most important of these assumptions are the metaphysical theory of matter and form, potency and act, and the ethical theory that all love is based upon self-love, 'that a friend is another self.'" Burnaby, *Amor,* 265.

[167] Aquinas, *Summa* 1.1.3.4 (Ages 1:38–39).

[168] Ibid., 1.1.3.7 (Ages 1:43–44).

[169] Ibid., 1.1.4.1 (Ages 1:48).

possesses all perfections of being, and for Aquinas, "Goodness and being are really the same,"

thus God is himself the ultimate goodness.[170] Furthermore, goodness is "what all desire" and thus

God is the ultimate desirable one, the true object of all desire.[171] As the ultimate perfect one, God

is altogether immutable. He cannot change or be affected since he is pure act with no

potentiality.[172] Moreover, he is eternal, for the divine being "bereft of movement . . . there is no

before or after" and the immutable one has no beginning nor end and no succession of time.[173]

God thus has no need of anything, possessing absolute goodness, and accordingly, desires nothing

for himself. As first mover and ultimate cause, God's will is sovereign and undefeated.[174] As with

Augustine, this divine ontology rules out a mutually impactful relationship between God and the

world.[175] However, it does not preclude Aquinas from positing a friendship love (*amicitia*)

between God and humans, as shall be seen. First, we turn to the nature of human loves.

The Nature of Human Loves

Aquinas inherited many different words that relate to different aspects of love. He

specifically mentions four primary ones (*amor, dilectio, caritas, and amicitia*) and differentiates

them accordingly.[176] For Aquinas, *amicitia* (friendship) is a habit, whereas *amor* and *dilectio* are

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[170] Ibid., 1.1.5.1 (Ages 1:55). All other beings which are good insofar as they have being, are "good by way of participation." Ibid., 1.1.6.4 (Ages 1:71).

[171] Ibid., 1.1.5.1 (Ages 1:55). "All things, by desiring their own perfection, desire God Himself, inasmuch as the perfections of all things are so many similitudes of the divine being." Ibid., 1.1.6.1.2 (Ages 1:67).

[172] Ibid., 1.1.9.1 (Ages 1:92–94). According to classical ontology any change would be from perfection to imperfection, and is thus wholly inappropriate to divinity.

[173] Ibid., 1.1.10.1 (Ages 1:98). Cf. ibid., 1.1.10.2 (Ages 1:100–101).

[174] "God, who is the Prime Agent of all things, does not act as acquiring anything by His action, but as by His action bestowing *something* (*aliquid largiens*)." Burnaby, *Amor,* 263–64.

[175] "The scholastic formulation aimed at excluding anthropomorphic conceptions of Deity. We are not to think of God as of a person with a certain character, a subject of whom universal attributes are predicable." Ibid., 40.

[176] It is notable that he does not mention concupiscence here. As shall be seen below, Aquinas

act or passion. Finally, *caritas* may express all of the above.[177] For him, *amor* is the broadest

category; *dilectio* and *caritas* are always *amor* but not vice versa; *dilectio* implies a love of

rational, purposive choice and is thus not of passion but of will.[178] *Caritas* is a "certain perfection

of love, insofar as that which is loved is held to be of great price, as the word [*carus*, meaning

dear] itself implies."[179]

For Aquinas, in human relationships love (*amor*) always has two aspects, the good which

is the immediate object of desire and the person for whom the good is willed.[180] In other words

love is always directed towards some good (*amor concupiscentiae*), which is willed toward

someone (*amor amicitiae*), whether oneself or another.[181] The former, desirous love (*amor

concupiscentiae*), "is something pertaining to the appetite [desire]; since good is the object of

both" love and appetite.[182] The latter, love of persons (*amor amicitiae*), is the love for the person

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speaks of love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*) which makes desire an aspect of love, but does not define love as desire in itself.

[177] Aquinas, *Summa* 2.1.26.3 (Ages 2:307–8).

[178] Aquinas writes that *dilectio* "implies, in addition to love, a choice [*electionem*] made beforehand as the very word denotes: and therefore dilection is not in the concupiscible power, but only in the will, and only in the rational nature." Ibid., 2.1.26.3 (Ages 2:308). This emphasizes the preceding choice.

[179] Ibid. This, of course, means the object of *caritas* is of great value. Carmichael comments, "Aquinas's view arose within the context of Latin that had developed distinctions between the words for love such that *amor* is a sensitive love of the passions, a lower love; dilectio is a higher, intellectual, willed love; and *amicitia* is the mutual society of lover and beloved, who act from deliberate choice." *Friendship*, 106.

[180] Thus, he quotes Aristotle, "to love is to wish good to someone." Aquinas, *Summa* 2.1.26.4 (Ages 2:309).

[181] "Hence the movement of love has a twofold tendency: towards the good which a man wishes to someone (to himself or to another) and towards that to which he wishes some good. Accordingly, man has love of concupiscence towards the good that he wishes to another, and love of friendship towards him to whom he wishes good." Ibid. Burnaby comments, "Benevolence, wishing someone well, has a double object—the good which is willed, and the person, whether self or another, for whom it is *willed*; and Thomas distinguishes these two directions of benevolence by the not very happy pair of terms which he had inherited from his predecessors: *amor concupiscentiae* and *amor amicitiae*." *Amor*, 266–67.

[182] Aquinas, *Summa*. 2.1.26.1 (Ages 2:304). For Aquinas something is loved if the lover's desire regards it as good and "since good is the object of the will, the perfect good of a man is that which entirely satisfies his will. Consequently to desire happiness is nothing else than to desire that one's will be satisfied.

that the good is willed toward.[183] Thus, in this context, desirous love (*amor concupiscentiae*) and friendship love (*amor amicitiae*) are integrally connected and complementary.[184] One who is loved in the sense of *amor amicitiae* is loved in himself as an end, whereas the object of *amor concupiscentiae* is loved for something else, as a means.[185] Nevertheless, he cautions:

> Love [*amor*] is not divided into friendship [*amicitia*] and Concupiscence [*concupiscentia*], but into love of friendship [*amor amicitiae*], and love of concupiscence [*amor concupiscentiae*]. For a friend is, properly speaking, one to whom we wish good: while we are said to desire, what we wish for ourselves.[186]

In this way, Aquinas can elsewhere contrast perfect friendship love with desirous love for self-interest, which he calls concupiscence.[187] A perfect, complete friendship (*amicitia*) is actually identical to *caritas* love.[188] In this context he speaks of perfect and imperfect love saying:

And this everyone desires." Ibid., 2.1.5.8 (Ages 2:84–85). Cf. ibid., 2.2.23.4 (Ages 3:263). Nygren criticizes Aquinas, believing that "for Thomas, as for Augustine, all love is fundamentally acquisitive love; love corresponds to the acquisitive will, and this latter to the natural quest for happiness." *Agape*, 642. Burnaby adds, "But the complacency in which my love consists is satisfaction in an object as *my own good*. The good which all things seeks is their own perfection." *Amor*, 266.

[183] Aquinas states, "To love anything is nothing else than to will good to that thing." *Summa* 1.1.20.2 (Ages 1:282).

[184] "Friendship comprehends both friendship-love directed to the person as an end in themselves, and desiring-love directed to the good things we wish for them as the means for their fulfillment." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 116. Thus, for Aquinas "friendship-love (*amor amicitiae*) and desiring-love (*amor concupiscentiae*) rightly directed, are complementary and integral to one another. . . . Love for the person is friendship-love, while the love that seeks to acquire goods for them is desiring-love." Ibid., 115.

[185] Aquinas, *Summa* 2.1.26.4 (Ages 2:309–10). Thus Burnaby comments, "Since the good desired is desired for the sake of the recipient, *amor concupiscentiae* must be regarded as secondary to *amor amicitiae*. It is the latter only which is love simpliciter, in which the object is loved 'for itself' and not 'for the sake of anything else.'" *Amor*, 267.

[186] Aquinas, *Summa* 2.1.26.4.2 (Ages 2:310).

[187] He writes, still in Aristotelian categories, "When friendship is based on usefulness or pleasure, a man does indeed wish his friend some good: and in this respect the character of friendship is preserved. But since he refers this good further to his own pleasure or use, the result is that friendship of the useful or pleasant, in so far as it is connected with love of concupiscence, loses the character to true friendship." Ibid., 2.1.26.4.3 (Ages 2:310).

[188] Aquinas states, "Caritas signifies not only the love of God, but also a certain friendship with Him." Ibid., 2.1.65.5 (Ages 2:697). Cf. Aquinas 2.2.23.1 (Ages 3:256–58). Thus, "*caritas* is the same as *amicitia*." Quoted in Carmichael, *Friendship*, 105. Moreover, friendship (*amicitia*) "embraces all definitions of love and manifests every possible aspect of it" and *caritas* is part of this perfect class. Quoted in ibid., 107. For Aquinas *caritas* and *amicitia* "must be identical because they show love at its greatest." Ibid., 106. Moreover, "Thomas was the only scholastic to define Christian love, *caritas*, fully and in every

Love is twofold: one kind is perfect; the other kind is imperfect. Love of something is imperfect when someone loves a thing not that he might wish the good in itself to the 'thing,' but in order that he might wish its good to himself. This is called by some 'concupiscence,' as when we love wine, wishing to enjoy its sweetness, or when we love some person for our own purposes or pleasure. The other kind of love is perfect; in this the good of anything is loved in itself, as when loving someone, I wish that he himself have the good, even if out of that fact nothing falls to me. This is said to be the love of friendship, whereby anyone is loved for himself (*secundum seipsum*). This is perfect friendship.[189]

Love that is directed toward a good as a means to one's own enjoyment, including when a friend is loved ultimately for one's own gratification, is imperfect love, in the literal sense of being incomplete. It is not that love directed toward oneself is evil in itself, as if love for others is the only virtuous love. Rather, love that loves things and persons as means to one's own good and not as ends in themselves falls short of perfect love, it is incomplete.[190] For Aquinas, the lover is always motivated by self-love, to some extent. In fact, aside from God who is to be the ultimate object of love, Aquinas contends that humans ought to love themselves more than others, and of course has been harshly criticized for this view.[191] However, self-love is prior to love for others not due to selfishness but because all other-love is patterned after self-love. Specifically, love for others arises out of love for self.[192] Nevertheless, in the process of loving, a person may come to

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respect as friendship, *amicitia*." Ibid., 105.

[189] Aquinas quoted in Stephen J. Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Moral Traditions Series; Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 237. Pope's translation.

[190] Aquinas writes, "Now there is a perfect, and an imperfect love. Perfect love is that whereby a man is loved in himself, as when someone wishes a person some good for his own sake; thus a man loves his friend. Imperfect love is that whereby a man love something, not for its own sake, but that he may obtain that good for himself; thus a man loves what he desires. The first love of God pertains to charity, which adheres to God for His own sake; while hope pertains to the second love, since he that hopes, intends to obtain possession of something for himself." *Summa* 2.2.17.8 (Ages 3:201).

[191] He states, "It is written, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Whence it seems to follow that man's love for himself is the model of his love for another. But the model exceeds the copy. Therefore, out of charity, a man ought to love himself more than his neighbor." Ibid., 2.2.26.4 (Ages 3:326). Nygren comments, "His basic idea can be summarised in two sentences: (i) everything in Christianity can be traced back to love, and (2) everything in love, can be traced back to self-love." *Agape*, 643.

[192] "The love that a man has for others arises in man from the love that he has for himself, for a man stands in relation to a friend as he does to himself. But a person loves himself inasmuch as he wishes the good for himself, just as he loves another person by wishing him good. So, by the fact that one is interested in his own good he is led to develop an interest in another person's good." S. Pope, *Ethics,* 238.

desire, motivated by self-interest, to be a person who can will good to others for their own sake.[193] In this way, the person who desires good from an object comes to love that object who provides the good, and is led to love them for their own self.[194] In this relationship of perfect friendship, benefits are derived from the friendship but those derivative benefits are not themselves the motivation for the friendship.[195]

Divine-Human Friendship

As mentioned previously, Aquinas posits a friendship between God and humans, which for obvious reasons, is drastically different from friendship between humans.[196] The very possibility for such a friendship between God and humans is predicated on his analogy of being (*analogia entis*).[197] This allows Aquinas to move beyond Aristotle's view that the distance from

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Carmichael comments, "Through delight, the lover stands in relation to the beloved object as though it were herself or part of herself." *Friendship*, 114. Thus Aquinas goes on, "Now fellowship is a reason for love according to a certain union in relation to God. Wherefore just as unity surpasses union, the fact that man himself has a share of the Divine good, is a more potent reason for loving than that another should be a partner with him in that share. Therefore man, out of charity, ought to love himself more than his neighbor." *Summa* 2.2.26.4.2 (Ages 3:327). Burnaby, however, is very critical of this approach. *Amor*, 269.

[193] Thus, Aquinas states, "A man ought to bear bodily injury for his friend's sake, and precisely in so doing he loves himself more as regards his spiritual mind, because it pertains to the perfection of virtue, which is a good of the mind. In spiritual matters, however, man ought not to suffer injury by sinning, in order to free his neighbor from sin, as stated above." *Summa* 2.2.26.4.2 (Ages 3:327).

[194] "Hence, because a person hopes for good from some other person, a way develops for him to love that other person in himself, from whom he hopes to attain the good. Indeed, a person is loved in himself when the lover wishes the good for him, even if the lover may receive nothing from him. Now, since by sanctifying grace there is produced in us an act of loving God for Himself, the result was that we obtained hope from God by means of grace." Aquinas, quoted in S. Pope, *Ethics,* 238.

[195] "However, though it is not for one's own benefit, friendship, whereby one loves another for himself, has of course many resulting benefits, in the sense that one friend helps another as he helps himself. Hence, when one person loves another, and knows that he is loved by that other, he must get hope from him." Aquinas, quoted in ibid.

[196] However, as shall be seen, any suggestion of the mutuality of *amicitia* in the God-world relationship is qualified by the divine ontology.

[197] "Here, then, we encounter just that feature in the Aristotelian account of Philia which seems most incompatible with the character of Agape in the Christian sense—the love which is so little dependent upon likeness as to show its nature most fully in forgiveness." Burnaby, *Amor,* 267.

God to man is too great to allow for friendship.[198] However, it must be understood that friendship love is not symmetrical but, rather, divine and human love are drastically different. *Caritas* (with a human subject) refers to the "movement of the soul towards the enjoyment of God for His own sake."[199] Moreover, in divine-human "friendship," God is the initiator, befriending humans first as their benefactor,[200] whereas humans love God as the ultimate object of goodness.[201] Although humans love God, even their love is derivative from divine love.[202] However, Aquinas employs a compatibilistic approach that attributes all reality to the necessity of the divine will yet differentiates between absolute necessity and a "conditional necessity which does not do away with the liberty of choice."[203] This allows Aquinas to preserve the power of humans to act in love,

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[198] Although Aquinas adopts much of Aristotle's ontology, he does not agree that God is too far removed for friendship but rather allows for friendship from God to man as willed beneficence, as shall be seen below. Thus, "God is not so far removed from creatures as to render friendship impossible. Rather, he is intimately present to and in all things, loving all creatures in that he wills their own natural good to them." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 107. In this way there is what Aquinas calls "the certain mutual return of love, together with a mutual communion," but as shall be seen this is not a symmetrical love but includes different kinds of love attributed to both sides. *Summa* 2.1.65.5 (Ages 2:697). Moreover, "our obedience is 'not the cause of divine friendship, but the sign' which demonstrates that God loves us and we him." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 109.

[199] Aquinas, *Summa* 2.2.23.2 (Ages 3:258–59).

[200] "We were not . . . friends in the active sense (*amantes*) but . . . friends in the passive sense of those whom he loved (*amanti*)." Aquinas, quoted in Carmichael, *Friendship*, 109.

[201] See Aquinas, *Summa* 2.2.27.8 (Ages 3:358–59).

[202] Love is given only by the Holy Spirit. "Therefore charity can be in us neither naturally, nor through acquisition by the natural powers, but by the infusion of the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the participation of Whom in us is created charity." Ibid., 2.2.23.2 (Ages 3:275). Thus, love "is primarily affirmed of God and only secondarily and in a derivative sense of the creature." Alan J. Torrance, "Is Love the Essence of God?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. K. J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 120. Moreover, "that very celestial love by which we love each other is not only from God, but also is God." Singer, *Nature,* 321. Accordingly, Aquinas comments further, "Moreover it is for this that the gift of charity is bestowed by God on each one, namely, that he may first of all direct his mind to God, and this pertains to a man's love for himself, and that, in the second place, he may wish other things to be directed to God, and even work for that end according to his capacity." Aquinas, *Summa* 2.2.26.13 (Ages 3:343–44).

[203] Ibid., 1.1.23.3.3 (Ages 1:313). Aquinas interprets reality in compatibilistic terms in an attempt to preserve both guilt worthy of condemnation in the reprobate as well as merit in the saved. Thus he is adamant that "reprobation . . . is not the cause of . . . sin; but it is the cause of abandonment by God. . . . Guilt proceeds from the free-will of the person who is reprobated and deserted by grace." Ibid., 1.1.23.3.2 (Ages 1:313). Nevertheless, "predestination is not anything in the predestined; but only in the person who

and thus gain merit, in accordance with his sacramental soteriology.[204] Not only is all love

ultimately from God, God is also the ultimate object of love, and all others are loved "for God's

sake."[205] It is God's worth as the supreme goodness that makes him the object of all love, since

all desire goodness toward their own perfection and happiness.[206]

In Aquinas's system, divine love is quite different from human love, in accordance with

classical divine ontology.[207] In this system, God cannot desire anything for his own benefit. He

lacks nothing. Moreover, God is utterly impassible; "in God there are no passions," and thus

divine love cannot be sensitive.[208] God loves, but his is a passionless love; it is an "act of the will"

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predestines. . . . Whence it is clear that predestination is a kind of type of the ordering of some persons towards eternal salvation, existing in the divine mind. The execution, however, of this order is in a passive way in the predestined, but actively in God." Ibid., 1.1.23.2 (Ages 1:310–11).

[204] Ibid., 2.2.23.2 (Ages 3:259). "Likewise, neither can it be said that the Holy Ghost moves the will in such a way to the act of loving, as though the will were an instrument, for an instrument, though it be a principle of action, nevertheless has not the power to act or not to act, for then again the act would cease to be voluntary and meritorious, whereas . . . the love of charity is the root of merit: and, given that the will is moved by the Holy Ghost to the act of love, it is necessary that the will also should be the efficient cause of that act." Ibid. Cf. ibid., 2.2.27 (Ages 3:356–58). Singer comments, "It is the notion of human merit that determines the Thomistic argument." *Nature,* 322. For Aquinas "an acceptable analysis of caritas *must* not challenge its ability to provide merit for the loving individual." Ibid., 321. "Infused sanctifying grace lifts us towards God, the theological virtues transfigure our powers, caritas as transforming virtue becomes a habit of our will, and this sharing of divine life makes it possible to experience caritas as friendship with God." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 111.

[205] "God is the principal object of charity, while our neighbor is loved out of charity for God's sake." Aquinas, *Summa* 2.2.23.5.1 (Ages 3:265). In this way, even enemies can be loved; love extends to enemies whom are loved by their relation to God. Ibid., 2.2.23.1.2 (Ages 3:257–58).

[206] "God will be to each one the entire reason of his love, for God is man's entire good. For if we make the impossible supposition that God were not man's good, He would not be man's reason for loving. Hence it is that in the order of love man should love himself more than all else after God." Ibid., 2.2.26.13.3 (Ages 3:344). Thus Nygren comments, "The reason why we love God at all is that we need Him as our bonum." *Agape*, 642.

[207] In fact, divine love is so different that it is questionable whether Aquinas's assertion of divine-human friendship is not equivocal. Nygren comments, "It cannot be denied that the unity of Thomas's doctrine of love suffered from this addition" of friendship. Ibid., 644. For a sympathetic treatment of Aquinas's conception of divine love and immutability, see Michael J. Dodds, *The Unchanging God of Love: A Study of the Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on Divine Immutability in View of Certain Contemporary Criticism of This Doctrine* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Éditions universitaires, 1986).

[208] The first objection he addresses is related to the apparent discrepancy of divine love, if love is considered to be a passion. "It seems that love does not exist in God. For in God there are no passions. Now love is a passion. Therefore love is not in God." Aquinas, *Summa* 1.1.20.1.1 (Ages 1:278). Aquinas explains that God has virtues that are concerned with passion but only metaphorically, whereas properly his

not an act of the "sensitive appetite."[209] As opposed to passion, which operates in human love,

divine love is the procession of the will of God.[210] Accordingly, "the love of God for Aquinas is

God's willing the good. God is benevolent (*bene volere* = 'good willing')."[211] Such love is not

caused by its object but by God alone. For Aquinas, love, or *caritas*, is a purposive, rational act of

the will.[212] Nevertheless, Aquinas continues, at least partially, love includes desire for some

good.[213] Even for God, love is directed toward a good object. But this is because every existent,

insofar as it exists, is good, although it is good only because God bestowed goodness.[214] Thus

Aquinas can state that divine love includes desire of a very qualified type: desire for the good of

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virtues are those that are concerned with "giving and expending; such as justice, liberality, magnificence" and these "reside not in the sensitive faculty, but in the will." Ibid., 1.1.21.1 (Ages 1:289). God does not experience sorrow, according to Aquinas, rather "sorrow . . . over the misery of others belongs not to God." Ibid., 1.1.21.3 (Ages 1:292).

[209] "Therefore acts of the sensitive appetite, inasmuch as they have annexed to them some bodily change, are called passions; whereas acts of the will are not so called. Love, therefore, and joy and delight are passions; in so far as they denote acts of the intellective appetite, they are not passions. It is in this latter sense that they are in God. Hence the Philosopher says (Ethic. vii): 'God rejoices by an operation that is one and simple,' and for the same reason He loves without passion." Ibid., 1.1.20.1.1 (Ages 1:280). Further Thomas speaks of the material and formal elements of the passions of sensitive appetite. But the material element is not proper to God in any way and the formal element only in "passions" which "imply no imperfection" (such as joy and love) and "without attributing passion to Him." Ibid., 1.1.20.1.2 (Ages 1:280).

[210] "There are two processions in God, one by way of the intellect, which is the procession of the Word, and another by way of the will, which is the procession of Love." Ibid., 1.1.37.1 (Ages 1:460).

[211] Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 5.

[212] For Aquinas, "the will also should be the efficient cause of that act" of love. *Summa* 2.2.23.2 (Ages 3:259).

[213] "For nobody desires anything nor rejoices in anything, except as a good that is loved: nor is anything an object of hate except as opposed to the object of love." Ibid., 1.1.20.1 (Ages 1:279).

[214] "*I answer that,* God loves all existing things. For all existing things, in so far as they exist, are good, since the existence of a thing is itself a good; and likewise, whatever perfection it possesses." Ibid., 1.1.20.2 (Ages 1:281). C. Osborne is quite critical of Aquinas saying, "In the area of mutuality, equal social status, co-operation, equal benefits accruing to both parties. This is the area in which Aquinas has to do most violence to both sides, minimizing the demand for mutual benefit in Aristotle, and maximizing the requirement of virtue in the beloved object in the *caritas*-tradition. In the tradition that Aquinas inherits *caritas* is clearly not a co-operative virtue, but one that is directed *towards* another object, whereas *philia* implies give and take, a relationship *between* two not *towards* another." *Eros,* 157.

others.[215] However, as seen above, this is by no means a passion; God is not affected in any way, it is purely willed good and only passion metaphorically.[216] Since God has no lack or need of anything, he does not actually gain satisfaction or value, he is beneficent by nature.[217] Accordingly, Aquinas continues the emphasis on *caritas* as both the divine essence and that which proceeds from God.[218]

Although Aquinas had equated *caritas* with *amicitia*, he clarifies that God does not actually love with friendship love (*amor amicitiae*) but with a desire (*amor concupiscentiae*) for the good of others, a kind of benevolence.[219] This fits with his further specification of love: "to love a person is to wish that person good."[220] This desire is strictly for their good; God gains nothing by loving humans and willing their good. However, whereas human friendships are relational, God has no actual relations with humankind.[221] Moreover, because God's will is undefeated, divine love is not merely benevolence but also a universal beneficence for every

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[215] "Strictly speaking, therefore, God does not love irrational creatures with the love of friendship; but as it were with the love of desire, in so far as He orders them to rational creatures, and even to Himself. Yet this is not because He stands in need of them; but only on account of His goodness, and of the services they render to us. For we can desire a thing for others as well as for ourselves." Aquinas, *Summa* 1.1.20.2.3 (Ages 1:282).

[216] See footnotes 208 and 209 above.

[217] "He can understand God's own love in no other way: if God loves His creatures, He wills their good for their sake, although, unlike our human love which is effect not cause of the goodness in its object, the divine love is creative—*infundens et creans bonitatem in rebus.*" Burnaby, *Amor,* 266.

[218] "The Divine Essence Itself is charity" and further "the charity whereby formally we love our neighbor is a participation of Divine charity." Aquinas, *Summa* 2.2.23.2 (Ages 3:260). Moreover, God's love is eternal; all objects of divine love have been "in Him from eternity." Aquinas states, "Although creatures have not existed from eternity, except in God, yet because they have been in Him from eternity, God has known them eternally in their proper natures; and for that reason has loved them, even as we, by the images of things within us, know things existing in themselves." Ibid., 1.1.20.2.2 (Ages 1:282).

[219] "Strictly speaking, therefore, God does not love irrational creatures with the love of friendship; but as it were with the love of desire." Ibid., 1.1.20.2.3 (Ages 1:282).

[220] "An act of love always tends towards two things; to the good that one wills, and to the person for whom one wills it: since to love a person is to wish that person good." Ibid., 1.1.20.1.3 (Ages 1:280).

[221] Thus Aquinas comments, "Now a relation of God to creatures, is not a reality in God, but in the creature; for it is in God in our idea only." Ibid., 1.1.6.2 (Ages 1:68).

existent.[222] Whereas human love is moved or affected by its object, divine love itself "infuses and creates goodness."[223] Divine love, then, is not dependent upon its object but actually creates the goodness of its object.[224] God loves universally, but this does not mean that God loves all equally.[225] In fact, though God loves all in some way, he does not love all in willing their eternal life.[226] Some are predestined to salvation and others are reprobate.[227] Thus divine love is not evaluative, or affected, but a purely creative, willed love that results in beneficence.[228]

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[222] He states, "God's will is the cause of all things. It must needs be, therefore, that a thing has existence, or any kind of good, only inasmuch as it is willed by God. To every existing thing, then, God wills some good. Hence, since to love anything is nothing else than to will good to that thing, it is manifest that God loves everything that exists." Ibid., 1.1.20.2 (Ages 1:281–82).

[223] God loves all, "yet not as we love. Because since our will is not the cause of the goodness of things, but is moved by it as by its object, our love, whereby we will good to anything, is not the cause of its goodness; but conversely its goodness, whether real or imaginary, calls forth our love, by which we will that it should preserve the good it has, and receive besides the good it has not, and to this end we direct our actions: whereas the love of God infuses and creates goodness." Ibid.

[224] "Further, God also loves himself and in this way moves himself. Therefore because God understands and loves Himself, in that respect they said that God moves Himself, not, however, as movement and change belong to a thing existing in potentiality, as we now speak of change and movement." Ibid., 1.1.9.1.1 (Ages 1:93).

[225] Rather "we must needs say that God loves some things more than others. For since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, as has been said, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." Ibid., 1.1.20.3 (Ages 1:283–84). "*I answer that,* It must needs be, according to what has been said before, that God loves more the better things. For it has been shown, that God's loving one thing more than another is nothing else than His willing for that thing a greater good: because God's will is the cause of goodness in things; and the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things." Ibid., 1.1.20.4 (Ages 1:285).

[226] "God loves all men and all creatures, inasmuch as He wishes them all some good; but He does not wish every good to them all. So far, therefore, as He does not wish this particular good—namely, eternal life—He is said to hate or reprobated them." Ibid., 1.1.23.3.1 (Ages 1:313). Moreover, God "extends friendship . . . to all 'antecedently (antecedente)' but 'finally (consequente)' only to the elect, willing for them the same good that he himself enjoys, 'the vision of himself, and the fruition with which he is blessed.'" Aquinas, quoted in Carmichael, *Friendship*, 107.

[227] See the discussion of compatibilism above.

[228] A. J. Torrance comments, "In radical contradistinction to the thrust of idealism, it [God's love] is a love that creates value by giving value to what it loves. It does not desire to receive, or to fulfill itself; it simply gives—and its human object may be worthless and degraded." "Is Love the Essence," 130.

Martin Luther's Conception of Love

Martin Luther breaks with the traditional doctrine of love primarily as it regards human love. However, there is a great deal of complementarity between Luther's view of divine love and the classical theologians before him.[229] At the same time, Luther pushes the conception of divine love further toward altruism while relegating all human-originated loves to egocentrism.[230] Although Luther never seems to have fully or systematically worked out a divine ontology, perhaps due to his belief in divine incomprehensibility,[231] he seems to adopt central tenets of Augustine and other theologians and from the primacy of the divine will all else flows, thus amounting to a monistic determinism.[232] Luther's break from traditional theology was therefore only partial. He maintained the axiom of God's aseity and utter freedom, locating God's independence in the divine will. Thus, Luther's view is voluntaristic. Everything is dependent upon God's eternal will, even the divine nature itself.[233] God is accordingly absolutely self-

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[229] It is important to note that the magisterial reformers did not break significantly with the classical doctrine of God as it relates to aseity and impassibility. For instance, John Calvin took it for granted: "God certainly has no blood, suffers not, cannot be touched with hands." *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.14.2 (Henry Beveridge, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* [Books for the Ages; Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software, 1997], 506).

[230] Peter Abelard was likely the first to suggest that only altruistic love suffices; he pointed out that "if man loved God on the basis of self-love, then he did not love God properly." Quoted in Singer, *Nature,* 338. However, Luther breaks considerably, reserving altruistic love for divine love alone.

[231] Luther contends, "If we knew his ways, he who is marvelous would not be incomprehensible." Luther, *Works*, 38:22. This is in accordance with his method of avoiding speculation regarding the divine majesty, "I follow this general rule: to avoid as much as possible any questions that carry us to the throne of the Supreme Majesty. It is better and safer to stay at the manger of Christ the Man. For there is very great danger in involving oneself in the mazes of the Divine Being." Ibid., 2:45. Thus Luther avoided construction of a divine ontology.

[232] Dennis Ngien argues that "the denial of divine passibility occurred because of the influence of Greek metaphysics upon the church's reading of Scripture, and that the platonic principle of divine apathy, in particular, held in its grip what many of the fathers believed may or may not be said of God." Ngien, *The Suffering of God according to Martin Luther's Theologia crucis* (vol. 181 of American University Studies: Series 7: Theology and Religion; New York: Lang, 1995), 3.

[233] God wills his own nature. "God Himself determines Himself to be divinely loving and good, says Luther, and is not determined in any way by the attitude or condition of those upon whom goodness and kindness are divinely bestowed." Ibid., 110.

sufficient, depending upon nothing outside of himself, but purely moved by his own will.[234] It

follows that God is immutable and impassible according to his "immutable, eternal, and infallible

will."[235] God is infinite and eternal, and the divine will is never defeated since God's power is

inexhaustible and irresistible.[236]

This attribute of impassibility plays a central role in defining divine love, negating

affected passion, as shall be seen. For this reason it is beneficial to carefully define Luther's view

of impassibility. For Luther, as the tradition before him, God cannot be affected from without.

However, it has been proposed that Luther did, in fact, allow for some divine passibility. This is

suggested in light of Luther's theology of the cross, which focuses on the suffering savior Jesus,

who is himself God.[237] First, Luther clearly presents divine impassibility stating, "God is not

capable of suffering."[238] Nevertheless, because Jesus is both God and man in one person, Luther

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[234] God alone has free will and relies upon no other. Luther states, "It follows now that free choice is plainly a divine term, and can be properly applied to none but the Divine Majesty alone; for he alone can do and does (as the psalmist says [Ps. 115:3]) whatever he pleases in heaven and on earth." Luther, *Works,* 33:68. Again, "free choice is a divine term and signifies a divine power." Ibid., 33:107. Ngien comments, "God's 'aseity' consists in the fact that God is *totally* independent of others, and correspondingly absolutely free." *Suffering*, 27.

[235] "God foreknows nothing contingently, but that he foresees and purposes and does all things by his immutable, eternal, and infallible will. Here is a thunderbolt by which free choice is completely prostrated and shattered, so that those who want free choice asserted must either deny or explain away this thunderbolt, or get rid of it by some other means." Luther, *Works,* 33:37. "Nothing can change, and resist God's will. God cannot be affected or changed by anything that the creatures do, otherwise God would not be God." *Suffering*, 27.

[236] Cf. Luther, *Works,* 17:29. "The omnipotence of God makes it impossible for the ungodly to evade the motion and action of God, for he is necessarily subject to it and obeys it." Ibid., 33:176. Moreover, "Since, then, God moves and actuates all in all, he necessarily moves and acts also in Satan and ungodly man. But he acts in them as they are and as he finds them; that is to say, since they are averse and evil, and caught up in the movement of this divine omnipotence, they do nothing but averse and evil things." Ibid. Luther explains, "God is immutable and unchanging in His counsel from eternity. He sees and knows all things; but He does not reveal them to the godly except at His own fixed time." Ibid., 2:45. Luther qualifies necessity as "necessity of immutability," which retains the important fact that God acts freely. Ibid., 33:64.

[237] For instance, Ngien theorizes that Luther's theology actually requires divine passibility, in *Suffering.* For another study of Luther's theology of the cross see Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985).

[238] Luther, *Works,* 38:254. He also acknowledges that, "the Deity surely cannot suffer and die." Ibid., 37:210. Elsewhere, Luther explicitly states that "from eternity he has not suffered; but when he was

"ascribe[s] to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to humanity, and vice versa" (*communicatio idiomatum*).[239] In this way, it can be said that God suffers, not in Godself, but in Christ.[240] Nevertheless, Luther opposes patripassianism. The Father does not suffer in himself.[241]

Thus, Luther may allow for a qualified divine passibility, only as it relates to the cross.[242] Whether Luther's theology of the cross is compatible with his simultaneous view of divine

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made man, he was passible" and goes on to refer to Christ as the "impassible Son of God." Luther, quoted in Ngien, *Suffering*, 82.

[239] Luther, *Works,* 37:210.

[240] Thus Luther states, Christ "is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say: the Son of God suffers. Although, so to speak, the one part (namely, the divinity) does not suffer, nevertheless the person, who is God, suffers in the other part (namely, in the humanity). And in reality it is so." Ibid. Cf. ibid., 24:106. Paradoxically, Luther just before had seemed to suggest that the divine nature truly suffered saying, "For if I believe that only the human nature suffered for me, then Christ would be a poor Savior for me, in fact, he himself would need a Savior." Ibid., 37:209. However, this assumes the *communicatio idiomatum*, specifically that "we should ascribe to the whole person whatever pertains to one part of the person, because both parts constitute one person." Ibid., 37:210. Thus God suffered in Christ. Luther extends this further saying, "The two natures, the human and the divine, are inseparable. They are so united in one Person that the properties of the one nature are also attributed to the other. For instance, mortality is peculiar to human nature; now that the human nature is united in one Person with the divine, death, exclusively the attribute of the human nature, is also ascribed to the divine." Ibid., 22:492. He goes on, "Since God and man are one Person, the properties characteristic of humanity alone are attributed to the deity; for the properties of the two natures are also united. . . . Yet these two natures are so united that there is only one God and Lord, that Mary suckles God with her breasts, bathes God, rocks Him, and carries Him; furthermore, that Pilate and Herod crucified and killed God. The two natures are so joined that the true deity and humanity are one. . . . The deity and the humanity joined not only their natures but also their properties, except for sin." Ibid., 22:492–93. Notably, Luther himself elsewhere cautions that the divine and human natures are not to be confused but presented in such "a way as to identify and recognize each nature properly." Ibid., 24:105–6.

[241] Ngien comments, "The Father does not 'suffer', only the Son does. But of course the Son, too, is God. That is how Luther affirms Theopaschitism but repudiates Patripassianism as the early Church does." *Suffering*, 1. Ngien asserts that because the suffering of Christ was eternally in the heart of God, it reaches the Trinity. Thus he states, "If God is in Christ then whatever God the Son suffers becomes the suffering of God by the union of the persons of the Trinity. . . . In this manner the Father, though He does not suffer dying as the Son does on the cross, suffers through divine unity with the Son." Ibid., 27 This is an interesting interpretation of Luther. However, it appears that Ngien extrapolates Luther's position beyond what is made explicit by Luther himself. He himself admits that Luther "did not develop a theology of relationships in which the suffering and dying person of the Son affect God the Father and God the Spirit in the inner divine life," presumably because "Luther sees no need to dwell on the *ad intra* life of God." Ibid.

[242] Others agree with Ngien. For instance, Paul Althaus considers Luther to be the first major theologian to break with impassibility. Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 197. Cf. John Kenneth Mozley, *The Impassibility of God: A Survey of Christian Thought*

impassibility is an open question. This apparent tension may be overcome if God's "passion" or

"suffering" is understood not to result from any external cause but from the divine will resulting

in self-willed suffering. Thus divine impassibility for Luther need not mean that God has no

passions, but that divine passions are purely willed by himself; he has no externally caused

passions but he may will his own passion or suffering.[243] Thus Christ can suffer as God but even

this suffering is not a suffering inflicted against God's will or by free agents outside of God.[244] In

all this, Luther does not waver from his position that God cannot be changed or affected by

anything outside of himself.[245] God in Christ chooses to suffer and this is in keeping with

Luther's radical voluntarism, which evidences the influence of nominalism, along with his utter

determinism, which hearkens to Augustinian predestination.

Luther is heavily influenced by the nominalism of William of Ockham, transmitted to

Luther by Gabriel Biel.[246] Primarily of interest to this study, Luther adopted the premise that

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(Cambridge, UK: The University Press, 1926). Nevertheless, Luther's theology of the cross does not make God passible to external influence.

[243] "God's passion is divine action, for He wills to bring upon Himself the deepest humiliation in the Son and enacts His will: The suffering that God undergoes in Christ's passion is a divine act, not out of a deficiency of God's being but out of God's 'boundless love.'" Ngien, *Suffering,* 27 Compare the view of Richard E. Creel that God cannot be "causally influenced" by any other. Creel, *Divine Impassibility: An Essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11. As Ngien puts it, "It is God's glory to give, to act, and to love freely. The immutability of God's freedom must be affirmed alongside of the passibility of God's love in order to avoid attributing to God creaturely passion." *Suffering*, 27.

[244] Suggestions to the contrary in biblical languages are merely due to the language of accommodation. Therefore, regarding the grief of the Spirit in Gen 6:7, Luther comments, "Such an emotion is attributed to God, not as though He were thus moved, but the holy prophets, Moses, and Noah conceived of Him in this way." Luther, *Works,* 17:358. Further he states, "One should not imagine that God has a heart or that He can grieve. But when the spirit of Noah, of Lamech, and of Methuselah is grieved, God Himself is said to be grieved. Thus we should understand this grief to refer to its effect, not to the divine essence." Ibid., 2:47.

[245] "For the counsel of God is not changed by either the merits or demerits of anyone. For He does not repent of the gifts and calling which He has promised, because the Jews are now unworthy of them and you are worthy. He is not changed just because you are changed, and therefore they shall turn back and be led again to the truth of the faith." Ibid., 25:432.

[246] Luther acknowledged the influence of Biel upon him. However, it should be noted that Luther breaks from Biel's view of merit where congruent merit can be earned. "I know what Gabriel Biel says, and it is all very good, except when he deals with grace, love, hope, faith, and virtue. To what an extent he there

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essence is known in act, in other words, something *is* what it *does*.[247] Moreover, God's power is such that it is beyond any restriction; God does whatever he pleases and all, even the definition of goodness and evil itself, is subject to the divine will.[248] This voluntaristic worldview is apparent throughout Luther's system, perhaps most clearly in Luther's predestinarian view of the bondage of the will. God alone is free. All others are determined by the eternal, sovereign, omnipotent will of God.[249] Here Luther adamantly supports Augustine's view of predestination and election, locating all reality as determined solely by the divine will.[250] Luther differentiated between the God hidden (*deus absconditus*) and the God revealed (*deus revelatus*) such that the mystery of the divine will regarding evil and the election of some but not others to eternal life is relegated to the hidden God.[251] Nevertheless, Luther himself struggles to understand how God can unilaterally

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Pelagianizes together with his Scotus." Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans* (trans. W. Pauck; vol. 15 of The Library of Christian Classics; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), liii.

[247] God is what God does such that "whoever understands His works correctly cannot fail to know His nature and will, His heart and mind." Luther, *Works*, 21:331. Cf. William Occkham, *Summa logicae* (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1957).

[248] "For Occkham, God and the good are not to be trapped in universals, if the good is whatever God ordains. God has absolute power (*potentia Dei absolute*), according to which God is free to change the good." Ngien, *Suffering,* 21.

[249] Luther states that since God "leads us to act by his infallible and immutable counsel and power . . . there is no such thing as free choice." *Works*, 33:191. Further, by God's omnipotence "I do not mean the potentiality by which he could do many things which he does not, but the active power by which he potently works all in all [cf. 1 Cor 12:6], which is the sense in which Scripture calls him omnipotent. This omnipotence and the foreknowledge of God, I say, completely abolish the dogma of free choice." Ibid., 33:189.

[250] Thus Luther comments, "In relation to God, or in matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice." Ibid., 33:70. Further, God "moves and works of necessity even in Satan and the ungodly. But He works according to what they are, and what He finds them to be: which means, since they are evil and perverted themselves, that when they are impelled to action by this movement of Divine omnipotence they do only that which is perverted and evil." Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (trans. O. R. Johnston; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2003), 204. For a discussion of Luther's view of the bondage of the will see Peckham, "Canon."

[251] Ronald Goetz comments: "Luther, who in his theology of the cross affirmed the suffering of God even unto death, seemed to take back much of what he said in his equally foundational doctrines of predestination and the Deus Absconditus" thus portraying "the purposes of the hidden God" as "inscrutably impassible, divine sovereignty." "The Suffering God: The Rise of a New Orthodoxy," *ChrCent* 103 (1986): 385. Ngien adds, "Goetz is right to identify the *deus absconditus* as 'an inscrutable impassible, divine sovereignty' who devours sinners without regret. . . . But he fails to grasp Luther's emphasis which sets the

damn some eternally and save others and yet be a God of love, but he proclaims it nevertheless.[252] The extent of divine voluntarism drastically affects the conception of divine love, as shall be seen further below.

Human Love

Luther is primarily interested in two aspects of love, love from humans to God and love from God to humans. It is in the first category that he makes a definitive break from his background as an Augustinian monk. Specifically, Luther reacted strongly to the traditional concept of *caritas* love. This reaction was motivated primarily by Luther's strong soteriology of *sola gratia*. Luther thought it impossible for humans to love God.[253] Because of intrinsic sinfulness, humans are ontologically incapable of love.[254] The separation between a sinless God and sinful human underscores the immense divine-human otherness, a difference so vast that there can be no true friendship between God and humans.[255] Accordingly, Luther sees "the very idea that man can love God a dangerous snare of the devil."[256] As has been seen, Luther utterly

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preached/revealed God against the not preached/hidden God." *Suffering*, 27.

[252] "Doubtless it gives the greatest possible offence to common sense or natural reason, that God, who is proclaimed as being full of mercy and goodness, and so on, should of His own mere will abandon, harden and damn men, as though He delighted in the sins and great eternal torments of such poor wretches. . . . And who would not stumble at it? I have stumbled at it myself more than once, down to the deepest pit of despair, so that I wished I had never been a man. . . . This is why so much toil and trouble has been devoted to clearing the goodness of God, throwing the blame on man's will." Luther, *Bondage*, 217.

[253] "The next phrases, however—'with the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole might'—are difficult. No saint could fulfill them if God did not forgive. Yes, who is there who does not fail in both respects: in having as well as in loving one God?" Luther, *Works*, 9:68. Thus humans may only "love God by admitting your utter and total inability to love God." Singer, *Nature,* 327.

[254] Thus Singer comments, "Between God and man, however, there could be no significant equality." Ibid.*,* 202.

[255] "Without equality there could be no friendship; and sinner that he was, man could never hope to equal the divine. But if friendship was impossible, how else could man raise himself into the love of God? To which Luther replies: he cannot." Ibid.

[256] Ibid., 325. He states, "No one is able to love God from his whole heart, etc., and his neighbor as himself." Luther, *Works*, 34:309. There is a love from humans to God which itself is the gift of God. "No one can love Him unless He makes Himself known to him in the most lovable and intimate fashion. . . . But where there is this experience, namely, that He is a God who looks into the depths and helps only the poor,

denies free will. Hence, he vehemently rejects Aquinas's conception of love, which allows for merit.[257] Merit is excluded both soteriologically (*sola gratia*) and metaphysically (determinism) and thus love cannot be an action of any subject other than God himself.[258]

When humans do exhibit love, it is God who loves through the human.[259] As water that passes through a tube, so the human may be a passive conduit of divine love.[260] Thus, "man himself cannot love, but he can receive love and pass it on to his neighbor."[261] Nygren contends that such neighbor (human to human) love is greater than the Augustinian neighbor love, which is actually directed at God as the ultimate good. "Thus, unlike Augustine's *caritas,* which can only use the neighbor to get to God, Luther's *agape* love addresses the neighbor as neighbor. In fact, Luther claims that love for God is none other than love for neighbor."[262] Yet, here the love is truly directed towards others but it does not originate with humans but with God. God is the

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despised, afflicted, miserable, forsaken, and those who are nothing, there a hearty love for Him is born. The heart overflows with gladness and goes leaping and dancing for the great pleasure it has found in God." Ibid., 21:300.

[257] "You see that nothing is held out to human trust in any work but the undeserved love of God, by which He is moved to approach us with His Word and promise even before we are born. It is out of the question that He should requite anything after we are born or begin to serve Him. . . . We should deem ourselves to be nothing as regards our merit, but to have, receive, and find power to do everything only by His mercy and love, to His glory—mercy which He first promises by His Word and then also confirms afterward by a work which He does through us." Ibid., 9:85.

[258] "But for Luther it is not man, even perfected man, who really acts: it is God." Singer, *Nature,* 340.

[259] Luther states, "But this concupiscence is always in us, and therefore the love of God is never in us, unless it is begun by grace, and until the concupiscence which still remains and which keeps us from 'loving God with all our heart' (Luke 10:27) is healed and by mercy not imputed to us as sin, and until it is completely removed and the perfect love for God is given to the believers and those who persistently agitate for it to the end." *Works*, 25:262.

[260] Thus, "faith and love, by which man is placed between God and his neighbour as a medium which receives from above and gives out again below, and is like a vessel or tube through which the stream of divine blessings must flow without intermission to other people." Luther, quoted in Nygren, *Agape,* 735. The tube/Christian makes no contribution to the character or shape of this love.

[261] Singer, *Nature,* 329. For Nygren, "the Christian is not an independent center of power alongside God." *Agape*, 734.

[262] Nygren*, Agape,* 736.

universal subject of this love as opposed to Augustine's universal object.[263] This still falls short of

a human other-love; it merely makes God the subject of all love rather than its sole object. All

true love flows from God downwards not from human upwards. Luther thus categorically rejects

the conception of adequate love from humans to God and accordingly rejects any synthesis of

eros and *agape*.

<div align="center">Divine Love</div>

Divine love, however, remains quite in accord with the tradition of Augustine and others.

For Luther, love is the essence of God, and this love is outflowing beneficence manifested in the

cross of Christ.[264] Divine wrath is overcome by God's "omnipotent love" through Christ's

atonement.[265] This love has no regard for its own good or for the worth of its objects but

manifests itself in pure bestowal.[266] Accordingly, divine love does not enjoy good but confers

good.[267] Even if human nature was capable of loving God, he would remain unaffected by such

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[263] However, one may rightly question whether this is a fair understanding of Augustine, for whom love originates with God's efficacious will. See, for instance, Augustine, *Spir. et litt.* (*NPNF* 5:108).

[264] For Luther, "God is nothing else than love." *Works*, 30:300. "The affirmation that God is love consistently appears throughout the entire corpus of Luther's works." Ngien, *Suffering,* 104. Divine love was itself the motive for the suffering and death of Christ on the cross for us. Luther, *Works*, 26:127. Cf. ibid., 26:92, 127.

[265] God in Christ "conquered hell through his omnipotent love." Luther, *Works*, 42:107. Wrath is an essential element of love; therefore Luther himself speaks of God's love as "wrathful love" (*Zornige Liebe*). Ngien, *Suffering,* 27. "The work of God's love works in a twofold way in relation to God's *wrath:* (1) In relation to us, the work of God's love itself *works* wrath (God's alien work) in order to move us to dependence upon *God's* love (God's proper work). (2) In relation to God, *God's love* moves God to come to us, thus abolishing His distance from us, which would mean wrath for us. Two contraries are resolved: (1) God's blessing and curse in His dealings with us; and (2) God's *blessing* in coming to us as opposed to the curse of His remaining at a *distance from* us." Ibid.

[266] "God does not love because of our works; He loves because of His love." Luther, *Works*, 30:300. For Luther, it is "God's nature to give, to bestow, to sacrifice himself and to have mercy." Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 191. God's loving descent is "a true 'bestowal of being,' a *sharing* of the nature of the divine with the creature." Singer, *Nature,* 339. God "gladly waste[s] . . . kindness on the ungrateful." Luther, *Works*, 14:106. This divine love is "ineffable" and is given "to the wayward multitude, which has not merited this but, on the contrary, should reasonably expect to be doomed and damned." Ibid., 22:373.

[267] Thus, for Luther, "in relationship to men, God's creative activity is pure giving and helping. . . . He is goodness and love, constantly engaged in giving." Althaus, *Theology,* 115. However, it is not only

love according to his self-sufficiency and impassibility.[268] The gratuitous love of God

(characterized thematically as *agape*) is to be differentiated from all human types of love.[269] As

Luther puts it: "Rather than seeking its own good, God's love flows forth and bestows good.[270]

Therefore, sinners are attractive because they are loved; they are not loved because they are

attractive."[271] God receives nothing from humans but gives out of his extravagant goodness.[272]

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good that divine love confers but also chastening. "For God leads down to hell and brings back (cf. 1 Sam 2:6). Now you see His back parts, and God seems to be shunning you, but sometime later you will see His front parts and His face. This is what it means for Him to love those whom He chastises. This love must be learned from experience, nor should chastisement be avoided and shunned." Luther, *Works*, 6:151.

[268] It should be noted that Luther at times speaks of divine love by employing passionate language. For instance, he speaks of God's love as the "blood of love." Luther, *Works*, 30:300–301. He also speaks of the zeal of the Lord against the enemies of God's people. Ibid., 16:102. Forcefully he even comments, "If I were to paint a picture of God I would so draw him that there would be nothing else in the depth of his divine nature than that of fire and passion which is called love for people. Correspondingly love is such a thing that it is neither human nor angelic but rather divine, yes, even God himself." Luther, quoted in Althaus, *Theology*, 115–16. In these cases, nevertheless, divine love is a willed love that remains unaffected by external influence. Yet he can even state poetically that "the cross was the altar on which He, consumed by the fire of the boundless love which burned in His heart, presented the living and holy sacrifice of His body and blood to the Father with fervent intercession, loud cries, and hot, anxious tears." Luther, *Works*, 13:319. Here again, the cross is the locus of divine passion, but passion in Christ, a willed beneficence.

[269] D. D. Williams, *Spirit*, 78.

[270] The thought that God bestows love on the unworthy was comforting to Luther considering his own struggle regarding personal salvation and acceptance with God. This view of love allowed him to have peace saying, "If God loved me so that He gave His only Son for my salvation, why should I fear His anger?" Luther, *Works*, 22:365.

[271] Ibid., 31:57. "I love thee, not because thou art good or bad, for I draw my love not from thy goodness as from an alien spring, but from mine own well-spring." Singer, *Nature,* 328. For Luther, divine love is an overflowing spring. See Luther, quoted in Nygren, *Agape,* 730. Luther writes, "God's love (amor Dei) does not find, but creates, its lovable object; man's love is caused by its lovable object. . . . Sinners are lovely because they are loved: they are not loved because they are lovely. That is why human love shuns sinners and evil men. As Christ said, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners' (Matt 9:13). And that is what love of the cross means. It is a love born of the cross, which betakes itself not to where it can find something good to enjoy, but where it may confer good to the wicked and the needy." Luther, quoted in Nygren, *Agape,* 725–26.

[272] Luther compares this to a furnace saying, "If anyone would paint and aptly portray God, then he must draw a picture of pure love, as if the Divine nature were nothing but a furnace and fire of such love, which fills heaven and earth." Quoted in Nygren, *Agape,* 724. In fact, God hates some who think they are loved. Luther states, "'Those other counterfeit saints, who are beyond reproach in their zeal for the Law, who hope to be loved, who are ready to die for their righteousness, and who suppose that with their strivings they are a delight to God—these are the ones whom Thou dost hate with a divine and insuperable hatred. Thou lovest only truth in secret. Thou dost not love those hypocrites and proud saints who go about in fictitious religion.' . . . Hence we cannot assume so glibly that we are loved by God, as can those who

Thus, divine love is indifferent to its object, bestowing goodness on whatever objects God wills to love.[273] In this way, divine love is a voluntaristic, willed love. The ultimate act of divine love was itself willed by God from all eternity.[274] In this way, love is a one-way relationship from God to humans. Daniel D. Williams states, "The Protestant Reformation understands the love of God as grace, as forgiveness given to man, rather than as a spirit which can be directly and immediately realized in man."[275] Thus, the idea that love includes desire, or *eros*, is fundamentally opposed to the idea of love as grace (divine bestowal). Simply put, "Divine nature is nothing else but pure beneficence."[276] Luther thus vehemently rejected the *caritas* of Augustine, finding no place for human love toward God (*eros*), but only divine love (*agape)*, which is, effectively, grace. Despite this reaction to the definition of love (specifically as it relates to human nature), Luther's view of God remains dependent upon the classical axioms of aseity and impassibility (among others) interpreted in accordance with divine voluntarism. The sovereign power and will of God is central to Luther's view so much so that "pure love . . . must defer to coercive power."[277]

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live in lies and brag with a loud voice that they are loved. . . . The counterfeit saints claim God's love though they are under hate." *Works*, 12:355.

[273] God "loves sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings in order to make them righteous, good, wise, and strong. Rather than seeking its own good, the love of God flows forth and bestows good." Ibid., 31:57. Thus God "is good by nature, and that His goodness does not stand or fall by the vice or virtue of another, as human goodness may stand on the virtue of one and fall by the vice of another, and even become worse than he is." Ibid., 14:106. Divine love is "free and overflowing bestowal. Indifferent to the worthlessness of its object, it lavishly makes all things good." Singer, *Nature,* 328.

[274] "God's self-sacrifice in His Son unveils His atoning will to reconcile humanity unto Himself. For Luther, God's atoning will in Christ has already existed in the heart of God in eternity before the historical work of redemption on the cross. Already there is a cross in God in eternity before the wood is seen on Calvary (Rev 13:8)." Ngien, *Suffering,* 27. "Christ would not have shown this love for you if God in his eternal love had not wanted this, for Christ's love for you is due to his obedience to God." Luther, *Works*, 42:13.

[275] D. D. Williams, *Spirit,* 76.

[276] Luther, quoted in Nygren, *Agape,* 720.

[277] Henry, *God, Revelation*, 352.

Anders Nygren's Conception of Love

No survey of divine love would be sufficient without considering the influence and

impact of Anders Nygren who wrote the classic work on the distinction of *agape* and *eros*.[278] In

conjunction with consideration of Nygren's view, it will also be beneficial to consider the

reaction to his landmark framing of the issues. Consideration of this reaction will shed further

light on the time-tested and long-lasting issues that revolve around divine love and provide

further context for the contemporary conflict. Through Nygren's work the categories of *agape*

and *eros* in thinking about divine love have become incredibly influential such that nearly every

serious work on the topic of love deals with these categories, and with Nygren's study.[279] He uses

what he calls motif analysis, avoiding the semantic argument regarding *agape* and *eros* and

focusing on a thematic dichotomy. For Nygren, *eros* and *agape* are opposites that represent

egocentrism and theocentrism, respectively.[280] He chastises the early church for what he

considers to be a devastating synthesis between *eros* and *agape* by accepting the *eros* worldview

and attempting to integrate it with Christianity. He hypothesizes that the *eros* motif stems from

Orphism[281] and thus consists of a desire toward ascending and *agape* to be the love of

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[278] Nygren, *Agape*.

[279] Gene H. Outka goes so far as to state, "Nygren so effectively posed issues about love that they have had a prominence in theology and ethics they never had before. . . . Thus, whatever the reader may think of it, one may justifiably regard his work as the beginning of the modern treatment of the subject." *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 1. Cf. Carmichael, *Friendship*, 36; James Barr, "Words for Love in Biblical Greek," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987); Edward Collins Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994). For a contemporary proponent of Nygren's view of *agape,* see Colin Grant, "For the Love of God: Agape," *JRE* 24 (1996): 3–21.

[280] He contends that *eros* and *agape* "represent two streams that run through the whole history of religion, alternately clashing against one another and mingling with one another. They stand for what may be described as the egocentric and the theocentric attitude in religion." Nygren, *Agape,* 205. "There seems in fact to be no possibility of discovering any idea common to them both which might serve as the starting-point for the comparison; for at every point the opposition between them makes itself felt." Ibid., 209.

[281] Further, "he identifies it both with the inclination toward the sensual that is expressed in mystery-piety and with the drive to transcend the sensual that is expressed, in its highest form, in Plato." Oord, "Matching," 117.

Christianity.[282] Nygren identifies a higher and lower *eros*, which he traces throughout the history of the motif, a vulgar *eros* that is love for this world and heavenly *eros* that strives for the higher world of forms.[283] In both cases, he identifies the central element of longing and desire for that which one does not possess and the self-interest to which such a conception of *eros* love is disposed. However, vulgar *eros* has been identified as inferior long since (see Plato); for Nygren it is heavenly *eros* that presents the rival motif to Christian *agape*.[284]

Nygren writes from a Lutheran perspective and fleshes out Luther's concept of gratuitous love as specifically opposed to *eros*.[285] He positions Luther as the bulwark defender of the true Christian conception of love as beneficence, which Nygren considers under the *agape* motif. For Nygren, the only true Christian love is *agape,* which he describes as (1) Spontaneous and unmotivated; (2) Indifferent to value; (3) Creative; and (4) Initiator of fellowship with God.[286] His perspective is further laid out in a series of antitheses. He contends that "Eros is acquisitive desire and longing" while "agape is sacrificial giving." "eros is an upward movement, man's way to God" while "agape is sacrificial giving" which "comes down . . . God's way to man." "Eros is man's effort" while "agape is God's grace." "Eros is determined by the quality, the beauty and worth, of its object, it is not spontaneous but 'evoked', 'motivated,'" while "agape is sovereign in relation to its object, and is directed to both 'the evil and the good'; it is spontaneous,

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[282] "*Agape* is the center of Christianity, the Christian fundamental motif *par excellence*." Nygren, *Agape,* 48. Moreover, for him, "nothing but that which bears the impress of *agape* has the right to be called Christian love." Ibid., 92.

[283] This distinction is clear in the writings of Plato, see above.

[284] He contends that Christianity's translation into Platonic terms transformed *agape* toward *eros*, leading toward the famous (or infamous, depending on one's view) *caritas* synthesis. Nygren, *Agape,* 54. It is quite interesting, however, that Nygren sees Platonic influence as distorting *agape* when it appears that a Platonic or neo-Platonic presuppositional doctrine of God underpins the requirement of love to be purely self-sufficient and disinterested.

[285] "Behind Nygren lay the Lutheran understanding of justification by faith alone, by God's action and not by human striving." Carmichael, *Friendship*, 36.

[286] Nygren, *Agape,* 75–81.

'overflowing', 'unmotivated'."[287] As such, any integration or conflation of *eros* and *agape* is utterly rejected by Nygren. For this reason he vehemently criticizes the so-called *caritas* synthesis of Augustine because, he believes, it includes the fundamental *eros* motif of ascent to God.[288] For Nygren, such ascent upward toward God is in stark contrast to the view of Luther that humans are incapable of ascent and that God descends to man, not vice versa.[289]

Since God, in Nygren's view and in keeping with Luther, lacks nothing and thus desires nothing (perfection and self-sufficiency), the *eros* motif is inappropriate to any conception of divine love. Accordingly, divine love in Christianity (*agape*) is not emotive, evaluative, or motivated but a purposive, willed, indifferent love totally distinct from any need or desire. Biblical expressions of divine emotion "are on this view merely crude anthropomorphisms."[290] All other types of love, *eros*, *philia,* etc., are not Christian love.[291] Rather, friendship love is inappropriate due to the vast inequality between God and humans. He claims that *agape* was a theme specifically chosen by the NT writers to convey this *sola gratia* type of love that is "indifferent to human merit" and to exclude all other concepts of love.[292] Thus, he believes that

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[287] Ibid., 210. For Nygren, "*Eros* is need-love which is motivated by the desire for what it lacks. *Agape is* gift-love which flows spontaneously from its own abundance. Thus God's love for us is not *eros* but pure *agape.*" Brümmer, *Model,* 128. Moreover, *eros* is self-love and *agape* is divine love toward others.

[288] See Nygren, *Agape,* 449–558. Moreover, Christian love (*agape*) is opposed to *nomos* and thus a denial of the Jewish scale of values. Ibid., 210. As such, *agape* excludes justice. Ibid., 88.

[289] "There is thus no way for man to come to God, but only a way for God to come to man: the way of divine forgiveness, divine love. *Agape* is God's way to man." Ibid., 80–81. Nygren's analysis seems motivated by a polemic against Catholicism; he writes, "The deepest difference between Catholicism and Luther can be expressed by the following formula; in Catholicism: fellowship with God is on God's own level, on the basis of holiness; in Luther fellowship with God is on our level, on the basis of sin. In Catholicism, it is a question of a fellowship with God motivated by some worth—produced, it is true, by the infusion of *caritas*—to be found in man; in Luther, fellowship with God rests exclusively on God's unmotivated love, justification is the justification of the sinner, the Christian is '*simul iustus et peccator.*'" Nygren, *Agape,* 690.

[290] Badcock, "Concept," 40.

[291] Nygren, *Agape,* 92.

[292] Ibid., 57. In fact, he goes so far as to consider it a "new creation of Christianity." Ibid., 48. Notably, Nygren dislikes the Johannine conception of love in preference for a Pauline conception. See

the NT conception of love is different from the meaning of love in the OT.[293] Here the only true

agent of love is God; humans in themselves are incapable of *agape* love.

Thus, a human loves God only "because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him

and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God. Therein lies the profound

significance of the idea of predestination: man has not selected God, but God has elected man."[294]

As for Luther, human to human *agape* love is likewise not originated by humans but divine love

that flows through humans.[295] "What we have here is a purely theocentric love, in which all

choice on man's part is excluded."[296]*Agape* love is thus unconditional love predicated only on the

divine will which itself is in accordance with the superabundance of the divine nature of *agape*;

divine love thus could never be earned or merited.[297] Moreover, Nygren states that *agape*

"excludes completely the principle of justice from the religious relationship."[298]

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ibid., 127, 151–59. Thus, Nygren "claims that St. Paul rarely speaks of man loving God because God's love was the only kind he recognized." Singer, *Nature,* 296. However, Carmichael points out, "More objective scholarship suggests that the appearance of agape is to be attributed, not to theological motivation but to the natural evolution of the Greek language." *Friendship*, 36.

[293] Nygren, *Agape,* 62. This is in keeping with his view of discontinuity between Judaism and Christianity.

[294] Ibid., 214. Badcock states, "According to Nygren, God loves but somehow does not love *us*." "Concept," 45.

[295] Thus, "to the extent that man participates in the divine, and only to that extent, is it right for me to love him." Nygren, *Agape,* 215. Nygren thus takes up Luther's tube analogy. Ibid., 215. See above. Thus, "strictly speaking, *agape* cannot be the love of one human being for another. It can only apply to the love of God for human beings whereby he uses one human being as an instrument through which he funnels his *agape* to another." Brümmer, *Model,* 136. "It is therefore not we but God who does all the loving." Ibid.

[296] Nygren, *Agape,* 213.

[297] "God's love is 'groundless' though not, of course, in the sense that there is no ground for it at all, or that it is arbitrary or fortuitous. On the contrary, it is just to bring out the *element* of necessity in it that we describe it as 'groundless' our purpose is to emphasise that there are no extrinsic grounds for it. The only ground for it is to be found in God himself. God's love is altogether spontaneous." Ibid., 73. "God does not love that which is already itself worthy of love, but on the contrary, that which in itself has no worth acquires worth just by becoming the object of God's love." Ibid., 78.

[298] Ibid., 88. In contrast to *nomos* in Judaism.

Nygren further states that "God does not love that which is already in itself worthy of love, but on the contrary, that which in itself has no worth acquires worth just by becoming the object of God's love. . . . The man who is loved by God has no value in himself; what gives him value is precisely the fact that God loves him. Agape is a value-creating principle."[299] The God-world relationship of love is a one-way relationship wholly predicated on the sovereign will of God.[300] God gains no value from this relationships; divine love is utterly gratuitous.[301] Nygren's view has come under a great deal of criticism, but it still remains a very influential study, and many of his conclusions remain prominent in biblical and systematic theology.[302] However, before considering criticisms of Nygren's view, it is important to recognize that Nygren explicitly states that he is not conducting a linguistic analysis or making a linguistic argument but rather a

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[299] Ibid., 78.

[300] "The fact that God loves the world derives solely from God himself, who is in himself unchanging, so that the love of God for the world is a function of the unchanging being and life of God." Badcock, "Concept," 40.

[301] "God does not love in order to obtain any advantage thereby, but quite simply because it is his nature to love with a love that seeks, not to get, but to give." Nygren, *Agape,* 201. Thus, "God's love for us has its origin in God himself, i.e. in the abundance of his own *agape,* and not in us, i.e. in some advantage which he desires to receive from us. But did not Plato argue in a similar way about the Good? It too was self-sufficiently perfect and could have no need-love; but it too could have gift-love which imparts of its own abundance 'to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things.' And this form of divine *agape* became even more explicit in neo-Platonism since, according to Plotinus, God ('the One') created the world out of the *superabundance* of his own nature, by a process of overflow or *emanation.* From this it follows that the sole reason for God's creativity and love is his own nature, which spontaneously overflows itself without suffering the least depletion." Brümmer, *Model,* 129.

[302] Nygren's theology of divine love is criticized by D. D. Williams who sees it as inconsistent. *Spirit,* 38. "Niebuhr explicitly criticizes Nygren for making the distinction between agape and human love too sharp." Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (2 vols.; New York: Scribner, 1964), 2:84. Many others have pointed out that the distinction between *agape* and other words for love, specifically the *philia* family, is not supported by the linguistics. Badcock states, "The Bible itself does not actually make the rigid distinction that Nygren presupposes between Christian love, *agape*, and other forms of human love." "Concept," 37. Cf. Stephen G. Post, *A Theory of Agape: On the Meaning of Christian Love* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1990), 88–89. John A. T. Robinson harshly criticized Nygren and finds "something of unfulfilled desire in agape." He states, "It is, indeed, utterly true that Agape does not require for its stimulation appreciation of, or desire for, a beauty or goodness external to itself. . . . But this is no way excludes the truth that *Agape* desires response, and desires it passionately. . . . Love yearns for a loving response. In this sense there is a need in the very heart of God, a divine discontent which must ever burn until it be satisfied." "Agape and Eros," *Theology* 48 (1945): 99. Many others have criticized Nygren's conception; others will appear later in this work.

motif analysis.[303] However, this leaves Nygren a great deal of room to apply definitions to

thematic *agape,* which seem to stem from Luther's definition more than the Bible and contrast

that with the tradition that Luther explicitly condemned. In this way, the study seems to

presuppose the conflict from a Lutheran perspective. The question is whether either of the motifs

of *eros* or *agape* was ever widely seen in such stark terms prior to Luther.

Nygren's basic premise regarding the categories of need love (corresponding to *eros*) and

gift love (corresponding to *agape*) continues to be influential in some circles.[304] At the same time,

Nygren's study has come under considerable criticism. For instance, Nygren's interpretations of

historical theology have been questioned regarding certain figures, such as Augustine.[305] Many

theologians question the adequacy of a conception of divine love that rules out a meaningful

mutual relationship between God and humans.[306] As might be expected, this criticism of Nygren

extends to his deterministic metaphysics.[307] Another issue is the sharp dichotomy between *eros*

and *agape*. While Nygren considers them to be opposing motifs, others see *eros* and *agape* as

complementary.[308] Moreover, the contention that the *agape* motif is the only true Christian

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[303] Nygren, *Agape,* 33. However, he does note the lack of the word *eros* in the NT. It is admitted, on the other hand, that the Bible uses *philia* words for love positively. Ibid., 153–55.

[304] For instance, these categories were adopted and popularized by C. S. Lewis in *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988). "The Need-loves, so far as I have been able to see, have no resemblance to the Love which God is." Ibid., 127. There can be no need loves in God, only gift love, charity. Even Pope Benedict XVI has weighed in, dealing with these categories at length in his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, in which he claims that "*eros* and *agape*—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized." Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est,* encyclical letter on Christian love, Vatican website, December 25, 2005, http://www.vatican .va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html.

[305] Burnaby, in *Amor,* critiqued Nygren's view in a classic study on Augustine's theology of love, specifically taking issue with Nygren's interpretation of Augustine and the so-called "caritas synthesis."

[306] Burnaby, in *Amor,* sees the supposition of a unilateral love relationship from God to humanity as wholly insufficient. See chapter 3 below.

[307] Oord is harshly critical of this worldview. "Matching," 113.

[308] For instance, D'Arcy also directly responds to Nygren's critique from a contemporary Catholic perspective, claiming that "Eros and Agape are not enemies but friends." D'Arcy, *Mind*, 304. Nevertheless,

conception of love has likewise been questioned.[309] It is also questioned whether desire can be

excluded from the Christian conception of love.[310] Perhaps the strongest criticism of Nygren,

despite his claim to not be making a semantic argument, is the apparent biblical testimony against

Nygren's motifs.[311] Such criticisms recall the primary issues that have recurred in the historical

theology of love and will be seen further in the contemporary conflict of interpretations between

the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models.

Conclusion

As has been seen, throughout the historical conceptions of divine love, many important

aspects of divine love remain prominent and under contention. The historical discussion of divine

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when it comes specifically to divine agape, D'Arcy himself retains the unilateral nature of divine love. Paul Tillich differs even further from Nygren claiming that "if *eros* and *agape* cannot be united, *agape* toward God is impossible." *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 1:281. For further discussion, see chapter 3 below.

[309] "Although he contends that *agape* is the only authentically Christian love, I join others in disagreeing with this contention." Oord, "Matching," 114. Cf. D. D. Williams, *Spirit*.

[310] Brümmer, while dealing with similar categories of gift and need love, is highly critical of the sharp dichotomy that Nygren proposes. For him, the separation of love from desire is unnecessary. "This would amount to accepting a form of quietist 'pure love' which, as we *pointed* out in section 4.1 above, renounces all desire, including the desire for God." Brümmer, *Model,* 137. However, C. Osborne criticizes Brümmer, stating: "While otherwise sensitive to some of the inadequacies of previous work on the subject, still starts by adopting and developing categories of love on the lines of C.S. Lewis's 'need-love' and 'gift-love', which leaves us stuck in the motivational contrasts Nygren so disastrously proposed." *Eros,* 6.

[311] Geraint Vaughan Jones says, "There are enough exceptions, however, and examples of overlapping, to show that the hard-and-fast distinction upon which Nygren and others insist cannot be maintained, and the infrequency of the use of *agape* in the Synoptic Gospels is striking; *agapao* is often used in the sense of *phileo.*" "Agape and Eros: Some Notes on Dostoievsky," *ExpTim* 66 (1954–55): 3. Cf. Roy F. Butler, *The Meaning of Agapao and Phileo in the Greek New Testament* (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado, 1977), 70. Oord presents a sustained criticism of Nygren's biblical interpretation, finding numerous examples that, he contends, contradict Nygren's thesis. He writes, "Nygren's thesis that *agape* is the only authentically Christian love—excluding all other loves as legitimate—collapses under a careful examination of Scripture. His thesis cannot stand because it is not supported by the very structure he assumes to be its primary foundation: the Bible." Oord, "Matching," 123. James Moffat points out that *agape* is used to convey meanings that fall outside of Nygren's definition of *agape. Love in the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1930). Further, Rist contends that Nygren has simply selected "those passages which might suit the theory that *agape* and *eros* are inhabitants of different worlds and then dragoon the other passages into harmony." John Rist argues, however, that "they are both recognized in the New Testament." "Some Interpretations of Agape and Eros," in *The Philosophy and Theology of Anders Nygren* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 172.

love displays a great deal of continuity with the Platonic and Aristotelian ontologies and theories of love. Specifically, the pre-eminent features of deity as simplicity, timelessness, perfection, self-sufficiency, immutability, and impassibility, retain priority down through the ages in the theologies of Augustine to Aquinas to Luther. Despite the radical upheaval between the Catholic and Protestant traditions in the reformation, the conception of God as a whole, and divine love specifically, remained relatively constant. While the meaning and nature of human love is diversely conceived, divine love is restricted by the possibilities afforded by the divine ontology. Specifically divine love must be unilateral, unmotivated, unaffected, gratuitous beneficence, which entails no passion but rather, purposive rationality.

However, the classical views on divine ontology, and thus divine love, have been increasingly questioned. In the next chapter, the immanent-experientialist model represents the primary alternative to the classical models and their contemporary modification, which is represented by the transcendent-voluntarist model. As shall be seen, the contemporary conflict of interpretations between these models revisits the issues that have been introduced in the survey above. Specifically, the question of the mutuality of the divine-human relationship becomes prominent. Further questions also arise, for instance, whether love is beneficence in part or in whole, or whether aspects such as desire, enjoyment, and/or appraisal of value are permissible for conceptions of divine love. Moreover, what is the extent of divine love, and how does this correspond to God's relatedness or unrelatedness to the world and its history? As shall be seen, these issues are integrally connected to the issues of ontology and metaphysics. With these considerations in mind, we now turn our attention to an influential, recent evangelical modification of divine love in Carl F. H. Henry. This is followed by a direct assault upon the classical conception that many view to be the most compelling alternative to traditional conceptions of divine love, that of Charles Hartshorne.

CHAPTER 3

CONFLICTING MODELS OF DIVINE LOVE

Introduction

This chapter presents an analytical description of the transcendent-voluntarist model and

the immanent-experientialist model, focused upon selected exemplars of both models. Carl F.H.

Henry's conception is a well-known and influential exemplar of the transcendent-voluntarist

model, and Charles Hartshorne's seminal process theology is representative of the immanent-

experientialist model.[1] To provide context to understand these models of divine love one must

look at the methodological and ontological frameworks, respectively.[2] Because the conceptions of

divine love flow out of the respective ontologies, they will be understood more easily after the

introduction of the theological systems. First, the basic methodological tenets will be

summarized, followed by the transcendent-voluntarist model's intentional modification (at least

in presentation) of some aspects of classic theism. The ontological framework will then be

examined, especially the emphasis on the sovereignty of the divine will and the closely related

axiomatic conceptions of simplicity, timelessness, omniscience, immutability, and omnipotence.

Then, the divine relationship to the world will be addressed regarding divine transcendence and

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[1] The term voluntarist is being utilized to denote that the divine will is the basic factor in the universe. It does not connote, however, that the will is necessarily in opposition to reason or the intellect.

[2] The need for a treatment of ontology is increasingly important. D. D. Williams expresses this quite clearly saying, "Why this concern with 'being'? . . . Our answer can be put quite simply—it is beings who love." *Spirit*, 9. D. D. Williams also states that "the traditional Christian interpretations of love have been largely influenced by one kind of philosophical thought about being." Ibid.*,* 122. Cf. Hartshorne, *Vision*, 114–20.

immanence, freedom, and providence. This leads to the conception of election love, which is required by the wider ontology of the transcendent-voluntarist model.

For the immanent-experientialist model Hartshorne's basic methodology is presented first. Then, his departure from traditional theology in positing the necessity of the absolute relatedness of God to the world is outlined. This chapter then proceeds to explore Hartshorne's ontological framework beginning with his process ontology of the world, then his divine ontology of dipolar theism, and concluding with his panentheistic metaphysics of the God-world relationship. Then, the conception of divine love, especially the important aspects of sympathy and value, is examined in light of the ontological framework and its implications for the God-world relationship. The presentation of these two models is followed by an examination of the extent of the conflict of interpretations between the two main models. The extent of the conflict is presented according to numerous recent theologians who express dissatisfaction with the two main models.

The Transcendent-Voluntarist Model

Methodological Framework

Basic Methodological Tenets

Henry's method is explicitly based upon propositional, biblical revelation, which reveals God in "objectively reliable form."[3] Thus, the "way of special biblical revelation declares God himself and his revelation to be the only objective intelligible basis for statements about his

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[3] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:99. Henry defines "propositional revelation" as "a divine communication to man of objective knowledge of the nature of God as he is, both in his eternal glory and in his relations to man." Ibid., 5:98. "That God can be known, that divine revelation is rationally given and is to be rationally understood, is a basic presupposition of biblical theology." Ibid., 5:381. Cf. Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief: The Rutherford Lectures* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990), 35–60, and idem, *The God Who Shows Himself* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1966), 1–2. For an exposition of the evangelical view of revelation see Gordon Haddon Clark, "Revealed Religion," in *Fundamentals of the Faith* (ed. C. F. H. Henry and G. H. Clark; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1969).

nature."[4] Accordingly, divine attributes are "determined by a logically ordered exposition of an inscripturated revelation."[5] Every question of divine nature is thus to be subordinated to Scripture, yet also "within biblically revealed principles to the demands of logical consistency."[6] Yet reason also plays a prime role in Henry's theological method including the stating and assessing of "the claims of both the theological and secular philosophical traditions."[7] However, he opposes the traditional "way of analogy" in favor of univocal predication because of the former's reliance on presupposition. Accordingly, he rejects any method that posits "a divine being or essence ontologically distinguishable from divine personality and knowable apart from God's selfhood" since "only non-biblical motives would require us to speak of God's existence

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[4] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation,* 5:99. Reliable, propositional information communicated through divine revelation is the only "confident basis for expounding the divine attributes." Ibid., 5:99. See also C. F. H. Henry, "The Interpretation of the Scriptures: Are We Doomed to Hermeneutical Nihilism?" *RevExp* 71 (1974): 197–215. Henry thus rules out any naturalistic or empirical methodology. *God, Revelation*, 5:90. Cf. Carl F. H. Henry, *Notes on the Doctrine of God* (Boston: Wilde, 1948), 66–68. For Henry's criticism of modern theology and a call to biblical theism see *Frontiers in Modern Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), and *The Protestant Dilemma: An Analysis of the Current Impasse in Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1949), 43–124. Although the intricacies of Henry's presuppositionalist epistemology are beyond the scope of this dissertation, some elements must be noted. C. F. H. Henry, *Recovery*, 55. His theory of knowledge stems from God as mind and the rational Logos behind all order and structure in the universe. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:334–37, 381. All reality is dependent upon God's ideas thus "the ultimate world of ideas is not a 'given' to which God is himself subject; it is, rather, the very mind or thought of God." Ibid., 5:335. Accordingly, humans "think his [God's] thoughts after him." Ibid., 5:16. Henry has often been criticized for being too rationalistic. For instance, McNeal criticizes his emphasis on the objective which he believes leads to a less than dynamic picture of God. Thomas Reginald McNeal, "A Critical Analysis of the Doctrine of God in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986). For a more positive appraisal of Henry's epistemology in conversation with other noted Evangelicals see Kelvin Neal Jones, "Revelation and Reason in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry, James I. Packer, and Ronald H. Nash" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994).

[5] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation,* 5:100. "The legitimacy of what we may say about God's being, essence, nature, substance, attributes, or whatever else, stems solely from the living God who makes himself known and from the divinely inspired Scriptures." Ibid., 5:49.

[6] Ibid., 5:132–33. He thus rejects any attempt "to derive a comprehensive analysis of the attributes of God from an a priori metaphysics." Ibid., 5:99.

[7] Ibid., 5:223. He states, "The revelation of the triune God . . . can be significantly maintained only if divine revelation is intelligible and by expounding its content without resorting to paradox and logical contradiction." Ibid., 5:51.

before we discuss his nature disclosed in divine revelation." [8] This leads to opposition toward Hartshorne's adapted use of the way of analogy.

Axiomatic to this methodology are the requisites of transcendence and immanence requiring both "God's independence of the created universe," and a description of "God's relation to the universe in a way that makes God accessible to human experience and assures knowledge of him as he truly is."[9] Henry also presupposes that a distinction must be made regarding "anthropomorphic passages."[10] Although anthropomorphisms and other wrinkles of divine revelation must be distinguished, Henry generally requires "univocal meaning" to "avoid agnosticism and skepticism" as well as "equivocation."[11] He does allow, however, the way of negation and the way of eminence, as long as they are not "separated from divine revelation."[12] The requirement of univocal predication is tied to Henry's supposition of propositional and rational divine revelation, which assumes that God reveals His essence in the Bible and thus humans are not limited to the mere "knowledge of God-in-relation to us" but may ascertain thereby "metaphysical knowledge of God-as-he-is-in-himself."[13] In this context, Henry advocates

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[8] Ibid., 5:185. The way of analogy "assigns to God in an eminent degree all perfections found in creaturely existence." Ibid., 5:86. He considers the way of analogy prone to "secretly presuppose in advance certain facts about the very nature of God that it professes to establish only by analogical reasoning." Ibid., 5:87.

[9] Ibid., 5:101.

[10] "The Bible requires a distinction between anthropomorphic passages that speak of God's 'hand,' 'arm,' 'eyes,' and so on, and ontological teaching that depicts personal distinctions in the nature of God. Those who consider the latter just as figurative as the former do so on interpretative principles that erode the reality of God. Scripture itself authorizes and requires a distinction between what we may say literally or figuratively about God." Ibid., 5:197.

[11] Ibid., 5:87. He thus asks, "Does a relational likeness of goodness when predicated of God and man make sense if its ascriptions to both the divine and the human have no univocal overlap? When thus conceived the analogy of proportionality channels into equivocation and hence into agnosticism." Ibid., 5:86.

[12] Ibid., 5:88. Thus, "within the guidance of special revelation both methods [negation and eminence] may be employed simultaneously." Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 5:96. Specifically, he states, "If divine revelation is cognitive and propositional, then God can reveal information about his immanent nature. Because of his intelligible revelation we can speak

caution against the proliferation of divine attributes, especially when based merely upon the

nuances of biblical terms.[14] This becomes especially important as it relates to the traditional

agape-eros distinction, as shall be seen.

Differentiation from Classic Theism

      Henry prefers the term evangelical theism as a descriptor of his doctrine of God. He

explicitly differentiates his views from what he calls the Thomistic emphasis on "Greek

philosophical motifs" rather than "Judeo-Christian biblical categories."[15] Accordingly, Henry

seems to tweak doctrines such as immutability and impassibility, at least as a matter of

presentation. However, he still relies on the classic tradition, seemingly assuming that the Nicene

and ante-Nicene fathers were biblical in their theology.[16] Thus, as shall be seen, Henry's doctrine

has much in common with classic theism. Some might consider it to be a modified or nuanced

form of classical theism, and others might see it as a new evangelical theism. Whatever the label,

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authentically about both his transcendent being and about his relations to man and the world." Ibid., 5:102. Therefore, Henry believes God's immanent nature is accessible due to propositional divine revelation while yet implying at least a semantic distinction between God's immanent and economic natures. However, he does remove the inaccessibility of divine nature saying, if "God's revelatory activity includes the divine disclosure of truths about God (valid information that stipulates the meaning of God's redemptive acts and unveils information also concerning God's transcendent selfhood and his divine goals) then no need arises for such rigid distinction between the self-revealed God and God-in-himself (since in self-revelation God conveys objectively valid knowledge of his eternal nature and will)." Ibid., 5:51.

    [14] Ibid., 5:139. "Scripture is not immune to the use of synonyms. Yet careless scriptural exegesis may dismiss certain significant vocabulary divergences as merely synonymous when in fact they are intended to convey special shades of meaning. In the long run what must decide the adequacy or inadequacy of competing representations of the number and kind of divine perfections is a faithful and consistent handling of the biblical text." Ibid.

    [15] He states that Aquinas "orients the doctrine of the immutability of the God of the Bible to Greek philosophical motifs and develops theistic doctrine more in Greek than in Judeo-Christian biblical categories." Ibid., 5:45. One specific break is the traditional substantialist ontology that Henry considers to be unnecessary. "This realistic, substantialist view elaborated by Roman Catholic theologians in line with Aristotelian metaphysics, Protestant orthodoxy then took over without questioning whether theology based upon special biblical revelation necessarily requires such a view." Ibid., 5:113.

    [16] "Contrary to Nicene and ante-Nicene fathers who expounded the doctrine of God in terms of the Scriptures, church fathers familiar with Greek philosophy in some cases readily subscribed to the unbiblical notions that the purity and spirituality of the divine are best maintained by stripping God of all logically meaningful predication." Ibid., 5:85.

it is clear that Henry's doctrine can neither be wholly differentiated from the tradition of classic theism nor can it be wholly identified with it.[17] As such, it is a worthy representative of the progression of recent Evangelical thought.

Ontological Framework

In the transcendent-voluntarist model, God "is a sovereign will."[18] He is conceived as perfect, simple, timeless, immutable, impassible and totally self-sufficient.[19] God is absolutely sovereign and "stands completely and intrinsically independent of the created order."[20] There is no will that threatens God's will, and thus non-divine decisions do not determine God in any way.[21] God is prior to and unequivocally other—yet not "wholly other"—than the world.[22] God

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[17] Ronald H. Nash, for instance, does not identify classical theism with Christian theism saying, "It is extremely important to recognize that the relationship between classical theism and Christian theism is a matter of some dispute." "Process Theology and Classical Theism," in *Process Theology* (ed. R. H. Nash; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987), 3. He summarizes the broad tenets of classic or Thomistic theism using eight attributes: Pure actuality, immutability, impassibility, timelessness, simplicity, necessity, omniscience, omnipotence. Ibid., 8–12. He bases this breakdown on David Ray Griffin, *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976). If classic theism is limited to the above eight attributions it is difficult to see anything like a clean break between Henry's Evangelical theism and classic theism.

[18] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:130.

[19] Henry summarizes his ontology by referring to God as he "who stands, and stays." Ibid., 5:10. God "stands" means that he "is the personal sovereign containing in himself the ground of his own existence." Ibid. The "God who stays" is in reference to the "providence" of God and the "eschatological consummation of his dramatic plan." Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 5:12. God "stands free of the universe both as its voluntary creator and voluntary preserver." Ibid. This means that "the universe is not necessary either to divine being or to divine perfection. God stands free of such dependence; he alone, moreover, stands completely and intrinsically independent of the created order." Ibid. Cf. Carl F. H. Henry, "The Nature of God," in *Christian Faith and Modern Theology: Contemporary Evangelical Thought* (ed. C. F. H. Henry and J. O. Buswell; New York: Channel, 1964), 91. Norman L. Geisler concurs and connects this with divine necessity. *Systematic Theology* (vol. 2 of *God, Creation*; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 2002), 58–73.

[21] God "is invulnerable to assault." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:13. Further, "the self-disclosed God, this One who 'stands,' exists forever in a self-specified condition free of external determination; his reality, purpose and activity are not contingent on the universe. He continues steadfast, unimpaired and immutable." Ibid., 5:11. Cf. Harold B. Kuhn, "God: His Names and Nature," in *Fundamentals of the Faith* (ed. C. F. H. Henry and G. H. Clark; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1969), 49.

[22] Yet God is not "in all respects wholly other than man who bears his image." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation,* 5:87. Henry emphasizes: "God is the unique and irreducible Other, the unconditional

wills his own life in absolute and independent freedom; he thus depends on nothing (aseity) and is

affected by nothing (impassibility) but rather "sustains himself in voluntary self-determination."[23]

In other words he is "wholly free to be himself" and there is nothing external or internal to God

that is not determined by God himself.[24] Thus, all divine relations are external relations.[25] God is

necessary, perfect, and complete. He cannot grow and is "not in process, in a condition of change,

[or] in motion toward perfection."[26] Divine plenitude extends even to his perfections such that

each of "his attributes is perfect and unlimited."[27] Henry is careful to point out, however, that God

is "ontologically changeless," yet not static and thus the "eternal and majestic" one "speaks and

acts."[28]

Ought, the transcendent Self." Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:87; Henry, "The Nature of God," 71.

[23] Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:214–15. Cf. ibid., 5:69. God's "self-determination" means "free agency or spontaneous voluntariness. God has free will, a will that is self-moved. His thoughts and acts are shaped neither by external necessity nor by internal limitation except as he is self-determined in what he thinks and does. Only God alone, moreover, is a totally free agent." Ibid.*,* 5:214–15. Further "God perpetually wills and purposes his own being; this being depends upon nothing external to himself yet is not internally necessitated as if he exists forever whether he wills to do so or not. He wills eternally to be himself in the fulness of his independent vitality, and never ceases to be himself." Ibid., 5:69.

[24] Ibid., 5:69. Even the "attributes or perfections of God are virtues that he himself wills in sovereign freedom. They are not external constraints to which God's nature and will must conform. . . . God alone establishes truth and the good; they have no existence independently of his will." Ibid., 5:215.

[25] Thus he states, "The Infinite can comprehend the finite without active relationships between the two. But the finite comprehends the Infinite only because the infinite Creator has fashioned the finite and relates himself to it." Ibid., 5:223.

[26] Ibid., 5:12. He states, "God is incapable of increase or diminution." Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 5:22.

[28] Ibid., 5:9. But, "if by static is meant indifferent, the complaint can be countered by biblical theology; if by static is meant unchanging, then that is indeed the case. . . . The self-revealing Creator-Redeemer God of the Bible is ontologically changeless." Ibid., 6:291. God "is the eternally active God. . . . [He] is not an indifferent and static divinity like the impersonal or remote gods of many ancient philosophers." Ibid., 5:12–13. Similarly, Carson stresses that God is "unchanging in his being, purposes, and perfections" yet this does not necessarily mean that God "cannot interact with his image-bearers in *their time*." *Difficult*, 55. Geisler adds, "Neither does impassible mean immobile: God can and does act. However, others do not move Him, for He is the Unmoved Mover of all else." *Systematic*, 112.

Simplicity, Essence, and Attributes

For Henry, in keeping with classic theism, God is absolutely simple, a unity.[29] The

absolutely simple and unified God is also triune.[30] The trinitarian persons are not "independent

beings" but are "*hypostases* alongside the living God and as subordinate deputies active in the

creation and history of the universe."[31] This simplicity flows from the unitary and supremely

rational divine will.[32] Accordingly, all divine perfections are willed perfections and "God's

essence and attributes are identical."[33]

Timelessness and Foreknowledge

The perfection of God is also associated with divine timelessness. The issue of divine

timelessness has been one of great debate, and the nature of the issue and the ongoing debate is

well known to Henry, who attempts to avoid absurdity in his conception.[34] Yet, though he

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[29] Simplicity means "God is not compounded of parts; he is not a collection of perfections, but rather a living center of activity pervasively characterized by all his distinctive perfections. The divine attributes are neither additions to the divine essence nor qualities pieced together to make a compound." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:131. As such, God is "noncomposite, and his essence and existence are identical." Ibid., 5:132. Geisler sees God's absolute simplicity as vitally connected to God's "pure actuality." *Systematic*, 30. For Geisler's articulation of the continuity with the classical Christian tradition see ibid., 30–57.

[30] He states "that three eternal persons coexist within the one divine essence—[this] is the distinctive Christian affirmation about deity." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:197.

[31] Ibid. These hypostases "are not simply divine representatives but personal realities whose being and that of the loving God are somehow integrated." Ibid.

[32] "The God of the Bible is a sovereign will; as such he is a living unity of perfections that coordinately manifests the divine essence." Ibid., 5:130.

[33] Ibid. Therefore, "all God's attributes known through his self-revelation are to be identified with what theologians properly designate as God's being, essence, nature or substance. . . . The divine essence is not to be differentiated from the divine attributes, but is constituted by them; the attributes define the essence more precisely." Ibid., 5:127. Grudem comments, "Every attribute is completely true of God and is true of all God's character." *Systematic*, 179. As unified and yet distinct all "divine attributes in the nature of God" require "equal ultimacy." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:52. Therefore, "all divine attributes are one in God . . . differentiated only within the created situation," and thus "mutually inclusive." Ibid., 5:132. Moreover, all "the divine perfections apply equally to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit." Ibid., 5:186.

[34] He even states that the explicit biblical teaching is "inconclusive" on the matter. Ibid., 5:268. For Henry "God is not in time" but that "does not mean He is timeless in such a way as to negate time. . . .

attempts to make qualifications to preserve coherence, he maintains the traditional doctrine of

timelessness in its essential points, in accordance with his other ontological suppositions such that

the perfection of God includes perfect, time independent (timeless) knowledge.[35] For Henry, the

very omniscience of God is bound up with timelessness and the two cannot be separated.[36] Hence,

not only is divine knowledge atemporal and *a priori*, it is derived solely from divine decree, never

from non-divine objects.[37] Thus, there is no real distinction between foreknowledge and

foreordination.[38] Although Henry seems to go out of his way to leave room for the significance of

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The supremacy of eternity over time is not the Greek notion of timelessness which negates or annuls time . . . in which the whole creaturely world loses significance from an eternal perspective." C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 132. For a recent defense of the traditional view of divine timelessness see Paul Helm, "Is God Bound by Time?" in *God under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God* (ed. D. S. Huffman and E. L. Johnson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002).

[35] He states, "What creaturely minds grasp in their time sequences God knows immediately as a comprehensive totality; his decree to create a specific universe involves knowledge of all its eventualities and possibilities." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:277. Further, "divine omniscience and divine sovereignty imply that divine knowledge is timeless and rule out temporal succession in the activity of divine knowledge." Ibid., 5:270.

[36] "It is futile, therefore, to try to preserve God's omniscience if his timelessness is denied. Some theists redefine divine eternity in terms of everlasting temporality and thus try to preserve divine omniscience. . . . But if God is a being to whom temporal predicates apply, then he has time-location." Ibid. For him, God knows everything "in a single act" but this does not require a "temporal Now" but a "timeless intellectual vision whereby he eternally knows all things." Ibid., 5:271.

[37] God's "knowledge of man and the world has its source in his self-knowledge, because God knew what he would make. God's knowledge of what will be is grounded in his knowledge of his eternal purpose." Ibid., 5:269.

[38] Ibid., 5:277. "Given the view of God's timeless eternity, the distinction between divine foreknowledge and divine foreordination falls away." Ibid., 5:284. However, though he is adamant that God's knowledge is based on his own decree, he concurrently contends that "God has knowledge of the universe as a created reality. He knows it now not simply as something purposed from eternity, but as a creaturely reality preserved and judged by him and in which he manifests his grace." Ibid., 5:277. Although if read in one way this might imply that God does in fact have knowledge based on the reality of the world, in conjunction with the rest of Henry's statements this does not seem to be the intended meaning. Therefore, to be consistent, this statement could not be taken to mean that God "now" knows what he did not know before but rather it means that due to God's omniscience he is aware of the situation that is "present" for the world. Henry unequivocally states, "The fact of divine omniscience does not imply that God's knowledge is dependent upon his creation." Ibid. Nevertheless, Henry can say that "God does know human decision and human activity in its dramatic day-to-day and age-to-age occurrences. He distinguishes the presently actual in the space-time realm from the yet future and from the irrecoverable past." Ibid. This is possible because all reality is based on divine decree. "Christian theology separates God's intrinsic nature (known on the basis of his self-revelation) from his works—creation, preservation, providence, redemption, and so on—by delineating the decrees. These decrees relate only to realities and relationships outside God, that is, to whatever depends optionally on his will." Ibid., 6:80.

space and time,[39] this does not negate his position that God is utterly timeless.[40] God's knowledge is thus based on his eternal decree and is not a knowledge derived from being in time or dependent upon contingencies; all reality is determined and known according to divine volition.[41] The equation of foreordination and timeless foreknowledge has implications for predestination and human freedom.[42] Henry's solution is the compatibilist view that freedom is not removed but humans act in accordance with their own volitions.[43] In "compatibilism," freedom does not entail

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[39] He states, "The time sequences of human history are crucially important both in God's sight and in man's. The space-time universe owes its very existence and continuance to God, and is the cosmic setting for the divine incarnation in Jesus Christ, the final triumph of righteousness, and the doom of injustice." Ibid., 5:277. He adds, "God is not limited to simply one track of relationships to the temporal order; he knows all historical factualities and contingencies through his eternal decree, and he knows them in personal presence in the historical order." Ibid., 5:276. Elsewhere he states, "The triune God not only has eternal personal relationships within his own timeless being, but also engages in interpersonal patterns with creatures to whom he manifests himself in righteousness and wrath and love and mercy." Ibid., 5:275.

[40] He states, "The biblical view, it seems to me, implies that God is not in time; that there is no succession of ideas in the divine mind; that time is a divine creation concomitant with the origin of the universe; that God internally knows all things, including all space-time contingencies; that this knowledge includes knowledge of the temporal succession prevalent in the created universe. . . . But God's nature need not itself be time-structured in order for him to know simultaneously all events and also to know them in the way that his creatures know them." Ibid., 5:276. Here "in the way" must mean in the sense that he knows them truthfully, certainly not "in the way" in the sense of manner of knowing.

[41] Although God has knowledge of succession he does not have "an a posteriori knowledge somehow derived through his observation of the universe, even if that knowledge is said somehow to transcend time." Ibid., 5:279.

[42] It is "the purposing will of God, and not omniscience, that governs the certainty of events." Ibid., 5:284. "There can be no other ground of divine foreknowledge of nonexistent processes, events and creatures if they were not divinely purposed. God's purposes are eternal, and effectuate all futurities." Ibid., 5:283–84. For an excellent and thorough collection of the ongoing contemporary debate on foreknowledge and free will see Robert Kane, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For open theism's critical analysis of God's foreknowledge in relation to his freedom see Pinnock et al., *Openness*; William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Clark H. Pinnock, *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1989). Open theism has been challenged in numerous responses; one prominent example is Norman L. Geisler, H. Wayne House, and Max Herrera, *The Battle for God: Responding to the Challenge of Neotheism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2001). For an excellent and brief discussion of the historicity of God and foreknowledge in relation to free will see Fernando Canale, "Doctrine of God," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (ed. R. Dederen; Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2000), 105-159. For a critique of timelessness and presentation of God's historicity and analogical temporality see Canale, *Criticism*.

[43] He contends that "God's foreknowledge does not involve determination that cancels voluntary action, but God knows what man will voluntarily choose." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:282. That compatibilism is Henry's position is clear when he states, "Voluntary action does not, however, depend

the ability to do otherwise (libertarianism) but rather means freedom from external compulsion. Therefore, everything ultimately happens according to the eternal divine decree.

Unchanging/Immutable

In accordance with absolute perfection, God is immutable and immune to "increase or decrease."[44] However, God's immutability is both moral and ontological.[45] The idea of a suffering God is hence explicitly opposed. God is impassible. There is nothing external to God that can affect him or impinge upon him.[46] Henry is adamant that "the biblical view is that the living God,

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upon intellectual doubt or divine ignorance, or upon arbitrary subjective power to reverse our each and every decision and deed. It depends rather upon voluntary choice. If humans voluntarily choose to do what God foreknows to be certain, then the conditions of voluntary human agency are fulfilled." Ibid. For a contemporary presentation of compatibilism see Millard J. Erickson, *What Does God Know and When Does He Know It?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2003). For a view for divine foreknowledge but against compatibilism see William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom: The Coherence of Freedom* (New York: Leiden, 1991), and idem, "Hasker on Divine Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies* 67 (1992): 52–78.

[44] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:286. "The God of the Bible is absolutely sovereign and omniscient. . . . Change and process do not apply to the Godhead." Ibid., 6:67. Compare with the classical view of Plato and Aristotle, developed in the scholasticism of Aquinas. For classic critiques of the doctrine of immutability see Norman Kretzmann, "Omniscience and Immutability," *Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966): 409–21, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, "God Everlasting," in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (ed. S. M. Cahn and D. Shatz; New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 77–98.

[45] "Scripture stresses especially God's moral constancy or ethical stability. It underscores God's faithfulness to his holy will and to his promises." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:287. Yet, beyond this, God's immutability cannot be limited to "God's moral nature" but further he is not at all susceptible to "ontological change." Ibid. Cf. ibid., 5:65.

[46] "God conceived primarily as our 'fellow sufferer' is not the immutable God of the Bible. All talk of the final liberation of man . . . must end in a question mark if God himself is a struggling, suffering deity." Ibid., 5:292. It must be understood, however, that in this model divine impassibility does not mean that God is uncaring or "utterly devoid of any feelings." Millard J. Erickson, *God the Father Almighty: A Contemporary Exploration of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 161. Carson states, "God cannot 'fall' in love in the way that we do, nor is his 'love' suddenly elicited by something he had not foreseen. *In that sense*, we may usefully affirm God's impassibility even while we affirm, with the greatest delight, God's passionate love—indeed, so great a love that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Donald A. Carson, "How Can We Reconcile the Love and the Transcendent Sovereignty of God?" in *God under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God* (ed. D. S. Huffman and E. L. Johnson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 308. Geisler posits that God may have emotional states but "His feelings are not the result of actions imposed upon Him by others." Geisler, House, and Herrera, *Battle*, 170. Moreover, "Scripture does teach that God cannot be acted upon by anything outside of Himself." Ibid., 171. "God cannot undergo passion or suffering; nothing in the created universe can make God feel pain or inflict misery on Him. This does not mean that God has no feelings, but simply that His feelings are not the results of actions imposed on Him by others. His feelings flow from His eternal and unchangeable nature." Geisler, *Systematic*, 112. The central idea is that God cannot be affected, thus if God

alone worthy of worship, is timelessly eternal and that immutability characterizes all his

perfections. He does not change either for better or for worse for he possesses all perfections from

eternity."[47] Nevertheless, Henry holds that this "unchanging and unchangeable God" is somehow

"active in temporal processes and historical events, and in the incarnation steps personally into

history."[48] Yet, at the same time, Henry is unequivocal "that ontological change is predicable only

of the world, and not of God."[49] While affirming and re-affirming God's timelessness and

immutability, Henry seemingly strains to hold on to God's interest in the world.[50] It is clear that

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has emotions they are purely willed, unaffected emotions.

[47] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:289. This is in close keeping with the classical conception of immutability. Bruce A. Ware points out (with numerous examples) that "the idea that a simple being is incapable of change is perhaps the most prominent notion invoked in the rational proofs for divine immutability." "An Evangelical Reexamination of the Doctrine of the Immutability of God" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984), 151.

[48] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:292. This qualification of Henry is perhaps influenced by the modern restructuring that Ware points out: "The doctrine of divine immutability has seen some major restructuring in the modern period. The primary attention that has been devoted to God as the living and active God has called for a restatement of the theological affirmation of God's unchangeableness so that two fundamental results, one negative and the other positive, could be secured: first, the immutability proper to God must not be conceived so as to allow any threat to God's free and active love, as is the case when immutability is seen as immobility; and second, the appropriate conception of God's changelessness provides full and unwavering assurance that the God who shows himself in free and sacrificial love always was, is, and will be the same in and through all changes." "Evangelical," 239–40. Accordingly, Ware points out that if in "divine immutability it is meant that God is distant, unfeeling, uncaring, static, and in every way unchanged and unaffected by the human condition, then it is highly doubtful that this conception of God is useful for one's religious experience." Ibid., 11.

[49] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:292. Henry is aware of the biblical texts that are often used to call into question the immutability of God. He points out that some degree of so-called anthropomorphism is to be expected in the biblical text. This, however, implies a break from purely univocal language about God. Nevertheless, "none of these considerations implies that God changes either in his eternal being or his eternal purpose. When all due allowance is made for the literal and objective truth conveyed by figurative statements, divine repentance is itself an anthropomorphic representation." Ibid., 5:304. Thus "divine 'repentance' can be viewed as the temporal fulfillment of a possibility eternally present to God and foreknown and foreordained by him." Ibid., 5:302–3. See ibid., 5:301ff. for a further discussion of repentance texts.

[50] Although "the world does not alter God ontologically . . . that is hardly to say that God is indifferent to the created universe. . . . Nor does God's immutability dwarf the fact that the incarnation of the Logos conjoins human nature enduringly to the Son of God." Ibid., 5:292. He also comments, "Surely God realizes values in and through the world; he ascribes worth to the created universe (Gen. 1:9 ff.). But to hold that this requires change in God, or implies that he is personally incomplete, as does process philosophy, is gratuitous and unjustifiable." Ibid. But in what way can an utterly immutable God "realize value?" That Henry does not actually allow for value to increase in God's experience or enjoyment is clear in his criticism of George A. F. Knight's emphasis that "God has gained something throughout the

God is absolute for Henry, that is, all God's perfections are infinite. But the question then

becomes: How can God actually be related to the world at all? Despite this paradox, Henry

maintains that God did come to the earth as a human, yet this did not entail a change in divinity.[51]

Thus, God is utterly perfect and immutable and history takes place according to his divine decree

without affecting Godself.

Determinism: Sovereignty and Omnipotence

Henry's conception of sovereignty and omnipotence might best be summed up: God wills

everything. It is not God's nature that determines God's will, but vice versa, and God's will

foreordains everything.[52] As sovereign will, God is omnipotent and "exists in absolute plenitude

and power."[53] Thus, a "fixed divine decree" of predestination is central to God's sovereignty and

such an all-encompassing decree includes even the evil in the world, though this does not make

God culpable.[54] The divine decree is not to be equated with "mechanical determinism," which

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centuries as a result of what has happened in the sequence of time; God has himself grown in experience as a result of his gracious love for man." Quoted in ibid., 5:306. Henry adamantly opposes this idea commenting, "Advocacy of a changing God is but a confusing declaration that Change is god." Ibid.

[51] Rather, "the permanent inclusion even of this glorified human nature in the experience of the Godhead did not involve a new mode of deity, however, even though it brings into profound and intimate interrelationships the timeless experience of God and the context of time-structured experience in which the exalted Christ rules as head of the Church." Ibid., 5:292–93.

[52] History is determined by the will of God, he "plans and decrees the world and man. . . . He ordains the future." Ibid., 5:13.

[53] Ibid., 5:69. Divine omnipotence is simply "power over all other power and powers." Ibid., 5:318. Henry contends that the Bible (despite the lack of the specific term "omnipotence") and all the church fathers teach divine omnipotence. Ibid., 5:308, 310. The concept of omnipotence has undergone considerable debate in contemporary theology. For an excellent dialogue on the issues see David Basinger and Randall Basinger, "Divine Omnipotence: Plantinga vs. Griffin," *Process Studies* 11 (1981): 11–24, and Alvin Plantinga, "Reply to the Basingers on Divine Omnipotence," *Process Studies* 11 (1981): 25–29.

[54] C. F. H. Henry states, "The foreordination of an evil act is not itself evil, since God need not will what he wills for the reasons others may will them." *God, Revelation*, 5:315. The doctrine of predestination is quite important to the transcendent-voluntarist model. However, it comes under severe criticism in different circles. For instance, Thomas Talbott severely criticizes the theory of predestination as "blasphemy" which must "inevitably attribute Satanic qualities to God." "On Predestination, Reprobation, and the Love of God: A Polemic," *The Reformed Journal* 33, no. 2 (1983): 11. He contends that there are several inconsistencies for a loving God to elect some to salvation and others to damnation including: (1) "God himself fails to love some of the very persons whom he has *commanded* us to love." (2) "The very

amounts to involuntary causation, but rather to "teleological law," which includes voluntary causation.[55] Moreover, there is no "ontological or logical or moral order independent of God to which God must conform his omnipotence."[56] Omnipotence means that whatever God wills he is able to do.[57] The divine will cannot be thwarted nor externally limited or affected since "only the sovereign Lord governs all realities and possibilities."[58]

God's Relationship to the World

In this model God's relationship to the world requires a clear distinction between the merely natural and the supernatural. Henry dismisses naturalism and considers supernaturalism to

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God who commands us to love *our* enemies fails to love his enemies." (3) "Loving-kindness is not an essential property of God, nor part of his essence." This includes an argument from logical impossibility: "If loving-kindness is an essential property of God, then it is logically impossible for him to act in an unloving way." (4) "God is less loving, less kind, and less merciful than many human beings." Ibid., 13. He also questions, if God doesn't really love our loved ones, could we really love Him? John Piper responds and accepts "Talbott's statement that the doctrine of predestination implies that there is nothing beyond God's own will and nature which stops him from saving people. . . . I also accept the inference that there are people who are not objects of God's electing love." Piper, "How Does a Sovereign God Love?: A Reply to Thomas Talbott," *The Reformed Journal* 33, no. 4 (1983): 10. Piper responds that God does show kindness in the sense of common grace to all, and this relates to the kind of love that humans are called to show in differentiation from the election love, which it is not proper for humans to exercise. Ibid., 10. Thomas Talbott's view culminates in universalism (*The Inescapable Love of God* [Parkland, Fla.: Universal, 1999]) whereas Piper's amounts to double predestination.

[55] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:50. It is the "doctrine of God's eternal decrees" that "distinguishes the biblical view of predestination from mechanical determinism." Ibid., 6:80. Henry is wary of all-pervasive causation and claims that "in the Bible creation is not a mechanistic causal reality; it involves, rather, a constant reenactment of God's presence and power. It is important to distinguish voluntary from involuntary causation." Ibid., 6:49.

[56] Ibid., 5:319. However, "God's will or nature implies certain limitations on his actions and normatively defines the very conception of omnipotence in terms of his own omnipotence. That God will not alter his own nature, that he cannot deny himself, that he cannot lie and cannot sin, that he cannot be deceived, and that, moreover, he cannot die, are affirmations which historic Christian theology has always properly associated with divine omnipotence and not with divine limitation or divine impotency, because the 'possibility' as stated is a logical impossibility." Ibid.

[57] Henry sees God's omnipotence "in terms of his free will that is grounded in his nature yet not necessitated by it. God discloses in his omnipotence that he is able to perform whatever he wills." Ibid., 5:325. This excludes the conundrum of God creating a rock that is too heavy for him to lift since "God himself is the ground of all possibility. To postulate contradictions constitutes nonsense; logically impossible projections can hardly impose actual limits on divine sovereignty." Ibid., 5:319.

[58] Ibid., 5:318. "No one can frustrate God's will." Ibid.

be "the only logically consistent alternative."[59] In contrast to secular representations, God is not at all dependent upon nature, but absolutely independent. He is "eternally perfect and not in process of development or growth," creator "ex nihilo" and most certainly "not himself the substance of the universe."[60] Creation is based on divine volition and not subject to any constraints, compulsion, or external motivation whatsoever.[61] Central to Henry's view of transcendence is the "emphasis on God's objective ontological transcendence of the universe."[62] However, though God "transcends the created universe," he is also "pervasively immanent in it."[63] In fact, Henry may even speak of "Christianity's insistent emphasis on divine immanence," though he cautions against the extremes of transcendence and of immanence that might teach that God is in any way to be identified with the world (immanence) or that God is utterly detached and unrelated to the world (transcendence).[64]

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[59] Ibid., 6:28. "God and God alone is supernatural, the sovereign eternal creator, the lord and judge of the whole space-time process." Ibid., 6:25–26. For a criticism of scientific naturalism see C. F. H. Henry, "Science and God's Revelation in Nature," *Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 3, no. 2 (1960): 25–36.

[60] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:27. Cf. ibid., 6:33. God is the "absolute transcendent Being . . . independent of all compulsory relations to anything and anyone outside himself; he is the ultimate source of all reality and of all authority." Ibid., 6:37.

[61] God is the creator of all and thus "ontologically other than the created universe . . . creator *ex nihilo* of the cosmic process, the ultimate cause of all that is." Ibid., 6:37. Cf. ibid., 6:120. God freely created the world. It "is a wholly contingent reality, not a product of divine necessity. Divine creation is not motivated by some inner divine need or lack." Ibid., 6:111.

[62] Ibid., 6:43. God is "totally distinct in being from the world of finite things." Ibid., 6:38. He alone "has aseity; alongside God nothing has an independent reality. He is the absolute creator and sustainer of the universe." Ibid., 6:120.

[63] Ibid., 6:36. He is the transcendent one and yet "the living and eternal God [who] is personally present and active in the universe by preserving it and by working out his sovereign purposes in and through it." Ibid., 6:35. Thus, "divine transcendence and immanence are corollary conceptions. God is not a divine being who acts only behind, outside or between cosmic and historical processes; he is present in these processes and works in them. The universe does not exist without his support and concurrence. God both acts on the events of nature and history from without and is purposefully and meaningfully engaged within the universe as well. He is not indifferent to the world and to man." Ibid., 6:48.

[64] Ibid., 6:25. For Henry, God is not "wholly remote from nature" yet neither may he be identified with the world such that the world is "necessary to God's being." Ibid., 6:39.

It remains difficult, however, to conceive of divine immanence in the universe if God

"retains his independence of space-time realities in whole or in part," and is thus utterly

transcendent of space and time.[65] Henry himself recognizes the issue at hand and asks, "If God is

eternal, transcendent being, how, it may be asked, can he act in the world? The answer given by

biblical theism is that God acts by predestination and that he is immanent in as well as

transcendent to his created universe."[66] Thus divine immanence is equated with God's causation

of the world according to eternal predestination. This is in accord with the impassibility of God,

which entails that all divine relations must be such that they do not impinge upon God (external

relations) but rather "God's thoughts and will are the ultimate cause of the creation" past, present,

and future.[67] Thus, divine "action" is non-spatio-temporal, expressed "in repetitive cosmic

processes and events, or in once-for-all acts."[68]

Election: The Predestinating Freedom of God

Clearly, the sovereign will of God is vital to the transcendent-voluntarist model wherein,

through eternal decree, God is omnicausal.[69] The centrality of God's sovereign will is emphasized

further in the doctrine of election. For Henry, predestination is an essential "theme" that "the

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[65] Ibid., 6:34. "As the personal and free creator and preserver of the universe he [God] is immanent throughout the cosmos; he fellowships with 'his own,' moreover, although even in the most intimate relationships with his creatures he retains his independence of space-time realities in whole or in part." Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 6:48.

[67] Ibid., 6:49.

[68] Ibid., 6:50.

[69] "God is the supreme and sovereign rational will." Ibid., 6:15. "Standing perpetually in providential relationships to man and the world, God is no less implicated in the falling of the rain than in the resurrection of the Redeemer." Ibid. "If you throw a pair of dice, what numbers come up lies in the determination of God." Carson, *Difficult*, 49. However, Henry also speaks of secondary causes. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:48–49. Yet, he also questions whether secondary causes ought to be considered at all. Ibid., 6:49.

Bible itself thrusts upon us."[70] Predestination flows from God's absolute freedom and lack of any external necessity.[71] Henry does not shrink from utter determinism, even comparing humans to inanimate objects controlled by the sovereign decree.[72] Divine election is "pretemporal, superhistorical eternal election. . . . Its existence is suspended on the eternal plan of the unchanging God who is free to decree as he pleases and who in his 'good pleasure' decrees a space-time matrix that by his willing becomes as necessary as is God himself."[73]

However, he emphasizes that "divine decree is not, however, identical with the external events, since God's thoughts become creative only through an act of divine will."[74] God's providence is thus not the same as God's decree but, rather, illustrates the living God, the one who "stands," "stoops," and "stays."[75] Such providence, however, operates according to God's timeless, absolute decree. Accordingly, providence is not general but specific, amounting to meticulous providence.[76]

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[70] Ibid., 6:76. "The singular uniqueness of Judeo-Christian revelation rests upon the governing premise of divine election; the truth of revealed religion stands or falls on the factuality of that election." Ibid., 6:83.

[71] "At the heart of the election doctrine throbs God's freedom. God is not bound by any necessity of nature to the universe. . . . He is free to create if and as he wills, free to provide or not to provide salvation for fallen creatures, free to covenant or not to covenant with the Hebrews or any other peoples or with no one at all." Ibid., 6:76.

[72] Henry is adamant that "everything that God does is the outworking of his sovereign decree. In this respect man is no different from the stars or from the sands of the sea; that humans stand at a definite place in history is no more an accident than that the planets move in their orbits and that the nations have their given bounds." Ibid., 6:78.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid. One especially troubling statement says, "God still wills what he willed in eternity past, although now he wills the effects of what he willed in the eternal decrees; and in all that he wills, he remains, moreover, the living God." Ibid., 6:85. Of course, this statement is riddled with the language of temporality, but if God is completely independent of spatio-temporality, how could it be that he "now" wills?

[75] "God who *stands*—who eternally exists—and who *stoops*—first in voluntarily creating the finite universe and then in voluntarily redeeming his fallen creation—is also God who *stays* to preserve and to renew and finally to consummate his purposive creation." Ibid., 6:455.

[76] Henry claims, "The biblical view of providence is dramatically specific; it unqualifiedly affirms particular divine providence, that is, that God works out his purposes not merely in life's generalities but in

Emphasis on unilateral divine volition gives rise to the objection that "such divine foreordination or election casts God in the role of an arbitrary despot indifferent to human choice."[77] Henry expresses concern over theories that "erode moral responsibility and significant human choice, and that obscure divine election of both Jesus Christ as the messianic substitute, and of sinners in Jesus Christ their Savior."[78] Accordingly, he attempts to leave room for the ethical responsibility of humans.[79] Of course, it must be remembered that freedom, in Henry's system, is compatibilistic, meaning that freedom does not require the "freedom of contrary choice" or the ability to do otherwise than one does.[80] Thus all reality still stems from God's eternal decree according to his "one sovereign purpose."[81] This includes the outcome of

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the details and minutiae of life as well. . . . Nothing falls outside God's will and concern. . . . Even seemingly chance events should be considered divine providences." Ibid., 6:459. This assures God's final victory in bringing the greatest good out of all things. Ibid., 6:483. He criticizes: "This is in marked contrast also to process theology whose God suffers along with the world. . . . Process theology can therefore offer no final guarantee of victory; the ultimate outcome remains in doubt." Ibid., 6:464.

[77] Ibid., 6:78. Henry dismisses this complaint as usually coming from "Western secular humanists and atheistic existentialists who consider man himself and not God personally determinative and creative in regards to truth, morals, and human destiny." Ibid., 6:78–79.

[78] Ibid., 6:82. Confusingly, he also states, "Apart from personal faith the fact of divine election does not of itself guarantee participation in the benefits of redemption. Scripture correlates divine predestination with the indispensability of personal spiritual decision and faith in the Savior." Ibid., 6:85.

[79] For instance, he writes, "Nor is the God of the Bible the sole volitional agent that pantheism projects. If divine omniscience is said to mean that God makes the only decisions and is the only volitional agent, then human decisions and deeds become totally irrelevant to man's final destiny. The fact is that even the most predestinarian passages of Scripture (e.g., Acts 2:23) emphasize man's accountability for his actions." Ibid., 6:82. Further he maintains that "all Christians, whatever doctrine of election they hold, insist that God preserves man's responsible moral agency and that divine election in no way transforms human beings into robots. Scripture affirms that God foreknows human actions as aspects of his plan; while these actions are certain as to their future occurrence, human beings are nonetheless ethically responsible for their personal actions." Ibid., 6:84.

[80] Ibid., 6:85. "To be morally responsible man needs only the capacity for choice, not the freedom of contrary choice. Man is accountable for the choices he makes even if his sinful nature vastly restricts that range of choices. Human beings voluntarily choose to do what they do. The fact that God has foreordained human choices and that his decree renders human actions certain does not therefore negate human choice." Ibid. Here, it seems that Henry muddles the conversation by not clearly distinguishing between (1) the lack of alternatives due to divine decree and (2) the lack or lessening of alternatives due to the depravity of human nature.

[81] Ibid., 6:84. "The divine decrees coalesce in God's one sovereign purpose; his plan is a comprehensive unity. . . . God's decrees will eventuate with certainty whether they come to pass solely by

individual human salvation, for God does eternally reject some and not others.[82] Henry's

emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty leads to the question of theodicy. The extent of divine

determinism is beyond question when he states, "God created a universe in which humans cannot

act other than they voluntarily do."[83] Yet, though God predestines all history he "does no evil";

God is the "cause" of evil but Henry is not willing to call God the "author" of evil.[84] In the

eschaton, "God's providential purpose and presence in history and experience subordinate all the

pain and suffering of regenerate believers to a higher good" yet in the meantime, God's purpose

is "partially revealed yet somewhat inscrutable."[85]

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his own causality or through the agency of his creatures." Ibid.

[82] He states, "Barth's denial that God hardens and rejects some persons clearly runs counter to what Scripture itself teaches." Ibid., 6:102. "The scriptural good news is not an eternal salvific election of all mankind in Christ that no one can resist or annul; it is the fact, rather, that the holy Lord has chosen some who despite the wickedness of humanity can through personal faith in Christ experience forgiveness of sins and renewal." Ibid., 6:104. For him, even "verses that imply God's sincere and strong wish for human salvation are not necessarily inconsistent with the divine election of only some to eternal life. Those who contend that it would impugn divine love and justice were God to elect only some fallen creatures without extending the same prerogatives to all are mistaken. . . . God shows his love in electing some undeserving human beings to salvation and his justice in redemptively passing over others who are equally undeserving." Ibid., 6:106–7. That Henry nevertheless struggles with the tension regarding predestination and human responsibility is evident. He states, "While God's sovereignty is absolute it is not tyrannical; he does not use his power unjustly and he coerces no one into personal salvation apart from individual decision for Christ. . . . On the other hand human unbelief cannot and will not frustrate God's election of some" even though "that election is ineffective, however, without individual repentance and faith in Christ." Ibid., 6:107.

[83] Ibid., 6:273.

[84] "God does not sin." Ibid., 5:283. God "does not even stimulate evil desires in man." Ibid., 6:86. Cf. Carson, *Difficult*, 56. In fact, C. F. H. Henry contends that Isa 45:6–7 "speaks of Yahweh as creator of both good and evil, and in this sense, therefore, as their cause." *God, Revelation*, 6:293. Moreover, "since the distinction between good and evil is grounded in God's will, the sovereign God in some sense creates sin. But to say that God commits sin is unthinkable, for Scripture throughout depicts sin as abhorrent to him." Ibid., 6:294. Henry proposes a "distinction . . . between cause and author" such that "God can be an ultimate cause of evil, as orthodox theism conceives him, without himself being an aspect of evil, or of evil being an aspect of him as its cause." Ibid., 6:293–94. God's "decree renders certain not only good acts but wicked acts as well" but "God is not a sinner" and "himself effectuates no acts as sinful." Ibid., 6:86.

[85] Ibid., 6:304, 296.

God Who Stays, Lives, and Becomes

As the one who stays, God is always there. Among God's many actions, he "publishes his holy will to the human race, as the living God relates himself to the forces of the cosmos and the experiences of mankind, hears the prayers of his creatures, providentially governs the fortunes of the redeemed (Rom. 8:28) and sovereignly influences the direction of human history toward the sure and final triumph of righteousness."[86] Of course, this is all understood within the context of the eternal divine decree. Surprisingly, Henry leaves room for the "becoming" of God but only when contrasted with the static nature of Greek philosophy and the contemporary misapplication of process philosophy.[87] God comes in "personal divine relationships to the created finite universe," yet this coming, and all that it entails, is purely voluntary" and "in sovereign determination," exemplified in Christ's incarnation, the "divine condescension."[88] The incarnation also provides the context of "divine becoming" as "forcibly stated in the prologue of John's Gospel: *The Word became flesh*."[89] Such divine becoming is strictly limited to the incarnation.[90] However, the incarnation does not require alteration of the divine nature, and indeed could not, since the divine and human natures are mutually exclusive and "distinct

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[86] Ibid., 5:81.

[87] "To be soundly scriptural any exposition of God must deal with all three: God's being, God's coming and God's becoming. In the Christian view divine becoming is a climactic reality that contrasts at once with ancient Greek notions of abstract being and becoming, and with modern process philosophy misconceptions of divine becoming that postulate change in the very nature of God." Ibid., 5:56. Rather, being and becoming correspond to the "eternal world" and the "spatio-temporal world" respectively. Ibid., 5:57.

[88] Ibid., 5:53.

[89] Ibid., 5:57.

[90] For Henry, "this is the only doctrine of divine becoming authorized by Scripture." Ibid., 5:58. However, this "becoming" is not really becoming for Henry. He appeals to the exegesis of C. K. Barrett who "says of *egeneto* in John 1:14: 'It cannot mean "became," since the Word continues to be the subject of further statements—it was the Word who "dwelt among us," and whose glory "we beheld"; the Word continued to be the Word.' Barrett thinks the sense may be that 'the Word came on the (human) scene as flesh, [as] man.'" Ibid., 5:59.

ontological entities."[91] Thus, the divine becoming in the incarnation, whatever it may mean, most

certainly does not mean that God changes.

<div style="text-align:center">Divine Love</div>

Divine Paternity

A prominent metaphor for God's relationship to the world is that of father. God is the

"almighty sovereign" and "personal father" and yet "also self-giving lover."[92] However, for

Henry, God is the father of his chosen rather than the father of all in an undifferentiated sense.[93]

At the same time, God is the creator of all and in this sense one may speak of a universal love in a

limited sense.[94] Yet, the special fatherhood of God is based upon divine election.[95] Although they

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[91] Ibid. Henry frames his view in keeping with Chalcedon of "one person (divine), two natures (divine and human)" in that "the Logos did not become a human person at all." In other words God does not become "a creature . . . [thus] to formulate divine becoming in this way makes it seem the absolute antithesis of divinity." Ibid., 5:60. Henry thus positions his view directly against process theology. Ibid., 5:62.

[92] Ibid., 6:322.

[93] Thus he states, "The notion of El as father of all, moreover, cannot be squared with the particular Hebrew view of Elohim as father of the chosen people Israel." Moreover, "reluctance of Old Testament writers to speak of God's fatherhood in a universal sense reflects theological commitments. . . . Such emphasis explains why Yahweh's fatherhood is specially correlated with Israel." Ibid., 6:307. He even states, "That God's love reaches beyond Israel is only implicit in the Old Testament. Even the reference to Yahweh's universal fatherhood (Mal. 2:10) is connected more with his creation of all mankind than with his love." Ibid., 6:345.

[94] "God being the God that he is, his love is for all he has made." Morris, *Testaments*, 80. There is a kind of universal divine fatherhood, but differing from the special elective fatherhood. "Like Judaism Christianity, too, affirms a universal divine fatherhood on the basis of creation and acknowledges the special fatherhood of the Creator-Redeemer God in the Old Testament community of faith." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:323. J. I. Packer speaks of this motif as the universal and particular divine love. Particular love reaches those whom God has sovereignly elected to love while universal love corresponds to God's common grace. "The Love of God: Universal and Particular," in *Still Sovereign; Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge & Grace* (ed. T. R. Schreiner and B. A. Ware; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 356. Thus God "loves all in some ways" and he loves "some in all ways." Ibid., 283.

[95] "For the Jews divine fatherhood was no abstract cosmological principle that reflects God's relationship to the universe, but rather Yahweh's personal relationship to the people of God's choice." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:310.

are related, Henry distinguishes "divine paternity" from "divine love."[96] Salvation is not

conveyed "on the basis of divine paternity alone, but especially in view of divine *agapē* which, as

divine self-giving, gains in Christ a decisive significance for human destiny."[97] Thus, emphasis

on God's election fatherhood "prevents attaching to it a sentimental universalism that robs divine

paternity of moral meaning."[98]

Holiness and Justice

This relates closely to the absolute holiness, righteousness, goodness, and justice of God,

which are very important to Henry's conception of divine love.[99] The goodness of God is closely

related to his love such that "Scripture everywhere views God's righteousness as coextensive

with his love."[100] Mercy is likewise closely connected to divine love, yet not required by the

divine nature.[101] Divine justice, however, is to be differentiated from divine benevolence.[102]

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[96] Ibid., 6:322. "The New Testament makes plain that God's love is more than paternal benevolence; it is a divine gift manifest in Jesus Christ. . . . It is because of God's *agapē* and man's appropriation of a divinely gifted redemption, and not simply in view of divine paternity, that regenerate sinners can once again be called the sons of God." Ibid., 6:322–23.

[97] Ibid., 6:316. "Only as God's redeeming love is additionally implied by references to his fatherhood can salvation be associated with the term Father." Ibid.

[98] Ibid., 6:321–22. Paradoxically, Henry speaks of God's fatherhood being "frustrated." He states, "How Israel's disobedience frustrated the fatherhood of God is reflected by Yahweh's lament" in Hos 11:1–2. Ibid., 6:308.

[99] See the chapter "The Holy Love of God" in C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 103–13. There he states regarding the impoverished view of God's holiness, "God's love then tends to be a concurrence in man's imperfections, or a certain divine sympathy which tolerates the temporary identification of sub-divine ends as legitimate human goals, or a partnership in which God and man strive together for higher ideals without any genuine sense of man's moral and spiritual discontinuity with the essential divine holiness." Ibid., 111. For Henry, "it is the God who regards sin solemnly who is the God of holy love—and none other." Ibid., 110.

[100] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:350. Cf. ibid., 6:258.

[101] Justification from divine wrath is a "voluntary act of mercy" and "does not flow from the justice of God as an inner necessity of God's nature." Ibid., 6:410. Moreover, divine love does not dissolve "the need of substitutionary and propitiatory atonement." C. F. H. Henry, *Himself*, 80. "The witness of Scripture is that divine love and divine righteousness, already united in the simplicity of God, find their historical meeting ground the reality of justification by faith." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:356. Of course, in the simplicity of God, "love and righteousness (or holiness) express different aspects of the same quality in God's being." Kuhn, "God," 53.

Henry is concerned that divine love might eclipse the reality of divine holiness, goodness, justice, and judgment.[103] He therefore insists on biblical divine wrath that "preclude[s] any promotion of love at the expense of righteousness."[104] Divine wrath, including the terror of hell, is real. Divine love does not remove this biblical emphasis or the fact that God must be "placated."[105] Paradoxically, it seems that divine wrath may be elicited, whereas divine love cannot be.

However, divine "love does not intercept God's final punishment of evil; in fact, God vindicates his essential nature by eschatological retribution."[106] However, divine wrath should not be thought of as "an uncontrollable outburst of passion."[107] Divine wrath is rightly understood within the context of "the one sovereign God, the self-revealing God of holy love."[108] Thus, Jesus is just as much the "revelation of divine wrath" as the "revelation of divine love."[109] In all this,

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[102] "If there is in God no divine perfection of justice distinguishable from sheer benevolence then there need be no justification—indeed, there can be no justification." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:356.

[103] Henry blames "exaggerated and distorted concepts of divine love" and "sentimental alternatives supposedly grounded in divine love" for the downplaying of divine holiness and judgment. Ibid., 6:328. Cf. C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 107. Morris points out that "we often confuse love with sentimentality. . . . There is a stern side to real love." *Testaments*, 25.

[104] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:325.

[105] Ibid., 5:303. "God is not a vague universal cosmic love but is wrathful toward fallen humanity and needs to be placated." Ibid. "That God's enmity toward sinners is not merely a passive attitude but one of active hostility may seem incompatible with the doctrine of God's love. Yet it was while we were considered God's enemies that Christ as the gift of divine love died for us." Ibid., 6:358. "Christ, *agapē* incarnate . . . makes it patently obvious that no correct view of final judgment can be elaborated that empties hell of its terrors and depicts God's last judgment as benevolent toward the impenitent and ungodly." Ibid., 6:351–52.

[106] Ibid., 6:353. The alternative, "self-cancelling justice is not only unbiblical, it also implies amoral love." Ibid., 6:354. He states that "outside the Biblical tradition, wherever the attributes of holiness and love are applied to deity, the application is such that either the divine love or the divine holiness is seriously compromised." C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 103.

[107] Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1955), 184. Carson also emphasizes the controlled nature of this anger saying, "God's wrath is not an implacable, blind rage. However emotional it may be, it is an entirely reasonable and willed response to offenses against holiness." *Difficult*, 69.

[108] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:330.

[109] Ibid., 6:332. He goes on, "Divine love and mercy open a way of escape from divine wrath:

divine judgment is perfect and God will be shown as "holy, loving, and compassionate, and indeed working all things for good to believers, and by his sovereignty sheltering even the fallen cosmos and history from purposeless destruction."[110]

Love and the Divine Essence

Although, the concept of love is very important to the transcendent-voluntarist model, Henry maintains that God's essence should not be limited to love.[111] Love is not "exhaustive of the totality of God's being, [but] is nevertheless intrinsic to God's very nature."[112] The main rationale for this decision is Henry's apparent fear that love will dominate the discussion of God's nature to the exclusion of other aspects.[113] However, some that align with this model in most other ways maintain that God's very essence is love.[114] The difference in this model minimally

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Christ's substitutionary, propitiatory death provides deliverance from both the present wrath and the wrath to come." Ibid., 6:334. For Henry, wrath is not merely an outgrowth of divine love since the terms for wrath certainly "do not intrinsically express divine love; only the grace of God can mitigate such actions against the sinner." Ibid., 6:327. Therefore, the "wrath of God is not . . . simply the reverse side of his love, although that may well be the case in his relations with the objects of his election. . . . Among the people of God what provokes God's wrath is insensitivity to his love while among unbelievers it is enduring hostility that perpetuates God's wrath." Ibid., 6:331.

[110] Ibid., 6:303.

[111] "The *agapē* of God is in fact the very lifeline of the Bible." Ibid., 6:346. Nevertheless, "the Johannine declaration does not imply, therefore, that the divine nature at its depth is only love and nothing more." Ibid., 6:341. Henry notes that John not only declares that "God is love" (1 John 4:8) but also that "God is light" (1 John 1:5). Ibid., 5:81–82.

[112] Ibid., 6:348. "Love is not accidental or incidental to God; it is an essential revelation of the divine nature, a fundamental and eternal perfection. His love, like all other divine attributes, reflects the whole of his being in specific actions and relationships." Ibid., 6:341.

[113] He is therefore concerned about making one understanding of an attribute dominate the entire ontology such that "when we ascribe goodness to God properly, we at the same time ascribe justice and omnipotence. If we ascribe love in a way that moderates divine righteousness, or righteousness in a way that cancels mercy, then we depict the totality of God's nature improperly." Ibid., 5:135. "If God's nature is self-communication which goes 'out of Himself' to others, then 'creation' becomes a necessity, the universe a necessary 'emanation,' for God's nature can hardly be conceived out of necessary relations to the universe." Ibid., 5:117.

[114] For instance, both Carson and Morris consider love the very essence of God; however, they do not focus on ontological implications from this position and seem to be more interested in affirming love as a foundational to how God should be understood. Carson states, "Love is bound up in the very nature of God. God is love." *Difficult*, 39. Morris also unequivocally sees love as the essence of God since God is

impacts the definition and nature of love itself. Although Henry does not allow for any one

"attribute" to be central or the sole essence, he actually makes every attribute, rightly understood,

the essential attribute, due to the co-inherence of the divine attributes in divine simplicity.[115]

Thus, God is love, yet not to the exclusion of other perfections of his unitary nature.[116] Since

God's essence *is* all his attributes and all attributes are mutually inclusive, there can be no tension

between love and "other" attributes in the divine simplicity, and love, rightly conceived, would

still be applicable to sum up the nature of God.[117]

**Departure from the Classical
Model of Divine Love**

This model of divine love interacts with the critique of the classical Greek idea of God,

specifically the concept that God does not love anything outside of himself.[118] In doing so it

recognizes some of the shortcomings of classical theism. D. A. Carson frames the issue well

when he asks, "What does such love look like in a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, sovereign,

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love "means more than that God is loving; it means that love is of the essence of his being." *Testaments*, 136.

[115] Thus "all God's perfections are equally ultimate in the simplicity of his being." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:132. He states, "We insist on the unity of the divine essence in which any and every divine attribute implies the others." Ibid., 6:322. Moreover, "all God's attributes have an absolute divine character; each attribute is involved in every other attribute." Ibid., 5:135. Thus he can state, "God and holiness, and God and love, are mutually exhaustive synonyms; Scripture itself testifies that 'God is love' (1 John 4:16), and not simply that love is in God." Ibid., 5:132.

[116] In other words, just as long as the conception of divine love already took into account the mutual inclusivity with the attributes of justice, omnipotence, and the like, God's essence may be thought of as love in this qualified sense. For instance, Henry allows that "no doubt an effective discussion of divine attributes requires an orderly arrangement and exposition involving logical priorities. But such exposition does not require certain divine perfections to be submerged to others on the premise that some attributes are ontologically inferior." Ibid., 5:136.

[117] The love of God is thus foundational to the whole doctrine of God since "God's interpersonal love for himself and for his creatures is the measure of all that passes for love in the universe he makes and preserves; it is the shaping principle of his creative and redemptive work." Ibid., 6:341. On the everlasting nature of this love see Morris, *Testaments*, 10.

[118] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:340.

and transcendent (i.e., above space and time)?"[119] Henry differentiates his view from Aristotle's view, which makes divine love for other than God impossible, contending that "no philosopher has affirmed divine love to be an attribute of the Infinite except through the influence of Christianity."[120] However, the "God of the Bible . . . is the personal Creator of the universe and the source of redemption."[121] Accordingly, "whatever Christian theology means by the impassibility of God, it does not mean that God's love, compassion and mercy are mere figures of speech."[122] Yet, the break is by no means total. For Henry, divine love is not elicited by anything external to God but is solely motivated by God's eternal decree.[123]

The Agape-Eros Distinction

That there is a good deal of continuity, though not identity, between the transcendent-voluntarist model and the tradition of love may be seen by considering the traditionally dominant *agape-eros* distinction. In addressing this issue, Henry rightly acknowledges the complexity

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[119] Carson, *Difficult*, 45. Vanhoozer points out that "it is becoming increasingly difficult for classical theists to defend the intelligibility of the love of God as an apathetic and unilateral benevolence." "Introduction," 10.

[120] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:233. Cf. ibid., 6:343. "Aristotle's spirit does not love the world like God the creator and preserver of the universe and redeemer of the penitent loves the world." Ibid., 5:215.

[121] Ibid., 5:340. Again, this is in explicit distinction from Aristotle's unmoved mover. Thus it is "only a deity view which conceives God already as communicative personality that the notion of divine love possesses any genuine meaning at all; a loving God is not a divine hermit." C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 104.

[122] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:349. In fact, Henry is able to speak of "God as having a tender concern for man, and loving man as sinner as well as creature, despite his moral revolt." *Notes*, 109. Carson discourages "attempts to strip God's love of affective content and make it no more than willed commitment to the other's good. The philology does not support this view." *Difficult*, 46. He is adamant that an emotionless God (such as may be implied in the Westminster Confession of Faith) is "profoundly unbiblical and should be repudiated" though he later argues for a form of impassibility. Ibid., 48. There is a "fervor" to divine love as Morris states that God "does not simply tolerate the people [Judah]—he loves them with all the fervor of his holy nature." *Testaments*, 11.

[123] Thus, "compassionate response is not induced in God by the distress of creatures, as if they were able to effect a change in the nature of an otherwise uncompassionate being; rather, response is grounded in the living God's essential nature, that is, in his voluntary disposition." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:349.

involved in the different biblical words for love.[124] No simplistic distinctions or definitions of

biblical words for love suffice.[125] He thus correctly notes that "it is hardly the case, then, as some

exegetes argue, that the Bible gives terms like *agape* a wholly new meaning."[126] Yet, on the other

hand, he contends, along with Nygren, that there is a unique "biblical view of divine *agapē*," a

"distinctive meaning of love, [that] is found exclusively in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures."[127] He

does, however, qualify this by acknowledging that "to compress the biblical view of divine love

solely into the term *agapē* can raise unnecessary misunderstanding."[128] Nevertheless, he contends

that "the inspired writers deliberately employ *agapē*—both when they speak of self-love and

when they refer to neighbor-love."[129] He states, "Because of its very colorlessness as a nonbiblical

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[124] Linguistically, the sharp dichotomy regarding the biblical words for love (such as *philia*) is rejected based on the bare semantic facts. Henry does recognize his dependence upon Nygren's study stating, "No scholar has contributed as influentially as Anders Nygren to the contemporary contrast of *agapē* and *eros* (*Agape and eros*). At the forefront of Swedish theological research into the fundamental motifs of the Christian faith, Nygren emphasizes the distinctive importance of *agapē* for understanding biblical religion." Ibid., 6:342. He states, "Some scholars have inferred, for example, that all terms for love except *agape* are inappropriate to the God of the Bible; the fact is that Jesus in the Gospel of John uses the verb *phileō* when he states that 'the Father loves the Son' (John 5:20), and does so as well when speaking of the Father's love for the disciples (John 16:27). Jesus' love for Lazarus (John 11:3, 36), for the apostle John (John 20:2), and for other believers also (Rev. 3:19) is characterized as *phileō*-love. Both *phileō* and *agapaō* are therefore used not only of Christian love for others but also of Jesus' love for his disciples, as well as for the Father's love of the incarnate Son. Moreover, the anathema that Paul pronounces at the end of 1 Corinthians (16:22) is directed at those who, amid the problems besetting the congregation at Corinth, 'love (*phileō*) not the Lord Jesus.'" Ibid., 6:343. His familiarity with the semantic overlap of the terms begs the question as to why he adopts the thematic dichotomy.

[125] Henry emphasizes the fact that "meaning is conveyed not by single words but by logical constellations of words." Ibid., 6:344.

[126] Ibid. For instance, Henry recognizes the use of *agape* in the LXX for situations such as the lust of Amnon for Tamar his sister (2 Sam 13:15).

[127] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343. Although Henry acknowledges many passages that speak of "love" he claims it is used in "God-man relationships much less frequently and much more cautiously than does Greek mythological literature." Ibid., 6:344.

[128] Ibid., 6:343. Carson as well recognizes that Nygren's "understanding of love cannot be tied in any univocal way to the [*agapao*] word group." *Difficult*, 26.

[129] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343–44. He thus adopts the belief that the verb form of *agape* was "an indefinite word often implying no more than to 'like' or to 'be content with'" and could thus be utilized by the Bible with an infusion of the meaning of a rational, willed love. Thus he contends that "The least definite term for love in this classical Greek word cluster was *agapan*, whose common emphasis was a lover's free and decisive act in behalf of another." Ibid., 6:345. He cites C. E. B. Cranfield:

term the biblical writers could impart to *agapaō* a highly selective intention and a distinctive connotation."[130] Furthermore he states, "And, most importantly, when God's love-relationship to man is in view the New Testament uses *agapē* almost entirely."[131] Thus, despite glaring semantic ambiguities, this model utilizes the *agape-eros* distinction to ground the specific discussion of divine love in opposition to classical Greek conceptions. [132] Accordingly, a thematic (as opposed to semantic) distinction between *agape* and *eros* is posited.

Thematically, Henry sees *eros* as "essentially one's quest for a value that compensates for an inner need or defect."[133] In another place he states, "*Eros* is self-serving passion; it seeks it

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"Although used for euphony as a synonym for *phileō* and *eraō, agapaō* lacked the warmth of the former and the intensity of the latter. . . . Of the verbs used for love in classical Greek, *agapaō* was therefore the least specific." Cranfield, "Love," *Theological Wordbook of the Bible* (ed. Alan Richardson; New York: Macmillan, 1950), 134. Yet, to be fair to Henry he does reject Cranfield's contention that *agape* was chosen because it lacked the erotic connotation of *eros*. He does so by referring once again to the instance of Amnon and Tamar. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:346.

[130] Ibid. Morris accurately points out that the use of the word *agape* "was not entirely new, but it was not common before the New Testament." *Testaments*, 124. Despite this, Morris also holds to the thesis that the NT writers intentionally employed this word "because they had a new idea about the essential meaning of love. In saying this I am not claiming that the linguistics prove this point." Ibid., 125. It must be noticed, then, that this is a theological and thematic rather than exegetical and linguistic argument. Thus, he clarifies that "the meaning aris[es] because of the way the Christians used the *concept*, not the word." Ibid. In fact, more than once Morris goes out of his way to emphasize that the case cannot be made from the linguistics. He states, "A. Nygren has often been criticized for making too sharp a distinction between *agape* and *erōs*. So perhaps I should repeat that I am not basing my argument on the linguistics, though I find them interesting and see in them a pointer. The main thrust of the argument depends on what the New Testament writers meant when they used the love words, not on their terminology." Ibid., 128. Carson, however, proceeds with greater caution saying, "There are excellent diachronic reasons in Greek philology to explain the rise of the [*agapao*] word group, so one should not rush too quickly toward theological explanations." *Difficult*, 27.

[131] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343–44. Morris also recognizes that *phileo* and *agapao* can, at times, be used interchangeably. Nevertheless, he does not see *phileo* as an adequate representation of love. He states, "We must dismiss this term . . . if we are looking for the essential New Testament idea of love. . . . In short, it does not indicate Christian love." *Testaments*, 119. However, as shall be seen, the semantic evidence does not seem to support such a dogmatic stance in favor of *agape* as opposed to other NT words for love.

[132] For instance he states, "Christian love (*agape*) is the antithesis of worldly hate, but it is much more; it is the antithesis of worldly love (*eros*) in all its forms. The gods of our time are but brittle images of *eros*-love." C. F. H. Henry, *Himself*, 13. "The empirical approach to the nature of God soon coalesced God into man and blurred *agapē* into *eros*." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343.

[133] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343.

objects for the fulfillment of the lover's own need or gratification."[134] Henry locates the problem

in this Greek conception of love as *eros* saying, "Here the misunderstanding of love in terms only

of *eros* leads Aristotle to reject the very possibility of God's love for the world or for

mankind."[135] Thus, Henry's solution to the classical view of divine love is a re-definition of love.

Accordingly, Henry utilizes a concept of love differing from the Greeks, *agape,* which is

supposed to suit the timeless and perfect ontology. Hence, *agape* cannot entail anything that

contradicts the concept of a simple, timeless, self-sufficient, and immutable God.[136]

Agape **Love as Election Love**

As has been seen, this model of divine love places an emphasis on the distinction

between God and the world. God is sovereign and transcendent over the world, and love is freely

willed by God with no necessity and no external motivation. Thus, divine love is a sovereign,

volitional love, not the result of any "inner divine necessity" or emanation, but rather purely

based on the totally free divine volition.[137] Likewise, there is no external compulsion or even

motivation for divine love. God's love, then, is not an impersonal force but is supremely personal,

although exclusive of sexuality.[138] Moreover, interpersonal love is part of God's trinitarian

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[134] Ibid., 6:345. For Morris, "basically*, erōs* is romantic love, sexual love." *Testaments*, 120. Although Morris points out that *erōs* is not inherently evil, he nevertheless concludes that "love is something quite different from a passionate human longing, even a longing for the good and for God." Ibid., 123.

[135] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343. He comments that the NT avoids *eros* "because of the misconception to which it is prone. The inspired writers deliberately employ *agape*." Ibid., 6:344.

[136] However, Carson adds a very important qualifier saying that "doubtless God's love is immeasurably richer than ours, in ways still to be explored, but they belong to the same genus, or the parallelisms could not be drawn." *Difficult*, 48. Thus, there is not an absolute dichotomy between divine and human love.

[137] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:116. Henry states, "God is sovereign from eternity and from eternity is personally active in self-giving holy love." Ibid., 5:292.

[138] Ibid., 5:297–98. Albert C. Knudson states, "Without personality love would be a mere abstraction." Knudson, *The Doctrine of God* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1930), 352, quoted in ibid. "Biblical religion is what imparted dimensions and distinctions of love and fellowship found nowhere else; because these terms gain their meaning in a context that heightens rather than lessens personal realities, it

nature.[139] However, God's love is not only intra-trinitarian but also includes other than God, according to sovereign election.

It follows from the aseity of God that the sovereign, rational will of God is the sole origin of God's *agape* love for mankind. As Carson puts it, God "does not 'fall in love' with us; he *sets his affection* on us."[140] This means that all divine love is predicated solely upon the eternal predestinating divine decree, independent of human action and/or response.[141] Henry adds, "Divine love is here not destructive of reason but is intrinsically rational; man's love for God, moreover, is not primarily emotional but volitional."[142] Thus, emotion is de-emphasized in favor of a rational will. Henry thus partially defines *agape* as "the incomparable love of the holy God

seems incredible and it is in fact impossible to ground them in subpersonal or impersonal relationships or processes." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:156–57.

[139] There is an "eternal interchange of holy love between the persons of the self-revealed Godhead." Ibid., 5:172. "God is continually engaged in intercommunion, in internal self-revelation and holy love. This activity is not an addition to his nature; it is God's essential being in tripersonal activity." Ibid., 5:155–56. Cf. Carson, *Difficult*, 39.

[140] Ibid., 61. Though the will is clearly emphasized Carson does caution that "Christian love cannot be reduced to willed altruism." Ibid., 28. Nevertheless, he adds that "all of God's emotions, including his love in all its aspects, cannot be divorced from God's knowledge, God's power, God's will. If God loves, it is because he chooses to love; if he suffers, it is because he chooses to suffer. God is impassible in the sense that he sustains no 'passion,' no emotion, that makes Him vulnerable from the outside, over which he has no control, or which he has not foreseen." Ibid., 60. Yet he claims that God's love is not to "be dissolved in God's will," but is in complete accord with God's will and thus "unlike ours," his love does "not flare up out of control." Ibid. C. F. H. Henry states, "Judaism and Christianity therefore expound a distinctive love relationship between God and the universe and between mankind and God. In the Old Testament God's love centers in his choice of a people utterly unworthy of his love as a covenant community." *God, Revelation*, 6:340. For a homiletical discussion of election love from a Reformed perspective see John MacArthur, *The God Who Loves* (Nashville, Tenn.: Word, 2001).

[141] C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 111. Accordingly, "God wills to love men and he loves according to his own purpose of election, not according to the actions of men." Morris, *Testaments*, 160. Further, "neither his love nor his hate is to be explained by the way men act." Ibid., 159. Carson also emphasizes what he calls "God's particular, effective, selecting love toward his elect." Carson, *Difficult*, 18.

[142] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:341. This is expressed further when Henry states that sometimes *agape* "was used to convey the thought of love that expresses not merely an emotion but rather an act of will; here it borders on the New Testament sense." Ibid., 6:346. Morris states, "It might be argued that God loves the people because there is something in them that delights him, but . . . it seems that God delights in this people simply because he chooses to do so." *Testaments*, 93.

for rebellious sinners whose only destiny would otherwise be unmitigated doom."[143] Here God's

love is not merited or won by humans, but is totally gratuitous.[144] God does not need to bestow

love nor does he gain from the loving relationship, for he already lacks nothing. Love is

beneficence, "bestowed not upon a worthy object and not for the personal advantage of the Lover

but solely for the benefit of the undeserving recipient."[145] Hence, the love of God is quite

comparable to the grace of God and the divine-human relationship is not reciprocal.[146]

This emphasis on divinely willed love also relates to the theme of election that is

prominent in this model; thus Morris states unequivocally that "predestination and love go

together."[147] Thus, the love of God is defined as purely willed by God and uncaused by its object.

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[143] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343. "And, most importantly, when God's love-relationship to man is in view the New Testament uses *agape* almost entirely." Ibid., 6:344. Morris defines that divine *agape* "is not a love of the worthy, and it is not a love that desires to possess. On the contrary, it is a love given quite irrespective of merit, and it is a love that seeks to give." *Testaments*, 128. Any human response is also the work of God and not man according to divine election. Thus, "God produces love in his elect; it is certainly not their own achievement." Ibid., 182. This is, of course, exactly what Nygren proposed when he said that man loves God "because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God," which is the "profound significance of the idea of predestination: man has not selected God, but God has elected man." Ibid., 191. Cf. Nygren, *Agape*, 231.

[144] "God loves not because the objects of his love are upright and winsome, but because he is a loving God. . . . The constancy of his love depends on what he is rather than on what they are." Morris, *Testaments*, 12. C. F. H. Henry adds, "The *agapē* of God confers on the unworthy an undeserved value or boon." *God, Revelation*, 6:342.

[145] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343. Geisler contends that the "Greek word *agape* used of God's love means 'benevolence,' a self-less 'sacrificial' love." *Systematic*, 367.

[146] In fact C. F. H. Henry goes so far as to say that, "only where the love of God is discerned in terms of grace—in terms of a divinely provided redemption bestowed as unmerited divine favor—that the love of God is conceived aright; in every other religious or philosophical tradition, the divine love is misconstrued." *Notes*, 108. "Here the Lover does not seek to satisfy some personal lack or to remedy an inner need, for God has none, but bestows a benefit on the one he gratuitously loves." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:343. Morris sees such an emphasis on the gratuitousness of God's love in the OT use of the *ahab* word group saying, "These words appear to signify love freely given, love given when there is no sense of obligation. When used to refer to God they imply his grace." *Testaments*, 12. However, it is questionable whether such a case is semantically demonstrable. Nevertheless, the identification of divine love as self-giving or self-communication, is quite common. For instance, "love in God approaches very nearly the definition given by Charles Hodge of God's quality of *goodness*, including 'benevolence, love, mercy and grace.'" Kuhn, "God," 53. Cf. Carson, *Difficult*, 41; Grudem, *Systematic,* 198; and Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2005), 102.

[147] Morris, *Testaments*, 191. As Norman Henry Snaith remarks, "Either we must accept this idea of choice on the part of God with its necessary accompaniment of exclusiveness, or we have to hold a

Divine love is solely based on God's sovereign decree independent of the nature of the object.[148] Although, in this model, all God's love is solely a product of his free choice, the so-called "elect" are not the only objects of love.[149] Moreover, God's love does not diminish his righteousness or holiness, nor preclude his judgment.[150] This concept of love builds on a concept of God as utterly transcendent and sovereign and is also very closely related to a soteriology of election and sheer gratuity in accord with the idea of volitional, unmotivated, and unaffected *agape*.[151]

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doctrine of the love of God other than that which is biblical." *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth, 1944), 139. C. F. H. Henry states, "Yahweh's sovereign love explains his choice of Jacob; had he wished, might have chosen Esau instead." *God, Revelation*, 6:347. Henry adds, "The prophets, especially Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah, expound God's love as the basic theme of his electing work." Ibid., 6:345.

[148] Morris thus states, "The constancy of his love depends on what he is rather than on what they are." *Testaments*, 12. Packer adds, "The love of God is thus sovereign love, and must always be acknowledged as such." "Love," 280.

[149] Carson, *Difficult*, 22. "If the love of God refers exclusively to his love for the elect, it is easy to drift toward a simple and absolute bifurcation." Ibid., 22. For Geisler, God is "omnibenevolent." *Systematic*, 367.

[150] Thus C. F. H. Henry states, "God is love in the sovereign freedom and power of his eternal being, and as such has revealed himself definitively and decisively in Scripture and in Christ. While his election-love is free, nonetheless it is limited in application even as his effective call to the unregenerate is withdrawn at physical death." *God, Revelation*, 6:349. In regard to God's elected people in the OT, Morris points out that they will be punished and judged but "this does not mean that God has stopped loving the people." *Testaments*, 24. This is because God's love is not dependent upon the response of the people. He has sovereignly decreed to love them and nothing can thwart that election love. Interestingly, Morris does acknowledge the OT emphasis that "the Lord's beloved must live as the beloved of the Lord. If they do not, they cut themselves off from the blessing that God's love is always offering." Ibid., 31. This would seem to have to be understood as the ability to cut oneself off from temporal blessing considering that God's elective love is not dependent upon any condition. Thus he states, "We must clearly recognize that God's love is unconditional. But it is also true that the God who loves his people loves certain qualities—for example, righteousness." Ibid. However, God's love is not dependent upon righteousness for Morris, God's love "is not a love given to the worthy or to those God charitably assumes to be worthy; it is lavished on sinners." Ibid., 131. Thus, it seems that ambiguity remains here.

[151] The emphasis on the soteriological aspect of the God-world relationship is made clear when Carson states, "If the love of God is exclusively portrayed as an inviting, yearning, sinner-seeking, rather lovesick passion, we may strengthen the hands of Arminians, semi-Pelagians, Pelagians, and those more interested in God's inner emotional life than in his justice and glory, but the cost will be massive . . . made absolute. . . . It steals God's sovereignty from him and our security from us." *Difficult*, 22.

The Impassibility of Divine Love

At the heart of the transcendent-voluntarist model of love is the emphasis that God acts, but is not acted upon. In this way, divine love is not elicited but is uncaused.[152] Henry states, "God's *agape* is comprehended in voluntary relationships that stem from his creative and compassionate personality. As represented in the Bible God's love presupposes the exclusive voluntary initiative of the sovereign divine being whom no external power can manipulate."[153] Accordingly, God's love is unmotivated (and certainly unmerited) by any external factors.[154] Hence, since love is based on eternal decree God's love is constant and steadfast.[155] Accordingly, divine love is non-evaluative and human love toward God cannot bring him value.[156] God's

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[152] Thus Morris can state, "God loves not because the objects of his love are upright and winsome, but because he is a loving God." *Testaments*, 12. Morris further points out that "two things about God's love are repeatedly emphasized: it is constant, and it is exercised despite the fact that the people God loves are so unworthy." Ibid., 100.

[153] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:349. Morris comments, "Men do not persuade God to be loving and gracious—he *is* loving and gracious by nature." *Testaments*, 35. Packer defines four truths regarding *agape*, in contradistinction to *storge, eros*, and *philia*. *Agape* is (1) "a purpose of doing good to others." (2) *Agape* is "measured by . . . what it does, and more specifically by what of its own it gives." (3) *Agape* "does not wait to be courted, nor does it limit itself to those who at once appreciate it, but it takes the initiative in giving help . . . and finds its joy in bringing others benefit." "Love," 278. Thus, "*agape* means doing good to the needy, not to the meritorious, and to the needy however undeserving they might be." (4) *Agape* is "precise about its object." Ibid., 279. All of these define the sovereign, impassible, elective love of this model.

[154] The love of God is the motivation of His redemptive work, but it is a purely internal motivation. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:340. Thus Morris contends that "we must see it [divine love] as something that does not proceed from any attractiveness in those God loves." *Testaments*, 135. God's "love emanates from his own character; it is not dependent on the loveliness of the loved, external to himself." Carson, *Difficult*, 63. Thus God could say, "I love you anyway, not because you are attractive, but because it is my nature to love." Ibid.

[155] C. F. H. Henry comments, "In interpersonal communion he maintains eternal fidelity in love. He is the steadfast God, not a vacillating sovereign." *God, Revelation*, 5:13. "Because God is God he will never cease to love." *Testaments*, 77. Morris stresses that "God's love is firm and sure and steadfast, continuing no matter what happens." Ibid., 19.

[156] Morris states, "But we are all wrong if we think that we are conferring some great favor on God by coming to him. *Agapē* is not *erōs*. We do not bring anything valuable to God—in fact, we acquire value only because we are the recipients of his love." *Testaments*, 142. Piper adds, "To be God is to be incapable of being a beneficiary of any person of power in the universe." "How?" 11. Further, "'God is love' is this: it belongs to the fullness of God's nature that he cannot be served but must overflow in service to his creation. The very meaning of God is a being who cannot be enriched but always remains the enricher." Ibid., 11.

delight is not affected by the actions of human beings, thus whatever is done does not increase or decrease God's perfection or love.[157] Anything otherwise might signify a lack or a need in God. Furthermore, since God is not acted upon, human love for him does not affect him.[158] In this model, then, love does not include suffering. Rather divine suffering is ruled out by God's absolute immutability, and all kinds of theopaschitism are explicitly ruled out.[159] Divine impassibility is maintained despite the fact of the incarnation: "The premise that Christ who suffered is true God and true man does not require the conclusion that God suffers."[160] The fact of the "suffering servant" leads Henry to propose a nuanced (yet strained) form of impassability in order to simultaneously maintain the suffering incarnate and divine self-sufficiency.

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[157] "It seems that God delights in this people simply because he chooses to do so." Morris, *Testaments*, 93. Further, although "it might be argued that God loves the people because there is something in them that delights him, but there is never an indication of what brings about this delight." Ibid.

[158] It is not clear what C. F. H. Henry means when he states that God's "love is wounded, moreover, when they [Israel] are disobedient to his covenant." *God, Revelation*, 6:345. This seems to imply the ability in God to be affected by the obedience or disobedience of His people. Most likely, however, in the context of Henry's ontology it cannot mean that God is actually externally affected but rather that this "wound" is either metaphorical or inflicted by his own sovereign decree. Carson also briefly struggles with this issue when he questions how one is to reconcile a love "which is clearly a vulnerable love that feels the pain and pleads for repentance? John, after all, clearly connects the two." *Difficult*, 59. However, he maintains that any vulnerability does not entail that God is "vulnerable from the outside." Ibid., 60.

[159] "God conceived primarily as our 'fellow sufferer' is not the immutable God of the Bible. All talk of the final liberation of man—psychological, moral, spiritual, political—must end in a question mark if God himself is a struggling, suffering deity." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:292. The idea of God suffering is rejected due to what Henry considers "its express incompatibility with Scripture." Ibid., 6:290. To affirm "'the subjectivity of God in the whole of Christ's suffering' and to make 'God *Himself* . . . the subject of the suffering in substitutionary self-surrender' . . . seriously confuses the scriptural revelation of Christ's mediatorship." Ibid., 6:291. Carson declares, "A God who is terribly vulnerable to the pain caused by our rebellion is scarcely a God who is in control or a God who so perfect he does not, strictly speaking, need us." *Difficult*, 60. He states further that "at its best impassibility is trying to avoid a picture of a God who is changeable, given over to mood swings, dependent upon his creatures. *Our* passions shape our direction and frequently control our will. What shall we say of God?" Ibid., 49.

[160] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:291.

Divine Love in History

Divine election love manifests itself in history.[161] God's love is displayed in the unmerited favor, or grace, that is displayed toward his elect.[162] God is the one who "stoops" in that he "condescends to go to the cross—to death on the cross—in holy covenantal love."[163] This stooping love is an act of his will; "God voluntarily forsakes his sovereign exclusivity."[164] By stating the loving action of God in history, Henry draws the distinction between divine love in action and "the inflexible mathematical regularities of a causal network of nature that are considered benevolent or from the mechanical relationships of an impersonal divine Absolute manifest as nature and man."[165] Hence, "God freely engages in compassionate and merciful acts."[166] In the ultimate act of love, Christ exemplifies the infinitude of God's love.[167] In fact, he states that "Jesus Christ is the meaning of divine *agape*," the ultimate manifestation of the love of God.[168]

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[161] For instance, Henry sees divine love in the creation of man in the divine image, the ejection of Adam and Eve from the garden to avoid eternal sinfulness, the enmity placed between humans and Satan, the promise of victory, the sparing of Noah and his family, and the promise to never again destroy sinful man, among many others. Ibid., 6:346–48.

[162] Ibid., 6:349. Henry makes "grace" a significant term for love, in accordance with Nygren's conception. Beyond this he also refers to divine lovingkindness in terms of grace. Ibid.

[163] Ibid., 5:15. In fact, the cross is the ultimate symbol of both the holiness and the love of God. C. F. H. Henry, *Notes*, 108.

[164] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:15. This is a "stooping that manifested the outgoing righteousness and love of God who stands." Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 6:349.

[166] Ibid.

[167] "That it is the God of infinite righteousness and love who goes to Calvary to salvage penitent humans is made manifest in word and life by the incarnate Christ. If Jesus does not overtly expound divine infinity in propositional form, he nonetheless exhibits divine infinity, as the Scripture affirms, in his own life by his servanthood." Ibid., 5:233.

[168] Ibid., 6:356. Cf. C. F. H. Henry, *Himself*, 13. "In manifesting his love in Christ God unleashed a floodtide of *agapē* into the sin-devastated cosmos." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:341. Further, Henry comments, "In the synoptic Gospels, Messiah Jesus is at once subject and object of God's love. Divine *agapē* is presented not only in word, but also in the Word become flesh, in the deed supreme; the climactic evidence of the Father's love is the person and mission of the Son. . . . Christ Jesus is the supreme

The Relationship of Divine Love to Ontological Suppositions

The transcendent-voluntarist conception of divine love, then, is bound up with the entirety of its ontology.[169] This starting point of a transcendent, immutable, and self-sufficient God places precise limits upon the nature of divine love. For such a God, love cannot be immanent, love cannot change God, and God can have no need or desire of love. Divine aseity rules out divine desire while immutability requires that God be incapable of change or newness.[170] Furthermore, God as perfect could have no deficiency, thus love can add no value or enrichment to the divine life. Accordingly, the thematic *eros* love is utterly ruled out being impossible according to the nature of deity. On the contrary, God as sovereign, rational will entails a sovereign, rational, and willed love; hence election love. This corresponds to the thematic (but not linguistic) *agape*. God's love is thus limited to gratuitous benevolence without regard for its object. God is not at all affected by external reality or the decisions of creatures but orders all history and bestows love sovereignly and independently of external causes. Since God as omnicausal cannot be acted upon; there is no power that could impact divinity; God's love is unaffected by spatio-temporal reality. In this way, God is impassible. Although the transcendent-voluntarist model insists that God has passions, is not indifferent to the world, and may have compassion and mercy, this does not mean that God can be impacted by other than God. Rather, all God's "emotions" are caused purely by the eternal decree. Accordingly, God's relationship to the world is an external one (the relativity required by an internal relation is impossible for a timeless, immutable God). God's loving action, which is manifested in time and space, thus stems

gift of God's love to fallen humanity." Ibid., 6:347–48. Thus "God's relationship to his covenant people reaches its climax in messianic redemption by suffering love." Ibid., 6:345. In light of his ontology it is difficult to understand what Henry means here by the words "suffering love."

[169] Which itself is summed up by Henry thus, "The living self-revealing God is eternally self-sufficient, the voluntary creator of the universe and sovereign monarch of all." Ibid., 6:67.

[170] Accordingly, Henry considers it "unpersuasive that a deity conceived as self-giving love requires in its reciprocal interrelationships that the universe be an aspect of the divine life." Ibid., 6:62.

only from the timeless providence of God according to the eternal decree (predestination). God is internally related only to himself as triune, and any potential need for love is fulfilled by intra-trinitarian love.[171]

Consequently, divine love for other than God is superfluous to God, not only as needed but even as desired or valued. Once again, this fits with the absolute perfection of God, which entails that God is already utterly complete, thus there could be no new experience for God; all is eternally bound in the divine nature according to the eternal sovereign will of God. Moreover, since God is absolutely simple, divine love is but one aspect of describing the utterly unitary essence of God. Love is thus qualified by all other perfections of God, which together are actually merely the simplicity of the sovereign will of God. All history is determined according to God's sovereignty and omnipotence. God is only the loving father of whom he chooses (election love). Divine love is not opposed to holiness, wrath, justice, and eschatological judgment/damnation—all of which take place purely according to the perfect sovereign will of God. In all this, the transcendent-voluntarist model of love, despite its significant and intentional breaks from classic theism in some areas, is nevertheless beholden to many of the classical axioms (though qualified) regarding divine ontology including transcendence, timelessness, simplicity, aseity, perfection, immutability, impassibility, omniscience, and omnipotence.

The Immanent-Experientialist Model

Methodological Framework

Basic Methodological Tenets

Hartshorne's stated goal is to free the conception of God from self-contradictions and present a coherent and complementary picture such that God "can be conceived without logical absurdity, and as having such a character that an enlightened person may worship and serve him

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[171] "In classic Christian theism the Trinity of persons within the eternal Godhead serves this purpose [of divine love] very adequately. Depicting divine interpersonal relationships apart from trinitarian

with whole heart and mind."[172] It must be noted from the outset that, in contrast to Henry, Hartshorne's method does not include the requisite of compatibility with the Bible or any other revered text.[173] Rather, his is a natural theology; nature "is the real 'word of God' concerning the general structure of the cosmos."[174] Though he has some regard for what he calls "religious doctrine" in distinction from purely metaphysical viewpoints, he assumes no infallible text but rather seeks the "main kernel of religious doctrine."[175] In so doing, Hartshorne is more than aware that all proofs will depend upon presuppositions.[176] Despite this, he seeks to produce a meticulously rigorous logic of God, to "discover a *logically complete* classification of possible ideas about God."[177] Hartshorne's method seems to be an eclectic one, utilizing aspects of empiricism in making experience a primary source of information[178] while recognizing the

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doctrine buttresses the argument that God requires a universe as an object of his love." Ibid.

[172] Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964), 1. He suggests that "some definitions of God, at least, contain discoverable self-contradictions, and hence suffice to disprove the God so defined." *Vision*, 77.

[173] He states, "The validity of revelation, or of religious experience as furnishing knowledge, is not a necessary assumption of the argument of this book." Ibid., xiv. Thus, although this study will later compare the biblical data to the models of love we must realize that Hartshorne made no attempt to follow such a method. Nevertheless, he allows the possibility that one working from revelation may contribute to the discussion saying, "A theology which in principle accepts revelation as affording knowledge to those able to assimilate it *may* have light to throw upon truths otherwise likely or perhaps certain to be missed or seen less clearly." Ibid., 67. However, he frequently questions the epistemological reliability of revelation. See Hartshorne, *Divine*, 129, and idem, *Omnipotence*, 41.

[174] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 73. He adds, "In science no book settles once for all what is to be believed." Ibid., 111.

[175] He wants to find that kernel "without assuming the infallibility of scriptural texts or their complete consistency." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 90–91. Yet, he does not "assume that religion has any kernel that makes sense." Ibid., 91.

[176] "All proofs for God depend upon conceptions which derive their meaning from God himself. They are merely ways of making clear that we already and once for all believe *in* God, though not always with clearness and consistency. With no belief in God no belief could be arrived at." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 274.

[177] Ibid., x.

[178] He states, "We have painfully learned (all but one or two groups of philosophers) that the way to evaluate ideas is to deduce their consequences and compare these with the relevant data of experience!" Ibid., 25. However, Santiago Sia questions whether Hartshorne's approach that assumes God "exemplifies

insufficiency of pure empiricism.[179] Neither does he rule out "a priori analysis," but for him this refers not to "analysis unrelated to experience, but analysis related to the strictly general traits of experience."[180] Thus, everything may be judged by "metaphysical necessity or empirical facts."[181] Accordingly, Hartshorne employs the mutually correcting "criterion of consistency" and that of "adequacy to experience" and what he calls the "ethical sense."[182] He contends that such rigorous analysis will leave only one coherent conception of God.[183]

Hartshorne posits that "God is the *one individual conceivable a priori*. It is in this sense that concepts applied to him are analogical rather than simply univocal, in comparison to their

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the metaphysical set-up" does not beg the question. "To assert that it [empirical knowledge] also helps us to know God is actually to pre-define the applicability of the metaphysical categories to include God. Instead of showing conclusively that it is indeed God we are talking about, Hartshorne's metaphysical route is reducible to an explanation of how we can know God, provided God is regarded as coming within metaphysics." Santiago Sia, "Charles Hartshorne on Describing God," *Modern Theology* 3 (1987): 199.

[179] Hartshorne states that empiricism "in theology as it is usually conceived is there shown to be an insufficient procedure." *Vision*, xii. Cf. Charles Hartshorne, "In Dispraise of Empiricism," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 10 (1989): 123–26.

[180] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 29.

[181] Ibid., 31. He contends that the traditional error of pitting one against the other resulted in atheism (pure empiricism) and classic theism (pure rationalism). The resultant classic theism disallowed contingency while including only necessity whereas Hartshorne's method allows for a necessary *and* contingent divinity, as shall be seen. "If we exclude contingent knowledge from theology, we thereby deny contingent aspects to God; if we exclude a priori knowledge, we exclude non-contingent or necessary aspects." Ibid., 61. He states, "Now the only type of theism, which is compatible with the validity (in theology) of both methods, empirical and metaphysical, is second-type theism; for it alone admits contingent features in the necessary being." Ibid., 64. Accordingly, he assumes the adequacy of the "self-evident formal structures of pure logic and mathematics" and the "data of experience so vivid that . . . they are universally admitted to occur." Ibid., 62. For a further discussion of method see Charles Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method* (London: S.C.M., 1970).

[182] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 125. The priority of experience is clear when he states, "Our only reason for any conclusion is some form of experience, and the harmony of secular experience with religious (as yielding the idea of God) is surely a reason for increased confidence in both." Ibid., 337. Though he allows ethical judgment to play a large role he points out that "we have an independent check on our ethical insight—the logic of metaphysical concepts; and we have an independent check on our metaphysical reasoning—our ethical sense." Ibid., 144.

[183] He maintains that "we must strive for formally exhaustive divisions, since to reject at the outset as patently absurd, or to overlook altogether, a formally possible view is to forget that *all* the views *but one* will prove patently absurd when their pretended meaning is adequately scrutinized." Ibid., 82.

other applications."[184] With this in mind, he determines the nature of God by numerous methods, including the way of analogy.[185] He also favors the way of eminence, for example: "Whatever is good in the creation is, in superior or eminent fashion, 'analogically not univocally,' the property of God."[186] The ways of analogy and of eminence are in contrast to the traditionally predominant way of negation, which Hartshorne considers a great historical error. He contends that "whereas the way of eminence, if consistently executed, treats the categories *impartially*, the way of negation plays favorites among the categories."[187] This consistent execution is posited to function by conceiving God "by analogy with our virtues . . . our other-regarding desires, and habits of acting upon them."[188] Thus, Hartshorne's method favors "other-regarding" categories, anticipating what he will later define as love itself.

The Polemic against Classic Theism

Hartshorne categorically rejects classic theism, considering it a total failure in maintaining any meaningful relationship between God and the world.[189] He thus frames his

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[184] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 31. Among their other applications are symbolical (or material) and literal (or formal). See Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1962).

[185] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 59. He cautions against the influence of anthropomorphism while concurrently realizing that the classic reaction, that of negating so-called "human traits," was itself a great error. He states, "We should be willing to give careful attention to religious anthropomorphism, as well *as* to philosophical attempts to transcend it, without too much initial confidence that either one, in traditional form, can be entirely accepted." Ibid., 88–89.

[186] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 77. "Thus knowledge, purpose, life, love, joy, are deficiently present in us, eminently and analogically present in God." Ibid. Sia explains that for Hartshorne "God is symbolically ruler, literally necessary, but analogically conscious and loving." "Hartshorne," 195. However, elsewhere he contends that there is at least some sense of univocal meaning. For Hartshorne, "the formal [or literal] predicates of deity are not exclusively negative, and accordingly, some positive properties of deity can be connoted by non-symbolic designations." Hartshorne, *Logic*, 134–35. For "if there is in *no* sense any univocal meaning then theology is pure sophistry." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 194.

[187] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 78. Cf. Charles Hartshorne, "Love and Dual Transcendence," *USQR* 30 (1975): 96.

[188] The alternative is "conceiving him by analogy with our vices, for example, our most truly and deeply 'selfish' wish for self-sufficiency." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 142.

[189] He states, "They made God, not an exalted being, but an empty absurdity, a love which is

system of theology in direct contrast to classic theism, which "turns upon such terms as perfection, infinity, absoluteness, self-dependence, pure actuality, immutability."[190] Leaving no doubt regarding his stance, Hartshorne states, "I am convinced that 'classical theism' (as much Greek as Christian, Jewish, or Islamic) was an incorrect translation of the central religious idea into philosophical categories."[191] A major factor in this error is the assumption of negative theology. Hartshorne contends that while some attributes of divinity derived from religious experience may be preserved, these must be extracted from the "non-religious tenets" of classical philosophy that have dominated the last two millennia with "an insufficiently analyzed notion of perfection and a preference for materialistic (and prescientific) rather than truly spiritual conceptions."[192]

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simply not love, a purpose which is no purpose, a will which is no will, a knowledge which is no knowledge." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 31. See Shubert Miles Ogden, "Must God Be Really Related to Creatures?" *Process Studies* 20 (1991): 54–56, and idem, *The Reality of God and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 46; Charles Hartshorne, "Redefining God," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 22 (2001): 107–13; and D. D. Williams, "The New Theological Situation," *ThTo* 24 (1968): 446, and idem, "How Does God Act? An Essay in Whitehead's Metaphysics," in *Process and Divinity: The Hartshorne Festschrift: Philosophical Essays Presented to Charles Hartshorne* (ed. E. Freeman and W. L. Reese; LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1964). For example, "knowledge seems to imply an internal distinction between subject and object—but God is said to be simple. Volition seems to imply change—but God is changeless. Purpose seems to imply a present lack of something—but God is perfect; and for him there is no contrast between present intent and future realization. Love involves sensitivity to the joys and sorrows of others, participation in them—but we cannot infect God with our sufferings since he is cause of everything and effect of nothing), and our joys can add nothing to the immutable perfection of God's happiness. Though in religion one speaks of 'serving' God, in reality, according to technical theology, one can do nothing for God, and our worst sins harm God as little as the finest acts of sainthood can advance him." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 114.

[190] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 5. It should be noted, however, that Hartshorne is often criticized for his treatment of classical theism. For instance, although appreciative and somewhat sympathetic to Hartshorne, W. Norris Clarke contends that Hartshorne "systematically misunderstands—to my mind—some of the key metaphysical issues which St. Thomas is trying to come to grips with." "Charles Hartshorne's Philosophy of God: A Thomistic Critique," in *Charles Hartshorne's Concept of God: Philosophical and Theological Responses* (ed. S. Sia; Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer, 1990), 103.

[191] Hartshorne, *Divine*, vii. Of Aquinas he states, "[Though] his doctrine was shipwrecked on certain rocks of contradiction, has he not left us an admirable chart showing the location of the rocks!" Ibid., xii. For D. D. Williams, "The result is that the active, temporal, creating, suffering side of God's being does not come sufficiently into view. It cannot do so because it contradicts the absolutist doctrine of perfection." *Spirit*, 100.

[192] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 4. These include timelessness, foreknowledge, impassivity, creation ex nihilo, simplicity, impassibility, and the lack of will related to "anticipatory and consummatory

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of classic theism for Hartshorne is its seeming incongruity with any real relatedness of God to the world, considering it to be "metaphysical snobbery toward relativity, dependence, or passivity."[193] Such widespread and influential shortcomings have excluded the possibility of God's enjoyment of the world, since he must "contain actually all possible value" and "being perfect, he cannot change."[194] The outgrowth of such errors, according to Hartshorne was that "the purely absolute God was, by logical implication, conceived as a thing, not a subject or a person; as ignorant, not conscious and knowing, as indifferent, not interested in things and their relations."[195] Most important for this study, he contends that classic theism ruled out the possibility of the genuine love of God: "Since love involves dependences upon the welfare of the beloved, and in so far is a passion, God, being passionless, wholly active, is necessarily exempt from it" in classic theism.[196]

Ontological Framework

In Hartshorne's system the God-world relationship is referred to as panentheism (literally "all in God") meaning that God is essentially related to the world such that God includes the

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experience." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 95. It is his contention that such ideas, along with utter immutability, omnipotence which excludes all other power, and either absolute transcendence or absolute immanence, have fueled rejection of theism in general as well as obscured the foundations of "such attributes as love or goodness." Ibid., 97. For Ogden, classical theism combines "the conceptions of God both of classical metaphysics and of Holy Scripture" and thus posits a God "without real internal relations to the contingent beings of which he is the ground" though also predicating "of God the personalistic perfections found in Scripture, all of which entail . . . real relations." *Reality*, 140.

[193] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 50. Hartshorne further contends that classic theism "is one-sided, meager, incomplete in its use of experience to arrive at the nature of God." *Vision*, 125. "It simply denies certain all-pervasive, infinitely fundamental aspects of life—change, variety, complexity, receptivity, sympathy, suffering, memory, anticipation—as relevant to the idea of God." Ibid.

[194] "From the assumption, God is a purely actual, impassive being, the absolutely independent cause upon which all other things depend, it follows that he contains actually all possible value, or is perfect. Being perfect, he cannot change; possessing all 'perfections,' he must know all things by an immutable act above time; he must have power, will, love, all the truly positive attributes in maximal degree." Ibid., 96.

[195] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 17. Thus, "a well-meaning attempt to purify theology anthropomorphisms purified it of any genuine, consistent meaning at all." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 29.

world and yet is more than the world.[197] In order to better understand divine love in the context of the God-world relationship, it is important to distinguish between the entities of the relationship (God and the world) and the relationship itself (panentheism).[198] Thus, this section will first consider Hartshorne's process ontology of the world (panpsychism), then his divine ontology (dipolar theism), followed by the metaphysics of the relationship between the two (panentheism).

The Process Ontology of the World

For Hartshorne, all reality consists of creative minds relating to one another as subjects and objects (panpsychism) within a pantemporal process of events.[199] Becoming, or "process," is the basic form of reality in direct opposition to the supposedly static ontology of classic theism.[200]

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[196] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 115.

[197] Hartshorne defines panentheism as "an appropriate term for the view that deity is in some real aspect distinguishable from and independent of any and all relative items, and yet, taken as an actual whole, includes all relative items." Ibid., 89. God thus transcends the world in being more than the world but not in the classical sense of total otherness or distance. This God-world relationship should not be confused with classic theism which posits God as wholly other than the world nor with pantheism which makes God and the world identical. The world is not identical or equivalent to God.

[198] As shall be seen, the nature of the God-world relationship in Hartshorne's metaphysics is interdependent such that God and the world cannot exist separate from one another. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity the two may be distinguished analytically.

[199] The nature of panpsychism will be unpacked further below.

[200] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 17. He affirms, "'becoming' is reality itself (Bergson), and being only an aspect of this reality." Charles Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method* (London: S.C.M., 1970), 13. Hartshorne is heavily influenced by his teacher Alfred North Whitehead. See Whitehead's seminal work *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929). However, though Hartshorne's dipolar view is compatible with Whitehead's "notion of the primordial and consequent natures of God" there are differences between them. John P. Mahoney, "Charles Hartshorne's Dipolar Conception of God" (M. A. thesis, University of Fribourg, 1974), 13. Most notably, "Whitehead's conception of God is not fully worked out, even in *Process and Reality*." Ibid. For a discussion of Hartshorne's and Whitehead's differences see Lewis S. Ford and William Lad Sessions, eds., *Two Process Philosophers: Hartshorne's Encounter with Whitehead* (AAR Studies in Religion; Tallahassee, Fla.: American Academy of Religion, 1973), and L. S. Ford, "Hartshorne's Interpretation of Whitehead," in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* (ed. L. E. Hahn; The Library of Living Philosophers; La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1991), 313–38. Hartshorne is also indebted to the contributions of Bergson and Morgan. See Cf. Henri Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice* (Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine; Paris: Alcan, 1909), and C. Lloyd Morgan, *Emergent Evolution: The Gifford Lectures* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1923). Despite agreement within process thought it should not be considered monolithic, rather the complexity involved leads to considerable nuance between thinkers.

This process ontology is directly contrary to timeless substance ontology such that all reality is

temporal and ever-changing.[201] Thus, rather than substances enduring through time, minds exist

in successive occasions, or events.[202] In this thoroughly temporalistic ontology, "reality is the

succession of units" or "experient occasions."[203] Time is thus the succession of moments (units)

and all reality is consecutive moments consisting of spatio-temporal events.[204] The present is

internally related to the past such that the past is included in the present and in that sense

permanent.[205] All actuality is thus temporal, and thus continually changing.[206] In this way

becoming is "cumulative"; each instant includes the past as relata and partially determines the

present.[207] That reality is thoroughly temporal excludes the existence of a timeless realm or

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[201] Hartshorne's "social theory, is temporalistic, the denial of any notion of a purely timeless or immutable existent." *Reality*, 134. D. D. Williams states, "Time, freedom, and historical existence are the central realities of our self-understanding." *Spirit*, 5. Likewise Ogden writes of "a reality which is through-and-through temporal and social." *Reality*, 64.

[202] "Events are the final nouns." Charles Hartshorne, "Strict and Genetic Identity: An Illustration of the Relation of Logic to Metaphysics," in *Structure, Method, and Meaning: Essays in Honor of Henry M. Sheffer* (ed. P. Henle; New York: Liberal Arts, 1951), 251. This may be called event pluralism; see Hartshorne, *Creative*, 173–204. The "absolute identity of the concrete or particular is given in an event or occasion, not in a thing enduring through time" or substance. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 102.

[203] Charles Hartshorne, "Personal Identity from A to Z," *Process Studies* 2 (1972): 210. Such experient occasions are also called "unit realities." He considers these "analogous . . . to momentary human experiences." Ibid.

[204] This theory of time finds its basis in Whitehead's "epochalism" which Hartshorne also calls "temporal atomism or chronological pluralism." Charles Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," in *A History of Philosophical Systems* (ed. V. Ferm; New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 450. "The mathematical continuum of point-instants is the system of all possible divisions of space-time; the atomic-epochal units are the actual divisions at a given moment." Ibid.

[205] Thus previous events are data for present events. This is his asymmetrical theory of time: the past is externally related and "thus the present may contain the past as its relatum without thereby infecting the past with its own presentness." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 69. This is based on Whitehead's doctrine of prehension. Hartshorne sums it up thus: every "occasion has intrinsic reference (somewhat as in Peirce's theory of reaction) to preceding occasions, with which it has some degree of sympathetic participation, echoing their qualities, but with a new over-all quality of its own as it reacts to them." Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 451. Thus, "once an event has occurred it is a permanent item in reality." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 35.

[206] Hartshorne comments, "Prior experiences . . . are taken into and thus qualify subsequent experiences." "Personal," 210.

[207] Ibid., 211.

eternal present where being is static. Accordingly, for Hartshorne, becoming is reality and being is an aspect of reality.

The nature of Hartshorne's "actual entities" or "experient occasions" will be clarified by considering his ontology of panpsychism, which refers to the view that all things (even at the subatomic level) consist of minds (souls) or "units of experiencing."[208] Panpsychism is a form of idealism that opposes materialism yet differentiates itself from simple idealism in that it supports the reality of the "spatio-temporal world."[209] Minds, of which all reality consists, function both as subjects *and* objects relating to one another in a social process.[210] However, the fact that all reality consists of minds should not be taken to mean that every object of human perception is sentient. Rather, all perceived things are actually compounds of "smaller [sentient] individuals."[211] There are two kinds of compounds, aggregates and compound individuals. Aggregates are not sentient since they do not have a mind (soul), whereas compound individuals have an emergent mind such that the compound individual is conscious, including other

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[208] In Hartshorne's words it is "the view that all things, in all their aspects, consist exclusively of 'souls,' [or minds] that is, of various kinds of subjects, or units of experiencing, with their qualifications, relations, and groupings or communities." "Panpsychism," 442.

[209] Hartshorne even refers to this as "panpsychical realism" as well as "realistic idealism" to emphasize the break from traditional forms of idealism. Ibid. Nevertheless, Hartshorne's system is not realism in the traditional sense. "The constituents of this world are, for panpsychists, just as real as human minds or as any mind." Ibid., 442. At the same time he contends that "no one has proved or can possibly prove . . . that there is any 'matter,' apart from social terms and relations." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 29. Moreover, "it is naive to suppose that merely because molecules, atoms, etc., are invisibly small, they cannot be social beings, in relation to their neighbors, or their constituents, or both." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 36. Thus, "mere matter as such is abstract or collective, and that only panpsychism can give content to it as concrete and singular." Ibid., 101.

[210] These minds are themselves extended. Therefore, "extendedness is then not a property capable of distinguishing 'mere matter' from mind, since minds, as entering into communal relations with one another, must exhibit extendedness. A mind, according to most panpsychists, is not simply outside the space-time world. It is also not at a mere point in that world, and nothing remains than that it be in an area of the world." Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 445–46.

[211] In "perceiving the non-human world we are always apprehending collectives." Ibid., 450. However, "all individuals apparent to the senses are compounded of numerous much smaller individuals." Charles Hartshorne, "The Compound Individual," in *Philosophical Essays for Alfred North Whitehead* (ed. F. S. C. Northrop; New York: Russell & Russell, 1936), 194. Further, "psychicalism . . . does not hold that everything feels. . . . Collections require collectors, sums summators." Hartshorne, *Creative,* 141.

individuals but not thereby removing their (or its own) individuality.[212] As shall be seen, in

Hartshorne's system, God is the supreme compound individual.

Hartshorne's panpsychism is further explained in terms of subject-object relations where

every soul or mind functions both as subject and object, in different respects. This is understood

within the context of four theses, which attempt a synthesis of realism and idealism.[213] First, the

"principle of objective independence," which maintains that "an 'object,' or that of which a

particular subject is aware, in no degree depends upon that subject."[214] Yet, the object is "within"

its subject "for relation-to-O includes O."[215] This is the theory of internal relations, which will be

discussed below. Second, the "principle of subjective dependence" means that "a 'subject,' or

whatever is aware of anything, always depends upon the entities of which it is aware, its

objects."[216] In this way, knowledge is by nature relative.[217] The third principle is that of

"universal objectivity," which states, "Any entity must be (or at least be destined to become)

object for some subject or other."[218] Fourth, the "principle of universal subjectivity" teaches that

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[212] Here I use the term emergent to mean more than the sum of the parts, in contrast to a reductive view of mind. I do not, however, mean to imply that mind emerges from matter. For a further discussion of the compound individual see Hartshorne, "Compound."

[213] The first two are beholden to realism whereas the last two are related to idealism, with the fourth specifically referring to panpsychism. Though these four theses are at times considered contradictory, Hartshorne considers them to be "complementary or mutually supporting." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 71.

[214] Ibid., 70.

[215] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 112. See the discussion of internal and external relations below.

[216] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 70. Thus, "determinate subject-object relations are found in subjects, not in objects. Subjectivity as such is relativity, objectivity as such is nonrelativity." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 110. "Nothing is so variously relative, dependent, as the knower." Ibid., 8.

[217] "Minds, as knowers, must somehow contain reference, relation, to their objects, or they are not knowers and (at the limit) not minds; but the entities which certain minds know and call their objects need not have this status in themselves." Ibid., 105.

[218] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 70. Hartshorne explains, "So it may be held that any entity must be known by some subject or other, even though being known by any particular subject is external to the entity." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 108. He extends this, saying that since "any object is constitutive of the knower, then one's own being-known, so far as one knows this, is constitutive." Ibid., 124.

"any concrete entity is a subject, or set of subjects; hence, any other concrete entity of which a subject, S1, is aware, is another subject or subjects (S2; or S2, S3, etc.)."[219] These four tenets amount to Hartshorne's panpsychism, or psychicalism, which he otherwise refers to as the "social theory of reality."[220] Thus, all knowers are relative. As shall be seen, God is the supreme, cosmic mind or soul; and as supreme knower he is supremely relative. Panpsychism thus maintains the reality of the spatio-temporal world *and* that the world consists of creative minds.[221]

In Hartshorne's system every mind is creative, meaning that it possesses some degree of freedom so that even when acted upon (limited) options remain open for reaction.[222] In other words, causes are the necessary condition, but never the sufficient conditions, for effects; effects are not merely the simple result of their causes but each "mind" has the ability to freely react to a cause within a limited number of possibilities; thus individuals "can only be influenced, they cannot be sheerly coerced."[223] In this way every mind is a co-creator of reality such that the whole world is interdependent; each mind contributes to the reality of all others.[224] In this way, each

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[219] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 70. A concrete entity is any particular thing in the actual world, even at the subatomic level.

[220] Ibid., 71. For an early presentation of Hartshorne's view see Charles Hartshorne, *Beyond Humanism: Essays in the New Philosophy of Nature* (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1937), 165–210. The importance of panpsychism to Hartshorne's ontology cannot be overstated. He states, "I agree that the falsity of panpsychism implies that of much else in my philosophy." "Could There Have Been Nothing? A Reply," *Process Studies* 1 (1971): 25.

[221] Hartshorne, *Creative*, 272. Cf. Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead's Novel Intuition," in *Alfred North Whitehead: Essays on His Philosophy* (ed. G. L. Kline; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963).

[222] All minds have "some degree of freedom or self-determination, even in the lowest orders of psyches." Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 371. Thus, "all happenings are to some extent by chance." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 106. "Novelty and freedom are fundamental to life and to all harmony." Ibid., 51.

[223] Hartshorne, *Vision*, xvi. "The notion of cause as completely determining its effects is a metaphorical confusion of logical consequence with temporal sequence." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 39.

[224] Thus every mind contains "a spark of freedom and creativity." Ibid., 146. "We *make* each other what we are, in greater or lesser degree." Ibid., 29. This interdependence is predicated on process philosophy's doctrine of universal creativity wherein "To be is to create." Hartshorne, *Creative*, 272.

mind is partially dependent and independent, partially determined and self-determined.[225] Accordingly, each mind plays a part (though by no means an equal part) in interdependently forming each moment of reality (co-creative). This is an indeterministic, non-coercive, creative synthesis of social relativity.[226]

This creative synthesis is predicated upon the relationships of minds to one another— Hartshorne's crucial theory of internal and external relations. First, we should recognize that relations are identified by Hartshorne in terms of feeling: "That all is psychic means, all is feeling, in reaction with other feeling."[227] In fact, although it seems to be an imprecise classification, feeling even includes "all the qualitative content of sensation, often classed under cognition."[228] Minds function as both subject *and* objects of feeling. As subject a mind is internally related to its object so that its relata is actually included in, and constitutive of, the subject.[229] Thus, an internal relation changes and affects the subject (feeler) of that relation and is inclusive of its object (that which is felt). On this basis, Hartshorne summarizes, "To include

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[225] Ibid., 146. Moreover, change is pervasive throughout all concrete actuality such that "with each change we have a new concrete reality, not simply the identical reality with new qualities." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 104.

[226] Here social is being used technically to describe minds (subhuman, human, and divine) relating to one another and should not be confused with human social relations.

[227] Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 449. Further, "Feelings react with other feelings, but in this reaction is involved some degree of participation in the qualities of these other feelings. A feeling feels the feelings to which it reacts. Feelings echo to some extent the feelings around them, and this is the basis of the possibility of relationships among realities by which they constitute a world of things relevant to one another." Ibid., 450. Thus "the unity of actuality is given as a felt unity, and its laws are laws of feeling." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 100. Thus feelings are relations between minds, whether immediate and distinct or mediated and indistinct, and this is the basis of all reality.

[228] Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 449.

[229] Thus "the entity to which the relation is internal is a *concrete* whole of which the externally related entities are *abstract* aspects." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 235. He describes this by stating that the subject must thus be conceived as "'outside' the object, as it were surrounding it but not penetrating it." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 112. For Hartshorne, even human subjects include the objects of their knowledge, though in an imperfect manner. Ibid., 143–44. He states, "If it seems otherwise, this is because of the inadequacy of human personal relations, which is such that the terms are not conspicuously and clearly contained in their subjects." Ibid., 144. See the discussion of metaphysical contraries below.

relations is to include their terms. Hence to know all is to include all."[230] On the other hand, a

mind functioning as object is *externally* related such that it is unaffected by the relation.

Hartshorne defines that an external relation is "such that the entity [mind] said to be externally

related could have been the same had the relations not obtained."[231] Such subject-object relations

are the building blocks of the creative synthesis of social relativity. It should be noted that this

doctrine of internal and external relations does not mean that each entity is included in every

other entity as a whole, but rather what is known in relation is constitutive of the knower (the

subject) without affecting or changing that which is known (the object). There is thus a "mutual

immanence of individuals"[232] as socially related, yet this "does not depreciate individual

distinctness" but recognizes individuality and distinction between minds, including between God

and other minds.[233] Thus every mind functions both as subject and object (according to

Hartshorne's principles of universal subjectivity and universal objectivity) and as such has

internal and external relations. All reality is accordingly an interdependent creative synthesis of

partially determined and self-determined minds interacting as both subjects and objects in

process.

The Divine Ontology of Dipolar Theism

Having considered Hartshorne's ontology of the world (panpsychism), I will now direct

attention to his divine ontology (dipolar theism). Importantly, God is not exempt from the

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[230] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 76. This means that "if there is *any* wholly genuine description of A which entails every genuine description of B, then and only then A is relative to B; but this means that *every* state description affirming A also affirms B. If there is *no* wholly genuine description of A entailing every genuine description of B, then and only then is A nonrelative to B; but this means that at least *some* state description affirms A and denies B." Ibid., 107.

[231] Ibid., 95. Hartshorne adopts G. E. Moore's definition. See "External and Internal Relations," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 20 (1919–20): 40–62. Moore argued for the validity of external relations, disputing F. H. Bradley's thesis that external relations involve an infinite regress.

[232] Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 443. Hartshorne comments, "Individuals generally are not simply outside each other (the fallacy of 'simple location') but in each other." Ibid.

metaphysical tenets of panpsychism. Rather, God himself is a mind, but not just any mind. He is

the supreme mind, also subject to indeterministic, relativistic, spatio-temporalistic panpsychism.

God is not identical to the world but distinct from it, though essentially related.[234] God is partially

dependent and independent, partially determined and self-determined; the eminently moved

mover of all. He is the all-knowing feeler of all feelings, the supreme mind whose knowledge is

perfectly adequate to the state of the world. Such relational characteristics will be unpacked when

the discussion moves specifically to the God-world relationship. However, the divine nature must

first be discussed since it is important to first understand the differentiation that Hartshorne makes

in his usage of absolutist terminology.

Hartshorne's absolutist terminology
of perfection

Hartshorne makes extensive use of terms such as absolute, perfection, necessary,

eminent, et al.[235] However, Hartshorne qualifies these terms in a manner that differentiates his

usage from the traditional meanings associated with classic theism. Hartshorne finds much of this

terminology to be riddled with ambiguities and thus he calls for precision.[236] The key to

Hartshorne's solution to such rampant ambiguity is his re-consideration of the "idea of infinity or

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[233] Ibid., 442. In other words, "'within' does not contradict 'other.'" Hartshorne, *Divine*, 99–100.

[234] The nature of this essential relation will be discussed when attention is turned to the God-world relationship (panentheism).

[235] For instance, the very "uniqueness of God is his maximality." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 231. He emphasizes perfection as well as the necessity of God's existence. "God is the only unconditionally 'necessary' existent. What is unconditionally necessary in God, however, is not all of God, though it is unique to him." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 87. Yet, he also points out that "necessity is a negative or at least an abstract conception." Ibid., 33.

[236] He states, "If there is to be argument about the reality, or even the meaningful conceivability, of an absolute or perfect being, we ought to have before us a systematic analysis of the rationally possible variations or analogous forms implied by the meanings, or at least pseudo-meanings" of such terms. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 111. Although Hartshorne himself utilizes them extensively, he nevertheless points out "how hopelessly ambiguous phrases like 'perfect being,' 'finite God,' 'absolute,' and the like" are. Hartshorne, *Vision*, 10. For him, "such insufficiently examined concepts . . . sidetracked theology." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 66.

perfection."[237] He accepts the traditional view that God must be perfect, but he does not accept

the traditional meaning of such perfection, finding it "dangerously loaded with the connotation,

complete, therefore unincreasable, therefore without relations."[238] Hartshorne seeks to overcome

this traditional notion of absolute perfection that excludes growth by noting three possibilities,

specifically that God may be perfect in all, some, or no ways.[239] That God is perfect in all ways

(absolute, complete, self-sufficient, etc.) is the conception of classic theism, whereas the position

that God is perfect in no ways is atheism. He finds the possibility of complete or absolute

actualization, meaning that all of the infinite potentialities are actualized, to be impossible

because not all potentialities are compossible.[240] Hartshorne avoids these views by positing that

God is "perfect in some ways," meaning "perfect in one sense and capable of increase in value in

another"; this is called surrelativism.[241] The nomenclature of surrelativism, however, emphasizes

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[237] "Perhaps this idea is ambiguous, perhaps there is a sense in which God should be conceived as perfect, another sense in which perfection cannot apply to God, because (it may be) this sense involves an absurdity or, in other words, is really nonsense." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 6.

[238] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 114. He goes on, "Such an idea, however legitimate, is not that of superiority. Non-reflexive transcendence is what has generally been called perfection, with the unproved assumption that to be best among possible beings is necessarily to be in the best (or only) possible state of this best being." Ibid.

[239] Hartshorne thus presupposes as "a minimal definition, God is an entity somehow *superior* to other entities." *Vision*, 6.

[240] There simply cannot "be a concrete maximum of attributes like goodness, knowledge, or power." Ibid., 89. Hence, God is only potentially absolute, not actually absolute since the actualization of all potentialities simultaneously is impossible. Furthermore, "God alone is 'complete' in potency. But completeness in actuality ('pure actuality') is meaningless, and the attempt to conceive it only results in a concept whose object must be less than the least of actualities because it is not actual at all." Ibid., 244. Cf. Hartshorne, *Divine*, 144.

[241] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 158. Cf. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 156. Hartshorne contends that the primary mistake of tradition was overlooking the categories of "all," "some," or "none." *Vision*, 33. Cf. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 112. Thus, there are only three options: first, God is absolutely "perfect and complete" and thus unable to change or "in any way increase in value" the God of classic theism. Ibid., 155. Third, is the view that God is "not in any respect entirely perfect" or atheism. Ibid. The second view, Hartshorne's model, "is that he is perfect and complete in some respects, but not in all." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 155. For Hartshorne, the first view must be dismissed because it leaves God incapable of relationship and the third must be rejected because it proposes a God who is in no way perfect.

that God may increase in value and thus surpass himself, though no others can ever surpass him. Thus he is the self-surpassing surpasser of all.

In this way, Hartshorne defines God's perfection as perfection in all ways that are meaningful and logically compatible (way of eminence) such that God "has everything in the highest degree which is capable of a highest degree."[242] However, not only possibility but also admiration comes into play such that God has "all properties that deserve admiration" in "the highest degree admirable."[243] Of course, admirability is to some extent a subjective category. Beyond the risk of subjectivity, the magnitude of the ambiguity surrounding these conceptions, despite Hartshorne's modifications, begs the question whether one ought to begin by speaking of God in terms of philosophical perfection at all.[244] He answers, "There is need for perfection, that we may have a cause infinitely worthy of our devotion. For though we may make reservations about all ordinary causes, there must be a deeper cause that we wholly accept (even though we cannot sharply formulate it)."[245] Of course this assumes that perfection of this or any other type is valuable and thus a requisite for a conception of a God worthy of worship. As shall be seen below the commitment to this notion, even with Hartshorne's modifications, entails other ontological conclusions.

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[242] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 97. He determines what is capable of a highest degree by "knowing otherwise of the attributes" and that "they are not deficiencies." Ibid. He states, "Only essentially negative predicates need or should be absolutely negated of the perfect." Ibid., 122. Of course the question remains as to the precise differentiation of positive and negative predicates.

[243] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 42.

[244] To be sure, Hartshorne tweaks the definitions. However, it is not certain that he escapes from all of the classic presuppositions and/or connotations.

[245] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 158.

The divine nature

God is the supreme mind who functions both as the supreme subject and the supreme object.[246] This is a partial description of God's dipolar nature or dual transcendence.[247] The dipolar conception of God does not mean that God has a polarized nature but, rather, the same God as supreme mind eminently exemplifies the admirable characteristics of both poles. These ontologically distinguishable yet ontically inseparable poles may be labeled according to numerous metaphysical contraries including: absolute-relative, abstract-concrete, potential-actual, necessary-contingent, and universal-particular, among others.

In Hartshorne's thinking, God must be supremely admirable, thus having "all properties that deserve admiration."[248] It will not do to simply attribute to God only the traditional, absolutist categories; this was the mistake of classical theism, which subjectively assumed the superiority of one pole.[249] In direct opposition to this tendency, Hartshorne conceives God as having all admirable properties (as far as compossible) in an eminent manner.[250] For Hartshorne, metaphysical contraries such as necessary and contingent, infinite and finite, absolute and relative, potential and actual, and others may be attributed to the same being (though not in the same sense), and there are estimable and inestimable manifestations of both poles.[251] Here the modification of absolutist language, specifically the categories of all, some, or none become integral to understanding Hartshorne's view of the divine nature and his application of the

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[246] The meaning of God as supreme subject and supreme object will be discussed further below.

[247] Hartshorne favored the term dual transcendence later in his career. Although he uses the terms synonymously, it seems he wanted to avoid some of the potentially dualistic connotations of dipolarity.

[248] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 42.

[249] Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 2.

[250] The term "compossible" here and elsewhere is used to mean possible in the light of all other relevant factors.

[251] Hartshorne, *Creative*, 268.

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metaphysical contraries to the divine nature. The application of absolute in some ways, for instance, leads to the conclusion that God is "unsurpassable except by itself."[252] This modifies perfection from simple illimitability or "completeness," to "unsurpassability or maximal value in *any* respect in which 'better' and 'worse' are possible, or as the property of that which, *in a given dimension* of value, could not be better than it is."[253] This is what he calls "transcendent excellence."[254] Thus God is perfect in some ways (dipolar theism), but not perfect as utterly complete or infinitely actualized (classic theism). Accordingly, God is not accurately described in monopolar terms where only one aspect of the metaphysical contraries is affirmed. Rather, God must be described in dipolar terms since he eminently exemplifies the admirable characteristics of both poles.[255]

Further application of the categories (all, some, or none) to the metaphysical contraries of necessity and contingency leads to the conclusion that God may be necessary in some ways and yet also contingent. For instance, Hartshorne posits that God is a necessary being, though only in respect to existence. In other words, that God exists is necessary but the particularities of his existence are contingent.[256] Whereas the divine existence is necessary, there are also accidents,

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[252] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 7. Cf. Hartshorne, *Divine*, 20.

[253] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 124. "Consequently, if we are to conceive of the truly perfect One, the One who is *eminently* good, it can hardly be otherwise than as the supreme exemplification of these very ideas, as himself the supremely social and temporal reality . . . the eminently relative One, whose openness to change contingently on the actions of others is literally boundless." Schubert Miles Ogden, "Toward a New Theism," in *A Colloquium on the Credibility of 'God'* (New Concord, Ohio: Muskingum College, 1967), 16.

[254] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 21. Thus "'divine relativity' . . . includes all the divine absoluteness (or eternity) that logical analysis shows to be conceivable without sheer contradiction." Ibid., ix.

[255] Of course this raises the question of the objectivity of Hartshorne's conception of God considering a given characteristic may be admirable to some but deficient to others. See Donald Wayne Viney, "Philosophy after Hartshorne," *Process Studies* 30 (2001): 211–36.

[256] Hartshorne states, "Deity exists necessarily, in a sense in which men, for example, do not, even though not all the factors in God—for example, his actual cognitions—can be necessary." *Divine*, 14. Ogden adds, "The scriptural witness to God can be appropriately interpreted only if his nature is conceived neoclassically as having a contingent as well as necessary aspect." *Reality*, 122–23. Cf. Ogden, "Toward," 14. Hartshorne interestingly adds, "If it be thought suspicious that the ontological argument argues from a

and thus contingency, in God.[257] This amounts to Hartshorne's important distinction (not separation) between existence (that an entity is) and actuality (the particularities of the existing entity).[258] Thus, God's existence is necessary but his actuality is contingent.

Accordingly, God may be absolute in some ways and yet relative, abstract in some ways and yet concrete, and so on. God as relative is "the integral totality of all ordinary causes and effects" yet as absolute he is "conceivable in abstraction from any particular, contingent being(s)."[259] This divine dipolarity may be further analyzed in terms of a concrete aspect and an abstract aspect of God.[260] Hartshorne builds on his previously discussed theory of relations, which maintains that a subject includes its object. Since the abstract may only function as object, the concrete (as subject) is inclusive of the abstract.[261] In fact, the concrete aspect is all-inclusive.[262]

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unique relation of God to existence (though one deduced from the normal relation plus the definition of perfection), let it be remembered that, by definition, God's relation to every question is unique. He is the unique being, unique because maximal, the only unsurpassed and unsurpassable being (in senses A and R)." *Vision*, 309. Yet, if God is altogether unique, what sense does it make to try to describe him at all?

[257] "In concrete or surrelative aspect, God, like all existents, has qualities that are accidental, that do not follow from any necessity of his essence." Hartshorne, *Divine*, xiii. Moreover, "an infinity of accidents must belong to God." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 132.

[258] "That God exists is one with his essence and is an analytic truth. . . . But how, or in what actual state of experience or knowledge or will, he exists is contingent in the same sense as is our own existence" Hartshorne, *Divine*, 87. See Viney, "Philosophy."

[259] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 348. It should be noted that God requires particulars, though it matters not which particulars.

[260] Hartshorne defines "the abstract" as "what can be abstracted, detached in thought and, at least potentially, in actuality, from various relationships or contexts, and yet in this detachment still be the identical entity." *Divine*, 68.

[261] "The concrete includes the abstract, and since the absolute or immutable is abstract, it can perfectly well constitute an aspect of a being which concretely or as a whole is relative and mutable." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 168. Hartshorne contends that tradition reversed the relation between abstract and concrete. "The fact is that traditional theology makes the abstract the basis of the concrete, whereas the reverse relation is logically correct. The abstract is reached by abstracting from some aspects of the more concrete." *Vision*, 113.

[262] Therefore, "since the abstract is in the concrete, any concrete case contains the entire unlimited form." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 144. Or put differently, "In their abstract or more or less general predicates things do not contain particular other things: but in their concrete being qualify each other reciprocally; and this is the social nature of reality." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 296.

The supreme divine mind is both concrete (relative) and abstract (absolute), with the abstract

aspect included in the concrete aspect. In this way God can be absolute in some ways without

ruling out the divine relativity. God's abstract or absolute aspect is the abstraction of his essence

from his contingent actuality (concrete aspect).[263] In this way God as concrete (relative) is an

actual individual consciousness whereas God as abstract (absolute) is non-actual and included in

the concrete.[264] For example, God is absolute in that no other can surpass him, yet he is

supremely relative in that he is all-inclusive and thus ever-growing according to all growth in the

world.[265] Thus God is always superior to every other individual (surrelative).[266] In concrete

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[263] Furthermore, in whatever respect God is "Absolute (in eminent sense)," he is the transcendent, perfect one, superior to all others, "the non-reflexive form . . . the abstract maximum; the self-unsurpassing surpasser of all others. (God as mere self-identical essence abstracted from the fullness of his accidents, the contingent contents of his awareness.)" Hartshorne, *Reality*, 116. Notice that this does not imply that God has an abstract nature in which he is absolute in all ways. On the contrary, the abstract (non-actual or potential) aspects of God are "abstractions" from the concrete (actual). On the other hand, God as concrete is relative. As "*relative* (in eminent sense; superrelative)" God is "the reflexive form . . . the concrete maximum; the self-surpassing surpasser of all, (God as self-contrasting life, process, or personality)." Ibid. "*Relativity is the inclusive, concrete conception;* non-relativity or non-reflexiveness (for as we have seen, these go together) is the reduction of this concrete conception to a partly negative and more abstract case." Ibid., 115.

[264] In this way Hartshorne technically distinguishes: (1) an absolute aspect which is abstract and non-actual, and (2) a relative aspect which is actual as well as "preeminently . . . mutable and passive." *Vision*, 128. "The absolute, infinite side is abstract and concerns the divine potentiality or capacity to have values, while the finitude or relativity concerns the divine actuality." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 45. Moreover, the divine absolute aspect "is everything in the form of possibility, nothing whatever in the form of actuality. God merely as absolute is non-actual; God as person [relative] is at least actual." "What we can clearly infer as to God is only his abstract essence, and the wholly abstract is no actual value." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 92.

[265] Hartshorne defines an absolute term as "abstract, object, cause, predecessor, constituent . . . in any relation in which the term is absolute." A relative term is conversely "concrete, subject, effect, successor, whole." Ibid., 70.

[266] Surrelativism means "to be absolutely guaranteed superiority to every other individual that comes to exist." Ibid., 21. This conception of supreme relativity is also called: dual transcendence, absolute-relative ontology, second-type theism, and most popularly process theology. In God's concrete, all-inclusive, actuality, then, "God himself is a supreme relativist, his absoluteness consisting in the ideally exhaustive way in which he relativizes his evaluations to all factors in the concrete actual world." Ibid., 129.

actuality, God is supremely relative.[267] This supreme relativity will be unpacked in the discussion

of the God-world relationship further below.

God's Relationship to the World as Panentheism

God as Supreme Subject and Supreme Object

　　With Hartshorne's ontology of the world (panpsychism) and divine ontology (dipolar

theism) in mind, attention must be turned to the relationship between God and the world

(panentheism) so that one may better understand how God can include the world and yet be more

than the world without equivocation. Once again, the world is in God, but is not identical or

equivalent to God. God as the supreme mind is both internally and externally related to all other

minds, yet distinct (non-identical) from other minds. As the supreme mind (and in accordance

with the way of eminence) God is the supreme or universal subject. This means that God knows

all other minds immediately (directly and non-mediated) with perfect distinctness. Since

functioning as a subject entails an internal relation, God includes all objects as the all-knowing

and thus all-inclusive mind.[268] It is in this way that God is supremely relative, the "subject of all

change," being eminently affected according to his maximal flexibility.[269] It must be understood

that though God is the universal subject, related to all minds, he is not the only subject. All minds

function as subjects and enter into relationships as part of the interdependent temporal process

(creative synthesis). Moreover, being included in God does not remove the distinctness of the

individual minds. They retain individual consciousness and some degree of freedom according to

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[267] God is not merely relative but "super-relative, a 'super-eminent' type of relativity, since it involves, as we have seen, an element of absoluteness, of maximality." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 113. For Ogden, God is "the eminently relative One." *Reality*, 65.

[268] Thus, "since the omniscient as such knows whatever else exists, the non-omniscient is contained in the omniscient as known in the knower." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 88.

[269] Maximal refers to the greatest degree of flexibility which is admirable and compossible. As maximally relative, God "can be all things to all things, whose all-sympathetic teleology assumes all the changing states of the universal striving." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 259.

the nature of creativity as seen above. The same God is also the supreme or universal object.

Once again, the language of universality does not mean that God is the sole object but rather that

because of his greatness (eminence) he is an object (though not the only object) for every

subject.[270] Thus every mind is related to God, though lesser minds do not know God with perfect

distinctness. Only God's knowledge is perfectly distinct and thus absolute in adequacy.[271] The

knowledge of other minds is partial and not related to all. God is thus the only supreme mind and

he functions both as the supreme subject and the supreme object and all other minds relate to him

and to one another as lesser subjects and objects.[272] As universal subject of the world, God is thus

affected by every event of the world (supreme relativity). God as universal object means,

conversely, that the world (every mind) is relative to, and thus affected by, God. Although God is

relationally all-inclusive, he cannot be wholly identified with (pantheism), nor wholly

differentiated from (classic theism), the world. He includes the world, yet is more than the world

(panentheism). This relationship is further clarified in Hartshorne's organic-social analogy.

The Organic-Social Analogy

Hartshorne's organic-social analogy is itself an amalgamation of two analogies: the

relationship between the human mind (soul) and body and a theory of social reality.[273] Since

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[270] Hartshorne states, "Only God can be so universally important that no subject can ever wholly fail or ever have failed to be aware of him." *Divine*, 70. Thus, God as "absolute is [also] object for all subjects." Ibid. He states, "The absolute is a divine object in the divine subject and for the divine subject. It is an essence, not an existence." Ibid., 87.

[271] This is important because it means that no other mind includes God as a whole, having only partial and indistinct knowledge of him. Thus God is partially in other minds as their object, "in some sense God must be in man." Ibid., 92. Yet only partially, for instance, human knowledge is often inadequate to its object and thus only inclusive of the limited relata that it knows (feels). However, it must be remembered that being known is an external relation and external relations do not affect the knower. Thus God is not affected by being the universal object but by being the universal subject.

[272] Hence, "God is *universal object as well as universal subject*." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 110.

[273] Interestingly, Hartshorne rejects numerous other analogies as useless, or worse. He dismisses any idea of God as monarch out of hand as "the most shockingly bad of all theological analogies." *Vision*, 203. He also forcefully rejects the analogy of God as father. Ibid., 175. Cf. Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 56. For him, "much more appropriate is the idea of a mother, influencing, but sympathetic to enhance influence

neither fully encapsulates Hartshorne's metaphysics, he combines the two. In the mind-body analogy, the God-world relationship is analogous to the human mind-body relationship. He explains that humans have "immediate awareness of the feeling of our own cells."[274] In other words, the human mind is internally related to its body such that the mind is the "supercellular individual of the cellular society called a human body."[275] Likewise, "God is the super-creaturely individual of the inclusive creaturely society."[276] In this way the world is analogous to God's body, which is "a society of individuals."[277] In this analogy, God's mind is internally related to his body, such that he is immediately (non-mediated, direct) related to all. Accordingly, the cosmic body is a society of living individuals, specifically of minds (panpsychism).[278] God is more than the world in a way analogous to the human consciousness, which Hartshorne considers to be more than the mere human body.[279] The world is in God, but God is more than the world, he is the supreme individual of the world.[280]

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by, her child and delighting in its growing creativity and freedom." Ibid., 58. Yet, even this lacks the sufficient "radical superiority." *Vision*, 202.

[274] Ibid., 289. "The living human body is a society of cells (relatively low-grade individuals) plus one high-grade individual, the human personality whose body it is." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 133. "Thus a body, to the best of our knowledge, is really a world of individuals, and a mind, if the body is one having a mind (or one capable of thinking and feeling), is to that body something like an indwelling God." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 177.

[275] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 59.

[276] Ibid. Yet "God has no separate sense organs or muscles, because all parts of the world body directly perform both functions for him. In this sense the world is God's body." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 185. Rather, "every physical individual in the Body becomes as a nerve or brain cell to the Soul." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 121. Thus "God's volition is related to the world as though every object in it were to him a nerve-muscle, and his omniscience is related to it as though every object were a muscle-nerve." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 185. Accordingly, "God is that mind which enjoys the fullest intimacy with all things, and therefore in an undiluted sense has all the world for body." Ibid., 200.

[277] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 59.

[278] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 155.

[279] It must be understood that the soul is not "located" in the same manner as visual objects. Minds are neither "simply outside the space-time world" nor located at "a mere point in that world." Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 445–46.

[280] God as the supreme compound individual will be discussed further below and add further

However, the mind-body analogy is insufficient for Hartshorne's system because the relations in the mind-body analogy are not obvious.[281] Since God is internally related to all minds and thus all-inclusive, he has immediate (non-mediated, direct) relations. This is illustrated in the social analogy which illustrates that all reality consists of the interaction and interdependency of minds and as such reality is essentially and undeniably social.[282] The "social" is defined as "the appeal of life for life, of experience for experience. It is 'shared experience,' the echo of one experience in another."[283] This shared experience, or feeling, is the fundamental characteristic of Hartshorne's social analogy. He describes it alternately as "sympathetic understanding" whereby we know "others most intimately."[284] Importantly, the social analogy illustrates that reality is "pan-psychistic, pan-indeterministic (or pan-creationistic), pan-relativistic, and pan-temporalistic, in the sense that every concrete being [including God] has psychic, free or creative, relative, and temporal aspects."[285] Under this analogy "the only conceivable God is a 'social being whose creatures must also be social throughout.'"[286] However, the social analogy (in its usual form) is likewise an imperfect analogy since it "does not explain how one mind is able to communicate its

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clarity. Again, God is not to be simply identified with the world (pantheism) but rather the world is included in God *and* God is more than world (panentheism).

[281] "For while it is a fact that mind has immediate relations to the body it cannot be said that the nature of these relations is obvious." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 186.

[282] For instance "there is no such thing as the mere individual, conscious of himself as such, to whom membership in one or more groups may be added as a complication. We all recognize that to be a human individual, and to be a member of at least one or two groups of such individuals, are inseparable aspects of one and the same thing." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 53.

[283] Ibid., 34.

[284] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 186. "Hence nothing can be social that is without experience. The minimum of experience, let us further agree, is feeling. Creatures are social if they feel, and feel in relation to each others' feelings." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 34.

[285] Ibid., 135.

[286] Ibid., 33.

feeling to another *immediately.*"[287] Hartshorne thus posits the combined organic-social analogy in

order to make the social relationship explicit while preserving the immediacy (unmediated nature)

of the relations; hence "the mind-body relationship is immediately social."[288]

The Supreme Compound Individual

To better understand the precise nature of God's relationship to the world, one must go

beyond the analogies to the reality of God as supreme individual of the world, his divine relativity

and activity, and the nature of the divine-world interaction. First, the inseparability of God from

the world must be recognized (panentheism). God is essentially related to the world and thus

dependent upon it. In accordance with the axioms of eminence, perfection, and necessity (closely

related to his ontological argument) Hartshorne maintains that the possibility of a world that is

external to God's whole being would entail the unacceptable conclusion that there is something

greater than God (the world plus God).[289] Thus God and the world are inseparable. Although God

does not need any particular world, he does need *some* world in order to exist.[290] This means that

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[287] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 186–87.

[288] Ibid., 187. In the analogy "cells possess humble forms of feeling or desire to reach the position that the human mind influences and is influenced by them through immediate (there is nothing to mediate it) sharing of feeling, with much indistinctness on both sides." Ibid., 188. He considers this an entirely defensible and appropriate analogy that demonstrates "the doctrine that the world is God's body, to whose members he has immediate social relations, and which are related to each other, directly or indirectly, exclusively by social relations." Ibid., 192. "Is this not the principle, and the only principle with any analogy in our experience, by which divine love (free of the 'indistinctness' i.e., imperfection) could know and sway the *world?*" Ibid., 188.

[289] "If the relation of the absolute to the world really fell wholly outside the absolute, then this relation would necessarily fall within some further and genuinely single entity which embraced both the absolute and the world and the relations between them—in other words, within an entity greater than the absolute." Ibid., 238. Cf. Hartshorne, *Divine*, 79. For more information regarding the ontological argument of Hartshorne, see Hartshorne, *Logic*, 28–117; idem, "What Did Anselm Discover?" in *The Many-Faced Argument* (ed. J. Hick and A. C. McGill; New York: Macmillan, 1967); and idem, "Rationale of the Ontological Proof," *ThTo* 20 (1963): 278–83. For another analysis of Hartshorne's view see John B. Cobb Jr., "'Perfection Exists': A Critique of Charles Hartshorne," *Religion in Life* 32 (1963): 294–304, and Eugene H. Peters, "Charles Hartshorne and the Ontological Argument," *Process Studies* 14 (1984): 11–20.

[290] M. L. Taylor, *God*, 354. "It is one thing to say God could exist without us, or without *any* creature or group of creatures you wish to specify; it is logically quite another to say he could exist were there *no* creature at all." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 108. Some have questioned whether this means there could

God could not have created the world *ex nihilo*, rather it is necessary that some world always existed.[291] God is thus dependent upon a partially free and undetermined world.[292] This conception of God's essential relation to the world requires a drastic departure from utter determinism (traditional omnipotence) to a broad indeterminism where both God and non-divine entities are free and partially determined according to the nature of social relativity (the aforementioned creative synthesis of minds).

As the supreme compound individual, Hartshorne calls God "the supreme case of personality."[293] God is the supreme person, an "*individual conscious* being."[294] However, in Hartshorne's view of temporality as the succession of units, a "conscious being" is itself

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have been nothing. Hartshorne finds this to be a logical impossibility: "To ask about the possibility of there being no creative process is to ask about the possibility of there being no possibility, even logical, for thought has no other function than to express, guide, or enrich that process." Hartshorne, "Could?" 26.

[291] Hartshorne sees "creation" as "supreme influence on growth" and sees this as a possible interpretation of Genesis. *Vision*, 193. The world is not eternal but is created out of a still "earlier world." Ibid., 230.

[292] We are "integral self-determined members of his present reality, rivulets poured into his 'ocean of feeling.'" Hartshorne, *Divine*, xvii-xviii.

[293] Ibid., 25. "What is a person if not a being qualified and constituted by social relations, relations to other persons? And what is God if not the supreme case of personality?" Ibid., 25. Further, he states that God is "truly individual and personal." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 250. God is a concrete person for "the abstract does not act, only the concrete acts or is a person." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 143. This view of divine personality has close affinities to Whitehead as well as Buddhism. Hartshorne, "Personal," 209.

[294] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 249. Since "individual" can simply mean a group considered as a unit, Hartshorne is consistent with his ontology to define personhood in this way. For him, individuals "are best understood as societies of events which are extended in time." Ronald Steph Cole-Turner, "God's Experience: The Trinitarian Theology of Jurgen Moltmann in Conversation with Charles Hartshorne" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983), 177. This alone rules out a trinitarian conception of God. However, some wonder how an all-sensitive, supremely relative being can yet be considered a person? See Albert Shalom and John C. Robertson Jr., "Hartshorne and the Problem of Personal Identity," *Process Studies* 8 (1978): 169–179, and Randall E. Auxier, "God, Process, and Persons: Charles Hartshorne and Personalism," *Process Studies* 27 (1998): 175–99. For an excellent discussion of Hartshorne's view of God's personhood in contrast to personalism see Hartshorne, "Personal," and Peter A. Bertocci, "Hartshorne on Personal Identity: A Personalist Critique," *Process Studies* 2 (1972): 216–21. One primary difference may be summarized, "The important personalistic thesis is that the (temporal) person, whenever he begins to be, is the kind of being who is never a sequence or a succession of units [Hartshorne's view] but a unity who can succeed himself by virtue of his ability to relate his world to himself on his own terms (within limits)." Bertocci, "Hartshorne, " 220. Cf. James Porter Moreland, "An Enduring Self: The Achilles' Heel of Process Philosophy," *Process Studies* 17 (1988): 193–99.

actualized in a specific moment. The conscious being of the next successive moment is thus not identical with the conscious being of the previous moment, but rather is ever-changing in temporal process. This means that the "absolute identity of the concrete or particular is given in an event or occasion, not in a thing enduring through time, like a person or a body."[295] This is what Hartshorne calls "genetic identity" as opposed to "strict identity."[296] Genetic identity is "the abstract description of a sequence or group of occasions," whereas strict identity requires that God in moment A and God in moment B be totally identical, which militates against the notion of an ever-changing temporality.[297] Nevertheless, God does endure through time. He is the supreme conscious being, "an enduring society of actualities, [though] not a single actuality."[298] God thus has an enduring character (abstract) actualized (concrete) in successive instances.[299] God "is concretely and in part new each moment, and each new divine self sympathizes with its predecessors and . . . anticipated successors."[300] God is able to sympathize with the past because

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[295] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 102.

[296] "The merely relative identity of the latter may be called, with Levin and Scholz, genetic identity, *Genidentitat.*" Ibid. Genetic identity is different from strict identity. Strict identity would hold that John Doe as a child and John Doe as an adult are identical identities; genetic identity holds a looser form of identity over the discontinuous instances of time. Thus he holds, "But John Smith on Monday and John Smith on Tuesday are two realities, numerically as well as qualitatively distinguished." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 104–5.

[297] J. P. Mahoney, "Hartshorne, " 39. Cf. Hartshorne, "Strict," 244.

[298] Charles Hartshorne, "The Dipolar Conception of Deity," *The Review of Metaphysics* 21(1967): 287. This is in contrast to Whitehead who does define God as a "single actuality" enduring through time. Hartshorne comments, "Here I think Whitehead was just mistaken." Ibid., 287. Whether God is a single actual entity or an enduring society of actualities is a disputed point among process theists. For instance, Griffin considers the former to be Whitehead's "greatest blunder." David Ray Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism: A Process Philosophy of Religion* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 152.

[299] For Hartshorne, this is analogous to the human person which is an ever-changing being, specifically "a different person every moment; but equally he is the same person every moment." *Vision*, 109. Here Whitehead's concept of the self is valuable. A man is a new "actual entity" in every moment or "specious present." Character, or the man as self-identical, is an abstraction from the sequence of concrete experiences each with its own intrinsic "subject" or "agent." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 209. Hartshorne thus explicitly rejects an ontology grounded in substance. Rather, "events are the final nouns." "Strict," 251. This may be called event pluralism; see Hartshorne, *Creative*, 173–204.

[300] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 351. Indeed, all of reality is not continuous but discontinuous, consisting of

the determinate past is permanent in God's perfectly adequate memory, thus there is an

"immortality of the past."[301] God as the enduring society of actualities is the supreme compound

individual of the world. God therefore includes within himself the entirety of reality. God, the

supreme mind, is supremely relative as universal subject and is affected by all (supremely

moved).

However, it might be wondered how God can be the compound individual of the world

and yet not be identical with the world. In other words, in what way is God more than the world

(panentheism)? First, if it is true that if God is supremely relative and all-inclusive, then we are

members of God and (to a partial extent) vice versa.[302] As supremely relative, God is all-

inclusive. Conversely, to the extent that any non-divine subject knows God (which never amounts

to perfect knowledge of God), the known relata is constitutive of and thus included in the non-

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discrete instances. For Hartshorne, "the result is that Whitehead has, not a less but a more, 'personal' deity than Augustine or Thomas, if personal means being an individual with a character expressible freely in acts of knowledge, choice, and love. God 'shares with each creature its actual world'; he takes into his actuality, as 'consequent' upon process, the life of the world, somewhat as we (in infinitely less adequate fashion) take into ourselves experiences of our friends. He does not plot it all out in eternity, and with a single moveless stare register the result." *Reality*, 202. However, some have argued that Whitehead's doctrine would be more coherent without God. See Donald W. Sherburne, "Whitehead without God," in *Process Philosophy and Christian Faith* (ed. D. Brown, R. James, and G. Reeves; Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), and idem, "The 'Whitehead without God' Debate: The Rejoinder," *Process Studies* 1 (1971): 91–100. For a critique of such a view, see John B. Cobb Jr., "The 'Whitehead without God' Debate: The Critique," *Process Studies* 1 (1971): 91–100.

[301] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 129. "To say an event is 'past' for God does not mean that it is *absent* from his present awareness; it means that it is *not* the 'final increment' of determinate detail contained in that awareness, the final increment being that which involves all the others though it is involved by none, the 'next to last' being that which involves all the others but one, and is involved solely by that one, etc. To say a past experience is part of present experience is not a contradiction, for the *date* of present experience as a whole is the date of its final increment, not of its non-final increments, this being the meaning of date." Ibid.

[302] "Are we and God members one of another? Again the answer is, Yes, but with a difference in principle in this supreme case, as contrast it to ordinary ones." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 110. Interestingly, Hartshorne sees the divine mind or soul as analogous to Plato's "world soul" in the *Timaeus,* yet this should not be taken to mean that Hartshorne adopts the two-worlds duality of Plato. See ibid., 134. However, it should be noted that each member of God's body has a minute impact on God as a whole just as "each cell in our body is almost as nothing in comparison with ourselves as conscious individuals." Ibid., 55. Interestingly Hartshorne appeals to Plato's analogy of an ideal society in *The Republic* for support. Hartshorne, *Vision*, 153, and idem, *Omnipotence*, 53.

divine knower. This co-inherence is illustrated in the organic-social analogy of Hartshorne.[303]

However this does not detract from the individuality of God or that of other minds.

This leads us to the question of extension and the locus of consciousness. It has already

been established that Hartshorne builds on panpsychism such that all reality consists of minds

interrelating. In this system, extension is thus a property of interrelating minds, but nothing can

thus be reduced to mere matter, in fact "'matter' is a form of manifestation of 'mind' . . . and is

nothing simply on its own."[304] While it is true that aggregates (groups of minds that lack a

compound individual consciousness) do not feel, the aggregate is nevertheless made up of

individual minds that do feel.[305] All actuality can thus only be reduced to interrelating minds.

There is no mind-matter dualism in Hartshorne's panpsychism. If minds, then, are not located in

matter, where are they? For Hartshorne, minds are not located outside the spatio-temporal world,

nor are they located in a point in the spatio-temporal world, but they occupy an area (included in

God himself). God as the compound individual of the world, the supreme mind, is likewise not

located outside the spatio-temporal world, or in a specific location, but overlaps the entire area of

spatio-temporality.[306] This is understood according to the view of God as universal subject and

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[303] "The conception of God which our argument leads to is that of a social being, dominant or ruling over the world society, yet not merely from outside, in a tyrannical or non-social way; but rather as that member of the society which exerts the supreme conserving and coordinating influence." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 40.

[304] Hartshorne, "Personal," 210. For Hartshorne, even "space is essentially a system of relations" such that "the volume even of singulars would be meaningless apart from some community of singulars." "Panpsychism," 445–46. Thus, "extendedness is then not a property capable of distinguishing 'mere matter' from mind, since minds, as entering into communal relations with one another, must exhibit extendedness." Ibid.

[305] In fact "all individuals apparent to the senses are compounded of numerous much smaller individuals." Hartshorne, "Compound," 194.

[306] "A mind, according to most panpsychists, is not simply outside the space-time world. It is also not at a mere point in that world, and nothing remains than that it be in an area of the world." Hartshorne, "Panpsychism," 445–46. See also Hartshorne, "Compound." Cf. John B. Cobb Jr., "Overcoming Reductionism," in *Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne* (ed. J. B. Cobb and F. I. Gamwell; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). Hartshorne's view is in distinction from Whitehead who held God to be spatially nonextended.

universal object. The whole world is inclusive to God as universal subject, thus nothing can be outside him. As universal object, however, God is partially included in every mind and since interrelating minds are extended, the divine supreme mind overlaps the entire spatio-temporal area. Once again, this does not detract from the individuality of the supreme or lesser minds. God and the world are not identical; the world is included in God but God is more than the world (panentheism). Just as lesser minds always retain at least partial creativity (independence and self-determination) as individuals, God likewise retains a partial independence and self-determination as the supreme compound individual. God's consciousness is not reducible to the parts of the world that are included in himself as the supreme mind. Thus God and the world are inseparably related, yet not identical.

Divine Knowledge as Supreme Relativity

As the supremely relative compound individual of the world God is internally related to all minds and thus the immediate feeler of all feelings. As such, God's knowledge is perfectly adequate to the actual state of the world. This is in contrast to the view of classic theism, which inexplicably reverses the relation between subject and object only when it relates to God himself by positing that God as subject changes the object of knowledge while God himself remains unaffected.[307] Classic theism thus makes God's knowledge omni-causal and thus "constitutive" of the world itself, requiring sheer determinism.[308] Hartshorne considers this traditional view of wholly transcendent, unrelated knowledge to be unfounded. Rather, God is the universal subject, partially dependent upon the world but not equivalent to it. This provides an example of the manner in which the same being can be supremely absolute and supremely relative, considering

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[307] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 8. "It is admitted by Thomists, for example, that God's knowledge is to his objects as the objects of human knowledge are to the knower! . . . Here the analogy is exactly in reverse." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 135. He explains that according to classic theism "God knows all things, but in such fashion (it was held) that there is zero relativity or dependence in God as knower, and maximal dependence in the creatures as known." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 8.

[308] Ibid., 123.

Hartshorne's supposition that the relative (concrete) includes the absolute (abstract) within itself.[309] This "'panentheism,' distinguishes God from the 'all' and yet makes him include all" in accordance with the supreme relativity.[310] Although God is supremely relative and ever-changing, Hartshorne nevertheless holds that "there is in God something absolute or nonrelative, [specifically] his cognitive adequacy."[311] In other words, God's cognitive adequacy is absolute in the sense that it is always perfectly adequate to the actual state of the world in any instant, and thus absolutely relative.

Since God is the supremely relative universal subject, the content of divine knowledge is provided by the "total of actuality."[312] God's knowledge, to be knowledge at all under Hartshorne's definition, must depend directly upon the state of the world in a given instant.[313] Adequate knowledge is defined in terms of perfect and immediate (unmediated) feeling where "the adequate knower himself is relative, relative to what he knows." [314] In fact, Hartshorne states that feeling is "the only adequate knowledge."[315] Thus, true knowledge amounts to the knower feeling an object's feeling as "one's own" or immediately.[316] Yet, it is limited to present and past

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[309] "So God, in his relative aspect, is the only unqualifiedly inclusive being, as, in his absolute aspect, he is the only unqualifiedly exclusive one." Ibid., 94.

[310] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 348. Nevertheless, "it can be said without equivocation that God is the totality of reality in that God includes all of reality within Godself." M. L. Taylor, *God,* 345.

[311] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 122.

[312] "God knows as actual whatever is actual." Ibid., 14–15. In this way, "omniscience is an infinite class of relationships." Ibid., 121.

[313] "God's knowledge differentially implies, and thus in our defined sense is relative to, the actual state of *all* existence, i.e., its relativity is unrestricted in scope." Ibid., 11.

[314] Ibid., 121–22. It must be remembered that feeling for Hartshorne includes even cognition. See the discussion of feeling regarding panpsychism above.

[315] Ibid., xvii. "There seems but one way to know a quality, and that is to feel it." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 223. For a discussion of the importance of "feeling" in Hartshorne's ontology see Keeling L. Bryant, "Feeling as a Metaphysical Category: Hartshorne from an Analytical View," *Process Studies* 6 (1976): 51–66.

[316] Hartshorne comments, "If we saw the individuality and vividness of the feeling, we would have the feeling." *Vision*, 163. However, Henry Simoni-Wastila questions whether universal immediate feeling

knowledge since the future is indeterminate, and, as such, Hartshorne contends that it is

unknowable as not "there to be known."[317] Nevertheless, such perfectly adequate knowledge of

the present and past is immediate, with "no error or ignorance" and no vagueness whatsoever, in

contrast to the indistinctness of the knowledge of non-divine subjects.[318] Omniscience, then, is

direct knowledge with "a certain completeness and clarity of experience" and reality is "the

content of such an experience."[319] Because God is internally related to all and thus all-inclusive,

God changes and grows in accordance with the feelings of the world, that is, all of reality.[320]

Nothing escapes God's universal knowledge (feeling).[321] This adequate knowledge (omniscience)

is all-inclusive and immediate feeling in accordance with the divine nature of transcendental

relativity. In this way, God is supremely relative to the world as the universal subject. Yet, how

does God then act? This leads to the consideration of divine will and action.

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is in fact possible. For instance, how could God sympathize with the feelings of temporary life and finitude when the divine life is eternal? Moreover, "the idea of God being able to fully appreciate ignorance seems categorically impossible." "Is Divine Relativity Possible? Charles Hartshorne on God's Sympathy with the World," *Process Studies* 28 (1999): 99.

[317] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 98. Cf. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 201. The "conception of a knower who sees past, present, and future—or all time from eternity—sees them but reserves no right to make further choices with respect to them, is, I submit, a mythical one which fails to describe even what we wish knowledge to be." Ibid., 91. Cf. D. D. Williams, *Spirit*, 128.

[318] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 38. "All we have to do to conceive omniscience is to banish all such vagueness from the idea of experience, but leave that vagueness which defines the futurity of what is future." Ibid., 328.

[319] Ibid., 330. Hartshorne refers to this as "absolute distinctness." Ibid., 325. Once again we see the importance of the absolute as a category of logical reasoning. Hartshorne explicitly tells us that God's knowledge is not "discursive" but his "field of distinct perception is the de facto whole itself. No thinking is thus needed to get to the whole from the part." *Omnipotence*, 93. This implies that God does not "think" at all but merely perceives absolutely in each new instance the whole of actuality that is there to be known.

[320] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 14. Such growth includes the "possibility of an increase in aesthetic satisfaction derived from his knowledge." Ibid., 38. Thus, God "finds his own joy in sharing their lives, lived according to their own free decisions, not fully anticipated by any detailed plan of his own." Hartshorne, *Divine*, xvii.

[321] "What God ignores he equally, and thereby, destroys or prevents from occurring." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 265.

Divine Power as Persuasive Power

As has been seen, God is the supreme creative being, yet he is not the only creative being in the indeterministic creative synthesis where each mind plays a part as co-creator of reality. Although each mind is undetermined, every mind is also dependent upon other minds, including the divine mind. Since God is dependent (as the supremely relative universal subject), he is partially determined by other minds in the world.[322] Thus, he is not omnipotent in the classical sense of omnicausality. Nevertheless, though God is moved by all events of the world, he retains freedom in reaction to events, such that he is partially self-determined. Thus, God does possess the power to act freely, although, like others, his options are severely limited by other minds.[323] Thus God's eminent passivity does not equate to total passivity.

God can and does act, but he acts not through coercion (unilateral determinism), but through persuasion.[324] In fact, since an effect is only partially determined by its cause, there is no such thing as sheer coercion. In this way, God may choose his action or reaction, but his choice does not overrule all other choices. Thus, in direct contrast to classic theism, God's will does not determine reality, but is the most powerful will among other wills.[325] Thus, every entity always

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[322] In this way, the world partially determines God since "by sympathetic union with our volitions God wants, not by choice, what we choose to want." Ibid., 291. Yet God remains free to respond and "the radical difference between God and us implies that our influence upon him a slight, while his influence upon us is predominant." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 141.

[323] "God presumably wills much that we do not will, but he cannot force our will and hence must enjoy and suffer what we enjoy and suffer on the basis of our limited and faulty willing." David Platt, "Does Whitehead's God Possess a Moral Will?" *Process Studies* 5 (1975): 120.

[324] God "is not a supreme autocrat, but a universal agent of 'persuasion.'" Hartshorne, *Divine*, xvii, 138. See John W. Lansing, "Persuasive and Coercive Power in Process Metaphysics," *Process Studies* 3 (1973): 153–57. "God must suffer all things, for he must participate in all things to know them, but he cannot be said to choose all things, for he has granted choices also to the creatures." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 197.

[325] Thus, it can be said that God passively wills the desires of other creatures but since all wills are not compossible he actively wills in response to the decisions of other creatures. "God passively wishes with and for the creatures what they wish for themselves, but his activity lies in *deciding* how to resolve the conflict of interests which he has thus taken into himself." Ibid., 292. As such, our interpersonal conflicts are "through the divine sympathy made God's problem of self-harmonization." Ibid., 293. Although this leaves room for God's decision it is far removed from the idea of a sovereign will of God.

has the ability to respond to a cause within a limited range of options.[326] Persuasion refers to non-unilateral self-determination which requires other minds to react to God's movement. Persuasion operates according to the notion of God as supreme object; the world is affected by knowing God (however indistinctly), such that when God moves himself, he thereby creates the necessary condition (but not the sufficient condition) for the effect of the world as social process.[327] In other words, God acts upon the world by persuasion, by moving himself, such that every mind is required to react to his self-movement while retaining some degree of freedom among (limited) options.[328] Because he is universal subject, he is the most moved mover, but the same God is also the universal object and thus the persuasive mover of all, possessing the greatest compossible power.[329]

Since all minds possess some creative power, God cannot possess all the power in the world; he is not omnipotent in the sense of having "all the power that exists united into one individual power."[330] Thus as opposed to classic theism, he cannot enact his will unilaterally.

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[326] Hartshorne states, "An object always influences, but cannot dictate, the awareness of itself" and thus "we influence God by our experiences but do not thereby deprive him of freedom in his response to us." *Divine*, 141.

[327] "Then, as this [divine] object changes, we are compelled to change in response." Ibid., 139. Further, "God orders the universe, according to panentheism, by taking into his own life all the currents of feeling in existence. He is the most irresistible of influences precisely because he is himself the most open to influence. In the depths of their hearts all creatures (even those able to 'rebel' against him) defer to God because they sense him as the one who alone is adequately moved by what moves them." Ibid., xvii.

[328] In other words, due to God's intimate connection to all minds "to alter us he has only to alter himself. God's unique power over us is his partly self-determined being as our inclusive object of awareness." Ibid., 139. He compares this with Plato's "self moved mover of others." Thus, "the total or concrete divine mover is self-moved, as Plato correctly said." Ibid., 142. But this self-movement does not exclude that God is also the most moved.

[329] David Basinger sees some inconsistency in the process account. He makes a distinction between "strong" and "weak" coercion, arguing that coercion in the weak sense happens inevitably in human experience and thus it would be expected that God would also exercise the weak sense of coercion. Thus one can grant that God does not totally determine the world and yet leave many questions of God's influence in the world unanswered. *Divine Power in Process Theism: A Philosophical Critique* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), and idem, "Human Coercion: A Fly in the Process Ointment?" *Process Studies* 15 (1986): 161–71.

[330] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 30. According to Hartshorne, the traditional doctrine of omnipotence "is a

Rather, God has all the power that is compossible with the pan-indeterminism and pan-relativity

of the world and in this sense he is "the greatest possible power."[331] God's power is thus not

purely absolute as in classic theism but rather "absolute in adequacy," it is unrivaled, eminent

power. Any individual can influence it, none can threaten it."[332] Accordingly, God "takes account

of the freedom of others, and determines events only by setting appropriate limits to the self-

determining of others." [333] God tolerates the maximal indeterminism that could yet be considered

harmonious according to his maximal relativity.[334] He thus orders the world so as to prearrange

"the course of events so far as it would be friendly to do so."[335] Yet, such prearrangement is

severely limited by the nature of social reality.[336]

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piece of unconscious blasphemy, condemning God to a dead world, probably not distinguishable from no
world at all." *Omnipotence*, 18. Accordingly, "Whitehead saw an ultimate ethical contrast between brute
force or coercion and persuasive love." Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (Harmondsworth,
UK: Penguin Books, 1942), 26.

[331] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 30. God's "power is absolutely maximal, the greatest possible, but even the
greatest possible power is still one power among others, is not the only power. God can do everything that a
God can do, everything that could be done by 'a being with no possible superior.'" Hartshorne, *Divine*,
138. Accordingly, for D. D. Williams, "the power of God, however, is not that of absolute omnipotence to
do anything. It is the power to do everything that the loving ground of all being can do to express and to
communicate and fulfil the society of loving beings. God's power expresses his love, it does not violate it."
Spirit, 137. Thus Richard Rice states that "God's power simply is the appeal of unsurpassable love." Rice,
"Process Theism and the Open View of God: The Crucial Difference," in *Searching for an Adequate God:
A Dialogue between Process and Free Will Theists* (ed. D. R. Griffin, J. B. Cobb, and C. H. Pinnock;
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 186.

[332] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 134. The "adequacy of cosmic power" means "power to do for the cosmos
(the field of divine social relationships) all desirable things that could be done by one universal or cosmic
agent." Ibid. "Adequate cosmic power is power to set conditions which are maximally favorable to
desirable decisions on the part of local agents." Ibid., 135. For Hartshorne, "adequacy is the measure of
greatness." Ibid., 134.

[333] Ibid., xvii, 138. "God is supremely sensitive. . . . In his rule he allots to us a privilege of
participation in governing which goes infinitely beyond a mere ballot. It means that with every decision,
however secret, that takes place in our minds we are casting a vote which will surely be taken account of
and will surely produce effects in the divine decisions." Ibid., 51.

[334] See Charles Hartshorne, "God as Composer-Director, Enjoyer, and, in a Sense, Player of the
Cosmic Drama," *Process Studies* 30 (2001): 242–60. Cf. Hartshorne, *Vision*, 265. Hartshorne is adamantly
opposed to determinism. For him, a predestinating God is an "absolute tyrant." Ibid., 105. Cf. Hartshorne,
Omnipotence, 67. He asks, "Are we to worship the Heavenly Father of Jesus . . . *or* to worship a heavenly
king, that is, a cosmic despot?" Ibid., 14.

[335] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 105. An aspect of providence is to set "the best or optimal limits to freedom

This leads directly to the question of theodicy, which seems to motivate Hartshorne's axiomatic conception of pan-indeterminism.[337] God cannot prevent evil in the world, but rather enforces "a maximal ratio of chances of good to chances of evil."[338] Conflict is inevitable due to the pan-indeterministic nature of social reality and "tragedy is thus inherent in value."[339] Accordingly, God is not responsible for evil; theodicy is merely a "false problem" that stems from "a faulty or non-social definition of omnipotence."[340] God is rather the one "to whom all hearts are completely open because his sensitive sympathy is absolute in flexibility."[341] This has a deep impact on the concept of love as shall be seen. As the universal object God is the supreme agent of persuasion, himself partially determined, yet nevertheless the most important co-creator of the interdependent creative synthesis of social process.[342]

(as any good government will do, in its drastically more limited providence)." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 41.

[336] "There is as much that God cannot make us do or be as there is that we cannot make him do or be, and the former 'cannot' expresses our deficiency, not God's." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 293. Accordingly, "the [simplistic] alternative, chance *or* providence, is invalid." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 137.

[337] See Hartshorne, *Logic*, 161–90, and idem, *Beyond*, 111–64. This is at least partially due to a polemic stemming from the issue of theodicy. For instance, Hartshorne contends, "The notion of an all-arranging, chance-excluding Providence is doubly tragic; it is cruel, for it compels us to try to imagine that our worst tortures are deliberately contrived for our own or someone's good by an allegedly all-loving being, and it is dangerous, for it suggests that we need not use our own resources to avert evil where possible and to help others in danger and privation." *Reality*, 107. Moreover, "predestination, in the sense of determination by something less than personal will, would destroy the meaning of love." D. D. Williams, *Spirit*, 116. He explicitly rules out the compatibilistic view for stating that "power to cause someone to perform by his own choice an act precisely defined by the cause is meaningless." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 135.

[338] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 107.

[339] Ibid. Because of the different interests of different organisms "conflict and suffering cannot be wholly excluded." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 127. Thus, there "is no such mixture which would guarantee the elimination of evil; for if there is any freedom in a multiplicity of beings, there is potentiality of discord between them, a potentiality the total nonrealization of which is infinitely unlikely." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 190. For "some risk there must be if there is to be any opportunity, any existence in the social sense." Ibid., 41.

[340] Ibid., 41.

[341] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 265.

[342] In this way, "God can rule the world and order it, setting optimal limits for our free action, presenting himself as essential object, so characterized as to weigh the possibilities of response in the desired respect." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 142.

Thus Hartshorne's highly complex metaphysical system presents the supreme, all-inclusive mind, which is the compound individual of the world, not identical or equivalent to the world, but more than the world. The divine-world relationship is understood within the context of the indeterministic, relativistic, spatio-temporalistic, panpsychism. All reality is accordingly an interdependent creative synthesis of partially determined and self-determined minds interacting as both subjects and objects in process. Minds are related both internally and externally where the subject of an internal relation includes and is thus affected by its relata and the object of an external relation remains unaffected. God is the supreme subject, internally related to all and thus supremely relative and all-inclusive, as well as the supreme object, an object (but not the sole object) for every subject. The supreme mind as universal subject and object corresponds to the dual transcendence (dipolarity) of the divine nature wherein God eminently exemplifies the admirable characteristics of metaphysical contraries. These poles are ontologically distinguishable yet ontically inseparable such that God is the absolute-relative, abstract-concrete, potential-actual, necessary-contingent, universal-particular, supreme compound individual. For example, God is absolute in that no other can surpass him, yet he is relative in that he is all-inclusive and thus ever-growing according to all growth in the world. Just as the subject includes its object, God as the universal subject (concrete and relative) includes the universal object (abstract and absolute). He is the self-surpassing surpasser of all, the transcendental relativity.

As has been seen, panentheism means that God is internally related to (and thus all-inclusive of) the world, the supremely relative, concrete subject. It also means that God is (imperfectly) known by the world, the absolute, abstract object. Since God is internally related to all minds and thus all-inclusive, he has immediate (non-mediated, direct) relations, meaning that he feels all the feelings of the world and changes accordingly. At the same time, God is neither wholly independent nor dependent, neither wholly determined nor self-determined, but is the supreme co-creator of the creative synthesis. While God is universally affected as universal subject, he may also act by persuasion (not coercion) upon all others as universal object such that

when God moves himself he thereby creates the necessary condition (but not the sufficient condition) for the effect of the world as the interdependent, creative synthesis of social process. God is thus the most moved but also possesses the greatest compossible power. This system determines the meaning of divine love.

<center>Divine Love</center>

Divine love is inseparably linked with the notion of divine feeling as sympathy. This is predicated on God as the all-inclusive universal subject, internally related to all other minds and, thus, feeler of all feelings. This universal and immediate feeling is sympathy. In this way God is passible, the all-sensitive.[343] As such, this universal sympathy is "relative in the eminent sense" and must be understood to include all the joy and suffering of the world by immediate feeling according to God's "infinite sensitivity."[344] Thus, God is the all-serving, he "who grieves in all

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[343] Hartshorne states, "By sensation we mean that aspect of experience which is neither thought nor *volition,* neither meaning nor action, but qualitative feeling." *Vision*, 199. For a systematic discussion of divine passibility see Jung Young Lee, *God Suffers for Us: A Systematic Inquiry into a Concept of Divine Passibility* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974). See also Marcel Sarot, *God, Passibility and Corporeality* (vol. 6 of Studies in Philosophical Theology; Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1992); Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (The Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Paul S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Joseph M. Hallman, *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1991), and *The Coming of the Impassible God: Tracing a Dilemma in Christian Theology* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2007). For an Evangelical argument in favor of impassibility see Geisler, House, and Herrera, *Battle*. For an argument that God may be impassible and yet really love in the sense of his predetermining loving "responses" see Creel, *Divine*. Cf. George W. Shields, "Hartshorne and Creel on Impassibility," *Process Studies* 21 (1992): 44–59. For a landmark discussion of the issue in the OT prophets see Heschel, *Prophets*. For an overview of the issues and a suggested approach based on Jeremiah see John C. Peckham, "The Passible Potter and the Contingent Clay: A Theological Study of Jeremiah 18:1–10," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 18 (2007): 130–50.

[344] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 76. This is necessary according to Hartshorne's ontology; he states, "It could not be that an inclusive mind excluded the suffering of the world from itself. Nothing is more irrational than the notion of an all-knowing mind that does not know suffering, in the only conceivable way in which suffering can be known—by feeling it." *Reality*, 172. Therefore, "divinity is not the privilege of escaping all sufferings but the exactly contrary one of sharing them all. *Unlimited companionship in the tragedies which freedom makes more or less inevitable* is the theologically most neglected of divine prerogatives." Hartshorne, *Vision*, xvi. Yet, though God suffers, "joy predominates." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 42.

griefs."[345] This is essential to Hartshorne's conception of love, "whereby what happens in one

individual produces partially similar occurrences in another individual aware of this

happening."[346] In other words, literal "sympathy" is integral to the concept of divine love, where

God feels "the feelings of all the subjects composing the world."[347] God is the all-sympathizer as

the all-inclusive universal subject.

Value: Ethical Immutability
and Aesthetic Perfectibility

Before Hartshorne's full conception of love is presented, it is important to understand the

foundational importance of value to Hartshorne's conception of love. He frames his discussion of

value in the categories of ethics and aesthetics, conceived as appropriate to the different aspects

of God as the supreme mind. For instance God is ethically immutable but aesthetically

perfectible; this means that God never acts unethically, but he is able to grow aesthetically. God

always acts ethically because he always takes account of all the feelings of the world.[348] In this

way, then, God is ethically immutable and with regard to ethics is "already as perfect as anything

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[345] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 203. Hartshorne even calls God "the slave, nay, the scourged slave, of all, infinitely more passive to others, more readily 'wounded' even, than anyone else can ever be." Ibid., 204. Yet, though he is "infinitely more passive" than others he is not absolutely passive for "the merely passive, that which has no active tendency of its own, is nothing." Ibid., 89.

[346] Ibid., 186. Thus, "love involves suffering, the freedom to be acted upon by the other." D. D. Williams, *Spirit,* 165. Therefore, God as love "is not the being whose life is sheer joy and beauty, but the cosmic sufferer, who endures infinitely more evil than we can imagine." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 331.

[347] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 28. Hartshorne describes the Whiteheadian foundation of this concept. For Whitehead "the basic relationship in reality is 'prehension,' which in the most concrete form (called 'physical prehension') is defined as 'feeling of feeling,' meaning the manner in which one subject feels the feelings of one or more other subjects. In other words, 'sympathy' in the most literal sense." Ibid., 27.

[348] God's character of ethical immutability (goodness) consists in the fact that "he guides his action [persuasion] by concern for *all* the interests affected by his actions [supreme relativity]" and this is the "maximal case of goodness." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 36. "There can be no ethical appeal beyond the decision of the one who in his decision takes account of all actuality and possibility." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 125. In this way, for God, "ultimately knowing and deciding are mutually inseparable." Ibid., 126.

could be."[349] In other words, because of his nature as the all-sympathizer (feeler of all feelings) it is necessary that God always act ethically; however, the particular acts of God are not necessary but contingent (relative, concrete). The ethical immutability of God thus corresponds to his abstract aspect, but the particular actions that are always ethical correspond to the concrete, both aspects referring to the same supreme mind, without separation.

Whereas Hartshorne considers it impossible (by the definition of ethics) for God to grow ethically, the area of aesthetics is always open to growth and thus divine happiness is not absolute.[350] Thus, God actually grows aesthetically according to the level of beauty in the actual world. The abstraction from this is that God always has the maximal aesthetic value that corresponds to the world in that moment. However, in each new moment the world grows aesthetically and thus God is ever-growing as the concrete and supremely relative (universal subject) compound individual of the world. For Hartshorne, panpsychism is the maximal ontology of beauty, a "cosmic harmony" of minds.[351] This is according to Hartshorne's view that "the most generally recognized principle of beauty" is "the principle of organic unity, or unity in variety."[352] Panpsychism, referring to the pan-indeterministic, interdependent, creative synthesis

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[349] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 157. The holiness of God consists in "the single aim at the one primary good, which is that the creatures should enjoy rich harmonies of living, and pour this richness into the one ultimate receptacle of all achievement, the light of God." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 128. He thus rejects what he calls the "strange reconciliation of justice and mercy, each somehow an ultimate principle of value." Ibid. Thus Hartshorne refers to God as a "slave to his goodness." Ibid., 138. "But he can express this goodness as he pleases in any world arrangement that is not inferior to any possible other, so far as God determined or might determine it." Ibid.

[350] All values are not compossible instantaneously and, thus, "*an absolute maximum of beauty is a meaningless idea*." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 10.

[351] Ibid., 119.

[352] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 212. See John Hospers, "Hartshorne's Aesthetics," in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* (ed. L. E. Hahn; The Library of Living Philosophers; La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1991). "Since the beautiful must contain contrast, it is as necessary that there be variety, multiplicity, in God as that there be unity." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 217. This "unity in variety" is harmony. See Hartshorne, *Reality*, 45.

of minds, maximizes beauty as an organic unity.[353] Hartshorne's conception of beauty leads us

directly to the importance of value to Hartshorne's view of divine love.

According to Hartshorne's aesthetics, change and growth are axiomatic and as such God

is the ever-growing compound individual who continues to increase in value.[354] As supremely

relative, God experiences all value in the world in accordance with God's perfect adequacy

(internal relation) to the feelings of all as universally related.[355] God as universal subject is thus

the universal subject of value.[356] In turn, this means he is also maximally dependent for happiness

since, according to Hartshorne's view of perfection, "the most perfect mind would derive most

from the satisfactions of others."[357] However, God always increases, but never decreases, in

overall value.[358] For Hartshorne, this view of a God that ever increases in value is the only

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[353] Thus, he considers the indeterminacy and unknowability of the future as "essential" to beauty; "in its temporal aspect harmony involves the contrast between expectation and fulfillment. . . . Unforeseen novelty is as essential as the realization of the foreseen." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 49.

[354] Ibid., 51. This is in direct contrast to classic theism which, according to Hartshorne, posits the "view that the world . . . is strictly valueless to God, an absolute nullity from the standpoint of ultimate truth." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 40. Is God "equally incapable of improvement in happiness? How can this be if God loves us, and through love shares in our sorrows, and is grieved by our misfortunes and errors?" Hartshorne, *Reality*, 157. "That, be we saint or sinner, no matter what we choose to do, it is all just the same to God, for his glory has the identical absolute perfection in either case." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 118. But if this is true, if "variety is said not to be a value for God, then one asks, Why a creation at all?" Ibid., 39.

[355] Specifically God must feel all since Hartshorne fails "to see any well-authenticated principle of value that justifies us in assuming a divine instance which, without literal containing of all experiences, has the equivalent of all their values." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 91.

[356] Therefore, "the idea of God is the idea of a being that really is the seat of all value." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 124. D. D. Williams states that each person "has a value for God which is unique and which enhances the life of God himself through whatever of positive value this member contributes." "New," 459. D. D. Williams goes on, "Hence we are valued by God for himself as increasing the joy and suffering of his being." "Situation," 459.

[357] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 23.

[358] Hartshorne comments, "A self-contrasting being surpassing all others will contrast with itself only through increase, never decrease, of value." *Reality*, 118. Here Hartshorne refers to self-contrasting to mean that God in moment A is in contrast to God in moment B as the enduring society of individuals that he is. In each successive moment, then, God is the value of all that is actual and since God includes the past in his memory (as internally related to himself) he can only increase in value, but never decrease. This assumes that there is always more joy than sorrow in the world. Thus Hartshorne sums up, "If there is always more satisfaction than dissatisfaction, then God should always have more reason to rejoice than to grieve over the world, and since he can retain the consciousness of past joys, there will always be a net

conception of God that makes the religious view of serving God meaningful; specifically humans

serve God by increasing value for him and thus adding to his enjoyment.[359] God is altruistic in

desiring the good of all others, yet, at the same time, because he is all-inclusive, his good brings

value and enjoyment to himself (though not unilaterally) since he feels all feeling as the maximal

sympathizer.[360] God thus enjoys ever-increasing value and grows aesthetically (aesthetic

perfectibility) while never acting unethically (ethical immutability).

The Love of God as Divine Sympathy

The ethical immutability and aesthetic perfectibility of God increases the significance of

the divine sympathy. As feeler of all other feelings, God always takes into account the feelings of

others in his actions (ethical immutability) and appreciates all value, growing in beauty

increment of value accruing to God at each moment." _Divine_, 46.

[359] Thus the meaning of life is "to serve and glorify God, that is, literally to contribute some value to the divine life which it otherwise would not have. Altruism toward God would include and embrace and unify all altruism." Hartshorne, _Divine_, 133. But, "if God can be indebted to no one, can receive value from no one, then to speak of serving him is to indulge in equivocation." Ibid., 58. He further criticizes classic theism saying, "If God is purely altruistic in relation to men, then men must be purely race-egoistic in relation to him. You cannot be motivated by consideration of the value you contribute to another, if that other is so constituted that he can receive no value from any source. The greatest joy is in giving joy, but we can give none to God." _Vision_, 117. Hartshorne further points out the deficiency in the alternative of utter immutability where nothing "could contribute anything whatever to his value or mean anything to him, for to him there would be no more or less but just sheer value." Ibid., 16. He considers this alternative appalling "for this only means that the particular characters of the objects of his knowledge, or the results of his willing, are to him totally insignificant, which is psychologically monstrous and is religiously appalling as well. (It seems against every word concerning God in the entire Bible, for example, so far as any very direct interpretation is concerned.)" Ibid., 39. Furthermore, "The idea that God equally and solely experiences bliss in all his relations is once for all a denial of the religiously essential doctrine that God is displeased by human sin and human misfortune." Ibid., 195. "Without such displeasure, the words 'just' and 'loving' seem mockeries." Ibid., 195. Cf. Hartshorne, _Reality_, 157. He points out that impassivity or lack of compassion is not at all valued in human beings so why should it be admired in divinity? Hartshorne, _Divine_, 44.

[360] This should not, Hartshorne cautions, be taken to mean that God is selfish. "God is neither selfish nor unselfish as we exhibit these traits. Rather, God is unsurpassably loving, and that means fully grasping the good of others as _therefore also_ divine good. God's satisfaction includes all the satisfactions of others, integrated on a higher level into the satisfaction which surpasses that of any conceivable other but perpetually exceeds itself as new others arise to enrich it." Hartshorne, _Omnipotence_, 120. For him, "the only way to avoid a certainly false, purely self-interest theory of motivation, and at the same time do justice to the principle that value lies in concrete individual satisfaction, not in mere collections, is to recognize a superhuman mind." Hartshorne, _Reality_, 65. One here senses the influence of Kant's need for the existence of God to ground ethics.

accordingly (aesthetic perfectibility). This of course presumes the ontology of God as the

supremely relative, self-surpassing surpasser of all. This ontology itself determines the shape and

content of divine love, so much so that one might understand everything that Hartshorne means

by "love" without ever seeing him invoke the word. This is because his definition of "love"

comes to be nearly synonymous with his whole theory of social relations.[361] God as the supreme

mind of the creative synthesis that is social reality is the feeler of all feelings. The feeling of

others' feelings is sympathy and sympathy is love: "to love is to sympathize with, and through

sympathy to share in, the changes occurring in the persons one loves."[362] Since God is all-

inclusive and supremely relative, he perfectly feels the feelings of all others. This is the perfect

adequacy of divine love. Since love is bound to the entire metaphysics of Hartshorne it becomes

an extremely elastic phrase that tends to lose uniqueness or specificity the more one comes across

it. In this way, love actually describes the essential characteristic of what Hartshorne means by

surrelativism, panentheism, and the like. In this way, the meaning of love, divine and otherwise,

is required by the ontological suppositions.

There can thus be no doubt that love is a central category of Hartshorne's divine

ontology.[363] As has been seen, for Hartshorne "love must be identified as feeling" or sympathy.[364]

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[361] Clark M. Williamson comments, "Process theology, per se, is primarily a theology of the love of God." "Review of the Spirit and the Forms of Love by Daniel Day Williams," *Process Studies* 3 (1973): 120. D. D. Williams frames the meaning of love in history saying, "The guiding conception which informs our understanding of all love is that love is spirit taking form in history. Love is an expression of spirit. It is spirit seeking the enjoyment of freedom in communion with the other." *Spirit*, 3.

[362] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 160. This is a love "unique in its ability to adjust to others, to yield with infinite versatility of sympathetic desire to all that has desire, and to set limits to the fulfillment of desire not as to something merely alien to himself but as to what he himself would like to enjoy in and with the subjects of the desire. Does this not introduce the tragedy of unfulfilled desire into God? Yes, it does just that. . . . God suffers, that existence is tragic for God. It is tragic for *anything* that loves those involved in tragedy. And this is why men can literally love God, because he even more literally loves them 'as he loves himself,' since by direct sympathetic union they are parts of his internal life." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 294.

[363] Let there be no confusion, "God really *is* love, without cavil or inconsistency." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 136. Ogden speaks of "God's pure unbounded love." *Reality*, 68. Hartshorne lauds the "magnificent intellectual content—far surpassing that of such systems Thomism, Spinozism, German idealism, positivism (old or new)—[that] is implicit in the religious faith most briefly expressed in the three words, God is love." *Vision*, ix.

Sympathetic love presumes Hartshorne's theory of social reality.[365] As social, the love of God requires concern for, and real dependence upon, its object such that "love *is* joy in the joy (actual or expected) of another, and sorrow in the sorrow of another."[366] As perfectly adequate to the feelings of others God is the one "to whom all hearts are open, and all feelings equally comprehensible."[367] Yet at the same time, the number of the objects of divine love means that a given object of divine love is not of great individual importance.[368]

The social conception of love is itself the universal and direct sympathy such that God is literally the "all-surpassing form of love."[369] The whole being of God, the entire divine ontology,

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[364] "Love is always feeling, whatever else it may be, and feeling has at least the universal dimension of intensity." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 266. Elsewhere he states, "God *is loving in the sense of feeling, with unique adequacy, the feelings of all others*, entirely free from inferior emotions (except as vicariously participated in or sympathetically objectified)." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 39. In this way, "love is more than goodness, wisdom, and power, it is also happiness as partly arising from sympathy with the joys of others." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 158. D. D. Williams adds, "To love is to act. Loving involves feelings, emotions, cravings, valuations and sharing, and all these require a movement toward the other, whether it be overt physical movement or the movement of the spirit." *Spirit,* 117. Thus D. D. Williams can define it this way: "To love is to accept another who makes his own decisions, including that of the love relationship itself." Ibid., 116.

[365] Hartshorne states, "*Either value is social*, and then its perfection cannot be wholly within the power of any one being, even God; *or is not social at all*, and then the saying, 'God is love,' is an error." *Vision*, 14.

[366] Ibid., 116. He pushes this identification of love as sympathy even further stating, "Love is taking the standpoint of the other." Ibid., 127. However, this can be problematic because it means God must enjoy sadism. "While God may derive value from the pleasure of the sadist, God also experiences the pain of the sadist's victim and in Whitehead's view, God would derive greater enjoyment if the sadist *and* the victim both had their own value experiences enhanced rather than that the sadist achieve his pleasure at the expense of the victim." Platt, "Does?" 117.

[367] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 35. God's "spirit embraces all the physical there is with all-surpassing, unstinted love." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 45.

[368] Hartshorne writes, "Consider now the idea that a loving God would not establish natural laws that make eventually dying a certainty for animals such as we are. God loves us, this I believe. But as what does God love us? I answer, God loves us as what we are, a certain very distinctive species of mortal animal, finite spatially and in careers. We are each divinely loved as rendered individual and definite by this finitude." *Omnipotence*, 36.

[369] Ibid., 37. "His interest is the universal interest in interests, that is, love in the highest conceivable sense." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 164. Such universal and direct sympathy is unique to God, being the all-encompassing subject. Humans "do not 'love' literally, but with qualifications, and metaphorically." Hartshorne, *Divine*, 36. "God is held to love all, not just a few; always; not just at times; in all their being, not with neglect of this or that aspect; and his influence in the universal society will be paramount and the basis of its integrity." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 135. D. D. Williams points out that, in his view, God himself is a

is summed up in the term "love," which, "defined as social awareness, taken literally, is God."[370]

Thus, as has been seen, Hartshorne's definition of divine love requires that God be passible, capable of receiving value, including the continued enrichment (aesthetic perfectibility) of the divine being.[371] This essential ontological attribute is perhaps the capstone break between classical theism and its recent critics. He states, "To love a being yet be absolutely independent of and unaffected by its welfare or suffering seems nonsense."[372] Moreover, "it is no use to say that God creates the creatures out of generosity or love; for if he loves the valueless, so much the worse for his love, and what but the value of contrast can the creatures add to existence?"[373]

Absolutely Adequate and Perfect Love

With love defined as the feeling of others' feelings, or sympathy, God's love is perfect in that it surpasses human love as absolutely adequate, meaning that God feels the feelings of all

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free and contingent being, "God is the supreme instance of freedom to love. He never refuses to love, but the specific action of his love lies within the mystery of his being which no ontological analysis can fully penetrate or exhaust." *Spirit*, 127. For him, "one of the categorical conditions of love is that there must be a transforming relationship without destruction of individuality." Ibid., 115.

[370] Hartshorne, *Divine*, 36.

[371] D. D. Williams states bluntly, "Impassibility makes love meaningless." *Spirit*, 127. Hartshorne considers it "obvious that there *must be* such a distinction between the generic unchangeable factor and the total value enjoyed." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 112. "Is it so strange to say that one who loves perfectly is yet made happier by the increasing welfare of those he loves? Would it not rather be very strange if God who loves us, gained no new joy from our achievements and growth?" Hartshorne, *Reality*, 155. D. D. Williams concurs that an individual must "risk being changed if they really love." *Spirit*, 115.

[372] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 40.

[373] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 39. On the other hand, divine love is not earned by its objects. It should not, then, be thought that the objects of divine love are "worthy"; such a category does not apply since love is "adequate awareness of the value of others, whatever that happens to be." Ibid., 165. Nevertheless, God does enjoy the value in his objects of love. This seems obvious to Hartshorne, for what kind of a friend says, "the good that results to you from my being and acting is nothing in my life"? Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 119–20. Or what kind of love would say, "I am totally unmoved and ungratified by the benefits my action brings to you. Whether you live or die, enjoy or suffer, is all one to me. My own possession of good is in every respect totally independent of any good in you. I am like the sun, bestowing benefits without the results giving me anything I would otherwise lack. I am absolutely unselfish, that is, I do not rejoice in your joy, or sorrow in your sorrow." Ibid., 120.

others as the internally related universal subject.[374] Thus, "God is perfect in love, but never-completed, ever growing (partly through our efforts) in the joy, the richness of his life, and this without end through all the infinite future."[375] This kind of "perfect" love is in contrast to love as complete or absolutely maximized such that it cannot grow, which is impossible in Hartshorne's system.[376] This break with classical ontology lends itself to Hartshorne's qualification of the meaning of "absolute" according to the meaning of love.[377] Thus he states, "It is for love to determine the legitimate scope of the concept of absoluteness, if the hypothesis, God is love, is ever to be tried out at all."[378] This scope is determined by drawing out the logical consequences of love as feeling. For Hartshorne, divine love feels and enjoys each incremental gain of the aesthetic value of its object, otherwise it is not really love.[379] Since God as universal subject

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[374] For Hartshorne, "perfect love" is "absolute *adequacy to the object.*" *Vision*, 165. In this way, love is conceived as proportional to the object itself and this "constitutes perfection in the only sense in which love can, without self-contradiction, be conceived as perfect." Ibid., 159.

[375] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 156.

[376] Hartshorne states, "Love means happiness varying somehow with variations in the happiness of others, and hence maximally happy love would mean love all of whose objects were maximally happy, an impossibility if the objects are to include created, imperfect beings." *Vision*, 135. Cf. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 121. "If he [God] is perfect in all ways, and if perfect means complete and incapable of enhancement, then the greatest saint can do no more for God than the worst sinner, for neither could possibly add to, or subtract from, what is always wholly perfect. And such a God could not love in a real sense, for to love is to find joy in the joy of others and sorrow in their sorrows, and thus to gain through their gains and lose (or at least, miss some possible value) through their losses, and the wholly perfect could neither gain nor lose. Hence, it could not love in a proper sense." Ibid., 156. Fiddes states, "To love is to be in a relationship where what the loved one does alters one's own experience." *Creative*, 50.

[377] Hartshorne asks, "If the absolute 'loves,' it does so in an absolute manner, and the question is, what then remains of the meaning of the term?" *Vision*, 42. One might wonder, then, why Hartshorne continues the use of such classical terms as "perfection." His answer: "If God is perfect in no way, then he would scarcely deserve our worship, religion would have certainly overpraised him, and we could not rely upon him." *Reality*, 156. Thus, "it is precisely love which must be perfect in God—and only love and what is implied by it as perfect—if either love or perfection is to serve as an explanatory concept in cosmology." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 50.

[378] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 42.

[379] "We, through our voluntary acts by virtue of which in part we are whatever, at any moment, we actually are, make it possible for God to love us in each new state of our existence and to gain the increment that a new object of love brings, not to the lovingness, but to the total resulting aesthetic value. And that it does depend upon us in part whether the contribution shall be made is not a paradox, but a deduction from the definition of love." Ibid., 120.

means that his sympathy is perfectly adequate to all objects, divine love does not discriminate.

There is no applicability of a divine will that chooses between objects of love, no election love of

any kind.[380] Rather,

> a perfectly loving, a just God must indeed never be moved one-sidedly, by the feelings of
> some only of the creatures, but always in a way appropriate to all of them at once. This is the
> meaning of ethical action, response to all on the same terms of adequate sensitivity, and of
> adequate creative furtherance so far as the various interests of others can be harmonized with
> the least sacrifice of value.[381]

The Desire and Dependence of Divine Love

The central role of sympathy in Hartshorne's definition has been clearly stated. However,

Hartshorne expands on this definition to include further aspects such as desire. In another

definitive break from classic theism, Hartshorne categorically rejects the traditional distinction

between *agape* and *eros*.[382] He considers the attempt to exclude desire (*eros*) from the conception

of divine love, fundamentally wrongheaded.[383] Hartshorne purposely frames divine love in terms

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[380] However, D. D. Williams recognizes the biblical theme of election and interprets it
Christologically as the election of the world in willing communion. In the Hebrew Bible "the central
meaning of God's love is that he has chosen to make this one people his own, and this choice is an act of
his love." *Spirit*, 19. Yet, "the real sense of election is God's loving communion between himself and his
son. This is the spirit of love in God, and in his love God wills communion with all." Ibid., 36–37. In other
words "it is the sense of the New Testament that all are elected to salvation in Jesus Christ." Ibid., 36.

[381] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 192–93.

[382] "It has been the contention of many theologians, most recently Nygren, that the divine love is
entirely without 'need' or 'desire' and has nothing to gain from the good it bestows." Hartshorne, *Reality*,
139. He goes on to point however, "I have been told that I here misinterpret Nygren's intent, but that 'he
lays himself open to this misinterpretation.' After some discussion with Nygren himself, I am happy to be
able to think we are perhaps not far apart. In any case, the following discussion concerns the issue, not any
particular theologian." Ibid. However, it seems that Hartshorne and Nygren were, in fact, very far apart. D.
D. Williams is explicit that *agape* and *eros* "are not necessarily opposed." *Spirit*, 9. Further, D. D. Williams
explicitly critiques Nygren's view of *agape*. "We can see why it is inadequate to describe *agape* of God
only as the spontaneous, unmotivated, uncalculated self-giving of the Holy God, regardless of the value of
its object. *Agape* is first and primordially the spirit of communion willing the divine relationship between
Father and Son as the ground and of the fulfilment of all things." Ibid., 37.

[383] On the traditional *agape-eros* dichotomy Hartshorne comments, "This is supposed to guarantee
the unselfishness of the divine love, whereas (it is thought) the selfish loves, as such, spring from
dependence and desire. This, I maintain, is not good religion but bad metaphysics. To will the good of
others is the entire positive side of benevolence, and it adds nothing to this to insist that one must *not*, in
willing the good of others, find in this good *also* good for one's self." *Reality*, 139. Again, he adamantly
opposes such a conception saying, "They sought to maintain a distinction between love as desire, with an

of desire, saying, "Love *is* desire for the good of others, ideally all others, or I have yet to be told what it is."[384] In fact, he locates desire in benevolence itself which "*is* desire for the welfare of others."[385] Divine desire is not, however, partial or fickle but is "superrationally enlightened, an all-comprehending, never wearying desire for others' good."[386] Nevertheless, desire entails that God's happiness is at least partially dependent upon others' happiness.[387] In fact, according to Hartshorne, divine love is not merely desire; it relates to actual need.[388] Once again this explicitly denies the classic ontological conception of self-sufficiency.[389] This does not mean God would cease to be without sharing in any particular being. None has the power to threaten his existence, but rather, he is dependent upon all beings.[390] In positing the divine need for love, Hartshorne is actually merely appealing back to his ontology of the internal relatedness of mutuality. In his

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element of possible gain or loss to the self, and love as purely altruistic benevolence; or again between sensuous and spiritual love, *eros* and *agape*. But the distinction between lower and higher forms of love which is alone given meaning by experience—that is, which alone has meaning—is not of this character." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 116. D. D. Williams adds, "It simply is not true that the *agape* of the New Testament is nothing but the grace of God poured out without motive upon the unworthy. It is also the spirit of rejoicing, of friendship, and of the new life with its foretaste of the blessedness of life with God and with the brethren in the full freedom of love." *Spirit*, 46.

[384] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 14. Of course, this is closely related to the theme of *eros*. D. D. Williams defines *eros* as "the love of the beautiful, the true, and the good, the aspiration for fulfillment of the soul's yearning." *Spirit*, 2. He distinguishes this from *epithumia*, which he defines as "desire, often with the connotation of impurity or lust." Ibid., 2.

[385] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 116.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Ibid.

[388] "God needs only one thing from the creatures: the intrinsic beauty of their lives, that is, their own true happiness, which is also his happiness in through his perfect appreciation of theirs. This appreciation is love, not something extra as a motive to love." Ibid., 164.

[389] "It is often maintained that the only really pure—or, at least, the highest—love is that which springs from no 'need' of the beloved, that which 'overflows' from a purely self-sufficient being who derives nothing from any, other. This is one of those apparently refined and superior thoughts of theologians which analysis shows to be really crude." Ibid., 163.

[390] "God 'needs' happiness in which to share, not because the alternative is for him to cease to be, for this is not a possible alternative, but because the exact beauty of his own life varies with the amount of beauty in lives generally. *Some* other lives he must have, but his perfect power consists in this, that no matter what the creatures do with their free will they cannot bring about the destruction of the cosmos as

system, "the being which God is to gain from us is to be a certain particular case of mutual being, and . . . the only way to enjoy mutuality is to depend for it in part upon others, since such dependence *is* mutuality, is love."[391] Such dependence is necessary for the social theory of reality, the ontology of love. Here we see clearly that Hartshorne's conception of divine love amounts to a recapitulation of his ontology using the terminology of love. This may be clearly seen throughout his works as his conception of love relates directly to, and is predicated upon, his ontology as a whole**.**

The Motivation of Divine Love:
Ethics and Altruism

In regard to social relationships, Hartshorne raises the issue of egoism and altruism. He questions the traditional view that divine love cannot be at all egoistic but must be purely altruistic.[392] The question of the motivation of love and of the possible increase of love is at the heart of Hartshorne's differences with traditional views.[393] Hartshorne challenges this conception saying, "*Any conceivable* mind will be both egoistic and altruistic, for selfhood is social or nothing."[394] He unequivocally rejects the idea that love must be purely altruistic in the sense that the subject has no appreciation or feeling of enjoyment in the act(s) of goodness.[395] This, of

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such, they cannot reduce God to solitariness." Ibid., 164.

[391] Ibid., 120.

[392] On the contrary, "it can be shown by many lines of reasoning that the future welfare of others can be a motive as direct and genuine as one's own future welfare." Ibid., 146.

[393] For instance, he summarizes that for classic theism God serves others only "in the overflowing expression of his own glory or superabundance, said theologians. But he would have been just as glorious had no creation existed; for God eternally is all value, world or no world. Pure altruism is all we can say, from the side of God." Ibid., 115.

[394] Ibid., 151.

[395] Because of his social theory of reality even altruism may be identified in "experience as a process of participation in the good of others, so that some sort of value accrues to the self through the very fact that value accrues to another self. This does not mean that all motivation is merely selfish. One may plan the welfare of others in the distant future, and expect no benefit oneself in that future from this welfare." Ibid., 115. Moreover, because of the intersubjectivity of social reality all beings ought to

course, amounts to an explicit rejection of the distinction between so-called need love and gift love.[396] Rather, "the ultimate motive is love, which has two equally fundamental aspects, self-love and love for others."[397] God desires the well-being of all others and as internally related to all, "promoting their welfare contributes to his own."[398] Conversely, God is the supreme object of love and when one loves God, he being the all-inclusive one, that one thereby also loves others, and even oneself.[399] Divine love, then, necessarily includes divine self-love, and love for God

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appreciate the good of others as the good of oneself but it is "only through this expected ignorance [that of humans] can there be a non-coincidence between the greater good and the good for self." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 141.

[396] "No pragmatic or operational difference can be imagined between this love and the alleged love without need. What is there but word-idolatry in the traditional insistence upon the latter? And what, on any analogical basis, could be meant by perfect altruism or generosity but a complete finding of one's own good in achieving the good of others?" Hartshorne, *Reality*, 140. Rather, in Hartshorne's view, "theology may avoid the dangerous situation in which Nygren and many another find themselves of seeing nothing in common or analogous between human love—like that of father for child, or husband for wife, or Jesus for his human fellows—and the divine love. The sublime contrast between human and divine benevolence consists not in the sheer difference between need and no need but in the gap between abysmal ignorance and omniscience, and between partial and shifting inhibition of the interest of others by self-interest, as contrasted to certain and absolute coincidence of other-interest and self-interest." Ibid., 141.

[397] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 151. For D. D. Williams, "God's *agape is* motivated in that love seeks out the other." *Spirit,* 121. This is in direct opposition to the idea of wholly unmotivated love.

[398] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 147. Hartshorne explains further regarding self or other motivated love. "Some ethical theories seek to furnish sanction for obligation by arguing that since sympathetic emotions are largely pleasant, it is to one's interest to cultivate them. This implies that a man asking for a motive for doing good has for the time being ceased to love his fellows. But if the man has really and utterly put aside all concern for others, then almost all that is human must have left him. And insofar as he does still care about other persons, he has a motive for doing good to them—simply that he wants to do so. Must one have a motive for doing what one wants to do? This is to ask a motive for the motive one already has." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 104. He relates this to the tendency of a reader to identify herself with the characters in a book and share in their emotions; thus altruism is identifying oneself with the other. He states, "The very characters in a book and their joys and sorrows can easily mean more to us than our own remote past or future. Of course there are some who will argue that this is because we identify ourselves with the characters. Exactly! That is the point; that is altruism—participating in the life of another so that his needs become yours." *Vision*, 149. Due to his distinctive view of the ever-different individuality of persons he can even hold that self-love implies "a difference between the self loving and the self loved, and that difference makes room for everything from one's own future state to other persons, animals, God, as the self which may be loved." Ibid. It is Buddhists who really went the limit in "qualifying personal identity to allow for partial identity with others." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 107. For an argument that Hartshorne's view maintains a common view with Zen Buddhism (as interpreted by Suzuki Daisetz) of the concrete in experience see Lawrence Willson, "Suzuki, Hartshorne, and Becoming-Now," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 2 (1975): 169–73. For instance, process, creative synthesis, sociality, and panpsychism are all represented in this form of Zen Buddhism.

[399] Thus Hartshorne can agree that "we are told that love for God is to be the all-in-all of our

includes love for others and oneself. Nevertheless, for Hartshorne the fact that divine love

includes self-love does not negate that it is also altruistic.[400] Since the divine inclusion of all else

does not negate the individuality of the other minds, divine love is not merely self-love.

Moreover, God is not selfish but it is simply his nature as the all-inclusive sympathizer that all

interests are his own interests. "God's altruism toward the creatures is the exact opposite of man's

'love' for him, since it is just as free from self-interest as the latter is exclusively constituted by

it."[401] God has only one motive and that is love.[402] Once again, it is manifest that love is itself the

essential characteristic of Hartshorne's ontology.[403] Since all reality consists of minds

interrelating (thus sympathizing, or loving) Hartshorne can state, "Apart from all this [love], we

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motivation" and loving God is "*exactly* how we are to love the neighbor." *Omnipotence*, 107. In this way, "Spinoza's saying that we love God with the love with which he loves himself has thus a truth which he did not quite intend. Not that God loves exclusively himself and no other individual, but that God through loving all individuals for their own sakes makes them one with himself, with phases of his own life. Consequently, when we for our part love God this love is a factor in God's enjoyment of himself, that is, in his self-love." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 294.

[400] Since God had "perfect knowledge" he has "perfect possession" of all "emotions of beauty and joy which God enables us to have." These "become elements in his own all-embracing experience, contributory to the richness of that experience. Each such contribution makes possible for God a unique form of beauty which in no other way could have existed for him. Omniscience thus removes from God the sole reason for that form of altruism which seeks the good of another in partial disregard of whether or not it is good for self. Such altruism is in very truth an imperfection, a glory of the imperfect will as such." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 140. "The fact that theologians have thought so little about the possibility of perfectly generous or other-regarding desire reflects, one suspects, the poverty of such desires in men. We must not deny desire to God because, forsooth, if it were our desire it would be niggardly and fitful in its inclusion of the good of others. What anthropomorphism this is; not less so because it is in part the result of an over-strained anti-anthropomorphism." Ibid., 142.

[401] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 114. This is because, "in God there is indeed a perfect agreement of altruism and egoism. For whatever good God may do to any being anywhere he himself, through his omniscient sympathy, will inevitably enjoy. The future welfare of all beings will be entirely included in the future satisfactions of God. Hence God can make no sacrifices, except in the sense that he does take upon himself the sufferings as well as the joys of his creatures. Theologians apparently sometimes overlooked the fact that such an agreement between love and self-interest depends upon the complete transparency or omniscience of the love." Ibid., 161.

[402] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 162.

[403] For Ogden, "dipolar theism is an analysis in the general terms of philosophy of just that love [eminent love] and its dialectic." *Reality*, 68.

have no self. It is our loves that make us anything worth mentioning."[404] Hartshorne even goes so

far as to proclaim that love "holds the universe together."[405] This is understood within the context

of panentheism, the metaphysics of "divine inclusiveness."[406] The very unity and harmony of the

world is to be found in the universal sympathy that is divine love, which is "the only theme ade-

quate to the cosmic symphony."[407] In this cosmic harmony of divine love, tragedy remains but

even it is turned into beauty as far as possible within the context of the panpsychic,

indeterministic, interdependent, creative synthesis of minds.[408]

Divine Love and the Christ Metaphor

      Although Hartshorne does not ascribe the special status to Christ that historic Christianity

would, he does point out that "a suffering God has for nearly twenty centuries been symbolized

by the cross, while during nearly the same period philosophy has not known how to grasp the idea

in technical terms."[409] He criticizes classical theology for ascribing divinity to Christ, yet

paradoxically denying passibility to divinity.[410]

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     [404] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 108.

     [405] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 180.

     [406] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 290. Further, "it is love that explains cosmic structure, or the two are aspects of the same thing. What binds many into one is social realization." Ibid. "Cosmic being is cosmic experience, is cosmic sociality or love." Ibid., 347. The being "which all qualities embody is either nothing further describable, or it is cosmic love. And conversely, cosmic love is either nothing conceivable or it is the distinctive character of 'being' itself." Ibid., 267. D. D. Williams, however, cautions that God not be thought of in Tillich's way of seeing God as "being itself" because that would require that God lack "individuality in relationship." He prefers "Being which is the source of the community of beings." *Spirit*, 126.

     [407] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 216. As the universal bond, love is also the ultimate of beauty, "the beauty beyond all others, that with which life has a meaning, without which it does not." Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 14. "The supreme example of such unity is the social harmony which is called love." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 100.

     [408] "It is through love that tragedy is, not indeed wholly prevented, but made bearable and given whatever beauty it is capable of. The love that can do this is that which expects to share with others the sufferings from which no actuality, human or superhuman—subject as all must be to chance and incompatibility—can entirely escape. . . . In its highest human and superhuman forms it simply is that beauty." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 108.

     [409] Ibid., 123. "The cross is a sublime and matchless symbol of this, partly nullified by theological

The incarnation is supposed to solve the problem also. I can only say that if it is Jesus as literally divine who loves men, really loves them, then my point, so far as I can see, is granted. If not, then the problem is unsolved. Instead of simply *adding Jesus to an unreconstructed idea of a non-loving God,* should we not take him as proof that God really *is love* — just that, without equivocation?[411]

He goes on to point out astutely, "In the debate over the divinity of Jesus, this question of a deity who does not escape—or wish to escape—full share in our tribulations, has generally been lost sight of."[412] Neither does the idea of intra-trinitarian love resolve the deficiency of the classic conception since it does not provide an answer to the question of whether or not God truly loves creatures.[413] Hartshorne blames this shortcoming on classical ontology, believing that his own ontology allows for a consistent conception of divine love and the God-world relationship.

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efforts to restrict suffering and sympathy to God as incarnate." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 198. It is clear, however, that Hartshorne does not ascribe to Jesus the unique identification as God or as part of the trinity. Hartshorne, *Reality*, 152. Cf. ibid., 146, 150.

[410] "His [Jesus'] suffering is the exhibition of his perfection, which is not that of impassible being but of love which cannot be impassible." D. D. Williams, *Spirit*, 160. Cf. ibid., 166.

[411] Hartshorne, *Vision*, 165. "To say that Jesus was God, then, ought to mean that God himself is one with us in our suffering, that divine love is not essentially benevolence—external well-wishing—but sympathy, taking into itself our every grief." Hartshorne, *Reality*, 147. "I suggest that much more than divine benevolence or human kinship was symbolized in the doctrine that the man on the cross was deity. The devotion of Jesus to his fellows was not mere benevolence, a wishing them well, or an eagerness to do things for them. It was a feeling of sympathetic identity with them in their troubles and sufferings, as well as in their joys, so that their cause and their tragedy became his; and he paid the price of a bitter death, rather than weaken the intimacy of his relation to the human lot, with all its suffering and failure. Jesus is a symbol of the solidarity of human weal and woe through sympathy, a solidarity from which the best man will least of all seek to escape." Ibid.

[412] Hartshorne, *Reality*, 147. However, if God is allowed passivity and relativity then Jesus "can still be, a living and unique symbol of the Christian or tragic view of divine love, a symbol taken as deity partly because in this way attention could be diverted from certain difficulties felt to arise if it be said directly that God sympathizes, suffers, and changes." Ibid., 152.

[413] "The Trinity is supposed to meet the requirements of giving God an object of love which yet agrees with his absolute self-sufficiency, and also an object of love 'worthy' to be loved with so perfect a love as the divine. This is done by making the lover and the beloved identical—yet not identical." Hartshorne, *Vision*, 164. It "leaves the essential problem of the divine love unsolved. For either God loves the creatures or he does not. If he does, then their interests contribute to his interests, for love means nothing more than this. If he does not, then the essence of the religious belief in God is sacrificed, and one still has the question, How then is God related to the creature's interests?" Ibid.

Summary of Hartshorne's System

Thus God as the supreme, all-inclusive mind, the compound individual of the world, not identical or equivalent to the world, but more than the world, is love. Divine love is divine sympathy, the feeling of all others' feelings, including the desire for the well-being of all the minds that make up the indeterministic, relativistic, spatio-temporalistic, panpsychism of social reality. As ethically immutable, God always loves all others with perfect adequacy yet also grows (aesthetic perfectibility) and enjoys the ever-increasing value of the world that he includes as the supremely relative all-inclusive compound individual of the world. Divine love as love for others also amounts to self-love since God himself includes the others (panentheism), but this does not detract from divine altruism because the divine all-inclusiveness does not remove the individuality of the minds that are included in God. God as universal subject is the supreme lover of all other minds and as universal object he is also the supreme loved one of all other minds (though not the sole lover or loved one). God's divine love for the world as universal subject eminently affects him, partly determining his life in joy and suffering.[414] The world's love for God as the universal object deeply affects the world and partly determines the course of reality. God's love is absolute in that it is absolutely relative; it always corresponds perfectly to all minds. As the supreme mind God is the supreme lover, the eminently relative all-sympathizer, the self-loving lover of all.

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[414] The growth or change in the content of God's universal sympathy, or love, is predicated on the all-inclusive nature of God's knowledge (feeling) as the supremely relative universal subject. Hartshorne, *Divine*, 17. Love receives new content and value because God changes every instant according to the internally related sum of all changes in the world.

The Extent of the Conflict of Interpretations

Conflicts between the Models

Considering that the process critique of classic theism has already been clearly presented, the transcendent-voluntarist critique of process theology should not be overlooked.[415] Although Henry recognizes some shortcomings of classic theism and works to correct them, he is nevertheless utterly opposed to the tenets of process theology.[416] Among the numerous reasons that Henry notes for rejecting process theology, the doctrine of revelation is of great importance. Whereas Henry posits divine revelation as the source of theology, process theology utilizes experience and reason as the fundamental sources.[417] Henry, moreover, is further irked by the inconsistent use of Scripture that he considers prevalent in process theology.[418] Another clean break with process theology comes over the process rejection of the transcendence of the

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[415] For Henry's further critique of process theology see Carl F. H. Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1946), 119–71; idem, "Reality and Identity of God: A Critique of Process-Theology," *Christianity Today* 13, no. 13 (1969); and idem, "The Stunted God of Process Theology," in *Process Theology* (ed. R. H. Nash; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987). For an excellent study contrasting elements of traditional theism and process theology see Colin E. Gunton, *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), and Ronald H. Nash, ed., *Process Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987).

[416] The extent of C. F. H. Henry's concern over process theology is evident in that he devotes an entire chapter to it in volume 6 of his *God, Revelation, and Authority*. Henry notes that while process theology attempts "to preserve literally such traditional metaphysical attributes of God as eternity, immutability, impassivity and immateriality, they actually redefine them within the requirements of process theory and preserve them only by linguistic obfuscation." *God, Revelation*, 6:73. Notably, W. Norris Clarke admits that traditional Christian theism needs to adapt to some process concerns if it is to adequately address God as personal, loving, and involved in the world. *The Philosophical Approach to God: A Neo-Thomist Perspective* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest University, 1979).

[417] "Process philosophy further dilutes the biblical revelation by excluding propositional conceptual content from God's self-revelation, and by correlating God's salvific activity not primarily with historical redemptive acts but rather with man's inner faith response to an interpersonal divine human encounter." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:68.

[418] "There is every reason to press those who occasionally stress the congruity of some of their conclusions with the Bible to indicate on just what basis of scriptural sensitivity they venture these traditional affirmations about God, and by what divine authority they reject other passages that contradict process philosophy perspectives." Ibid., 5:63. Nash comments, "Most process theologians appear to have a highly selective hermeneutic. Scripture is welcomed as authoritative when it agrees with panentheist opinions." Nash, "Process," 22.

sovereign God.[419] Process theism's attempt to provide an alternative to a "static" God has rather

provided merely a "projected reconstitution of God's nature [that] actually deprives deity of

major perfections and activities characteristic of the living God of the Bible, and results in a view

of the divine that is inadequate philosophically, scripturally, and experientially."[420] Thus, one can

readily see the striking contrast between process theology's apparent lack of distinction between

the natural and supernatural, resulting in some "inner divine necessity," and Henry's insistence

that the divine nature be understood "in terms of divine voluntarism."[421] Whereas Henry posits

divine determinism where "every creaturely activity incarnates God's aims to a higher or lesser

degree," process allows for intersubjectivity in open process.[422] Thus process theology makes

"divine *aseity* and independence of the universe . . . impossible notions," undercutting the ground

of evangelical theism.[423]

Another criticism is the supposed lack of personality in process theology, a point of

considerable debate even among process theologians.[424] In conjunction with this, Henry proposes

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[419] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:59. This includes any intimation that "the universe is necessary to God's being." Ibid., 5:217. For instance, the process "theory that created reality is necessary to God, and is in some respects divine, departs in crucial ways from the biblical revelation of God." Ibid., 5:68. For Carson, any valid doctrine will result in "an understanding of God who is, on the one hand, sovereign and transcendent and, on the other, personal and loving. On set of attributes or characteristics will not be used to domesticate another set." "How?" 312.

[420] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:68.

[421] Ibid., 5:62. Henry claims process philosophy "sponsors a monodimensional view of reality that evaporates the antithesis of supernatural and natural." Ibid., 6:18. "If God created out of inner necessity as say process philosophers, why as creatures should we glorify and worship him? Would not God's creation of man and the world simply exemplify ontological determinism? However much process thinkers may relate all the evils in history to divine suffering love, these evils nonetheless become conditions that humans must bear because a self-satisfying deity could not avoid fashioning our universe." Ibid., 6:289.

[422] Ibid., 5:178. "Process theology proffers still another alternative. For the biblical doctrine of election it substitutes the much diluted notion of divine persuasion." Ibid., 6:97. "Most evangelical theists insist, however, that to contradict or to constrict divine omnipotence, transcendence, and independence, undermines a meaningful concept of God." Ibid., 6:60.

[423] Ibid., 6:62.

[424] "Process theology adduces no persuasive considerations for requiring that God be personal; in the absence of divine self-revelation, it cannot effectively refute Buddhist and other nontheistic claims that personal characterization of the absolute falsifies the nature of reality." Ibid., 5:181. "In the writings of

that process theology lacks "an articulate doctrine of divine self-revelation of a deity who loves

the world and man and with whom personal fellowship is possible."[425] Thus, in the end Henry

believes that process theology "equates God's being with the being of the universe."[426] Such a

"one-layer view of reality provides no consistent alternative to naturalism."[427] This "obscures the

deity's ever-active relation to man and the world" by "substituting a necessary divine creation of

the universe for voluntary supernatural creation, and by excluding the once-for-all miraculous as

a misreading of natural processes."[428] Moreover, the notion of a becoming God that grows is

unacceptable to traditional Christianity.[429] The very idea of a dipolar God is also impossible due

to the divine simplicity.[430] This dovetails with the process admission of temporality in the divine

nature, which Henry summarily rejects.[431]

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some process thinkers, the personal God of theism appears to be replaced by an impersonal God. This is a point of major disagreement among process thinkers." Nash, "Process," 16. Donald G. Bloesch criticizes, "Even those who view God in personal terms do not really think of God as an absolute individual who reigns over the universe as a Sovereign Lord (as in Reformed theology)." "Process Theology and Reformed Theology," in *Process Theology* (ed. R. H. Nash; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987), 40.

[425] C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:141.

[426] Ibid. Yet, if "equates" means identical, this is not actually Hartshorne's position.

[427] Ibid., 5:142.

[428] Ibid., 5:68.

[429] "Process philosophy imports change and development into aspects of the very nature of God and consequently speaks of a growing God." Ibid. Yet, "if God is in fact a growing God, if God does change in important respects, can we any longer confidently and truly say what God in truth *is*?" Ibid., 6:64. Further, "if God is not sovereign and omniscient but growing, cannot his own ability to tell the truth also expand, and if so, have we any basis for regarding even divine revelation as unsubject to revision?" Ibid.

[430] "Any ontological gradation of divine attributes can be carried through only at the expense of God's simplicity and immutability." Ibid., 5:135. Henry calls this a "schizophrenic God who embodies radically opposed modes of reality, a deity absolute in some aspects of his nature, but relative in others. Mere semantic manipulation of the metaphor of polarity will not bridge the logical difficulties, however, nor will it obscure the violence done to the nature of the Judeo-Christian God." Ibid., 6:63. Moreover, "the notion of God as partly nonexistent and yet capable of existing fully is a speculative monstrosity; no philosopher could seriously have proposed such a concept unless he had imbibed modern evolutionary theory too long and too much." Ibid., 6:65.

[431] "Neo-Protestant process philosophers react against the speculative exclusion of time-distinctions from God's range of knowledge by unjustifiably importing time into God's very nature and

Moreover, the classic axiom of ontological immutability is removed in Hartshorne's thought.[432] Such removal of immutability might cast doubt upon the permanence of God, or whether he might even be destroyed himself.[433] Thus, Henry contends, "making process or change or growth an ultimate perfection is one of the prime weaknesses of process philosophy."[434] In conjunction with the issue of temporality and mutability is the issue of God being enriched or appreciating any external value, which Hartshorne posits as essential to divine love, and Henry rejects as ontologically unacceptable.[435] Moreover, Henry criticizes the lack of willed providence in process theology's view of history.[436] Henry also rejects the process critique that Christianity makes God unrelated to the world.[437] Beyond this, Henry is also adamantly against process theology's removal of many other Christian distinctives.[438] Both the transcendent-

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making it an essential aspect of divine life." Ibid., 5:272.

[432] Henry criticizes Hartshorne's attempt to "combine immutability with change" calling it "a feat as difficult as riding two horses moving in opposite directions." Ibid., 5:290. He criticizes further, "Hartshorne has clearly substituted a conjectural deity for the biblical God who reveals himself. A doctrine of divine 'immutability' based on such tortuous exposition is more confusing than true or useful." Ibid., 5:291.

[433] "If God's ontic independence is to some extent denied, so that some aspect of his being or nature depends upon external causes, then these causes could just as readily destroy as constitute his reality." Ibid., 6:65.

[434] Ibid., 6:66.

[435] Henry comments, "Involvement of God in temporal processes compromises his divine transcendence and portrays him as becoming progressively enriched in experience with the passing of time. The result of Hartshorne's panpsychism is loss of the omniscient and immutable God of the Bible; God becomes so meshed with historical processes that he internally experiences the quality of evil and is steeped in inner conflict." Ibid., 6:272.

[436] Ibid., 6:457.

[437] For Henry, God can relate to the world and "God's absoluteness" is not "incompatible with his real relationship to others." Ibid., 6:20. Henry states, "Process theologians err twice over when they league evangelical theism with an immovable and uncompassionate Absolute and when they depict biblical writers as champions of a changing God who in some respects depends upon the universe." Ibid., 6:68. However, "Christian theism disallows intrinsically necessary divine relationships to man and the world, and insists on God's essential independence" in opposition to process theology's position of a "mutual relationship" which "obscures God's causal efficacy in relation to the universe." Ibid., 6:20.

[438] For instance, process theology rejects the doctrine of the Trinitarian divine life. Moreover, he notes, "One searches the philosophies of Whitehead and Hartshorne in vain, moreover, for any significant

voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models thus explicitly reject the other's ontology and in devastating fashion.

The conflict of interpretations between the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models of divine love is readily apparent. As has been seen, the transcendent-voluntarist model of divine love retains many of the axioms of classic theism, which were explicitly and enthusiastically criticized and rejected by the immanent-experientialist model. No less enthusiastically has the transcendent-voluntarist model rejected the immanent-experientialist model of love.[439] It seems that such mutual exclusiveness was inevitable due to the utterly conflicting ontologies and the complete dependence of both models of love on them. The respective conceptions of love are bound up in mutually exclusive ontologies. Hence, there could be no resolution of the conflict of interpretations without drastic revision of one or both ontologies. Accordingly, the transcendent-voluntarist model of divine love is irreconcilably opposed to that of the immanent-experientialist model.

Specifically, there is an irreconcilable difference between the transcendent, sovereignly willed, unaffected and unenriched, election love of the transcendent-voluntarist model and the all-sympathetic, immanent, affected and enriched, direct and adequate, desire-filled feeling love of

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christology." Ibid., 6:55. He also sees process theology as "obscuring both the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and the church as the regenerate body over which the Risen Christ reigns, and strips the grace of God of such decisive historical acts as Jesus' substitutionary atonement and his bodily resurrection from the dead." Ibid., 5:68. Henry is especially concerned over the lack of the substitutionary atonement saying that in this model the sufferings of Jesus "lose their propitiatory-substitutionary character and instead supremely exemplify suffering in general." Ibid., 6:289.

[439] Mahoney, writing from a Thomist perspective, considers Aquinas's doctrine of love to be superior because "in Hartshorne's doctrine God must create some world or the other; in Aquinas creation is totally an act of gratuitous love. The latter is a much freer act of love than the former. And even by human standards the more freely given love seems to be the superior. In Hartshorne's conception of God in loving he receives as much as he gives; in Aquinas the divine love is so radically different from creaturely love, that the divine love causes the good it loves, rather than being caused by it. Once again by human standards the latter ranks higher than the former, being more altruistic. On both scores the thomistic conception is superior, precisely because God cannot gain anything from his love of creatures, being beyond the realm of being modified." "Hartshorne," 137.

the immanent-experientialist model.[440] Whereas in transcendent voluntarism divine love is impassible and divine suffering is impossible, in immanent-experientialism, divine love is supremely passible, all-inclusively sympathetic joy and suffering.[441] The idea of suffering as part of divine love is categorically rejected by the former model but essential to the latter model. In the former, divine immutability rules out the possibility of God receiving enriching, or value-increasing love, but in the latter, the divine life is increased in value and enriched by internally relating to and receiving each and every instance of love in the universe. In the latter, it is proposed that it is impossible to love an immutable being, whereas in the former a mutable being is unworthy of worship, much less worshipful love.[442] Closely related is Henry's charge that process theology "cannot avoid replacing *agapē* with *eros* as the nature of divine love."[443] Specifically, in the transcendent-voluntarist model God acts in history "out of self-giving love" whereas in the immanent-experientialist model God acts "to expedite his own fulfillment."[444] Finally, the immanent-experientialist model indiscriminately universalizes the divine love, in direct contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model, which limits divine love to those whom God

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[440] The models directly rule one another out even at their foundations. For instance, D. D. Williams criticizes the transcendent-voluntarist model saying, "The traditional assertion that the will of God is the ultimate cause of every event cannot be preserved without qualification, because a will which allows no effective power to any other cannot be a loving will." *Spirit*, 128.

[441] Hartshorne criticizes, "God's love for us does not, for classical theists, mean that God sympathizes with us, is rejoiced or made happy by our good joy or good fortune or grieved by our sorrow or misery. Rather God's love is like the sun's way of doing good, which benefits the myriad forms of life on earth but receives no benefits from the good it produces." *Omnipotence*, 4.

[442] "But humans can hardly be expected to worship everything that concerns their roving intellect; we cannot in any event worship permanently what is but relative and changing, and such entities moreover are hardly worthy of even momentary worship." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 6:289.

[443] Ibid. "It considers the universe in all its development as necessary to God as God is to the world." Ibid.

[444] Ibid., 6:289–90. "If God 'creates' out of inner necessity, and is motivated by *eros* rather than *agapē*, his relationship to space-time realities is not that of the Judeo-Christian God. The New Testament nowhere portrays the climax of God's love as divine-human interdependence or as divine absorption of human wickedness Scripture declares it, rather, to be God's costly redemption of sinners from the penalty and corruption of their evil ways, a redemption available only to those who turn to the Savior." Ibid., 6:69.

sovereignly elects to bestow favor upon.[445] It appears evident that both models cannot be

maintained simultaneously, and this suggests the possibility for another paradigm of divine love

that assumes neither ontology.

Dissatisfaction in Recent Theology

A number of perspectives on divine love do not fit neatly within the transcendent-

voluntarist or immanent-experientialist model.[446] Therefore, it is important to take note of some

major breaks from both models regarding the concept of divine love. Questions regarding love in

the God-world relationship continue to be raised from diverse traditions, ranging to issues of

ontology such as immutability, impassibility, determinism, et al. The following discussion will

mention a number of areas of dissatisfaction that have been expressed in relation to the two

models above including the reciprocality of divine love and the question of whether divine love is

to be thought of as pure giving (thematic *agape*), or as giving *and* receiving, including brief

mention of some inextricable ontological issues. At the outset, it must be understood that the

theologians referenced below may voice similar dissatisfaction regarding a particular aspect of

divine love and yet hold vastly differing perspectives on other aspects of divine love and/or

severe disagreements regarding the underlying issues regarding the metaphysics of the God-world

relationship.[447]

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[445] "Process theology only adds to its problems by diluting even the love of God. On the one hand, it excludes miraculous divine redemption in deference to evolutionary continuity and scientific uniformity; on the other, it professes to universalize God's election love of the Hebrews." Ibid., 6:289.

[446] There are many more than two options, however they are framed. See Nash, "Process," 21.

[447] It is not the purpose of this section to provide a summary or overview of the theologians that voice the dissatisfaction but to evidence the call for improvement regarding the theological definition of divine love in the context of the God-world relationship.

The Relationality of Divine Love

A major point of contention has revolved around the notion of reciprocity in the divine-world relationship.[448] A number of theologians have called for emphasis upon reciprocal divine love—in opposition to the transcendent-voluntarist model—yet not necessarily to the extent of the internal relatedness prevalent in the immanent-experientialist model. For instance, Vincent Brümmer contends that "love must by its very nature be a relationship of free mutual give and take, otherwise it cannot be love at all."[449] Elizabeth Carmichael thus promotes friendship love that "embraces both giving and receiving."[450] On the other hand, Martin D'Arcy likewise gives a great deal of prominence to both giving and receiving in love; however, rather than calling for reciprocality as it relates to God, he limits divine love to gratuitous self-giving and rules out divine reception of love.[451] Other theologians struggle with the issue of the God-world relationship and reciprocal relations. For instance, Karl Rahner wrestles with allowing genuine relationality to God, maintaining that God in Godself is "strictly nonrelative or absolute" but is "genuinely related to the world in God's other," that is, Jesus.[452] It appears that Rahner recognizes the need for some relationality but nevertheless relegates it to a symbolic relationship that does

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[448] Brümmer points out that, in tradition, "love has generally been taken to be an attitude of one person toward another, rather than as a relation between persons. This way of thinking about love can probably be explained by the fact that western thought has suffered from a systematic blind spot for relations." *Model*, 33.

[449] Ibid., 161. Brümmer defines love as "intentional, evaluative, disposition," and "reciprocal" and for him love always "entails a desire for reciprocation." Ibid.*,* 155. He goes on, "Love wants to be returned, requited, and in this way fulfilled in a relationship of mutual love. Of course this does not exclude the possibility of unrequited love. . . . In this respect love is more than mere beneficence." Ibid. Cf. Post, *Theory*.

[450] For Carmichael, "the love of friendship alone gives a wholly satisfactory account of love precisely because it embraces both giving and receiving." *Friendship*, 4.

[451] "God has shown to us, so far as is compatible with the unchanging plenitude of his nature, a love like to that of self-donating and self-giving." D'Arcy, *Mind*, 245.

[452] M. L. Taylor, *God,* 193. This seems to be Rahner's solution to the paradox of God's utter timelessness and immutability and God's incarnation and personal action in the world. Taylor critiques that, "unfortunately, the concept of the real symbol does not seem to offer much clarification of how God can be relative in God's other while remaining in Godself nonrelative." Ibid., 202.

not touch God in Godself. On the contrary, John Burnaby, an Anglican expert on Augustine's

view of love, criticizes such a "'one-way' relationship, a giving without receiving" as "strangely

inadequate."[453] Stephen G. Post also critiques such a view, stating that one-directional love is

"essentially negative in that it undermines the circular flow of giving and receiving in which

agape is sustained and supported."[454]

Accordingly, numerous theologians posit that a mutual relationship between God and the

world means that God gives *and* receives. For Thomas Oden, such reciprocality is a feature of all

love.[455] On this point, Jürgen Moltmann concurs, seeing divine love as a reciprocal (though

unequal) relationship between God and the world.[456] From yet another perspective, Wolfhart

Pannenberg adds that love seeks response and as such "lets the other be."[457] For Sallie McFague,

God gracefully loves us and "our responsive love . . . fills a need in God the lover."[458] For the

proponents of open theism, love "involves sensitivity to the other. Because God loves the

creatures, he is open to their experiences."[459] Thomas Jay Oord, a self-described Evangelical-

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[453] Burnaby, *Amor*, 307.

[454] Post, *Theory,* 12. Cf. Stephen G. Post, *Altruism & Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, & Religion in Dialogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[455] "God's love for humanity, like all love, is reciprocal. God prizes the world, and values especially human creatures, who have the freedom and imagination to respond to God and to share with God consciousness and compassion." Thomas C. Oden, *The Living God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 121. However, he is careful to note that love may include both self-love and unrequited love, "Love may remain completely unreturned without ceasing to be love. Love for one's beloved is not finally dependent upon its being reciprocated." Ibid., 120.

[456] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (trans. M. Kohl; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 203.

[457] "The Spirit is the power of love that lets the other be." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (trans. G. W. Bromiley; 3 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 1:427. Further "it is an element of the creative love that wills the existence of creatures. It waits for the response of creatures in which they fulfill their destiny." Ibid., 439. Vacek also uses a great deal of language that suggests a reciprocal relationship. For instance, he sees the human response to God's love as free and unforced. *Love,* 188–90.

[458] Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 134.

Process theologian, agrees, yet goes further, stating that "all existence is essentially related and reciprocal."[460]

Divine Lover as Sole Giver

In conceptions of love as a reciprocal relationship between God and the world, the aspects of giving and receiving rise to the fore, receiving a great deal of attention in recent discussion of divine love. God as the supreme giver is an ancient conception of God that retains a great deal of traction in recent theology. Many theologians see God as the giver who bestows value on those he loves, rather than recognizing value. This may be called "creative love."[461] For some, God creates and bestows all value unilaterally; there is no value that God did not sovereignly create. For others, love does not necessarily create its object but does create value in it by loving it.[462] The former view rules out a reciprocal relationship between God and others, while the latter may allow for such mutuality.

The traditional view, adopted by the transcendent-voluntarist model, frames God's giving as the former type of bestowal love, a pure beneficence (thematic *agape*).[463] Emil Brunner defines

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[459] Rice, "Process," 184. Thus Pinnock states, "Open theism is a form of relational theism, the approach to Scripture which views God as entering into reciprocal relations with creatures and experiencing genuine give-and-take." Clark H. Pinnock, "Constrained by Love: Divine Self-Restraint According to Open Theism," *PRSt* 34 (2007): 149.

[460] Oord, "Matching," 313. For Oord, mutual relationship between God and the world is an ontological kind of friendship love (*philia*). Oord has recently argued for a form of panentheism that he calls "Essential Kenosis Theology" such that divine love for creatures is necessary and essential to God; "God loves necessarily" and "cannot not love." *Nature*, 129. Cf. Thomas Jay Oord, *Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos, 2010).

[461] Cole-Turner, "God's," 26. Singer contends this bestowed value is true of all love, saying, "Love creates a new value, one that is not reducible to the individual or objective value that something may also have. This further type of valuing I call bestowal." *Nature*, 5. Cf. Brümmer, *Model,* 166.

[462] For example, Brümmer comments, the "fact that I am loved by another does indeed bestow a value on me which I would not otherwise have had." Ibid., 131. Singer adds, "Love does not create its object; it merely responds to it creatively." *Nature*, 15.

[463] In this view: "Love is sheer gratuity." Singer, *Nature*, 15. For an interesting discussion of whether it is even conceivable that God extends benevolence to all equally see Paul Helm, "Can God Love the World?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. K. J.

this as "gracious love."[464] God does not receive anything, but only gives. Millard Erickson

concurs saying, "[God's] love for us and for his other creatures is completely disinterested."[465] C.

S. Lewis famously framed this position with the dichotomy between "need love" and "gift

love."[466] Divine love is only gift love but never need love. This distinction is very closely related

to the traditional thematic distinction between *agape* and *eros,* wherein *agape* is a purely

beneficent love (gift love) and *eros* is a desirous love (need love). In contrast to the immanent-

experientialist model, and in keeping with the transcendent-voluntarist model, this thematic

distinction between *agape* and *eros* continues to influence recent theologians.[467] For instance,

Donald Bloesch explicitly states, "In Christian perspective divine love is *agape*, not *eros*."[468]

Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 168–85.

[464] Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (London: Lutterworth, 1949), 187. "Love is the self-giving of God; love is the free and generous grace of the One who is Holy Lord." Ibid., 185.

[465] Erickson, *Christian*, 319. Rahner also retains the transcendent and gratuitous self-communication which is antithetical to the immanent-experientialist model. For a study of Rahner's conception from a process perspective, see M. L. Taylor, *God*. Cf. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 174.

[466] For instance, C. S. Lewis says, "God, who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that He may love and perfect them." *Four*, 127. H. Ray Dunning frames divine aseity in terms of love, stating that "God's love is spontaneous. . . . Its cause is contained within itself, not in anything else. It is not called forth by external causes but breaks forth by itself." *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill, 1988), 200–201. Dunning goes on to frame the divine attributes in the context of love; see ibid., 200–207.

[467] This dissertation has already considered the continuing impact of Nygren's influential work on this topic. Others have also continued this distinction. Brunner, for instance, stresses the traditional difference between *agape* and *eros* and states that, as opposed to *eros,* divine *agape* "does not seek value, but it creates value or gives value." *Christian,* 186. He believes that this kind of love is completely foreign to human love. Karl Barth maintains the *agape-eros* distinction, at least in part, saying that agape "has its basis in the good being and action of God" whereas *eros* is based "in the corruption of man." *Church Dogmatics* (trans. G. T. Thomson; 5 vols.; Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 1958), 4/2:747.

[468] Donald G. Bloesch, *God, the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006), 146. Erickson comments similarly, "God's love is an unselfish interest in us for our sake. It is '*agape,* not *eros.*'" *Christian*, 319. Bloesch goes on, "In evangelical religion love is neither unrequited longing (*eros*) nor submission to a moral code (*nomos*) but unmerited grace (*agape*). It is not the passion to possess (*eros*) nor the duly to attend (*nomos*) but the loving-kindness that bestows (*agape*)." *God*, 148. Further, he states, "God loves us not in order to fulfill himself (he is already fulfilled) but in order to redeem the sinner." "Process," 46. Dunning contends that *agape* "was not generated by the potentiality of its object to meet a need in God. It arose out of the fullness of the Divine Being. It is disinterested love, concern for the well-being of the object, in no way based on the worth of the object." *Grace,* 195.

D'Arcy, however, rejects the dichotomy between *agape* and *eros* claiming they are "not enemies but friends."[469] However, for D'Arcy, this rejection only relates to human love since divine love is pure *agape* (beneficence) without *eros*. Thus, D'Arcy's view remains within the traditional conception of divine love.

Despite strong support for the transcendent-voluntarist notion of divine love as pure beneficence (thematic *agape*), other recent theologians strongly react to this limitation of divine love, considering it to be inadequate as a description.[470] In fact, Moltmann goes as far as to identify God with *eros,* "the creative Spirit of God is himself *Eros*, for out of his creations and in his creations his beauty shines forth and again awakens *eros* in its turn."[471] Oord contends that all three love archetypes—*agape, eros*, and *philia*—apply to aspects of divine love.[472] For him, elements of *eros*, in the sense of a desirous or value-recognizing love, are apparent in the fact that the trinitarian persons love one another as valuable.[473] Brümmer also vehemently objects to love that is merely beneficence, noting that love "entails beneficence, but unlike beneficence it also seeks a relationship."[474] Moreover, in purely beneficent love, a giving that excludes divine

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[469] D'Arcy, *Mind,* 304. He makes an interesting distinction between essence and existence relating to love. For him, the love related to essence is of the mind and refers to a self-love. The love related to existence is passion and other love. Ibid., 318.

[470] C. Osborne contends that the distinction is inadequate not just for God but according to a review of the usage of the word in Greek philosophy. She contends that "both *eros* and *agape* can be used to designate love characterized by *either* generous *or* self-interested concerns." *Eros*, 70. For her, *eros* is characteristic of love in the sense of the myth of Cupid which conveys "the inexplicability of loving someone." Ibid., 72. She thus rejects the dichotomy between acquisitive and generous love.

[471] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (London: SCMP, 1992), 261.

[472] Oord, "Matching," 336–37. This he does both philosophically and with selected biblical examples, although whether he systematically considers all biblical data to support the ontology underlying his thesis is questionable.

[473] He states, "If *eros* elements are constitutive of divine love in Trinity, this places into jeopardy Nygren's claim that God's love is exclusively *agape.*" Ibid., 138. Moreover, Oord also emphasizes *philia*, or friendship love which is contingent upon human response. For further information regarding the three archetypes see ibid., 338–40. Cf. C. A. Boyd, "Perichoretic," 15–30.

[474] Brümmer, *Model,* 155.

receiving, God may only be "said to *care for* us but not *about* us."[475] Oden also objects to the

dichotomy between *agape* and *eros*. For him, God's love does include grace (unmerited favor),

but it is not thus unqualified benevolence.[476] Oden concurrently employs the thematic categories

of *agape* and *eros* in recognition of their co-existence and, even, complementarity in divine

love.[477] Accordingly, he unequivocally rejects the separation of *agape* and *eros* that was

exemplified in the work of Nygren.[478] In keeping with this rejection, Oord proposes that the only

adequate conception of divine love requires give *and* take.[479] However, before conceptions of

divine love as a receiving love are considered, it is important to look at this dichotomy as it

relates to election love and universal love.

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[475] Ibid., 132. He goes on, "Pure giving without receiving is not love but mere beneficence." Ibid., 240.

[476] "All things are loved by God, but all things are not loved in the same way by God, since there are degrees of capacity, receptivity, and willingness among varied creatures to receive God's love." T. C. Oden, *Living,* 118. "For Arminians, God's love is simply incompatible with unconditional election or irresistible grace within a nonuniversalist scheme." Roger E. Olson, "Election/Predestination," in *The Westminster Handbook to Christian Theology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster Knox, 2004), 169. Yet, for T. C. Oden, God's love is constant and not dependent upon the reception of its objects. In Hosea one beholds the "eternal One who is in love with a beloved partner who tragically does not return that love. Yet God's way of loving does not cease, as if contingent on its being received. . . . [This expresses] the intimacy, constancy, and faithfulness of God's covenant love." *Living,* 82.

[477] He explains that "love is a confluence of two seemingly paradoxical impulses: the hunger for the desired object [*eros*] and the desire to do good for the beloved [*agape*]. One impulse takes and the other gives." T. C. Oden, *Living*, 119.

[478] "Although *agapē* and *eros* seem to be opposites, they may come together and flow in balanced simultaneity and support each other's impulses." Ibid. "Both involve a yearning: love as *eros* yearns for the self's fulfillment through another; love as *agapē* yearns for the other's fulfillment even at a cost to oneself." Ibid., 119. Therefore, "to separate *eros* and *agapē* or to oppose them or set them absolutely off against each other as alternatives (cf. Nygren, *Agapē and Eros*) is to view love incompletely and to fail to understand how one dimension may strengthen the other." Ibid. Similarly, see Post, *Theory*, 33.

[479] Oord states, "If a more adequate, biblical conception of divine love is to be offered, one must conceive of this love as involving give and take. God must be mutable and passible if the central biblical notion 'God is love' is to make sense. The God whose love is only *agape* (in the sense of *giving*) is a God whose love is incomprehensible." "Matching," 277. Oord himself defines *agape* as "an intentional response to promote well-being when responding to that which has generated ill-being." Thomas Jay Oord, "The Love Racket: Defining Love and Agape for the Love-and-Science Research Program," *Zygon* 40 (2005): 934.

Election Love vs. Universal Love

The transcendent-voluntarist model promotes election love, that is, love limited by God's decision as to whom he will love (unto salvation). The immanent-experientialist model on the other hand supposes that divine love is universal and applicable to all, since God is essentially love and, as such, essentially related to all in a sympathetic, indeterministic relationship. This division over particular or universal love remains controversial.[480] Some theologians continue to support the notion that God's salvific love is reserved for those whom he chooses, in harmony with the transcendent-voluntarist model but in opposition to the immanent-experientialist model.[481] Others contend that God's love is universal. God extends love to *all* and this contradicts both the transcendent-voluntarist model and the immanent-experientialist model.[482] Many who accept this second option presume that God has the freedom to love or not to love creatures, but chooses to love all and in such a way that humans have the freedom to respond or not respond to God's love. Here "love is by definition free."[483] In opposition to process theology, God has

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[480] The position of universal divine love does not necessarily entail universalism in the sense that God saves all. It would lead to universalism if the divine will were conceived as the only will determinative for salvation *and* God truly desires the salvation of all. However, the position of universalism is itself an implicit critique of the limited election love of the transcendent-voluntarist model, incompatible with the strong emphasis on divine judgment and election of some but not others to the benefit of divine love. One example is the neo-orthodox position that God's love will overcome his wrath. For a critical discussion see C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation*, 5:138, 358.

[481] This position may also contend that God loves all with "common" love but not with a love unto salvation. So Packer, "Love." Cf. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 151.

[482] For Dunning, divine love as a "manifestation" of the divine nature "is universal rather than selective." God loves "all without discrimination. None is excluded." *Grace,* 196–97. Cf. T. C. Oden, *Living*, and Fritz Guy, "The Universality of God's Love," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995), 31–49. Brümmer believes this notion that God unilaterally chooses whom he loves and "causes us to love him . . . seems to turn God into a kind of Heavenly Conquistador." *Model,* 159–60. He goes on, "If we are to account for the personal nature of the relation between God and human persons, we shall require a less deterministic view on the relation between grace and freedom than that entailed by this concept of love." Ibid., 54. Cf. Singer, *Nature,* 293. Oord comments, "How can we say that God is loving if God arbitrarily chooses not to elect some to receive salvation? Evangelicals in the Arminian, Wesleyan, Holiness, and other traditions have a history of pointing out that this doctrine sacrifices divine love." "Matching," 54.

[483] Brümmer, *Model,* 175. This is most commonly considered the Wesleyan/Arminian approach to divine love and T. C. Oden is an excellent exemplar of this viewpoint. See also Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A*

ontological independence from the world.[484] Others support the immanent-experientialist model

that God loves all without distinction according to the essential (love) relation of God's nature.[485]

These categories thus clearly relate to the issue of God's will and power. The

transcendent-voluntarist model's position that God's will is primary, and always carried out

according to his omnipotence, remains well supported.[486] However, for many theologians, this

position would mean that there is no free will for agents other than God.[487] This is especially

problematic for those who hold that love requires freedom.[488] The immanent-experientialist

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Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill, 1972). The Arminian perspective highlights some drastic differences within contemporary Evangelicalism. "In spite of profound agreement about the basic meanings of election and predestination as expressions of God's sovereignty in salvation, evangelical theologians fall into sharp disagreement with each other over their precise interpretations." R. E. Olson, "Election," 168. R. E. Olson notes three categories: the classical Calvinist, the classical Arminian, and the paradoxical approach. Ibid. Whereas the transcendent-voluntarist model would be most similar to the classical Calvinist view, T. C. Oden represents a classical Arminian view that has significant impact on the conception of divine love. Such an Arminian view reacts against the notion of "restricted love." See Jerry L. Walls and Joseph Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 50–55. Pinnock comments, "The future is not settled." Moreover, God "takes risks and jeopardizes his own sovereignty." "Systematic," 125. Cf. Pinnock, *Grace of God*. In this sense, "the fact that God allows us as persons to retain the ability to turn away from him, excludes any form of universalism which holds that God's love *must* triumph in the end and cause all to love him." Brümmer, *Model,* 179. Cf. Pannenberg, *Systematic,* 1:438.

[484] God is free from any necessity to create a world. Rice states, "The world owes its existence to God's free choice, not to metaphysical necessity." "Process," 185. Cf. ibid., 184.

[485] Oord, for example, utterly rejects divine determinism in favor of what he calls essential free-will theism. This differs from the second view above, which he calls "provisional" free-will theism, in that God *essentially* loves and *essentially* allows free will, meaning that God lacks the power to unilaterally coerce. Oord, "Matching," 308, 320. More recently Oord has referred to his view as "Essential Kenosis Theology." *Nature*, 129.

[486] For instance, Erickson contends that God's omnipotence controls all of history according to his universal providence: "God is in control of all that occurs." *Theology*, 437. Furthermore, his "will is never frustrated. . . . What he chooses to do, he accomplishes, for he has the ability to do it." Ibid., 303. Divine actions are according to the "good pleasure of his will" and as such his "decisions and actions are not determined by considerations of any factors outside himself, but are simply a matter of his own free choice." Ibid., 304.

[487] This is despite the claims of compatibilism that God does not force human actions but renders those human actions certain. Cf. Erickson, *Theology*. Brümmer contends that "such views take love to be a highly impersonal concept and the relationship of love to be a very impersonal manipulative one." *Model*, 160.

[488] Pinnock states, "To the invitation of love, one may respond gladly or refuse. Forced love is a contradiction in terms, and God does not force his love on us." Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996), 74. Brümmer adds that "love is

model contends, on the other hand, that God does not exercise all the power in the world. Although he is the most powerful being, he lacks the power to coerce.[489] Open theism, however, breaks from both models by simultaneously affirming God's sovereign will *and* indeterminism, such that God has all power, yet chooses to grant power to agents other than himself and, in this way, others can love God freely.[490] Similarly, for Oden, God's omnipotence is conceived as not lacking in power to determine the world, yet, purposely leaving room for other agents.[491] Dunning agrees, holding that "God does not determine one's choices, but He influences them" and this allows for a free love relationship.[492] Thus, God chooses not to exercise the full extent of his power, manifesting "a form of love that lets the creatures have their own existence."[493] Thus,

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necessarily free." *Model*, 177. "Furthermore, can our relationship to God still count as a *personal* relationship if on the one hand God's *agape* for us is the inevitable result of his nature, and on the other hand our loving response is the inevitable effect of his *agape?"* Ibid., 134.

[489] Oord concurs, saying, "God does not essentially possess all power." "Matching," 314. "God is sovereign because divinity exercises the greatest degree of power and the scope of this power is universal, but nondivine individuals also necessarily possess power." Ibid. This is very important for Oord since the lack of ability to unilaterally coerce the world frees God from culpability for evil, something that he contends even provisional free-will theism does not. Oord contends: "If God does not care enough to prevent genuinely evil occurrences while having the power to do so, God is not love." Ibid., 345. Cf. ibid., 320.

[490] In contrast to process theology, "God's loving sovereignty means that God has specific plans for the universe and possesses the means to achieve them. God retains sufficient power to guarantee their fulfillment." Rice, "Process," 195. Pinnock comments, "God, although he could control everything, chooses not to do so but restrains himself for the sake of the freedom that love requires. It is essentially a theology of self-restraint." "Constrained," 149. Open theism thus criticizes process theology's view of divine power for presenting a God who is too passive. See D. Basinger, *Divine*, and Clark H. Pinnock, "Between Classical and Process Theism," in *Process Theology* (ed. R. H. Nash; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987), 313–27.

[491] T. C. Oden, *Living,* 75. Moltmann holds God's sovereignty and indeterminism as well, taking notice of a dipolar conception in Judaism and Scripture (distinct from Hartshorne's) where God is "free in himself and at the same time interested in his covenant relationship and affected by human history." Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (trans. R. A. Wilson and J. Bowden; New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 272.

[492] Dunning, *Grace,* 258. God may influence wills not by "coercion" but by "persuasion." Ibid.

[493] Pannenberg, *Systematic,* 1:438. If it is "the patience of the powerful who can intervene in what happens but refrains from doing so, and if this patience is shown by his own creatures, then it is a form of the love that lets the creatures have their own existence." Ibid. Cf. Geddes MacGregor, *He Who Lets Us Be: A Theology of Love* (New York: Seabury, 1975).

indeterministic love, opposed to the transcendent-voluntarist model, agrees with the immanent-experientialist model that divine love "involves profound sensitivity."[494] But, in contrast to the immanent-experientialist model, this sensitive love does not mean divine love is involuntary.[495] On the contrary, God has chosen to love the world and to be affected by it, retaining his sovereignty while allowing for mutual relationship.[496] This allows for a sensitive, feeling love where God is not only giver but also a receiver, able to be affected by and receive the love of his creatures. This position requires that God not be impassible as is supposed in traditional theism.

Divine Lover as Receiver

The attribute of divine impassibility has come under increasingly harsh criticism, with major implications for the nature of divine love.[497] The closely related ideas of perfection, immutability, and total self-sufficiency are also under increasing scrutiny.[498] Even the somewhat softened version of impassibility promoted by Henry is deemed inadequate because it

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[494] Rice, "Process," 185.

[495] For instance, "open theism affirms the process insight that love involves profound sensitivity, but it insists that love is a voluntary commitment." Ibid. Thus, God limits himself but this "'kenotic' act of self-restraint, which is voluntary on God's part, does not reflect any limitation in God or any ontological diminishment." Pinnock, "Constrained," 150.

[496] This love is "something contingent upon God's willing to enter into such a relationship in the first place, to place himself under certain relational constraints, to be limited in his freedom by the existence of a genuinely free other." Trevor Hart, "How Do We Define the Nature of God's Love?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 109.

[497] "It is no longer sufficient to speak of God as the 'superior, absolute, impassible, unchanging being.'" Leo J. O'Donovan, "The Mystery of God as a History of Love: Eberhard Jüngel's Doctrine of God," *TS* 42 (1981): 255. Cf. Eberhard Jüngel, *God As the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), and idem, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being Is in Becoming* (trans. H. Harris; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976). Goetz adds, "The rejection of the ancient doctrine of divine impassibility has become theological commonplace." "Suffering," 385. See the discussion of impassibility earlier in this chapter.

[498] Brümmer points out that "the view of divine perfection which was put forward by Plato and was self-evident for a vast number of theologians in the Christian tradition, including Augustine and Nygren . . . turns God into a quietist who avoids vulnerability and suffering by renouncing all desires. Such a God could be infinitely beneficent toward us, but as we have argued at length, he cannot be the God of love." *Model*, 227.

nevertheless rules out God's ability to be impacted or affected by the world, in accordance with the axiom of divine self-sufficiency (aseity).[499] However, it should be noticed that the process ontology proposed by Hartshorne and others has also been heavily criticized.[500] Nevertheless, increasing dissatisfaction on the impassibility front is readily apparent. For instance, Evangelical theologian Bloesch notices the insufficiency of utter divine impassibility.[501] Moltmann reacts much more strongly to notions of God's impassibility, stating that a God incapable of suffering "is poorer than any human . . . he is also a loveless being."[502] For him, there is a level of intimacy with the world to the point that God's "freedom is his vulnerable love, his openness, the encountering kindness through which he suffers with the human beings he loves."[503] Numerous others consider God's passibility to be integral to his love.[504] However, in contrast to the

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[499] Karl Barth's view on this point mirrors Henry. He states that the God of the Bible "can feel and be affected. . . . He cannot be moved from outside by an extraneous power. But this does not mean that He is not capable of moving Himself.' No, God is 'moved and stirred' by his own 'free power' to relieve our distress." *Church Dogmatics,* 2/1:370. Hart comments on Barth's doctrine, "He loves us, that is to say, not out of any lack or need in his own being, but because he wills our existence as an other over against himself and sharing in fellowship with himself." "How?" 109.

[500] See, for instance, Nash, *Process*.

[501] He states, "The classical idea of perfection as all-sufficiency and completeness had indubitably penetrated Christian thinking and prevented the church through the ages from giving due justice to the biblical idea of God sharing the pain and suffering of his people." Bloesch, "Process," 51. Although no friend to process theology he even concedes that "the modern process conception of God who shares our suffering is probably closer to the Biblical view than the Hellenistic conception of a God who is wholly self-contained, who is removed from temporality and exempt from vulnerability." Ibid., 53.

[502] Moltmann, *Crucified*, 222. "God's being is in suffering and the suffering is in God's being itself, because God is love." Ibid., 227. Thus love is antithetical to impassibility but requires being vulnerable to suffering and suffering in the sufferings of His objects of love. Moltmann, *Trinity*, 51–52. But God does not suffer in the sense of internal relatedness but in voluntary identification. God "opens himself to the suffering which is involved in love, and yet remains superior to it by virtue of his love." Moltmann, *Crucified*, 230. Divine suffering extends even to the Father: "The Son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of the Son." Ibid., 243. This suffering is not "out of deficiency of being" but is "from the love which is the superabundance and overflowing of his being." Moltmann, *Trinity*, 23.

[503] Moltmann, *Trinity*, 56. For Guy, "divine love" is "vulnerable to disappointment." "Universality," 41. Brümmer concurs, saying, "Love is necessarily vulnerable, since each partner in a relationship of love is necessarily dependent on the freedom and responsibility of the other partner for establishing and for maintaining the relationship." *Model*, 160.

[504] In fact, C. Osborne states, "God's love for us could very well be described as involving powerlessness and passion, even unseemliness." *Eros*, 21. Dunning also allows for divine

immanent-experientialist model, Brümmer contends that God feels but he feels his own feelings not the feelings of others.[505]

If God is passible (capable of being affected), then it also follows that he could desire love and enjoy its reception, as the immanent-experientialist model holds. Traditionally, these aspects of divine love have been ruled out according to God's self-sufficiency, suggesting that if God were to desire or enjoy anything, he must not be totally self-sufficient. However, theologians continue to allow more room for God's ability regarding the appraisal and appreciation of value,[506] the desire for requited love,[507] and the divine enjoyment of creatures[508] in a mutual

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suffering/passivity. *Grace*, 195. Cf. Rice, "Process"; Pinnock, "Systematic"; and Jüngel, *Mystery*.

[505] Brümmer, *Model,* 149.

[506] God is capable of receiving value, or "an increase of his riches and his bliss." Moltmann, *Trinity*, 121. Cf. ibid., 168. Thus, God can and does desire to receive value from creatures but this is not out of his "deficiency" but out of his "superabundance" and thus does not detract from divine perfection. Ibid., 45. Singer allows for appraisal but not to the exclusion of bestowal, saying, "Love would not be love unless appraising were accompanied by the bestowing of value." *Nature*, 10. Brümmer also sees the value that God appreciates as bestowed value. "My value as a person is not something intrinsic to me which somehow merits the love of God. On the contrary, it is bestowed on me freely in the love of God." *Model*, 243. Badcock voices the importance of God's care for the world. He writes, "If in fact God does care about the world for what it is in itself, if his love for me, in short, can be affronted by my disobedience or confirmed and even deepened by my obedience and faithfulness, then it becomes necessary to say that God's love, like ours in the Platonic conception, is based on a kind of need." "Concept," 41. However, Badcock makes it clear that the language of "need" for God "is strictly speaking, inappropriate for God." Ibid., 45. Cf. Vacek, *Love,* 163–71.

[507] Singer states, "There is no love without desire, and no love is good except as it conduces to someone's satisfaction." *Nature*, 148. "When God loves, he desires nothing but to be loved, since he loves us for no other reason than to be loved, for he knows that those who love him are blessed in their very love." Brümmer,*Model,* 236. God may also desire the future value of his creatures. C. Osborne states, "God's love for the world may be a devotion not so much to the goodness and beauty that the world already possesses as to the realization of his vision of what it might be." *Eros*, 23. Cf. Robert Farrar Capon, *Hunting the Divine Fox: An Introduction to the Language of Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Seabury, 1985), 38.

[508] T. C. Oden states, "God loves all creatures in the twofold sense that God unapologetically enjoys them for their own sake and desires their answering, enjoying love in response to eternally patient, self-sacrificial love." *Living*, 121. C. Osborne comments, "There obviously are certain things that God obtains from no other source; he cannot obtain the worship of human beings unless they perform it; similarly if he delights in burnt offerings, or contrite hearts, or fine music and art, or upright dealings and acts of mercy and charity, for all these he must turn to the free acts of humankind to satisfy his desire." *Eros*, 65. Moreover, "to suggest that God did not delight in such things, or did not take any interest in such matters at all, would already imply that God was aloof and careless of humanity." Ibid.

(though unequal), loving, relationship. While excluded in the transcendent-voluntarist model, these aspects are increasingly promoted among theologians of diverse backgrounds.[509] Importantly, however, these aspects of divine love do not necessarily require the immanent-experientialist view of divine ontological dependence but, rather, God may freely will to allow others to affect him, without divine need or vital dependency.[510]

**Summary of the Dissatisfaction
in Recent Theology**

From this survey of the dissatisfaction with both the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models, a number of important issues regarding divine love may be isolated in the form of questions that remain unsettled.[511] Foremost among these questions is whether God and humans can enter into a reciprocal, or mutual (though unequal), relationship of love. The answer to this primary question is heavily influenced by the answers to a number of closely related ones. For instance, is God the sole giver but never the receiver? In other words, is divine love only pure beneficence (thematic *agape*) or may it include desire or enjoyment (thematic *eros*)? Does God only bestow and/or create value or might he also appraise, appreciate, and receive value? Does God choose to fully love only some, or does he choose to love all, or is he essentially related to all such that he necessarily loves all? The responses to these questions are themselves bound up with answers to ontological issues relating to the extent of divine power

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[509] For instance, Erickson rejects the idea of God's enjoying the world. For him, God merely enjoys himself; "God loves us on the basis of that likeness of himself which he has placed within us. He therefore in effect loves himself in us. This likeness to him, however, is not our own doing, but is present in us because of his unselfish, giving, nature." *Christian*, 320.

[510] Thus, God desires and receives actual enjoyment and value from creatures but this is not due to any "need or lack of something in himself." T. C. Oden, *Living,* 121. Many posit intratrinitarian divine love as the evidence that God does not need love outside of himself, but chooses to desire it. However, others do see these aspects as needs of God. "Only by needing us can God bestow value on us and upon our love for him. If God does not need us, we become infinitely superfluous." Brümmer, *Model,* 242. Cf. McFague, *Models,* 134.

[511] Notably, these unsettled issues remain similar to the prominent issues throughout the historical survey of divine love, further confirming the potential importance of a modified approach to these issues.

(coercion/persuasion/other), the meaning of the sovereignty of divine will and determinism or indeterminism; the acceptance, rejection, or qualification of immutability and impassibility; and the nature of divine perfection and/or self-sufficiency (dependence/independence/other). The positions regarding these ontological issues further limit the available options regarding whether God is affected by the world (and if so, whether according to his eternal decree, his ontological sympathetic dependency, or free relationship with others) whether he cares *about* it or only cares *for* it, all of which determine whether or to what extent God can enter into a mutually beneficial (though unequal) relationship.

From the numerous breaks from the two main models, substantial questions remain unresolved, giving evidence of the dissatisfaction with both the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models. Moreover, theologians have explicitly called for a more adequate model of divine love.[512] It seems apparent, then, that the extent of the conflict of interpretations between the primary models of this study, as well as the ongoing unresolved questions revolving around divine love, warrants an investigation into the biblical data to ascertain whether progress in overcoming the perceived shortcomings of the models is attainable by utilizing a method for a canonical and systematic theology.

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[512] "In order for formal Evangelical theology to express the love themes central to the Bible and to Evangelical piety more adequately, an alternative formal theology appears to be required." Oord, "Matching," 75–76. Pinnock comments, "Unless we construct a model of the divine somewhere between classical and process theism, I fear that we will lose some of our keenest minds to process liberalism." "Between," 317.

CHAPTER 4

A CANONICAL SURVEY OF DIVINE

LOVE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Divine love is a complex and multifaceted concept throughout the OT. This chapter will present a canonical survey of the prominent themes that illuminate the many facets of divine love in the God-world relationship. Of course, due to the overwhelming amount of data, this survey is necessarily selective in its presentation. The investigative process consisted of a comprehensive reading of the entire OT that analyzed any texts and/or passages that might contribute to potential answers to the systematic questions raised in previous chapters, which revolve around the issue of whether divine love is unilateral or whether God and humans may share a reciprocal (though unequal) relationship of love.

Relative to this broad issue, five questions have been identified as standing at the center of the conflict of interpretations, seen in chapter 3. First, is God the sole giver but never the receiver? In other words, is divine love only arbitrarily willed, pure beneficence (thematic *agape*), or may it include desire or enjoyment (thematic *eros*)? Second, does God only bestow and/or create value or might he also appraise, appreciate, and receive value? Third, does God's love include affection and/or emotionality such that God is concerned for the world, sympathetically or otherwise? Fourth, does God choose to fully love only some, or does he choose to love all, or is he essentially related to all such that he necessarily loves all? Fifth, bound up with this is the question of whether divine love is unconditional or conditional, ungrounded or grounded, and so on.

With such questions in mind, the investigation of the data was conducted by way of a

final-form canonical approach that concentrates on interpretation of the text(s) in canonical

context.[1] Accordingly, the focus is upon the theological interpretation of Scripture, in accordance

with the canonical approach to systematic theology explained in chapter 1. The inductive reading

of the OT sought to identify all data that might provide answers to the systematic questions raised

by the theological conflict of interpretations over the meaning of divine love.[2] The data extracted

from this reading were then analyzed and organized according to the three sections of the OT

canon in an ongoing spiral that included both narrowing and expansion of the data when themes

became more or less significant than originally thought.[3] Within this process, a number of

prominent terms that hold significant implications for potential answers to the systematic

questions became apparent. These were investigated from the standpoint of a synchronic-

canonical approach. Here the inherent limitations of semantic studies with regard to systematic

investigation are recognized, especially the fact that meanings of words vary depending upon

their context and usage. Accordingly, it is not the intention of these semantic surveys to reduce

the terms to simple definitions, nor to assume that a nuance of meaning in one location can be

extrapolated to all other occurrences of a given term.[4] Rather, such surveys seek to identify and

summarize the basic meaning denoted by word groups as well as the polysemy and the

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[1] This entails that many of the issues of historical criticism are not germane to this study, and thus do not receive significant treatment. This is especially true of source and tradition criticism. The final-form approach, rather, engages the text as a unified corpus.

[2] See the summary of these issues in the five questions above.

[3] While it is likely that, despite great care, some information has been overlooked, it is hoped that the data presented here will provide significant insight for ongoing inquiry and discussion with regard to an intentionally canonical model of divine love.

[4] James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). Consider also the methodology followed by Gordon R. Clark, *The Word* Hesed *in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 24–34.

multivalency of their semantic range and usage within the canon in order to provide the crucial background for engaging the wider canonical themes regarding divine love.

While the OT data were investigated inductively, this chapter will survey the data deductively by grouping the pertinent content under five rubrics that respond to the systematic questions noted above: the volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally relational aspects of divine love. These rubrics correspond to five aspects of love that provide the outline of a canonical and systematic model of divine love, which is presented in chapter 6. The five aspects may be summarized thus:

1. Divine love is volitional but not only volitional.

2. Divine love is not indifferent or disinterested, but evaluative.

3. God's love is profoundly emotional though not to the exclusion of volitional and evaluative aspects.

4. Divine love is foreconditional, not altogether unconditional. I have coined the term "foreconditional" to refer to the conception that divine love is freely bestowed prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions.[5]

5. Divine love is multilaterally relational. God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into and/or maintains particular, intimate relationships only with those who respond appropriately.

It must be understood that these rubrics are themselves derived from the canonical data and not presupposed. In this chapter, the OT data that support each thesis are grouped under the corresponding category.[6] Under each of the five categories the data are further organized

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[5] See chapter 6 for a more detailed explanation of the foreconditionality of divine love.

[6] Of course, this requires that the grouping of the data is somewhat artificial and some texts are treated more than once. The reason for adopting this organizational structure is to afford an efficient presentation for the reader that highlights the importance of the data as it points toward a wider canonical model of divine love.

according to the three sections of the Hebrew canon: Torah, Prophets, and Writings.[7] Further, the

brief semantic surveys of prominent terminology relative to the meaning of divine love are

interspersed under their corresponding rubrics. Of course, not all terms of any significance can be

treated in this chapter. Thus, terms have been selected for more attention according to their

explanatory value in accord with the canonical analysis. Accordingly, the most prominent terms

are explained at the greatest length. Likewise, the large amount of data precludes an exhaustive

presentation of its analysis. As such, this thematic presentation is but a survey of the research

conducted.

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The Meaning of the אהב Word Group

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Before turning to the first of the five rubrics of divine love, this chapter will first present

a brief word study of אהב, the most prominent word related to divine love, which overlaps all of

the rubrics. It appears frequently with both divine and human agency.[8] The word group includes a

great deal of polysemy, similar in this respect to the English term.[9] It may be used to refer to

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[7] Such diacanonical presentation respects the canonical groupings of the text without entering into
the ongoing debates regarding the authorship and dating of specific passages and texts that continue to
elude consensus.

[8] The verb אהב appears 215 times in 200 verses and in the noun form אהבה 37 times in 34 verses.
The verb is usually pointed as a stative in the MT, with the exception of Gen 37:3–4; Deut 4:37; 1 Kgs
11:1. However, it often has a transitive usage; cf. Ernst Jenni, "אהב," *TLOT* 1:46. Because of significant
overlap between the nominal and verbal forms of אהב, they will be discussed together. Throughout this and
other word studies in the following two chapters, references will frequently be made to the number of times
a term appears in the OT or NT. In many cases such word counts are only approximations that rely upon
the counts generated by use of Logos and/or Bibleworks software. Further precision regarding such word
counts is unnecessary since no great import hinges upon the precise numbers. Rather, the counts are
provided to give the reader an idea of the relative frequency of terms.

[9] The focus in the main text, in keeping with the scope of the dissertation, is upon divine אהב but it
may be helpful for the reader to recognize that interpersonal love is manifested in various types of human
relationships including: familial, romantic, friendship, international, king/subject, servant/master, and
neighbor/stranger. אהב often appears in reference to the feeling of affection within kinship relationships,
especially that of parent-child (cf. Gen 22:2) and husband-wife (see, among many others, Gen 29:18, 20,
30). Of friendship love, at times with fervent emotional attachment, see (among others) 1 Sam 18:1, 3;
20:17; 2 Sam 1:26. אהב likewise depicts romantic affection, passion, and desire (see Cant 1:3–4, 7; 2:4, 5, 7;
3:1–5, 10; 7:6; 8:4). At times it may be associated with sexual intercourse, but most often it is used with
reference to the sentiment underlying sexual activity (cf. Gen 24:67; 29:30; Prov 5:19; 7:18; Eccl 9:9).
Some have suggested that the original use of אהב stems from the arena of sexual relations, including desire

everything from the most virtuous love of affection and generosity, to a "love" that is more akin to lust and fades quickly after its rapacious selfishness is satisfied (see the examples below).[10] It often denotes affection or fondness for its object, at times of a passionate nature, often with the connotation of devotion with corresponding action(s). Such "affection" may entail romance, lust, desire, devotion, friendship, preference, acceptance, delight, the absence of hatred, et al.[11] With divine agency the word group always manifests the positive and noble aspects of the word group and may be directed at impersonal objects such as righteousness but is most often directed at human beings, usually corporate but also, at times, toward individuals (2 Sam 12:24; Isa 41:8; Neh 13:26; 2 Chr 20:7; cf. Deut 10:18; Isa 48:14; Ps 146:8; Prov 3:12; 15:9).

Divine אהב for persons, as well as God's love for justice and righteousness, is a ground of, but not identical to, divine beneficent action (Pss 11:7; 33:5; 37:28) and election (Deut 4:37; 7:7–8). God's "everlasting love" is itself the basis of God drawing his people with lovingkindness (Jer 31:3). Accordingly, God rescued Israel from Egyptian slavery "because of" [מִן] the Lord's "love" for them (Deut 7:8). Isaiah points back to divine love as the central motivation of the deliverance of Israel, "In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them" (Isa 63:9). Likewise, the divine call out of Egypt is predicated on God's love for

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and pleasure based on such usage in Ugaritic; cf. Gerhard Wallis, "אהב," *TDOT* 1:107; E. M. Good, "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:165; Gottfried Quell, "Love in the OT," *TDNT* 1:22. Yet, sexual activity itself is commonly denoted by ידע or שׁכב while אהב most often refers less to the sexual activity itself and more to the romantic love relationship as a whole; cf. Wallis, *TDOT* 1:107; P. J. J. S. Els, "אהב," *NIDOTTE* 1:291. It is never used with sexual connotations when God is its subject.

[10] The particular meaning of אהב is dependent upon its usage in context. While some semantic studies may be greatly benefitted by careful attention to etymology, the etymology of אהב resists consensus and thus may assist only in tenuous conclusions. Two prominent associations have been proposed. The first is the Arabic *habba*, to "breathe heavily, be excited." See David W. Thomas, "The Root אהב 'Love' in Hebrew," *ZAW* 57 (1939), 57–64. Second, the Arabic *'ihāb*, "skin, leather" has been proposed such that "an affectionate feeling in the physical realm was applied to the emotional stimulation which produced it. If this supposition is correct, then the emotional experience is the germ cell for the development of the concept of 'ahabh.'" Godfrey R. Driver, "Supposed Arabisms in the Old Testament," *JBL* 55 (1936): 111; cf. Hos 11:4.

[11] See Jenni, *TLOT* 1:45-54; Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:277-99; Arnulf Bergman, A. O. Haldar, and Gerhard Wallis, "אהב," *TDOT* 1:99–118; Robert L. Alden, "אהב," *TWOT* 14–15.

Israel in their "youth" (Hos 11:1). God refused to listen to Balaam's attempt to curse Israel and "turned curse into a blessing . . . because" of his love for them (Deut 23:5 [6]).[12] God's love for Israel is also spoken of as a ground of making Solomon king (1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chr 2:11; cf. 2 Chr 9:8). Elsewhere such love is the motivation for a substitution, "Since you [Israel] are precious [יקר] in My sight, Since you are honored [כבד] and I love you, I will give other men in your place" (Isa 43:4). Likewise, YHWH "loves him [Israel]" and "he will carry out his good pleasure on Babylon" (Isa 48:14). Thus, both divine blessing upon his beloved and judgment on her enemies are grounded in, yet not identical to, divine אהב.

אהב is closely associated with many word groups that are also significant to the meaning of divine love. This word group collocates significantly with language regarding: the seat of emotions (נפשׁ and לבב/לב), pleasure and/or delight (רצון/רצה, חפץ, and many others), compassion (חמל), passion/zeal (קנאה), lovingkindness (חסד), favor/grace (חנן),[13] and contrasts frequently with hatred (שׂנא). Many of these significant collocations appear interspersed throughout the discussion of the important issues below.

There are a number of important, often-disputed, issues related to the meaning of אהב.[14] Many of these touch on one primary issue: whether אהב is primarily (or even exclusively) volitional or emotional. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the volitional aspect of אהב, and there is a great deal of support for such a view. Indeed, the fact that human אהב is often commanded (toward neighbors, strangers, and even toward God) assumes a volitional element

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[12] Literally, God was "not willing [וְלֹא־אָבָה] to listen [שׁמע] to Balaam" but rather "turned the curse into a blessing [בְּרָכָה]" (Deut 23:5 [6]). As Gordon R. Clark states, "If they are faithful to Yahweh, he will be faithful to them and to the covenant; he will go on loving them and expressing that love by fulfilling the promises he made to their ancestors." *The Word Hesed*, 131. Els refers to this as God "promising his love as a reward for covenant faithfulness." *NIDOTTE* 1:283.

[13] See Amos 5:15; Ps 119:132; Prov 5:19; 22:11; Esth 2:17.

[14] Such issues will only be touched on here and will be more fully treated in the canonical analysis.

though not necessarily to the exclusion of emotion. Likewise, divine אהב has an apparent

volitional aspect. The preference and volition of divine אהב is perhaps clearest in those passages

that relate to election.[15] Some scholars have incorrectly suggested that אהב refers to "election

love," often conflating אהב with בחר.[16] However, the evidence does not seem to allow for such

conflation, nor for אהב to be seen as purely election love. For one thing, if אהב entails election,

what is to be made of God's אהב that extends beyond the elect (Deut 10:18)? Moreover, a strong

case will be made in this chapter that love (אהב) is the basis of election, rather than the other way

around, and as such, could not be equivalent with election (cf. Deut 4:37; 7:7–8; 10:15; cf. Isa

41:8; Pss 47:4 [5]; 78:68; 2 Chr 20:7).[17] Nevertheless, there is a significant volitional element

associated with divine אהב and other terms of love, as will be further seen below (cf. Hos 14:4

[5]).

   At times, the correspondence between God's election and preferential love suggests

evaluation. For instance, that God "loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places

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[15] אהב collocates with בחר, "to choose, elect," in five verses, all related to the divine election of
Israel/Judah (Deut 4:37; 10:15; Isa 41:8; Pss 47:4 [5]; 78:68).

[16] For instance, Norman H. Snaith identifies אהב as "election love." God "loved Israel—that is, He
preferred her before all other peoples. She is His elected people." *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old
Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1962), 95, 134. Eugene H. Merrill views these as "technical terms . . .
virtually synonymous. . . . In other words, 'to love' is to choose, and 'to choose' is to love." *Deuteronomy*
(Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 132; cf. Charles E. B. Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological
Word Book of the Bible* (ed. Alan Richardson; New York: Macmillan, 1950), 132; Kyung Hee Park,
"Divine Love in Hosea 11" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 36; Pieter A.
Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 196; Larry R.
Walker, "'Love' in the Old Testament: Some Lexical Observations," in *Current Issues in Biblical and
Patristic Interpretation* (ed. G. F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975), 287–88. On the
other hand, Alexander To Ha Luc rejects the conflation of love and choice in contexts of election. "The
Meaning of *'hb* in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1982).
Jacqueline E. Lapsley adds that such conflation "effectively eliminates emotions as significant in covenant
love, despite the biblical evidence to the contrary." "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy,"
CBQ 65 (2003): 360. Jacob sees love, rather, as the basis of election, "desire at once violent and voluntary."
Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 108.

[17] אהב as the basis of election is widely recognized. See, for instance, Wallis, *TDOT* 1:104;
William A. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979),
59; Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 263. Even Carl F. H. Henry recognized this. *God, Revelation, and Authority*
(Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976), 2:347. This and other features that distinguish between אהב and election
will be discussed further in the canonical analysis.

of Jacob" implies comparative evaluation (Ps 87:2). Elsewhere, God states, "Since you [Israel] are precious [יקר] in My sight, Since you are honored [כבד] and I love you, I will give other men in your place" (Isa 43:4).[18] The fact that in such instances people are singled out as recipients of divine אהב points to preferential love and may also suggest evaluation.[19] Indeed, אהב is often used evaluatively. Thus, God loves justice (Isa 61:8; Pss 33:5; 37:28), righteousness (Pss 11:7; 33:5), his sanctuary (Mal 2:11), and the gates of Zion (Ps 87:2). Likewise, God loves the righteous (Ps 146:8) and the pursuer of justice (Prov 15:9).[20] This evaluative aspect of אהב is further apparent in the frequent attention given to misdirected love.[21] It is important to note at this juncture that אהב

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[18] In non-religious use of the term, אהב is sometimes associated with evaluative attraction based on beauty. Thus, Tamar was "beautiful" [יפה] and Amnon "loved" her (2 Sam 13:1). In Canticles, the woman is described as "beautiful [יפה] and delightful [נעם], My love" (Cant 7:6). This latter term "delightful" is likewise associated with the "love" between Jonathan and David (2 Sam 1:26).

[19] Indeed, preferential אהב appears frequently with human agency as well. In romantic contexts, Jacob "loved Rachel more than Leah" (Gen 29:30), Hannah is preferred by her husband Elkanah, who "loved" her and thus gave her a double portion (1 Sam 1:5), the king loved Esther "more than all the women" (Esth 2:17), and Rehoboam "loved Maacah . . . more than all of his other wives and concubines" (2 Chr 11:21). In familial contexts, Isaac "loved" Esau but Rebekah "loved" Jacob (Gen 25:28). Israel [Jacob] "loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age" (Gen 37:3–4) and Benjamin is likewise preferred (44:20), both due to Jacob's preferential love for their mother Rachel. Due to the reality of such preferential love, Deuteronomy puts restrictions in place to protect children in the instance where one wife is "loved and the other unloved [שְׂנוּאָה]" (Deut 21:15–16). In a number of such cases, preferential love is not merely arbitrary or groundless but evaluative. For instance, Abraham's love for Isaac as the unique son (Gen 22:2), Isaac's love for Esau is particularly predicated on Esau's pleasing skill coupled with Jacob's taste for game (Gen 25:28), Jacob's love for Joseph and Benjamin as Rachel's children (Gen 37:3). Both Rachel and Esther are implicitly preferred based on their beauty (Gen 29:17; Esth 2:7, 17). Within the context of the reality of preferential love, and of a type that clearly includes appraisal, Leah's notion that Jacob may finally "love" her once she bears him a child makes sense (Gen 29:32). Many other examples of evaluative love from humans appear. See, e.g., 1 Sam 18:16; 2 Sam 1:23, 26; Ruth 4:15.

[20] Conversely, the people who "love the LORD" are to hate evil (Ps 97:10; cf. Pss 45:7; 119:113). Elsewhere, the lovers of God are starkly contrasted with God's haters (Exod 20:5–6; Deut 5:9–10; 7:9–10).

[21] Indeed, some objects are worthy of love while others are worthless (cf. Ps 4:2), implying that proper love ought to be directed not toward evil or worthless things, but to good and worthwhile objects. Yet, human אהב is commonly misdirected. Some "love being simple-minded" and "delight [חמד] themselves in scoffing" while "fools hate knowledge" (Prov 1:22). The people ought not to love perjury, which God hates (Zech 8:17; cf. Ps 11:5). Evil is to be hated, good to be loved (Amos 5:15; Mic 3:2; 6:8; cf. Ps 45:7 [8]). Amos negatively states that Israel so "love[s]" to offer sacrifice (Amos 4:5). Further, numerous inappropriate objects of love appear, including: a bribe (Isa 1:23), slumber/sleep (Isa 56:10; Prov 20:13), idolatry (Hos 3:1; 10:1; Jer 8:2), shame (Hos 4:18), Israel's earnings of harlotry (Hos 9:1), "detestable" things (Hos 9:10), evil (Mic 3:2; Ps 52:3 [5]), perjury (Zech 8:17), "worthless" things (Ps 4:2), oppression

does not necessarily refer to positive, noble, or appropriate love in and of itself. On the contrary,

אהב may be used in dark contexts, denoting Shechem's intense feelings of romantic attraction

[דבק] and infatuation for Dinah that led to rape and afterward his request for marriage (Gen 34:3).

אהב is also used to describe Amnon's temporary, lustful feelings toward his half-sister Tamar,

which turned to intense hatred after he had raped her (2 Sam 13:1, 4, 15).[22] אהב does not

necessarily last forever.[23]

The evaluative nature (and often emotionality as well) of divine אהב is also manifest in its

collocation as the antonym of divine hate, whether in reference to categories such as "justice"

and/or "robbery" (Isa 61:8; cf. Zech 8:17), or the change from divine love to hate toward human

beings (Hos 9:15; cf. Ps 11:5).[24] Thus, rather than being disinterested, purely elective,

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(Hos 12:7 [8]), violence (Ps 11:5), words that devour (Ps 52:4 [6]), cursing (Ps 109:17), lying (Ps 119:163), being simple-minded (Prov 1:22), transgression and strife (Prov 17:19), hedonistic pleasure, wine, and oil (Prov 21:17), and money and abundance (Eccl 5:10). On the other hand, one should love good (Amos 5:15), kindness (Mic 6:8), truth and peace (Zech 8:19), knowledge and discipline (Prov 12:1), wisdom (Prov 29:3) and in getting wisdom "loves his own soul" (Prov 19:8), and purity of heart (Prov 22:11). אהב also often describes Israel's and/or Judah's infidelity and spiritual harlotry (Isa 57:8; Jer 2:25, 33; 5:31; 8:2; 14:10). It is thus used in reference to Judah's many "lovers" (Jer 22:20, 22; 30:14; Ezek 16:33, 36–37; 23:22; Lam 1:19). Hosea also makes reference to the abundance of spiritual adultery and Israel's "lovers" (Hos 2:5 [H 2:7]; 2:7 [2:9]; 2:10 [2:12]; 2:12–13 [2:14–15]; 3:1; 8:9; 10:11). Such misdirected love causes non-acceptance with God and remembrance of the people's sin; cf. 2 Chr 19:2.

[22] Notably, a number of scholars think this instance of אהב merely designates "lust." Bruce C. Birch, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol. 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 1303; Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* (NAC 7; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 382; A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas: Word, 1989), 175. Wallis suggests that this occurrence highlights the emotive nature of both "love" and "hate" since "indeed, love can suddenly be turned into hate." *TDOT* 1:102; cf. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AB 9; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 324.

[23] For example, love may turn to hate; cf. Wallis, *TDOT* 1:109. Thus, at one time Saul was said to have "loved [David] greatly" (1 Sam 16:21), but this love does not remain when David rises to prominence. Later, אהב is presented in a ruse, where Saul's servants are to make David believe "the king delights [חָפֵץ] in you, and all his servants love [אהב] you" (1 Sam 18:22).

[24] אהב and שׂנא collocate as antonyms many times (in 31 verses), with God and humans as agents. Wallis points out that the emotive nature of the term אהב "seems to be supported at least by the fact that this emotional feeling which flows out of one's perceptions is contrasted with hate." *TDOT* 1:102. Thus, אהב collocates with the emotions of hate (שִׂנְאָה) and zeal (קִנְאָה) (Eccl 9:6). With humans as agents, Jacob's preferential love of Joseph breeds his brothers' hatred of him (Gen 37:4). אהב and שׂנא depict a husband's preferential love between wives, the one "loved," the other "hated" or "unloved" (Deut 21:15–16). As mentioned above, Amnon's "love" is replaced by an even greater hatred after he violated Tamar (2 Sam

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unconditional love, divine אהב may often connote appraisal, even delight. Accordingly, אהב

frequently collocates with language of delight, including חפץ, which may connote delight or

desire,[25] and רצון/רצה, which may connote "be pleased with, accept favorably, delight in," etc.[26] In

a number of instances where אהב collocates with various other words for joy and/or delight, love

results in rejoicing in its object.[27] Such examples of divine pleasure and delight also point toward

the potential emotional connotations of אהב, which will be discussed further below.

Another recurring misconception, often related to the idea of election love, is that divine

אהב is altogether unconditional, predicated on the unilateral divine will (volition).[28] However, this

perspective is in tension with the apparent conditionality and contingency sometimes associated

with אהב (cf. Deut 7:12–13; Ps 146:8; Prov 15:9). Accordingly, what some interpreters deem

"unconditional" may more accurately be referred to as "unmerited" or "undeserved" (Deut 7:7;

13:15; cf. Judg 14:16; 2 Sam 19:6 [7]; 2 Chr 19:2). In a number of other instances the two terms are set in direct contrast (Ezek 16:37; Ps 109:5; Prov 1:22; 8:36; 9:8; 10:12; 12:1; 13:24; 14:20; 15:17; 27:6; Eccl 3:8; 9:1). Thus, evil is to be hated, good to be loved (Amos 5:15; Mic 3:2).

[25] Notice the parallel usage of the terms when Saul's servants are to make David believe "the king delights [חָפֵץ] in him, and all his servants love" him (1 Sam 18:22). Similarly, in Ps 109:17, one "loved cursing" but "did not delight [חפץ] in blessing." Again, to "desire [חָפֵץ]" life is to love "*length of* days" (Ps 34:12 [13]); cf. 1 Kgs 10:9; Isa 48:14; 2 Chr 9:8. For parallel usage in adjacent verses, see Deut 21:14–15; Isa 56:4, 6.

[26] These two also appear in parallel usage. Thus, the one who "speaks right is loved" and "righteous lips are the delight [רָצוֹן] of kings" (Prov 16:13). Divine אהב is also explicitly set in parallel to the favor or delight [רצה] a father has for his son (Prov 3:12).

[27] For instance, consider the collocation of אהב with חשק, which likewise appears to connote attachment, affection, and perhaps even delight (Deut 10:15; cf. Gen 34:3, 8). A psalmist declares, "I will delight [שעע] in Your commandments, Which I love" (Ps 119:47; cf. Prov 1:22). אהב further repeatedly collocates with terms of rejoicing such as שוש, שמחה/שמח, רנה, and/or גיל. For example, those who "love" God's name should be "glad" [שמח] and sing for "joy" [רנן] and exult in him (Ps 5:11 [12]). Likewise, even divine delight, joy, and rejoicing appear together, looking to the future when God "will exult [שוש] over you with joy [שמחה], He will be quiet [חרש] in His love, He will rejoice [גיל] over you with shouts of joy [רנה]" (Zeph 3:17). See also Isa 66:10; Hos 9:1; Zech 8:19; Ps 40:16 [17] = 70:5; Cant 1:4).

[28] For Snaith, "God's love for Israel is an unconditioned sovereign love," which is limited "only by the will or the nature of the lover." *The Distinctive Ideas*, 13, 95; cf. ibid., 138. A number of other scholars view divine אהב as "unconditional." Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:280; Park, "Divine Love in Hosea 11," 37–38; Verhoef, *The Books*, 196–97; Walker, "'Love,'" in *Current Issues* (ed. Hawthorne), 287; Jacob, *Theology*, 110; Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 31.

9:4–5).[29] Such divine love is prior to conditions, yet neither purely unilateral nor exclusive of

conditionality. Therefore, it may be helpful to refer to it as foreconditional. Related to the

question of conditionality and unconditionality is the significant tension between the endurance of

divine אהב in contrast to the apparent possibility of its discontinuance, even divine hatred. On the

one hand, God himself proclaims: I have "loved you with" an "everlasting love" (Jer 31:3).[30] On

the other hand, at times God himself declares the change from love for his people to hatred [שׂנא]

of them, due to their wickedness, even to the extent that he declares, "I will love them no more"

(Hos 9:15).[31]

The above issues are related to the question of whether divine אהב is unilateral or

bilateral. Some scholars have marginalized human love toward God.[32] However, the reciprocal

response of human love toward God is integral to his purposes. In human interpersonal אהב,

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[29] The inaccuracy enters when that which is unmerited is assumed to also be unconditional. Thus, Snaith comments, "Jehovah's love for Israel was unconditioned by anything in Israel that was good. It was wholly unmerited. It was not in the least degree because of anything in Israel that was good, or beautiful, or desirable. . . . Such is the story of God's unconditioned love." Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 137.

[30] Some scholars mistakenly consider the endurance of divine love to be based entirely on the divine will and thus unilaterally constant and unaffected; cf. Park, "Divine Love in Hosea 11," 37; Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 12.

[31] See the further discussion of this tension below.

[32] Much has been written on the presence or absence of human love for God. Although it is clear that human אהב toward God is present, especially in the Psalms, a number of scholars have marginalized human love toward God, sometimes suggesting that all or nearly all of the instances are merely the result of the influence of the so-called Deuteronomistic tradition; cf. Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:279, 283–84; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 133. Claude Wiener believes love toward God is a relatively late concept, appearing in the prophets and coming to full fruition in Deuteronomy. *Recherches sur L'Amour pour Dieu dans L'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Letouzey Et Ane, 1957). Cf. G. Winter, "Die Liebe zu Gott im Alten Testament," *Journal of Old Testament Scholarship* 9 (1889): 211–46. Moreover, a number of scholars, presumably for theological reasons, see human אהב as a divine miracle. Thus, both Els and Cranfield quote Barth that God "has to bring about a change in the sinful heart of man to produce true love for himself. Such human love is really a miracle, brought about in a person by God." Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (trans. G. T. Thomson; vol. 5; Edinburgh: Clark, 1936), I/2: 410, quoted in Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:283; Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. Richardson), 133. However, reduction of religious אהב to the Deuteronomist tradition begs the question on at least two points. First, not all of the instances are found in writings generally ascribed to the Deuteronomist(s). Cf. Judg 5:31; Pss 5:11 [12]; 69:36 [37]; Jer 2:2; and even sometimes Exod 20:6. See Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:283. Second, it raises the question of the speculative nature of the attribution of writings to the Deuteronomist tradition, which approaches the error of pan-Deuteronomism. See, for instance, Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie, eds., *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-*

reciprocality is often presented as the ideal. In numerous texts it seems to be assumed that אהב

ought to be reciprocated, since it is lamented when love is repaid with hatred (Ps 109:4–5), or

when Job's loved ones have turned against him (Job 19:19). David is chastised by Joab for

"loving those who hate you" and "hating those who love you" (2 Sam 19:6). Moreover, those

who hate God ought not to be loved (2 Chr 19:2). Similarly, consider the exclamation, "May they

prosper who love you [human]" (Ps 122:6). Personified Wisdom even proclaims, "I love those

who love Me" (Prov 8:17). Thus, אהב often entails relationality that includes proper regard and

the expectation of reciprocity.

The ideal of mutual love also appears in the divine-human relationship, evidenced in the

abundant expressions of divine אהב toward human beings on the one hand (e.g., Deut 4:37; 7:13;

10:15; 1 Kgs 3:3; Isa 43:4; Ps 146:8), and the abundance of divine commands for his people to

love God on the other (e.g., Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13; 13:3 [4]; 30:6; Josh 22:5; 23:11; Ps 31:23

[24]).[33] Further, אהב depicts not only commanded but also actual human love for God, illustrating

the ideal of mutual and reciprocal אהב.[34] In this regard, אהב often collocates with חסד, "steadfast

love" or "lovingkindness," especially in the frequent statements that God reciprocates חסד toward

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Deuteronomism (*JSOT* Supplement; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[33] Notably, even statistical usage hints at this ideal of reciprocality of divine-human love. Els notes
that the root is "used 27x when God loves persons, as against 24x when persons love God." Els, *NIDOTTE*
1:279. Wallis adds, "The only possible way for Israel to live is in a love, fidelity, and devotion to Yahweh
which reciprocates [God's] love." *TDOT* 1:115; cf. Daniel J. Simundson, "The Book of Micah," in *The
Twelve Prophets* (vol. 7 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 580.

[34] Thus, "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father" (1 Kgs 3:3). Likewise,
the psalmist "love[s] the LORD, because" God hears him (Ps 116:1). Abraham is the "friend," or more
literally the "lover," of God (Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7). In another context God is entreated to "let those who
love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might" (Judg 5:31). Those who "love" God's salvation are those
who "seek" God (Ps 40:16 [17]; cf. Ps 70:4[5]). Those who "love the LORD" should hate evil (Ps 97:10).
God "keeps all who love Him" (Ps 145:20). In a number of instances, love for God is indirectly stated, via
love for a hypostatization of God. For instance, covenant blessings are prescribed to those, even foreigners,
who "love the name of the LORD" (Isa 56:6; cf. Ps 5:11 [12]; Pss 69:36 [37]); 119:132). Love is also
variously directed at God's house (Ps 26:8), his salvation (Pss 40:16 [17]; 70:4 [5]), his commandments (Ps
119:47–48, 127), law (Ps 119:97, 113, 163, 165), testimonies (Ps 119:119, 167), word (Ps 119:140),
precepts (Ps 119:159), and Jerusalem (Isa 66:10; cf. Ps 122:6). Such indirect reference may be related to
the avoidance of pointing human אהב toward God due to its prevalent (perhaps original) function in human

humans who love him (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4).[35] Moreover, God has

drawn his people with חסד according to his "everlasting love" (Jer 31:3). Human חסד toward God

is in direct parallel to human אהב as God remembers "the devotion [חסד] of your youth, the love

[אהב] of your betrothals" (Jer 2:2). The חסיד is to love God (Ps 31:23 [24]) and, likewise, God

loves justice and does not forsake his חסיד (Ps 37:28). Again, God preserves his חסיד, those who

love him and hate evil (Ps 97:10). Nevertheless, the history of Israel portrays and laments God's

repeated position as her unrequited lover (e.g., Jer 2; Ezek 16; Hos 3).

On the other hand, Susan Ackerman has recently contended that the lexeme אהב is used

one-sidedly as the agent is "typically the hierarchically superior party in the relationship" and she

extends this view to human and divine-human relationships.[36] While the majority of accounts

support this perspective, examples such as Ruth to Naomi (Ruth 4:15) and the slave's love of his

master (Exod 21:5; Deut 15:16) call this into serious doubt.[37] Moreover, the love between David

and Jonathan (1 Sam 20:17; 2 Sam 1:26) and the love of women toward men in Canticles (Cant

1:3–4, 7; 3:1–4) and ultimately the love from humans toward God, both commanded and

manifested (see examples above), further cast doubt on this thesis. Although love of a societal

inferior toward a superior is less common, it is represented.[38]

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sexuality. Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:289; cf. Jenni, *TLOT* 1:45–54.

[35] Perhaps on this basis the psalmist asks for recognition of his love for God's precepts and to be revived according to God's חסד (Ps 119:159). Further, God loves righteousness and justice and his חסד fills the earth (Ps 33:5). God has told humans to love חסד (Mic 6:8).

[36] Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*'āhēb, 'ahâbâ*) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52 (2002): 447.

[37] Ackerman unconvincingly explains the former as Ruth having become the superior by marriage and childbearing and the latter as merely a utilitarian expression as per J. A. Thompson, "Israel's 'Lovers,'" *VT* 27 (1977): 475–81. See "The Personal," 447.

[38] Accordingly, Pedersen speaks of the "commandment of love" as "a direct expression of the character of the soul and the organism of family and people . . . the substance of normal life." Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (2 vols.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 1:310.

Another major issue concerns how the אהב relationship is to be viewed, specifically

whether the divine-human relationship depicts the type of emotional and affectionate אהב

manifested in kinship relationships (such as marriage and parent-child) or if it is purely

"covenantal" אהב that is descriptive of a legal, lord-vassal treaty relationship.[39] Based on Ancient

Near Eastern parallels, William L. Moran suggested that אהב, at least in Deuteronomy, belongs to

technical treaty language.[40] The rather striking ANE parallels use love terminology to depict

relationships between international parties, masters-servants, kings-subjects, etc. Extrapolated

from these parallels is the view that such "covenant" אהב is to be contrasted to the kind of

affection that often transpires in romantic or parental relationships.[41] Dennis McCarthy built on

Moran's seminal work by suggesting that the divine-human, father-child analogy was itself

technical covenant language that undergirded the usage in Deuteronomy, devoid of "any sort of

tender love" but focused on fear, loyalty, and obedience, a love that "can be commanded."[42] In

this way, McCarthy connects the father-son analogy to covenant, but in doing so he conflates the

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[39] A distinction is often made between the emotional affection in intimate personal relationships (family, friendship) as opposed to the merely political "love" of treaty contexts; cf. Ackerman, "The Personal," 440; J. A. Thompson, "Significance of the Verb Love in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel," *VT* 24 (1974): 334–38.

[40] William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77–87. The central premises of this seminal study of אהב in Deuteronomy have been adopted and expanded over the years. See, for instance, Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:285–87; Walker, "'Love,'" in *Current Issues* (ed. Hawthorne), 283–84; Ackerman, "The Personal," 440; Dennis J. McCarthy, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship Between Yahweh and Israel," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 144–45; Norbert Lohfink, "Hate and Love in Osee 9, 15," 25 (1963).

[41] For Moran, "Love in Deuteronomy is . . . in brief, a love defined by and pledged in the covenant—a covenantal love." Moran, "The Ancient," 78.

[42] McCarthy, "Notes," 145. McCarthy seems to find "tender love" in the father-child analogy only in Hosea. He notes two other possibilities: Deut 1:31 and Isa 63:16. The former he sees as dependent on Hos 11 and he suggests that the latter actually speaks of God's harsh treatment with "no note of tenderness." Ibid. However, it is interesting that in another work McCarthy acknowledges that Hittite parity treaties were "to create an affective relationship as well as a legal bond" including "passionate rhetoric" as well as "an appeal for the true dedication, not forced acceptance." *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (AnBib 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 181.

father-son analogy with his preconception regarding the "Deuteronomistic" theology of אהב, bereft of the affection of kinship relationships.[43]

However, the influential conclusions of Moran and McCarthy are questionable at some points. To be sure, the context of אהב in Deuteronomy (and likely elsewhere) is covenantal, and the numerous ANE parallels that evidence the language of "love" in ANE treaties are indeed compelling. Moreover, significant continuity between the covenant language and kinship metaphors (parental and marital) descriptive of אהב in the divine-human relationship and elsewhere seems evident.[44] However, it is not apparent that either the biblical instances of אהב or its equivalent in ANE literature in covenant contexts are necessarily limited to legality or devoid of "tender love." Nor is it evident that אהב is restricted to the purely legal aspect of covenant, even within Deuteronomy. Numerous reasons for skepticism regarding such a claim may be briefly noted, the force of which will increase as this chapter progresses:

1. Biblical texts often switch, with little or no warning, from one metaphor to another in describing the divine-human relationship. As such, there is significant overlap between the metaphors of covenant, marriage, and parent-child relationships.[45]

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[43] For McCarthy, "the very ancient Israelite concept of Israel as Yahweh's son is very close to, or even identical with, the Deuteronomistic conception articulated in terms of the treaty." "Notes," 145. As support for his view in Deuteronomy, McCarthy notes the parent analogy in Deut 8:5; 14:1. The first is what he views as stern discipline, corresponding to covenantal discipline; the second is an explicit link between covenant command and the language of sonship; cf. Deut 32:5, 19–20. He mentions as further evidence of a connection between covenant and father-child language, Isa 1:2; 30:1–2, 9 and Jer 3:19; 31:1, 9; Mal 1:6. In another direction with the father-child analogy, J. W. McKay expands on McCarthy's view, arguing for Deuteronomistic dependence upon Wisdom literature as the context, such that the "love" refers to the obedience proper to a teacher-student relationship. "Man's Love for God in Deuteronomy and the Father/Teacher—Son/Pupil Relationship," *VT* 22 (1972): 426–35.

[44] Consider the connection between language of sonship and covenant even in secular usage (2 Kgs 16:7).

[45] For example, consider the mixing of covenant, marriage, and parent-child metaphors in Hosea (14:5; 3:1; 11:1, 4) and the parallel of breaking the covenant with harlotry (Ezek 16:33, 36, 37); cf. Ackerman, "The Personal," 447.

2. There is considerable support for the view that covenant language is itself grounded in the more basic kinship language, rather than vice versa.[46]

3. Divine love is prior to, and in fact the basis of, covenant.[47]

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[46] Although vestiges of the once prevalent reduction of covenant and covenant language to its legal aspects remain in some scholarship, studies such as that by Scott Hahn have demonstrated with great force and clarity the foundational nature of kinship to covenant rather than vice versa. *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Duane Smith, while recognizing the usage of אהב in covenant language, comments, "The root 'hb is first and foremost a kinship term." "Kinship and Covenant in Hosea 11:1–4," *HBT* 16 (1994): 43. "We must not suppose, however, that biblical covenants borrowed their kinship language from the social world of treaties. Both the language of biblical covenant and treaty language developed in a social environment in which kinship was the primary model for understanding all human interaction. It was natural, therefore, that international treaties, national (league) covenants, and individual covenants used kinship to describe their content." D. Smith, "Kinship and Covenant," 49. As Cross points out, kinship language was basic to the social organization of West Semitic tribal groups. Moreover, "the language of love (ahabah) is kinship language, the bond that holds together those in intimate relationships, the relationships of family and kindred," including a basic responsibility for amity toward one another. Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 5.

Leo G. Perdue likewise questions the priority of ANE suzerainty treaties, seeing such a view as "forced." Rather, he considers the "theology of covenant" to itself be an expression of "solidarity and community" rooted in the "household." "The Household, Old Testament, and Contemporary Hermeneutics," in *Families in Ancient Israel* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 240. Ernest W. Nicholson also recognizes the kinship basis of the language of love and, further, rejects dependence upon treaties for such language. He also contends that it would have been distasteful and counterproductive to tell the Israelites that God "loves' them in the same way as a suzerain (e.g., Ashurbanipal or Nebuchadrezzar) 'loves' his vassals and that they are to 'love' Yahweh as vassals 'love' their suzerains." *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 79. Lapsley likewise believes that love language "is imported into the political realm from family life, where it originated, and that its emotional connotation in that context is transferred to the political context in the borrowing." "Feeling Our Way," 355. She further points out the mistake in assuming that "structural and formulaic parallels necessarily express identical content." Accordingly, the "aptness of the ancient Near Eastern parallels does not *ipso facto* mean that human love for God in Deuteronomy does not have an important affective dimension." Ibid., 353–54. Even Moshe Weinfeld recognizes that the "whole diplomatic vocabulary of the second millennium is rooted in the familial sphere." "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 194.

[47] This is true of the covenant between David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18:3) as well as the divine-human covenant relationship. See the canonical analysis below for more discussion of the grounding of covenant in divine love; cf. Quell, "Love in the OT," 27. R. Laird asserts, "Love is a covenant word because kings borrowed it from general use to try to render covenants effective. They tried to make the vassal promise to act like a brother, friend and husband. It does not follow that God's love is merely a factor in a covenant; rather the covenant is the sign and expression of his love." "חסד," *TWOT* 306. Likewise, Peter C. Craigie recognizes the similarity between the usage of אהב and ANE treaty language, yet insists, "The language of loving God, however, is not drawn directly from the treaty terminology; rather it is one of the features of the Hebrew relationship to God which made possible the use of the treaty terminology in the first place, and also the use of the father/son analogy." *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 169–70. Likewise, Ronald E. Clements cautions against assuming that the language is "dependent on" such ANE parallels: "It was no mere imitation of an existing covenant

4. The divine commands calling for human love in covenant contexts imply the demand of internal devotion consisting, not merely of outward obedience, but including an inner attitude of wholehearted fidelity (e.g., Deut 6:5). Therefore, loyalty to God and his covenant does not exclude affection and devotion. In fact, it might be argued that enduring loyalty ought to be predicated on such underlying attachment.[48]

5. Emotionality and affection are, in fact, evident within covenantal contexts.[49] Thus, it appears that אהב, although often appearing within covenant relationships, may connote more than strictly legal "covenant love." Indeed, אהב clearly constitutes the very ground of covenant in many instances.[50] God expects and desires full allegiance, devotion, and loyalty. Therefore, the

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formulation." *God's Chosen People: A Theological Interpretation of the Book of Deuteronomy* (London: SCM Press, 1968), 83; cf. Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. Richardson), 132; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (WBC 6A; Dallas: Word, 1991), 143–44; Richard D. Patterson, "Parental Love as a Metaphor for Divine-Human Love," *JETS* 46 (2003): 208.

[48] Accordingly, Clements finds Moran's view "strained and implausible in view of the importance of the issue and the widespread feature in Deuteronomy of pointing out the necessity for the nurturing of a right attitude toward God." "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol. 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 343. It is true that similar language of wholeheartedness is also present in the ANE vassal treaties, such as those of Esarhaddon. See D. J. Wiseman, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," *Iraq* 20 (1958): 14–22. However, such parallels may also have intent that goes beyond purely external behavior, in recognition of the fact that merely external loyalty can change quickly. ANE rulers/masters would likely also desire obedience that is predicated on inward devotion since the most dependable, long-lasting obedience stems from internal loyalty and devotion, not merely external, compulsory, or fear-based external action. As Lapsley points out, "even a modern understanding of 'loyalty' is loaded with emotional content, and there is no reason to assume that ancient loyalty did not also involve the emotions in a significant way." "Feeling Our Way," 352.

[49] Further, Weinfeld, who recognizes the correspondence between אהב in Deuteronomy and ANE vassal treaties, admits, "In spite of the covenantal overtones, the love imagery in the description of the relationship between God and Israel has an affectionate connotation, especially in poetic texts such as Hosea and Jeremiah. Moreover, even in Deut 6:8 the affectionate connotation comes up when contrasted with the phrase 'because YHWH hates us' in 1:27." *Deuteronomy 1–11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 369. Elsewhere he notices both "affection and emotion" noting Deut 7:8, 13; 23:6 in the love between God and Israel. *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 351. Daniel I. Block also recognizes emotion and "covenant commitment." *Judges, Ruth* (NAC 6; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 244. Cf. Luc, "The Meaning."

[50] Clark wisely counsels that "it is not wise to import" the entire ANE treaty "background into every use of the word ברית in the Old Testament. Nor is it legitimate to insist that every use of the אהב derivatives carries the full weight of political implications." *The Word Hesed*, 128. On the other hand, this is not to dismiss the potential political connotations, but rather, to recognize that such overtones need not rule out an affective meaning; cf. P. R. Ackroyd, "The Verb Love—*Aheb*—in the David-Jonathan Narratives: A Footnote," *VT* 25 (1975): 214. Abraham Malamat notes that the verb אהב usually refers to an

genre of treaty language is altogether appropriate to, though not exhaustive of, the content of divine אהב.

Some have assumed that if love can be commanded it must be unemotional. However, the kind of human love that God commands appears to include an attitude, even emotion, of love that includes devotion displayed in obedience, service, commandment keeping, listening, and seeking him.[51] Such external manifestations must correspond to an internal devotion, which is not devoid of emotion, in order to measure up to the love that God expects. That the nature of this expected love goes far beyond merely external legality is clear in the language used: humans are to love God with all their "heart" [לבב] and "soul" [that is, inner person, נפש],[52] which is language associated with internal emotionality (Deut 6:5; 10:13; 11:13; 13:3; 30:6; Josh 22:5; cf. Josh 23:11). Likewise, God himself will "circumcise" their heart . . . to love" him with all their "heart" and "soul" (Deut 30:6).[53] This is likewise apparent in that the sincerity of love for God can be

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affectionate relationship but also thinks "love your neighbor as yourself means be useful to your neighbor." "You Shall Love Your Neighbor As Yourself: A Case of Misinterpretation," in *Die Hebraische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift fur Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Erhard Blum, Christian Macholz, and Ekehard W. Stegemann; Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 112–13.

[51] Some have struggled with the concept of a love that can be commanded. Quell, "Love in the OT," 25. Bernard J. Bamberger solves the issue by divesting the love toward Yahweh of emotion on the basis that it is commanded. "Fear and Love of God in the Old Testament," *HUCA* 6 (1929): 39–53; cf. McKay, "Man's Love," 426. Marten H. Woudstra, however, contends that "this is judging the biblical love concept by an extraneous standard." *The Book of Joshua* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 337. He notes, "The Hebrew word for "love," *'āhaḇ*, covers the whole range of human affection: sexual love, love of friendship, and love for God. It is more than a voluntary expression of the emotions. It can be commanded, and it expresses itself in concrete acts of obedience to law." Jeffrey H. Tigay notes, "The idea of commanding a feeling is not foreign to the Torah, which assumes that people can cultivate proper attitudes." *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 76. Lapsley likewise contends, "The objection that feelings cannot be commanded relies on the modern notions not only that feelings exist within the private world of the individual, but also that they are uncontrollable. In order to talk about love in Deuteronomy, on the other hand, we must come up with a way to talk about emotion that does not perpetuate the modern propensity to privatize feelings and separate them from action." "Feeling Our Way," 365. Cf. Hos 3:1.

[52] נפש often refers to the seat of the emotions, the inner person. The term never refers to an immortal soul.

[53] "Love and behavior motivated by love are not to be separated from emotion, and yet they are not dependent on emotion, but require wise consideration." Wallis, *TDOT* 1:110. Els adds, "Human love

tested. Thus the people are warned that God is "testing" [נסה] them "to find out if" they "love" him with all their "heart" and "soul" (Deut 13:3 [4]). This helps explain what some see as a contradiction between a love of obedience and affectionate, emotional love.[54] Human love for God is not to be merely external but to spring from an internal disposition. In close association with the religious context of wholehearted love for God, אהב with a human agent is often collocated with fear (awe) and the actions of pursuit/seeking, and/or clinging, both toward God and other humans.[55] Particularly significant is the association of אהב and דבק, "to cling," which connotes the idea of attachment, even at times, attraction.[56]

The strong emotional aspect that may be connoted by אהב is readily apparent elsewhere, supporting the conclusion that the term does not merely refer to legal aspects when used in covenant contexts.[57] The potential passion of אהב is perhaps most explicit in its collocations with

for God is therefore far from being expressed merely in sheer *legalism or external observance* of the cult; on the contrary, it engages the *whole person*, with all his/her powers; it must come from one's whole heart." *NIDOTTE* 1:286. Accordingly, "the condemnation of externalism" and superficial worship is well-represented" (286). Dennis T. Olson comments, "Obedience *and* passionate relationships characterize the full love of God." *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 51. Luc further comments that "genuine inner feeling must go hand in hand with outward observance, loyalty to God must involve both." "The Meaning," 139.

[54] The "question has been raised as to how such love as this can be commanded. However, if love is not merely an emotional feeling for a person or a thing, but also involves a behavior that is becoming to love, then it is possible for Deuteronomy to elevate this behavior to the level of a commandment." Wallis, *TDOT* 1:115. Tigay, however, sees no contradiction, "In Deuteronomy, love and loyalty toward God is virtually synonymous with keeping His commandments; it refers to an emotional attachment which is expressed in action (see, e.g., 10:12–13; 11:1, 22)." *Deuteronomy*, 67.

[55] "'Love' designates the emotional feeling of strongly desiring something that flows out of one's perceptions and as a result causes one to go after (Jer. 2:25b), seek (Prov. 8:17 [Q]), run after (Isa. 1:23), cleave (Deut. 11:22; 30:20; Prov. 18:24), and continue faithful to the loved person or thing." Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 203. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld adds, "In such contexts the word carries the general connotation of setting one's heart and mind upon the object mentioned, giving it special attention or dedicating oneself to pursuing it." "Love in the OT*," ABD* 4:376.

[56] Beyond the many appearances associated with the command toward humans to love God (see above) דבק, "cling," also appears in collocation with אהב to describe the friend who sticks closer than a brother (Prov 18:24), as a description of Shechem's "deep attraction" to Tamar (Gen 34:3) and in reference to Solomon's loving and clinging to many foreign women (1 Kgs 11:2).

[57] Luc explains that אהב is basically an emotive term. "The Meaning." Jacob similarly speaks of

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the emotions of hate [שִׂנְאָה] and zeal [קִנְאָה] (Eccl 9:6). In one other instance אהב is associated with

the strong emotion of jealousy describing the potentially great intensity of love, even such that is

"as strong as death" (Cant 8:6). Further emotionality is evident as אהב collocates once with divine

compassion (חמל): "In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and

carried them" (Isa 63:9).[58] אהב is often used of intense feelings within the bond of an intimate

relationship. This is evidenced in the collocation of אהב with נפשׁ (inner person) and/or לבב/לב

(heart), functioning as the seat of profound emotions (cf. Ps 119:167). Indeed, the one who loves

violence, God's soul [נפשׁ] hates (Ps 11:5). In familial contexts, אהב often implies feelings of

attachment, affection, and care (i.e., Gen 22:2). Strong feelings of attachment are also apparent in

the אהב of profound friendship between Jonathan and David and also when David remembers

Jonathan's love as "very pleasant" and "more wonderful than the love of women (2 Sam 1:26).

In fact, Jonathan is said to love David, literally, as his own self/inner person (נפשׁ) (1 Sam

18:1, 3; 20:17). Likewise, אהב also may connote passion, which may especially be implied in

romantic contexts.[59] In Gen 34:3, Shechem's soul [נפשׁ] clung to Dinah, he loved her, and spoke to

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"the sense of ardent and voluntary desire contained in the root 'ahab," which is confirmed by comparison to other roots such as חשׁק, חפץ, and רצה. *Theology*, 109. Elaine Adler adds that the verb "commonly expresses the ardent affection conveyed by the English 'love.'" "The Background for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1990), 70. Lapsley contends that the term "decidedly involves the emotions." "Feeling Our Way," 354. Likewise, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Loyalty and Love: The Language of Human Interconnections in the Hebrew Bible," in *Backgrounds for the Bible* (ed. M. P. O'Connor and D. N. Freedman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 225; Georg Hentschel, "'Weil der Herr euch liebt' (Dtn 7, 8): Die Liebe im Ersten Testament," *IKZ* 23 (1994): 400–408. Quell adds that it "hardly ever loses its passionate note." "Love in the OT," 23.

[58] Notably, אהב does not collocate within a single verse with either רחם, "compassion, love" or חוס, "compassion, pity." However, רחם and אהב do collocate within some larger units, for instance Hos 2:25–3:1; 14:3–4 [4–5]. אהב and נחם, "feel compassion, be sorry, comfort," collocate three times, all related to humans being "comforted": Isaac married Rebekah, loved her, and was comforted after the death of his mother (Gen 24:67). David "comforted" Bathsheba and lay with her and she gave birth to a son whom God loved (2 Sam 12:24). Finally, Jerusalem weeps bitterly, with no lovers to comfort her (Lam 1:2).

[59] Wallis mentions its potential connotation of "passionate desire to be intimately united with a person." *TDOT* 1:103; cf. ibid., 109; Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. Richardson), 131. Walther Eichrodt concurs saying, אהב "always retains the passionate overtones of complete engagement of the will accompanied by strong emotion." *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. A. Baker; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 250. Park notes, אהב "implies passionate and vehement inclination of mind, at

her heart [לֵב] (cf. Judg 16:15). Moreover, the woman in Canticles recurrently references her lover as "you whom my soul loves [נַפְשִׁי]" (Cant 1:7; 3:1, 2, 3, 4). Divine affection is likewise apparent in the kinship analogies of husband-wife and father-son. Thus, אהב is used to depict divine love for his corporate people in analogy to the romantic love of a husband for his wife, wherein the woman is unfaithful (i.e., Hos 3:1). That this analogy connotes intensely emotive אהב is not only implicit in the analogy itself but explicit in its further explication, where infidelity affects God in a way analogous to a scorned human husband (cf. Hos 9:15; 11:8–9). The analogy of the father-son relationship likewise seems to connote affection. Thus, God himself recalls his love for Israel as a youth: "When Israel was a youth I loved Him, and out of Egypt I called [קְרָא] My son" (Hos 11:1; cf. Prov 3:12).[60] For the reasons I described in chapter 1, such examples of the emotionality of divine אהב (and other instances of divine emotionality) should not be dismissed as mere anthropopathism, in accordance with a final-form canonical approach to theology.

In all, the אהב word group may connote intense affection and emotion, including delight, rejoicing, favor, etc. Further, it does not depict divine love as simply unilateral, but its continuance is presented as an outcome of loyalty to God, and thus apparently reciprocal and evaluative, not disinterested or altogether unconditional (Deut 7:12–13; Ps 146:8; Prov 15:9). The result of divine אהב (including its continuance) is often contingent upon, and appropriate to, the actual state of affairs. Thus, love may turn to anger and back. As such, an apparent tension exists between the depiction of divine אהב as "everlasting" and yet subject to change, even hatred and the discontinuance of love. With this in mind, we turn to the first of the five rubrics regarding the nature of divine love.

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the same time tenderness and fullness of affection." Park, "Divine Love in Hosea 11," 28.

[60] Although some scholars point to ANE parallels as an explanation for this language as well, Lapsley points out, "No parallel presents itself for the paradox of a god who is sovereign over the cosmos, from whom flows an immeasurable and irrational affection for a powerless group of ragtag slaves. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to suggest that God's love for others might also spring from genuine feeling, and not simply from adherence to an abstract idea." "Feeling Our Way," 362.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that ground the volitional aspect of God's love and leads to the conclusion that divine love is volitional but not only volitional. That is, God's love includes a free, volitional aspect that is not essential, necessary, or strictly arbitrary. Further, divine love is not merely volitional. That is, divine love is closely associated with, but not identical to, God's will and election. Finally, the divine-human love relationship, then, is neither unilaterally deterministic nor essential or ontologically necessary but mutually (though not symmetrically) volitional and contingent. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. What is the relationship of love, the divine will, and election? Is divine love the result of God's unilaterally arbitrary will? Is divine love to be equated with election? These questions are themselves predicated on thorny questions at the center of the free-will debate, particularly the complex issue of whether God's will is unilaterally efficacious or do humans possess significant freedom, that is, freedom to do otherwise than they do.

Throughout the OT the concept of love is firmly embedded in relationship. The form of relationship is most often, but not always, that of covenant, which itself is closely associated with the concept of election.[61] As such, covenant is an especially important revelation of the divine-human relationship as a whole, and of love in particular. Throughout the canon, covenant functions as a central environment for the divine-human relationship, overlapping significantly with the theme of divine love. While covenant itself is not the object of this study, the basis of covenant (i.e., love) is.[62] Moreover, many other oft-referenced facets of love, including election

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[61] There are diverse forms of covenant throughout the OT and the ANE, the complexity of which is, at times, staggering. This dissertation operates with the basic definition of Gary N. Knoppers that a covenant is not merely a unilateral or one-sided oath but refers to a "formal agreement involving two or more parties" and consequently, "affects those parties" and are "inevitably bilateral." "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?" *JAOS* 116 (1996): 696. Such a basic definition is adopted on the basis of consideration of the OT covenants, which consistently depict mutuality, though not equality or symmetry, in the divine-human relationship, as shall be seen.

[62] The rationale for the priority of love as the basis of the covenant will be explained further below.

and beneficence, are often integrally rooted in covenant. Therefore, this study will approach

covenant from the standpoint of issues regarding divine election and beneficence. This section of

the study begins with a survey of the meaning of the primary term of election in the OT, בחר, and

the major term for divine grace, חנן. Then, this section will present a survey of election and

covenant in the OT that provides necessary background information in order to appreciate the

survey of the volitional aspect of divine love in the OT that will conclude this section.

<div align="center">A Brief Survey of בחר</div>

בחר is the primary term for election in the OT.[63] The most common meaning refers to

choice or selection,[64] often with the connotation of evaluation and examination (cf. Isa 48:10).[65]

In some instances, the term refers to a decision or will of someone, without explicit reference to

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[63] The word group occurs in verbal (mostly *qal* but a few *niphal*) forms over 160 times. It also appears in noun forms מִבְחָר or מִבְחוֹר as well as the adjectival בָּחִיר. On the etymology of the term see John N. Oswalt, "בחר," *TWOT* 100; Emile Nicole, "בחר," *NIDOTTE* 1:638.

[64] Oswalt comments that the "root idea is evidently 'to take a keen look at' (KB), thus accounting for the connotation of 'testing or examining'" in Isa 48:10; cf. Prov 10:20. "בחר," *TWOT* 100. Thus, the "idea seems to be that which has been examined and found to be best or most serviceable." Ibid., 101. Nicole asserts, "there is no intrinsic difference between secular and theological uses of the word. In both cases the vb. denotes the selection of something or someone from a number of other possibilities." *NIDOTTE* 1:638. However, the term is most often used in religious contexts.

[65] H. Seebass points out the objective nature of בחר, that is, "the principles determining the choice can be scrutinized, and this seems to be characteristic of בחר." This is the "rational element, i.e., the scrutiny of the criteria." "בחר," *TDOT* 2:75–76. Accordingly, he views divine בחר as intelligible, verifiable, rational, and understandable in accordance with specific purpose; a reasoned and purposeful choice based on rational standards. Ibid., 79, 82–83. "The choice that one makes can be related strictly to an obj.: one chooses the fittest, the most appropriate, the best, and the most beautiful. Because the basic meaning may be 'to regard precisely' and the verb can also mean 'to test,' this value orientation is surely a primary element. The subj. itself is involved, in fact, because it evaluates, but this evaluation arises from a rational consideration." H. Wildberger, "בחר," *TLOT* 1:212. Accordingly, Wildberger suggests that "similarity in form and meaning suggests the likelihood that a relationship exists between the roots *bḥr* and *bḥn* . . . 'to select, choose,'" and "to test, put to the test," respectively. *TLOT* 1:210. Yet, there also may be the "subj.-conditioned, volitional meaning [which] should be distinguished from this obj.-oriented, cognitive meaning: one chooses what one would dearly like to have, what pleases one, what one loves. A strict distinction between the two aspects is impossible. But the second aspect manifests itself very clearly in the translators' rendering of the word in such passages with 'to elect' and not simply with 'to choose, select,' occasionally even with 'to choose for oneself,' expressing the subj.'s engagement, as well as with 'to wish for.'" Wildberger, *TLOT* 1:212. In many instances, "the 'choice' transpires in these cases on the basis of a pleasure that is not rationally founded or, indeed, rationally demonstrable." Wildberger, *TLOT* 1:213.

evaluation.[66] However, בחר is often depicted as on the basis of some evaluation, that is, with

reference to some characteristic or quality.[67] Indeed, a number of forms of the word group refer to

that which is "choice" or "elect" in an evaluative sense, including superlatives in reference to that

which is "choicest" or "best."[68] Similarly בחר is also closely related to desire or that which is

desirable.[69]

    בחר refers to God's choice or decision especially frequently. The word group is the term

par excellence for divine election. The adjective בָּחִיר is always used of those chosen of God (in 13

verses).[70] בחר is used in reference to the vocational (as opposed to salvific) elections of Jerusalem,

the temple, the priesthood, kings/leaders, and the people as a whole.[71] Most often the group is

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[66] Thus, servants are ready to do whatever the king chooses (2 Sam 15:15). See also 2 Sam 19:38; 1 Kgs 18:23, 25; Isa 7:15–16; Job 9:14; 15:5; 29:25; 34:33; 36:21.

[67] Thus, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair and took whom they chose (Gen 6:2). Similarly, Lot "saw" the valley that it was a good land (Gen 13:10) then he "chose" for himself all the valley of the Jordan (Gen 13:11). Many other examples include 1 Sam 17:40; 20:30; Isa 40:20; Job 34:4; Prov 3:31. It also frequently refers to the choice of soldiers, an obviously evaluative choice. See Exod 17:9; 18:25; Josh 8:3; 1 Sam 13:2; 2 Sam 10:9; 17:1; 1 Chr 19:10.

[68] Thus, in the *niphal* נִבְחָר refers to something that is of superlative quality or value, e.g., the "choicest" gold or silver (Prov 8:10, 19; 10:20; 16:16). Similarly, the *qal* passive participle בָּחוּר often refers to that which is choice or select in an evaluative sense and the nouns מִבְחָר or מִבְחוֹר appear as superlatives, referring to that which is choicest or best. בָּחוּר appears in 18 verses (Exod 14:7; Judg 20:15–16; 20:34; 1 Sam 24:2 [3]; 26:2; 2 Sam 6:1; 10:9; 1 Kgs 12:21; Jer 49:19; 50:44; Ps 89:19 [20]; Cant 5:15; 1 Chr 19:10; 2 Chr 11:1; 13:3, 17; 25:5. It is still debated whether the noun בָּחוּר, young men, is to be associated with this lexeme. See Oswalt, "בחר," *TWOT* 100–101; Nicole, *NIDOTTE* 1:638. With regard to the nouns מִבְחָר or מִבְחוֹר, the former appears in 11 verses, the latter in 2 verses. See Gen 23:6; Exod 15:4; 2 Kgs 3:19; 19:23; Isa 22:7; 37:24; Jer 22:7; 48:15; Ezek 23:7; 24:4; 31:16; Dan 11:15.

[69] For instance, "a good name is to be more desired [בחר] than great wealth (Prov 22:1). In another occurrence it is in parallel to desire, "the oaks which you have desired [חָמַד] . . . the gardens which you have chosen" (Isa 1:29). Those who have rebelled against God are said to have "chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations" (Isa 66:3); cf. Job 7:15.

[70] See 2 Sam 21:6; Isa 42:1; 43:20; 45:4; 65:9, 15, 22; Pss 89:4; 105:6, 43; 106:5, 23; 1 Chr 16:13.

[71] בחר refers to the election of the priesthood (Num 16:5, 7; Deut 18:5; 21:5; 1 Sam 2:28; 1 Chr 15:2; 2 Chr 29:11). Also, reference is frequently made to the "place which the LORD your God will choose" where his name will dwell (Deut 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23–25; 15:20; 16:2, 6–7, 11, 15–16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 23:16 [17]; 26:2;3 1:11; Josh 9:27). Later, the reference is to God's choice of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:16, 44, 48; 11:32, 36; 14:21; 2 Kgs 21:7; 23:27; Zech 1:17; 2:12; 3:2; 2 Chr 6:5–6, 34, 38; 12:13; 33:7; Neh 1:9; cf. Ps 132:13) and to the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chr 7:12, 16). It also refers to the election of individuals to positions of leadership (Hag 2:23; Pss 105:26; 106:23; Neh 9:7; cf. Isa 42:1; 49:7), especially kings (Saul – 1 Sam 10:24; 12:13; cf. Deut 17:15; 1 Sam 8:18; 2 Sam 21:6; David – 1 Chr 28:4;

used of God's election of Israel/Judah, chosen out of love [אהב] and in affection [חשׁק] (Deut 4:37; 7:6–7; 10:15) to be a "holy people," God's "own possession" (Deut 14:2; cf. Ps 135:4).[72] As shall be argued further below, divine election is often associated, but not to be conflated, with divine love (cf. Isa 41:8; Ps 47:4 [5]; cf. 78:68). Moreover, as shall be examined hereafter, divine election is often depicted as conditional and contingent (cf. 2 Kgs 23:27; Isa 14:1; 41:9; Jer 33:24; Ezek 20:5; Zech 1:17; 2:12, [16]; Ps 78:67–68).[73] Significantly, in a number of instances בחר refers to divine desires that are, in some cases, unfulfilled.[74] There is considerable overlap in some instances with God's desire and delight as signified by אוה, חמד, חפץ and רצה, each of which may refer to evaluative and/or emotional desire or delight.[75] Further, the concept of significant human freedom is implied in a number of places by use of בחר.[76] In all, then, this term points to

cf. 1 Sam 16:8–10; 2 Sam 6:21; Pss 78:70; 89:3 [4], 19 [20]; 2 Chr 6:5–6; Solomon – 1; Chr 28:5–6, 10; 29:1; cf. 1 Kgs 11:13, 34); cf. the deceptive use in 2 Sam 16:18. Divine election of kings is also a well-represented theme in the ANE; cf. Wildberger, *TLOT* 1:213–14. At times, the term is with reference to other specific elections of people (Jer 49:19; 50:44; Ps 65:6). Oswalt points out, "In all of these cases serviceability rather than simple arbitrariness is at the heart of the choosing. . . . The scriptural doctrine of divine capacity for choice demonstrates that purpose and personality, not blind mechanism, are at the heart of the universe. Since God carefully chooses certain ones for a specific task, he can also reject them if they deviate from that purpose (I Sam 2:27ff.)." "בחר," *TWOT* 100.

[72] The term is used in various ways in reference to this special election of God's people. For instance, they are the people whom God has "chosen" (1 Kgs 3:8), "the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance" (Ps 33:12), "Sons of Jacob, His chosen [בְּחִיר] ones" (Ps 105:6; 1 Chr 16:13; cf. Isa 43:10, 20; 44:1–2; 45:4; 65:9, 15, 22; 105:43; 106:5).

[73] Notably, מאס is often used as the antonym of בחר, to choose, as it appears in Isa 7:15–16; 41:9; Jer 33:24; Ps 78:67; Job 34:33.

[74] For instance, to do righteousness and justice is desired [בחר] by the LORD more than sacrifice" (Prov 21:3; cf. Isa 58:5–6). Similarly, in Ps 132:13 God's choice of Zion is in parallel with the statement, "he has desired [אִוָּה] it for His habitation" (Ps 132:13). Moreover, divine desires may be unfulfilled; God will "choose" punishments for the people because he "called, but no one answers"; he "spoke, but they did not listen. And they did evil in [his] sight and chose that in which [he] did not delight" (Isa 66:4).

[75] חפץ and רצה will be addressed at the outset of the evaluative section. אוה and חמד are briefly surveyed in footnotes as they appear in the canonical analysis in this section.

[76] Thus, the exhortation, "choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants" (Deut 30:19), "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve" (Josh 24:15). Similarly, the people are said to have "chosen for [themselves] the LORD, to serve Him" (Josh 24:22). Likewise, humans have the power to choose other gods (Judg 5:8; 10:14; cf. Isa 41:24). In some cases, humans choose for God (Isa 56:4; Pss 119:30; 173) and in others humans choose against him (cf. Isa 6:12; 66:3; Jer 8:3; Prov 1:29); cf. 2 Sam 24:12; Pss 25:12; 84:10 [11]; 1 Chr 21:10. Thus, "God is not the only one who chooses and elects; people

the strong divine volition but also points toward divine evaluation and the exercise of human

volition.

<div align="center">A Brief Survey of חנן</div>

חנן is not strictly a term of divine volition but has volitional as well as evaluative

elements.[77] The חנן word group is most often translated as favor, or grace.[78] In its most basic

sense, this group refers to a positive, favorable disposition and/or action from one to another.[79] It

is closely associated with entreaty since it often consists of a free, beneficial disposition and/or

action in a situation where the (potential) object of favor is in, or will soon be in, a situation of

distress or need.[80] Although in a number of cases the supplicant is unworthy of receiving favor,

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do too. The OT operates on the assumption that they can also choose their God or gods [cf. Josh 24:22]." Wildberger, *TLOT* 1:224–25.

[77] Because it appears so prominently in the OT canon and overlaps with the five rubrics, but does not fit fully within any of them, it seems best to introduce the term here.

[78] In the ANE the cognates (Akkadian, Ugaritic, Arabic) have a range of meaning similar to that represented by the usage in the Hebrew Bible. Terence E. Fretheim, "חנן," *NIDOTTE* 2:203. The Arabic *ḥanna* to "yearn or long for" or "to feel sympathy, compassion" may form the background of the adjectival חנון, which is often coupled with compassion, רחם. David N. Freedman and Jack R. Lundbom, "חנן," *TDOT* 5:23. Freedman and Lundbom suggest that by association with רחם, חנון may also "carry the idea of motherly (or fatherly) compassion." *TDOT* 5:25; cf. Exod 22:26 [27]. Dafydd R. Ap-Thomas has suggested a connection to a root [ḥnh] "to bend, incline" thus seeing the sense of condescension. "Some Aspects of the Root *HNN* in the Old Testament," *JSS* 2 (1957): 128–48. Stoebe thinks it is possible, but Yamauchi finds the suggestion unconvincing. H. J. Stoebe, "חנן," *TLOT* 1:440; Edwin Yamauchi, "חנן," *TWOT* 302.

[79] The group appears in the noun חן (in 68 verses), various verbal forms (in 72 verses), and the adjectival חנון (in 12 verses). Other noun forms include חנינה meaning "favor," appearing only once (Jer 16:13) and two terms that consistently present supplication, usually from humans toward God, but sometimes human to human: תחנה (in 25 verses) and תחנון (in 18 verses). The verb חנן appears most often in the *qal* (in 50 verses), followed by the *hitpael* (in 17 verses), and rarely in the *piel* (1x) and the poel and *hophal* (2x). Some have seen a *niphal* form in Jer 22:23 but the term is more likely a "miswritten form of" אנח, "to sigh." See Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:440. In the *hitpael*, it refers to supplication, the (potential) recipient of which is always human, while the (potential) benefactor may be human or divine. In the *qal*, it may refer to the disposition and/or action of being gracious or bestowing favor. In human contexts, being "gracious" is clearly described as a desirable virtue (i.e., Pss 37:21, 26; 112:5). With God as agent, the *qal* is most often used in entreaty, when God is asked to "be gracious," usually relative to the request of specific action(s) (cf. Isa 33:2 among many others). It likewise appears frequently as the description of God's beneficent disposition and/or actions, whether requested or received. See Gen 33:5, 11; 33:19; 2 Sam 12:22; 2 Kgs 13:23; Isa 27:11; 30:18–19; Amos 5:15; Pss 59:5 [6]; 102:13 [14]; cf. Mal 1:9; Ps 109:12.

[80] Yamauchi considers it to entail not only a favorable response but a "heartfelt response by someone who has something to give." *TWOT* 302. Similarly, Freedman and Lundbom, *TDOT* 5:26.

the root חנן itself does not necessarily connote anything about the worthiness or unworthiness of

the supplicant. In many instances, the supplicant greatly desires or needs that which is asked for

and the one who may or may not grant favor is in a position to grant it (cf. Gen 6:8; Isa 27:11;

Amos 5:15; Ps 119:132).[81] In such circumstances, חנן may be ordinary favor or that which extends

beyond expectations. Importantly, God is never the patient of חנן except when the term refers to

supplication, in other words, he is never depicted as the beneficiary of חן or חנן.[82]

In human usage, חן sometimes refers to qualities, i.e., "gracefulness" (cf. Prov 3:22;

5:19).[83] The term is thus, at times, suggestive of traits that are desirable or favorable.[84] However,

the term most often appears within the context of entreaty, frequently in the expression "find

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[81] For instance, many commentators see the use of "favor" for Noah as an instance where the term denotes approval; see below. In 2 Sam 15:25–26, finding favor with God is put in parallel with the potential of God having "delight" [חפץ] in someone (2 Sam 15:26); cf. Judg 6:17; 2 Sam 15:25.

[82] Moreover, although חנן has been thought to be only from superiors to inferiors (so Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 215; Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible* [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967], 128; W. F. Lofthouse, "*Hen* and *Hesed* in the Old Testament," *ZAW* 51[1933]: 30), this is not always the case when it comes to societal status (cf. Gen 30:27; 47:29). So Freedman and Lundbom, *TDOT* 5:27; Yamauchi, *TWOT* 303; William L. Reed, "Some Implications of *Hen* for Old Testament," *JBL* 73 (1954): 36–41. However, חנן does always flow from a situational position where the potential benefactor is in a position to grant something needed or greatly desired to the supplicant, which is almost always the societal superior. As Fretheim points out, even "find favor," the common syntagm of entreaty, "may or may not specify deference toward the one addressed." *NIDOTTE* 2:204.

[83] For various connotations in this general vein see Nah 3:4; Zech 4:7; Ps 45:2; Prov 3:22; 4:9; 5:19; 11:16; 17:8; 22:1, 11; 28:23; 31:30; Eccl 9:11; 10:12. Other uses of חן include Deut 7:2, where Israel is commanded to "show no favor" to the former occupants of the land (Deut 7:2) and Deut 28:50 where a nation is foretold who will "show no favor to the young" (Deut 28:50). Thus, in some instances "one may gain favor or honor from others by words or deeds (Prov 13:15; 28:23), yet not inevitably so (Eccl 9:11)." Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 2:204.

[84] Freedman and Lundbom state, "The noun is first a term of beauty. It denotes an aesthetically pleasing presentation or aspect of someone or something, and is properly the quality someone or something possesses. The response to this projection of beauty is also *hen*, 'favor.'" *TDOT* 5:22. They also point out that verb may also "be used in an aesthetic sense, 'possess grace.'" Ibid.; cf. Prov 26:25; 22:11. Fretheim concurs, seeing "an aesthetic sense for that which possesses an aspect that is gracious, graceful, or elegant," which "contributes to the beauty of the world and will usually receive a favorable response." *NIDOTTE* 2:204. Thus, a "derived sense is used in Hebrew primarily for the pleasing impression made upon one individual by another." Freedman and Lundbom, *TDOT* 5:22. Stoebe adds that in some contexts, חן "assumes the meaning 'attractiveness, loveliness' as a visually perceptible personal or objective characteristic that can also involve the notions of success and fortune." See Prov 1:9; 3:22; 4:9; 11:16. *TLOT* 1:442–43. However, it is not valid to thus read evaluation into every use of the term, though one should be aware of the possibility of it.

favor" in one's sight (עַיִן + חֵן + מצא).[85] This syntagm is used in situations where one is seeking

and/or receiving desired or needed favor from another, usually without reference to merit, but not

ruling out the possibility that the recipient is, at least relatively, worthy.[86] The latter seems to be

the case with regard to Noah, who "found favor" in God's sight prior to the flood and, the

narrative makes sure to inform the reader, he was "a righteous man, blameless in his time" who

"walked with God" (Gen 6:8–9).[87] However, even when the object of חֵן appears to be worthy, חֵן

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[85] The idiom apparently refers to looking at one's eyes to determine whether one was favorably disposed or not. Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 2:203. Since "favor is shown on the face," ancient peoples looked at the eyes while contemporary humans look at the smile. Freedman and Lundbom, *TDOT* 5:24. Moreover, the term for face [פָּנֶה] itself is a common term used to express the presence or absence of divine favor, whether it is hidden/turned away, or turned toward someone.

[86] I say "relatively" because in an absolute sense no imperfect human is worthy of divine favor. Reed, nevertheless, correctly sees evaluation in a number of instances of this syntagm. "Some Implications," 39. The term is used with humans or God as the potential benefactor. In human usage the pattern is of one seeking and/or receiving desired or needed favor from another, thus Laban from Jacob (Gen 30:27), Jacob from Esau (Gen 32:5; 33:8, 10, 15), Shechem from Jacob and his sons (Gen 34:11), Joseph from Potiphar (Gen 39:4), Joseph from the chief jailer (Gen 39:21), those affected by famine from Joseph (Gen 47:25), Jacob from Joseph (47:29), Joseph from Pharaoh (Gen 50:4), the Gadites and Reubenites from Moses and Eleazar (Num 32:5), the lack for a wife from her husband (Deut 24:1), Hanna from Eli (1 Sam 1:18), David from Saul (1 Sam 16:22; 20:29), David from Jonathan (1 Sam 20:3), David from Nabal (1 Sam 25:8), David from Achish (1 Sam 27:5), Joab from David (2 Sam 14:22), Ziba from the king (2 Sam 16:4), Hadad the Edomite from Pharaoh (1 Kgs 11:14), Ruth from Boaz (Ruth 2:2, 10, 13), Esther from all who saw her (Esth 2:15), and Esther from the king (Esth 5:8; 7:3; 8:5). In Esther a variant of the syntagm appears three times, עַיִן + חֵן + נשׂא also referring to Esther's receiving favor in the sight of the king (Esth 2:15, 17; 5:2). Notably, many usages in Esther appear to imply that her beauty was the source of her favor, suggestive of the potential evaluative connotations of חֵן noted earlier (cf. Ruth 2:10, 13). Further, Freedman and Lundbom contend that David "had established a deep relationship with both men [Saul and Jonathan], so much so that *hen* implies deep affection." *TDOT* 5:28.
In theological usage, with God as the potential benefactor: Noah "found favor" in God's sight (Gen 6:8). Abraham entreats one of three strangers (in an apparent theophany): "Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight" do not pass by (Gen 18:3). Lot, speaking to the "man" who saved him from destruction in Sodom, says, "Your servant has found favor in your sight" (Gen 19:19). Moses found favor in God's sight (Exod 33:12) and based his significant entreaty upon it (Exod 33:13, 16–17; 34:9). In times of further distress, Moses laments to God why he has "not found favor" in God's sight (Num 11:11, 15), entreating further divine response. In numerous other instances the syntagm denotes the request, hope for, or reception of favor in God's sight: to Gideon (Judg 6:17), to David (2 Sam 15:25). Jeremiah 31:2 refers to the Israelites having "found grace in the wilderness." Favor in the sight of another may also be extended by God (and only by him), from the chief jailer to Joseph (Gen 39:21) and from the Egyptians to the Israelites (Exod 3:21; 12:36).

[87] Most translations have "finding favor" but some have "winning favor" (e.g., NEB). Interestingly, in Gen 6:8 JPS has "found favor" but in Exod 32, JPS consistently translates "gained my favor." Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 213. Freedman and Lundbom suggest that "this shows again that the OT has no aversion to merited favor." *TDOT* 5:31. While Stoebe elsewhere notes

is never an obligation of the one bestowing it.[88] As such, חן may be given to a worthy or unworthy recipient, both at the discretion of the bestower. At the same time, nothing in the usage of חן suggests that it must be an altogether arbitrary bestowal by the benefactor, and instances such as Gen 6:8 imply evaluation and appreciation of the recipient.[89]

Aside from the expression "found favor," the term appears in other contexts of entreaty with God as agent, sometimes in benedictory formulas (Gen 43:29; Num 6:25). Interestingly, חן is also sometimes spoken of as that which is given on the basis of specific conditions. For instance, the psalmist proclaims that God "will give grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Ps 84:11). Similarly, those who do not forget Qohelet's teaching and keep his commandments (Prov 3:1) are those that "will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man (Prov 3:4; cf. 3:5).[90] In another instance, God "gives grace to the afflicted" yet scoffs at the scoffers," assuming some form of divine appraisal (Prov 3:34; cf. 3:33). On the other

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the potentially evaluative connotation of חן and חנן, he appears to reject evaluation with divine agency. He asserts that "no reason for the grace" toward Noah is stated, a view he holds by seeing vv. 8 and 9 as stemming from independent sources, specifically v. 8 (J), v. 9 (P). *TLOT* 1:444. However, K. A. Matthews comments that "the reason Noah "found favor" is related in the following *tōlĕdōt* section to his 'righteous' conduct" and points to Ezek 14:14, 20. "This infers that Noah's conduct is related in some way to God's bestowal of gracious favor" though he nevertheless believes that "'favor' remains as God's sole discretion." *Genesis 1–11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 346. Reed believes Noah "had given some indication of being worthy of that attitude" of divine goodwill. "Some Implications," 39; cf. Sarna, *Exodus*, 213; Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC 2; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 703–4. Thus, it appears that חנן may be given subjectively or with a mind toward the objective value or action of the recipient.

[88] See Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 127–28; Lofthouse, "*Hen* and *Hesed*," 29–35.

[89] Stoebe comments, "The demonstration of *ḥēn* includes an evaluation of the other so that both, subj. and obj., are considered and both participate, even if in different roles, in the event." *TLOT* 1:441; cf. Gen 39:4; Deut 24:1; 1 Sam 16:21–22; 18:1; 25:8.

[90] Waltke comments, "The term for 'grace,' here denotes the positive disposition of heaven and earth toward the son because of his attractiveness . . . extended voluntarily and unilaterally to preserve a valued relationship." *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 243. Cf. Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 169. Accordingly, Fretheim notes, "Such favor may be granted in view of positive human response (loyal, Prov 3:3–4; righteous, Gen 6:8–9; repentant, Isa 30:19), but God may withhold such favor (pity) in view of a sinful human response (Jer 16:13) or because of God's larger purposes (Josh 11:20)." Further, God is entreated specifically not to be gracious (חנן) to the "treacherous" (Ps 59:5 [6]). On the other hand, it also may be granted to "those who are not repentant" (Neh 9:17, 31). *NIDOTTE* 2:205.

hand, God proclaims he will "grant" no "favor" (חֲנִינָה) to the people because of their great evil (Jer 16:13).

The adjective חנון almost always has God as agent, and is descriptive of the attribute of "graciousness," appearing thirteen times, eleven of which collocate with רחום as descriptive of God's compassionate and gracious nature, rooted in the amazing self-revelation of divine character at Sinai.[91] In the one exception, the meaning is similar: God will hear because he is gracious (Exod 22:27 [26]). So, divine grace appears to be primarily predicated upon God's character. At the same time, in a number of instances divine חנן or חן seems to be responsive to people's appropriate disposition and/or action toward God. In all, the word group may be directed toward qualities that elicit a favorable response, but most often it is used with regard to supplication for gracious action, which is freely, but not necessarily wholly arbitrarily, bestowed upon a worthy or unworthy recipient, one who has responded appropriately toward God (Ps 84:11; Prov 3:1) or not (Neh 9:17, 31), at God's discretion.[92]

Election and Covenant in the Torah

Genesis provides the origin of all God-human relations when God immanently creates Adam and Eve, thus framing the primary divine-human relation, that of Creator to his creation, a relationship that is marred thereafter by the Fall. However, the divine-human relationship continues, extending in the form of explicit covenants that God initiated with his people, which include divine election and blessing as prime features that pervade the entirety of the Hebrew

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[91] Exod 34:6; 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:17, 31; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; cf. Pss 112:4; 116:5. In Ps 112:4 the agent is unclear, whether divine or human, though the latter is more likely (see the discussion of רחם). In 116:5 חנון collocates with the participle form מְרַחֵם and the characteristic of righteousness [צַדִּיק].

[92] As Freedman and Lundbom point out, "favor can be sought on either the ground of righteousness or the ground of unrighteousness coupled with repentance for sin." Thus, the psalmist can come with a "consciousness of sin" (Pss 25:16, 18; 45:4 [5]; 51:1 [3]) or "as a righteous person" (Pss 26; 140). *TDOT* 5:32. However, there is a consistent theme that repentance provides occasion for grace (Isa 30:19; Jer 31:9; Joel 2:13; 2 Chr 30:9; cf., conversely, Isa. 27:11). God is even presented as waiting to be gracious (Isa 30:18).

canon. The main word for this significant theme of election (בחר) does not appear with God as agent until Num 16:5. However, the theme of election, in the most basic sense of divine choice, appears much earlier in the Torah. The first significant thematic instance of election is the selection of Noah to build the ark.[93] The language regarding the cause of this election is ambiguous, however, simply stating that Noah "found favor" in God's eyes (Gen 6:8) and was a "righteous man, blameless in his time" (Gen 6:9).[94] No reason for Noah's election is explicitly given but Noah's selection is not depicted as altogether arbitrary but as grounded, at least partially, in Noah's character.[95] After Noah follows God's instructions and is delivered in the ark (Gen 6:13–14, 18, 22), God establishes the covenant with the seemingly unconditional promise to never again destroy the earth by flood (Gen 9:11–17).

The call of Abraham represents the second significant thematic election, the initiation of the promise and covenant that founds Israel and undergirds the God-Israel relationship (Gen 12:1–3; 15:18; 17:1–14; 18:19). Once again, no explicit reason for the choice of Abraham is presented. There is, however, an apparent tension between the absence of explicit conditionality of the divine promises and other statements that may imply conditionality, such as the

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[93] Some have seen election in the narrative of Cain and Abel. For instance, Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 104. But others are skeptical of such a view. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Dallas: Word, 1987), 104. The later discourse between God and Cain suggests that the unspecified fault was known to Cain (Gen 4:7); cf. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 270; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 117. See also Saul Levin, who suggests that God simply liked the smell of the meat better. "The More Savory Offering: A Key to the Problem of Gen 4:3–5," *JBL* 81 (1979): 85.

[94] Numerous commentators have noted that Noah is explicitly approved in God's sight (Gen 6:8–9), in contrast to the evil God had observed pervading the earth (Gen 6:5); cf. Sarna, *Exodus*, 213; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 345–46; Stuart, *Exodus*, 703–4.

[95] Fretheim, however, suggests that the divine action is independent of Noah's character. "The Book of Genesis," in *Genesis to Leviticus* (vol. 1 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1994), 1:390. Likewise, von Rad, *Genesis*, 118. However, this begs the question, was it just a coincidence that God chose the one who is described as "righteous" and "blameless" and who would be faithful, the very one who "walked with God" (Gen 6:9)? Wenham sees Noah's righteousness as ensuring the continuance of divine blessing, including "preservation in the flood" and the consequent covenant, though not necessarily deserved by Noah. *Genesis 1–15*, 206. Similarly, Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 347.

expectations of human response (Gen 17:1, 9–11, 14).[96] Moreover, Abraham, is not only called,

but he is also tested (Gen 22:16–18) and blessings are depicted as consequences of Abraham's

appropriate response (Gen 26:4–5; cf. 18:19).[97] Importantly, the election of Abraham is not

presented as exclusive but intended as a blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4).[98]

The election of Israel as a nation is predicated on the Abrahamic covenant, and this

corporate election is described thematically in Exodus-Numbers.[99] Prior to Deuteronomy the

institution of the covenant with the nation of Israel is explained by reference to the Abrahamic

covenant (Exod 2:24; 3:6, 15–16; 6:4, 8; 32:13; 33:1; Lev 26:42, 45; Num 32:11) and the election

is more explicitly outlined in relation to God's love in Deuteronomy itself (see the volitional

aspect of divine love in the Torah below).

The famous divine statement, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will

show compassion on whom I will show compassion" (Exod 33:19), has sometimes been taken to

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[96] Abram is instructed to "walk before" God and "be blameless" prior to a divine declaration of the covenant promises (Gen 17:1) and again commanded after the promises: "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations" and be circumcised with the uncircumcised to be cut off (Gen 17:10–11, 14).

[97] Following the Akedah narrative, God swears, "Because you have done this thing . . . indeed I will greatly bless you. . . . In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Gen 22:16–18). Again, the promise of blessing is recounted and said to be "because Abraham obeyed Me" (Gen 26:5). Moreover, previously God had declared, "I have known" Abraham "so that he may command" his descendants to keep God's way "so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him" (Gen 18:19).
    Wenham recognizes this conditionality, "the fulfillment of the promise [is] contingent on Abraham's obedience," and asserts the "pattern of promise-obedience-fulfillment of promise is ubiquitous in Scripture" thus rejecting Gunkel and Westermann's assertion that the original form of the promise was unconditional. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 50. Sarna goes further, believing that Abraham must "unequivocally prove his worthiness to be God's elect." *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 393. Victor P. Hamilton believes the covenant is primarily "unilateral" yet admits that "the voice of conditionality and mutuality is occasionally heard." *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 19.

[98] The Abrahamic covenant extends even to the slave who becomes circumcised as a condition of entrance into the covenant (Gen 17:14).

[99] It is not presented in detail as בחר until Deuteronomy though Moses and Aaron are chosen [בחר] to lead the Exodus.

mean that God chooses to bestow grace and compassion on some but withholds it from others.[100] However, this phrase seems to be an echo of the first call of Moses where the divine name is made known (Exod 3:14).[101] As such, this *idem per idem* construction, parallel to the original revelation of the divine name, adds to the divine self-description, moving from "I am who I am" to something like "I will proclaim before you the name LORD, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show" (JPS). This explanation of divine character serves to emphasize the divine right to bestow mercy on even those who are egregiously undeserving, but does not refer to arbitrary election of those who will receive mercy to the exclusion of others.[102] In other words, the divine freedom and authority to bestow grace and compassion on Israel, even after such odious rebellion with the golden calf, is highlighted, leading into the fuller expression of the divine character in Exod 34:6–7.

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[100] For instance, see Leonard J. Coppes, "רחם," *TWOT* 842; J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 309.

[101] Stuart states, "The characteristics of Yahweh, namely his grace and mercy, are placed here in grammatical apposition to the *name* of Yahweh." *Exodus*, 708; cf. G. W. Ashby, *Go Out and Meet God: A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 134.

[102] Many scholars concur that this *idem per idem* construction signifies an emphasis on God's attributes of grace and compassion rather than discrimination between objects of God's mercy; cf. Freedman and Lundbom, *TDOT* 5:30; Sarna, *Exodus*, 214; Stuart, *Exodus*, 708; J. Gerald Janzen, *Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 248; David Noel Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *JBL* 79 (1960): 154; Walter Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," *Genesis to Leviticus* (vol. 1 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1994), 940; Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 76, 596; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 225; Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 305. Lundbom asserted that the *idem per idem* construction was used to end a discussion. "God's Use of the Idem per Idem to Terminate Debate," *HTR* 71 (1978): 193–201. However, G. S. Oden comes to different conclusions by a survey of all the known examples, which suggest the construction may express the totality/intensity of the action of the verb. In this context, the adverbial locating phrase (אֲשֶׁר) stresses the extent of the verbal action. The termination of argument is only a secondary function of this construction. Perhaps most notably, he concludes that the traditional interpretation that the construction refers to God's freedom of choice is without substance. "Idem Per Idem: Its Use and Meaning," *JSOT* 17 (1992): 107–20.

Election and Covenant in the Prophets

Conceptually, the prophets build upon the corporate covenants in the Torah, and add to them the Davidic covenant and the new covenant. In the prophets, the term election often denotes vocational election.[103] The election of kings is the most prominent type of election throughout the prophets, beginning with the strange case of Saul. His election begins with the people's desire for a king, regarding which God warns them that they will cry out because of the king whom they have "chosen" (1 Sam 8:18; 10:19), yet they continue to demand a king. Thus, the kingship itself was "chosen" by the people against God's wishes and despite his warnings (1 Sam 12:12–13, 17). Nevertheless, God is willing to bless the kingship if the people would "fear," "serve," and "listen to" him but, if they do wickedly they and their king would "be swept away" (1 Sam 12:14–16, 20, 24–25). According to the wishes of the people for a king, Saul, the one "whom the LORD has chosen" (1 Sam 10:24), is "anointed" of the LORD (1 Sam 10:1; cf. 9:16–17), Yet, Saul, God's elect, is eventually rejected by God. Although no explicit reason was given as to why God chose Saul to be king rather than someone else, the reasons for Saul's rejection are apparent. They include his offering of sacrifice without Samuel at Gilgal (1 Sam 13:8–13) and his disobedience in not utterly destroying the Amalekite king and the plunder of war (1 Sam 15:3, 9–11). On such bases, God declares, "I regret that I have made Saul king" (1 Sam 15:11; cf. 15:35)[104] and Samuel

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[103] This includes chosen priests (1 Sam 2:28), the election of Zerubbabel (Hag 2:23), and the election of kings (discussed below). Jerusalem is also elect by God (1 Kgs 8:44, 48; 11:13, 32, 36; 14:21; 21:7; cf. Josh 9:27; 1 Kgs 8:16) though eventually God calls her "this city which I have not chosen" (2 Kgs 23:27). Such election appears to extend even to the election of the Messiah, whom God has chosen and delights in (Isa 42:1) but the nation abhors (Isa 49:7). Of course, the referent of these elections is disputed, as are numerous potentially Messianic passages throughout Isaiah. Many believe the referent is Cyrus in Isa 42:1 due in part to parallels with the Cylinder of Cyrus including Cyrus being called by name, chosen, and Marduk being pleased with him. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 211. However, if the referent is indeed the Messiah, such election is clearly not merely subjective, but the election as well as the associated delight quite clearly would be evaluative.

[104] Perhaps the translation "regret" is a bit misleading. The term may better be translated, "I am sorry." As H. Van Dyke Parunak points out, נחם connotes the sorrow of emotional pain but never the sense of "regret" per se. "A Semantic Survey of NHM," *Bib* 56 (1975): 519. This is the same term used of God's sorrow in Gen 6:6, suggesting God "was deeply concerned" and in "grief." Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 170. For

declares to Saul, "Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king" and in this regard he will not "change His mind" (1 Sam 15:23, cf. 15:26).[105] It is thus apparent that Saul's election to the kingship was not unconditional.[106] Significantly, the dynasty that is thereafter promised to David was conditionally available to Saul. At Gilgal, Samuel had proclaimed that God "would have established" Saul's "kingdom over Israel forever" but because of his sin, his kingdom would "not endure" (1 Sam 13:13–14).

Within this context, David is chosen to succeed Saul. The first hint of David's election comes directly upon the heels of the first proclamation of Saul's rejection as dynastic king, wherein Samuel proclaims, "The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart" and "has appointed him as ruler over His people." Yet, importantly, the selection of another is itself "because" Saul had not kept God's commands (1 Sam 13:14) and thus God has given the kingdom to another "who is better" than Saul (1 Sam 15:26–28). Although scholars have been divided as to whether the phrase "a man after His own heart" is a statement of subjective election or objective evaluation (or some combination), the latter statements suggest evaluation.[107] The narrative of David's selection is itself telling regarding the nature of this election. First, God declares that he has "seen" (ראה) a king for himself (1 Sam 16:1). Shortly after, Samuel beholds

further discussion see the word study of נחם earlier. Bergen comments further, "God is aware of and responsive to choices made by people, reacting favorably only when people choose the option of obedience to the divine will." *1, 2 Samuel*, 170.

[105] The same term, נחם, is used for God's sorrow (1 Sam 15:11, 35) as well as the declaration that he will not "change his mind" like a human (1 Sam 15:29). The statement in v. 29 conveys God's resolve to remove Saul and replace him with David, which is beyond revocation, but does not assert that God never "relents," as such. See the brief word study of נחם later in this chapter.

[106] That is, "election does not have such permanence that it cannot be called into question by the improper behavior of the elect." H. Wildberger, "מאס," *TLOT* 2:654.

[107] Some see this phrase referring to God's choice, suggesting the translation "a man of his own choosing." McCarter Jr., *II Samuel*, 229. Elsewhere, the phrase כִּלְבָבֶךָ, literally "according to my heart," refers to that which is according to one's desire (1 Sam 14:7; Ps 20:4 [5]). But this begs the question, whether such "desire" is wholly arbitrary or at least partially grounded in objective evaluation, as implied elsewhere (1 Kgs 3:6). Consider also the apparently objective, morally evaluative, usage in Jer 3:15 of the shepherds, after his own heart [כְּלִבִּי], whom God will appoint for his people after they return from apostasy.

Eliab and thinks he must be God's anointed, but God responds that while "man looks at the outward appearance," God "looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7), a significant hint of evaluation that reminds one of the somewhat cryptic earlier description, "man after my own heart" (1 Sam 13:14). God successively declares, with regard to brother after brother of David, not "chosen" (1 Sam 16:8–10) until David is brought and God states, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he" (1 Sam 16:12). David later states, God "chose me above" Saul "and above all his house" (2 Sam 6:21; cf. 1 Kgs 8:16). Although God does not specify why David himself is chosen, Saul was clearly rejected because he rejected God, David is "better" than Saul, and God looked upon the heart of David in selecting him. The implication is that David's election is not arbitrary.[108]

With this election comes the promise of a dynasty. God declares to David that he will "make a house" for him (2 Sam 7:11) and will "establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam 7:13). God will be "a father to him and he will be a son to" God who will discipline his sons if they depart from faithfulness. Yet, divine "lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as [God] took it away from Saul. . . . [David's] house and [his] kingdom shall endure before [God] forever; [David's] throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam 7:14–16; cf. 2 Kgs 21:7; Jer 33:17–21).[109] This David later refers to as "an everlasting covenant" (2 Sam 23:5). As such, these promises to David appear to be unconditional, in stark contrast to the case of Saul. But this begs the question, why is such a promise made to David, and by extension, Solomon?[110] Interestingly, Solomon

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[108] In support of this view, Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers reference an "element of scrutiny in the root בחר [which] is appropriate to the idea that, for so important an office, Yahweh looks carefully at qualifications before making his appointment." *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8* (AB 25B; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 70. See also such evaluative connotations in the word study of בחר.

[109] Roddy Braun contends that "no possibility is entertained that this covenant will be abrogated, or will need to be abrogated (v 13); no less than five times the writer repeats that it will be forever." *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Dallas: Word, 1986), 200.

[110] Both Birth and Fretheim suggest that God's election of David is different in kind from Saul's such that while Saul's election was conditional, David's is unconditional. Birch, "First and Second Samuel," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:1091, 1257–58. Yet, Birch states, "The promise to David does not remove the 'if' of moral demand that we associate with God's covenant given to Israel at Sinai. Even kings may be chastised and made to suffer the consequences of their sin." "First and Second Samuel," in *Numbers–*

seems to attribute this "great lovingkindness" shown to David, including Solomon's own kingship over God's "chosen" people, at least partially to David's obedience and "uprightness of heart" (1 Kgs 3:6, 8). Likewise, later, it is declared that Solomon's kingship is "for David's sake," and "because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that [God] commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kgs 15:4–5).

Further, the promise elsewhere seems explicitly conditional. David himself instructs Solomon to obey God in accordance with the "Law of Moses . . . so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel'" (1 Kgs 2:3–4; cf. 1 Kgs 8:25). Again, Solomon is instructed by God himself, "if you will walk before Me as your father David walked . . . then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David" (1 Kgs 9:4–5). Yet, "if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me . . . then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them" (1 Kgs 9:6–7; cf. 9:9).[111] Accordingly, the earthly dynasty is not everlasting. In actuality, Solomon strays from obedience, and God is angered (1 Kgs 11:9–10) and proclaims, "Because you have done this . . . I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will

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Samuel, 2:1258. But then, whence is unconditionality? Fretheim suggests that God learned from the experience of Saul and implemented a better way. "Divine Foreknowledge, Divine Constancy, and the Rejection of Saul's Kingship," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 599–601. Yet, even if one allows Fretheim's view that God lacks foreknowledge (which I do not), it seems difficult to believe God would not anticipate enthroning a potentially rebellious king. Why not just make an unconditional commitment the first time? Why not just decide to maintain the commitment to Saul despite his rebellion while he was still on the throne, even? Fretheim further suggests that the proclamation that God will not "change his mind" in 1 Sam 15:29 refers to the surety and permanence of David's election; cf. also Ps 132:11. However, the apparent conditionality of the Davidic covenant elsewhere raises significant questions for such an approach.

[111] Many scholars have recognized the conditionality embedded even in the promises of the Davidic dynasty. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 150–51; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel* (WBC 10; Dallas: Word, 1983), 127; Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 141–42; 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).

give it to your servant" (1 Kgs 11:11; cf. 11:33). Yet, the punishment is tempered on account of

David and Jerusalem such that God "will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David"

but the kingdom will be torn from Solomon's son though his son will be given one tribe "for the

sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen" (1 Kgs 11:12–13).

Jeroboam is selected in a similarly contingent manner, being given a conditional promise

of an "enduring house" if he is obedient to God as was David (cf. 1 Kgs 11:38).[112] Yet, he is

disobedient and thus the kingdom is taken from his house (1 Kgs 14:8). Thus began a long line of

mostly rebellious kings in both the north and the south of the divided kingdom. Although

punishment was tempered and delayed "for the sake of David His servant, since He had promised

him to give a lamp to him through his son always" (2 Kgs 8:19), both Israel and Judah ultimately

faced destruction (cf. 2 Kgs 23:27).

It seems, then, that while election may be undeserved and foreconditional, its attendant

privileges are neither unconditional nor unending. There have been numerous scholarly

explanations for the apparent tension between the apparently unconditional promise(s) and,

elsewhere, conditionality involved in the attendant blessings of the promise(s). Some interpreters

hold that there were at least two streams of history that interpreted the events in contradiction to

one another: one viewing the promises as unconditional and eternal, the other viewing them as

conditional, or at least tempering them as such.[113] Another possibility is that, considering the

evident conditionality and the removal of the earthly kingship, the promise was never intended to

be viewed as unconditional. A third possibility is that the election, covenant, and attendant

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[112] Jeroboam succeeds Solomon as ruler over 11 tribes but one tribe will remain with Solomon's son, "for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel (1 Kgs 11:32), and again "for the sake of My servant David whom I chose, who observed My commandments and My statutes" (1 Kgs 11:34), "that My servant David may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen for Myself to put My name" (1 Kgs 11:36).

[113] The prevalent view is that the Deuteronomic historian emphasized conditionality upon faithfulness while another strand, likely the priestly, emphasized the unconditional "perpetual covenant" hearkening back to Abraham. Weinfeld, "The Covenant," 195; Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 149, 237–39; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

promises were unconditional in some respects, but conditional in others. This study favors the

third option, which is bolstered by reference to parallels in ANE literature.[114] This potential

solution will be addressed in a bit more detail later, along with further mention of the potential

interpretive value of comparison to ANE covenant genres, especially that of grant.

The apparent tension between elements of conditionality and unconditionality continues

throughout the latter prophets, and into the writings. Much of Israel's identity is as God's

"chosen" people (Isa 43:10, 20; 44:1–2; 45:4; 48:10; 65:9, 15, 22).[115] God has "chosen" and not

"rejected" Israel (Isa 41:8–9; cf. Jer 33:24; Zech 3:2). However, the people are not always faithful

to God, despite his repeated pleadings for them. Indeed, in numerous instances, God's desires are

unfulfilled. For example, God "longs [חכה] to be gracious" to his people" (Isa 30:18) but his

compassion is interrupted by human apostasy.[116] Further, God does not desire or have "pleasure"

(חפץ) in the death of the wicked but desires repentance (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11). However, many

reject him.[117] Therefore, God's will is not unilaterally efficacious; some factor(s) bring about

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[114] This is the view of many scholars. See McCarter Jr., *II Samuel*, 207–8; Weinfeld, "The Covenant"; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 370. Consider also John H. Walton's helpful presentation of covenant jeopardy, which maintains that God does not revoke his covenant promises but "there is a necessity for the human party to obey God." *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 113. Walton suggests that failure by the human party to meet covenant responsibilities might amount to "benefit jeopardy" or "abortive jeopardy," among others. In the former, the human party's failure to meet covenant responsibilities puts them in danger of losing the benefits of the covenant (cf. Lev 26:14–30; Deut 28:15–68; 1 Kgs 9:6–9). In the latter, failure "on the part of the human party prior to or soon after ratification [of the covenant] could jeopardize their involvement in that phase of the covenant." For example, if "Abraham had not left his home and family to go to the land God showed him, the covenant would not have been made with him." *Covenant*, 97. In this way, he contends that human rebellion against God can "render the covenant ineffectual." However, "this does not mean that the covenant is null and void, but that it is rendered ineffectual in terms of its intended purpose." Walton, *Covenant*, 97.

[115] It should be remembered that often the identification of the "chosen" is disputed. The passages here appear to be in reference to Israel.

[116] This is important for it means that God makes his action dependent upon contingencies. The language of intense waiting implies once again the divine emotion of wanting to be gracious but not being able to tolerate the state of affairs (in regard to justice, not sheer capability).

[117] Although God has no pleasure in anyone's death, "Yahweh will not impose his grace on a rebellious people. They must accept responsibility for both the course of their lives and their destiny. Without repentance God cannot forgive and the death sentence remains inevitable." Daniel I. Block, *The*

states of affairs contrary to God's will, which causes him grief (cf. Lam 3:32–33). Accordingly,

that election is not constant with regard to Israel is apparent in the forecast that a time will come

when God "will have compassion on Jacob and again choose Israel" (Isa 14:1). Likewise, in

Zechariah it is foretold that God will "again choose Jerusalem" (Zech 1:17; 2:12).[118] Further,

humans are said to have "broke[n] the everlasting covenant" (Isa 24:5; cf. Jer 6:30).[119]

Conditionality is further evident in that people are exhorted to listen to and come to God and he

"will make an everlasting covenant with" them, "according to the faithful mercies shown to

David" (Isa 55:3).[120] Apparently, even this "everlasting covenant" requires a responsive

relationship. Again, God declares that he loves justice and thus declares his intention to faithfully

recompense Israel with an everlasting covenant and with blessing denoting a link between love,

justice, and blessing (Isa 61:8–9). Indeed, God looks forward to a day when the "whole house of

Israel" will serve him, he will "accept [רצה] them" and their gifts as a "soothing aroma" and bring

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Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24 (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 589. Thus, "God desired to deliver, but he would bring judgment if necessary." Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr., *Ezekiel* (NAC 17; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 193.

[118] Ben C. Ollenburger suggests, "These texts stress the permanence of God's choice, and thus of Jerusalem/Zion." "The Book of Zechariah," in *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 7 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 754. Similarly, see Gary Smith, *Isaiah 1–39* (NAC 15A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 306. Oswalt suggests, "This election does not speak so much of Israel's status before God as it does of the individual Israelite's experience of him. God's choice of Israel to be the bearers of the covenant was fixed in God's promise to Abraham. But any specific group or generation of that people had to receive the choosing for themselves." Yet, whatever may come, "God will once again choose." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39* (NICOT; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1986), 312. Yet, the very fact that Israel must be chosen again points to an aspect of impermanence. Watts suggests, "'Again' is needed in the context where such election has been set aside to allow judgment to do its work." John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* (WBC 24; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985), 202. Such lapses of election are consistently attributed not to divine arbitrariness, but to the failure and rebellion of God's covenant people. Indeed, here "election is not deterministic and that the correlation of divine election and human submission to obligation is taken very seriously." Wildberger, *TLOT* 1:221–22.

[119] However, Wildberger points out that "Lev 26:44 expressly emphasizes the notion that this judgment may be understood as abandonment to destruction. The dissolution of the covenant is not at issue." *TLOT* 2:659. See also Jer 31:37.

[120] There is some ambiguity as to whether the phrase חַסְדֵי דָוִד is a subjective or objective genitive. That is, are the "mercies" those shown by David toward God, or by God toward David? See the discussion in the word study of חסד.

them to the land of Israel (Ezek 20:39–42).[121] Thus, ultimately, God forecasts a new covenant, not

like the one the people broke (Jer 31:31–32) but one in which God will put his law within them

and write it on their heart (Jer 31:33) and its endurance will be sure (Jer 31:35–37; cf. Jer 32:38–

41; Ezek 16:59–63; 37:21–28). The key to this future, idyllic relationship is the concept of a new

heart provided by God, such that the relationship will be wholehearted and internal (cf. Ezek

11:19; 18:31; 36:26).

Accordingly, it seems that Israel is not automatically privy to the Davidic promises.

God's word will accomplish his "desire" (חפץ) (Isa 55:11), his anger accomplishes his purpose

(Jer 23:20), he is the father (Isa 64:8) and the potter (Isa 64:8; Jer 18:1–10).[122] Yet, God expects

appropriate response, that is, requited love. The elect king is to, in effect, fulfill that which was

already prescribed in the Mosaic covenant, which itself exists only because of God's love for

Israel's forefathers (Deut 4:37; 7:7–8; 10:15), and his lovingkindness and compassion bestowed

upon them, especially after rebellion (Exod 33:19; 34:6–7).[123] Similarly, in Amos, the special

status of the people before God brings special responsibility. Thus, God declares, "You only have

I chosen [ידע] among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your

iniquities" (Amos 3:2).[124] God took the initiative, and his love is the basis for the relationship, but

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[121] God himself recounts the up and down history of his special relationship with Israel, from the day he "chose Israel and swore" to them in Egypt (Ezek 20:5) they rebelled with idolatry despite God's instructions and, thus, he "resolved to pour out" his "wrath on them" (Ezek 20:8). Yet, for his name he delivered them repeatedly but they likewise rebelled repeatedly, making God furious, an emotion that he tempered, and did not destroy them (Ezek 20:9–24). In the promised land, their rebellion continued, even in child sacrifice (Ezek 20:31) yet God resolved that he would bring them back through discipline, even into the "bond of the covenant," purge the rebels and bring them out of sojourn but not to Israel (Ezek 20:38).

[122] God is consistently represented as passible, but he is not passive. Notably, the "potter" analogy, while clearly displaying God's power as the shaper of his creation, also evidences clear conditionality; cf. John C. Peckham, "The Passible Potter and the Contingent Clay: A Theological Study of Jeremiah 18:1–10," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 18 (2007): 130–50.

[123] Thus, the Davidic covenant is a sub-covenant of the Sinaitic covenant and, therefore, also includes conditionality. See Roy Gane, "Covenant of Love: Syllabus for GSEM 538 Covenant-Law-Sabbath" (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 1997), 32–35.

[124] The verb here, ידע, connotes an intimate relationship, thus alluding to the special status of Israel before God as elect. Andersen and Freedman rightly point out, "Yahweh is the 'God of Israel,'" and

he expects all the more an appropriate response from his people. Within this context, the idea of a remnant becomes highly significant; some of God's "chosen" are spared and heirs to the inheritance (Isa 65:8–9), and there is a "blessing" in them, God's people who "seek" him (Isa 65:10).[125] However, there are others who were "called" but neither listened to nor answered God and forsook him, chose what displeased him, and thus face destruction (Isa 65:11–12). This posits the distinction between a "believing [faithful] remnant" who are heirs to the promises and the unbelieving who ultimately face destruction.[126] In all this, though God's promises never fail, election is depicted as conditional and not unilateral, irresistible, or constant.

Election and Covenant in the Writings

The Writings build upon a very similar framework to that of the prophets with regard to election. As in the prophets, the term בחר often refers to vocational election, especially the election of Israel (Pss 33:12; 47:4 [5]; 78:67–68; 132:13; 135:4).[127] Notably, Israel is chosen as God's "inheritance" (Ps 33:12) and "His own possession [סְגֻלָּה]" (Ps 135:4). As such, God's

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"although v 2 states the case in absolute terms, these should be taken as relative rather than exclusive: I have given you more attention than any other people; therefore I expect more from you than from them. I will punish you more than them." Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 382. This may have served as a corrective against those who thought election relieved them of responsibility. Donald E. Gowan, "The Book of Amos," in *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 7 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 369–70. On the contrary, "Israel was about to learn that their special relationship carried with it special responsibility and accountability." Billy K. Smith and Frank S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (NAC 19B; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 71.

[125] John D. W. Watts believes that "the whole is preserved from deserved destruction for the sake of the few faithful *servants* and the potential life and blessing inherent in them." *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 344. Cf. idem, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1998), 644–45.

[126] Though some scholars think that the idea of a "believing" remnant is late, Oswalt points out that "all the prophets, at least from Elijah and Elisha onward, divided the nation into those who obeyed God and those who did not." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 645; cf. Deut 28–29; Isa 3:10; Jer 24.

[127] Election in the Writings also includes that of priests (1 Chr 15:2; 2 Chr 29:11) and kings, Jerusalem (Ps 78:68; 2 Chr 6:5, 34, 38; 12:13; 33:7; Neh 1:9), and the temple itself (2 Chr 7:12, 16; 33:7). Reference is also made to the election of Abraham (Neh 9:7; cf. Ps 105:9–12 = 1 Chr 16:16–19) and of Moses and Aaron (Ps 105:26). The Abrahamic covenant, the product of this election, is itself presented as "everlasting" in 1 Chr 16:16–19 = Ps 105:9–12; cf. Ps 111:5, 9.

people are cherished by him, a special treasure (סְגֻלָּה), implying evaluation (cf. Prov 21:3).[128] Elsewhere, the psalmist speaks of God's "desire" (חמד) for the mountain of his dwelling (Ps 68:16 [17]).[129] Likewise, God has "chosen" (בחר) and "desired" (אוה) Zion (Ps 132:13); it is to be his "resting place forever" for he has "desired [אוה] it" (Ps 132:13–14; cf. 2 Chr 7:16).[130] The term for desire here is a strongly emotional term, sometimes connoting an intense craving.[131] Moreover,

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[128] Notice the evaluative term סְגֻלָּה, which denotes something highly valued, treasured, and/or cherished. See the discussion of the term in the Torah section earlier. It is also interesting that the word בחר (*niphal* participle) with God as agent is used in the sense of "desire" in Prov 21:3. See the discussion regarding divine delight below.

[129] חמד connotes desire, longing, liking, finding pleasure, and/or craving, but usually of an explicitly objective nature, with an object that is desirable, pleasant, etc. It "denotes the desire as founded upon the perception of beauty, and therefore excited from without." W. Schultz, quoted in Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (10 vols.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 1:402. David Talley comments that "depending on the context, חמד can stress a different meaning, either the desirability of an object or the desire to obtain." "חמד," *NIDOTTE* 2:167. Childs states, "The emphasis of חמד falls on an emotion which often leads to a commensurate action." *The Book of Exodus*, 427. It may be used for a positive desire or the coveting of that which belongs to someone else (cf. Exod 20:17). Notably, it collocates in parallel with אהב in one instance, referring to those who "love [אהב] being simple-minded" and scoffers who "delight [חמד] themselves in scoffing" (Prov 1:22). The term is used with divine agency in four instances, the verb once (Ps 68:16 [17]) and the adjectival חָמוּד thrice, all in reference to Daniel as one who is "greatly beloved" or "highly esteemed" (Dan 9:23; 10:11, 19). The implicit agent is God. The adjectival form appears in 9 verses altogether. Elsewhere, it refers to that which is precious, highly valuable, pleasant, etc. (cf. Gen 27:15; Ezra 8:27; Dan 10:3; 11:38, 43; 2 Chr 20:25). The noun חֶמְדָּה appears in 16 verses referring to a desirable object. In some instances, there may be implicit divine evaluation such as when God refers to "My pleasant [חֶמְדָּה] field" (Jer 12:10; cf. Jer 3:19). Interestingly, the term collocates once in parallel with choice [בחר], of human agency (Isa 1:29).

[130] According to Waltke, "*Desire (taᵃwat)* is a synonym of ḥāmad ("covet"; see 1:22) and denotes the aspirations rooted deep in a person's existence." *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 474. Both terms are profoundly emotive. G. Mayer, "אוה," *TDOT* 1:135. Leslie C. Allen speaks of this as God's "enthusiastic fervor." *Psalms 101–150* (WBC 21; Dallas: Word, 2002), 274.

[131] אוה appears with divine agency in three passages, two in the verbal form (Ps 132:12–13; Job 32:13) and once in the noun form (Hos 10:10). Its basic meaning is "desire," which may be associated with longing and/or craving. See William C. Williams, "אוה," *NIDOTTE* 1:304–306. The *piel,* which appears here in Ps 132:13–14, is in every other case collocated with the soul as the seat of desire. The verb אוה appears in 27 verses altogether, in the *piel* (11 verses) and in the *hitpael* (16 verses). The *hitpael* often connotes a greedy craving or coveting while the *piel* often refers to intense desire, whether positive or negative. The collocation of אוה + נֶפֶשׁ appears in Deut 12:20; 14:26; 1 Sam 2:16; 2 Sam 3:21; 1 Kgs 11:37; Job 23:13; Prov 21:10; Isa 26:9; Mic 7:1.
    Job also uses it to refer to the divine will saying, "What [God's] soul [נַפְשׁוֹ] desires, that He does" (Job 23:13). This, interestingly, associates the divine will with a syntagm that usually connotes intense longing. In its noun form, אוה appears in the phrase, "When it is My desire, I will chastise them" (Hos 10:10), which may also be translated "in my desire, I will chastise them" (Hos 10:10). This marks the only occurrence where the noun does not collocate with נֶפֶשׁ. Notably, some have questioned whether this is an instance of אוה at all, suggesting that the text may be amended to an infinitive construct of אתה; cf. Francis I.

divine election is not unconditional or unilaterally effective as God is provoked by Israel's evil (Ps 78:58–59) and "rejected [מאס] the tent of Joseph, and did not choose [בחר] the tribe of Ephraim" (Ps 78:67), but he "chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved" (Ps 78:68).[132]

Further, the Davidic election is once again a prevalent theme in the Writings, perhaps most clearly depicted when David recounts that God "chose" him to be king "for He has chosen Judah" and "He took pleasure [רצה] in me to make me king over all Israel (1 Chr 28:4; cf. 2 Chr 6:5–7). Further, Solomon's election is also prominent; God himself declares, "I have chosen him to be a son to Me, and I will be a father to him" (1 Chr 28:6; cf. 1 Chr 17:13; 28:5). Again, as in the Prophets, the promises attending this election within the Davidic covenant are frequently spoken of as everlasting. For instance, God proclaims that he will "establish" Solomon's "throne forever," be a father to him, and not take away his חסד as from Saul (1 Chr 17:12–14). In numerous other instances the covenant is spoken of as everlasting.[133] Indeed, it is declared, "If his sons forsake" the commandments then God will punish them but "will not break off [his] lovingkindness from him. . . . My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of my

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Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 565–66. JPS translates the phrase, "When I chose them." The noun occurs in 7 verses with the connotation of desire, longing. The collocation of אוה + נֶפֶשׁ appears in Deut 12:15, 20–21; 18:6; 1 Sam 23:20; Jer 2:24. A different noun of this lexeme, תַּאֲוָה, represents desire in the form of a craving for someone of something; it is never used with divine agency.

[132] This appears to be in reference to the removal of the ark from Shiloh to Jerusalem, which is itself a precursor to further judgment against Israel, yet also, by extension, highlights appraisal of respective nations.

[133] Thus, God declares, "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish your seed forever" (Ps 89:3–4 [4–5]; cf. 89:19–21 [20–22]). Notice the *qal* passive participle used here with reference to David's election, which often connotes the evaluative sense of being choice, of good quality, like choice soldiers, chariots, cedars, etc. Further, "My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and my covenant shall be confirmed to him. So I will establish his descendants forever" (Ps 89:28–29 [29–30]; cf. 89:2 [3]). See also 1 Chr 22:10; cf. 2 Chr 13:5.

lips. Once I have sworn to My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure

forever and his throne . . . shall be established forever"" (Ps 89:31–37 [32–38]).[134]

Yet, despite all of this, the Psalmist laments the apparent reality that God has "cast off

and rejected" and even "spurned the covenant of your servant" and "profaned his crown in the

dust (Ps 89:38–39 [39–40]) and asks, "Where are Your former lovingkindnesses, O Lord, which

You swore to David in Your faithfulness?" (Ps 89:49 [50]).[135] Accordingly, the attendant

privileges of this election are repeatedly declared to be conditional. For example, God himself

declares to Solomon, "If you walk before Me as your father David walked" keeping the

commandments "then I will establish your throne as I covenanted with your father David . . . but

if you turn away and forsake" the commandments and serve other gods "then I will uproot you"

(2 Chr 7:17–20). Likewise, David exhorts Solomon to serve God wholeheartedly for "if you seek

Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever" (1 Chr 28:9).

Many other statements likewise declare such conditionality.[136] Further, the Davidic promises

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[134] As J. Clinton McCann Jr. puts it, here the "metaphor suggests that the Davidic dynasty is an enduring structure of God's cosmic rule." "The Book of Psalms," in *1 & 2 Maccabees, Job, Psalms* (vol. 4 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 1036. The language here and in 2 Sam 7, upon which this passage is based, has often been associated with the language of a "royal grant"-type covenant. So Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 2002), 427. See the discussion further below.

[135] Knoppers believes that "however much 2 Sam 7 and Ps 89 heighten the deity's obligation to David and his seed, they also contain a bilateral element. In both texts, David's descendants are not freed from their responsibility to obey Yhwh (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:31–33)." Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29* (AB 12A; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 672. Cf. idem, "Ancient Near Eastern." Notably, God's faithfulness (אֱמוּנָה) and lovingkindness (חֶסֶד) are emphasized throughout the Psalm (both appearing seven times) and it forms the crux of the Psalmist's final question, is God no longer faithful? As Tate puts it, "The perplexity and hurt are not resolved in this psalm; the matter is left open. The speaker cannot solve the problem." *Psalms 51–100*, 429.

[136] Thus, David states to Solomon, "Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe" God's commandments (1 Chr 22:13). God declares of Solomon, "I will establish his kingdom forever if he resolutely performs my commandments and My ordinances (1 Chr 28:7). Likewise, Solomon recounts God's declaration to David: "You shall not lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way, to walk in My laws as you [David] have walked before Me" (2 Chr 6:16; cf. 6:42). Cf. Ps 89:32 [33]; 1 Chr 28:10; 2 Chr 15:2. Elsewhere, the conditionality is also explicit: "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. If your sons will keep My covenant and My testimony which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever" for "the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation" calling it his "resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps 132:11–14). Here and elsewhere the Psalms presume what is implicit elsewhere, namely that the Davidic promises

remain integral to the divine acceptance or rejection of succeeding kings.[137] Eventually, despite the Davidic covenant, destruction comes, even upon Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:19).[138] In all there is repeated contingency despite the supposed unconditionality of the divine promises.[139] The depiction of election and covenant in the OT thus suggests significant conditionality in the divine-human relationship.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the Torah

The volitional aspect of love is evident in Exod 33:19 where God has the right to freely bestow mercy and compassion on the undeserving but is not compelled to do so.[140] The volitional aspect of divine love is further apparent in the relationship between love and choice, which is clarified in three primary passages in Deuteronomy, all of which depict divine love as the cause of the divine choice of Israel (Deut 4:37; 7:7–8; 10:15). First, "because" God loved (אהב) Israel's forefathers he chose (בחר) their descendants (Deut 4:37). Second, "Not because you were more numerous than all other peoples did Yahweh delight [חשק] in you, therefore he chose [בחר] you when you were the least of all peoples, because of the love [אַהֲבָה] of Yahweh for you, and he kept the oath which he swore to your fathers" (Deut 7:7–8).[141] Third, "Yet in your fathers Yahweh

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are meant not merely for kings but, through them, belong to the people as a whole.

[137] God was with Jehoshaphat "because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals" (2 Chr 17:3). Similarly, Hezekiah and Josiah "did right in the sight of the LORD" like their "father David" (2 Chr 29:2; 34:2; cf. 11:17). On the other hand Ahaz "did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father" (2 Chr 28:1).

[138] This is despite the fact that even in the midst of evil, God "was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever" (2 Chr 21:7).

[139] Thompson comments, the "basic condition [of the Davidic dynasty] was that David's descendants should walk in God's law." J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles* (NAC 9; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 229.

[140] See the discussion of this verse above where it is demonstrated that the text does not refer to the arbitrary bestowal of compassion on some and not others.

[141] My translation. I have departed from the NASB translation, both here and in Deut 10:15 below, because the translation "set His love" or "set His affection" in 7:7 and 10:15 respectively (likely influenced

delighted [חשק] to love [אהב] them. Therefore he chose [בחר] their seed after them, even you, from all the peoples as it is this day" (Deut 10:15).[142] These texts do not address the cause of divine love itself but, importantly, distinguish between love and choice, the former consistently being identified as the source of the latter.[143] As such, divine love and choice cannot be synonymous.[144] Israel is the recipient of divine choice and affection (חשק) *because* of God's love for their fathers, first, but also *because* of his love for them.[145] Since divine love is the basis of election, it is likewise the basis of covenant. Further, in Deut 7:7 and 10:15, significant import hinges upon the meaning of the rare term חשק, an emotive term, which may denote clinging, attachment, longing, attraction, being drawn to, desire, and/or delight in something or someone.[146] חשק implies that the

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by the LXX "προείλατο" for חשק, meaning to "choose, decide, prefer, or commit oneself to") is misleading when the meaning of חשק is considered intertextually. Lapsley refers to this as an "evidently emotional attachment." "Feeling Our Way," 361. Further, "Somehow, God's love for Israel is born out of a feeling, and that feeling has moral weight and relates in a significant way to the actions God takes on Israel's behalf (Deut 7:8)." Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way," 368.

[142] My translation. In both cases, I have translated vav with בחר as a vav of consequence "therefore he chose" in accordance with the usage in Deut 4:37 where the parallel statement is predicated on "because" [תַּחַת] and the vav with בחר is thus a vav of consequence. Lapsley translates, "Yhwh became attached to Israel's ancestors in love and chose their seed after them." Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way," 361.

[143] Shafer sees this as reference to "a cosmic deity who loved the fathers, made covenant with them, and acknowledged their reciprocal faithfulness to his covenant by choosing their seed." Byron E. Shafer, "The Root *bhr* and Pre-Exilic Concepts of Chosenness in the Hebrew Bible," *ZAW* 89 (1977): 39. Tigay suggests that "Israel's ancestors earned God's love" through "fidelity" as "explained in Genesis." *Deuteronomy*, 57.

[144] Some scholars have seemed to conflate love and choice. So Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 134. Merrill is likewise representative of such a perspective. He suggests that in "covenant contexts these verbs are synonymous." Thus, in his view, "love and hate are not emotive terms but technical language to speak of divine election for salvation and service." *Deuteronomy*, 180–81. But, contra Merrill, since election is consistently described as a consequence of God's prior love here, it cannot therefore be synonymous.

[145] Cf. Pss 78:68; 47:4 [5]. That God's choice is explicitly predicated on his love, as its basis, is recognized by numerous scholars, despite the traditional conflation of love and choice; cf. Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:285; Dyrness, *Themes*, 59, Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 131, 136; Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 179–80; Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 159, 204; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52* (WBC 27; Dallas, TX: Word, 1995), 108. Jacob comments that "the origin of election is found in love, that is to say in the spontaneous movement which carries one being toward another being with the desire to possess it and to find some satisfaction in that possession." *Theology*, 108. Even Egyptian parallels depict divine activity toward Pharaoh "as a result of my love for you." See Jan Bergman, "אהב," *TDOT* 1:100.

[146] חשק is a somewhat rare term, appearing in only 13 verses, yet it is very closely related to אהב

kind of love that God has for his people is not detached, but includes tender feeling, affection, and emotion.[147]Yet, divine love here describes more than God's emotive affection for Israel. Here, divine love is also committal, signified by the action of choice, explicitly appealing to a prior commitment, the promise to the patriarchs. In this way, the volitional aspect of divine love is complementary to evaluation and emotion.

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and plays a prominent role in passages that speak of Israel's election in divine love. The non-personal usages of חשק refer to bands in the construction of the sanctuary (Exod 27:17; 38:17, 28), thus suggesting derivation from a root meaning of bind, adhere, unite, or stick together; cf. Good, "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:165; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 360; Gerhard Wallis, "חשק," *TDOT* 5:261. The usage in interpersonal contexts also implies such a connection. For instance, in Gen 34:8 (Shechem for Dinah) it means "longing" or even "passionate desire." See Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:280. Deut 21:11 utilizes the same term of a man's desire for a beautiful woman among the captives whom he would like to marry. It is used of other desires as well (1 Kgs 9:1, 19; 2 Chr 8:6; Isa 38:17). The same term is used to describe the one who has "loved" [חשק] God and "therefore" God will deliver him (Ps 91:14). In this way, from a survey of OT usages it is clear that the term does not connote "choice" in the sense of arbitrary election. Rather, the normal meaning would seem to entail passionate love, delight, and/or desire.

However, some scholars nevertheless suggest an elective connotation. Wallis recognizes the connotation of "inward devotion to or pleasure in a project" in human usage (1 Kgs 9:19). *TDOT* 5:262. However, he believes the theological usage is correctly associated with decision and "does not suggest a sudden surge of emotion; it presupposes not just an unconditional erotic attraction but also a reasoned and unconditional decision . . . a conscious attitude of devotion." Ibid., 262. Merrill, not surprisingly, sees חשק, בחר, and אהב as "essentially synonymous as their usage elsewhere clearly shows." *Deuteronomy*, 203. However, in my view, both err in projecting the meaning of choice onto the two other verbs, which by their function are not synonymous but merely interrelated. Coppes sees it as purely on the basis of divine volition but also "deep, inward attachment." "חשק," *TWOT* 332.

On the other hand, many scholars have suggested meaning more in line with the etymology and usage of the term throughout the OT. BDB simply suggests the meaning "to love, be attached to." "חשק," BDB, 365. Similarly, *HALOT* suggests, "be attached to" or "to love" and that there may be a relationship to the Arabic *'asiqa*, 'love passionately.'" "חשק," *HALOT*, 362. Robert Alter translates חשק as "desire" in both Deut 7:7 and 10:15. *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton, 2005), 917, 933. HCSB translates "devoted" in both instances. JPS is inconsistent, translating "set his heart" in Deut 7:7, but "was drawn in His love" in Deut 10:15. Similarly, Craigie suggests in Deut 10, God "was *drawn to your fathers to love them*." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 204. The NKJV is likewise inconsistent, translating "set His love" and "delighted" (Deut 7:7; 10:15). Els and Snaith likewise see חשק as meaning "delight." Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:280; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 135. Talley sees this as "God's desire" by choice and including emotion. "חשק," *NIDOTTE* 2:318. Duane Christensen interprets that God has "fallen in love" with them. *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* (WBC 6B; Dallas: Word, 2002), 204. Eichrodt sees this as "free affection" and points out "the emphasis on the emotional element" in this term. *Theology*, 256; cf. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 56. Weinfeld even suggests "'lusted after you' or 'hung on you.'" *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 360. Lapsley contends that the verb "denotes affectionate love, desire, yearning, or longing—sometimes with a sexual connotation (Gen 34:8; Deut 21:11) but always with an affective dimension." "Feeling Our Way," 360.

[147] In Els's analysis, אהב in these verses signifies, among other things, "an emotive event, expressing a divine *feeling* of love." *NIDOTTE* 1:280.

Further, divine love is here unmerited and foreconditional, that is, prior to, but not

exclusive of, conditions. Israel is not chosen because of its merit but precisely because of God's

prior love (Deut 7:7–8; cf. 9:4–5).[148] God does not need to love Israel, he is the sovereign of the

universe (Deut 10:14); to him belongs all that is, yet he loved and chose Israel, "even" her "above

all peoples" (Deut 10:15). This divine choice is necessarily in contrast to the "nations" that will

be driven out of the land, since the specific divine blessing of inheritance is preferential and

mutually exclusive to the blessing of those who already occupy the "promised" land (Deut 4:38).

Accordingly, Israel is holy, "chosen" for God's own "possession out of all the peoples" on earth

(Deut 7:6). As such, divine love is depicted as differential. However, God's action is not

altogether arbitrary since the former occupants are dispossessed of the promised land because of

their wickedness (Deut 9:4–5; cf. Gen 15:16). Moreover, divine love does not exclude non-

Israelites since God "does not show partiality nor take a bribe" and God loves even the alien

(Deut 10:17–18).[149] As such, divine love may be differential, but is not altogether exclusive.

Although the status of God's elect is unmerited it is nevertheless conditional and must be

maintained by appropriate human response to God (Deut 7:9, 11–13; 10:16). This implication

also appears in that Israel is a "holy people to the LORD," which is in parallel to the fact that they

are "chosen . . . to be a people for His own possession" (Deut 7:6; 14:2). The syntagm "holy" and

"to the LORD" connotes not only that the people were set apart by choice, but also that they now

have a responsibility to maintain holiness. This responsibility is also indicated by reference to the

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[148] Cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 135, 137; Eichrodt, *Theology*, 256. See also Deut 32:10; Hos 11:1, 3; Jer 3:4; Ezek 6:6, 8; 7:4–6; Jer 31:9, 20.

[149] Lapsley makes a compelling case that further points to the emotive nature of divine love. She comments that "an emotional dimension to this divine love for the stranger flows logically from the concern for the inner life that is present in the preceding verses." "Feeling Our Way," 361. She further points out that the love that humans are to show for the alien is likewise emotional since they are to remember what it felt like to be a stranger and this "act of emotional imagination will stir feelings of compassion. Out of this affective response will arise love for the stranger, which then takes form in practical action." Ibid., 363.

conditionality associated with this phrase elsewhere in Deuteronomy (14:21; 26:18–19; 28:9).[150]

Moreover, the word "possession" (סגלה), often translated "treasured possession," has significant

connotations of pleasure/delight, predicated on the condition of human fidelity, and is elsewhere

closely associated with holiness to the LORD (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; cf. Mal 3:16–

18).[151] Thus, even within the context of election, human responsibility and corresponding divine

evaluation are highlighted. As such, God's choice itself imposes conditions. This will become

especially clear as the canonical analysis proceeds.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the Prophets

The primary term for election (בחר) only collocates with אהב once in the Prophets,

referring to "Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham my friend

[אֹהֲבִי]" (Isa 41:8). Here, as in the Torah, the election of Israel is predicated on prior love

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[150] For instance, "the LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments" (Deut 28:9). Moreover, Christensen points out that as elect they "must maintain a 'priestly' level of holiness." *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, 291. Similarly, see Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy,* 179; Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:350; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 87; Wildberger, *TLOT* 1:214, 216.

[151] סגלה appears in 8 verses in the OT. Two are in reference to treasure of gold and silver (Eccl 2:8; 1 Chr 29:3), one is a direct allusion to Deut 7:6; 14:2 describing God's choice of Israel as his סגלה, absent reference to holiness (Ps 135:4). In each of Exod 19:5–6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18–19, סגלה is related to holiness and explicit conditions or instructions. For example, "if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My סגלה" (Exod 19:5) a "holy nation" (Exod 19:6). Mal 3:16–18, absent the term holy [קדש], nevertheless implies active holiness for "those who fear" God and "esteem His name," which are those of whom God speaks when he declares, "They will be Mine . . . on the day that I prepare my סגלה" (Mal 3:16–17) and God "will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked" (Mal 3:18). As such, סגלה is clearly a term that expects obedience and its privileges are predicated on maintenance of relational holiness to God. As such, it appears to be an evaluative term. Israel's special status as סגלה is only possible because of God's election in the first place, but God's initiative must be appropriately responded to in order to continue.
Greenberg associates this term with the Akkadian, *sikiltu*, denoting valuable, private property but coming to refer in theological usage to "objects diligently and patiently acquired" and in this way a "dear personal possession." "Hebrew *segulla*: Akkadian *sikiltu*," *JAOS* 71 (1951): 174. "A royal seal of Abban of Alakh designates its owner as the *sikiltum* of the god, his 'servant' and 'beloved.' A letter from the Hittite sovereign to the king of Ugarit characterizes his vassal as his 'servant' and *sglt*, 'treasured possession.'" Sarna, *Exodus*, 104. Thus, the term "expresses God's special covenantal relationship with Israel and His love for His people" and the contexts in which it appears "uniquely emphasize the inextricable association between being God's סגלה and the pursuit of holiness." Ibid. Thus, God "owns everything, but Israel is his favorite possession." William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40* (AB 2A; New York: Doubleday, 2006), 157.

beginning with Abraham.[152] In Isa 41:8, there are many possible referents of the phrase, the "LORD loves him," within the context of a declaration that God will deliver Judah from Babylonian captivity. The text may refer to Cyrus, to Israel in a collective singular, the author or speaker of the text, or even to the Messiah himself.[153] In light of various plausible interpretations it seems unwise to try to draw far-reaching conclusions from this text.

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[152] Clark likewise makes this connection of love leading to choice in Deut 7:7–8; 10:15; Isa 41:8 and Pss 47:5; 78:68. *The Word Hesed*, 130. J. A. Motyer agrees, saying, "election arises from divine love, but it issues in responsive love." *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 312; cf. Isa 41:8–9. As Oswalt puts it, "*My friend* . . . suggests that election is not an austere, judicial act but is rooted and grounded in love, both the love of God for the chosen and the love of the chosen for God." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 90. Els believes that Abraham "the friend of Yahweh, on account of his intimate relationship with God, is seen as the model of piety." *NIDOTTE* 1:286. Some have seen in this a reference to ANE covenant language. See Thompson, "Israel's 'Lovers'"; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 371. See also the discussion of the relationship of love to covenant language in the אהב word study earlier.

[153] Some who believe it refers to Cyrus as the agent of deliverance, whom God has chosen (Isa 44:28; cf. 45:1; 46:11), and here "loves," believe this is an instance of the term "love" signifying election. Oswalt sees the referent as Cyrus, seeing "love" as "an expression of the election of Cyrus for the task at hand." Though he acknowledges, "It may also, though not necessarily, express a special affection for the man who would accomplish God's purpose for him." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 277; cf. Wallis, *TDOT* 1:113. Importantly, even if the referent is Cyrus it does not require a conflation of אהב with בחר. It may, in fact, be pointing to a divine affection for the person he uses to accomplish his purposes. Others who see this as Cyrus associate it with suzerain-vassal language, for which there is very specific support in relation to an ANE text regarding Cyrus as the "friend" of Marduk. Motyer connects this to the "Cyrus Cylinder account that Marduk, angered by the Babylonian kings, 'scoured all the lands for a friend. . . . He called Cyrus . . . went at his side like a friend and comrade.'" *Isaiah*, 380. In this vein, Blenkinsopp sees Cyrus and the referent and interprets "love" in a political rather than emotive sense, like the love of an overlord for his vassal. *Isaiah 40–55*, 294; cf. James Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40–66," in *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah* (ed. George A. Buttrick; vol. 5 of *IB*, ed. George A. Buttrick; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1956), 560. If Israel is the beloved, God's affection for his people would reasonably provide the basis for God's action against unmerciful Babylon (Isa 47:6). If the referent is the author or speaker of the verse, the phrase the "LORD loves him" belongs with the immediately previous phrase "who among them has declared these things." Christopher Seitz believes that "the Lord loves him," strictly speaking, is not an answer to the question, "Who among them has declared this?" If the question is not rhetorical only, an alternative reading would be, "The Lord loves the one who declared this." Here, then, the declarer would be from Israel, perhaps the author of the discourse. "The Book of Isaiah 40–66," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel* (vol. 6 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2001), 419. Finally, if it refers to the Messiah it would refer cryptically to the Messiah's ultimate work of the restoration of God's people. I believe the most likely referent is Israel, in part because God's love for Israel is frequently the motivation of divine deliverance elsewhere in Isaiah (Isa 43:4; 63:9; cf. 41:8) as well as throughout the prophets. The nearest textual antecedent is Israel in 48:12. However, the language in vs. 14, if the object of "love," is Israel would require Israel to be both in the second person, "you," earlier and in the third person as this object. This is possible considering the call for people to assemble. The text may shift between speakers, or have one speaker refer to the assembly by use of a collective singular. The LXX reads ἀγαπῶν σε, "loves you," which would make the referent Israel. Some amend the verb אהב from 3ms to a participle. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 292.

Perhaps the most frequently cited passage regarding the use of אהב in close association

with election appears in Mal 1. God declares at the outset of Malachi, "I have loved you,"

connoting not only past love but also his ongoing love for his people, that is, "I have loved and

continue to love you" (Mal 1:2). But, unappreciative, the people ask, "How have you loved us?"

In other words, where is the evidence of God's stated love? The implied accusation is that God

has not fulfilled his covenant promises. God answers that he "loved Jacob" (Mal 1:2) but "hated

Esau," though they were brothers (Mal 1:3). That this refers to Israel and Edom, the descendants

of Jacob and Esau respectively, seems clear in the foreground of the passage (cf. 1:3–5).[154] A

couple of major interpretive issues present themselves with regard to this passage. First, many

scholars have considered the idea of God's hatred of Edom to be too harsh and that, rather, the

language of "hate" merely refers either to God's loving Edom less than Israel,[155] or simply not

loving Edom.[156] The latter perspective has downplayed, or even denied altogether, the

emotionality of one or both of the terms, שׂנא and אהב.[157] Second, there has been some tendency to

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[154] The usage of "Esau" and "Jacob" to refer to Edom and Israel respectively throughout Obadiah (especially 10) seems to parallel the usage here. Scholars, however, disagree on whether the reference also refers to the individuals Jacob and Esau, a question that arises primarily due to Paul's usage of this passage in Rom 9:13. A number of scholars find reference to both the individuals and nations. Verhoef, *The Books*, 202; E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi* (NAC; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 256; Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi* (AB 25D; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 164. In my view, the primary emphasis is on the nations of Israel and Edom, yet the reference to the progenitors of both nations also draws attention to the historical reversal of birthrights, pointing toward election.

[155] See, for instance, Theodore F. K. Laetsch, *Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1956), 512–13. On the other hand, Keil and Delitzsch state, "To hate, is the opposite of love." *Commentary*, 10:637.

[156] If loved means chosen, hate means not loved or not chosen, rejected. Verhoef, *The Books*, 200–201; Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 251; Hill, *Malachi*, 166. David L. Petersen on the other hand rejects this explicitly saying nothing in this passage is akin to Deut 21:15, "In Malachi, hate is hate. . . . The rhetoric requires that Yahweh hate Edom virulently in order to demonstrate his unmitigated love toward Israel." *Zechariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 170.

[157] This will be discussed further below.

conflate אהב with "election" as if the two were synonymous.[158] This often dovetails with the supposition that God's love is altogether unconditional.[159]

First, let us consider the issue of whether the term "loved" should be interpreted as chosen in this passage. There can be little doubt that this passage is associated with, and indeed appeals to, election. However, if "I love you" simply means "I have chosen you," what does it add to the first affirmation that preceded the question?[160] The people's question itself presumes election as the supposed legitimation for their complaint, implying something like, "you ought to have loved us, but you haven't." God does not seem to be ignoring the question and merely re-stating his election of Israel. Rather, God seems to be appealing to his election of Israel to make the point that he has, in fact, manifested love toward Jacob's descendants. But this claim is not evidenced by reference to the mere fact that he elected them in the past, but rather by reference to

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[158] For instance, both Snaith and A. E. Hill view אהב as synonymous with choice. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 133; A. E. Hill, *Malachi*, 147, 165. Clendenen equates it with election *and* God's ongoing fidelity. Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 247. Similarly, Verhoef, *The Books*, 196. Els sees both a "definite act of election in sovereign grace" but "not apart from a secondary semantic component of a feeling of affection." *NIDOTTE* 1:282. The determinist view of this "love" and "hate" has been to equate this with God's inscrutable, eternal decree of predestination to salvation (Jacob) or to damnation (Esau). However, some who equate election and love do not see this as election unto salvation. For instance, Verhoef, *The Books*, 198. Clendenen views Israel's election as unto salvation, but not necessarily to the exclusion of the salvation of individual Edomites. *Haggai, Malachi*, 253. Others see the election as one of "position" and "historical task." Gottlob Schrenk, "εκλεγομαι in the New Testament," *TDNT* 4:179. John M. P. Smith rejects the interpretation that this represents "the doctrine of predestination" altogether. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi* (ICC 25; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 21. Likewise, Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 10:637.

[159] "The love of God for Israel is sovereign and unconditional." Verhoef, *The Books*, 196; cf. ibid., 197. "Like Yahweh's love, Yahweh's 'hate' is absolute and unconditional." A. E. Hill, *Malachi*, 167. "God's 'love' was in no way conditioned by the moral qualities of its object, but emanated from his sovereign will and mercy. This 'love' is undefinable in terms of more or less." Verhoef, *The Books*, 200–201. Thus Clendenen can proclaim "God's choosing Jacob and his descendants meant that he established a permanent relationship with Israel as a whole. . . . Regardless of how often they strayed from him, he would be faithful to them by his grace until his work in them was complete." *Haggai, Malachi*, 253. However, to say God's love is unconditional begs the question regarding the foreground of Malachi. See below on Mal 1:8–10. It also demands an explanation for the destruction of Samaria in 722 B.C. or Jerusalem in 586 B.C. While God always faithfully fulfills his promises, God's people may forfeit the reception of God's love and eventually cut off relationship with him (see the further explanation of this in chapter 6). However, God continues to work with a faithful remnant according to his plan.

[160] To put it another way, if one simply translates אהב here as equivalent to בחר, the passage would read, "I have chosen you,' says the LORD. But you say, 'How have you chosen us?' 'Was not Esau Jacob's

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the evidence that he has loved them throughout their history and even now. This is highlighted by comparison of Jacob and Esau's descendants. Both are progeny of Abraham and Isaac, yet Israel has been specifically privileged in God's love toward them.

Significantly, neither Jacob nor Esau deserves to receive divine love, rather they both deserve destruction. Yet, God has manifested his ongoing love in having been compassionate and patient with Israel, despite their rebellion and continual slander of his name (cf. Mal 3:6; 2:11). Such unmerited favor and preservation is a consequence of God's fidelity to the covenant, itself begun by election. Here, the unmerited election itself is not the love of God, but divine love is demonstrated in that God has mercifully and compassionately restored Judah and remains in covenant relationship despite her many shortcomings. As such, the contrast of God's treatment of Israel and Edom demonstrates not only *that* he has loved Israel but is to point toward *how* he has done so historically.[161] Thus, election and love are to be differentiated in this passage, the former highlighting the fact that Israel has neither deserved nor merited God's love.[162]

Furthermore, it is important to briefly address the issue of conditionality that is apparent with regard to God's treatment of both nations. First, it is important to recognize that Edom is not subjectively rejected by God, nor are its people treated unfairly. Rather, the Edomites are responsible for their fate, having rejected and forfeited available divine blessing and thus deserving destruction.[163] On the other hand, while God's love toward Israel is certainly

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brother?' declares the LORD. 'Yet I have chosen Jacob.'"

[161] Although the precise manner of Edom's downfall is not historically clear, Edom became a desolation while Israel was restored. Some believe Edom fell to Babylon around the time of the fall of Jerusalem, others think it was during the Persian-Egyptian wars, and still others relate it to the Nabateans ca. 5th century BC. For a discussion of these issues see Verhoef, *The Books*, 203–4.

[162] Consider also the discussion of Deut 4:36–37; 7:12–13; 10:15 above, and the parallel in Isa 41:8.

[163] Judgment against Edom is often described as "because" of their evil actions; cf. Ezek 25:12–13; 35:15; 36:5; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:9, 11; Obad 10–14; Lam 4:22. Elizabeth Achtemeier comments that God responds to the questioning of his love by pointing to the fact that "Edom has not gone unpunished for his violation of his brotherly covenant with Israel." *Nahum-Malachi* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), 176.

undeserved, it is not depicted as altogether unconditional. God expects his love to be reciprocated

by his people, and the remainder of Malachi testifies to God's desire for, and expectation of, a

responsive relationship with Israel.[164]

The second primary interpretive issue of this passage is whether divine love and hate here

denote affectionate emotion, or are merely technical terms for election/acceptance and rejection.

It is not altogether clear whether the terms love and hate refer to divine emotions.[165] However, the

foreground of the passage implies that they do connote emotion when God is said to be

"indignant [זעם] forever" toward Edom (Mal 1:4).[166] Supporting this is the fact that divine שׂנא is

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Thus, God "does not reject arbitrarily." Rex Mason, *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1977), 141. Rather, "Edom brought divine judgment upon themselves." A. E. Hill, *Malachi*, 167. Clendenen takes the compatibilist view that Edom's "destiny" is explained "both by the divine word and by their own wickedness." *Haggai, Malachi*, 257. Harris adds, "It does not necessarily follow that Esau was hated before he was born. This statement is quoted from Mal 1:3 which was written long after Esau had lived his predominantly secular life." Further, "the condemnation of the lost is . . . upon the basis of their own sin." R. Laird Harris, editor's note in Gerard Van Groningen, "שׂנא," *TWOT* 880. Keil and Delitzsch contend that though "no explanation is given here of the reasons which determined the actions of God . . . with God anything arbitrary is inconceivable." *Commentary*, 10:637. It is also important to recognize that God did not always "hate" Edom, but has shown concern for them elsewhere (cf. Deut 2:5).

[164] A. E. Hill suggests that here, as in Deuteronomy, *'ahb* points to the "duty to reciprocate God's love." *Malachi*, 147; cf. ibid., 165; cf. Mal 2:11. J. M. P. Smith points out, "Yahweh loves" Israel but "her own sinful conduct prevents her from enjoying the full fruitage of that love." *A Critical*, 19.

[165] The *qal* perfect 1ms, אֲהַבְתִּי, appears to be a *qal* quasi-fientive, which is a verb that "exhibit[s] both stative and fientive characteristics" and "denote[s] a mental or psychological state *and* take[s] an object." Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 365, 491. Cf. A. E. Hill, *Malachi*, 147; Laetsch, *Bible Commentary*, 510. A. E. Hill thus appears to be correct in viewing it as a "durative stative perfective," which indicates "an ongoing emotional response," which he believes is further implied by the people's question. *Malachi*, 147–48; cf. Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction*, 365, 491. Verhoef likewise sees this as "based upon God's continuous love during the whole of Israel's history." *The Books*, 195. Eileen M. Schuler, on the other hand, sees it as a simple statement about God's present love. "The Book of Malachi," in *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 7 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 854.

[166] God elsewhere displays negative emotions toward Edom. See Ezek 25:14; 36:5; cf. Isa 63:1–6. Moreover, as A. E. Hill points out, Edom was guilty of doing the things that God hates (Deut 16:22; Pss 5:6 [5]; 11:5; 129:5; etc.). *Malachi*, 152. Some scholars suggest the absence of feeling or personal animosity in this passage. Clendenen considers love and hate "to be figurative, pointing to God's sovereign election in choosing by his grace to form a relationship with some of his creatures and to leave others to pursue their rebellious desires to their own destruction." *Haggai, Malachi*, 372; cf. Schuler, "The Book of Malachi," in *The Twelve Prophets*, 7:856. Snaith recognizes that the language used in the passage in fact presents a hatred that is "active, even virulent, to the highest degree" but ascribes it to the human author rather than God in accordance with the so-called "damn Edom" theology. *The Distinctive Ideas*, 133–34. A. E. Hill

often clearly emotive throughout the OT (cf. Isa 1:14; Jer 12:8; 44:4; Hos 9:15; Amos 5:21; 6:8; Pss 5:5–6 [6–7]; 11:5) and is never depicted as arbitrary.[167] With regard to divine love, in the foreground of Malachi, Israel continues to depart from God in iniquity, not entreating his favor (חן; Mal 1:9), therefore, God is "not pleased" (חָפֵץ) with them and will not "accept" (רצה) or have pleasure in them (Mal 1:10; cf. 1:13).[168] Such evaluative and emotive terminology suggests that אהב earlier in this chapter does, in fact, connote divine affection.[169] This would be further supported by parallel expressions of intensely emotive and affectionate אהב elsewhere, especially those in the latter prophets, which will be considered further below.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the Writings

In the Writings, Israel's election is likewise grounded in love and depicted as explicitly conditional. Thus, God chooses (בחר) the inheritance for Jacob "whom He loves" (Ps 47:4 [5]).[170]

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thinks that on the one hand God's hatred lacks "personal animosity." *Malachi*, 167. Yet, paradoxically, he notes that "emotion and hostility color this text." Ibid., 152. Ralph L. Smith notes, "an overtone of bitterness here directed at Edom." *Micah-Malachi* (WBC 32; Word: Dallas, 1984), 305.

[167] That divine hatred is often of an emotive nature is further evidenced by other terms of negative evaluation and/or rejection that collocate with divine שׂנא, including תועבה/תעב (Deut 12:31; Isa 1:13–14; Jer 44:4; Amos 5:10; 6:8; Ps 5:5–6 [6–7]; Prov 6:16) and מאס (Amos 5:21). See the word study of שׂנא later in this chapter.

[168] The terms חֵפֶץ and רצה together serve to convey the absence of God's delight in their object. That these terms are evaluative here is clear in v. 8, in the rhetorical question that assumes a negative response, Would your governor "be pleased [רצה] with you?" See also the respective word studies of these terms in the evaluative section. The idiomatic language of entreaty in v. 9, literally "soften the face" [חלה + פָּנִים], suggests God might be persuaded to be favorable toward Israel, which seems to place divine pleasure beyond that of the unilateral divine will. For the idiom elsewhere see Zech 7:2; Dan 9:13. However, though God is responsive to humans, he desired and delights in true, heartfelt worship and obedience, but theirs is a token offering, and of an inferior nature, at that (Mal 1:8; cf. Isa 29:13). Moreover, divine evaluation is likewise apparent in the foreground of Malachi. For instance, a book of remembrance is made of those who "fear the LORD." In the future, God says, "They will be Mine . . . on the day that I prepare My own possession [סְגֻלָּה]" and there will be a distinction between the righteous and the wicked (Mal 3:16–18). Further, conditionality is explicit throughout the book; the people must turn to God in order to receive divine blessing (Mal 4:6).

[169] A. E. Hill sees "an ongoing emotional response" in אהב. *Malachi*, 147. Moreover, Els notes what he calls "a secondary semantic component of a feeling of affection." *NIDOTTE* 1:282.

[170] That is, out of God's love for Israel, he provided their land, their inheritance, and glory for them. Although it is possible to translate Jacob as a reference to the patriarch himself, it seems the

Likewise, the bestowal of land "forever" is spoken of as predicated on "Abraham [God's] friend"
(אהב; 2 Chr 20:7).[171] Similarly, God "chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved" (Ps
78:68). In such instances, love is in a similar relationship to election as that which was seen in the
Torah (Deut 4:37; 7:7–8) and in the Prophets (Isa 41:8), namely election on the basis of, or as a
manifestation of, divine love.

Importantly, the context of Ps 78:68 evidences that at least some types of divine election
are both evaluative and not unilaterally effective. God is said to have been provoked and made
jealous [קנא] by Israel's evil (Ps 78:58). Thus, he was "filled with wrath" and "greatly abhorred
[מְאֹד + מאס] Israel" (Ps 78:59) and, accordingly, "rejected [מאס] the tent of Joseph, and did not
choose [בחר] the tribe of Ephraim" (Ps 78:67), but he "chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion
which He loved" (Ps 78:68). Notably, God's rejection of Israel stems from their idol worship.
God is presented as being moved to intense, negative emotions and removes the ark, and thus his
presence, from their midst. On the other hand, Judah is elected as the locus of worship, meaning
that God's presence will be among them, for God loves them. As such, this divine choice of
election is presented as both evaluative and neither wholly arbitrary nor ineradicable. Such a
relationship between election and elements of divine love also appears with regard to the Davidic
dynasty. Solomon's king-making is specifically seen as based upon God's love for his people (2
Chr 2:11 [10]; 2 Chr 9:8). Similarly, Solomon is made king according to God's lovingkindness to
David (2 Chr 1:8).[172] In all this, divine election is neither strictly arbitrary nor unilaterally
constant and may be associated with emotion and desire.

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reference is to the people of Israel as Ps 135:4 and elsewhere. On the other hand, if it were to refer to Jacob,
even as a dual reference, it would parallel the line of thought in 2 Chr 20:7.

[171] It is not entirely clear whether it is the land or the friendship with Abraham that is forever; the
former seems more likely due to the prevalence of עוֹלָם as a reference to the divine promises.

[172] L. C. Allen believes that here "Solomon's obedience is in view as a condition for the dynastic
continuity. In fact, the motif of royal obedience accompanies the references to the divine promises in 1 Kgs
8:26 and the parallel 2 Chr 6:17." "The First and Second Books of Chronicles," in *Kings–Judith* (vol. 3 of

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that ground the conclusion that divine love is not indifferent or disinterested, but evaluative. The term "evaluative" refers in this context to the appraisal, appreciation, and/or reception of value from external agents. First, divine love is explicitly depicted as evaluative throughout the canon. Second, divine love includes appropriate self-interest that is not exclusive to other-interest. Third, humans may bring value to God through the prevenient and ongoing action of God, especially the mediation of Christ. Thus, God can and does receive love and may enjoy, delight in, and garner pleasure from his creatures. His own delight is voluntarily bound up with bringing genuine pleasure, joy, and delight to those very objects of his love. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Can God be the beneficiary of human action? What about self-interest? Is self-sacrifice and/or self-abnegation the ideal of love? Is divine love indifferent and/or disinterested? Does God's love include delight and/or enjoyment of his creatures, including their loving response toward him? This section of the study begins with a survey of the meaning of prominent terms relative to God's evaluative love.

The Semantics of Divine Delight

A Brief Survey of חפץ

The word חפץ[173] has the basic meaning of desire or delight, often of an emotive nature, which may be manifested in the wish for something or someone.[174] It is thus often used of

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NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1999), 473.

[173] The noun appears in 37 verses, while the verb appears in 70 verses, always in the *qal*, and the lexeme appears as a verbal adjective in 12 verses. The etymology of the term is "obscure, since all its occurrences are relatively late" and limited. G. Johannes Botterweck, "חפץ," *TDOT* 13:92.

[174] For Leon J. Wood, "The basic meaning is to feel great favor towards something" with considerable "emotional involvement." With both divine and human agency it means "to experience emotional delight." "חפץ," *TLOT* 1:310. Talley calls it the "direction of one's heart or passion" and "conveys a passionate emotion for an object." "חפץ," *NIDOTTE* 2:232. For David Toshio Tsumura, it is that "which preoccupies one's thought and will." *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.:

evaluative delight in a person or object.[175] With personal objects it may connote affection and joy

in another.[176] An unfulfilled wish may be seen as a desire, a fulfilled wish may bring delight. In

other words, when something would be a source of delight, but is absent, the sense is desire,

want, or wish. In this way, the term sometimes takes on the connotation of that which one wishes,

especially the will of a sovereign.[177] However, it is not merely a subjective expression of the will,

but relates to the unfulfilled or fulfilled wishes of its agent, which are grounded in objective

reality.[178] In various usages, חפץ is closely associated with אהב, sometimes set in parallel (cf. Ps

109:17).[179]

חפץ often refers to divine desire and delight.[180] With regard to the former, it may refer to

various things that God wants to take place, often with a strong sense of that which he will

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Eerdmans, 2006), 402. In one instance (Job 40:17) there is a second root, which means "to let hang." Also, in some instances in Ecclesiastes the term takes on the meaning "'business or facts' of life." W. E. Staples, "The Meaning of *Hepes* in Ecclesiastes," *JNES* 24 (1965): 112; cf. Eccl 3:1, 17; 5:8 [7].

[175] Thus, it may refer to that which elicits delight (Isa 54:12; Prov 3:15; 8:11; Eccl 12:10) or things that ought not be delighted in (Pss 40:14 [15]; 68:30 [31]; 70:2 [3]; 109:17; Prov 18:2). Of such delight or pleasure see 2 Sam 24:3; Isa 13:17; Prov 31:13. It may also refer to joy or rejoicing (Ps 35:27). See the examples with divine agency below.

[176] See Botterweck, *TDOT* 13:94. Thus, it may be used of the presence or absence of delight in romantic relationships (Gen 34:19; Deut 21:14; Esth 2:14; cf. Deut 25:7–8) or in non-romantic interpersonal relationships such as Jonathan's great affection for David (1 Sam 19:1; cf. 18:22; 2 Sam 20:11; Esth 6:6–7, 9, 11).

[177] Of the will or desire of a sovereign see 1 Sam 18:25; 2 Sam 23:5; 1 Kgs 5:8–10; 9:1, 11; 10:13; Eccl 8:3; 2 Chr 9:12). It may also refer to general desires, such as for life (Ps 34:12), a haven (Ps 107:30), for family (Job 21:21), and the desires of the poor (Job 31:16). In many instances, the term appears to merely denote one's will or wish (1 Kgs 13:33; Jer 42:22; Eccl 3:1, 17; 8:6). It can thus be used in a request (1 Kgs 21:6; Ruth 3:13; cf. Cant 2:7; 3:5; 8:4).

[178] "The confusion lies in English, where 'purpose' and 'pleasure' are not closely related" as they are in חפץ. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 581.

[179] The wicked "loved cursing" but "did not delight [חפץ] in blessing" (Ps 109:17). Further, Saul's servants are to make David believe "the king delights [חָפֵץ] in him, and all his servants love" him (1 Sam 18:22). אהב is also used in parallel to "desire [חָפֵץ]" for life as one who "loves *length of* days" (Ps 34:12 [13]). Divine delight is likewise associated with אהב toward Israel. The Queen of Sheba states, "God . . . delighted [חפץ] in you [Solomon]" making you king "because" God "loved Israel" (1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8). Talley suggests that אהב is possibly a "synonym for חפץ." *NIDOTTE* 2:232. Botterweck likewise suggests דבק, אהב, and חשׁק as being used synonymously. Botterweck, *TDOT* 13:95.

[180] On the other hand, in numerous instances it is descriptive of the delight of humans for God or

accomplish.[181] If one asserts that the divine will is always unilaterally enacted, then a divine

desire, in the sense of "want," would be nonsensical. Yet, many instances of this term refer to

divine desires that remain unfulfilled. For instance, God proclaims, "I have no pleasure in the

death of the wicked" but "rather . . . that he should turn . . . and live" (Ezek 18:23; cf. 18:32;

33:11; cf. also, Isa 66:4; 65:12). Likewise, God "desire[s] truth in the innermost being" from

humans who are, on the contrary, quite sinful (Ps 51:6 [7]). As such, God's desire is not always

efficacious.[182]

The evaluative, and often emotive, sense of this terminology is further apparent in its

frequent portrayals of divine delight.[183] For instance, God "delights" in חסד, justice, and

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the things of God. See Isa 58:2, 13; Mal 3:1; Pss 1:2; 16:3; 40:8 [9]; 73:25; 111:2; 112:1; 119:35; Neh 1:11; 2 Chr 28:9. It may also refer to the lack of delight in the things of God (Jer 6:10; Job 21:14; cf. Job 9:3; 13:3; Eccl 12:1).

[181] For instance, Isaiah states, "The LORD was pleased for His righteousness' sake To make the law great and glorious" (Isa 42:21). Further, God declares of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire" (Isa 44:28; cf. 48:14). Again, God declares, "My purpose [עֵצָה] will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure" (Isa 46:10). In an apparent Messianic reference, "the LORD was pleased to crush Him . . . and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand" (Isa 53:10). Moreover, God's word does not return "without accomplishing what [he] desire[s]" (Isa 55:11; cf. Hos 10:10). In all, God "does whatever he pleases" (Ps 115:3; cf. Jonah 1:14; 135:6). Consider the study of Avi Hurvitz, who looks at all the occurrences of the syntagm עשה + חֵפֶץ + כֹּל, of God (Isa 46:10; Jonah 1:14; Pss 115:3; 135:6) and, once, of a human sovereign (Eccl 8:3), and finds that they refer to the unlimited power of the sovereign within the realm of jurisprudence. "The History of a Legal Formula: *kōl 'ašer-ḥāpēs ʻāśāh* (Psalms cxv 3, cxxv 6)," *VT* 32 (1982): 257–67. He also points out the more prevalent idiom, do what is good in your sight (עין + טוב + עשה; cf. 2 Sam 10:12). The term may also refer to God's desire to execute, or not execute, judgment. Thus, Manoah states that God did not desire to kill them (Judg 13:23). Eli's sons "would not listen to the voice of their father [Eli], for the LORD desired to put them to death" (1 Sam 2:25; cf. Job 33:32). In Proverbs it is used of divine sovereignty where it is stated, a "king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Prov 21:1). Importantly, however, the rest of the chapter evidences that whatever this verse refers to, it does not appear to refer to utter determinism. For instance, the next verses speak of every man's way being right in his own eyes and God's desire (בחר) of righteousness rather than sacrifice (Prov 21:2–3). As such, God's fervent desire, coupled with his sovereignty/omnipotence, means that he will bring about that which he sets his heart on. But, these do not refer to determinism as is seen elsewhere.

[182] Both usages of חפץ are complementary, not contradictory, if the underlying meaning of "desire" is kept in mind as something willed, which, when not effectuated, amounts to something wanted. Thus, both aspects of meaning may be in play when God as potter remakes the vessel into what "it pleased the potter to make" (Jer 18:4).

[183] Wood points to the evaluative sense in stating with regard to this term, "The object solicits favor by its own intrinsic qualities. The subject is easily attracted to it because it is desirable." *TLOT* 1:310; cf. Botterweck, *TDOT* 5:104.

righteousness (Jer 9:24; cf. Mic 7:18) and takes no pleasure in wickedness (Ps 5:4 [5]).[184] Further, God "does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure [רצה] in the legs of a man," but he "favors [רצה] those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness [חסד]" (Ps 147:11; cf. Isa 56:4; Ps 37:23).[185] Moreover, חפץ repeatedly manifests God's delight in human fidelity as opposed to purely external ritual and sacrifice.[186] God's delight in human beings is often the grounding of his beneficent action.[187] For instance, David declares, "He rescued me, because He delighted in me" (2 Sam 22:20 = Ps 18:19 [20]; cf. 22:8 [9]).[188] On the other hand, with regard to those who choose their own ways and delight in abominations, God will "choose their punishments" because they "chose that in which I did not delight" (Isa 66:4; cf. 65:12). God even looks forward to his future delight in his restored people (see Isa 62:4; Mal 3:12). Thus, חפץ has the ability to depict the amazing sovereignty of God and yet his affection for and attachment to human beings whom he values and who may bring him great delight and enjoyment.

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[184] In a negative evaluative sense, God refers to Coniah and Moab as an "undesirable vessel" (Jer 22:28; 48:38; cf. Mal 2:17). Israel is "like a vessel in which no one delights" (Hos 8:8). God says explicitly to his people, "I am not pleased with you" and thus will not accept their offering (Mal 1:10). Moreover, he "takes no delight in fools" (Eccl 5:4 [3]); cf. Job 22:3.

[185] Talley thus suggests that "God's delight, or the lack thereof, revolves around human obedience (cf. Ps 37:22, 28, 34, 38)." *NIDOTTE* 2:232. Similarly, R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers* (NAC 3B; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 227.

[186] Importantly, the sense is not that God does not desire the very sacrifices he has prescribed, but that the value of the sacrifices lies ultimately in the internal disposition of the offerer. This common sentiment is expressed in various ways. See 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11; Hos 6:6; Pss 40:6 [7]; 51:16–17, 19 [18–19, 21]; cf. Isa 58:3.

[187] Thus, Talley states, "If the passion of God's heart is *for* someone, then the subsequent action is blessing (cf. Num 14:8; 2 Sam 22:20; Ps 18:19 [20]; 41:11 [12]), but if God's heart is *against* someone, then the subsequent action is punishment (cf. Mal 2:17–3:7)." Talley, *NIDOTTE* 2:232.

[188] Joshua states, "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us" (Num 14:8). Similarly, the psalmist says, "By this I know that You are pleased with me, Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me" (Ps 41:11 [12]). The Queen of Sheba declares that God "delighted in" Solomon to make him king "because the LORD loved Israel forever" (1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8). On the other hand, David notes the possibility that God will "have no delight" in him but merely states, "Let Him do to me as seems good to Him" (2 Sam 15:26). God wants the best for his people; he "delights" in his servant's prosperity (Ps 35:27).

A Brief Survey of רצה

The meaning of רצה[189] is often similar to that of חפץ with which it frequently collocates.[190] רצה refers to strong delight in something or someone, often including the connotation of acceptance.[191] It sometimes refers to one's desire or will, in a few cases describing the divine will.[192] The term most often has God as agent. Notably, רצה collocates in parallel with love in description of God's affection for his people, "whom the LORD loves he reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights" (Prov 3:12; cf. 16:13; Jer 14:10). The aspect of acceptance flows from the prevalent usage of רצה in sacrificial contexts to describe an offering

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[189] It appears in verbal [רצה – in 54 verses] and nominal [רָצוֹן – in 56 verses] forms, which will be treated together for the purposes of this survey.

[190] G. Gerleman explains that "the two roots are used synonymously to a great extent (Psa 147:10 par.). But they have each undergone unique developments in varied directions." "חפץ," *TLOT* 1:466.

[191] Barstad comments, "The basic meaning of the verb is best defined as 'be pleased with, find good or pleasant, love, like, wish for,' etc." H. M. Barstad, "רצה," *TDOT* 13:619. Gerleman adds that lexical evidence shows that "the verb was used almost exclusively as an expression of a positive assessment: 'to find something good, be pleased with something'" and "the abstract form רָצוֹן most often indicates the subjective sentiment of pleasure." G. Gerleman, "רצה," *TLOT* 3:1259–60. However, many occurrences appear to be, at least partially, rooted in objective qualities and/or actions and others are ambiguous in this regard. He adds, "The root finds greatest usage in theological language: to indicate divine pleasure." Gerleman, *TLOT* 3:1260. Likewise, Norman Walker comments, "The root meaning of רָצוֹן is two-sided, namely *will* and *pleasure,* whether oneself or another." "Renderings of *rāṣôn*," *JBL* 81 (1962): 184; cf. Terence E. Fretheim, "רצה," *NIDOTTE* 3:1186; William White, "רצה," *TWOT* 860. Thus, the term may be used in human relationships of one received "favorably" (Gen 33:10) or of evaluative favor that might result from action (1 Sam 29:4; Prov 14:35; 16:13; Esth 10:3; 2 Chr 10:7; cf. Prov 23:26) or simply that which is acceptable (Prov 10:32; cf. 11:27) or of "good will" (Prov 14:9). On the other hand, some are pleased with that which should not be accepted as pleasing. There are those who "approve" of the words of the foolish (Ps 49:13 [14]), are "pleased" with a thief (Ps 50:18), delight in falsehood (Ps 62:4 [5]). In other instances, the term seems to denote bestowed favor. For example, the king's "favor is like a cloud with the spring rain" (Prov 16:15), like "dew on the grass" (Prov 19:12; cf. Job 20:10). In some texts, the term has been thought to belong to a separate lexeme, רצה II, meaning to buy or pay or possibly even atone, though others think it is merely an expansion of meaning that can usually be explained by the nuance "accept." Lexicographers remain split on the issue. Richard E. Averbeck, for instance, contends there "may be some reason to believe that two original words are represented." "רצה," *NIDOTTE* 3:1187. The separation is partially dependent upon ANE cognates, but there based on singular occurrences and thus indeterminate. Ibid., 1186. Possible occurrences include Lev 26:34, 41, 43; Isa 40:2; Job 20:10; 2 Chr 36:21. Barstad, however, rejects the categorization and suggests the translation "accept" in many such cases, related to the so-called "credit terminology." *TDOT* 13:624–25. Likewise, Gerleman suggests that some such occurrences mean "accept" with the neutral or negative meaning to let something come to one. *TLOT* 3:1259–60.

[192] Of divine agency see Pss 103:21; 143:10; Ezra 10:11. Of human agency in this respect see Gen 49:6; Neh 9:24, 37; Esth 1:8; 9:5; Dan 8:4; 11:3; cf. 11:15, 36. Here is the meaning of "choice, liking," that

that is pleasing, and thus acceptable to Yahweh through which its offering may be reckoned pleasing.[193] Indeed, God looks toward a future when all Israel will serve him and "there [he] will accept them" (Ezek 20:40), "as a soothing aroma" God "will accept" them (Ezek 20:41). In one instance, divine election collocates with God's רצה in such a way that leaves the impression of evaluative pleasure of a passionate nature: God states, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold, My chosen one in whom my soul [inner person] delights" (Isa 42:1; cf. 1 Chr 28:4).[194] This use extends to other ways in which one might please, or be acceptable to, God.[195] Like חפץ, the term רצה (when negated) is frequently used to describe God's displeasure in sacrifices that are merely offered by external ritual, absent the corresponding internal devotion and fidelity that is actually the object of God's desire and pleasure.[196] Thus, even in such cultic contexts, it is clear that God has profound desires and he is affected by the people's disposition toward him; God's delight is

is, they could do "whatever they liked." Barstad, *TDOT* 13:628.

[193] The acceptability of offerings is conditional upon many aspects of the offering and its proper performance (see Lev 1:3–4; 7:18; 22:19–21, 25, 27). The term thus connotes that a sacrifice is "well-pleasing." See Rendtorff, *Die Gesezte*. Indeed, "the effect of a sacrificial offering depends on whether it pleases God." Gerleman, *TLOT* 3:1260–61. See also Barstad, *TDOT* 13:621–22. The intended result of such offerings is clearly stated; it is "so that [the offerer] may be accepted" by God (Lev 19:5; 22:29; 23:11; cf. Exod 28:37 [38]).

[194] Notice, the use of the term "soul," referring to the inner person [נֶפֶשׁ], as the seat of delight, connoting profound emotion. Barstad comments of 1 Chr 28:4, "David was chosen to be king because Yahweh took delight in him (*rsh*)." *TDOT* 13:620.

[195] Thus, רצה often occurs with reference to the request, expectation, and/or actuality of being accepted favorably by God (Deut 33:11; Isa 60:7; Pss 19:14 [15]; 40:13 [14]; 119:108; Job 33:26; Eccl 9:8; cf. Ps 77:7 [8]). It can similarly refer to an "acceptable" or "favorable" time (Isa 49:8; 58:5; 61:2; Ps 69:13 [14]).

[196] See Mic 6:7–8; Ps 51:16 [18]; Prov 15:8. Indeed, the people's offerings are ineffectual insofar as they are merely attempts to assuage God without true repentance (Hos 8:13). Thus, human offerings may be rejected by God (see Jer 6:20; Amos 5:22, 24, 26; Mal 1:8, 10, 13; 2:13). But God looks forward to a day when human hearts will truly be set toward him and he will delight in their offerings (Isa 56:7). Some have posited a critique by the prophets of the priestly system of "crediting of offerings." Cf. Barstad, *TDOT* 13:622. However, others have, rightfully in my opinion, pointed out that the criticism is not of the cult per se, but of merely external offerings without internal devotion. See, for example, Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 145.

evaluative, grounded in the disposition of his people.[197] The divine-human relationship that is

symbolized in cultic ceremony is not automatic, but points to a deeper reciprocal relationship that

God desires with his people, and delights in when such is present.

Moreover, the רצה word group is not restricted to sacrificial contexts but is "a central

theological term expressing fundamental relationships between God and human beings."[198]

Elsewhere, divine evaluation of humans is evident such as when God examines or "tries" [בחן] the

heart and "delight[s] in uprightness" (1 Chr 29:17). Further, God "does not delight [חפץ]" in a

horse's strength and "does not take pleasure [רצה]" in man's legs (Ps 147:10). Rather, God

"favors [רצה]" those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 147:11).[199] On the

other hand, because the people have "loved to wander . . . therefore the LORD does not accept

them" (Jer 14:10), when they call, God is "not going to accept them" (Jer 14:12). Similarly, both

positive and negative divine evaluation are evident by explicit contrasts between that which is

pleasing to God or not.[200] Finally, רצה also may be used to describe the manner of God's actions,

as the grounding of his beneficence.[201] It is thus starkly contrasted with divine anger and thus

appears to depict the opposite, more enduring emotion akin to love.[202]

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[197] רצה also often appears in religious contexts of human delight toward the things of God. For instance, David proclaims that in his "delight in the house" of God he has provided his treasure for the temple (1 Chr 29:3). God's servants "find pleasure" in Zion (Ps 102:13 [15]). The psalmist proclaims to God, "I delight to do Your will" (Ps 40:8 [9]; cf. 2 Chr 15:15).

[198] Barstad, *TDOT* 13:621.

[199] See also Hag 1:8; Pss 5:12 [13]; 145:16, 19; 149:4; Prov 3:12; 8:35; 16:7; cf. Job 34:9. As Fretheim notes, "The striking language of God's delighting . . . demonstrates that feelings are not foreign to his experience of the world." Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 3:1186.

[200] For instance, "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight" (Prov 11:1; cf. 15:8). Likewise, the "perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in their walk are His delight" (Prov 11:20). Likewise, see Prov 12:2, 22.

[201] For example, God "favored" his people in giving them the Promised Land (Ps 44:3 [4]) and later "showed favor" to his land in restoring Jacob (Ps 85:1 [2]). See also Pss 30:7 [8]; 51:18 [20]; 89:17 [18]; 106:4; Prov 18:22; cf. Isa 40:2. See also its usage in benedictory formulas (Deut 33:16, 23–24; 2 Sam 24:13).

[202] For instance, God declares, "In My wrath I struck you, and in My favor I have had compassion

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in the Torah

Divine evaluative pleasure, delight, and even enjoyment appears in numerous instances in the Torah, often in cultic contexts. For instance, in the aftermath of the flood God "smelled [רוח] the soothing aroma" of Noah's offering and then proclaims that he will never again destroy all living things with a flood (Gen 8:21).[203] The phrase "soothing aroma" (רֵיחַ נַיחֹחַ) may be literally rendered quieting or soothing odor and is often used, mostly in the Torah, to denote sacrifices acceptable to God.[204] The implication appears to be that God was pleased by the offering and/or offerer and thus the promise.[205] רצה also appears primarily in cultic contexts in the Torah, with the

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on you" (Isa 60:10). Similarly, the psalmist declares, "His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime" (Ps 30:5 [6]). According to Craigie, then, "*favor* is the divine response to goodness, but also to repentance and contrition." *Psalms 1–50* (WBC 19; Dallas: Word, 2002), 254. Compare also the frequent contrast of the term with "abomination," תּוֹעֵבָה, as appears above. Michael V. Fox states that תּוֹעֵבָה is the opposite of רָצוֹן, "'favor,' that is, what one favors or finds pleasing." *Proverbs 10–31* (AB 18B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 530. See also the brief survey of terms for divine displeasure.

[203] Interestingly, Genesis is the only case where God is said to "smell" the offering, though elsewhere he requested to do this (1 Sam 26:19). Moreover, God could refuse to smell (Lev 26:31). Hamilton suggests that references to "God's olfactory sense" are "to be understood as anthropomorphisms." Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 308. Likewise, von Rad, *Genesis*, 122. It is notable that this narrative does not include a divine craving to eat the sacrifice(s) as in ANE parallels. (Cf. Gilgamesh, *ANET*, 95, where "hungry gods . . . crowded like flies around the sacrifices"); cf. Sarna, *Genesis*, 59.

[204] See Exod 29:18, 25; 29:41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; 23:13, 18; Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13–14, 24; 18:17; 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27; 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36; cf. Ezek 6:13; 16:19; 20:28; 20:41. There is an interesting play on words between the name Noah and an offering that is soothing (נִיחֹחַ), perhaps highlighting that Noah as offerer is a ground of divine pleasure/acceptance. Sarna, however, suggests the phrase is used "in a specific technical sense, divested of its literal meaning. It simply connotes God's acceptance of the sacrifice." Sarna, *Genesis*, 59. Although its repetition does suggest technical meaning, it is not altogether clear that this requires divesting it of its explicit sense.

[205] There is disagreement whether the offering is propitiary or a thank offering, Wenham believes both are appropriate. *Genesis 1–15*, 189–90. See also Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 393. He further goes on to note common objections to the idea that "this offering changed God's attitude to mankind"; (1) "an aversion to allowing any significant role to ritual," and (2) the fact that God had already proclaimed his gracious attitude toward Noah previously (8:1). He, however, sees continuity of "very clear interest in cultic and priestly concerns that runs through Gen 1–8" and believes that God's disposition toward Noah was not the object of change, but his attitude toward humankind in general "turned around." Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 189–90. Wenham, however, does believe that the ultimate reason for the acceptance still resides in "God's antecedent purpose, whereby he appointed the sacrificial system as a means of atonement for reconciliation between God and man." Ibid., 190. Other commentators also recognize that God is here presented as affected by the offering. Matthews believes that "Noah's worship soothed the broken 'heart' of God, which had been injured by man's wickedness" and God thus "shows his pleasure" and "as a result of Noah's offering, God determines in 'his heart' . . . to stay any future curse and destruction." *Genesis 1–*

nuance of favorable acceptance of sacrifice. Such acceptance is based upon numerous conditions, including but not limited to the quality of the sacrifice, proper age, proper ritual, etc. (Lev 1:3–4; 22:19, 21, 27; cf. 23:11). Offerings may be rejected by God if they do not meet the prescribed criteria (Lev 7:18; 19:7; 22:20, 23, 25).[206] However, the crux of the issue is only indirectly the acceptance of offerings, since it is through the cultic system that the people are to be accepted. Thus, the importance of various ritual elements is described "that you may be accepted" (Exod 28:37 [38]; Lev 19:5; 22:29). The implication is that God once again takes delight in his people as a consequence of the proper human response. This assumes divine responsiveness to human beings and appraisal of their actions.

Evaluative pleasure also appears when Joshua, while pleading with Israel to trust the Lord to deliver the Promised Land, states, "If the LORD is pleased [חָפֵץ] with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us" (Num 14:8). Here, although the land had already been promised, Joshua sees reception of it as contingent upon divine delight. Israel's fidelity toward God brings him pleasure, specifically; the Lord "delighted" (שׂוּשׂ) or "rejoiced" to prosper Israel (Deut 28:63). Yet, on the other hand, disobedience brings it about that the LORD will delight [שׂוּשׂ] to destroy Israel (Deut 28:63).[207] God also looks forward to a future restoration, predicated

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11:26, 392–93. Fretheim suggests that the sacrifice pleased God out of Noah's devotion. "The Book of Genesis," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:393. John Skinner states, "That the pleasing odour is not the motive but merely the occasion of his gracious purpose (Knobel) may be sound theology, but it hardly expresses the idea of the passage." *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), 158.

[206] רצה also appears in benedictions, in the request of favor [רָצוֹן] upon the sons of Jacob and their progeny (Deut 33:16, 23).

[207] Divine delight is elsewhere presented by the term שׂוּשׂ, with the connotation of evaluation and enjoyment. However, Tigay sees the term in a volitional sense, "was determined to . . . will be determined to." *Deuteronomy*, 272; cf. Yochanan Muffs, *Love & Joy: Law, Language, and Religion in Ancient Israel* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992). However, שׂוּשׂ consistently refers to exultation and joy and does not appear to connote "determined" anywhere in the text. Importantly, every other usage where God is the agent the term seems to refer to rejoicing (Isa 62:5; 65:19; Jer 32:41; Zeph 3:17). Thus, it may be that here the term connotes divine delight in the people even in times of trouble and acts appropriately to their actions for their ultimate good. Thus, Christensen translates, "And it shall be just as YHWH took delight in you by doing good for you and by multiplying you so YHWH still takes delight in

on appropriate human response, when he will "again rejoice [שׂושׂ] over you for good, just as He rejoiced [שׂושׂ] over your fathers" (Deut 30:9–10). Here, not only divine evaluation but also emotionality is apparent in God's delight in his people, which is responsive to their disposition and/or action(s).

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in the Prophets

In the prophets, God's love is also often presented as evaluative. For instance, God states that he "loves justice" but "hates robbery," and recompenses the just accordingly (Isa 61:8). Likewise, God describes himself as the "LORD who exercises lovingkindness [חסד], justice and righteousness . . . for I delight [חפץ] in these things" (Jer 9:24; cf. Isa 16:5; Mic 7:18). Accordingly, God "delight[s] in "loyalty [חֶסֶד] rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings (Hos 6:6; cf. 4:1; 1 Sam 15:22; Mic 6:7–8). As Andersen points out, "*Hesed* is a matter of ultimate concern for Yahweh. The use of this emotional word, rather than one that emphasizes formal authority or power, matches the expressions of disappointment and anguish at the people's inconstancy (v 4)."[208] Conversely, God is displeased by merely external obedience and hates wickedness. For instance God declares that he has no "pleasure" (חפץ) in the blood of sacrifices (Isa 1:11), his soul "hates" (שׂנא) the festivals and feasts, which have become a wearisome burden to him (Isa 1:14).[209] Again, God "hates" and "rejects" their festivals and does

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you." *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, 696. See the further discussion of this term and others in the discussion of Zeph 3:17 later in this chapter.

[208] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 430. "By using *ḥesed* for what Israel does for God, Hosea is able to emphasize that observance of the decalogue is not just something that God commands, but is more importantly what God desires or asks from Israel. Even though God is powerful and Israel dependent, *ḥesed* is nevertheless an attitude and action that Israel is somehow free to offer or to withhold. Divine judgment might 'coerce' such behavior, but judgment by its nature cannot produce the *free* and *willing* behavior and commitment that is essential to *ḥesed*. Thus in speaking of Israel's *ḥesed* to God, Hosea is able to convey both the freedom of Israel within the covenant relationship and also the deep and urgent desire of God for Israel's free response." Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:380. See the word study of חסד later in this chapter.

[209] Motyer points out, *My soul hates* is equivalent to 'I hate with all my heart.'" *Isaiah*, 47. On divine weariness with Israel's antics see also Mal 2:17.

not "delight in" (or "smell," רוח) their assemblies (Amos 5:21), thus he will not "accept" or

"delight" (רצה) in them (Amos 5:22).[210] Likewise, God "does not take pleasure" in Judah's guides

because they have wickedly misled the people (Isa 9:17). He is "not pleased" (חפץ) with Israel

despite their entreaty of favor and hope for grace and will not "accept" (רצה) their offering (Mal

1:9; cf. 1:13).[211] In every case, God's displeasure with his people corresponds to his evaluation of

their evil.[212]

That God's pleasure and displeasure is not arbitrary but evaluative is especially evident

when God refers to those who may receive blessing if only they "choose what pleases [חפץ]" him

(Isa 56:4), in contrast to those who do not receive blessing because they "chose that in which

[God] did not delight [חָפֵץ]" (Isa 65:12). [213] As such, the choices of human beings may bring

pleasure, or deny delight, to God himself (cf. Hag 1:8). God's pleasure or delight is spoken of as a

grounding of beneficence. Thus, David states, "He rescued me, because He delighted in me" (2

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[210] Literally, God will not "smell" their solemn assemblies. This is in contrast with his acceptance of the "pleasing aroma" of sacrifices. See the discussion of Gen 6:8. Likewise, God takes "no delight" in the people [רצה] (Hos 8:13; cf. Jer 14:10), and is not "pleased" [עָרֵב] with their sacrifices (Hos 9:4). Here, the people's offerings are ineffectual insofar as they are merely attempts to assuage God without true repentance. God's evaluation thus looks at the inward motivation and devotion to God, since "the Lord himself does not need the sacrifices like gods and goddesses in other religions." Thus, "*sacrifice* without *obedience* as well as *the fat of rams* without *attentiveness*" is worthless to him. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 402; cf. Douglas K. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC 31; Dallas: Word, 1987), 110. God desires true faithfulness, and will someday again take pleasure [ערב] in their offerings (Mal 3:4), but not while the heart of his people is far from him. This term ערב refers to that which is "pleasant" or "pleasing," a term that points to objective approval or disapproval. Clendenen points out, "It is a synonym of *rṣh* and of *ḥps* in Mal 1:8, 10, 13; and 2:17." *Haggai, Malachi*, 390–91.

[211] Contrast this with God's willingness to accept [רצה] the offerings and sacrifices of faithful foreigners (Isa 56:7). The acceptance or rejection is thus not arbitrary, but grounded in God's evaluation of the offerer.

[212] Thus, "the LORD saw [ראה], and it was displeasing [רעע] in His sight that there was no justice [מִשְׁפָּט]" (Isa 59:15). God "does not accept" the people and "remember[s] their iniquity" because they have "loved [אָהֲבוּ] to wander" (Jer 14:10). Not only does this shed light on the purity of the divine character but it also denotes the evaluative nature of divine delight, similar to the exhortation to "hate evil, love good" (Amos 5:15).

[213] Quite clearly, then, "That which distinguishes persons acceptable to God from those who are unacceptable is their commitment to God's will and to God's ways (cf. 1:19)." Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 249. The point regards "what kinds of behavior please God." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 508.

Sam 22:20 = Ps 18:19 [20]).[214] In all this, God has no "pleasure" (חפץ) in the death of the wicked,

desiring repentance instead (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11).[215] Thus, God's evaluative pleasure extends

to the plan of salvation, even the sacrifice of his "chosen one in whom [his] soul [inner person]

delights [רצה]" (Isa 42:1; cf. v. 21).[216] Yet, God "was pleased [חפץ] to crush" the servant, a willing

guilt offering, and thus the "good pleasure [חֵפֶץ] of the LORD will prosper in His hand" (Isa

53:10).[217]

Accordingly, God's love is such that he often manifests emotions of delight and/or joy

over his people. God refers to Israel/Judah as "His delightful [שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים] plant" (Isa 5:7), his

"pleasant [חֶמְדָּה] field" (Jer 12:10), and within the context of robust emotive language speaks of

"Ephraim My dear [יַקִּיר] son" as "a delightful [שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים] child" (Jer 31:20).[218] His people are

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[214] McCarter Jr. comments that this denotes affection and preference. *II Samuel*, 468. The
following verses denote the context of this "preference," which is clearly evaluative approval rather than
arbitrary selection among equivalent potential objects of favor (cf. 2 Sam 22:21–27). Divine evaluation is
also prominent in David's statement regarding the uncertainty of his kingship while fleeing, specifically
whether God will find favor in him, and thus return him to the city, or not delight in him (2 Sam 15:25–26).
Notice the parallel between God's delight and finding favor in his eyes. Similarly, Sheba ascribes
Solomon's kingship to God's love for Israel and his delight in Solomon (1 Kgs 10:9). Likewise, divine
"favor" or "delight" [רָצוֹן] is the root of compassion, in direct contrast to wrath [קֶצֶף], a source of
punishment (Isa 60:10). All this is in accord with God's right as the creator of all and by his great power to
bestow blessings on "the one who is pleasing in My sight" [יָשַׁר בְּעֵינָי] (Jer 27:5). Although it is possible to
read this to mean that God arbitrarily and altogether subjectively bestows blessings on whom he will, the
covenant context of Jeremiah would seem to rule out such an interpretation. Rather, this seems to assert
God's sovereignty and ability to bless those who please him, or to those who might bring about that which
ultimately pleases him.

[215] Greenberg calls this "an impassioned declaration of his desire that the wicked repent and live."
Ezekiel 21–37 (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 675.

[216] Here again, the "soul," often the seat of emotions, is the seat of divine delight. As Watts puts it,
"What is done with the 'soul' comes from the heart." Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 119.

[217] Here, God's pleasure seems to be indirect. It does not refer to some sadistic enjoyment of the
servant's suffering but to the ultimate desires of God, which may be brought about by the sufferings. See
the discussion of this in chapter 6.

[218] There can be little question that such language is deeply emotive due to the mention of the
yearning of God's heart and compassion in the foreground (Jer 31:20). This does, however, raise the
question with regard to what God finds delightful in Israel at this time. Nevertheless, the term here for
delight (שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים), in noun form, is used in only nine verses and is often clearly in reference to objective
delight, that is, delight for an object that warrants it, for instance God's testimonies (Ps 119:24), law (Ps
119:77, 92, 174), commandments (Ps 119:143), etc. Moreover, wisdom had her "delight in the sons of
men" (Prov 8:31). Wisdom was daily God's delight (Prov 8:30) and the men of Judah "His delightful

"precious" (יקר) in his sight, "honored" (כבד), and "loved" (אהב) (Isa 43:4).[219] Moreover, God

refers to his people as "the apple of his eye" (Zech 2:8).[220] God looks forward to the end of

Israel's forsakenness when she shall be called "My delight is in her" for "the LORD delights

[חפץ] in you" (Isa 62:4). Furthermore, the people will be a source of God's delight, even "as the

bridegroom rejoices [שׂוֹשׂ] over the bride, So your God will rejoice [שׂוֹשׂ] over you" (Isa 62:5).

Thus, the day will come when God himself "will rejoice [שׂוֹשׂ] over them to do them good and will

faithfully plant them . . . with all [his] heart and with all [his] soul" (Jer 32:41).[221] Similarly, God

looks forward to a future wherein weeping and crying will be removed and "I will also rejoice

[גיל] in Jerusalem and be glad [שׂוֹשׂ] in My people" (Isa 65:19).[222] In the future, God's people will

serve him and he will "accept [רצה] them" as "a soothing aroma" (Ezek 20:40–41; cf. Gen 6:8).

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plant" (Isa 5:7). Lundbom comments, "The noun *saasuim* . . . is another intensive form meaning the object of play or delight. . . . In Isa 66:12 the Polpal form of the verb means 'rocked back and forth on the lap.'" *Jeremiah 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21B; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 446. Moreover, of the parallel term, Lundbom informs, "Hebrew *yaqqir* means 'dear, very precious' (cf. *yaqar* in 15:19 and *yeqar* in 20:5)." *Jeremiah 21–36*, 445.

[219] Cf. Exod 19:5. Notably, God acts on the basis of this love for his people to "give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life" (Isa 43:4). In other words, God's valuation of the people is a grounding of substitution. Oswalt thinks this is not because of "intrinsic worth in the one being ransomed, but because of who God is and what he sees in them." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 134. O. Palmer Robertson likewise believes, "Them he loves because he loves them (Deut. 7:6–8). Not in them or for anything in them is to be found the reason for his love. In the nature of God himself may be discovered the only explanation of this love." *The Books of Nahum, Habbakkuk, and Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 341. However, is it not likewise possible that God finds worth in his beings, value with which he himself imbibed them, looking past their shortcomings in love? According to Motyer, these terms "speak of the value the Lord sees in his people (precious: cf. Eph 1:18), the dignity (honoured) he has conferred in calling them his, and the love (Dt. 7:7–8) which undergirds all." *Isaiah*, 332.

[220] Cf. Deut 32:10; Ps. 17:8, literally, "little man of his eye." It is elsewhere clear that God does appreciate beauty, even the beauty that he himself creates, "I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, And all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it" (Ezek 31:9).

[221] Once again, note the intensity added by the phrase "with all my heart and with all my soul," denoting the object of God's cognitive and emotive personality. Notably, "only here in the OT is the expression 'with all my heart and with all my soul' used in reference to God." Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, 521.

[222] Watts comments, "Undoubtedly God's tears had flowed for both the city and his people many times during the previous four centuries. Finally this can be reversed." *Isaiah 34–66*, 354. Moreover, God "will rejoice because his compassionate heart will no longer be wrenched and torn by those things that wrench and tear at ours." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 657–58.

Zephaniah presents perhaps the height of this apparently eschatological divine delight. In "that day" of deliverance, God the mighty warrior "in your midst . . . will exult [שֹׂושׂ] over you with joy [שִׂמְחָה], He will be quiet in His love,[223] He will rejoice [גיל] over you with shouts of joy [רִנָּה]" (Zeph 3:16–17).[224] Notice the rich and intense divine joy, which nearly exhausts the available terminology and might best be described as exuberance, even perhaps "ecstasy."[225] Clearly, God may be pleased or displeased in correspondence with the specific actions/reactions of his people. As such, divine pleasure, or the lack thereof, is clearly represented as evaluative, corresponding to the presence or absence of the desired state of affairs. For this reason, the height of his joy is

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[223] Numerous suggestions have been made regarding the meaning of "keeps silent in his love." The LXX and Pesshitta read, "he will renew you in his love." However, the most natural reading is "silent in his love." Keil and Delitzsch helpfully suggest, "Silence in His love is an expression used to denote love deeply felt, which is absorbed in its object with thoughtfulness and admiration." *Commentary*, 10:461. Similarly, Robertson points out that חרש is usually intransitive, thus denoting the "inward condition of the subject," thus this describes God as contemplating his people in love. *The Books*, 340. Theodore H. Gaster also rejects the LXX reading, suggesting an intended contrast between "*keeping silent* and *bursting into song*" rendering the latter as a concessive clause, "Though now He be keeping silent about His love, He will then joy over thee in a burst of song." "Two Textual Emendations," *ExpTim* 78 (1966–67): 267.

[224] A brief look at these terms may further highlight divine delight. שֹׂושׂ consistently means exult or rejoice and appears in various instances with human agency. Sometimes it appears alone, connoting exultation, joy (Isa 62:4 [5]; 64:5 [4]; 66:14; Ezek 21:10; Pss 19:6 [5]; 119:14, 162; Job 39:21; Lam 1:21). It is often closely associated with other terms for rejoice, as it is here, such as שָׂמֵחַ (Pss 40:16 [17]; 70:4 [5]; Lam 4:21), both שָׂמֵחַ and עָלַץ (Ps 68:3 [4], both שָׂמֵחַ and גיל (Isa 66:10; Job 3:22), and גיל (Isa 35:1; 65:18; Ps 35:9). In divine usage, the term clearly denotes divine joy, even rejoicing (Isa 62:4 [5]; 66:19; Jer 32:41; cf. Jer 49:25; Isa 60:15; Jer 49:25; Lam 2:15). שמח is a very frequent term of joy, gladness, and/or delight. It refers not to lasting joy, but to a spontaneous emotion of rejoicing, even exuberance. E. Ruprecht, "שמח," *TLOT* 3:1273. "The root *ś-m-ḥ* denotes being glad or joyful with the whole disposition as indicated by its association with the heart (cf. Exod 4:14; Pss 19:8 [H 9]; 104:15; 105:3), the soul (Ps 86:4); and with the lighting up of the eyes (Prov 15:30)." Bruce K. Waltke, "שמח," *TWOT* 879. It mostly refers to human joy but does appear a few times with divine agency in both verbal שמח and nominal forms (Isa 9:17 [16]; Zeph 3:17; Ps 104:31). רנן, another prominent term of joy, often of shouting or singing, appears with God as subject only here in Zeph 3:17. Finally, גיל refers to gladness, rejoicing. Wood comments that this root connotes great "emotional involvement." *TLOT* 1:310. It appears with divine agency not only in Zeph 3:17 but also Isa 65:19.

[225] Robertson, *The Books*, 340. Robertson calls this "a rapturous description of the love of God for his people. . . . Delight, joy, rejoicing, and singing on God's part underscore the mutuality of emotional experience felt by God and the redeemed." Ibid., 339. Indeed, in Zeph 3, "Zion is exhorted to sing *(rānnî);* [God] rejoices with singing *(rinnāh)*. Jerusalem shall rejoice *(śimṭî);* [God] delights over Jerusalem with joy *(śimṭāh)*. The whole scene depicts a grand oratorio as God and his people mutually rejoice in their love for one another." Ibid., 340.

reserved for the day of ultimate restoration when reality will be in perfect accord with the divine will.

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in the Writings

Although Eliphaz, Job's so-called friend, gives voice to the common misconception that God does not actually enjoy or appreciate human beings (Job 22:2–3), the evaluative aspect of divine love is likewise presented in the Writings.[226] For example, God "loves [אהב] the righteous" (Ps 146:8).[227] He himself is righteous and "loves righteousness," the upright "will behold His face" (Ps 11:7; cf. Pss 33:5; 37:28; 99:4, 8).[228] God's delight is itself sometimes directly connected to love proper. Thus, God "reproves" those he loves (אהב) like a father to his son in whom he "delights" (רצה) (Prov 3:12). Likewise, just as the upright person's prayer is God's

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[226] Eliphaz rhetorically asks whether a "vigorous man" is "useful" [סכן] to God (Job 22:2) or whether God has any pleasure [חֵפֶץ] in human righteousness, or "profit" [בֶּצַע] in perfection (Job 22:3; cf. 35:7). Eliphaz therein assumes that God can neither use, nor pleasure, nor profit from the actions of human beings. "The point of the verse is that God is not advantaged by good deeds. He is distant and detached . . . transcendent" and "indifferent toward all people." Robert L. Alden, *Job* (NAC 11; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 230. Apparently, Eliphaz "wishes to refute Job's implication from his disputation that since there are wicked people who enjoy prosperity all their lives there may be righteous people who endure calamity in spite of their righteousness (ch. 21). Eliphaz counters this position with the premise that a person *cannot benefit God*. . . . This means then that misfortune can have its cause only in human sin, never in God's sovereign purpose acting toward an individual irrespective of his righteousness or wickedness. In other words it is unfathomable to Eliphaz that God would permit a righteous person to endure a season of misery even though he has been faithful in obeying God." John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 325; cf. Marvin H. Pope, *Job* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 150. There is "in Eliphaz's position a dual stripping of biblical faith: God is depersonalized by a mechanical view of justice, and moral deeds possess only utilitarian value for mankind." Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 325. Of course, Eliphaz and Job's other friends are shown to be incorrect (they have not spoken of God "what is right") and thus strongly rebuked by God at the end of the book (Job 42:7–8). Such statements are therefore not representative of the true nature of God. See the discussion of the temporary and partial suspension of the consequences of evaluative judgment in chapter 6, which sheds light on these issues.

[227] The "righteous" are within a passage that emphasizes God's beneficence toward the needy, the blind, the orphan, etc. "While it may seem that 'the righteous' (v. 8c) do not belong in this series, we must remember that it is precisely 'the righteous' in the psalter who are constantly besieged, assaulted, and oppressed (see Ps 34:19)." McCann Jr., "The Book of Psalms," in *1 & 2 Maccabees*, 4:1264.

[228] Craigie comments, "Because God is righteous, *he loves righteous deeds* (v 7), implying either that he loves to *do* righteous deeds, or loves those that do righteous deeds; in context, the latter is more likely, so that there is here a confident expression of the love of a righteous God for a righteous person." *Psalms 1–50*, 134. Thus, "God's judgment follows his evaluation of people." Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (NAC 14; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 126–27.

delight (רָצוֹן), he loves (אהב) the pursuer of righteousness (Prov 15:8–9). These passages, as well as others, clearly associate divine love with objectively evaluative, divine delight.[229] Further, as in the prophets, divine delight (חפץ) also may be the cause of rescue (Ps 18:19 [20]), which David frames as "reward" and "recompense" according to his "righteousness" and "cleanness" (Ps 18:20 [21]).[230]

Thus, God "takes pleasure (רָצָה) in His people" (Ps 149:4; cf. 77:8–9). On the other hand, God does not take "pleasure" (חָפֵץ) in evil but "hates" (שׂנא) those who do evil, destroys those who speak falsehood, and "abhors [תעב] the man of bloodshed and deceit" (Ps 5:4–6 [5–7]; cf. 106:40). God's "soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) hates (שׂנא) the one who "loves" (אהב) violence (Ps 11:5).[231] Whereas God does not "delight [חפץ] in the strength of the horse" nor "take pleasure [רצה] in the legs of a man," he "favors" (רצה), or takes pleasure in, those "who fear Him" and "wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 147:10–11).[232] Similarly, whereas "the perverse in heart are an abomination [תוֹעֵבָה] to the LORD, the blameless in their walk are His delight [רָצוֹן]" (Prov 11:20). As in the prophets, divine

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[229] Thus, Daniel is God's beloved, or one of "high esteem" (חֲמוּד) (Dan 10:11). Choon-Leong Seow renders this, "Greatly beloved," "literally, 'a man of lovableness.'" *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 243. John E. Goldingay points out, "Like words such as אהב 'love,' חמד suggests both a feeling and an attitude that expresses itself in being drawn toward the object of love and committing oneself to it (Isa 53:2; Pss 19:11 [10]; 68:17 [16]). . . . Daniel is one to whom God is committed. As we have seen, he has prayed as *persona grata* to Yahweh." *Daniel* (WBC 30; Dallas: Word, 1989), 256. Good adds, this "denotes something highly desirable and precious." "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:165. Likewise Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel* (NAC 18; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 251; cf. Gen 27:15; Ezra 8:27. Further, God "delighted [חָפֵץ] in" Solomon and set him on the throne out of love for Israel (2 Chr 9:8).

[230] Mitchell Dahood translates, "He [God] brought me out of the broad domain, liberated me because he loved me. Yahweh rewarded me because I was just, because my hands were innocent he repaid me." *Psalms 1-50* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 102. The foreground likewise speaks of the keeping of God's commandments and God's reciprocal relations, "with the kind [חָסִיד] You show yourself kind [חסד]; with the blameless You show yourself blameless; With the pure You show Yourself pure, And with the crooked You show Yourself astute" (Ps 18:25–26 [26–27]). Thus, "there was a reciprocal dimension to the relationship with God, by which the faithful, the blameless, and the pure could expect God's faithful response, while the twisted could expect tortuous returns." Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 175. Notably, it is not that his behavior guaranteed a turbulent-free life, for the king had been assailed by enemies, but the assertion is that God heard him when he cried because he had been faithful.

[231] See the discussion of the emotive nature of these statements in the section on the emotionality of divine love.

appraisal is again evident with regard to God's delight in, or desire for, heartfelt, sincere devotion

to him, which is contrasted with merely external sacrifices by various phrases.[233] Such instances

speak to the wholeheartedness expected by God from his people; external sacrifices of themselves

are not pleasing to God but an internal spirit of devotion to God is his delight. In many other

instances, God's evaluative delight appears throughout the Writings.[234] Such examples are clearly

evaluative, distinguishing between moral qualities in the identification of the object of divine

delight. God's pleasure and delight are thus evaluatively responsive to actual objects yet distinct

from the scale of evaluation that human beings may employ.[235] Accordingly, divine love, as well

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[232] JPS translates, "the LORD values those who fear Him" (Ps 147:10).

[233] Thus, God does not "delight [חָפֵץ] in sacrifice" nor is he "pleased [רָצָה] with burnt offering" but the "sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart," which he "will not despise" (Ps 51:16–17 [18–19]; cf. Ps 40:6 [7]; 69:31; Prov 15:8–9). In one such instance, בחר, the usual term for election, signifies such evaluative desire. Specifically the doing of "righteousness and justice is desired [בחר] by the LORD more than sacrifice" (Prov 21:3). Here, בחר (in *niphal* participle) clearly connotes more than indifferent election but seems to connote the divine evaluation and even appreciation of good conduct; cf. Prov 22:21. This evaluative sense of בחר is not surprising when it is remembered that the word group often refers to that which is "choice" or the "choicest" in the sense of being the most desirable or precious. See the word study earlier in this chapter. As Roland E. Murphy comments, "The contrast is not between the relative values of sacrifice and prayer, but between the reaction of God and the contradictory actions of human beings. It is the sacrificer, not the sacrifice, that is the issue." *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Dallas: Word, 1998), 112. Thus, "the criterion for God's favor is not simply the scrupulous performance of ritual but the ardent pursuit of serving others along with it." Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 621.

[234] Thus, as upright and faithful himself, God "loves [אהב] righteousness and justice" (Ps 33:5). Again, he "loves justice" and does not "forsake His godly ones" (חָסִיד) whereas others are cut off (Ps 37:28). Further, a just weight (Prov 11:1), the blameless (Prov 11:20), those who deal faithfully (Prov 12:22) and the prayer of the upright (Prov 15:8) are each characterized as God's "delight" (רָצוֹן). These are in contrast to a false weight (Prov 11:1), lying lips (12:22), and the sacrifice of the wicked (15:8), which are all viewed by God as an "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה). God does not take "pleasure [חָפֵץ] in wickedness" (Ps 5:4), "takes no delight [חָפֵץ] in fools" (Eccl 5:4 [3]) and may be otherwise "displeased" (וְרַע בְּעֵינָיו) (Prov 24:18). Further, the man whose way is "pleasing" (רָצוֹן) to God is blessed (Prov 16:7; cf. 12:22). As Waltke paraphrases Prov 12:22, on the other hand, "liars so repulse his nature that he casts them aside." *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 539. Further, the one who finds wisdom "finds life and obtains the favor [רָצוֹן] of the LORD" (Prov 8:35; cf. 12:2). Likewise, God "surrounds" the righteous man with "favor" [רָצוֹן] (Ps 5:12; cf. Prov 3:3). Wisdom personified is God's daily, intense "delight" (שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים) (Prov 8:30). The Hebrew term שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים signifies "intense delight." See the discussion above. Some translations (e.g., NIV) ascribe the delight to "wisdom" not to God. So Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 420–21. However, the noun שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים in the construction would seem to imply that wisdom is the object and God the subject of the delight, as the LXX interprets. Cf. Jer 31:20. This is the position of Fox who comments, "God gets amusement from his creatures." Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 287.

[235] Morris cautions, "It is going too far to suggest that these passages teach that the righteous are so meritorious that they win the love of an otherwise unloving God." *Testaments of Love*, 95. However, this

as its antonym hatred, is not altogether indifferent, but may be grounded in objective appraisal. It is thus neither undifferentiated nor altogether constant.

The Evaluative and Emotional Aspect of Divine Hatred

At the juncture of the evaluative and emotional aspects of divine love is the contrast of God's hate. The most prominent term of negative divine evaluation is שנא, the antonym of אהב, which is most often used in religious contexts.[236] The root most often refers to the emotional feelings of disdain or hatred for something or someone.[237] However, the intensity of the negative feelings and/or evaluation can vary greatly from the most intense loathing or abhorrence of something, or someone, to a mild aversion.[238]

As with אהב, שנא often refers to the emotions between a man and a woman in a romantic and/or erotic relationship. For instance, Leah is said to be "hated" by her husband Jacob (Gen 29:31, 33; cf. Deut 21:15–17; 22:13; 24:3).[239] Many consider this usage, and others like it, to

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could be taken to present a false dichotomy because divine delight could be evaluative but still not amount to winning or meriting God's love.

[236] The word group appears in verbal (139 verses), nominal (16 verses), and adjectival forms (1x). In ANE cognates the term appears often in northwest Semitic languages with significant parallels meaning "to hate." See A. H. Konkel, "שנא," *NIDOTTE* 3:1257; Ernst Jenni, "שנא," *TLOT* 3:1277; cf. the Aramaic cognate in Dan 4:16. The term is used some 31 times in direct contrast to אהב as its antonym.

[237] It "expresses an emotional attitude toward persons and things which are opposed, detested, despised and with which one wishes to have no contact or relationship. It is therefore the opposite of love." Groningen, *TWOT* 880. Lipinski adds that the verb "refers to an emotional condition of aversion that OT anthropology locates 'in the heart' [לֵבָב] . . . or in the" נֶפֶשׁ. E. Lipinski, "שנא," *TDOT* 14:64; cf. Lev 19:17; 2 Sam 5:8; Ps 11:5.

[238] "The gamut of feelings of dislike are included in the scope of שנא; it may express the most intense hatred of the enemies of God (Ps 139:21–22), or that of a violent enemy (25:19), but it may simply express that which is to be avoided, such as serving as a guarantor for a debt (Prov 11:15), the feelings of aversion for a poor man (19:7), or the aggravation of a neighbor who visits too often (25:17)." Konkel, *NIDOTTE* 3:1257. Jenni concurs, "The semantic scope . . . reaches from the strongly affective 'to hate' . . . to a somewhat diluted 'to feel aversion for, not want, avoid.'" *TLOT* 3:1278.

[239] Similarly, in the situation where a man has two wives "one loved and the other hated" the law protects the children of the "hated" wife from losing any birthrights (Deut 21:15–17). In both of these passages, as well as Prov 30:23, שנא is a *qal* passive participle. שנא also refers to a man who, after consummating the marriage, "hates" his wife and charges her with having not been a virgin (Deut 22:13, 16) and to a man who "hates" his wife to divorce her (Deut 24:3). Many have seen שנא in such contexts as

merely depict a mild contrast with אהב and thus render the term "unloved" or "unpreferred."[240]

However, there is simply not enough information to determine the intensity of the שׂנא in the

situations above.[241] Elsewhere, an intensely emotional contrast is apparent, as in the dark

narrative of Amnon and Tamar. After Amnon rapes his half-sister, it is said that "hated her with a

very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he

had loved her" (2 Sam 13:15).[242] Likewise, שׂנא appears within sibling relationships, referring to

quite intense, and evaluative, animosity. For example, Joseph is hated by his brothers because

they see that their father "loved him more than all his brothers" and they come to hate him "even

more" after he tells them his dream (Gen 37:4–5, 8). Absalom hated Amnon for raping his sister

Tamar (2 Sam 13:22). In both of the above cases the reason for the animosity is clearly given.

Likewise, in a non-kinship relationship the cause of hatred is explicit; Ahab hates Micaiah

because he never prophesies good for him (1 Kgs 22:8; 2 Chr 18:7).[243] Thus, hatred is often

explicitly predicated on some objective reality.[244]

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technical language for divorce. Lipinski comments that while it is a technical term used "in connection with divorce" the use of the term in Hebrew "leaves no doubt that this verb expresses an emotional condition implying the wish for separation or removal from the 'hated' person." *TDOT* 14:169.

[240] For instance, Konkel comments, "The use of loved and hated to describe the attitude toward a preferred wife as opposed to the one who was tolerated or even rejected (Gen 29:31, 33) lends to hate the sense of being unloved or not chosen, or even abandoned and rejected." *NIDOTTE* 3:1257. Jenni comments, "In reference to the relationship between man and woman, *śn'* usually implies a contrast to the expected or prior relationship of love: 'to hate' (Ezek 23:29) signifies, then, 'to love no longer, develop dislike for,' etc. (Deut 22:13, 16; 24:3; Judg 14:16; 15:2; 2 Sam 13:15)." *TLOT* 3:1278. See the brief discussion of this in the word study of אהב.

[241] With regard to Leah, commentators have long proposed that שׂנא is here merely a reference to the absence of love. However, it is not unreasonable to think that Jacob may have felt some animosity, whether overtly or suppressed, toward Leah considering the fact that he never intended to marry her and worked an extra seven years for her sister, Rachel, due to Laban's deception with which Leah apparently went along. It is plausible that, as such, Jacob did have some degree of disdain for Leah.

[242] Further emotional contrast is apparent when Delilah complains to Samson, "you only hate me, and you do not love me" when he will not give her truthful information regarding the source of his strength (Judg 14:16; cf. Judg 15:2).

[243] In a couple of instances, prior hatred is referenced. Isaac asks Abimelech why he came to him, "since you hate me and have sent me away from you" (Gen 26:27). Jephthah says similarly to the elders, "Did you not hate me and drive me from my father's house? So why have you come to me now when you

Evaluation and/or emotion is often apparent by reference to the context. Thus, it is clear that שׂנא connotes evaluation when God praises, "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness" and therefore God has anointed him above others (Ps 45:7 [8]). Similarly, those who "love the LORD" are exhorted to "hate evil" (Ps 97:10; cf. Amos 5:15; Prov 8:13; 27:6; Eccl 3:8; 9:1).[245] There are many other examples of the term שׂנא being used in a clearly evaluative manner.[246] Thus, it appears that an evaluative element is consistently present such that even when the reason for hatred is not explicitly given there appears to be something operative that goes beyond merely arbitrary decision. The emotionality of the term is likewise evident in many occurrences. For instance, God will bring judgment on Edom according to their anger (אַף) and envy (קִנְאָה), which they showed because of their hatred of Israel and Judah (Ezek 35:11; cf. 35:6). Likewise, the passion of hatred is apparent in another collocation with the emotion zeal (קִנְאָה) (Eccl 9:6).[247]

With divine agency, the word group is consistently used in an explicitly evaluative manner and often with a clear indication of emotionality. For example, God loves justice but

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are in trouble?" (Judg 11:7). Consider also the presence or absence of prior hatred as the determinative factor between murder and manslaughter (Num 35:20; Deut 4:42; 19:4, 6, 11; Josh 20:5).

[244] שׂנא also often appears with specific counsel, including the command to not "hate your brother in your heart" (Lev 19:17; cf. Zech 8:17) and to help the animal of the one who hates you (Exod 23:4–5). The term is also often used with regard to proverbial advice. See Prov 10:12, 18; 11:15; 15:17; 25:17; 26:24, 26, 28.

[245] Similarly evaluative is Jehu's chastising of King Jehoshaphat for helping the wicked, and thus loving "those who hate the LORD," thus provoking God's wrath (2 Chr 19:2). David is chastised by Joab for "loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you" when he is mourning for Absalom (2 Sam 19:6).

[246] This is true even if evaluation is not always accurate or warranted or worse, perverted, such as Amnon's hatred for Tamar after defiling her. See Exod 18:21; Amos 5:10, 15; Mic 3:2; Pss 26:5; 31:6 [7]; 36:2 [3]; 50:17; 101:3; 109:5; 119:104, 128; 119:113, 163; 120:6; Prov 1:22, 29; 5:12; 8:13, 36; 12:1; 13:5, 24; 14:17, 20; 15:27; 19:7; 29:10, 24; Job 34:17; Eccl 2:17–18.

[247] Emotion is also evident when שׂנא is collocated with "soul" or "inner person" [נֶפֶשׁ], which is often used as the seat of emotions (2 Sam 5:8). Further, the presence or absence of animosity or hatred can make the difference with regard to whether there is murderous intent. If one kills another out "of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait" the penalty is death (Num 35:20; cf. Deut 4:42; 19:4, 6, 11; Josh 20:5) but if there is no malice the person may be restored by the congregation (Num 35:25).

hates robbery (Isa 61:8). He himself declares, "I hate [literally, My soul (נֶפֶשׁ) hates] your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me, I am weary of bearing them" (Isa 1:14).[248]

God is even said to hate human beings with the connotation of both evaluation and emotion.[249] For instance, God says, "My inheritance has become to Me like a lion in the forest; she has roared against Me; Therefore I have come to hate her" (Jer 12:8).[250] Again, God "came to hate" his people at Gilgal and will drive them out of his house because of their wickedness and "will love them no more" (Hos 9:15). Likewise, God hates "all who do iniquity" (Ps 5:5 [6]; cf. Mal 1:2–3).[251] That this is evaluative and emotional is evident in the verses before and after. The next verse declares, in parallel, he "abhors" (תעב) the man of bloodshed and deceit" (Ps 5:6 [7])

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[248] Further, God "hates" the idolatrous pillar (Deut 16:22), the "abominable [תּוֹעֵבָה] acts that the other nations have committed (Deut 12:31; cf. Prov 6:16), evil and perjury (Zech 8:17), and divorce (Mal 2:16). Notably, emotive content is apparent in that Prov 6:16 depicts that which is an abomination to God's soul. Indeed, God hates such abominable acts so much that he has continually sent his prophets to declare on his behalf, "'Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer 44:4). Similarly, God says, "I hate, I despise [מָאַס] your religious feasts" (Amos 5:21). By the use of strongly emotive terminology, God has "sworn by Himself [נֶפֶשׁ]" and declared "I loathe [תאב] the arrogance of Jacob, and detest [שׂנא] his citadels" (Amos 6:8).

[249] On the other hand, humans may also hate God or his people. The participle of שׂנא frequently refers to a hater or haters of an individual or group, often of those who hate God's people. שׂנא also appears frequently in the participle to refer to those who hate God, often with the further statement that God will repay them for their hatred (cf. Exod 20:5 = Deut 5:9). See also Num 10:35; Deut 7:10; 32:41; Pss 21:8 [9]; 68:1 [2]; 81:15 [16]; 83:2 [3]; 139:21; 2 Chr 19:2. The term is similarly used to refer to those whom God's people "hate," the very same who will oppress her (Ezek 16:37; 23:28–29; cf. Isa 60:15; Ps 139:21–22).

[250] This is in contrast to their position as the "beloved" of his "soul" (Jer 12:7). Here, "the Lord declares that he 'hates' his people, the very people who had earlier been described as his 'beloved.' Once again we catch a glimpse of the pathos of God (cf. 9:1–10)." Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25* (WBC 26; Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 184. Earlier, the Israelites had falsely accused God of hating them and thus bringing them into the wilderness to suffer (Deut 1:27; cf. 9:28).

[251] At times, God's declaration "I have loved Jacob" but "I have hated Esau" (Mal 1:2–3) has been interpreted as a simple contrast between the election of Jacob and Esau, conflating the terms "love" and "hate" with choose and not choose, respectively. However, in every other case, God's hatred toward human beings is prompted by evil and God's response is appropriate to the actual state of affairs. Accordingly, in light of the fact that all other instances of divine hatred are not arbitrary but evaluative (and most are explicitly emotive) as well as a number of intertextual hints in Malachi (and the wider canon) that suggest divine animosity toward Edom, this passage should also be seen as an instance of evaluative and emotional divine hatred. For a further explanation of this position, see the discussion of this passage in the canonical analysis earlier in this chapter in the section on the volitional aspect of divine love in the prophets.

where the previous verse stated, "You are not a God who takes pleasure [חָפֵץ] in wickedness" (Ps

5:4 [5]). Similarly, God examines, or "tests" (בחן), the righteous and the wicked, and the one who

loves violence His soul [שׂנֵא] hates" (Ps 11:5).[252] The evaluation is evident by reference to

examination, and intense emotionality is clear by the use of the divine soul, the seat of emotions,

as the agency of hatred. Notably, in the above instances, reasons for divine hatred are explicitly

given, so the divine hatred is anything but arbitrary.[253]

That divine hatred is often (and likely always) of an emotional nature is further evidenced

by other terms of negative evaluation and/or rejection that collocate with divine שׂנא including

תועבה/תעב (Deut 12:31; Isa 1:13–14; Jer 44:4; Amos 5:10; 6:8; Ps 5:5–6 [6–7]; Prov 6:16) and מאס

(Amos 5:21). A brief look at the usage of these terms with divine agency may further clarify

negative evaluation.

The word group תעב appears frequently, referring to loathing, detesting, or abhorring

something or someone. The noun תועבה frequently refers to abominations, or those

objects/occurrences that are detestable to God and provoke his anger.[254] For instance, with

idolatrous "abominations" Israel "provoked" God to anger (Deut 32:16). Israel frequently

partakes in such abominations and is not ashamed of them (Jer 6:15; cf. 7:10; 8:12) despite God's

consistent pleadings (Jer 44:4). As such, they made God's inheritance an abomination (Jer 2:7; cf.

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[252] The language of "soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) clearly denotes emotionality as elsewhere. Such hatred is here based on examination. "The verb בחן, translated 'scrutinize,' implies 'testing, proving, assaying.' And the testing of metals was done by fire." Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 133. Dahood, however, sees the human as the subject of hatred. He translates, "Yahweh is the Just One who will indeed assay the wicked; So that he who loves injustice hates his own life." *Psalms 1–50*, 68. Such a translation is possible (cf. Prov 29:24), but the parallel with Ps 5 strongly suggests a divine subject. Likewise, cf. Isa 1:14; Amos 6:8; Prov 6:16.

[253] Van Groningen likewise comments, "God's hatred for idols and feasts is also directed against people, e.g., Esau (Mal 1:3, Gen 27; Pss 5:5 [H 6]; 11:5). In each case the character and/or activities of the hated ones are expressed; thus God is opposed to, separates himself from, and brings the consequences of his hatred upon people not as mere people, but as sinful people." *TWOT* 880.

[254] "Pagan worship practices, deceit and insubordination within the covenant nation, and superficial worship of Yahweh constitute three major realms of abhorrent activities." Michael A. Grisanti, "תעב," *NIDOTTE* 4:314. A few examples are given in the main text of a much longer list of things that are abominations to God.

Isa 1:13). As with hatred, an abomination, or that which prompts divine loathing, is evaluatively

evil or negative. Frequently, Proverbs contrasts that which is an abomination (תּוֹעֵבָה) to God with

that which is his delight (רָצוֹן), clearly connoting both positive and negative divine evaluation.[255]

God's abhorrence extends to human beings, like his hatred. Thus, the one who does abominations

or "detestable things" (תּוֹעֵבָה) is "detestable [תּוֹעֵבָה] to the LORD" (Deut 18:12; cf. 25:16).

Likewise, God "abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit" (Ps 5:6 [7]). Further "the devious are an

abomination to the LORD; But he is intimate [סוֹד] with the upright" (Prov 3:32). Because of their

evil "the anger of the LORD was kindled against His people and He abhorred His inheritance"

(Ps 106:40). Thus, divine abhorrence is directly tied to evaluation; divine abhorrence toward

human beings is grounded in their evil, not in an arbitrary divine decision. The abominations of

God's people try God, so that he is "no longer able to endure it" and thus destruction is brought

upon them (Jer 44:22) and the absence of divine pity (חוּס) and compassion (חמל) results (Ezek

5:11; 7:4, 9).[256]

The verb מאס often refers to the action of rejection, which is associated with God's hatred

and at times the disposition from which they spring.[257] God had promised a limitation to his

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[255] Thus, "a false weight is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight [רָצוֹן]"
(Prov 11:1). Similarly, the "perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in their
walk are His delight [רָצוֹן]" (Prov 11:20). Likewise, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those
who deal faithfully are His delight [רָצוֹן]" (Prov 12:22). Again, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an
abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight [רָצוֹן]" (Prov 15:8). In the same vein,
"The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves [אהב] one who pursues
righteousness" (Prov 15:9). Similar evaluation is present in ANE parallels. For instance, "this verse has a
parallel in Amenemope, chap. 10, 'Do not speak falsely to a man, the God abhors it.'" Murphy, *Proverbs*,
92.

[256] Cf. Ezek 5:9, 11; 6:11; 7:3–4, 8–9, 20; 11:21; 12:16; 16:58; 18:12–13; 18:24; 33:29; 43:8.
Regarding their continual abominations also see Mal 2:11; Ezek 6:9; 8:6, 9, 13, 15, 17; 9:4; 11:18; 14:6;
16:2, 22, 25, 36, 43, 47, 50–52; 20:4; 22:2, 11; 23:36; 33:26; 36:31; 44:6–7, 13.

[257] "The rather rich spectrum of usages indicates that one can assume the basic meaning 'to want
nothing to do with.' . . . The verbal notion has a marked emotionally charged, irrational aspect; one rejects
something because one neither no longer can nor wishes to identify inwardly with it." Wildberger, *TLOT*
2:653. "Reasons for this distaste need not be stated and often are not. Yet the LXX's relatively frequent
translation of *m's* with *exoudeneō* should be noted: one abhors something because one has come to the
awareness that it has no significant value for one." Ibid. The verb occurs in 69 verses; in the *qal* (65 verses)

animosity, to not reject them so as to destroy them (Lev 26:44). Yet, as they rejected his covenant "the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel" (2 Kgs 17:20). God also says, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen" (2 Kgs 23:27; cf. Amos 5:21).[258] As such, it sometimes seems to the people like they have, in fact, been utterly rejected. Thus, God reassures, "You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you" (Isa 41:9). Yet, in distress the people of God can be compared to a "wife of one's youth when she is rejected" (Isa 54:6).

Israel provoked God such that he was "filled with wrath and greatly abhorred Israel (Ps 78:59). Thus, he "rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim" (Ps 78:67). Thus, the question to God, "Have you completely rejected Judah? Or have you loathed [נעל] Zion?" (Jer 14:19; cf. Jer 2:37; 6:30; 7:29).[259] In Lamentations, one wonders if God has "utterly rejected" (מָאֹס מְאַסְתָּנוּ) them and is "exceedingly angry with" them (Lam 5:22). Later, the psalmist laments, "You have cast off and rejected, You have been full of wrath against Your anointed" (Ps 89:38 [39]). Yet, ultimately, God proclaims that he will not "cast off [מאס] all the offspring of Israel" (Jer 31:37; cf. 33:24, 26). However, all this is not arbitrary, but it is directly related to

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and in the *niphal* (5 verses). The noun מָאוֹס appears only once, meaning "refuse" or trash (Lam 3:45).

[258] This term is often used as the antonym of בחר, to choose, as it appears here (Isa 7:15–16; 41:9; Jer 33:24; Ps 78:67; Job 34:33. Eugene H. Merrill, "מאס," *NIDOTTE* 2:834.

[259] Further, consider the verb נעל, "to abhor, reject," which does not appear often (10 x) and does not collocate with שנא. However, it does collocate with מאס in a number of instances (Lev 26:15, 43–44; Jer 14:19) and likewise portrays divine animosity toward human beings. Levine suggests, "The primary image seems to be that of physical spoilage, or filth." Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 184. Milgrom adds, it "conveys the notion of 'nausea, loathing.'" Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2301. Thus, God proclaims that if they are faithful he will dwell among them and his "soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) will not despise them (Lev 26:11). Notice נֶפֶשׁ, the seat of emotions. But if their soul abhors his ordinances (Lev 26:15; cf. 26:43) and they spurn God, then God's "soul shall abhor" them (Lev 26:30). Yet, the divine abhorrence will only go so far. For "in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject [מאס] them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God" (Lev 26:44). Thus, in times of distress it is asked of God, "Have You completely rejected Judah? Or have You loathed Zion?" (Jer 14:19). Other instances of the term include Ezek 16:5, 45; 2 Sam 1:21; Job 21:10. Consider also God's spurning (נאץ) of his people, likewise in response to their evil (Deut 32:19; Jer 14:21; Lam 2:6). Importantly, this term most often refers to the people spurning God.

Israel's choice. Just as Saul was rejected as king because he rejected God's word (1 Sam 15:23; cf. 15:26; 16:1; Hos 4:6; 9:17),[260] the people have "rejected" the LORD (Num 11:20; 1 Sam 8:7; 10:19), his commandments (Lev 26:15, 43), the land (Num 14:31), his statues and his covenants (2 Kgs 17:15; cf. 17:20; Ezek 5:6; 20:13, 16, 24), the law of the LORD (Isa 5:24; cf. Jer 6:19; Amos 2:4), and the word of the LORD (Jer 8:9).

This brief survey demonstrates that God's hatred, abhorrence, and rejection of human beings are consistently grounded in evaluation of them that prompts negative divine emotions, often of an intense nature. Such negative evaluation is the apparent opposite of divine love and delight seen earlier. Thus, divine displeasure is quite prominent, further grounding the fact that God's emotions are frequently depicted as affected and evaluative. With this in mind, we turn to the emotional aspect of divine love.

The Emotional Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that support the conception that God's love is profoundly emotional though not to the exclusion of volitional and evaluative aspects. In this dissertation, an emotion is loosely defined as any feeling(s) that may be affected by external stimulation. At the same time, emotions are not necessarily determined by external stimulus to the exclusion of other mental factors including volition, evaluation, etc. First, love may be, at once, emotional and responsive to command. Second, God's love is consistently depicted as intensely affective and emotive. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Is divine love emotionally responsive to human disposition and/or action? If so, what kind of emotions are exhibited and on what occasions? Is God concerned about/affected by the world? Do the lives of creatures make a difference to God's own life? Are emotions

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[260] Importantly, "Yahweh's rejection is not capricious. . . . It is a reaction to the failure of the king." Wildberger, *TLOT* 2:654. Kaiser comments that such statements refer "only to individual participation and not to the abiding promise which remains open to all who will believe." Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "מאס," *TWOT* 488; cf. Walton, *Covenant*, 102–3.

mutually exclusive to volition, that is, can emotional love be commanded? This section of the

study begins with a survey of the meaning of prominent terms relative to God's emotional love

and then proceeds with the canonical survey of divine emotions.

<div align="center">The Semantics of Compassion and Passion in the NT</div>

A Brief Survey of רחם

The word group רחם generally refers to compassion.[261] The basic meaning of רֶחֶם, the

noun from this root, is "womb." Both the verb (probably denominative from the noun) and

abstract plural form of the noun denote compassion and tender-feelings, apparently based on the

idea of רֶחֶם, "womb," and, accordingly, referring to a "womb-like mother love."[262] As such, the

word group can refer to the "seat of emotions" or the profound emotions of compassion and/or

affection of one for another.[263] רחם includes mercy but is more than mercy; it is an emotional love,

a compassionate affection that often is manifested in merciful, non-obligatory action that goes

beyond reasonable expectations. Quell thus calls it "the strongest word for love that biblical

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[261] The lexeme appears in the nominal רחמים (37 verses), verbal רחם (43 verses), and two forms of adjectival רחום (13 verses) and once as רַחֲמָנִי (Lam 4:10). This count does not include the occurrences of the singular noun that means "womb." Moreover, it also does not include the usage in the "names" in Hos 1:6, 8. The word also appears in Aramaic once (Dan 2:18). There is not a significant difference between the connotation of the nominal and the verbal form, thus the two shall be treated together.

[262] See Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT 2; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 31–59. רחמים is likely an intensive plural. It is "probably in reference to the accompanying physiological phenomenon of strong emotion." H. J. Stoebe, "רחם," *TLOT* 3:1226; cf. "רחם," *HALOT* 1217–18. This connection is widely recognized, see, for instance, Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 527; Coppes, "רחם," *TWOT* 841; G. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, 306; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 202; Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 14; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 243–44; Stoebe, *TLOT* 3:1225; Mike Butterworth, "רחם," *NIDOTTE* 3:1093. This connection of "womb" to the emotion of love and/or compassion is also testified in the cognate languages. Ibid.. Simian-Yofre asserts רחם is "common to all Semitic languages." H. Simian-Yofre, "רחם," *TDOT* 13:438. The cognates further signify various connotations of love, compassion, devotion, loyalty, attachment. For an overview see ibid., 438–39.

[263] Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 14; cf. Coppes, "רחם," *TWOT* 842–843; Wilhelm Gesenius, "רחם," *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Oak Harbor, Wash.: Logos, 2003), 766. Thus, Janzen comments that it "refers to the feeling a mother has for the children whom she carries and feels in her womb, then carries in her arms and nurses at her breast, and afterward continues in faithful compassion toward them." *Exodus*, 252.

language has."[264] רחם is closely associated with some word groups that are also significant to the meaning of divine love. This word group collocates especially significantly with lovingkindness (חסד),[265] grace (חנן),[266] and other terms for compassion (חוס and חמל, נחם).[267] It further complements divine justice (משפט),[268] may be grounded in divine pleasure and act alongside divine passion,[269] tempers and overcomes wrath,[270] and is contrasted with being cruel (אַכְזָרִי).[271]

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[264] G. Quell, "Jesaja 14, 1–23," in *Festschrift Friedrich Baumgärtel* (ed. L. Rost; Erlangen: Universitätsbund, 1959), 140, quoted in Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 202. Gowan contends that it "needs to be given a stronger emotional quality than the word 'mercy' usually has." *Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 236. The intense emotion connoted by רחם is variously described. It is a "feelings word" and "denotes strong emotion," the "strong feelings of love and concern" that result in "action." Goldingay, *Daniel*, 243–44. It "is a heart-love: compassion . . . emotional, passionate, personal." Motyer, *Isaiah*, 386. Stoebe interprets רחמים as "an emotion oriented toward a specific action." *TLOT* 3:1226–27; cf. H. J. Stoebe, "Die Bedeutung des Wortes hāsād im Alten Testament," *VT* 2 (1952): 246.

[265] The discussion of the overlap with the חסד word group will take place in the word study of חסד later in this chapter.

[266] See the discussion further below.

[267] In three instances, it is used with חוס, each referring to the lack of compassion and pity in the context of war, one from the Medes to the Persians (Isa 13:18). In two of those instances, חוס, חמל, and רחם all appear together, expressing the lack of compassion from God toward Jerusalem (Jer 13:14), and Nebuchadnezzar toward Judah (Jer 21:7). It also collocates with the נחם lexeme, twice in allusions to Exod 34:6–7, with the mention of God's "relenting" (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). In another instance, God "comforted" his people and "will have compassion" on the afflicted (Isa 49:13). See the discussions of each of these three terms in footnotes in the canonical section.

[268] Indeed, God exhorts human beings to "dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion" (Zech 7:9). Thus, "the LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice" (Isa 30:18). Similarly, God proclaims he will betroth his people to him in "righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion" (Hos 2:19 [21]).

[269] In one instance, רחם associates with divine pleasure [רצון] as the grounding of divine compassion, as opposed to wrath as the grounding of judgment (Isa 60:10). In another instance, the absence of God's compassion is lamented and the absence of his zeal (קנאה) and the stirrings of his heart are questioned (Isa 63:15). On the other hand, God proclaims that he will "restore" and "have mercy" on Israel and "be jealous" for his holy name (Ezek 39:25).

[270] See the discussion below.

[271] אַכְזָרִי is a clear antonym of רחם. Those who have no mercy are cruel (Jer 6:23; 50:42; cf. Prov 12:10).

God is by far the most common agent of רחם, it is one of the essential elements of God's self-revelation of his character, manifested in action. The first appearance of רחם with God as agent takes place in the midst of dire need for forgiveness after Israel's rebellion with the golden calf where God's freedom to bestow compassion on the undeserving is put in action (Exod 33:19) and God reveals his character as "the LORD, the LORD God, compassionate [רחום] and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Exod 34:6).[272] This adjective רחום appears thirteen times altogether, and in every instance, with the likely exception of Ps 112:4, God is the agent.[273] The close association of God's compassion and graciousness is evident in that eleven of the thirteen instances are paired with words from the root חנן.[274] Further, God's רחם is great and abundant, denoted numerous times by the syntagm חסד with רב.[275] Over and over again throughout the OT the amazing compassion of God is recounted as unfailing and a basis of his merciful, redemptive action.[276] These ideas will be taken up further in the canonical analysis below. Here, a few characteristics of this word group should be noted before moving on.

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[272] See the discussion of this verse in the canonical analysis below.

[273] Ps 112:4 appears to associate the attributes "gracious and compassion and righteous" with the "upright" human agent, which would be the only time where רחום is used of a human. For this reason many have interpreted the text to refer to divine agency. If it does refer to God, it would seem to parallel Ps 116:5, which uses חנן, רחם, and צדק of God, although not in this order. On the other hand, if it is of human agency the four descriptors may form a chiasm: צַדִּיק, רחום, חנון, יָשָׁר. Both interpretations are possible but the latter interpretation is more likely absent the presupposition that humans cannot manifest true רחם and considering that the entire chapter is about humankind.

[274] See Exod 34:6; 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:17, 31; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; cf. Ps 112:4. Sometimes this syntagm is an unmistakable, extensive allusion to Exod 34:6, together with "slow to anger" and abounding/great in חסד (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh 9:17). At other times the pair form a simpler refrain (Pss 111:4; 112:4; Neh 9:31; 2 Chr 30:9). Some instances of either the longer or shorter form reverse the order of the pair in Exod 34:6, reading "gracious and compassionate" (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Pss 111:4; 112:4; 145:8; Neh 9:17, 31; 2 Chr 30:9). Finally, one instance of חנון appears with a participle of רחם (מְרַחֵם), God is the "gracious" and "righteous" and "compassionate one" (Ps 116:5); cf. Isa 49:15. The adjective appears without חנון only twice (Deut 4:31; Ps 78:38).

[275] See 2 Sam 24:14; Isa 63:7; Pss 51:1; 69:16; 119:156; Dan 9:18; Neh 9:19, 27, 31; 1 Chr 21:13), and once "exceedingly great" (מאד + רב) (1 Chr 21:13). This is similar to the many usages of רב + חסד.

[276] See Pss 103:4; 119:156; Lam 3:22; Dan 9:9, 18.

First, divine רחם is responsive and profoundly emotional. Over and over again the term

exhibits intense feelings of affection and/or compassion for the plight of human beings.[277] It often

appears not merely as a willed affection, but actually affected and/or aroused, an emotion that is

responsive to the actual state of affairs. At times, the striking magnitude of God's tender

compassion is compared to that of a father and/or mother for their children (Isa 49:15; Jer 31:20;

Ps 103:13; cf. Isa 63:15). Second, and closely related, the emotion comes to fruition in a

corresponding action that goes out toward one who is in distress or needs help.[278] With divine

agency, God's compassion often results in beneficence, forgiveness, and the removal of anger (cf.

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[277] With human agency the term also refers to strong emotional feelings of love and compassion
between family members including: Joseph for his brother (Gen 43:30), a mother for her endangered infant
(1 Kgs 3:26), and a father for his children (Ps 103:13). In the first two, רחם is collocated with כמר to form a
phrase that connotes profound and intense emotion. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he "was deeply stirred . . .
and sought out a place to weep . . . and wept" (Gen 43:30). JPS translates, "he was overcome with feeling
toward his brother and was on the verge of tears." This emotion is so strong it is apparently "beyond his
ability to control." Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 148. This same collocation refers to the mother "deeply stirred"
over her infant in the baby custody case before Solomon (1 Kgs 3:26); cf. Ps 103:13; Zech 7:9.

[278] With divine agency see, for example, Jer 42:12; Neh 9:27. Many have thus suggested that רחם
is compassion from a superior to an inferior. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 527;
Stoebe, *TLOT* 3:1227. Coppes suggests this is usually the case. "רחם," *TWOT* 841. While this is true for the
majority of cases, the psalmist declares, "I love You, O LORD" (Ps 18:1 [2]), the only occurrence where
רחם is in the *qal* and the only instance of God as the object of רחם. This one case of divine רחם toward God
would rule out the universality of such a trend, if it is taken as a valid instance. Many have considered this
to be a textual corruption or scribal gloss, especially since this phrase does not appear in the parallel in 2
Sam 22:2. However, textual data favor its validity and the proposed emendations are not very compelling;
cf. Simian-Yofre, *TDOT* 13:444. Simian-Yofre points out that "Ps. 116, which appears to presuppose Ps. 18
. . . uses *'hb* instead of *rhm*" and thus sees Ps 18 as an Aramaism. Ibid.; cf. Stoebe, *TLOT* 3:1227. Coppes
sees it as a valid expression of the Psalmist's love for God. "רחם," *TWOT* 841; cf. Good, "Love in the OT,"
IDB 3:165. In the absence of compelling data to the contrary, this study considers the text to be a valid
representation of human love (רחם) toward God. For our purposes, then, it seems best to recognize that רחם
most often (but not always) connotes beneficence from one in a position to bestow mercy on one in need.
Girdlestone, accordingly, states that רחם expresses "a deep and tender feeling of compassion, such as is
aroused by the sight of weakness or suffering in those that are dear to us or need our help." Robert Baker
Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), 108; cf. Cranfield,
"Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. Richardson), 131; Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 148; Butterworth, "רחם,"
NIDOTTE 3:1093; Simian-Yofre, *TDOT* 13:451. The negated word group with human agency may also
refer to the absence of compassion, especially in the context of war (Isa 13:18; 47:6; Jer 21:7; Amos 1:11).
Although Michael A. Fishbane suggests the interpretation of "friends, allies" for רחמים here, it does not fit
the broader meaning of the term. "Treaty Background of Amos 1:11 and Related Matters," *JBL* 89 (1970):
313–18; idem, "Additional Remarks on *Rhmyh* (Amos 1:11)," 91 (1972): 391–92. Simian-Yofre points out,
"Etymological evidence stands in the way of accepting Fishbane's proposal to translate *rahamim* as
'friends, allies.'" *TDOT* 13:448. Robert B. Coote agrees with Fishbane on the legal meaning, but not with
regard to his suggested etymology. "Amos 1:11: RHMYW," *JBL* 90 (1971): 206–8. Within such a context,
the lack of "mercy" is like cruelty [אַכְזָרִי] (Jer 6:23; 50:42; cf. Prov 12:10).

Exod 33:19; 34:6).[279] Accordingly, divine רחם is repeatedly contrasted with God's wrath.[280] Third, God's רחם extends far beyond the covenant and any responsibility and/or expectations, moral or otherwise, due to his willingness to bestow compassion on the undeserving out of his profound love. Divine רחם is freely given and unmerited.[281] Fourth, divine רחם is, nevertheless, not unilaterally constant. Rather, it is conditional upon various factors.[282] Such contingency of divine compassion, including that it may be withdrawn, is well attested.[283] Fifth, God's compassion is both particular and universal. On the one hand, God's compassion extends universally. He "is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (Ps 145:9).[284] However, as shall be seen

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[279] See also 1 Kgs 8:50; Isa 55:7; Jer 30:18; 42:12; Ezek 39:25; Hos 1:6; 2:23; 14:3; Mic 7:19; Zech 1:16; 10:6; Dan 9:9. The results of divine compassion further include the bestowal of goodness (Isa 63:7), renewal of election (Isa 14:1; cf. Zech 1:16–17), betrothal to him (Hos 2:19 [21]), and all kinds of blessing, such as the relieving of hunger and thirst (Isa 49:10). God may even extend רחם through human agents (Gen 43:14; 1 Kgs 8:50; Jer 42:12; Ps 106:46; Neh 1:11; Dan 1:9).

[280] Deut 13:17 [18]; 29:28; 30:2–3; Isa 54:7–8; 60:10; Jer 12:15; Zech 1:12; Pss 77:9; 78:38. Divine compassion is thus, as it were, the antidote to divine wrath, the former far outlasting the latter (cf. Isa 54:10; Jer 33:26). As has been seen, the lasting nature of this compassion surpasses even that of a mother for her young child (Isa 49:15; cf. 49:13).

[281] Thus, Simian-Yofre comments, "When the people suffer affliction, *rhm* can denote the unmerited revelation of Yahweh's benevolence." *TDOT* 13:442. Often, there is no semblance of an external basis upon which God ought to bestow compassion. Nevertheless, humans continually call upon God to respond in compassion with the expectation that he will hear and respond (1 Kgs 8:50; Hab 3:2; Pss 25:6; 51:1; 69:16; 79:8; 119:77; Dan 2:18 [Aramaic]; 9:18). However, it is important to recognize that this call is not based in any obligation of God, nor external warrant but, rather, humans appeal because they recall God's past compassion, and ultimately, his character (cf. Exod 33:19; 34:6–7). See also 2 Sam 24:14; 1 Chr 21:13; Pss 40:11; 102:13; Lam 3:32.

[282] Why is God's compassion bestowed some times and not others? Numerous grounds of divine compassion are apparent, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, including divine freedom, zeal for his name, the responsiveness of the people, etc.; cf. 2 Kgs 13:23; Jer 42:12; Ezek 39:25. The contingency of divine compassion and factors involved will be discussed further below.

[283] See Deut 13:17–18 [18–19]; 30:2–3; 2 Kgs 13:23; Isa 55:7; Jer 42:12–16; Ps 103:13; Prov 28:13; 2 Chr 30:9. The withdrawal of divine compassion is evident in the frequent references where compassion has been withdrawn or withheld (Isa 9:17 [16]; 27:11; 63:15; Jer 13:14; 16:5; Hos 1:6–7; 2:4; Zech 1:12; Ps 77:9 [10]). However, it must be understood that the withdrawal of divine רחם is never depicted as an arbitrary whim of God, but always stems from the persistent and egregious shortcomings of the people. God wants to be merciful and manifest his love (cf. Isa 30:18; Lam 3:32–33). See the canonical analysis for discussions of these and other verses regarding divine compassion.

[284] Thus, God's compassion is not restricted to his covenant people or elect. Elsewhere, it is also clear that רחם extends beyond Israel/Judah, since the neighboring nations may receive divine רחם in Jer 12:15, though conditionally.

below, this need not entail that divine רחם is universal or constant in every respect. Some people

are privy to divine compassion while others may forfeit it. Nevertheless, God desires to

continually bestow compassion on human beings; it is an integral facet of God's love.

A Brief Survey of קנא

The word group קנא denotes the very strong emotions of ardor and intense passion,

related to a basic sense of zeal, passion, or jealousy, for that which belongs to one, or envy for

that which belongs to someone else.[285] As such, it is closely associated with God's love for his

people.[286] However, the term is never used to denote divine envy, but always for that rightful

passion that God has for the exclusive relationship his people are to have to him, analogous to

that which spouses ought to have in a marriage relationship.[287] In English usage, however, the

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[285] Many have suggested a connection to the Arabic *qana'a* meaning intensely red, thinking that this lexeme derives from that redness of face associated with intense emotion. Sarna, *Exodus*, 110; "קנא," BDB, 888; Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 216; Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Book of Numbers: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol. 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 201. However, the etymology is uncertain and other scholars have suggested the link is tenuous at best. G. Sauer, "קנא," *TLOT* 3:1145; E. Reuter, "קנא," *TDOT* 13:48. Although etymology is uncertain, "the meanings of cognates in other Sem. languages roughly correspond to the semantic range of the Heb. root." H. G. L Peels, "קנא," *NIDOTTE* 3:937. In human usage the emotionality of this term is readily apparent, often responsive to the infidelity of a loved one. See Num 5:14–15, 18, 25, 29–30; Prov 6:34; 27:4; Cant 8:6; Eccl 9:6.

[286] Numerous scholars recognize a close association between passion and divine love. Cf. Pierre Buis, *Le Deutéronome* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1969), 59. In fact, Coppes even suggests that קנאה represents God's "arduous love." Leonard J. Coppes, "קנא," *TWOT* 802. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 138; Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 87; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 65; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 211; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 187; Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21–36* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 289. Weinfeld comments, "The basic meaning of qn,' which is 'jealousy,' applies also to passionate love. Love causes jealousy, and jealousy brings anger that burns like fire (Deut 4:22; 23:21–22)." Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 296. Because "the covenant relationship was one of love," when Israel forgot their "first love," the divine response was appropriately jealous. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 138. Craigie even refers to jealousy as "the reverse of the coin of love." Ibid. Reuter thinks אהב "functions both as an antonym and a prerequisite (meeting of extremes) of qn.'" Reuter, *TDOT* 13:49. Likewise, קנא may be manifest in "passionate love" or "vitriolic hatred." Ibid., 57.

[287] Longman notes that two kinds of relationships qualify for appropriate jealousy, the husband-wife and divine-human relationships. "God's jealousy is an energy that tries to rescue the relationship. Similarly, a man and a woman can have only one spouse. If there is a threat to that relationship, then jealousy is a proper emotion. All this is because so much hangs on the integrity of relationship. It is so basic, so deep, that it stirs up strong emotions and passions." Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 212.

term jealousy has primarily taken on the negative connotation of envy, whereas in Hebrew the

basic lexeme קנא may refer to a positive emotion that results in action protective of a rightful

possession or relation, or it may relate to a negative, inappropriate, destructive emotion akin to

envy or covetousness.[288] The combination of קנא + preposition בּ suggests the latter negative

emotion of envy (e.g., "envy" in Prov 3:31), never used of God,[289] whereas the construction of קנא

+ ל suggests the former, an appropriate passion or righteous ardor with action on behalf of its

object, of both humans (e.g., "zealous" in 1 Kgs 19:10) or of God (e.g., Zech 8:2).[290] As such, the

negative connotations of "jealousy" are often absent from the term קנא and such negative emotion

is never connoted by the term with God as agent.[291]

    קנא describes a crucial divine characteristic: God's passionate love for his people, which

is displayed in fiery jealousy when his people are unfaithful to him.[292] This stands in contrast to

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[288] The group is manifested in the substantive קנאה (43 x), the verbal (34 x), mostly in *piel* (30 x),
but in a few instances *hiphil* (4 x), and two adjectival forms קַנָּא (6 x) and קַנּוֹא (2 x). The majority of
occurrences of the root in the substantive are related to divine passion (24 x) and the adjectival forms are
only descriptive of God.

[289] See Gen 26:14; 30:1; 37:11; Isa 11:13; Ezek 31:9; 35:11; Eccl 4:4. Numerous cautions to not
be "envious" of evil in various forms appear (Pss 37:1; 73:3; Prov 1:31; 14:30; 23:17; 24:1, 19; Job 5:2).

[290] Of God, see also Ezek 39:25; Joel 2:18; Zech 1:14; 8:2. See Reuter, *TDOT* 13:49; Peels,
NIDOTTE 4:938. Of humans, see 2 Sam 21:2; 1 Kgs 19:10, 14; 2 Kgs 10:16; Pss 69:9; 119:39; cf. Num
11:29. In such contexts, "jealousy is best understood as the actualization of passion confronted by a threat."
Reuter, *TDOT* 13:50.

[291] For this reason, Peels believes that "the translation 'jealous' is, therefore, [often] inadequate."
NIDOTTE 4:939. Cf. Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*
(AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 386. See also H. A. Brongers, who thinks a more general meaning
of being angry better suits the term. "Der eifer des Herrn Zebaoth," *VT* 13 (1963): 280. However, while
recognizing that the common negative connotation of jealousy may be reason to substitute a word like
passion, Longman points out that "it is important to understand that the Bible affirms a proper type of
jealousy, a desire for someone else that tolerates no rivals." Longman III, *Song of Songs*, 211.

[292] Thus God is repeatedly presented as a "jealous God" אל קנא (Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9;
6:15) or אל קנוא (Josh 24:19; Nah 1:2), always in the context of the exclusive worship required by God.
Sarna translates this as "an impassioned God." *Exodus*, 110. This denotes God's "intolerance of rivalry or
unfaithfulness." Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 208. Eichrodt considers this to be the "basic element in the
whole OT idea of God." Eichrodt, *Theology*, 210. As such, it "concerns the central characteristic of OT
belief: Yahweh's demand that he alone be worshiped, enshrined in the great commandment." Reuter,
TDOT 13:53. Thus, Nahum speaks of God as a God "jealous and avenging" toward his enemies (Nah 1:2;
cf. Isa 59:17; Zeph 1:18; 3:8) and קִנְאָה is used in the metaphor that describes God as a "warrior" who will

depictions of other gods in the ANE who may be envious of one another but no deity manifests "zeal in relation to his worshiper."[293] In contrast, God is never jealous *of* other gods or idols or any kind of being, but is passionate *for* his name and his people. Accordingly, it is used of God's passion for Israel as her husband in the marriage analogy (cf. Ezek 16:38, 42; 23:25).[294] As such, קנא is an intensely emotive term that assumes divine passibility and may be manifested negatively, against the unfaithful,[295] or positively, on behalf of his people and against her oppressors.[296] Due to theological presuppositions, קנא has sometimes been interpreted as a mere anthropopathism.[297] However, such a position requires appeal to extra-biblical suppositions and

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"arouse His zeal" (Isa 42:13).

[293] Sauer, *TLOT* 3:1146.

[294] Although the term is used of God only with explicit reference to the marriage analogy in Ezekiel, many scholars have sensed the connotation throughout the wider usage of the term. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 296; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 65; Sarna, *Exodus*, 110; Fretheim, *Exodus*, 227; Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 615; Coppes, "קנא," *TWOT* 802. Reuter points out that though the language is different, since Hosea does not use the lexeme קנא, "in substance . . . the similarity to Hosea is unmistakable." Reuter, *TDOT* 13:54. In such usage, the term represents "the fire of divine passion, Yahweh's enthusiasm for his covenant relationship with Israel . . . arising out of the profundity of his covenant love." Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 211. See Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9; Num 25:8, 11; Deut 29:20 [19].

[295] Throughout Israel's history they made him "jealous with strange gods" and "provoked" [כעס] him (Deut 32:16, 21; 4:24–25; Ps 78:58). It is noteworthy that in all four instances of קנא in the *hiphil* God is the patient (Deut 32:16, 21; Ezek 8:3; Ps 78:58). Elsewhere, Israel's infidelity occasions divine jealousy (1 Kgs 14:22; Ezek 5:13; 8:3, 5; 16:38, 42; 23:25; Pss 78:58; 79:5). Thus, he is explicitly caused to be jealous by idolatry. Divine jealousy is associated with numerous other terms for divine anger as well, denoting the result of his passion directed at unfaithfulness of evil.

[296] Isaiah specifically describes God's "zeal for the people," which prompts divine judgment (fire) on her enemies (Isa 26:11; cf. 42:13). See also 2 Kgs 19:31; Isa 9:7; 37:32; 63:15; Ezek 35:6; 36:5; 38:19; 39:25; Joel 2:18; Nah 1:2; Zech 1:14; 8:2–3. In such contexts, "God is understood as watching jealously/zealously over his people" in his love. Reuter, *TDOT* 13:57; cf. Peels, *NIDOTTE* 4:939. Brueggemann puts it this way, "Negatively, this jealous God is one of deep moral seriousness who takes affront at violations of commands, so that the cost of the affront endures over the generations (34:7b). Positively, this jealous God is one who practices massive fidelity [חסד] to those who are willing to live in covenant (34:6–7a)." Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1: 842. Stuart adds, "We would especially remind the reader that God's jealousy, including the demand that he be exclusively worshiped, does not arise from petty motives but from beneficent ones. The problem with idols is not that they make God feel bad but that they cannot save, thus keeping from salvation those he wants to see gain eternal life. His hatred of idols reflects his love for us, not any insecurity with regard to himself." *Exodus*, 724.

[297] For instance, Brongers refers to divine jealousy as "a crude anthropopathism" from which the interpreter would like to spare God. "Der eifer," 276; cf. to a lesser degree, Sarna, *Exodus*, 110; Sauer,

does not do justice to the textual data.[298] In all, this term denotes God's intense, impassioned interest in his people, particularly the special and sacred relationship between them.[299]

Concern, Compassion, and Passion in the Torah

God speaks the world into existence (Gen 1) yet intimately forms man from the ground, breathes life into him (Gen 2:7–8), and even "walks" in the garden seeking fellowship with humans (Gen 3:8).[300] However, the Fall presents a serious rupture in the divine-human relationship, significantly altering the level of intimacy going forward. Nevertheless, God remains intensely interested in, and concerned for, the world despite the rebellion of his creatures.[301] In the aftermath of the Fall, God finds a way to continue his presence among his people through the sanctuary.[302] Thus, God is concerned about his people and does not abandon them. He regards,

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TLOT 3:1147.

[298] Reuter rightly points out, "this concern only serves the Stoic notion of divine impassibility, which is inconsistent with the biblical understanding of God but is often espoused nevertheless by both Christian and Jewish theology, creating problems of exegesis." *TDOT* 13:53; cf. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 66. See especially the discussion of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms in chapter 1.

[299] This "term emphasizes that God cannot be indifferent to His creatures and that He is deeply involved in human affairs." Sarna, *Exodus*, 110. Thus, "God's "jealousy" clearly has the best interest of his creation in view. Just as a screeching mother mockingbird terrorizes any feline that comes near her nest, so the Lord zealously hovers over his own to avert any rival to his sovereignty and centrality." Robertson, *The Books*, 60.

[300] Although source criticism assumes discontinuity between the two creation accounts, this sympathetic canonical reading considers the viewpoints as complementary unless such a view is necessarily incoherent. The intimacy of the second depiction of the creation of humankind is quite striking. Derek Kidner comments, "*Breathed* is warmly personal, with the face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the significance that this was giving as well as making; and self-giving at that." *Genesis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 60. Further, "walks" (מִתְהַלֵּךְ) is a *hitpael*, which "suggests iterative and habitual aspects." Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, 192. In other words, the text implies that God often walked in the garden. Consider a similar usage of the term to signify God's presence in the sanctuary (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15 [14]; 2 Sam 7:6–7).

[301] Fretheim comments, "These chapters imply that the divine sovereignty in creation is understood, not in terms of absolute divine control, but as a sovereignty that gives power to the created for the sake of a relationship of integrity. Such a view involves risk, since it entails the possibility that the creatures will misuse the power they have been given, which does occur." Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:356.

[302] Thus God is also said to "walk among" his people and be their God, a reference to his presence in the sanctuary and a subtle suggestion of the partial restoration of the special Edenic relationship (Lev

sees, and takes appropriate action.[303] God hears and responds accordingly. God remembers and

moves.[304] He delights, and, at times, grieves, over his people. Altogether, a striking picture is

presented of a God who is deeply interested in human affairs, who notices the goings on of

history, who is consistently concerned about and invested in the world, and such concern spurs

him to appropriate action. Accordingly, God is recurrently presented as affected by, and

responsive to, his people. Yet, due to the immense holiness of God on the one hand and the

sinfulness of the people on the other, a palpable tension is woven throughout the OT that provides

numerous pictures of heightened divine emotion, even grief, anger, and jealousy, yet divine

concern, compassion, and lovingkindness reign supreme.

26:12; cf. Deut 23:15 [14]; cf. 2 Sam 7:6–7; 1 Chr 17:6).

[303] For instance, God looks (שָׁעָה) upon Abel and his offering with approval, in contrast to the disapproval and disregard (לֹא שָׁעָה) for Cain and his offering (Gen 4:5); cf. Gen 4:10, 13–15.

[304] For instance, in the midst of the flood, God "remembers" (זכר) Noah (Gen 8:1; cf. 9:15–16), which leads to the recession of the waters. Importantly, divine remembrance does not depict "calling to mind" so much as a focus on the object of memory. See Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 382; Sarna, *Genesis*, 56; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, 299. As the focus changes from universal to more local concerns in the patriarchal narratives, God continues to display intimate personal concern for his people. He spares Lot from destruction on the basis of remembrance of Abraham (Gen 19:29). In the Akedah narrative, he is Yahweh-yireh, "the Lord sees" (Gen 22:14; cf. 22:8). He does not forsake (עָזַב) his lovingkindness toward Abraham but guides Abraham's servant in the search for a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:27). He promises not to abandon Jacob (Gen 28:15). Further, God manifests personal concern for Hagar, giving "heed" (שׁמע) to her distress (Gen 16:11; cf. 21:17) and for Leah, Jacob's "unloved" and barren wife, both seeing and hearing her plight (Gen 29:31–33; 30:17; cf. 30:22) blessing both with a child; an explicit connection between favorable divine action and divine concern is thus apparent (cf. Gen 21:17; 30:22). Similarly, God "saw" Jacob's affliction by Laban, and provided for him (Gen 31:42). God "heard" (שׁמע), "remembered" (זכר), "saw" (ראה) and "took notice" (ידע) of Israel in Egyptian bondage and delivered them (Exod 2:23–25; cf. 3:7–8, 16; 4:31; 6:4–5) for he was "indeed concerned about" them (Exod 3:16; cf. Gen 21:1). In Exod 2:23–24, direct responsiveness is evident even in the number of verbs. Israel cries out by use of four verbs and God's taking notice of their cry is also expressed by four verbs. Sarna, *Exodus*, 13. Likewise, a number of scholars recognize that God's action is a response at least partially caused by entreaty. Stuart, *Exodus*, 103; Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:706; cf. 1 Sam 9:16. On the other hand, God also hears Israel's grumblings and complaints (Exod 16:8; Num 11:1; 12:2; Deut 1:34) and responds in kind. God lovingly and patiently leads and guides his people like a shepherd (Exod 15:13). Such expressions collectively refer to God's attention. The sense is not that he previously could not see or hear, had forgotten, or was unconcerned, but that now God is about to respond to his people with power. Stuart claims, "The different wordings [including *paqad*] are all variations of an idiom that is essentially a synecdoche—a part for the whole—in which because of God's nature, his own overt mention of his being *aware* automatically implies additionally his determination to *act*." *Exodus*, 123. Of course, depending upon the situation, God's action could be negative or positive.

For instance, at the observance of the extreme wickedness on the earth before the flood, God is deeply "grieved [עצב] in his heart" and "sorry" (נחם) that he made humans (Gen 6:6–7).[305] In this context, the reference is clearly to God's deep emotion of sorrow and grief. God is pained by the wickedness on the earth and responds with judgment: the flood (Gen 6–9).[306] The appearance of profound divine sorrow is striking in that it depicts God in terms of passibility nearly from the outset of the Genesis account. The term נחם is also used to describe God's "compassion" toward his people (Deut 32:36) and appears in the description of Moses' pleading with God to turn (שׁוב) from his anger and even change (נחם) his intention toward his people, eventually resulting in a re-institution of the broken covenant relationship (Exod 32:12) and God does, in fact, relent (Exod 34:14).[307] However, God is certainly not altogether passive; there are

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[305] God is not just "grieved" but "grieved to his heart," emphasizing the intensity of the divine emotion. Thus, Matthews speaks of "God's fervent passion" and his "wounded 'heart' filled with pain," which "conveys the emotional response of God" and even "emotional anguish." *Genesis 1–11:26*, 341–42; cf. von Rad, *Genesis*, 118. "In other words, he felt the bitter rage of someone whose closest friend had been terribly wronged. This is the anger of someone who loves deeply." Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 146. Sarna, however, for apparently non-textual reasons, sees this as an anthropopathism. *Genesis*, 47. The lexeme עצב appears only a few times in the Torah, all in Genesis (3:16; 5:29; 34:7; 45:5). Beyond the usage of divine grief here in Genesis, God is also said to be "grieved" by rebellion (Isa 63:10; Ps 78:40). The meaning of עצב with human subjects may denote physical pain, such as that in childbirth (Gen 3:16; 1 Chr 4:9) or in toil (Gen 5:29; Isa 14:3; cf. 58:3; Ps 127:2; Prov 5:10; 14:23; Eccl 10:9), or by extension denotes emotional suffering, such as the grief of Dinah's brothers after she was raped (Gen 34:7) or the potential grief of Joseph's brothers over selling him into slavery (Gen 45:5), and various other kinds of emotional grief (1 Sam 20:3, 34; 2 Sam 19:2 [3]; 1 Kgs 1:6; Isa 54:6; Prov 10:22; Neh 8:10; 1 Chr 4:10–11). It is also used in reference to the "distortion" of God's words (Ps 56:5) or to a "harsh" word (Prov 15:1), a grievous way (Ps 139:24). This is not to be confused with עצב meaning make or shape, the nominal form of which refers often to idols.

[306] God's action is prompted by his observance (ראה) of the extent of evil (Gen 6:5, 12) in contrast to God's sight (ראה) of his creation, which was good (Gen 1:31), and Noah whom God saw (ראה) as righteous (Gen 7:1). Sarna suggests that "the LORD saw" has "juridical overtones, implying both investigation of the facts and readiness for action." *Genesis*, 47. Thus, later God "saw" Israel's idolatry and spurned them (Deut 32:19). This may be why the Israelites invoke God to "look upon" how Moses has made them odious to Pharaoh (Exod 5:21).

[307] נחם, the most prominent term related to compassion other than רחם, may take on various meanings, depending upon its context and form, which include: to comfort or have compassion, be comforted, or comfort oneself, to mourn or be sorry, and to relent/change one's mind. However, the common theme throughout its usage is that נחם often appears in a situation that prompts intense grief or regret and connotes the emotion and/or active response to that situation. Thus, the feeling of sorrow or regret is associated with the action of repenting, that is, changing action accordingly. Thus, Stoebe groups the meaning into two categories "'be comforted' and 'be sorry' in the broadest scope." Stoebe, "נחם," *TLOT*

some decisions of God that he will not change, thus the declaration, "God is not a man, that he will not change, thus the declaration, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should repent [*hitpael*]" (Num 23:19; cf. 1 Sam 15:29).[308]

2:734. He goes on to note that in the *niphal* the term "is never sorrowful resignation but always has concrete consequences." Ibid., 738. In other words, it is not just felt but acted upon. נחם may be used with both human and divine agency. In various human usages, the term often takes the meaning: to comfort someone else or to mourn (*piel*), be comforted by someone (*niphal*), or comfort/appease oneself (*hitpael*) or the lack of such comfort. The related term תנחום refers to consolation (Isa 66:11; Jer 16:7; Ps 94:19; Job 15:11; 21:2). When the verb appears in the *niphal*, it may also refer to changing one's mind, repenting (Exod 31:17; Jer 8:6; 31:19; Job 42:6), or being "sorry" (Judg 21:6, 15). All these usages are grounded in a situation that prompts, or should prompt, intense grief or regret.

       With divine agency נחם often refers to comfort and/or compassion. In nominal forms, the root likewise may refer to "comfort" given by God (Isa 57:17–18; cf. Zech 1:13) or to the presence or absence of divine compassion, which is clearly emotive (Hos 11:8; 13:14). In the *piel*, the verb refers to divine comfort toward the people (or the lack thereof), which may result in compassion and the turning away of anger (Isa 12:1; 49:13; cf. 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 61:2; 66:13; Jer 31:13; Zech 1:17; Pss 23:4; 71:21; 86:17; 119:76, 82). In the *pual*, it refers to those comforted or not comforted (Isa 54:11; 66:13). In *hitpael* various meanings are presented in a small number of occurrences. First, it is declared that God "will have compassion on his servants" (Deut 32:36; Ps 135:14). In another instance it refers to God being "appeased" (Ezek 5:13). In still another, God is contrasted with humans, specifically that he is not "man, that he should repent" (Num 23:19). The term may also refer to profound divine emotions akin to compassion (cf. Hos 11:8). With God as subject the verb most often appears in the *niphal*, which may denote divine sorrow and/or grief (Gen 6:6–7; 1 Sam 15:11, 35), being "moved to pity" or "feeling sympathy for" (Judg 2:18; cf. Ps 90:13), and/or relenting, or changing course in action (Exod 32:12, 14; 2 Sam 24:16; Isa 57:6; Jer 26:19; Joel 2:13–14; Jonah 3:9–10; 4:2; Amos 7:3, 6; Ps 106:45; 1 Chr 21:15; cf. Isa 1:24). Jeremiah 18:1–10 is perhaps the capstone passage that lays out God's willingness to relent in accordance with human repentance. If humans change course, God's responsive action will change accordingly (cf. Jer 26:3, 13; 42:10). In fact, in one instance, God has relented so often that he is "tired of relenting" (Jer 15:6).

       [308] Similarly, 1 Sam 15:29 states, God "will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." These verses have sometimes been taken to mean that God can't actually relent or change his mind. However, both of these occurrences use נחם to contrast with one who would not keep his word, thus implying that here the declaration is to emphasize the surety and irrevocability of God's decision in that specific instance. Moreover, with regard to the usage in 1 Sam 15:29, within the same chapter it is said twice, both before and after the above statement and in the same form (*niphal*), that God was "sorry" (נחם) he had made Saul king (1 Sam 15:11, 35). This is an apparent contradiction unless one understands that contextually the meaning in 1 Sam 15:29 appears to relate to the finality of God's rejection of Saul, not the nature of God. An explicit usage of such finality of divine decision appears in a divine declaration in Jeremiah, "I have spoken, I have purposed, and I will not change My mind" (Jer 4:28). That this is not a blanket policy appears clear in that later God himself declares at length that he will indeed relent in accordance with human repentance (Jer 18:1–10 et al.). In this way, the term is used in a number of instances in the *niphal* to show that God's decision is final, whether positively (Ps 110:4) or when God carries out judgment without relenting (1 Sam 15:29; Jer 4:28; 20:16; Zech 8:14) and in one such instance the lack of נחם is collocated with the lack of relenting (פרע) and pity (חוס; Ezek 24:14). In such usages the term refers to the finality of the divine decision, not to the ontological possibility of divine relenting. Butterworth notes, "God does not capriciously change his intentions or ways of acting. It is the change in Saul's behavior that leads to this expression of regret." "נחם," *NIDOTTE* 3:82. Some scholars, however, relieve the tension by simply positing that the term is "anthropopathic" and thus "from man's limited, earthly, finite perspective it only appears that God's purposes have changed." Marvin R. Wilson, "נחם," *TWOT* 571. For a response, see Peckham, "The Passible Potter," 130–50. Although some scholars have suggested that God is absolutely immutable, numerous scholars recognize that the Bible depicts God as capable of changing direction and thus not ontologically immutable in this sense. Indeed, several texts

Divine passibility and emotionality are further apparent in that God is often provoked to anger (כעס), that is, "vexed" by Israel's evil, often in the form of idolatry, due in part to his great love and passion (קנאה) for his people (Deut 32:16, 21; cf. Exod 32:11; Ezek 16:42; Ps 78:58).[309] Though the OT unashamedly depicts divine anger, God's wrath is never arbitrary but is always a result of human action that provokes God because he loves his people so deeply. In the aftermath of Israel's apostasy with the golden calf, God's anger runs high with "burning anger" (Exod 32:11) but God is successfully entreated by Moses to turn from his anger, eventually resulting in a re-institution of the broken covenant relationship (Exod 32:12–14; 33:12–34:10; cf. Gen 18:22–32; Lev 26:41–42, 45; Num 14:13–19; Deut 3:23; 9:25–28).[310] Out of this exchange in which God

suggest that "to repent concerning [threatened/real] calamity" is "fundamental to the divine nature." Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 131. Van Dyke Parunak points to the underlying conception of comfort, consolation or compassion and asserts that the root entails both "change" and sorrow" "in the sense of emotional pain," even at times sympathy, but no "suggestion of regret." Parunak, "A Semantic Survey," 513, 532. See also Stuart, *Exodus*, 672; Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:932; Peckham, "The Passible Potter"; Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); David N. Freedman, *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 1:409–46; Terence E. Fretheim, "The Repentance of God: A Key to Evaluating Old Testament God-Talk," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 10 (1988): 47–70. God can and does relent, but in some situations he will not relent. As such, God can and does change direction, and can be affected by human affairs, but he is nevertheless sovereign. Paying attention to the form and context of נחם is essential to understanding its meaning in the Old Testament.

[309] Craigie sees not only anger but also sorrow in the context of Deut 32. "The behavior of the Israelites vexed God; he had a fatherly concern for them as his sons and daughters, so that to see them rejecting his love caused him not only anger, but also pain . . . for a loving Father finds it hard to look on while his children invite disaster by their sinful behavior." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 383. Such apostasy brings real pain and vexation (כעס) to God, a recurring theme throughout the OT (cf. Deut 4:25; 9:18; 31:29; 32:16, 19, 21; Judg 2:12; 1 Kgs 14:9, 15; 15:30; 16:2, 7, 13, 26, 33; 21:22; 22:54; 2 Kgs 17:11, 17; 2 Kgs 21:6, 15; 22:17; 23:19, 26; Isa 65:3; Jer 7:18–19; 8:19; 11:17; 25:6–7; 32:29–30, 32; 44:3, 8; Ezek 8:17; 16:26; 20:28; Hos 12:14 [15]; Pss 78:58; 85:4 [5]; 106:29; 2 Chr 28:25; 33:6; 34:25; cf. Deut 32:27). In one such instance, due to such provocation, God is said to "spurn" the people, which means to treat them with contempt (Deut 32:19). Yet, God looks forward to a time when he will be vexed "no more" (Ezek 16:42). It also refers to various kinds of provocation and vexation in human usage (1 Sam 1:6–7, 16; Pss 6:7 [8]; 10:14; 31:10 [9]; 112:10; Prov 12:16; 17:25; 21:19; 27:3; Eccl 1:18; 2:23; 5:17; 7:3, 9; 11:10; 32:9; Neh 4:1 [3:33]; 4:5 [3:37]; 2 Chr 16:10). Craigie points out, "the anger of God is an awesome and terrible thing exactly because it follows from a rejection of the equally pervasive love of God." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 384.

[310] Moses persistently entreats God, reminding God of his declaration that he had "found favor" in God's sight and pleading that God would act on that basis (Exod 33:12–13, 16; cf. 34:9) to which God agrees (Exod 33:17), resulting ultimately in forgiveness, the renewal of covenant, and a wonderful self-revelation of God's character (Exod 33:19; 34:6–7). The importance of this cannot be overestimated. Israel's very "election is surely at stake because God is now prepared to annihilate her completely (cf. Deut

enters into personal give-and-take dialogue with Moses, he responds to Moses' request to see his glory (Exod 33:18) by proclaiming that he will make all of his goodness pass by and "will proclaim before you the name LORD, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show" (Exod 33:19, JPS). This emphatic phrase that binds divine compassion and graciousness with God's very name is further elaborated in what has become perhaps the *locus classicus* of all OT texts on God's character, Exod 34:6–7.[311] "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth" (Exod 34:6). As in Exod 33:19, the proclamation of divine character is explicitly associated with his name, which is, among other things, compassionate and gracious. They are presented as core characteristics of God associated with, and perhaps descriptive of, his enduring, longsuffering patience signified by the idiomatic expression that God is "long of nose" (אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם). Since anger was metaphorically seen in the nose (think red) the length signifies the length of time it would take for one to become angry.[312] In other words, God has great capacity to overcome his anger at sin and bestow grace and compassion.

Yet, God is not compelled to be gracious. On the contrary, God has every right to destroy the people for their apostasy. Yet, his compassion reaches beyond the blessings and curses of covenant, providing a means for continuance of what would otherwise be a shattered relationship.

9:8; Num 14.11f; Ezek. 20.13ff.)." Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 567. However, as Stuart comments, "God never desired to destroy his people in the first place, so he was willing to relent in response to Moses' appeal (v. 14). Nevertheless, the threat was genuine rather than theoretical, and the response of God reveals his willingness to respond to prayer. Indeed, this is one of many passages in Scripture that demonstrate God's responsiveness to the prayer of a righteous person prayed not for selfish reasons but out of a desire to see God's will accomplished." Stuart, *Exodus*, 672. Elsewhere, God repeatedly hears entreaty and responds (Deut 5:28; 9:19; 10:10; 26:7). God's anger also may be "turned away" by swift action to deal with evil (Deut 13:17–18; Num 25:11) and/or priestly intercession (Num 16:41–50).

[311] One need only consider the amount of allusions to this text throughout the OT to recognize its pervasive influence. For instance, consider Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; 31–32; Pss 86:15; 103:8, 17; 145:8; Jer 32; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3. Moreover, this "is the only place [in the OT] where God actually described Himself, listing His own glorious attributes." J. Carl Laney, "God's Self-revelation in Exodus 34:6–8," *Bibliotheca sacra* 158 (2001): 36.

[312] Cf. Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:946. See also the

This divine forbearance, grounded in his character of compassion and graciousness, among other attributes, is thus essential to the divine-human relationship; without divine compassion there could be no God-human relationship. Thus, throughout the Torah, compassion continues to function as the grounding of entreaty and the basis of deliverance (cf. Gen 19:16).[313] Likewise, the divine graciousness (חנון), as a characteristic of God, depicts his willingness to hear and respond to entreaty, closely associated with his compassion as in 34:6, but also independently portrays that he will hear the one who cries out, for he is "gracious" (Exod 22:27 [26]). As such, divine compassion is depicted as the most profound, rich, and intense mother-love, providing forgiveness and comfort (cf. Isa 49:15). Nevertheless, alongside divine compassion, there is a balance between divine mercy and justice, stated without equivocation in Exod 34:7, which will be addressed further in its relation to lovingkindness below.

As seen above, divine compassion is a ground of entreaty and is itself often conditional. Thus, the people are instructed to turn to God in times of distress (Deut 4:30) for he is "a compassionate God" (אֵל רַחוּם) and he will not fail or forget his covenant (Deut 4:31). God may thus work through discipline to bring his people to a state of repentance that may, in turn, affect his disposition toward them.[314] Such "discipline" is explicitly noted just a few verses later in Deut 4:36, and elsewhere connected with fatherly discipline (cf. Deut 8:5). Nevertheless, continued rebellion will result in the execution of divine judgment but, when Israel acts faithfully (following, fearing, keeping, listening, serving, clinging), God will turn from "burning anger" to show "mercy" (רחמים) and "have compassion" (רחם) (Deut 13:17–18 [18–19]). Similarly, if God's people will make a heartfelt return to God in wholehearted obedience, then God will "restore,"

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description of God's anger as the "heat of my nostrils" in Exod 32:10, 12.

[313] In Gen 19:16 Lot's deliverance is predicated on the "the compassion [חֶמְלָה] of the LORD."

[314] God's wrath itself appears here as a corrective to Israel, prompting them to repentance for their ultimate good. As Tigay puts it, Deut 4:30 "suggests a cause-and-effect relationship between distress and repentance: when the exiles see that worshiping idols brings them no relief in exile, they will return to the

and "have compassion" (רחם) on, Israel (Deut 30:2–3).[315] Notably, God's compassionate response

includes circumcision of their hearts to love (אהב) him in return (Deut 30:6).[316] Thus, even after

apostasy, compassion is available to Israel, but true repentance is required. It is in this line of

thought that God lays out clear covenant options before his people: life and prosperity or death

and adversity, they must choose (Deut 30:15–20).[317] In this way, the divine-human relationship is

at least partially dependent upon the disposition and actions of the covenant people, according to

whether or not they choose to receive his grace.

In the divine character, compassion is complemented by passion, God is both אל קנא

(Deut 4:24) and אל רחום (Deut 4:31).[318] God's passionate love for his people is manifested in

righteous jealousy when his people are unfaithful to him.[319] Thus, God declares of himself, "I, the

LORD your God, am a jealous [קנא] God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on

the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9).[320] Thus, Israel is

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Lord and obey Him." *Deuteronomy*, 54.

[315] JPS translates, "God will restore your fortunes and take you back in love." Cf. ibid., 400. Craigie points out, the people had to turn to God and "only then could they expect to know once again his *compassion* (v. 3)." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 363.

[316] Wallis comments that here "Yahweh's love for his people and Israel's love for her God are interwoven. But Yahweh is always the one who takes the first step in love, and Israel must actively respond to this love. . . . A failure to love and obey Yahweh brings a curse on Israel." Wallis, *TDOT* 1:116.

[317] The very promise (שבע) is contingent on the people responding to God in love (Deut 30:20).

[318] "The God who is impassionate (qanna') because of the sin of the people (v 24) turns into a compassionate God (*'el rahum*) after Israelite repentance (v 31)." Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 207.

[319] The association between divine love and passion is well-recognized. Weinfeld comments, "The basic meaning of qn', which is 'jealousy', applies also to passionate love. Love causes jealousy, and jealousy brings anger that burns like fire (Deut 4:22; 23:21–22)." Ibid., 296. Craigie comments, "The language is stern, but it is closely related to the theme of the love of God in Deuteronomy." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 138; cf. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 87; Buis, *Le Deutéronome*, 59. See the word study on קנא previously.

[320] Based on the association between love and "jealousy," Weinfeld suggests the "possibility that the term 'el qanna' refers not only to the clause of punishment, but also the clause of divine grace" in Deut 5:9–10. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 296. The literary structure supports this view since "אל קנא appears as an overall characterization, followed by a negative idea introduced by a participle which is followed by a positive idea introduced by another participle." Roy Gane, email message to author, January 18, 2012.

not to worship any other God for his "name is Jealous, [he] is a jealous God" (Exod 34:14; cf.

Deut 4:24; 6:14–15).[321] Significantly, if jealousy is a part of God's very name, then his character

must be relational, since his jealousy is only occasioned by the divine-human relationship.[322]

Israel repeatedly made God "jealous with strange gods" and "provoked" him (Deut 32:16, 21). As

such, God is deeply affected by Israel's spiritual adultery. Such divine passion is very strong and

the consequences of infidelity are serious.[323] Yet, as mentioned above, divine passion is never

envious but always refers to God's appropriate passion (קנא) in the context of exclusive

relationship.[324]

In all this, throughout the Torah, God's compassionate and passionate concern is evident.

Thus, it is fitting that near the end of the Torah, God is said to "encircle," to "care for" and

"guard" Israel "as the pupil of His eye" (Deut 32:10; cf. 2:7; 11:2). Divine concern is here

depicted "like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spreads His wings and

caught them, and carried them" (Deut 32:11). God cares for his people. His compassion goes

beyond covenant to the depth of mercy that is the character of God. In fact, divine compassion is

expected to finally triumph in vindication of God's people; God will "have compassion [נחם] on

His servants" when all their strength is gone (Deut 32:36; cf. 31:6, 8, 16–17).

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[321] For Exod 34:14, Stuart suggests another translation, "You must worship no other god, because Yahweh is jealous for his name. He is a jealous God." Stuart, *Exodus*, 724.

[322] Reuter points out that "if jealousy is a critical element of the name of Yahweh" then "our attention must turn at once to the relationship between Yahweh and his worshipers." *TDOT* 13:54.

[323] In a striking instance, Phinehas puts an end to egregious sin in the camp by execution of the participants (Num 25:8), which turns away divine wrath. In reference to this, God explains that Phinehas "was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy" (Num 25:11). Likewise, the intensity of divine jealousy is clear in that God's anger and jealousy will burn against the man who defiantly turns to serve other gods, and God will not forgive him (Deut 29:20 [19]). Dozeman thus suggests that "Yahweh is not indifferent" but demands "exclusive allegiance." "The Book of Numbers," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:201.

[324] In other words, this is a "justified jealousy of Israel's God." John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 286. "The basis for this jealousy of Yahweh is the expectation of undiluted loyalty" from "those who, having promised to have no God but him, have gone back on that promise" showing that they actually "hate" God. Ibid., 287.

God is likewise deeply concerned for human beings throughout the prophets. He is thus

responsive to them, positively or negatively, appropriate to their disposition and/or action toward

him. He sees, hears, answers, and remembers.[325] Such concern is especially manifest in God's

responsive compassion and passion.

Divine Compassion

In the prophets, God's compassion is especially prominent, often associated with divine

grace. The God of compassion is likewise the great comforter as well as a loving, interested

shepherd.[326] Yet, the intimate image of the shepherd cradling his little lambs is surpassed when

God's comfort and compassion (Isa 49:13) are compared to that of a woman nursing her child.

Despite Israel's feeling of forsakenness and being forgotten (Isa 49:14), God declares he will no

more forget them than a "woman [could] forget her nursing child" or lack "compassion [רחם] on

the son of her womb" (Isa 49:15). God's compassion is thus depicted with the most vivid imagery

of personal affection known to humanity.

Though God is often provoked to wrath by his people, he is affected even more by their

suffering (Judg 2:18; 10:16; Isa 63:15; Hos 11:8). God is even depicted as sympathetically feeling

Israel's suffering. He is "afflicted in [all] their affliction" yet provides deliverance in love and

mercy (חֶמְלָה) (Isa 63:9).[327] In this way, divine compassion seems to restrict the extent of divine

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[325] See Judg 2:18; 1 Kgs 8:49–53; Isa 30:19; 49:14–15, Jer 2:2; Ezek 16:8; cf. Jonah 1:6.

[326] God is he who "will tend his flock. In His arm he will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes" (Isa 40:11; cf. Isa 49:10). Of God as comforter see Isa 12:1; 40:1; 49:13; cf. 51:3, 19; 52:9; 57:18; Jer 31:13; Zech 1:17.

[327] This translation follows the Qere, לוֹ, "to him." However, the Ketiv is לֹא, which is also in LXX, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate. Interestingly, according to Watts, 1QIsaᵃ has לוא. *Isaiah 34–66*, 326. Although this is ambiguous, it does give an important textual possibility for the Qere. If one follows the Ketiv, numerous translation possibilities arise, which affect the whole clause. For instance, LXX reads οὐ πρέσβυς οὐδὲ ἄγγελος ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς κύριος ἔσωσεν αὐτούς, "not an envoy or angel but the Lord Himself saved them," reading ציר not צָר and translating πρέσβυς. However, this seems to be a synthetic attempt to remove the importance of the mediatorial role of the angel and is not compelling. Watts translates "In all

anger and wrath such that God's anger may be "turned away" and effectively replaced by comfort (Isa 12:1). However, while divine compassion may suspend or reduce deserved punishment, it does not overrule justice.[328] Joel, alluding to the classic self-revelation of Exod 34:6, encourages the people to return to God in heartfelt repentance "for He is gracious and compassionate" (Joel 2:13). True repentance will prompt the divine response of passion (קנא) and compassion (חמל) (Joel 2:18) resulting in deliverance and blessing (Joel 2:19). Here, divine compassion and grace are by no means automatic, but rather, contingent upon human response. Likewise, the people are exhorted to "hate evil, love good and establish justice" and then God "may be gracious to the remnant" (Amos 5:14–15). In this way, divine favor and/or compassion often serve as grounds of deliverance and the reduction or removal of divine wrath and punishment. Thus, "the LORD was gracious [חנן] to [the people] and had compassion [רחם] on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (2 Kgs 13:23; cf. Isa 49:10; 63:7). Importantly, divine compassion is not restricted to the covenant people. Rather, even the foreign lands may receive compassion in the wake of judgment (Jer 12:15–17).[329] Likewise, Jonah 4:2 depicts God's

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their affliction he did not afflict," which follows the Ketiv but does not disrupt the parallel verb of affliction. Ibid. However, elsewhere in Isaiah it is clear that God did "afflict" them. God's judgment had fallen on the people. He is even said to have "become their enemy" (Isa 63:10; cf. Deut 31:17; 2 Chr 15:6; Neh 9:27, 37). It seems best to utilize the Qere in accordance with most translations and see this as a depiction of divine sympathy. So Joseph Blenkinsopp translates, "In all their afflictions he too was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and his pity, he himself redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them for all the days of old." *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Anchor Bible/Doubleday, 2003), 252; cf. Judg 2:18, where Stoebe suggests the most accurate reading is to "feel sympathy for." *TLOT* 2:738.

[328] For example, asked to choose the agent of punishment in the aftermath of his census, David chooses to "fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great" as opposed to that of man (2 Sam 24:14; cf. 12:22). David's confidence in divine compassion is not displaced but neither is punishment annulled. Rather, after significant, but far from total, angelic destruction the angel prepares to destroy Jerusalem, but "the LORD relented [נחם] from the calamity" declaring "It is enough" (2 Sam 24:16; cf. 2 Sam 24:25). Thus, "so real was the Lord's mercy that he was unwilling to pursue the killing further and 'was grieved because of the calamity.'" Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 479.

[329] God promises to "have compassion on" the peoples and "bring them back" each to their land and then "if they will really" learn the ways of his people they will be built up, but the alternative is destruction (Jer 12:15–17). "The text betrays a powerful universalistic impulse. The Lord invites and welcomes all the 'neighbors' into the community of faith that is constituted by Israel. The invitation is real." Patrick D. Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel* (vol. 6 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.:

compassion toward the people of Nineveh and God responds to their heartfelt repentance (cf.

4:10–11).[330] Over and over again in the prophets, God is thus presented as moved, deeply

affected, and responsive to sincere entreaty and supplication. For instance, God is "moved to pity

[נחם] by" his people's "groaning" (Judg 2:18),[331] "could bear the misery of Israel no longer" (Judg

10:13),[332] and is "moved by prayer" (וַיֵּעָתֵר) for the land (2 Sam 21:14).[333] He is eager to relent

Abingdon Press, 2001), 680. "This is an extraordinary statement, nothing less than a conditional, Sinai-type covenant offered to the Gentiles. Yahweh's compassion is not conditional upon them learning his peoples' ways, but conditions will come afterward. Verse 17 tells us what will happen if these conditions are not met." Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 663; cf. J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), 362. Thus, here compassion appears prior to conditions but along with conditions for its continuance, providing a probationary opportunity for the nations to turn toward God. F. B. Huey Jr. adds, "The verses teach the freedom of choice with which God has endowed the human race. We are free to accept his lordship and be blessed or to reject him and experience punishment." *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NAC 16; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 141–43.

[330] God even has compassion (חוס) for the animals (Jonah 4:10–11). S. H. Blank comments, "Man's troubles are matched and dwarfed by God's own hurt." "'Doest Thou Well to Be Angry?' A Study in Self-Pity," *HUCA* 26 (1955): 36. In that instance, Nineveh was afforded probation through the reluctant preaching of Jonah. At times, God's relenting is according to his lovingkindness (Ps 106:45; cf. Dan 1:9). In still other accounts, divine compassion is set in parallel to the action of sparing (חוס) (Ps 72:13). As McCann Jr. puts it, "Motivated by compassion, impelled by grace, God sets things right." "The Book of Psalms," in *1 & 2 Maccabees*, 4:1148.

[331] When God's people cry out, he hears, and is "moved to pity [נחם] by their groaning" resulting in deliverance (Judg 2:18). Here, the term for "groaning" (נְאָקָה) appears with a causative *mem*, indicating the causal relation between God's hearing of Israel's pain and his feelings of compassion for them. Cf. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 130. Here, the usage "signifies sorrow at the hurt or pain of another and a desire to come to the victim's aid." Dennis T. Olson, "The Book of Judges," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol. 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 756; cf. Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (AB 6A; New York: Doubleday, 1969), 75. Many scholars note that the text here, as in Exod 2, makes no explicit mention of repentance. God appears to be moved out of his compassion for his people. Cf. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 130.

[332] Within the context of judgment, even after God had declared "I will no longer deliver you" (Judg 10:13), when the people turn to God and away from their foreign gods, "He could bear the misery of Israel no longer," connoting deep affection and passibility (Judg 10:16). This is a statement of deep affection. Literally, "his soul was shortened at the trouble of Israel" (Judg 10:16). In the only other three instances where the syntagm קצר + נֶפֶשׁ appears it refers to humans who have grown weary or become impatient (Num 21:4; Judg 16:16; Zech 11:8). A similar phrase appears elsewhere in a question form, "Is the Spirit [רוּחַ] of the LORD impatient [קצר]?" (Mic 2:7); cf. Robert D. Haak, "A Study and New Interpretation of QSR NPS," *JBL* 101 (1982): 161–67. Traditionally, this has been interpreted to mean that God responds favorably because of the genuineness of Israel's repentance. However, Block thinks that God "has grown tired" of Israel's "call for help" and "may be dismissing the Israelite actions as further evidence of their iniquitous condition. The words themselves are ambiguous, but there is rejection in Yahweh's voice" due to the intolerability of Israel's "present efforts . . . and the attempts to wrest deliverance from him." *Judges, Ruth*, 348–49. However, this has been questioned. D. T. Olson thinks God does favorably

(נחם) if only his people will repent (נחם) (Jer 18:1–10), but he will not do so forever (cf. Jer 15:6).[334]

Accordingly, notwithstanding the immensity of God's tender regard for humans, divine compassion toward rebellious humans is not extended forever.[335] It may be forfeited and removed by God. For example, God declares numerous times in succession, "My eye will have no pity [חוס] on you, nor will I spare [חמל] you,"[336] as the consequence of Israel's evil conduct (Ezek 7:4;

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change his plans, but merely because of Israel's great suffering, while knowing that their repentance is "temporary and shallow." "The Book of Judges," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:824–25. The text denotes both repentance and action, which elsewhere seems to denote genuine repentance (Judg 10:15–16). It is, however, impossible to judge with certainty the motivations of Israel. Even if Block's interpretation is correct, God is likewise moved emotionally by the situation, albeit in the opposite direction.

[333] Later in Israelite history, God is said to be "moved by prayer" (וַיֵּעָתֵר) for the land (2 Sam 21:14; cf. 2 Sam 24:25; 1 Kgs 8:50–53). Notably, God does not reject his people despite numerous affronts, but remains concerned for the well-being of his people. God "sees" affliction and responds in deliverance (2 Kgs 14:26) and manifests patience and unwillingness to destroy Judah despite the abundance of iniquity committed in Israel (2 Kgs 8:19).

[334] Thus, God repeatedly presents himself as an object of entreaty. God is open, and often responsive to, supplication (1 Kgs 8:33, 47, 59; 9:3), even human wrestling with him (Hos 12:4 [5]). Jeremiah 18:1–10 is perhaps the capstone passage that lays out such divine willingness to relent in accordance with human repentance. If humans change course, God's responsive action will change accordingly. However, such relenting is not endless (Jer 15:6; 1 Sam 15:29). God may become "tired of relenting" (Jer 15:6). "In mercy Yahweh will relent (*niḥam*) for so long, but finally he will grow weary of relenting." Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 389–90. The term, with God as subject, most often appears in the *niphal*, denoting at times relenting, or changing course in action (2 Sam 24:16; Isa 57:6; Jer 26:19; Joel 2:13–14; Jonah 3:9–10; 4:2; Amos 7:3, 6) or regretting (1 Sam 15:11, 35); at still others God is "moved to pity" (Judg 2:18). For a further discussion of divine relenting see the word study of נחם.

[335] For instance, at times the apparent absence of divine compassion is lamented by the covenant people (Zech 1:12). Further, Isaiah speaks of a time when God will "have compassion [רחם]" and "again choose Israel" (Isa 14:1; cf. Mic 7:20). Someday, God will "return" to Jerusalem with "compassion" (Zech 1:16), he will "comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem" (Zech 1:17; cf. 2:12 [16]).

[336] The terms חמל and חוס collocate frequently, both referring to pity and/or compassion and closely associated with רחם and, at times, נחם. They often appear together with reference to the lack of compassion and pity in the context of war whether from humans (Isa 13:18; Jer 21:7) or from God (Jer 13:14; Ezek 24:14). The phrase (or similar) "My eye will have no pity (חוס + עַיִן) and I will not spare [חמל]" appears frequently in Ezekiel (Ezek 5:11; cf. Ezek 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:10; cf. 9:5; 16:5; Deut 13:8 [9]). Apart from one another, both lexemes often continue this meaning related to pitying or sparing. חוס often occurs in the idiomatic expression, the eye will (not) pity (חוס + עַיִן) and refers to a lack of concern or compassion for its object, with both human (Gen 45:20; Deut 7:16; 13:8 [9]; 19:13, 21; 25:11 [12]; cf. 1 Sam 24:10 [11]) and divine subjects (Ezek 24:14). In one instance with God as subject, the idiom is positive, when God declares, "My eye spared them" (Ezek 20:17). חוס may appear with a positive meaning elsewhere as well, thus the king "will have compassion [חוס] on" the poor (Ps 72:13). The term is also used in entreaty; God is called upon to "have compassion" on Nehemiah (Neh 13:22) and "spare" his people (Joel 2:17). Finally, whereas

cf. 7:9; 8:18; 9:10).[337] Thus, the interruption of divine compassion is not isolated, but recurs in response to the people's disposition and/or actions toward God in rejecting his overtures.[338] Without fail, the lack or removal of divine compassion is the divine response to human infidelity (cf. Jer 2:32).[339] Even God's compassion and mercy have a limit; divine compassion is neither constant nor immutable, but conditional within a real, historically significant relationship.

Jonah's compassion extends to a mere plant, God's compassion (חוס) extends to the people, and even animals, of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11).

The חמל word group likewise continues the concept of compassion and/or sparing when it is used elsewhere. It may refer to human compassion, such as that felt by Pharaoh's daughter upon seeing the baby Moses on the river (Exod 2:6; cf. 1 Sam 23:21; 2 Sam 12:4, 6; Zech 11:5). However, as above, the verb frequently refers to the action of sparing (1 Sam 15:9, 15; 2 Sam 21:7) or not sparing (1 Sam 15:3; Isa 9:19 [18]; 30:14; Jer 50:14; 51:3; Hab 1:17; Prov 6:34) something or someone from destruction in battle. At times, it appears in laments over the apparent lack of divine compassion and/or sparing (Job 16:13; Lam 2:2, 17, 21; 3:43) or in God's own declaration that compassion is or will be absent (Jer 15:5; Zech 11:6). On the other hand, it also describes the presence of divine compassion. God sent prophets because of his compassion on the people, but the people scoffed at them and, consequently, Babylon had no compassion on them (2 Chr 36:15–17). Yet, Joel speaks of a day when God "will be zealous [קנא] for His land and will have pity on His people" (Joel 2:18; cf. Mal 3:17). In all this, God has "concern" for his own holy name (Ezek 36:21). Likewise, positive, is the noun חמלה, which appears in only two instances, describing the "compassion [חמלה] of the LORD [that] was upon" Lot when the men took he, his wife and two daughters out of Sodom (Gen 19:16) and in close relation to divine love in the recollection of the Sinai narrative, "in His love [אהבה] and in His pity [חמלה] [God] redeemed [גאל] them" (Isa 63:9). As such, both חוס and חמל can be used in reference to the presence or (when negated) the absence of compassion, most often referring to the specific action of sparing or not sparing something or someone.

[337] The people have pushed God too far. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr comments regarding Ezek 8:18, "By their actions, God insists, 'they are putting the branch to my nose!' (MT, 'their nose,' a deliberate scribal emendation). The meaning of this action is obscure; scholars have identified it as a gesture of entreaty, an obscene gesture, or a euphemistic reference to 'breaking wind.' Whatever the phrase's literal referent, its present use is probably metaphorical: Just as a painful blow provokes outrage, so also Judah's deeds unleash divine wrath," "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel* (vol. 6 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2001), 1176. Their "impurity has become so great that only a thorough purge of land and people can eradicate it." Ibid., 1166. Thus, "as people have behaved, so they shall be treated; one's fate is merely the outworking of one's action. Yahweh will personally guarantee that this occurs. He will not permit any hint of pity to interfere with his determined action." Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 250. Elsewhere God also refuses to respond to entreaty (Jer 11:11; Mic 3:4; Zech 7:13).

[338] Thus, God "will not have compassion" nor "be gracious" to his people who lack discernment (Isa 27:11; cf. Mal 1:9). Likewise, God is adamant that, at times, he will not "relent" (פרע) nor have "pity" (חוס) nor "be sorry" (נחם) but will judge "according to your ways and according to your deeds" (Ezek 24:14; cf. Zech 11:5). God has tried to restore this people. Verse 13 literally reads I purged you, "i.e., I applied cleansers to you to no avail. This may be a metaphor for the graduated futile chastisements inflicted on the people in the manner described in Lev 26." Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 503.

[339] God has not been unfaithful to them but they have continually rebelled and "have forgotten" him "days without number" (Jer 2:32). The imagery is that of a bride who would not forget her attire, yet Israel, God's bride, has forgotten him, her husband.

The removal of divine compassion is poignantly displayed in the husband-bride metaphor of Hosea. The spiritual adultery of Israel is depicted and its results upon the divine-human relationship appear even in the names of Hosea's children. One is named "Lo-ruhamah," which God interprets to signify, "I will no longer have compassion [רָחַם] on the house of Israel, that I would forgive them" (Hos 1:6; cf. 2:4 [5]; 2:23 [25]) though compassion appears to remain, at least temporarily, for Judah (Hos 1:7).[340] Divine compassion is removed on the explicit basis of "harlotry" (Hos 2:4 [6]) that brings considerable grief and anguish to God himself (Hos 11:8, see

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[340] The Hebrew of vv. 6–7 is notoriously difficult. The phrase could be rendered, "I will no longer love [have compassion on] the house of Israel, but I will surely forgive them" (Hos 1:6). But this appears to make little sense as a whole. Some have viewed the text as corrupt and requiring emendation to fix the difficulty. Others have interpreted, "I will no longer show Israel love by forgiving them." Cf. William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (New York: Scribner, 1905), 214. Others interpret נשא, usually translated "forgive," in its more basic sense of "lift" or "carry" to mean that Israel will be carried away, or God's compassion will be taken away. The former are represented by Thomas E. McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992), 1:21; James L. Mays, *Hosea, a Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 22. The latter is represented by Hans W. Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 8. Another option, championed by Andersen and Freedman, is that the whole of what follows the negative expression "I will no longer" (לֹא אוֹסִיף) is governed by it, thus the following elements of the passage might mean, "never again will (1) I have pity on the house of Israel, (2) I make the slightest move to forgive them, (3) I have pity on the house of Judah, and (4) I, Yahweh their God, rescue them." They point to Jer 3:2; 22:10; Num 23:19; Mic 7:1; Isa 38:18 as analogous instances of such rare grammar. *Hosea*, 189. Fensham, however, rejects this view, stating that "in verse 7 the stress on [בֵּית יְהוּדָה] by placing it before the verb shows that a contrast is expressed." F. Charles Fensham, "The Marriage Metaphor in Hosea for the Covenant Relationship between the Lord and His People," *JNSL* 12 (1984): 76. Garrett thinks that the text should be left to stand as a paradox, seeing a similar dual statement in 1:9–10. *Hosea, Joel* (NAC 19A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 61–62. He observes, "Of course Hosea loved Lo-Ruhamah! Could God abandon his love for Israel? On one level the answer is yes—he could give them over to the most terrible suffering—but on a deeper level it is impossible: 'How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? . . . My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused' (Hos 11:8). This inconsistency is the language of the vexation of a broken heart—and it also reflects the mystery of a God whose ways are above our ways." Ibid., 62. Yet, this would raise questions for Hos 9:15, which has its own tension with Hos 11. See the discussion of both further below. There is no compelling reason to depart from the traditional rendering, which would see in these verses the rejection of Israel, likely fulfilled in the destruction of Samaria in 722 B.C., but the postponement of Judah's punishment. In fact, the kind of tension seen in these verses is apparent throughout the book. Perhaps it is meant to be cryptic, less a foretelling of what will occur and more a declaration of God's profound grief at the rupture of his special relationship with Israel and Judah. However, the Hebrew is understood and applied to the two nations; the theological point regarding the removal, or at least suspension, of God's compassion/love is striking and sets up a tension that continues throughout the book of Hosea. As Simian-Yofre sees it, "Yahweh [is] torn between love and punishment, pity and pitilessness." *TDOT* 13:443.

below).[341] The case is similar throughout the entire latter prophets; the temporary lack of divine

compassion (Cf. Isa 27:11) is not attributed to God's unilateral decision but is the direct result of

the unwillingness of God's people. They were afforded every opportunity for repentance and trust

but they "were not willing" (Isa 30:15) even though God "longs to be gracious" (חכה) and "waits

on high to have compassion on" them (Isa 30:18).[342] The compassion of God is here represented

as an internal commitment such that Israel's rebellion affects the inner life of God, so even God

must wait for them to be ready to receive his compassion. In the meantime, God's desire is

unfulfilled, he longs to be compassionate and seeks them out, but they are obstructing the

relationship.[343] Still, he will respond and be gracious at the sound of their cry, when he hears, he

will answer (Isa 30:19).[344] As such, divine compassion is manifestly contingent upon the state of

relationship. Although compassion cannot be earned, it must be received; God's call seeks to

evoke response (cf. Jer 42:10–16). In the future, God will reclaim his people, betroth them to

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[341] Although it is possible to see the lack of compassion on her children as an extended penalty of their "mother's" adultery, it is more likely that the reference is to her children who are also taking part in adultery in like manner as their "mother." This would fit the historical reference to Israel and Judah. Thus, Stuart translates, "I can have no compassion on her children, Because they are prostituting children." *Hosea-Jonah*, 42.

[342] Joseph Blenkinsopp translates, "but you did not want it." *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 417. "The Holy One had extended his arms to them with a gentle word of strength (28:12), but they refused." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, 554; cf. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, 556–57. Thus, God waits because they were unwilling (Isa 30:15); cf. Isa 5:2, 4, 7. "In spite of the circumstances that prevent God from saving his people immediately, those who wait for God will be blessed (30:18b)." G. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, 519.

[343] The extent to which God goes in seeking reconciliation is displayed in God's own language. He continually and persistently called to his people, signified by the idiomatical language of "rising up early and speaking." But the people "did not hear," God called but they "did not answer" (Jer 7:13; cf. 7:25; 11:7; 25:3–4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14–15; 44:4). Elsewhere, despite being forgotten and mistreated, God searches (דרשׁ) and seeks (בקר) for (or inspects) His people, even "as a shepherd cares [בְּקָרָה] for his herd . . . so I will care for My sheep" (Ezek 34:11–12). Some have considered this text to be corrupt. However, in its final form, Darr points out the potential evaluative connotation of this seeking. "The *piel* verb from the root *baqar* can mean 'to seek' but also 'to inquire' in the sense of inspecting something." "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:1466; cf. Lev 13:36; Lev 27:33**.** Likewise, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 700; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 289.

[344] The construction חָנוֹן יְחָנְךָ inf. abs + *qal* imperfect emphasizes the certainty that God will be gracious when they call.

himself in righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, and compassion (Hos 2:19 [21]) and will "have

compassion" on them, so that those who were not his people will be his people and he will be

their God (Hos 2:23 [25]).[345] Likewise, God will "strengthen," "save," and "bring back" Judah

"because" he has "had compassion [רָחַם] on them and they will be as though [God] had not

rejected [זנח] them" (Zech 10:6; cf. Jer 33:25; cf. Zeph 2:3, 7).

Thus, over and over the familiar pattern appears. Even though the "stirrings" of the divine

"heart," "compassion," and "zeal" are temporarily "restrained" (Isa 63:15; cf. 63:10), there is

hope for the future when God will again comfort his people even "as one whom his mother

comforts" (Isa 66:13).[346] Likewise in Jeremiah, though divine compassion may be evoked, it may

also be revoked. In response to human rebellion, God "withdraws" his "peace," and his

"lovingkindness and compassion," resulting in discipline (Jer 16:5; 30:14).[347] Yet, in the wake of

justly deserved divine punishment, God will "have compassion [רחם] on his dwelling places" (Jer

30:18).[348] On the basis of God's enduring love (Jer 31:3), he will "turn their mourning into joy

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[345] "The woman's repentance and return to her husband then become the first and vital act in the process of rehabilitation. Hosea, however, contends that the initiative always remains with the husband (Yahweh), though it is only effective when there is a response (v 17b)." Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 264. Thus, the "broken covenant could be mended because Yahweh's love was stronger than his wrath." Ibid., 219; cf. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 54. This tension between the apparent removal and, conversely, continuance of love will be taken up further below.

[346] Further demonstration of the depth of divine compassion and passion appears by way of an idiom that literally rendered means the murmur, roar of turmoil of your internal organs. Oswalt phrases it as "the rumbling of your innards." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 612. It here connotes the kind of distress that is often accompanied in humans by intestinal aching. This profound divine affection, sympathy, and interest in his people results ultimately in God's purpose of restoration. "The outcome (restoration) is rooted in the deep feeling of God, the parental compassion that is moved to care and tenderness in the presence of the pain of the child (cf. 31:20)." Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:808.

[347] In fact, God himself says he "wounded" Israel "with the punishment of a cruel one" (אַכְזָרִי מוּסַר), depicted as "incurable," but this is because of the great iniquity of the people (Jer 30:14–15; cf. 15, which clearly shows the reason for their punishment). Such punishment is just, signified here by the term מוּסָר, elsewhere "discipline," which the people consistently refused to accept (Jer 2:30; 5:3; 7:28; 17:23; 32:33). The "cruelty" could refer to the punishment itself or perhaps the mediatorial agent of punishment, Babylon (cf. Jer 6:23; 50:42).

[348] In this context, the compassion is elicited by the taunts of the nations that no one cares for God's people (Jer 30:17). Apparently, God's compassion is at least partially motivated by the

and will comfort [נחם] them" (Jer 31:13). He will "certainly remember" his "dear son . . . a

delightful child," his "heart [that is, innards, מֵעֶה] yearns [המה] for him" and God will "surely have

mercy on him" (Jer 31:20; cf. 33:25–26).[349] Thus, God introduces a heartfelt call to repentance

(Jer 31:21–22). The depth of divine emotion expressed here is astounding. God deeply longs to

love and continue loving his wayward people, and this expression leads into the famous

proclamation of the new covenant (cf. Jer 31:31–34).

Likewise, while Israel deserves severe punishment for her adulterous ways, God appears

to be conflicted, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How

can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned over within

Me, All My compassions [נְחֻמִים] are kindled [כמר]" (Hos 11:8–9).[350] Consequently, the fullness of

representation of divine character. For instance, God will restore the people and "have mercy" (רחם) on
them but in the context of jealousy for his "holy name" (Ezek 39:25; cf. Ezek 20:21–22; 39:27). Thus,
Block comments that "Ezekiel recognizes two motivational factors underlying Yahweh's restorative
actions, the first relating to the need of his people, and the second to concern for his name." *The Book of
Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 486. "Yahweh's actions toward his people, both punitive and salvific, are played
out before the worldwide audience." Ibid., 487. He further notes that "Israel's election was particularly to
be a witness to the nations of the uniqueness of Yahweh." Ibid.

[349] This idiomatic syntagm of yearning innards appeared also in Isa 63:15. Thompson comments,
"The very vivid anthropomorphism depicts God's stomach being churned up with longing for his son." *The
Book of Jeremiah*, 575. The word "heart"—מֵעֶה internal organs, inward parts, bowels, belly—is often used
in the sense of womb and stomach. It is used in instances of intense physiological pain (Job 30:27; Ps
22:15) but more frequently to denote intense human emotions (Isa 16:11; Jer 4:19; Lam 1:20; 2:11). Stoebe
thus correctly sees this as "expanded parallelism" that "approximate[s] *rahamim*." Stoebe, *TLOT* 3:1226.
The collocation of מֵעֶה and המה or הָמוֹן—murmur, roar, sometimes meaning arouse—appears five times (Isa
16:11; 63:15; Jer 4:19; 31:20; Cant 5:4). Elsewhere it describes the inner feelings of emotional lament for
Moab (Isa 16:11). In Cant 5:4 it depicts the erotic feelings of an aroused woman. המה with לֵב describes the
"pounding" of Jeremiah's heart, in parallel to the anguish (חול) of his innards (מֵעֶה) (Jer 4:19).

[350] The two human instances (Gen 43:40; 1 Kgs 3:6) and this divine one are the only three
instances where כמר relates to emotions. Only in one other instance does it appear at all, of skin becoming
hot in the sun (Lam 5:10); cf. Stoebe, *TLOT* 3:1226; Butterworth, "רחם," *NIDOTTE* 3:1093. Further, "The
word *nihumim* occurs only here, in Isa 57:18, and in Zech 1:13. The emotion is one of compassion and pity;
it describes the desire to bring consolation. As such it is close in meaning to *rahamim*." Andersen and
Freedman, *Hosea*, 589. Garrett comments, "Abruptly, Yahweh enters what can only be described as
distraught self-questioning. Like a father who is at wit's end over what to do with a wayward child,
Yahweh is here at a loss as he tries to resolve his compassion for Israel and the punishment demanded by
their sin. One may of course regard this as metaphor, as language that somehow puts divine love into terms
that a human can understand, even though God himself does not really experience self-doubt and anxiety
over issues of justice and mercy." He goes on, "While accepting the fact that God transcends our metaphors
and that theological doctrines about the impassability and foreknowledge of God should never be

God's anger is not executed (Hos 11:9). Although destruction will come, there will be a future when anger will be removed and divine love toward his people will be restored (Hos 14:4 [5]).[351] Such acute idioms of divine emotion thus appear recurrently throughout the prophets, evidencing God's deeply affective nature. Far from being aloof, God is profoundly impacted by the evil and sufferings of his people yet desires to restore and reclaim them into intimate relationship with himself.[352]

Such intense emotionality is likewise depicted when God describes his momentary forsaking of his people as an "outburst of anger" in stark contrast to his "great compassion," which is displayed with "everlasting lovingkindness" (Isa 54:7–8).[353] Although God may act in a torrent of anger, divine compassion is greater and exponentially more lasting than any "negative" emotions. Moreover, in spite of the obvious contingency of divine compassion, the wellspring of divine sympathy and God's unwavering benevolence endures beyond all expectations. God's

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jettisoned, texts such as this should be allowed to speak to us in the power of their raw emotion. It is precisely in texts such as this that the love of God becomes a vivid reality and not a barren abstraction." *Hosea, Joel*, 227; cf. John L. McKenzie, "Divine Passion in Osee," *CBQ* 17 (1955): 287–99. I agree with Garrett that the texts must be allowed to speak and, on that basis, question whether the doctrine of divine impassibility is able to cohere with the texts as such. See the further discussion of this in chapter 6.

[351] "It is significant that the attribute of God to which the OT returns again and again is his compassion: his tenderness and his ability to be touched by the pain and grief of his people. His transcendence and almighty power are never forgotten, but it is his compassion to which they return with wonder again and again." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 299; cf. Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC 8; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 309.

[352] Consider also the poignant metaphor of God depicted as the attentive owner and caretaker of his much-cherished vineyard (Israel). The vineyard owner's painstakingly presents tender care to his vineyard, providing everything for it, but it nevertheless produces only worthless grapes though it should have produced good grapes (Isa 5:2). Therefore God cries out, "judge between Me and My vineyard. What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?" (Isa 5:3–4). Despite God's all-encompassing labor and consistent beneficence, his people have turned away from him. There is nothing left for God to do except carry out judgment and destruction in response to the absence of justice and righteousness in his vineyard (Isa 5:5–7).

[353] "It is *deep/*'great' *compassion*, love which overflows, love in its passionate reality." Motyer, *Isaiah*, 448. "Thus God is passionately concerned about us and the thought that we should corrupt and destroy ourselves stirs him to the depths. How much better a father who knows what his child is doing to himself or herself and is angry about it than the one who neither knows nor cares what is happening." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 421.

good will toward his people is more lasting than the hills and the mountains. God declares, "My lovingkindness will not be removed from you. And My covenant of peace will not be shaken, Says the LORD who has compassion on you" (Isa 54:10).[354] Accordingly, God implores the "wicked [to] forsake his way . . . return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on Him" and "abundantly pardon" (Isa 55:7; cf. Zeph 3:17).[355] He wants to remain near, to be found by them, but the opportunity will not be available forever. Thus, although divine initiative is primary and his benevolence endures, the fruition of divine compassion and pardon is predicated on human response. There is thus a tension between the permanence of willed divine compassion and the potential transience of efficacious, received divine compassion. God persistently wills, and longs for, a harmonious reconciliation with his wayward people, and his compassion and grace make such reconciliation possible, but he does not unilaterally effectuate relationship.

Divine Passion

Without equivocation, then, the latter prophets present God as personally concerned about his covenant people. However, such concern may turn into righteous indignation when God is "grieved" (עצב) by rebellion (Isa 63:10). As in the Torah, God is repeatedly provoked (כעס) by Israel's apostasy with idols, bringing him pain and vexation and spurring him to anger. In one instance among many, God refers to Israel as "a people who continually provoke Me to My face" (Isa 65:3).[356] Whereas, God "cared" (ידע) for Israel in the wilderness, Israel became proud and

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[354] Yet, even this comes on the heels of a rupture of the relationship. Thus JPS translates, "my loyalty shall never move from you . . . said the LORD, who takes you back in love." Cf. Jer 33:25. God further promises an "everlasting covenant" that is "according to the חסד of David" (חַסְדֵי דָוִד), specifically unto those who "incline" their "ear," "come," and "listen that [they] might live" (Isa 55:3). It is not altogether clear whether the phrase חַסְדֵי דָוִד refers to the חסד shown to David or the חסד David showed toward God. Either way, the point is that such a relationship may yet be restored to God's people, if they will respond to him.

[355] Further, they are to "seek the Lord while he may be found; Call upon Him while He is near" (Isa 55:6).

[356] See Judg 2:12; 1 Kgs 14:9, 15; 15:30; 16:2, 7, 13, 26, 33; 21:22; 22:54; 2 Kgs 17:11, 17; 21:6, 15; 22:17; 23:19, 26; Isa 65:3; Jer 7:18–19; 8:19; 11:17; 25:6–7; 32:29–30, 32; 44:3, 8; Ezek 8:17; 16:26;

forgot God, resulting in divine wrath, which itself is compared to that of a "lion," a "leopard," a

"bear robbed of her cubs," a "lioness," or "wild beast" (Hos 13:5–8).[357] Thus the Israelites have

brought their own destruction (Hos 13:9). Divine anger (אַף) may be evoked by, and persist

against, the godless and the evildoer and, accordingly, God will "not take pleasure [שׂמח] in their

young men" nor "have pity [רחם] on their orphans or their widows" (Isa 9:17 [16]).[358] Similarly,

God often becomes indignant at evil, usually toward his covenant people, but his indignation also

falls upon the other nations, especially in response to their cruel oppression of his people.[359]

God's profoundly emotional concern and compassion correspond to his intense,

passionate love for his people. This is especially manifest in God's desire for exclusive

relationship with them.[360] Accordingly, when his people stray into spiritual adultery it is

manifested in jealousy, anger, and zeal. On the other hand, it can also denote the divine passion

for his people in a positive sense, manifested against her oppressors. God is a holy and jealous

God [אֵל־קַנּוֹא], and therefore he takes sin seriously and his offers of forgiveness are not endless

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20:28; Hos 12:14 [15]).

[357] Some consider ידע in covenant contexts to be a technical term for the recognition of treaty parameters. Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew Yadaʻ," *BASOR* 181 (1966): 37. However, as with אהב, it is a mistake to reduce the meaning of the term to mere legality on the basis of ANE parallels, especially when it is likely that such treaty language itself borrows from the more basic kinship language. Nicholson contends that where ידע is used with divine agency it means "something like 'know someone for one's own,' 'choose and make someone one's own.'" *God and His People*, 80; cf. Eberhard Baumann, "ידע und seine Derivate," *ZAW* 28 (1908): 22–41. Sakenfeld suggests that treaty language is not mutually exclusive to the other, more intimate, connotations of ידע. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 171.

[358] Importantly, even the orphans and widows are represented as evildoers. Blenkinsopp translates, "so the Sovereign Lord had no mercy on their youths, no compassion on their orphans and widows, for they are all ungodly and wicked." *Isaiah 1–39*, 216.

[359] For indignation toward Israel see Isa 10:25; 13:5; 26:20; Ezek 22:24, 31; Zech 1:12. For indignation toward the nations, see Isa 10:5; 30:27; 66:14; Jer 10:10; 50:25; Ezek 21:36; Nah 1:6; Hab 3:12; Zeph 3:8; Mal 1:4.

[360] God "loves them so much that he wants their undivided love in return. He will not share them with any other god." Trent C. Butler, *Joshua* (WBC 7; Dallas: Word, 1984), 275. God's jealousy cannot tolerate . . . undivided love and wants the same [devotion] from them." Butler, *Joshua*, 275.

(Josh 24:19).[361] Accordingly, Judah's infidelity with false gods provokes God to severe jealousy

(1 Kgs 14:22; cf. 14:15) for he deserves and requires the exclusive loyalty of his people. Such

infidelity is frequently presented as adultery; Judah is the wife who runs after many "lovers"

(Ezek 16:33, 36–37; 23:9, 25; cf. Ezek 23:5–7, 22).[362] Here, divine jealousy amounts to

unrequited love; God is like a scorned husband passionate for his wayward beloved. However, the

divine jealousy (קִנְאָה) and anger (כַּעַס) may be "pacified" in the carrying out of discipline. In this,

God himself will "calm" or satisfy (נוח) his "fury" (חֵמָה) (Ezek 16:42) and thereafter may again

"care" for his people (Ezek 36:9).[363] Yet, in all this, divine discipline is a manifestation of his

love-seeking relationship.

Accordingly, God's negative emotions, themselves an outgrowth of his profound concern

for his creatures, may be quite intense; God describes his temporary forsaking of Israel as "an

outburst of anger" and "in My wrath I struck you," though this is contrasted with his everlasting

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[361] This statement is in the context of Joshua warning the people that, despite their claims to the contrary, they will not be able to serve Yahweh faithfully, for "He will not put up with your disloyalty and your sinning." Robert G. Boling, *Joshua* (AB 6; New York: Doubleday, 1982), 528. The ability or inability of Israel to serve God is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, it should be noted that many are perplexed by this statement and see it as a "deep paradox" considering the constant exhortations to serve God. See David M. Howard Jr, *Joshua* (NAC 5; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 437. Butler calls it "perhaps the most shocking statement in the OT." Butler, *Joshua*, 274. However, this was not an absolute statement, but in the context of infidelity, "if his people persisted in rebellion in spite of such loving and sustained overtures, he would not tolerate this forever." Howard Jr, *Joshua*, 438.

[362] Their harlotry is so perverted that whereas most harlots receive gifts, they give gifts to entice their lovers (Ezek 16:33).

[363] "There had to be a spending of the jealous fury of v 38, a final resolution of the problem that provoked Yahweh to pain-filled anger in v 26. This glancing back over the earlier material shows that theodicy is the issue at stake in this oracle. Only the final destruction of Jerusalem could wipe clean the slate of accumulated debt owed to its divine patron." Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC 28; Dallas, TX: Word, 1994), 243. "His primary aim is to put a stop to all of Jerusalem's harlotrous ways (v. 41b), but the effects will be cathartic upon his disposition as well. . . . But this will not transpire until the city has suffered the full consequences of her deeds." Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 503. "The gods of the neighbors would simply wait for the worshiper to come back. Yahweh goes out to discipline the errant lover until she returns." Butler, *Joshua*, 275. God is far from indifferent. He is manifesting the righteous indignation that is appropriate to his place and the relationship he has entered into with Israel. "Anything less than this kind of justifiable protectiveness would indicate a careless attitude toward destructive behavior like idolatry and sensuality." House, *1, 2 Kings*, 193–94.

lovingkindness and favor (רָצוֹן) manifested in compassion (Isa 54:8–9; cf. Isa 47:6).[364] Likewise, the overall conditionality of the covenant relationship is in full view when the continuance of divine blessing is jeopardized "because of" Israel's continued provocation of divine anger with their "Asherim" (1 Kgs 14:15–16). God may be offended to the point that his "heart [נַפְשִׁי] would not be with this people," even if Moses and Samuel were among them, for he is "tired of relenting" (Jer 15:1, 6).[365] However, despite the intensity of divine anger at times, Jer 23:20 implies that God controls his emotions: His anger is not "turned back" until the divine purposes are carried out. Likewise, in God's purpose his anger will be "spent," his wrath "satisfied," and God "appeased" (נָחַם), this God has spoken in his passionate "zeal" (קִנְאָה) (Ezek 5:13).[366] Again, divine anger, though intense, does not continue forever unabated, but he himself will calm his fury and be vexed "no more" (Ezek 16:42).

Divine jealousy may also be an immense positive for God's people. It may be prompted by the "insults of the nations" against his people, provoking him to act in "jealousy"—even "fiery jealousy" (בְּאֵשׁ קִנְאָתִי)—and in "wrath" (Ezek 36:6; cf. Zeph 1:18; 3:8). Likewise, God describes his great and exceeding jealousy for "Jerusalem and Zion" (Zech 1:14), which amounts to him being "very angry" with the oppressive nations (Zech 1:13, 15; cf. 8:2).[367] Likewise, God is "exceedingly jealous" for Zion, "with great wrath" he is "jealous for her" (Zech 8:2). Jealousy for his beloved and, thus, anger towards her oppressors, results in the divine declaration of a future

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[364] God is thus clearly "both affected and determined by human actions, if only in response. This God is by no means immutable." Gene M. Tucker, "The Book of Isaiah 1–39," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel* (vol. 6 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2001), 161. Rather, "God is passionately concerned about the lives of human beings and whether justice takes place among them." Bruce Baloian, "Anger," *NIDOTTE* 4:381.

[365] The use of "my heart," or rather my soul (נַפְשִׁי), once again presents God as an emotional being.

[366] Such wrath is neither "arbitrary" nor "impulsive" but is part of God's "historical self-manifestation." Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 211. See the discussion of קנא earlier.

[367] While he was "only a little angry" the oppressors "furthered the disaster," pushing him to severe zeal (Zech 1:14). While he is motivated by his passion, "Yahweh is motivated by pure compassion. Thus the two grounds for God's work of salvation are his covenant bond with the people and his merciful nature." Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 351.

return to Jerusalem with "compassion," which will result in the blessing of overflowing prosperity when God will "again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem" (Zech 1:16–17; cf. 2:12 [16]).

Elsewhere, Joel locates divine jealousy as an emotion contingent upon the repentance of the people, while also pre-emptive of the insults of the other nations (Joel 2:17): "Then will the LORD be jealous [קנא] for his land, and pity [חמל] his people" (Joel 2:18).[368] Zephaniah likewise speaks of the Lord's great "wrath" and "the fire of his jealousy" (וּבְאֵשׁ קִנְאָתוֹ) on the day of retribution (Zeph 1:18). Yet, divine wrath is in favor of all those who "wait" for him on that coming day of "indignation, "burning anger," "fire," and "zeal" (Zeph 3:8).[369] Thus, although God is "slow to anger and great in power" he punishes the guilty (Nah 1:3). Toward his enemies, God is "a jealous [קַנּוֹא] and avenging God" a "wrathful" one who "takes vengeance" (Nah 1:2).[370]

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[368] The actual repentance of the people is not reported, though it seems that they did, in fact, repent. James L. Crenshaw thus points out, "One could argue that YHWH's compassionate character as announced in 2:13b pertains regardless of human response" yet "the context of the second chapter in Joel argues against this emphasis on ignoring human conduct." *Joel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24C; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 148. "When either [the land or people] suffered, it aroused strong and deep emotions in his heart. He had now rushed to show his *passionate concern,* his keen ardor which would not allow his rights to be infringed. This zealous or jealous love is a passion that in the OT can show itself in judgment upon Israel, but here it is protective, and is to cause Yahweh to drive away the trespassers from his property." Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 87; cf. Ezek 39:25; Zech 1:14; 8:2.

[369] Kenneth L. Barker states that God's caring jealousy is "the stimulating force behind the decisive turn in redemptive history: the 'small remnant' and the coming of the Messiah are the result of God's burning love for Israel." *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (NAC 20; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 169–70.

[370] Coggins suggests this reading would have the shock value of "'a deliberate dramatic device' in which 'the two great Canaanite deities, El and Baal" are "used as alternative designations of Yahweh." Thus, "jealous El, avenging Yahweh, angry Baal." R. J. Coggins and S. P. Re'emi, *Israel among the Nations: A Commentary on the Books of Nahum and Obadiah* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985), 21. Some have taken the phrase, "keeps [נטר] wrath," as an indication of divine self-control. Robertson, *The Books*, 62. Others, however, believe it simply refers to God's ability to become angry. Duane L. Christensen, *Nahum* (Anchor Yale Bible 24F; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 179. Thus, "zeal describes Yahweh's affective nature. He feels strongly and reacts vigorously to the behavior of his people. So God's compassionate beneficence as well as his wrath is contained in the notion of Yahweh's devotion or 'zeal' for Israel; the tone and measure of Yahweh's passionate reaction depends on whether his people uphold or break the covenant." Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 120.

Yet, he is "good" and "knows those who take refuge in him" (Nah 1:7)."[371] As such, jealousy itself seems to be a manifestation of the intense emotionality of divine love. It is manifested negatively when God is jealous toward Israel due to her infidelity, but positively when God is jealous for Israel due to outside forces. In both cases, God is the passionate lover.[372]

Compassion and Passion in the Writings

God's concern is once again on display throughout the Writings where God is depicted as hearing (שׁמע) and "inclining" his ear to the humble (Ps 10:17; cf. 40:2).[373] God cares (פקד) about and remembers (זכר) his people. He sees (ראה) and he hears (שׁמע) human cries (Ps 106:44; cf. Ps 139:3) and remembers (זכר) "His covenant," even relenting (נחם) according to his great lovingkindness (Ps 106:45).[374] He is concerned for, and responds to, those who respond to him,

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[371] "This 'knowing' of the Lord must be understood in the full biblical sense of 'loving' with the most intense care." Robertson, *The Books*, 70. Likewise, Barker, *Micah*, 178.

[372] "The Bible thus speaks unashamedly of Yahweh's passion, presenting him as an intense and passionate Being, fervently interested in the world of humans." Baloian, *NIDOTTE* 4:380.

[373] The idiom "inclining" his ear is תַּקְשִׁיב אָזְנֶךָ. As such, "God has heard; God will act." Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 126. At the dedication of the temple, God himself declares he has "heard" (שׁמע) Solomon and that if his people, in times of distress, will "humble themselves and pray and seek [his] face and turn from their wicked ways," then God will "hear [שׁמע] from heaven." His "eyes will be open and [his] ears attentive" to prayers from the temple (2 Chr 7:12–15). Thus, God is "entreated" (חלה), "moved by his entreaty" (עתר + פלל), and he hears, and responds to, "supplication" (תְּחִנָּה) (2 Chr 33:12–13; cf. 30:20; Ezra 8:23). Notably, this is the supplication of the worst king of Judah. This illustrates the heights and depths of the grace and compassion of God. Manasseh certainly did not deserve grace but he received it, yet for him even that grace was conditional. God "responded" to his entreaty. "Even a religious renegade like Manasseh could be restored to blessing." L. C. Allen, "First and Second Chronicles," in *Kings–Judith*, 3:636.
　　Daniel notes the failure of the people to have "sought" God's favor (Dan 9:13). Thus, he himself pleads for God to "listen" (שׁמע) to his supplications, "O my God, incline Your ear and hear [שׁמע]! Open Your eyes and see [ראה] our desolations" (Dan 9:17–18; cf. Ps 116:1; Neh 1:11). He goes on, "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action!" (Dan 9:19). "The picture is of a person bending the ear in order to hear more clearly. God was being asked to listen intently to the prophet's prayer (and possibly also to the insulting words being spoken about Yahweh by the heathen). The Lord was then implored to 'open' ('open please!') his eyes and observe the plight of the Jewish people and the condition of Jerusalem." Miller, *Daniel*, 249. Yet, even when supplication is made, it is not "on account of any merits" of the asker, "but on account of [God's] great compassion" (Dan 9:18). God responds to such heartfelt entreaty (Dan 9:23; cf. Ezra 8:23; Neh 9:17, 19, 27).

[374] Elsewhere, in the midst of terrible divine judgment, God himself is concerned, he "saw [ראה] and was sorry [נחם] over the calamity" and declared "it is enough" (1 Chr 21:15; cf. Lam 3:33). The verse

not forsaking (עזב) those who "seek" (דרשׁ) and trust in him (Ps 9:10). This abundance of divine concern and emotion consistently evidences the passibility and relationality of God. Such awareness and responsiveness to the actual state of affairs are most prominently depicted in terms of divine compassion and passion.

Divine Compassion

God is consistently represented as the compassionate (רחם) one (Pss 40:11 [12]; 103:8; 119:76–77; Lam 3:22), one who comforts (נחם) humans, denoting God's devoted and compassionate attention to his people (Pss 23:4; 71:21; 86:17; 119:76; 135:14; cf. 77:2 [3]; 119:82). The intimacy of such divine compassion is illustrated when it is compared with a father's compassion for his children, specifically directed toward "those who fear him" (Ps 103:13; cf. 17, 18).[375] Further, both compassion and graciousness are central characteristics of God who is repeatedly described as "gracious and compassionate" (Ps 111:4; cf. 77:7 [8]; 102:13 [14]; 103:8; 111:4; 145:8; Neh 9:31; 2 Chr 30:9) and these two characteristics are further linked with divine righteousness (Ps 116:5; cf. 112:4).[376] The bestowal of such divine compassion (נחם) is dependent upon (albeit not unilaterally) the divine will (Ps 135:14) and, at times, an apparent ground of God's grace (Ps 51:1), deliverance (Ps 69:16), and/or redemption (Ps 103:4). As compassionate, God is responsive and is thus implored to remember his compassion and his lovingkindness, which "have been from of old" (Ps 25:6; cf. vs. 7). While, God's "mercies [רַחֲמִים] are over all his works," thus implying an aspect of universal compassion (Ps 145:9), God is "near

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implies that God is affected by the sight of the affliction and relents in sorrow (cf. Gen 6:6). See also the word study of נחם. The term appears elsewhere in the Writings with regard to divine relenting (Pss 90:13; 106:45) or not relenting (Ps 110:4). See also the word study of נחם.

[375] Specifically, "children" is in parallel with "those who fear him," implying that God's children are none other than those who fear him.

[376] Such depictions of the divine character are dependent upon the *locus classicus* of divine self-revelation in Exod 34:6–7. Psalm 112:4 is a potential example of this divine attribute, but more likely it is in reference to a human agent though scholars are divided on this point (see the discussion regarding this in the word study of רחם).

to all who call upon Him . . . in truth" (Ps 145:18). Accordingly, over and over such divine

compassion is sought (Ps 51:1; Dan 2:18; Neh 1:11), as well as grace (Pss 51:1; 56:1; 119:32; Job

8:5; Dan 9:13, 17–18), evidencing the widespread understanding that God may be affected, hear,

and respond to entreaty.[377] As such, neither divine grace nor compassion is depicted as altogether

unilateral.

Indeed, while divine grace and compassion may be unmerited they are not indifferent to

human response. God is entreated to "turn" and be "gracious . . . after your manner with those

who love your name" (Ps 119:32). God "scoffs at the scoffers" but "gives grace to the afflicted"

(Prov 3:34).[378] Confession and the forsaking of transgressions will "find compassion" (Prov

28:13). God is "gracious and compassionate" and will "not turn his face away from you if you

return to Him" (2 Chr 30:9).[379] However, when God sent his "messengers" the prophets to call the

people back to him "because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place," they

were "continually mocked" and "scoffed at . . . until the wrath of the LORD arose against His

people, until there was no remedy" (36:15–16) and destruction came, and God "had no

compassion" on any of them (2 Chr 36:17). The tension, here and elsewhere, between the

"gracious and compassionate" God and the lack of efficacious compassion on historical

occasions, is not due to a conflicted divine nature, character, or will, but is consistently tied to the

actual state of affairs, specifically the resolve of Israel to repent or remain in apostasy.

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[377] Thus, human supplication makes a difference, though it is only viable because of God's "great compassion" (רַחֲמִים) (Dan 9:18; cf. 9:9; Pss 78:38; 79:8 [9]). God's compassion is so immense that David would rather receive chastisement directly from him rather than any human, for God's "mercies [רַחֲמִים] are very great" (1 Chr 21:13).

[378] This implies a condition of grace, i.e., not scoffing. Thus, here divine grace is not altogether arbitrary. Fox translates, "As for the scornful—them he scorns, but upon the humble he bestows favor." *Proverbs 1–9*, 162; cf. Ps 18:25–26 [26–27] = 2 Sam 22:26–27. According to Murphy, "The sense is that he [God] 'outscoffs' the scoffers." *Proverbs*, 23.

[379] Here, as elsewhere, God's compassionate and gracious nature seems to provide the occasion for repentance; cf. Jer 12:15–17.

The expectation that God will be compassionate is so strong that its apparent absence is lamented (Ps 77:7 [8]). Yet, even in times of the apparent absence of God's mercy there is hope predicated upon God's amazing character. Thus, Ps 102 speaks of a future when God will arise and have compassion (רחם), because it is "time to be gracious [חנן]" and "the appointed time has come" (Ps 102:13 [14]).[380] Although explanation is not given as to the nature of the "appointed time," God is clearly not compelled to bestow compassion, but does so according to his designs while also being affected by the actual state of affairs. Accordingly, God's compassion, as his lovingkindness, never fails, his faithfulness is great (Lam 3:22). He does not desire to execute judgment, indeed, he unwillingly causes grief (Lam 3:32–33) but he will nevertheless "have compassion according to his abundant lovingkindness" (Lam 3:32).

Perhaps the abundance of divine compassion is most clearly represented in Nehemiah's reflection upon Israel's history, specifically the pattern of apostasy > loss of blessing > return > restoration of blessing > apostasy, and yet, divine compassion. While God is a God of forgiveness, grace, compassion, patience, and lovingkindness, the people stubbornly refused to listen to or remember God's deeds, nevertheless God, in his "great compassion," did not "forsake" them but continued to guide them (Neh 9:17, 19). However, due to their continued rebellion they were given to their oppressors. Yet, when they "cried" to God he "heard from heaven" and compassionately delivered them (Neh 9:27). Nevertheless, "as soon as they had rest, they did evil again" and thus God "abandoned them to the hand of their enemies" (Neh 9:28). But the people "cried again" and God again "heard from heaven" and "many times . . . rescued them according to [his] compassion" (Neh 9:28) and in God's great compassion did not destroy or forsake them, for he is "a gracious and compassionate God" (Neh 9:31), the "great," "mighty," and "awesome," "who keeps covenant and lovingkindness" (Neh 9:32; cf. Neh 1:5). Again,

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[380] "The psalmist ventures to remind God of the ruined state of Jerusalem, in order to arouse compassion. He appeals to Yahweh's faithfulness, to the covenant relationship that still binds Yahweh to Israel and Zion." L. C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 21.

appeal is made on the basis of God's gracious and compassionate character, with the recognition that "You are just in all that has come upon us; For You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly" (Neh 9:33; cf. 13:22).[381] In all this, though the primary reason for grace and compassion is found in God's character and willingness to bestow grace and compassion, the reception of this grace and compassion is dependent upon the human reception, specifically hearing, obeying, turning, and thus manifesting their love for God.

Divine Passion

Divine concern is also manifested in indignation due to God's people continually provoking him to vexation and the execution of judgment. Psalm 78 presents a compelling summary of this continual provocation in the history of Israel. Despite God's care for them, his people forgot his deeds and rebelled against his commandments (Ps 78:10–11). He brought them out of Egyptian bondage miraculously but they continued to rebel, even testing God with their complaints and infuriating him even unto fiery wrath (Ps 78:15–21, 31). However, despite judgment they kept on sinning (Ps 78:32). When times became severe they "remembered," "returned," and sought God "diligently" (Ps 78:34–35). However, before long, they returned to covenant breaking and deceit (Ps 78:36–37). Yet God, "being compassionate, forgave" and "did not destroy them. . . . Often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath" (Ps 78:38). Notably, God has control over his anger, which is counteracted by his compassion. Despite such divine mercy, the people repeatedly rebelled, "grieved" (עָצַב), "tempted, "and "pained" God (Ps

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[381] "God would have been 'just' in putting an end to these rebellious people. Yet he kept on loving, guiding, and delivering them (Exod 32:10; 33:5)." Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (NAC 10; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 241. H. G. M. Williamson suggests that this depicts a "God who, powerful as creator, had bound himself to them [the people] in a covenant promise that he had moved in deliverance to uphold and realize. . . . While they therefore offered no excuse on their own behalf, they appealed to the contradiction between their present circumstances and what they perceived as God's immutable purposes toward them. The future might still be open, but in its own way the conclusion of the prayer breathes an atmosphere of strong faith and hope in spite of all the present, contradictory circumstances." *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Dallas: Word, 1985), 319.

78:40–41).[382] Even after God established them in the Promised Land "they provoked [כעס] him" and "aroused His jealousy [קנא]" with idolatry (Ps 78:58) such that God was angry and "greatly abhorred Israel" (Ps 78:59). This prompted God to remove his presence from Israel (Ps 78:60) and, finally, select Judah as the place of his presence (Ps 78:67–68).[383] However, despite all of this, God goes on to shepherd Judah "according to the integrity of his heart" (Ps 78:72).

The themes present in Ps 78 appear throughout the Writings, and indeed throughout the entire OT. The emotional response of divine anger is complemented by a broad range of emotions, including divine grief, pain, vexation, displeasure, jealousy, and even hatred, abhorrence, and loathing. Elsewhere, in response to infidelity, God often becomes angry in his wrath (2 Chr 19:2). At times, God is so deeply aggravated that he even hides his face (Ps 30:7), a strong sign of disapproval and removal of divine presence and beneficence (cf. Ps 77:8–9). Notice the intense divine feeling in his statement: "For forty years I loathed [קום] *that* generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways" (Ps 95:10). That generation "tested" and "tried" God (Ps 95:9) and he resolved (literally "swore" in his "anger") that they would not enter into his rest (Ps 95:11). This is profound, raw emotion. Over and over again, Israel provoked (כעס) God with their idolatrous infidelity (Pss 78:58; 106:29; 2 Chr 28:25; 33:6; 34:24–25; cf. 85:4). Israel's infidelity thus prompts him to passionate, righteous jealousy (קנא) (Pss 78:58; 79:5; cf. Cant 8:6).[384] Even so, God's anger may be turned away by entreaty

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[382] עצב and תוה are both in the *hiphil*, an explicit statement of humans causing God grief and pain.

[383] This specifically depicts the removal of the ark from Shiloh. Notably, Ps 78:65 uses two analogies that describe God as rousing from sleep like a drunken warrior as he acts to place the ark in Jerusalem. The analogous, metaphorical, nature of this imagery is clearly depicted by the preposition כ in both cases; cf. Isa 40:28; Ps 121:4.

[384] The divine passion (קנא), whether in verbal or nominal, is infrequently represented in the Writings (Pss 78:58; 79:5). Interestingly, the emotion of jealousy is associated with love and the "flame of Yahweh" in Cant 8:6 (cf. Deut 32:21–22). Although some commentators have seen the use of "Yah" as a superlative, primarily because the divine name is avoided elsewhere (so Longman III, *Song of Songs*, 213), it is more likely that it is indeed intended as a reference to the divine name. See the extended discussion in Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 621–32. Sauer interprets קנא here as "passionate love." Sauer, *TLOT* 3:1146. Weems

and/or supplication (2 Chr 12:12; 30:8).[385] Even in his anger, God remains receptive to the sincere cries of his people who humble themselves (2 Chr 2:6). Moreover, God does not desire to act in wrath, but even in times of judgment God "does not afflict willingly" (Lam 3:33).[386] Ultimately, the anger (אַף) of God is only a moment in contrast to his favor (רָצוֹן), which lasts a lifetime (Ps 30:5).[387]

Conclusion

In all this, God is presented as being profoundly interested in, and moved by human affairs. On the one hand evil provokes him to anger, but on the other, his passion and compassion may be elicited by repentance and entreaty, leading to the removal of wrath, forgiveness, and deliverance. As such, throughout the canon, God is presented as emotional, affected by human actions, experiencing feelings of sorrow, grief, and passionate love, moved to anger by evil and yet compassionately responding, even relenting, according to human entreaty. God is thus presented as sympathetic, deeply affected by the sorrows of his people, willing to hear, answer,

comments, "Human passion is compared to 'a mighty/raging flame' or 'a flame of fire from Yahweh/God.' Human love can be as intense as divine love, but divine jealousy can be as intense as human jealousy." Renita J. Weems, "The Song of Songs," in *Proverbs–Sirach* (vol. 5 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1997), 430. Davidson compellingly argues that the reference here presents the very best of romantic, human love as ultimately flowing from that reciprocal divine love God manifests toward his people, "a spark off the Holy Flame." Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 630. See also Larry L. Lyke, *I Will Espouse You Forever: The Song of Songs and the Theology of Love in the Hebrew Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2007).

[385] Prior to this, notice the reciprocality involved in that God declares to Judah, "You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak" (2 Chr 12:5); cf. 1 Chr 28:9; 2 Chr 15:2; 24:20. Here, "it was by humbling himself before the LORD that Rehoboam escaped (12:7), but he also adds the note that there was 'some good' in Judah. The good is left undefined—it may have been the very acts of contrition themselves, the many faithful in the kingdom, the residual benefit of God's promises to David, or simply the favor shown to his people Israel." Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (WBC 15; Dallas: Word, 1987), 100–101.

[386] Notably, this suggests that God's will is not omnicausal, the sole determiner of history, while at the same time recognizing God's direct and powerful agency in history.

[387] Thus, "weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning" (Ps 30:5). Both "favor" and "anger" are here clearly emotional. Craigie states, "*Anger* is the divine response to human sin; *favor* is the divine response to goodness, but also to repentance." Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 254.

and comfort. His compassion is passionate, profoundly deep and intense, the magnitude of which is astounding. Although divine compassion is not constantly applied, its lasting nature stands in stark contrast to the fleetingness of divine anger. Nevertheless, even divine compassion has a limit; it is not inexhaustible. Divine compassion is thus, to some extent, contingent upon the actual situation and disposition of the people. In this way the efficacy and manifestation of divine compassion fluctuates, not because God is capricious, but in direct relationship to the vacillation of his wayward people. Divine compassion is assiduous but not immutable, highly emotive but not beyond divine control. At the same time, there is a real give and take that is presented as affecting God himself, and it is within this divine passibility that the contingency of covenant election is situated. God has real emotions that respond to human action(s). He thus remains compassionate, willing to turn in favor toward those who sincerely turn to him. In all this, even in divine wrath, it is unmistakable that God is personally invested and interested in his creatures.

Kinship Metaphors

The relational responsiveness that provides the context for divine-human relationships including election, covenant, and blessing, as well as aspects of conditionality and unconditionality, is conveyed quite powerfully in kinship metaphors. These stand at the junction of the emotional aspect of divine love and the foreconditional and reciprocal aspects of God's love, depicting the strong affection as well as the reciprocity expected of the divine-human relationship that God seeks with his creatures.

Kinship Metaphors in the Torah

The parent-child analogy appears in numerous instances that build upon the covenant but describe a relationship that surpasses mere legal responsibility in the imagery of familial, kinship love.[388] For instance, God considers Israel "My people" (Exod 3:7), even "My son, My firstborn"

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[388] It has been suggested that the covenant itself is a father-son relationship, at least in

(Exod 4:22). He is deeply concerned about them and goes to great lengths to deliver them from

bondage (Exod 4:23).[389] In reflection upon God's action in Israel's past history, they are

reminded that God "carried" them "just as a man carries his son" (Deut 1:31). Further, God

disciplines Israel even as a "man disciplines his son" (Deut 8:5), a loving discipline that is

ultimately for their "good" (Deut 8:16; cf. Deut 4:36–37; Prov 3:11–12; 13:24).[390] Certain

behavior is expected of God's children because they "are the sons of the LORD" (Deut 14:1), "a

holy people" whom the LORD has "chosen" as his "own possession" (סְגֻלָּה) (Deut 14:2). Israel's

election, or adoption, itself expects the responsibility of those adopted.

This parental analogy reaches its pinnacle in the Torah within the extended poetic

imagery of Deut 32. Israel has "acted corruptly toward" God and the people are "not His children,

because of their defect" (Deut 32:5). God is their "Father who has bought" them, made, and

established them (Deut 32:6). He is said to have "found" Israel "in a desert land," a "howling

waste of wilderness" and "encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His

eye" (Deut 32:10).[391] This divine concern is then depicted as "like an eagle that stirs up its nest,

That hovers over its young, He spreads His wings and caught them, and carried them" (Deut

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Deuteronomy. See, for instance, the seminal article of McCarthy, "Notes"; cf. 2 Kgs 16:7. While the two are certainly complementary and overlapping, however, the particular nuances of each descriptor of the divine-human relationship ought to be retained as well. Kinship language underlies language of covenant throughout the ANE, so covenant language is based on kinship, not vice versa. See the discussion in the אהב word study above.

[389] Although LXX has "my people" instead of "my son," the MT is almost surely correct. Israel's status as "firstborn" implies that God has others, pointing toward universal fatherhood. Stuart points to God's "concern for the son's suffering," an "empathetic attention." Stuart, *Exodus*, 151. According to Driver, Israel is here "brought into the closest and dearest relation to God." S. R. Driver, *Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1911), 31. Note that Israel is called God's firstborn even prior to the institution of the Mosaic covenant (Exod 4:22). Further, this comparison is heightened by the tenth plague against Egypt's firstborn, which God characterizes in response to their bondage of his "firstborn" (Exod 4:23).

[390] "The comparison to a father's discipline indicates that the discipline, whether punitive or not, is administered with love." Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 93. Likewise, Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 186.

[391] The idiom "little man in his eye" denotes the reflection of the object of sight in one's pupil. "Since protecting the eye is a reflexive action, the pupil is an effective simile for the object of protective care." Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 304.

32:11; cf. Exod 19:4).[392] However, they forgot the God "who begot" them, who gave them "birth" (Deut 32:18) and went after false gods and he "spurned them because of the provocation of His sons and daughters" (Deut 32:19). He hides his face from them because they are "sons in whom there is no faithfulness" (Deut 32:20). In their rebellion they made him jealous and "provoked" him to "anger" (Deut 32:21; cf. 32:16), resulting in the execution of divine judgment. But, in the future, God "will have compassion on His servants" (Deut 32:36), indeed, he "loves" them (Deut 33:3).

In some passages the language of divine fatherhood and election implies adoption (Deut 14:1–2; 32:6, 10; cf. Exod 4:22). However, the parent-child metaphor freely alternates between language of adoption and language of begetting/birth. Throughout such usage, the parent-child metaphor corresponds to the covenant relationship, but signifies that the divine-human relationship goes beyond the legal, perhaps utilitarian, relationship between the typical suzerain and vassal.[393] Rather, divine fatherhood operates within profound personal relationship that is presented as affectionate, loving, devotedly interested, and intimately concerned, feeling sorrow, passion, and intense anger at Israel's evil, but also compassion and the desire to bring them back. Thus, this parental love acts not only in tender caretaking, but when necessary, in discipline, itself corresponding to that real love that goes beyond surface sentimentality to the desire of ultimate well-being for its object.

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[392] This is quite a striking analogy: "Apparently the eagle taught its young to fly by throwing one out of the nest, and then swooping down and allowing the young bird to alight on its mother's wings. The poetry illustrates vividly God's dealings with his people, casting them from security to the fierce wilderness, but remaining beneath them to give them strength for the fearful experience, and gradually teaching them to 'fly' on their own." Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 381.

[393] As Brueggemann puts it, "Yahweh's resolve is not just that of a political sovereign (though it is that), but is also the passion of a parent who will see about the honor and well-being of the beloved heir and firstborn." Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:720.

Kinship Metaphors in the Prophets[394]

In the prophets, the divine-human relationship is often depicted by the use of the parental and marriage metaphors.[395] Both metaphors overlap with the covenant(s) and with one another and, in doing so, manifest the emotive background of the divine-human relationship, which includes God's profound and lasting affection for his people as well as his desire for reciprocal love.[396] The central themes that utilize both kinship metaphors are God's enduring and faithful affection and their continual infidelity. Both are used (sometimes overlapping) to depict God's tender affection on the one hand and Israel's unfaithfulness on the other. For instance, divine fatherhood can extend to the individual, the covenant people, and all humans universally. Thus,

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[394] Although a broad pattern emerges, in some instances the imagery has a complex relationship to Israel's history such that the precise human referents of the metaphor are not always entirely clear. This brief survey will highlight the broad themes that often frame instances of love in the divine-human relationship, giving little attention to the details and intricacies regarding historical referents, in order to better serve the purposes of this study.

[395] This brief survey is not intended to be exhaustive but serves the purpose of orienting one to the overarching metaphors that often overlap with love and describe the context of the divine-human relationship. For further information regarding these metaphors in the Bible, see Adler, "The Background"; David Tasker, "The Fatherhood of God: An Exegetical Study from the Hebrew Scriptures" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2001); Patterson, "Parental Love." Interestingly, whereas the parental imagery is common in language depicting the relationship between ANE gods and humans (especially with regard to kingship), the language of marriage for the deity-human relationship is unique to the Bible. No ANE deity is "called the 'husband' of its nation." Likewise, "nowhere else in the Ancient Near East is a pact or covenant found between a god and his/her worshipping community" that entails exclusive fidelity. Adler, "The Background," 1–2, 5.

[396] Cf. Adler, "The Background," 72. There is a clear association between such metaphors and the covenant, by nature of the history of the parties. However, while covenant and the metaphors are closely related, they should not be conflated. The metaphors convey information about the divine-human relationship that should not be reduced by assuming it is only referencing the legal aspects of the relationship. For further information on the conflation of covenant with other metaphors, especially the father-son relationship, see the discussion earlier in the word study of אהב. With this in mind, the intense emotionality of these metaphors should be recognized rather than explained away. Such emotionality within these metaphors is widely recognized; cf. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 56; Fretheim, *Exodus*, 77; Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 176; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, 64; Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:608–9; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 303. "'A wife of youth' suggests all the passionate devotion of a young married couple with the bright hopes of their early married life." Motyer, *Isaiah*, 447. Similarly, see Adler, "The Background," 70; cf. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 251–52. As Garrett points out, "The marriage between Yahweh and Israel is the covenant, but this particular analogy for covenant implies more than either of the other two standard analogies, a contract and a treaty" since "a marriage . . . is an act of love." *Hosea, Joel*, 93; cf. D. Smith, "Kinship and Covenant," 45. As such, covenant and the emotionality of kinship are complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

God utilizes the father-son imagery in describing the promise of his enduring faithfulness to Solomon, saying, "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me," which will include establishing his throne forever, disciplining him when necessary, but never removing his חסד (2 Sam 7:13–15).[397] In another sense, divine fatherhood is universal. He is the creator of all (Mal 2:10). As father, God is presented as the one who discovered Israel as a foundling in the wilderness, took her even in her amniotic fluid, washed her, and adopted her (Ezek 16:3–6).[398] Similarly, God proclaims, "When Israel *was* a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son" (Hos 11:1).[399] He taught Ephraim to walk, gathered him in his arms, healed him and will continue to guide them (Hos 11:3–4).[400] God spoke of his people as "sons who will not deal

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[397] This language has significant parallels in ANE literature. Weinfeld has connected this with language of adoption coupled with the granting of kingship. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," 90–93; cf. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 670. However, Cross helpfully emphasizes, "It should be stressed that adoptive sonship places obligations of kinship on the father, as is generally recognized, and also on the son, which is often forgotten. Kinship obligations are necessarily mutual. In the language of kinship-in-law, the so-called Davidic Covenant, the same is true. . . . There are no 'unilateral' covenants in a kinship-based society." Cross, *From Epic*, 14.

[398] When God found her, she was still in her amniotic fluid, with uncut navel cord, unwashed, and unwrapped, abandoned and abhorred. The adoption is evident in the phrase, "Live!" (Ezek 16:6). The child had been abandoned, since the biological parents had relinquished all rights and left her for dead. See Meir Malul, "Adoption of Foundlings in the Bible and Mesopotamian Documents: A Study of Some Legal Metaphors in Ezekiel 16:1–7," *JSOT* 46 (1990): 97–126.

[399] This is apparently language of adoption and may recall Deut 4, 7, and 10 where love precedes divine election. Here God loves Israel, then calls them his child; cf. Exod 4:22. Notice the JPS translation, "I fell in love with Israel when he was still a child; and I have called *him* My son Ever since Egypt" (Hos 11:1). This love itself is far more than the election that springs from it, but, when compared intertextually throughout Hosea, points to a profound affection within a give-and-take relationship (cf. Hos 3:1; 9:15; 11:8–9; 14:4 [5]). Yee points out this give and take in that "in the other retrospects, God's election is juxtaposed with Israel's desertion to the gods of Canaan (9:10; 10:1–2). The more God 'called' Israel, the more he abandoned God to worship the baals (11:2). The son thus disowns himself from his parent, just as the wife/Israel rejects her husband (2:2a)." Gale A. Yee, "The Book of Hosea," in *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 7 of NIB, Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 277.

[400] These verses shift without warning to the metaphor of Israel as a beast of burden, in continuity with Hos 4:16; 10:11. Andersen and Freedman, however, believe that "taught to walk" and "took them in My arms" are incorrect interpretations since "a na'ar is not an infant that must be taught to walk." *Hosea*, 579. Adopting the more traditional view, Stuart points to the "image of the tender, patient parent training a child to walk, he proclaims his own innocence. There is both irony and pathos in these words. He had held little Ephraim's hands as Ephraim took his first hesitant steps, and cared for him when he was sick. . . . Yet Ephraim did not even acknowledge this compassionate attention." Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 178; cf. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 223. The Hebrew of v. 4 presents significant interpretive problems (which many attribute to textual corruption) as is readily apparent by comparing modern translations. Andersen and Freedman

falsely" (Isa 63:8) and he thus, among other things, redeemed them in love and mercy (Isa 63:9; cf. 63:16; 64:8). The depth of God's affection is apparent in that his compassion surpasses that of a mother for her infant (Isa 49:15). When Israel grew up, God entered into a marriage covenant with her so that she became his (Ezek 16:8).[401] He cared for her, lavishing her with gifts of fine clothing, adornments, and fine food (Ezek 16:9–13). God later looks back on this time with both fondness, recalling Israel's former, youthful devotion (חסד) and the love (אַהֲבַת) of her betrothals, and yet sorrow at what she has become (Jer 2:2).[402]

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suggest the translation, "I was a guide for Ephraim. I took from his arms the bonds of men. They did not acknowledge that I had healed them, That I had drawn them with cords of love on their jaws, That I treated them like those who remove the yoke. I heeded (his plea) and made (him) prevail" (Hos 11:3–4). Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 574. Yee suggests that "the MT seems to conflate two images for Israel here: Israel as son and Israel as heifer." Yee, "The Book of Hosea," in *The Twelve Prophets*, 7:277. So also Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 179; Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 224. The reference to lifting the yoke from their jaws in 11:4 would seem to relate to the similar image in 10:11 where Ephraim is referred to as a "trained heifer" who is harnessed by God. If this is correct, Yee suggests the rendering "cords of human kindness" and "bands of love" as references to "the reins that control the animal." She points to a similar conflation in Jer 31:28–20. Yee, "The Book of Hosea," in *The Twelve Prophets*, 7:277. It is difficult to point to a specific translation and interpretation with certainty, but the significance seems to be captured well by Huey, who reads this as a comparison of "the Lord's patience with Israel to a workman gently and compassionately correcting and leading an animal to food (11:4)." Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 270. Yet, the people's refusal was a continual and purposive rebellion as God describes it: They were "bent on turning from Me" (Hos 11:7). Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 574. Notice the potential parallel to Jer 31:3 by the collocation of אהבה + משׁך. Ibid., 581.

[401] Literally, he spread his skirt (wings) over her, a custom signifying betrothal. See P. A. Kruger, "The Hem of the Garment in Marriage: The Meaning of the Symbolic Gesture in Ruth 3:9 and Ezek 16:8," *JNSL* 12 (1984): 86; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 277. This shift from adopted daughter to wife is perhaps shocking to contemporary readers, but this is yet another example of the unexpected shifts from one metaphor to another. Here and elsewhere, the metaphors are intermixed in order to convey the content regarding the relationship most powerfully. For similar overlaps see Jer 3 and Hos 1–2. Further, God "swore" (שׁבע—the language of covenant promise) to her and "entered into a covenant" so that she became his. This has parallels in the Elephantine marriage vow, "She is my wife and I am her husband." See R. Yaron, *Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 46. Cf. Mal 2:14; Prov 2:17. The Elephantine marriage vow is, of course, strongly reminiscent of the divine language of covenant-making, "I will take you for My people, and I will be your God" (Exod 6:7; cf. Lev 26:12; Jer 7:23; 11:4 24:7; 30:22; 32:38; Ezek 11:20; 37:23; Zech 8:8; 13:9).

[402] The use of אַהֲבָה may be doing double-duty as a reference to the covenant relationship but also pointing to the language of affection and tender emotion drawn from interpersonal relationships. Neither connotation excludes the other. Some have spoken of this as a "nomadic" or "desert ideal," a reference to the initial period of marital devotion of Israel toward God. Fox thinks this is mistaken with regard to Jer 2:2, which he sees as specifying God's unmerited love and devotion. Michael V. Fox, "Jeremiah 2:2 and the 'Desert Ideal,'" *CBQ* 35 (1973): 441–50; cf. Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986). Some see this as a direct contradiction of the history. Ibid., 120. Similarly, Lundbom views this as "pure romanticism." Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 253. However, many

Yet, God is repeatedly presented as a disrespected and unloved father or a scorned, cuckolded husband, the victim of unrequited love. The people's disloyalty is expressed by their depiction, on the one hand, as rebellious, faithless children (Isa 1:2, 4; 30:9; Hos 11:2) who dishonor their father (Mal 1:6) and only seem to call to him as "my father" when they are in need (Jer 3:4; cf. Isa 63:16) and, on the other hand, as an extremely promiscuous and adulterous wife, continually going after her "many lovers" (Jer 3:1; cf. Isa 57:6–8; Jer 2:24–25; Ezek 16:15, 25–26), abandoning God (Jer 3:20), and forgetting him "days without number" (Jer 2:32), who even pays her "clients" rather than receiving payment from them (Ezek 16:33–34).[403] Their rebellion brings divine discipline (Isa 63:10; Ezek 16:42–43) and the rupture of the special relationship between God and his people. They have no rightful claim to the continuance of the special relationship as "wife" (Jer 3:1)[404] or as God's children (Hos 1:6, 9; 2:4; cf. Jer 4:22).[405] Thus, God

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scholars view the language as not merely wishful, but also factual. Israel was briefly devoted, though inconsistent. Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, 24, 52; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 162–63; Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 62; Michael DeRoche, "Jeremiah 2:2–3 and Israel's Love for God during the Wilderness Wanderings," 45 (1983): 364–76. Importantly, Ezek 16:8–14 likewise depicts the wilderness era as a time of "close fellowship with God" despite also noting the extent of Israel's later corruption (Ezek 20:5–26). Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 163.

[403] The imagery of adultery is quite frequent throughout nearly all of Hosea as well (cf. Hos 4:12, 15, 18; 5:3–4, 7; 6:10; 8:9; 9:1, 10). She is even said to have "played the harlot" with "every passer-by who might be willing" (Ezek 16:15; cf. 16:25–26) as well as having committed child sacrifice and other atrocities (Ezek 16:20–22). Their depravity is even compared to a donkey in heat, a powerful metaphor of their adulterous ways (Jer 2:24–25).

[404] Jeremiah 3:1 raises the prospect that no reconciliation may be possible by reference to the law in Deut 24:1–4 that prohibits a man from remarrying a woman who has since been re-married to another and divorced. Miller thinks God's affection is so great that he "is willing to violate God's own law . . . if the people will return." "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:603. However, as Thompson points out, Israel had not married one lover but "was a prostitute to several lovers." *The Book of Jeremiah*, 191. Yaron, further, stresses that "too exacting a standard must not be applied to a text which is not legal." R. Yaron, "Restoration of Marriage," *JJS* 17 (1966): 3. Likewise, Craigie wisely cautions not to press the marital law imagery, since the prophet "freely adapts it to his immediate purpose." Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, 51.

[405] Hosea is thus commanded to name his children Lo-Ruhamah (no compassion) and Lo-Ammi (not my people) to symbolize God's fractured relationship with such children of harlotry (Hos 1:6, 9; cf. 2:4) though later God hopefully reverses these names to Ruhamah and Ammi (Hos 2:1 [3]). Here, the imagery of unfaithful children and adulterous wife come together in the complex analogy of Hosea, where an adulterous wife and her two children appear to represent Israel and Judah, perhaps with Israel depicted as the mother and one of the children. Andersen and Freedman suggest the land as mother, Jezreel as all Israel, Lo-Ruhamah as Ephraim and Lo-Ammi as Judah. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 288–89.

sent them away and gave Israel a "writ of divorce" (Jer 3:8; cf. Isa 50:1; Hos 2:2).[406] God's

passion regarding his "wife" is nevertheless evident. She is his "beloved" who by vile deeds has

forfeited her place in his house (Jer 11:15). Therefore he has "forsaken" his house and

"abandoned" his inheritance, given the "beloved of [his] soul" into the hand of her enemies and

has even "come to hate her" (Jer 12:8–9).[407]

Nevertheless, despite their unfaithfulness and apostasy, God in his graciousness and love

maintains a seemingly heartfelt call for their repentance and return (Jer 3:12–14, 22), upon which

the restoration depends (Jer 4:1; cf. 31:21–22; Hos 2:2 [4]; 10:12; 14:1–3 [2–4]).[408] Thus, God

will allure his adulterous wife, bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her (Hos 2:14; cf.

However, the exact referents are not entirely certain.

[406] This is specifically in reference to the northern kingdom, Israel, and was to hopefully deter Judah from her adultery, but it did not do so (Jer 3:8). Notably, adultery should have incurred the death penalty (cf. Deut 22:22) but God compassionately issued only a writ of divorce, which corresponds to something less than adultery (cf. Deut 24:1). There has been some disagreement over whether God ever actually divorced Israel, especially considering the cryptic phrase in Isa 50:1 where God, defending himself against the charge that he abandoned his people, asks, "Where is the certificate of divorce by which I have sent your mother away? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away" (Isa 50:1). Some have taken this to mean that God never gave them such a writ of divorce and that the people's inability to produce one will drive that point home. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 191. This is in accord with the view that God and his "wife" were merely separated but not divorced in Hos 1–2. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 220–24. On the other hand, some see this as God calling for the writ of divorce to point out the charges that were brought against them, that God did not abandon them but the other way around. Both options could fit the meaning of Isa 50:1 in isolation but, of the two, only the latter accords with Jer 3:8. Cf. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 196.

[407] The language "beloved of my soul" is intensely emotive suggesting that the hatred, as parallel antonym, is as well. Miller points out, "the pathos of the whole section is caught up in that one sentence, with its identification of the one whom the Lord has given over to her enemies as 'the beloved of my heart.'" "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:679. Lundbom likewise notes the import of the expression, manifesting God's "deep love for his people." *Jeremiah 1–20*, 654.

[408] "By her faithlessness Israel [had] forfeited a father-child relationship and an inheritance." Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 77–78. Yet, "God had a special desire to give them the best, *a delightful land, the most beautiful patrimony in all the world.* But if that were to be the case, Israel would need to call Yahweh *My Father* in utter sincerity and not turn back." Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 207. "The woman's repentance and return to her husband then become the first and vital act in the process of rehabilitation. Hosea, however, contends that the initiative always remains with the husband (Yahweh), though it is only effective when there is a response (v 17b)." Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 264. Lundbom notes that in 4:2 the language is from the Abrahamic covenant, pointing out that "the Abrahamic covenant is being subjected to conditions," specifically that Israel's "role in mediating grace to the nations . . . is made conditional." Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 327.

Hos 3:1).[409] If they will but return, God will adopt (or re-adopt) them, promising to set them

among his sons, give them a pleasant land and the most beautiful inheritance; they will call him

father (Jer 3:19) and he will heal their faithlessness (Jer 3:22).[410] Likewise, in response to their

repentance and recognition that in God "the orphan finds mercy," God declares, "I will heal their

apostasy, I will love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them" (Hos 14:3–4 [4–

5]).[411] Once again, out of his surpassing affection and "everlasting love" (Jer 31:3) for Israel,

even his firstborn Ephraim (Jer 31:9), God exclaims, "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful

child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly *still* remember him; Therefore

My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him" (Jer 31:20). Therefore, though they

broke (פָּרַר) their covenant with him, their husband, he will make a new covenant with them which

shall endure (Jer 31:31–36; cf. Ezek 16:60–62) and "betroth" his people to himself "forever," in

"righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, compassion, and faithfulness (Hos 2:19–20 [21–22]).[412]

In that future, her shame will be forgotten, "For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the

LORD of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the

earth" (Isa 54:4–5). God has called her "like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife

of one's youth when she is rejected" (Isa 54:6), for he "forsook" her for a "brief moment" but will

gather her with "great compassion" (Isa 54:7); he hid his face in a momentary "outburst of anger"

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[409] The continuance of his love for her, despite her infidelity, is modeled in the command to
Hosea, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves
the sons of Israel" (Hos 3:1). As Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr. put it, "Beyond all the requirements of
the covenant regulations, God continued to love those who had long since ceased to love him and earnestly
desired their return to him." *Jeremiah 1–25*, 57.

[410] Notice the adoption language of fatherhood and inheritance. Further, "the reflective nature of
these verses illuminates the warmth and love that lie permanently in the heart of God. He is disappointed at
failure but still loves and still desires repentance (3:22). It is important to retain memory of this deep
compassion when we read the prophet's declarations of judgment (4:5ff.); in judgment, the compassion is
still present, hoping beyond the judgment for a restoration of the relationship of love." Ibid., 64.

[411] There can be little doubt that the people recognize themselves as the "orphan."

[412] He will be called "Ishi" (my husband) and no longer "Baali" (my master) (Hos 2:16 [18]) and
will make a covenant with them (Hos 2:18 [20]) and have compassion on she who was Lo-Ruhamah (no

but will have compassion with "everlasting lovingkindness" (Isa 54:8). Thus, she will no longer

be called "forsaken" nor her land "desolate" but she will be called "My delight is in her" and her

land "married" for God delights in her and will marry (or re-marry) her land (Isa 62:4). Likewise,

God will claim them as his own cherished "possession" (סְגֻלָּה) and "spare" (חמל) or have

compassion on them even as a man has compassion on the "son who serves him" (Mal 3:17).[413]

Kinship Metaphors in the Writings

The intimacy of the divine-human relationship is once again described in the Writings in

terms of kinship. In this section of the canon, however, the overwhelming prevalence is the

parental metaphor, whereas the marriage metaphor is rare and somewhat cryptic. With regard to

the latter, there are two primary instances where the marriage metaphor may be discerned. One is

within a wedding song describing the marriage of a king and a princess, which typologically

points to the divine-human relationship (Ps 45:9–14).[414] Similarly, Song of Songs may

typologically point to the love between God and his people, specifically by reference to the flame

of Yahweh (Cant 8:6).[415] If such instances are indeed types of the divine-human relationship, they

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compassion) and declare Lo-Ammi (not my people) to be Ammi (my people) (Hos 2:23 [25]).

[413] Notice the evaluative term סְגֻלָּה and see the discussion of the term in the Torah section earlier. Also, notice the term חָמַל, which often has the affective connotation of compassion.

[414] The immediate referent is a historical king and his bride. However, the NT identifies this as a Messianic psalm (compare Ps 45:6–7 with Heb 1:8–9). As such, the typology seems to point toward the metaphors of Christ and his bride that are prevalent in the NT. For a discussion of the primary and secondary meanings in this Psalm see Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 5:333–34, Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 340.

[415] The entire book traditionally has been interpreted as an allegory of the love between God and his people. However, strictly speaking, the book is not allegorical, but surely refers to immediate historical persons. Moreover, an allegorical view tends to reduce the meaning of the book to the realm of the spiritual, overlooking its importance as an ode to God's gift of human sexuality. The typological, rather than allegorical, link to the divine-human relationship is evidenced by the reference to the "flame of Yah," which the lover uses to describe the passionate love of her relationship. As Longman states, "The love between a man and a woman is used to describe the love between God and his people. One thinks of the tenacious love of God for a recalcitrant Israel in Hosea 8:8–9." Longman III, *Song of Songs*, 213. For an extended treatment of these issues, see Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 607–632; cf. Lyke, *I Will*.

manifest a profound, passionate love of God for his people, in continuity with that which has already been seen in the earlier sections of the OT.

The parental metaphor is more explicit in the Writings, used in numerous instances with regard to the Davidic dynasty, specifically David and Solomon. God proclaims to David regarding Solomon, "I will be his father and he shall by My son" along with the promise of unceasing lovingkindness (1 Chr 17:13; cf. 22:10; 28:6).[416] The Psalms similarly recall this time regarding David, "He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father, My God . . . I also shall make him My firstborn" (Ps 89:26–27 [27–28]). Moreover, God's decree is recounted, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You" (Ps 2:7).[417] The metaphor also extends beyond individuals to the community of God's people, evidencing his interest and concern for their well-being. God is "a father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows" (Ps 68:5 [6]; cf. 10:14). Fatherly divine love extends to compassion as well as discipline. Thus, "just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him" (Ps 103:13).[418] Yet, "whom the LORD loves [אהב] He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights [רצה]" (Prov 3:12; cf. Ps 89:30–32 [31–33]).[419] Thus, even divine discipline is grounded in the intimate and compassionate, fatherly love of God. It is his deep affection that prompts God to care enough about his people to discipline them.[420] In all, kinship descriptors of the divine-human relationship

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[416] This language has significant parallels in ANE literature. Weinfeld has connected this with language of adoption coupled with the granting of kingship. "The Covenant," 190–93; cf. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 670.

[417] The NT identifies this as Messianic (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).

[418] L. C. Allen suggests the reading, "As tender as a father's affection for his children, has been Yahweh's affection for those who revere him." *Psalms 101–150*, 25. Notably, the children in the analogy appear to be "those who fear him," thus contingency is built into the kinship relationship in this instance.

[419] Notice the connection between love and delight, presenting the strongly emotional fondness and affection God has for his people.

[420] Correction, only necessary in a non-ideal world, implies cognizance and concern for the actual situation of the son. This is in accord with the proverb, "Discipline" is withheld by the father who "hates" his son, but the one who "loves" his son "disciplines him diligently" (Prov 13:24; cf. 15:10). God desires

appear in continuity with those in the Prophets, although they are less frequent. They manifest that profound affinity that God has for his people, and desires from them in return.

Conclusion

Throughout the OT, kinship imagery depicts God's affection for his people, like the enduring and deep compassion of parents for their children and the passion of a husband for his exclusive marital relationship. It is interesting to note that marriage and adoption are both voluntary, rather than merely natural, relationships. This implies that the divine-human relationship is voluntary rather than necessary. At the same time, deep and intense affection is evident both in such metaphors and elsewhere throughout the OT, which suggests relationship that is not only volitional but also profoundly emotional. Similarly, the ongoing maintenance of the relationship is conditional. The divine-human relationship is thus depicted as both more than voluntary (involving pathos and compassion) but also not less than voluntary. God is the devoted parent and faithfully loving husband, yet dishonored and scorned, his overtures rejected in a repetitive cycle of unrequited love. God is thus the wounded lover and the pained, rejected father. Yet, he is nevertheless the sovereign God who continuously acts to call his people back, whether by wooing them or disciplining them toward repentance, and he forecasts a day of final and ultimate restoration and delight that he will bring about for those who respond to him. This provides the striking context of divine love, set within a reciprocal, give-and-take relationship with his people, as shall be seen below.

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his people to experience blessing, but they must respond to him in loyalty. Therefore, he disciplines them. "Although the reproof may be harsh, it is actually a sign of the LORD's love, not of his wrath, for it concerns those *whom the LORD loves.*" Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 249. Garrett further points out that discipline goes beyond punishment: "While the idea of punishment is certainly present (cf. Job 5:17–18 and 2 Sam 7:14), 'discipline' primarily involves teaching or training rather than punishment for wrongdoing. It is analogous to military training, in which, although the threat of punishment is present, even stern discipline is not necessarily retribution for offenses. Hardship and correction are involved, however, which are always hard to accept." *Proverbs*, 81. However, this does not mean that all suffering is a result of discipline or divine action.

The Foreconditional Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that support the conclusion that divine love is foreconditional, not altogether unconditional. By the term "foreconditional" I mean that God's love is offered prior to any conditions but not exclusive of conditions. Accordingly, that God's love is foreconditional affirms that:

1. Divine love is prior to any human initiative or response—it holds sole primacy regarding the divine-human love relationship.

2. God chooses to bestow his love prior to and independent of human merit.

3. God's love expects and ultimately requires, an appropriate human response, even if that response is merely the intention of responding to God in love.

First, divine love is prior to all other love and conditions though it is not thereby altogether unconditional. Second, divine love is unmerited but not altogether unconditional. Third, divine love, as evaluative, is also conditional and may be forfeited. Therefore, it is not strictly unmotivated, spontaneous, disinterested, indifferent, or unconditional. Fourth, divine love is unconditional with respect to God's volition, but conditional with respect to divine evaluation. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Is divine love altogether unconditional, spontaneous, or ungrounded? Is divine love mere beneficence? Is divine love altogether unmerited? Can divine love be forfeited, lost, or discontinued and, if so, how and why? This section of the study begins with a survey of the meaning of the important, complex, and multifaceted term חסד. This is followed by a brief survey of the conditional aspect of divine beneficence in the OT before a canonical survey of the foreconditionality of divine love.

<center>The Meaning of חסד</center>

חסד is one of the most significant descriptors of God's character in the entire

Scriptures.[421] חסד is a purely relational term, describing interpersonal attitudes and/or actions as

well as divine-human attitudes and/or actions, the majority referring to the divine-human

relationship.[422] It is often translated as lovingkindness, steadfast love, loyalty, goodness,

faithfulness, mercy et al. It may connote love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, yet also

faithfulness, loyalty, and strength. Perhaps Gowan puts it best when he writes that חסד "cannot be

adequately translated by anything short of a paragraph."[423] As with אהב, חסד has a wide range of

meaning. It is often a basis of many kinds of beneficent action.[424] The purpose of this brief

semantic overview is not to search for a narrow or monolithic definition of the term, but rather to

view its range of meaning in order to better grasp its relationship to the topic of this study.[425]

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[421] It occurs 251 times in 245 verses. The etymology is uncertain and unhelpful in determining the meaning; cf. Hans-Jürgen Zobel, "חסד," *TDOT* 5:45; H. J. Stoebe, "חסד," *TLOT* 1:449. חסד occurs primarily in the noun form (248 times in 243 verses) with the verbal form appearing only in two verses, which are identical (2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]). The vast majority of instances are singular. The plural appears only 16 times in 15 verses. Over half of all occurrences of חסד appear in the Psalms. Three of the 245 occurrences are of a variant meaning of "shame" or "insult" (Prov 25:10; 14:34; Lev 20:17). Beyond the 245 uses of חסד, the adjectival חסיד appears in 32 verses, mostly in the Psalms (25 verses).

[422] Zobel counts 63 out of 245 as חסד within the divine-human relationship. Zobel, *TDOT* 5:45.

[423] Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 236. Walker cautions against "too sharp a distinction between God's love ('hb) and his faithfulness (hsd) . . . hsd may clearly refer to either 'love' (kindness, mercy, favor) or 'faithfulness.'" "'Love,'" in *Current Issues* (ed. Hawthorne), 279. *Hesed* is further associated with, among other things, truth, faithfulness, compassion, righteousness, justice/judgment, goodness, redemption/deliverance, etc.

[424] There are numerous cries for salvation, rescue, and/or deliverance on the basis, or "because of," God's חסד (Ps 6:4 [5]). חסד may thus be the basis of remembrance (Ps 25:6–7), deliverance (Pss 69:13 [14]; 86:5; 144:2), help (Ps 94:18), salvation (Pss 31:16; 109:26; cf. 119:41), redemption (Ps 44:26), preservation (Ps 61:7), satisfaction (Ps 90:14), comfort (Ps 119:76), revival (Ps 119:88, 159), even the cutting off of enemies (Ps 143:12), and a host of other benefits (Pss 69:16; 119:124, 149; 143:8). God's חסד and truth "continually preserve," he does not "withhold" his "compassion" (Ps 40:11). He saves and "sends forth His lovingkindness and truth" (Ps 57:3). "He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (Ps 98:3). God may even extend חסד through other human beings (see Gen 39:21; Ezra 7:28; 9:9; Dan 1:9). In the plural, חסד is a term for God's beneficent action itself (lovingkindnesses—Pss 66:20; 85:7 [8]; 86:13; 90:14; 94:18; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43; 2 Chr 1:8).

[425] A plethora of studies have been conducted regarding the meaning of חסד, with sometimes

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חסד appears most often with God as agent and is strictly relational, connoting a positive disposition and/or action(s) toward another.[426] Within such relationality, divine חסד is responsive and expects appropriate response. Specifically God's חסד is often in response to a pre-existing relationship and/or various actions of human beings including fidelity and supplication. As such, the divine-human חסד assumes a reciprocal, though unequal, relationship. However, divine חסד is consistently presented as voluntary and free.[427] Perhaps the greatest example of this, among others, appears in the narrative of the golden calf, when divine חסד, among other divine characteristics, is bestowed upon a people who have just forfeited all covenant rights in an egregious manner (cf. Exod 32–34).

Out of that wider Exodus narrative come two seminal statements that go to the very root of the OT understanding of God and חסד. The first appears within the Decalogue. Although God will visit iniquity to the third and fourth generations, divine חסד will be shown to the thousandth generation of those who love God and keep his commandments (Exod 20:6 = Deut 5:10; cf. Exod 34:7; Deut 7:9; Jer 32:18). The second seminal statement is perhaps the *locus classicus* of divine character (Exod 34:6–7). In the golden calf narrative, and indeed recurrently throughout Israel's

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widely different conclusions regarding the meaning of the word. Secondary studies will be engaged as they relate to the issues that come up in surveying the usage of חסד.

[426] Likewise, with human agents, the root חסד sums up all that is virtuous in behavior. In intimate relationships of family and/or friendship that means treating loved ones as such. In political relationships that is being faithful to responsibilities and reciprocating past favors. In religious relationship that is fulfilling all of the covenant desires of God: hearing, doing, obeying, worshipping exclusively, etc., but doing all this out of devotion, that is, from the heart.

[427] For instance, Lot declares that he has "found favor in your sight" and "you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me" (Gen 19:19). Abraham's servant requests that God show "lovingkindness" to Abraham in granting success in the search for Isaac's bride (Gen 24:12; cf. 24:14) and then praises God "who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and truth" implying that God was free to do otherwise (Gen 24:27). Jacob, as a precursor to his request of deliverance from Esau, declares that he is "unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness" (Gen 32:10). Later, divine lovingkindness is said to have been removed from Saul, but God promises that such will not depart from David's son (2 Sam 7:15). Solomon praises God for having dealt in great חסד toward David by fulfilling his promise (2 Chr 1:8–9). In all of these examples, God need not have manifested חסד, but חסד is predicated upon God's voluntary association.

history, God goes far beyond covenant responsibilities, or even moral expectations, by continuing

in חסד toward a stiff-necked, rebellious, unworthy people who had forfeited all covenantal

privileges. In the aftermath of Israel's great apostasy (Exod 32), God describes himself as

"abounding in lovingkindness and truth" as well as "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger

(Exod 34:6), the one "who keeps lovingkindness for thousands" the forgiver of all kinds of sin,

yet also the punisher of the guilty (Exod 34:7). Thus, "as it stands in Exodus, the passage is a

beautifully balanced statement with regard to the two most basic aspects of the character of

God—His love and His justice. It is significant that love holds the primary place."[428] חסד is thus a

foundational characteristic of God, one that is manifested in action but flows from who God is,

demonstrating the steadfastness of God's commitment to his people, which extends beyond what

is deserved in divine mercy and forgiveness.[429]

This seminal statement of divine character and חסד manifests associations that appear

many times elsewhere, including goodness, compassion, graciousness, truth, and forgiveness yet

never injustice (Exod 33:19; 34:6–7). These characteristics also often appear alongside חסד in

contexts where someone requires mercy, which often result in forgiveness. Although forgiveness

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[428] Robert C. Dentan, "The Literary Affinitites of Exodus XXXIV 6f," *VT* 13 (1963): 36.

[429] This seminal passage is recurrently alluded to, often in the context of further entreaty. After one such allusion, entreaty for pardon is predicated "according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness" (Num 14:18–19). Similar allusions occur throughout the OT, often the basis of similar appeals (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Neh 9:17; 31–32; cf. Ps 86:15; cf. Pss 103:8; 145:8). The importance of חסד to the divine character is also seen in its frequent occurrence as the basis of praise. Appropriately, divine חסד is also a basis of effusive praise and thanksgiving (Exod 15:13; Pss 31:7, 21; 92:2; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31; 136:1–26; 138:2; cf. Jer 33:11; Ezra 3:11; 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 20:21). God is to be "blessed" (Ps 66:20), his חסד is to be praised and proclaimed (Pss 59:16–17; 63:3; 89:1; 101:1), not hidden (Ps 40:10), walked in (Ps 26:3), and thought of (Ps 48:9). Moreover, חסד is not just characteristic of God, it is his "delight," which he expects of humans (Hos 6:6), and delights in exercising, along with justice and righteousness (Jer 9:24). He is unique as the pardoner, the one who passes over rebellion, who does "not retain His anger forever, because He delights [חָפֵץ] in unchanging love [חסד]" (Mic 7:18; cf. v. 20). Similarly in the Psalms, חסד takes on even greater prevalence as a descriptor of the divine character, in fact, as a summative term that, amidst other rich language and imagery, intends to encapsulate God's relationship to his people. He is the God of חסד (Ps 59:10 [11]). God is the one "who redeems . . . who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion" (Ps 103:4). With him there is חסד and abundant redemption (Ps 130:7). It is characteristic of divine virtues and governance, thus, "righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You" (Ps 89:14; cf. 85:10).

is not significantly associated with חסד in human interpersonal usage, it becomes quite important to the ongoing divine-human relationship within which חסד takes place. חסד is often a basis (often alongside goodness, compassion, and/or grace) of the removal of divine wrath (Isa 54:8; Mic 7:18; Lam 3:31–32) as well as the expectation, request, and/or reception of forgiveness and/or deliverance (i.e., Num 14:19; Pss 25:7; 51:3). This willingness to overcome sin and the disruption of the relationship manifests the steadfastness of God's commitment, which is the only way that the God-human relationship can continue. In this way, the ultimate (but not exclusive) ground of divine חסד is God's free, loving character. As such, חסד is closely associated and collocates significantly with all the divine virtues including his love (אהב),[430] compassion (רחם),[431] and goodness (טוב),[432] which are manifested in his voluntary association with humanity.[433]

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[430] Divine אהב itself is an explicit ground of חסד. God declares his "everlasting love" and "therefore" has drawn the people with חסד (Jer 31:3). According to Bowen, God shows חסד because he loves. Boone M. Bowen, "A Study of *Chesed*" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1938), quoted in Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 18. The close connection is also apparent in Jer 2:2, where God remembers human חסד and love toward him. On the other hand, God is often said to respond with חסד toward humans who love him (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4; cf. Pss 119:159; 37:28; 97:10).

[431] In one instance, compassion is on the basis of חסד (Isa 54:8), but most often they are side by side as grounds of positive divine action and are not clearly distinguished. As such, in many of the collocations a beneficial action is either promised, expected, requested, and/or received on the basis of divine חסד and compassion (Isa 63:7; Hos 2:19 [21]; Pss 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; Pss 69:16 [17]; 103:4; Lam 3:22, 32). Likewise, the two terms collocate in the *locus classicus* of the divine character. God is compassionate as well as abounding in lovingkindness (Exod 34:6; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh 9:17), attributes that provide the foundation of divine forgiveness. The endurance of both is emphasized (Isa 54:10; Lam 3:22). They are both "from of old" (Ps 25:6), bestowed on "those who fear" God (Ps 103:11, 13). Both may be withdrawn or withheld (Jer 16:5; cf. Ps 40:11) or appear to be absent (Mic 7:19–20; Ps 77:8–9 [9–10]). Both are thus grounds of the continuance of the divine-human relationship, in which divine forgiveness and deliverance are so often needed. God's חסד as steadfast loyal love, and רחם as God's compassionate, tender feelings for his people, together ground God's beneficent actions, especially those that extend into the realm of need.

[432] There is a great degree of overlap between the terms, but their semantic ranges are distinct. Goodness is an aspect of חסד, but חסד is more than goodness. For one thing, חסד entails particular interpersonal relations while טוב may be used more abstractly. As such, חסד is always good, but goodness is not always חסד. Zobel comments, "What is meant by *hesed* can almost be paraphrased by the expression 'do good.'" *TDOT* 5:47. For further consideration of the overlap see Stoebe, "Die Bedeutung," 244–54. He suggests the original meaning of חסד was "goodheartedness, kindness" and that טוב gradually replaced חסד in late writings. In divine usage, the collocation is most often used to praise the character of God in the refrain, he "is good" and "His lovingkindness is everlasting" (Jer 33:11; Pss 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1; 1 Chr 6:34; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3; cf. Ezra 3:11). Similarly, God is praised for the "great goodness toward the house of Israel," according to his compassion and the abundance of his חסד (Isa 63:7; cf. Ps 63:3 [4]).

God's commitment, reliability, steadfastness, and fidelity to the objects of his חסד is

further emphasized in the frequent collocations of חסד with אמת, אמן, or אמונה, all of which connote

aspects of truth and faithfulness.[434] In circumstances that require forgiveness חסד also overlaps

somewhat with grace, although the quality of loyalty and steadfastness distinguishes the terms,

being essential to חסד but not to חן/חנן.[435] It must be recognized in all this that divine חסד surpasses

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Thus, both terms together describe and extol God's virtuous character (cf. Pss 86:5; 25:7; 69:16 [17]; 109:21). See also Mic 6:8; 2 Chr 6:41; Prov 14:22; Judg 8:35; 2 Sam 2:6; Esth 2:9.

[433] Due to such associations many scholars see an emotional aspect as a connotation of חסד. "*Hesedh*, then, implies relationship and indicates a deep, lasting affection." Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 68. Clark spoke of it as "an emotion that leads to activity beneficial to the recipient." Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 267. Zobel sees חסד as "involv[ing] an emotional element," even early, which becomes clear in its association with רחם. *TDOT* 5:53. Snaith sees emotionality based on his view that חסד has etymological roots in the Arabic term meaning "eager, ardent desire." *The Distinctive Ideas*, 106. Propp believes that "*hesed* is an emotional state motivating action." *Exodus 1–18*, 532.

[434] Often the terms חסד and אמת, "truth," appear together in the syntagm חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת both with human and divine agency. At times, this syntagm signifies the steadfast faithfulness in human relationships (Gen 24:29; 47:29; Josh 2:14), or is descriptive of virtue (Ps 25:10; Prov 3:3) and/or the consequences of virtue (Prov 14:22; 16:6; 20:28; cf. 2 Sam 15:20). However, it appears most often with divine agency, signifying the steadfastness and faithfulness of divine חסד (Gen 24:27; Exod 34:6; Pss 40:10–11 [11–12]; 57:4; 61:7 [8]); 85:10 [11]; 86:15; 89:14 [15]; 138:2). In other instances, the two terms demonstrate the close connection between them as descriptors of the basis, or description, of virtuous action requested, received, and/or expected of God (Gen 32:10 [11]; 2 Sam 2:6; Mic 7:20; Pss 69:13 [14]; 115:1; 117:2). חסד is not synonymous with אמת, since the latter alone can be used in non-personal contexts, but the syntagm magnifies the commitment, reliability, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and fidelity aspects of God's חסד; cf. Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 236; Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 34. Many scholars have seen the syntagm as a hendiadys with אמת serving to accentuate or emphasize the divine commitment. Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 255; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 102; Zobel, *TDOT* 5:48; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 440; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 180. As Sarna puts it, "The combination of terms expresses God's absolute and eternal dependability in dispensing His benefactions." *Exodus*, 216. A number of scholars, however, see these as two separate attributes of God. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 242; Laney, "God's Self-revelation," 46; Alfred Jepsen, "אמן," *TDOT* 1:314. As Clark puts it, "The genuineness, permanence, and reliability is not so much an attribute of *hesed* as of the parties who are involved in the *hesed*. . . . The relationship between them is an unwavering, enduring, reliable commitment to each other in which *hesed* is the appropriate action." *The Word Hesed*, 254–55. See also Ps 57:10 [11]; cf. 108:4 [5]. חסד also collocates closely with two other terms that have meanings related to אמת (truth): אמן and אמונה. אמן describes God's character of faithfulness (Deut 7:9; cf. Ps 89:1 [2]). Likewise, God's continued חסד and אמונה are variously described and praised (Pss 92: [3]; 98:3). See also Pss 36:5 [6]; 89:2 [3]; 100:5; 89:24 [25]; 33 [34]; 49 [50]). In all this it is clear that the qualities of truth and faithfulness are inherent in חסד, though חסד is more than these qualities.

[435] In divine usage, the two terms appear in parallel and signify beneficence. See Gen 19:19; 39:21. The close association between the terms also allows for either to serve as the apparent basis for the other (see Gen 47:29; Ps 51:1 [3]). Both terms most often appear in the many instances of the *locus classicus*, denoting God's gracious character and abundant lovingkindness (Exod 34:6; Joel 2:13; Jonah

responsibilities and/or expectations since forgiveness and grace are never deserved and God's

fidelity extends far beyond that which is required, or could be reasonably anticipated. This

surpassing and superabounding aspect often connoted by חסד alone is magnified in the syntagms

"abundance of חסד" (חסד + רב) of "greatness of חסד."[436] However, this does not mean that justice is

ever shirked. Divine forgiveness does not include ignoring or overlooking sin. Importantly, divine

חסד is associated with justice in many significant ways especially in collocations with the lexemes

צדק and משפט.[437] God forgives but does not thereby forsake justice; God is the one "who exercises

lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth" (Jer 9:23 [24]; cf. Pss 33:5; 89:14 [15]). As

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4:2; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh 9:17). Thus, חסד overlaps with grace in being a favorable disposition and/or resulting in favorable, often gracious action. But the terms are not synonymous. Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:456. They collocate together in contexts where mercy, forgiveness, or some kind of special favor is needed by the patient. Thus, their significant overlap is not surprising considering the history of Israel's frequent need for grace. In such contexts, חסד has the ability to overlap with חן/חנן, yet surpasses חן/חנן in its other connotations of steadfastness, loyalty, appropriate response, etc. חסד goes beyond all responsibilities and in this respect overlaps חן, but entails more than the surpassing of responsibilities. חסד is more than beneficence; it presumes loyalty and, often, faithfulness to a past relationship or mutual activity while חן is that element of favor in general, often unmerited. Thus, חסד often contains חן in its expression, but the two terms are not to be conflated.

   Two main differences have been popular among scholars: the difference between the terms with regard to responsibility/obligation and the difference regarding relative status. Lofthouse thought חן was only appropriate "just where there was no tie or claim," whereas חסד requires "some recognised tie." Lofthouse, "*Hen* and *Hesed*," 33. Likewise, for Snaith, חסד is bilateral, but חן is unilateral, and the bestowal of חן is out of pure generosity, never responsibility. *The Distinctive Ideas*, 128. However, one should take care to recognize that something may be undeserved yet, at the same time, not given entirely arbitrarily. Lofthouse also viewed חן as only from superior to inferior. Lofthouse, "*Hen* and *Hesed*," 30; cf. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 128. Clark agreed with the superior-inferior relation for חן but thought it irrelevant for חסד. *The Word Hesed*, 215. However, Reed correctly notes that חן does not require a superior-inferior relationship, but more importantly emphasizes the capacity of the giver of חן for goodwill. Further, he considers חן to be quite complementary to חסד, perhaps even as a basis of חסד. Reed, "Some Implications," 36–41.

   [436] For the former see Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Isa 63:7; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Pss 5:7 [8]; 69:13 [14]; 86:5, 15; 103:8; 106:7, 45; Lam 3:22; Neh 9:17; 13:22. For the latter see Gen 19:19; Num 14:19; 1 Kgs 3:6; Pss 57:10 [11]; 86:13; 108:4 [5]; 145:8; 2 Chr 1:8.

   [437] The three terms are collocated together in numerous instances. For example, God "loves righteousness [צדק] and justice [משפט]; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Ps 33:5). See also Ps 89:14 [15]; Isa 16:5; Jer 9:23 [24]; Hos 2:19 [21]. In other instances, חסד is closely tied to צדק. For example, "lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness [צדק] and peace have kissed each other (Ps 85:10 [11]). See also 1 Kgs 3:6; Hos 10:12; Pss 40:10 [11]; 36:10 [11]; 103:17; Prov 21:21. Similarly, the close bond is seen with משפט. See Hos 12:6 [7]; Mic 6:8; Zech 7:9; Pss 101:1; 119:149. This term is also related to the חסיד. God loves justice (משפט) and does not forsake his חסיד (Ps 37:28; cf. 149:9), he guards the paths of justice, preserves the way of the חסיד (Prov 2:8).

such, חסד overlaps with both mercy and forgiveness, on the one hand, and justice on the other, tying them together (Ps 85:10).[438]

At this point it will be helpful to address a number of issues related to the interpretation of חסד including whether חסד is strictly "covenant love," always takes place in mutual obligatory relationships, flows only from superior to inferior, or may be reciprocal, everlasting, or conditional. Some of these may be illuminated by an example or two; others may await potential resolution by way of the larger canonical analysis. Within the following issues, the broader question of the nature of the relationship within which חסד takes place rises to the fore. The divine-human relationship that provides the environment of חסד is often, though not always (cf. Job 10:12), a covenant relationship. Thus, חסד is manifest in relation to the Abrahamic (Gen 19:19; 24:12, 14, 27; 32:10; Exod 15:13; cf. Mic 7:18, 20), Mosaic (Exod 20:5–6; 34:6–7; Deut 5:10; 7:9, 12), and Davidic covenants (2 Sam 7:15; 22:15; 1 Kgs 3:6; 8:23; 2 Chr 1:8; 6:14, 42), and is also in close reference to the proclamation of the new covenant (Jer 31:3).[439] Accordingly, there are a number of close collocations of חסד and ברית.[440] However, while there is certainly a great deal of affinity between חסד and covenant, they are not synonymous.

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[438] Hesed is also sometimes associated with strength such as in the parallel, "In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength [עֹז] you have guided them" (Exod 15:13); cf. Ps 144:2. Some have viewed one of חסד's basic meanings as strength when used with divine agency. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 94–95; cf. W. E. Vine, "Loving-Kindness," *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 143; cf. especially Lester J. Kupyer, "The Meaning of חסדו Isa 40:6," *VT* 13 (1963): 491–92. But Sakenfeld suggests that "'strength' is not an additional, independent meaning of the word but rather a particular emphasis within the larger framework of meaning evoked by the term." *The Meaning of Hesed*, 223.

[439] This is by no means an exhaustive list.

[440] In some instances God is described as the keeper of covenant and חסד (Deut 7:9, 12; 1 Kgs 8:23; Neh 1:5; 9:32; 2 Chr 6:14; Dan 9:4). A number of these instances point to some degree of mutuality, specifically that God keeps covenant and חסד with those who love him (Deut 7:9 et al.). The חסידים are likewise described as "those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Ps 50:5). Such mutuality also appears when חסד is said to be to those who keep the covenant (Ps 25:10). To David, God proclaims he will keep his חסד and confirm his covenant (Ps 89:28 [29]; cf. Isa 55:3). In parallel, God proclaims that his חסד will not be removed, nor his covenant of peace shaken (Isa 54:10). Speaking of God's deliverance in the past, God remembered the covenant and relented according to his great חסד (Ps 106:45). The two terms with human agency only collocate once, when David asks for חסד from Jonathan, and appeals to the

For this and other reasons, חסד has often been described as "covenant love," or at least as the "norm of conduct" in a relationship of "mutual rights and duties."[441] However, it is important to recognize covenant is not always in the background of חסד. In fact, חסד is not restricted to a formalized relationship of any kind, and, even within a covenant context, may operate outside as well as above and beyond the restrictions of ברית.[442] Moreover, חסד is often manifested in situations that go far beyond any reasonable expectations (covenant, moral, or otherwise).[443] Divine חסד also extends beyond the covenant people in numerous examples.[444]

As such, חסד is a concept alongside that of covenant, but not subservient to covenant. While covenant responsibility is often present, the actual ground of divine חסד goes beyond covenant responsibility. Indeed, covenant itself originated in the free decision of God. חסד

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covenant between them (1 Sam 20:8). Here it seems that covenant is an additional source of responsibility beyond חסד.

[441] Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 68. "God's *hesed* can only be understood as Yahweh's covenantal relationship toward his followers." Ibid., 102. For him, the terms are not synonymous but require one another, though in some parallel usages they may have the same meaning. Ibid., 47. *Hesed* is the "very essence of a berith," yet, at the same time, חסד is the "result" of the covenant. Ibid., 55, 68, 102. As such, they are "mutually contingent upon one another." Ibid., 47. However, for Glueck חסד could take place beyond formal covenants, but only within relationship with mutual commitments of obligations. Norman Snaith went beyond Glueck's view to assert that חסד is "covenant love" specifically "eagerness, steadfastness . . . mercy, loving-kindness" but "all within the covenant." Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 94–95, 98; cf. Good, "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:167; Lofthouse, "*Hen* and *Hesed*," 29–35.

[442] Numerous scholars recognize that חסד is not restricted to covenant. Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 192; Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 69; Harris, "חסד," *TWOT* 306–7; Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:379; Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 145; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 241–42; Zobel, *TDOT* 5:53, 61; Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:455, 460; Thomas M. Raitt, "Why Does God Forgive?" *HBT* 13 (1991): 54; Dentan, "The Literary Affinitites," 43; Alfred Jepsen, "Gnade und Barmherzigkeit," *KD* 7 (1961): 265. Cross points to the more basic category of kinship, suggesting that not only אהב, but also חסד "originally was a term designating the loyal and loving behavior appropriate to kinship relationship." *From Epic*, 5.

[443] For reasons that will be seen later in the study, I also do not believe God is internally obligated, but the usage of חסד is not sufficient to determine this position.

[444] Naomi calls for God to show חסד to Ruth and Orpah, non-Israelites (Ruth 1:8; cf. 2 Sam 15:20). Perhaps even clearer is Jonah's lament that God is a God of חסד, among other attributes, which led to the suspension of judgment against Nineveh (Jonah 4:2). Such universality of divine חסד is likewise implied in that the entire "earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Ps 33:5; cf. Pss 36:7 [8]; 117:1–2; 119:64; 145:8–9); cf. Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:379; idem, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 127; Gerald A. Larue, "Recent Studies in *Hesed*," in *Hesed in the Bible* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967), 4. On the other hand, Clark thinks חסד is restricted to God's covenant people. Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 145.

belongs to the God-human relational context of which covenant is the most prominent descriptor. As such, חסד exemplifies the best, the ideal, of that relationship as well as other divine-human relationships, while covenant itself is grounded in the character of God and his decision to enter into special relationship with human beings.[445]

The supposition of חסד as a covenantal term is closely related to the debated position that חסד always takes place only within a "mutually obligatory relationship."[446] While Glueck believed that חסד always "connotes mutual obligation" between parties, others have emphasized the ideas of voluntary kindness, mercy, and/or grace, as opposed to obligation.[447] In this latter perspective חסד as duty gives way to חסד as the free actions of a benefactor.[448] Sakenfeld rightly points out that the request or situational expectation of חסד is always one that the potential grantor could

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[445] Further support for this view will become clearer as the study progresses.

[446] Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 55; cf. ibid., 38–40, 50, 54. Yet Glueck does allow that in later usages [Esther, Ruth] חסד loses "characteristics of obligation" and "becomes more like grace and mercy" yet, nevertheless, he later summarizes, "Subjectively understood, *hesed*, especially that shown to the poor, may appear as mercy or grace. Objectively, however, *hesed* remains the obligatory relationship of men toward one another, and implicitly as well as explicitly toward God." Ibid., 52, 64; cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*; Park, "Divine Love in Hosea 11," 28. Bowen contended that חסד is descriptive of the universal obligations of human interpersonal conduct. Boone M. Bowen, quoted in Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 18.

[447] Jepsen rejected any kind of obligation related to חסד. "Gnade und Barmherzigkeit," 261–71. Cf. Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:454; U. Masing, "Der Begriff Hesed im alttestamentlichen Sprachgebrauch," in *Charisteria Iohanni Kopp: Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile* (Stockholm: Holmiae, 1954), quoted in Larue, "Recent Studies in Hesed," 22. Harris comments that "Glueck certainly seems to find obligation where there is none. . . . Where no obvious relationship of mutual obligation is apparent in the text, Glueck ingeniously discovers one." "חסד," *TWOT* 305. Fox suggests, "Hesed is kindness (whether an act or an attitude) that is *not mandatory*. . . . It is always the right thing to do, never a mere gift and certainly never an unfair partiality. Hesed is charity, in the sense of gracious benevolence, correctly translated *eleos* 'mercy' in the LXX." *Proverbs 1–9*, 144.

[448] Stoebe explicitly rejects obligations, seeing חסד as a "kindness . . . not a duty." Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:454. In his view, חסד is "the spontaneous demonstration of a sincerely friendly attitude." Ibid., 1:455; Cf. Stoebe, "Die Bedeutung," 244–54. Stoebe refers to 1 Kgs 20:31 as a prime example, when the servants entreat Benhadad to humble himself before the "merciful kings" of Israel who will perhaps spare him; cf. 1 Sam 15:6; 2 Sam 2:5; 10:2; cf. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 236. Andersen also recognizes that חסד is "outside the domain of duty and obligation" yet a "promise to do *hesed* can bring it within the domain of commitment." "Yahweh, the Kind and Sensitive God," in *God Who Is Rich in Mercy: Essays Presented to Dr. D. B. Knox* (ed. P. T. O'Brien and D. G. Peterson; Homebush West, Australia: Lancer, 1986), 81.

deny.[449] In other words, there is no enforceable obligation for חסד to be granted. That the benefits

of divine חסד are not automatic, but require voluntary divine response, is apparent in the

numerous requests, some for חסד (Gen 24:12, 14; Ruth 1:8; 2 Sam 2:6), some on the basis of חסד

(Gen 19:19; 24:27; Num 14:19; 2 Chr 1:10; 2 Chr 6:42; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Dan 9:4; Neh 1:5;

9:17, 31–32; 13:22; cf. Ps 42:8).[450] While the prevalent covenantal context creates a divine

responsibility that calls for חסד, God, by nature, is not externally obligated to bestow חסד. At its

core, then, חסד includes voluntary positive disposition and/or action toward another.[451]

However, although there is no enforceable obligation, there is often the expectation, or

even moral responsibility, that חסד should and/or will be granted.[452] Indeed, in many instances of

חסד a covenant responsibility provides the context, though this responsibility is to be

distinguished from an enforceable obligation. At this juncture, a point of clarification will avoid

confusion with regard to use of the term "obligation." The word "obligation" may be used in

various senses, but for our purpose we can distinguish between "hard" and "soft" obligations.[453]

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[449] Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry*, 176, 234. This is true of both human and divine usage. Sakenfeld points out her own dependence upon an unpublished paper by Sidney Hills, "The Hesed of Man in the Old Testament," presented to the Biblical Colloquium, 1957. She does, however, depart from Hills in significant ways. "Love in the OT," 4:379; Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:460.

[450] The volitional nature of חסד may also be demonstrated in that God "commands His lovingkindness" (Ps 42:8). Sakenfeld comments, "The sovereign freedom of God and his strong commitment to his chosen people were held together in a single word," that of חסד. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 238–39; cf. "Loving-Kindness," 142. חסד does appear in collocation with "oath" in numerous instances, but often the oath is called upon to ensure that חסד will take place, which seems to assume the absence of existing, legal obligation (Gen 21:23; Josh 2:12). Thus, in instances of divine agency, the oath appears to be an additional ground of entreaty that God "ought to" provide deliverance (cf. Deut 7:12; Ps 89:49; Mic 7:20).

[451] Sakenfeld stresses the "inability for an act of *hesed* to be required or compelled" as a distinctive feature of חסד. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 45.

[452] Ibid., 234. Larue points out that "passages, such as Ps. 25:6, 7; 106:1, 7, 45; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31; 138:8, suggest that Yahweh ought to show *hesed* as a moral imperative to a distressed people or else fall short of moral responsibilities." "Recent Studies in Hesed," 4.

[453] Sakenfeld unfortunately uses the word "obligation" ambiguously, at times allowing it and in other instances rejecting it. Cf. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 3, 6. She seems to be assuming the type of distinction made above.

The former is the sort of obligation that is enforceable and, as such, is binding with regard to external factors, while the latter refers to responsibilities that may include expectations, perhaps "good faith," and even moral value, but are not enforceable and thus always maintain volitional freedom.[454] With this distinction in mind, soft obligations may relate to חסד, while it appears that hard obligations do not. Thus, חסד is the volitional, non-coerced disposition/action toward one another that often meets and/or exceeds responsibilities.

Although mutual "hard" obligations do not pertain to חסד, the question of mutuality of חסד in general is also a point of dispute, and merits clarification. As has been seen, חסד presumes some kind of relational responsiveness, whether within a pre-existing relationship, or an informal one begun by positive action. Moreover, a number of instances have demonstrated not only relationality but, more specifically, the expectation and/or presence of an appropriate (reciprocal) response (cf. 1 Sam 20:8, 14). However, some scholars deny the reciprocal nature of חסד.[455]

Indeed, some scholars have contended that humans never direct חסד toward God.[456] However, a number of instances seem to display human חסד toward God.[457] For example, God

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[454] An example of implied responsibility, but not necessarily ontological or legal obligation, is the Israelites' failure to show חסד to Gideon's descendants in Judg 8:35.

[455] Of course, all those who assert mutually obligatory relationships presume reciprocality. So Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 128; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 55–57. Others recognize mutuality more generally. Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:454; D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:213, 216. Zobel recognizes mutuality in human relationships, but not divine-human ones, contending it is one of "the ethical norms of human intercourse to return *hesed* that has been received." *TDOT* 5:48. Clark, likewise denying human חסד toward God, nevertheless views human interpersonal חסד as "a mutual, bilateral commitment." *The Word Hesed*, 261; ibid., 20. But still others have asserted that חסד does not assume mutual חסד, but rather חסד is unilateral, though it is rooted in responsibility and may be a response to prior action, even prior חסד. Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:377; idem, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 7, 53–54. Hills also viewed חסד as situationally unilateral assistance. "*Hesed* of man," in Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 50; cf. Ugo Masing, quoted in ibid., 6–7. According to Fox, חסד is "always a one-sided boon." "Jeremiah 2:2," 443; cf. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 145.

[456] A number of scholars interpret all of the uncertain occurrences as directed toward other human beings. Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 259, 267; Zobel, *TDOT* 5:61–62; Jepsen, "Gnade und Barmherzigkeit," 268–69. A potential rationale for the rejection of human חסד toward God is the theological supposition that humans cannot benefit God. Thus Zobel "excludes from the outset any possibility that human beings, following the secular principle of mutuality, could repay Yahweh in turn the divine kindness they have experienced or do him an act of kindness." Zobel, *TDOT* 5:63.

himself declares his remembrance of "the devotion [חסד] of your [Judah] youth, the love [אַהֲבָה] of

your betrothals, your following after Me in the wilderness" (Jer 2:2).[458] In another example,

Nehemiah entreats God to "remember" him for his deeds and "not blot out my loyal deeds [חסד]

which I have performed for the house of my God and its services" (Neh 13:14; cf. 2 Chr 32:32;

35:26).[459] Another pair of instances exemplifies a contrast between the endurance of divine חסד

and the transience of human חסד and, in so doing, also implies human to divine חסד. God declares,

"What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty [חסד]

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[457] Numerous scholars recognize that there are examples of human חסד toward God, including Good, "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:168; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 128; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 56–63; Stoebe, "Die Bedeutung," 244–54; Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:458–59; Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 142; Baer and Gordon, *NIDOTTE* 2:213. However, in order to differentiate human חסד toward God from human חסד, some suggest viewing the former as piety. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 94, 128; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 58. Sakenfeld qualifies that Israel's responsibility is "to him, not for him. Since God is understood as all-powerful and self-sufficient, Israel's חסד obviously cannot be an action of the powerful for the weak, an action of deliverance or rescue or protection." *The Meaning of Hesed*, 173–74. Andersen views human חסד toward God only in the indirect sense, that is, by doing it to other human beings. "Yahweh, the Kind and Sensitive God," 81. It seems that the relative scarcity of human to divine חסד is not because it is outside the bounds of the meaning of the term, but that relative usage is much less because the situations where God may be the beneficiary are so rare in the Hebrew Bible.

[458] Some have attempted to dismiss this as an inaccurate statement, claiming that this is just a metaphor displaying God's wishful remembrance but that Israel never displayed such חסד. Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 120. Fox interprets God as the subject of both אהב and חסד, akin to unmerited grace. For him חסד is always a "one-sided boon or favor." "Jeremiah 2:2," 443; cf. Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 198; Jepsen, "Gnade und Barmherzigkeit," 268. With this view in mind, Zobel thus concludes, "Even though . . . this interpretation of Jer. 2:2 is nothing more than a suggestion worth considering, his fundamental conclusion stands: in view of the frequency with which our term occurs in the OT, a single passage cannot bear the burden of proof. Human beings can receive the kindness of Yahweh, but they cannot do him acts of kindness." *TDOT* 5:62. DeRoche, on the other hand, makes a compelling case that this is an instance of human חסד toward God by, among other things, a structure that alternates between human agency and divine agency in Jer 2–3. "Jeremiah 2:2–3," 369. Numerous other scholars also see this as a legitimate example of human חסד toward God, including Good, "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:168; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 105; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 60; Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 173; Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, 24; Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:597; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 162; Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:460. See the further discussion in canonical analysis.

[459] Here, the reference to God's house suggests an indirect reference to God himself. Another potential example of human חסד toward God is the mention of two kings whose positive actions are referred to as "deeds of devotion" (2 Chr 32:32; 35:26). Since the Chronicler is mostly concerned with matters of worship, it would seem that these deeds are most likely referring to faithfulness toward the true worship of Yahweh.

is like a morning cloud And like the dew which goes away early" (Hos 6:4; cf. Isa 40:6).[460] In a

number of other potential cases of human חסד toward God the object of חסד is unclear.[461]

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[460] That this is apparently toward God seems evident in that two verses later the context is God's delight for חסד more than sacrifice (Hos 6:6). In a likely related text, NASB translates חסד as "loveliness" poetically, that all its "loveliness is like the flower of the field" (Isa 40:6). So also NKJV. JPS translates חסד here as "goodness."

[461] A number of instances consist of the command of humans to manifest חסד with the object of such חסד uncertain. For instance, Hosea counsels, "return" to God and "observe kindness and justice" (Hos 12:6 [12:7]; cf. Mic 6:8; Hos 10:12; Zech 7:9; Prov 3:3–4). Moreover, that God expects human חסד is apparent in that he laments the people's lack of חסד (Hos 4:1; cf. 6:6). In these examples, it is uncertain whether the object of human חסד is merely other humans, or directly/indirectly God as well. It seems likely, however, that in many such instances both relations with God and fellow human beings are in view, since God is consistently interested in both vertical and horizontal relationships (cf. Prov 19:17). On the other hand, humans who have engaged in idolatry are characterized as those who "forsake their חסד" (Jonah 2:8). Since idolatry is a sin against God himself, this text implies that humans ought to maintain their חסד toward him in true worship. Sakenfeld thinks that human חסד toward God is the issue of every instance of the term in Hosea (2:19 [21]; 4:1; 6:4, 6; 10:12; 12:7). "Love in the OT," 4:380. She believes that, in Hosea, חסד connotes all of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of justice, "that is, *ḥesed* represents the entire decalogue in a single word." Ibid., 380; cf. Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 57; Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:459. A number of cases call upon God to bless humans for their חסד (Ruth 3:10) or for divine vengeance when expected חסד is absent (2 Chr 24:22). As Sakenfeld puts it, "The alternative of *ḥesed* toward God or only among people is falsely posed because, for the OT, both belong together." Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:459.

The uncertainty is also apparent with regard to two ambiguous syntagms. First, in the two instances of the syntagm חַסְדֵי דָוִד, it is unclear whether it is a subjective or objective genitive. In the first, the people are called to come to God and he will "make an everlasting covenant with you" (Isa 55:3). Whether this means the covenant will be made according to the חסד God showed toward David, or because of the חסד David showed is not certain. Likewise unclear is the petition of God to remember חַסְדֵי דָוִד (2 Chr 6:42). Is the petitioner asking God to remember his חסד toward David, or bless on the basis of David's חסד? In each case, both options are possible since the promise of divine חסד toward David and his house is well-represented on the one hand (i.e., Ps 89:50), but also there is the implication that David's progenitors are blessed on account of David's faithfulness (cf. 1 Kgs 11:12–13, 32–34; 2 Kgs 8:19; Ps 132:10). For the position that God is agent see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 367; Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40–66," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:482; Zobel, *TDOT* 5:58; Baer and Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:217; H. G. M. Williamson, "'The Sure Mercies of David': Subjective or Objective Genitive?" *JSS* 23 (1978): 31–49. On the other hand, Dillard thinks David is the agent of חסד in the usage in 2 Chronicles as a "periphrastic allusion" to Ps 132 where "the faithful actions of David are in view." Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 51–52; cf. Isa 63:7; Pss 89:2; 107:43; Lam 3:22. It is also unclear what is meant by the syntagm חֶסֶד יְהוָה or חֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים (1 Sam 20:14; 2 Sam 9:3). It could be that David shows God's חסד toward other human beings or it may refer to merely human חסד, perhaps as a superlative (in the sense of relationship to God, not in the sense of denying the "religious significance" of the divine name). See David Winton Thomas, "A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew," *VT* 3 (1953): 215. Finally, the agent in Prov 16:6 is also unclear: "By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil" (Prov 16:6). Here, "lovingkindness and truth" seems to be in parallel to "fear of the LORD" and as such, would appear to describe the disposition and/or action(s) that God expects/desires. On the other hand, it is possible that it is the divine "lovingkindness and truth" in view here, especially considering the connection to the term "atonement" (כפר). See also 2 Chr 6:42; 1 Sam 20:14; 2 Sam 9:3.

Moreover, the adjectival חסיד also appears to be a manifestation of human חסד in relationship to God.[462] For instance, "with the kind" (חָסִיד) God shows himself "kind" (חסד) (2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]). The parallel statements suggest reciprocality, divine חסד bestowed on the human חסיד.[463] Although it is not altogether clear whether חסיד refers to those upon whom God bestows חסד, or those who manifest חסד,[464] the latter appears to be the case in numerous instances that highlight the character of the חסיד (Mic 7:2; 2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]).[465] חסיד sometimes seems to refer to Israel as a whole (Pss 148:14; 149:1) but in other instances it seems to connote a more restricted group of "the faithful within Israel" (Pss 31:23 [24]; 37:28).[466] That חסיד is not restricted to those who receive but never bestow חסד is evidenced in that God himself is twice referred to as חסיד (Jer 3:12; Ps 145:17).

One reason for rejection of reciprocal חסד by some scholars is the assertion that חסד flows only from a superior agent to inferior patient, which of course denies the possibility of bilateral חסד.[467] Although the majority of instances appear to flow from a superior to inferior (with regard

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[462] Similarly, righteous humans are "men of חסד" (Isa 57:1; cf. Prov 11:17).

[463] This would be consistent with similar theological positions elsewhere (cf. Exod 20:6 = 5:10; 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4).

[464] It appears to refer to qualitative evaluation in some instances (Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 2:9; 2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]; Mic 7:2; Pss 4:3 [4]; 12:1 [2]; 37:28; 43:1; 86:2; 97:10; Prov 2:8). In some occurrences, it is not clear whether evaluation is involved (Pss 16:10; 32:6; 116:15). At other times it may be a term for the priests (2 Chr 6:41; Ps 132:9, 16) or perhaps to the entire camp (Pss 30:4 [5]; 31:23 [24]; 50:5; 52:9 [11]; 79:2; 85:8 [9]; 89:19 [20]; 145:10; 148:14; 149:1, 5, 9).

[465] For instance, the חסיד are described as "upright" (יָשָׁר—Mic 7:2) and blameless (תָּמִים—2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]). Baer sees חסיד as "denoting the one whose life is lived in accordance with the principles of חסד." Baer and Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:213; cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 110; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 68. Sakenfeld notes ambiguity between the people as a whole and the upright, but recognizes many evaluative usages. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 179; cf. Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:462–63. But Harris cautions, "Whether God's people in the OT were called *ḥāsîd* because they were characterized by *ḥesed* (as seems likely) or were so called because they were objects of God's *ḥesed* may not be certain." "חסד," *TWOT* 307.

[466] Baer and Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:213.

[467] Fox asserts, "*hesed* is always conferred by a superior upon an inferior (in status or power)." *Proverbs 1–9*, 144; cf. Ugo Masing, quoted in Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 6–7. It has been pointed out, however, that the disproportionate number of "instances of *hesed* as a divine characteristic" may skew

to status), there are many examples in human interpersonal usage of either the request, or the

showing, of חסד from a societal inferior to a societal superior (Gen 20:13; 2 Sam 2:5; 3:8; 16:17;

2 Chr 24:22).[468] Thus, a more nuanced view has been proposed, that in human interpersonal usage

חסד only takes place from a *circumstantially,* or *situationally,* superior to inferior. In other words,

the person receiving the חסד must be in a situation of need or significant distress in relation to the

superior, without regard to societal status.[469] This view has some merit since within human

relationships, חסד consistently refers to beneficent actions, thus appearing within the context of a

benefactor-beneficiary relationship.[470] Most often (if not always) within human relationships, the

beneficiary is the *situationally* inferior party with regard to the beneficence at hand. This is not

surprising since in order for one to request or receive חסד they must be in a position to benefit

from it, if it is to have any value worth mentioning. As such, the relative status of the parties with

regard to חסד may be accidental, and perhaps it is more precise to recognize that חסד takes place

from a benefactor to a beneficiary, but does not in every case require need, though most cases

may presume need or significant distress. As such, חסד is something important to the beneficiary,

but not always needed (e.g., Gen 24:12, 49; 2 Sam 9:1). Further, in some instances the benefactor

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a conception of חסד as only from superior to inferior since "*hesed*, when used of God, will, by definition, involve relationships of superior and inferior." Baer and Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:212.

[468] Sarah to Abraham (Gen 20:13), the spies to Rahab (Josh 2:12–14), Jabesh-Gileadites to King Saul (2 Sam 2:5), Hushai (potentially) to David (2 Sam 16:17), Abner to Ishbosheth (2 Sam 3:8), Jehoida the priest toward King Joash (2 Chr 24:22). This also seems to be the case when Abimelech asks Abraham to show him חסד going forward (Gen 21:23). But Sakenfeld suggests that Abraham is the stronger party with God's support. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 72. Another example is the חסד between David and Jonathan (1 Sam 20:8, 14–15). Those who assert the restriction of חסד from superior to inferior contend that David was the inferior when he is requesting חסד but Jonathan looks forward to a time when David will be king and thus will, in the future, be the superior. Cf. Josh 2:12–14; Judg 1:24; 8:35; Job 6:14. Consider also the occurrences of human חסד toward God, discussed further above.

[469] Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:378. She gives credit for this to her expansion of the interpretation of Hills. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 12; cf. ibid., 7, 234; Clark, *The Word Hesed*, 267. However, Sakenfeld sees this reversed in the instances of human to divine חסד. She ascribes this reversal to what she views as Hosea's intention to shock his hearers. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 175.

[470] Importantly, however, a beneficial action may or may not be altruistic. So, also, Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 235.

and the beneficiary may be bilateral such that both parties may be able to do חסד toward the other, in different ways (e.g., Josh 2:12).

Another possible reason for this denial of reciprocal חסד is ambiguity regarding the meaning of "reciprocal." It is possible for "reciprocal" to refer to an action that expects, or receives, an equal reaction, that is, חסד for חסד. If the term "reciprocal" is restricted to this *quid quo pro* type of mutuality, it would be inaccurate to ascribe to חסד universally since such one-to-one correspondence of חסד is only rarely seen in the text.[471] On the other hand, if "reciprocal" refers to the broader idea of a relationship wherein an action of חסד is often responsive to a previous relationship and/or action and/or expects a positive response, if applicable, in the future, then it is appropriate. Sakenfeld seems to react negatively to the first usage, whereas many scholars seem to intend the latter when they use the term "reciprocal," which may be called appropriate responsiveness.[472] In this dissertation, I use the term reciprocal with reference to the latter, a relationship that expects or receives appropriate response. A relationship of חסד seems to expect that חסד would flow from either agent to the other, if the appropriate circumstance(s) obtained (Josh 2:12–14; 1 Sam 20:8, 14–15; 1 Sam 15:16; 2 Chr 24:22).[473] In all this, reciprocality does not necessarily mean equality or symmetry, either of the agents or of the respective actions.

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[471] See Gen 21:23; Josh 2:12–14; cf. Ps 109:12, 16; Ruth 2:20.

[472] Sakenfeld rejects the idea that חסד is "mutual exchange" but rather (in human relationships) it is the unilateral act of a situationally superior toward inferior. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 50. But she recognizes חסד may be "dependent on something prior." Ibid., 50. Further, she allows that once her thesis regarding situational superior-inferior relationships is in view, "reciprocity need not be utterly rejected, for it occurs when there is a reversal of circumstances" as in the case of Rahab. Ibid., 7. Thus, in her view, "While *hesed* is not exchanged *quid pro quo*, it is rooted in responsibility, and the reference to a prior action concretizes that responsibility." Ibid., *The Meaning of Hesed*, 91.

[473] In other words, an individual in a חסד relationship, or having received חסד, ought to reciprocate if possible.

With these qualifications in mind, חסד may be spoken of as reciprocal in that it assumes a bilateral relationship. At times, חסד is responded to with חסד,[474] at other times חסד is responsive to a previous positive action or a pre-existing relationship;[475] in still other instances, חסד seems to initiate a relationship but expects appropriate future response, including חסד if a situation arises that warrants it.[476] Thus, חסד operates within a context of relational, voluntary, reciprocal responsibility. This not only explains the human interpersonal usage of חסד but also fits with both human חסד toward God and divine חסד toward humans.

Another major interpretive issue is the tension between the endurance, on the one hand, and contingency, on the other, of divine חסד. The OT consistently affirms the amazing endurance and persistence of divine חסד, even to the thousandth generation (Exod 20:6; 34:6–7; Deut 10:5 et al.). God himself proclaims his "everlasting lovingkindness" with which he promises, "I will have compassion on you," and contrasts this with the momentary hiding of his face "in an outburst of anger" (Isa 54:8). Similarly, divine lovingkindness flows from "everlasting love" (Jer 31:3) and itself is "everlasting" (Jer 33:11). Indeed, divine חסד is "from everlasting to everlasting on those

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[474] Thus, in some instances an initiating action of חסד is reciprocated by חסד (Gen 21:23; Josh 2:12–14; cf. Ps 109:12, 16; Ruth 2:20).

[475] Human חסד takes place in a number of pre-existing relationships including marriage (Gen 20:13), familial/kinship (Gen 24:49; 47:29), friendship (1 Sam 20:8, 14–15; 2 Sam 9:1, 3, 7; Job 6:14), or a political relationship (2 Sam 3:8; 2 Sam 16:17). In other instances, חסד is requested, received, or unexpectedly absent on the basis of, and appropriate to, some previous action (Gen 40:14; Judg 1:24; 1 Kgs 2:7; Judg 8:35; 2 Sam 10:2; 1 Chr 19:2; cf. Prov 14:22). In such instances חסד is descriptive of reciprocal (though not necessarily equal) relations. That is, חסד is often a response to a prior beneficial action that created the expectation (but not necessarily a duty) of response by the one who is, at that time, the beneficiary. Although in many (if not all) of these instances existing relationships may also be discoverable, the emphasis appears to be on prior action. In some sense, every human interaction is based on relationship to some degree, even if that relationship is merely belonging to common humanity.

[476] In another rare variation, the initial action alone is described as חסד, with an appropriate response or the expectation thereof (1 Sam 15:6; 2 Chr 24:22; cf. Ruth 3:10). Thus, חסד may take place within a pre-existing relationship or on the basis of a previous action that precipitates a response of חסד, or rarely, חסד may be depicted as initiating a relationship. In one rare divergence of usage, חסד seems to be an outcome of the king's pleasure and/or desire for Esther (Esth 2:9, 17). Sakenfeld believes this late usage is explained by the meanings of חן and חסד having "fallen together" by the time of this writing. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 235.

who fear him" (Ps 103:17). In many other instances the steadfastness of God's חסד is proclaimed,

even to the extent that it is spoken of as everlasting, and thus, *seemingly* impossible to forfeit.[477]

Yet, removal of divine חסד also occurs. God declares he has "withdrawn . . . peace [שָׁלוֹם] .

. . lovingkindness and compassion [רַחֲמִים]" (Jer 16:5). In numerous contexts, it appears to be

assumed that God could remove חסד.[478] For instance, God is praised as the one "who has not

forsaken His lovingkindness and truth," implying that he could do so (Gen 24:27; Pss 98:3;

106:45). Similarly, God is often entreated to continue his חסד: "Do not turn away the face of Your

anointed; remember *Your* lovingkindness to Your servant David" (2 Chr 6:42; Ps 36:10 [11]; cf.

138:8). At other times, חסד appears to be absent, leading to the people's lament, "Has his

lovingkindness ceased forever?" (Ps 77:8), "Will your lovingkindness be declared in the grave,

your faithfulness in Abaddon?" (Ps 88:11), "Where are your former lovingkindnesses, O Lord,

which You swore to David in Your faithfulness?" (Ps 89:49). The contingency of divine חסד is

likewise implied throughout Hosea. For example, God pleads a case against Israel because of

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[477] Thus, Snaith comments, "the *chesed* of God . . . is everlasting, determined, unshakable." *The Distinctive Ideas*, 102. Similarly, Zobel suggests חסד is "characterized by permanence and reliability." *TDOT* 5:57. In comparison to mountains and hills, which may be shaken, divine חסד "will not be removed" (Isa 54:10). In Hosea this lasting lovingkindness is associated with betrothal when God speaks of his people, "I will betroth you to Me forever . . . in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and compassion" (Hos 2:19 [H 2:21]). Again, his "lovingkindnesses never cease, For His compassions never fail" (Lam 3:22). His חסד "is great" and his "truth" is "everlasting" (Ps 117:2). Indeed, "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness" (Ps 103:11; cf. Pss 36:5 [6]; 57:10; 108:4). Divine חסד is "precious" (Ps 36:7), it "endures all day long" (Ps 52:1), it is "better than life" (Ps 63:3) and is even depicted as pursuing David for his lifetime (Ps 23:6). Interestingly, a large number of the statements regarding the persistence of divine חסד are in reference to the Davidic covenant (dynasty). 2 Sam 7:15 declares, God's "lovingkindness shall not depart from" David as he removed it from Saul (cf. 2 Sam 22:51; 1 Chr 17:13). Divine חסד to David "will be built up forever" (Ps 89:2 [3]). "My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, And My covenant shall be confirmed to him" (Ps 89:28 [29]; cf. 18:50 [51]), "I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness" (Ps 89:33 [34]). Similarly, God declares regarding Solomon, "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you" (1 Chr 17:13). Finally, in a common refrain of praise, God's חסד is proclaimed as everlasting (Pss 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1–4, 29; 136:1–26; 138:8; cf. Jer 33:11; Ezra 3:11; 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21), his faithfulness to all generations (Ps 100:5). As such, divine חסד is steadfast and extremely long-lasting.

[478] Baer and Gordon acknowledge, "Numerous texts witness to at least the hypothetical possibility of losing God's חֶסֶד or of having it taken away." "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:215.

their lack of faithfulness, kindness, and knowledge (Hos 4:1). God laments Israel's lack of loyalty

(Hos 6:4) and they are punished because he "delight[s] [חָפֵץ] in loyalty rather than sacrifice" (Hos

6:6). Thus, in numerous instances, there is a clear tension between the permanence of divine חסד

and its contingency, even removal. The possible forfeiture of חסד dovetails with the significant

conditionality of divine חסד apparent in numerous instances. Although חסד is ultimately grounded

in the divine character, the reception of חסד sometimes indicates the fidelity of the recipient of

חסד, implying conditionality and the expectation of responsiveness.[479] For example, the divine

lovingkindness will be shown (עשׂה) to the thousandth generation of those who love God and keep

his commandments (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10). The conditional human reception of חסד is likewise

explicit in numerous other instances.[480] While divine חסד is ultimately grounded in God's love,

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[479] In some instances, "God's *ḥesed* is conditional, dependent upon the good repair of the covenant relationship that it is up to Israel to maintain." Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:379. Sakenfeld goes so far as to suggest that חסד "may even be 'deserved' at the same time that it is freely given," as in the case of Joseph. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 102; cf. ibid., 97. Glueck, similarly, believes it is given to the "worthy." *Hesed in the Bible*, 99. As Sakenfeld notes, "The person's right relationship to God is not stated as a basis for the *hesed*" yet she notes that in some circumstances it is clear "that the individual is acting in obedience to God or is doing the morally upright [thing] against difficult odds and hence is 'deserving' of divine assistance." Ibid., 236; cf. idem, "Love in the OT," 4:379; Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, 81, 89.

[480] In Deut 7:9, God is the "faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments." Likewise, Deut 7:12, "because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them" God "will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore" (Deut 7:12). Here, חסד is explicitly (though not necessarily exclusively) predicated on appropriate human behavior. Accordingly, Solomon declares that God has "shown great lovingkindness" to David "according as he walked before [God] in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart" and God has "reserved for him this great lovingkindness" (1 Kgs 3:6). God is likewise the one "keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness" to his "servants who walk before [him] with all their heart" (1 Kgs 8:23 = 2 Chr 6:14).
Conditionality is further apparent when God exhorts his people to come to him and listen "and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David" (Isa 55:3). Psalms also depicts divine חסד as an appropriate response to human action. Thus, "with the kind You show Yourself kind; with the blameless You show Yourself blameless" (2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]). Likewise, some entreaties assume such mutuality, asking God to "continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart" (Ps 36:10 [11]; cf. Ps 40:10–11 [11–12]). Again, "lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, For You recompense a man according to his work" (Ps 62:12). Similarly, "he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him" (Ps 32:10; cf. 17:7). His חסד is "great" and "from everlasting to everlasting" for "those who fear Him" (Ps 103:11, 17). "Abundant lovingkindness" is available to all who call upon him" (Ps 86:15). The "LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 147:11). "All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Ps 25:10). Moreover, God's "eye . . . is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness" (Ps 33:18; cf. 33:22). Both Daniel and

compassion, and goodness as a part of his character and an outgrowth of his free decision to

bestow חסד on human beings, the bestowal of חסד is not altogether unilateral. There is relational

responsibility, conditionality, and a divine expectation of appropriate response at work. However,

while God always meets and/or exceeds his responsibility, humans consistently fall short of

theirs. Yet, divine חסד often overcomes even human shortcomings, another manifestation of the

freedom of חסד, which manifests itself beyond the bounds of covenant and/or obligation. At the

same time, divine חסד is clearly (partially) contingent upon human response.

The conditionality and potential forfeiture of חסד thus posits a crucial tension between

"everlasting חסד" and the potential of removal and/or forfeiture thereof.[481] This tension is not

unlike that already seen with regard to divine אהב. Moreover, such questions are not unique to חסד

but pertain to numerous themes related to divine love. Perhaps the key is apparent in Ps 103:17,

which states: Divine חסד is "from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him." Here,

everlasting חסד is directed specifically toward those who respond appropriately to God. Thus, as

shall be further explained in the canonical analysis, divine חסד, like other aspects of divine love, is

not unconditional but foreconditional. That is, God freely bestows חסד prior to conditions, will

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Nehemiah recognize the unworthiness of humans to receive God's mercy but base their supplication on "the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Dan 9:4; Neh 1:5). Nehemiah later entreats remembrance *because* of his efforts to purify Israel, asking, "have compassion on me according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness" (Neh 13:22; cf. Pss 26:3; 119:159; 143:8). In such occurrences, the reception of חסד is tied to fidelity to God. Finally, in a couple of instances, requests for divine חסד are based on prior acts of human to human חסד. See Ruth 1:8; 2 Sam 2:6. In both instances, divine חסד is hoped for/expected on the basis of human to human חסד, implying that חסד to Naomi/Saul is indirectly חסד to God. Sakenfeld suggests that such requests are technical language that presume the discontinuance of a relationship such that only God could do חסד in the future. *The Meaning of Hesed*, 107–8. Yet, though that may be the occasion of the blessing, the request is nevertheless predicated on previous action.

[481] Baer and Gordon recognize the tension but offer no solution. "It may finally be impossible to square such agonized questioning with the frequent confident assertions that חֶסֶד is eternal. Perhaps this very tension reminds us of the relational core at the center of this concept. God's steadfast love, the biblical theologian might conclude, is not a mechanical tool to be used in a crisis, nor a philosophical absolute to be taken for granted. Rather, it is a quality of relationship that is to be sought again, appropriated, and treasured in the covenantal partner's every needy moment." "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:216.

never remove חסד arbitrarily, but expects appropriate response upon which the continuing

relationship within which חסד takes place is conditional.

In all, חסד is relational conduct and/or attitude in accord with the highest virtues (love,

loyalty, goodness, kindness) and beneficial to another, which meets and exceeds all expectations

(often manifested in mercy and forgiveness), in which the agent is ontologically free to act

otherwise, and is responsive to and/or creates or maintains the expectation (but not hard

obligation) of appropriate response from the recipient. Since it describes the attitude of the agent

who characteristically acts in such a way, a חסד disposition often becomes the basis of entreaty for

חסד action. From the perspective of the (potential) beneficiary, חסד is a disposition and/or action

that will fulfill a need or important desire. חסד may take place in human non-religious

relationships, from humans toward God, but most often from God toward humans.

Divine חסד is grounded in the divine character of love, compassion, goodness,

faithfulness, and justice. It is free and voluntary, but not altogether spontaneous, often taking

place within the commitment of the covenant relationship, but not restricted thereby. It is a basic

grounding characteristic of God that makes the covenant meaningful and reliable. It is unmerited

but not altogether unconditional.[482] It includes action that may be one-sided and unilateral, but

assumes a relation that will be reciprocated (even if חסד action in particular is not, or cannot, be).

It is from benefactor to beneficiary, not merely *quid pro quo*, but assumes appropriate

responsiveness and expects reciprocation when/if the context arises. In many instances (i.e., with

regard to ברית) God has committed himself to certain responsibilities (soft obligations) to which

his faithfulness is unparalleled. However, this is to be distinguished from "hard obligations" since

(1) there is no external obligation upon God due to the simple fact that there is no one capable of

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[482] Divine חסד thus may flow beyond the covenant, beyond responsibility, even beyond moral duty
to the unworthy, those who have forfeited any claim thereto (as in Exod 34:6–7).

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enforcement, and (2) the very language used of God with regard to ברית presumes the lack of ontological obligation.

As such, divine חסד may be responsive to virtue and/or entreaty, yet may be withdrawn or withheld according to the state of affairs. As such, divine commitments are voluntary responsibilities and thus moral expectation and the divine name (character) are involved, but God remains volitionally free. Divine חסד is extremely steadfast, reliable, and enduring, yet likewise expects appropriate response from humanity and is often depicted as contingent, yet goes well beyond what would be considered normal grounds for forfeiture. Accordingly, it often takes on the connotation of mercy and forgiveness and results in the removal of wrath and the bestowal of blessings, especially deliverance. Thus, divine חסד often surpasses the bounds of expectation and exceeds all moral responsibility. As such, divine חסד is an aspect of his character of goodness, but is not mere clemency or beneficence but, rather, consists in always doing that which is best, righteous, and just, always and without fail.

The Conditional Aspect of Divine Beneficence

As has been seen, some have defined divine love in terms of beneficence. For this reason it is important to briefly examine the nature of divine blessing and its place in the divine-human relationship. Divine goodness is a central characteristic of God himself (Exod 33:19), which is consistently manifested in actions of beneficence.[483] However, though blessing appears most often within covenant, blessing is not limited to the immediate recipients of the covenant, but is

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[483] Divine blessing (ברך) toward human beings is an especially prominent feature that runs from the creation narrative to the end of the Hebrew Bible, often related to covenant and promise (Gen 12:2; 17:16–19; 18:12; Exod 19:4–6; Lev 26; Deut 1:11; 2:7). Divine blessing appears to flow from divine lovingkindness, and does so in such a way that God is not obligated to manifest lovingkindness, but expected to do so based on his character (cf. Gen 24:12, 14, 27; Ps 69:13, 16). Further, election is another basis of divine blessing. Thus the one who is blessed (אַשְׁרֵי) is the one whom God chooses (בחר) and "bring[s] near" (קרב) (Ps 65:4 [5]). Notably, however, just previously it is stated, "to You all men come" (Ps 65:2 [3]). Tate comments, "The request in v 5 seems to support the interpretation that the worshiping community is intended here; all those who are acceptable in the worship of Yahweh, and potentially every Israelite—and if v 3b has a universal expectation, every human being who comes to Yahweh." *Psalms 51–*

intended to extend beyond Abraham or Abraham's progeny as a universal blessing mediated

through Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:2–3; 17:4–6; 26:4).[484] Moreover, divine blessing

is not depicted as purely unilateral beneficence. On the contrary, although it flows from God's

character and freedom and is, as such, unmerited and seemingly prior to any conditions

(foreconditional), it nevertheless often betrays underlying contingency, especially in accordance

with covenant conditionality.

To be sure, at times blessing is mentioned without causal explanation and may be

extended unilaterally. However, in many instances, divine beneficence is depicted as conditional

upon appropriate human response. Such human responsibility tied to the contingency of divine

blessing is apparent in the Abrahamic covenant in numerous instances. Thus, God states that he

"will greatly bless" Abraham "because" he did not withhold his son from God (Gen 22:16; cf.

18:19; 26:4–5).[485] The responsiveness of the divine-human relationship is perhaps most starkly

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100, 141–42.

[484] Notice also the examples of mediated blessing to others through Abraham's progeny, for example, blessing to Laban through Jacob (Gen 30:27, 30); to Potiphar and his house through Joseph (Gen 39:5). Moreover, other nations are mentioned as people to whom God has granted land. He refuses to give Israel "as little as a footstep" of Edom's land (Deut 2:5), similarly Moab (2:9) and Ammon (2:19). As Tigay puts it, this "indicates the universal dominion of God and His involvement in the history of all nations." *Deuteronomy*, 24. Likewise, Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 108; cf. Deut 32:8; Amos 9:7. Further, foreigners may also be privy to the covenant blessings if they align themselves with the LORD, keep God's Sabbath, choose what pleases God, love the name of the LORD, and keep the covenant (Isa 56:4, 6–7). Thus, foreigners become part of the "chosen" by choosing to please God. Such conditions are similar to those expected of God's people already within the covenant (Isa 58:13–14). This is in accordance with other hints throughout the prophets of God's concern for all peoples. "This is what God longs for in his people, and if anyone will do this, their parentage or their body has nothing to do with their acceptability." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 458. Watts views this as meaning, "Commitment and acceptance of responsibility are more important than the birthright. Cf. the story of Esau and Jacob in Gen 25:29–34. . . . Israel/Jacob also despised his birthright. Now others, more worthy, are invited to enter into it." Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 249. Thus, "all who do justice and righteousness and hold fast to the divine covenant are God's servants." Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40–66," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:485.

[485] Sarna suggests that at first in the Abrahamic narrative, "blessings are pure acts of divine grace" but later "these are presented as rewards for Abraham's devotion to God." *Genesis*, 154; cf. Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:835. Hamilton concurs, but believes that the order gives priority to "promise" and "grace." Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 116. Fretheim explicitly recognizes that the promise of God was "thereby made conditional" in the sense that "God could not have used a disloyal Abraham for the purposes God intends." "The Book of Genesis," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:497. Similarly, Wenham recognizes the "meritoriousness of Abraham." *Genesis 1–15*, 111.

manifested by the strange "wrestling" of Jacob with the divine "man" culminating in the

reception of blessing (Gen 32:25–28).[486] The conditionality of the divine-human relationship also

appears throughout Exodus (Exod 1:20), especially with regard to the Mosaic covenant (Exod

19:5; 23:25; 32:29).[487] Such covenant conditionality, tied to blessings and curses, is also

prominent in Leviticus (Lev 26:3–17, 40–44).[488] Likewise, it is clear elsewhere that the

continuance of divine blessing is dependent upon the maintenance of the covenant relationship

(Deut 4:40; 5:16; 18; 10:12–13; 11:13–15, 22–23, 26–28; 15:4–6; 19:13; 28:1–2, 58, 62; Josh

22:2, 5; 23:11–13).[489] Thus, God expects reciprocal response from his people, which will result in

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[486] This is a powerful narrative example of the connection between human action and divine response with regard to divine beneficence. It is clear in the narrative that nothing Jacob could do would force God to bless him, for the "man" is able to injure Jacob by a mere touch (Gen 32:25), yet the divine "man" nevertheless wrestles with Jacob. That the "man" is, in fact, divine is explicit in Gen 32:28 (cf. Hos 12:4–5).

[487] God is good (יטב) to the Hebrew midwives who "fear God" and spare the Israelite infants (Exod 1:20). Those who obey and keep God's commands are promised covenant blessings (Exod 19:5), but only "if" they choose to serve God (Exod 23:25). In Exod 19:5, "the birth of 'Israel' as Yawheh's people" is contingent upon "affirmative response." Durham, *Exodus*, 262. In the aftermath of the golden calf apostasy, divine blessing is explicitly contingent upon the people's repentance and dedication to the Lord (Exod 32:29).

[488] Divine blessings are contingent upon human response, specifically walking in, keeping, and doing the divine prescriptions (Lev 26:3–4, 6). Simply put, "Obedience to God's will brings reward; disobedience brings dire punishment." Levine, *Leviticus*, 182; cf. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Book of Leviticus," in *Genesis to Leviticus* (vol. 1 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1994), 1179. Specifically, God will respond and turn toward the people and confirm the covenant and dwell among the people, walk among them, and be their God and not reject them (Lev 26:9–12); the opposite will take place if they reject God (Lev 26:17). In effect, it seems that "without obedience to the commandments there can be no blessing." Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:351.

[489] The conditionality may be summarized thus, "the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God" (Deut 11:27–28). Even the reception of the land is explicitly conditional (Deut 11:22–23). Further, the command to love God wholeheartedly, which includes obedience, appears over and over again in Deuteronomy and elsewhere. For example, see Deut 6:5; Josh 22:5. In all this, God deeply desires to bless the people, but his doing so is contingent upon not only their external obedience, but also upon their internal disposition (cf. Deut 4:40; 5:29; 6:24; 12:28). Robert B. Coote summarizes thusly, "Obey the law and take the land; continue to obey the law or lose the land." "The Book of Joshua," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol. 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 710. Woudstra thus notes, "There is a point when God abandons sinners to their wicked desires." *The Book of Joshua*, 337–38. Thus, "it matters whether God's own people remain unified and work together toward the purposes of God. God has chosen in some way to be contingent on active human participation in the ongoing drama of God's saving ways with God's people and the world." D. T. Olson, "The Book of Judges," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:790.

blessing.[490] For example, God is gracious and compassionate, giving food to "those who fear

him" for he "remember[s] his covenant forever" (Ps 111:4–5).[491] Likewise, the one who retains

"kindness and truth" will "find favor" (חֵן + מצא) and "good repute" or success/kind approval (שֵׂכֶל)

with "God and man" (Prov 3:3–4; 12:2; cf. Ezra 8:22).[492] Conversely, the absence of divine

blessing is often directly responsive to the people's disposition and/or actions.[493] Importantly,

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[490] God himself who hears (שמע) the cries of Israel (Exod 2:24; 6:5) expects them to hear/obey
(שמע) his commands (Exod 15:26; 19:5). Likewise, God remembers (זכר) his covenant with Abraham (Exod
2:24) and institutes ritual to bring about remembrance (זכר) of himself (Exod 20:24). Similar reciprocality is
present in the language of Leviticus where the people are commanded to walk in God's commands (Lev
26:3) and God will walk among them (Lev 26:12). God will not "abhor" them (Lev 26:11) if they do not
"abhor" his commands (Lev 26:15) and vice versa (Lev 26:30, 43–44). Ultimately, God loves them (Deut
7:7) and wants to be loved in return (Deut 6:5) Thus, God is responsive to the disposition of his people, all
the while modeling the type of disposition they ought to manifest toward him. Thus, the human response to
God requires more than external actions. It requires a change in heart (Lev 26:42; cf. Deut 10:16).
Reciprocality is also evident in a benedictory proclamation; Jabesh-gilead is to be "blessed of the LORD
because" of the חסד they showed in burying Saul (2 Sam 2:5–6).

[491] In this passage, four factors of divine blessing are present: the divine character, the covenant,
divine action (remembering the covenant), and human response (God-fearing). Priority is here given to the
divine character of grace and compassion and his positive action, but contingency is clearly displayed in
regard to whether or not potential objects of blessing "fear" God. Further, God "blesses" the "righteous
man" and "surrounds him with favor" (Ps 5:12; cf. 37:28). The "good" one obtains divine "favor" (רָצוֹן) but
the wicked will be condemned (Prov 12:2). Similarly, "when a man's ways are pleasing [רָצָה] to the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7). Likewise, the one who is attentive to the
"word" and trusts God "will find good" and is "blessed" (Prov 16:20) just as God is "good" to those who
"wait for him" and "seek Him" (Lam 3:25; cf. Ruth 3:20). Reciprocality is likewise implied in the
statement, "Delight [ענג] yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps 37:4).
Those who "love" the name of God exult in him, take refuge in him (5:11 [12]) and are the righteous that
God blesses (5:12 [13]). Likewise, various blessings are associated with proper human disposition,
including: loving righteousness and hating wickedness (Ps 45:7), loving God's name (Ps 69:36), walking in
God's way (Pss 119:1; 128:1), and fearing God (Pss 128:1; 103:11, 13, 18; Eccl 8:12). Likewise, God
states that he will deliver someone, "because He has loved [חשק] Me," that is, "known My name" (Ps
91:14).

[492] In this context, both מצא + חֵן and שֵׂכֶל appear to be evaluative. "The root meaning of sekel (var.
sekel) is 'vision,' 'perception.' It almost always refers to (1) perception from the standpoint of the
perceiver. The possessor of sekel sees a situation clearly and is consequently discerning and circumspect.
Sometimes sekel refers to (2) perception from the standpoint of the object, i.e., the way *others* see a
person" (Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 147); cf. 1 Sam 25:3; Esth 2:7; Gen 29:17; 39:6; Ps 111:10; Prov 3:4; cf.
HALOT 1328. See also the word study of חנן on מצא + חֵן. Further, although Fox is adamant that the חסד here
"can only be God's kindness toward the pupil" and thus cannot be human חסד (Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 144), the
more likely (and common) reading is that people are being encouraged to act loyally and faithfully. So
Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 241; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 121; cf. Prov 20:28. See the
discussion in the word study of חסד above.

[493] For instance, the opposite of divine blessing is manifested in reaction to Judah's unfaithfulness
when God declares, "You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken [עזב] you to Shishak" (2 Chr 12:2, 5).

even the lack of blessing and the execution of divine judgment is directed toward disciplining

Israel with the hope that they will turn back so that the relationship can be restored (Deut 8:5).[494]

Significantly, the contingency of divine blessing is set alongside the contingency of

divine love, specifically "because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them. . . . God

will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. He

will love you and bless you and multiply you" (Deut 7:12–13; cf. 2 Sam 22:20–25).[495] Likewise,

humans are thus to turn from idolatry and return to God, in order to receive the full measure of

divine beneficence and mercy. If they will but return, God will "love them freely" (Hos 14:1–4

[2–5]; cf. Joel 2:12–14). On the other hand, Israel's continued disloyalty removes the divine

blessing such that God has "withdrawn" his "peace" from the people, even his "lovingkindness

and compassion" (Jer 16:5; cf. Jer 14:10).

Conditionality must not be confused with merit. Divine blessing is not deserved based on

Israel's "righteousness" (Deut 9:4). On the contrary, Israel has "provoked" God to "wrath" over

and over (Deut 9:7). Nevertheless human action may contribute to divine pleasure (cf. Num

14:8), or, on the other hand, it may obstruct divine love, and may even eventually prompt God to

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Similarly, "the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chr 15:2). When the people seek God "with their whole heart" and "earnestly," God "let them find Him" (2 Chr 15:4, 15) and "gave them rest on every side" (2 Chr 15:15; cf. Jer 29:13–14). Thus, the continuation or disruption of the covenant blessings is clearly predicated on the human response. The relationship, then, is not presented as one unilaterally predicated on the divine will.

[494] Cf. M. F. Rooker, *Leviticus* (NAC 3A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 318. "By reason of Israel's continued provocation of God, its troubles will also become more aggravated, not as a retaliatory device on God's part, but as a further stimulus to capture their attention. . . . The same love of God that sent the word of the prophets will not send a message of love in the tragedies of life, hoping that the nation will be forced by desperation to cry out to God for forgiveness and love once again." Kaiser Jr., "The Book of Leviticus," in *Genesis to Leviticus*, 1:1180.

[495] Notably, divine blessing is also connected to divine delight when David proclaims that he has been rescued "because" God "delighted in" (חפץ) him (2 Sam 22:20). David goes on to describe his "reward" and "recompense" as a consequence of his own fidelity to God (2 Sam 22:21–25; cf. 1 Kgs 3:6), culminating in the refrain, "with the kind You show yourself kind, with the blameless You show Yourself blameless" (2 Sam 22:26; cf. 22:27).

dispossess a people. In this way, divine blessing is gracious but requires ongoing reciprocation.[496]

Thus, Judges differentiates between the "lovers" (אהב) and "haters" (איב) of God; the former will

be blessed, the latter cursed (Judg 5:31). Nevertheless, while human reciprocation may be a

proximal cause of the maintenance of divine blessing, its origin, and the primary ground of its

continuance, is explicitly located in divine love (Deut 4:36–38; 7:8; 23:5).

Furthermore, the divine disposition toward the people, although it may be affected, is not

wholly dependent upon the human response but, rather, God resolves to be ready to respond even

when his people have forfeited all privileges (Lev 26:40–44).[497] Indeed, whereas divine

beneficence may be interrupted, it appears that divine benevolence remains. God seems to

continually seek and forecast a state of affairs when he can abundantly bless the people.[498] God

desires to bless the people and has the power to do so since "nothing is too hard for him" (Jer

32:17, 27) yet God gives to each "according to his ways" and the "fruits of his deeds" (Jer

32:19).[499] The people suffer not because of God's will but because they continually provoke God

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[496] Thus, "that the Israelites are undeserving is not incompatible with his [Moses] frequent admonition that obedience to the commandments is a precondition for the conquest (see, e.g., 4:1; 6:18–19). That condition applies to their behavior from now on (see 10:16): future obedience is indispensable for the conquest, but it will not be the reason why God chose to give the land to Israel." Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 97. Likewise, see Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 193–94, 211, Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 184.

[497] God will hear and remember the covenant if the people confess and respond to him (Lev 26:40, 42) and in all this God will refuse to reject (מאס) and abhor (נעל) his people or break (פרר) the covenant even when they reject and abhor (נעל) him (Lev 26:44). This is only explained by the proclamation, "I am the Lord their God" (Lev 26:44). This "underscores the significance of YHWH's fidelity to his covenant. . . . Israel will continue as his people, and the covenantal promises will remain in force. This statement belies the claim that divine mercy is absent in priestly theology." Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2337. Levine suggests, "No matter how disloyal the Israelites have been, the Lord remains their God and will restore them." *Leviticus*, 192.

[498] Thus, God's stirring declaration, "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deut 5:29; cf. Deut 4:40; 6:24; 12:28).

[499] Thus, if they persist in evil, God will "set [his] eyes against them for evil and not for good" (Amos 9:4; cf. Lev 26:17; Deut 31:17–18). "To 'fix one's gaze on' (שם עינים על) is usually a sign of favor (Gen 44:21; Jer 24:6). Here, however, its purpose is for harm (לרעה)." Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 392. Thus, it is evaluative and responsive. Perhaps this conditionality is nowhere more apparent than in Jer 18:7–10 where the divine intention is represented as directly contingent upon human response, and God will 'relent' according to the actions of his people.

to anger through spiritual adultery and wickedness, yet God looks forward to a day of restoration that he will enact and thus "rejoice" over his people "to do them good" (Jer 32:30–42) with the bestowal of such goodness and peace that it will cause the nations to tremble (33:6–9; cf. Zech 10:6; Zeph 2:7).[500] In spite of human shortcomings, God's enduring commitment to covenant remains, while nevertheless partially contingent upon human response.

The pervasive conditionality in the OT therefore suggests that divine blessing is not purely arbitrary beneficence but is often responsive to the divine-human relationship. Thus one finds a conditional/unconditional motif that weaves itself through the complexities of the divine-human relationship, complexities that betray a fundamental place for a relational give and take between God and humans. In all this, while divine blessing need not be motivated or initiated by human action or obedience, to some extent ongoing divine blessing is presented as dependent upon human response to God's initiative and providence. God desires to pour out his blessings, but the actual reception of God's covenant blessing is often presented as contingent upon human fidelity. In other words, it is consistently God's will to continue the blessing relationship, to be with his people, to not forsake them, but he leaves the decision in their hands. Since the reasons for the absence (or lessening) of divine blessing are not to be found in God's goodness or character, nor in God's election, there must be other factors at work, especially including the disobedience and apostasy of the people. At no point has God merely failed to follow through on his end of the covenant; the failure to receive promised divine blessings is presented as due to human transgression of appropriate response to God.

However, it is important to note that although the covenant relationship posits a specific *modus operandi* regarding blessings and curses, not all blessings fit neatly within such a framework. First of all, divine blessings are not restricted to the elect but, rather, God is "good to

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[500] Nevertheless, despite the anticipation of a future full blessing in Zechariah, the contingency of the divine covenant remains in view, allowing for the possibility of its removal (Zech 11:10).

all" (Ps 145:9). Yet, he specifically "keeps" those "who love Him while the wicked are destroyed (Ps 145:20; cf. 70:4 [5]). Here there is a clear differentiation between universal and particular blessing, as has been seen elsewhere in the OT.[501] Presumably, there are aspects in which God blesses all people yet other aspects that operate in response to human disposition and/or actions.

Second, questions regarding the correspondence between human actions and divine blessing arise. To be sure, human response is an essential (necessary, but not sufficient) component of covenant blessing. The covenant relationship cannot continue forever without positive human response in accord with the expectations of God. Yet, the priority of the divine initiative is evident. However, humans often do not receive their just deserts, as is also clearly represented in the OT, especially in Job and Qohelet (cf. Eccl 3:16–17; 8:12, 14; 9:2). Thus, there is not always a one-to-one correlation between behavior and the reception of blessings or curses. Accordingly, positing a thoroughgoing "theology of (immediate) retribution" would create a significant tension.[502] However, the complexity in the operation of the divine-human relationship, as presented in the OT, resists positing a simplistic, one-to-one relationship between the occurrences of an individual's earthly life and their faithfulness to God. Moreover, the Bible operates with a tension between the present and the future. As such, often retribution, whether positive or negative, operates as deferred rather than immediate. It becomes apparent as the canon progresses that ultimate justice awaits the eschaton (Rev 20). These dual tensions of the

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[501] As L. C. Allen comments, "First, the whole creation is dependent on Yahweh's providential work. . . . Second, Yahweh's loving care is demonstrated especially to that group of people privileged to invoke this name in worship, the community of Israel." *Psalms 101–150*, 373.

[502] Even texts that may be read as positing a view of immediate retribution in isolation are clarified by wider contextual interpretation. For instance, Ps 18:25–26 [26–27]) posits, "With the kind You show Yourself kind; With the blameless You show Yourself blameless; With the pure You show Yourself pure, And with the crooked You show Yourself astute." However, the context of this verse demonstrates that the king's enemy has assailed him (Ps 18:17–18 [18–19]). Thus, God hears his cry in accordance with his faithfulness, but such faithfulness has not preserved him from all misfortune. As Craigie puts it, "He had lived a life of moral integrity, he had walked in God's ways. . . . The assault of enemies had not been a consequence of his behavior; it did not reflect divine judgment. So he had been able to call for divine deliverance, and deliverance had come." *Psalms 1–50*, 174–75.

presence/absence of retribution and the present/future become perhaps more prominent in the NT, as shall be seen. Aside from this tension, the contingency that is evident throughout the OT, with regard to the reception of divine blessings, assumes that God takes account of the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of covenant conditions. If God does, in fact, take into account human actions that affect (yet not determine) the bestowal of blessing, then divine beneficence is not wholly unilateral and, of necessity, God's nature is capable of seeking and appreciating reciprocal response. With this in mind, attention now turns particularly to the foreconditionality of divine love in the OT.

The Foreconditionality of Love in the Torah

The priority of divine love is explicit in the unmerited election of Israel (cf. Deut 4:37; 7:7–8; 10:15). Israel was the object of God's love prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions (cf. Deut 9:4–5). The priority of God's love is further apparent from the first appearance of חסד in Genesis when Lot describes his deliverance from Sodom by the phrase "you have magnified your lovingkindness" (Gen 19:19). Abraham's servant praises God for "His lovingkindness and truth" in guiding him to a bride for Isaac (Gen 24:12, 27; cf. Gen 32:10 [11]). Notably, the servant's praise implies that God could have withheld his lovingkindness, which is thus depicted as free and voluntary.

Divine love is also amazingly enduring as appears so poignantly as in the narrative of Exod 32–34 where God freely grants mercy and compassion to an undeserving people who have forfeited the privileges of their special relationship with God. In so doing, God manifests his own nature as "abounding in lovingkindness and truth" in close association to his being "compassionate and gracious" and longsuffering (Exod 34:6–7; cf. 33:19).[503] God's willingness

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[503] Here, the syntagm חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת appears, which emphasizes the commitment, reliability, faithfulness, steadfastness, and fidelity of the divine חסד. It appears elsewhere in the Torah in Gen 24:27; cf. Gen 32:10 [11].

to overcome sin and the disruption of the relationship manifests the steadfastness of his commitment, which is the only way the divine-human relationship can be continued.

However, although divine love is amazingly enduring, it is not strictly unconditional. Rather, divine love is foreconditional. That is, God's love is bestowed prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. As has been seen earlier, divine חסד is conditionally predicated on the human response of love for God. God will visit iniquity to the third and fourth generation of those who hate him, but divine חסד will be shown to the thousandth generation of those who love (אהב) him and keep his commandments (Exod 20:5–6 = Deut 5:10; cf. Exod 34:7; Deut 7:9; Jer 32:18). חסד is thus unmerited, though not thereby altogether unconditional as shall be seen further below.

Deuteronomy 7:7–13 further illustrates the foreconditionality of divine love in one of the fullest expositions of how love is to operate within the divine-human relationship. First, divine love is prior to human response and unmerited. "Not because you were more numerous than all other peoples did Yahweh delight [חשק] in you, therefore he chose [בחר] you when you were the least of all peoples, because of the love [אַהֲבָה] of Yahweh for you, and he kept the oath which he swore to your fathers," delivered and redeemed them (Deut 7:7–8).[504] Divine love is thus prior to conditions (foreconditional) and, at the same time, unmerited. However, it is not unconditional. God is "the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness [חסד] to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deut 7:9) yet "repays those who hate Him to their faces" (Deut 7:10). Therefore, Israel is to "listen" to, "keep," and "do" all of God's commands (Deut 7:11). "Then it shall come about, *because* [עֵקֶב] you listen to these judgments and keep and do them," God "will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your fathers" and "He will love you and bless you and multiply you" in

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[504] My translation. Notably, Jacob points to the picture in Hos 9:10 of God finding Israel like grapes in the wilderness, suggesting that "Israel must therefore have had some trait to arouse Yahweh's interest, but this passage, unique of its kind, might also mean that the impossible had become true, and so put in relief the extraordinary and miraculous character of election." *Theology*, 110.

numerous ways (Deut 7:12–13, emphasis mine).[505] Thus, although the origination of divine love

is foreconditional and unmerited, the continuance of his love (as חסד and אהב) and the attendant,

promised, covenant blessings are all likewise contingent and conditional upon the human

response, often love that is to be manifested in devoted loyalty and obedience.

The Foreconditionality of Love in the Prophets

The priority of divine love is also apparent in the Prophets. For example, while Solomon

was an infant "the LORD loved him" (2 Sam 12:24). Such love is obviously prior to any

conditions that Solomon could have possibly fulfilled, though it is associated with the Davidic

covenant.[506] Just as divine אהב was bestowed foreconditionally (prior to any conditions) upon

Solomon, the endurance of divine חסד is predicted by God in a prophecy shared with David.

Specifically, God promises to treat Solomon as a father would his son, including necessary

correction and discipline (יכח), yet never to take away his lovingkindness, which itself results in

continued blessing (2 Sam 7:13–15; cf. 2 Sam 22:51).[507] Solomon himself predicates this on

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[505] The *vav* consecutive at the start of Deut 7:13 implies that v. 13 is likewise a result of Israel's appropriate response. Thus, listening, keeping, and doing the divine judgments (Deut 7:12) are the condition that God will "love you [אהב] and bless you [אהב] and multiply [רבה] you" according to the divine promise (Deut 7:13). Quell notes that this verse indeed "links the love of God with blessing as a reward which Yahweh will give for covenant faithfulness. Hence the thought of love unintentionally acquires a note of *Do ut des.*" "Love in the OT," 33. However, he incorrectly believes this connection to law robs love of "its best part, its freedom." Notably, even that which God had promised (swore) is presented as explicitly conditional upon the ongoing relationship. However, as Craigie points out, "This did not mean that obedience merited divine blessing, but rather that obedience maintained the proper covenant relationship with God; and his people could experience the blessing of God only when the covenant relationship, which involved reciprocal responsibilities, was properly maintained." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 180. Divine love is thus relationally beneficent. Divine blessing originates in the promise (Deut 1:11; 2:7) and thus, ultimately, in love. On the other hand, destruction will come "because" (עֵקֶב) of disobedience (Deut 8:20). Cf. Deut 13:3–4; 19:9.

[506] This divine love entails not only a positive divine disposition toward Solomon, but also grace toward David manifested in a visible marker of the continuance of divine love in the aftermath of his sins with Bathsheba and against Uriah.

[507] Here, then, God promises to really care for Solomon, not indifferently, but including the discipline that truly accompanies love. Cf. Deut 8:15; Prov 3:11–12.

God's "great lovingkindness" to David "according as he walked before [God]" faithfully (1 Kgs 3:6).[508]

The surpassing endurance of God's love is abundantly evident in his continual love to an undeserving and ungrateful people who even have the audacity to question his love (cf. Mal 1:2–5).[509] In some instances, divine love is spoken of as "everlasting." God is said to show his lovingkindness to David "forever" (2 Sam 22:51; cf. 2 Sam 7:13–15). The everlasting nature of divine חסד even becomes part of a frequent refrain, "the LORD is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting" (Jer 33:11).[510] Further, God declares his intention to "betroth" the people to him "forever" in righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, and compassion (Hos 2:19 [21]).

In this regard, consider the fluctuation between the potential rupture of the divine-human relationship and its continuance that appears in Isa 54. Israel is compared to a "wife forsaken and grieved in spirit" and "rejected" (Isa 54:6).[511] God even admits, "For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you" (Isa 54:7).[512] Moreover, in contrast to his "outburst of anger," which amounted to the hiding of his face "for a moment," God, the redeemer, will "with everlasting lovingkindness . . . have compassion" on his people (Isa 54:8). Moreover, God's "lovingkindness will not be removed" and his "covenant of peace will not be shaken, Says

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[508] As such, Solomon appears to be the benefactor of something akin to a covenant of grant that God made with David. God shows "great חסד" in reciprocation of David's faithfulness. Cf. 1 Kgs 15:4–5. See the discussion further above.

[509] Elsewhere, the Israelites rebelled and "grieved His Holy Spirit" (Isa 63:10) and God's "zeal," "mighty deeds" and the "stirrings" of his heart and compassion appear to be "restrained" (Isa 63:15). Yet, God's anger is not "forever [לָעַד]," because He delights חָפֵץ in" steadfast love (חֶסֶד) (Mic 7:18). Thus, he will again have compassion, forgive, and give truth to Jacob and חסד to Abraham (Mic 7:20).

[510] This phrase is quite frequent in the Psalms (cf. Pss 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1–4, 29; 136:1–26).

[511] For the similar analogy, see Jer 2:1; Hos 3:1, see the previous discussion of the familial analogies.

[512] Notice the allusion to perpetual covenant with Noah in v. 9–10.

the LORD who has compassion" (Isa 54:10; cf. Isa 55:3).[513] While divine anger, manifested in

rejection, is a momentary torrent, divine love is manifested in great compassion and endures

beyond mere covenant stipulations, making a way for reconciliation. Nevertheless, it is not

altogether constant.

Perhaps the foremost passage regarding the enduring nature of divine love is found in Jer

31. Within the context of the need for Judah to turn to God, specifically that he will be found if

they seek with all their heart (Jer 29:13), and in the aftermath of God's punishment and exile of

them for their harlotries (Jer 30), God declares the depth of this love. Even after all that has

transpired between the covenant partners, he will be their God and they shall be his people (Jer

31:1), they have found "favor," and the covenant will be restored to a remnant (Jer 31:2). It is

within this context that God himself declares, "I have loved you with an everlasting love;

Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer 31:3).[514] First, this is a glorious affirmation

of the longsuffering and overarching nature of divine love, itself the basis of God's continued

drawing in lovingkindness. This new covenant points to a further work of God that provides the

possibility of an ongoing, intimate, covenant relationship between God and his people. Although

God will punish iniquity, the results of which reach even to future generations, God's

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[513] Oswalt suggests that God's "*ḥesed,* that gracious, giving loyalty that, if given half a chance, will beggar itself for the beloved. It is not a spineless sentimentality that is blind to our human condition. Rather, it calls us into the mutual commitment of covenant. But it is that 'love [that] never fails' of which Paul knew (1 Cor. 13:8, NIV)." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 423.

[514] The opening phrase, מֵרָחוֹק יְהוָה נִרְאָה לִי, could refer to a revelation from "long ago" in reference to Sinai, but may also be taken to mean "from afar." The latter would be in accord with Jeremiah's use of רָחוֹק, elsewhere in the sense of distance (Jer 12:2; 23:23; 25:26; 30:10; 46:27; 48:24; 51:50). Yet, the sense of "long ago" is also represented in other prophets. The precise relationship between חֶסֶד and "I have drawn you" is not certain since there is no preposition between the terms. Yet, it is clear that חֶסֶד results in the "drawing." Such continuance of divine love will result in a return of blessings to Israel (Jer 31:13) and ultimately in a new covenant.
   The phrase אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם, usually translated "everlasting love" might also be translated "love of old" or ancient love. However, such an interpretation would appear to be strained. Moreover, the syntagm of חסד + עוֹלָם seems to be thematically related to this syntagm and the meaning "of old" applied to עוֹלָם in many such contexts does not fit (i.e., Isa 54:8; cf. 2 Sam 22:51). If such a connotation were present, one would expect מֵעוֹלָם, so Ps 25:6. Rather, divine חֶסֶד is elsewhere consistently depicted as "everlasting," unmistakably so in texts such as Ps 103:17. It seems best to read this as a reference to "everlasting love."

lovingkindness is transmitted to the thousandth generation (Jer 32:18; cf. Exod 20:6 = Deut

5:10).[515] Within this context, a future is envisioned in which God will restore, forgive, and be so

good to his people that the other nations will tremble (Jer 33:9; cf. Jer 31:31–34; 32:38). In this

context, praise will resound for God's goodness and "everlasting lovingkindness" (Jer 33:11).[516]

On the other hand, there are numerous instances throughout the prophets that display the

conditionality of love, including its potential forfeiture. A most striking and illuminating example

is found in Hosea when God's people become so evil that God "came to hate [שָׂנֵא] them" and

declared, "I will love them no more" (Hos 9:15).[517] Notice the contingency of divine love. It is

clearly foreconditional since God "found" them in the wilderness (Hos 9:10) and loved them prior

to any human response. However, it is clearly not unconditional since this love is interrupted,

even discontinued. Divine hate is here associated with the discontinuance of love, but not

indifference. As such, divine love is neither unilateral nor impartially constant. However, God's

final word has not been spoken in Hos 9 but he posits a further, conditional opportunity. If they

will but return, God will "heal their apostasy" and "love them freely" (אֹהֲבֵם נְדָבָה), his anger will

be "turned away," and blessings will result (Hos 14:1–4 [2–5]).[518] The very opportunity of

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[515] This is clearly an allusion to Exod 20:5–6; 3:7; Deut 5:9–10, which Lundbom calls "the divine retribution formula." *Jeremiah 21–36*, 512; cf. Jer 31:30. Literally, God "shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them." The following verse emphasizes that God is just in his dispersal of rewards (Jer 32:19); cf. Deut 24:16; Ezek 18:20.

[516] Such a refrain appears often throughout the Psalms.

[517] Further, God declares that they became as detestable as that which they love (Hos 9:10), likely descriptive of their engagement in cultic and sexual evils (cf. Num 25), even eating sacrifices to the dead (Ps 106:28); cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 537. Andersen and Freedman translate, "Because of all their evil in Gilgal indeed there I came to hate them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds, I will expel them from my house. I will never love them again." Ibid., 536.

[518] Eichrodt thinks that Hosea's depiction, which he elsewhere considered the deepest and most advanced, nevertheless is "utterly impossible to rationalize it into a dogmatic statement about the nature of God" where the "most appalling outbursts of anger and the expressions of favour toward the new Israel—I will love them no more' (9.15) and 'I will love them freely' (14.4)—are allowed to stand side by side with no attempt at reconciliation, signifying that on the basis of the prophetic faith at any rate there is no method of reconciling them. The only answer is to flee from the wrathful to the loving God." Eichrodt, *Theology*, 253. Thus, he believes that "it can only be understood as the product of faith,' breaking through the opus alienum of the divine wrath, to the vision of love as the ultimate and decisive power." *Theology*, 253.

returning to God is predicated on divine compassion, yet the reception of divine blessing is nevertheless conditional; if only they will repent, God will "love them freely" (Hos 14:1, 4; cf. Joel 2:12–14). Thus, significant tension appears between the stated endurance, and yet apparent absence at times, of divine love and lovingkindness. How does the repetitive conditionality of the divine-human relationship accord with "everlasting love"?[519] The tension is especially apparent in contrast to God's statement in Hos 9:15 that he came to hate Israel and "will love them no more" (Hos 9:15). If such statements are taken seriously, it appears that divine love is everlasting in some respect(s), yet may nevertheless be discontinued.[520] Importantly, the object of this everlasting love appears to be a "remnant" (Jer 31:7–9) within the parental analogy, suggesting limited application of such everlasting love. In other words, divine love itself may be everlasting, but its objects may not be constant. Thus, the love relationship will ultimately continue only for those who are a part of the new covenant.

In this regard, consider the striking presentation of the simultaneous continuance of God's love for his people and yet restriction from actively loving them that appears in Jer 11, further highlighting these issues. Because of their continual apostasy, even breaking (פרר) the covenant (Jer 11:10), God will "not listen [שֹׁמֵעַ] when they call" (Jer 11:14). Even though they are his "beloved" (יְדִיד) they lack the right to his house because of their "vile deeds" (Jer 11:15; cf. 8:5).[521] In one sense, the people continue to be viewed as God's "beloved" yet the love

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However, this tension is not a contradiction in light of the concept of foreconditionality.

[519] Keown, Scalise, and Smothers suggest that "the unique description of the divine love as עוֹלָם, "everlasting," moves beyond the conditional promise in Deut 7:9, no longer counting generations or sins. It is the LORD's constant commitment to Israel that bridges the generations and makes restoration possible." *Jeremiah 26–52*, 108. However, contra Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, it does not seem Jeremiah moves beyond conditionality at all, especially in consideration of the wider themes of Jeremiah (cf. Jer 18:7–10), not to mention further tension between these themes throughout the prophets.

[520] Consider the continuity between this conception of divine love and Walton's view of covenant jeopardy. *Covenant*, 94–107.

[521] Whereas God is steadfast in love, "Jerusalem is distinguished by its steadfastness to rebellion and evildoing." Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 509. In fact, God declares that even "a remnant will not be left

relationship is ineffective and broken. Thus, it appears that divine benevolence, which stems from his foreconditional love for Israel, is maintained, while his beneficence is interrupted by their apostasy. In other words, the love God desires to manifest remains thwarted by the rebellious actions of the object of that love. In this way, the foreconditional divine love is subject to conditions in the actual history of the relationship.

Divine love is not, in this passage, impartially constant or undifferentiated. On the contrary, it is extremely passionate. God may, at least temporarily, forsake (עזב) his inheritance by giving the "beloved" (יְדִדוּת) of his "soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) to her enemies (Jer 12:7), noting that he has actually "come to hate [שׂנא] her" (Jer 12:8).[522] There can be no mistaking the profound passion of God for his people, as the beloved of his very soul, yet even this intense affection does not prevent such passion from turning to hatred. It appears, then, that the apostasy can go so far that the people can cut themselves off from divine love such that even if Moses and Samuel were present, God declares, "My heart [נַפְשִׁי] would not be with this people" (Jer 15:1).[523] Israel's continued disloyalty removes the divine blessing such that God has "withdrawn" his "peace"

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to them" (Jer 11:23). The lack of a remnant is apparently in reference to the conspirators, not the nation as a whole (Ezra 2:23).

[522] The form יְדִדוּת is a hapax legomenon but with the identical meaning of יָדִיד "beloved" (cf. Jer 11:15). This phrase "beloved of my soul" is a statement of profound emotion. Notice נֶפֶשׁ, the seat of emotions. Thus, Miller states, "I have given the beloved of my heart into the hands of her enemies." The pathos of the whole section is caught up in that one sentence, with its identification of the one whom the Lord has given over to her enemies as "the beloved of my heart." "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:679. Such expression "is a strong one . . . showing a deep love for his people." Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 654. Thus, divine hatred here appears likewise to be intensely passionate. Notably, God appears to both love and hate Judah at the same time in this passage. Although the emotionality of divine hatred is often downplayed in some theological circles, the emotionality here is recognized by many scholars. For instance see Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, 184; Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:679.

[523] "The situation is so terrible—lying, apostasy, adultery, malfeasance of office, oppression of the poor—that not even the most successful intercessors could succeed. The Lord's heart has hardened in the face of continuing, unrelenting wickedness. The people's refusal to 'turn,' repent, and their refusal to receive correction is so persistent (e.g., 2:30; 3:10; 5:3; 8:5–6; 15:7) that 'turning' is no longer possible." Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:692. "There is a limit to God's mercy and patience." Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 157. "As has been seen previously, in all this, it is not God's decision to remove himself, but they have 'done this to' themselves." Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, 33. Similarly, Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 174.

from the people, even his "lovingkindness and compassion" (Jer 16:5; cf. Jer 14:10). As such, despite the enduring quality of divine lovingkindness, it is not unilaterally permanent. God's love, lovingkindness, and compassion may be withdrawn, contingent upon the actions of the people. In this way, it appears that the reception of divine love by its intended objects can be thwarted while God waits for a "remnant" upon whom he can pour out his blessings. As such, God's love is, in and of itself, everlasting and granted prior to conditions, but its continued reception is conditional upon appropriate human response. This is the foreconditionality of divine love.

The Foreconditionality of Love in the Writings

The priority of divine love is likewise apparent in the Writings. God is, freely and without prompting, "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth" (Ps 86:15; cf. 103:8; 106:44-45; 145:8; Neh 9:17). Such love is astonishing in its endurance. God's lovingkindness is frequently spoken of as everlasting, often in the hymn formula, "give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting" (Pss 106:1; 107:1; 118:1–4, 29; 136:1–2, 4–5; Ezra 3:11; 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21).[524] Elsewhere the same theme is confirmed: God is good, his lovingkindness is everlasting, and his faithfulness is to all generations (Ps 100:5; cf. 89:1–2 [1–3]; 117:2; 138:8).[525] His "lovingkindness . . . endures all day long" (Ps 52:1 [3]).[526] This enduring bond is linked to the

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[524] Notably, in Ezra, the paradigmatic refrain comes in the wake of the laying of the second temple's foundation, itself a historical witness to the numerous sufferings of the exile. Thus, it seems to be understood that even though calamity comes upon God's people, it is not because God's lovingkindness has changed.

[525] McCann reads this as having universal implications, "Psalm 100 wants us to know that God is shepherd both of God's people and of the whole cosmos (see Pss 23:1; 74:1; 80:1; 95:7; Ezek 34:11–16)." "The Book of Psalms," in *1 & 2 Maccabees*, 4:1079. Tate translates Ps 89:2 [3], "For I have declared that your loyal-love is built to last forever, (and) that you have fixed your faithfulness in the heavens." *Psalms 51–100*, 406. McCann Jr. adds, "God's steadfast love lies behind and accounts for the origin of the world. . . . The verb makes clear that God's character, the essence of which is steadfast love, is made known by God's creating, redeeming, and sustaining activity." "The Book of Psalms," in *1 & 2 Maccabees*, 4:1224.

[526] The term here translated "lovingkindness" is rendered in some translations by the unrelated lexeme חסד, which means shame, reproach, and is thus translated here, "you are a disgrace" (NIV; cf. also

intimacy of the father–son relationship that God enters into with Solomon. God proclaims that he

will be a father to Solomon and not take away his חסד from him (1 Chr 7:13; cf. Ps 103:13; cf.

103:17). Thus a personal, moral, and affectionate relationship is established, one that God

apparently has the power to end but declares that he will not. Within the context of the Davidic

promises, God declares, in accord with his superlative character of faithfulness, righteousness,

justice, lovingkindness and truth, that he will keep his lovingkindness forever (Ps 89:28 [29]; cf. 2

[3], 30–32 [31–33]; 18:50 [51]). Even within the context of sorrow and affliction, it is affirmed

that God's lovingkindness itself never ceases, just as his compassions do not fail; "great is [his]

faithfulness" (Lam 3:22–23; cf. Ps 33:5). However, such enduring love and lovingkindness are

not unilaterally constant.

Rather, the context of Lamentations itself draws attention to the tension between God's

"everlasting" חסד and the suffering and sorrows that befall his people. Such is apparent as well

when, at times, the lack of expected lovingkindness is lamented, through questions such as: Will

God "reject forever" and "never be favorable [רָצָה] again?" Has God's "lovingkindness ceased

forever," his "promise come to an end forever? Has God forgotten to be gracious" or "in anger

withdrawn his compassion?" (Ps 77:7–9 [8–10]). Similarly, Ps 88 questions God, "Will Your

lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon?" Further, "You have

removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are *in* darkness" (Ps 88:11, 18). Such

lamentation is based on apparent absence, coupled with the expected continuance of divine

lovingkindness, etc.[527]

NRSV). However, the syntagm חֶסֶד אֵל seems to make the more prevalent reading as God's enduring חסד more plausible; cf. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 32.

[527] As Tate comments, "The apparent absence of God in the present leads to meditation about the past, when divine love and protection were evident. This makes the present look even worse as the speaker remembers the favor, lovingkindness, graciousness, and compassion of the former days. Even God's eternal promises seem to have come to an end. In sorrow and abandonment the speaker ponders on the disturbing questions in vv 8–10." *Psalms 51–100*, 274–75.

Further, divine love is often spoken of as contingent and conditional, as was the case in

the Torah and the Prophets, here most often with reference to divine חסד. While God himself is

the ultimate ground of the bestowal of love and lovingkindness, divine love is not indifferent to

the actual response of human beings. For instance, God "keeps" the covenant and lovingkindness

to those who "walk before [him] with all their heart" (2 Chr 6:14; cf. Deut 7:9). Likewise, God

"keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments"

(Dan 9:4; cf. Neh 1:5; 13:22). Similarly, it is prayed that God continue lovingkindness to those

who "know" God and his righteousness to those who are "upright in heart" (Ps 36:10; cf. Ruth

1:8).[528] On the other hand, it is prayed that no lovingkindness be extended to the evil one,

"because he did not remember to show lovingkindness" (Ps 109:12, 16). Further, expected

reciprocality is quite explicit in the statement, "with the kind [חָסִיד] You show Yourself kind

[חסד]" (Ps 18:25 [26] = 2 Sam 22:26). Accordingly, "all the paths of the LORD are

lovingkindness and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Ps 25:10; cf. 25:6,

14).[529] Further, divine "lovingkindness" is seen as the basis upon which God "recompense[s] a

man according to his work," it is here unequivocally conditional (Ps 62:12; cf. 31:23 [24]).[530]

Likewise, it is the one with lovingkindness and truth who finds "favor and good repute in the

sight of God and man" (Prov 3:4). Similarly, just as the upright's prayer is God's delight (רָצוֹן), he

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[528] In Ruth 1:8, Naomi asks God to "deal kindly" with Ruth and Orpah as they "have dealt with the dead and with me." Robert L. Hubbard Jr. comments, "Here emerges a key theological assumption of the book: the intimate link between human action and divine action. In this case, human kindness has earned the possibility (even likelihood) of a God-given reward. It has even modeled the shape that reward should take. This assumes, of course, that God is so intimately involved in the main characters that he knows their actions. It also assumes that he cares about them—indeed, that he wants to treat them kindly." *The Book of Ruth* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 104–5.

[529] However, that this does not require perfect obedience is clear from Ps 25:11. As Craigie puts it, "All covenants have two parties, and the lovingkindness of God, the senior partner in the covenant (v 10a), was related to the psalmist's obedience to the covenant stipulations (v 10b)." Yet, "if God's response depended upon *sinlessness* with regard to the covenant stipulations, then there could be no response. And so the psalmist prays again for forgiveness, aware that his 'iniquity . . . is great.'" *Psalms 1–50*, 220.

[530] Tate translates, "Yours is indeed a loyal-love, O Lord, for you reward each person according to what he [or she] has done." *Psalms 51–100*, 117.

loves [אהב] the pursuer of righteousness (Prov 15:8–9). Lovingkindness "surrounds" the one who "trusts in the Lord" (Ps 32:10).[531] He "favors" (רצה) those "who fear him," that is, "those who wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 147:11; cf. Lam 3:25). Again, that God is interested in human response is likewise clear in the statement, "the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness" (Ps 33:18). God is thus willing to forgive "all who call upon" him, in his goodness and abundant lovingkindness (Ps 86:5; cf. 33:22). Similarly, "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him" (Ps 103:11). The conditionality on the basis of appropriate response here is obvious.

In all this, there is a striking contingency in God's lovingkindness. Perhaps the tension between such contingency and statements of God's everlasting חסד approaches resolution in the statement, "The lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember his precepts to do them" (Ps 103:17–18).[532] Here the everlasting promise of חסד is contained but particularized for those who respond appropriately to God.

At this juncture, it may be instructive to revisit the potential solutions to the tension between unconditionality and conditionality throughout the OT. The tension has been apparent with regard to love, lovingkindness, compassion, and the covenants, and it is not unreasonable to assume that the tension regarding such elements of the divine-human relationship are interrelated

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[531] "In other words, the 'godly one' (חסיד, v 6) will experience the divine lovingkindness (חסד, v 10)." Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 268.

[532] "This love is not to be willfully abused. Its recipients must respond with respectful awe, he says in a triple refrain at vv 11, 13, 17. . . . The activity of God, involving 'loyal love' and 'vindication' (vv 4b, 6), must find an echo of obedient activity in their lives. . . . 'Loyal love,' essentially engenders a corresponding relationship of obligation." L. C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 32–33. McCann Jr. suggests, "There seems to be a contradiction: How is it 'mercy' if finally it is deserved? And what need is there for forgiveness? This contradiction, or better perhaps, tension, represents the inevitable dilemma for God, who both wills and demands justice and righteousness and yet who loves and is committed to relationship with sinful people." "The Book of Psalms," in *1 & 2 Maccabees*, 4:1092. While McCann is right to note some apparent tension, it is not correct to conflate conditional with deserved.

and share a common thread. A prevalent position in biblical scholarship has been the belief that there are at least two, contradictory, streams of thought presented in the OT with regard to this issue, one positing the unconditionality and everlasting nature of God's promises, the other presenting the divine promises as conditional and potentially transient.[533] On the other hand, a canonical reading of the OT comes to a quite different and, I believe, compelling conclusion: that the covenant, and its attendant promises and blessings, including divine love, are unconditional in some respects, yet conditional in others. At the risk of oversimplification, this view basically interprets the data to point to the unconditionality of God's promises in general, but conditionality with regard to who will or will not be the recipients of such promises (as seems to be the clear reading of Ps 103:17–18 above).[534] God's love dovetails with this unconditionality and conditionality by way of its foreconditional nature. That is, God bestows love freely to his creatures foreconditionally, but the continued reception of that love, and attendant personal love relationship with God, is conditional upon appropriate human response to God's initiating love.[535]

Such a view is bolstered by, though not necessarily dependent on, interesting parallels between the biblical covenants and the grant type of covenant in the ANE.[536] While the

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[533] The prevalent view is that the Deuteronomic historian emphasized conditionality upon faithfulness while another strand, likely the priestly, emphasized the unconditional "perpetual covenant" harking back to Abraham. Weinfeld, "The Covenant," 195; idem, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic*; Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 149, 237–39.

[534] To be sure the nature and content (dynasty, land, etc.) of the promises vary considerably throughout the OT. Without attempting to conflate these promises, the overall unconditionality that a remnant will be the beneficiary of the fulfillment of those promises, while other potential beneficiaries may forfeit their place, may be recognized as a broad, overarching theme of the OT that, according to the NT, finds ultimate resolution in the eschatological kingdom that will be brought about by Jesus Christ; cf. Walton, *Covenant*, 94–107.

[535] This points toward the universality and particularity of divine love, which will be briefly taken up in the next section of this chapter.

[536] The grant type of covenant basically consists of gifts from a sovereign to an individual and his descendants who had loyally served him, with the assurance that the gifts will not be taken away from him or his progeny. Weinfeld, "The Covenant." It is important to note that Knoppers has compellingly argued that a covenant of grant genre, as Weinfeld posits, is inadequate to the complexity of covenants in the ANE as well as to the Davidic covenant in the OT, and misleading with regard to the nature of ANE covenants. For instance, he points out that ANE land grants (at least in the sources that correspond to Weinfeld's use)

complexity of both ANE covenants and biblical covenants defies one-to-one correlation with the

so-called covenant of grant, the many ANE instances of a promise of blessings that will extend to

future generations, independent of lapses in, and therefore punishment of, a particular generation,

provide a striking parallel to the interlaced elements of unconditionality and conditionality with

regard to the divine-human relationship of the OT.[537]

Scholars have long made a connection between the supposedly promissory and

unconditional Abrahamic and Davidic covenants as a "covenant of grant" in stark contrast to the

obligatory (upon the vassal) and conditional Mosaic covenant, akin to the so-called suzerain-

vassal treaty type in the ANE.[538] However, some scholars have recognized that there is apparent

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are, in fact, conditional and, further, do not conform to a standard pattern. Likewise, the instances related to the Davidic covenant are not altogether unconditional; they are not legal texts and represent divergent depictions of the covenant, in both form and content. Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern," 670–97. Further discussion of the technical nature of the disagreements regarding the extent of the correspondence between biblical covenants and so-called covenants of grant (or royal grant treaties) in the ANE goes far beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, this study simply recognizes a broad-based, three-fold typology of covenants: (1) parity or kinship where "obligations of the covenant are more or less equally distributed between the two parties"; (2) treaty covenant where obligations are primarily imposed upon an inferior by a superior; (3) grant covenant where the "obligations rest predominantly with the superior party." Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 29. The explanatory value of the evident parallels does not hinge upon the particular outcome of the form-critical debates regarding the level of correspondence to covenant genres since whether there is dependency of one on the other or not the elements of bilateral relationship are clearly apparent in the canonical text itself.

[537] For the examples of such partially unconditional, intergenerational ANE grants/promises see especially Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern," 670–97. Importantly, parallels can be found across many genres—"vassal treaties, grants, wills, and adoption documents." Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern," 684. As such, "rather than seeing biblical authors as modeling the Davidic promises after either vassal treaties or land grants, it would be more accurate to say that biblical authors draw upon a variety of genres in their presentations of YHWH's provisions for David's descendants." "Ancient Near Eastern," 674.

[538] For the distinction between the suzerain-vassal treaty as obligatory, meaning the vassal took on the obligations of the covenant in contrast to the view of the covenant of grant as promissory, where the grantor promises to bestow blessings (dynasty, land) upon the grantee in light of past faithfulness, see Weinfeld, "The Covenant," 184–85. This view is partially dependent on Weinfeld's assumption that a covenant is a largely one-sided, rather than bilateral, promise of obligation. Such sharp contrast between the supposed unconditionality of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants versus the emphatic conditionality of the Mosaic has been widely held. See, for instance, George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *BA* 17 (1954): 50–76.

Importantly, Weinfeld does recognize expectation of ongoing faithfulness, but not such that the fulfillment of the promises is conditional upon such faithfulness. In order for the Davidic covenant to qualify as an unconditional covenant, however, the statements of conditionality that pertain to reception of the promises with regard to the Davidic covenant (1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25; 9:4–9) are presumed by Weinfeld to be the result of Deuteronomistic redaction. "The Covenant," 195; cf. idem, *Deuteronomy and the*

conditionality evidenced in texts with regard to both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, neither of which is altogether promissory or obligatory.[539] In fact, since the covenants are integrally related to one another intertextually in the OT, there is significant overlap between the so-called suzerain-vassal type, the grant type, as well as the kinship type of covenant throughout the OT. As such, while these covenants are asymmetrical they are not depicted in the OT as altogether unilateral and one-sided, but are actually bilateral covenants that presume a form of mutuality (though not equality) between God and humans.[540] Such a position asserts itself within a final-form canonical interpretation of the text that takes seriously the consistent presentation of the endurance of God's beneficence contrasted with the similarly consistent predication of the continuance of such blessings on appropriate human response.[541] Importantly, the language of love itself consistently contains conditionality that presumes a bilateral relationship of give and take, in which God loves human beings and desires to be loved in return. Further implications of

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Deuteronomic. A final-form canonical approach is not at liberty to adopt such a selective reading of the texts that is based on circular reasoning.

[539] A case can certainly be made that the emphasis of the Mosaic covenant (at least in many passages) is on the obligations of Israel toward God while the emphasis of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are on the promises, but neither excludes promises or obligations. In fact, Cross maintains that "there are no 'unilateral' covenants in a kinship-based society" and missing this point has led to the "gross distortion" of viewing covenant as unilateral. *From Epic*, 14–15. Cross further points out the dependence of such a view on extra-biblical presuppositions, commenting on Wellhausen's view that "the relationship between God and Israel in premonarchical times and in early prophecy was 'natural,' spontaneous, free, interior (individualistic). Such language is his inheritance from a philosophical milieu created by idealism and romanticism, borrowed immediately from Vatke, and congruent with Protestant antinomianism." Ibid., 15.

[540] Knoppers has pointed out the insoluble problems with positing a stark contrast between promissory and obligatory covenants. By extensive reference to ANE parallels, he contends that most covenants are bilateral. This is the case even where the covenant is asymmetrical. The conditions and/or responsibilities may fall more heavily on one party or the other, but this does not amount to an entirely unilateral or one-sided covenant. Rather, "even in the most one-sided arrangements (e.g., Ulmi-Tesup; 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 89) there may be an element of reciprocity. The clearly bilateral dimension of such special relationships is but one more illustration of the complexity of covenant within ancient Israel and the ancient Near East." "Ancient Near Eastern," 696.

[541] Davies points out that the Davidic covenant has "an inbuilt expectation of obedience (1 Sam 7:14; Ps 132:12). The tensions which result may not be the result of careless redaction, but the necessary tensions in an account of a relationship with attempts to grapple with the conundrum of a persistent divine commitment and a meaningful human responsibility." *A Royal Priesthood*, 181. Cf. Gane, "Covenant of

this approach with regard to divine love and the God-world relationship will be explored in chapter 6.

In all this, there is no actual dichotomy between divine love and justice; חסד is shown toward those who respond to God, and yet, God repeatedly provides occasions for human response according to his compassion, graciousness, and longsuffering.[542] Thus, although God's love is grounded in his goodness, and prior to any external motivation, it does not appear to be manifested as uninterrupted or unilateral beneficence but, rather, appears within the context of real give-and-take relationship. In all this, God is clearly affected, loving and delighting in goodness, justice, and righteousness, reserving the ultimate reward for the upright.

The Relational and Multilateral Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that support the view that divine love is multilaterally relational.[543] God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into a particular, intimate relationship only with those who respond appropriately. First, God seeks and enters into reciprocally responsive love relationships with his creatures, which amount to multilateral divine-human love relationships. Second, though God's foreconditional love is universal, God does not love all equally and uniformly. God desires a reciprocal love relationship of give and take with all his creatures and initiates the possibility of such a relationship through his universal offer of foreconditional love that enables and calls for a reciprocal response of love. However, not all respond positively. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind

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Love," 38–39, 62–65, 73–76, 78.

[542] Recall the striking association between divine lovingkindness and justice as well as truth, righteousness, faithfulness, etc. Divine lovingkindness is unquestionably connected to moral categories and, as such, it only makes sense that God's love would not be antithetical to evaluation or conditionality.

[543] I use the term multilateral here and elsewhere because love not only is to flow reciprocally from God to humans and vice versa but also from humans to others, which is indirectly love toward God as well. Further, in the NT, intra-trinitarian love is also added to the mix (see chapter 5). Thus, the relations of divine love are more than bilateral, they are multilateral.

while reading this section. Is divine love unilateral? Is God the only proper agent of love or may there be a reciprocal divine-human love relationship? Is divine love universal or particular? Following on this, might some be loved more than others? What of the concept of eschatological reward and the "remnant"? This section of the study will proceed with a survey of reciprocal love in the OT.

Reciprocal Love in the Torah

In the Torah, there is both particularity and universality to God's love. The covenant relationship clearly depicts a particular love relationship (cf. Deut 4:37; 7:7–13; 10:15). God's special love for his people is evident in numerous places. For example, God "loves [חבב] the people," all the "holy ones" are in his "hand" (Deut 33:3).[544] However, divine love extends beyond the elect, Israel, to outsiders. God himself showed "His love for the alien" and commanded the Israelites to do likewise (Deut 10:18–19). In this way, the universality of divine love, which is explicit elsewhere, is implied.[545] Thus, there is a contrast between what may be called "insider love" and "outsider love." Throughout the OT, it becomes clear that God's intention is to call all peoples to a particular, reciprocal love relationship with himself. Those who

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[544] חבב is a hapax legomenon and may be derived or adopted from an Aramaic term meaning "bosom," which would signify "Yahweh's intense love" for the people. Good, "Love in the OT," *IDB* 3:165. However, חבב is interpreted in other ways, most notably as "pure," which Craigie reads as "Yea, the pure ones of the peoples." Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 392. Tigay thinks the text may be damaged and its meaning indeterminate. *Deuteronomy*, 320. The MT represents the object as plural, "the peoples" (עַמִּים). Thus, as Tigay notes, if the statement does indeed refer to God "it is a surprisingly universalistic statement for a poem about His protection of Israel." Ibid., 320–21. LXX, here, represents people as singular. Christensen follows MT, "peoples." *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, 836. However, Merrill interprets it as love but restricts its object to Israel. *Deuteronomy*, 435. Notably, later in this chapter Benjamin is referred to as the "beloved [יְדִיד] of the LORD" (Deut 33:12), "a term of endearment" Ibid., 440.

[545] Consider also the universal intent of the covenant promises to Abraham; they were to bless all nations (Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4). Further, the Abrahamic covenant extends even to the slave who becomes circumcised as a condition of entrance into the covenant (Gen 17:14). "The reason for this choice must not be sought in Israel's importance as a people, but in the unmerited love of God and in his fidelity to the promises (7:6–7). Yet, this choice does not limit God's rule on earth to this small people, but comes within the framework of God's plan for the whole world (10:14–15) and is the basis of the obedience and holiness required of Israel (10:15–16; 14:1–2). Israel's choice is for the purpose of mission (note also Gen 12:1–3; Exod 19:5–6)." Nicole, *NIDOTTE* 1:641.

have entered into such a relationship will be "insiders" while those who reject God's overtures will remain outsiders and, eventually, forfeit God's universal, foreconditional love.[546] In microcosm, the covenant people are treated as objects of God's insider love though the individuals within the covenant themselves may forfeit God's love.

God desires that his creatures reciprocate his love and thus enter into an intimate, particular love relationship with him. It should be remembered here and throughout the OT that, as shall be further explained in the coming chapters, human love toward God is itself predicated on God's prior action. This is apparent in God's proclamation to his people that he will "circumcise" their "heart . . . to love the LORD your God with all" their "heart" and "soul, so that [they] may live" (Deut 30:6).[547] With this in mind, throughout the Torah, humans are repeatedly commanded to love God. In response to what God has done, the people should "love" him, "always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments" (Deut 11:1). That is, humans are to love God with all their "heart," "soul," and "might" (Deut 6:5). Elsewhere, the command to love God is similarly repeated: Humans are to love God with all their "heart" and "soul" (Deut 10:12; 11:13; 13:3 [4]; 30:6; Josh 22:5), "to fear" him (Deut 10:12, 20; 13:3–4 [4–5]), "walk in His ways" (Deut 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 30:16; Josh 22:5), "serve" him (Deut 10:12; 11:13; 13:3–4 [4–5]; Josh 22:5), and "hold fast" or "cling" (דבק) to him (Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4 [5]; Josh 22:5; 30:20), to "keep" (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9; 11:1; 19:9; 30:16; Josh 22:5) and/or obey (Deut 11:13; 30:20) variously his voice, commandments, statutes, commandments,

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[546] Notice the stark contrast between the lovers and haters of God (Exod 20:5–6; Deut 5:9–10; 7:9–10).

[547] That God does not do this unilaterally is implicit in the abundance of commands to love God throughout Deuteronomy and elsewhere. God makes love toward himself possible but does not unilaterally effect it. On the other hand, if God did unilaterally cause humans to love him, why not do so from the beginning and universally? Such a conception would run counter to the OT narrative where God consistently calls human beings to respond to him in love. Clements comments, "There is to be a strong reciprocal bond of affection and commitment between Israel and the LORD as God." "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:343. Though Weinfeld sees loyalty and obedience as the primary meaning of the love command, he notes that "love between God and Israel involves also affection and emotion." *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 351.

ordinances, and judgments. Likewise, the people are to "take diligent heed to [themselves] to love" God (Josh 23:11; cf. Deut 4:15).[548] The people are similarly exhorted to "love the LORD" for he "preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer" (Ps 31:23 [24]). Importantly, God expects his people to love their fellow human beings: both neighbors (Lev 19:18) and aliens (Lev 19:34; Deut 10:18–19).

Beyond the many commands of love toward God, evidencing God's desire for a reciprocal love relationship, there are instances in which humans actually do love God. For example, those who love God and keep his commandments are those who are shown divine lovingkindness (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; cf. Deut 7:9). Conversely, God is "the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness [חסד] to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deut 7:9) yet "repays those who hate Him to their faces" (Deut 7:10).[549]

The operation of this reciprocality is evidenced in a seminal statement regarding divine lovingkindness. The first is situated within the third commandment of the Decalogue, which prohibits idolatry. In his passion (קנא) for this exclusive relationship, God will visit iniquity to the third and fourth generation of those who hate him, but divine חסד will be shown to the thousandth generations of those who love (אהב) him and keep his commandments (Exod 20:5–6 = Deut 5:10; cf. Exod 34:7; Deut 7:9; Jer 32:18).[550] Thus, God's חסד far exceeds divine judgment; the

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[548] Literally, they are to be "exceedingly watchful of their souls [inner person] to love" (Josh 23:11). The mention of "soul" implies that this is to be a passionate love, since "soul" is often the seat of emotions.

[549] God is faithful (אמן) and expects faithfulness. It might be said that divine love is thus faithfully seeking reciprocal faithfulness. Keown, Scalise, and Smothers point out that "God's love . . . motivated the election of the people and their deliverance . . . and lovingkindness 'for a thousand generations' measures the LORD's commitment to the covenant." *Jeremiah 26–52*, 108.

[550] This is not necessarily in contradiction to statements elsewhere that sons are not to be punished for the sins of their fathers (Deut 24:16; 2 Kgs 14:6; Ezek 18:20). Here, the consequences of iniquity appear to consist of those that are naturally passed down from generation to generation. It is a fact of life that the quality of a father's life has significant impact, for good or for ill, on the lives of his progeny. Notably, the range of consequences to the fourth generation would often include contemporaries, thus

consequences of the latter may extend to the fourth generation but חסד continues even unto the

thousandth generation, though conditionally predicated on the human response of love for God.[551]

Here lovingkindness is thus set within the context of a reciprocal relationship predicated partially

on human love for God. In this, the importance of the divine-human relationship *qua* relationship

is highlighted. God's passion for this relationship may result in temporary chastening when

appropriate, but ultimately divine blessings will overflow upon those who respond to God in love,

in accordance with God's character of steadfast love (חסד).

Reciprocal Love in the Prophets

Once again, in the Prophets, God does not love all equally. There is a universal divine

love but also a love that is particular and intimate. As has been mentioned already, God wants to

include all humans in an intimate love relationship with himself but this requires that humans

freely reciprocate God's love. A number of examples of "insider" love, that is, love that is

specially directed toward an individual or a group (going beyond universal love), occur in the

Prophets. As in the Torah, the special love that God has for his elect, covenant people is one

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making it even easier to see how the consequences of a patriarch's evils may severely affect his family. For a similar view, see Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 238. Likewise, Craigie further points out the intergenerational affects that would stem from children and grandchildren lacking the proper Torah instruction that "was essential to their life and well-being." *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 154. Compare, the similar, but nuanced view of Sarna, *Exodus*, 110. Others think the verse actually refers to the subsequent generations that continue to practice the same sins of the fathers, who will thus face similar consequences. Thus, the phrase "of those who hate me." Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 66; Stuart, *Exodus*, 454. In any case, this is in striking contrast to the practically everlasting חסד promised to those who love God, the "thousands," which Durham proposes, "might better be read 'innumerable descendancy.'" *Exodus*, 287.

[551] That is, "the Lord will faithfully reciprocate the devotion and obedience of the people." Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 67. There are a number of ANE parallels to this language. For instance, the first Ketef Hinnom silver plaque speaks of "the covenant-lover and fidelity to his lovers, and among those who keep." See Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 173. It also resembles language from the Sinuhe narrative, "God exalts the one who loves him." See ibid., *19–40*, 173. Based on these parallels, some have reduced love in Deuteronomy to legal obedience devoid of any tender emotion and many others have followed in viewing such language merely as technical treaty language. The seminal studies are Moran, "The Ancient," 77–87; McCarthy, "Notes," 145–46. However, this position is not compelling in light of the wider evidence throughout the Torah (and the rest of the canon) where tender emotion is apparent on both sides of the divine-human relationship. Numerous other reasons also suggest that the covenant background of אהב in the Torah and elsewhere is not mutually exclusive to the concurrent presence of emotional affection. For a further discussion of this issue see the אהב word study earlier in this chapter.

example of "insider" love (cf. Mal 1:2). Further, God "loved" Solomon as an infant as well as later in his life (2 Sam 12:24; Neh 13:26; cf. 1 Kgs 10:9). Since elsewhere it is apparent that God loves all, this statement must refer to a particular kind of love, otherwise it would be superfluous. In another instance, the "LORD loves him" may refer to Cyrus, or to Israel in a collective singular (Isa 48:14). Either way it manifests God's particular "insider" love. Abraham is also likely singled out, referred to as God's friend (Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; cf. Deut 4:37).[552] The benefits of such "insider" love appear when David describes his "reward" and "recompense" as a consequence of his own fidelity to God (2 Sam 22:21–25; cf. 1 Kgs 3:6), culminating in the refrain, "with the kind You show yourself kind, with the blameless You show Yourself blameless" (2 Sam 22:26; cf. 22:27).[553] The ideal nature of bilaterality is also apparent when, at the dedication of the temple, Solomon refers to God's "keeping covenant" and "lovingkindness" with those "servants who walk before [him] with all their heart" (1 Kgs 8:23).[554]

As in the Torah, God consistently seeks a reciprocal love relationship with his people.[555] Those who are privy to an ongoing, particular, and intimate love relationship with God (thus

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[552] Though the *qal* participle in both of these instances may only denote Abraham's love toward God, it is clear elsewhere that God loved Abraham, not least of which in the numerous references to God's love of the "fathers" (cf. Deut 4:37; 7:7–8; 10:15). Other potential instances of love for individuals also appear.

[553] This "asserts the importance of righteousness and obedience to God's covenant as moral qualities that God takes seriously. . . . The Lord does regard such qualities, and we are reassured that such values matter in the eyes of God." Birch, "First and Second Samuel," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:1367. However, it must be remembered that David himself was surely not perfect. Thus, significantly, "The Lord does not treat all people alike—to do so would demonstrate a moral indifference that is not found in the biblical view of God." Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 458. Similarly, the promises to Solomon are themselves predicated on God's "great lovingkindness" to David, which are themselves "according as he walked before [God]" faithfully (1 Kgs 3:6). As such, this special relationship with Solomon is grounded in both the great חסד of God and the prior faithfulness of David. Importantly, this relationship is not unilateral but Solomon is specifically said to have "loved" God, albeit imperfectly (1 Kgs 3:3).

[554] Elsewhere, the explicit reciprocality of the divine-human relationship is apparent absent language of divine love when God states, "Those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam 2:30).

[555] Love is to be reciprocated. Notice, for instance, the assumption that אהב ought to be reciprocated when David is chastised by Joab for "loving those who hate you" and "hating those who love you" (2 Sam 19:6). Loose reciprocality is also evident in a benedictory proclamation: Jabesh-gilead is to be

"insiders") are those who respond appropriately to God in love. Importantly, this particular and intimate love relationship is offered to all humans. Despite the revelatory emphasis on the particular covenant relationship of God with Israel, it is important to recognize that God's love and care extends beyond the bounds of covenant unto all peoples, though not in an undifferentiated manner. For example, God's grace, חסד, and compassion extend beyond the covenant people to Nineveh, much to the dismay of the reluctant prophet, Jonah (Jonah 4:2, 11).[556] Further, the prophets refer to the universal purpose of the Abrahamic covenant, blessing to the nations, in a number of instances (Isa 42:1; Jer 4:2). Moreover, the covenant blessings are available to foreigners who join themselves to God and keep it (Isa 56:4–8).[557] According to Jer 12:15–17, even the foreign lands may receive compassion in the wake of judgment, if they will respond to God appropriately.[558] In a real, but limited, sense divine fatherhood is universal since he is the creator of all (Mal 2:10). Indeed, God ultimately looks toward a gathering of the nations

"blessed of the LORD because" of the חסד they showed in burying Saul (2 Sam 2:5–6).

[556] God even has compassion [חום] for the animals (Jonah 4:10–11). Blank comments, "Man's troubles are matched and dwarfed by God's own hurt." Blank, "'Doest Thou,'" 36. Other instances show that God was interested in other nations as well (cf. Jer 32:19; 33:9; Amos 9:7, 12). Divine חסד to foreigners also appears in Ruth 1:8; 2 Sam 15:20.

[557] Although some have sought to relegate such universal implications to a minority opinion of "Second Isaiah, the passages that are usually quoted as examples of narrow Jewish exclusivism (Ezek. 44:6–9; Ezra 4:1–3) are not aimed at the kind of people being talked about here. What Ezekiel and Ezra were alarmed about is the same thing Isaiah is alarmed about in 57:3–13 and later: pagans . . . who are either open in their unbelief or are masquerading as believers. . . . Isa. 56:1–8 says nothing against that kind of exclusivism, and 57:3–13 and 65:1–7 actively support it." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 457.

[558] God promises to "have compassion on" the peoples and "bring them back" each to their land and then "if they will really" learn the ways of his people they will be built up, but the alternative is destruction (Jer 12:15–17). Here, compassion appears prior to conditions but along with conditions for its continuance, providing a probationary opportunity for the nations to turn toward God. "The text betrays a powerful universalistic impulse. The Lord invites and welcomes all the 'neighbors' into the community of faith that is constituted by Israel. The invitation is real." Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:680. "This is an extraordinary statement, nothing less than a conditional, Sinai-type covenant offered to the Gentiles. Yahweh's compassion is not conditional upon them learning his peoples' ways, but conditions will come afterward. Verse 17 tells us what will happen if these conditions are not met." Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, 663; cf. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 362. Huey adds, "The verses teach the freedom of choice with which God has endowed the human race. We are free to accept his lordship and be blessed or to reject him and experience punishment." Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 141–43.

to himself (Isa 66:18–22; Hos 14:5–7 [6–8]; Zeph 3:8–9; Zech 2:11).[559] However, only those who appropriately respond to God actually enjoy the intimate, particular divine-human love relationship.

The reality of reciprocal human love toward God, in response to his love, also appears in the Prophets. A particularly clear, indicative example is God's love for Solomon (2 Sam 12:24; cf. Neh 13:26) and the fact that "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father" (1 Kgs 3:3).[560] Elsewhere, Abraham is the "friend," literally the "lover" (אֹהֲבִי), of God (Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7). Further, Judges differentiates between the "lovers" (אהב) and "haters" (איב) of God; the former will be blessed, the latter cursed (Judg 5:31). Elsewhere, God remembers the "love of" Israel's "betrothals," in parallel to "the devotion [חסד] of [her] youth" and her "following after [God] in the wilderness" (Jer 2:2).[561] In another context, God is entreated to "let those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might" (Judg 5:31). In a number of instances, love for God is indirectly stated, via love for a hypostatization of God. For instance, covenant blessings are prescribed to those, even foreigners, who "love the name of the LORD" (Isa 56:6).[562] As such,

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[559] Notably, in Zech 2:11 God even declares that "many nations will be joined with" him and "become my people" and he "will dwell in [their] midst." This is just after a statement of re-election (Zech 2:12 [16]) and is also strikingly reminiscent of divine language of covenant-making, "I will take you for My people, and I will be your God" (Exod 6:7; cf. Lev 26:12; Jer 7:23; 11:4 24:7; 30:22; 32:38; Ezek 11:20; 37:23; Zech 8:8; 13:9).

[560] Notably, Solomon is still sacrificing at the high places, which makes his love for God imperfect. As such, love does not assume perfection. In the following verse, God declares that Solomon is to be called "Jedidiah" (יְדִידְיָהּ), meaning beloved of the Lord (2 Sam 12:25).

[561] Stoebe mentions that as in Jer 2:2, "Deut 7:8 also presupposes God's love; indeed, in distinction from Hos, *'hb* "to love" seems to have become an equivalent for *ḥesed*, even in reference to human love for God. One could ask whether the formula "to love with all your heart, etc." (e.g., Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; 30:6) means to express the unreserved devotion implied by *ḥesed*." Stoebe, *TLOT* 1:460. It is perhaps significant that human love toward God is quite prominent in Deuteronomy but altogether absent in Hosea, whereas human חסד toward God is well-represented in Hosea but altogether absent in Deuteronomy.

[562] Further, a psalmist loves the divine "name" (Ps 5:11 [12]). The inheritance is for "all those who love His name" (Ps 69:36 [37]). God is gracious to "those who love Your name" (Ps 119:132). Love is also variously directed at God's house (Ps 26:8), his salvation (Pss 40:16 [17]; 70:4 [5]), his commandments (Ps 119:47–48, 127), law (Ps 119:97, 113, 163, 165), testimonies (Ps 119:119, 167), word (Ps 119:140), precepts (Ps 119:159), and Jerusalem (Isa 66:10; cf. Ps 122:6). Such indirect reference may be related to

humans may reciprocate God's love and thus enter into and/or maintain an intimate and particular love relationship with him.[563]

However, God's people may also forfeit God's love by scorning his overtures. This repeatedly took place in the history of Israel and Judah. Hosea the prophet was called to act out this relationship in his life, by marrying an adulterous woman as a metaphor of the "love" God has for apostate Israel (Hos 3:1).[564] God is here presented as a wounded lover, a scorned God of compassion, the victim of unrequited love.[565] Throughout Hosea there seems to be both permanent and transient elements to divine love. God "finds" Israel in the wilderness, yet they

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the avoidance of pointing human אהב toward God due to its prevalent (perhaps original) function in human sexuality. Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:289; cf. Jenni, *TLOT* 1:45–54.

[563] On the other hand, human אהב is commonly misdirected, often describing Israel and/or Judah's infidelity and spiritual harlotry (Isa 57:8; Jer 2:25, 33; 5:31; 8:2; 14:10). It is thus used in reference to Judah's many "lovers" (Jer 22:20, 22; 30:14; Ezek 16:33, 36–37; 23:22; Lam 1:19). Thompson suggests this language has significant connotations of a suzerain-vassal relationship between the people and her "lovers" based on ANE parallels and that in such instance "lover" may mean ally. "Israel's 'Lovers.'" However, Ackerman points out that the simultaneous usage of the marriage metaphor and Judah's adultery requires this passage to also be seen "as dependent upon an understanding of love rooted in the language of interpersonal relationship." "The Personal," 448. Cf. Jer 2:33–3:5. Hosea also makes reference to the abundance of spiritual adultery and Israel's "lovers" (Hos 2:5 [H 2:7]; 2:7 [2:9]; 2:10 [2:12]; 2:12–13 [2:14–15]; 3:1; 8:9; 10:11). Such misdirected love causes non-acceptance with God and remembrance of the people's sin.

[564] It is not certain whether "again" refers to God's statement, thus "the LORD said to me again," or to the command, thus go "again love." Scholars disagree regarding the identity of the adulteress "woman [אִשָּׁה]." Three main views appear: (1) it is another woman, distinct from the one in chapter 1, so Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 64. (2) It is the same woman, whom Hosea had since divorced. (3) It is the same woman to whom Hosea remains married, though she is unfaithful, so Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 295. It does not appear that the reference could be to a different married woman, lest Hosea himself be commanded here to commit adultery; cf. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 99. Thus, the reference must be to the same woman of chapter 1, whom Hosea appears to have divorced yet with whom he is to seek reconciliation. See the earlier discussion regarding Hos 1:6–7. Regardless of the particular historical reference, however, the texts clearly point to God's continued seeking of a mutual relationship with his people. Notice the wide range of "love" in this passage. It characterizes the emotion of God, symbolized by that Hosea is to display toward his wife, yet the people are "loved" by another, a reference to her adultery, and "loves" raisin cakes, apparently a reference to idolatry. Stuart notes the contrast between God's virtuous love and that of Israel. *Hosea-Jonah*, 65. Here again, it must be remembered that the term אהב itself does not shed light on the kind, or quality, of love.

[565] "Yahweh loves Israel—to whom he is married—in spite of the fact that Israel loves other gods. Hosea is to love his wife the way Yahweh loves Israel. This close comparison between God's love for his people and a man's love for his wife sums up the story of Hosea's marriage." Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 297. This is a passionate love, as Yee states: Love here "characterizes both the profound emotion of Hosea and God." "The Book of Hosea," in *The Twelve Prophets*, 7:231.

come to love Baal (Hos 9:10) and become so evil that God "came to hate [שָׂנֵא] them there" and

declares, "I will love them no more" (לֹא אוֹסֵף אַהֲבָתָם) (Hos 9:15).[566] Nevertheless, the interruption

of divine love does not amount to a total rejection. Rather, God continues to work with his

people, and he promises chastising (יסר) when it is his desire (אַוָּה) (Hos 10:10). A similar pattern

is recapitulated in Hos 11, even more poignantly. God declares his profound "love" (אהב) for

youthful Israel, whom he called "My child" (Hos 11:1). Such love was manifested in that he

"taught" them to "walk" and "took them in [his] arms" though they did not recognize him (Hos

11:3). God goes on to depict Israel as a beast whom he "led . . . with the cords of a man, with

bonds of love" (Hos 11:4), but they "refused to return" and for this reason they are to be given

over to Assyrian rule (cf. Hos 11:7).[567] But this divine judgment deeply grieves God, who

expresses his anguish: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?" My heart is turned over

within Me, All My compassions are kindled" (Hos 11:8).[568] Once again, the magnitude of God's

unrequited love is manifested here in divine suffering when the deserved consequences of Israel's

action must be meted out. God then proclaims that he will "not execute My fierce anger" for "I

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[566] As Wallis puts it, Israel's adultery "provoked her husband to wrath. His love changed to antipathy. He divorces his wife." *TDOT* 1:113–14. As Eichrodt puts it, "Love has turned into a hate that knows neither compassion nor mercy." *Theology*, 253. Though he believes, anticipating what comes hereafter, that it "is still the love that woos the nation and suffers as a result of their rejection, not a cold, calculating requital, sealing Israel's fate. This means that it is still possible to hope for the greatest of all mercies, that even the rejected nation may escape the destiny of judgment, if only they can find it in them to say 'Yes' to God's proposal." Ibid., 253–54. The animosity is apparent, despite the interpretations of some that this is merely language of covenant rejection. For instance, Stuart claims, "Personal emotions are beside the point. The wrath of the covenant God is the predominating issue." *Hosea-Jonah*, 153; cf. Lohfink, "Hate and Love," 417. Yet, this presumes that wrath is not an emotion and reduces hate to merely technical covenant language. However, the wider context of Hosea points to deep and profound divine emotionality. See also the discussion of divine hatred in the word study of שׂנא earlier.

[567] See the discussion of Hos 11 earlier in this chapter.

[568] This is the strongest emotive language of love. See the discussion of the emotionality of love earlier in this chapter.

am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, And I will not come in wrath" (Hos 11:9).[569] The possibility of the rupture of God's relationship with his people is painful to God, even if it is impermanent. Israel was given over to Assyrian destruction that was complete by 722 B.C., showing that divine judgment is not altogether removed by divine mercy, but there is a hope for future (eschatological) restoration (see Hos 14:4 [5] below).[570]

Future restoration of the divine-human covenant love relationship is partially dependent upon the requirement that Israel turn from idolatry and return to God, in order to receive the full

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[569] Despite the language of parental imagery, God is well within his rights to destroy Israel (cf. Deut 21:18–21). The Hebrew, however, is once again difficult to interpret. A number of interpretive/translation issues arise. First, it is not clear whether God is stating that the fullness of his anger will not be poured out (i.e., utter destruction), or whether the idiom "again" (שוב) means it will not be poured out after the destruction of Samaria, or whether he looks forward to an eschatological situation where his anger is no longer necessary. Another option is also available: Andersen and Freedmen translate by viewing לא as asseverative rather than negative. Thus God is pouring out his anger, even though it is agonizing for him to do so. Thus, "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I relinquish you, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I deal with you like Zeboiim? My mind is turning over inside me. My emotions are agitated all together. I will certainly act out my burning anger. I will certainly come back to destroy Ephraim. For I am a god and not a human. I, the Holy One, will certainly come into the midst of your city." *Hosea*, 574; cf. Lam 3. The meaning of the statement "I am God, and not man" is also unclear since it could mean that he is unlike humans in not allowing his emotions to cloud his judgment, or that unlike humans he is free to follow his emotions that are always righteous; cf. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 589. Even if the former position is taken it still begs the question: Which emotion is overcome, his love and compassion (Hos 11:8) or his anger and wrath (Hos 11:9)? Some scholars posit that the ultimate end of God's love is an impossibility, though he could give them over to "terrible suffering." Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 62. Perhaps it conveys that God, despite the magnitude of emotion, is not determined by that emotion and though extremely angry will not act as a human being would (i.e., total eradication). On the other hand, Andersen and Freedmen posit, with reference to Deut 1:17 and the divine self-declaration of holiness, that "if Yahweh were to give special consideration to Ephraim, he would be acting in a human way. This course he spurns." *Hosea*, 589. In this view, restoration comes only after total destruction, that is, resurrection. Ibid., 197; cf. Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Exod 34:6–7. Garrett, on the other hand suggests that the entire passage is patterned after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah but that here God will not carry out his full fury as he did then. Ephraim will be punished but "not suffer the total, irreversible annihilation that Sodom experienced." Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 228. Further, he translates the final clause בְּעִיר וְלֹא אָבוֹא, "I shall not enter the city" rather than "I will not come in wrath" and believes this refers to God's mercy. Specifically, God being holy would utterly eradicate Israel if he entered the city and "saw" their sins as he did Gomorrah. Ibid., 228–29. Numerous options are plausible. However, regardless of the option that is taken, the clear import for the divine-human relationship is that God desires to not mete out judgment against Israel and is here agonizing over the situation. Historically, judgment did fall on Samaria yet God looked forward to a time of restoration (cf. Hos 14:4 [5]).

[570] Thus, Stuart appears to be correct when he states, "This is not a promise of mercy for those alive in Hosea's day, but for their descendants, the remnant that will follow. To righteous followers of the covenant, those who heeded Hosea's message, it would nevertheless be a source of great encouragement." *Hosea-Jonah*, 182.

measure of divine beneficence and mercy. If they will but return, God will "heal their apostasy" and "love them freely,"[571] his anger will be "turned away" and blessings will result (Hos 14:1–4 [2–5]).[572] Thus, God wants to bestow his love upon the people, but conditions remain for Israel to receive divine love within a sustainable relationship. Divine love is voluntary, yet also contingent upon relationship. Ultimately, God looks forward to the day when he will "exult" over a remnant with joy, "be quiet in His love," and "rejoice" over them "with shouts of joy" (Zeph 3:17).[573] Throughout the descriptions of divine love in the prophets, God's love is emotive, within a give-and-take relationship, and also evaluative, delighting in justice and human faithfulness. As such, the particular, intimate, reciprocal love that God desires with human beings is not unilaterally effected by him. Rather, he initiates and makes all provisions for such a relationship but it is nevertheless conditional upon human response (i.e., foreconditional).

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[571] "The theme of God loving this people in spite of their disloyalty reiterates the passionate, tender emotions that Yahweh/husband expressed to his repentant wife (2:19–20; 3:1)." Yee, "The Book of Hosea," in *The Twelve Prophets*, 7:295. Andersen and Freedman render, "I will love them generously." *Hosea*, 646. Stuart sees this in the sense of an unearned or "voluntary offering" or "offering made out of generosity" such that "Yahweh's love will again give blessing to his people." In his view, "Yahweh's anger will be appeased (cf. 11:9) only by his own grace (cf. 2:16, 17 [14, 15]). Israel remains as undeserving of this merciful forgiveness as she was of her initial election. She will, in the eschaton, receive the blessing of being made faithful (restoration blessing type 3; cf. Deut 30:6)." Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 214–15. Perhaps the sense is that God will be free to love them in all his fullness once the relationship is restored and his anger is assuaged; cf. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 273–74. Notably, "healing is promised for the repentant nation in the future, whereas no healing was possible in the past." *Hosea-Jonah*, 214. Thus, Yahweh will renew their adoption.

[572] Eichrodt thinks that Hosea's depiction, which he elsewhere considered the deepest and most advanced, nevertheless is "utterly impossible to rationalize it into a dogmatic statement about the nature of God" where the "most appalling outbursts of anger and the expressions of favour toward the new Israel—'I will love them no more' (9.15) and 'I will love them freely' (14.4)—are allowed to stand side by side with no attempt at reconciliation, signifying that on the basis of the prophetic faith at any rate there is no method of reconciling them. The only answer is to flee from the wrathful to the loving God." Eichrodt, *Theology*, 253. Thus, he believes that "it can only be understood as the product of faith, breaking through the opus alienum of the divine wrath, to the vision of love as the ultimate and decisive power." Ibid.

[573] See the discussion of this beautiful passage above. Notice the implication that the object is a remnant in Zeph 3:11–15.

Reciprocal Love in the Writings

The conception of the universality and particularity of divine love within the context of God's profound desire for a reciprocal love relationship with human beings is further depicted in the Writings, as it was in the Torah and Prophets. Notice the many explicit examples of the ideal reciprocal nature of love. For example, consider the exclamation, "May they prosper who love you [human]" (Ps 122:6). Personified wisdom even proclaims, "I love those who love Me" (Prov 8:17).[574] On the other hand, those who hate God ought not to be loved (2 Chr 19:2).[575] Further, it is prayed that God continue lovingkindness to those who "know" God and his righteousness to those who are "upright in heart" (Ps 36:10; cf. Ruth 1:8). On the other hand, it is prayed that no lovingkindness be extended to the evil one, "because he did not remember to show lovingkindness" (Ps 109:12, 16). Thus, love often assumes relationality that includes proper regard and the expectation of reciprocality.

In such passages the concept of "insider" love, that preferential (and often evaluative) love discussed earlier, appears once again. Yet, while divine love most often appears within the covenant relationship, and thus within an "insider" relationship, in a number of instances it is clear that God's love extends far beyond the covenant community, indeed even to all humans. Thus, divine lovingkindness (חסד) is said to fill the earth (Pss 33:5; 119:64; cf. 36:7 [8]; 100:5;

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[574] Fox comments, "Behind the concept of mutual love of wisdom and humanity may lie the theme of reciprocal divine-human love. While the theme of mutually divine-human love is biblical (especially prominent in Deuteronomy), the formula of reciprocal love is not (though some statements come very close). There are, however, strong Egyptian parallels. Kayatz (1966:98–102) quotes the formulas on heart scarabs, such as 'Khonsu loves him who loves him'; 'Isis loves the one who loves her.' Kayatz believes that the qualities of loving and being loved are particularly characteristic of Ma'at, the goddess of justice and truth (see pp. 335f). This reciprocality formula, however, is used of a variety of deities." Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 276. Waltke adds, "Similar statements are made about one's relation to God (e.g., 'those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me I will disdain,' 1 Sam. 2:30; cf. 2 Sam. 22:26 [= Ps. 18:26(27)])." There are also "parallels in the Egyptian wisdom literature. 'Ptah loves all those who love him and who ask him.'" Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29*, 404.

[575] Notice, also, in numerous texts it is assumed that אהב ought to be reciprocated, since it is lamented when love is repaid with hatred (Ps 109:4–5), or when Job's loved ones have turned against him (Job 19:19). Similarly, the psalmist laments that hatred is repaid for friendship (Ps 109:5); cf. Ezek 16:37; Prov 27:6.

117:1–2; 119:64; 136:4–9; Ruth 1:8).[576] God "is good to all, His mercies [רַחֲמָיו] are over all His

works" (Ps 145:9; cf. 8, 10, 17).[577] Further, God satisfies the desires of humans, indeed "every

living thing" (Ps 145:16). Yet, in an apparently special sense, he "will fulfill the desire of those

who fear Him" (Ps 145:19; cf. 65:2, 4 [3, 5]).[578] Accordingly, God desires an intimate, particular

relationship with all his creatures.[579] However, although such a divine love relationship is

available to all, it is not unilaterally bestowed on everyone in an undifferentiated manner (cf. Ps

145:20). Rather, such an intimate, particular love relationship is only effective when humans

respond appropriately to God's foreconditional love with their love toward him in return (cf. Ps

18:25 [26]).[580]

That there is special divine love reserved for some seems apparent from the numerous

instances that persons or groups are specified by terms of divine endearment. For instance, God's

"beloved" (יְדִיד) is the object of his blessing (Ps 127:2). As God's "beloved" (יְדִיד) humans cry out

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[576] Naomi calls for God to show חסד to Ruth and Orpah, non-Israelites (Ruth 1:8; cf. 2 Sam 15:20).

[577] While אהב has been seen to go beyond the covenant in earlier sections of the OT, there is no explicit mention of that facet of אהב specifically in the Writings. On the universality of divine חסד see Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," 4:379; ibid., 127; Larue, "Recent Studies in Hesed," 4. On the other hand, Clark thinks (incorrectly, I believe) that חסד is restricted to God's covenant people. *The Word Hesed*, 145.

[578] The one who is blessed is the one whom God chooses (בחר) and "bring[s] near" (קרב) (Ps 65:4 [5]). Notably, however, just previously it is stated, "to You all men come" (Ps 65:2 [3]). Tate comments, "The request in v 5 seems to support the interpretation that the worshiping community is intended here; all those who are acceptable in the worship of Yahweh, and potentially every Israelite—and if v 3b has a universal expectation, every human being who comes to Yahweh." *Psalms 51–100*, 141–42.

[579] This will become even clearer by way of the NT data.

[580] Notice again the statement toward God: "with the kind [חָסִיד] You show Yourself kind [חסד]" (Ps 18:25 [26] = 2 Sam 22:26). Elsewhere, the חסיד are to love God (Ps 31:23 [24]) and, likewise, God loves justice and does not forsake his חסיד (Ps 37:28). Again, God preserves his חסידים, those who love him and hate evil (Ps 97:10). That is, "the fervent love of the godly man God requites with confiding love, the entire submission of the upright with a full measure of grace. . . . God's conduct to man is the reflection of the relation in which man has placed himself to God; cf. 1 Sam. 2:30; 15:23." Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 5:163. Interestingly with regard to "insider love" חסיד sometimes seems to refer to Israel as a whole (Pss 148:14; 149:1) but in other instances it seems to connote a more restricted group of "the faithful within Israel" (Pss 31:23 [24]; 37:28). Baer and Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:213.

to God, seeking deliverance (Ps 108:6 [7]; cf. 60:5; 84:1–2).[581] God is said to love (אהב) "the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob" (Ps 87:2).[582] Daniel is told by the angel who has come to enlighten him that he is "greatly beloved" or "esteemed." Further preference seems apparent in that God loves "Jacob" (corporate Israel) and chooses Jacob's inheritance (Ps 47:4 [5]). Solomon's kingship is predicated on God's love for his people (2 Chr 2:11; 9:8). Further, Solomon himself is declared to have been "loved by God" (Neh 13:26).[583] The bestowal of land "forever" is spoken of as predicated on "Abraham [God's] friend" (אֹהֲבִי) (2 Chr 20:7). God's love thus manifests particularity and preference and, accordingly, God manifests special concern for those whom he loves.

A number of other examples of "insider" love appear in this corpus as well. For example, God loved Solomon (Neh 13:26), God loves the righteous (Ps 146:8), the one whom he disciplines (Prov 3:12), and the pursuer of justice (Prov 15:9). Thus, it is apparent that God does not love all equally. Indeed, God reserves special love for those who respond appropriately to him. Thus, Daniel and Nehemiah repeat the theme that God "keeps covenant and lovingkindness for those who love him and keep His commandments" (Dan 9:4; Neh 1:5; cf. 13:14, 22).[584]

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[581] As Tate puts it, "God is reminded that these are 'those dear to you' ('beloved ones') and 'those who fear you' (v 6). The powerful action of the divine right hand is needed for deliverance (see Pss 17:7; 18:36; 44:5 [4]; 74:11; 138:7; etc.). God is implored to respond, 'Answer us!' *Psalms 51–100*, 106. The term ידיד likewise appears with divine agency in the statement, "God's dwelling places are 'lovely'" (יְדִיד) (Ps 84:1–2). Elsewhere, the psalmist asks God to keep him as the "apple of the eye" (Ps 17:8). Job also refers to the past friendship (סוֹד) of God (Job 29:4). There is some disagreement, however, on the precise meaning of סוֹד in this context.

[582] Interestingly, Tate reads this with regard to God's universal purpose. In his view, this "is a declaration of God's intention to make Zion the spiritual metropolis of the world." *Psalms 51–100*, 392.

[583] Interestingly, Nehemiah presents Solomon as peerless: "Among many nations was there no king like him. . . . Nevertheless, the foreign women caused even him to sin" (Neh 13:26). Clearly, God's love is not reserved only for perfect people.

[584] Of course, this hearkens back to the covenant language, especially that of Deuteronomy. Breneman comments, "'with those who love him and obey his commands' shows that covenant love or loyalty was to be reciprocal." *Ezra*, 171–72. F. Charles Fensham adds, "Love and keeping of the law are thus the two pillars on which the covenant rests." *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 154–55. "The Lord does indeed make good on his covenant promises and showers his covenant love on 'all who love him and obey his commands.'" Miller, *Daniel*, 244. In Neh

Moreover, God "keeps all who love Him" while the wicked are destroyed (Ps 145:20; cf. 70:4 [5]). Again, he "loves justice" and does not "forsake His godly ones" (חָסִיד) whereas others are cut off (Ps 37:28; cf. 99:4, 8). On the other hand, God "hates" (שׂנא) those who do evil, destroys those who speak falsehood, and "abhors [תעב] the man of bloodshed and deceit" (Ps 5:4–6 [5–7]; cf. 106:40). God's "soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) hates (שׂנא) the one who "loves" (אהב) violence (Ps 11:5).[585] Thus, there are clear instances of particular love that does not extend to all. God does not love all equally. Yet, this is not due to arbitrariness on God's part. On the contrary, God is responsive to human devotion toward him (or the lack thereof), specifically wholehearted devotion. He "keeps" the covenant and lovingkindness to those who "walk before You with all their heart" (2 Chr 6:14; cf. Deut 7:9).

In such instances, God's particular love for those responsive to him is manifest as well as a number of examples of human love toward God. Other examples of human love toward God also appear. For example, the psalmist states, "I love [רחם] You, O LORD, my strength" (Ps 18:1 [2]). Elsewhere, the psalmist "love[s] the LORD, because" God hears him (Ps 116:1).[586] Those who "love the LORD" should hate evil (Ps 97:10). Those who "love" God's salvation are those who "seek" God (Ps 40:16 [17]; cf. Pss 5:11 [12]; 70:4[5]). Likewise, God states that he will deliver someone, "because He has loved [חשׁק] Me," that is, "known My name" (Ps 91:14).[587]

13:22, Nehemiah recalls, "I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and come as gatekeepers to sanctify the sabbath day. *For* this also remember me" (Neh 13:22). Sakenfeld comments, "Humanly considered, Nehemiah implies that some piety engenders a better possibility for an ongoing relationship with God than does none at all." *The Meaning of Hesed,* 165. Fensham adds, "It is clear, however, that Nehemiah besought the Lord to give special attention to what he did. He wanted to receive through his deeds the love of God." *The Books*, 265.

[585] See the discussion of the emotive nature of these statements earlier in this chapter.

[586] Notably, this depicts love motived by, and grounded in, God's care. According to Els, "the interior depths of this love is emphasized by the use of רחם (18:1) and חשׁק (91:14)." *NIDOTTE* 1:286.

[587] This term חשׁק is used of God's love for Israel (Deut 7:7; 10:15), but nowhere else of a human's love for God. Notice similar reciprocality, absent explicit language of love, elsewhere. God declares, "You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken [עזב] you to Shishak" (2 Chr 12:2, 5). "The formula 'you have abandoned me; I have abandoned you' or an approximate equivalent appears in similar speech materials in

Elsewhere, humans are called upon to love God (Ps 31:23 [24] and repeated reference is made to those who love God's name (Pss 69:36 [37]; 119:132; cf. 119:159, 163), an indirect reference to loving God himself. Within the Writings, then, divine love and lovingkindness once again present a God who is intensely interested in his creation and enters into a give-and-take relationship with human beings. He wants to love all intimately but, sadly, some reject God's love.

Conclusion

God's love in the OT takes many forms and displays many aspects. It is the ground of divine-human relationship itself, the explicit cause of election, covenant, and blessing, and the basis of God's steadfast, tender affection and concern that is manifested in God's blessings, discipline, and the overall maintenance of the divine-human relationship. Such divine love is volitionally free and not the product of necessity; the basis of election, and consequently, of the covenant relationship itself. While God's will to love is primary and original, the divine-human relationship assumed in the OT is one of relational responsiveness, often within covenant, but also depicted in complementary, kinship metaphors such as the parent-child and marriage metaphors, both of which connote the voluntary and affectionate nature of the divine-human love relationship. Divine love is also manifested in evaluation. God may be pleased with human dispositions and/or actions, take pleasure, and even delight in his people when appropriate or, conversely, be displeased and provoked by evil.

Closely related to such evaluation, divine love is also emotive, and the plethora of God's emotions that revolve around the divine-human relationship point toward divine passibility. Because of his profound love for his people, God is concerned, affected, grieved, vexed, and angered at evil, and out of his intense desire to receive the undiluted love and fidelity of his people God becomes impassioned (קִנְאָ) at their unfaithfulness and spiritual adultery. Such passion

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1 Chr 28:9; 2 Chr 15:2; 24:20." Dillard, 100. Similarly, "the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chr 15:2).

may be manifest in anger toward their infidelity, or restoration when others have oppressed them. In response to infidelity, God disciplines his people, again out of his love for them with the hope of ultimate reclamation. Moreover, God responds repeatedly to heartfelt entreaty and is willing to relent of discipline and return in his compassion and graciousness, which far exceed his wrath. God's compassion even exceeds that of a mother for her newborn; he is exceedingly longsuffering. However, God consistently expects appropriate responsiveness from his people, willing to forgive, but not to the exclusion of justice.

Accordingly, divine love is also foreconditional—bestowed prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. God's love, as well as the frequent beneficent actions that flow therefrom, is unmerited, but not altogether unconditional. God is the sole initiator, and at times the sole preserver, of the divine-human love relationship. His love endures beyond all reasonable expectations. Yet, the endurance of the relationship in particular is contingent upon appropriate human response, itself enabled by God's own prevenient action.

Altogether, then, divine love for humans in the OT is voluntary and unnecessary to God himself, yet evaluative and not wholly arbitrary; differential and preferential, yet not altogether exclusive; intensely emotional (compassionate, affected, caring, joyful, even jealous), yet also committal, foreconditional, and unmerited, yet not unconditional, and expectant of the appropriate human response of reciprocal love, faithfully seeking reciprocal faithfulness but often the victim of unrequited love.

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THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE LOVE IN THE CONTEXT OF

THE GOD-WORLD RELATIONSHIP

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

by

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CHAPTER 5

A CANONICAL SURVEY OF DIVINE

LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Divine love in the NT builds on the facets of love discovered already in the OT. Just as the previous chapter, this chapter will present a canonical survey of the prominent themes that illuminate the many facets of divine love in the God-world relationship. Of course, due to the overwhelming amount of data, this survey is necessarily selective in its presentation. The investigative process consisted of a broad reading of the entire NT that analyzed any texts and/or passages that might contribute to potential answers to the systematic questions raised in chapters 2 and 3, which revolve around the question of whether divine love is unilateral or whether God and humans may share a reciprocal (though unequal) relationship of love.

Relative to this broad issue, five questions have been identified as standing at the center of the conflict of interpretations, seen in chapter 3. First, is God the sole giver but never the receiver? In other words, is divine love only arbitrarily willed, pure beneficence (thematic *agape*) or may it include desire or enjoyment (thematic *eros*)? Second, does God only bestow and/or create value or might he also appraise, appreciate, and receive value? Third, does God's love include affection and/or emotionality such that God is concerned for the world, sympathetically or otherwise? Fourth, does God choose to fully love only some, or does he choose to love all, or is he essentially related to all such that he necessarily loves all? Fifth, bound up with this is the question of whether divine love is unconditional or conditional, ungrounded or grounded, and so on.

With such questions in mind, the investigation of the data was conducted by way of a

final-form canonical approach, which concentrates on interpretation of the text(s) in canonical

context.[1] Accordingly, the focus is upon the theological interpretation of Scripture, in accordance

with the canonical approach to systematic theology explained in chapter 1. The inductive reading

of the NT sought to identify all data that might provide answers to the systematic questions raised

by the theological conflict of interpretations over the meaning of divine love.[2] The data extracted

from this reading were then analyzed and organized according to three sections of the NT canon

in an ongoing spiral, which included both narrowing and expansion of the data when themes

became more or less significant than originally thought.[3] Within this process, a number of

prominent terms that hold significant implications for potential answers to the systematic

questions became apparent. These were investigated and are presented from the standpoint of a

synchronic-canonical approach. Here the inherent limitations of semantic studies with regard to

systematic investigation are recognized, especially the fact that meanings of words vary

depending upon their context and usage. Accordingly, it is not the intention of these semantic

surveys to reduce the terms to simple definitions, nor to assume that a nuance of meaning in one

location can be extrapolated to all other occurrences of a given term. Rather, such surveys seek to

identify and summarize the basic meaning denoted by word groups as well as the polysemy and

the multivalency of their semantic range and usage within the canon in order to provide the

crucial background for engaging the wider canonical themes regarding divine love.

While the NT data were investigated inductively, this chapter will survey the data

deductively by grouping the pertinent content under five rubrics that respond to the systematic

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[1] This entails that many of the issues of historical criticism are not appropriate to this study, and thus do not receive significant treatment. This is especially true of source and tradition criticism.

[2] See the summary of these issues in the five questions above.

[3] While it is likely that, despite great care, some information has been overlooked, it is hoped that the data presented here will provide significant insight for ongoing inquiry and discussion with regard to a canonical model of divine love.

questions noted above: the volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally

relational aspects of love. These rubrics correspond to five aspects of love that provide the outline

of a canonical and systematic model of divine love, which will be presented in chapter 6. The five

aspects may be summarized thusly:

1. Divine love is volitional but not only volitional.

2. Divine love is not indifferent or disinterested, but evaluative.

3. God's love is profoundly emotional though not to the exclusion of volitional and

evaluative aspects.

4. Divine love is foreconditional, not altogether unconditional.[4]

5. Divine love is multilaterally relational. God universally seeks a relationship of

reciprocal love but enters into and/or maintains particular, intimate relationship only with those

who respond appropriately.

It must be understood that these rubrics and thesis statements are themselves derived

from the canonical data and not presupposed. In this chapter, the NT data that support each thesis

are grouped under the corresponding category.[5] Under each of the five categories the data are

further grouped under the three categories of Gospel-Acts, Pauline Writings, and General Epistles

and Revelation.[6] Further, the brief semantic surveys of prominent terminology relative to the

meaning of divine love are distributed under their corresponding rubrics.[7] Of course, the large

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[4] I have coined the term "foreconditional" to refer to the conception that divine love is freely
bestowed prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. See chapter 6 for a more detailed explanation of the
foreconditionality of divine love.

[5] Of course, this requires that the grouping of the data is somewhat artificial. The reason for
adopting this organizational structure is to afford an efficient presentation for the reader that highlights the
importance of the data as it points toward a wider canonical model of divine love.

[6] Such diacanonical presentation respects the canonical groupings of the text without entering into
the ongoing debates regarding the authorship and dating of specific passages and texts that continue to
elude consensus.

[7] Of course, not all terms of any significance can be treated in this chapter. Thus, terms have been
selected for more attention according to their explanatory value in accord with the canonical analysis.

amount of data precludes an exhaustive presentation of its analysis. As such, this thematic

presentation is but a survey of the research conducted. The two most crucial NT terms of love,

ἀγαπάω and φιλέω, are discussed first since their NT usage and theological significance transcend

any one or two of the themes in the remainder of the chapter.

The Primary Semantics of Divine Love in the NT

The Meaning of the ἀγαπάω Word Group

The ἀγαπάω word group is the most prominent for love in the NT and appears frequently

with both human and divine agency.[8] The group displays a broad range of meaning including love

that is affectionate, warm, concerned with, and interested in its object(s),[9] love in the sense of

high regard, value, and appreciation for its object(s),[10] love that includes enjoyment, pleasure, and

fondness,[11] preferential love (whether proper or improper),[12] and love demonstrated in action,

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Accordingly, the most prominent terms are explained at the greatest length.

[8] It appears over 300 times in verbal (ἀγαπάω), nominal (ἀγάπη), and adjectival (ἀγαπητός) forms combined. ἀγαπάω appears 143 times in 110 verses, appears 116 times in 106 verses, and ἀγαπητός appears 61 times in 60 verses. The group appears most often in the Pauline writings (over 130 times) followed closely by the Johannine works (over 100 times). It appears in the Synoptic Gospels less than 40 times and just over 40 times in the remainder of the NT. In Pauline usage the noun appears much more frequently than the verb whereas in Johannine usage the situation is reversed.

[9] The verb thus may mean "to regard with affection, loving concern." J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "αγαπαω a, αγαπη," L&N 1:292. BDAG defines one aspect of meaning as "a warm regard for and interest in another, *cherish, have affection for, love*." F. W. Danker et al., eds., "αγαπαω," BDAG, 5–6. For Ceslas Spicq, this "affection . . . is accompanied by contentment" related to the idea of being "happy, satisfied." "αγαπη," *TLNT* 1:12–13. John H. Elliott describes the word group as "the act of emotional commitment." *1 Peter* (AB 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 343. Cf. William E. Phipps, "The Sensuousness of Agape," *ThTo* 29 (1973): 370–79.

[10] Thus, it may entail love "based on sincere appreciation and high regard." Louw and Nida, L&N 1:292. Both the verb and noun relate to "esteem," "satisfaction," and "warm regard." F. W. Danker et al., eds., "αγαπαω, αγαπη," BDAG, 5–6. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 1:11–12; idem, *Agape in the New Testament* (3 vols.; St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1963), 1:18. Kenneth S. Wuest contends that it refers to "love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved. It is a love of esteem, of evaluation," which "recognizes the worthiness of the object loved." "Four Greek Words for Love," *BSac* 116 (1959): 243. Cf. James Moffat, *Love in the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1930), 49.

[11] The verb may also mean "*take pleasure in.*" Danker et al., BDAG, 5–6. Similarly, Louw and Nida, eds., "αγαπαω c," L&N 1:300. With regard to that which would bring pleasure but is not yet enjoyed it can refer to desiring or longing as in the usage of those "who have loved [ἀγαπάω] His appearing" (cf. 2 Tim 4:8). 1 Pet 3:10 connotes "a stronger sense of 'longing for' or 'desiring.'" Moffat, *Love*, 48.

often of a beneficent nature.[13] Although the ἀγαπάω word group is not exclusively descriptive of divine love, it is often used to describe God's wonderful, superabundant, magnificent love.[14] Further, though human love of a misdirected or inappropriate nature may occur, love is most often held up as the highest of virtues and described in the most glowing of terms throughout the NT.[15] Each of these aspects may overlap with one another or may be absent from or uncertain with regard to the meaning intended in a particular usage of the word group.

While ἀγαπάω appears relatively frequently in Greek literature from Homer onward, ἀγάπη is not very well-represented in extra-biblical Greek literature, if at all.[16] However, the LXX usage of the word group is abundant and, considering the regard with which NT writers held the OT, is the most significant ground for illuminating the background of the word group familiar to

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[12] Cf. Moffat, *Love*, 49; Ethelbert Stauffer, "αγαπάω, αγάπη, αγαπητός," *TDNT* 1:48.

[13] So Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:37. "Love leads to action; it is impossible to love someone deeply and not do things for him. Love is eager to serve, to give." Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 42. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 1:12. Cf. 1 John 3:18. The noun may also be used simply in reference to the "agape feast" (Jude 1:12).

[14] ἀγάπη often appears as an attribute of God, e.g., the "God of love" (2 Cor 13:11) or the "love of God" (2 Cor 13:14) or the most famous statement: "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16; cf. 1 John 4:7). Such divine love, especially toward humans, is manifested in action, often of a salvific nature (John 3:16; Rom 5:8; 8:39; Eph 2:4–5; 1 John 3:1; 4:9–10, 16) especially the sending of the Son (John 17:23; 1 John 4:9–10, 14–16; John 3:16–17; 34–35). Likewise, divine love is associated with his "giving" (John 3:16; Rom 5:5; 1 John 3:1). ἀγάπη is likewise an attribute of Jesus. For instance, reference is made to the "love . . . in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 1:13). This love of Jesus is also directed toward humans, again often tied to his sacrifice, which itself is the manifestation of greatest love (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16; cf. Rom 5:8). Just as the Father's love is associated with giving so is the Son's (Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25; 2 Thess 2:16).

[15] Thus, love is "patient," "kind," "not jealous," it "does not brag," "is not arrogant," and "never fails" (1 Cor 13:4, 8). Love is also the first among the fruits of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22). Further, it "does no wrong to a neighbor" and as such is "the fulfillment of the law" (Rom 13:10). It is included in the triad of "faith, hope, love . . . but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13). Cf. 2 Tim 1:7; 1 John 4:17–18.

[16] Whether ἀγάπη is attested in pre-LXX Greek remains disputed. See the discussion of this issue below. ἀγαπάω in classical Greek includes many of the aspects of meaning that become apparent in the NT. It can relate to "being satisfied" to "desire someone or something," "to prefer" or "to esteem" someone more highly than another and may relate to friendship and even sympathy. It may also refer to God's preference "for a particular man." Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:36. For the primary references of the Greek literature, see ibid., 36–37. Further, the etymology of the root is unclear and thus does not provide much information regarding the NT meaning. So Spicq, *TLNT* 1:8, Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:36, W. Günther and H. G. Link, "αγαπαω," *NIDNTT* 2:539.

NT authors.[17] In the LXX, the verb ἀγαπάω most frequently translates the verb אהב[18] and the noun

ἀγάπη always translates the Hebrew אהבה.[19] The ἀγαπάω group in the LXX, then, may denote

much the same, broad meaning as the אהב root does in the Hebrew.[20] In the NT, the ἀγαπάω word

group is closely associated in usage with many significant word groups including: love (φιλέω),

kindness/mercy/compassion (ἔλεος), good pleasure (εὐδοκία), compassion (οἰκτιρμός and

σπλάγχνον), and, in antithetical parallel, hatred (μισέω).[21] Many of these significant LXX

translations and collocations appear interspersed throughout the discussion below.

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[17] So Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:539. See, also William Klassen, "Love in the NT and Early Jewish Literature*," ABD* 4:395.

[18] ἀγαπάω translates אהב over 160 times in the LXX, of human love for God (Exod 20:6) and divine love for humans (Deut 4:37), at times of an emotive nature (Hos 11:1; Jer 38:3), in other instances clearly evaluative (Ps 145:8), and also of love that may be forfeited (Hos 9:15), among many other aspects of אהב. The verb also translates אֲהֵבָה once (Ps 108:4), אֲהָבִים once (Hos 8:9), רחם 4 times (cf. Ps 17:2 [18:1]), יָדִיד 4 times (cf. Deut 33:12) and יְשֻׁרוּן 4 times (cf. Deut 32:15), once of יָחִיד (Prov 4:3), once of דּוֹד (Songs 1:4), and once of יְדִדוּת (Jer 12:7). It also translates a number of other terms once or twice, including a number of terms of delight (listed further below). The verb אהב is translated by ἀγαπάω in the vast majority of its occurrences. However, in a few instances it is translated by the φιλέω word group: φιλέω (Gen 27:4, 9, 14; 37:4; Prov 8:17; 21:17; 29:3; Isa 56:10; Hos 3:1; Eccl 3:8), φίλος (Esth 5:10, 14; 6:13; Pss 37:12; 78:19; Prov 14:20; 27:6; Jer 20:6; 37:14) and φιλία (Prov 5:19), and in other instances various compounds from the φιλέω word group (1 Kgs 11:1; 2 Chr 16:10; 19:2; Prov 17:19). In a few other instances אהב is translated by terms of the ἐράω word group including ἐράω (Esth 2:17; Prov 4:6) and ἐραστής (Hos 2:7, 9, 12, 14, 15; Jer 22:20, 22; Lam 1:19; Ezek 16:33, 36, 37; 23:5, 9, 22). As such, אהב "covers all the wealth of the three Greek terms." Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:38. The primary "lacking feature," however, is "religious eroticism," which distinguishes it from the ANE fertility cults and from the Greek world. Ibid. A few other terms translate אהב once in the LXX.

[19] ἀγάπη translates אהבה 15 times in 14 verses in the LXX, used of human love toward God (Jer 2:2), evil lust (2 Sam 13:15), and contrasted with hatred (Eccl 9:1, 6). Most, however, appear in Songs (2:4–5, 7, 3:5, 10; 5:8; 7:7; 8:4, 6–7). The noun אֲהֵבָה is also translated by the older Greek noun ἀγάπησις, which does not appear in the NT (2 Sam 1:26; Ps 108:5; Hos 11:4; Zeph 3:17; Jer 2:33; 38:3). It is also translated by φιλία (Prov 10:12; 15:17; 17:9; 27:5). ἀγαπητός also appears numerous times, most often translating ידיד or יחיד. See the discussion of ἀγαπητός in the LXX in the brief semantic study of ἀγαπητός below.

[20] That is, it is "universally applied to the actions of God and human beings" such that "no field of divine or human affection is excluded." Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 146. That this is the case is borne out by a comparison of OT and NT usage. See the discussion of the meaning of אהב in the previous chapter.

[21] Further, ἀγαπάω is associated, to a lesser extent, with χρηστός (kindness), μακροθυμία (patience), παράκλησις (comfort), παραδέχομαι (accept), and δόκιμος (tested, approved). A number of other, less significant collocations will appear in the survey further below.

Despite the wide and significant range of meaning of this word group in the NT some

have incorrectly categorized ἀγάπη in narrow terms, with significant theological implications. A

common error is the assertion that ἀγάπη is uniquely descriptive of the highest divine love distinct

from and exclusive of other, supposedly lesser, terms of love (i.e., ἐράω, φιλέω). Such ἀγάπη

flows unilaterally, that is, from God to others but never from others to God.[22] As such, ἀγάπη love

is said to be strictly beneficent giving exclusive of receiving, disinterested, directed toward the

unworthy and thus non-evaluative, purely altruistic generosity, unconditional, utterly

spontaneous, and impassible.[23] These characteristics are often explicitly set in opposition to the

purported meanings of ἐράω and φιλέω, respectively, especially the former; making up the oft-

repeated *agape-eros* distinction.[24] However, evidence suggests that the ἀγαπάω word group does

not exclusively denote pure divine love to the exclusion of all other terminology (i.e., φιλέω). On

the contrary, the word group may be used of both divine and human agency and manifests many

aspects of love, including negative aspects of love.[25] Here, the most misleading assumptions

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[22] When the existence of human love toward God is allowed it is described as nothing more than God's own love flowing back to himself through a strictly passive agent. Thus, Martin Luther speaks of both faith and love as that which is received from God and the human is merely "like a vessel or tube through which the stream of the divine blessings must flow without intermission to other people." *WA* 10.1.1, quoted in Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (trans. P. S. Watson; London: S.P.C.K., 1953), 735. So, also, Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:50; Charles E. B. Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (ed. Alan Richardson; New York: Macmillan, 1950), 136.

[23] This perspective is most prominently associated with the massively influential work of Nygren, himself apparently beholden to earlier philosophical-theological presuppositions. While Nygren himself was making a thematic, not a semantic, argument, many of his assumptions (whether dependent on his work or not) have spilled over into semantic discussions whether explicitly or implicitly. See *Agape and Eros*.

[24] For Nygren, *eros* is acquisitive and desirous love, *philia* denotes reciprocal friendship and attendant emotionality, and *agape* refers to self-sacrificial beneficence towards the unworthy. Ibid. Cranfield adopted similar distinctions. "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 133, 135. So, also, Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 120. Cf. to varying degrees Spicq, *TLNT* 1:9–13; Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:35–37; Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:540, 542; Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther* (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1:266. Such distinctions appear at the level of textual commentaries as well. For example, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX* (AB 28; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 638. Contra Phipps, "The Sensuousness of Agape," 370–79.

[25] Accordingly, one should not make the mistake of universally projecting any one of the potential aspects of the word group onto all the instances of the term (illegitimate totality transfer). Rather, the

regarding the meaning of ἀγάπη will be briefly countered by evidence from the usage of the word group.[26]

First, the ἀγαπάω word group does not, in and of itself, depict the highest love. On the contrary, in numerous instances it depicts inferior kinds/aspects of love, including incestuous and rapacious "lust" and misdirected love.[27] On the other hand, God's love is depicted by both ἀγαπάω and φιλέω (cf. John 14:21, 23; 16:27) and is never misdirected, being unique in quality, purity, and degree. However, such differences between human and divine love are not due to semantic constraints of the terms themselves, but arise from usage within distinct contexts.

Second, the ἀγαπάω word group does not describe unilateral divine love but, on the contrary, demonstrates that divine love is multilateral, since God may not only give, but also receive ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη.[28] The usage of the word group demonstrates that love may flow in many directions within various kinds of personal relationships, including from God to humans and vice versa.[29] As such, the usage itself reflects the potential mutuality of love, which is also the divine ideal (cf. John 14:20–24; 15:8–12; 1 John 4:8–16). Further, the potential intimacy of ἀγαπάω is

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contextual usage of the term sheds light on its intended meaning within its semantic range.

[26] This will be limited to an overview; the larger force of the evidence will appear within the discussion of the broader categories/questions.

[27] Thus, Amnon's lust for his half-sister Tamar is described by both ἀγάπη and ἀγαπάω (2 Sam 13:15). In the NT, Demas forsook Paul because he loved [ἀγαπάω] the evil world (2 Tim 4:10). Rather than loving light, men have loved [ἀγαπάω] darkness (John 3:19). Cf. Pss 11:5; 52:3; Amos 5:15; Hos 9:1; John 12:43.

[28] The verb and noun most often refer to interpersonal love, often that which takes place between God and humans. See Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:543; Gerhard Schneider, "αγαπη," *EDNT* 1:9.

[29] Thus, the Father loves the Son (John 3:35) and the Son loves the Father (John 14:31), the Father loves humans (John 3:16; 14:21) and humans love God (1 Cor 8:3; Jas 1:12; 1 John 5:3), the Son loves humans (Mark 10:21; John 13:1) and humans love the Son (Luke 7:47; John 14:21; Heb 6:10), and humans love one another (Luke 7:5; 1 Cor 16:24; 2 Cor 11:11; 2 John 1). Importantly, human love toward God, Jesus, and one another is denoted both by the verb and the noun. Thus, one may not assert that merely the noun ἀγάπη is reserved for divine agency. Note also that John 14:31 is the only explicit example of love from the Son to the Father, though it is implied elsewhere. Finally, it is notable that the command for humans to love one another is often modeled after divine love for them suggesting some continuity amongst such loves (cf. John 13:34; 15:12). For the sake of brevity, only a few textual examples of these love relationships are listed here. The various examples of each will be seen in more detail when they are

apparent when Jesus proclaims his "love" for "his own" [ἴδιος] (John 13:1).[30] Nevertheless, some

maintain the unilateral agency of love and insist that all instances of mutual divine-human love

are the result of God's efficacious election love.[31] However, the nature of many of the instances,

including characteristics of exhortation and conditionality, militate against such a conception.[32]

Such a view appears to be based more on dogmatic presupposition than the canonical text.

Third, ἀγαπάω is not necessarily descriptive of strictly beneficent, disinterested, altruistic,

non-evaluative love toward the unworthy.[33] Although divine love is often manifested toward

unworthy objects (cf. Rom 5:8), and frequently associated with divine grace,[34] ἀγαπάω love

nevertheless manifests evaluation (cf. 1 Thess 5:13).[35] Moreover, the reality of misdirected love

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discussed within the broader canonical discussion below.

[30] Significantly, this also rules out the idea that love for one's own is exclusive to the concept of φιλέω. The adjective ἀγαπητός also highlights the relational nature of the word group.

[31] Thus, Morris recognizes that "mutual love can be seen" throughout Scripture and is a "distinctive quality of the Israelites' view of God and man." *Testaments of Love*, 42. Nevertheless he subsumes mutual love under unilateral election stating, "God produces love in his elect; it is certainly not their own achievement." Ibid., 182.

[32] The examples that substantiate this claim will be analyzed in the canonical section further below.

[33] Contra the contention of Morris and others that "we do not bring anything valuable to God—in fact, we acquire value only because we are the recipients of his love." *Testaments of Love*, 142. So Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 135. Spicq similarly believes that "the only adequate translation is 'love in the sense of charity'; in Latin, *caritas* or *dilectio*." *TLNT* 1:8. Such caritas entails that the superior's (God's) love is generous and the inferior's (human's) response is gratitude.

[34] Though the two word groups should not be conflated or confused, the ἀγαπάω and χάρις word groups collocate in a number of significant instances. For instance, divine "grace" (χάρις) is "freely bestowed [χαριτόω] on us in the Beloved [ἠγαπημένῳ]" (Eph 1:6). Further, both are associated with God's redemptive action (2 Thess 2:16; cf. 1 Tim 1:14). The two also often collocate in benedictory formulas and/or greetings (Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 6:24; 2 Tim 1:2; 2 John 3) and in exhortation to "gracious work" grounded in "love" (2 Cor 8:7). Cf. Luke 6:32, 35; 7:42.

[35] In one such instance, ἀγάπη is explicitly evaluative and motivated as Paul commands to esteem some very highly "in love because of their work" (1 Thess 5:13). Viktor Warnach states that the verb in the LXX refers to "love in the sense of placing a high value upon some person or thing, or of receiving them with favour." "Love," *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology* 2:518. Cf. Schneider, *EDNT* 1:9; Robert Joly, *Le vocabulaire chrétien de l'amour est-il original: Philein et agapan dans le grec antique* (Brussels: Univ de Bruxelles, 1968).

suggests evaluation in that love ought to be directed toward appropriate objects.[36] Even the

Father's love for the Son and for humans is described as grounded and evaluative (John 10:17; 2

Cor 9:7). Further, the adjective ἀγαπητός highlights the evaluative nature of the word group as it

may refer to the lover's perception of lovableness.[37] Those who maintain that God's

ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη love is unaffected and non-evaluative contend that instances of delight are simply

the result of God's choice "to delight" and not prompted by the object(s) as such.[38] However,

examples abound to the contrary.[39] Moreover, evaluation, and even delight, is implied by the

collocation of some terms with the ἀγαπάω group, that is, when love is associated with being

pleased, being accepted, delighted in.[40]

Fourth, the word group is not altogether unconditional, spontaneous, or unmotivated,

despite frequent scholarly rhetoric of this nature.[41] The purported unconditionality of the ἀγαπάω

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[36] For example, misdirected love is evident in Matt 6:24; Luke 11:43; John 3:19; 12:43; 2 Tim 4:10; 2 Pet 2:15; 1 John 2:15; Rev 12:11.

[37] H. G. Liddell-Scott views the classical use as meaning "worthy of love, loveable, dear." "αγαπητος," *LSJ Abridged*, 4. The adjective generally refers to "one who is in a very special relationship with another," thus "beloved," "one who is dearly loved" and/or "prized, valued," "the object of one's affection." F. W. Danker et al., eds., "αγαπητος," BDAG, 7; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "αγαπητος," L&N 1:293. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:37.

[38] Thus Morris contends, "It might be argued that God loves the people because there is something in them that delights him, but there is never an indication of what brings about this delight." *Testaments of Love*, 93. "It seems that God delights in this people simply because he chooses to do so." Ibid.

[39] For instance, the Son is said to love righteousness, a clear indication of appraisal (Heb 1:9). More appear below.

[40] For example, Christ is often referred to as the beloved (ἀγαπητός) son in whom the Father is well-pleased (εὐδοκέω) (Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 2 Pet 1:17). See also the parallel usage of εὐδοκία, "good will," and ἀγάπη in Phil 1:15–16. Evaluation is also explicit when Christ is praised for having "loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb 1:9). Moreover, "whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives [παραδέχομαι]" (Heb 12:6). Here and in the LXX of Prov 3:12 παραδέχομαι translates רָצָה, a term of evaluative pleasure. In this instance, then, ἀγαπάω is set in parallel to evaluation. Similarly, the ἀγαπάω word group also collocates with the evaluative term δόκιμος (cf. Jas 1:12).

[41] For instance, Morris comments, "We must clearly recognize that God's love is unconditional. *Testaments of Love*, 31. Likewise, "In respect of *agapao* as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant 'love' and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects." W. E. Vine, "Love," *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 382. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:49.

group is conceptually bound up with the assertion that divine love is arbitrary, unilaterally willed, election love.[42] While the ἀγαπάω word group is closely associated with election, the two concepts should not be confused or conflated.[43] They relate not as interchangeable terms/concepts but within a nexus of cause and effect. The conditionality of ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη is readily apparent in NT usage. Thus, the Father loves (ἀγαπάω) humans because they love (ἀγαπάω) the Son (John 14:21, 23; cf. John 10:17; 15:9–10; 2 Cor 9:7; Jude 21). Therefore, it is not true that ἀγαπάω is strictly unmotivated, ungrounded, or the product of strictly unilateral election.[44]

Fifth, the ἀγαπάω word group often denotes emotionality, even divine emotionality. It is thus incompatible with impassibility despite assertions that ἀγάπη is volitional, but not emotional, love.[45] Rather, the usage of ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη includes volition but also manifests emotionality.[46]

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[42] Thus, Stauffer associates the two concepts in his view that Paul refers to "God's unconditional sovereignty in loving and hating, electing and rejecting (R. 9:13, 25)." For him, the "love of God implies election" and love itself is simply "the orientation of his 'sovereign will.'" *TDNT* 1:49–50. Similarly, Morris argues that "God wills to love men and he loves according to his own purpose of election, not according to the actions of men." *Testaments of Love*, 160. Cf. Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:544.

[43] The ἀγαπάω word group and terms of election are often closely associated in the NT. Thus Paul refers to "those who have been chosen [ἐκλεκτός] of God, holy and beloved [ἀγαπάω]" (Col 3:12; cf. 1 Thess 1:4; 2 John 1). Many other instances appear. See Rom 9:11–13; 11:28; Eph 1:4–5; Jas 2:5. Moreover, in the LXX the ἀγαπάω and ἐκλέγομαι word groups appear in many contexts where love and election are associated (cf. Deut 4:37; 7:7; 10:15; Pss 47:4; 78:68; Isa 41:8; 44:1–2). Election, by way of αἱρετίζω, also associates closely with divine ἀγαπάω when the divine voice declares, "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen [αἱρετίζω]; my beloved [ἀγαπητός] in whom my soul is well-pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles" (Matt 12:18; cf. 2 Thess 2:13). The ἀγαπάω word group also collocates frequently with language of the divine call. Thus Paul writes to the "beloved," those "called as saints" (Rom 1:7; cf. 1 John 3:1; Jude 1). See also Rom 8:28; cf. 9:11–13, 25, 29; Eph 4:1–2; 2 Thess 2:13–14; 1 Tim 6:11–12. The relationship between love and election is complex. See the discussion of love and election in the OT as well as the further discussion of the divine will, election, calling and love further in this chapter. See also Wis 3:9; Sir 47:22.

[44] Donald A. Carson is thus correct when he states that the very "pattern of relationships" makes it "clear that there is nothing in the words *agapaō* and *agapē* themselves to suggest that the love of which John speaks is invariably spontaneous, self-generated, without reference to the loved one." *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 204. However, aside from semantics, Carson nevertheless asserts spontaneous divine love that is "not the consequence of their loveliness but of the sublime truth that 'God is love' (1 Jn. 4:16)." Ibid., 204–5. One the other hand, texts suggest that ἀγάπη does not necessarily continue forever; it can diminish or even die out (cf. Matt 24:12; Rev 2:4).

[45] For example, Cranfield contends that ἀγάπη "evidently refers to the will rather than to the emotion, and often conveys the idea of showing love by action." "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134. Accordingly, for Spicq ἀγάπη is "the most rational kind of love." "αγάπη," *TLNT* 1:12.

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Moreover, the collocation with other word groups in the NT strongly suggests emotionality,

including the contrast between love and hate[47] and the close association with compassion,[48]

mercy,[49] kindness,[50] comfort,[51] and patience.[52] Likewise, in the LXX the ἀγαπάω word group is

used to translate terms that, in such contexts, connote delight and compassion.[53]

Cf. idem, *Agape in the New Testament*, 1:11–12. G. Johnston similarly defines ἀγάπη as "passionless love." "Love in the NT," *IDB* 3:169. Cf. Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World* (Harper Torchbooks: New York, 1974), 311. For Richard C. Trench, ἀγαπάω is "cold" rather than "passionate." *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), 42. Cf. Joseph F. Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Westminster Press, 1966), 103.

[46] For instance, explicitly emotional ἀγαπάω is apparent in 1 Pet 1:22 (cf. Col 3:19; 1 Pet 4:8). Notably, ἀγαπάω appears to be emotional (even visceral) when Jesus looked at a young seeker and "felt a love for him" (Mark 10:21) and when Jesus is said to have loved his own to the end (John 13:1). Some have even suggested that ἀγάπη may include at least some aspects of *eros*. Thus, John A. T. Robinson contends that "*agape* desires response, and desires it passionately. . . . Love yearns for a loving response. In this sense there is a need in the very heart of God, a divine discontent which must ever burn until it be satisfied." "Agape and Eros," *Theology* 48 (1945): 99. Klassen further comments, "If ecstasy is at the center of the idea of *erōs,* then surely there is no true *agapē* without it; a God who does not care whether people respond is hardly the God portrayed in Hosea or in the NT image of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem." *Love in the NT*, 385. Cf. Phipps, "The Sensuousness of Agape"; Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1972), 32; Thomas J. Oord, "Matching Theology and Piety: An Evangelical Process Theology of Love" (Claremont Graduate University, 1999), 184.

[47] See Matt 5:43–44; 6:24; Luke 6:27; Rom 9:13; Heb 1:9; 1 John 4:20, all of which will be discussed below.

[48] The strongly emotive and visceral word groups of compassion, οἰκτιρμός and σπλάγχνον, collocate relatively infrequently, but nonetheless significantly, with this word group in the NT. Of οἰκτιρμός with ἀγαπάω see Luke 6:36; Rom 9:13, 15; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12. Likewise, a close association between σπλάγχνον and ἀγαπάω is apparent. See Phil 2:1; Col 3:12; cf. Eph 4:32–5:2; Phlm 1:7; 1 John 3:17).

[49] In Eph 2:4 divine mercy and love ground divine action. Other collocations include 2 Tim 1:2; Jude 2, 21; 2 John 3; cf. 1 Tim 1:13–14. Terms of the ἀγαπάω and ἐλεέω ("mercy, compassion") word groups also translate LXX terms in parallel usages such as when God speaks of having struck his people in wrath but "in My favor [רָצוֹן - ἔλεος] I have had compassion [רָחַם - ἀγαπάω] on you" (Isa 60:10). See also Jer 2:2. Likewise the terms collocate to translate God's חֶסֶד to those who love God, the former translated by ἔλεος and the latter by ἀγαπάω (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4; cf. Ps 119:132). Consider also Ps 33:5; Mic 6:8.

[50] χρηστεύομαι ("kind") is an important characteristic of love, among many others (1 Cor 13:4). See also Luke 6:35; 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:32–5:2).

[51] God "has loved us and given us eternal comfort [παράκλησις]" (2 Thess 2:16). See also the collocations in 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 2:1; Col 2:2; Phlm 1:7.

[52] Both ἀγάπη and μακροθυμία ("patience") are fruits of the spirit (Gal 5:22) and patience is an important characteristic of love (1 Cor 13:4). See also 2 Cor 6:6; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Tim 1:14, 16; 2 Tim

In all, then, God's ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη may be (1) multilateral (giving and receiving), (2) evaluative and appreciative, (3) grounded, motivated, and conditional, and (4) emotional and descriptive of delight and enjoyment. At this point, we will turn to a discussion of the φιλέω word group before returning to a discussion of the supposed uniqueness of ἀγάπη as Christian love.

The Meaning of the φιλέω Word Group

The φιλέω word group is also extremely significant with regard to the meaning of divine love. The basic meaning of the verb φιλέω is to love in the sense of regarding with affection. The noun φίλος signifies a loved one or friend, and the noun φιλία refers to a relationship between loved ones (i.e., friendship).[54] The word group may connote affectionate love, fondness, attraction, concern, special interest, and/or enjoyment/pleasure in or valuing of someone or something.[55] It often appears in the context of close association with the potential connotation of

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3:10; 2 Pet 3:8–9, 14–15.

[53] Thus, in the LXX, ἀγαπάω translates a number of terms of delight such as חפץ (Ps 50:8; Esth 6:9), רצה (1 Chr 29:17), מָשׂוֹשׂ (Jer 30:31), שָׁעַע (Ps . 93:19), and שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים (Isa 5:7). Moreover, ἀγαπάω translates רחם 4 times, of the Psalmist's "love" for God (Ps 17:2; cf. Prov 28:13) and God's compassion on his people to bring them back (Zech 10:6). Finally, God struck the people in his wrath, but in his favor (ἔλεος) he had compassion (רחם – ἀγαπάω) on them (Isa 60:10).

[54] The verb appears 25 times in 21, the noun φίλος (which may be active or passive) appears 29 times in 27 verses, and the noun φιλία appears only once in the NT.

[55] See Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:538; Klassen, *Love in the NT*, 385; F. W. Danker et al., eds., "φιλεω," BDAG, 1056; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "φιλεω," L&N, 300; Gustav Stählin, "φιλεω, καταφιλεω, φιλημα," *TDNT* 9:117. The group also has many derivatives that consist of compound terms such as φιλαδελφία, "brotherly love," among many others in biblical and extra-biblical Greek. For this reason Gunther calls it "the most general word for love or regard with affection." Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:538. φιλαδελφία /φιλάδελφος appears in Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22; 3:8; 2 Pet 1:7. Many others appear, including love for God (φιλόθεος, 2 Tim 3:4) and love for humans (φιλανθρωπία, Acts 28:2; Titus 3:4). One compound, significant with regard to its usage of *storgē*, describes an intense affection, heartfelt love, combining two of the words for Greek love into φιλόστοργος translated, "devoted" (Rom 12:10). This comes from the φίλος word group combining with "*storgē* (*stergō*)," which refers to "familial affection" and often "refers either to the tender feelings that parents naturally feel toward their children or children toward their siblings and parents, or to the bond that unites husband and wife, and also takes in sympathy for friends and compatriots." Ceslas Spicq, "φιλοστοργος," *TLNT* 3:462, 10. Cf. Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:538; "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 133. Cf. Ceslas Spicq, "Philostorgos (à propos de Rom 12:10)," *RB* 62 (1955): 497–510. Also, the converse *astorgos* appears in Rom 1:31; 2 Tim 3:3. Other compounds abound, ranging from various kinds of misdirected love to positive, virtuous, and/or evaluative kinds of love. Thus, compounds

belonging, at times in the sense of friendship or family but extending to virtually any kind of association.[56]

Most (if not all) of the questions regarding the meaning of φιλέω that pertain to the purposes of this dissertation are bound up with the question of the extent of similarity and/or dissimilarity to the ἀγαπάω word group. As shall be seen, the meaning of the φιλέω word group overlaps significantly with the ἀγαπάω word group. In many instances the terms appear to be used interchangeably. Robert Joly's study has convincingly argued that the φιλέω word group was being pushed out of regular use by the ἀγαπάω word group by the time of the writing of the NT.[57] As such, considering the smaller sample size and the fallacy of arguments from silence, it would be unwise to draw conclusions regarding the semantic range of φιλέω based on the way the term is *not* used in the NT. Moreover, the evidence suggests that one should not presuppose a sharp difference between the meaning of the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω word groups *a priori*, contra the

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refer to the love of, or lovers of, money (φιλαργυρία and φιλάργυρος, 1 Tim 6:10; Luke 16:14; 2 Tim 3:20), lovers of self (φίλαυτος, 2 Tim 3:2), lovers of pleasure (φιλήδονος, 2 Tim 3:4), desire to be first (φιλοπρωτεύω, 3 John 1:9). Compounds also refer to "dispute" (φιλονεικία) or the characteristic of being "contentious" (φιλόνεικος) (1 Cor 11:16) or empty "philosophy" (φιλοσοφία) (Col 2:8). More positively compounds refer to the love of that which is good (φιλάγαθον, Titus 1:8), being lovely (προσφιλής, Phil 4:8), being courteous (φιλοφρόνως, Acts 28:7), consideration of others (φιλανθρώπως, Acts 27:3), and love for the stranger, hospitality (φιλόξενον and φιλοξενία, Titus 1:8; 1 Tim 3:2; 1 Pet 4:9; Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2). Others are more ambivalent such as aspiration or ambition, literally love of honor (φιλοτιμέομαι, Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 5:9; 1 Thess 4:11). There are also a number of compound names of humans (Philemon, Philetos, Philipesis, Philipos) and of cities (Philadelphia, Philippoi, Philomelion).

[56] Stählin suggests the basic sense relates to "belonging to" or being "proper to" thus denoting "natural attraction to those who belong, love for close relatives." Stählin, *TDNT* 9:115. Likewise, φιλέω is "love or affection for someone or something based on association." "φιλεω," 292. Cf. Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:542; Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 133; Danker et al., BDAG, 1056; idem, "φιλεω," BDAG, 292; idem, "φιλος," BDAG, 1059.

[57] The φιλέω group became more and more associated with the sense of "kiss," a meaning that appears in the NT by way of φιλέω (cf. Matt 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 22:47) with the corresponding noun φίλημα, which always means kiss (Luke 7:45; 22:48; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14; cf. Prov 27:6; Song 1:2). However, the kiss in the NT has no sexual connotations but is an expression of "close relationship and the corresponding love." Stählin, *TDNT* 9:120. As such, Judas's action is "a basic betrayal of canons of friendship." F. W. Danker et al., eds., "φιλημα, ατος," BDAG, 1057. See also the usage of καταφιλέω, to kiss, in the LXX and NT (26 times in all).

relatively common assertions regarding the qualitative superiority of the ἀγαπάω group.[58] It is the context that sheds light on the intended semantic range of a given term.

The etymology of the root of φιλέω is uncertain, though it is commonly thought to originally refer to love of that which belongs to one or is one's own.[59] The word group is much more prominent in pre-LXX Greek than in biblical Greek, there often (but not exclusively) referring to the love of friendship, developed by some philosophers (such as Aristotle) into a rather technical term of reciprocity, status, and utilitarian benefit.[60] However, considering the linguistic shift ca. the time of the LXX translation, it would be unwise to draw too much information regarding the meaning of the group from its varied, and sometimes technical, usage in classical Greek. Rather, this work will focus on the usage of the terminology in the LXX and NT, the former due to the familiarity and high esteem in which it would have been held by many NT authors. φιλέω translates אהב 10 times in the LXX and נשׁק, to kiss, 14 times.[61] The noun φίλος appears frequently in the LXX,[62] most often translating רֵעַ (over 30 times) and אהב (10 times).[63]

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[58] The supposed distinction stems from the assumptions of the superiority of ἀγάπη, which grounds the *agape-eros* distinction referred to above. This issue will be taken up further below.

[59] Stählin, *TDNT* 9:129. However, according to Stählin in extra-biblical Greek the term also may take on the sense of "that which is chosen." Ibid., 115. Both aspects are apparent in Jesus' use. He uses it of his own who are in fact, at the same time, the chosen. Stählin thinks that ἴδιος and φίλος are "more or less synonymous" in the NT (cf. John 13:1 and 15:13, 19; Acts 24:33; 27:3). *TDNT* 9:114. However, John 15:19 is the only instance where φιλέω collocates with ἴδιος, "one's own." Moreover, the ἀγαπάω group also is used in this manner in some NT instances.

[60] See the discussion of Aristotle's view of love in the historical survey above. Both verb and noun are used of reciprocal friendship in extra-biblical Greek as well as in reference to the "solicitous" and often preferential love of the gods for men. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:36, 115. Accordingly, φίλος may refer to one's close relatives, or to a person or object that is "intrinsic, belonging, proper to," "beloved," "dear." Gustav Stählin, "φιλος, φιλη, φιλια," *TDNT* 9:114, 146. It may also refer to affectionate or romantic love. BDAG, 862.

[61] The latter translation usage supports Joly's contention regarding the linguistic shift of the meaning and usage of the φιλέω word group. *Le vocabulaire*. See the further discussion of this below. φιλέω also translates רֵעַ, of "friends," in close proximity/parallel to "lovers" in Lam 1:2; cf. Jer 22:22.

[62] φίλος appears 180 times in the LXX with Apocrypha but just over 70 times in the OT books. In the OT books it often refers to a covenantal friendship.

[63] It also translates a number of others terms in 4 occurrences or less including שַׂר (Esth 1:3; 2:18;

The noun φιλία mostly translates אהבה (6 times).[64] In the NT, the group is closely associated with the ἀγαπάω word group (see below), functions as an antonym of hate (μισέω),[65] and frequently collocates with language of family.[66]

The verb φιλέω is used in the context of numerous relationships and signifies many aspects of love in the NT including self-love, interpersonal love, divine-human love, and intra-trinitarian love.[67] Elsewhere, the verb is used of misdirected love and, in a few instances, of non-

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3:1; 6:9) and רחם (Judg 5:20).

[64] φιλία appears 36 times in 35 verses in the LXX (including the Apocrypha) but only 9 times in 8 verses in the LXX OT books. It also translates דוד and רע once each (Prov 7:18; 19:7). In the LXX the term may connote friendship love, erotic φιλία, and political φιλία. Stählin suggests that in the NT ἀγάπη replaces φιλία which, in his view, "may be seen if we compare Prv. 10:12 and Jm. 5:20; 1 Pt. 4:8." *TDNT* 9:154. If Stählin is correct in this regard, ἀγάπη would signify true friendship love in such contexts.

[65] See Luke 23:12; John 12:25; 15:19; Jas 4:4. In the LXX see the collocation of the two in Gen 37:4; Eccl 3:8; Prov 14:20; cf. Prov 27:6; Lam 1:2. The word group also collocates significantly, but infrequently, with the ἐκλέγομαι word group (John 15:14–15, 19) but it never collocates within a single verse with the κλητός word group.

[66] For instance, the φιλέω word group often collocates with συγγενής, kinsmen, relatives (Mark 6:4; Luke 1:58; 2:44; 14:12; 21:16; John 18:26; Acts 10:24; Rom 9:3; 16:7, 11, 21). Likewise, with ἀδελφός in close association with "friends" (Luke 14:12; 21:16).

[67] It is used of human love, including self-love (John 12:25) and human interpersonal love of both a familial (Matt 10:37) and associative (John 15:19; Titus 3:15) nature. Frequently it is used of the Father's or Son's love for humans (John 11:3, 36; 16:27; 20:2; Rev 3:19) and also describes the Father's love for the Son (John 5:20). Conversely, the verb also describes human love for Jesus: both the expectation for (Matt 10:37; John 21:17; cf. 1 Cor 16:22) and reality thereof (Matt 10:37; John 16:27; 21:15–17). It never refers to the Son's love for the Father or human love for the Father explicitly. Human love toward "God" (other than Jesus) by the use of φιλέω also does not appear in the LXX. Yet, the noun does refer to Abraham as the "friend of God" (Jas 2:23; cf. 4:4). Moreover, the compound term φιλόθεος implies the expectation of such love toward God (2 Tim 3:4; cf. Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1; 1 Cor 16:22). Some in antiquity, such as Aristotle, rejected the idea of human love toward the gods as well as divine-human friendship, in stark contrast to the biblical Greek. See the historical survey of divine love as well as the discussion in Stählin, *TDNT* 9:115. Also, the name Θεόφιλος in Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1 literally means lover or friend of God. Once again, however, considering the limited sample size it would be unwise to draw conclusions regarding the wider meaning of the term based on the fallacious argument from silence.
With reference to both the love of the Father and Son for humans, all three instances refer to so-called "insider" love. The (potential) significance of this category of love will be taken up in the wider canonical analysis below. Here, however, it should be noted that one should not draw broad semantic conclusions on such a limited sample size. At the same time, it should be noted that the verb φιλέω with regard to personal love in the NT is always used within an associative relationship of some commonality, i.e., "insider love," whereas ἀγαπάω may signify both "insider" and "outsider" love, though it also refers most often to the former. Importantly, the φιλέω word group is not strictly limited to insider love since love for the other (including the stranger) is encouraged by way of the compound terms φιλόξενος and φιλοξενία (1 Tim 3:2; Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2). See also Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34.

romantic kissing.[68] The noun φίλος appears very frequently in human usage, often of "friends,"

which itself may range from close and/or well-known friends to favorable acquaintances, guests,

or even "political friends."[69] However, the concept of "friendship" in the NT does not necessarily

refer to one of utility or benefit.[70] φίλος also depicts divine-human friendship.[71] The substantive

φιλία is used only once in the NT, in the reference to "friendship [φιλία] with the world," which

is hostility (ἔχθρα) toward God (Jas 4:4). Divine love toward humans is also depicted by the

compound term, φιλανθρωπία, "affectionate concern for and interest in humanity," itself in

parallel to the "kindness [χρηστότης] of God" (Titus 3:4).[72]

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[68] Such as love of praise (Matt 6:5), status (Matt 23:6; Luke 20:46), and falsehood (Rev 22:15). Of non-romantic kissing see Matt 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 22:47. This dovetails with the linguistic shift explanation argued by Joly; see *Le vocabulaire*.

[69] It refers to the centurion's friends whom he sent (Luke 7:6), a friend of whom a favor is asked (Luke 11:5–8), one who is invited to a feast (Luke 14:10, 12), in close proximity with neighbors to celebrate the finding of the lost sheep or coin (Luke 15:6, 9), the prodigal son's brother's friends (Luke 15:29), friends made through use of wealth (Luke 16:9), grouped with parents, brothers, and relatives who will betray them (Luke 21:16), grouped with relatives (Acts 10:24), Herod and Pilate (Luke 23:12), in the sense of "friend of Caesar" (John 19:12), officials of the province who were friends who go to urge him not to go into theater (Acts 19:31), other friends of Paul (Acts 27:3), and "friends" in the sense of the church (3 John 1:15).

[70] This is evident in that friends are to share the lot of friends (Luke 12:4) and by the fact that the greatest love is that which lays its life down for friends (John 15:13).

[71] In the only instance of someone being called a "friend of God" in the NT, Abraham is "called the friend of God" (Jas 2:23), while a "friend" (φίλος) of the world is an enemy (ἐχθρός) of God (Jas 4:4). Friendship with God is also indirectly symbolized in parables (Luke 11:5–8; 15:6, 9; cf. Luke 14:10; 16:9). See also Stählin, *TDNT* 9:164. Further, Christ addresses his followers as his "friends" (Luke 12:4; John 11:11; 15:13, 14; cf. 3:29). Elsewhere, Jesus is referred to as the friend of publicans and sinners (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34). The statement is an attempt to slander Jesus as one who is friends with those whom one should not be friends. At the same time, the statement unintentionally points to the truth that Jesus is, or wishes to be, the "friend" of all. For Stählin, "φίλος is both active and passive. Jesus loves sinners and is loved by them in return, as shown in Lk. 7:37–50 by the washing of His feet, the kiss and the anointing with costly ointment, which are manifestations of grateful love." *TDNT* 9:161. Notably, others are spoken of as friends of God in extra-biblical Jewish literature. Ibid., 168.

[72] F. W. Danker et al., eds., "φιλανθρωπια," BDAG, 1055. It also may refer to human love for humankind (Acts 28:2). A similar compound refers again to love for men (φιλανθρώπως), sometimes translated "consideration" (Acts 27:3). In the Hellenistic period it referred to divine and human benefactors. Cf. Ceslas Spicq, "φιλανθρωπια, φιλανθρωπως," *TLNT* 3:442–43; E. Plümacher, "φιλανθρωπια, ας, φιλανθρωπως," *EDNT* 3:424. Significantly, the term does not necessarily refer to disinterested benevolence but can also refer to motivated φιλανθρωπία, which expects reciprocation. See Spicq, *TLNT* 3:443–44.

Thus, in the NT the φιλέω group refers to a number of aspects of love that dovetail with the most important usages of ἀγαπάω including: the conditionality of love/friendship (John 15:13; 16:27; Jas 4:4), reciprocality (John 16:27; cf. Prov 8:17), emotion and/or passion (John 11:36; Jas 4:4), pleasure, enjoyment, and/or evaluative love (Matt 6:5; 23:6),[73] preferential love (Matt 10:37; John 20:2),[74] concern manifested in discipline (Rev 3:19), and misdirected love (Rev 22:15, among many others).[75] There is no indication that the term indicates an inferior kind of love, and its usage with divine agency indicates strongly the capacity of the term to indicate the highest and noblest aspects of love. With this in mind, we return to the misguided assertion of the uniqueness of the ἀγαπάω word group over and against the φιλέω word group.

The Association of the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω Word Groups

In conjunction with the assertion of the uniqueness of ἀγάπη as descriptive of the highest divine love, some scholars have asserted a stark difference between the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω word groups, often portraying the latter as unsuitable to denote "Christian love."[76] For instance, some assert that φιλέω is the warmer, more affectionate term and/or specific to reciprocal friendship.[77]

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[73] In the LXX consider the use of the term in the sense of that which is especially liked and/or brings pleasure (Gen 27:4, 9, 14; Hos 3:1; cf. Isa 56:10).

[74] Cf. Gen 37:4. See also the discussion of "insider love" further below.

[75] In the LXX consider misdirected love of slumber (Isa 56:10) as well as the love of pleasure in Prov 21:17, in contrast to properly directed love of wisdom in Prov 29:3.

[76] Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 119, 263. Spicq, while recognizing parallel meanings in some contexts, contends that φιλέω was "hardly appropriate for expressing a love that unites God and humans and extends even to enemies." *TLNT* 1:10–11. For him, the classical meaning "friendship or amity (*philia, phileō*) moves on an entirely different plane" including the notion of "reciprocity." *TLNT* 1:10. Similarly, Singer, *The Nature of Love*, 1:160. Consider also Wuest's contention that *philein* is a "love of pleasure," "delight," and "liking" that "takes pleasure in" while *agapan* is a "love of preciousness," "esteem," and "prizing" that "ascribes value to." "Four Greek Words," 243. Similarly, see Benjamin B. Warfield, "Terminology of Love in the New Testament," *Princeton Theological Review* 16 (1918): 195–96.

[77] Of the former see Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134. Of the latter see Spicq, who argues that in extra-biblical Greek ἀγάπη is used of superior-inferior relations whereas "friendship is properly used only of a relationship between equals." *TLNT* 1:13, 10. Cf. Viktor Warnach, *Agape: Die Liebe als Grundmotiv der neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1951), 162, n. 1.

The supposed qualitative difference between the terms has been especially emphasized in the narrative of John 21 when Jesus asks Peter three times, "do you love me?" using ἀγαπάω the first two times, while Peter responds affirmatively with φιλέω until Jesus, the third time, also uses φιλέω to which Peter responds a third time with φιλέω (John 21:15–17). Many commentators have asserted that while Jesus asks Peter twice whether he "loves" him with the highest, divine love of ἀγαπάω, Peter is unwilling to assert that he is capable of such love and thus responds with the lesser, φιλέω love.[78] Others have asserted, on the contrary, that Jesus asks if Peter loves him with a weaker form of love (ἀγαπάω), and Peter is actually asserting that he loves (φιλέω) Jesus with great passion and warmth of affection, which Jesus concedes in his third response.[79] Thus, even scholars who see a difference in terms disagree on the nature of the difference, even taking opposite positions.

Yet, in canonical usage the two word groups overlap with regard to the major aspects of love, often being used interchangeably in the NT.[80] This is true with regard to John 21, which

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[78] So Brooke F. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: J. Murray, 1908), 303. For Spicq, Peter affirms less than Jesus is asking but here "*agapan* refers, not to a love that is more rational and voluntary than *philein*, but to love in the technical sense it had in the Septuagint: religious attachment and consecration." *Agape*, 3:95–96. Wuest thinks Peter is offering by way of φιλέω a love of emotion while Jesus is asking for a higher ἀγαπάω love of devotion. "Four Greek Words," 246–47. William Hendriksen notes the considerable semantic overlap of the terms but nevertheless sees a distinction between them here. *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel according to John* (Black's New Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1953), 2:487, 494–500. Gerald L. Borchert sees a distinction, but for different reasons. *John 12–21* (NAC 25B; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 178. Cf. Kenneth L. McKay, who argues that John's variation is not merely stylistic but builds to a climax. "Style and Significance in the Language of John 21:15–17," *NovT* 27 (1985): 321–23, 332. Consider also the Vulgate translation of *diligere* and *amare* for ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21, respectively.

[79] So "Love," 382; Trench, *Synonyms*, 43.

[80] So Moffat, *Love*, 46–47; Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:543; Joly, *Le vocabulaire*; Oord, "Matching Theology," 140; Stählin, *TDNT* 9:116, 124; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Dallas: Word, 2002), 405; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2004), 596; Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 632; James Barr, "Words for Love in Biblical Greek," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 3-18. Some nevertheless see minor differences in the semantic range of the terms while others consider them synonymous or nearly so. For the former view see Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 676–77; idem, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 1996), 51; Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 768–69. For the latter, see Roy F. Butler, *The Meaning of Agapao and Phileo in*

reflects Johannine stylistic variation rather than any intended distinction in meaning.[81] Peter's

consternation relates to the threefold repetition of the question, not the variation of verbs.[82]

Beyond John 21, the usage of φιλέω and ἀγαπάω in the LXX and NT shows significant overlap.

Thus, both terms are used of Jacob's preferential love for Joseph (Gen 37:3–4; cf. Prov 8:17; Lam

1:2; cf. Tob 6:19).[83] In the NT, both terms are used to describe the Father's love for the Son (John

5:20; cf. John 3:35), the Father's love for the disciples because of their love for Jesus (John

16:27; cf. 14:21, 23),[84] Jesus's love for humans (Rev 3:19; cf. 3:9), Jesus's love for individuals

(John 11:36; cf. 11:5), human love for other humans (John 15:19; cf. 15:19), human love for their

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the Greek New Testament (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1977); W. Feneberg, "φιλεω," *EDNT* 3:425–26. Stählin suggests that there may have been a distinction in some classical Greek authors such that φιλέω meant "to like" and ἀγαπάω "to love" with "strong feeling, inwardness, devotion, and even passion" yet the two terms "approximate" to one another "in meaning and use" and even in Classical Greek are "often interchangeable." *TDNT* 9:116. Spicq, on the other hand, contends that "those who make them synonymous either ignore the semantics of *agape* or minimize the importance of the scene." *Agape*, 3:95.

[81] The Johannine penchant for purely stylistic variation is evident in this same pericope where different words are used for the lambs/sheep as well as the commanded activity of tending/shepherding them and of "you know" (John 21:15–17). See Louw and Nida, *L&N* 2:293; Moffat, *Love*, 46–47; Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:542–43; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 676–77; idem, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 53; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 394; Köstenberger, *John*, 596; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 771–72. Cf. Edwin D. Freed, "Variations in the Language and Thought of John," *ZNW* 55 (1964): 192–93. Moreover, the variation is almost surely John's since Jesus would likely have been speaking in Aramaic. So Morris, *The Gospel according to John,* 769; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 1103.

[82] Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 678. So, also, Borchert, *John 12–21*, 335; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 405; Morris, *The Gospel according to John,* 771; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, 1103. As J. H. Bernard puts it, "Why should he say 'Yes,' if he means 'No'? *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* (ICC 2; New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1929), 704. The majority of recent commentators also support the view that the terms are used interchangeably in this pericope. So, among many others, Moffat, *Love*, 46–47; Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:542–43; Klassen, *Love in the NT*, 389; Johnston, *IDB* 3:177; Bernard, *A Critical*, 701–4; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 584–85; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 711, n. 5; Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile selon saint Jean* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1936), 529–30.

[83] Indeed, both ἀγαπάω and φιλέω may translate אהב, as they do in the parallel usage in Gen 37:3–4.

[84] Nevertheless, Spicq attempts to find a distinction even here. He claims that they are "very close in meaning" here but not identical. In his view, the "religious agape ascending from disciple to Master [John 14:21] is very different from the sensible, emotional warmth" that is φιλέω in John 16:27. *Agape*, 3:88.

own life (John 12:25; cf. Rev 12:11) and both terms describe the disciple whom Jesus loves (John 20:2; cf. 23:23).[85] Moreover, notice that Christians are the φίλοι (3 John 15) as well as the ἀγαπητός (3 John 2, 5, 11). Furthermore, in the NT both are used of preferential love (Matt 10:37; John 11:5; 13:1), misdirected love (Matt 23:6; Luke 20:46; 22:15; Rev 22:15; 2 Tim 4:10; cf. Prov 21:17), conditional divine love (John 14:21,23; 16:27), and love that includes discipline (Rev 3:19; Heb 12:6).[86] Further, the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω word groups collocate frequently with closely related meanings both in the NT and the LXX and both translate the אהב word group in the LXX, as seen earlier.[87] Such usage, especially with divine agency, demonstrates that φιλέω is not an inferior type of love but in fact may describe the very love of God. Hence, it is simply incorrect to assert that ἀγαπάω is divine love and φιλέω is a lesser, human love.[88]

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[85] Therefore, the only subject-object relations of love that are not described by φιλέω are human love for the Father and Jesus' love for the Father. However, the compound φιλόθεος does describe "lovers of God" (2 Tim 3:4) and Jesus' love for the Father is only explicitly stated once, the absence of φιλέω for Jesus' love for the Father is thus likely merely accidental due to limited usage. Butler thus writes, "For every occurrence of *phileo* there is an example of *agapao* expressing exactly the same idea. As a consequence, the only conclusion possible is that *agapao* and *phileo* in the New Testament must have the same meaning." *The Meaning*, 70. He does recognize, however, that *phileo* is never used explicitly of human love toward the Father but he does not believe "any importance should be attached to this fact." Ibid., 57.

[86] Lam 1:2 also used both in a sensual fashion. Josephus also alternates the terms stylistically. Further, the φιλέω word group may be used to speak of positive or negative love just as the ἀγαπάω word group may signify positive or negative love.

[87] The two collocate interchangeably in John 21:15–16 (see discussion above). In John 15:13, "Greater love has no one that this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Elsewhere, human love toward one another is paralleled with brotherly love (φιλαδελφία) (1 Thess 4:9; so 1 Pet 1:22; 2 Pet 1:7). In one instance, reference is made to a greeting "kiss [φίλημα] of love [ἀγάπη]" (1 Pet 5:14). Humans are commanded to "love [ἀγαπάω] one another" (John 15:17) while the world "love[s] [φιλέω] its own" (John 15:19). In the LXX, Prov 8:17 uses the terms interchangeably when "wisdom" states "I love [ἀγαπάω] those who love [φιλέω] me." Likewise, they are used synonymously of the love (ἀγαπάω) of pleasure and the love (φιλέω) of wine, respectively (Prov 21:17). See also Hos 3:1; Lam 1:2; Esth 6:9; Tob (s) 10:13.

[88] In light of this evidence, some see the φιλέω and ἀγαπάω word groups as synonymous in the NT while others suggest there is a slight distinction in the wider semantic range although the two terms are used interchangeably in a number of contexts. While one cannot conclusively rule out minor variation of the terms, "certainly there does not seem to be any significant difference in meaning." Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 498. So Louw and Nida, L&N 1:293. Butler contends that the two terms are synonymous since, he argues, for every instance of φιλέω there is an example of ἀγαπάω expressing nearly the same idea. See *The Meaning*, 70–72. Hendriksen, on

Accordingly, numerous scholars have recognized that the semantics of the ἀγαπάω word group do not posit a unique type of divine or Christian love.[89] However, notwithstanding this evidence, the contention that ἀγάπη is uniquely descriptive of the highest divine love distinct from and exclusive of other, supposedly lesser, terms of love (i.e., ἐράω, φιλέω) has remained in some circles and is especially prominent in "popular" theology.[90] In this vein, the striking increase of the ἀγαπάω word group, especially the noun ἀγάπη, in biblical Greek when compared with extra-biblical literature around the time of the LXX, has sometimes been referenced as evidence of the uniqueness of ἀγάπη.[91] Some have asserted that ἀγάπη in the LXX/NT presents a new, higher

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the other hand, argues that ἀγαπάω is pushing φιλέω out of use and, though the terms may be used interchangeably in some contexts, the semantic ranges are not identical. For example, the φιλέω group may be used of a kiss (Luke 22:47) but the ἀγαπάω group is never used in such manner in the NT. He also argues that only ἀγαπάω is commanded and love of the family is always φιλέω. *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel according to John*, 2:487, 494–500. So, also "Love," 382. Cf. Danker et al., BDAG, 1056; Stählin, *TDNT* 9:115; Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 52. However, it should be pointed out that familial love signified by ἀγαπάω appears in the LXX (Gen 37:3–4) and the NT (Col 3:19) and the expectation of love toward God/Jesus, and accountability for the lack thereof, approaches that of command in 1 Cor 16:22 as well as with reference to the compound φιλόθεος in 2 Tim 3:4; cf. also Matt 10:37; John 15:14; Jas 4:4. Beyond the specialized meaning of "kiss" in the φιλέω group, if there is any difference in meaning "φιλέω and φιλία are likely to focus upon love or affection based upon interpersonal association, while ἀγαπάω and ἀγάπη focus upon love and affection based on deep appreciation and high regard." Louw and Nida, L&N 1:293. Cf. Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:542–43; Klassen, *Love in the NT*, 381.

[89] Thus, Carson states unequivocally, "there is nothing intrinsic to the verb ἀγαπάω (*agapao*) or the noun ἀγάπη (*agape*) to prove its real meaning or hidden meaning refers to some special kind of love." *Exegetical Fallacies*, 32. So Butler, *The Meaning*, 70–72; Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1972), 20–21. Importantly, Carson does see a special meaning for divine love, but finds no basis for such a view in the semantics but in the "sentences, paragraphs, discourses, and so forth." *Exegetical Fallacies*, 53. Cf. idem, "Love," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 646. Klassen states, "Nygren's thesis has been all but discredited." *Love in the NT*, 385. Similarly, J. A. T. Robinson, "Agape and Eros," 98–104; Oord, "Matching Theology," 139; Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11* (NAC 25A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 238; Geraint Vaughan Jones, "Agape and Eros: Some Notes on Dostoievsky," *ExpTim* 66 (1954–1955): 3.

[90] For instance, Morris adopts Nygren's "basic idea of ἀγάπη is that of self-giving love for the unworthy" while allowing that Nygren may have been too sharp in his distinctions between *agape* and *eros* and "equated it too narrowly with the use of particular Greek words." Nevertheless, Morris contends, "there is such a love as he describes as *Agape* and that it is the Christian understanding of love seems clear. God's love for us is evoked by God's own inner nature, not by anything worthy in us" and divine love "evokes a corresponding love within people." *The Gospel according to John*, 293. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988). For a recent proponent of Nygren's view of *agape* see Colin Grant, "For the Love of God: Agape," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24 (Spring 1996): 7.

[91] While ἀγαπάω is used relatively frequently in Greek from Homer onward, the noun ἀγάπη is not

form of love unheard of in previous literature.[92] Further, some assert that the NT meaning of

ἀγάπη alone presents the highest form of love while the LXX portrays an inferior conception of

ἀγάπη.[93] The apparent explosion of the noun ἀγάπη onto the scene has been explained in

numerous ways.[94] Robert Joly makes the most compelling argument, widely adopted by

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very well represented in extra-biblical Greek literature, if at all. In fact, it remains disputed whether the noun ἀγάπη is attested at all in pre-LXX Greek, though the older noun ἀγάπησις is present in classical Greek literature. However, Spicq argues that ἀγάπη is derived from ἀγαπάω and not ἀγάπησις. *TLNT* 1:18. Some instances of ἀγάπη in pre-LXX Greek have been suggested. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:37–39. See *TLNT* 1:14–15, for an overview of the supposed instances of pre-LXX ἀγάπη and Spicq's reasons for rejecting such instances. Spicq concludes that ἀγάπη "is proper to the koine." Ibid., 18. Further, see the conflicting arguments of Stephanie West and R. E. Witt regarding the instance of "pagan" use of ἀγάπη with regard to Isis in P. Oxy. 1380. West argues that this instance is merely a copyist mistake such that ἀγάπη was originally ἀγάθὴ. "Alleged Pagan Use of Agapē in P Oxy 1380," *JTS* 18 (1967): 143. Cf. idem, "Further Note on Agapē in P Oxy. 1380," *JTS* 20 (1969): 228–30. Witt, on the other hand, argues convincingly that the text should not be emended and the usage fits with the cult of Isis. "Use of Agapē in P Oxy 1380," *JTS* 19 (1968): 211.

Further, whereas the verb φιλέω is more common than ἀγαπάω in extra-biblical literature, in the LXX ἀγαπάω appears roughly 8 times as often as φιλέω and almost 6 times as often as φιλέω in the NT. Feneberg rightly points out that the NT disparity is "doubtless dependent on" the LXX. *EDNT* 3:425. Moreover, the ἐράω word group, also prominent in extra-biblical Greek, appears only a few times in the LXX and never in the NT. ἐράω appears in Esth 2:17; Prov 4:6 (cf. 1 Esd 4:24) and ἐραστής in Hos 2:7, 9, 12, 14, 15; Jer 4:30; 22:20, 22; Lam 1:19; Ezek 16:33, 36, 37; 23:5, 9, 22 (cf. Wis 8:2; 15:6). Of these LXX OT instances only Jer 4:30 does not translate אהב.

[92] Trench thus asserts that ἀγάπη was "a word born within the bosom of revealed religion." *Synonyms*, 43. Spicq believes that the noun ἀγάπη finds its origin in the LXX as a translation of אהבה. *TLNT* 1:14. While doubting the newness of the term itself in the LXX, Stauffer contends that "the whole group of words associated with ἀγαπᾶν is given a new meaning by the Greek translation of the OT." *TDNT* 1:39. Similarly, James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, "αγαπη," in *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1949), 2.

[93] Thus, "since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf. however, Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5." "Love," 381. Similarly, Morris writes, "Clearly, the use of the term in the Septuagint is a far cry from that in the New Testament." *Testaments of Love*, 103.

[94] Klassen supposes that the LXX uses this word group because "the Hellenistic Jewish translators sought the least marked Greek term for expressions of love in their sacred texts," a preference which the NT naturally continued. *Love in the NT*, 381. Similarly, Stauffer suggests ἀγαπάω was a "colourless Greek word" that was "best adapted to express" the intended meaning of "selection, of willed address and of readiness for action." *TDNT* 1:39, 36. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1982), 254–55. Others have suggested in a similar vein that ἀγαπάω was selected because it lacked the "warmth" and "affective emphasis" of other terms referring to a "will rather than to the emotion" and/or a "sober kind of love." Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134; Schneider, *EDNT* 1:9. It has also been suggested that ἀγαπάω is favored in order to avoid any sexual connotations, especially in contrast to ἐράω. Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134. Cf. Moffat, *Love*, 38. However, not only ἐράω but also φιλέω and ἀγαπάω "denote sensual love" in extra-biblical literature. Stählin, *TDNT* 9:115. Cf. also 2 Sam 13:15 and Lam 1:2 in the

contemporary scholars, that the increase in usage of ἀγάπη and the wider word group may be

accounted for exclusively on the basis of diachronic linguistic shifts rather than theological

purpose(s).[95]

Nygren, on the contrary, makes much of the fact that Paul overwhelmingly favors the

noun ἀγάπη over the verb ἀγαπάω, opposite the more frequent usage of the verb rather than the

noun in the Johannine writings and the LXX as a whole.[96] However, Paul's preference for the

noun is not suggestive of a distinctive meaning thereof. The usage of the LXX and NT

demonstrate that a sharp distinction between the meaning of ἀγαπάω and ἀγάπη is unwarranted

and artificial.[97] In all, while the precise identification of the factors regarding the entrance of the

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LXX. Morris thinks it was chosen to distinguish from the entire range of meaning of ἐράω. However, recognizing that the linguistics do not "prove the point" he emphasizes that the distinctive meaning stems not from the "word" but the "concept." *Testaments of Love*, 103, 125, 128. Others have suggested the preference is due to similarity in sound to אהב. See a discussion of this in Stählin, *TDNT* 9:124.

[95] Joly contends the preference for the ἀγάπη word group was present in Hellenistic times and that the change took place for linguistic reasons from the fourth century B.C. on; specifically, *philein* was moving from "love" to "kiss" (due to the disappearance of the older word for kiss - κυνείν) while *agapan* moved from "be content with" to "love" with some overlap with previous meanings. *Le vocabulaire*, 33. So Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 51–52; idem, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 646; Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995), 96; Donald A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000), 27. C. C. Tarelli suggests something similar prior to Joly. "Agapē," *JTS* 1 (1950): 64–67. Cf. Barr, "Words for Love," in *The Glory* (ed. Hurst and Wright), 6, 11; idem, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). Moffat suggests, "So congenial and comprehensive did ἀγαπάν become in the Christian vocabulary indeed, that φιλεῖν practically disappeared during the second century." *Love*, 47. Warfield had also seen ἀγάπη as the word that was current at the time, not as a deliberate choice of the authors, though he nevertheless asserts a contrast between ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21. "Terminology," 184, 196. Contra the claims of Spicq and others that the colorless ἀγάπη words were given a higher meaning in the LXX. *TLNT* 1:11.

[96] The LXX uses the verb ten times more often than the noun whereas Paul uses the noun twice as much as the verb. Interestingly, Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics,* uses *philia* as a noun far more frequently than as a verb. See Catherine Osborne, *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 24, 25.

[97] On the contrary, Barr states, "in relation to ideas of love, this noun [ἀγάπη] is no more than a nominalization of those same relations and emotions which in verb form were expressed by ἀγαπᾶν." "Words for Love," in *The Glory* (ed. Hurst and Wright), 8. Cf. Vaughan Jones, "Agape and Eros," 3. Accordingly, Paul's more frequent usage of the noun may simply be due to the fact that he uses abstract, rather than active, language regarding virtue and qualities more frequently than some other biblical writers. Moreover, there are some LXX books that also use the noun more frequently such as Canticles and Ecclesiastes. Barr suggests that Paul is adopting a more Hellenistic style in this usage. *Holy Scripture*, 62.

specific noun ἀγάπη into frequent usage as well as the increased usage of the ἀγαπάω word group in biblical Greek remains beyond certainty, their usage in the LXX connects them with the OT meaning of love, especially that of אהב.[98] It is incorrect to suggest that ἀγάπη in and of itself posits a new, higher form of divine love as this overlooks the considerable influence of the OT usage on the NT as well as the compelling linguistic reasons for the increase in usage of the ἀγάπη and the ἀγαπάω word group. With this in mind, attention will now be turned to various themes of love in the NT that relate to the systematic issues pertinent to this dissertation.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that support the conclusion that divine love is volitional but not merely volitional. First, divine love is volitional. That is, God's love includes a free, volitional aspect that is not essential, necessary, or strictly arbitrary. Second, divine love is not merely volitional. That is, divine love is closely associated with, but not identical to, God's will and election. Third, the divine-human love relationship, then, is neither unilaterally deterministic nor essential or ontologically necessary but mutually (though not symmetrically) volitional and contingent. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. What is the relationship between love, the divine will, and election? Is divine love the result of God's unilaterally arbitrary will? Is divine love to be equated with election? These questions are themselves predicated on thorny questions at the center of the free-will debate, particularly the complex issue of whether God's will is unilaterally efficacious or whether humans possess significant freedom, that is, freedom to do otherwise than they do.

Importantly, Paul may be adopting the Hellenistic style of abstract language without thereby adopting Hellenistic theological/philosophical content.

[98] R. E. Brown points toward what he calls a "real concept of ἀγάπη before Christianity" included in OT חסד. *The Epistles of John*, 255.

Before turning to the NT data regarding love and election it is important to first

understand the nature of the divine will and election as depicted in the NT. Thus, a brief survey of

the semantics and meaning of the divine will and election will be presented prior to the specific

association of love and election. Here and throughout this section, NT data will be presented that

suggest that the divine will is not the only factor in the divine-human relationship and election is

not arbitrary or unilaterally efficacious (cf. 2 Thess 2:10–14).

A Brief Consideration of the Divine Will in the NT

The will of God is a massive concept in the NT, a full discussion of which is far beyond

the scope of this dissertation. The significant overlap between the terms and conception of divine

love with that of the divine will and election has led some to define love within the context of

deterministic election.[99] While it is not possible to address the entire concept of determinism in

this space, a strictly deterministic conception runs into large problems in reconciling the biblical

data regarding divine love (both in the OT and NT).[100] While the NT presents a robust picture of

God's will and intervention in human affairs, the language related to the divine will and election

suggests in numerous places that God's will is not unilaterally efficacious nor is it always

fulfilled. Further, the divine will also shows evidence of being affected and evaluative, related to

that which God desires, wants, delights in, etc. If this is so, then one should not assume a

unilateral conception of the divine will and/or election, which is then superimposed upon divine

love and the God-human relationship. Rather, God allows significantly free beings to

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[99] For instance, Morris believes that "God wills to love men and he loves according to his own purpose of election, not according to the actions of men." *Testaments of Love*, 160. Thus, for Morris unilateral "predestination and love go together." Ibid., 191. Similarly, see *Agape and Eros*, 214.

[100] Since the priority of the divine will is well-known and well-represented in the Bible and in numerous studies, this section will primarily draw attention to the usages of the divine will that do not appear to fit into a conception of unilateral determinism. Importantly, those sections that depict a robust will and relate directly to divine love will be taken up further below. Moreover, a hypothesis regarding how the perspective depicted here accords with the strong statements often used to assert unilateral determinism will be taken up briefly in chapter 6.

significantly affect the actual course of history. As such, the conception of the divine will in the NT does not support a deterministic metaphysic.[101]

The two most significant word groups related to the divine will are θέλω and βούλομαι.[102] The NT usage of these terms suggests that they do not necessarily refer to a unilaterally efficacious will.[103] The θέλω word group relates to that which is willed, desired, wanted, taken pleasure in, or even liked.[104] It may be related to the fulfilled or unfulfilled wish of its agent. The βούλομαι word group similarly relates to that which is wanted, desired, willed, intended and/or planned, whether of volition or inclination, often with the connotation of deliberation.[105] With regard to both word groups, which are used very similarly in the NT,[106] there are instances of unfulfilled wishes and desires, even with divine agency (cf. Matt 23:37; Mark 7:24; Luke 7:30; Luke 13:34; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).[107] Thus, while both roots often appear in strong statements

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[101] This perspective has striking implications for the overall doctrine of divine love, especially when applied to the two main exemplars of models, Carl F. H. Henry and Charles Hartshorne.

[102] The verb θέλω appears 208 times in 199 verses. The noun θέλημα meaning will, wish, desire, appears 62 times in 58 verses. Another noun, θέλησις, also meaning will, appears only once (Heb 2:4). The verb βούλομαι appears 37 times in 37 verses. The noun, βουλη, appears 12 times in 12 verses and refers to that which is decided in accordance with the agent's wishes. Another noun, βούλημα, appears 3 times.

[103] This is not to suggest that the terms could never refer to a unilaterally efficacious will but simply that they don't require that meaning with regard to the divine will.

[104] See D. Müller, "θελω," *NIDNTT* 3:1018; M. Limbeck, "θελω," *EDNT* 2:138; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "θέλω," L&N 1:287, 300. The classical Greek of the θέλω word group referred to inclination, taking pleasure in and/or liking. Gottlob Schrenk, "θελω, θελημα, θελησις," *TDNT* 3:45.

[105] See D. Müller, "Βουλομαι," *NIDNTT* 3:1015–17; Gottlob Schrenk, "Βουλομαι, Βουλη, Βουλημα," *TDNT* 1:632. The sense of deliberation also appears in the NT with the sense of "consider carefully, make up one's mind, decide" (cf. Luke 14:31). H. J. Ritz, "Βουλη," *EDNT* 1:224. Cf. Müller, *NIDNTT* 3:1016. Likewise, outside the NT the word group could refer to initial stages as well as the final result of deliberation, resolve. Schrenk, *TDNT* 1:633.

[106] The original difference in meaning is widely disputed, whether the βούλομαι root was more rational and the θέλω root more impulsive desire or vice versa. See Schrenk, *TDNT* 1:629. Cf. also Müller, *NIDNTT* 3:1015. Both are significantly associated with terms of "desire, want, wish" and evaluation. J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "θέλω, θέλημα," 1:287, 300; idem, "βούλομαι, βούλημα," 1:287, 300.

[107] It would be strange for Jesus to weep over that which he ultimately willed should be the case when he could have just as easily unilaterally willed it to be otherwise! This is contra Schrenk's contention that "God's θέλειν is always characterised by absolute definiteness, sovereign self-assurance and efficacy.

regarding the divine will, especially as it relates to his plan of salvation (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:28; Eph 1:5, 9, 11), neither root in and of itself denotes a unilaterally efficacious will or divine decree.[108]

The important connotation of desire and/or delight that the θέλω and βούλομαι word groups often signify is further supported by the Hebrew terms that the Greek word groups translate in the LXX. These most often depict the aspect of that which one desires and which will bring the agent delight and/or pleasure in the OT.[109] Further, in some instances, the θέλω group is

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It is resolute and complete willing." *TDNT* 3:47. Likewise the textual data directly contradict the overstatement that with divine agency the βούλομαι word-group "is always a case of an irrefragable determination." Müller, *NIDNTT* 3:1017. See, for example, Luke 7:30. Schrenk recognizes "the frustration" of Jesus' 'will' but limits the impact to his merely human will in contrast to other usages which characterize his "omnipotent will." Schrenk, *TDNT* 3:48. However, there is no exegetically based method to assign the verb to Jesus' divinity or humanity. As such, this is a purely speculative argument.

[108] This is despite the dogmatic language that is often used such as when Schrenk asserts that θέλημα defines "God's will as His eternal decree of salvation." Similarly, βουλή Schrenk, *TDNT* 3:57. Cf. also idem, *TDNT* 1:635–36; Ritz, *EDNT* 1:224–25. Limbeck, on the contrary, is correct that with regard to salvation "the human will is not insignificant." *EDNT* 2:138. Importantly, Müller correctly affirms, "the NT church does not acknowledge a double predestination in the will of God, whereby from the beginning one section of humanity is excluded from salvation." Müller, *NIDNTT* 3:1020. In fact, some instances of human θέλω suggest the importance of the human will in the divine-human relationship. As Limbeck states, "the call to discipleship in the word of Jesus occurs as inquiry and invitation, not as a 'must.'" *EDNT* 2:138. Cf. Matt 15:28; 19:17, 21; Mark 8:34; 9:35; 10:51. Yet, Limbeck mistakenly believes that in John the human will is totally "determined from outside." *EDNT* 2:138.

[109] In the LXX, the verb θέλω most often translates חָפֵץ, delight in, have pleasure in, desire (40 times in 38 verses) and אָבָה, be willing, consent (32 times). Thus, it may translate חפץ in reference to explicitly evaluative delight such as God's lack of pleasure in wickedness (Ps 5:5; cf. 50:18; 56:4; Hos 6:6) or his delight in the Psalmist (Ps 17:20; cf. 21:9; 40;12) and the lack of pleasure when the wicked perish (Ezek 18:23, 32) among many others. The translations of אבה may refer to human willful rebellion against God (Deut 1:26; cf. Ezek 3:7; 20:8) or the Lord's unwillingness to forgive those who have rebelled against him (Deut 29:19; cf. 23:5). Nineteen times it takes a negative particle to translate מֵאֵן, to refuse. The verb also translates the noun חֵפֶץ and the verb רָצָה once each (1 Kgs 10:13; 1 Chr 28:4) as well as a number of other terms once each. Beyond its rendering as θέλω, the verb חפץ is also frequently rendered by βούλομαι (21 times) and εὐδοκέω (3 times) as well as θέλημα and θελητής once.
The noun θέλημα most often translates the חפץ word group (20 times) and רָצוֹן (11 times); both terms are significantly associated with divine delight, pleasure, and desire in the OT. For example, see Jer 9:23; Ps 29:6. Other terms are translated by θέλημα once. Beyond its rendering by θέλημα, חפץ is also rendered by βούλομαι and θέλω 5 times each, πρᾶγμα, matter, thing, 4 times, and θελητός, desired, twice among many others two times or less. The noun θέλησις also most often translates חפץ (4 times) and רצון (twice). For an example of translating חפץ of evaluative pleasure, see especially Ps 146:10. It also once translates אֲרֶשֶׁת, desire, request, in parallel to "heart's desire" (Ps 20:3).
Likewise, the verb βούλομαι most often translates חפץ (24 times) and אבה (16 times). For translations of חפץ with the connotation of divine delight, or the lack thereof, see Isa 1:11; 42:21; 53:10; 65:12; 66:4; Ezek 33:11. Significantly, it appears to refer to the fact that the people would not listen, did evil, and chose that in which God "did not delight" in Isa 66:4. אבה is often translated by θέλω with

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closely associated with the terminology of love, often with the connotation of liking, or having pleasure in, something (cf. Luke 20:46; 1 Pet 3:10).[110] The θέλω group also collocates frequently with that of εὐδοκέω, such that the divine will (θέλημα) is in accordance with God's good pleasure (εὐδοκέω) (Eph 1:5, 9; cf. Phil 2:13) or in reference to the lack of divine desire (θέλω) for or pleasure (εὐδοκέω) in sacrifices (Heb 10:8; cf. Pss 50:18; 146:10).[111]

While the various theological interpretations of the meaning of the divine will are the subject of continuous debate, consideration of the NT usage demonstrates that there is nothing inherent in the terminology of will that requires or suggests unilateral efficaciousness.[112] In fact, the usage of the terminology suggests otherwise. At this point, we will turn to a brief survey of NT instances indicating that the divine will is not always fulfilled.[113]

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reference to the people's unwillingness to obey God (Lev 26:21; Isa 30:9, 15; 42:24; Ezek 3:7). As θέλω does, βούλομαι also takes a negative particle to translate מָאֵן 10 times. It also translates some other terms once or twice, including חָמַד once (Isa 1:29). The noun βουλή most often translates עֵצָה, "counsel" (70 times), which supports the sense of deliberation noted above. It also translates a number of other terms related to council and/or plot 4 times or less. βούλημα never appears in the LXX, although Josephus uses it to refer to Pharaoh's disobedience to the true intention of God in refusing to let Israel go. Cf. *Antiquities of the Jews* 2.304.

[110] Thus, in Luke 20:46, the scribes "like [θέλω] to walk in love robes" and "love [φιλέω] respectful greetings in the markets," etc. (Luke 20:46). In 1 Pet 3:10, "the one who desires [θέλω] life, to love [ἀγαπάω] and see good days" (1 Pet 3:10; from Ps 33:13). See also the collocations in the LXX in 1 Sam 18:22; 1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8; Pss 33:13; 108:17; Isa 48:14. The larger conceptual relationship between love, the divine will, and election is apparent in Eph 1:4–6; see the discussion of this passage with regard to love and election further below. The βούλομαι word group, on the other hand, never collocates in a single verse with the ἀγαπάω word group and only once with the φιλέω word group (Jas 4:4).

[111] See the discussions further below of the largely evaluative meaning of the εὐδοκέω word group and the particular meaning of these verses. The sense of choice may also be present when these two collocate as in the usage in Sir 15:15. The εὐδοκέω and βούλομαι word groups never collocate in a single verse.

[112] This stands in direct contrast to the misleading, dogmatic statements with regard to the semantics such as when L. Coenen states, "If it be asked what are the principles which underlie God's choice, the only positive answer that can be given is that he bestows his favour upon men and joins them to himself solely on the basis of his own free decision and his love which is not dependent on any temporal circumstances [in other words it is unmotivated by any external factor]." "εκλεγομαι," *NIDNTT* 1:542.

[113] Many of the instances below may be sidestepped by the determinist interpreter by assuming that those who do the will of God are actually unilaterally determined to do so by God and that those who don't do God's will are explained by reference to a distinction between God's revealed and hidden will. These dogmatic interpretations will be taken up in chapter 6. In the meantime, the weight of the NT

In the Gospels, the sovereignty of God's will is emphasized, yet, at the same time, there are numerous instances of the divine will not being enacted. For example, the rejection of God's will is explicit when the "Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose [βουλή] for themselves, not having been baptized by John" (Luke 7:30).[114] Further, God "desires [θέλω] all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4) yet, not all will be saved.[115] Likewise, God "is patient [μακροθυμέω] toward you, not wishing [βούλομαι] for any to perish but for all to come to repentance [μετάνοια]" (2 Pet 3:9; cf. Ezek 18:32).[116] Yet, it is clear elsewhere in the NT that this divine will that all be saved is not actualized (cf. 1 John 2:17; Heb 10:36).[117] Moreover, the will of Jesus is often

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evidence surveyed in this chapter suggests that such an interpretation amounts to special pleading.

[114] As Fitzmyer interprets, "the Pharisees and lawyers thwarted God's design on their behalf." *Luke I–IX*, 670. Cf. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 301; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994), 678; Robert H. Stein, *Luke* (NAC 24; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 231. This assumes "that the βουλή of God can be hindered." Ritz, *EDNT* 1:224. Consider also the indirect rejection of God's will by the people's disobedience to Moses (Acts 7:39) and the object lessons, which assume human beings do not always do God's will (Matt 21:31; Luke 12:47). Further, Jesus frequently refers to those who do "the will" (θέλημα) of the Father with the clear implication that God's will is not always done (Matt 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; Mark 3:35; John 6:40; cf. Matt 6:10; John 7:17; 9:31). See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 246. Cf. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 288; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* (WBC 33A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 148.

[115] Anton Vögtle contends that this verse excludes the Calvinist/Determinist perspective. *Der Judasbrief, der 2. Petrusbrief* (Bd 22; Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 1994), 231–32. Cf. Müller, *NIDNTT* 3:1020. On the deterministic response to such verses see the brief discussion of 2 Pet 3:9 below. Further, a number of exhortations to prove, understand, and do the will of God imply that humans may do otherwise (Rom 12:2; Eph 5:17; 6:6; cf. Col 1:9; 4:12; 1 Thess 4:3; 5:18; cf. Phlm 14). While such exhortations are not positive examples of God's unfulfilled will, such exhortations would be superfluous if God's will were always carried out. Other texts with such implications appear in the section dedicated to love and election below.

[116] The attribute of patience itself presumes the possibility of unfulfilled desire (cf. 2 Pet 3:15). Moreover, prayers are to be made "according to His will" and then he will hear (1 John 5:14; cf. 1 Pet 2:15) with the obvious implication that prayers might be made not according to his will, which he will not hear. "It is as we freely yield ourselves to God that he is able to accomplish his will through us and our prayers. In a very real sense, therefore, the accomplishment of God's will in the world does depend on our prayers." I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (NICNT; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1978), 245. Cf. Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John* (WBC 51; Dallas: Word, 2002), 295. Cf. 1 John 3:22. Further, Hebrews refers to God's lack of desire (θέλω) for, and pleasure (εὐδοκέω) in, sacrifices and offerings (Heb 10:8; cf. 5; Heb 13:21). Here it is evident that God desires and/or wills that in which he takes delight. See the discussion of εὐάρεστος in the section dedicated to divine delight further below.

[117] God wants "'everyone'/'all' to come to repentance. . . . God's will may not be done, but it will not be for lack of trying on his part." Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (PNTC; Grand

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depicted as an unfulfilled desire. Thus, Jesus's will is explicitly thwarted or rejected such as when

Jesus wanted (θέλω) no one to know of his location but "he could not escape notice" (Mark 7:24)

and when he wished the fires of destruction were already kindled (Luke 12:49).[118] Most

poignantly, Jesus laments, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who

are sent to her! How often I wanted [θέλω] to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers

her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling [θέλω]" (Matt 23:37; cf. Luke 13:34; John

5:40).[119] Overall, the divine will may be unfulfilled, or thwarted (at least in its ideal sense), that

is, a number of things that God does not want do in fact take place.

Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 281. Similarly, Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond believe this text argues against determinism. *La deuxième Épitre de Saint Pierre. L'épitre de Saint Jude* (CNT 13B; Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1980), 115–16. On the other hand, it is sometimes argued that the terms "anyone" and "all" may simply be referring to the addressees of the letter. Cf. Richard J. Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude* (WBC 50; Dallas: Word, 2002), 313; Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter and Jude* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 188. Thomas R. Schreiner, however, thinks such a restriction is unsatisfying saying, "By extension we should understand 2 Pet 3:9 in the same way as Ezek 18:32. It refers to God's desire that everyone without exception be saved." *1, 2 Peter Jude* (NAC 37; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 382. Moreover, the wider canonical theology including Ezek 18:32, 1 Tim 2:4 and others suggests that this indeed refers to a desire for universal salvation. Schreiner is representative of those who recognize the problem in this verse but nevertheless maintain the idea of double predestination. He recognizes that in Ezek 18:32 "God's regret over the perishing of anyone is clear." Ibid., 381. Yet, he attempts to overcome the dilemma here by distinguishing between God's "decretive will" and his "desired will" that "God desires the salvation of all in one sense, but he does not ultimately ordain that all will be saved." Ibid. Cf. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), 419–20. For Schreiner, "God genuinely desires in one sense that all will be saved, even if he has not ultimately decreed that all will be saved." He contends that "the Scriptures, if accepted as a harmonious whole, compel us to make such distinctions." *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 382. Marshall, however, comments that assuming that God's will is always done "in such deterministic terms is inconsistent with the freedom which the Bible itself assigns to God's children, and it wreaks havoc upon the biblical idea of the personal relationship which exists between God and his children." *The Epistles of John*, 245. The deterministic interpretation will be further evaluated in chapter 6.

[118] Of the latter Stein correctly notes that this "grammatical construction for a contrary-to-fact condition indicates that Jesus longed for the completion of his mission, which was as yet incomplete." *Luke*, 364. Cf. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), 137, 187; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978), 546. Further, Jesus quotes from the OT that he desires (θέλω) "compassion" (ἔλεος) rather than sacrifice (Matt 9:13; cf. Matt 12:7; Hos 6:6).

[119] Their will explicitly rejected the will of Jesus. Thus, the blame is placed on their choice. See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 883. Similarly, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 951; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33b; Dallas: Word, 2002), 680; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV* (AB 28A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1036. Yet, "God never imposes His love by overriding human will." Craig Blomberg, *Matthew* (NAC 22; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 350.

A Brief Consideration of the Semantics of Election

The instances above that demonstrate that the divine will is not unilaterally efficacious

complement the meaning and usage of the terminology of election that will be surveyed below.

This is especially true of God's desire that all should be saved. As will be seen, terms of election

often connote the sense of an invitation that may be (or may have already been) accepted or

rejected. In this way, "elect" and "called" correspond to those who have appropriately responded,

or will do so, to God's call. With regard to "vocation" the divine call may be particular (i.e.,

apostolicity) but with regard to a love relationship with God (resultant in salvation) this call is

universal. Therefore, the "called" and "elect," as they relate to the objects of divine love and/or

salvation, do not refer to those who are such by God's unilateral decision. God's decision to love

at all is a necessary but not sufficient condition for "the called" and the "elect."

The Meaning of the ἐκλέγομαι
Word Group

The ἐκλέγομαι word group refers to choice or selection, often with the connotation of

evaluation and appraisal of that which is distinguished, considered the best, and/or excellent.[120]

The word group most frequently refers to divine election, though the verb may refer to human

choice.[121] Jesus himself is the truly worthy objective of election, the "choice" one in the sense of

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[120] Coenen, *NIDNTT* 1: 536; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "εκλεκτος," L&N 1:306.

[121] The adjective ἐκλεκτός, of that which is "chosen," appears 22 times in 22 verses. It is used most often as a description of those who are Christians, the "elect" (18 times), but also refers to Christ as elect (Luke 23:35; 1 Pet 2:4, 6) and once of angels (1 Tim 5:21). The noun ἐκλογή appears 7 times in 7 verses in the NT, always of divine election, which is often in the sense of vocation but many times with soteriological implications (Acts 9:15; Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Pet 1:10). The verb ἐκλέγομαι appears 22 times in 20 verses with both human and divine agency of the action of choosing. With human agency it may refer to the church's appointment of someone to office (Acts 6:5; 15:22, 25) or to general human choices of an evaluative nature (Luke 10:42; 14:7). However, by far it most often refers to divine election. Such election may be of Jesus (Luke 9:35), but more often, of humans via the Father or Christ to a particular purpose (Luke 6:13; John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19; Acts 1:2, 24; 15:7; 1 Cor 1:27–28; cf. Acts 13:17) or of a soteriological nature (Mark 13:20; Eph 1:4; Jas 2:5). In some instances, the distinction between election to a particular purpose and unto salvation is somewhat artificial. For example, John 15 appears to also connote soteriological implications. However, it is clear that some who are "elect" are not thereby saved, as is evident in the case of Judas. It is not always clear where vocation ends and

being desirable, pleasant, highly esteemed, valuable, honorable, and excellent (cf. Matt 12:18; Luke 9:35; 23:35; 1 Pet 2:4).[122] Accordingly, election in the NT may be of an evaluative nature and is evidently not spontaneous or ungrounded in every instance.[123] The range of meaning of the NT terms of election, including the potentially evaluative and/or grounded nature of the word group, is further bolstered by its LXX usage where it translates various Hebrew terms that connote evaluative choice and/or desire.[124] Moreover, the ἐκλέγομαι word group frequently

soteriological implications begin. One should neither dismiss the distinction nor apply it too rigidly.

[122] Jesus is thus "choice [ἐκλεκτός] and precious [ἔντιμος]" from God's perspective (1 Pet 2:4, 6). The adjective ἔντιμος refers to that which is valued, precious, honorable. Cf. Isa 28:16. Elsewhere ἐκλεκτός is also used in reference to that which is "choice" in the sense of being, evaluatively, praiseworthy. It is apparently used thus of Rufus "a choice man in the Lord" (Rom 16:13) and the "chosen angels" (1 Tim 5:21). In the LXX see Ps 17:27; Sir 24:15; Bar 3:30; Wis 3:14. Many, but not all, scholars consider this reference to Rufus as a "'choice' believer (cf. French *élite*)." Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 536. Similarly, Robert H. Mounce, *Romans* (NAC 27; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 277. W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam suggest he is "'eminent,' 'distinguished for his special excellence' . . . as a Christian." *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC 32; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980), 427. Similarly, C. K. Barrett refers to him as "that outstanding Christian." *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1957), 284. Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 741.

[123] Importantly, "the act of choosing (and thus the words of this group) includes a judgment by the chooser as to which object he considers to be the most suitable for the fulfilment of his purpose. It is not of vital importance whether it be objective criteria, or subjective feelings and considerations which are paramount in making the decision." Coenen, *NIDNTT* 1:536. Selection of an objective nature was often in view by the group in classical Greek where the verb is sometimes used of the choice of that which is most beautiful, of the best quality, or worthy of praise. See Gottlob Schrenk, "εκλεγομαι, εκλογη, εκλεκτος," *TDNT* 4:144, 182. Similarly, "the election or recruitment of political and military leaders had to do with the merits and the character of the persons chosen." Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 92. This evaluative element may relate to its derivation from "*legō*, count, collect, read." Coenen, *NIDNTT* 1:536.

[124] The adjective ἐκλεκτός most often translates the word group בחר, choose, choice (38 times) and ברר, pure, select (6 times). It often translates בָּחִיר, which may refer to Israel as a whole but often specifically refers to the faithful among the people (cf. Isa 65:9, 15, 22). Of ברר, consider the significant usage in the statement, "with the pure you show yourself pure" (Ps 17:27; 2 Sam 22:27). It also translates חֶמְדָּה of that which is an object of desire, 4 times (cf. Hag 2:7) and בֹּחַן twice, of that which has been tested (cf. Isa 28:16), בריא (of "fat" and thus "choice" livestock or produce) 8 times and a number of others once. In many such instances, ἐκλεκτός "does not express the fact of being chosen, but in a wider sense factors already present which make choice likely." Coenen, *NIDNTT* 1:537. The verb ἐκλέγομαι most often translates בחר, to choose, select (34 times). Cf. Ps 77:68. Such usage "denotes the complicated rather than the simple act of will" but the "motive is not indicated by the word." Gottfried Quell, "Election in the Old Testament," *TDNT* 4:148. Moreover, Coenen adds that God's election is not on the basis of "human qualifications" but "can only be meaningfully maintained" as it "leads to a response to the love of God, to obedience." *NIDNTT* 1:538. Some other terms are translated by ἐκλεκτός once. ἐκλογή never appears in the LXX.

collocates with the ἀγαπάω word group, especially with ἀγαπητός, the "beloved," demonstrating its association with love.[125] It is even more closely associated with the κλητός word group, which will be surveyed below.[126]

Humans are the most frequent objects of divine election, whether vocational[127] or salvific.[128] With regard to the latter, the adjective ἐκλεκτός consistently refers to those who are "the elect," the chosen of God.[129] This "elect" often appears to refer to those who will ultimately be saved, at times specifically directed toward those at the end of days.[130] In such instances, the elect

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[125] Cf. John 15:19; Rom 11:28; Eph 1:4–5; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; Jas 2:5; 1 Pet 2:9, 11. Beyond a single verse see John 15:16–17; Rom 8:33, 35; 9:11–13. These verses will be specifically addressed in the section dedicated to love and election further below. The terms also frequently collocate in the LXX (Deut 4:37; 7:7; 10:15; Pss 46:5; 77:68; Isa 41:8; 44:1–2; cf. Wis 3:9; Sir 47:22).

[126] Though there are fewer collocations in number, the meaning is more closely related. See Matt 22:14; 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 1:10; Rev 17:14. They also frequently overlap in the LXX.

[127] Jesus elected some to specific vocations (Luke 6:13; John 15:16, 19; Acts 1:2, 24), which might be forfeited, as in the case of Judas (John 6:70; 13:18). Others are elected by God to missional functions (Acts 9:15; 15:7; 1 Cor 1:27–28; cf. 13:17). One might argue that Judas was elected to fulfill the role of betrayer (cf. John 6:70). So, to a limited extent, Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:173. However, the actions of Judas are severely condemned (Mark 14:21) and if Judas was unilaterally determined to betray Christ then he is also arbitrarily condemned. On the contrary, Judas chose to betray Jesus; he "was a willful devil." Borchert, *John 1–11*, 276. For the argument that God's election is not truly frustrated in this instance since "election (in a broader sense) allows for the possibility of human failure" see Köstenberger, *John*, 222. Cf. Adolf von Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes, Wie er spricht, denkt und glaubt: ein Kommentar zum vierten Evangelium* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1960), 184–85. Notably, in 1 Cor 1:27–28 the election is specifically evaluative since God purposely chooses the "foolish" and "weak" things in the eyes of the world. Compare the narrative of the selection of Gideon's 300 warriors (Judg 7:2–7). As in the case of Gideon, if God only chose those whom the world viewed as well-suited, the world could easily overlook the action of God in bringing about his purpose.

[128] Election is frequently with regard to the plan of salvation, thus God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4; cf. Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thess 1:4). All of these passages, which some have interpreted to refer to unilateral determinism, will be discussed further below.

[129] See Matt 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; Rom 8:33; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:9; Rev 17:14; cf. 1 Pet 5:13; 2 John 1, 13.

[130] It is descriptive of a remnant on whose behalf tribulation will be cut short (Matt 24:22; Mark 13:20), whom false prophets will attempt to mislead, "if possible" (Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22), and whom God will ultimately gather "from the four winds" (Matt 24:31; Mark 13:27) and bring justice (Luke 18:7). The phrase "if possible" could be understood to mean that it is impossible for the elect to be lost. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 706; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 361. Cf. also James A. Brooks, *Mark* (NAC 23; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 214. This might even be taken in the sense that they are unilaterally determined unto salvation. Gregory the Great commented in Homilies on Ezek 1:9, "if they are elect, it is not possible; and if it is possible, they are not elect." Quoted in Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers* (trans. J. H. Newman;

"must refer to those who have followed Jesus, i.e., Christians."[131] However, the "elect" do not

seem to be unilaterally determined by God since "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt

22:14).[132] The immediate as well as the wider Matthean context suggests that those who are

ultimately "chosen" are those who respond to God (cf. Matt 22:1–13).[133] Likewise, the wider NT

data also imply that those who respond appropriately are God's elect (cf. Jas 2:5; Rev 17:14).[134]

Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842), 264. France, on the other hand, sees this as "an optimistic expectation that their faith will prove equal to the test." *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 529. Though France's view might be correct the sense might be stronger, a reference to those who *will not* be misled but not necessarily that they *could not* be misled. This may be an example of the "elect" spoken of corporately without reference to which individuals make up that group or a product of divine foreknowledge. Importantly, the NT is consistent that it is those who endure to the end who will be saved (Matt 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13).

[131] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 703. Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 977. For Joel Marcus, these references are to the "faithful remnant." *Mark 8–16* (AB 27A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 897. Cf. Isa 65:8–10. R. de Vaux describes the prophetic concept of remnant as a holy community that lives in love and fear of YHWH and thus receives his blessings. "Le 'reste d'Israël' d'après les prophètes," *RB* 42 (1933): 539. There may also be the implication of evaluation if the term translated "justice" (ἐκδίκησις) in Luke 18:7 refers to the "vindication" of the saints. Such evaluative vindication, however, could only take place through the mediation of Christ by his merits.

[132] The "many" likely refers to God's universal invitation (cf. John 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4, 6; Titus 2:11) as "the πολλοί is probably to be taken as a universalizing Semitism, which can be translated 'everyone.'" Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 632. So Blomberg, *Matthew*, 329; B. F. Meyer, "Many [= All] Are Called, but Few [= Not All] Are Chosen," *NTS* 36 (1990): 89–97. Thus Jeremias comments, "materially the many represent the totality." That is, "Mt. 22:14 contrasts the totality of those invited with the small number of the chosen." Joachim Jeremias, "πολλοι," *TDNT* 6:542. The "few" here, on the other hand, again corresponds to the concept of "remnant." So Blaine Charette, "The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel," *JSNTSup* 79 (1992): 150. Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 891. Even Moo, who takes a deterministic position, recognizes this as "a 'general' call." *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996), 530. Here, the "elect" corresponds to the OT category of the "righteous or pious" and as such, "many Jews had received the call, but few had become 'elect' by accepting it." Alan Hugh M'Neile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1928), 317. Cf. 4 Esd 8:3. The same phrase is found in Matt 20:16 in some manuscripts but the usage there is most likely not original.

[133] "Those responding properly may be said to have been chosen. The elect are the true community of the people God chooses to save, even as Israel had once been so chosen, but those people must freely respond to the Spirit's work in their lives. . . . Election does not violate free will nor occur irrespective of the man's conduct." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 329. Cf. 2 Esd 8:3, 41. J. Eckert likewise comments, "A predestinarian misunderstanding of the belief in election is thus rejected. . . . The elect are those who have followed the invitation into the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ." "εκλεκτος," *EDNT* 4:417. Contra Coenen who thinks that this is attributed "to the divine choice alone." *NIDNTT* 1:540.

[134] Indeed, those who are "chosen" (ἐκλέγομαι) are those who "love God" (Jas 2:5), the "called [κλητός], chosen [ἐκλεκτός] and faithful [πιστός]" (Rev 17:14), and they are "chosen [ἐκλεκτός] according to the foreknowledge of God" (1 Pet 1:1–2; cf. Rom 8:28–30). The implication of all this is that those who respond appropriately are God's elect. Indeed, "those who believe and obey are elected." Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:187. Cf. Moffat, *Love*, 202; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Accordingly, numerous exhortations to the "chosen" suggest human responsibility.[135] This all supports the interpretation that election is neither unilateral nor unconditional, though it may (or in some cases may not) be foreconditional (see especially Matt 10:22; 24:13; cf. also Mark 13:13).[136]

As has been seen, in some instances the terminology of election is clearly evaluative (cf. 1 Pet 2:4, 6). However, whether the terminology describes election of a subjective, arbitrary nature or of an objective evaluative nature (or a combination of the two) is not specified by the mere use of the ἐκλέγομαι word group. As such, whether or not election refers to God's unilateral and arbitrary selection of some and not others is not settled by the semantics alone. The words for election should not be considered technical terms for strictly arbitrary, non-evaluative, and/or timeless divine decision. When used with regard to divine election of humans the term may refer to those who are presently part of God's people and/or those who will finally be among God's people.[137] Perhaps in some instances the reference is simply to a corporate group without

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Eerdmans, 1997), 319; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2002), 624; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 31.

[135] For instance, "be all the more diligent to make certain about His [κλῆσις] and choosing [ἐκλογή] you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble" (2 Pet 1:10; cf. 3:14; Col 3:12). Paul's own claim to "endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen" implies the contingency of that status (2 Tim 2:10; cf. Titus 1:1). See also 1 Cor 9:22–23; 1 Tim 4:16. For Schrenk, this demonstrates that "election is not a logical point of rest. It is the serious responsibility which confronts the community with the question of final decision." *TDNT* 4:188. Cf. Gerhard Delling, "Merkmale der Kirche nach dem Neuen Testament," *NTS* 13 (1967): 305. As such, the "possibility of falling away is not suppressed." Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:188. The "elect . . . need to remain faithful from start to finish." Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 505. Contra George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 399. Moreover, the "chosen" may correspond to the "faithful" and "holy" (cf. 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 17:14).

[136] The parable just prior to this statement speaks of those who rejected the invitation to the wedding feast. See the discussion of this regarding the meaning of καλέω below.

[137] Stein comments that the "'Chosen ones' designates those who have responded to God in repentance and faith and are thus the recipients of his love and grace rather than to the elect by some kind of predestination." *Luke*, 446. However, Towner argues that the term tends to be used "to refer to those who are at present God's people." *The Letters*, 504. In fact, the term appears to be used of those who have responded and are thus presently part of God's people in some instances as well as those who will finally be part of God's people in others. This accords with the descriptions of salvation as variously past (cf. Titus

reference to which individuals will ultimately be included in that group.[138] When in specific

reference to those who will be saved, however, the individual texts and the wider canonical

context suggest that the "elect" identifies those who have responded, or will respond,

appropriately to God's call to salvation (cf. Matt 22:14).

The Meaning of the καλέω Word Group

The theological meaning of the καλέω word group generally refers to being divinely

called and/or invited, including the possibility of having responded affirmatively to the

call/invitation.[139] Whether the call/invitation has been responded to is not indicated by use of the

term itself and the root never explicitly refers to an irresistible call.[140] Indeed, the verb often

clearly manifests the sense of an open call in the NT[141] and in the LXX.[142] For instance, in one

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3:5; Eph 2:5, 8), present (Phil 2:12), and future (Rom 13:11).

[138] For the position that divine election is corporate see William W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie, 1990).

[139] F. W. Danker et al., eds., "κλητος," BDAG, 549; idem, "κλησις," BDAG, 549. Cf. Karl L. Schmidt, "καλεω, κλησις, αντικαλεω, εγκαλεω, ενκλημα, εισκαλεω, μετακαλεω, προκαλεω, συγκαλεω, επικαλεω, προσκαλεω, εκκλεσια," *TDNT* 3:487–536; L. Coenen, "καλεω," *NIDNTT* 1:271–76; J. Eckert, "καλεω, κλησις, κλητος," *EDNT* 2:240–44. However, the precise meaning of the terminology depends on the context, since the usage varies. See Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 233. The adjective κλητός (10 times in 10 verses), meaning called or invited, and the noun κλῆσις (11 times in 11 verses), referring to a calling or invitation, are always used in the NT with reference to a divine call; whether a call to a specific vocation or, more generally, the call to follow Christ. Schmidt thinks all instances refer to the process of salvation since "to become and be an apostle could not be separated for Paul." *TDNT* 3:494. κλῆσις is always used in reference to the divine calling of believers (Rom 11:29; 1 Cor 1:26; 7:20; Eph 1:18; 4:1, 4; Phil 3:14; 2 Thess 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:10). The verb καλέω appears 148 times in 140 verses, the vast majority of which refer to the basic sense of someone being called by a name or greeted, etc. Nevertheless, many instances of the verb refer to the divine calling.

[140] On the other hand, Schreiner is representative of those who contend that the divine call is deterministic. Thus, in his view, "those whom God calls are powerfully and inevitably brought to faith in Jesus Christ" and this "call of God is extended only to some and is always successful." *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 429. Likewise, for Moo the divine call is related to God "irresistibly" bringing about "what he chooses." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 582. However, the NT usage and LXX background of the term suggest otherwise.

[141] Thus, Jesus calls his apostles (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:20) and he calls sinners to repentance (Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). It is apparently a contingent privilege to be "called sons of God" as such blessing is ascribed to peacemakers (Matt 5:9; cf. Rom 9:26; 1 John 3:1). Elsewhere, Abraham is praised for obeying "when he was called," implying that he could have not obeyed (Heb 11:8; cf. 5:4; 11:18).

parable, Jesus refers to those who refuse a call/invitation (καλέω) to the wedding feast, symbolic

of his own invitation to salvation, which might be refused (Matt 22:3–4, 8–9; cf. Luke 14:16–

24).[143] Significantly, this parable immediately precedes Jesus's statement: "For many are called

[κλητός], but few are chosen [ἐκλεκτός]" (Matt 22:14).[144] As such, the "called" cannot in every

case be identical to the "chosen" and κλητός does not in every case refer to those who will be

saved. On the other hand, in many cases κλητός appears to refer to those who have responded

Moreover, the basic action of inviting someone to a gathering appears numerous times in the NT (Luke 7:39; John 2:2; 1 Cor 10:27), taking on theological significance in some of Jesus' parables (Luke 14:7–10, 12–13). Further, the verb often refers to those whom God has "called" in association with the wider plan of salvation according to which they have been called. See Rom 8:30; 9:24–26; 1 Cor 1:9; 7:17–18, 20–22, 24; Gal 1:15; 5:8, 13; Eph 4:4; Col 3:15; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 9:15; see others interspersed below. Interestingly, this cannot always (if ever) refer to an "eternal" call since in some instances it refers to a particular point in time when one was "called" (1 Cor 7:17–18, 20–22, 24).

[142] In the LXX, κλητός refers to guests who were invited, even guests already present at a gathering (2 Sam 15:11; 1 Kgs 1:41, 49; cf. 3 Macc 5:14). It thus renders the passive participle of קרא, "called," in reference to invited guests (cf. Judg 14:11). In Zeph 1:7 the term is used with reference to the day of the LORD and in the context of proclamation of judgment, "The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated [קדשׁ] His guests [קרא – again, passive part.]" (Zeph 1:7). In the other 13 of its 18 appearances in the LXX, the only instances of κλητός in the Pentateuch, it appears in the phrase κλητὴ ἁγία where the term translates מִקְרָא. Likewise, κλῆσις refers in the non-OT LXX to an "invitation" to a gathering (Jdt 12:10; 2 Macc 5:14). The only other instance in the LXX is without significance for the theological meaning of the term (Jer 38:6). The verb καλέω appears 458 times in 432 verses in the LXX, the vast majority of which translates קרא, "call" (over 340 times), with its various meanings.

[143] Thus, Jesus speaks of those "called" (καλέω) to the "wedding feast" who were "unwilling [θέλω] to come" and, accordingly, "those who were invited [καλέω] were not worthy [ἄξιος]" and others are therefore invited (Matt 22:3–4, 8–9; cf. Luke 14:16–24). This "invitation implies obedience. . . . Nowhere do we read that those invited are forced to refuse. The whole point of the parable is that one does not have to decline or to appear in an unsuitable garment." Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:186. Similarly, France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 827; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 892. Notably, the parable is directed at those who were "chosen" but ultimately reject God's will for them. Likewise, in Luke 14:16–24 a number of potential guests were invited but they make excuses and refuse to come, therefore the master brings others. Finally, the master proclaims, "none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner" (Luke 14:24). Later in the NT, the verb is explicitly used with reference to a salvific invitation: "Blessed are those who are invited [καλέω] to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9). This does not necessarily refer to a limited invitation since elsewhere in Revelation those who are "blessed" are consistently those who responded appropriately (Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 22:7, 14; cf. also the context of Rev 19:8).

[144] Schmidt contends that this is a dialectical and paradoxical saying that actually means "many are called and yet few are called; many are elected and yet few are elected." *TDNT* 3:495. However, Schmidt's interpretation misses the point of the preceding parable regarding those who rejected the invitation to the wedding feast. On the other hand, Coenen rightly notes that "at least from the standpoint of human response, the circle of the called and of the elect cannot be taken as necessarily coinciding." *NIDNTT* 1:274–75.

(and/or will respond) affirmatively to the invitation/call (cf. Rom 1:6–7; 8:28; 1 Cor 1:2, 24; Jude 1; Rev 17:14).[145] Elsewhere, the divine "call" entails the pursuit of the goal or prize (Phil 3:14). Further, language of the divine call to salvation often appears alongside exhortation.[146] For example, Paul implores his audience to "walk in a manner worthy [ἀξίως] of the calling [κλῆσις] with which you have been called [καλέω]" (Eph 4:1). Likewise, Paul exhorts the "brethren beloved by the Lord," those who had been "chosen" (αἱρέω) by God "from the beginning for salvation" (2 Thess 2:13) "that our God will count you worthy [ἀξιόω] of your calling [κλῆσις]" (2 Thess 1:11; cf. also 2:14–15).[147] The implication is that God may not deem them worthy and, as such, the call is not unilaterally efficacious.[148] Accordingly Peter exhorts the "brethren" to be

[145] These are "those who by their loyalty ratify their calling and election" (cf. 2 Pet 1:10). Moffat, *Love*, 202. Similarly, Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 319. The "necessary response is seen in their remaining 'faithful.'" Osborne, *Revelation*, 624. κλῆσις is used in reference to those "called . . . with a holy calling" not according to works but according to the divine purpose (2 Tim 1:9) and God will never revoke his call (Rom 11:29). However, the divine call may be rejected by the human. The recipients of "His calling" are those "who believe" (Eph 1:18–19).

[146] Notice especially the exhortation to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness" and "take hold of [ἐπιλαμβάνομαι] the eternal life to which you were called [καλέω]" (1 Tim 6:11–12). In many other cases, the context is exhortation (Gal 1:6; 5:13; Eph 4:1; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7; 2 Thess 1:11; 2:13–15; 1 Tim 6:12; 1 Pet 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:3).

[147] The soteriological intention of this exhortation is evident in the verses just prior (cf. 2 Thess 1:7–10). There is disagreement over whether ἀξιόω means to make or deem worthy. Abraham J. Malherbe believes it means here to "make worthy." *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 410. Cf. Fee, *The First and Second Epistles*, 265. However, Wanamaker points out that "with the possible exception of Ep. Diog.; 9:1 no other examples" of the sense "to make worthy" for ἀξιόω are known. On account of this we should stay with the normal denotation of the word, "to *consider* worthy." *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 233. So G. L. Green, *The Letters*, 296; James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1912), 239–40; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Dallas: Word, 2002); 156. This is "substantiated by" the use of καταξιόω, to deem worthy, in 2 Thess 1:5. *The Epistles*, 233. See I. Howard Marshall, "Election and Calling to Salvation in 1 and 2 Thessalonians," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL 87; ed. R. F. Collins; Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990).

[148] This evaluation of worthiness accords with Paul's exhortation in 1 Thess 2:12 to "walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls [ἀξίως] you" (cf. also Matt 22:8; Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10) as well as the numerous other statements about the necessity of divine approval in the final judgment. For G. L. Green, "these citations speak to us of those who are evaluated and found *worthy* of some kind of honor." *The Letters*, 296. This complements the frequent collocation with the language of holiness. For instance, reference is made in the NT to those "called as saints," the κλητοῖς ἁγίοις (Rom 1:7; cf. 1 Cor 1:2). These terms (κλητός and ἅγιος) collocate in 13 verses in the LXX as κλητὴ ἁγία, the translation of מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ, that is, "holy convocation" (Exod 12:16; Lev 23:2–4, 7–8, 21, 24, 27, 35–37; Num 28:25). As such, this

"all the more diligent to make certain His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble" (2 Pet 1:10).[149]

Thus, the usage of the word group in the NT (as well as the LXX background of the term) suggests that, contra the tendency of some interpreters to refer to the "called" as those determined to be saved,[150] κλητός may refer simply to those who are invited but have the ability to decline the invitation (Matt 22:14) whereas in other places it appears to refer to those who have been invited and responded (or will respond, cf. Rom 8:28–29) appropriately to the invitation.[151] As such, it

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terminology closely resembles language of OT Israel. Further, the "called" are often exhorted to be holy. For example, "God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification (1 Thess 4:7; cf. Heb 2:11; 3:1). See also Eph 1:18; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 1:15; 2:9. Some scholars argue that "holiness" in such contexts refers to "status" rather than "behavior." So Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 55. Similarly, Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 12-13; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 19. However, while the word group often does refer to such status it may be a false dichotomy to separate the two too starkly. The status expects a corresponding behavior that should be strived for, if not fully attained prior to the eschaton (cf. 1 Thess 4:7; 1 Pet 1:15).

[149] "Christ has called the Christian into his kingdom (v 3), promising him immortality (v 4), but an appropriate moral response is required if his final salvation is to be guaranteed. Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude*, 190. Cf. Wisd. 6:17–20. The conditionality here is real: "Virtue will keep one from the disaster of stumbling and never arriving at the eschatological home." Davids, *The Letters*, 188. Such diligence is not merely for "subjective assurance" as in the interpretation of Luther and Calvin but "objectively necessary for the attainment of final salvation." Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude*, 190. So, also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 305. Cf. *Barn.* 4:13. So, also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 305. Cf. Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2*, 154; Fuchs and Reymond, *La deuxième Épitre*, 60.

[150] For example, Schreiner contends that κλητός refers to an "effectual" calling that "overcomes human resistance" and "not merely an invitation" since he believes that "God's unstoppable purpose in calling believers to salvation cannot be frustrated." *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998), 450–51. So, also, Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 530–31, 582. Similarly, Mounce, *Romans*, 188; Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling away* (WUNT 37; Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1990), 59–60. Cf. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 13. Klein recognizes that the sense of "summon" could fit as a meaning of this term but favors "designate as" because the former "implicitly includes some response" whereas, in his view, the term should be seen as "strictly God's action." "Paul's Use of Kalein: A Proposal," *JETS* 27 (1984): 62–64.

[151] Cf. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 329. Thus, at times Paul speaks of the κλητοὶ with the "implication that the call is accepted." Those who are "summoned" for a special purpose will be saved "if their career runs its normal course" but "ἐκλεκτοί only shows that they are in the right way to reach it. . . . If they lose it, they will do so by their own fault." Sanday and Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 220–21. Likewise, R. C. H. Lenski points out that while in Matthew κλητοὶ may refer to those who hear the gospel call "irrespective of whether they accept it or not, in the epistles the term is used in the pregnant sense and includes the acceptance." *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1945), 553. Similarly, see James Morison, *Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), 69–70. Cf. Morris, *The Epistle to the*

may be descriptive of the universal call of God to a loving relationship.[152] The καλέω word group

collocates significantly with the ἐκλέγομαι word group and often appears with the ἀγαπάω word

group as well.[153]

Overall, this understanding of the divine will, calling, and election as not unilaterally

efficacious dovetails with the other canonical data regarding divine love. Consistently, the divine-

human love relationship is presented as one of give and take.[154] One who wishes to maintain that

the divine will, plan, and election are unilaterally effective, amounting to the omnicausality of the

divine will, must show how such a presupposition can accord with the inner logic apparent in the

rest of the data of Scripture.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the Gospels-Acts

The primary relationship between love and election in the Gospels consists of the overlap

between Jesus' status as God's chosen and as his "beloved." Thus, God refers to Jesus as "My

Servant whom I have chosen [αἱρετίζω]; My beloved [ἀγαπητός] in whom My soul is well-

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Romans, 332.

[152] Cf. 1 Tim 2:4, 6, which implies a universal call without the explicit language of calling or election. All are called to a relationship with God but not all will respond. "Never is the implication given that God intends to accept some and to reject others. The New Testament affirms absolutely that it is God's will that all men would come to know him." B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter*, 166–67. Likewise, Frédéric Louis Godet argues emphatically that such a call is an "invitation" and "all are alike seriously called." *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), 323. For others who view God's "call" as universal see Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle*, 553–54; Kenneth Grayston, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Epworth Commentaries; Peterborough, Eng.: Epworth Press, 1997), 74–75. Cf. Matt 22:14.

[153] Thus, the "beloved" are those "called as saints" (Rom 1:7) and "those who love God" are paralleled with "those who are called" (Rom 8:28). See also Rom 1:7; 9:11–13, 25; 11:29; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:1–2; Col 3:12, 14–15; 1 Thess 2:8, 12; 4:7, 9; 2 Thess 2:13–16; 1 Tim 6:11–12; 2 Tim 2:22; Jas 2:5, 7; 1 Pet 2:9–11; 1 John 3:1; Jude 1. However, Günther goes too far when he contends, "The *klētoi* ("called") are the *agapētoi* ("beloved") (Rom. 1:7; Col. 3:12)." Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:544. While the terms may refer to the same group, they are not thereby identical terms. The relation of the two concepts will be clarified as these texts are discussed in the section dedicated to love and election further below.

[154] Thus, not only the internal data regarding the divine will and plan suggest the fallacy of divine omnicausality but also the other data related to my study would require such a view in order to be consistent with regard to the divine-human relationship. See the compelling argument against a deterministic view of divine election in Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1–3* (AB 34; Garden City, N.Y.:

pleased [εὐδοκέω]" (Matt 12:18).[155] That Jesus is God's elect one demonstrates that such election

is not arbitrary, since Jesus himself is the uniquely worthy object of divine pleasure and qualified

to be God's "Chosen [ἐκλέγομαι] One" (Luke 9:35).[156] Election is also closely associated with

love in that the very objects of Christ's greatest love (John 15:13) are those that "did not choose

[ἐκλέγομαι]" him but rather, he "chose [ἐκλέγομαι] and appointed [τίθημι] them to bear fruit"

(John 15:16; cf. John 15:19). Significantly, however, they are his "friends" only if they obey him

(John 15:14) and, as such, this is not an unconditional election.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the Pauline Writings

Although unilateral election is not taught in the Pauline writings, the priority and

importance of divine volition to the divine-human love relationship are readily apparent in the

correspondence between love and election. The close relationship between calling, election, and

love is seen in numerous references to those who are loved by God. Specifically, divine election

is predicated on God's love. Thus, Paul refers to the "brethren [ἀδελφοί] beloved [ἠγαπημένοι] by

God" who manifest evidence of God's "choice [ἐκλογὴν]" of them (1 Thess 1:4; cf. 3).[157]

Doubleday, 1974), 87–88, 105–9.

[155] Moffat comments that beloved and elect are interchangeable in Matt 12:18. *Love*, 78. However, as shall be seen, the relationship of the two is more complicated, which Moffat himself recognizes. Cf. ibid., 202.

[156] Evaluation is further evident in the overlap between this election of Jesus and the parallel statements at the Transfiguration, which refer instead to his status as "beloved" (ἀγαπητός), the one who is pleasing (εὐδοκέω) to God (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; cf. Matt 3:17; 12:18; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). The TR has ἀγαπητὸς here instead of "chosen" but this is widely considered to be a scribal harmonization. Moreover, Jesus is ridiculed on the cross with the challenge that he should save himself if he is "the Christ of God, His Chosen One" (Luke 23:35). Elsewhere, Matthew records this jeer in explicitly evaluative language: let God rescue him "if He delights [θέλω] in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God'" (Matt 27:43). The evaluative nature of Jesus' election will be taken up further below.

[157] This complements the OT perspective on love and election (cf. Deut 4:37; 7:7–8). Malherbe renders, "you, whom God loved, he has chosen" and believes the participle here and in 2 Thess 2:13 focuses on "God's election as an act of love." *The Letters*, 105, 110. So G. L. Green, *The Letters*, 92; D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians* (NAC 33; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 57. Fee concurs that "election . . . is always seen as an action of God's love." *The First and Second Epistles*, 31. At the same time, the elect are here those who have already responded appropriately to God (cf. 1 Thess 1:3, 6). So Fee, *The First and Second Epistles*. Cf. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, 77; D. M. Martin, *1, 2*

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Likewise, Paul refers to the "brethren beloved by the Lord" whom "God has chosen [αἱρέω][158] . . . from the beginning[159] for salvation through sanctification" (2 Thess 2:13) who have been "called" that they might "gain the glory" of Christ and are further exhorted to "stand firm" (2 Thess 2:14–15). Importantly, such election is not depicted as unconditional and/or non-evaluative. Rather, in contrast to the elect, those who perish do so "because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" (2 Thess 2:10).[160] Accordingly, calling and election on the basis of divine love is to be reflected in Christian behavior. Thus, the "chosen [ἐκλεκτός] of God" are said to be "holy [ἅγιος] and beloved [ἠγαπημένοι]" while being exhorted to manifest love (Col 3:12).[161]

Second Corinthians 5:14, absent the usual language of election, is sometimes taken to imply that divine love unilaterally determines the actions of its object(s).[162] There Paul asserts,

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Thessalonians, 57.

[158] This term might simply mean "prefer." Elsewhere it refers to that which is selected or a decision made based on preference (cf. Phil 1:22; Heb 11:25).

[159] The reading here is uncertain due to a textual variant with manuscript support on both sides. It might have originally read ἀπ᾽ αρχῆς, "from the beginning" (cf. NIV, RSV, NASB) or ἀπαρχὴν, "firstfruits" (NAB, GNB). Cf. Rom 16:5; Rev 14:4.

[160] This lack of love for the truth is further associated with unbelief and pleasure [εὐδοκία] in wickedness (2 Thess 2:12). In the end, the direction of their affections is related to their decision to neither believe nor love the truth, which condemns them, they have rejected the divine "calling" (2 Thess 2:14). "The causal clause [ἀνθ᾽ ὧν] makes clear that they suffer their fate because they have 'refused to love the truth.'" D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 246. So Fee adds, "They are headed for 'destruction' precisely because they 'were not receptive,'" that is, they rejected the truth. *The First and Second Epistles*, 294. So Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, 261, 263; Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 174; D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 250; George Milligan, *St. Pauls Epistles to the Thessalonians: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (London: Macmillan, 1908), 105. Cf. G. L. Green, *The Letters*, 323–24; Malherbe, *The Letters*, 426.

[161] It is highly significant that those who are "chosen" and "holy" are here exhorted to act out that holiness. This, along with the OT covenant context of such language, suggests that holiness is not here identical to election but a consequence of election, which itself must be maintained by relationship to Jesus Christ, who expects appropriate human response. Cf. Deut 7:6–11 and Lev 11:44. Thus, God's "choice souls . . . should inevitably exhibit something of his nature." F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984), 153. See also James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans), 228. Similarly, the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) are "called [κλητός] as saints" (Rom 1:7; cf. 9:25).

[162] For instance, Murray J. Harris contends, "Christ's love is a compulsive force in the life of believers, a dominating power that effectively eradicates choice in that it leaves them no option but to live for God." *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 419. Klassen similarly thinks that "Paul also speaks of the love of Christ as so commanding we have no choice

"the love [ἀγάπη] of Christ controls [συνέχω] us" (2 Cor 5:14) in that one died for all and therefore all died.[163] Commentators hold widely varying opinions on whether this means controls, restrains, embraces, lays claim to, or something else.[164] Although certainty with regard to Paul's precise meaning signified by this term seems beyond reach, the wider context of this passage (and the canon) demonstrates that, absent contradiction, this verse cannot be in reference to absolute control over human beings, that is, unilaterally efficacious, determinism (cf. 2 Cor 5:9–10). The wider context suggests that Paul here is referring to his feeling of being "obliged" to preach the gospel either because of his cognizance of the depth of Christ's love for him or out of the zeal of his own love for Christ (cf. Phil 1:23).[165]

Importantly, it is clear elsewhere that the elect are not only those loved by God but those who love God (and others) in return. Thus, the ones who "love God" are in parallel to "those who are called [κλητός] according to His purpose [πρόθεσις]" for whom "God causes all things to work together for good" (Rom 8:28).[166] While the determinist may argue that love for God is here the

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(Gk *sunexō,* 2 Cor 5:14)." *Love in the NT*, 392. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:49.

[163] Though many commentators believe this refers to Christ's love, the genitive construction allows for the possibility that Paul is speaking of human love for Christ, which "restricts" the options available to him in faithfulness to that love. Some commentators even see this as both subjective and objective. So Spicq, *Agape*, 2:186; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 120. Paul Barnett, himself favoring the subjective view, nevertheless suggests that Paul may have the objective in mind and intends to compare his former motives of zeal for the name of Yahweh (cf. 11:2) with his current motive of love for Christ, which might be coupled with the "fear of the Lord." *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT 11; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 288.

[164] The precise meaning of the term συνέχω here is uncertain. It generally means to hold together, fast, shut, in custody, or within bounds. Cf. Helmut Köster, "συνεχω," *TDNT* 7:877–86. For a discussion of the various meanings suggested by interpreters see Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Dallas: Word, 2002), 128.

[165] Consider also the usage in Phil 1:23–24 where Paul says he is "hard-pressed [συνέχω] from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ" but chooses to remain because it is "more necessary" for his fellows. Here, the term does not refer to determinism but pressure on Paul toward two differing paths, the one less desirable to him being chosen for the sake of others, and indirectly, for the sake of Christ.

[166] The precise meaning of the phrase "causes all things to work together for good" is left open due to the availability of numerous grammatical readings. Importantly, however, the text does not require divine determinism or omnicausality and, indeed, hints that human love toward God is itself a factor that

efficacious consequence of God's unilateral election,[167] the evidence here and elsewhere suggests otherwise.[168] While it is undoubtedly true that God's love is the prior and necessary condition of human love in return, it is not itself the sufficient condition of human love toward God. Humans must choose to respond (cf. Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).[169]

Romans 9–11 and Eph 1 are two of the most significant and controversial passages that deal with the relationship of divine volition, election, and love.[170] After describing God's election (ἐκλογή) of Jacob over Esau prior to their birth in accordance with his "purpose" (πρόθεσις), not "because of works but because of Him who calls [καλέω]" (Rom 9:11), Paul quotes from Mal

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prompts such divine beneficence. In this way, a "vital ongoing love for God is the necessary prerequisite for his active intervention in the affairs of our life." Mounce, *Romans*, 188. Importantly, the phrase does not mean that evil will be suspended or instantaneously reversed for those who love God, but that the ultimate outcome will be good, that is, in the eschaton. So Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 331; Schreiner, *Romans*, 450. B. M. Newman and Nida seem to capture the intent by reading the text in a way that "assumes that we live in a world in which God has permitted the possibilities of good and of evil; and that even where evil results from the choice of wicked men, God is able to work with those who love him in order to bring good out of the circumstances." *A Handbook on Paul's Letter*, 166. For various options of translation/interpretation see Carroll D. Osburn, "The Interpretation of Romans 8:28," *WTJ* 44 (1982): 99–109.

[167] Thus, determinists insist that this is an "effectual calling" and thus unilaterally determined. God is solely responsible for his elect's love toward him. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 530; cf. ibid., 531; Schreiner, *Romans*, 450–51; Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 59–60. Cf. Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Römer 8 als Beispiel paulinischer Soteriologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 280. On the other hand, Herman N. Ridderbos argues that Paul's grouping of God's "purpose, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification in one indissoluble bond" in Rom 8:28–30 "is not an abstract pronouncement concerning the immutability of the number of those predestined to salvation, but a pastoral encouragement for the persecuted and embattled church." *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 350.

[168] Godet correctly sees the phrase "to them that love God" in Rom 8:28 as "expressing the condition" of that which follows. *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 322. The phraseology of loving God is consistently conditional in the OT and NT, often supplemented with the promise of reward, as in this case.

[169] Human love is thus a response to God's "initiative, his prevenient call to such love." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 524. Similarly, Dunn correctly points out, "coerced love is not love." *Romans 1-8*, 481; B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter*, 166–67. Even Moo, who elsewhere contends that love toward God is unilaterally affected by God, recognizes that here love toward God "is therefore a qualification for the enjoyment of the promise of this verse" though one "met by all who belong to Christ." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 530. So Schreiner, *Romans*, 450.

[170] Though a full treatment of these passages is well beyond the scope of this work, I will briefly take up each passage, restricting discussion to that which pertains to the purposes of this dissertation.

1:2–3, "Jacob I loved [ἀγαπάω], but Esau I hated [μισέω]" (Rom 9:13). Many have equated love

in this context with unilateral "election love."[171] First, the question arises whether this passage is

dealing with salvation or election to something else.[172] Secondly, does the latter statement, "Jacob

have I loved," refer to election in itself? With regard to the first question, election does not appear

to relate to salvation, here or elsewhere in Rom 9.[173] Rather, the issue throughout Rom 9–11 is

God's justice in salvation history, specifically the prerogative of God to include believing

Gentiles and exclude unbelieving descendants of Abraham. Thus, Paul is not "teaching double

predestination" but that God had not failed to "maintain his covenant."[174]

With regard to the second question, love and election are not identical in this passage.

The statement that God loved Jacob but hated Esau in Rom 9:13 is retrospective, quoted from

Malachi, written long after the individuals Jacob and Esau have been dead and Edom itself has

been ravaged.[175] The election itself, on the other hand, appears in Rom 9:11–12, which refers to

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[171] Moo contends that here "God's love is the same as his election." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 587. Cf. Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 159. As was the case with regard to the same phrase in Malachi, some scholars contend that "hated" merely means "loved less." So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 563. Moo contends that "love" and "hate" are not meant at all but merely divine election and rejection. *The Epistle to the Romans,* 587. So Mounce, *Romans*, 198–99. On the other hand, Godet correctly argues that these statements "do not signify merely: I have preferred the one to the other" but both are based on a "difference of feeling in God himself," which consists of "moral sympathy" on the one hand and "moral antipathy" on the other. *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 350. See the discussion of this issue with regard to Malachi in chapter 4.

[172] A secondary question is whether Paul refers to the individuals or the nations they represent, a point over which scholars are divided. The flow of Paul's wider argument suggests that Paul has both the individuals and their progeny in mind (notice the reference in the original context to "two nations" in Gen 25:23). See the discussion of this issue with regard to the original context of Mal 1 in chapter 4.

[173] So, among others Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:179; Eckert, *EDNT* 4:418–19; Morison, *Exposition*, 72–73; William S. Campbell, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel," *JSNT* 13 (1981): 39; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 2002), 562. Moo himself recognizes the "strong case" for a "corporate and salvation-historical interpretation" but prefers a deterministic reading. *The Epistle to the Romans,* 585. Similarly, Schreiner, *Romans*, 500–501.

[174] Mounce, *Romans*, 199. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 544–46. Since both Isaac and Jacob had older brothers who could have justifiably been chosen by God (Rom 9:6–14), their descendants have no right to complain that God is including those who are not of Abraham's seed (the Gentiles). That theodicy is at issue is evident in the statements that frame this argument such as "the word of God has not failed" (Rom 9:6) and "There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!" (Rom 9:14).

[175] See the discussion of the statement in Malachi in the previous chapter. There it was argued that

the selection of the younger son Jacob over the older Esau in Gen 25:23 and should not be confused with the retrospective statement of God's love for Jacob (Israel) and hatred of Esau (Edom). Here, as elsewhere, divine election is predicated on God's love.[176] The potential injustice that raises the question, "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?" in Rom 9:14 is answered by the fact that neither Israel nor Edom is worthy of divine love. The latter receives its just judgment but the former has received abundant, undeserved mercy that surpasses all expectations.[177] The very fact that Israel has received such extravagant grace when they had no more biological claim as children of Abraham than Edom should logically silence their ungrateful, misguided, and unfounded complaints against God's justice toward them.

Paul goes on to reinforce this point by referencing the *locus classicus* of Israel's rebellion and God's manifestation of his character of love: "I will have mercy [ἐλεέω] on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion [οἰκτίρω] on whom I have compassion" (Rom 9:15; cf. Exod 33:19). Paul's point is not that God bestows mercy on some and unilaterally withholds it from others independently of the presence or absence of human response to him. The context of God's statement in Exod 33:19, to which Paul refers, is the aftermath of Israel's golden calf apostasy for which they deserved destruction by God. Instead, God was compassionate, gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth (cf. Exod 34:6), freely and of his own volition bestowing undeserved, extravagant mercy on a severely apostate and undeserving people.

love and election are separate concepts that interrelate in Malachi but are certainly not identical. Specifically, divine hatred in the OT is never arbitrary, but always consists of an appropriate response to an actual state of affairs.

[176] So Gunther who comments, "As in the OT the motive for the election is God's love." Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:544. Godet correctly points out that "God's love toward Jacob is neither *merited* nor *arbitrary*." *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 350. The wider motivation of God's love behind all election will be further examined in chapter 6.

[177] The question of the justice of God in bestowing such mercy on Israel and not Edom will be taken up in chapter 6. For now it should be noted that nothing that Paul states removes human responsibility. So Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:179. Determinism should thus not be read into Paul's argument here lest he be depicted as contradicting himself in the wider context of Romans as well as the rest of Pauline literature.

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The statement of Exod 33:19 is thus not a negative statement of exclusion from mercy but a positive statement that God has the right to bestow mercy on even the most undeserving. By reminding his interlocutors of this historical mercy shown to Israel, the ridiculousness of the claim that others should be excluded from divine mercy becomes apparent. Or, put positively, if God is able to justly have mercy on Israel after the golden calf rebellion, how much more does he have the right to show mercy to the Gentiles?[178]

In this way, Israel has no exclusive claim to divine mercy, nor do the people have the right to demand that God show more mercy to them than he has already, for it depends not on the will of a human being, but "on God who has mercy [ἐλεέω]" (Rom 9:16). This Paul further illustrates by reference to Pharaoh whom God used as a demonstration of his power in order that his name would be "proclaimed throughout the whole earth" (Rom 9:17).[179] "So then He has mercy [ἐλεέω] on whom He desires [θέλω], and He hardens [σκληρύνω] whom He desires" (Rom 9:18). Once again, attention to the OT context demonstrates that Pharaoh rejected God of his own volition. The text states that he hardened his own heart (Exod 8:11, 28) before it says that God hardened his heart (Exod 9:12).[180] Thus, God gave Pharaoh over to his own decision.[181] God has

[178] Fitzmyer points out that Paul cites these words "in order to underscore Yahweh's freedom of merciful activity; he does not act arbitrarily, as Israel itself knows." *Romans*, 567. Likewise, Campbell contends, "These words are intended not as proof that the divine election is arbitrary but as proof to the contrary." "The Freedom," 30. Cf. F. Staudinger, "ελεος," *EDNT* 1:431; H. H. Esser, "ελεος," *NIDNTT* 2:597. Lenski likewise argues that this phrase does not restrict God's mercy to a select few but, rather, means that God's mercy is "unrestricted by limits that men may set up. . . . There is no sovereignty which restricts mercy and pity in God." Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle*, 608–9.

[179] Notice, there is a missional purpose behind God's plan.

[180] See Morison, *Exposition*, 134–47. "God's hardening follows on what Pharaoh himself did. . . . God does not harden people who do not go astray first (cf. Jas. 1:13)." Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 361.

[181] Godet suggests that "hardening" here is the "same idea as that of παραδίδωμι ('God gave them up'), by which the apostle expressed God's judgment on the Gentiles for their refusal" of his revelation (Rom 1:24, 26, 28; cf. 2 Chr 36:16). *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 355. Likewise, Fitzmyer comments that this "hardening" is a "protological way of expressing divine reaction to persistent human obstinacy against him." *Romans*, 568. Accordingly, the "sovereignty of God does not set aside human responsibility." Mounce, *Romans*, 200. Similarly, Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 361. On the other hand, Moo argues the deterministic view that "God's hardening, then, is an action that renders a

not unilaterally determined Pharaoh's rebellion but he has used Pharaoh's rebellion to accomplish his purpose.[182]

Paul proceeds to further clarify his point by reference to the metaphor of the potter and the clay (Rom 9:20). God, as potter, has the right "to make from the same lump one vessel [σκεῦος] for honorable [τιμή] use and another for common use [ἀτιμία]" (Rom 9:21). Once again, the emphasis is on Paul's defense of God's right to operate in salvation history as he has. Importantly, however, the language that he uses here should not be taken to suggest determinism as if the vessel analogy presents humans as inanimate, impotent objects that are manipulated as puppets or automatons. On the contrary, Paul's use of the same language elsewhere suggests conditionality and the reality of human volition.[183] Thus, Paul writes of "vessels [σκεῦος] . . . some to honor [τιμή] and some to dishonor [ἀτιμία]" and then adds, "if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel [σκεῦος] for honor [τιμή], sanctified, useful [εὔχρηστος] to the Master" (2 Tim 2:20–21; cf. Wis 15:7).[184]

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person insensitive to God and his word and that, if not reversed, culminates in eternal damnation." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 597. Further, it "is a sovereign act of God that is not *caused* by anything in those individuals who are hardened." Ibid., 598. Though he also contends that God's "hardening affects those who have already by their sin deserved condemnation." Ibid., 600.

[182] This issue is itself raised when Paul writes, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" (Rom 9:19). It is essential at this point to recognize that the statement is not Paul's but one which he presents by way of his interlocutor(s) and thus prefaced by the statement, "You will say to me then" (Rom 9:19).

[183] Mounce points out that in v. 22 Paul goes on to extol God's great patience and in chapter 10 he discusses "the liberty and responsibility of human beings." *Romans*, 202. Godet argues that "the use God makes of man at a given moment (a Pharaoh, for example, as a vessel of dishonor), far from excluding his moral liberty, supposes and involves it" and he does not assign humans roles "merely arbitrarily." *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 358. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 545.

[184] The reflexive force of "cleanses himself" (ἐκκαθάρῃ ἑαυτὸν) unequivocally stresses human action, an "individual decision." Towner, *The Letters*, 541. This is a "general invitation to respond. . . . 'Anyone' can become an 'instrument for noble purposes' no matter what category applied in v. 20." Ibid. Cf. G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 418; Jouette M. Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (ANTC; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 156.

Accordingly, God endures "with much patience [μακροθυμία] vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" (Rom 9:22).[185] Divine patience would be superfluous if God executes his ideal will unilaterally.[186] Such patience therefore implies that God is not unilaterally controlling the circumstances but is longsuffering in order to "make known the riches [πλοῦτος] of His glory [δόξα] upon vessels of mercy [σκεύη ἐλέους]" (Rom 9:23).[187] Such "vessels of mercy" are the "called" (καλέω), both Jew and Gentile (Rom 9:24), and Paul alludes to Hosea, "I will call [καλέω] those who were not my people, 'my people,' and her who was not beloved, 'beloved [ἀγαπάω]'" (Rom 9:25). Paul thus uses Hosea to demonstrate God's right to call a people who were not his people, extrapolating from the situation of an apostate people who were reclaimed by God.[188] However, according to the wider context of Rom 9–11, this "call" is not unilaterally efficacious (cf. Rom 9:32; 10:3).[189] Rather, it refers to God's universal invitation to all peoples, which God has the right to bestow (Rom 10:9, 12–13; cf. 11:22–23).[190]

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[185] Here, "prepared" (κατηρτισμένα) is most likely passive (the middle is possible but rare). The agent is not explicit, the vessels could be thus "prepared" or "fitted" for destruction of their own accord (cf. 2 Tim 2:20–21). The deterministic view takes this as a divine passive. See, for example, Schreiner, *Romans*, 521–22.

[186] Elsewhere, divine patience is afforded to allow opportunity for repentance (Rom 2:4; 1 Tim 1:16). Yet, Moo argues that in this verse God's patience is not to allow for repentance for God has prepared them "himself for eternal condemnation." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 607. The purpose of God's patience, in this view, is "to show forth his wrath and make known his power." Schreiner, *Romans*, 520. Contra Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 559.

[187] Notice, the intention is explicitly revelatory, to make known the divine character. Staudinger comments that this contrast between vessels of mercy and wrath is made "in order to explain God's universal (inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles) appointment to glory." Staudinger, *EDNT* 1:431.

[188] Scholars have long puzzled over Paul's use of this verse, which is originally directed at the northern kingdom to refer to God's calling of Gentiles. However, Paul may draw this shocking analogy to drive the point home that they had no more claim to the divine call than do the Gentiles. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 574–75.

[189] Israel did not attain righteousness "because they did not pursue it by faith" (Rom 9:32) and "they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom 10:3).

[190] Those of "Israel" could be saved if they would confess and believe in Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9) since, for both Jew and Greek, God is "Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him" and thus "whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:12–13). This is all in accordance with the NT usage of "call language," which refers to an invitation that may be (or may have already been)

The call is thus open to all but not all respond. God has not rejected his people (Rom 11:1), but some have rejected him (cf. Rom 11:22–23). Nevertheless, there is a "remnant according to God's gracious choice [ἐκλογή]" (Rom 11:5).[191] "Israel" did not obtain what she sought but "those who were chosen [ἐκλογή] obtained it" whereas the "rest were hardened" (πωρόω) (Rom 11:7). One might at first glance interpret this to mean that only some were arbitrarily selected by God and the rest were arbitrarily rejected by him. However, that this cannot be the case becomes clear later in this chapter. Specifically, conditionality is evident when Paul notes the divine "kindness" and "severity" of God, the latter to those who "fell" (πίπτω) but the former "to you . . . if you continue [ἐπιμένω] in His kindness, otherwise you also will be cut off" (Rom 11:22).[192] Furthermore, those who had fallen away may yet be granted back in "if they do not continue [ἐπιμένω] in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again" (Rom 11:23).[193] Accordingly, Paul could not be talking about unilateral predestination. Rather, those who are "chosen" in Rom 11:7 refers to those who have responded to God in belief and who are, as such, the recipients of God's undeserved mercy and grace (cf. Rom 10:9, 12–13).

Throughout Rom 9–11, then, Paul has demonstrated that God has bestowed wholly undeserved and extravagant grace and mercy to Israel. This is highlighted once more in Rom

accepted or rejected.

[191] This does not mean God's choice of some and not others but refers to God's gracious decision to continue to be merciful and thus provide the occasion for undeserving humans to accept his loving overtures. Contra Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 677–78. God's gracious choice to bestow mercy on the undeserving does not rule out the conditions for an individual's reception of that mercy (cf. Rom 3:22, 25; 4:16).

[192] Here it is apparent that "God's election, though gratuitous, is conditioned by Christians' responsible fulfillment of obligations to him." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 616. Cf. Mounce, *Romans*, 221–22. Thus, Paul again "underlines the point that perseverance is a Christian responsibility rather than an unconditional promise." Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 665. Even Moo recognizes that "ultimate salvation is dependent on continuing faith; therefore, the person who ceases to believe forfeits any hope of salvation (cf. also Rom. 8:13; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:6, 14)." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 707. Similarly, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 609, 612.

[193] Both conditional clauses use ἐάν + the subjunctive (3rd class condition) and thus suggest that such conditions are "uncertain of fulfillment." Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 696.

11:28 where Paul states that those who seem to be "enemies" (ἐχθρός) of the gospel are according to divine "choice [ἐκλογή] . . . beloved for the sake of their fathers" (Rom 11:28; cf. Deut 7:7).[194] Here, one aspect of divine love is contrasted with another. They are in one sense "beloved" but in another sense God's "enemies" at the same time. This complexity points toward the foreconditionality of love, which will be discussed further below.[195] Accordingly, God has not repented of his "calling" (Rom 11:29) but continued to bear long with his elect because of his love for their forebears, which itself grounded their election in the first place.[196] As such, in this instance divine love for the Israelites defies the expectations of human evaluation in accordance with the salvation-historical divine decision in favor of the progeny of the fathers. However, it should be kept in mind that this forbearance applies particularly to a remnant by faith (cf. Rom 9:6, 27; 11:5, 22–23).[197] In all this, God has not acted unfairly to Israel or anyone else in his calling of the Gentiles to be part of God's people (cf. Matt 20:10–16). It is worthy of note that immediately following this discourse Rom 12:1 begins with an exhortation for humans to present themselves as holy and acceptable offerings to God.[198]

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[194] "Enemies" could be active or passive but it is most likely passive in parallel with "beloved." So most commentators. See Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 685.

[195] Paul is "saying that in connection with the gospel the Jews are the objects of divine hostility" as "they have refused to believe in Christ." Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 422. In other words, "Israel's failure to respond made them an enemy of God." Mounce, *Romans*, 225.

[196] The translation of Rom 11:29 in the NASB and elsewhere misleadingly says that "the calling of God" is "irrevocable" when the term, ἀμεταμέλητος, literally means without repentance. In other words, God has not changed his mind and revoked his call. Nevertheless, such call may be accepted or rejected (Rom 11:22–23).

[197] Moo, on the other hand, thinks that all Israelites are blessed as the "beloved of God" due to God's promises to the patriarchs "but this status will eventuate in salvation only for those whom God individually chooses for salvation in this age (the remnant) and in the last days ('all Israel')." *The Epistle to the Romans,* 731–32.

[198] Moo thus comments, "That God's mercy does not automatically produce the obedience God expects is clear from the imperatives in this passage" but, he contends, it "does impel us toward the obedience that the gospel demands." Ibid., 749–50.

Elsewhere in the Pauline writings God is said to have "chose[n] us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.[199] In love He predestined us to adoption . . . according to the kind intention of His will."[200] Moreover, his "grace . . . He freely bestowed . . . in the Beloved" (Eph 1:4–6).[201] Here, God's love is the basis of his plan (προορίζω) of adoption,[202] itself associated with the "kind intention [εὐδοκία] of His will [θέλημα]."[203] In other words, because of God's love for his creatures, he has planned to save those who would believe through Christ and this brings him pleasure. Accordingly, God has "lavished" his grace "on us" (Eph 1:7–8) and has made known the "mystery of his will [θέλημα]" in accordance with his "kind intention" [εὐδοκία] that he "purposed [προτίθημι][204] in Him [Christ]"

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[199] This call to holiness suggests that election includes "responsibility." Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 100. See the discussion of the many exhortations toward the beloved, called, and elect and especially the relationship to holiness above. Without such holiness "no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14; cf. 1 Pet 1:2, 15–16; Eph 5:27; Col 1:22).

[200] The phrase "in love" could belong to that which precedes or follows it. Accordingly, it might be taken with what precedes and could thus describe being "holy and blameless before him in love" ascribing "love" to human agency. Yet, it could also refer to divine love. See ibid., 100–101; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 2002), 24. Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 256. On the other hand, if taken with what follows, it would refer to God's election according to his love. M. Barth thinks both may be intended. *Ephesians 1–3*, 80.

[201] Here, "election and predestination are for the state of adoption, and this takes place through the ἠγαπημένος, the elect. The connection here is obviously that the Elect (Christ) bears the elect." Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:175. Lincoln, accordingly, points out the connection here to the previous language "ἐν Χριστῷ (1:3), ἐν αὐτῷ (1:4), and διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:5)." *Ephesians*, 26.

[202] Bruce contends that this is the case regardless of whether "in love" belongs to what precedes or what follows. *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 257. Similarly, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 23. On the other hand, O'Brien takes it as a reference to human love. *Colossians-Philemon*, 101.

[203] M. Barth points out the affective nature of εὐδοκία (see the word study below) that here suggests God's "willingness and joy in doing good are indicated." Accordingly, this is "far from any idea of arbitrariness." *Ephesians 1–3*, 81. O'Brien similarly notes that εὐδοκία "signifies not simply the purpose of God but also the delight that he takes in his plans. It has warm and personal connotations, and draws attention to God's willingness and joy to do good." O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon*, 104. As such, this might be read "the good pleasure of his desire."

[204] Some have asserted that the προ- prefix refers to God's "pretemporal resolve" (cf. Eph 1:4). In this vein, Bruce smuggles in language of an "eternal decree." *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 261. Yet, the use of the verb with a human subject in Rom 1:13 indicates that the verb itself, absent contextual considerations, does not necessarily denote an eternal plan or decree. So Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 31.

(Eph 1:9).[205] "In him" those "first to hope in Christ . . . have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:10–12). Significantly, all this is directed toward those who "having also believed . . . were sealed in Him" (Eph 1:13). While some have interpreted this passage as referring to unilateral deterministic predestination,[206] the passage itself suggests that God has planned all along to lavish his grace upon those who would believe (Eph 1:13), adopting them in Christ because of his love and delighting to save through the gospel, that is, the mystery of his will (cf. Eph 1:7). In all this, the free divine volition is emphasized, but not in such a way that God unilaterally determines the destiny of human beings.[207]

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[205] God's "kind intention" is manifested in Christ's salvific action, especially the cross. Such language is strikingly reminiscent of Isa 53 where Yahweh is said to be "pleased [חָפֵץ] to crush" the servant, that is, Christ (Isa 53:10). Such pleasure does not refer to some divine sadism but to God's overall delight in the plan of salvation, of which the sacrifice of Christ was an essential part. Notice the purpose "in him" pointing back to the incorporation "in Christ" through adoption. "God's choice of his people 'in Christ' is the new element in election. He is the Chosen One par excellence (Luke 9:35; 23:35)" through whom others are included as God's elect, adopted children. O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon*, 99. Similarly, M. Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 86; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 23. Christians are thus "chosen" and, elsewhere, "beloved" through Christ who is the one who is truly "choice" and worthy of love.

[206] See, for instance, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 23. Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 257, 263–64; O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon*, 99–100. On the other hand, compelling arguments have been made that this should be seen as a "corporate" election. So Carey C. Newman, "Election and Predestination in Ephesians 1:4–6a: An Exegetical-Theological Study of the Historical, Christological Realization of God's Purpose," *RevExp* 93 (1996): 239. Klyne Snodgrass contends that "election is primarily a corporate term" and as such Ephesians focuses on those who are "in Christ." *Ephesians* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 49. Consider also the arguments for corporate election in Klein, "Paul's Use," 179–80; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (ICC 36; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 119–21. Cf. H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 349–52.

[207] Thus, "God's election" is "a preordination freely given in love (modal)" for which "the mediating function of Jesus Christ is fundamental; through the Son we become sons of God." However, there is nothing here of a "divine decree concerning the non-elect of humanity by which they have been predestined, without any guilt of their own, to destruction and damnation (Determinism). Such a speculation has no place in this eulogy of thanks and praise." Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 54. As D. M. Martin puts it, "the fact that God chooses is not presented as an act that limits the availability of salvation. There is no direct statement in the New Testament to the effect that the option of salvation is unavailable to certain persons or that God has chosen some for damnation." *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 251–52.

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the General Epistles-Revelation

As earlier in the NT, the election of Jesus is again depicted as evaluative. Specifically, Jesus is anointed by God because he has "loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb 1:9; cf. Ps 45:7 [LXX 44:8]). Evaluation is also sometimes apparent with regard to the election of humans. For example, James refers to "my beloved [ἀγαπητός] brethren" and asks, "did not God choose [ἐκλέγομαι] the poor of this world . . . rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love [ἀγαπάω] Him?" (Jas 2:5). Here, the "chosen" are again identified as "those who love" God. Significantly, the "poor" had already become a descriptor of the pious in OT, intertestamental, and rabbinic literature[208] and it is thus fitting that they are here described as "rich in faith."[209] Accordingly, the "poor" correspond to those who "love" God, who are, as such, the elect who will enjoy the ultimate reward (cf. Jas 1:12).[210] Elsewhere, Jude speaks of "those who are the called, beloved in God the Father" and "kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1).[211] Once again it is clear that the "called" and "beloved" are not those who are irresistibly called by a

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[208] Compare Jesus' blessing of the poor (Luke 6:20). The "poor" is "virtually a name for the true believers." Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 112. Likewise, Alan Richardson contends that Jesus uses the phrase as "the technical expression in later Jewish literature, as denoting the class of pious, hard-working, humble folk who look to God for redemption," that is, "the devout." "Poor, Rich, Possessions, Wealth," in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (ed. A. Richardson; London: SCM Press, 1950), 168. Cf. Ernst Bammel, "πτωχος, πτωχεια, πτωχευω," *TDNT* 6:895–98, 911; Ralph P. Martin, *James* (WBC 48; Dallas: Word, 2002), 65. Cf. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 107.

[209] The NASB translation "to be rich in faith" inserts the words "to be" whereas the Greek text reads literally "the poor of this world, rich in faith." Some see this phrase as a reference to eschatological wealth. R. P. Martin, *James*, 65. So Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 111–12. Here, the "poor person is the true pious person" and here they are those "rich within that sphere which is called here 'faith.'" Martin Dibelius and Heinrich Greeven, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 137, 138. In my view, the phrase is qualified by "those who love Him"; both are descriptors of the elect's faithful response.

[210] This phrase "those who love him . . . is older and obviously was already a self-designation of the pious among the Jews." J. L. Houlden, *A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 89. See the discussion of Jas 1:12 and this construction further below.

[211] The TR has "sanctified" (ἡγιασμένοις) instead of "beloved" (ἠγαπημένοις). The former is widely considered a copyist error since the latter has overwhelming manuscript support. See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 430.

deterministic election, as shown by the further exhortation "keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).[212] Both that divine love is not merely so-called "election love" and that election itself is not arbitrary are further evidenced in the relationship between love, election, and evaluative elements. Significantly, much of the election language in the NT, as it relates to love, overlaps significantly with evaluation, even divine delight. Accordingly, we now turn to the evaluative nature of divine love.

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that ground the conception that divine love is not indifferent or disinterested, but evaluative.[213] First, divine love is explicitly depicted as evaluative throughout the canon. Second, divine love includes appropriate self-interest that is not exclusive to other-interest. Third, humans may bring value to God through the prior and ongoing action of God, especially the mediation of Christ. Thus, God can and does receive love and may enjoy, delight in, and garner pleasure from his creatures. His own delight is voluntarily bound up with bringing genuine pleasure, joy, and delight to those very objects of his love. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Can God be the beneficiary of human action?[214] What about self-interest? Is self-sacrifice and/or self-abnegation

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[212] Contra Schreiner, who contends that "believers have been loved by God the Father, and his effective love is the reason they belong to the people of God." Ibid. On the other hand, Jerome H. Neyrey correctly takes "beloved" as a term of evaluative appraisal such that "God has deemed them worthy of this benefaction, and so they take honor from being the worthy clients of a worthy patron" while also standing in debt toward "their heavenly patron." *2 Peter, Jude* (AB 37C; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 48.

[213] The term "evaluative" refers in this context to the appraisal, appreciation, and/or reception of value from external agents.

[214] Those who adopt the presupposition of impassibility contend that God cannot be affected and thus cannot be the beneficiary of any human action. Thus divine love is non-evaluative. The famous *agape-eros* distinction further contributes to this notion that divine love is non-evaluative. Specifically, if God's love (signified by ἀγάπη or otherwise) is altogether groundless, unconditional, unilateral, and equated with arbitrary election, then it could not also be evaluative and God cannot enjoy or appreciate the objects of his love nor their love in return. See, for example, Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 142. Others are mentioned in the general introduction to the ἀγαπάω word group. On the other hand, some argue that even if God were capable of enjoying human beings, humans are incapable of generating value due to their sinful nature.

the ideal of love?[215] Is divine love indifferent and/or disinterested? Does God's love include

delight and/or enjoyment of his creatures, including their loving response toward him? This

section of the study will begin with a survey of the meaning of prominent terms relative to God's

evaluative love.

Before turning to the positive evidence regarding the evaluative aspect of divine love,

two brief topical summaries will demonstrate the existence and virtue of evaluative love. First, a

survey of the numerous instances of misdirected love will show that the NT assumes that

appropriate love includes proper evaluation. Second, the objection that true love is altruistic will

be briefly examined according to the NT data that support the concept of proper self-regard. After

these examinations, attention will be turned to the significant evaluative and appraisal elements

apparent in the identification of God's chosen people (evaluation and election). There, two main

terms that overlap between the conceptual spheres of election and evaluative love, ἀγαπητός

(beloved) and εὐδοκέω (delight or pleasure in), will be examined, thus shedding light on this and

the previous section. Further, the even more explicitly evaluative term of pleasure, the ἀρεστός

word group, will be surveyed. Then, attention will be turned to the significant NT data on God's

acceptance, approval, delight, and enjoyment, depicting his positive evaluative love, which itself

betrays the divine emotionality, as well as the evaluative distinction between love and hate,

which, together, lead in to the passionate and emotional aspect of divine love.

Misdirected Love

Numerous instances of love (both ἀγαπάω and φιλέω) demonstrate an evaluative aspect of

love by clearly identifying misdirected love, that is, love that is directed toward an unworthy,

inappropriate, or even evil object.[216] For example, the scribes and Pharisees "love [φιλέω] the

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[215] Some have suggested that pure love is strictly altruistic in exclusion to self-interest or self-love.

[216] Günther contends that there are no instances of misdirected love by way of the noun ἀγάπη in
the NT. *NIDNTT* 2:543. However, one should not read theological significance into this since it is likely

place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues" (Matt 23:6). Luke recounts the

same example but uses ἀγαπάω: they "love" (ἀγαπάω) the chief seats in the synagogues (Luke

11:43) but disregard "justice and the love of God" (Luke 11:42). Examples of such misdirected

love abound throughout the NT.[217] Such misdirected love is itself the reason that Jesus is rejected

by those who "loved [ἀγαπάω] the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil" (John

3:19).[218] Humans are not to love the world (1 John 2:15) but Demas "loved [ἀγαπάω] this present

world" and thus deserted Paul (2 Tim 4:10).[219] Accordingly, "friendship (φιλία) with the world is

hostility [ἔχθρα] toward God" and "whoever wishes to be a friend [φίλος] of the world makes

himself an enemy [ἐχθρός] of God" (Jas 4:4). Therefore, the object of one's love is very important

since those who perish, perish because they did not "receive the love of the truth so as to be

saved" (2 Thess 2:10; cf. 2 Tim 4:8). Similarly, in the *eschaton*, the saints who have overcome

through Christ "did not love their life even when faced with death" (Rev 12:11). On the other

hand, the ones "outside" the holy city are "everyone who loves [φιλέω] and practices lying" (Rev

22:15).[220] Many instances of misdirected love refer to a love of attraction and/or enjoyment of its

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that the reason for this is the tendency of the φιλέω root to make compound words. Many of the instances of misdirected love utilize a compound word, philologically lessening the likelihood of the use of ἀγάπη. That the noun ἀγάπη can signify a negative kind of love is evident in the LXX (cf. 2 Sam 13:15).

[217] Later, Luke similarly describes: the scribes "like [θέλω] to walk around in long robes, and love [φιλέω] respectful greetings . . . chief seats" and "places of honor" (Luke 20:46; Similarly, Matt 6:5). Balaam "loved [ἀγαπάω] the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet 2:15) and Diotrephes "loves to be the first [φιλοπρωτεύων]" (3 John 1:9). Many compound terms further signify misdirected love including the "love of money" (φιλαργυρία) (1 Tim 6:10; cf. Luke 16:14; 1 Tim 3:3; Heb 13:5). See also 2 Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:8.

[218] Similarly, some chief rulers who believed in Jesus did not confess him because they "love" (ἀγαπάω) the approval of men rather than "the approval of God" (John 12:43). In contrast, humans are to love (φιλέω) Jesus above all and such love toward Jesus involves sacrifice such that the one "who does not take his cross and follow" Jesus is not worthy of him (Matt 10:38).

[219] Such misdirected love amounts to hatred for the followers of Jesus since the world "love[s] [φιλέω] its own" but "hates" those "chosen" by Jesus (John 15:19).

[220] The proper direction and quality of love is further explained in various ways. See Rom 12:9; 14:15; 1 Cor 17:14; 2 Cor 6:6; 8:8, 24; 1 Tim 4:12; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22; 3:10.

object, often with the connotation of strongly liking something. Such love is evil in these cases not because of the preferential nature of the love itself as attraction and/or enjoyment (as some have contended),[221] but, because of its inappropriate direction(s).[222] Misdirected love is integrally related to a lack of love for God and/or the things of God. Overall, the very fact that objects of love may be appropriate or inappropriate suggests that proper love itself includes appropriate evaluation.

Pure Altruism versus Proper Self-love

The objection to the evaluative nature of love, that true (or pure) love should be strictly altruistic and thus include self-abnegation and self-sacrifice, contradicts the NT data, which recognize an appropriate kind of self-love. For instance, while the NT surely emphasizes the self-sacrificial love of Christ (John 15:13) it also presumes proper self-love.[223] Thus, the second of the greatest commandments tells humans to love their neighbor as themselves (Matt 22:37–39; cf. Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; cf. Matt 19:19). Accordingly, at least some kind of self-love is appropriate, contra the notion of "pure love" as wholly altruistic and self-abnegating, exclusive of all self-interest and self-regard.[224] At the same time, self-regard is not to be the ultimate object of

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[221] For example, consider Nygren's condemnation of acquisitive or appetitive love in *Agape and Eros*, 128, 210.

[222] Smalley correctly cautions, "Perhaps we should not distinguish too sharply between these two connotations of 'love,' as 'love' and 'desire.' 'Attraction' is a fundamentally human emotion; the question is whether that attraction is properly motivated, and directed to the right object." *1, 2, 3 John*, 82. Daniel L. Akin adds, "In a sense love is neutral. The object of one's love or affection is decisive." *1, 2, 3, John* (NAC 38; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 108.

[223] Notably, in John 15:13 such love is in the context of friendship; it assumes an existing relationship and is thus not altogether unilateral or "disinterested." See the discussion of friendship and reciprocal love later in this chapter.

[224] Nolland rightly contends that far from utter self-disregard the "text assumes positive self-regard and the care for oneself that goes with this. . . . Even love for God . . . should not be seen, despite all the rigours of discipleship, as extinguishing the significance of our own well-being (cf. Mt. 7:12; Eph 5:29)." *The Gospel of Matthew*, 912. Blomberg also recognizes that while this is "not a call to self-love" it "does presuppose it." *Matthew*, 335. Cf. also Klassen, *Love in the NT*, 389; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 480; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 839. This is in direct contrast to Nygren's ἀγάπη, which is exclusive of all self-love. *Agape and Eros*, 100–101, 130–31. On these commands see Spicq, *Agape*; Furnish, *The Love Command*.

one's love. Thus, Jesus also states, "He who loves [φιλέω] his life loses it, and he who hates [μισέω] his life in this world will keep it to life eternal" (John 12:25). Importantly, the text does not command one to hate oneself but specifically to hate one's "life in this world." As such, the emphasis is on that selfishness that values one's own human existence above the things of God, thus loving the world (through self) rather than God (cf. 2 Tim 3:2–4).[225]

Moreover, proper self-love is apparent elsewhere in the NT. Thus, NT writers quote Jesus's love command as the fulfillment of the whole law: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8). Paul, in the same vein, contends that the husband is to love his wife as he loves himself (Eph 5:28). Again, each one is "to love his own wife even as himself" (Eph 5:33).[226] Significantly, this is modeled after the way Christ has loved humans who corporately are referred to as his body (Eph 5:25, 29–30).[227] Amazingly, then, Christ's interest in the church is metaphorically compared to one's love for their own body, their own self. Accordingly, this manifests the principle that God's love includes self-interest but such self-interest itself includes the interests of all other beings. In other words, other-love becomes identified with self-love. In this way, divine love is truly sympathetic.[228] The divine life is intimately affected by the lives of his children because he has made their interests his own. This is

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[225] Stählin, on the other hand, thinks this "demands an uncompromising renunciation of self-love." Stählin, *TDNT* 9:130. However, the point Jesus is making is not against proper self-regard but against the kind of love that asserts one's temporal life as the highest value. As such, this does not necessarily amount to utter self-abnegation but to a call of preference for God and the things of God above even one's own life.

[226] "Accordingly, the husband's obligation to love his wife as his own body is not simply a matter of loving someone else just like he loves himself. It is, in fact, to love himself." O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon*, 426–27. So Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4–6* (AB 34A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 636; Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21–33* (Leiden: Boston Brill, 1998), 153–54. As such, other-love in no way replaces self-love here but becomes inseparably connected with it for the Christian. See on Eph 5:25. See also John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34* (WBC 35B; Dallas: Word, 2002), 584.

[227] This body language is metaphorical (not ontological) since the combination here of two metaphors (marriage and one's body), if taken literally, would be mutually exclusive (cf. Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 6:16).

[228] See chapter 6 for a further exploration of this concept.

not "selfish" (1 Cor 13:5) but "recognizes the effect of love upon the lover." As such, the self-sacrificial love of Jesus in dying for the church that she might be his bride is bound up with his "self-love," that is, love for his body, the church.

In all this, though divine love is outgoing and (when appropriate) self-sacrificial, it is not therefore self-abnegating.[229] Rather, there is appropriate self-love that is to be contrasted with selfishness. At the same time, there is appropriate sacrificial love, but not all proper love is sacrificial. While self-sacrifice is virtuous in the appropriate circumstances, total and utter self-abnegation is not ideal. Both self-sacrificial love and proper self-love are modeled in Christ who laid down his life for sinners because of his love, but Christ will nevertheless be exalted in the *eschaton* as is appropriate to him (cf. Phil 2). The exaltation of Christ is not opposed to his love. Divine evaluation in the sense that God is brought pleasure by receiving the love of human beings in no way lessens the quality of divine love. God actually enjoys human beings, delights in them, and is joyous in their joy. His creatures' best interest is his interest; this is true love.

A Brief Look at Some Terms of Evaluative Divine Love

The Meaning of ἀγαπητός[230]

The term ἀγαπητός generally denotes "one who is in a very special relationship with another," thus "beloved," "one who is dearly loved" and/or "prized, valued," "the object of one's affection" and, even one who is worthy of love.[231] Accordingly, the term may entail evaluation,

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[229] Donald A. Carson likewise contends that love is more than altruism. He points to Paul's contention in 1 Cor 13 that even the greatest kinds of giving are possible without love: "This surely demonstrates that the love he has in mind is more sweeping than mere altruism, than mere commitment to the good of the other, however self-denying." "Love," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 646.

[230] While the wider ἀγαπάω word group to which ἀγαπητός belongs has already been discussed, the importance of the term as it relates to the identification of divine love as evaluative, rather than deterministically elective, warrants a brief survey of the meaning of this prominent NT adjective. This will both clarify the evaluative nature of divine love and support the position presented above that divine election itself is often inclusive of evaluation.

[231] Danker et al., BDAG, 7; ibid., 293. "It is used above all of an only and precious child." Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:37. It is thus a strong term of endearment. See Davids, *The Letters*, 309; B. M. Newman

the lover's perception of lovableness, and affection, delight, and/or pleasure in someone.[232] In the NT, ἀγαπητός refers to Jesus as God's beloved son in nine instances, and in such cases the "beloved" status is certainly evaluative since Jesus is the worthy object of divine love.[233] In six of those instances, the evaluative connotation of ἀγαπητός is unequivocally evident when it collocates with εὐδοκέω in describing Christ as the beloved and well-pleasing son of God.[234]

In almost every other NT instance, ἀγαπητός refers to Christians, whether of those beloved by God (i.e., Rom 1:7) or by other humans (i.e., 1 Cor 4:14), in reference to both individuals and groups.[235] The term is thus one of "insider love," that is, love for special objects of endearment, favor, and affection within the context of a particular, rather than universal, relationship.[236] As such, it naturally relates conceptually to other descriptors of those who are in a special relationship to God such as the elect,[237] called,[238] and/or brethren,[239] and explicitly

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and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter*, 12. It appears 61 times in 60 verses in the NT.

[232] See Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26* (WBC 34A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 34. Liddell-Scott views the classical use as meaning "worthy of love, loveable, dear." *LSJ Abridged*, 4.

[233] Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 20:13; 2 Pet 1:17. While semantically, both non-evaluative election and evaluative and emotive disposition are possible connotations of ἀγαπητός (at least according to some scholars), theologically, only the latter is available as a coherent option when the referent is the son of God. On the explicitly evaluative delight connoted in many such instances see Spicq, *Agape*, 1:49–50, 53; idem, "ευδοκέω, ευδοκία," *TLNT* 2:102. See also the further discussion of these below. All 8 instances of ἀγαπητός in the Gospels refer to Jesus. Cf. also the use of the perfect passive participle of ἀγαπάω with reference to Christ (Eph 1:6). For Bruce these designate Christ as "the supreme object of the Father's love." *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 258. Similarly, Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 485–86.

[234] Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 2 Pet 1:17. The only other instance describes that Paul and his associates were "well-pleased" to share the gospel with those who had become "very dear" to them (1 Thess 2:8).

[235] The only exception is Rom 11:28 where "Israel" is referred to as "beloved for the sake of the fathers." As such, it often stands in as a description of the "Christian community," which itself consists of those "beloved of God" who "reciprocate that love." Strecker, *The Johannine Letters*, 148.

[236] For Stauffer, this is "the preferential love which includes separation and special calling." *TDNT* 1:48. But notice, with regard to ἀγαπητός, "preferential" does not mean arbitrary, non-evaluative, or strictly unconditional. See the discussion of insider love further below.

[237] Interestingly, ἀγαπητός never collocates with ἐκλεκτός in a single verse but does collocate with the wider ἐκλέγομαι word group 3 times (Acts 15:25; Rom 11:28; Jas 2:5). The close association is also seen in parallel usage such as when Persus is referred to as the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) and in the next verse

contrasts with "enemies" (Rom 11:28). Similarly, the perfect passive participle of ἀγαπάω often functions in the same manner as ἀγαπητός, referring to those "beloved," often in the context of election.[240] Importantly, however, while the mere use of the term ἀγαπητός does not itself specify how one becomes "beloved," the usage of the term demonstrates that the status of "beloved" is not unconditionally bestowed, though it may be granted foreconditionally.[241] Despite interpretations to the contrary, then, ἀγαπητός should not be conflated with election.[242]

Rufus is "a choice (ἐκλεκτός) man in the Lord" (Rom 16:12–13). Both are apparently evaluative descriptions of Paul's dear brethren. In 1 Pet 2:9, 11 those who were "chosen" (ἐκλεκτός) are also referred to as "beloved" (ἀγαπητός). See also the collocation with αἱρετίζω, "choose, appoint," in reference to Christ who is also the object of God's pleasure (εὐδοκέω) (Matt 12:18).

[238] The two collocate only once in a single verse of the "beloved" who are "called [κλητός] as saints" (Rom 1:7). Interestingly, ἀγαπητός, the ἐκλέγομαι word group, and the καλέω word group collocate within 2 verses in Rom 11:28–29, of those who are "from the standpoint of God's choice . . . beloved for the sake of the fathers" since God's "calling" is without repentance. Similarly, those who are referred to as "chosen" and "beloved" were "called" by God (1 Pet 2:9, 11). See also 1 Thess 2:8, 12; Jude 1, 3.

[239] In many instances the two collocate, often in the phrase "beloved brethren" (1 Cor 15:58; Phil 4:1; Jas 1:16, 19; 2:5) or with reference to a "beloved brother" (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7, 9; Phlm 1:1, 16; 2 Pet 3:15). Elsewhere, the "brethren" are closely associated with the "beloved" (1 Tim 6:2; 3 John 5). Elsewhere, familial association is evident when Paul refers to the "beloved" just after applying God's covenant promise to be a father to them (2 Cor 6:18–7:1). Similarly, there are numerous references to beloved children (1 Cor 4:14; Eph 5:1; 1 John 3:20; cf. 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 1:2). As such, there is an association with the concept of being adopted into the family of God. Accordingly, Neyrey sees the status of "beloved" (in Jude 1:1) as being "fictive members of God's family." *2 Peter, Jude*, 48.

[240] The perfect passive participle of ἀγαπάω appears 7 times in 7 verses in the NT. There it often appears within the context of calling and/or election. See Rom 9:25; Eph 1:6; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; Jude 1. The only other instance is with reference to the "beloved city" in Rev 20:9. The passive participle of ἀγαπάω also translates יְשֻׁרוּן four times in the LXX (cf. Deut 32:15).

[241] Rather, the "beloved" often applies to those who have responded, or will respond, to God's loving overtures and thus become a part of the people of God (with the possible, but not certain, exception of Rom 11:28). As such, it often is used in reference to those who are "faithful" whether of groups (1 Tim 6:2; 3 John 5; cf. Jas 2:5; Jude 20; Rom 1:7–8; Phlm 1, 5) or individuals (1 Cor 4:17; Eph 6:21; Col 1:7; 4:7, 9). The "beloved" are thus in Christ; he is who is truly the "beloved" one.

[242] While Christians are both "elect" and "beloved" the terms are not thereby synonymous. Contra Günther and Link's contention that *"agapē* is for him [Paul] electing love, as is indicated by his use of *agapētos,* 'the chosen one.'" *NIDNTT* 2:544. The same error appears when Günther and Link contend that the *"klētoi* ('called') are the *agapētoi* ('beloved') (Rom. 1:7; Col. 3:12)." *NIDNTT* 2:544. Christians may be both "elect" and "beloved" in Christ, both of which relate to being adopted into God's family. In this way there is a close association between election and being beloved, but the connotations of the terms are not synonymous.

Furthermore, various usages of ἀγαπητός in the NT militate against deterministic election while suggesting evaluation and/or emotionality (cf. 2 Pet 3:17; Jude 20–21).[243]

This range of meaning of ἀγαπητός, especially its often evaluative and emotive connotations, is further illumined by a consideration of the Hebrew terms that it translates in the LXX. For instance, out of 17 instances ἀγαπητός translates יחיד 6 times, always in reference to one's offspring and thus connoting that which is uniquely and specially treasured with the significant emotional attachment that belongs to the parental bond and affection.[244] This sense of emotional attachment to a precious and dear one is also present when ἀγαπητός once renders יקיר in the emotionally charged description of God's affection for, and delight in, his people as his "dear son [יַקִּיר]" and "delightful child" for whom his heart yearns (Jer 38:20 [ET 31:20]). A strong sense of endearment is likewise apparent in the 5 instances where ἀγαπητός translates ידיד,

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[243] For example, those who are referred to as ἀγαπητός are often exhorted towards the manifestation of proper Christian behavior, especially holiness (cf. Eph 5:1, 3; 2 Cor 7:1; Jude 10). In many such exhortations it is clear that the ἀγαπητός could fall (see especially 2 Pet 3:17; Jude 20–21; cf. Phil 2:12; 4:1; 1 Pet 2:11; 2 Pet 3:1, 8, 14; 1 John 2:7; 4:7, 11; 3 John 1:11; Jude 1:3, 17). As such, "beloved" is certainly not a unilaterally constant designation (cf. 1 John 3:21).

[244] Three of these instances refer to Abraham's beloved (but not only) son Isaac (Gen 22:2, 12, 16). The other three instances evoke the emotion of sorrow that will be felt in a time of judgment akin to that felt in mourning for one's יחיד, only child (Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10; Jer 6:26). יחיד itself appears 12 times in the OT, 6 of which are rendered by ἀγαπητός, 1 by the present passive participle of ἀγαπάω, 4 by μονογενής, and once by μονοτρόπους. Eight of the instances of יחיד refer to one's offspring while the other four refer to one's own life and to the "lonely," there translated by μονογενής three times and μονοτρόπους once. Because of this association between ἀγαπητός and יחיד one frequently finds the equating, or nearly equating, of "beloved" and "only." So C. H. Turner who argued that ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός is rightly translated "only son." "*ho huios mou ho agapetos*," *JTS* 27 (1926): 129. Many others have agreed, at least to some extent, with this conclusion. See Louw and Nida, L&N 1:293; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 730; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 58; John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20* (WBC 35A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 158, 164. Cf. Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:539. However, the meaning of "only" child for ἀγαπητός is "highly unlikely." Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 486. As seen above, יחיד itself does not always refer to an only child or even a child at all. Isaac was not Abraham's "only" child, Ishmael was his older brother. Likewise μονογενής does not necessarily refer to one's only child, or offspring at all, in the LXX or the OT. The terms, rather, denote that which is specially treasured in some special fashion, one that is favored. As such, it is a mistake to identify ἀγαπητός with only child, its connotation is of affectionate love for one specially favored and dear. Indeed there is a significant association between μονογενής and ἀγαπητός, which appears in the LXX and NT and appears often in the church fathers, but the association has μονογενής taking on the connotation of special and treasured in order to overlap with the meaning of dear and beloved proper to ἀγαπητός.

"beloved."[245] Finally, ἀγαπητός once translates the piel participle of אהב (Zech 13:6) and once דּוֹד,

"beloved" (Isa 5:1).[246] In all this, the term clearly indicates affection in the LXX and often (if not

always) does so in the NT as well.[247]

The Meaning of the εὐδοκέω
Word Group

The εὐδοκέω word group also overlaps with the categories of election and evaluative love.

The word group generally denotes desire, pleasure, delight, satisfaction, approval, preference,

and/or enjoyment of an object or course of action.[248] The group often connotes evaluation such

that the object of preference or desire is considered to be good, something that might bring

pleasure, satisfaction, or benefit and/or is worthy of selection.[249] Importantly, neither the verb nor

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[245] Four of these instances refer to divine love toward his "beloved" and in the fifth the reference is to a song of love. In one other instance, the LXX translators apparently mistook יְדִידוּן יְדְדוּן from the verb נדד for ידיד and translated it by ἀγαπητός (Ps 67:13). ידיד itself appears only 9 times in 8 verses in the OT. The other four instances not translated by ἀγαπητός are all used of God's love and rendered by the perfect passive participle of ἀγαπάω. It has been suggested that the "originally distinct meanings of יחיד and ידיד became conflated" in the LXX, "perhaps due to textual variants in the MSS" or "misreadings" or "idiomatic interpretation." M. Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 82.

[246] In two other instances ἀγαπητός appears in the LXX without Hebrew equivalent. It also appears 8 times in 8 verses in the LXX Apocrypha. Cf. the use of ἀγαπητός instead of μονογενής in Judg (A) 11:34. ἀγαπητός never translates בחיר in the LXX as it appears to do in the likely allusion to Isa 42:1 in Matt 12:18.

[247] Strongly emotive affection is evident with regard to Jesus in Matt 12:18 where Jesus is the "beloved" in whom God's "soul is well-pleased." Elsewhere, in human usage emotional affection is likewise explicit. See 1 Thess 2:7, 8. The affective connotation is also apparent in classical Greek. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 34.

[248] See Spicq, *TLNT* 2:99; H. Bietenhard, "ευδοκεω," *NIDNTT* 2:817; F. W. Danker et al., eds., "ευδοκεω," BDAG, 404; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "ευδοκεω," L&N 1:289, 361. In classical Greek the term also "means to be well pleased or content, to consent, to approve." Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:817. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 2:99. At Qumran the term is primarily one of election, which is not surprising regarding the election theology of that community. However, even there some evaluative usages appear (cf. 1 QS 4.1).

[249] See Danker et al., BDAG, 404; idem, "ευδοκεω," BDAG, 289, 361; idem, "ευδοκια," BDAG, 404. Cf. also Gottlob Schrenk, "εὐδοκέω, εὐδοκία," *TDNT* 2:741. Thus, εὐδοκία may refer to "that which is desired on the basis of its appearing to be beneficial—'desire, what is wished for.'" Danker et al., BDAG, 289. The etymology is uncertain; the group may derive from "the hypothetical *eudokos*, formed from *eu*, good, and *dechomai*, to accept." See Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:817. This would imply evaluation as the usage of the term also suggests. Schrenk, however, thinks that it is "developed from the impersonal εὖ δοκεῖ τινί τι." *TDNT* 2:738. The noun "εὐδοκία is almost completely restricted to Jewish and Christian literature." Ibid., 742. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 2:103.

the noun refers to arbitrary decision or election. Rather, as one might expect, there is a connection between that in which one takes pleasure and that which one desires, wants, wishes for, and thus wills.

The εὐδοκέω word group appears frequently with human and divine agency.[250] With human agency, the word group may refer to: being "pleased" to do something,[251] the evaluative preference of something desirable,[252] or taking pleasure in, or enjoying, doing something (cf. 2 Thess 2:12). With divine agency the word group often refers to that which God is pleased to do, often in reference to the plan of salvation,[253] and also frequently in reference to personal objects of God's evaluative and affective pleasure[254] or displeasure.[255] The evaluative connotation of the

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[250] The verb εὐδοκέω appears 21 times in 21 verses and the noun εὐδοκία appears 9 times in 9 verses.

[251] Of the verb, see Rom 15:26, 27; 1 Thess 2:8; 2 Thess 2:12). Likewise, the noun εὐδοκία is used to refer to one's heartfelt desire (Rom 10:1; cf. 2 Thess 1:11) or good will as motivation to action (Phil 1:15). Rom 10:1 is descriptive of the combination of strong emotion and will in describing Paul's "heart's desire" (εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας) or "what I wish for with all my heart." "ευδοκεω," 289. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 2:106. 2 Thess 1:11 is here taken as referring to human desire but the genitive may refer to the divine good pleasure. Cf. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:819–20; Schrenk, *TDNT* 2:746.

[252] Elsewhere the verb connotes evaluative preference of something more desirable such as Paul's preference to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8; cf. 1 Thess 3:1; 2 Cor 12:10).

[253] Of the verb see Luke 12:32; 1 Cor 1:21; Gal 1:15; Col 1:19. The noun likewise is used in reference to God's good will or pleasure in the plan of salvation (Matt 11:26; Luke 10:21; Eph 1:5, 9; Phil 2:13).

[254] Thus, Jesus himself is often the worthy object of divine affection and pleasure, the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) in whom the Father is "well-pleased" (Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 2 Pet 1:17). Guelich correctly points out that this collocation with ἀγαπητός "underscores the primary motif of affection, delight and pleasure inherent in εὐδοκεῖν." *Mark 1–8:26*, 34. Similarly, Spicq emphasizes the "affective meaning" such that the "Father's 'pleasure' is the joy of the love that he bears for the Son" and as such "*eudokeō* . . . exegete[s] the divine *agapē*." *TLNT* 2:102. This positive, affectionate evaluation is not unconditional but may be forfeited for "if He shrinks back, My soul [ψυχή] has no pleasure [εὐδοκέω] in Him" (Heb 10:38; cf. Hab 2:4). That this is emotive is clear by the idiomatic use of "soul" or "inner person," which, by way of the Hebrew idiom, refers to the seat of emotions. Likewise, divine emotionality is evident in this way in Matt 12:18. Consider also the idiomatic usage of the soul, of human agency, in Sir 18:31.

[255] Thus "God was not well-pleased" (εὐδοκέω) with most of those who came out of the Exodus (1 Cor 10:5) and took no pleasure (εὐδοκέω) in sacrifices which he did not desire (θέλω) (Heb 10:6, 8). Even those who elsewhere stress the divine will must here speak in terms of evaluation. For example, S. Légasse comments on this verse that "because of their own sin" the "mass of Israelites . . . did not obtain what God had provided, and only a minority came into the delight of the divine plan." "ευδοκεω," *EDNT* 2:75.

εὐδοκέω word group is further apparent by reference to the terms that the εὐδοκέω word group translates in the LXX, most often the רצה and חָפֵץ word groups.[256]

The primary dispute with regard to the meaning of the εὐδοκέω word group is whether the term is one of will or evaluation. Some scholars have considered the group with divine usage to refer to God's eternal, unilateral, and efficacious decree, especially those instances relative to the plan of salvation.[257] However, the question is not whether the εὐδοκέω word group is connected to will; it clearly is, as is evidenced by its close association with the theme and semantics of divine volition and election.[258] Rather, the question is with regard to the nature of the association. There

Finally, in a difficult-to-interpret verse, the angelic proclamation of Christ's birth may be translated "peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:14) but some may translate "good will toward men." The former would be contingent and evaluative while the latter could be a general, non-evaluative, arbitrary disposition/will. There is a great deal of dispute about the meaning of this phraseology. See the discussion of this verse in the discussion of the canonical data below.

[256] The verb εὐδοκέω appears 38 times in 37 verses in the LXX OT (many more times in the OT Apocrypha) most often translating רצה (23 times in 22 verses) often of delight, enjoyment. For instance, it refers to God's lack of delight (θέλω) and pleasure (εὐδοκέω) in a horse's strength and the legs of a man, respectively. Rather, God "favors [εὐδοκέω] those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness" (Ps 146:10–11; cf. 50:18; 149:4). See also Lev 26:34; Eccl 9:7; Jer 14:10. Beyond its translation by εὐδοκέω in the LXX it is rendered by προσδέχομαι, "accept," 13 times in 12 verses and by δέχομαι in 5 verses all in the sense of accepting or, on the other hand, not being pleased with rituals/offerings. It is also rendered 5 times by δεκτός in the sense of acceptance, favor. Numerous other terms render it once. εὐδοκέω also translates the related verb חָפֵץ in 3 instances, all in reference to divine delight (2 Sam 22:20; Ps 50:21; Mal 2:17). It also translates קָדַד, to bow down, twice (Gen 24:26, 48) and a number of other terms once, notably including חָמַד, desire, once (Ps 67:17). The noun εὐδοκία appears 10 times in 10 verses in the LXX OT and most often translates רצון (7 times). These are all in the Psalms (5:13; 18:15; 50:20; 68:14; 88:18; 105:4; 144:16) often in the sense of "favor" or that which is "acceptable" (Pss 5:13 and 18:15 respectively). Cf. also its translation of תִּרְצָה in Song 6:4. It appears many more times in the OT Apocrypha, 16 times in Sirach alone where it has the connotation of one's will in the sense of that which is pleasing. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 2:104. Thus, "what pleases the Lord is faithfulness and mercy" or "turning away from evil" (Sir 1:26; 35;16; cf. 32:14; 33:13; 39:18; 41:4) as opposed to the "gifts of wicked men," which are not "acceptable" to him (Sir 35:3). Beyond its translation by εὐδοκία in the LXX, רצון is rendered by δεκτός, acceptable, favorable, in 23 verses; ἀρεστός, pleasing, in 3; and προσδεκτός, acceptable, satisfactory, and θέλησις, will, in 2 instances; and a few others once, notably, ἐπιθυμία in Gen 49:6.

[257] For example, David E. Garland contends that "when God is said to be 'well pleased' (εὐδόκησεν, eudokēsen), it refers to God's inscrutable decree, what is otherwise unaccountable, the sovereignty and mystery of God's choice." *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2003), 68. Likewise, Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (BNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1993), 58. Cf. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:818; Légasse, *EDNT* 2:75. Nolland, on the other hand, thinks Schrenk "exaggerates the election element" in the term. *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 164.

[258] See the brief discussion of the collocation of the εὐδοκέω word group with the θέλω word group

is strong volition involved in many usages but, likewise, clear evaluation and emotion appears.[259]

In this way, the dispute appears to be based on something of a false dichotomy between will, emotion, and evaluation. The three are depicted in the use of this term (and elsewhere) as closely interrelated, such that what one wills is, in fact, that which is evaluated as preferable and/or brings one pleasure.[260] The divine will is thus itself in accord with that which pleases God, often explicitly with a view toward appraisal of objective reality. Thus, the explicitly evaluative instances of divine εὐδοκέω (cf. Heb 10:38; 1 Cor 10:5) do not conflict with, but complement the instances where the divine desire and will seem to be highlighted.[261] Accordingly, those instances that speak of God's purpose in the plan of salvation may simply mean that God is pleased to work out the plan of salvation because of his love for his creatures.[262] As such, the evidence from NT and LXX usage suggests that the term includes the connotation of evaluative preference such that the element of volitional choice is bound up with the direction toward something that is viewed as worthy or bringing satisfaction or pleasure.

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in the brief word study of the latter earlier in this chapter. Interestingly, the group never collocates in a single verse with the βούλομαι or ἐκλέγομαι word groups and rarely with the καλέω word group, with little significance (2 Thess 1:11; cf. Gal 1:15–16). Importantly, as has been seen above, the major terms of election themselves are not clearly descriptive of determinism. Consider, for example, the meaning of evaluative "desire" and "delight" by way of θέλω and εὐδοκέω in Heb 10:8.

[259] For example, Schrenk notes the connection of the term to the theme of election but also notes that of all such terms "εὐδοκεῖν brings out most strongly the emotional side of the love of Him who elects." *TDNT* 2:740–41.

[260] One selects some thing or course of action because it is "preferred as better" as is explicit in the phrase εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον in 2 Cor 5:8. Ibid., 741. So, also "ευδοκεω," 361. Thus, the term "implies strong volition, as well as taking pleasure in." Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 73.

[261] In other words, the assertion of determinism does not fit the usage as found in instances such as Heb 10:38 but the usages that appear to strongly assert divine volition are in accord with a view that sees the will, evaluation, and emotion as complementary.

[262] Thus, M. Barth states, "Far from any idea of arbitrariness, [εὐδοκέω] has warm and personal connotations. When God's good pleasure is mentioned, his willingness and joy in doing good are indicated. The happiness that accompanies a radiant good will is implied." *Ephesians 1–3*, 81. Similarly, O'Brien affirms that "pleasure . . . signifies not simply the purpose of God but also the delight that he takes in his plans." *Colossians-Philemon*, 103.

Other Significant Terms of Evaluative Pleasure

The ἀρέσκω word group refers to that which is pleasing or acceptable.[263] The verb

ἀρέσκω[264] and the noun ἀρεστός[265] are often used with both human and divine agency, consistently

in reference to grounded, evaluative pleasure.[266] εὐάρεστος[267] and εὐαρεστέω[268] likewise refer to

that which is well-pleasing, acceptable, even delightful, almost always of pleasure and/or

acceptability in the sight of God or Christ, often of an explicitly evaluative nature.[269] Such

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[263] See Werner Foerster, "αρεσκω, ανθρωπαρεσκος, αρεσκεία, αρεστος, ευαρεστος, ευαρεστεω," *TDNT* 1:456; H. Bietenhard, "αρέσκω," *NIDNTT* 2:814–15.

[264] The verb ἀρέσκω appears 17 times in 16 verses, consistently referring to grounded, evaluative pleasure. For appearances referring to human pleasure see Matt 14:6; Mark 6:22; Acts 6:4–5; Rom 15:1–3; 1 Cor 7:33–34; 10:33; Gal 1:10; 2 Tim 2:4. For instances of divine pleasure see Rom 8:8; 1 Cor 7:32; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4, 15; 4:1; possibly also Rom 15:3; 2 Tim 2:4. The related term ἀνθρωπάρεσκος refers to "men pleasers" (Eph 6:6; Col 3:22). In the LXX, ἀρέσκω most often translates טוב (21 times), יָשָׁר, right (6 times), and a number of others 3 times or less.

[265] The noun ἀρεστός appears 4 times in 4 verses with both human (Acts 6:2; 12:3) and divine agency (John 8:29; 1 John 3:22). Acts 12:3 may also refer to that which is desirable from a divine perspective. So Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:816. In the LXX it often refers to divine evaluation and translates יָשָׁר, right (7 times), רָצוֹן (3 times), טוב (2 times), and others 3 times or less. Often, the Hebrew includes the idiom "in the eyes of," a clear pointer to explicit appraisal and evaluation. Cf. ibid., 815.

[266] In many cases the verb clearly refers to evaluative divine pleasure (cf. 1 Thess 4:1; 1 John 3:22). The related noun ἀρεσκεία appears only once in the NT, also of divine pleasure in human conduct (Col 1:10). It thus generally refers to pleasure or the "desire to please." Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:814. Cf. Prov 31:30. Its evaluative sense is also present in classical Greek where it "denotes the pleasure which men or the gods derive from something." Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:815. Cf. Malherbe, *The Letters*, 220.

[267] The adjective εὐάρεστος appears 9 times in 9 verses, all but one of which refers to that which is pleasing and/or acceptable to God. Humans might be exhorted to be "acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1–2; 14:18) or aspire to please him (2 Cor 5:9; cf. Eph 5:10; Heb 13:21) or are, in fact, "well-pleasing to God" (Phil 4:18; cf. Col 3:20). The one exception that refers to human agency is Titus 2:9. The evaluative sense is also explicit outside the NT as there it refers to "the experience of being pleased because of what another does." F. W. Danker et al., eds., "ευαρεστεω, εαυρεστησις, ευαρεστος," BDAG, 403. Cf. Foerster, *TDNT* 1:456; Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:814. It appears in the LXX only in Wis 4:10; 9:10, both of pleasing God.

[268] The verb εὐαρεστέω appears only 3 times in the NT, all with reference to pleasing God (Heb 11:5, 6; 13:16).

[269] See Foerster, *TDNT* 1:456–57; Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:814–15; Danker et al., BDAG, 403. In the LXX, the verb often translates הלך in the sense of walking with God (Gen 5:22, 24; 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; Pss 25:3; 34:14; 55:14; 114:9; cf. Sir 44:16). Interestingly, the only instance where the ἀγαπάω word group collocates with the ἀρέσκω word group is in the LXX Apocrypha where it is said of Enoch: "There was one who pleased [εὐάρεστος] God and was loved [ἀγαπάω] by him" (Wis 4:10). Cf. Heb 11:5.

terminology is closely akin to the δεκτός and εὐδοκέω word groups in the sense of evaluative

pleasure and/or acceptance.[270] There is also significant overlap with the δόκιμος word group,

which points to the evaluative nature of both, since the δόκιμος word group generally refers to

that which comes out of examination, inspection, and is found pleasing, acceptable, approved.[271]

Finally, there is some overlap with the will of God. Specifically, collocations further demonstrate

that the divine will itself refers to that which is pleasing to God.[272] In all, the entire ἀρέσκω word

group is frequently used in ways that demonstrate the fact of evaluative divine pleasure.

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in Gospels-Acts

In this corpus, the evaluative aspect of divine love is highlighted in God's evaluative

pleasure and affection for Jesus in the divine declarations at Jesus' baptism and the

Transfiguration where Jesus is referred to as the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) Son in whom the Father is

"well-pleased" (Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; cf. Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35).[273] The various

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[270] See Louw and Nida, L&N 1:299. The association is not due to collocation but with regard to meaning and usage. Of these groups there are no theologically significant collocations.

[271] δόκιμος basically refers to that which has been tested and found worthy, reliable. See Walter Grundmann, "δόκιμος, αδόκιμος, δοκιμή, δοκίμιον, δοκιμάζω, αποδοκιμάζω, δοκιμασία," *TDNT* 2: 255–60. The two word groups overlap in 4 instances, all with theological significance (Rom 12:2; 14:18; Eph 5:10; 1 Thess 2:4). See the further discussion of these verses below.

[272] Thus, Heb 13:21 refers to God's "equipping you in every good thing to do His will [θέλημα], working in us that which is pleasing [εὐάρεστος] in His sight." Likewise, Paul exhorts Christians to "prove what the will [θέλημα] of God is, that which is good and acceptable [εὐάρεστος] and perfect" (Rom 12:2; cf. Eph 6:6). Not surprisingly, that which is good is also often referred to as pleasing (Rom 12:2; cf. Rom 15:2; Col 1:10; Heb 13:21).

[273] While there is some variance between these declarations, their striking similarity points toward a common understanding of the nature of Christ's incarnate status before the Father. In a number of passages, Jesus is called the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) Son in whom the Father is "well-pleased" with minor variances (Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). Two other verses have more significant variations, "This is My beloved [ἀγαπητός] Son, listen to Him!" (Mark 9:7). "This is My Son, *My* Chosen [ἐκλέγομαι] One; listen to Him!" (Luke 9:35). In Luke 9 the TR has ἀγαπητὸς instead of ἐκλελεγμένος but this is widely considered to be scribal smoothing of the variant. The origin of the variance between these synoptic statements is impossible to determine with certainty. Moreover, the nature of the interdependence between these statements as well as their usage of the OT is widely disputed. The most commonly suggested OT backgrounds include Gen 22:2, 12, 16; Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1; cf. Exod 4:22–23; Isa 41:8; 44:2. For a detailed summary of the positions often taken on this point see Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 341–43.

statements highlight the strong association between ἀγαπητός, εὐδοκέω, and (to a lesser extent) ἐκλέγομαι. Specifically, the parallel between Christ's status as "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) and the one in whom the Father is "well-pleased" (εὐδοκέω) points toward the fact that Jesus is the worthy object of the Father's loving affection and evaluative pleasure. The potentially evaluative connotation of election language is further apparent in the substitution of "chosen one" (ἐκλέγομαι) in place of "beloved" in Luke 9:35.[274] This association is emphatically presented in the similar statement of Matt 12:18: "Behold, My Servant [παῖς][275] whom I have chosen [αἱρετίζω]; My beloved [ἀγαπητός] in whom My soul is well-pleased [εὐδοκέω]" (Matt 12:18; cf. Isa 42:1).[276] On the surface, it is possible to view these statements from the standpoint of an arbitrary divine decree, such that all such related concepts are seen as descriptions of the unilateral divine will. However, evidence suggests that the terms in these passages convey evaluation rather than arbitrary, deterministic election. First, this is suggested by what has been seen already in this chapter with regard to the often evaluative connotations of election language. Second, Jesus is explicitly referred to as bringing pleasure to God elsewhere. Third, and perhaps most striking, the wider theological context requires that this language is evaluative since Christ is evaluatively beloved.

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[274] Cf. ibid., 874; Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 501. This special Father-Son relationship of lover-beloved is further highlighted in the parable of the vineyard owner (Mark 12:6; Luke 20:13). For Marcus, "the repetition of the last word ('beloved son . . . they will respect my son') highlights the pathos of the father's dispatch of his offspring." *Mark 8–16*, 812. Cf. Isa 5:1–2.

[275] This term may relate to a child or youth and thus may correspond to "Son" (υἱός) in the parallel passages. Cf. Joachim Jeremias, "παις θεου," *TDNT* 5:701–2. However, I. Howard Marshall rejects this view. "Son of God or Servant of Yahweh: A Reconsideration of Mark 1:11," *NTS* 15 (1969): 326–336.

[276] The verse is likely dependent on Isa 42:1 but some favor a separate Greek text other than the LXX. So Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 486; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 471–72. Others have suggested 2 Sam 22:20. See Eduard Schweizer, "υἱός," *TDNT* 8:368. Christ as "beloved son" is the true representative of Israel. So Paul G. Bretscher, "Exodus 4:22–23 and the Voice from Heaven," *JBL* 87 (1968): 305–6; William Foxwell Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew* (AB 26; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), 31. For a detailed discussion of this text see Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew, and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 107–15.

Specifically, Jesus is not arbitrarily elected as if he is selected out of a number of potential christs or sons of God. He is the "beloved" Son, the "chosen," not by selection but by his very nature.[277] Christ is both ontologically and behaviorally beloved and pleasing; he always does the things that are "pleasing" (ἀρεστός) to the Father (John 8:29; cf. Matt 27:43; Heb 10:38).[278] Accordingly, the NT data show that the status of Jesus declared by the Father in these instances is a genuine, accurate, appraisal of him. He is the "choice" (best) one, the worthy; none other could be chosen in his place as the incarnate Messiah. He is well-pleasing, for in all his actions he elicits delight; he is "beloved," that is, the Father loves the Son and in such a way that recognizes that the Son is worthy to be loved (cf. John 1:1; Rev 5:2, 4, 9, 12). Such "election" is neither arbitrary nor spontaneous but evaluative; a descriptive rather than prescriptive election.[279]

In the Gospels, language of divine pleasure also appears closely associated with the divine will in the sense that God's will is toward that which pleases him. Thus, it is the "Father's

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[277] On the other hand, if Christ's status as God's beloved, well-pleasing, and elect one is taken to derive from arbitrary and non-evaluative election, it calls into question Christ's intrinsic status as pre-existent, altogether worthy, and very God and may leave the door open for some form of adoptionism. However, adoptionism of the type that sees Christ elevated to sonship at his baptism (or at any other point) is itself ruled out in the Gospels as Jesus' sonship is previously affirmed in Matt 2:15; Luke 1:32–35; 2:49; cf. John 1:1–3, etc. Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 59; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 82. France correctly sees the declarations of "God's pleasure" in "obedience" and also "more fundamentally" Jesus' "own relationship with God." *The Gospel of Matthew*, 122–23; cf. ibid., 82. Similarly, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 158; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 59. Some, however, see the emphasis on God's past evaluative choice (so W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 57–58, 320; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8* [AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000], 163), while others view the statement as one of present, evaluative approval. See discussion in Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 31. That the approval refers to Jesus's obedience on earth would complement the following narrative of the wilderness testing in Matthew and Mark.

[278] Thus, God "has not left" Christ since he always does "what pleases him." R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII*, 347. Similarly, Köstenberger, *John*, 260; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 402. Cf. Matt 27:43; Ps 21:9 LXX.

[279] As such, ἀγαπητός here describes the Father's great affection for the Son; εὐδοκέω derives from the pleasure he evokes, and he is the truly "choice," worthy, one. ἀγαπητός here expresses the "special love-relationship between the heavenly Father and the Son." Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 485–86. Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 471–72. Such "love is deep-seated . . . as great as the heart of God itself . . . tender, vast, infinite." William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1973), 215. It is further without any "suggestion of election or adoption to sonship." Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 156. For Guelich, the collocation with ἀγαπητός underscores "the primary motif of affection, delight and pleasure inherent in εὐδοκεῖν." *Mark 1–8:26*, 34.

good pleasure" (εὐδοκέω) to bestow the kingdom (Luke 12:32).[280] In one striking instance, Jesus refers to that which was "well-pleasing [εὐδοκία] in [the Father's] sight in close proximity to God's hiding things from the wise and revealing them to infants [νήπιος]" (Matt 11:25–26; cf. Luke 10:21). While one might wonder why God would "hide" divine revelation from anyone it should be remembered that it is God's *modus operandi* to eventually give people over to their own desires (cf. Rom 1:24, 26, 28). Here, the νήπιος, the "infant" or "simple-minded," likely refers to that class of people who have not spurned, but received, God's gracious revelation instead of their own "wisdom."[281] That is, God reveals these things to those who will be receptive, not the haughty who do not wish to receive God's light, preferring their own darkness (cf. John 7:17). Moreover, the wider context of this passage suggests that this statement of Jesus does not refer to the exercise of a unilateral divine will in the sense of deterministic predestination. For example, in the immediate context of Matt 11, Jesus denounces the cities for not repenting, which makes little sense if they could not have repented (cf. Matt 11:20–24, 28).[282]

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[280] Thus, "God's pleasure (or will) is manifest in his gift of the kingdom." J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 495.

[281] This relates to the background in Jewish literature where the "the 'simple' are the pious or those who in their weakness can be helped by God (1QpHab 12.4; 1QH 2.9; 4Q169 [= 4QpNah] fragments 3–4 3.5; 11QPsᵃ 18.2, 4)." Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1996), 1010. Thus, "for Jesus the childlike and poor are not the meticulous performers of law and ritual but the needy and downtrodden who accept the gospel." Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 434. Consider Eccl 9:11; Sir 3:19; Wis 10:21; Luke 1:51–54; Rom 1:22; 1 Cor 1:26–31; 2 Cor 4:3–4; Jas 2:5; 4:6. Nolland thinks the term refers simply to those who are in need of, and open, to help. *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 572. This group appears to mirror the "poor" of Jas 2:5. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1010. Cf. Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium: zweiter teil* (Bd 3; Freiburg: Herder, 1990), 106. See the discussion of that verse above. Cf. Luke 6:20.

[282] Thus, France correctly notes that Matt 11:25–26 does not mean that God "pre-selected individuals to be placed in each category; vv. 20–24 have already made it clear that people have a responsibility and a choice as to whether or not they receive his revelation. It is also important to note that this declaration is followed by Jesus' open invitation to any who are in need (not only the 'chosen') to 'come to me' (v. 28)." *The Gospel of Matthew*, 445. Contra those who see this as "the sovereign divine decree." So Schrenk, *TDNT* 2:747; R. Mahoney, "ευδοκια," *EDNT* 2:76. Cf. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:819. Compare the view of Morris who thinks that the "note of predestination here cannot be missed but is to be held in tension with the culpability of those who refuse to believe (cf. vv 20–24)." Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992), 319. Similarly, Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 318; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 192–93. Cf. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 572–73.

It thus seems that the divine pleasure here is not directed specifically toward the hiding of such things from the wise in and of itself but with regard to the wider plan of salvation within which God ultimately gives those who reject him over to their own desires but delights to bestow his blessings on those who respond appropriately to him.[283]

Moreover, God's evaluative delight in humans is also conveyed in the Gospels. Thus, if anyone follows Jesus, "the Father will honor [τιμάω] him" (John 12:26).[284] Elsewhere, Moses is said to have been "lovely in the sight of God" (ἀστεῖος τῷ θεῷ) (Acts 7:20). This sense of evaluative acceptance also appears when it is said, "In every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome [δεκτός] to Him" (Acts 10:35). Further, Jesus refers to "those who are considered worthy [καταξιόω] to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead" (Luke 20:35; cf. Acts 5:41; 2 Thess 1:5).[285] On the other hand, the one who loves (φιλέω) parents or children more than Christ is not "worthy" (ἄξιος) of him (Matt 10:37; cf. 38). Thus it appears that although God does not owe human beings anything (cf. Luke 17:9), he freely bestows rewards evaluatively and not altogether arbitrarily (cf. Acts 13:46). He freely wills to resurrect those who respond to God and are, thus, accounted worthy (through Christ's mediation).

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[283] "It is comforting to note that throughout the New Testament the good pleasure or delight of the Father, when positively expressed, everywhere else has as its object Christ and/or the work of salvation in connection with him. It seems logical, therefore, to believe that also here (in Matt. 11:26 and in its parallel Luke 10:21) the positive thought of revealing to babes the things pertaining to salvation is uppermost in Christ's mind when he mentions the Father's good pleasure." Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, 500. So Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 434; Hans Conzelmann, "συνίημι, σύνεσις, συνετός, σύνετος," *TDNT* 7:893. In the Lucan parallel Christ himself "rejoiced greatly" just before he makes the declaration and in the previous verse had counseled his hearers to "rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." As such, his joy seems to be grounded in the positive divine revelation (Luke 10:20–21). It is therefore likely that God's "pleasure" is intended in reference to his positive action in salvation since God does not delight in punishment. Cf. Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11.

[284] Notice, this word generally means "to estimate, fix the value" and is thus an evaluative term.

[285] This is almost surely a divine passive; God is the agent of evaluation. Stein, *Luke*, 502; Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1305.

Another potential instance of divine, evaluative pleasure of humans is found in Luke 2:14 where God is said to have "men with whom He is pleased" upon whom peace is wished.[286] Some have seen this as a reference to divine election, in the sense that God has unilaterally elected some to receive peace.[287] However, grammatically εὐδοκίας appears to be used here to express divine delight.[288] It is likely, then, that those of his good pleasure correspond to those who respond appropriately to him (cf. Luke 1:50).[289] As such, the ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας may very well correspond to "elect" insofar as that group is understood as those who respond to the divine call (cf. Matt 20:16; 22:14).

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[286] Much of the meaning hinges upon a matter of textual criticism. The TR has the nominative εὐδοκία but other texts have the genitive εὐδοκίας. The latter is the preferred reading amongst textual critics as the "lectio difficilior" and is thus the reading adopted here. Cf. Schrenk, *TDNT* 2:747–50; Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 133.

[287] Schrenk views this as "the sovereign good-pleasure of God in the sense of His decree" toward his "elect" with "no place for reflection on the will of man." *TDNT* 2:750. Schrenk's view is based on his dogmatic assumption that εὐδοκία refers to God's unilateral decree. Similarly, see Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:819. In this view, much is made of the parallel "sons of good pleasure" from Qumran (1 QH 4:32–33; 11:9) on the basis of which ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας is believed to reflect "a semitechnical Semitic expression referring to God's people and having overtones of election." Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 109. So, also, Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 220. However, it is, first, not certain that this designation itself does not refer to those who are deserving of good pleasure and, second, one need not assume that Luke used the phraseology in the same way as the Qumran community, considering the divergences in their wider theological outlook. Mahoney recognizes the possibility that it refers to human good will but favors that it "points to God's free decision." *EDNT* 2:76.

[288] While NASB translates "peace *among* men with whom he is pleased" peace *for* those with whom he is pleased is more likely and preferred by many commentators. See Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 411. Cf. J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 136; Ross S. Kilpatrick, "The Greek Syntax of Luke 2:14," *NTS* 34 (1988). Paul Richard Berger, "Lk 2:14: anthrōpoi eudokias - Die auf Gottes Weisung mit Wohlgefallen beschenkten Menschen," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 129–44. Although the text could conceivably be translated with humans as the agent of εὐδοκίας, thus "men of goodwill" the reading "men of his pleasure" i.e., those with whom God is pleased, is to be preferred, with God as the agent of εὐδοκίας as in Luke 10:21. Cf. J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 137; Stein, *Luke*, 110; Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 109; Joachim Jeremias, "ανθρωποι ευδοκιας (Lc 2 14)," *ZNW* 1 (1928): 19.

[289] As Blomberg puts it, "To those who welcome him, he offers" peace. *Matthew*, 180. Thus, here the elect are the God-fearers in 1:50–53, that is, those who respond to Jesus' coming. While Jesus came for all people (Luke 2:10), only some are among "those who benefit from his coming" Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 221. Cf. Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 109. Spicq, however, thinks Luke 2:14 refers to God's granting of peace to all universally. *TLNT* 2:105–6. Cf. J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 137. However, this runs counter to the fact that the coming of Jesus did not bring peace for all (cf. Matt 10:34). See also Sir 44:10; 44:23, 27.

Elsewhere, the shepherd (representative of Christ) "rejoices" (χαίρω) even more over the

one that is found than the 99 sheep that remained (Matt 18:13; cf. Ezek 34:10–11, 13).[290] In the

Lucan parallel, the joy at this event corresponds to joy (χαρά) in heaven (a likely circumlocution

for divine joy) where there is "more joy" over one repentant sinner than over 99 righteous who

need no repentance (Luke 15:7; cf. 5–6).[291] Likewise, just as the woman rejoices with (συγχαίρω)

her friends upon finding her lost coin so there is "joy [χαρὰ] in the presence of the angels of God"

(another likely circumlocution for divine joy) over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10; cf. 24).[292]

That God values humans is likewise explicit in Jesus' reference to the small value of two

sparrows whom God still cares for, conveying that God cares much more for humans who are

"more valuable [διαφέρω][293] than many sparrows" (Matt 10:31; cf. 12:12; Luke 12:6–7).[294] Here,

divine evaluation is differentiated based on its object, demonstrating that God values human

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[290] Nolland comments that "more than" here displays profound "pathos" and refers to the "specific value of the particular sheep" as lost but now found. *The Gospel of Matthew*, 743. There is no hint here, however, that the sheep is loved more because it is "the biggest" as in the *Gospel of Thomas*, 107. Rather, "the joy at the restoration of one who had strayed points to the importance of each sheep in the shepherd's eye." Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 528.

[291] "Heaven" here is likely a substitute for the divine name, describing the emotion of God and other inhabitants collectively. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1077. Similarly, Stein, *Luke*, 404. God takes "particular delight in restoration" in accordance with "the value he sets upon the individual." Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 773.

[292] Again, this is again a likely circumlocution for God himself. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1082. Cf. v. 7. Many commentators agree that this refers to divine joy. So Stein, *Luke*, 404; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 604; Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 776; Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1304; Andrew F. Walls, "'In the Presence of the Angels' (Luke 15:10)," *NT* 3 (1959): 316. Similarly joy is apparent in the celebration (εὐφραίνω) after the prodigal son returns (Luke 15:24).

[293] The term διαφέρω means to be superior or worth more. Cf. Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 127. Here, there is "intimacy and endearment." Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 286. Blomberg sees this as reassurance to the disciples "of God's fatherly love" through the contrast between "their great worth with the comparatively insignificant value of sparrows." *Matthew*, 178.

[294] Likewise, not one sparrow is "forgotten before God" (ἐπιλανθάνομαι) (Luke 12:6). Yet humans are "more valuable" (διαφέρω) than many sparrows (Luke 12:7; cf. 12:24). With regard to God's "care" for the sparrows see Dorothy J. Weaver's compelling interpretation that in these verses the focus is not on God's will but on "the presence of God, which supports and sustains the disciples throughout their sufferings." "Matthew's Missionary Discourse: A Literary Critical Analysis," *JSNTSup* 38 (1990): 206–7. Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 286. In my view, the point of this object lesson is not so much about the nature of providence as about the extent of divine concern. This is clearly the case in the Lucan parallel.

beings and is concerned for them in a very specific manner.[295] In all these, divine delight is response to events and thus affected and evaluative.

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in the Pauline Writings

As in the Gospels, reference is often made in this corpus to God's pleasure in close association with his will, often in relation to the plan of salvation. As has been argued above, this may be understood in the sense that God wills or desires that which brings him pleasure rather than assuming that the divine will is unilaterally efficacious but inclusive of evaluation and/or divine pleasure.[296] The evaluative aspect of divine love is further explicit in the striking statement of evaluative divine love found in 2 Cor 9:7: "God loves [ἀγαπάω] a cheerful giver." This points to an evaluative divine love that goes beyond the sense in which God loves the world generally (cf. John 3:16).[297] Throughout this corpus, the status of "beloved" also points toward divine

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[295] However, divine concern does not guarantee temporal safety just as sparrows still fall to the ground. Cf. J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 483.

[296] Thus, it was "the Father's good pleasure [εὐδοκέω] for all the fullness to dwell in Him" (Col 1:19). God is most likely the intended agent of εὐδοκέω though it is grammatically possible to take Christ or the "fullness" as the subject. For a discussion of these possibilities, see Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 72–73; Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians* (AB 34B; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 210–12; Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon* (WBC 4; Dallas: Word, 2002), 51–53. Thus, "God was pleased to take human form in Jesus" and "God the Father delighted in the fact that Jesus" was fully God. Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (NAC 32; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 224. Similarly, God "was pleased" (εὐδοκέω) to reveal His son (Gal 1:15–16) and is "well-pleased" (εὐδοκέω) to save through the gospel (1 Cor 1:21; cf. 1:27). Moreover, Paul speaks of the divine plan (προορίζω) to adopt humans "as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention [εὐδοκία] of His will [θέλημα]" (Eph 1:5). Likewise, "He made known to us the mystery [θέλημα] of His will, according to His kind intention [εὐδοκία] which He purposed [προτίθημι] in Him" (Eph 1:9; cf. Phil 2:13). O'Brien correctly comments that the reference here is not merely to "purpose" but to God's "delight" in his plans. *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 104. However, many scholars interpret such texts deterministically and assert that as the meaning of the εὐδοκέω word group. Cf. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:819; Schrenk, *TDNT* 2:747. However, it should be noted that the texts say nothing of the unilateral nature, or otherwise, of the divine intention. Moreover, see the textual evidence referred to above suggesting that the divine will is not unilaterally efficacious, as well as the brief word study of εὐδοκέω, which demonstrates that the term does not refer to a unilaterally, efficacious divine will (cf. 1 Cor 10:5).

[297] God "responds lovingly to generosity willed and carried out from the heart. His love is poured out on those who pour out their love on others. Charity is the virtue the Lord loves above all others." Spicq, *Agape*, 2:31. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that God loves only the cheerful giver and not others but that God loves the giver in a special way; he delights and approves of that one. Thus, "Paul is affirming that God has a special love for those who are cheerful as they give" and "takes special pleasure in the type of

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evaluation. It is frequently applied to human beings and often associated with election (cf. Rom 9:25; 11:28; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13). However, the nature of many of the references to the "beloved" suggests that the category includes evaluation (cf. 1 Thess 1:3–4).[298] For instance, exhortation is frequently directed toward the "beloved" with the expectation of appropriate response and the implication of negative evaluation in its absence.[299] The "beloved" are also frequently referred to in terms of holiness. For instance, the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) are to cleanse themselves from defilement thus "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor 7:1).[300] Further, the implication that the "beloved" include those who have responded in faith is presented in the many references to the "beloved" in terms of having faith (πίστις) (Rom 1:7–8; Phlm 1, 5) or being faithful (πιστός) (1 Cor 4:17; Eph 6:21; Col 1:7; 4:7, 9; 1 Tim 6:2).[301] In all this, the implication is that being "beloved" is not an automatic or unconditional status.[302]

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giving—cheerful giving—that reflects his own manner of giving (cf. Heb. 13:16)." Harris, *The Second Epistle*, 636. So, also, David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians* (BECNT; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 407.

[298] Just before referring to "the brethren beloved [ἀγαπάω] by God" and God's "choice" (ἐκλογή) of them (1 Thess 1:4) Paul spoke of "their work of faith and labor of love [ἀγάπη] and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," which appears to be an evaluation of them (1 Thess 1:3; cf. 2:4, 8, 10–13).

[299] Thus, Paul exhorts the "beloved" to leave vengeance with God (Rom 12:19), "flee from idolatry" (1 Cor 10:14), "be steadfast, immovable" (1 Cor 15:58), "stand firm in the Lord" (Phil 4:1), and exhibit all the characteristics of true love (Col 3:12). It is not always clear whether "beloved" speaks of God's love for them or Paul's own love for the recipients of his letter. It may be that a sharp distinction between these two is inappropriate since those beloved by God should also be beloved by Paul as part of the divine family, and thus his "brethren." Notably, the exhortation in 1 Cor 10:14 comes on the heels of a description of the failure of the initial generation in the wilderness. Thus, the possibility of the forfeiture of election due to divine displeasure is in view (cf. 1 Cor 10:1–6). Evaluation is further apparent when Paul commands, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children" (Eph 5:1). Here being like God is expected of God's children. Indeed, their status as God's children both "requires" and "enables imitation to take place." Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 310. Here, the reference is to "the love his children owe God which answers to and befits his own love." Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 212. Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 367; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 353. Compare the conditionality of sonship in Luke 6:35–36.

[300] Further, they are "called as saints" (Rom 1:7). Likewise, they are the "chosen of God, holy and beloved [ἀγαπάω]" who are nevertheless exhorted to exhibit Christian love (Col 3:12).

[301] Bruce states that such statements connote both "affection and commendation." *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 43.

[302] Indeed, the "beloved" apparently require ministry since Paul's own work for the "beloved" at

The conditionality with regard to the status of "beloved" is explicit in a somewhat controversial passage that points toward some degree of synergism. Paul writes, "Beloved . . . work [κατεργάζομαι] out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work [ἐνεργέω] in you, both to will [θέλω] and to work [ἐνεργέω] for His good pleasure [εὐδοκία]" (Phil 2:12–13; cf. 15). First, the divine action of God in willing and working is directed toward his own "good pleasure."[303] As such, the divine will is qualified by "kind intention" not identical to it. While some commentators appear to be uncomfortable with the idea that God acts for his own pleasure's sake,[304] this phrasing points toward God's intention of delighting in his creatures.[305] Some commentators, however, avoid any conception that humans are contributing to their salvation by denying that the verse bears on soteriology, whether by interpreting it in a purely sociological sense,[306] or applying it merely to the ethical outworking of salvation.[307] However, it

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Corinth is for their "upbuilding" (2 Cor 12:19).

[303] So Melick, *Philippians*, 111; Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 239; Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 288; Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 131. Some, however, think that God is working toward "goodwill" in the community. So Jean-François Collange, *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Philippiens* (CNT 10A; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1973), 97–99; John Hugh Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (MNTC 10; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1929), 104. Cf. Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43; Dallas: Word, 2004), 142–43.

[304] Some scholars appear to find the idea that God does something "for the sake of his own good pleasure" as "awkward" or even "theologically offensive." Some therefore contend that ὑπέρ equals κατά or attach ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας to the following sentence. But this is to be rejected since such usage "grammatically . . . has no analogies." Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 239. So, also O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 288–89. Fee refers to these as "a number of unlikely ploys to get around the ordinary sense of the preposition." *Paul's Letter*, 239.

[305] The preposition ὑπέρ means "for the sake of" in the sense that God "does this for his people precisely because it pleases him to do so." Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 239. Cf. Moule, *An Idiom Book*, 65. God's "doing what pleases him is not capricious, but what is wholly good for those he loves." Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 239–40. Similarly O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 289. Cf. Schrenk, *TDNT* 2:747.

[306] This view asserts that the verse is dealing with strictly sociological concerns such that σωτηρία refers to the "health" or "well-being" of the community. Cf. Michael, *The Epistle of Paul*, 101–2. However, this interpretation is untenable since "out of nearly twenty occurrences of this noun in the Pauline corpus, not one instance requires the translation 'well-being'; the vast majority require—and all of them admit—the theological sense." Silva, *Philippians*, 119–20. So, also Melick, *Philippians*, 110; Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 235.

seems much more likely that this text refers explicitly to "human responsibility in [personal] salvation" within the context of community.[308] Importantly, this affirmation of the integral nature of human responsibility need not amount to any suggestion of salvation by works with the recognition that the divine activity is both prior to, and itself the necessary foundation of, human action.[309] If this view is correct, human action is required of the "beloved," which bears on their personal salvation while the primacy of divine action is upheld.[310]

This controversial passage points to questions that underlie the issue with regard to the status of the "beloved." That is, are believers beloved because they are elect or vice versa? Are they beloved because they are holy or vice versa? Are they beloved because they believe or vice versa? Such questions actually present a false dichotomy. Humans are "beloved" and "elect"

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[307] This perspective views the verses as "ethical" (having to do with "how saved people live out their salvation") rather than "soteriological" (having to do with how people are saved). Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 234–35. Cf. also O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 280.

[308] Silva, *Philippians*, 122. That is, the "engagement of human and divine activity in the total work of salvation." Ibid., 120–22; cf. 119. Cf. 2 Pet 1:10; Phil 1:6; 3:7–14. This is supported by the likelihood that ἐν ὑμῖν does not mean "among you" as in corporate approaches to this verse, but must mean "in you" as it does with ἐνεργέω in 2 Cor 4:12; cf. Rom 7:5; 1 Cor 12:6; Eph 1:20; Col 1:29. Silva, *Philippians*, 122. Further, the "motivational" phrase "fear and trembling" is strongly suggestive of true human agency. Cf. W. Mundle, "φόβος," *NIDNTT* 1:623. On the other hand, see Fee's seemingly reluctant recognition of this point. *Paul's Letter*, 237. As such, "sanctification requires conscious effort and concentration." Silva, *Philippians*, 123. Cf. Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:819; Melick, *Philippians*, 110.

[309] Thus, Silva is correct in stressing that human works neither initiate nor contribute to justification, which flows not from human righteousness but from the divine initiative (cf. Rom 4:5). Moreover, with regard to salvation, "our activity is possible only because of divine grace." *Philippians*, 122. Yet, at the same time, "because salvation in its entire scope necessarily includes the manifestation of righteousness in our lives, it follows that our activity is integral to the process of salvation." Ibid. Cf. Rom 13:11; Eph 2:9–10. Cf. Melick, *Philippians*, 111. Many other commentators speak of necessary human co-operation here (even if differing on what the goal of the co-operation is) while stressing the overarching "effective working" of God, which itself enables, supports, or even creates such co-operation. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 140, 142. Cf. Melick, *Philippians*, 111; Collange, *L'épître*, 99; Michael, *The Epistle of Paul*, 103. Many of the commentators above view such works from a compatibilist perspective so that God is nevertheless the unilaterally efficacious agent behind human action, contrary to the view taken in this dissertation. Thus, O'Brien emphasizes "the effectiveness of the divine energy" to the exclusion of "synergism." *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 285–86, 289. Cf. H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 253–58, 349–52.

[310] Thus, "our salvation, which we confess to be God's from beginning to end, is here described as something that we must bring about." Silva, *Philippians*, 122. Cf. John Eadie and William Young, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1884), 136.

ultimately because of God's decision to bestow love and choose to adopt those who believe in him. However, the divine initiative is the necessary but not sufficient condition of such statuses. Humans are also expected to respond in love, a response which itself is only possible because of God's foreconditional, prevenient love.[311] It is only because of divine grace that humans may be the recipients of the full force of God's love. Such grace is itself only available through him who is the truly worthy "beloved," for God freely bestows grace on Christians "in the Beloved" (ἀγαπάω) (Eph 1:6). Jesus is depicted as the ultimate object of divine delight, the legitimate "Beloved."

Since Jesus is the object of divine delight, through Christ humans may also offer acceptable sacrifice, even "fragrant aroma" (cf. Phil 4:18; Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15–16).[312] Accordingly, Jesus is referred to as "an offering and sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma [ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας]" (Eph 5:2).[313] This hearkens back to God's delight in the OT, often connected with language of the sacrificial system as pleasing to God.[314] In these cases, Jesus is the worthy recipient of divine delight as the truly "acceptable sacrifice to God."[315] Thus, things sent to Paul

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[311] To say that humans are "beloved" unilaterally because they are elect would require overlooking or sterilizing the force of the exhortations to the beloved and the warning of future evaluative judgment. To say that humans are "beloved" merely due to their response to God would miss the essential divine initiative that makes such response possible.

[312] Through Christ, Christians are a new priesthood (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:5–6) who may offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet 2:5; cf. Heb 13:16). Cf. M. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 559. As Silva puts it, despite the utter, qualitative uniqueness of Jesus' sacrifice it "does indeed provide a pattern for our behavior." *Philippians*, 208.

[313] The phrase ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, "fragrant aroma," is found only here and in Phil 4:18 in the NT. There it refers to gifts sent to Paul, which are "an acceptable sacrifice" and "pleasing to God" (Phil 4:18). Cf. 2 Cor 2:14–15.

[314] The corresponding OT phrase, רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ, soothing aroma, is found some 37 times in the LXX (including twice in the OT Apocrypha). The OT idiom refers to God enjoying the smell of the offering, what M. Barth refers to as a "crude anthropomorphism." *Ephesians 4–6*, 559. Similarly, John Reumann, *Philippians* (Anchor Yale Bible 33B; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 669. See the discussion of anthropomorphisms and idioms in the methodology section as well as the reality of divine pleasure signified by this language discussed in chapter 4.

[315] Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 368. Cf. Heb 10:5–10. "Christ's sacrifice of love was supremely pleasing and glorifying to God." Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 312. So O'Brien, *The Letter to the*

for his sustenance are "a fragrant aroma [ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας], an acceptable [δεκτός][316] sacrifice, well-

pleasing [εὐάρεστος] to God" (Phil 4:18).[317] Similarly, Paul exhorts his hearers, "by the mercies of

God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable [εὐάρεστος] to God, *which is*

your spiritual service of worship" (Rom 12:1; cf. 12:2). Further, Paul exhorts Timothy to "be

diligent to present [παρίστημι] yourself approved [δόκιμος][318] to God" (2 Tim 2:15).[319] Again,

Paul speaks of the purpose of his function as a minister, which is "so that *my* offering of the

Gentiles[320] may become acceptable [εὐπρόσδεκτος],[321] sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:16;

Ephesians, 355.

[316] δεκτός refers to that which is acceptable. Four out of the 5 instances of this term in the NT refer to divine acceptance (cf. Luke 4:19; Acts 10:35; 2 Cor 6:2). The exception is Luke 4:24. See Grundmann, *TDNT* 2:58–59.

[317] Notice the same OT imagery of "a fragrant aroma" as that of Christ's sacrifice in Eph 5:2. Here God is pictured "as literally taking pleasure in the smell of the sacrifices offered by his people." Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 272. "The picture is that of the 'aroma' of the sacrificial fire wafting heavenward—into God's 'nostrils,' as it were. Properly offered, it becomes 'an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to him.'" Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 451. Cf. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*. Amazingly, Paul could "speak of the Philippians' sacrificial love for him in the same terms that this writer uses for Christ's sacrifice." Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 312. Importantly, the symbolism points to "the quality an offering must possess in order for it to be pleasing and acceptable to God (Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13; Ezek 20:41; cf. Eph 5:2)." Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 272. As such, the imagery points "to the immense value of the Philippians' gifts in the sight of God." O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 540. On the sacrificial imagery see Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (SNTSMS 53; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 62–68.

[318] δόκιμος means "'approved by testing' and indicates that the person in question, being pleasing to God, has survived the test." Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 489. Cf. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 858; G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 411; Grundmann, *TDNT* 2:255–60. Thus, it refers to careful assessment. Towner, *The Letters*, 519–20. Cf. 1 Cor 11:19.

[319] To present (παρίστημι) oneself may correspond to the sacrificial metaphor of becoming a pleasing sacrifice to God as well as the legal metaphor of standing before God the judge. It sometimes appears in the sense of "offering oneself as a sacrifice" (Rom 12:1; Col 1:22), sometimes in the sense of "presenting someone before a judge" (Col 1:28; Rom 6:13; 2 Cor 4:14). Towner, *The Letters*, 520. Cf. also Rom 14:10. In either metaphor, divine evaluation and appraisal are explicit; this is the scrutiny of divine judgment.

[320] The clause "offering of the Gentiles" may be a subjective genitive, the Gentiles' offering, or an objective genitive, where Paul functions as a priest offering the Gentiles to God. Cf. Isa 66:20. The majority of commentators favor the latter option, which is also utilized here. See, for example, Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 712; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 890; Schreiner, *Romans*, 767. The evaluative meaning, however, does not hinge on the outcome of this decision.

[321] εὐπρόσδεκτος carries the basic meaning acceptable and appears four other times in the NT and

cf. Phil 2:17).[322] Thus, through Christ, humans may be the object(s) of divine delight, even pleasing sacrifices.

God is, accordingly, often spoken of as the examiner, the judge, and humans are likewise often the object(s) or potential object(s) of God's pleasure.[323] Such approval is not unconditional, for even Paul disciplines himself "so that" he himself "will not be disqualified [ἀδόκιμος]" (1 Cor 9:27; cf. Titus 1:16).[324] Further, "entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings" are to be "made on behalf of all men" for these are "good [καλός] and acceptable [ἀπόδεκτος] in the sight [ἐνώπιος] of God" whose "desire" (θέλω) is that all men be saved (1 Tim 2:1, 3–4; cf. Heb 13:21).[325] Paul further proclaims, "We have been approved [δοκιμάζω][326] by God to be entrusted

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appears four other times in the NT of Paul's service being "accepted of the saints" (Rom 15:31), of the "accepted time," that is, the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2; cf. Isa 49:8), of the fact that where "readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have" (2 Cor 8:12), and perhaps most significantly in the call to Christians as "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). It is, of course, related to δεκτός but connotes "an intensive force, 'fully/very acceptable.'" Harris, *The Second Epistle*, 585.

[322] Notably, the acceptability of the offering is associated with being "sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Thus, Moo comments that while "animal sacrifices are replaced by obedient Christians" (cf. Rom 12:1) and "the priest by Christians" (cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9) "to be 'pleasing to God,' sacrifices must still be 'sanctified.'" *The Epistle to the Romans,* 891. Cf. Ezek 36:22–28.

[323] Thus, the Lord is the one who "commends" (συνίστημι) and "it is not he who commends [συνίστημι] himself that is approved [δόκιμος]" (2 Cor 10:18). Apelles is spoken of as "the approved [δόκιμος] in Christ" (Rom 16:10). Thus, Apelles is "a man of tested excellence." Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 535. Similarly, Schreiner, *Romans*, 791. Paul speaks of another's "proven worth [δοκιμή]" (Phil 2:22).

[324] Just as δόκιμος refers to having been approved after a test or close examination, its antonym ἀδόκιμος refers to having failed a test and thus being unqualified or, even, worthless. In some instances it refers to the "dross in the silver refining process." Towner, *The Letters*, 711. Cf. Prov 25:4; Isa 1:22. Some scholars limit this potential disqualification to the status of apostle rather than to salvation or eschatological reward. So Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 237. On the contrary, however, Fee points out that in light of the wider context (cf. 1 Cor 10) this parenesis is "that the Corinthians exercise self-control lest they fail to obtain the eschatological prize." *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 440. Those who argue otherwise usually do so "because of a prior theological commitment, not because of what the text itself says." Ibid. Garland further comments that though the "implication that one may forfeit one's salvation may cause theological dyspepsia for some . . . the immortal crown to be worn (9:25) is not a good job-approval rating as an apostle, but salvation. It can be won only if one exercises self-control." *1 Corinthians*, 444. Cf. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, 316. See also Heb 6:8.

[325] The language here suggests that these prayers may function like OT sacrifices (cf. Lev 1:3). Further, notice the qualification of ἐνώπιος, language of being in the sight of, or coming before one for evaluative judgment. See especially Rom 3:20; cf. 1 Tim 5:4, 21; 6:13; 2 Tim 2:14; 4:1; 14:22; 1 Cor 1:29;

with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing [ἀρέσκω] men, but God who examines [δοκιμάζω] our hearts" (1 Thess 2:4).[327]

Elsewhere it is likewise evident that humans may indeed bring pleasure, or displeasure, to God (cf. 1 Thess 4:1).[328] Thus, God may be "please[d] [ἀρεσκία] in all respects" when one walks in a manner "worthy [ἀξίως] of the Lord" (Col 1:10; cf. 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5).[329] Further, the one who serves Christ by faith "is acceptable [εὐάρεστος] to God and approved [δόκιμος] by men" (Rom 14:18; cf. Phil 4:18; Rom 12:1). Likewise, children obeying their parents is "well-pleasing [εὐάρεστος] to the Lord" (Col 3:20).[330] Accordingly, Paul calls for prayer "that our God will count

4:2; 7:12; 8:21; Gal 1:20. In the LXX, this divine evaluation is rendered by the term ἐναντίον, "in the judgment of, before" (cf. Gen 6:8, 11; 7:1; Exod 5:21; 15:26; Lev 1:3; Deut 6:18 among many others). See H. Krämer, *EDNT* 1:462; Towner, *The Letters*, 176. Notice also the divine desire that all will be saved, which, short of universalism, is not carried out. See the discussion of the non-unilaterally efficacious nature of the divine will earlier in this chapter.

[326] This verb, like the corresponding noun δόκιμος, refers to proving the quality, acceptability, or worth of something by examination and/or testing. Cf. 1 Cor 3:13; 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 6:4; 1 Thess 5.21; 1 Tim 3:10.

[327] Notice this clearly evaluative pleasure of God, evidenced by the heart examination by God, which itself qualifies one to carry the gospel. Such divine examination of the human "heart" is prominent throughout the canon. Cf. 1 Sam 16:7; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:9; Pss 7:9; 17:3; 139:23; Prov 17:3; 1 Chr 28:9; Rom 8:27; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom 8:27; Rev 2:23. "Despite the fact that [Paul] was chosen by God to be an apostle even before his birth (Gal. 1.1, 15), there was a period during which he was tested and after which God set his seal upon him as one *approved* for the ministry." G. L. Green, *The Letters*, 120. Cf. ibid., 121; Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, 95; Malherbe, *The Letters*, 141. Such evaluative election to an office or task fits with the counsel to the churches to examine those who may serve as leaders (cf. Rom 14:18; 1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:22; 13:7; 1 Tim 3:10).

[328] "Pleasing God means living in a manner consistent with his commands (1 Thess 4:1)." D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 92. Cf. 1 Cor 7:32–33; Gal 1:10; cf. Rom 15:3. Importantly, "those who are in the flesh cannot please [ἀρέσκω] God" (Rom 8:8; cf. 1 Thess 2:15; 2 Tim 2:3–4). This does not mean that human beings can never please God in any way but that humans cannot please God insofar as they remain in the control of their inherited carnal nature (cf. Rom 8:9–10). Humans must therefore be adopted in Christ to become pleasing to God (Rom 8:15–17).

[329] Here, divine pleasure is explicitly evaluative by collocation with the term ἀξίως, worthy. That God is the one pleased is implied (Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 47; O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon*, 22), though it is possible that the intention is that both God and humans are to be pleased. So Barth and Blanke, *Colossians*, 178.

[330] Similar evaluation is apparent in the expectations that offspring care for their progenitors "for this is acceptable [ἀπόδεκτος] in the sight [ἐνώπιος] of God" (1 Tim 5:4). Again, notice the element of presence before God in the context of OT sacrificial language, implying evaluative judgment.

you worthy [ἀξιόω] of your calling [κλῆσις], and fulfill every desire [εὐδοκία] for goodness" (2 Thess 1:11).[331] On the other hand, those who killed the Lord and the prophets "are not pleasing [μὴ ἀρεσκόντων] to God, but hostile to all men" (1 Thess 2:15). Likewise, God was not "well-pleased" [εὐδοκέω] with those who rebelled in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:5).[332] Importantly, in these last verses those who are "not pleasing" are among God's OT elect of Israel. Thus, the distinction between those who are pleasing or approved by God and those who are displeasing to him as well as the status of elect is not the result of arbitrary election but is grounded in the actual state of affairs, specifically the disposition and corresponding action(s) of the human agent(s) toward God.[333]

The importance of this divine evaluation of humans is evident in the frequent exhortations of Paul to "test" or "examine" (δοκιμάζω) themselves to see where they stand (2 Cor 13:5–6) and to be "approved" rather than "unapproved [ἀδόκιμος]" (2 Cor 13:7; cf. Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 11:28; Gal 6:4). Ultimately, the "quality of each man's work" will be tested (δοκιμάζω) by fire (1 Cor 3:13) and God is himself the examiner (cf. 1 Thess 2:4).[334] Accordingly, Paul

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[331] Interestingly, if such desire is to be fulfilled automatically the wish becomes nonsensical. In this way, such a "wish" would demonstrate that the election is not unconditional or unilaterally efficacious.

[332] Notably, it says that "with most of them" he was not "well-pleased," implying also that there were some (a remnant) with which he was pleased. Of the others, Schrenk contends that this "can only imply rejection." *TDNT* 2:741. Similarly, see Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:819.

[333] As such, divine pleasure and, apparently, election itself may be forfeited by those who displease God. Fee recognizes their "forfeiture of election—despite their privileges. . . . The vast majority of them experienced God's judgment and failed of the prize." *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 450. However, Garland nevertheless sees this as a reference to the "sovereignty and mystery of God's choice of persons, which is inscrutable to humans." Nevertheless, he confusingly recognizes that they failed to reach Canaan "because their 'postbaptismal' sins were so great" thus resulting in their "forfeiture of election." *1 Corinthians*, 458–59. Accordingly, "God's choice is not irrevocable." John S. Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth* (WPC; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 92.

[334] Such statements serve a "parenetic function" of calling others to examine themselves to see if they are pleasing God, "since the judgment would provide the final testing not only of unbelievers but also of Christians (cf. 1 Cor 3:10–15)." Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, 94. "Since they will be 'examined' by God at the End . . . they should test themselves *now*." Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 562. This test "*discloses definitive approval (or otherwise)* in the sense of a disclosure of all the factors which contribute to God's definitive verdict. This may, indeed will, include whether the person concerned shares the rightwised (justified) status of those who are in Christ; but it will also disclose the extent to which their

proclaims it the Christian ambition "to be pleasing" (εὐάρεστος) to God for "we must all appear

before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the

body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor 5:9–10; cf. Eph 5:2).

Evidently, behavior is a factor in who is "acceptable" or pleasing to God, with eschatological

consequences.[335] Accordingly, in light of such abundant evidence, it is manifestly certain that

divine pleasure includes divine evaluation of human beings, which itself relates to careful

inspection and judgment. At the same time, one must remember the mediatorial role of Christ as

the truly acceptable sacrifice through whom humans may offer acceptable sacrifice.

<center>The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in the General Epistles-Revelation</center>

In this corpus, Christ is again referred to as the "truly" beloved, the one who is actually

worthy of divine love by way of a quotation of the divine declaration of evaluative approval at the

transfiguration: "This is my beloved son with whom I am well-pleased" (2 Pet 1:17; cf. Matt

17:5). That Jesus's election was evaluative is likewise apparent in that Jesus was anointed by God

because he has "loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb 1:9).[336] Christ is himself "a

living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice [ἐκλεκτός] and precious [ἔντιμος] in the

sight of God" (1 Pet 2:4; cf. 2:6–8; Isa 28:16; Ps 117:22 LXX).[337] Moreover, Christ's status was

itself evaluative and conditional since "if he shrinks back, my soul [ψυχή] has no pleasure

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work has produced some lasting effect in God's sight." Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 313.

[335] "To be pleasing to God means that they will be vindicated and saved at the final judgment." Schreiner, *Romans*, 741. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 697.

[336] Schreiner calls this "God's imprimatur of approval upon his Son. . . . God was pleased with his Son, Jesus." *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 314–15.

[337] Here, there is not only evaluation and appraisal of Christ as the worthy recipient of praise but the reception of Christ's value is conditional upon human response, that is, belief (cf. 1 Pet 2:7).

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[εὐδοκέω] in him" (Heb 10:38; cf. Hab 2:4).[338] In all this, Jesus is truly "worthy [ἄξιος]" (Rev 5:9).

Human beings are also frequently the objects of divine evaluation, also frequently referred to as "beloved" in this corpus,[339] often corresponding to the "called" or "elect" (cf. Jude 1). Human responsibility and evaluation appear in a number of such references to the "beloved" (ἀγαπητός).[340] Accordingly, the "beloved" are to "be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless" (2 Pet 3:14; cf. 3:1, 8).[341] As such, even the "beloved" must "be on their guard" so as not to "fall" (ἐκπίπτω) from their "own steadfastness" (2 Pet 3:17; cf. 1 Pet 2:11).[342] This appears to exclude the concept of a unilaterally determined salvation for the "beloved." First John 3:21–22 also suggests conditionality relative to human responsibility: "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from

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[338] Notice the emotional connotation signified by the OT idiom of "soul" as the seat of emotions.

[339] The term is directed to groups (Jas 2:5; 2 Pet 3:1, 8; 1 John 3:2; 3 John 1:2, 5; Jude 1:3, 17) and individuals such as "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Pet 3:15) or "the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth" (3 John 1:1). Sometimes these imply beloved by God and, at other times, they seem to be a general term of the fellow brethren.

[340] The "beloved" are often spoken of as having faith and/or acting faithfully (3 John 5; Jas 2:5; Jude 20). Moreover, the author of Hebrews addresses the "beloved" saying, "we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation" (Heb 6:9) and goes on to point out that God will not unjustly forget their "work" and their "love" and encouraging them to "diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end" (Heb 6:10–11; cf. Jude 3, 17). Elsewhere, the "beloved" face great adversity that is for their "testing [πειρασμός]" (1 Pet 4:12). Such testing of the "beloved" demonstrates conditionality and the evaluation of the beloved. Peter Davids refers to this as "a refining process that will reveal the genuineness of their faith." *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 164–65. Cf. Prov 27:21. Notice the language of Wis 3:1–6, "God tested them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace he proved them, and as a whole burnt offering he accepted them." Cf. Sir 2:1–6.

[341] The phrase "found by Him" is an explicit indication of divine evaluation. Further, the exhortation assumes that a state of purity is neither automatic nor determined for the "beloved" but requires their diligence.

[342] The term ἐκπίπτω "refers to apostasy," that is, "departing from the Christian faith." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 399. So, also Davids, *The Letters*, 311–12. Cf. Rom 11:11, 22; 14:4; 1 Cor 10:12; Heb 4:11; Rev 2:5. They can thus fall, they might "lose their eschatological reward," that is, "those who fall away . . . are destined for eternal destruction. Believers maintain their secure position, in other words, by heeding warnings, not by ignoring them." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 399. Cf. 2 Pet 1:10. Schreiner, however, contends that those who fall away were never part of God's people in the first place. Ibid., 400.

Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing [ἀρεστός] in His sight" (1 John 3:21–22; cf. 4:7, 11).[343] The reception of that which is asked for is explicitly contingent upon obedience and being pleasing to God, and is also likely related to the basis of "confidence before God."[344] Likewise, the "beloved are to be careful and "keep" themselves "in the love of God . . . waiting anxiously for the mercy" of Jesus "to eternal life" (Jude 1:20–21). It is highly significant that the "beloved" have to keep themselves in the love of God.[345] The "beloved," then, cannot be a group that is such on the basis of unilateral, unconditional election nor is the status as "beloved" an immutable, invariable, one.

Evaluative divine pleasure is further emphasized in this corpus when it is stated that Enoch "was pleasing [εὐαρεστέω] to God" before he was "taken up" (Heb 11:5; cf. Wis 4:10–15). Reference is also made to the "imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit," which is "precious [πολυτελής][346] in the sight [ἐνώπιος] of God" (1 Pet 3:4).[347] Peter also refers to the

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[343] Here, again, the language of "in his sight" makes explicit the action of divine scrutiny, evidencing that God's pleasure here is not merely arbitrary but is grounded in appraisal of the human response.

[344] Cf. 1 John 5:14–15; John 14:14–15; 15:14, 17; 16:23. The conditionality of maintaining this relationship with God is also apparent in the broader context of the verse (1 John 3:10; cf. 3 John 11). John R. W. Stott comments that "there is an objective, moral reason" that God hears and answers prayers, "namely because we obey his commands, and, more generally, do what pleases him. Obedience is the indispensable condition, not the meritorious cause, of answered prayer." *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 19; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 152. So Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 205; cf. 204–6; Robert Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 299–300. Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 462; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 166; Bietenhard, *NIDNTT* 2:816; Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 142. Marshall, on the other hand, attempts to exclude the possibility that "answered prayer" is a "*quid pro quo*—God repays us in accordance with what we give him" pointing to this context of a Father-child love relationship "in which all thoughts of our doing good simply in order to win advantages or of God granting favors merely to those who please him are excluded." *The Epistles of John*, 199. Yet, Marshall's position (1) does not do justice to what the text actually states and (2) appears to include a false dichotomy. With regard to the former, the text explicitly and unavoidably predicates these benefits on obedience and pleasing God. Secondly, God could bestow blessings in response to obedience without requiring either that humans only serve him in order to receive such benefits (i.e., the claim of Satan in Job 1:10–11) or that God only gives good things to those who please him.

[345] Carson recognizes that this is "clearly implying that it is possible for Christians not to keep themselves in the love of God." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648.

[346] This adjective means "very precious," "of great worth" and "is also used of 'expensive'

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"proof" (δοκίμιον) of "faith, being more precious [πολύτιμος] than gold which is perishable, even though tested [δοκιμάζω] by fire" (1 Pet 1:7; cf. 4:12).[348]

In many instances, the OT language of acceptable or pleasing sacrifice is applied to human actions toward pleasing God. Thus, Hebrews exhorts to "show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable [εὐαρέστως] service with reverence and awe" (Heb 12:28). Through Christ, Christians are a "holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable [εὐπρόσδεκτος] to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5; cf. Heb 9:14).[349] Likewise, humans are exhorted to "through Him [Jesus] . . . continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God . . . for with such sacrifices God is pleased [εὐαρεστέω]" (Heb 13:15–16; cf. Rom 12:1–2).[350] In all this, the human is able to offer pleasing sacrifices only through the mediation of Christ who sanctifies them "through His own blood" (Heb 13:12).[351] The human life as service to God from the heart

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perfume (Mark 14:3), clothing (1 Tim 2:9), and signs of status; note also *polytimoteros* (1:7), *timios* (1:19), *time* (2:7), entimos (2:4, 6), all terms related to the semantic field of honor and worth." Elliott, *1 Peter*, 568.

[347] Notice the evaluative language of "in the sight of." "Such virtue" is "valuable to God." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 154. So Davids, *The First Epistle*, 119.

[348] "The focus here is on the value of genuine faith in God's sight on the day of judgment," which is said to be "of greater worth than gold." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 68. "The eschatological reward will be given to them because of the genuineness of their faith, which is proved by the sufferings they endure." Ibid.

[349] Notably, this verse is couched between the identification of Jesus as the elect and precious stone in 1 Pet 2:4, 6–7. Such "spiritual sacrifices . . . may be understood as all behavior that flows from a transformation of the human spirit by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (1:2)." Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2005), 151. Of metaphorical sacrifices in the OT, see Pss 50:13–14, 23; 51:17; 141:2. In the NT, such offerings refer to "an all-out personal commitment to do the will of God (Rom 12:1)." J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Dallas: Word, 2002), 101. Though some have suggested that Paul has the Eucharist specifically in mind here, David Hill argues convincingly that it is the "totality of Christian living" that is in view here and not specifically the Eucharist or any other liturgical element. "'To Offer Spiritual Sacrifices' (1 Pet 2:5): Liturgical Formulations and Christian Paraenesis in 1 Peter," *JSNT* 16 (1982): 61.

[350] Such sacrifices are not external ritual offerings but the human life itself lived in Christ.

[351] "The effective, creative blessing of God will be mediated to the community through the agency of Jesus Christ, enabling them to bring to God through Jesus the sacrifices that please him." William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (WBC 47B; Dallas: Word, 2002), 565. Thus, "even the worship and praise of the Christian is dependent on the work of Christ for its acceptability." Davids, *The First Epistle*, 88. So, also Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 107–8.

thus fulfills the OT sacrifices, which in and of themselves (that is, apart from the heart motivation) never pleased (εὐδοκέω) God (Heb 10:6, 8; cf. Ps 40:6).

In all this, then, God's initiative is primary but not unilaterally efficacious: Humans may be pleasing to God only through divine action. God is thus working to "equip" Christians "in every good thing to do His will [θέλημα], working in" them "that which is pleasing [εὐάρεστος] in His sight [ἐνώπιος]" (Heb 13:21; cf. 1 John 3:21–22; Jas 1:27).[352] At the same time, pleasing God is only possible through faith because "without faith it is impossible to please [εὐαρεστέω] Him" and such faith includes recognizing that God "is a rewarder [μισθαποδότης] of those who seek [ἐκζητέω] Him" (Heb 11:6). Thus, pleasing God is not something earned by the believer but it is nevertheless conditional upon faith, which is rewarded.[353]

The conditionality regarding such divine evaluation extends even to salvation, for "blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved [δόκιμος], he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love [ἀγαπάω] Him" (Jas 1:12; cf. Jas 2:5; 1 John 5:2; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3).[354] Significantly, the one who is approved is the one who loves God.[355] Moreover, the reward, the "crown of life," is eternal life itself.[356]

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[352] Importantly, that this does not refer to a unilaterally efficacious divine will is evident in that Paul goes on to "urge" them in Heb 13:22. Note also the evaluative language "in His sight," which again points back to such OT language of the evaluative scrutiny of sacrifices and judgment.

[353] The precise nature of the reward is uncertain, but it is likely that it refers to the ultimate eschatological reward in light of Heb 12:23. Cf. W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 337; Paul Ellingsworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 577; Herbert Preisker, "μισθός, μισθόω, μίσθιος, μισθωτός, μισθαποδότης, μισθαποδοσία, ἀντιμισθία," *TDNT* 4:701. The human response to the divine initiative, faith, cannot be separated from faithfulness, which God appreciates.

[354] The one who "endures to the end, then at last, winning final approval, he will receive the final reward, the crown of life." James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 67. Cf. Spicq, *Agape*, 2:4, Luke T. Johnson, *James* (AB 37A; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 190. Thus, "those who endure are counted pious." Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 79. Cf. 1 Pet 5:4; Dan 12:12. For a number of parallels in Jewish literature where endurance is "the sign of the pious character which will receive the reward" see Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 79–80. Ultimately, humans may have confidence in the judgment by abiding in Christ by which "love is perfected with us" since "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:17–18).

[355] Blessings or promises to those who love God are seen in Exod 20:6; Deut 7:9; 30:16, 20; Judg

Throughout this corpus, that God clearly evaluates human beings, with significant consequences, is firmly asserted while positive evaluation of humans is emphatically located only in Christ.

Love and Hate in the NT

At the junction of emotionality and evaluation is the contrast between the antonyms love and hate, which frequently connote evaluation and emotionality. It has frequently been suggested that in many cases the contrast is idiomatic, amounting to choose and not choose or accept and reject. For instance, Jesus states that one cannot "serve two masters; for either he will hate [μισέω] the one and love [ἀγαπάω] the other" or "he will be devoted [ἀντέχω] to one and despise [καταφρονέω] the other" (Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13; cf. 6:26–27). In this instance, some have suggested that it would be unusual for a slave to actually love his master in any affectionate sense; thus the cool and detached meanings of accept and reject are more appropriate.[357] However, it is in fact not unusual to find affectionate love of a slave for their master in antiquity and thus this assumption is invalid (cf. Exod 21:5).[358] Further, the greatest devotion in any

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5:30; Ps 5:11; Jas 2:5; 1 John 5:2; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; 2 Tim 4:8. Cf. Deut 6:4. The ones who love God are thus those "in proper covenant relationship with" him who "also 'love his commandments.'" L. T. Johnson, *James*, 188–89. See Ps 118:47–48. Cf. Kurt A. Richardson, *James* (NAC 36; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 77. In rabbinic literature, "'those that love him' frequently stands for the pious, being at times an exegesis of Dt. 6:5." Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 80. So Dibelius and Greeven, *James*, 89.

[356] Cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 1 Pet 5:4; 2 Tim 4:8 and especially Rev 4:8 where those "faithful unto death" will be given "the crown of life [στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς]." The στέφανος was "the wreath or chaplet" awarded to "victors in games" (cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 2:5) or "to honor public service" or "signify rank" (cf. 2 Sam 12:30; Isa 22:21) but "can also be used generally for any sort of reward." L. T. Johnson, *James*, 188. Here, however, the term is qualified by "of life" pointing to the ultimate, eschatological reward of salvation, an "epexegetic genitive." Moo, *The Letter of James*, 70. So Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 80; Dibelius and Greeven, *James*, 88–89. Cf. K. A. Richardson, *James*, 77. Cf. Wis 5:15–16.

[357] Thus, Hagner suggests that in "the Jewish idiom" of love and hate the latter does not refer to "hatred as we understand the word but is only an emphatic way of referring to the absolute commitment required in discipleship. 'Hate' thus equals love less than.'" *Matthew 1–13*, 159. Similarly, Blomberg, *Matthew*, 124. The contention is based on the supposed "idiom" in Gen 29:31, 33; Deut 21:15. However, see the treatment of the relationship of love and hate in the OT in the previous chapter where it is argued that both often (if not always) refer to evaluation and emotion.

[358] Rather, "in the Greco-Roman world the lot of slaves was extremely varied and in many cases was consonant with deep loyalty to and warm affection for the master." Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*,

relationship stems from a truly affectionate disposition.[359] Here, not only is there a stark

evaluative contrast at hand, but the point is that humans are to love God above all else and

exclude love for anything that is less than good.[360]

Accordingly, human zeal for God is supposed to be so intense that one would "hate"

(μισέω) his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters and even one's own life (Luke

14:26; cf. Deut 33:9; Exod 32:27–29). Similarly, in John the one who "loves" (φιλέω) his own

life loses it but Christians are to "hate" (μισέω) their own life in this world (John 12:25). Matthew

refers to the one who "loves [φιλέω] father or mother more than Me" rather than using the term

hate (Matt 10:37). However, he previously refers to enmity (ἐχθρός) among family members that

Jesus brings, thus also referring to animosity akin to the Lucan parallel (Matt 10:34–36).[361]

Again, many have suggested that love and hate in such contexts are merely stand-ins for

accepting and rejecting, respectively, divested of emotive content.[362] The assumption is that this

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303–4. Moreover, "Greco-Roman texts recognize the importance of affection and loyalty to the master in the appointment of a slave as steward." Idem, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 807. "The slave owner who engendered affection was likely to get more than his fair share of the efforts of the shared slave." *The Gospel of Matthew*, 304. See also the apparent affection of Abraham's servant for him (Gen 24:14, 26–27).

[359] Indeed, absolute loyalty and commitment must include feeling and/or emotion. The greatest loyalty stems, at least in part, from inward, heartfelt motivation. Here, Jesus is using a *qal vahomer* argument that such loyal love should extend to God much more than it does in natural kinship relationships. The force of the point would be significantly lessened by removing the actual familial affection involved.

[360] Here, the issue is "feelings" for both parties. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 303.

[361] Such "enmity" points toward the real animosity and conflict that the gospel may elicit from family members. Thus, even though Matthew does not use the term hate, the very closely associated "enmity" implies the same meaning as Luke's version. Hagner refers to the "hostility now in view—that between otherwise close family members—is described with the metaphor of a "sword." *Matthew 1–13*, 291.

[362] Stein appeals to the Matthean parallel as well as the usual OT passages (see further above) contending that this merely means "love [one's family] less." *Luke*, 397. So Beasley-Murray, *John*, 211. Similarly, among many others, Köstenberger, *John*, 379; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII*, 129; Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1284. With regard to John 12:25, J. B. Green comments, "'Hating' one's self should not be taken as a reference to an affective self-abhorrence." *The Gospel of Luke*, 565. Cf. Otto Michel, "μισέω," *TDNT* 4:690–93.

call would make "no sense" as a "summation of what God desires."[363] However, the collocation

of μισέω with other emotive terminology (such as καταφρονέω, "despise," in Matt 6:24 and Luke

16:13, the contrast with ἐκτρέφω, "nourish," and θάλπω "cherish," in Eph 5:29; the collocation

with ἐπιθυμία "lust, desire," ἡδονή, "pleasure," κακία, "malice, evil," φθόνος, "envy," and

στυγητός, "hateful," in Titus 3:3; cf. Gen 37:4) suggests that the term as here used includes

emotion, though not "hatred on some absolute scale."[364] Importantly, in these instances (Luke 14

and Matt 10) the "hatred" is situational. The point is not that one should hate family members

absolutely; quite the opposite is true (cf. Eph 6:1–4; 1 Tim 5:8). The assumption is that other

loved ones, or love of oneself, may get in the way of commitment to Jesus (cf. Mic 7:6–7; 4 Ezra

6:24).[365] In this regard, there is a *pro tanto* obligation to hate the obstruction insofar as it obstructs

undiluted love for Christ.[366] Importantly, as in the OT, hatred need not function as the superlative

term of animosity, as it often connotes in English, but may refer to animosity of varying

degrees.[367] Jesus's call is intended to be radical and startling and should not be downplayed to

accommodate contemporary sensibilities. True devotion, allegiance, and loyalty cannot be

separated from the inner disposition (i.e., love/affection or hate/animosity; cf. Eccl 3:8). The one

who does not have such undiluted love for Jesus is not "worthy [ἄξιος] of him" (Matt 10:37–38).

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[363] Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1284.

[364] For Carson, "the love/hate contrast reflects a semitic idiom that articulates fundamental preference, not hatred on some absolute scale." *The Gospel according to John*, 439. Carson is correct in excluding the "absolute" connotation of the terms, but the terms nevertheless convey more than a tepid preference. Nolland believes the language is "typical Semitic hyperbole" but does not believe that it means "love less than." *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 762.

[365] This is because "there could be no casual devotion to Jesus in the first century. A decision for Christ marked a person and automatically came with a cost. . . . If one chose to be associated with Jesus, one received a negative reaction, often from within the home." Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1285.

[366] Blomberg points out that "in each case Jesus implies that an unbeliever is initiating the hostility against a believing family member." *Matthew*, 180. Fitzmyer thus correctly comments that "one is called to such 'hatred' to the extent that such persons would be opposed to Jesus; the choice that the disciple has to make is between natural affection for kin and allegiance to Jesus." *Luke X–XXIV*, 1063. Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 409.

The NT thus consistently points to a stark division between those who love God and/or the things of God and those who hate God and/or the things of God. Some are "haters [θεοστυγής] of God" (Rom 1:30).[368] The controversy is real.[369] The strong, emotive contrast between love and hate is apparent when James states that "friendship [φιλία] with the world is hostility [ἔχθρα] toward God" and thus "whoever wishes [βούλομαι] to be a friend [φίλος] of the world makes himself an enemy [ἐχθρός] of God" (Jas 4:4). Rejection of friendship with God (cf. John 15:14; Jas 2:23) thus includes both volition (βούλομαι) and hostile emotion (i.e., ἔχθρα).[370]

That hatred ought to be evaluative is evident in that Jesus has been "hated . . . without cause" (John 15:25; cf. Pss 35:19; 69:4). It is here implicit that it is unjust to hate someone "without cause." Would it not then be unjust of God to hate some humans without cause? The logical conclusion is that, as is evidenced in the OT, divine hatred is never groundless but always

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[367] See the word study of שׂנא in chapter 4.

[368] It is not clear whether this refers to those who hate God or are hated by God. In classical Greek this term is "used only in the passive sense, 'hated by God, abandoned by God,' but later in Hellenistic Greek it developed an active sense, 'one who hates God.'" Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 289. Moo favors an active sense. *The Epistle to the Romans*, 120. Similarly, Mounce, *Romans*, 85; B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter*, 29; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 68; Schreiner, *Romans*, 98. Others take it in the passive sense, hated by God. For example, Barrett, *A Commentary*, 40. Moffat renders, "loathed by God" (James Moffat Translation); cf. NEB. TDNT renders, "despisers hated by God." *TDNT* 8:306.

[369] This "strife between good and evil is no tepid affair, but one that elicits the bitter hatred of the forces of evil." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 207. Cf. Borchert, *John 1–11*; 186. John 3:19–20 thus speaks of those who "loved [ἀγαπάω] the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil" and those who do evil "hate" (μισέω) the Light, fearing exposure (John 3:19–20). While Jesus commands Christians to "love [ἀγαπάω] one another" the world will hate (μισέω) them just as it hated Jesus since the world "loves [φιλέω] its own" (John 15:17–19). R. E. Brown contends that, unlike Matt 6:24, here "'hate' has its literal sense." *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, 686. But this raises the question, how does one know when it has its "literal sense" and when it is "Semitic exaggeration?" The lack of an objective hermeneutic implies that the interpretation is simply beholden to human opinion or presupposition. On the other hand one cannot "love God" and hate his brother (1 John 4:20). Similarly, hating (μισέω) Jesus ultimately amounts to hating the Father (John 15:23). "The two are so closely connected that to hate the one is to hate the other." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 604. Cf. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 526–27.

[370] Moo sees this against the background of the OT marriage analogy. Here, then, God is the scorned lover by those who choose "friendship with the world." As such, "'Enemy,' especially in light of the OT background . . . must involve hostility of God toward the believer as well as that of the believer toward God." *The Letter of James*, 187.

appropriate to the actual state of affairs. Thus, Jesus "hates [μισέω]" the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6) and commends the church of Ephesus for also hating them. Further, the strong emotionality and evaluative nature of God's displeasure is further noted in that the behavior of self-justifying lovers of money is "detestable" (βδέλυγμα) to God (Luke 16:15).[371] Importantly, such animosity is explicitly based on the fact that "God knows" their "hearts" (Luke 16:15; cf. Prov 16:5). Once again, divine animosity corresponds to an accurate appraisal of its object(s), as it always does elsewhere.[372] As such, God may hate passionately but never arbitrarily. The antithetical parallel to divine love itself implies the emotional nature of divine love, to which we now turn.

The Emotional Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that ground the conclusion that God's love is profoundly emotional though not to the exclusion of volitional and evaluative aspects.[373] First, love may be, at once, emotional and responsive to command. Second, God's love is consistently depicted as intensely affective and emotive. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Is divine love emotionally responsive to human disposition and/or action?[374] If so, what kind of emotions are exhibited and on what occasions? Is

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[371] βδέλυγμα is strong language that often refers to that which is an abomination and "idiomatically . . . indicates something that stinks." Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1350. Cf. Werner Foerster, "βδελύσσομαι, βδέλυγμα, βδελυκτός," *TDNT* 1:600. In the LXX, its emotive force is explicit as it often is used to refer to "what God finds utterly revolting." Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 810. Cf. 1 Kgs 11:5; Prov 11:1. Cf. Foerster, *TDNT* 1:600.

[372] "God's wrath" is never "arbitrary or whimsical. In Scripture; God's wrath, however affective, is the willed and righteous response of his holiness to sin, God's holiness, like God's love, is intrinsic to the very being of God; his wrath is not." Carson, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 647.

[373] In this dissertation, an emotion is loosely defined as any feeling(s) that may be affected by external stimulation. At the same time, emotions are not necessarily determined by external stimulus to the exclusion of other mental factors including volition, evaluation, etc.

[374] It is often supposed that divine love is impassible. The implications of this presupposition are evident in the view that divine ἀγάπη is non-emotive but purely volitional, election love. For example, Cranfield contends that ἀγάπη "evidently refers to the will rather than to the emotion, and often conveys the idea of showing love by action." "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134. Likewise,

God concerned about/affected by the world? Do the lives of creatures make a difference to God's own life? Are emotions mutually exclusive to volition, that is, can emotional love be commanded? This section of the study will begin with the brief introduction of the primary terms related to the emotionality of divine love followed by a canonical survey of the NT data.

A Brief Look at Some Terms of Emotional Divine Love

The Meaning of the ἐλεέω Word Group

The basic meaning of the ἐλεέω word group may include mercy, lovingkindness, heartfelt concern, compassion and/or sympathy of a strongly emotive character, which is often explicitly manifested in action.[375] The verb ἐλεέω is often used of divine agency toward individuals (cf. Phil 2:27) or groups of people (cf. 1 Pet 2:10).[376] The noun ἔλεος is also often used of God's wonderful, abundant, and enduring, but not thereby unconditional, lovingkindness, compassion, and/or mercy (cf. Luke 1:50, 58; Ps 102:17).[377] The adjective ἐλεήμων appears twice, once of

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Morris contends that "God's love is not an emotion conditioned by the kind of people we are." Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 151. As such, "passion" does not constitute "Christian love." Ibid., 276. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:38; Schneider, *EDNT* 1:9. For William G. Cole, "love in the Hebrew . . . was not ephemeral emotion but steadfast concern, involving the will rather than the feelings." *Sex and Love in the Bible* (New York: Association Press, 1959), 67. See also de Rougemont, *Love*.

[375] See Esser, *NIDNTT* 2:594; F. W. Danker et al., eds., "ελεεω," BDAG, 315; idem, "ελεος," BDAG, 316; Ceslas Spicq, "ελεεω, ελεος," *TLNT* 1:471, 475; Rudolf Bultmann, "ελεος, ελεεω, ελεημων, ελεημοσυνη, ανελεος, ανελεημων," *TDNT* 2:483, 485; F. W. Danker et al., eds., "ελεημων," BDAG, 316. In the wider, secular Greek usage ἔλεος is a term signifying strong emotion, often prompted by the affliction of another for which one feels mercy and/or sympathy. As such, it was often looked down upon by Greek thinkers as inferior πάθος, emotion, which is not proper, a weakness. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 1:471–72; Bultmann, *TDNT* 2:477–78. In contrast to the negative views of compassion in Greek thought, in the LXX ἔλεος is "exalted" and "becomes a religious virtue and especially a divine attribute." Spicq, *TLNT* 1:473.

[376] In all, the verb appears 29 times in 26 verses and 3 more times (Rom 9:16; Jude 22, 23) with the varying inflectional type as ἐλεάω. Divine ἐλεέω further appears in Rom 9:15–16, 18; 11:30, 31, 32 and is implied in Matt 5:7; 18:33, 35; cf. 2 Cor 4:1; 1 Tim 1:13, 16. The verb also refers to human mercy/compassion, often with the expectation that Christians should exhibit it (cf. Rom 12:8; Jude 22, 23).

[377] In all, the noun appears 29 times in 26 verses in the NT. Elsewhere divine ἔλεος is manifest in Luke 1:54, 72, 78; Rom 9:23; 11:31; 15:9; Gal 6:16; Eph 2:4; 1 Tim 1:2; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:3; Heb 4:16; Jas 2:13; 2 John 3; Jude 21; cf. 2 Tim 1:16, 18; Jude 2. The noun ἔλεος also may depict human mercy, compassion, and/or lovingkindness and is clearly depicted as virtuous conduct becoming a Christian (cf. Luke 10:37; Jas 2:13) and desired by God of human beings (Matt 9:13; 12:7). Another noun (ἐλεημοσύνη) refers to the gift itself of alms or merciful bestowal or "charitable deed" whether given or requested (Matt

humans (Matt 5:7) and once of Christ (Heb 2:17).[378] Divine mercy/compassion is consistently

active[379] and often manifests emotionality[380] as well as conditionality.[381]

The range of this word group thus corresponds with that of lovingkindness (חסד) and

compassion (רחם) in the OT.[382] The overlap of the range of meaning with חסד is evident in the

frequency with which the word group translates חסד in the LXX.[383] The aspects of heartfelt

6:2–4; Luke 11:41; 12:33; Acts 3:2–3, 10; 9:36; 10:2, 4, 31; 24:17). In such a form the indissoluble connection between the disposition of mercy/pity and action is clearly manifest.

[378] Another adjective, ἐλεεινός (pitiable), appears only with regard to humans, twice in 2 verses, of those who are pitiable or "to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:19; Rev 3:17).

[379] ἔλεος is often a grounding (as are other terms of love) of divine beneficence (Eph 2:4; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:3; cf. Luke 1:54, 78).

[380] For example, it is used of "the tender [σπλάγχνον] mercy [ἔλεος] of our God" (Luke 1:78; cf. Luke 10:33, 37). Likewise, that "mercy" is assumed to be emotive is implied in the story of the one who received mercy but failed to bestow it (Matt 18:33) in the explanation of Jesus that God requires humans to "forgive his brother from your heart" (18:35).

[381] In a number of instances, the reception of divine mercy is conditional upon humans bestowing mercy to one another (Matt 5:7; 18:33, 35; cf. Jas 2:13) or otherwise contingent (Luke 1:50; 1 Tim 1:13; Gal 6:16; Jude 21). At the same time, such mercy is undeserved and unmerited (Titus 3:5). Consider also the correspondence to the notion of חסד, which not only included חסד from two parties to one another but also חסד shown in response to another's previous positive action (cf. 2 Tim 1:16, 18). Spicq refers to חסד as "fundamentally a species of love" noting correctly that "most of its occurrences have to do with God's mercy or lovingkindness." *TLNT* 1:475.

[382] Similar to חסד in the OT, in the NT the group never explicitly refers to ἐλεέω/ἔλεος from a situationally inferior toward a situationally superior but, in all cases where the subject and object are apparent, depicts mercy flowing from a superior to an inferior. There are instances of חסד from a situational inferior toward a situational superior in the OT, including human חסד toward God, but such instances are a small minority of the total occurrences. There are no direct instances of human mercy toward God in the NT, though God desires mercy (Matt 9:13; 12:7 in OT allusions translating חסד). Moreover, as in the OT, some instances of expectation of human to human ἔλεος are likely to be understood as indirect ἔλεος toward God. For example, the scribes and Pharisees are rebuked for neglecting "justice and mercy and faithfulness," which could be toward humans and/or toward God (cf. Matt 5:7; Jas 2:13). Further, there is some association with grace (χάρις) as both might refer to beneficent action toward (or received by) someone in need. The two word groups collocate closely in 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Heb 4:16; 2 John 3. In the LXX see Gen 39:21; 47:29; Prov 3:3. The two also collocate a number of times in the LXX Apocrypha.

[383] The noun ἔλεος translates חסד over 200 times (cf. Exod 20:6; 34:7; Deut 7:9). ἐλεήμων also translates חסד twice (Prov 11:17; 20:6; cf. Prov 28:22) and חָסִיד once with God as the subject (Jer 3:12). Even ἐλεημοσύνη, often used of alms or sympathy, translates חסד 8 times, second to צדקה, which it translates 10 times. Accordingly, there is significant overlap between the semantic range of חסד and ἔλεος. Spicq points to significant continuity between the terms, contending that the NT takes up "God's mercy in exactly the same form and continues it." *TLNT* 1:476. Beyond חסד, ἔλεος also translates רחם (6 times), תְּחִנָּה , favor, supplication (6 times), צְדָקָה, righteousness (3 times) and חֵן, favor, grace (2 times), as well as a number of

concern, sympathy, compassion of the ἐλεέω word group are likewise apparent in the frequent

association with OT terms of compassion such as רחם[384] as well as significant collocations with

terms such as οἰκτιρμός,[385] "compassion, pity," and σπλάγχνον, "tender mercies, compassion."[386]

Thus, there is a significant correspondence to the meaning of compassion and/or pity.[387] As seen

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other terms once. Conversely, beyond its rendering by ἔλεος, חסד is translated 9 times by the closely related
πολυέλεος, "abundant mercy," and 9 times by δικαιοσύνη (cf. Gen 19:19), among a number of others once.

Further, in the LXX, the verb ἐλεέω most often translates חנן (38 times), often of divine
graciousness as in Exod 33:19. In many such instances where it translates חנן in the LXX it collocates with
οἰκτιρμός, which itself therein translates רחם. See the discussion of these collocations below. ἐλεέω also
translates רחם, חמל, נחם numerous times (see regarding these in the main text) and a number of other terms
once. Moreover, the adjective ἐλεήμων, which is most often used of God in the LXX, most often translates
חנון (12 times) especially in the statements that God is "merciful and gracious" (οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων)
(Exod 34:6; 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:17, 31; Pss 85:15; 102:8; 110:4; 111:4; 114:5; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). Cf. also
Ps 144:8. It also translates חסד twice and a number of other terms once.

[384] In the LXX, the verb ἐλεέω translates רחם, compassion, 25 times, often of God's profoundly
emotive compassion as in Isa 38:20 (ET 31:20). Cf. Deut 13:17; 30:3; Isa 30:18; 49:15; 54:8; Ezek 39:25. It
also translates רחמה in Hos 2:3. The verb also translates חמל 7 times, often in the idiomatic expression "my
eye will have no pity [חוס] and I will not spare" (חמל - ἐλεέω) (Ezek 5:11; 7:6, 8; 8:18; 9:5, 10) and נחם 5
times, often in the sense of God comforting his people (Zech 1:17; Isa 12:1; 49:13; 52:9). The other
translation of חמל refers to the lack of human sparing in Isa 9:18. The other instance of נחם is of God's
declaration that he will not "relent" and not "pity" and not "be sorry" (Ezek 24:14). The noun renders רחמים
5 times (Deut 13:18; Isa 47:6; 54:7; 63:7; Jer 49:12) and רחם once (Hab 3:2). Conversely, beyond its
rendering by the ἐλεέω word group, the verb רחם is translated 12 times by οἰκτίρω, 4 times by ἀγαπάω, and
once by παρακαλέω (Isa 49:13). Beyond its translation by ἔλεος, רחמים is most often translated by the noun
οἰκτιρμός (20 times) and the adjective οἰκτίρμων (7 times) as well as a number of others once.

[385] In the NT the two word groups collocate once in Paul's quotation of Exod 33:19 in Rom 9:15.
In the LXX the two collocate in many significant instances including Exod 33:19, of God's mercy (ἐλεέω)
and compassion (οἰκτίρω), and 34:6 of God's compassionate (οἰκτίρμων) and gracious (ἐλεήμων) nature
(cf. also the collocation in many allusions to Exod 34:6 including 2 Chr 20:9; Neh 9:17, 31; Pss 85:15;
102:8; 144:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). Likewise, the two collocate in the many other descriptions of God as
gracious (ἐλεήμων) and compassionate (οἰκτίρμων) (Ps 110:4; cf. 111:4; 144:8; Isa 27:11; 30:18). The
terms also collocate in many instances where רחם and חסד collocate, ἔλεος translating חסד (Pss 39:12; 50:3;
68:17; 102:4; 102:8; Hos 2:21; Zech 7:9; Lam 3:32). See also 2 Kgs 13:23; Isa 63:15; 1 Macc 3:44; Sir
2:11; 5:6.

[386] The two collocate once in the reference to the "tender [σπλάγχνον] mercy [ἔλεος] of our God"
(Luke 1:78). In more than a single verse see the association in Luke 10:33, 37. Since the σπλάγχνον word
group is relatively rare in the LXX the two do not collocate often therein (cf. Odes 9:18; Prov 12:10).

[387] In fact, the association is so significant that the NIDNTT groups the three together in its
dictionary article. Esser points to the close association of the terms in their original meanings: "In their
original use *eleos* refers to the feeling of pity, *oiktirmos*, and especially its root *oiktos*, to the exclamation of
pity at the sight of another's ill-fortune, and *splanchna* to the seat of the emotions, the inward parts or what
today would be called the heart. The corresponding verbs in the active express these feelings shown in the
sense of to help, feel pity, show mercy; where they are used in the passive, they express the experience of
these emotions." *NIDNTT* 2:593.

earlier in this chapter, the word group also associates significantly with the ἀγαπάω word group.[388] As such, the NT meaning is sometimes akin to the English conception of mercy though the concept of mercy does not exhaust the meaning of the term, which likely corresponds to the much richer meaning of חסד in some usages. While one should not read the entire meaning of חסד into this term in the NT one should also not be too hasty to exclude the possibility that the rich concept of חסד may be in the background of many NT usages.[389]

The Meaning of the οἰκτίρω and σπλαγχνίζομαι Word Groups

The οἰκτίρω word group appears infrequently in the NT[390] but with considerable significance, denoting the basic meaning of a highly emotive response to someone's hardship; compassion, sympathy, mercy, tender feeling, and/or pity.[391] The σπλαγχνίζομαι word group is closely related to the οἰκτίρω word group. It similarly refers to the feeling (or the seat of the feeling) of warm sympathy, pity, and/or compassion at someone's misfortune, such emotion itself

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[388] Significantly, they collocate frequently in the LXX in those verses that speak of God's חסד toward those who love God translated by ἔλεος and ἀγαπάω (cf. Exod 20:6 among many others). See also Deut 5:10; 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4. In the NT, both are associated in grounding divine action (Eph 2:4). See also 2 Tim 1:2; Jude 2, 21; 2 John 3; cf. 1 Tim 1:13–14 and the discussion of the collocation of these word groups in the discussion of the meaning of the ἀγαπάω word group above.

[389] Esser suggests the secular Greek background does not relate to the meaning of the term in the NT but, rather, one must "interpret the LXX translation from the standpoint of the Heb. original, and not the other way round." *NIDNTT* 2:594.

[390] The noun οἰκτιρμός appears 5 times, twice of human agency as virtuous feeling/disposition (Col 3:12; Phil 2:1) and 3 times of divine agency, once describing God as "the Father of mercies" (οἰκτιρμός) (2 Cor 1:3; cf. Rom 12:1) though such mercy is not unconditional (Heb 10:28). The adjective οἰκτίρμων appears 3 times in 2 verses referring to the characteristic of being merciful and/or compassionate, often descriptive of God as "merciful" (Luke 6:36; Jas 5:11; cf. Ps 102:8), but once of humans who are to be merciful even as God is (Luke 6:36). This likely echoes the OT description of God as "compassionate and gracious" (Ps 102:8 among many others). So Rudolf Bultmann, "οικτιρω, οικτιρμος, οικτιρμων," *TDNT* 5:161. The verb οἰκτίρω appears 2 times in 1 verse, itself a quotation of Exod 33:19 where it translates רחם in parallel to חנן, which is translated by ἐλεέω (Rom 9:15).

[391] F. W. Danker et al., eds., "οικτιρμος," BDAG, 700; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "οικτιρω, οικτιρμος," L&N 1:750; H. H. Esser, "οικτιρμος," *NIDNTT* 2:598. As was the case for the ἐλεέω word group, this emotion was also seen as a "sign of weakness" amongst many Greek philosophers, even a "reprehensible πάθος." Bultmann, *TDNT* 5:160. Nevertheless, in classical Greek "mercy is invoked from the deity, or οἰκτίρειν is predicated of it." Ibid.

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bound up with affectionate love.[392] The noun σπλάγχνον may refer to the "inward parts" of the

body as the "seat of emotions" akin to the functioning of רחמים in the OT.[393] As such, it often

depicts the "seat and source of love, sympathy, and mercy" or to the "feeling itself" of great

"love" and "affection."[394] It is most often used of human agency (2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 2:1; Col

3:12; Phlm 7, 12, 20; 1 John 3:17) but once of divine agency of the "tender [σπλάγχνον] mercy

[ἔλεος] of our God" (Luke 1:78; cf. Phil 1:8).[395] The verb σπλαγχνίζομαι appears only in the

Synoptics and refers to highly emotive compassion, always with divine agency (often Jesus) and

often prompted by sight and spoken of explicitly as "felt."[396] Significantly, it may be forfeited (cf.

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[392] F. W. Danker et al., eds., "σπλαγχνίζομαι," BDAG, 938. "Compassion involves so identifying with the situation of others that one is prepared to act for their benefit." Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 407. The Semitic background of the term suggests the meaning "tender mercy." E. Colin B. MacLaurin, "Semitic Background of Use of '*en splanchnois*,'" 103(1971): 45. Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine explain the meaning as "to be stirred up with feeling," a "feeling of pity and love." *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 279. It is descriptive of a "gut response." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 373. Silva contends that σπλάγχνα may be used "by metonymy of the affection itself." *Philippians*, 48. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; London: SCM Press, 1952), 2:222.

[393] See Louw and Nida, L&N 1:323; F. W. Danker et al., eds., "σπλαγχνον," BDAG, 938; Ceslas Spicq, "σπλαγχνα, σπλαγχνιζομαι," *TLNT* 3:274–75; J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., "σπλαγχνιζομαι; σπλαγχνα, ων," L&N 1:294; Helmut Köster, "σπλαγχνον, σπλαγχνιζομαι, ευσπλαγχνος, πολυσπλαγχνος, ασπλαγχνος," *TDNT* 7:548–49; H. H. Esser, "σπλαγχνα, σπλαγχνον," *NIDNTT* 2:599. Cf. Isa 49:15. See also E. Dhorme, *L'emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps en hébreu et en akkadien* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P.Geuthner, 1963), 111–12, 134–35. The noun appears 11 times in the OT. "Older Greek literature viewed the σπλάγχνα particularly as the seat of violent, aggressive feelings. Only in the Hellenistic period were the σπλάγχνα considered the place where one "becomes weak, soft." N. Walter, "σπλαγχνον," *EDNT* 3:266. Cf. Sir 30:7; Wis 10:5c; *Jos. Asen.* 6:1; *Pss. Sol.* 2:14. The middle form of the verb, always used in the NT, is nearly absent in ancient Greek literature. Esser thus explains that "the metaphorical meaning [of this verb] have mercy on, feel pity, is found only in the writings of Judaism and the NT." *NIDNTT* 2:599.

[394] Danker et al., BDAG, 938. So, also "σπλαγχνιζομαι; σπλαγχνα, ων," 294; Esser, *NIDNTT* 2:599; Walter, *EDNT* 3:266.

[395] In one instance it literally refers to "intestines" (Acts 1:18).

[396] It is "literally a movement of the entrails at the sight" to "have a visceral feeling of compassion." Spicq, *TLNT* 3:274–75. In 10 of its 12 instances it is passive, the other two are middle (Matt 15:32; Mark 8:2). It most often describes Jesus' compassionate feelings (Matt 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 8:2; cf. Mark 9:22), very often prompted by the sight of some affliction (Matt 9:36; 14:14; Mark 6:34; Luke 7:13). The only other occurrences are in the symbolic narratives of Jesus, which themselves are themselves descriptive of divine compassion (Matt 18:27; Luke 10:33; 15:20). Only in these symbolic narratives are humans the subject of the verb (the good Samaritan in Luke 10:33, the debt holder in Matt 18:27, and the father in Luke 15:20). As such, "the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι has become solely and simply an attribute of the

Matt 18:27). Two semantically related adjectives also appear: the adjective πολύσπλαγχνος

describes God's abundant compassion (Jas 5:11)[397] and the adjective εὔσπλαγχνος "tenderhearted,

compassionate" of the disposition Christians ought to have (Eph 4:32; 1 Pet 3:8).

While the σπλαγχνίζομαι word group appears more frequently in the NT than the οἰκτίρω

word group, only the noun appears (only 3 times) in the LXX.[398] The σπλαγχνίζομαι word group

appears to have come into common use in post-LXX Jewish literature.[399] On the other hand,

though the οἰκτίρω word group is relatively infrequent in the NT, the οἰκτίρω word group

appears many times in the LXX, where it is clearly situated amongst the major descriptors of

God's love, mercy, compassion, grace, kindness, and patience.[400]

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divine dealings." Köster, *TDNT* 7:553.

[397] For Spicq this depicts the "innate love and compassion and tenderness" of God by way of the metaphor of "having long or abundant entrails . . . the equivalent of *polyeleos*." *TLNT* 3:275.

[398] The three instances are Prov 12:10 wherein it translates רחם, Prov 26:22 where it translates בֶּטֶן, body, and Jer 28:13 [51:13] where it translates בֶּצַע, gain made by violence. The noun appears 14 times in the LXX Apocrypha as "the seat of natural maternal love (4 Macc 14:13; 15:23, 29), as well as of affection in the larger sense." Walter, *EDNT* 3:266. The others are 2 Mac 9:5, 6; 4 Ma 5:30; 10:8; 11:19; Ode 9:78; Wis 10:5; Sir 30:7; 33:5; *Pss. Sol.* 2:14; Bar 2:17. The verb appears once in the LXX Apocrypha in 2 Macc 6:8 and εὔσπλαγχνος also appears once in the LXX Apocrypha (Ode 12:7). The closely related verb ἐπισπλαγχνίζομαι appears in Prov 17:15 but without Hebrew original.

[399] Thus Test. XII demonstrates the predominant use of this word group with the sense of "mercy" and "to be merciful," replacing the οἰκτίρω word group. Köster, *TDNT* 7:552. Cf. also Esser, *NIDNTT* 2:599. Significantly, it is therein predicated of God and thus may point to the background of the NT's usage of σπλάγχνον. Köster argues that this "translation of רַחֲמִים by σπλάγχνα" introduced "in later Jewish writings . . . is undoubtedly the direct presupposition of the NT usage." Köster, *TDNT* 7:552. On the other hand, however, it is disputed whether Test. XII is actually a Jewish work at all; some have seen it as a Christian forgery and it is unclear whether there is a Jewish predecessor (Vorlage).

[400] Therein, the verb οἰκτίρω translates רחם 11 times in 10 verses including depictions of God's fatherly compassion (Ps 102:13) and "compassion according to his abundant lovingkindness" (Lam 3:32; cf. Exod 33:19). The others include 1 Kgs 8:50; 2 Kgs 13:23; Ps 101:14; Mic 7:19; Isa 27:11; Jer 13:14; 21:7. It also translates חנן in 10 verses, often of divine compassion (cf. Isa 30:18; Ps 101:14). See also Pss 4:2; 36:21; 58:6; 66:2; 76:10; 101:14, 15; 111:5; 122:2. It also translates a number of other terms once. The noun οἰκτιρμός most often translates רחמים/רחם in 28 verses, also often of God's compassion. See 2 Sam 24:14; 1 Kgs 8:50; 1 Chr 21:13; 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 1:11; 9:19, 27, 28, 31; Pss 24:6; 39:12; 50:3; 68:17; 76:10; 78:8; 102:4; 105:46; 118:77, 156; 144:9; Hos 2:21; Zech 1:16; 7:9; Isa 63:15; Dan 1:9; 2:18; 9:9, 18. It also translates תַּחֲנוּן twice (Zech 12:10; Dan 9:18) and חֵן once (Dan 4:27). The related noun οἰκτίρημα, which never appears in the NT, translates חֶסֶד in Jer 38:13. The adjective οἰκτίρμων most often translates רחום (12 times), usually of God being "compassionate [οἰκτίρμων] and gracious [ἐλεήμων]" (Exod 34:6). Thus, the profoundly emotive nature of such compassion is evident. It also translates that phrase 9 more

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The overlapping, emotive nature of both word groups is further evident by their collocations since both are closely related to the OT concept of רחמים/רחם.[401] The οἰκτίρω word group also overlaps significantly with the ἐλεέω word group, especially as it relates to the notion of sympathy for someone else's hardship.[402] The σπλαγχνίζομαι word group collocates with the ἐλεέω word group only once, in the reference to the "tender [σπλάγχνον] mercy [ἔλεος] of our God" (Luke 1:78).[403] The οἰκτίρω group also significantly collocates with the ἀγαπάω word group in the admonition "love your enemies . . . Be merciful [οἰκτίρμων], just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36) as does the σπλαγχνίζομαι word group elsewhere.[404] Both groups also collocate with other major characteristics that relate closely to love including "kindness,"[405] "comfort,"[406] and "patience/longsuffering" among others.[407]

times (2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:17, 31; Pss 85:15; 102:8; 110:4; 111:4; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2) and translates רחום in two others (Deut 4:31; Ps 77:38). οἰκτίρμων also translates חנן and חנון once (Pss 10:12; 144:8) and רַחֲמָנִי once (Lam 4:10). Cf. Ps 144:8.

[401] They appear in Paul's exhortations of Christians to "put on a heart [σπλάγχνον] of compassion [οἰκτιρμός]" (Col 3:12) and reference is made to "affection [σπλάγχνον] and compassion [οἰκτιρμός]," likely of the Philippians (Phil 2:1). Both also refer to God's character, he is "full of compassion [πολύσπλαγχνος] and merciful" (Jas 5:11). The two word groups only collocate once in a single verse in the LXX (Prov 12:10) but that is insignificant considering the scarcity of the σπλαγχνίζομαι word group in the LXX.

[402] Bultmann, *TDNT* 5:159. Bultmann goes so far as to say, "There is no palpable distinction between οἰκτίρειν and ἐλεεῖν or οἰκτιρμοί and ἔλεος" in the LXX. Ibid., 160. See the discussion in the ἐλεέω word study just above this one.

[403] In more than one verse the two are closely related, in Matt 18:27, 33 and Luke 10:33, 37. In the LXX the groups collocate in Prov 12:10 and Odes 9:18.

[404] Some scholars have also suggested that both word groups function much like ἀγαπάω in the Gospels where ἀγαπάω is relatively infrequently used. Cf. Köster, *TDNT* 7:555–56. Both word groups collocate with the ἀγαπάω word group in Phil 2:1 and Col 3:12 and the ἀγαπάω word group collocates with the οἰκτίρω word group alone in Rom 9:13, 15 and the σπλαγχνίζομαι word group alone in Phlm 7; 1 John 3:17. They also collocate within two verses in Eph 4:32–5:1. In the LXX with οἰκτίρω see *Pss. Sol.* 9:8; Zech 12:10. Neither group ever collocates with the φιλέω word group.

[405] That is, the χρηστός word group, which collocates with both in Col 3:12. See the parallel between the χρηστός and οἰκτίρμων of God's character as kind and merciful (Luke 6:34–36). In the LXX it collocates with the οἰκτίρω group in Pss 68:17; 111:5; 144:9.

[406] That is, παράκλησις, which collocates with both in Phil 2:1 and σπλάγχνον in Eph 4:32. It collocates with σπλάγχνον in Phlm 7 and with οἰκτιρμός it depicts God as "the Father of mercies and God

The Meaning of the ζηλόω Word Group

The ζηλόω word group refers to passion for someone or something, which may take the form of negative jealousy or positive zeal.[408] Thus, the group may refer to "holy zeal" (John 2:17; Rom 10:2; 2 Cor 11:2; Phil 3:6; Heb 10:27),[409] negative hostility and anger, ill will (Acts 5:17; 7:9; 13:45; 17:5), jealousy as a vice (Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; 13:4; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Jas 3:14, 16; 4:2), or desire toward goals or devotion toward someone (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1, 39; 2 Cor 7:7, 11; 9:2; Gal 4:17, 18; cf. Rev 3:19).[410] In all these the emotive, passionate sense is clear whether it is misdirected or positively directed.[411] Accordingly, the statement "love is not jealous" (1 Cor 13:4) refers to the negative, misdirected, hostile sense of the term but does not rule out the positive passionate commitment,[412] whether manifested by Christians, or that which is

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of all comfort" (2 Cor 1:3).

[407] That is, the μακροθυμία word group, which collocates with both in Col 3:12. In Matt 18:26 the debtor pleads for patience and receives compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι) (Matt 18:27). In the LXX, this group collocates with οἰκτίρω, often in the *locus classicus* of God's character (Exod 34:6) and allusions thereto (Neh 9:17; Pss 85:15; 102:8; 144:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). See also Dat 4:27. Therein it collocates with σπλαγχνίζομαι only in Ode 12:7.

[408] Albrecht Stumpff, "ζῆλος, ζηλοω, ζηλωτης, παραζηλοω," *TDNT* 2:886. The verb appears 11 times in 10 verses. The noun ζῆλος appears 16 times in 16 verses and refers to passionate commitment. That is, "the capacity or state of passionate committal to a person or cause." Ibid., 877. Thus, the related noun, ζηλωτής, "zealot," which appears 8 times in 8 verses, and frequently in the LXX. For W. Popkes, both "designate a passionate commitment to a person or cause." "ζελευω, ζηλος, ζηλοω," *EDNT* 2:100. In classical Greek the noun may also have positive or negative connotations from "eager striving," "enthusiasm," "admiration," to "jealousy," "envy," "ill-will." H. C. Hahn, "ζηλος," *NIDNTT* 3:1166. Another verb, παραζηλόω, provoking to jealousy, appears 4 times in 4 verses, once of divine passion (1 Cor 10:22). The closely related verb, ζηλεύω, of intense interest and/or eagerness, appears once, exhorted by the resurrected Christ himself (Rev 3:19).

[409] Such zeal toward God may itself be misguided "not in accordance with knowledge" (Rom 10:2). This is the case with Paul's zeal as Christian persecutor (Phil 3:6). On the other hand, some is positive, "godly jealousy" (2 Cor 11:2). It refers to Jesus' zeal (John 2:17) and once to God's own zeal (Heb 10:27).

[410] This summary adapts the very helpful outline of these four distinctive usages in Popkes, *EDNT* 2:100.

[411] Likewise with the 8 instances of the noun ζηλωτής, which might be misguided or proper (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13; 21:20; 22:3; Gal 1:14; 1 Cor 14:12; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 3:13). Since the term may be positive or negative, depending on its context, it is especially important to avoid the error of illegitimate totality transfer.

exemplified in divine zeal for his people (cf. Heb 10:27), which itself corresponds to his profound

love (cf. 1 Cor 14:1; Rev 3:19; Eccl 9:6).[413] While the word group is used relatively infrequently

of divine passion in the NT, it corresponds to the very important קנא in the OT, which is often

used therein to describe God's passionate love.[414]

Divine Mercy, Compassion, and Passion in Gospels-Acts

For obvious reasons, Jesus is the most frequent (but not sole) agent of divine emotion in

the Gospels.[415] Christ is depicted as the good shepherd who knows his sheep and they know him.

His concern (μέλει) for them is so great that he is even willing to die for his sheep (John 10:11,

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[412] That zeal is not always negative is evident in that Paul exhorts them to "pursue love, yet desire earnestly [ζηλόω] spiritual gifts" (1 Cor 14:1). Likewise, Christ exhorts those he loves to "be zealous and repent" (Rev 3:19).

[413] Significantly, although it is a positive divine attribute in the LXX, Philo, who only uses the term in its positive sense, rules out the concept as inappropriate to God. He criticizes those who speak of God "as they would of men, they add jealousy, anger, passion, and other feelings like these." However, those who "are initiated in the true mysteries relating to the living God . . . never attribute any of the properties of created beings to him." *Lectures on St. John* 113.60–61 (The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson), 163. Further, due to "fear of any kind of anthropomorphising" the idea of passion or jealousy came to be considered inappropriate to God among some Jewish scholars. See Stumpff, *TDNT* 2:879–80. While it was not avoided altogether the passionate force of the term is evaded, according to Stumpff.

[414] See the word study of קנא in chapter 4. With God as agent, the word group in the LXX refers to the "the intensity, the uncompromising involvement with which God deals with men." Stumpff, *TDNT* 2:882; Hahn, *NIDNTT* 3:1166. Stumpff believes the usage in the LXX classifies it as belonging "to the very essence of God." *TDNT* 2:884. The קנא word group is almost always translated by the ζηλόω word group in the LXX. Therein the noun ζῆλος always translates the word group קנא; 28 times it translates the noun קנאה and twice it renders the verb קנא. There it often depicts divine passion (Deut 29:19; Ps 78:5). A different noun ζηλωτής appears 8 times in 8 verses in the LXX always translating קנא (5 times, Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15) or קנוא (once, Nah 1:2). In every instance it refers to God's jealousy; he is a "jealous God" (Deut 4:24). The verb ζηλόω almost always translates קנא (20 times) and also is often used of God's jealous love (cf. Num 25:13). It also translates קנּוא (Josh 24:19) and קנאה (2 Kgs 10:16) once. It renders a few other terms once as well. ζηλεύω never appears in the LXX. The verb ζηλωτής translates קנא 3 times (Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 14:22; Ps 77:58) and חרה 3 times (Ps 36:1, 7, 8). The latter is always of human fretting while the former always refers to God being provoked to jealousy.

[415] In this dissertation, such emotionality is taken as evidence of divine emotionality. The most powerful evidence for this position is the correspondence between the emotions of Jesus and the emotions exhibited by YHWH in the OT. See the methodology in chapter 1 for a discussion of the wider theological issues and rationale for ascribing Jesus's emotions not merely to his human nature but to divinity.

13, 14).[416] This loving concern of Christ for his creatures is further evident in the angst he

expresses over the unwillingness of Jerusalem to allow him to save her: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted [θέλω] to gather

your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling

[οὐ + θέλω]" (Matt 23:37; par. Luke 13:34).[417] Later, Jesus "saw the city and wept [ἔκλαυσεν]

over it" (Luke 19:41).[418] Elsewhere, Jesus manifests anger (ὀργή) and is "grieved [συλλυπέω] at

their hardness of heart" (Mark 3:5; cf. John 2:17) thus manifesting sympathetic grief (συλλυπέω)

elicited by their callous disposition against God.[419] At Lazarus's death Jesus is said to be "deeply

moved [ἐμβριμάομαι][420] in spirit and troubled [ταράσσω]"[421] (John 11:33), so much so that he

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[416] Notice the "reciprocal knowledge" here, which "is not superficial but intimate," implying love, which is even compared to that between the Father and the Son (cf. John 10:15). Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 455. Christ is "deeply concerned for the sheep" with "passions" that are "aroused." Ibid., 454. Similar concern is demonstrated in action in the parables of the lost sheep, coin, and son (Luke 15:5, 10, 19–20).

[417] Here, " Jesus' words betray great tenderness and employ maternal imagery." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 350.

[418] The term here for weeping is strong, referring to "full sobbing or wailing." Cf. Danker et al., eds., "ἔκλαυσεν," BAGD, 433; Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1560. Hagner refers to this as "agony." *Matthew 14–28*, 680. Jesus weeping and lamenting over the rebellion of God's people is reminiscent of the OT prophets (cf. 2 Kgs 8:11; Jer 9:1; 13:17; 14:17).

[419] The verb συλλυπέω in passive as here means "'to share in grief, sympathise, console,' never 'to be grieved with.'" Though Marcus thinks the latter seems to be the meaning required by the context here." *Mark 1–8*, 248. So Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 223.

[420] The term for "deeply moved," ἐμβριμάομαι, ""signifies a loud inarticulate noise, and its proper use appears to be for the snorting of horses." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 493. Cf. F. W. Danker et al., eds., "εμβριμάομαι," BDAG, 253. Of humans it usually denotes anger, emotional indignation. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 415; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 1375. Cf. Dan 12 [11]:30; Lam 2:6; Sir 13:3. For primary Greek references, see Barnabas Lindars and C. M. Tuckett, *Essays on John* (SNTA 17; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 92–96. Elsewhere in the NT it appears in vs. 38; Matt 9:30; Mark 1:43; 14:5; cf. also the textual variant to Matt 12:18. This is the same verb used of Jesus's reaction to the distressed in Mark 1:43; Matt 9:30.

[421] This term is used here of inner "anguish." Köstenberger, *John*, 339. Cf. John 12:27; 13:21; Esth 4:4. The verb is immediately followed by the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν, "himself." Some suggest this rendering means that Jesus was master over his emotions. So Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 494. B. M. Newman and Nida recognize this possibility but also note it may be a "kind of substitute passive." *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 371–72. Yet, this seems to read too much into the reflexive, which likely simply connotes the intensity of the emotions. Certainly, no theological case can be made to the effect that Jesus' emotions were not passive since John 12:27 and 13:21 use the passive form with Jesus as subject.

"wept" (δακρύω)[422] (John 11:35).[423] The Jews interpreted this as a signal of the degree of Jesus' love for Lazarus: "See how much He loved [φιλέω] him" (John 11:36).[424] This emotion two verses later refers to Jesus as "deeply moved [ἐμβριμάομαι] within" (John 11:38). The language used suggests profound emotion, perhaps that Jesus "shuddered, moved with the deepest emotions."[425]

Elsewhere, Jesus displayed the "zeal" (ζῆλος) spoken of by the prophet when he cleansed the temple of those who were using it as a place of business, reminiscent of divine zeal in the OT

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[422] The verb may mean "burst into tears" considering the force of the aorist, here taken as ingressive. Köstenberger, *John*, 341. Cf. Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 495.

[423] Jesus is possibly both grieved and angered at the situation of death, suffering, and lack of faith. Carson believes that Jesus may be both grieved at their unbelief and at the same time "moved by their grief" and "consequently angry with the sin, sickness and death" itself. Here, Jesus is both "angry" and "loving and empathetic" toward the people at once. *The Gospel according to John*, 416. However, there is considerable disagreement among scholars over the nature and cause of Jesus's emotion in this verse. It is unclear whether Jesus wept for Lazarus or because of the broader misguided feelings and dispositions of the people, or simply was grieved at the situation of death and suffering. The first is rejected by most on the premise that Jesus would have known that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead and thus there was no cause for weeping. The debate is generally between forms of the second and third options. The interpretation of such emotion is further complicated by the fact that the precise emotion described by ἐμβριμάομαι here and in v. 38 is further debated. The term would normally denote anger but the appropriateness of such emotion in this context has been questioned in favor of an emotion akin to compassion or pity. Cf. Lagrange, *Évangile selon saint Jean*, 304–5. Some manuscripts even soften the meaning of "anger" by reading "as if" before it. See R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII*, 426. However, the lexical evidence strongly points toward the meaning of "anger" despite the tendency toward softening the meaning. If this view is correct, what was Jesus angry at? Many contend that Jesus is angered by the lack of faith by those present. For example, see Beasley-Murray, *John*, 192–93; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 400. Or, perhaps Jesus is angered by the pain that sin and evil have caused or even angry toward the agencies of evil themselves. So, among others, Köstenberger, *John*, 339; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII*, 435. For a more comprehensive summary of positions taken on this issue and the arguments behind them see Beasley-Murray, *John*, 192–93; Köstenberger, *John*, 339–40.

[424] Many commentators argue that those present misunderstand Jesus' tears, which were not because of his love for Lazarus but because of his sadness at the disposition of the others present. So, among many others, Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 416; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 496; Borchert, *John 1–11*, 360. Köstenberger, on the other hand allows that the Jews are "partially correct when they interpret Jesus' tears as an expression of his love for Lazarus" but "err when they imagine his grief to be in despair." *John*, 341–42. Similarly, Barrett contends that the Jews here "express the truth without perceiving it" though his "affection" and "love . . . for his own is" far greater than that felt by the mourners. *The Gospel according to St. John*, 400.

[425] R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII*, 421. This is "no light emotion." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 494. It is language of "inner agitation and turmoil." Köstenberger, *John*, 339.

(John 2:17; cf. Ps 69:9).[426] The passion narrative also exhibits the strong emotions of Jesus. Jesus greatly desires (ἐπιθυμέω) to eat the Passover with the disciples (Luke 22:15). As the cross nears, Jesus is "grieved [λυπέω] and distressed [ἀδημονέω]" and states, "My soul is deeply grieved [περίλυπος], to the point of death" (Matt 26:37–38; cf. Mark 14:33–34).[427] Yet, even in the midst of his suffering on the cross, Christ's love yet remains, exhibited in his prayer of forgiveness for those who are crucifying him (Luke 23:34).[428]

In a number of instances the love (ἀγαπάω or φιλέω) of Jesus also exhibits emotionality, often responsive to human disposition and/or action. For example, when a man approaches Jesus asking him how to inherit eternal life, Jesus, "looking [ἐμβλέπω] at him, felt a love [ἀγαπάω] for him" (Mark 10:21).[429] Such love is here depicted as prompted by sight; it is thus a passible reaction, corresponding to the frequent instances where Jesus' compassion is prompted by sight. Importantly, Jesus loves the man before calling him to decision, but response is required for the

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[426] This is similar to God's zeal for his name (cf. Isa 59:17; Ezek 39:25). Borchert comments, "The way Jesus reacted to the Jewish merchandising in the temple troubles some who cannot conceive of a loving Jesus being angry. But spineless love is hardly love. . . . Any theology that is monofocal and fails to encompass both love and judgment ultimately ends up in heresy." *John 1–11*, 164.

[427] The intensity and depth of this emotion is widely recognized by commentators. For example, Blomberg renders this as "overwhelmed with sorrow." *Matthew*, 394. Similarly, Mark 14:33 reads, "very distressed [ἐκθαμβέω] and troubled [ἀδημονέω]." Note once again the idiom of the "soul" as the "seat of emotions," depicting "deeply-felt emotion, not an outward show." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1004.

[428] Jesus here puts "into practice his own instruction regarding love for one's enemies: "Pray for those who abuse you" (6:27–28)." J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 819–20. Though the phrase is absent in a number of manuscripts and the "internal" textual arguments are inconclusive, the similar saying in Acts 7:60 points toward authenticity. See Stein, *Luke*, 588–89. Ultimately, the passibility of Jesus is clear in his "suffering" (Matt 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 1:3; 3:18; 17:3; 26:23).

[429] Marcus sees this as "fatherly affection ('moved with love for him')." *Mark 8–16*, 727. France sees an evaluative element noting that "ἐμβλέπω denotes a searching look (see 14:67): so far he has passed Jesus' careful scrutiny, and Jesus is duly impressed." That Jesus loves him, then, "eliminates any suggestion that that man's profession is insincere." *The Gospel of Mark*, 403. Spicq comments, "Jesus was unable not to love the young man whose sincere and exceptional attachment to God he saw and admired." *Agape*, 1:60.

relationship to continue and deepen (Mark 10:21–22). This exhibits the foreconditionality of such love.[430]

Likewise, emotions appear to be associated with Jesus' love for Lazarus who is referred to as "he whom You love [φιλέω]" (John 11:3; cf.36) and Lazarus, Martha, and Mary are all designated as objects of Jesus's love (ἀγαπάω) (John 11:5). Elsewhere, Jesus "loved [ἀγαπάω] His own [ἴδιος] who were in the world, He loved [ἀγαπάω] them to the end [τέλος]" (John 13:1). There seems to be a great depth of love connoted by the expression "to the end," likely connoting both intensity and endurance.[431] Further, Jesus' love is specifically "for his own," itself a "term of endearment in some ANE literature.[432]

Divine beneficence toward humans is itself predicated on "the tender [σπλάγχνον] mercy [ἔλεος] of our God" (Luke 1:78). This terminology suggests that God's mercy is intensely emotive and profoundly heartfelt.[433] In numerous instances the divine mercy is on display. Jesus speaks of the "Lord" having "mercy" (ἐλεέω) on a man who has received a miracle (Mark 5:19). Further, God has given "help . . . in remembrance of His mercy [ἔλεος]" and has "displayed His great mercy [ἔλεος]" and has shown "mercy" (ἔλεος) in remembrance of the covenant (Luke 1:54,

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[430] The foreconditionality of divine love will be further discussed below. Stauffer sees this as an example of the responsibilities that come with election. "Jesus loves the rich young ruler with the love of God which summons men to the very highest. But the one who is called starts back." *TDNT* 1:48. Thus, the man forfeits the conditional reward.

[431] H. N. Ridderbos renders it "love to the last breath" and "love in its highest intensity." *The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 452. Thus, it likely means "utterly, completely" as well as "to the end of life," perhaps implying Jesus' own willingness to lay down his life as the "supreme expression of love." R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, 550. So *John 12–21*, 77; Köstenberger, *John*, 402; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 546.

[432] James Moulton notes that "ὁ ἴδιος without a noun expressed" appears in the papyri "as a term of endearment to near relations." *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), 90. See the further discussion of love for one's own as well as the notion of insider and outsider love further below.

[433] σπλάγχνον idiomatically refers to the innards, depicting visceral emotionality. See the word studies above.

58, 72). Divine compassion is depicted as prompted by human need or distress in a number of

Jesus' object lessons.[434] For example, in the parable of the prodigal son, the father saw (ὁράω) his

returning son "still a long way off . . . and felt compassion [σπλαγχνίζομαι] *for him*, and ran and

embraced him and kissed [καταφιλέω] him" (Luke 15:20). Though the son is, by his own

admission, unworthy (ἄξιος), the sight of his return causes compassion to well up in the heart of

the father, turning to joy and celebration (εὐφραίνω) (Luke 15:19, 24). The emotive nature of the

father's response is emphasized in that he ran to greet him, an undignified response according to

the customs and norms of the day.[435] The amazing endurance of the father's compassion

illustrates God's enduring compassion, which surpasses all expectations.[436]

Jesus is again the most frequent agent of mercy and compassion in this corpus, both

descriptive of his divine character of love.[437] Such compassion leads to appropriate action (cf.

Matt 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34). Significantly, such compassion is often prompted by the sight

of someone in distress, describing an emotive response toward its object(s).[438] For example,

Jesus, "seeing [ὁράω] the people, . . . felt compassion [σπλαγχνίζομαι] for them, because they

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[434] In one example, compassion is prompted by sight as is often the case of Christ's compassion. The Samaritan, "when he saw [ὁράω]" a man badly beaten and robbed, "he felt compassion [σπλαγχνίζομαι]" and "took care" (ἐπιμελέομαι) of the fallen Jew and, in this way, "showed mercy [ἔλεος] toward him" (Luke 10:33–34, 37). Thus, "compassion is that which causes us so to identify with another's situation such that we are prepared to act for his or her benefit (cf. 7:13; 15:20). Moreover, the content of the term is not significantly different from that of 'love' in v 27." Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 594. So, also Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1032.

[435] "All of these details are designed to picture the basic emotion expressed. The scene reminds one of the common picture of soldiers returning from a long separation from their families. The emotion is basic to the love that exists within a family and powerfully portrays the love of God." Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1314.

[436] This conception of fatherly mercy and/or compassion is a significant theme in Luke (cf. 6:36; 8:51; 9:42; 11:2, 11, 13; 12:30, 32).

[437] The mercy and compassion shown by Jesus "reveals the mercy and love of God." Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:543. So Köster, *TDNT* 7:554; N. Walter, "σπλαγχνιζομαι," *EDNT* 3:265.

[438] In such instances, the compassion is deeply emotive. Literally it could be rendered "his heart contracted convulsively." Esser, *NIDNTT* 2:599. Such compassion of Jesus was "no condescending pity but rather a loving concern." Stein, *Luke*, 222.

were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36).[439] In other instances, compassion and/or mercy is prompted by need or distress, without the mention of sight, often in direct response to a request[440] and/or the exercise of faith.[441] In a striking example, a man comes to Jesus seeking healing and Jesus is either "moved with compassion" (σπλαγχνίζομαι) or becomes angry (ὀργισθείς) and "sternly" (ἐμβριμάομαι) warns the man to keep quiet about his healing (Mark 1:41, 43–44).[442] It is notable that in this passage Jesus' action is explicitly

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[439] Cf. Mark 6:34. Elsewhere, Jesus "saw a large crowd, and felt compassion [σπλαγχνίζομαι] for them and healed their sick" (Matt 14:14). Yet again, "when the Lord saw [ὁράω] a widow of Nain, He felt compassion [σπλαγχνίζομαι] for her, and said to her, 'Do not weep'" and proceeded to raise her son from the dead (Luke 7:13).

[440] For instance, a man pleads with Jesus to "have mercy [ἐλεέω]" on his son who is a "lunatic" and "very ill" and "often falls into the fire and into the open water" (Matt 17:15). In Mark's account the father cries for "pity" (σπλαγχνίζομαι) and "help" (βοηθέω) from Jesus for his son who is often thrown into fire and water by a demon (Mark 9:22). Notice the close relationship of ἐλεέω and σπλαγχνίζομαι in the parallel accounts. The affirmative response of Jesus in healing the boy indicates that Jesus indeed had mercy/compassion in this instance. Later in Matthew, Jesus heals two blind men in response to their call for "mercy" (ἐλεέω) being "moved with compassion" (σπλαγχνίζομαι) (Matt 20:30–31, 34). Further, a Canaanite woman pleads for and receives mercy saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed" (Matt 15:32). Later, lepers call to Jesus for "mercy" (ἐλεέω) and are not disappointed (Luke 17:13; cf. 18:13). Elsewhere, without any recorded request, Jesus responds to the hunger of a large group of people, declaring to his disciples, "I feel compassion [σπλαγχνίζομαι] for the people" because they had not eaten for three days (Matt 15:32; cf. Mark 8:2). France renders this emotion, "Jesus' heart went out to them." *The Gospel of Matthew*, 763. The OT is replete with examples of human entreaty to God for mercy and/or compassion (cf. Ps 132:2–3). Such instances "frequently invoke God's love as a motive for such assistance." Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 661.

[441] Elsewhere, Jesus responds to the calls of two blind men for "mercy" (ἐλεέω) (Matt 9:27; cf. Mark 10:47–48; Luke 18:38–39). Significantly, in all three Synoptic accounts the mercy is explicitly stated as a response to faith, though in Mark and Luke's accounts only one blind man is explicitly mentioned (Matt 9:29; Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42). Lane comments, "Jesus did not exercise his power arbitrarily or impersonally but in the context of a genuine involvement which established the existence of faith sufficient to receive the gift of healing from God." *The Gospel of Mark*, 388. See also Stein, *Luke*, 464; Brooks, *Mark*, 174. Cf. Luke 5:20; 8:48; 17:19.

[442] In this verse there is "a genuine textual dilemma" as to whether σπλαγχνίζομαι is original or the term ὀργισθείς, which would signify anger, should be read here. Both verbs are used numerous times in Jesus' ministry. Only a few texts support ὀργισθείς but it is the *lectio difficilior* and preferred by some for that reason, as well as its correspondence to ἐμβριμᾶσθαι in 1:43 and the fact that it does not appear in the parallel passages in the Synoptics. See, among others, Brooks, *Mark*, 55; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 115; *Mark 1–8:26*, 72; W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 84. Metzger, on the other hand, argues for σπλαγχνίζομαι. *A Textual Commentary*, 76. So, also, Ernst Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu. Eine Erklärung des Markus-Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen* (Bd 6; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966), 94–96. If the reading "anger" is correct, Jesus may be angered not by the man's request but perhaps at the suffering itself, or perhaps at his sorrow at the lack of faith around him in contrast to this faith-filled request stirs his emotions. For other proposals regarding the reading of "anger," see Brooks, *Mark*, 55–56; France, *The*

voluntary: He states, "I am willing [θέλω]; be cleansed" (Mark 1:41). As such, his will appears to be closely associated with being moved to compassion. In all this, Christ is "above all . . . the one who cares."[443]

However, while divine compassion is unmerited, it is not depicted as unconditional, rather it presumes appropriate response, including showing compassion to others, and can even be forfeited. Jesus quotes from the OT that he desires (θέλω) "compassion" (ἔλεος) rather than sacrifice (Matt 9:13; similarly, Matt 12:7). Accordingly humans are expected to reflect God's character and "be merciful [οἰκτίρμων], just as your Father is merciful [οἰκτίρμων]" (Luke 6:36; cf. Matt 5:44–48).[444] Jesus further states, "Blessed are the merciful [ἐλεήμων], for they shall receive mercy [ἐλεέω]" (Matt 5:7; cf. 5:7; 7:2; 1 John 4:11; Jas 2:13).[445] The reception of divine mercy, then, is conditional upon being merciful. Similarly, Luke quotes from the OT that God's "mercy [ἔλεος] is upon generation after generation toward those who fear [φοβέομαι] him" thus continuing the emphasis on the contingent reception of divine mercy (Luke 1:50; cf. Exod 20:6; Ps 103:17 [LXX 102:17]).[446]

Gospel of Mark, 117–18; W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 84. Brooks points out that "even if 'with compassion' is not the original reading, the compassion of Jesus comes out clearly in the fact that he touched the leper. Such a thing was unheard of and made Jesus ceremonially unclean." Ibid.

[443] France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 265. Hendriksen adds, "The sorrows of the people are Christ's own sorrows, for he dearly loves these burdened ones. He feels deeply for them, and is eager to help them. On the subject of the Lord's sympathy see also 8:17; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 5:19; 6:34; Luke 7:13." *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, 439.

[444] A similar statement appears in the Targum on Lev 22:28 and the concept is frequent in Judaism. See Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 604.

[445] This recalls the expectation of appropriate response within mutual relationship included in the meaning of חסד in the OT. Cf. Bultmann, *TDNT* 2:482. Interestingly, in one instance, the mercies given by a human being are recognized by God, when an angel appears to Cornelius and proclaims, "Your prayers and alms [ἐλεημοσύνη] have ascended as a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4).

[446] For Marshall, the reciprocality of this verse is evident even in the terminology as a translation of חסד in which it "takes on the nuance of an attitude arising from a mutual relationship, 'faithfulness.'" *The Gospel of Luke*, 83.

The necessity of appropriate response is highlighted in the parable of the unforgiving servant. The debt holder "felt compassion" (σπλαγχνίζομαι) for his servant and released him from a massive debt (Matt 18:27).[447] Yet, because of the lack of that servant's mercy toward his own debtor, the penalty was reinstated (Matt 18:33). This displays conditionality regarding the retention of compassion. The reception of compassion created a moral obligation to likewise show compassion and, thus, the servant should "have had mercy [ἐλεέω]" on his fellow slave "in the same way that [the master] had mercy [ἐλεέω] on" him (Matt 18:33).[448] As such, divine compassion and mercy are here depicted as foreconditional, that is, they are given to the undeserving servant freely but then forfeited by the failure to show mercy to others (cf. Matt 6:12, 14–15).[449] The foreconditional nature of mercy and compassion complements the foreconditional nature of love, the NT textual evidence for which will be taken up just after this section on divine mercy and compassion.

Divine Mercy, Compassion, and Passion in the Pauline Writings

Divine concern is also evident in the Pauline writings.[450] While God is concerned to prescribe merciful treatment of oxen, he is even more concerned about the merciful treatment and just compensation of human laborers (1 Cor 9:9–10).[451] Further concern is evident in the language

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[447] The clause "felt compassion" signifies a decision that is not derived merely from "calculation" but responsive to need. "The king is moved by a visceral compassion (*splanchnistheis*, Matt 18:27) when he hears his debtor's supplications and forgives the whole debt; but the latter shuts out all feelings of pity." Spicq, *TLNT* 1:476.

[448] See Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 540. Nolland, similarly, refers to it in the category of "moral necessities." *The Gospel of Matthew*, 760.

[449] In all this, "God will treat us according to the way we treat our brethren. The motivation for brotherly compassion is imitation of God; which puts the emphasis on the interiority and sincerity of the forgiveness." Spicq, *TLNT* 1:477.

[450] Perhaps the greatest evidence of divine concern and passibility is the oft-mentioned suffering ("passion") of Jesus (Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24).

[451] Paul here applies the law against muzzling an ox while threshing paradigmatically to human beings of divine concern. Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 407–8; Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 687.

of reciprocal knowledge between God and humans. Some "have come to know God, or rather to be known by God" and thus should not be turning back to "worthless elemental things" (Gal 4:9; cf. 1 John 4:10). Here, the swift transition from knowing God to being known by him by use of the construction "or rather" (μᾶλλον δέ) emphasizes the priority of the divine initiative without nullifying the human response in such reciprocal, relational knowledge.[452] Elsewhere, Paul speaks of being "jealous [ζηλόω] for you with a godly jealousy [θεοῦ ζήλῳ]; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin" (2 Cor 11:2).[453] Apparently, Paul is vicariously manifesting God's zeal for his people who are to be presented to Christ as a pure bride, mirroring the theme of God's passionate commitment to an exclusive relationship with his people, found frequently in the context of the marriage metaphor in the OT. Further, divine jealousy, responsive to human action, is apparent in that it is possible to "provoke the Lord to jealousy [παραζηλόω]" (1 Cor 10:21–22).[454]

Mercy and compassion are also primary characteristics of God as grounds of his actions in the Pauline writings. He is "rich [πλούσιος] in mercy [ἔλεος]" and acts for his people "because

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[452] Thus, "our knowing God is conditioned upon his prior knowledge of us." Timothy George, *Galatians* (NAC 30; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 314. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 202; Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 189. Some may view the phrase μᾶλλον δε as a retraction of the first statement. However, the same construction elsewhere may be rendered "all the more" (Acts 5:14) or "yes, rather" in the sense of moreso (Rom 8:34) and "but especially" and "but even more" (1 Cor 14:1, 5). It may also have a contrasting sense as rather or instead (Eph 4:28; 5:11). The point is not that humans may not know God. That would contradict Jesus' statement of reciprocal knowledge of his own in John 10:14. Rather, the point is that any conception that human beings come to know God through their own initiative is utterly false. Such language of reciprocal knowledge is closely associated with love.

[453] The genitive here might be subjective or objective. If the former, it represents God's own jealousy for his people, parallel to that in the OT. So Stumpff, *TDNT* 2:881; Hahn, *NIDNTT* 3:1167. However, it might be a genitive of quality or of origin. See Popkes, *EDNT* 2:100.

[454] While someone might argue that the following clause, "we are not stronger than He, are we" (1 Cor 10:22), means that we are not strong enough to provoke God to jealousy; this would contradict the clear OT teaching that God was often provoked by his people. Rather, the reference to God's strength seems to refer to foolishness of provoking God since we are weak and unable to withstand divine wrath. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474.

of His great love with which He loved" humans (Eph 2:4; cf. Phil 1:8; Eph 4:32).[455] Again, God's "kindness" (χρηστότης) and "love [φιλανθρωπία] for mankind appeared" and "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy [ἔλεος], by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:4–5).[456] There is, then, a close association between divine mercy and love and both function, among other elements including love proper, as the ground and motivation of God's loving action(s), in contrast to human merit.[457]

However, as in the Gospels, the reception and/or retention of divine mercy is not strictly ungrounded or unconditional. For example, Paul is called by divine mercy to apostleship, an undeserved yet not wholly arbitrary or non-evaluative call. The evaluative aspect of the call is apparent in that Paul is thankful that God "considered [him] faithful" and used him despite his former antagonism to Christianity. He was "shown mercy because" he "acted ignorantly in unbelief" and "for this reason" he "found mercy" in accordance with the "more than abundant . . . grace of our Lord" and "the faith and love [ἀγάπη] that are in Christ Jesus,"[458] in order that the

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[455] Here, the motivation of God's action is described. It is an emotive motivation: "διά plus the accusative of words for emotion indicates motivation." Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 100. Also, O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 166. Cf. Exod 34:6; Deut 7:7–9. Elsewhere, the Christians are exhorted to "Be kind [χρηστός] to one another, tender-hearted [εὔσπλαγχνος], forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Eph 4:32). Further, Paul himself "longs" (ἐπιποθέω) "with the affection [σπλάγχνον] of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:8). It is not clear in this latter instance whether the genitive is one of source such that the affection Paul feels comes from Jesus or one of quality, that Paul feels affection akin to that felt by Jesus. Perhaps Paul does not intend a fine distinction between these two. "Paul loves them as Christ loves them and because Christ loves them through him." Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 29. See Fee, *Paul's Letter*, 95.

[456] This is likely related to the frequent basis of God's actions in his abundant lovingkindness (cf. Num 14:19; Neh 13:22; Pss 25:7 [24:7]; 51:1 [50:3]; 106:45 [105:45]; 109:26 [108:26]; 119:88, 124, 149, 159 [all Ps 188]; Lam 3:32, all of which translate חסד with ἔλεος). Such mercy further amounts to the divine healing of Epaphroditus, upon whom God had mercy (ἐλεέω) (Phil 2:27; cf. 2 Cor 4:1–2; 1 Tim 1:2).

[457] Such "salvation was totally unmerited, since we were dead in our trespasses." O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 164. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 100.

[458] It is not clear who the agent of such love is, whether Christ or Paul. For a discussion of this see G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 98.

"perfect patience" (μακροθυμία) of Christ[459] might be demonstrated as an "example" in Paul (1 Tim 1:12–14, 16; cf. 1 Cor 15:9–10). Accordingly, Paul is "by the mercy of the Lord trustworthy" (1 Cor 7:25; cf. Rom 12:1). It is especially striking that the reception of mercy was predicated on Paul's ignorance. As such, divine mercy is here manifested as both unmerited *and* evaluatively responsive.[460] Similarly, it is interesting that Paul calls for God's "mercy" (ἔλεος) to be granted to Onesiphorus and his house, "for [ὅτι] he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord" (2 Tim 1:16–18; cf. Col 3:12).[461] Elsewhere, Paul states, "those who will walk by this rule, peace [εἰρήνη] and mercy [ἔλεος] be upon them, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16; cf. Heb 10:28).[462] At the same time, while divine mercy is neither arbitrary nor

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[459] Importantly, this phrase is intensive referring to the immensity of God's patience but does not denote that it is "unlimited." So Towner, *The Letters*, 149. That God's mercy is not unlimited is apparent in the OT and NT.

[460] That is, though Paul had acted in ways that made him undeserving of mercy, he does not depict divine mercy as arbitrary or non-evaluative. Rather, he speaks of being considered faithful and notes that his ignorance was taken into account as a rationale for mercy. Accordingly, divine mercy is not merely unilateral or arbitrary but may take into account its object. G. W. Knight contends that "because" (ὅτι) does not describe "the reason that Paul was shown mercy, as if his ignorance made him worthy and therefore elicited the mercy" but explains why such sins were not the "defiant or high-handed sin mentioned in the OT" (cf. Num 15:30, 31). *The Pastoral Epistles*, 96. Cf. Towner, *The Letters*, 140. Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., on the other hand, speak of this as a "negative cause of the divine mercy. God demonstrated mercy to Paul because Paul was ignorant of the true nature of Jesus as Lord and Savior. . . . Paul did not sin against better knowledge and commit a willful sin (Heb 10:26)." *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (NAC 34; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 73–74. Accordingly, Paul's ignorance can be a basis (not *the* basis) of mercy without thereby meaning that Paul was in any way worthy. The ultimate priority of God's graciousness is not lessened by such evaluation.

[461] This seems to correspond to the reciprocal nature of חסד in the OT rather than a purely unmotivated mercy. Accordingly, the "elect" are expected to manifest such compassion (cf. Col 3:12).

[462] It is probable that "Israel of God" is epexegetic, in apposition with those who walk by the rule. Many interpreters read it this way. For example, J. Louis Martyn interprets, "As to all those who follow this standard in their lives, let peace and mercy be upon them, that is to say upon the Israel of God." *Galatians* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 559. So, Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 2002), 298. Cf. Ps 125:4–5. On the other hand, some scholars insist that the term "Israel" is never applied to Gentile Christians elsewhere in the NT. So Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (ICC 35; New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1920), 358. But this is not compelling (cf. Rom 9:6 for example). Longenecker correctly argues that it is not impossible that Paul refers to the Gentile converts of Galatia throughout this verse thereby focusing on the essential question of the book: "Who really are the children of Abraham? (cf. esp. 3:6–9, 14, 16, 26–29; 4:21–31)," the answer being: those in Christ. *Galatians*, 298. See the detailed discussion in ibid., 297–98.

altogether unmotivated, it is undeserved and merited and available to all (cf. Rom 9:15–18; 11:30–32).[463] Everyone is undeserving of God's mercy but God has the right to bear longer with some than others (cf. Rom 9:23) in accordance with his wider plan of salvation. In all this, God is the "Father of mercies [οἰκτιρμῶν] and God of all comfort [παράκλησις]" (2 Cor 1:3).[464]

Divine Mercy, Compassion, and Passion in the General Epistles-Revelation

Divine emotion is further evident in that God "remember[s]" and has "concern" (ἐπισκέπτομαι) for humankind (Heb 2:6). Accordingly, God "took them by the hand to lead them" but "they did not continue in" his "covenant, and" therefore he "did not care [ἀμελέω] for them" (Heb 8:9). Here, then, divine concern is conditional and may be forfeited. Yet, later, God declares, "I will be merciful [ἵλεως] to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" (Heb 8:12). Elsewhere God's care is the basis of putting trust in him as Peter exhorts, cast "your

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[463] For instance, consider the oft-misunderstood proclamation of Exod 33:19, quoted by Paul, "I will have mercy [ἐλεέω] on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion [οἰκτίρω] on whom I will have compassion" (Rom 9:15). In Exodus, the quoted statement of Rom 9:15 denotes that God is able to have mercy on the Israelites even though they have sinned with the golden calf. How much more is God able to have mercy upon the Gentiles in NT times? Such compassion and mercy are undeserved but God has the right to bestow it on the undeserving. See also Rom 9:16–18 and the discussion of these verses as well as the wider meaning of Rom 9–11 under the volitional nature of divine love above. In that same vein, Paul argues that many Gentiles have received "mercy because of [Israel's] disobedience" (Rom 11:30) "that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy" (Rom 11:31). Thus, "God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all" (Rom 11:32; cf. 15:9). The deterministic view restricts the second "all" to mean all people in the sense of "both Jews and Gentiles." Schreiner, *Romans*, 629. Others have interpreted this to point toward universalism. However, the parallel meaning of the two uses of "all" is preserved without the contradiction of universalism by understanding that such mercy is not unilaterally efficacious unto salvation. As such, all receive mercy but not all will respond to that mercy (cf. Rom 11:22–23).

[464] For similar Pauline descriptions of God's amazing, loving character, see 2 Cor 13:11; Rom 15:5, 13; 16:20; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16. The merciful and compassionate God is thus also the great comforter. God "comforts [παρακαλέω]" humans who can in turn comfort others as they "are comforted by God" (2 Cor 1:4). Humans may share in the "sufferings" of Christ but likewise the abundant "comfort" (παράκλησις) through Christ (2 Cor 1:5). God also "comforts" (παρακαλέω) the depressed (2 Cor 7:6). However, divine comfort does not take away suffering as such; the situation is much more complex than that. The emphasis on God as comforter corresponds to the OT depiction of the prophets, especially Isaiah. Cf. Isa 40:1; 49:13; 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 61:2; 66:13. Cf. Luke 2:25.

anxiety on Him, because He cares [μέλω] for you" (1 Pet 5:7).[465] Similarly, Jesus is able to "sympathize [συμπαθέω] with our weaknesses" (Heb 4:15; cf. 2:18; 5:8).[466]

Elsewhere, divine passion of God appears as a "consuming fire [καταναλίσκω]" (Heb 12:29). His passionate love for his people is accordingly the basis of "a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury [ζῆλος] of a fire which will consume the adversaries" (Heb 10:27; cf. Isa 26:11).[467] God's wrath is provoked by Israel, for God was repeatedly "tried," "tested" (δοκιμασία), and "grieved" by his people (Heb 3:8–10; cf. 3:15; Pss 94:4; 95:9–11). The relationship of concern and love to discipline appears when Jesus states, "Those whom I love [φιλέω], I reprove [ἐλέγχω] and discipline [παιδεύω]; therefore be zealous and repent" (Rev 3:19).[468] Discipline itself is a manifestation of God's love, which looks for the ultimate well-being of its objects.

In this corpus it is likewise clear that mercy, along with other elements, is a central characteristic of God's love (cf. 2 John 3; Jude 2) and a basis of salvation. Thus, God's "great mercy [ἔλεος] has caused us to be born again" (1 Pet 1:3; cf. 2:10). This central characteristic of mercy is also exemplified in Jesus who became a "merciful [ἐλεήμων] and faithful [πιστός] high priest" (Heb 2:17).[469] Accordingly, Jesus can "sympathize [συμπαθέω] with our weaknesses [ἀσθένεια]," having been tempted (Heb 4:15).

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[465] God is thus "concerned with the affairs of man." Davids, *The First Epistle*, 188. "He has compassion on his children and will sustain them in every distress." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 241.

[466] The word, from which the English "sympathy" is derived, literally means to feel something with someone. "In its fullest sense sympathy is a bond similar to a mother's feeling for her children (4 Macc 13:13–14; 15:4, 7, 11) or one brother's feeling for another (4 Macc 13:23)." Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews* (AB 36; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 283. As in the rest of the NT, the sufferings of Jesus are frequently mentioned (Heb 2:9–10; 9:26; 13:12; 1 Pet 1:11; 2:21, 23; 4:1; 5:1).

[467] In the LXX parallel of Isa 26:11 this divine passion is in favor of his people. It is his passionate love, which manifests itself in fury against those who hurt his children.

[468] William Barclay takes φιλέω here as "the warmest and most tender affection." *The Revelation of John* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 1:182.

[469] Notice the association of mercy with faithfulness, which may reflect the חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת construction

Divine mercy, which itself motivates God's salvific action, is available only through Jesus; because of him humans can draw close to the throne of grace and "receive mercy and find grace" (Heb 4:16).[470] Accordingly, the "beloved" are to be careful and "keep" themselves "in the love [ἀγάπη] of God" in a state of "waiting anxiously for the mercy [ἔλεος]" of Jesus "to eternal life" (Jude 1:21; cf. Heb 4:6). In another instance, it is implied that endurance is rewarded out of God's abundant compassion and mercy. God "is full of compassion [πολύσπλαγχνος] and *is* merciful [οἰκτίρμων]" and, therefore, those who endure can be sure of their reward (Jas 5:11; cf. Exod 34:6; Sir 2:11).[471] Likewise, conditionality is apparent in the statement that "judgment *will be* merciless [ἀνέλεος] to one who has shown no mercy [ἔλεος]; mercy [ἔλεος] triumphs over judgment" (Jas 2:13). The condition, then, of receiving mercy is bestowing mercy. The key is one's heart disposition.[472] Conversely, "anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses" (Heb 10:28).[473]

Accordingly, divine mercy may be forfeited. Thus, while God "took them [Israel] by the hand to lead them . . . they did not continue in" his "covenant" and he "did not care [ἀμελέω] for them" (Heb 8:9). However, later, in the new covenant, he "will be merciful [ἵλεως] to their iniquities" and "will remember [μιμνήσκομαι] their sins no more" (Heb 8:12). Importantly,

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of the OT. Cf. Deut 7:9; cf. Exod 34:6; Deut 26:16–19. See also the likely allusion to Ps 145:8 [144:8 in LXX].

[470] Here, again, there is a significant association between mercy and grace, which W. L. Lane refers to here as "closely allied and essential aspects of God's love." *Hebrews 1–8* (WBC 47A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 116.

[471] Notably, earlier in the verse the "endurance of Job" is mentioned and the pericope of Jas 5:7–11 is about the reward of the patient and enduring.

[472] For L. T. Johnson, the "law of freedom" is "identified as essentially about love and mercy. Failure to live by it . . . means one will be judged on that basis." *James*, 234. Cf. Matt 18:23–25; 25:34–46. R. P. Martin notes the contrast between the "lovers of the world" in Jas 4:4 and "Abraham, the friend of God" in 2:23. "At the final judgment Abraham's life of faith will be pronounced righteous because he demonstrated it through deeds pleasing to God; but at the same judgment those who fail to honor God by their works will find no mercy (cf. 2:13)." *James*, 148.

[473] See Heb 4:14; 2 Esd 7:33.

however, while there is continuity with regard to the corporate object (Israel) of the mercy that is bestowed in Heb 8:12, the individual agents are different. In other words, those who forfeited the mercy in the wilderness are not the beneficiaries of God's extended mercy in the covenant he makes "with the house of Israel after those days" (Heb 8:10).

Kinship Metaphors

The relational responsiveness that provides the context for divine-human relationships including election, covenant, and blessing/discipline, as well as aspects of conditionality and unconditionality, is conveyed quite powerfully in kinship metaphors including those of parent-child and marriage. These stand at the junction of the emotional nature of divine love and the foreconditional and reciprocal aspects of God's love, depicting the strong affection as well as the reciprocity expected of the divine-human relationship that God seeks with his creatures.

Kinship Metaphors in the Gospels-Acts

The marriage analogy frequently depicts the God-human love relationship in this corpus. Just as God is depicted as the husband of his people in the OT, Jesus takes on the role of the bridegroom who will metaphorically wed his bride, the church (Matt 9:15; 25:1, 5–6, 10; Mark 2:19–20; Luke 5:34–35; John 3:29). This marriage metaphor forms the background of Jesus' identification of the "adulterous" (μοιχαλίς) generation, which heeds not his words (Matt 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38). The contingency of this special divine-human relationship is apparent when the conditionality of being part of the wedding party is depicted in the parable of the ten virgins (cf. Matt 25:10).

The parental analogy is likewise prominent in the Gospels. First and foremost it depicts the intra-trinitarian relationship of the Father and the Son. Thus, Christ is the true Son of God, often spoken of as his "beloved" son (cf. Matt 3:17).[474] Christ is thus the fulfillment of the OT

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[474] Repeatedly, reference is made to Christ as the Son of the Father throughout the NT. Here and

sonship and, as such, the divine promises are appropriated to and through him (cf. Matt 2:15). Moreover, God is the "Father" of Christ whom he loves (John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17) and of his human creatures whom he loves (John 14:21, 23; 16:27).[475] Indeed, the Father loves his human children even as he has loved the Son (John 17:23). This Fatherhood of God depicts his personal and intimate relationship to his creatures, a relationship that is dynamic and full of affectionate concern and appropriate emotion. Moreover, the Son loves the father (John 14:31) and the human children love the Father (Matt 22:37; cf. John 5:42; 8:42; 1 John 5:1), the Son (John 14:21, 23), and are to love one another in the same way (John 13:34).

Accordingly, humans are repeatedly referred to as children (cf. Mark 10:24; John 13:33) even "children [τέκνον] of God" (John 11:5).[476] Yet, this relationship requires appropriate response. Thus, it is those who respond to God that may be "sons [υἱός] of God" (Matt 5:9, 45; Luke 6:35; 20:36).[477] Although God is the "father of all" (cf. Eph 4:6) as their Creator, status as born-again children of God is neither natural nor automatic (cf. Matt 8:12).[478] Those who become God's children are adopted; "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).[479] Accordingly, those "who were born, not of blood nor of the will

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elsewhere in this section only a few examples are given out of many.

[475] God is also identified as "Father" to his human creatures in Matt 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8–9, 14–15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11; 10:20, 29; 13:43; 18:14; 23:9; Luke 6:36; 11:2, 13; 12:30, 32; John 20:17; cf. Luke 15:12, 17–18, 20–22, 27–29. Of course, the identification of God as "Father" in general or to Christ as Son is extremely frequent throughout the NT.

[476] In continuity with the OT parental metaphor, Christ came to the "daughter of Zion" as her king (Matt 21:5; John 12:15). Moreover, this NT concept of Christians as children of God clearly picks up on the OT emphasis on Israel as God's chosen/adopted son (cf. Exod 4:22–23; Hos 11:1; Deut 32:18; Jer 31:9).

[477] John, however, reserves this term for Christ; humans may be children but not υἱός of God, though "sons of light" comes close (John 12:36). This is likely to distinguish the nature of his sonship from all others.

[478] Even the "sons of the kingdom" may ultimately be lost for their rejection of Christ (Matt 8:12).

[479] Similar response is apparent in that "unless one is born [γεννάω] of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). R. E. Brown sees a distinction between Paul's language of adoption and John's language of begetting. *The Epistles of John*, 389. Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, "The Pivot

[θέλημα] of the flesh nor of the will [θέλημα] of man, but of God" (John 1:13).[480] This adoption is

thus predicated on the divine will, but is neither unilateral nor unconditional but requires

appropriate response.[481] Accordingly, Jesus described such status conditionally: "Blessed are the

peacemakers, for they shall be called sons [υἱός] of God" (Matt 5:9; cf. Matt 13:43). Similarly,

Jesus exhorts humans to love their enemies "so that you may be sons [υἱός] of your Father

[πατήρ] who is in heaven" (Matt 5:44–45; cf. Luke 6:35).

As such, humans become children of God through Christ, the true Son, as adoptees. The

fullness of this transfer of status is apparent when Jesus states, "I ascend to My Father and your

Father, and My God and your God" (John 20:17). As God's adopted children, believers are

brothers and sisters to Christ and to one another.[482] But once again, this applies in a particular

manner to those who respond appropriately to God as Jesus states, "Whoever does the will of My

Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt 12:50; cf. Mark 3:35;

Luke 8:21).[483]

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of John's Prologue," *NTS* 27 (1980): 1–31. In contrast are those who are of their "father the devil" and the "sons of the devil" (John 8:44; Acts 13:10).

[480] "John 1:12–13 strikes the balance between human responsibility ('to receive,' 'to believe') and divine sovereignty ('born of God')." Köstenberger, *John*, 38. Similarly, Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 115.

[481] "All are his [the Father's] sons in the sense that he made them and that he provides for them. But people are his sons in the full sense only as they respond to what he does for them in Christ." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 87. "The 'children,' then, are those who believe." Ibid. So Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 141. Cf. Matt 5:9.

[482] Christ refers to the followers as "brothers" to one another (Luke 22:32; cf. 15:27, 32) and they themselves refer to one another as "brethren" (John 21:23; Acts 6:3; 9:30). In many instances the term seems to refer to a Jew speaking to other Jews (cf. Rom 9:3; this is especially the case in many instances in Acts) but the language also refers to Christians, including Gentile Christians. Significantly, Jesus even refers to his "brothers" in a seemingly universal sense (Matt 25:40) but the term is also specifically applied to his followers (Matt 12:49–50; 28:10; Mark 3:34–35; Luke 8:21; John 20:17).

[483] Thus, "the disciples of Jesus are his true family because they follow his teaching." Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 360. Cf. similarly Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 519. "It is the performance of the will of God which is decisive in determining kinship with Jesus." W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, 148.

Kinship Metaphors in the Pauline Writings

Similarly, in the Pauline writings, Christ is compared to the husband and the church to his bride whom he "loved" and for whom he "gave Himself up" (Eph 5:23–27) and to whom the church is "betrothed . . . as a pure virgin" (2 Cor 11:2).[484] The parental analogy is also integral in the Pauline writings where Christ is the Father's true Son, "His beloved [ἀγάπη] Son" (Col 1:13). Likewise, God is the "Father" to his human children, "the beloved of God" (Rom 1:7).[485] Accordingly, humans are repeatedly referred to as the "children of God" (Rom 8:16–17, 21; 9:7–8; Phil 2:15; cf. Gal 4:28; Eph 5:1, 8). Importantly, however, this relationship is conditional. Though the Israelites were God's elect and, as such, his children, Paul proclaims they are not all "children because they are Abraham's descendants" for "it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants" (Rom 9:7–8; cf. Rom 9:26–27; 1 Pet 3:6). Rather, "all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14).[486] Moreover, Christians are to "prove" themselves "blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach" (Phil 2:15; cf. Eph 5:8). Thus, those who respond to the divine overture may be "sons [υἱός] of God" (Rom 8:14, 19; 9:26; 2 Cor 6:18; Gal 3:26; 4:6–7).

Therefore, although there is universality to divine love evident in the NT, the Father's love is directed in a particular way toward those who have entered into a "kinship" relationship with him and are thus "beloved" (Rom 1:7).[487] This status is only possible in and through Christ: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26). In this same vein, the OT

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[484] Interestingly, Paul is here "jealous with a godly jealousy" that they be pure to present to Christ. This relates to the significant meaning of divine passion in the OT, specifically God's passion for exclusive relationship with his bride.

[485] Elsewhere the fatherhood of God toward humans appears in Rom 8:15; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3–4; 4:6; Eph 1:2; 4:6; Phil 1:2; 4:20; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:3; 3:11, 13; 2 Thess 1:1; 2:16; Phlm 1:3.

[486] In contrast are the "sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2; 5:6; Col 3:6).

[487] As has been seen, the "beloved" are specifically those who have responded to God's loving overtures. Thus, God is the "the Father of those who believe." Mounce, *Romans*, 64.

covenant language is explicitly appropriated in language kingship when Paul exhorts them to separate from any hint of idolatry and quotes God's proclamation: "I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me" (2 Cor 6:18). Such father-child relationality is here specifically contingent upon the forsaking of idolatry and, accordingly, entering into an exclusive relationship.

Accordingly, this status as God's children is neither natural nor automatic, for Christians were previously "children of wrath" (Eph 2:3). Yet, humans might receive "adoption as sons" only through Christ, that is, "in the Beloved" (Eph 1:5–6; similarly, Rom 8:23; Gal 4:5–6; cf. Rom 9:4).[488] Christians, then, have "received a spirit of adoption as sons" by which they "cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" and are "fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:15, 17).[489] Christians are therefore "brethren" of one another and of Christ, through Christ, and, as such, should love one another (cf. 1 Thess 4:9).[490] Indeed, the plan of salvation was instituted so that Christ "would be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29; cf. 1 Cor 8:12).

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[488] This terminology of "adoption as sons" is akin to that in Greco-Roman law of those who were not sons by birth. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 25. There is some continuity to this metaphor with respect to the OT covenants and Israel "to whom belongs the adoption as sons . . . and the covenants" (Rom 9:4). "It is only through the work of God's *Son*, the Beloved, that believers can be adopted as *sons* (cf. Eph 4:13; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 3:26; 4:4, 5)." O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 103. Cf. M. Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 83, 86; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 254; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 103; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 27. Thus, "the term 'Beloved'" used of Christians "shows that God's election of believers to be his sons and daughters is intimately related to their being in Christ the Chosen One (cf. v. 5), and that the bounty which he lavishes on them 'consists in their being caught up into the love which subsists between the Father and the Son' (cf. John 3:35; 5:20; 17:23, 26)." O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 104–5. Similarly, Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 27.

[489] Consider Francis Lyall's contention that Paul uses the concept of adoption from Roman law intentionally to illustrate that the "believer" is adopted and "made part of God's family forever, with reciprocal duties and rights." "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption," *JBL* 88 (1969): 466. On the other hand, James M. Scott argues convincingly that the OT covenants form the background of this Pauline language. *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Huiothesia in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT; Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1992).

[490] Thus, Christians repeatedly refer to one another as "brethren" (John 21:23; Acts 6:3; 9:30; Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 1:8; Gal 1:2, 11; Eph 6:23; Phil 1:12; Col 1:2; 4:7; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 1:3; 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 4:21; cf. 2 John 1:13). Note also the language used of individuals, for instance "our sister Phoebe" (Rom 16:1) or "Sosthenes our brother" (1 Cor 1:1). That the category of brethren is not automatic is implied when Paul refers to some who are immoral, etc., as a "so-called brother" (1 Cor 5:11). Likewise, a brother may need to be turned back lest he be lost (Jas 5:19–20). Further, NT authors frequently refer to

Kinship Metaphors in the General
Epistles-Revelation

In this corpus the marriage and parental metaphors again appear with great significance.

In Revelation, the church is depicted as Christ's bride made ready for her wedding (Rev 19:7; cf.

Rev 21:2, 9; 22:17). The marriage metaphor of the OT is also the background to the concept that

friendship (φιλία) with the world is hostility to God in Jas 4:4. In other words, those who love the

world are guilty of "spiritual adultery" and thus James begins the verse with the address: "You

adulteresses" (μοιχαλίς).[491] The parental metaphor also appears when Jesus is again identified as

the true Son of the Father, his "beloved Son" (2 Pet 1:17). Through his sonship, others may be

children of God. Thus, God is the "Father" of his human children upon whom he has bestowed

great love "that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1). Accordingly, reference is

made to those who are "beloved in God the Father" (Jude 1).[492] Moreover, as in the previous

sections of the NT, human beings are even referred to as God's sons (υἱός) (Heb 12:5–8; Rev

21:7) and "children [τέκνον] of God" (1 John 3:1–2, 10; 5:2; cf. 2 John 1:1, 4, 13). But not all

humans are God's children in this manner. Rather, those who become God's children are adopted;

according to the "great love" that the "Father has bestowed" Christians might be "called children

of God" (1 John 3:1).[493] In order to become such a child of God, appropriate response is required.

Christians as "beloved brethren" (1 Cor 15:58; Phil 4:1; Jas 1:16, 19; 2:5) or to individuals as "beloved brother" (Eph 6:21; 1 Cor 4:7, 9; Phlm 1:16; 2 Pet 3:15; cf. 1 Tim 6:2; Phlm 1:1; 3 John 5). See further the connection between being "beloved" and "brethren" further below.

[491] So Moo, *The Letter of James*, 186; L. T. Johnson, *James*, 279; K. A. Richardson, *James*, 178.

[492] Elsewhere, God is depicted as the "Father" of humans in Heb 12:7; Jas 1:27; 3:9.

[493] "To them he gave authority to become God's children; they were not so by nature (contrary to the Gnostics!), but became such by authorization of the Logos. This implies a concept of adoption, which in v 13 gives way to that of regeneration (the theme is developed in 3:1–21)." Beasley-Murray, *John*, 13. Moreover, "being a child of God is neither a quality possessed by all nor an exclusive prerogative for Israelites; it is an entitlement for those who believe in the Word. . . . This assumes that, in one sense, sinful people are not God's children, even though they are created by God, unless and until they believe in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 3:1–2)." Köstenberger, *John*, 39. So, also R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII*, 3. Notice, the two verses immediately previous, therein John exhorts the "children" to "abide in Him" so as not to "shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (1 John 2:28) and then it speaks of those who

Thus, "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son [υἱός]" (Rev 21:7). Further, the contingency of this status is evident in the exhortation "brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble" (2 Pet 1:10; cf. 1 Pet 3:6). Likewise, such familial status is not guaranteed for "Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (Heb 3:6). Because such status might be forfeited, the Father's loving concern for such sons may be manifested in discipline when necessary without which they are "illegitimate children and not sons" (Heb 12:6–8; cf. Rev 3:19).[494] Further, once again this section of the NT follows through with the analogy such that those who are children of God are the "brethren" of Christ and of one another.[495] As brethren, the children of God are to love one another (cf. 1 Pet 1:22; 2:17).[496]

The Foreconditional Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that lead to the conclusion that divine love is foreconditional, not altogether unconditional.[497] First, divine love is prior to all other love and

practice righteousness as having been "born [γεννάω] of him" (1 John 2:29). Accordingly, such status as children requires appropriate response and perseverance.

[494] Importantly, this loving discipline is aimed at eliciting a zealous repentant response. Such love is explicitly a love of concern, which expects a response. The discipline, as in the OT, is for their good (cf. 1 Cor 11:32). Accordingly, "God's stern hatred of evil is a necessary part of his love for people." Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 112.

[495] Thus, Christians refer to one another as "brethren" (Heb 3:1; Jas 1:2; 1 Pet 5:9; 2 Pet 1:10; 1 John 3:13; 3 John 1:3; Rev 19:10; cf. Rev 12:10) and are Christ's "brethren" (Heb 2:17). Moreover, "both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2:11; cf. 2:12).

[496] The one who does not love his brother is not a child of God but a child of the devil (cf. 1 John 2:9–11; 3:10, 14–17; 4:20–21; 5:1–2; cf. 3 John 1). Accordingly, the status as child of God is conditional upon, and manifest by, love. Cf. Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 150; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 126.

[497] By the term "foreconditional" I mean that God's love is offered prior to any conditions but not exclusive to conditions. Accordingly, that God's love is foreconditional affirms that: (1) divine love is prior to any human initiative or response – it holds sole primacy regarding the divine-human love relationship. (2) God chooses to bestow his love prior to and independent of human desert or merit. (3) God's love expects and ultimately requires an appropriate human response, even if that response is merely the intention

conditions though it is not thereby altogether unconditional. Second, divine love is unmerited but not altogether unconditional. Third, divine love, as evaluative, is also conditional and may be forfeited. Therefore, it is not strictly unmotivated, spontaneous, disinterested, indifferent, or unconditional. Fourth, divine love is unconditional with respect to God's volition, but conditional with respect to divine evaluation. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Is divine love altogether unconditional, spontaneous, or ungrounded?[498] Is divine love mere beneficence? Is divine love altogether unmerited? Can divine love be forfeited, lost, discontinued and, if so, how and why?

Before we survey the NT evidence regarding these questions, the major theme of whether God's beneficent actions are altogether gratuitous, "disinterested generous love," or can be conditional upon human response must be answered.[499] Thus, this section will begin with an excursus regarding the (fore)conditional nature of divine blessing and thereafter attention will be turned to a survey of the NT evidence with regard to the questions that circle around the conditionality vs. the unconditionality of love.

of responding to God in love.

[498] It is frequently asserted that divine love is altogether unconditional. Thus, Morris comments, "we must clearly recognize that God's love is unconditional." Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 31. Likewise, Stauffer contends that Paul refers to "God's unconditional sovereignty in loving and hating, electing and rejecting (R. 9:13, 25)." *TDNT* 1:49. This claim is often (but not always) connected to the popular view that ἀγάπη signifies a uniquely divine and unilateral gift love. Importantly, as has been seen, the term ἀγάπη is "often used by biblical writers to mean something other than unmotivated or spontaneous love." Oord, "Matching Theology," 139. See the word study of the ἀγαπάω word group above.

[499] For instance, consider Spicq's claim that divine ἀγάπη is identical to "charity" (think *caritas*) such that God's love is always giving love and amounts to "disinterested generous love." *TLNT* 1:8, 13. This is in keeping with his view that ἀγάπη love takes place within a benefactor-benefactee relationship where the superior's ἀγάπη is gift love and the inferior's love is "first of all consent, welcome, acceptance" and "gratitude . . . the love inspired in turn by generous love." Ibid., 13. Thus, he refers to it as "the voluntary, purely gratuitous love which is authentic charity." Idem, *Agape*, 1:85. Nygren and others who follow his view agree with the first part, that divine love is always gratuitous and disinterested, but contend that real human love toward God is impossible. Love from humans to God is really God's own love flowing through humans to himself. See the historical survey of divine love in chapter 2 on this view.

The Conditional Aspect of Divine Beneficence

Divine love is not to be conflated with beneficence, though the latter is an aspect and outgrowth of the former. For instance, love does not always refer to something akin to blessing. For example, Jesus tells the story of a moneylender who "graciously forgave" (χαρίζομαι) the debts of two individuals. Importantly, the one whose debt was greater "will love him more [πλεῖον ἀγαπήσει]" (Luke 7:42–43; cf. 47). Notably, love is here proportionate to the greatness of forgiveness. Moreover, such "love" of the forgiven toward their benefactor cannot itself refer to active blessing since they have nothing tangible to give him. It is in this case a feeling or disposition of love. Love and blessing are therefore not identical.

Without confusing the two concepts, however, their close association should be recognized. This close relationship between divine love and blessing is apparent in numerous instances such as the many references to God's love as the basis of his salvific action and adoption of human beings (cf. among many others Titus 3:4–5; 1 John 3:1). According to such love, God always does what is in the best interest of those he loves, even if that is not immediate blessing but, instead, discipline. Thus, "whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives" (Heb 12:6) just as fathers discipline their sons (Heb 12:5, 7). God always disciplines humans for their good (Heb 12:10). Likewise Jesus proclaims, "Those whom I love [φιλέω], I reprove and discipline, therefore be zealous and repent" (Rev 3:19). Love is thus not exclusive to judgment. On the other hand, God pours out his gifts and blessings abundantly upon human beings (cf. Eph 1:3; Heb 6:14; Jas 1:17). As such, divine blessing is often described in terms akin to grace, that is, as benefits to the undeserving. Thus, in accordance with his "kindness" (χρηστότης) and "love for mankind" (φιλανθρωπία) God has saved humans "not on the basis of [our righteous] deeds" but "according to His mercy [ἔλεος]" (Titus 3:4–5).[500]

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[500] Moreover, his "grace . . . He freely bestowed" and his grace he has "lavished on us" and has made known his will "according to His good pleasure" (Eph 1:6–9).

Yet, while the divine decision is the necessary condition of blessing and grace, it is not always a sufficient condition. Indeed, the reception of divine grace is often contingent upon appropriate response.[501] Thus, divine blessings, even eschatological rewards, are often conditioned upon appropriate human disposition and/or response to God, including love and/or associated loving action.[502] Thus, "God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name" in ministering (Heb 6:10).[503] Elsewhere, Paul interprets the fact that all nations will be blessed in Abraham to mean "those who of faith are blessed," thus making the reception of blessing contingent on faith (Gal 3:8–9).[504] Likewise, he states, "grace [χάρις] be with all those who love [ἀγαπάω] our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible [ἀφθαρσία] love" (Eph 6:24).[505] Elsewhere, the reception of blessing appears to be on the basis of obedience: We receive what we ask "because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing [ἀρεστός] in his sight" (1 John 3:22).[506] Again, the one "abides by" the law and is an "effectual doer," the same "will be blessed in what he does" (Jas 1:25; cf. Luke 11:28).[507] Thus, humans

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[501] This is in close connection with the OT conception of conditional blessing, itself most prominently featured within the framework of covenant.

[502] On this idea of blessings attached to love for God, see Deut 11:13–14, 22–23; 19:9.

[503] "Toward his name" almost surely refers to love toward God himself. So Koester, *Hebrews*, 312. Notice here the evaluative judgment. In this way, God is a "rewarder [μισθαποδότης]" of "those who seek him" (Heb 11:6; cf. Jas 1:5–7). The phrase, "those who seek him" likely corresponds to "those who love him" elsewhere. Loving God and seeking God are frequently associated in the OT, especially in Deuteronomy. Importantly, here the reward is likewise predicated on faith, which is itself the only way one might please God. Similarly, Luke quotes from the OT that God's "mercy [ἔλεος] is upon generation after generation toward those who fear [φοβέομαι] him" (Luke 1:50; cf. Acts 10:35).

[504] "So then, it is those whose identity is derived from faith who are blessed with faithful Abraham." Martyn, *Galatians*, 294.

[505] The referent and meaning of "incorruptible" here are the subject of much debate. See Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 415–16. However, whatever the precise function of that construction, the emphasis of the verse is on the reward associated with human love toward God.

[506] Likewise, the ground that produces useful vegetation "receives a blessing [εὐλογία] from God," a metaphor for the blessings contingent upon covenant faithfulness (Heb 6:7).

[507] Interestingly, Moo sees the blessing as most likely salvific. *The Letter of James*, 95. Cf. Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 100. "There is always a direct connection between receiving the gifts of God and

who "love" their "enemies" will receive a great reward (μισθός)[508] and be "sons of the Most High" (Luke 6:35; cf. 27) but those who "love" the praise of men have received their reward already (Matt 6:5; cf. Luke 14:14).[509]

Ultimately, things wonderful beyond imagining are "prepared for those who love" God (1 Cor 2:9; cf. Isa 64:4).[510] There is a "crown of righteousness"[511] laid up for "all who have loved [ἀγαπάω] His appearing" (2 Tim 4:8).[512] Similarly, the contingency of eschatological reward is apparent when Paul speaks of women being "preserved . . . if they continue in faith and love [ἀγάπη] and sanctity with self-restraint" (1 Tim 2:15; cf. Rom 11:22–23).[513] Once again, "Blessed

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doing the will of God according to his Word. Those who are blessed by God live in the union of truth and action, which is their joy." K. A. Richardson, *James*, 98.

[508] This term refers literally to dues paid for labor, that is, wages or the natural reward for work. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 635.

[509] Likewise, Jesus advocates that one should invite to one's banquet those who cannot repay but promises that the one who does so "will be repaid [ἀνταποδίδωμι] at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:14). Of course, God himself is implied as the one who will repay them. This is a divine passive. Interestingly, this beneficence is not wholly disinterested since the one doing so will be rewarded. See the discussion of the appropriate reciprocal nature of love below and in the following chapter. Notice also the language of Luke 6:27 that merely loving those who love you is not a "credit" (χάρις) to you, which itself implies the evaluation and reward of human love by use of the language of grace. Likewise in Luke 6:33.

[510] This "evokes an image of end-time salvation, confirms that God is behind it, and affirms that it can be appropriated only by those who love God." Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 97.

[511] The meaning of this phrase is much-debated. Does it refer to "righteousness" itself that will be received in full at the eschaton or does it refer to a crown that is the reward of holy living? For a representative of the former view see G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 461. For a representative of the latter view see Lea and Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 249. Towner wisely contends that we need not "distinguish too rigidly between" these. *The Letters*, 615. Perhaps Paul is thinking of righteousness that is "yet to be fully received," as well as "the need for the believer to 'cooperate' in this process by means of his/her faithful response to God in godly living" while at the same time including a "note of 'vindication'" in accordance with God as "the righteous judge." Ibid., 616.

[512] The description of "those who have loved his appearing" thus "characterizes those believers who will, like Paul, qualify to receive the reward as people whose lives have been marked by a determined and expectant forward look to the parousia and the consummation of the victory of God (Titus 2:13; Rom 8:23–25; Phil 3:20)." Towner, *The Letters*, 616. Cf. 1 Cor 9:27.

[513] The use of ἐάν + the subjunctive (3ʳᵈ class condition) suggests that this condition is "uncertain of fulfillment." Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 696. Some have attempted to remove the soteriological significance by claiming that this refers to some blessing(s) other than personal salvation, claiming that otherwise salvation would be "conditional on a work." See for a discussion of this issue in G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 145. On the contrary, Paul's use of σῴζω does seem to be referring to the

is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (Jas 1:12; cf. 5:11) and God promised the kingdom to "those who love him" (Jas 2:5). In all this, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Rom 8:28).[514] On the other hand, the ones "outside" the holy city in the end are "everyone who loves and practices lying" (Rev 22:15). Likewise, the ones who perish, perish "because they did not receive the love [ἀγάπη] of the truth so as to be saved" (2 Thess 2:10). Similarly, the one who "does not love [φιλέω] the Lord, he is to be accursed [ἀνάθεμα]" (1 Cor 16:22).[515]

Thus, eschatological blessing, even salvation, is repeatedly tied to proper human love. Though such love does not thereby earn salvation it is the appropriate response to God's call and love, a necessary corollary of faith, which is itself a conduit of salvation (cf. Gal 5:6).[516] Such

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perseverance necessary for personal salvation in this instance. So ibid., 147–48; Lea and Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 102. See the discussion of a similar issue with regard to 2 Pet 3:9.

[514] On the supposition that those who love God are thus merely those whom God has unilaterally predestined to salvation, see the discussion of election and love previously. There it is argued that "called" refers to an invitation that is still open or has already been accepted; i.e., an invitation open to rejection (either at present or in the past).

[515] Spicq rejects the idea that this is a liturgical formula, arguing that it deals with a person who is excluded from the church as well as from eternal life because they have refused membership in Christ. "Comment Comprendre philein dans 1 Cor 16:22," *NT* 1 (1956): 204. Cf. idem, *Agape*, 3:81–85.

[516] Likewise, passing from death to life assumes that one loves other humans while failing to love one's brother amounts to abiding (μένω) in death (1 John 3:14). John states that one knows they have passed from death to life "because we love the brethren [ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς]" but the one who does not "love [ἀγαπάω]" abides in death (1 John 3:14). Most commentators argue that love is the basis of one's knowledge of having passed from death to life rather than a reason for passing from death to life. It is thus supposed that the "conjunction 'because' *(hoti)* modifies the verb 'we know' *(oidamen)* rather than 'we have passed' *(metabebekamen).*" Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 157. So Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 191. Similarly, Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 135–36. It is further supposed that to assert otherwise would be "tantamount to a doctrine of salvation by works." Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 189. Yet, Smalley comments that "the evidence, as well as the test, of having crossed over from spiritual death into the dimension of eternal life is both practical and objective; it is fraternal love." Ibid. First, it is not true that if love is necessary for the reception of God's gift of eternal life that such love is thereby meritorious. Second, it is grammatically possible that "because" does correspond to "we have passed." Further, the statement that the one who does not "love abides in death" suggests that "love is more than a sign of life." R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 446. In fact, love may be the basis of knowing that one has passed into eternal life and at the same time a condition of eternal life. Edward Malatesta contends one remains spiritually dead "until he has chosen to make love a conscious activity," which itself includes breaking "away from the world."

soteriological conditionality is not opposed to grace and salvation as a gift once one understands

that the very possibility and ability to respond stems from God's prevenient action (grace and

love). In all, divine blessings are repeatedly predicated on appropriate human response, most

often faith and/or love. Accordingly, divine love is not merely gratuitous benevolence or

generosity, and divine blessing is itself conditional, though unmerited. Importantly, since God

does reward appropriate response one should not equate worthiness or merit with "reward." With

such conditionality in mind we now turn to the conditionality of divine love specifically.

The Foreconditionality of Love in the Gospels-Acts

The ultimate priority of divine love is evident in the statement of God's love for the

world, which makes it possible for anyone who believes to be saved. Specifically, God loves the

world so much that he gave his son for it (John 3:16).[517] The clause "whoever believes," if taken

seriously, means that divine love is universal, not arbitrarily excluding anyone, but subject to

conditionality (John 3:16, 18).[518] As such, the foreconditionality of divine love is explicit in this

context. Though conditional, divine love toward humans is also unmerited. That is, God loves

undeserving humans not because humans are worthy but of his own volition. Thus, God "Himself

is kind [χρηστός] to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35).[519] In the Matthean parallel he "causes

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Interiority and Covenant: A Study of [einai en] and [menein en] in the First Letter of Saint John (AnBib
69; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 260. That love for God (and others) is conditional in this way is
implied in many verses (see above). See the discussion of this in the following chapter.

[517] "The Greek construction behind *so loved that he gave his one and only Son* (*houtōs* plus *hōste*
plus the indicative instead of the infinitive) emphasizes the intensity of the love." Carson, *The Gospel
according to John*, 204. Cf. Ceslas Spicq, "Notes d'exegese johannique: La charite est amour manifeste,"
RB 65 (1958): 358. God's love is thus intense, active, and costly.

[518] "Undoubtedly God's desire is that all might be saved (e.g., Acts 17:30–31; 22:15–16; 1 Tim
2:6), but because of human freedom or choice ("whosoever," 3:16), all of humanity does not respond in
believing acceptance of the Son (e.g., John 1:11–13; Rom 1:5; 10:16; 1 Tim 4:10). As a result, the rejection
of God's love brings judgment or condemnation (John 3:17)." Borchert, *John 1–11*, 184. Morris similarly
comments, the "love of God is limitless; it embraces all mankind." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*,
203.

[519] The χρηστότης word group refers to goodness, kindness, often used in description of God's
beneficence and love. See E. Beyreuther, "χρηστος," *NIDNTT* 2:105, Ceslas Spicq, "χρηστευσομαι,

His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt 5:45).[520] On this basis, such unmerited love is also to be shown by Christians: They are to be "merciful [οἰκτίρμων], just as [their] Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36; cf. Matt 5:48). Thus, Christ commands to "love" (ἀγαπάω) one's enemies (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:35).[521]

Some might interpret Jesus' command as suggesting that love is to be strictly unconditional, altruistic, and disinterested.[522] However, the notion that one might love another

χρηστος, χρηστοτης," *TLNT* 3:511; Konrad Weiss, "χρηστος, χρηστοτης, χρηστευομαι, χρηστολογια," *TDNT* 9:487–88. In classical Greek it refers to that which is "excellent," "serviceable," "useful," "good" and broadened to include "moral excellence . . . linked with genuine goodness of heart," rarely used of the gods. Beyreuther, *NIDNTT* 2:105. Cf. Spicq, *TLNT* 3:512; K. Weiss, *TDNT* 9:483–84. The noun χρηστότης appears 10 times in 8 verses, all in the Pauline writings. In the LXX, the noun translates טוב in almost all instances (15 times). טוב is often translated by ἀγαθός and καλός as well. In many instances it describes the disposition a Christian ought to have, that is, kindness, closely related to other virtues such as love, compassion, patience, etc. (2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Col 3:12; cf. Rom 3:12). However, the noun most often describes the kindness and goodness of God, in close association with other terms of divine love (Rom 2:4; Rom 11:22; Eph 2:7; Titus 3:4). The adjective χρηστός appears 7 times in 7 verses depicting that which is good or kind of humans (Luke 5:39; 1 Cor 15:33; cf. Eph 4:32) but also of God's kindness (Luke 6:35; 1 Pet 2:3; cf. Matt 11:30). In the LXX it most often translates טוב (22 times). It translates a few other terms twice or less. It is most often used in worship and praise toward God. Interestingly, God's very name is χρηστός – Ps 51:11. The group is closely associated with the ἀγαπάω group of love (cf. Luke 35; 1 Cor 13:4; 2 Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Col 3:12; cf. Eph 4:32–5:1) and also once with φιλανθρωπία (Titus 3:4). In all, "kindness is an unmistakable and essential characteristic of love." Beyreuther, *NIDNTT* 2:106. So Spicq, *TLNT* 3:515. Cf. 1 Cor 13:4.

[520] Blomberg sees this as God's "common grace for all humanity in his good provisions in nature" showing that "God loves them too." *Matthew*, 115. Cf. Ps 145:9. For similar statements in antiquity see Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 265.

[521] Such love is manifested in beneficent action, even toward "those who hate you" (Luke 6:27). They are not merely to love (ἀγαπάω) only those who love (ἀγαπάω) them (Matt 5:46; Luke 6:32). For examples of similar conceptions of enemy love in the ancient world see Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 637–38; Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 294–95; John Piper, *"Love Your Enemies": Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Early Christian Paraenesis: A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of Its Uses* (SNTSMS 38; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 19–65. On the other hand, the fact that there were others who advocated this principle (or something quite similar) does not detract from the fact that it was by no means the normal human philosophy or conduct of the age. Rather, it flew "in the face of conventional wisdom." J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 272.

[522] Bock states that the "love in view here is unconditional," in contrast to any "utilitarian position that says, 'Do this to them so they will do it to you." *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 596. It is "love for love's sake." Ibid., 598. Beyreuther comments that "because it [God's kindness] is without limit, it calls for unconditional love for their enemies on the part of Jesus' disciples." *NIDNTT* 2:106. Cf. Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134. Such statements confuse unconditional with unmerited. Further, Klassen thinks, "Lacking is any utilitarian motive. This ethical guidance is fully and exclusively rooted in the nature and behavior of God. The only reward which is in sight is a relationship with God." *Love in the NT*, 387. Yet, if a relationship with God is the ultimate reward, how would this lack any self-interest?

without expecting benefit from the one loved does not mean that love ultimately nullifies conditions, just deserts, reciprocity, or proper self-regard.[523] Indeed, Jesus repeatedly points to future reward (μισθός) (cf. Matt 5:46; Luke 6:32–35).[524] Ultimately, those who love their enemies "without expecting any return" will receive a "rich reward [μισθός]" from God and thus become sons of God (Luke 6:35; cf. Matt 5:45).[525] Thus, even in the call for Christians to bestow love on

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[523] It is true that human "love is not [to be] dependent on others' behavior." Stein, *Luke*, 208. So, also Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 596. However, this cannot be extended to rule out the evaluative aspects of love altogether. Christ is asking for the Christian to suspend the consequences of such evaluation since he himself is the judge. Christians are to manifest love toward all in this time between the times but that does not mean that love, by definition, is non-evaluative and/or unconditional. See the further discussion of this below and in chapter 6. Notice also the prominent conception of "insider love," which is discussed elsewhere in this chapter (cf. John 13:1).

[524] Thus, Jesus asks, "if you love those who love you, what reward [μισθός] do you have?" (Matt 5:46). Luke phrases it just a bit differently but with a similar concept of reward: "If you love [ἀγαπάω] those who love [ἀγαπάω] you, what credit [χάρις] is that to you? (Luke 6:32; cf. 33–34). Here, χάρις "denotes an effort to pay off a debt by returning benefit for benefit." J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 273. Cf. Ceslas Spicq, "χάρις," *TLNT* 3:500–506. Bock refers to it as divine favor "in response to having done something more," specifically, in response to human love that "goes beyond the sinner's love." *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 603. "There is no favor from God for such limited love." Ibid., 600. Of course, this implies that loving like God loves may curry favor. It thus has "the overtone of 'reward,' as the use of misthos in v. 35b shows." Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 640. See the similar usage of חן in the sense of evaluation of the person or relationship in the chapter 4. Divine reward is common elsewhere as well. See Matt 5:12; 6:1–16; 10:41–42.

[525] In Matthew they are to love as such "so that" (ὅπως) they "may be sons of" their "Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:45). Thus, "there is a reward for a life lived by this higher standard of love. . . . The reward of the children of God is for those who live as the children of God." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 227. Likewise, Johnston points out, "Love is rewarded. This does not involve any diminution of the quality of love, for the supreme compensation is membership in the new family of the kingdom (Matt. 23:8–9; Mark 3:34–35; 10:30)." *IDB* 3:170. Some have suggested that such sonship is not here conditional but, rather, this love is merely the outworking, or necessary result, of already being God's children. So Stein, *Luke*, 209. Cf. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 274; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 603. However, the future middle indicative ἔσται in the phrase "and you will be [ἔσται] sons of the Most High" (Luke 6:35) suggests that being a child of God follows as a result of the loving behavior (though this need not entail that such behavior is the sole or ultimate ground). Contra Stein who contends that the verb "'will be' should not be understood as 'will become' but rather 'will show yourselves to be.'" *Luke*, 209. Even Piper notes the reality that "Jesus' love command" is "a condition for entrance into the Kingdom of God." *"Love your enemies,"* 76–77. However, it must be understood that for Piper something can be conditional and at the same time rendered certain by God. In other words, in his view this "condition" is fulfilled solely in accordance with the efficacious divine will. Moreover, the "so that" (ὅπως) in Matt 5:45 depicts sonship as a consequence of love. Albright and Mann thus reads, "In this way you will become sons of your heavenly Father." *Matthew*, 71. As Charette puts it, "Those who accept the offer of salvation experience the blessing which God designed for the nations when he first called Abraham. But those who decline the offer are the truly cursed who have defeated their proper destiny by cutting themselves off for ever from the inheritance first promised to Abraham." "The Theme," 159. Importantly, this need not mean that one was not a child of God already in some sense, or that such loving action may spring from the human agent alone and apart

the undeserving they themselves are evaluated and will be rewarded for such beneficence.[526] The

very ones who are to love their enemies, are themselves judged on the basis of their love,

specifically its quality. In this way, the love may be unselfish but not altogether disinterested (cf.

Luke 14:14).[527]

That reciprocity and the principle of appropriate response are not nullified in this

command is further evident since, in the Lucan account, Jesus declared the golden rule: "Treat

others the same way you want them to treat you," just four verses before the command to love

one's enemies (Luke 6:31).[528] Importantly, this guideline does not assume self-abnegation but

rather a form of sympathy (cf. οἰκτίρμων in Luke 6:36) and a kind of reciprocity, though not the

kind of *quid quo pro* reciprocity of conventional wisdom.[529] Specifically, the ideal of reciprocal

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from God's prior initiative. It is possible that this condition refers to the continuation rather than the
beginning of sonship but the condition is real nonetheless. In any case, the texts strongly imply that Jesus'
intention is to speak of a special status of sonship that is reserved for those who imitate God, specifically,
his love. This view is supported by the fact that these passages are clearly exhortative, culminating in
command. Cf. Sir 4:10.

[526] On the other hand, negative reward awaits those who reject God, that is, those who remain
ungrateful. Bock even refers to this as "meritorious love," seeing such reward as "God's acknowledgment
that he has seen this meritorious love and the faithfulness it reflects. . . . It is not merit for salvation; but
recognition of being a faithful son or daughter (Luke 6:23; Matt. 5:9)." *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 603. On the other
hand, Stein comments, "There is no idea of merit in this statement, for even after perfect obedience and
service to God, believers will only be able to say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'
(Luke 17:10). It is pure grace that causes God to reward his servants; but reward there will be, and this is
not an uncommon theme in the NT." *Luke*, 203. Importantly, however, the idea that humans do not deserve
such a gracious reward should not nullify the fact that such reward is itself conditional upon appropriate
(albeit imperfect) human response. See chapter 6 on the important difference between merit and conditional
reward.

[527] Similarly, elsewhere beneficence is to be given not just to friends (φίλος), brothers, relatives,
and rich neighbors but to those who cannot repay. However, the one who shows such beneficence to the
one who cannot repay "will be repaid [ἀνταποδίδωμι] at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:14; cf.
14:10; 16:9).

[528] Many similar commands are known in antiquity, especially prominent in the negative form in
Jewish literature. For an impressive list of ancient parallels see Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 596.

[529] Thus, J. B. Green states, "In the ethics of the larger Lukan world, a patron solidifies his or her
position in the community by 'giving,' by placing others in his or her debt, and receiving from them
obliged acts of service and reverence. In this new economy, however, the patron gives without strings
attached, yet is still repaid, now by a third party, God, the great benefactor, the protector and the benefactor
of those in need." *The Gospel of Luke*, 274. Klassen also notes that this is "a guideline which is based on
reciprocity" but mistakenly thinks that "it could be construed to contradict the non-reciprocal teaching on

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love is not removed but God himself stands in as the one who reciprocates such love; he himself will repay such love that is granted to the undeserving (cf. Matt 25:40).[530] The consequences of evaluative judgment are suspended but not thereby nullified. As such, God's "impartiality" should not be seen to "obviate" divine evaluative judgment.[531] Indeed, Jesus affirms in the same pericope that "by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return" (cf. Luke 6:37–38).[532]

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loving the enemy (Dihle 1962)." *Love in the NT*, 387. On the contrary, the statements of Luke 6:31 and 6:35 are no contradiction but qualify and clarify one another. Cf. Furnish, *The Love Command*, 58–59.

[530] He mediates for the unworthy recipient of love in the here and now. Thus, J. B. Green is correct when he notes, "What motives does Jesus offer for these new practices? First, he vouches for the continuance of the notion of reciprocity, albeit in a radicalized form. Those who act without expectation of return, even on behalf of their enemies, will be rewarded. Now, however, their reward does not consist of acts of gratitude from the recipients of their benefaction; rather, God rewards them (cf. 12:33; 14:14)." *The Gospel of Luke*, 273–74. Cf. Stein, *Luke*, 209. Further, "the reciprocity denied in vv 32–35a has been restored, with one telling exception. Jesus' followers give freely, without dragging others and especially those in need into the quagmire of never-ending cycles of repayment and liability. And God will lavishly repay them." Ibid., 275. Cf. Johnston, *IDB* 3:170. Spicq, who elsewhere points to the purely gratuitous nature of ἀγάπη, here notes that "even the purest Christian love hopes for return and fruition . . . but never from men. God alone rewards the love of charity, and superabundantly." Further, "Christian beneficence must be disinterested in its deepest inspiration, and yet God considers whatever is done for neighbor as done for himself. He promises to repay those who love their enemies, if only their generosity is motivated by love for him." *Agape*, 1:86.

[531] See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 226. Thus, God is not removing the principles of law and justice: "Such action would not in fact be an imitation of the character of God who upholds the moral law and judges transgressors." Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 266. "This does not imply flabby indifference to the moral condition of others nor the blind renunciation of attempts at a true and serious appraisal of those with whom we have to live. What is unconditionally demanded is that such evaluations should be subject to the certainty that God's judgment falls also on those who judge, so that superiority, hardness and blindness to one's own faults are excluded, and a readiness to forgive and to intercede is safeguarded." Friedrich Büchsel, "κρίνω," *TDNT* 5:939. So Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 606; Stein, *Luke*, 212; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 266. In other words, it is not that such evaluation is removed but that such evaluation ultimately belongs to and will be carried out by God himself.

[532] The idea that rewards are conditioned upon appropriate human response is supported in the foreground where Jesus emphasizes reciprocality: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. . . . For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return" (Luke 6:37–38). Thus, "the believer's behavior toward others will determine God's behavior toward him or her." Stein, *Luke*, 212. On the other hand, "those who treat others harshly can expect their prayers to be hindered (1 Pet. 3:7–12). To the generous, God is generous." Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 607. Bock, however, insists that such evaluative judgment does not apply to one's salvific reward. However, Matt 25:31–46 strongly suggests otherwise. Cf. Luke 18:30.

Thus, conditionality and divine appraisal are present and God himself operates with a principle of reciprocity, but the divine principle of reciprocity operates in a complex way that has room for grace and the temporary suspension of the consequences of judgment. In the future, the execution of divine judgment will finally separate between those who will receive their reward according to the merits of Christ through atonement and those who reject divine mediation and suffer destruction. Importantly, Jesus' command of love toward our enemies here does not therefore conflict with his advocacy and practice of "insider love" elsewhere.

That God's love is bestowed on the undeserving prior to conditions does not mean that divine love is in every respect groundless, spontaneous, or unconditional. First, divine love *qua* divine love is not always unmerited, though it is unmerited toward humans. Thus, God loves his unique (μονογενής) Son, the one who was and is truly worthy of love (John 3:16).[533] Elsewhere, divine love for the Son is explicitly grounded in Jesus's action(s) as evident in his proclamation "for this reason [Διὰ τοῦτό] the Father loves [ἀγαπάω] Me, because I lay down My life" (John 10:17).[534] Here, divine love for the Son is grounded in the Son's voluntary obedience and is itself associated with the love of God for human beings.[535] As such, divine love is not, in and of itself,

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[533] God gave what was most dear to him." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 203–4. "The pathos of those words 'only Son' should remind the interpreter of the pathos in the story of Abraham" and Isaac. Borchert, *John 1–11*, 183. R. L. Roberts argues that since יחיד and μονογενής are "used as hyperboles of affection" in the LXX the best rendering of this phrase is "only beloved." "The Rendering 'Only Begotten' in John 3:16," *ResQ* 16 (1973): 15.

[534] He lays down his life of his own volition, and will yet take up life again in accordance with the commandment of the Father (John 10:17–18).

[535] The action of Jesus "is given as the reason for the Father's loving the Son." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 456. Cf. Klassen, *Love in the NT*, 389. Some, however, seek to avoid this notion by reversing the idea. Thus Borchert, considering it "highly unlikely that either Jesus or John would have based the love of the Father for Jesus on the Son's causal willingness to die," states, "I would reverse the idea and read the text of 10:17 as, 'Because *[dia touto]* the Father loves me, that is the reason [*hoti*, therefore] I lay down my life.'" *John 1–11*, 336. Cf. Köstenberger, *John*, 307–8. However, "the first part of this verse reads literally 'because of this the Father loves me because I give up my life.'" B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 332. Thus, against such special pleading, the text does point to grounded divine love, not unlike that which is seen elsewhere in John (cf. John 16:27). Therefore Edwyn C. Hoskyns correctly states, "The love of the Father for the Son is set in the context neither of the original creation nor of a relationship which existed before the world was made" but the "love of the Father is directed towards the Son, because by him, by his voluntary death, the obedience upon which the salvation

altogether unmotivated since the Son actually merits love.[536] Thus, while love for humans is not

meritorious, it is not because God is incapable of appreciating merit but because human beings

are sinful and incapable of deserving God's love. This requires, then, a both/and explanation of

divine love. It is primarily grounded in divine agency but also, in some respects, may be

evaluative and grounded in the disposition and/or action(s) of its object, to a greater or lesser

degree.

The reality of grounded love is further evident in Jesus' tale of the moneylender who

"graciously forgave" (χαρίζομαι) two debts of unequal size. Therein, Jesus asks which "will love

him more? [πλεῖον ἀγαπήσει]" with the answer, the "one whom he forgave more" (Luke 7:42–

43). The grace of the moneylender is completely undeserved. However, those forgiven love the

moneylender proportionately to the greatness of his forgiveness.[537] This is love that is explicitly

grounded in, and responsive to, prior beneficence. Notably, however, those who love the

benefactor are in no position to benefit him: Their love therefore apparently describes an

affectionate disposition that would (or ought to) be manifested in beneficence toward the

moneylender if such occasion obtained (cf. Matt 18:33–35). This object lesson is itself used to

illustrate the virtuous love shown for Jesus by the woman of ill repute who anointed Jesus with

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of men depends has been accomplished. The Resurrection is the inevitable consequence of the obedience of Jesus." *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber, 1947), 379.

[536] Importantly, the text does not say that this is the only reason the Father loves him, but it does portray divine love as at least partially caused and clearly evaluative. Beasley-Murray comments, "The Father's love for the Son is linked with the Son's death for the world. This event is naturally not represented as the origin of that love but its supreme manifestation and enactment." *John*, 171. Cf. Köstenberger, *John*, 307. However, while it is apparent that God loved the Son even before Jesus gave his life for sinful humans, one should not be too quick to rule out that some aspect of the Father's love for the Son is prompted and/or heightened by the Son's self-sacrifice. Carson puts it well when he states, Jesus "is now at pains to elucidate *why* the Father loves him. It is not that the Father withholds his love until Jesus agrees to give up his life on the cross and rise again. Rather, the love of the Father for the Son is eternally linked with the unqualified obedience of the Son to the Father, his utter dependence upon him, culminating in this greatest act of obedience now just before him." *The Gospel according to John*, 388.

[537] Bock comments, "The larger the debt that is forgiven, the larger the gratitude and love that emerge in the response." *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 699. This love is thus not bestowal but includes aspects of gratitude. See Stein, *Luke*, 237; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 311; Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 356; Hebert

perfume (Luke 7:37). After telling the parable, and comparing her loving actions to the lack of action by his host, Jesus goes on to declare, "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for [ὅτι] she loved [ἀγαπάω] much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little. Then He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven" (Luke 7:47–48). It is unclear whether she loves more because she is forgiven more, as the parable implies, or whether her love is a (not necessarily *the*) basis for the forgiveness as the statement of Jesus seems to imply.[538] The former is favored by many commentators[539] while some argue the latter.[540] Both are possible readings based on the grammar. Perhaps Luke does not intend to separate the two but depicts here again the foreconditionality of love. She receives forgiveness and, appropriately, loves Christ and her forgiveness is ratified by her loving response (cf. 1 Pet 4:8).[541] The lack of such response would

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G. Wood, "The Use of αγαπαω in Luke 8:42, 47," *ExpTim* 66 (1955): 319–20.

[538] This tension has led some to conclude that the accounts do not belong together. For example, see Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (RNT 3; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1977), 258–59. However, such tension is not necessarily a contradiction in light of the wider foreconditionality of love evidenced in the NT.

[539] Those who think she loves because she is forgiven take the causal ὅτι clause as "evidentiary" and thus interpret Jesus' statement to mean something like, "Because of what she had done, I can now conclude that her sins had in fact been forgiven." Stein, *Luke*, 237. So, among others, Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 691; J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 313; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 703; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 313; Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 537–38; J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 324. In this vein, some argue that the forgiveness must be in the past in light of the perfect tense. So Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 703, 705. So, also Stein, *Luke*, 237; Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1893), 1:362. Yet, elsewhere the same form is used by Jesus of present forgiveness (cf. Luke 5:20, 23).

[540] For one example, among many others, Spicq comments that Jesus "responded" to "her love . . . by pardoning her. The lesson here is not only that love can obtain the remission of sins but also that great sinners are usually the most sincere in their contrition and charity." *Agape*, 1:105. Cf. 106–7. Cf. Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 436–38.

[541] Interestingly, Jesus directly contrasts the loving actions of the woman to the lack thereof by Simon, suggesting an evaluative distinction between them, likely with the purpose of prompting Simon to notice the state of his own heart, which appears to be closed to the forgiveness that he himself needs. Thus, one implication of Jesus' statement is that Simon ought to love Jesus more. This could not be the case, however, if love amounts to an automatic response to forgiveness. One ought to love in response to forgiveness, but such is not always the case (cf. Matt 18:23–35). The woman is thus indirectly praised for her love of Jesus. Cf. the praise of the Roman because "he loves [ἀγαπάω] our nation" (Luke 7:5). In this later case "Jesus' reaction is emotional" and "one of commendation" for "he is amazed at the soldier." Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 642.

result in forfeiture of the forgiveness as was the case for the unforgiving debtor (cf. Matt 18:33–35).[542] Accordingly, her loving response is a necessary corollary, as well as evidence of her faith and, as such, truly conditional.[543] In this way, the forgiveness is foreconditional but not unconditional.

Such groundedness and conditionality of divine love are also likely in view in the encouragement to "abide" in divine love. For example, the father "has loved [ἀγαπάω]" the Son and Jesus loves his followers in the same way. In turn, they are exhorted to "abide in My love" (John 15:9; cf. Jude 1:21). Notably, this command is imperative, manifesting the apparent conditionality of remaining in divine love (cf. John 15:4, 7). Abiding in his "love" (ἀγάπη) is accomplished if one keeps Jesus' commandments just as Christ has modeled in relation to the Father and, thus, "abide[s] [μένω] in His love" (John 15:10). The implication is that one may not abide in God's love but such privilege may be forfeited such that the one who does not "abide" through obedience and fidelity to Jesus might thereby remove themselves as objects of such love.[544] Significantly, in v. 10 Jesus' own abiding in the Father's love is implied to fall under this

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[542] This idea that the one who does not forgive will not be forgiven is explicitly emphasized in the NT not only in the story of the unforgiving debtor but elsewhere (cf. Matt 6:12, 14–15, Jas 2:13).

[543] This would make sense of two of Jesus' statements at the end of the narrative. First, after describing that she "loved much" he declares to the woman "your sins have been forgiven" (Luke 7:48). But, this might seem to be superfluous if she was already altogether forgiven. J. B. Green, however, suggests that the woman needed no such assurance of forgiveness but that Jesus made the statement to manifest it to the others present. *The Gospel of Luke*, 314. This is possible, but uncertain. Nolland suggests this "cannot be read as a fresh forgiveness of the woman, but it can and should be read as a confirmation of the woman's forgiveness." *Luke 1:1–9:20*, 359. Perhaps more striking, however, is Jesus's further statement, "your faith has saved you," which explicitly grounds her forgiveness in the necessary faith response that she has manifested in love (Luke 7:50). Cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 692; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 704. Such "saving" faith is also prominent in Luke, cf. 8:48; 17:19; 18:42. Thus, perhaps the woman acted out of love having received forgiveness and, at the same time, such acts of love are the necessary evidence and even the seal of her forgiveness. If this is correct one must nevertheless be careful to remember that this does not amount to earning or deserving forgiveness. As elsewhere, a gift may be unmerited without being unconditional.

[544] Carson correctly states, "The injunction to *remain* in Jesus' love . . . presupposes that, however much God's love for us is gracious and undeserved, continued enjoyment of that love turns, at least in part, on our response to it." *The Gospel according to John*, 520. He qualifies, "Such texts do not tell us how people become Christians; rather, assuming that followers of Jesus are in view, they tell us that Christians remain in the love of God and of Jesus by obedience, in precisely the same way that children remain in

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same conditionality (cf. John 10:17).[545] Similarly, the disciples are Jesus' "friends" (φίλος) if they do his commands (John 15:14; cf. John 15:15).[546] So the friendship relationship of love is conditional upon obedience, which earlier in the chapter is connected to reciprocal love.[547]

More explicit examples of conditional and grounded divine love also appear in the Gospels. Thus, Jesus proclaims, "He who loves Me will be loved[548] by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him" (John 14:21—all ἀγαπάω).[549] Again, the one who "loves" (ἀγαπάω) Jesus will "keep" his word "and My Father will love [ἀγαπάω] him" and they will make their abode with him (John 14:23). The clear implication is that obedience and love toward Jesus evokes the love of the Father and that of the Son. Likewise, divine love toward humans is explicitly predicated on human love when Jesus later states, the "Father Himself loves [φιλέω] you, because [ὅτι] you have loved [φιλέω] Me and have believed [πιστεύω]"[550] (John 16:27).[551]

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their parents' love by obedience." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648.

[545] Thus, "not even Jesus is exempt from responding to the Father's love for him in obedience." Köstenberger, *John*, 456. Similarly, Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 509. Here, then, "the relationship of the disciple to Jesus in terms of obedience and love is modeled on the relationship of the Son to the Father." Borchert, *John 12–21*, 146. So Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 520.

[546] This notion of friendship with God is common elsewhere (2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8; John 11:11; Jas 2:23; cf. also Exod 33:11; John 3:29). See the discussion of friendship below in this chapter.

[547] Here, while God initiates the relationship (cf. John 6:70; 15:16), "the ongoing relationship between Jesus and his disciples is characterized by obedience on their part, and thus is logically conditioned by it." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 503. Cf. Köstenberger, *John*, 458; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 599. Borchert points out that these "basic requirements" of "friendship . . . are exactly the same obedience requirements as those (15:10) for abiding in his love." *John 12–21*, 149. As such, abiding relates closely to friendship and both are conditional.

[548] P75 reads, "kept safe." However, the parallel in 16:27 suggests that "love" is the correct reading here.

[549] B. M. Newman and Nida suggest that this clause, like the first clause of v. 21, may "also be treated as conditional; for example, 'if anyone loves me, my Father will love him." *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 471.

[550] Note the close association between love and faith. Bultmann states, "'Love is often used with 'faith' as if to denote the essence of Christianity." *Theology*, 2:222. This further supports the necessity of a love response in accordance with true faith.

[551] Importantly, "*He loves you because* is literally "because." . . . In 14.21, 23 the disciples are required to love Jesus and to obey his commands if they are to be loved by the Father. Here they are to love

Such examples depict reciprocal, conditional, motivated, and evaluative love such that divine

love may be contingent upon and responsive to human action.[552]

At the same time, three potential qualifications should be noted here. First, these texts do

not state that human love is prior to divine love and therefore do not contradict the Johannine

perspective elsewhere regarding the ultimate priority of God's love (cf. 1 John 4:10, 19). Second,

love that is conditioned upon appropriate human response is not thereby merited. Something may

be conditional and still undeserved.[553] Third, the texts do not mean that those who love Jesus

move from a category of not being loved by the Father at all to a category of being loved by him.

That would not accord with earlier statements in John as well as the wider canon (cf. John 3:16).

Jesus and to believe in him if they are to experience the Father's love." B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 518. Hendriksen, accordingly, renders it, "The reason why he loves you is this, that you have loved me, with a love which still continues, and have believed, with a faith that never ceases." *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel according to John*, 2:338. As such, the "Father's love is extended to believers on the basis of their confirmed love and settled faith in Jesus." Köstenberger, *John*, 478–79. As such, "this love of the Father is presented as being contingent upon belief in his Son." Fernando F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition: Agape/Agapan in I John and the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 58; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 155. He further sees this in terms of the relationship of "a promise to a condition. Whoever loves Jesus . . . can rest assured that the Father himself will love him in return; on the other hand, he who does not so believe is not loved by the Father." Segovia, *Love Relationships*, 154. Thus, "God's love is promised as a reward for Christian devotion." There is "an experience of the Father's love in return for obedience." Moffat, *Love*, 265. Cf. Spicq, *Agape*, 87–88.

[552] This is in direct contrast to the deterministic conception of divine love. Thus, Calvin contends that this amounts merely to "a testimony of" God's "love to them." *John* (Calvin's Commentaries; Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software, 1998); John 14:21. Similarly, Augustine posits this human love as the unilateral work of God himself such that "He Himself loved that which He had made." *Lectures on St. John* 7.102.5 (*NPNF* 7:391). Similarly, Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), John 16:23–27. Cf. Stählin, *TDNT* 9:133. However, R. E. Brown correctly points out that "one must recognize that in Johannine dualism, since God's spontaneous love is expressed in the gift of His Son, if one turns away from the Son, one forfeits God's love." *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, 641. While R. E. Brown correctly points that divine love might be forfeited it should also be noted that a love that might be forfeited is not altogether spontaneous, though its origin may be spontaneous.

[553] Thus, Morris is right to comment, "This does not mean that the Father's love is merited by this obedience" but "he is saying that the Father is not indifferent to the attitude people take toward the Son." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 580. Similarly, see Borchert who points out this does not "imply that a believer 'earns' God's love through obedience." *John 12–21*, 128. However, Charles Simeon goes too far in suggesting that this merely refers to the "particular occasion in which" God's "love may be manifested." *John XIII to Acts* (Horae Homileticae 14; London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1833), 105. Although such human love does not create an obligation (morally or otherwise) regarding God's loving response Jesus does posit it as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of the continuing divine-human love relationship.

However, such statements do require that the particular aspect of divine love referred to here is responsive to and conditioned upon human love. Accordingly, they likely refer to a special, intimate, relational love that moves beyond God's universal, unilateral decision to bestow love on all to the intimate, relational love without which the first is not sustained indefinitely. That is, God loves those who respond to his son in love in a way that is not afforded to "the world."[554] In such instances, God's love is both prior to human love and also, in another way, responsive to and conditioned upon human love, which is responsive to that prior love; this is the foreconditionality of divine love.[555]

The Foreconditionality of Love in the Pauline Writings

The priority of God's love is shown in many statements in the Pauline writings. God is characteristically loving, the "God of love and peace" (2 Cor 13:11; cf. 14).[556] He is "rich in mercy" and acts "because of His great love [ἀγάπη] with which He loved [ἀγαπάω] us" (Eph 2:4).[557] Thus, God's love itself is the initiating force that makes human response to God, such as

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[554] Carson goes on, "With the connection between obedience and love so explicit, it should be self-evident that the circle of love in view embraces all of Jesus' true disciples, but not the 'world', which falls within a rather different and more extended circle of love (*cf.* notes on 13:1, 34–35)." *The Gospel according to John*, 503. Morris adds correctly, "It is true that from one point of view the Father loves all people. But it is also true that he has a special regard for those who believe." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 630. See the further discussion of "insider love" in the final section of this chapter and in chapter 6.

[555] Hendriksen rightly states, "Why cannot God's love *both* precede and follow ours? That is exactly what it does, and that is the beauty of it: first, by *preceding* our love, it creates in us the eager desire to keep Christ's precepts; then, by *following* our love, it rewards us for keeping them! Nothing could ever be more glorious than such an arrangement!" *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel according to John*, 2:281–82.

[556] Klassen thinks this is probably Paul's "way of saying that God is love." *Love in the NT*, 392. "God of love" never appears elsewhere, whether in NT or LXX.

[557] Similarly, Christ, the "Son of God," is the one "who loved [ἀγαπήσαντός] me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal 2:20; similarly, Eph 5:2, 25). That Christ actively "gave" himself implies volition. See George, *Galatians*, 201. Likewise, the Father "has loved [ἀγαπάω] us and given us eternal comfort [παράκλησις]" (2 Thess 2:16). The singular verb and dual antecedent here may mean that both the Father and the Son are intended as the subject of this love. So, among many others, Frame, 286. Even if that is not the precise intention of this verse, the love of the Father and the Son are clearly operative in such instances. "Their love is so intertwined that it cannot be separated (Rom 8:35, 37, 39)." Malherbe, *The Letters*, 442.

repentance, possible.[558] Therefore, Paul cautions his audience not to "think lightly of the riches of

His [God's] kindness [χρηστότης] and tolerance [ἀνοχή] and patience [μακροθυμία]" since it is the

"kindness [χρηστός] of God" that leads to repentance (Rom 2:4).[559] Human response to divine

love, then, is never primary but always secondary, impossible apart from God's initiative.

However, response is necessary. Divine forbearance and patience will not continue forever; it has

a limit.[560]

On the other hand, the endurance of such divine love is astounding. Paul states

emphatically that nothing can "separate us from the love of Christ" (Rom 8:35; cf. 39).[561] But we

are conquerors "through Him who loved us" (Rom 8:37). Does this mean divine love is

unconditional?[562] Some have interpreted these verses to mean that even believers cannot remove

themselves from God's love.[563] Such an interpretation would contradict the assertion elsewhere

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[558] The priority and volitional nature of love is further emphasized when it is stated that "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will" (Eph 1:4–5). See the discussion of this verse above. Note also that it is disputed whether "in love" belongs with what precedes or what follows. Whether God "chose us . . . in love" or "in love He predestined us" it is clear that divine love includes a volitional and purposeful aspect that holds primacy as foundational to the divine-human relationship.

[559] Some commentators see this as a response to a false security and complacency of some Jews regarding their status in the judgment as God's elect. Cf. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 133; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 83.

[560] ἀνοχή refers to God's patient forbearance and appears only here and in 3:26. In the LXX it appears only in 1 Macc 12:25. In Greek usage it refers to the holding back of "final judgment," which provides "the sinner an interval in which" to repent. But this is "temporary. It implies a limit. If the sinner does nothing but sin . . . then in due course he must face God with all his sin." Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 112. Likewise, God's longsuffering provides time to repent, but it does not amount to the nullification of judgment; human response is required.

[561] This is clearly a subjective genitive, Christ's love for us. So ibid., 338, Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 533; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 543; Schreiner, *Romans*, 463. Four verses later Paul reiterates that basically nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:39).

[562] For example, "No created being or force can unsettle that foundation . . . Christ's love and God's election. These are unshakable." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 536. Stauffer speaks of the elect's "indissoluble fellowship with God." *TDNT* 1:49. Mounce contends, "We are forever united with the one who is perfect love." *Romans*, 192.

[563] So Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 546–47; Schreiner, *Romans*, 466; Gundry Volf, *Paul and*

that the believer can remove oneself from being an object of divine love (cf. John 15:9–10; Jude 21). Therefore, in light of the wider information regarding the conditionality of divine love, Paul is likely referring to the fact that there is no external force or power that can impede God's love for us, though humans retain the responsibility to abide in relationship with God.[564]

Such love toward human beings is undeserved and unmerited (but not altogether unconditional). Thus, God "demonstrates His own [ἀγάπην] toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).[565] Likewise, the "kindness [χρηστότης] of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind [φιλανθρωπία] appeared" and God acted salvifically "not on the basis of [our righteous] deeds" but "according to His mercy" (Titus 3:5; cf. Eph 1:4; 1 Tim 1:13–14).[566] Yet, while unmerited, it is evident that God's kindness may be forfeited since the divine "severity" will be upon those who fell but the divine kindness (χρηστότης) "to you . . . if you continue in His kindness, otherwise you also will be cut off" (Rom 11:22; cf. 23). As such, God's "kindness" is not the product of either unconditional election or essential relation. The general sense of grounded love is also apparent when Paul proclaims that God "loves" a cheerful giver (2

Perseverance, 57–58.

[564] That is, nothing can separate us from God's love "so long as we shall not refuse to abide" in it. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 333. Similarly, Philipp Melanchthon, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. F. Kramer; St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 183–84. Cf. Sanday and Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 220–21.

[565] Such love for the "helpless" is greater than the greatest human love (cf. Rom 5:6–8). Indeed, v. 6 describes the human as "helpless." Cf. Lone Fatum, "Die menschliche Schwäche im Römerbrief," *ST* 29 (1975): 31–52. Notice that God "demonstrates" his love; the action is not the love itself but demonstrates the underlying disposition. On the basis of this passage, some commentators assert that "divine love is spontaneously demonstrated toward sinners without a hint that it is repaying a love already shown." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 400. Cf. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 224. However, while this is unmerited love and prior to conditions, that does not necessarily exclude conditionality and expected reciprocation.

[566] Wuest interprets φιλανθρωπία here as "affection called out of God's heart by something in fallen man that is like God." "Four Greek Words," 244. Such unmerited love was shown directly to Paul when the Lord's abundant "grace" (χάρις) and "faith and love" (πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης) were manifested to him and he was shown mercy (ἐλεέω) "because" he "acted ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim 1:13–14). Importantly, here the divine mercy is undeserved and unmerited being grounded in Christ's "faith and love." Moreover, Paul ascribes some ground also to his ignorance with the implication that such mercy would not have been shown had he been fully cognizant of, and intentional about, his wrongdoing. See the discussion of this verse earlier in this chapter.

Cor 9:7). Though this does not mean that God doesn't love others, it does correlate divine love to a positive human attribute. In this way, divine love cannot be wholly arbitrary or ungrounded.

Similarly, 1 Cor 8 may teach that being known by God is predicated on human love toward God. Thus, "if anyone loves God, he is known by Him" (1 Cor 8:3).[567] Accordingly, love for God corresponds to being known by God. But what is the nature of the correspondence? Does one love God because one is known by him or is one known by God because one loves God? Many commentators favor the former, that God's prior action of knowing the individual results in the human loving God, often in the sense of unilateral election.[568] The perfect passive is often appealed to in support of this position that God's knowledge is in the past.[569] However, the perfect passive does not necessarily refer to something in the past. Indeed, it is used in other contexts where the referent is contingent and grounded (cf. Luke 5:20, 23). To be sure, God "knows" humans prior to any human love toward God (cf. Gal 4:9; 1 Cor 13:12; Phil 3:12). However, it is also possible that loving God is the condition of being known intimately by God.[570] In other words, though God knows everyone in a general way, he knows those who love him in a special way, keeping in mind that humans can only love God because God has already loved them (1 John 4:19).[571] This would be in accord with the Johannine emphasis on mutual and conditional love in all of its spheres.[572]

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[567] On textual variants that omit τὸν θεόν and ὑπ' αὐτοῦ and would thus significantly alter the meaning of this verse, see Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 367. However, this "longer" reading is given an "A" grading in UBS[4]. Consider also the arguments in favor of the inclusion of these clauses in Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 490–91.

[568] For instance, *1 Corinthians*, 370–71.

[569] This may be a middle or a passive, but most take it as a passive. See Thiselton, *The First Epistle*, 625.

[570] Cf. the relational connotations of ידע in the OT.

[571] Bruce states, "Both the knowledge and the love are mutual, and in both it is God in Christ who takes the initiative." *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 329. Cf. Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1957), 1:410.

[572] Thus, from a systematic-canonical perspective it would appear that this latter meaning fits the

The Foreconditionality of Love in the General Epistles-Revelation

The priority of divine love is again evident in this corpus. Indeed, God has "bestowed" on humans such a great love to be called "children of God" (1 John 3:1).[573] God's love manifests itself consistently in beneficial action toward others, including the ultimate sacrifice of Christ.[574] No human is worthy of such love but Christ showed "true love [ἀγάπην]" in dying for sinful humans (1 John 3:16). Further, 1 John states explicitly, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). This broad and highly significant statement raises a number of questions. First, is love the very essence of God? Many contend so, with varying implications.[575] Others contend that the statement does not require the view that love is God's essence any more than the statement "God is light" means that God's essence is "light" (1 John 1:5; cf. John 4:24). In this way, the question of whether love is God's essence cannot be settled by this singular statement in 1 John 4.[576]

The text is explicit, however, that God is the source of love, for "love is from God" (1 John 4:7).[577] As such, God's love is logically and ontologically prior to any other love, it holds

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wider canonical theology best. However, one cannot be sure since there are numerous grammatical possibilities and the immediate context provides little help in making Paul's meaning in this verse clear.

[573] The clause "how great" (ποταπός) likely refers to the degree of God's love and not that divine love is wholly other. So Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 140; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 132–33. On the other hand, based on the original meaning of the term "of what country," Stott comments, "The Father's love is so unearthly, so foreign to this world, that [John] wonders from what country it may come." *The Letters of John*, 122.

[574] Thus, "we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16; cf. John 15:13). Likewise, Jesus is he "who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood" (Rev 1:5). Some variants have ἀγαπάω as an aorist participle, instead of the present participle. However, beneficent action and/or self-sacrifice should not be confused with the nature of love itself, contrary to Marshall's supposition that "the two factors which determine the nature of love: on the one hand, self-sacrifice, and, on the other hand, action done for the benefit of others." Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 214. Cf. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 543; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 158. As has been seen there are many other aspects of love including beneficent action and, when appropriate, self-sacrifice. Neither, however, suffices to describe the entire nature of divine love. See the discussion of altruism earlier.

[575] Thus Akin, like many others, states, "His very nature is love." *1, 2, 3, John*, 178–79. Others contend that the statement is not "ontological" but in reference to "the loving nature of God." Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 157. Similarly, Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 212–13; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 239.

[576] The question of the relationship of love to God's essence will be taken up in chapter 6.

[577] Some, on this basis, point out that "one's love 'flows from . . . divine begetting.'" R. E. Brown,

sole primacy. Further, "everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). On the

other hand, "the one who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8). Indeed, the "command

to love is directly linked to the demand for *faith*" (cf. Gal 5:6) and the one who loves has fulfilled

the law (Rom 13:8–10; cf. Matt 22:37–40; John 14:15; 15:10).[578] These divine expectations

(human faith and love) are themselves grounded in God's prior love (cf. 1 John 4:9).[579] Humans

are to believe and accept God's love as well as respond in love toward him and others (cf. 1 John

4:15–21). Accordingly, this is "love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" and sent Jesus

to save us (1 John 4:10).[580] Importantly, John does not mean that humans do not love God, lest he

contradict himself elsewhere. Rather, he is emphasizing that God loved humans first and thereby

stressing the ontological priority of divine love as the necessary condition and basis of human

love.[581] Yet, the text goes on to say that "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"

The Epistles of John, 514. Cf. Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 211; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 157; Stott, *The Letters of John*, 168. This is true insofar as one does not overstate the case such that divine love flows from God in a unilaterally efficacious manner such that human response is not required. That this is the case is clear from the many exhortations of Christians to love. Nevertheless, God's prior love is the necessary condition of any human love. As such, "inasmuch as anyone has even the smallest capacity to love, this comes by the grace of God." Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 177.

[578] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 238. B. F. Westcott notes that the "clause appears at first sight to be inverted in form. . . . But as it is, the words bring out the blessing as well as the implied necessity of love." *The Epistles of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1902), 147–48. So Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 238. As such, love appears to be at once a real condition of relationship with God and at the same time only comes about as a consequence of being born of God. This is the cyclical nature of the foreconditionality of God's love, which seeks relationship.

[579] Indeed, the amazing "love of God" toward humans was shown in the sending of Christ so we might live (1 John 4:9). Verse 10 makes it clear that the genitive in v. 9 is subjective, referring to God's love. NASB translates ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, "the love of God was manifested in us." It could mean for/to us or, more literally, in us or in our midst. However, the wider theology seems to entail both: "The sense of ἐν ἡμῖν , in part, is thus that the love of God disclosed by Jesus indwells the Church, and creates the basis for a mutual and ongoing relationship of love between the Godhead and the Christian (cf. ζήσωμεν in v 9*b*; note also John 14:21, 23; 16:27)." Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 157.

[580] Here and elsewhere some scholars point to the aorist "loved" and suggest it thereby refers specifically to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. So Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 214. Others suggest it refers to "God's eternal love." Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 243. The former is more likely than the latter but considering the variable usage of Greek tenses one should probably not put too much weight on the aorist here or elsewhere.

[581] In other words, without divine initiative humans would never love God. See R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 519; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 243; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 180.

(1 John 4:11). Notably, then, God's love for humans places a moral obligation upon humans to love one another (cf. 1 John 3:16; John 15:12).[582] Moreover, "if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12).[583] As such, divine love is prior to any conditions while expectant of appropriate response, that is, foreconditional.

Accordingly, that God is love entails that those who would be in relationship with God must abide in love.[584] Thus, John adds that Christians "have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16; cf. 17–18).[585] What, then, does it mean to abide in love and thus abide in God? Does it refer to continuing as recipients of God's love, as agents of love to God, or

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[582] In the OT section, I have called such obligations "soft obligations" where the agent is free to do otherwise ontologically, but morally obligated to respond. Marshall, on the other hand, is incorrect in asserting that the "recipients of such love have no choice as to their response. Their sins have been taken away by this gracious act of God. He has loved them in such a way as to arouse adoring wonder at the magnitude of his sacrificial giving. They cannot do anything else but show love to one another." Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 215. This completely overlooks the exhortative function of "we also ought [ὀφείλω] to love one another" in 1 John 4:11. This term never refers to an ontological obligation in the NT but always to that which one owes or ought to do. It refers to such moral "oughts" consistently in this letter (1 John 2:6; 3:16; cf. 3 John 8). Marshall himself later refers to this as a "command." *The Epistles of John*, 215. The moral, rather than ontological, obligation is further evident in the explicit conditionality of such human response in this epistle and elsewhere, which is itself evident in the survey of evidence in this chapter.

[583] The conditional clause suggests genuine uncertainty (ἐάν + subjunctive). It is once again unclear whether the genitive is subjective, referring to God's love in us; objective, referring to human love toward God; or qualitative, referring to a love that is qualitatively akin to God's. Commentators are divided between these options. See the discussion in R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 521. Smalley contends that this "does not mean that God's indwelling . . . depend[s] on the love of Christians. . . . We love because God dwells in us, and not the reverse." *1, 2, 3 John*, 247–48. On the other hand, while it is true that divine love is always prior to human love, the Johannine writings also suggest that the human response of love conditions the ongoing divine-human relationship. Thus, here and elsewhere, God's abiding is contingent upon a loving response (cf. John 15:10; 1 John 3:24). This interpretation is supported not only by the reality of the condition but by the Johannine usage of μένω, "abide" (cf. v. 13,15; John 15:9–10). Thus, just three verses later such conditionality is evident in the statement, "Whoever (again, an uncertain condition, ἐάν + subjunctive) confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." On the reciprocal nature of divine-human fellowship, see Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, 174–75. Cf. Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant,* 301.

[584] "A person cannot come into a real relationship with a loving God without being transformed into a loving person." Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 212. Cf. Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 178.

[585] ἐν ἡμῖν translated "for us," above, could again mean for us or in us. Further, while some have taken the latter part of v. 16 to start a new paragraph, Smalley rightly recognizes that the "ideas of God's love for us (16a) and our love for God (16b) are complementary." *1, 2, 3 John*, 255.

as agents of love to fellow humans? The text admits each of these options and the wider theology

of the Johannine writings suggests that all three are intended here.[586] First, the one who loves his

fellow Christian, in so doing, loves God (cf. 1 John 4:20–21).[587] Second, remaining in God's love

entails appropriate responsive love to God and others and, as such, abiding in God and his love is

conditional (cf. John 15:9–10; 1 John 4:13, 15). This all amounts to "reciprocal indwelling" (i.e.,

abiding in God and vice versa), which is a prominent Johannine theme (cf. 1 John 4:13, 15; John

15:1–10). In all this, "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).[588] The pericope thus

comes full circle to the priority of divine love (cf. 1 John 4:7, 10). To be sure, then, human love is

impossible without God's prior love, yet it does not bypass the human agency. God's prevenient

love is a necessary but not sufficient condition of human love for him and others (cf. 1 Pet 2:3).[589]

In this way, God's love is prior to all other love, and that which enables other beings to love, but

it is not simply unilateral (see the reciprocal nature of divine love below).

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[586] See Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 222; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 255.

[587] Smalley sees the latter part of v. 16 with reference to human love for God, which complements God's love for humans. *1, 2, 3 John*, 255.

[588] The implied object of this human love is God. So some manuscripts add αὐτόν or τὸν Θεόν. Houlden argues that the "balance of the sentence suggests" this refers to love for God; "our love for God returns his for us." *A Commentary*, 120. So also, on the basis of vv. 19–21. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 169. Others think humans are the object, or both God and humans. See the discussion in Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 262. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Johannine Epistles: A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 75. Whoever the object, the priority of divine love is evident. Further, the human love here is usually taken in the indicative, though it might also be subjunctive and imply exhortation. So Law, *The Tests of Life*, 402. Cf. 1 John 4:7. A great deal of commentators, however, favor the indicative. So Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 225; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 262; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 169. Notice, however, that the command to love arises from this (cf. 1 John 4:21–5:4).

[589] Accordingly, by the use of different terminology, Peter suggests that God's love is the impetus for appropriate human action toward God. Thus, evil should be put aside "if you have tasted the kindness [χρηστὸς] of the Lord" (1 Pet 2:3; cf. Ps 34:8). That is, having tasted God's kindness humans will themselves act accordingly toward God, even perhaps being able to "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). Importantly, the statement is exhortative, not merely descriptive. It is not that Christians will automatically act appropriately, but that Christians should do so in response to God's kindness, and, according to other NT statements, are able to do so for that reason. To this extent I agree with Marshall that "the source of all love is God" and "whether we love God or our neighbor, it is God's love that is at work in us." *The Epistles of John*, 222. However, this does not mean that humans are merely passive agents through whom divine love flows. The Johannine, and wider biblical, theology will not support such a reading.

That divine love is not altogether unconditional but is often contingent and grounded is further apparent when Jesus proclaims to the Philadelphian church, in direct contrast to those who belong to Satan: "I have loved you. Because you have kept the Word of My perseverance, I will also keep you from the hour of testing" (Rev 3:9–10; cf. 1 John 3:21–22).[590] The objects of Christ's love are therefore those who have responded appropriately to God.[591] Accordingly, Jude exhorts the "beloved" to be careful to "keep" themselves "in the love of God" and to be "waiting anxiously for the mercy" of Jesus "to eternal life" (Jude 20–21).[592] The implication is that remaining in God's love is conditional and grounded in human response, which itself makes the difference between the "beloved" and the "ungodly" (cf. Jude 4 ff.).[593] This is in accord with the significant exhortations that Christians should "abide" in divine love (cf. John 15:9; 1 John 2:10; 4:16).[594] Thus, although God's love is explicitly prior to human love (cf. 1 John 4:10, 16),

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[590] Further, in v. 8 Jesus has placed before them an open door that cannot be shut "because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (Rev 3:8).

[591] G. R. Osborne thus comments, "The Jews will finally be aware that God's true love is for those who have believed in his Messiah (cf. John 13:1; Rom. 8:35–39)." *Revelation*, 191. "Christ will show his faithfulness to the Christians in Philadelphia . . . *because* they have been faithful *witnesses* to him in the past." G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 289.

[592] While it is grammatically possible that the "love of God" is an objective genitive referring to human love for God it is most likely a subjective genitive corresponding to "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." As such, it is thus exhorting Christians to keep themselves in God's love, that is, to remain as recipients of divine love. The term might also have subjective and objective connotations as a comprehensive or plenary genitive. Cf. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 483.

[593] Notably, the same ones who are told to keep (imperative) themselves in the love of God here are those who are "the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:1; cf. Jude 1:24). God's prior and continuing action is thus presupposed here but does not nullify the potential failure to keep oneself in God's love and thus not remain among the "beloved." This possibility is exemplified in the ungodly, those of the Exodus "who did not believe," those "angels who did not keep their own domain," Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, and Korah (Jude 1:4–7, 11). Accordingly, Davids rightly notices "human responsibility" here and comments, "God is love and loves believers, but they also need to 'remain' in love. . . . They have experienced God's love, but it is possible to depart from that love, as one sees in the case of the teachers he opposes." Davids, *The Letters*, 96. Notice further the soteriological implications of "to eternal life" (Jude 1:21).

[594] Carson recognizes that this is "clearly implying that it is possible for Christians not to keep themselves in the love of God." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648. Notably, Schreiner adopts a determinist-compatibilist perspective he notes that "being preserved in God's love will only be a reality if believers continue to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith and if they regularly pray." *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 483. The horns of the compatibilist dilemma are apparent as he goes on to say that "those who

remaining as a recipient of divine love is exhorted. Since "God is love" then "the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16; cf. 1 John 2:15; 4:12).[595] In all, God's loving initiative is prior to human love and its necessary but not sufficient condition.[596] Divine love is both prevenient and foreconditional, but not strictly unconditional and unilateral.

The Relational and Multilateral Aspect of Divine Love

This section focuses on data that ground the view that divine love is multilaterally relational.[597] God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into particular, intimate relationship only with those who respond appropriately. First, God seeks and enters into reciprocally responsive love relationships with his creatures, which amount to multilateral divine-human love relationships.[598] Second, though God's foreconditional love is universal, God does not love all equally and uniformly. God desires a reciprocal love relationship of give and take with all his creatures and initiates the possibility of such a relationship through his universal offer of foreconditional love, which enables and calls for a reciprocal response of love, but not all

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trust in Christ remain in the faith because of the preserving work of God the Father. Nevertheless, the promise that God will keep his own does not nullify the responsibility of believers to persevere in the faith. God keeps his own, and yet believers must keep themselves in God's love. . . . On the one hand, believers only avoid apostasy because of the grace of God. On the other hand, the grace of God does not cancel out the need for believers to exert all their energy to remain in God's love." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 483–84.

[595] See the further discussion of this highly significant chapter further below with regard to reciprocal love.

[596] As Davids puts it, in John 15 and Jude "we have a situation in which the believers are already loved but still need to remain in that love." *The Letters*, 96. Bauckham likewise appeals to John 15:9–10 and contends that Jude in a similar fashion "probably means that God's love for Christians requires an appropriate response. Without obedience to God's will, fellowship with God can be forfeited, and this is the danger with which the antinomian doctrine of the false teachers threatens the church." *2 Peter, Jude*, 113–14.

[597] I use the term multilateral here and elsewhere because love not only is to flow reciprocally from God to humans and vice versa but also from humans to others, which is indirectly love toward God as well. Further, in the NT, intra-trinitarian love is also added to the mix. Thus, the relations of divine love are more than bilateral, they are multilateral.

[598] By reciprocal here I do not mean that love is always returned for love, but that is the ideal of divine love. Moreover, my use of the term reciprocal does not entail equality of relationship or equal measure of love flowing in both directions.

respond positively. Accordingly, the reader is encouraged to keep the following questions in mind while reading this section. Is divine love unilateral? Is God the only proper agent of love or may there be a reciprocal divine-human love relationship?[599] Is divine love universal or particular? Following on this, might some be loved more than others? What of the concept of eschatological reward and the "remnant"? This section of the study will proceed with a survey of reciprocal love in the NT canon.

Reciprocal Love in the Gospels-Acts

The multi-relationality of love is evident by way of many different texts in this corpus. First, it is important to clarify the nature and importance of "insider love." Friendship is an example of such love that assumes a particular, as opposed to universal, relationship and is thus a form of preferential (but not necessarily arbitrary) love.[600] The concept of friendship is especially

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[599] It has been suggested in some circles that divine love is the only true love. In this view, human love is either non-existent, of a lesser kind, or the result of a unilateral divine miracle.

[600] Jesus highlights the quality of God's friendship in the story of the man who goes to his "friend" (φίλος) at midnight requesting food for another "friend" (φίλος) who has come on a journey (Luke 11:5–6). Though the initial "friend" may not "get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs" (Luke 11:8). Thus, if even an unwilling friend will respond with assistance after persistent pleading how much more will God respond to the requests of his children? (cf. Luke 11:12–13). Similarly Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1059–60. Cf. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, 366–67. Interestingly, J. B. Green interprets this within the context of honor and shame. Just as the "friend" would be dishonored by rejecting the pleas of his friend, J. B. Green extrapolates from this that "God engages in eschatological redemption in order that he might restore honor to his name (see above on v 2)." *The Gospel of Luke*, 449. See J. B. Green on the "conventions of hospitality" that form the background here. Ibid., 447–48. Cf. Prov 3:27–28.

The category of friendship, then, appears to imply an expectation of response, which when unmet, is supplemented by pleading. Many have taken this to mean that one should pray toward God with persistence or boldness, though this is disputed. The meaning "persistence" is questioned because the word used (ἀναίδεια) generally means "shamelessness" rather than persistence. For a discussion of the possible explanation of the meaning of this term here see Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 625–26. For the argument against the meaning "persistence" see J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 445. He contends that the emphasis is not on how to pray but on the graciousness of the Father who is willing to respond to prayer. Ibid., 446. Bock claims that "it refers to a combination of boldness and shamelessness." *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1059. Some have applied it to the householder meaning that he will respond rather than act shamelessly by refusing to help. So Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 624, J. Duncan M. Derrett, "The Friend at Midnight: Asian Ideas in the Gospel of St Luke," in *Donum Gentilicium* (ed. Ernst Bammel et al.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 77–87. If this interpretation is correct, the point would be that one may approach God with confidence. In either case, the abundantly good friendship of God is exemplified by contrast. God is the "best friend" who is willing and able to respond to the requests of his people. As Stählin puts it, "God is the best friend who

significant as it relates to the friendship between Jesus and humans.[601] Humans are often referred

to as Jesus' friends, including individuals such as John the Baptist (John 3:29), Lazarus (John

11:11), and more general statements referring to groups of humans (cf. Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34;

12:4; John 15:13).[602] Other friendships, by different language, also appear. For example, Lazarus

is the one whom Jesus loves (φιλέω) (John 11:3) and Jesus loves Lazarus, Martha, and Mary

(John 11:5).[603] There are also frequent references to the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23;

cf. 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). All of these instances point to particular, rather than universal,

relationships of friendship love. Such friendships between Jesus and humans are consistently

bilateral yet unequal such as when John the Baptist describes himself as the "friend [φίλος] of the

bridegroom," referring to the intimate friend who takes care of wedding arrangements (John

3:29).

Elsewhere, the beneficiaries of Christ's sacrificial love are referred to as his friends:

"Greater love [ἀγάπη] has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends [φίλος]"

(John 15:13). This relationship includes intimacy, which Jesus highlights in his proclamation that

he no longer calls them "slaves" but has called them "friends" having revealed himself and God

to them (John 15:15). Notably, however, such friendship is conditional upon appropriate human

response.[604] Therefore, the beneficiaries of this sacrificial love are those who obey him; they are

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grants the requests of His friend and who indeed wants to be asked. Hence we have the corresponding
thought that the disciples are God's friends." Stählin, *TDNT* 9:164.

[601] Importantly, there is no dichotomy between friendship and that love signified by ἀγαπάω. For
example, Lazarus, whom Jesus loved (John 11:5), is referred to as a friend (φίλος) of Jesus and his
followers (John 11:11).

[602] Interestingly, Jesus calls Judas "friend" when Judas comes to betray him but by use of the term
ἑταῖρος (Matt 26:50).

[603] Carson sees this as a "hint" at deeper relationships implying that "some at least felt particularly
loved by him." *The Gospel according to John*, 406. It is worthy of notice here that there is no discernible
difference between ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 11:3, 5. Contra Joseph N. Sanders, "'Those Whom Jesus
Loved' (John 11:5)," *NTS* 1 (1954): 33. See the discussion of this issue earlier in this chapter.

[604] Thus, Jesus' friends are not such by unilateral election. Though Christ himself "chose" them

his "friends" (φίλος) if they do his commands (John 15:14; cf. John 15:15).[605] Here, again, there is reciprocal action; Jesus will give himself for them but they are expected to keep his commands. The friendship is a mutual (though unequal) one. Further, by different language a similar relationship is exemplified when Christ is said to have "loved [ἀγαπάω] His own [ἴδιος] who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 13:1; cf. John 10:14). The use of ἴδιος, which implies belonging or membership in a close-knit group, makes clear that such love is particular rather than universal.[606] Such love does not require merit but rather assumes a close relationship (cf. Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34) within which humans are to love one another just as God has loved them (cf. John 15:12).[607]

The intimate love relations that make up such "insider love" constitute a multirelational circle of love: from Father to Son and vice versa, from Father and Son to humans and vice versa, and from believers to one another, which itself indirectly amounts to human love toward the Father and Son (cf. 1 John 5:1).[608] This intimate circle of love begins with the reciprocal love between the Father and the Son, which itself models the ideal nature of all divine love relationships. The Father's great love for the Son is exhibited in many forms. The Father loves the Son, rendered in different passages by ἀγαπάω and φιλέω (John 3:35; 5:20 respectively). The Son

their obedience is a necessary condition for such friendship. Such friendship is not unilateral.

[605] He died for his "friends," that is, those whom he loves. So Köstenberger, *John*, 458. Conversely, some have taken the proclamations of Peter and Thomas to lay down their lives as professions of their love for him as his friends. Stählin, *TDNT* 9:166.

[606] "It is of the nature of this love for one's own, for what belongs, to be reciprocal." Stählin, *TDNT* 9:130. The "world," on the other hand, hates (μισέω) them but "would love [φιλέω] its own" (John 15:19).

[607] Such love for one another is akin to the command to love one's neighbor (Matt 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27).

[608] See Carson who also refers to this as a "circle of love." *The Gospel according to John*, 547. Cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 287. Others refer to a "chain of love." Köstenberger, *John*, 457. Gunther thinks that "the love of the Father for the Son is therefore the archetype of all love." Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:546.

is the Father's "beloved" (ἀγαπητός) (cf. Matt 3:17 among many others). Such love pre-dates the creation itself for the Father loved (ἀγαπάω) the Son "before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). As such, divine love is not dependent upon creatures but was existent even before creation.

At the same time, the Father's love for the Son is also evaluatively grounded: "For this reason [Διὰ τοῦτό] the Father loves [ἀγαπάω] Me," that is, because he will die, of his own volition, in accordance with the commandment of the Father (John 10:17–18). Reciprocally, Christ loves (ἀγαπάω) the Father and does exactly what the Father commands (John 14:31).[609] In this way, Jesus models the appropriate human response to God, love manifest in obedience.

Further, the Father's love for the Son also manifests that love relationship that may obtain between God and humans. Thus, the Father's love for the Son is the model of the Son's love for his followers: "Just as [καθώς] the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love" (John 15:9). Likewise, the Father himself "loved" (ἀγαπάω) Christ's followers "even as" (καθώς) the Father loved (ἀγαπάω) Christ (John 17:23).[610]

The divine-human love relationship described in these passages is not universal but particular and intimate.[611] The "insiders" who are privy to this special, intimate love relationship are those who have appropriately responded or will do so (John 17:20, 25).[612] Accordingly, membership in this intimate divine-human love relationship is not automatic but contingent.

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[609] Notably, this verse is the only instance in the NT that states Jesus' love for the Father though it is "implied everywhere." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 586.

[610] Apparently, the objects of such love are the original followers of Christ as well as "those also who believe in Me through their word" (John 17:20).

[611] The intimacy of this love relationship is evident in the repeated phraseology of reciprocal knowledge and reciprocal indwelling, i.e., "I in them and you in Me" (John 17:23; cf. 17:26).

[612] Carson states correctly, "With the connection between obedience and love so explicit, it should be self-evident that the circle of love in view embraces all of Jesus' true disciples, but not the 'world', which falls within a rather different and more extended circle of love (*cf.* notes on 13:1, 34–35)." *The Gospel according to John*, 503.

Specifically, humans are expected to reciprocate God's love (both Father and Son) and not merely by external action but wholeheartedly (cf. Matt 10:37–38; 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; John 14:15, 21, 23–24, 28).[613] Thus, the objects of divine love are exhorted to "abide [μένω] in My love" (John 15:9). Abiding in his "love" (ἀγάπη) is conditional and is accomplished if you "keep My commandments" just as Jesus has modeled in relation to the Father and Jesus "abide[s] [μένω] in His love" (John 15:10).[614] Significantly, then, humans may abide (μένω) in divine love in the same way that Christ abides (μένω) in the Father's love: By the appropriate love response of obedience (John 15:10).[615] As such, the exhortation to "abide" in God's love is itself indicative of the divine desire and expectation that the objects of his love will love him reciprocally. This reciprocal love, which itself entails obedience, results in intimate friendship with Jesus (cf. John 15:14). The famous example of Jesus's three-fold question to Peter, "Do you love me?" followed by Peter's affirmation three times that he does love Jesus is instructive

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[613] The wholehearted love that is required is evident in the greatest commandment: "love [ἀγαπάω] the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" along with the second to "love [ἀγαπάω] your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:37–39; cf. Mark 12:30–31; Luke 10:27). Mark and Luke have four elements: heart, soul, mind, and strength (strength and mind in reverse order in Luke) while Matthew has only three: heart, soul, and mind. On the textual difference between these and the LXX see Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel*, JSNTSup (1994): 123–25. The various descriptors amount to a call to wholehearted love of God, "for total allegiance: one should love God with every globule of one's being." W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC 3; London: T&T Clark International, 1997), 241. The reference is to "refer to wholehearted devotion to God with every aspect of one's being, from whatever angle one chooses to consider it—emotionally, volitionally, or cognitively." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 335. Such wholehearted love is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:33). This statement seems to parallel the statements of the OT of God's desire for חסד rather than sacrifice (cf. Hos 6:6 et al.). Such love must amount to undivided devotion (cf. Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13). Notice further that love toward God and love toward others are inseparably linked.

[614] The conditionality of language of abiding (μένω) is prominent throughout its NT usage. The implication of such language is that the love relationship must be maintained by appropriate human response in order to continue intact. See John 14:23; 15:7, 9–10; 1 Tim 2:15; 1 John 2:5–6, 10, 17, 28; 3:1, 9–11, 14–15, 17; 23–24, 35–36; 4:12, 16.

[615] Carson comments, "the love for which we were created" is "a mutual love that issues in obedience without reserve." *The Gospel according to John*, 521. Thus, "Jesus remains in his Father's love by being obedient to him (8:29; 15:10)" and "believers remain in Jesus' love by being obedient to him (15:9–11)." Ibid., 547. This is also indicative of the conditionality of divine love. See the more extensive treatment of this concept further above. Further, such "intimate relationship . . . reflects the fellowship of love between the Father and the Son." Beasley-Murray, *John*, 170.

regarding the nature of such love.[616] In particular, it points to the reality of human love toward God that is not automatically determined by God nor merely divine love flowing through a passive human agent (otherwise the questions would be superfluous) but the result of a heartfelt response to God's initiating love (John 21:15–17; cf. Luke 7:47).

Keeping God's commandments is itself a manifestation of one's love for him (John 14:15, 21; cf. 1 John 5:3)[617] and divine love is also reciprocally responsive to such manifestations of human love. Thus, both God and Jesus respond with love toward those who love Jesus. "He who loves [ἀγαπάω] Me will be loved [ἀγαπάω] by My Father, and I will love [ἀγαπάω] him and will disclose Myself to him" (John 14:21). Further, the one who "loves" (ἀγαπάω) Jesus will "keep" his word "and My Father will love [ἀγαπάω] him" and both Father and Son will make their abode (μονη) with that one (John 14:23). Likewise, the "Father Himself loves [φιλέω] you, because [ὅτι] you have loved [φιλέω] Me and have believed [πιστεύω]" (John 16:27). While God already loved these humans in the limited sense that he foreconditionally loves all humans universally, here intimate relational love is described, that aspect of reciprocal divine love that flows evaluatively and conditionally upon the appropriate human response of love (or equivalent).[618] Significantly, such reciprocal and contingent love is described in the same terms as

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[616] There is no discernible theological significance to alternating use of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in these verses. For a discussion of this issue see the word studies of the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω word groups above.

[617] Carson rightly notes that the "linkage" between love and obedience toward God "approaches the level of definition." *The Gospel according to John*, 498. Cf. 1 John 5:3. However, Morris poses a false dichotomy when he states, "Love is not regarded in this Gospel as an abstract emotion but as something intensely practical. It involves obedience." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 581. On the contrary, the NT speaks of love as both intensely emotional and volitionally active without contradiction, as does the OT. Significantly, "If you love [ἀγαπάω] Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15) is a third class condition (ἐάν + the subjunctive) which suggests that this condition is "uncertain of fulfillment." Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 696. In the manuscripts favored by most textual critics the verb is present active subjunctive, but both aorist imperative and aorist subjunctive forms are attested in some manuscripts.

[618] "To this love of the disciples for Jesus corresponds the reciprocal love of God for the disciples . . . which is obviously different from His love for the world, cf. 3:16." Stählin, *TDNT* 9:133. As such, "the ongoing relationship between Jesus and his disciples is characterized by obedience on their part, and thus is logically conditioned by it." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 503.

that modeled by Jesus since his love for the Father is demonstrated by doing his commands and

the Father, in response, loves him (John 10:17; 14:31; cf. 15:10).[619] In this way, the love of Jesus

is truly the model of human love toward God and of divine love toward humans.

This multirelational circle of love further includes love between believers, which is

patterned after divine-human love and is accepted as indirect love toward God. Thus, Jesus

commands, "love one another, even as [καθώς] I have loved you, that you also love one another"

(John 13:34; so, also John 15:12; cf. 15:17).[620] This completes the multirelational circle of love

described above.[621] Here, attention should be drawn to the fact that the loves in the various

relationships of this circle are depicted as alike in nature. Thus, both the Father and the Son love

humans in the same way (καθώς) that the Father has loved the Son (John 15:9; 17:23; cf. Eph 5:2,

25). In like manner, believers are to love one another "even as" (καθώς) Christ has loved them

(John 13:34; 15:12). In this way, believers are to obey Christ just as (καθώς) he has obeyed the

Father and thus abide (μένω) in his love even as Christ thereby abides (μένω) in the Father's love

(John 15:9–10). In all this, Christ's revelation of the Father is itself directed toward the goal of

divine-human love, that is, "so that the love [ἀγάπη] with which" the Father loved (ἀγαπάω)

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[619] Humans "love and obey Jesus, and he loves them, in exactly the same way that he loves and obeys his Father, and the Father loves him (*cf.* 3:35; 5:20; 8:29; 14:31)." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 503. That divine-human love is modeled after the love between the Father and Son points toward the ideal reciprocality that God desires for the God-human relationship.

[620] This "one another" apparently refers to those who are fellow believers. Cf. Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 562, Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 109–14. Some, however, think that restriction is invalid. Cf. Borchert, *John 12–21*, 99. Carson contends, "It is not so much that Christians are to love the world less, as that they are to love one another more." *The Gospel according to John*, 485. In other words, this love toward one another does not exclude the fact that they should love all humans in a universal sense (cf. Matt 5:43) but is specifically with regard to that kind of love that is intimate and takes place within a reciprocal love relationship. As such, love for the community does not exclude universal love, but is special, relational love of a different kind. God's love is likewise differentiated as seen in John 14:21 and 16:27.

[621] "Jesus' point [in John 15:12] is not that love for fellow believers exempts one from the call to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength, but that genuine love for God ensures genuine love for his Son, who is the focal point of divine revelation; that genuine love for the Son ensures obedience to him (14:15); that obedience to him is especially tested by obedience to the new commandment, the command to love (13:34–35; 15:12)." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 521.

Christ "may be in them, and [Christ] in them" (John 17:26).[622] Indeed, the very love of God is to

be "in them."[623] As such, in precisely the same way that the Father loves the Son and vice versa,

humans are to love God and love one another (cf. John 14:31; 15:9–10, 12). In this way the

textual evidence in no way supports the case that human love is an inferior kind of love.

In light of such particular and intimate love, the question may arise in one's mind about

those who might be excluded from such love. In one sense, Christ's death was for the "world"

(John 3:16; cf. Rom 5:8, 10) and love is not to be restricted only to one's friends or those who can

benefit oneself but also is to be extended to enemies (cf. Matt 5:44, 46; 6:27, 32, 35). At the same

time only those who believe will be his "friends" or "his own," that is, his beloved, and thus

receive the full benefit of God's love unto salvation (cf. John 14:21, 23; 15:9–10, 14; 16:7).[624]

This is illustrated in microcosm in Christ's encounter with the man who asked regarding entering

into eternal life. Christ looked at him and "felt a love for him" and proceeded to call him to

follow, but the man refused (Mark 10:21–22). Christ loved this man (an outsider at the time)

foreconditionally and beckoned the man into intimate association with himself, but the man

turned away. As such, the "insider love" referenced above is not exclusive but offered to "many"

who refuse it (cf. Matt 22:14). The cultural boundaries of insider and outsider are not in play here,

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[622] Morris takes "in them" to mean both "in them" and "among them." Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 653. So, also, Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 570. This would point to the further relationality that is to obtain from Christians to other Christians.

[623] Ultimately, the objects of God's love "will be so transformed, as God is continually made known to them, that God's own love for his Son will become their love. The love with which they learn to love is nothing less than the love amongst the persons of the Godhead (*cf*. notes on 15:12–17)." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 570.

[624] Although later in John God's love is directed toward a specific circle, his prior love for the world as in John 3:16 is foundational. "All believers have been chosen out of the world (15:19); they are not something other than 'world' when the gospel first comes to them. They would not have become true disciples apart from the love of God for the world." For this reason, they are to continue to witness to that world. Ibid., 205. It should also be noted that "his own" (ἴδιος) may be used in other contexts to refer to a different kind of insider relationship (cf. John 1:11).

but, rather, the true insider is the one who loves as God does (cf. Luke 10:36–37).[625] Love is thus

not restricted to an existing relationship, whether covenant or otherwise, but does pursue and

expect a reciprocal relationship to ensue. In the absence of appropriate response, one will not be

an insider and eventually will forfeit the benefits of God's love.

In all this, there is an important differentiation between God's universal love and that

particular, special, intimate love that is between Christ and those who respond to him. This

friendship relationship is predicated on obedience (John 15:14), which is itself connected to

reciprocal love and the result of entering into a love relationship with God (John 14:15).[626] This is

a relational, contingent, and conditional friendship though the ultimate provisions and sacrifices

have been made by God himself. In other words, though God requires a response, he is not

demanding an equivalent response. Such "insider love" is by no means a contradiction with

Christ's command to love one's enemies (cf. Matt 5:43–37). The fact that love for the

undeserving is commanded does not mean that such love (in all of its aspects) will continue

indefinitely. Specifically, God himself does not "love" his enemies forever but, eventually, those

who persist as enemies will be destroyed. The interim is the opportunity for those who are

enemies (cf. Rom 5:10) to be reconciled to him, but without such reconciliation the love

relationship cannot and will not continue. God is not equivalently related to all nor does he

unilaterally exclude some. He invites and enables all to intimate relationship by his prevenient

and foreconditional love, but not all are willing to respond.

Reciprocal Love in the Pauline Writings

This multirelational circle of love is also evident in the Pauline writings, though not with

the same frequency or detail as in the Gospels. Thus, Christ is again the object of God's love,

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[625] In this story of the good Samaritan, then, enemy and neighbor love meet.

[626] God wants such reciprocal ἀγάπη, i.e., friendship, with all humans, but he does not actually
have it with all humans.

referred to as "His beloved son," literally the son of his love (ἀγάπη) (Col 1:13) and as simply the

"beloved" (ἀγαπάω - pass. part.) (Eph 1:6).[627] Divine love for humans is seemingly ubiquitous in

the Pauline corpus. Thus, God loves humans abundantly and has demonstrated his love toward

humans in the plan of salvation (Eph 2:4; Rom 5:8; 8:39) and likewise Christ "loved" and gave

himself for humans (cf. Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2). Further, divine love for humans is evident by the term

ἀγαπητός (see, among many others, Rom 1:7).[628] Conversely, humans are often said to manifest

love toward God. Thus, "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God"

(Rom 8:28). Moreover, the wonderful things of heaven, beyond human description, are "prepared

for those who love" God (1 Cor 2:9). On the other hand, the one who "does not love [φιλέω] the

Lord . . . is to be accursed [ἀνάθεμα]" (1 Cor 16:22).[629] Likewise, God is the implied object of

human love when it is proclaimed that a "crown of righteousness" is laid up for "all who have

loved [ἀγαπάω] His appearing" (2 Tim 4:8; cf. 2 Thess 2:10). Likewise, human love toward Jesus

is present. To take one example, Paul also proclaims, "Grace [χάρις] be with all those who love

our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible [ἀφθαρσία] love" (Eph 6:24; cf. Phlm 1:5). Further, a

reciprocal love relationship between God and humans is implied in the statement "if anyone loves

God, he is known by Him" (1 Cor 8:3).[630]

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[627] For Bruce, Col 1:13 "designation marks Christ out as the supreme object of the Father's love" (cf. Col 1:13). *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 258. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 79–80.

[628] Many other examples of divine love appear earlier in this chapter.

[629] The referent of "Lord" may be Jesus or the Father. The term most often refers to Jesus in the NT.

[630] Here the statement is a first-class condition, suggesting the veracity of the protasis and thus the reality of human love toward God. Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 690–94. Of course, the forms of such conditional clauses do not always follow such rules. See the discussion of potential interpretations of this verse as to whether divine knowledge is predicated on love or vice versa further above.

A number of other verses potentially depict human love toward God but there is uncertainty regarding the agency of love due to the ambiguous use of the genitive.[631] One of these, Rom 5:5, is used by Nygren to support the view that human love toward God is nothing more than God's own love returning to him through a passive agent.[632] It reads, "The love [ἀγάπη] of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5). Here it is not clear whether this is love for God or God's love though the majority of commentators favor the latter.[633] However, regardless of whether the genitive is subjective or objective the text does not assert that the human agent is a passive agent of such love. It does assert the ultimate priority of the divine initiative as the necessary (but not sufficient) condition of all creaturely love (cf. 1 John 4:7, 19). Elsewhere, Paul urges believers to strive in prayer "by [διὰ] our Lord Jesus Christ" and "by [διὰ] the love of the Spirit" (Rom 15:30). Here, "of the Spirit" appears to be subjective, referring to Christ as the agent of prayer and the Spirit as the agent of love.[634] Finally, there is ambiguity even in the absence of a genitive construction when Paul praises the Colossians for having "love [ἀγάπη] in the Spirit" (Col 1:8). Paul probably intends the Colossians as the agents

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[631] Only a few significant examples will be mentioned here. See chapter 1 for a discussion of ambiguous genitives and how they would be utilized in this dissertation.

[632] Thus, for Nygren the "Christian's love for his neighbour is a manifestation of God's Agape, which in this case uses the Christian, the 'spiritual' man, as its instrument." *Agape and Eros*, 130. Thus, "the acting subject is not man himself; it is—as Paul expresses it—God" and thus "God's Agape can be described by Paul quite realistically as a 'pneumatic fluid', which is 'shed abroad in our hearts." Ibid., 129. Augustine writes, "'The love of God' is said to be shed abroad in our hearts, not because He loves us, but because He makes us lovers of Himself." *On the Spirit and the Letter* 5.56 (*NPNF* 5:108). Cf. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann; 55 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 25:44–45.

[633] So Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 221; Mounce, *Romans*, 135; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 393; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 304; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 252; Schreiner, *Romans*, 257. For the traditional dispute on the significance of the verse, see Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKKNT Bd 6; Zürich Benziger, 1978), 1:300–305.

[634] For Fitzmyer, the Spirit is here the "source and inspiration." *Romans*, 725. Others similarly take it as a genitive of source in the sense of the love that the Spirit pours out (cf. Rom 5:5). See Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 523; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 909; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 878. Of course it could also refer to human love for the Spirit, but this seems unlikely.

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of love that is akin to that of the Spirit, but "in the Spirit may suggest that this love is itself rooted in God's action.[635]

Moreover, just as in the Gospels, humans are repeatedly exhorted to love one another (Rom 12:10; Eph 4:2; 1 Thess 4:9; 2 Thess 1:3), which is itself closely related to neighbor love (cf. Gal 5:13–14; Rom 13:8–9). At the same time, such insider love for one's neighbor does not exclude universal love. Rather, Christians are exhorted to have "love for one another, and for all people" (1 Thess 3:12).

Further, the importance of insider (as opposed to outsider) love is also evident in the frequent reference to the special relational status before God of the chosen and called who, as argued earlier in this chapter, are those who love God (cf. Rom 8:28).[636] Importantly, it is evident that people who were once outsiders may become insiders. Thus, God calls those "who were not [his] people, 'My people' and "her who was not beloved, 'beloved'" [ἀγαπάω—pass. part.] (Rom 9:25; cf. 1 Thess 1:4). The very fact that some were not then called shows the dynamic nature of God's call and election, which is not unilaterally efficacious but demands appropriate human response.[637] Thus, some who were "elect" and thus insiders may become outsiders, and such status is contingent upon appropriate response to God (cf. Rom 11:22–23; 2 Thess 2:10–15).[638] On the other hand, those who become insiders were loved foreconditionally, that is, even before their response, when they were yet sinners "dead in" their "transgressions" (Eph 2:4–5; Rom 5:8). Therefore, such intimate, particular, reciprocal love is not exclusive of some humans due to a unilateral divine will. It is universally available but not universally consummated.

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[635] Bruce takes this also as "God's love," which is poured out "in the Spirit" (cf. Rom 5:5). *The Epistles to the Colossians*, 44. The object of this love is undetermined.

[636] See the many verses depicting such categories further above.

[637] See the discussion of this issue further above.

[638] Indeed, being an "insider" by birth may profit nothing as in the case of Ishmael and Esau.

Reciprocal Love in the General Epistles-Revelation

The multirelational circle of love is likewise apparent in this corpus. The Father's love

for the Son is evident by his status as his "beloved [ἀγαπητός] Son" (2 Pet 1:17; cf. 1 Pet 2:4; 1

John 4:9). Likewise the Father and Son profoundly love their children (1 John 3:1; cf. 1 John 4:9;

Rev 1:5; 3:9). Numerous other instances exemplify God's love toward his people by use of

ἀγαπητός (for example, see 1 John 3:2). Humans also love God and other humans and both kinds

of love are preceded by divine love (1 John 4:7, 10, 19).[639] Thus, God has the "crown of life" and

"the kingdom," "to those who love him" (Jas 1:12; 2:5; cf. Heb 6:10; Rev 2:4, 19).[640] Peter refers

to those who love Christ, "though you have not seen Him, you love [ἀγαπάω] Him" (1 Pet 1:8).[641]

In another example, "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (cf. 1 John 5:1–

3). Indeed, the one who keeps God's word "in him the love of God has truly been perfected" but

"if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:5, 15).[642] Moreover,

"love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). On the

other hand, "the one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). As

such, a relationship with God will manifest itself in love toward other humans. Specifically, "if

God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). In other words, God loved us,

therefore we should reciprocate by loving those whom he loves.

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[639] Hence, this is "love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" and sent Jesus (1 John 4:10). This does not mean that humans do not love God (lest it contradict the rest of the NT) but that God's love is prior and holds primacy.

[640] "Love for the Lord God is the identifying mark of his people whether in the OT or the NT (Deut 6:4–5; Mark 12:30), and thus virtually the equivalent of trust or faith." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 69. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:52.

[641] Technically, this might be interpreted as imperative or indicative. But, the indicative seems to be Paul's clear intent since he "was not exhorting the churches but commending them here." Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter Jude*, 69. Here faith and love are once again connected as later in the verse it states, "though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him."

[642] By reference to the parallel concept in v. 15 it is evident that the genitive in v. 5 is objective referring to love for God.

Importantly, such love toward others is indirectly love toward God himself for "whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him" (1 John 5:1).[643] Further, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments" (1 John 5:2).[644] Likewise, "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).[645] Similarly, the one who loves God must also love his brother and if he does not, he cannot love God (1 John 4:20–21; cf. 2:5–11; 3:7).[646] Vertical and horizontal love are thus inseparable and relate closely to the language of mutual abiding and mutual indwelling, which depict this circle of love. Moreover, if we do love one another, God abides (μένω) in us and "His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12).[647] Further, since "God is love" then "the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16; cf. 1 John 2:15). Indeed, one knows they have "passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" but the one "who does not love abides in death" (1 John 3:14). Accordingly, frequent reference is made to the love of the brethren and/or love of one another (cf. 1 Pet 1:22 among others), which is itself associated with the love of one's neighbor (Jas 2:8). As such, the circle of love described elsewhere is here again apparent: God loves us, we

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[643] The one "born of Him" is the one who "believes that Jesus is the Christ" (1 John 5:1). Accordingly, "love for God must involve love for his children." Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 227.

[644] Thus, John is pointing out the fact that love for God entails loving others and vice versa. It is another way of saying that the two things are inseparably linked. "Just as it is impossible to love God without loving God's children, it is impossible to love God's children without loving God (cf. 4:21)." Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 191. Similarly, Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 172. Some commentators interpret ἐν τούτῳ as referring back to v. 1 but "when" (ὅταν) in the middle of v. 2 suggests that the clause points forward. For a discussion of this see Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 268; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 191.

[645] This is almost certainly an objective genitive referring to human love for God in accordance with v. 1. Most scholars are agreed. So Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 269; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 191; Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 172. Cf. R. E. Brown who also thinks the subjective meaning is always in the background in Johannine thought. *The Epistles of John*, 539. Cf. also John 14:15, 21, 23.

[646] Thus, "the circuit of God's love is completed when we love one another." Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 162. Cf. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 249.

[647] "His love" (ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ) might be translated the "love of him" and thus it is not certain whether this refers to God's love or human love toward God of love of a divine quality, though the first is most likely. For a discussion of the options see Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 217.

should love one another and, in doing so, we manifest love toward God and he abides in us and perfects his love in us.[648]

The particularity of this divine love relationship is negatively shown by the fact that the "love [ἀγάπη] of the Father is not in" those who "love the world [ἀγαπᾶτε]" (1 John 2:15).[649] Similarly, "friendship [φιλία] with the world is hostility toward God" thus "whoever wishes to be a friend [φίλος] of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas 4:4).[650] These verses indicate that friendship signifies a mutual relationship that is grounded in reciprocality and loyalty; it is not indifferent or strictly universal (though it is available universally). Abraham is also said to have been the "friend [φίλος] of God" and this friendship is itself predicated on Abraham's belief (πιστεύω) (Jas 2:23).[651] Specifically, Abraham's faith is reckoned as righteousness and thus the mutuality (but not equality) of this relationship is evident in that both human faith and divine grace are operative as bases of this divine-human friendship.[652] The particularity of the divine

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[648] As Schneider summarizes, in the letters of John "*God's love* (1 John 3:1; 4:7–21; 2 John 3) and *love for God* (1 John 2:5, 15; 3:17; 4:10, 12, 20f.; 5:1–3) and for *Jesus* (5:1), as well as love *for one another* (3:11, 23; 4:7, 11f.; 2 John 5) and love *for the brother* (1 John 2:10; 3:10; 4:20f.; pl. 3:14; cf. 5:1f.) are placed in relationship to each other." *EDNT* 1:12.

[649] Here, "world" is used in a negative sense of evil whereas in John 3:16 it refers to the totality of human persons. Cf. Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 108.

[650] Adamson comments that this friendship with the world "is a result of deliberate choice" as the Greek βουληθῇ means "'not mere will, but will with premeditation.'" *The Epistle of James*, 170. So, also, R. P. Martin, *James*, 148.

[651] Rarely are individuals referred to as a friend of God. Twice in the OT Abraham is referred to as such (2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8). Abraham's friendship is clearly conditioned upon his appropriate response to God (cf. Gen 15:6; 22:9).

[652] As Adamson puts it, in light of Gen 15:6, righteousness refers to a "right Covenant relationship," which Abraham has "because his faith led him to cooperate with God." *The Epistle of James*, 132. Similarly, Davids thinks it is "likely" that this friendship is "a reward for his *previous* righteous deeds of charity." *The Epistle of James*, 130. Likewise, Stählin contends, "According to the context the works of faith done by Abraham are the reason why God conferred this title on him." *TDNT* 9:169. Cf. Jas 2:21. Moo, on the other hand, takes it in a forensic sense, faith credited for righteousness. *The Letter of James*, 138–39. However, he also refers to this description as "an indication of the privileged status Abraham was given on account of his deep faith and practical obedience." Moo, *The Letter of James*, 139. "Abraham, for James as for Paul, illustrates faith working in a life of love (Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 13:2, 7)." R. P. Martin, *James*, 94. Cf. K. A. Richardson, *James*, 141.

love relationship is also apparent in the numerous references to the special group of the "called" and/or "elect" who are those who love God (cf. Jas 2:5; Jude 1; Rev 17:14).

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been seen that divine love is volitional but not merely volitional. That is, divine love is not unilateral but multilateral, inclusive of giving and receiving within a reciprocal circle of relational love. Such love often exhibits intense divine emotions akin to the most profound compassion and corresponds to the most intimate kinds of affectionate relationship (parent-child, marriage). Further, divine love is not strictly spontaneous, ungrounded, or unmotivated but often portrays evaluation and appraisal. At the same time, divine love is not merited, nor is it initiated by its object(s) but God's decision to bestow his love is the primary and necessary, but not sufficient, ground of the divine-human love relationship.

Since the divine-human love relationship is explicitly predicated on the priority of God's decision to create and, in turn, bestow love on his creatures, divine love toward creatures is neither necessary nor essential to his being, though it is integral to his character. That is, while God's love is integral to his character he did not need to even create humans, much less bestow his love on us. Not only is the divine volition significant in the divine-human relationship but human volition appears in the necessity of appropriate human response to God's foreconditional love. In accordance with the evaluative nature of God's love, it is bestowed foreconditionally. That is, God has decided to love prior to conditions but such prevenient love includes conditions for the maintenance of the divine-human relationship. Such conditions themselves may be fulfilled by humans only because of God's prior love and the way made in and through Christ. Those who respond appropriately to God's loving invitation are privy to an intimate and everlasting love relationship with him. These aspects of divine love among others will be further unpacked as they relate to a systematic model of divine love within the context of the God-human relationship in the following chapter.

Altogether, then, divine love in the NT is voluntary and unnecessary, yet evaluative and not wholly arbitrary, differential and preferential, yet not altogether exclusive, intensely emotional (compassionate, affected, caring, joyful, even jealous), yet also committal, foreconditional and unmerited, yet not unconditional, and expectant of the appropriate human response of reciprocal love, faithfully seeking reciprocal faithfulness but often not finding it.

CHAPTER 6

A CANONICAL AND SYSTEMATIC MODEL OF DIVINE

LOVE IN RELATION TO THE WORLD

This chapter presents and explains a canonical and systematic model of divine love in the

context of the God-world relationship. First, this chapter will proceed with a brief overview of the

canonical model that has been inductively derived from Scripture, synthesizing the conclusions of

chapters 4 and 5. Next, each of the primary aspects of the model of divine love in relation to the

world that proceed from the biblical data is further explained. The chapter will then turn to a

comparison of the canonical model with the primary features of the transcendent-voluntarist and

immanent experientialist models in order to address the conflict of interpretations introduced in

chapter 3. Finally, implications of this model for a wider divine ontology are surveyed.

**Overview of the Canonical Model of Divine
Love in Relation to the World**

Divine love in the context of the God-world relationship consists of many parts that

interrelate with considerable complexity yet striking harmony.[1] When Scripture speaks of God's

love, it does so by means of various terms that point to its various features and components.

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[1] For the sake of brevity, this overview of the canonical model will forego documentation of the canonical grounding of the various components of the model. Such documentation and pointers to chapters 4 and 5 will be interspersed throughout the further explanation of the model that follows the introductory overview. Therein texts will be referred to in order to provide the reader a canonical example of the point being made with regard to divine love. Yet, for the sake of brevity, clarity, and in order to avoid a tedious reading experience, no attempt is made to list the supporting data in any comprehensive fashion. The data are laid out in much more detail in chapters 4 and 5 to which the reader is referred for further examination of the canonical data that support the model of divine love briefly outlined and explained in this chapter.

Likewise, when the term "love" is used in the canonical model described here it must be kept in mind that the term is complex, including a great deal of polysemy.

At the risk of oversimplification, God's love is virtuous, kind, generous, unmerited, voluntary, faithfully devoted, evaluative, profoundly affectionate and compassionate, intensely passionate, patient and longsuffering, merciful, gracious, just, steadfast, amazingly reliable and enduring but not unalterably constant, preferential but not arbitrarily exclusive, relationally responsive, desirous of reciprocation, and active. God loves qualities like goodness, justice, righteousness, and indeed his love is bound up with such qualities. His love is most often directed toward humans and his disposition of love continually manifests itself in actions, which ground the divine-human relationship itself. God's love is the basis of, and manifest in, loving acts such as creation, calling and election, covenant, beneficence, deliverance, redemption, restoration, corrective discipline, wrath toward oppressors and evil of all kinds, and many others.[2] Through such providential actions, God's everlasting love persistently draws people to himself, calling humans to respond freely to God's love and thus enter into a reciprocal love relationship in which he will delight.[3] God takes pleasure in those who respond positively to him (his beloved) and enjoys the most profound, intimate, friendship with them. In all this, God's love is intensely emotional, akin to, but exponentially greater than, the compassion of the mother for her infant and the passion of the husband for his wife. While God desires and expects appropriate human response and thus faithfully seeks reciprocal love, he is often the victim of unrequited love.

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[2] Indeed, a case could be made that all God's actions are loving but the presentation and defense of such a case would require consideration of all of the divine actions and that far exceeds the scope of this work. For this reason, I make no attempt below to explain in detail the specific actions of God that constitute the various types and aspects of love. Suffice it to say that, according to Scripture, God always does that which is best, righteous, and just, always and without fail (cf. Rev 15:3).

[3] Here and elsewhere the term reciprocal refers to love that flows bilaterally. However, reciprocal should not be taken to mean symmetrical or equal. The love relationship between God and humans is ideally reciprocal but it is never symmetrical or equal.

The characteristics of divine love in the context of the God-world relationship briefly described here may be grouped according to five primary and coprimordial aspects: Divine love is (1) volitional, (2) evaluative, (3) emotional, (4) foreconditional, and (5) multilaterally relational. These five aspects are each basic to the biblical understanding of God's love relationship with the world and they interrelate and support one another while each contributes to the wider view of divine love, which is complex and multi-faceted. To a description of each aspect and their interrelationship we now turn. Throughout the subsequent explanation of the five aspects of love, the different qualifiers of God's love (i.e., universally relational vs. particularly relational) that are introduced must be remembered in order to clearly recognize and understand the distinctions between the use of the term "love," which refers to various different aspects in different contexts.

All five aspects of divine love fit together within the context of reciprocal relationality. Scripture consistently depicts God as a personal and relational being who desires a reciprocal love relationship of give-and-take with his creatures. While the persons of the Trinity loved one another before the world was created, God's love relationship with creatures had a beginning. Indeed, the God-human love relationship is contingent upon God's free decision to create the world and is thus non-essential to his being. God's decision to create the world, and thus voluntarily bestow his love on creatures, does not by itself effect the reciprocal love relationship that God desires. That is, God's love relationship with the world is not unilaterally willed by God. Rather, God desires a reciprocal love relationship with human beings wherein humans freely love God in response to his prior love.

The fact that God voluntarily created the world and bestowed his love on humans, coupled with the fact that the reciprocal love relationship desired by God does not come to fruition without human response, amounts to the distinction between God's universally relational love and his particularly relational love. God's universally relational love is the undeserved and unprompted initiating love that God bestows on each human being prior to any human response.

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God's particularly relational love, on the other hand, refers to God's special and intimate kind of love for those who respond to him and enter into a reciprocal relationship of love with him. God's universally relational love, which flows unilaterally and prior to human response, initiates the possibility of a reciprocal love relationship between God and humans. That is, God draws humans into a reciprocal love relationship by unilaterally bestowing love on each one prior to any conditions with the goal of eliciting a human response of love. However, God will neither coerce nor unilaterally determine human beings to love him in return. With those who respond positively to God's loving overtures, God enters into particular and intimate love relationship that amounts to a reciprocal love relationship.

In all this, God's love in relation to the world is foreconditional. God's love for everyone (his universally relational love) is bestowed on each human prior to their response and thus before any conditions have been met. However, God desires and expects that humans will respond to his love appropriately. In this way, God's love in relation to the world is foreconditional. That is, it is bestowed on everyone prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions.[4] God's universally bestowed, foreconditional love enables and calls for a response of love from humans. As such, God's love is ontologically, logically, and chronologically prior to human love and itself the grounding of all love. Yet, the divine-human love relationship is contingent upon reciprocal human response. Importantly, though God's love in relation to the world is conditional in many ways, it is never merited.

God's love is foreconditional rather than altogether unconditional or conditional. The canon displays both conditional and unconditional aspects of God's love in relation to the world. While Scripture frequently describes God's love as everlasting, numerous other examples present God's love as conditional and subject to forfeit. Thus, God's love is unconditional in some

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[4] In other words, the foreconditionality of divine love means that God's love is the initiator, prior to any human action, love, merit, or worth while, at the same time, God implements conditions for the human reception and continuance of that love.

respects and conditional in others. The unconditionality of God's love refers to his subjective, non-evaluative, and unilateral love for all of his creatures whereas the conditionality of God's love amounts to his objective, evaluative, and emotionally responsive love for humans. That is, God's subjective love is that which is grounded in himself as subject, independent from the response, or lack of response, from human beings. God's objective love refers to that love which corresponds to, and is affected by, the disposition and/or actions of its object.

God's subjective love thus refers to God's unchanging disposition of unilateral and non-evaluative love that is grounded wholly in himself but aims outward toward the goal of reciprocal love relationship with all humans. This subjective disposition of love prompts God's loving actions that are bestowed initially on all creatures (God's universally relational love), which is aimed toward, but does not unilaterally effect, reciprocal love relationship (God's particularly relational love).[5] That is, God's subjective love is not itself relational but it is the ground of God's universally relational love that reaches out toward all humans foreconditionally. In this way, God's subjective love is the ground of God's universally relational love that reaches creatures. While God's subjective love is itself everlasting and unconditional, it does not eternally benefit creatures since humans may finally reject God entirely, thus forfeiting the love relationship beyond repair. While God's subjective love remains in God's disposition even after such forfeiture it does not reach its objects (via his relational love) who have finally rejected loving relationship with God and, accordingly, no longer receive God's love.[6] God always loves everyone subjectively in the sense that he remains desirous of a love relationship with them. He never removes his love from anyone who wishes to receive his love. However, the object(s) of

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[5] God's subjective love is thus the basis of, but not identical with, God's universally relational love, which is bestowed on all human beings foreconditionally.

[6] That humans who have made such a final decision no longer receive God's love does not mean that God's subjective love has ceased. Rather, it means that God's subjective love does not reach them (via his relational love) since they have removed themselves from the sphere of God's loving actions.

God's love may reject intimate relationship with God and, if persistent in such rejection, forfeit the reception of divine love altogether.

Both the reciprocally relational and foreconditional aspects of God's love assume the volitional aspect of God's love. That is, the reciprocal love relationship that God desires with all, and achieves with those who respond to him, assumes bilateral significant freedom. Bilateral significant freedom means that both God and humans possess the freedom to do otherwise than they do. For his part, God need not have created human beings at all and thus his love toward humans is voluntary, not necessary. Conversely, humans also possess significant freedom, bestowed by God their creator, which they might use to reciprocate or reject God's love. Importantly, God's love is not arbitrarily willed toward only some but God voluntarily loves all humans and bestows his universally relational love on them accordingly. Thus, according to the canon, the divine-human love relationship is neither unilaterally deterministic nor necessary to God's nature but mutually (though not symmetrically) voluntary and contingent.

God's love is not only volitional but also includes evaluative and emotional aspects. The evaluative aspect of God's love refers to the appraisal, appreciation, and/or reception of value from external agents. God loves goodness and hates evil. He delights in, takes pleasure in, and enjoys his people who belong to him but is displeased, pained, and grieved by those who turn their backs on him.[7] God's joy is, accordingly, increased or decreased by the actual state of affairs in the world because God has bound his own interests to the best interests of all of his creatures. While sinful humans cannot by themselves bring value to God, they may bring value and joy to him because of God's enabling and drawing action, especially the mediation of Christ through whom even meager human offerings elicit divine delight. As such, God's love for individuals may, in fact, be increased and/or decreased according to their disposition and/or actions.

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[7] That is, God derives pleasure from the positive disposition and actions of humans, as well as their own joy and/or well-being, but is displeased at sin and evil of every kind.

Finally, God's love is also profoundly emotional. God is consistently presented as affectionate, loving, and devotedly interested in and intimately concerned with human beings. God feels sorrow, passion, and intense anger at human evil but also compassion and the desire to bring wayward humans back into proper relationship with himself. Conversely, God delights in goodness and is joyous over every person who responds to his loving overtures. In all, God's love for humans is ardent and passionate. The emotionality of God's love does not exclude its volitional and evaluative aspects. All three of these aspects are mutually supportive and interrelated.[8]

Altogether, divine love is relational. God persistently seeks a reciprocal love relationship of give-and-take with his creatures. Further, his love is foreconditional and unmerited, voluntary and unnecessary, yet not arbitrary, differential and preferential, yet available to those who are willing to respond positively, intensely emotional, yet also committal, evaluative and expectant of appropriate human response.

The Canonical Model of Divine Love
in Relation to the World Unpacked

We now turn to an explanation of each of the five aspects of divine love that have been featured in the overview above and the relationship between them, along with pointers to the biblical data from which these aspects are derived and, when necessary, cross references to the sections in chapters 4 and 5 that elaborate on the biblical basis of these aspects. For the purposes of clarity in unfolding these aspects I will begin by explaining the volitional, evaluative, and emotional aspects of God's love. These three characteristics of love must be understood in order to build toward the larger picture of God's foreconditional and multilaterally relational love. These characteristics, however, are coprimordial. That is, they are equally basic to God's love for

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[8] The evaluative and emotional aspects of divine love are especially closely related since both of them assume divine passibility and point to the fact that God can enter into a mutually beneficial (though unequal) relationship of give-and-take with human beings.

the world. The order in which they are presented here corresponds to the canonical investigation, depicting a phenomenological description of God's love in relation to the world. Therefore, the order of elements does not signify the order of importance or a progression from basis to consequence but, rather, is chosen for the purpose of explanation and in correspondence to chapters 4 and 5. The volitional, evaluative, and emotional aspects closely interrelate with one another and all contribute to the understanding of the foreconditionality of love while all of the four preceding aspects lead to the wider conception of God's multilaterally relational love. While these five aspects may be distinguished, they are not altogether distinct since they overlap considerably as evidenced by both the semantic and thematic data of the canon.[9]

The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love

God's Love for Creatures Is Voluntary

In the beginning, since no other persons existed (cf. John 1:1–3), God's love flowed only between the persons of the Trinity (cf. John 17:24). However, God decided to create and, accordingly, bestow his love on creatures.[10] The divine-human love relationship that God desired

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[9] The overlaps between the five aspects are readily apparent by reference to the semantics alone. The primary words for love in the OT and NT collocate with and closely relate to terminology that points to the five aspects. For a demonstration of the semantic overlaps that also support the various aspects described in this chapter, see the word studies interspersed throughout chapters 4 and 5, especially the studies of אהב, חסד, רחם, חפץ, ἀγαπάω, and φιλέω. Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that, among other things, divine love toward the world is volitional, as evidenced by both the semantics and divine actions. For instance, the language of election and divine will relate closely to the language of God's love (see the various word studies in chapters 4 and 5 in this regard). This interrelationship points to the association between God's will and his loving actions. Indeed, God's will to create is the prerequisite for his relational love with the world. God's decision to create, election, and commitment to the covenant relationship initiated, but not unilaterally maintained, by that election exemplify the volitional aspect of God's love. Moreover, this volitional aspect complements both the emotional and evaluative aspects of divine love toward the world, which are also coprimordial. Indeed, evaluation, volition, and emotion are all bound up in the language of God's election, good pleasure, delight, etc., by way of both OT and NT terminology, all of which closely corresponds to and collocates with the most important words descriptive of divine love. God's evaluation is further seen in various languages and descriptions of his delight and joy over his people and, conversely, his displeasure and righteous indignation against evil, all of which are closely associated with the major terminology of love. Closely connected to God's evaluative love is his emotional love evidenced in various depictions of his compassion and passion. These volitional, evaluative, and emotional aspects are assumed by, and necessary for, the foreconditional and multilaterally relational aspects of love.

[10] This canonical model of love presumes that the "world" is not eternal but was, at some point in

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(and continues to desire) could not take place without God's logically, ontologically, and chronologically prior decision to create other beings. God is thus the relational starting point, causal origin, and prime agent of all relationship. God did not need to create and love the world but voluntarily opened himself up to relationship with creatures and, as such, God's love relationship with creatures is also voluntary rather than necessary.

This volitional aspect of God's love in the context of the God-world relationship extends beyond the act of creation. God's amazing commitment to his creatures is demonstrated as he continues to voluntarily love creatures even after the fall. While human sin merits death, God has made a way to repair the ruptured relationship and continues to bestow his universally relational love even on sinful and undeserving human beings, though he is under no obligation to do so.[11] In response to the Fall and subsequent disordering of the world, God chose a people through whom he would reach out to all peoples and committed himself to them in covenant relationship for the benefit of all (cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18). The covenant relationship thus further highlights the volitional elements involved in the divine-human love relationship. God's love for humans itself prompted the initiation of covenant relationship through election and God's people were expected to reciprocate God's love through commitment and obedience to him (cf. Deut 7:7–13).[12] Likewise, the oft-used kinship metaphors of marriage and parent-child point toward the bilateral, voluntary commitment expected within the divine-human love relationship.[13]

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time, created by God. This is the explicit canonical view and is among the most basic of biblical metaphysical assumptions. See William L. Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2000).

[11] Both the unmerited nature of divine love and the divine decision as an example of the partial and temporary suspension of the consequences of evaluative judgment will be discussed later in this chapter.

[12] Since the covenant relationship can be broken it cannot be descriptive of a necessary relationship. Rather, it clearly describes a voluntary relationship. On the real possibility that love relationship with God, including covenant, could be forfeited as well as its bilateral nature, see the discussions of the foreconditional and multilaterally relational aspects of love later in this chapter.

[13] For example, the metaphor of marriage assumes voluntary union, especially the frequent divine

Though God's people repeatedly rebelled against him and rejected his loving overtures, God persisted in his love for them far beyond any obligations and reasonable expectations. Over and over again, God renewed his commitment to continue bestowing his love on them actively with the intention of ultimately reclaiming them and restoring them to the harmonious, reciprocal divine-human love relationship that was his goal all along (cf. Exod 32–34; Neh 9; Ps 78). Though they did not deserve it and though God had every right to remove his love from reaching them, God voluntarily continued his love relationship with them. In this vein, the canon consistently speaks of divine love in relation to the world as both initiated and freely bestowed by God.

Numerous other examples of God's volitional love appear throughout Scripture, perhaps the most explicit of which is found in his declaration: "I will love them freely" (Hos 14:4 [5]).[14] On the basis of his love, God chose Israel above all peoples, though they did not merit such election (cf. Deut 7:6–7, 14; 10:15). Likewise, that God's love for creatures is not necessary is evident in the strong language that presents God's love as contingent upon his will in Exod 33:19.[15] There, in the aftermath of Israel's rebellion with the golden calf, God states, "I will be

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charge of infidelity by his "bride" (cf. Jer 3; Hosea). Moreover, the parental metaphor is depicted as one of "adoption," which is also a relationship entered into by decision, at least on the part of the parent, but also at some point that of the child as well (cf. Deut 32:10; Ezek 16:1–6; Hos 11:1). A child might remove him/herself from such a relationship and have nothing to do with his/her parents (at least when adulthood is reached). The parent may continue to have loving feelings toward the absent child but, to the extent that the parent's love is unrequited, the parent-child love relationship is non-existent. For a further discussion of kinship metaphors see chapter 4, pages 341–52, and chapter 5, pages 534–40.

[14] The adjective translated freely (נְדָבָה) connotes the "determinative . . . element of freewill" referring to that which is offered "totally voluntarily." J. Conrad, "נדב," *TLOT* 9:200, 222. See also the fundamentally free and voluntary nature of divine חסד in the discussion of that term in the OT chapter, pages 354–75, where is it demonstrated that God need not manifest חסד, but חסד is predicated upon God's voluntary association. Cf. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 45, 176, 234.

[15] In other cases, the removal of God's lovingkindness or compassion, in response to the people's apostasy, suggests the volitional aspect of God's love (Jer 16:5). Thus, God can clearly remove his love. However, the context shows that the people's actions warranted the removal of lovingkindness and/or compassion long before God actually removed it. Therefore, it appears that such removal is not automatic but voluntary, while at the same time never arbitrary. The freedom of God is also evident in his "repenting," meaning he has the freedom to change course (cf. Jonah 3:9; 4:2). Likewise, humans

gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion" (Exod 33:19; cf. Rom 9:15–18).[16] God's commitment to love humans reaches its apex in Christ himself who manifested the depth and height of God's love by willingly giving himself up for humans (Rom 5:8; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:25).

Thus, God both voluntarily created and bestowed love on humans and continued to bestow that love in the face of evil which, absent God's mercy, would amount to the forfeiture of the benefits of God's love. As such, humans never merit or deserve God's love. God's love is freely given without compulsion.[17]

**God's Love for Creatures
Is Not Solely Voluntary**

While God's love includes a volitional aspect, it is not strictly volitional or unilaterally willed. That is, God's love is not identical to his will or merely a product of his will. God's love is also evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and relationally responsive.[18] God voluntarily loves all humans and bestows his universally relational love on them accordingly.[19] This requires an understanding of the relationship and distinction between God's love and his will and election.

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entreating God in prayer assume that he has the power to act or not act and will himself make a decision.

[16] Here God bestows his compassion and grace without compulsion. The people have forfeited his favor but he continues it toward them nevertheless. In this case, God is not stating that he will arbitrarily be gracious and compassionate to some and not others. Rather, he is stating that though none deserve God's mercy or compassion and he is under no obligation to be merciful toward them, he has the right to bestow it. That God is not merely selecting some to receive his grace and not others is apparent by the construction of the phrase itself, which might be better translated "I will proclaim before you the name LORD, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show" (JPS). See the further discussion of this in chapter 4, pages 251–2. See also the discussion of the relation of God's will and love in Rom 9:15–18 in chapter 5, pages 462–4.

[17] However, while this volitionally free aspect of divine love is recognized, one should be careful not to assume a false dichotomy between the divine will and essence. This issue will be revisited later in this chapter.

[18] These aspects will each be discussed in succession after this one.

[19] God's universal bestowal of love and the content of his universally relational love in particular will be discussed later in this chapter.

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God's love is closely connected to his will and the divine action of election throughout the canon. However, Scripture clearly distinguishes between God's love and God's will and election. Specifically, divine love is itself the basis of election.[20] That is, election is a manifestation of divine love. At this point, two kinds of election must also be distinguished from one another, though they may overlap: (1) vocational election within the plan of salvation and (2) salvific election. Both kinds of election are the result of a divine call to which humans freely respond. That is, both kinds of election are not unilaterally determined by God but require appropriate human response for their continuance. Further, both calls result from and are a manifestation of God's love as will be explained further below.

Vocational election on the basis of divine love

Vocational election refers to God's call to specific individuals and/or groups to a role in the plan of salvation, often of a revelatory nature.[21] This kind of election does not refer to the salvation of the elect but to their special function in salvation history.[22] For example, Israel was

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[20] See Deut 4:37; 7:7–8; 10:15; Pss 47:4 [5]; 78:68; Isa 41:8; 42:1; Matt 12:18; Rom 11:28; cf. Isa 42:1; Eph 1:4; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13. See the discussion of these passages in chapters 4 and 5 especially on pages 265–9, 274–5, 460–62, 468–9. One should also refer to the discussion of the relationship between love and election in Mal 1 and Rom 9 in chapters 4 and 5 on pages 271–5, 460–7. Further, that love is the basis of election is widely recognized. See, for instance, William A. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 59; Gordon R. Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 263; Gerhard Wallis, "אהב," *TDOT* 1:104; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 49; Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 92; Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 99; Daniel Day Williams, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 19; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976), 179–80; E. M. Good, "Love in the OT" (IDB 3; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1962), 166; Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC 32; Dallas: Word, 1984), 305; Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (6 vols.; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976), 6:347.

[21] For example, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the people of Israel, Saul, David, the Twelve, Paul, etc., were vocationally elected to specific tasks and/or functions. On the revelatory purpose of "covenant" see further John H. Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994).

[22] Of course, there is some overlap between vocational and salvific election. One who is vocationally elected may also be elect unto salvation but the two are not the same. The latter is universally available but predicated on appropriate response. As such, the appropriate response, or lack thereof, to vocational election may itself have salvific ramifications.

chosen because of God's love for the patriarchs (cf. Deut 4:37).[23] Importantly, while their election

was unmerited and prior to conditions (cf. Deut 7:7–8; 9:4–5), its attendant privileges were

neither unconditional nor impervious to forfeiture. Likewise, in other instances, while God

chooses particular individuals, such election is conditional upon human response and thus may be

rejected initially and/or forfeited as it was by King Saul and Judas.[24] Accordingly, humans must

maintain their status as "elect" within the divine-human relationship through appropriate response

to God (cf. Deut 7:7–13; 10:15–16; John 15:14, 16).[25]

Significantly, God's vocational election of Israel is not intended for the benefit of Israel

alone. Rather, God intends, through Israel, to enter into a reciprocal love relationship with

peoples of all nations and ethnicities (cf. Gen 12:3; Deut 10:18; Acts 10:34–35).[26] His vocational

election is thus a manifestation of his love not only toward Israel but toward all peoples whom he

desires to draw into reciprocal love relationship with himself.[27] The revelation of God's love,

compassion, mercy, and grace to Israel is, in microcosm, that which he will bestow upon all

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[23] Scripture does not reveal "why" God loved the patriarchs in a special manner though it is apparent that God had a special relational love with Abraham (cf. Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; Jas 2:23).

[24] Cf. Heb 11:8 with reference to Abraham's response to the divine call. Throughout Scripture, "election by Yahweh must find response in the proper behavior of the elect." H. Wildberger, "בחר," *TLOT* 1:214.

[25] For example, though God chose his disciples they are his "friends" only if they obey him (John 15:14) and, as such, this is not an unconditional election. In this way, the ongoing status of an individual or nation as "chosen" is conditional; it is not presented as a unilateral, irresistible, permanent election. "Israel has been chosen by God and must therefore maintain its obligations toward the divine covenant that was the consequence of this choice." Ronald E. Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol. 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 350. Cf. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 179; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), 87.

[26] Thus, "God's election does not mean groundless and unmerited favoritism. Were that the case, God would have been shown to flout the very righteousness the covenant declared and upheld." Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:359. Rather, "God's plan for the salvation of the nations was his motive for the election of Israel. This responsible role of the elect was a dominant theme in the preaching of the prophets." Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr., *Ezekiel* (NAC 17; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 105. Cf. Dyrness, *Themes*, 59.

[27] That is, God's purpose in vocationally electing a particular nation stems from his love for all peoples and his desire to reveal that love to everyone such that all who are willing might enter into a reciprocal love relationship with him. This would explain God's frequent concern for his "name." See,

sinners who will respond to his action and come to him (John 3:16; Rom 10:13; 1 John 1:9).[28]

God vocationally elects humans because of his love and that love not only motivates God to enter

into covenant relationship in the first place but also to remain in that relationship as long as

possible in order to enact the plan of salvation, reveal himself, and provide every opportunity for

as many as possible to respond to him and enter into his particularly relational love.[29]

Salvific election on the basis of divine love

Salvific election describes those instances in Scripture where those who will ultimately

receive salvation are referred to as the "elect" (cf. Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22). The language of

divine calling and election often functions as technical language with reference to becoming, or

being, part of the people of God, which itself requires entrance into, and the maintenance of, a

loving relationship with God.[30] Salvific election then, like vocational election, stems from God's

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among many other instances, Exod 32:12–13; Pss 109:21; 143:11; Ezek 18:25; 20:9, 14, 22, 44.

[28] That is, through the vocational election of Israel and others, God aims at revealing his universal love and his desire for that love to be returned. For this reason God bears longer with Israel in order to manifest his character; that is, not because they are deserving of such longsuffering nor because God is partial (he is not, cf. Acts 10:34–35) but because they are the conduit of the revelation of God's universal love, which is intended toward relational love with all peoples. One may surmise that if God had not made a particular choice of his people all the divine actions could have been viewed as merely natural, the normal course of events. In this case, there would be no way to highlight the way God deals with his people supernaturally and specially. In order for God to reveal his character, and the *modus operandi* of the divine-human relationship, he used a microcosm to set in contrast with the wider world structure which, temporarily, lies outside of God's ideal will as a consequence of creaturely evil.

[29] Within this framework, consider the case of God's love for "Jacob" rather than "Esau" in Mal 1 and Rom 9. Neither Israel nor Edom deserved divine love (cf. Mal 2:11; 3:6) but God bore long with Israel due to their vocational election in the plan of salvation (Deut 4:37; 7:7; Rom 11:28). Israel is privileged not merely for its own sake but God's persevering love toward them is directed toward revealing his love to all. Despite their special election, however, judgment could and did fall upon them, even though God was abundantly longsuffering until there "was no remedy" (2 Chr 36:16). See the further discussion of these instances in chapters 4 and 5, especially on pages 271–80, 460–7, as well as the discussion of evaluative love in the following section in this chapter.

[30] A few examples and explanation of this will be given in the discussion that follows. However, for a further explanation of the meaning of God's calling and election with regard to salvation, see the word studies of בחר, εκλεγομαι, and καλέω along with the discussion of these issues in chapters 4 and 5, pages 242–5, 447–56. See also, among others, Robert H. Stein, *Luke* (NAC 24; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 446; Gottlob Schrenk, "εκλεγομαι, εκλογη, εκλεκτος," *TDNT* 4:187; Craig Blomberg, *Matthew* (NAC 22; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 329.

love. God calls everyone to salvation because he loves every human (his universally relational

love) and desires that all will be party to his particularly relational love and thus be saved (cf.

John 3:16).[31]

God's call in such contexts is an invitation to a reciprocal love relationship, which may

be accepted or rejected.[32] Those who accept the invitation are the "elect" who will enjoy

relationship with God forever (cf. Matt 22:14).[33] This same group is also often referred to as

God's "beloved" (cf. Rom 1:7; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13).[34] On the other hand, not all

who are called, or "invited," respond and become "elect" (cf. Matt 22:3–4, 8–9, 14; Luke 14:16–

24). The divine-human love relationship enjoyed by the elect, then, is contingent upon

appropriate response (cf. Rom 10:9, 12–13; 11:22–23).[35] That is, the final status of "elect"

requires the ongoing, free, positive response of human beings (cf. 2 Pet 1:10).[36] In this way, God

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[31] See further the discussion of God's universally relational love later in this chapter.

[32] The terminology of the divine call is used in a complex fashion. At times, the called are those who have received an invitation to which they must respond (cf. Matt 22:14) while at other times the "called" are those who have responded to the invitation (or will respond). In either case, the invitation is one that must be voluntarily accepted (cf. Matt 22:2–6). For further evidence of this see the discussion of the καλέω word group in chapter 5, pages 452–6.

[33] For example, Jesus stated, "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt 22:14). Here, the "called" are those who may accept or reject God's invitation while the "chosen" are those who do accept the invitation.

[34] However, though they correspond to the same objects, the terminology of the elect and those who love God are not themselves equivalent in meaning. The elect are those who have been called and responded to that call (or will do so). The beloved are also elect but the term beloved also connotes that they are the recipients of God's particularly relational love and thus the objects of God's special affection. The latter is not connoted by the term elect itself, although it is true that the elect are also beloved. For a further demonstration of this view of the statuses of called, elect, and beloved see chapter 5, pages 447–71.

[35] For example, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:13; cf. 10:9, 12). Likewise, Rom 11:22–23 shows that the "elect" are not unilaterally so. Rather, they may forfeit God's kindness. Thus, Paul writes, "Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." See the further discussion of Rom 9–11 with regard to these issues in chapter 5, pages 460–7.

[36] This status is, accordingly, conditional and not unilaterally determined. Thus, Peter writes, "brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble" (2 Pet 1:10; cf. Deut 7:11–12; Eph 4:1; Col 3:12; 2 Thess

freely loves all human beings and makes the reception of his love available to every human but also imposes real conditions upon the potential ongoing recipients of his love.[37]

In all this, those who are salvifically "elect" are those who have responded (or will respond) to the divine invitation by loving God (albeit imperfectly) and are thus "beloved," that is, party to God's particularly relational love, forevermore. Therefore, the "elect" and "beloved" who receive the final reward are not merely those loved by God but "those who love" God in return (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; 1 Thess 1:4; cf. Eph 6:24; Jas 1:12; 2:5).[38] This exemplifies the crucial distinction between God's universally relational love, which God voluntarily bestows on everyone, and his particularly relational love, which is received and enjoyed only by those who appropriately respond to God's universally relational love.[39] God's universally relational love is manifest, among other ways, in the universal call (invitation) to the divine-human love relationship (cf. John 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).[40] The nature of God's vocational and salvific election as the result of God's call to which humans freely respond points to the fact that God has granted human beings significant freedom, a point to which we now turn.

2:13–15; 2 Pet 3:14, 17; Jude 1). Paul prays "that your God will count you worthy of your calling" (2 Thess 1:11). If the faith response of the elect were irresistibly determined by God these numerous exhortations to those elect would be superfluous. For further evidence of the conditionality of election see William G. MacDonald, "The Biblical Doctrine of Election," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995); William W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie, 1990). See also the further discussion of these and other passages with regard to this issue in chapter 5, pages 447–71.

[37] This is descriptive of the foreconditionality of love, which will be discussed further below in this chapter. This expected human response is not meritorious. Rather, human response to God's invitation is itself offered and made possible by his prior grace and love (John 6:44; 12:32). Election is thus conditional and yet unmerited. God's calling is not according to works (2 Tim 1:9) and God will not revoke the call (Rom 11:29). The recipients of "His calling" are those "who believe" (Eph 1:18–19).

[38] To take but one of these examples, the one "who perseveres under trial" when "approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (Jas 1:12; similarly, see Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; Jas 2:5; cf. 1 Cor 8:3; Eph 6:24).

[39] God's universally relational and particularly relational love will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

[40] The call is not itself God's love but is one of the actions that is prompted by God's love and that seeks human love in return.

God's Love Relationship with Creatures
Assumes Bilateral Significant Freedom

As has been briefly seen, the volitional aspect of God's love includes God's desire and will toward a reciprocal relationship with all humans, a relationship that is achieved with those who respond to him. That God desires a reciprocal relationship with all but only enjoys it with some, assumes the notion of bilateral significant freedom. Bilateral significant freedom means that both God and humans possess the freedom to do otherwise than they do. As mentioned earlier, for his part, God need not have created human beings at all. He did not need to create other beings. He could have enjoyed the Trinitarian love relationship for all eternity. God's love toward humans is therefore voluntary, not necessary.[41]

Conversely, God has bestowed significant freedom on humans, including the freedom to reciprocate, or not reciprocate, God's love (cf. Deut 6:5).[42] The volitional aspect of God's love therefore has a counterpart in the divinely bestowed free will of humans. God never irresistibly determines human love. Indeed, the biblical data suggest that determined love is an oxymoron.[43] Love must be freely given as supported both by the numerous commands of humans to love (see

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[41] God's significant freedom has been demonstrated by many of the passages referenced already in this chapter regarding the volitional nature of divine love. For a further discussion of the biblical theology of this issue see chapters 4 and 5, pages 447–71. The significant freedom of God and other creatures is also briefly revisited below in the section on theo-ontological implications.

[42] Thus, human beings are not unilaterally determined to act as they do. The significant freedom of human beings is apparent in numerous instances where what God wants to happen does not occur. For instance, "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves" (Luke 7:30; cf. Mark 7:24). Elsewhere, God desired to save his people. He even "longs to be gracious" to them and "waits on high to have compassion," but they were "unwilling" (Isa 30:15, 18). Likewise, God "called, but no one answers," he "spoke, but they did not listen. And they did evil in [His] sight and chose that in which [He] did not delight" (Isa 66:4; cf. 65:12). In many other instances God's will is not unilaterally effective since that which takes place is not always what God desires. See Lam 3:33; Ezek 33:11; cf. 18:23, 32; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34; 2 Pet 3:9; cf. 1 Tim 2:4. See also the discussion of these and other passages in chapters 4 and 5.

[43] Some evidence for this conclusion is presented in this section and much more may be found in chapters 4 and 5, pages 241–301 and 447–71. Moreover, the evidence for this conclusion becomes stronger and stronger as one considers the many other aspects of love and how they interrelate. As we turn to each of those aspects we will see that the voluntary nature of love, both human and divine, is not only implied in many passages but required to make sense of the broader conception of God's love and the divine-human love relationship as depicted throughout Scripture.

further below) and implied by the fact that God's love as well as the love of humans is consistently depicted as voluntary throughout Scripture (cf. Hos 14:4; Deut 30;15–16, 19–20). Indeed, there are no instances of forced love in the Scripture. Rather, throughout Scripture, love, whether human or divine, assumes freedom.[44]

This means that human response is required to establish and maintain the particular, divine-human love relationship. The requisite human response is apparent in the frequent divine command of humans to love God and others (cf. Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:37–39), among many other places. Such commands make little sense if the human's will is not involved. Rather, such commands suggest that humans might volitionally respond to God's love with reciprocal love. Conversely, divine love may be forfeited by the lack of appropriate human response.[45] If humans are free to respond or not respond to God's love, as suggested in these texts, the God-human love relationship cannot be the result of God's will alone. God's will, therefore, is necessary to a divine-human love relationship but does not bring such relationship to fruition by itself.[46] Though God will never arbitrarily remove his love, humans may reject his love and disown him (cf. Jer 31:3; Hos 9:15). The divine-human love relationship, then, is neither unilaterally deterministic nor essential or ontologically necessary but mutually (though not symmetrically) volitional and contingent.

In all this, God's love in relation to the world is voluntary but not arbitrary. That is, God's love for creatures is not the product of his will alone but also includes evaluative and

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[44] Stephen G. Post correctly comments that "God refuses to eliminate human freedom, because a divine determinism would preclude the realization of communion, of which freedom is a constitutive principle." *A Theory of Agape: On the Meaning of Christian Love* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1990), 26. Similarly, David Fergusson writes, "The necessary condition of freedom bestowed by the love of God, therefore, is the possibility of our rejecting him." "Will the Love of God Finally Triumph?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 200.

[45] This will be explained and further elaborated upon in the section on the foreconditional nature of divine love below.

[46] That is, God's will to love is thus a necessary basis of the divine-human love relationship but does not, by itself, amount to a loving relationship between God and humans.

emotional aspects that complement its volitional aspect. Further, the love relationship that God

desires with human beings is not unilaterally willed but requires the free response of human

beings to God's freely given love. Neither God nor humans love one another by necessity. God

freely loves humans and beseeches humans to freely love him in return. God's love for the world,

then, takes place within the context of a free, volitional relationship.

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love

**Throughout Scripture, God's Love
Is Consistently Evaluative**

God's love is not only volitional but also includes evaluative and emotional aspects. The

evaluative aspect of God's love refers to the appraisal, appreciation, and/or reception of value

from external agents. Throughout Scripture, God often delights in, takes pleasure in, and enjoys

his creatures. Indeed, "the Lord takes pleasure in His people" (Ps 149:4) who are precious and

valuable in his sight (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 26:18; Isa 43:4; Matt 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:27, 24).[47]

On the other hand, God may also be displeased, vexed, and grieved by humans.[48] God's

evaluative love is further evident in that he loves the righteous (Ps 146:8; cf. Prov 11:20; 12:2,

22) and the "cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7; cf. Heb 13:16) but hates those who do iniquity (Ps 5:5

[6]; cf. 11:5; Prov 11:20; Rev 2:6).[49] Indeed, the "way of the wicked is an abomination to the

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[47] Elsewhere it is abundantly clear that God's people may be "delightful" and/or pleasing to him (2 Sam 22:21–28; 1 Kgs 10:9; Jer 31:20; Pss 147:10–11; 149:4; Prov 16:7; Dan 9:23; 2 Chr 9:8; Rom 14:18; Col 1:10; 3:20; 1 Thess 4:1; Heb 11:5; 1 John 3:22). Likewise, human beings are precious and valuable to God (cf. Isa 43:4; Matt 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:6–7, 24) and his special treasure (Exod 19:5–6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; cf. Mal 3:17–18). God thus enjoys his creatures and this is an aspect of his love. Furthermore, God "will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy" (Zeph 3:17). One may "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please him in all respects" (Col 1:10; cf. 1 Thess 4:1; Heb 11:5; 1 John 3:22) as children who are obedient to their parents are "well-pleasing to the Lord" (Col 3:20).

[48] In many instances, the canon clearly asserts that humans may displease God. See, for example, Isa 9:17 [16]; 65:12; 66:4; Eccl 5:4 [3]; 1 Cor 10:5; 1 Thess 2:15.

[49] Importantly, this contrast between divine love and hate (cf. Isa 61:8; Ps 45:7 [8]) is depicted as explicitly evaluative and often emotive. It is evident here and elsewhere that divine love and hatred should not be conflated with choosing and rejecting, respectively. They both may connote volition, evaluation, and emotional affection (cf. Jas 2:23). See the further discussion of this issue in chapters 4 and 5, pages 294–

Lord, but He loves one who pursues righteousness" (Prov 15:8–9). That God loves the righteous

and the "cheerful giver" does not necessarily mean that God only loves them and not others.

Rather, God loves everyone in some respects as evidenced elsewhere (cf. John 3:16).[50] These

passages, then, suggest that God loves the righteous and the cheerful giver in a special, evaluative

sense. He delights in and approves of those who do good while being displeased by evil.[51]

Significantly, even those among God's "elect" may be the object of divine displeasure (Hos 8:13;

Mal 1:10; 1 Cor 10:5) while the "outsider" may be accepted by God (Acts 10:35).

Accordingly, divine pleasure or displeasure in human beings is (partially) predicated on

human disposition and/or action and may be manifest along with intense and profound divine

emotions.[52] As such, God's love for individuals may, in fact, be increased and/or decreased

according to their disposition and/or actions. Thus, the evaluative aspect of God's love assumes

divine responsiveness to human beings, including appraisal of their disposition and/or actions. As

such, both God's positive and negative responses to human beings are not arbitrary, but

responsive to human actions.

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301 and 506–10.

[50] On God's love for everyone, see the discussion of God's universally relational love under the discussion of the relationally multilateral aspect of God's love later in this chapter.

[51] God hates evil because, among other reasons, it affects everyone negatively. In other words, his love for all must logically result in the response of hatred toward certain states of affairs and, even, specific persons who perpetrate evil. In this regard Leon Morris correctly points out that "we often confuse love with sentimentality. . . . There is a stern side to real love." *Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 25. Cf. Donald A. Carson, "Love," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 647.

[52] For example, God delights in righteousness, goodness, obedience, and lovingkindness (Jer 9:24; Mic 7:18; Ps 11:7; cf. 1 Pet 1:7; 3:4) but takes no pleasure in wickedness (Ps 5:4 [5]; cf. Deut 12:31; 28:63; Luke 16:15) nor in merely external sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11, 14; Hos 6:6; 9:4; Amos 5:21–22; Mic 6:7–8; Ps 40:6 [7]; Heb 10:8; cf. Prov 15:8). The emotional intensity of God's evaluative displeasure is evident when God himself declares, "I hate [literally, My soul (נֶפֶשׁ) hates] your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me, I am weary of bearing them" (Isa 1:14; cf. Jer 12:8; Hos 9:15; Amos 6:8; Ps 106:40). Thus, divine hatred is depicted in strongly emotional terms that point toward the passionate nature of God as well as the passionate nature of love. See the further discussion of the emotional aspect of God's love in the next section of this chapter.

Indeed, God's displeasure is never described as arbitrary in Scripture but is always

prompted by evil (cf. Hos 9:15).[53] God never hates that which is good but justly hates evil.[54] Yet,

even his righteous indignation is tempered, due to his amazing mercy and grace.[55] In the

meantime, God longs for the day when his people will be his delight (Isa 62:4 [5]; cf. Isa 65:19;

Jer 32:41; Ezek 20:39–42; Mal 3:12). The pinnacle of God's joy is reserved for the day of

ultimate restoration when reality will be in perfect accord with the divine will and pleasure and he

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[53] "God's wrath is [not] arbitrary or whimsical" but is the "righteous response of his holiness to sin." Carson, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 647.

[54] Not only is this apparent by reference to the canonical instances of divine hatred but it also follows from other Scriptural data. For example, Scripture laments that Jesus was "hated . . . without cause" (John 15:25; cf. Pss 35:19; 69:4). It is here implicit that it is unjust to hate someone "without cause." Would it not then be unjust of God to hate some humans without cause? The logical conclusion is that, as is evidenced in the canon, divine hatred is never groundless but always appropriate to the actual state of affairs. This corresponds to the frequent canonical conception of misdirected love, which assumes that love ought to be directed toward that which is good rather than that which is evil. Such a conception itself assumes the appropriateness of evaluative love. Thus, humans should love that which is good and hate that which is evil (cf. Amos 5:15; Titus 1:8). Misdirected love is frequently rebuked throughout the canon (see, among many others, Isa 1:23; 56:10; Hos 3:1; 9:10; 10:1; Amos 4:5; Prov 20:13; 2 Chr 19:2; Matt 6:5; 23:6; Luke 11:42–43; 16:14; 20:46; 1 Tim 3:3; 6:10; 2 Tim 3:2–4; 4:10; Heb 13:5; 2 Pet 2:15; 3 John 9; Rev 22:15). Importantly, misdirected love is evil not because it includes desire, attraction, and enjoyment but because it is directed at that which should not be loved. This is contra Anders Nygren's condemnation of what he called acquisitive or appetitive love. *Agape and Eros* (trans. P. S. Watson; London: SPCK, 1953), 128, 210. Thus, Daniel L. Akin correctly states that it is "not the emotion that is felt by the individual" that is evil but "the question is whether that attraction is properly motivated, and directed to the right object." *1, 2, 3, John* (NAC 38; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 108.

[55] Further, divine hatred does not necessarily refer to maximal negative emotion as the term "hate" in English generally connotes. The intensity of the divine feelings of hatred and/or displeasure depends on the context and can vary from the most intense loathing to mild aversion. Moreover, God may (temporarily) love and hate the same object(s) simultaneously. For example, God may come to hate his people evaluatively but still continue to long for a particular, love relationship with them and accordingly work to draw them to himself in the meantime. This corresponds to the subjective, universally relational, and foreconditional aspects of his love, which itself relates to the temporary and partial suspension of evaluative judgment. Eventually, however, without appropriate human response, such evaluative hatred will become permanent and God's universally relational love will be forfeited. Nevertheless, in the meantime there is considerable complexity due to the sinfulness of the human objects of God's love such that God might truly love and hate the same object, in different ways, at the same time. Tony Lane comments, "God loves sinners, not in the sense that he does not hate them along with their sin, but in the sense that he seeks their salvation in Christ." "The Wrath of God as an Aspect of the Love of God," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 155. He further suggests that it is possible to view God's "wrath against a particular sinner [a]s demanded by his love for that particular sinner." Ibid., 164.

will rejoice over his people even as the father rejoiced over his prodigal son who returned home (Luke 15:20–24; cf. Zeph 3:17).[56]

The Partial and Temporary Suspension of the Effects of Divine Evaluation

However, what about the apparent tension between the concept of evaluative love and the reality that the objects of divine love are not worthy of love? For example, what is to be made of God's love for the "righteous" in light of the fact that elsewhere the canon states that in God's sight no one is righteous (cf. Ps 143:2; Rom 3:10) and all human righteousness is like filthy rags (Isa 64:6)? God is able to take pleasure in unworthy human beings because, due to his loving mercy and grace, he has temporarily and partially suspended the consequences of evaluative judgment in response to the entrance of evil into the world through the Fall (cf. Acts 17:3).[57] Without this there would not only be an absence of evaluative love toward creatures but humans themselves would be non-existent. Yet, while humans have ruptured the divine-human love relationship and deserve to die, God mercifully and graciously grants ongoing life and love (cf. Exod 33:18–34:10). That is, because of God's voluntary and undeserved, steadfast love, manifested in the bestowal of mercy and grace, the eradication of evil, which would otherwise be immediate, is temporarily suspended so that all who will respond to God's loving overtures might be reconciled to him (cf. 2 Pet 3:9; Ezek 18:32; 33:11).[58] However, the temporary and partial

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[56] God delights when even one lost person is found. See Luke 15:7, 10, 24; Matt 18; Ezek 34:10–11, 13.

[57] I qualify this suspension of the consequences of judgment as "partial" since God still does execute some judgment at all times but, presently, his positive judgments do not correspond to perfect judgment (other than the evaluation of Christ), since no creaturely objects are themselves worthy of positive appraisal, and his negative judgments are significantly tempered (but not nullified) by his longsuffering mercy and grace. Such "partial" judgment is especially prominent in the divine appraisal of his OT covenant people, who apparently function as a microcosm and type of the way the divine-human evaluation operates in accord with God's mercy and grace.

[58] Therefore, the word "righteous" is used in such instances in a qualified sense, a partial righteousness corresponding to the partial suspension of the effects of judgment. Of course, the very existence of divine mercy and grace assumes the (at least partial) suspension of the effects of evaluative

suspension of divine evaluation does not amount to its nullification. There will be future

judgment, including the eradication of the impediment to the perfect divine-human love

relationship, that is, evil (cf. Rev 20–21). In the meantime, God bestows his universally relational

love on undeserving, sinful humans based on his own mediating work and, accordingly, actively

draws humans to himself toward his ultimate goal of reciprocal divine-human love relationship.

That divine evaluation is partially suspended requires that God's positive appraisal of

creatures is now only partially evaluative. No creaturely objects are presently worthy of positive

evaluation. Indeed, absent divine intervention human beings are incapable by themselves of

bringing anything valuable to God and are therefore unworthy objects of divine love (cf. Isa

64:6).[59] However, humans may bring value, such as pleasing "sacrifices," to God only through:

(1) the divine initiative of grace and love, which are bestowed prior to conditions (his

foreconditional love), and (2) the mediation of Christ (and the Holy Spirit).

First, prior to any human action, God has loved humans and, accordingly, draws them to

himself (Jer 31:3) such that human love is predicated on, and responsive to, prior divine love (1

John 4:19).[60] This prior action dovetails with the volitional aspect of God's love discussed earlier,

since God not only decided to create beings whom he would love but also continued his

universally relational love toward humans even after the Fall. Accordingly, God's negative

judgments are significantly tempered (but not nullified) by his longsuffering mercy and grace.

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judgment as their occasion.

[59] At the same time, it should not be forgotten that humans are all creatures of God and thus possess intrinsic value, not because they deserve it but because God has invested value in his humans whom he "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14) in his own image. As such, unworthy and sinful humans are not thereby valueless in the eyes of God. Humans thus always possess intrinsic value as divinely created but cannot generate value in and of themselves in their fallen state.

[60] Thus, God declares, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer 31:3). Moreover, "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This aspect of God's love will be discussed in more detail under the discussion of the foreconditional aspect of God's love later in this chapter.

Second, Christ's mediation suffices for the deficiency of human righteousness for those who are "in Christ" by faith (which itself entails love as its indispensable corollary).[61] That is, God values the human intention and motivation (itself impossible without God's prior, loving action and continuing mediation) and adds to that intention and motivation the ongoing mediation of Christ that makes up for the human deficiencies (cf. 1 Pet 2:5). Thus, statements of God's delight in the "righteous" do not mean that those humans merit or deserve God's evaluative love. Rather, during this partial and temporary suspension of the effects of evaluative judgment Christ functions as mediator such that meager human offerings, themselves only possible because of God's previous loving action toward humans, may be received as pleasing and acceptable to God.[62] Thus, God truly loves the "righteous," those who conscientiously respond to God's loving overtures in good faith, while there is no one who is, in fact, wholly righteous since all strictly human righteousness is soiled (cf. Isa 64:6).[63] As such, it must never be forgotten that such "righteousness" is conditional but is not itself meritorious; it could not be evaluated as "lovely" without divine mercy and mediation. God's love toward his creatures is always undeserved but that does not rule out divine evaluation or conditionality. Through Christ, God's attention is

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[61] See the discussion of this in chapter 5, pages 492–506.

[62] Whereas, in the OT human acceptability before God was mediated through the sanctuary system (typologically), the NT reveals Christ as the true mediator (antitype) through whom Christians might bring genuine value to God. "Through Christ," humans may "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (1 Pet 2:5) and be "pleasing in His sight" (Heb 13:21). Under this umbrella of divine mercy and mediation, God takes pleasure in even the smallest appropriate response to his love (cf. Mark 9:24; 2 Cor 8:12). That is, even though creatures are unworthy objects of divine delight, God takes pleasure in whatever "goodness" is exhibited in them. Accordingly, through Christ, God can look upon even meager offerings as valuable and pleasing to him. Christ's mediation makes humble offerings acceptable by the superaddition of himself (cf. 1 Pet 2:5; Eph 5:2, 10). See also Ezek 20:39–42; Rom 12:1–2; Eph 5:1–2, 10; Phil 4:18; Heb 13:12, 15–16. See also the mediatorial work of the Holy Spirit in Rom 8:26.

[63] Perhaps some have overlooked the evaluative elements of divine love due to the fear of approaching the idea of merits or the fallacy that one might earn salvation. The key to understanding the apparent tension between the idea that God evaluates, appreciates, and may be pleased with human beings, resulting in blessings, with the idea that human righteousness is mere filthy rags is understanding the reality and nature of Christ's mediation.

directed not only at what humans are in the present but what they might become in Christ.[64] In this way, the partial and temporary suspension of the effects of evaluation allows for the mercifully positive divine appraisal of undeserving humans.

Jesus Christ is the worthy and effective mediator since he himself is loved as the supremely worthy, excellent, valuable, precious, objectively and evaluatively choice and lovable Son of God. Thus, the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt 3:17).[65] The Father's love for the Son is itself evaluative, grounded in the reality of who Jesus is *and* what he does. Significantly, the Father's evaluative love toward the Son depicts choice, evaluation, and emotion as complementary.[66] Christ is thus the truly worthy object of God's evaluative love while others may be the objects of God's delight prior to the eschaton only to the extent that they are "in Christ," receiving such privileges as God's adopted children. In other words, Christ stands in as the proper object of divine love though whom humans may be beloved (cf. Eph 1:6; 5:2).[67]

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[64] As Edward Collins Vacek suggests, "Agape is directed to the good of the beloved, whether this good is *actual or only potential*." *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 163.

[65] That the Son is the worthy object of God's love as "beloved" as well as the one who is truly pleasing to God, is abundantly attested in the canonical data. See Isa 42:1; Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 9:35; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; John 8:29; Heb 1:9; 10:38; 1 Pet 2:4, 6; 2 Pet 1:17; Rev 5:9, 12.

[66] On the close association between divine choice, evaluation, and emotion consider the word studies in chapters 4 and 5 of ἀγαπητός, εὐδοκέω, θέλω, βούλομαι, ἐκλέγομαι, חפץ, רצה, and בחר on pages 242–5, 277–84, 441–56, and 476–83. The use of such terms shows considerable overlap between that which God wills and his evaluative desires, that which brings him satisfaction, pleasure and/or delight, and even that which he loves or has affection toward. As such, there is a strong association in the canon between divine volition, evaluation, and emotion such that the divine will is not to the exclusion of, but includes, evaluation and emotion. Consider also the brief word studies of the many other terms used of divine evaluation and/or delight such as the ἀρέσκω and δόκιμος word groups on pages 484–5. Further, see also the discussion of חשק on pages 266–7.

[67] Christ is himself the eminently "elect" and "beloved" one through whom humans who respond with love to God's loving overtures might be "elect" and "beloved" (cf. Eph 1:4–6). Thus, "Christ is the primary and exemplary elect" through whom others may be elected. Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1–3* (AB 34; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 86. In this way, "the Elect (Christ) bears the elect." Schrenk, *TDNT* 4:175. Cf. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 99, 104–5; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 2002), 27.

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However, the temporary and partial suspension of the consequences of evaluation does not amount to nullification. Evil will finally be punished.[68] Though divine mercy and grace endure beyond reasonable expectations, they do not nullify divine justice, especially eschatological judgment. In the future, there will be evaluative judgment that corresponds to the actual state of affairs. Indeed, the canon consistently points toward the reality of evaluative scrutiny and testing in judgment (cf. 1 Chr 29:17; Jer 11:20; Ps 7:9; Prov 27:21; Rom 8:27; 2 Cor 10:18; 13:5–7; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12), especially eschatological judgment (1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:9–10). Therein, God freely wills to resurrect those who respond to God and are thus accounted worthy (through Christ's mediation, see Luke 20:35; cf. 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Pet 1:10–11) and finally transformed into his likeness (cf. 1 Cor 15:51–56; 1 John 3:2).[69] In all this, such positive divine appraisal is predicated on "faith" without which "it is impossible to please Him" (Heb 11:6). In this way, pleasing God is not something earned by the believer but it is nevertheless conditional upon true faith, which is finally rewarded.[70] In the eschaton, the divine postponement of the consequences of evaluation will be over and the partial and mediated divine evaluation will turn to fully objective evaluation. Then, however, willing humans will have been transformed into perfectly loveable objects, having been changed by God. On the other hand, those who reject God's love will also be judged accordingly. Thus, mediatorial justification prior

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[68] C. F. H. Henry is correct in stating, "It is the God who regards sin solemnly who is the God of holy love—and none other." *Notes on the Doctrine of God* (Boston: Wilde, 1948), 110. Thus, divine "love does not intercept God's final punishment of evil." Idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:353. The alternative, "self-cancelling justice is not only unbiblical, it also implies amoral love." Ibid., 6:354.

[69] Evidently, being pleasing or acceptable to God entails eschatological consequences. "To be pleasing to God means that they will be vindicated and saved at the final judgment." Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998), 741.

[70] As Douglas J. Moo puts it, "Some Christians have a difficulty with rewards, objecting that our obedience to Christ should be pure and disinterested, unmotivated by any such crass consideration as future reward. . . . But the contemplation of heaven's rewards is found throughout the NT as a spur to our faithfulness in difficult circumstances here on earth." *The Letter of James* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 71.

to the final execution of judgment is not mere legal fiction but points to the fact that God will

accomplish the perfection of those who love him (cf. Jas 1:12; 1 John 3:2).[71]

**God Has Bound His Own Interests to
the Best Interests of His Creatures**

As has been seen, God's evaluative love includes the fact that God derives pleasure from

the positive disposition and actions of humans but is displeased at sin and evil of every kind. In

this way, God himself is the model of both proper self-love and profound other-love. On the one

hand, God rightly commands and receives worship and glory and enjoys and delights in

relationship with his people. On the other hand, divine self-interest does not exclude other-

interest. Rather, by God's free decision to create, sustain, and invest his love in the world, God's

self-interest includes the best interests of all others. In this way, God's own enjoyment is

voluntarily tied to the joy of his creatures, akin to a loving mother's joy in her child's happiness.

For example, in Eph 5 the church is presented as analogous to Christ's bride *and* his own

body when Paul states, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave

Himself up for her. . . . So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He

who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and

cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of his body" (Eph 5:25,

28–30).[72] In these parallel metaphors of love, the giver (Christ) receives by giving. This is far

from the selfishness that 1 Cor 13:5 excludes by stating that love "does not seek its own." It is

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[71] They will manifest the ultimate result of gold refined in the fire (cf. 1 Pet 1:7; 4, 12). In other words, divine love, which is undeserved, will then be warranted as a result of the completed process of mediation, redemption, and reconciliation. Even then, however, divine love will not be merited since divine favor could never be deserved by creatures; existence itself is a gift.

[72] While process thinkers might see in this passage an example of panentheism, the fact that the two metaphors of wife and body are mutually exclusive, if applied literally, rules this notion out. Such language should not be taken to refer to an essential relation between Jesus and human beings any more than a man and a woman form an essential relation when they are married and "become one" (Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 6:16). On the contrary, God identifies with the best interests of others voluntarily rather than essentially.

appropriate self-interest that includes other-interest. Here, the self-sacrificial love of Christ in dying for the church that she might be redeemed as his bride is bound up with his self-love, that is, his love for his metaphorical body, the church.

Thus, that God may be the beneficiary of creaturely action, enjoying, delighting, and taking pleasure in human love toward him and others (which itself is indirectly love toward him) in no way depreciates his love. God enjoys human beings, delights in them, and is joyous in their joy. His creatures' best interest is his interest and this is genuine, compassionate love.[73] This is also true of God's zeal for his name (cf. Joel 2:18), which is not exclusive to other-interest since the proper revelation of God's love encourages human love response.[74]

In all this, God's love is consistently evaluative. While sinful humans cannot by themselves bring value to God, they may bring value and joy to him because of God's enabling and drawing action, especially the mediation of Christ. Yet, while God has proper self-interest, he is never selfish. God's life is intimately affected by the lives of humans because he has made their best interests his own; the joy of others is integral to God's own joy.[75] In this manner, God models, affirms, and prescribes an unselfish self-interest, most clearly manifest in the demonstration of God's love at the cross (cf. Rom 5:8).

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[73] While humans, being selfish, often place their own interests above those of others, God experiences no such conflict of interests because his will is perfectly directed toward the best good of all which, in its fullness, will bring him and them joy.

[74] This interrelation of God's self and other-interest is itself tied to God's compassion and sympathy as well as his zeal and passion. On these elements see the discussion of the emotive nature of divine love in the next section.

[75] Indeed, when one sinner is saved, heaven rejoices (Luke 15:7, 10). As such, God's joy is increased or decreased by the actual state of affairs in the world because God has bound his own interests to the best interests of all of his creatures.

The Emotional Aspect of Divine Love

God's Love Is Deeply Emotional and Affected

Scripture consistently displays God's intensely passionate and profoundly emotional love for his people.[76] God is deeply concerned about the goings on of history, makes commitments and keeps them, and is consistently concerned about and emotionally invested in the world, which spurs him to appropriate action (cf. Exod 2:23–25).[77] God is thus presented as ever-involved and invested in the world that he created, being affectionate, loving, devotedly interested in and intimately concerned with human beings.[78] Indeed, God delights in goodness, takes pleasure in righteousness, and is joyous over every person who responds to his loving overtures (cf. Zeph 3:17).[79] God is, then, intensely interested in and affected by humans, and may be pleased and enjoy them. On the other hand, God feels sorrow, passion, and intense anger at human evil, while

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[76] Here, "emotion" refers to any feeling(s) that may be affected by external stimulation. Yet, emotions are not necessarily determined by external stimulus to the exclusion of other mental factors, including volition, evaluation, etc. With this in mind, the term emotion is used in this dissertation to refer to that which manifests a passible, affective response to the state of affairs. No attempt is made here to broach the ongoing conflict of interpretations in the field of psychology regarding the definition and nature of emotion. However, this model does appear to complement the aspects of some cognitive (but not exclusively cognitive) theories of emotions that give weight to an evaluative component wherein emotion is a response to an agent's evaluation of the state of affairs. See the brief discussion in Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Suffering Love," in *Augustine's Confessions: Critical Essays* (ed. W. E. Mann; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 123.

[77] This is evident in the intimacy of the creation and fall accounts, the divine initiative, watch care, and grief displayed in the flood, patriarchal, Exodus, conquest, kingdoms, exile and restoration narratives in the OT as well as by the intense divine concern and interest manifested through the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ and through apostolic times and even unto the forecasted *parousia*.

[78] In this presentation, the manifestation of divine emotionality in the incarnation of Christ has not been separated from the other manifestations of divine emotion in Scripture but they are taken to represent truly divine emotions. Indeed, Christ came to reveal God and proclaimed in no uncertain terms "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). However, even if one were to exclude the emotions of Christ, the emotionality of divine love is readily apparent even without those instances. Moreover, the correspondence between the emotions of Christ and those of YHWH elsewhere themselves present a compelling argument that such emotions are divine rather than merely human. See the methodology section in chapter 1 for a further discussion of this issue and the potential theological ramifications of positing that Jesus' emotions were merely human.

[79] God "will exult" over his people "with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy" (Zeph 3:17).

also compassion and the desire to bring wayward humans back into proper relationship with himself (see below).

God's love consistently manifests strong affection for, and interest in, his creatures (cf. Isa 49:15; 63:9; Jer 31:20; Hos 3:1; 9:15; 11:1, 8–9; Zeph 3:17; Mark 10:21; John 13:1). His people are "beloved" and "dear" to him.[80] For example, God's love is likened to the tender affection of a parent who adopts and cares for a child. Thus, God "loved" Israel as "a youth" and called his "son" out of Egypt (Hos 11:1).[81] Even when they rebel against him, God's "heart yearns" for his people whom he calls "My dear son" and "delightful child" (Jer 31:20).[82] God's compassion and sympathy for his children is even greater than the love of any mother for her newborn child. Indeed, God himself proclaims, "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you" (Isa 49:15).[83] This depth of God's compassion is symbolized by the passionate and joyous love of the father for his prodigal son who returned (Luke 15:20). Jesus likewise manifests this profoundly

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[80] See, for example, the word studies of חשׁק and ἀγαπητός, among others, in the canonical chapters, pages 266–7 and 476–80. ἀγαπητός, for example, generally refers to that which is loved, often in the sense of being dearly loved, prized, and/or valued, the object of one's affection, and may be used of emotional attachment to a dear one, as ידיד and יחיד.

[81] God also taught "Ephraim to walk," took him in his arms, cared for him (Hos 11:3–4), and "carried" his people "just as a man carries his son" (Deut 1:31). In "God's love and His mercy He redeemed them" and "lifted them and carried them all the days of old" (Isa 63:9; cf. John 13:1).

[82] Notice the intensely emotional phraseology of God's heart yearning. See the discussion of this imagery in chapter 4 on pages 327–8. See also Exod 4:22; Deut 1:31; 8:5, 16; Isa 49:15; 66:13; Jer 31:20; Hos 11:1, 3–4; Ps 103:13; Prov 3:11–12; cf. Luke 15:20.

[83] רחם, the term used in Isa 49:15 to compare God's love to that of a mother's compassion, is probably denominative from רֶחֶם, "womb," and accordingly evokes the image of a "womb-like mother love." See Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT 2; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 31–59. See the word study of רחם on pages 302–7. Consider also the physiological idiom associated with רחם and σπλαγχνίζομαι, which speaks to the depth of the divine emotions of compassion as if they are located in his churning "innards" (cf. Isa 63:15). See the discussion of this and other intensely emotional imagery of God's love on pages 327–8. Elsewhere, God loves his people even as "one whom his mother comforts" (Isa 66:13) and has compassion on his beloved even as "a father has compassion on his children" (Ps 103:13).

emotional love. When he sees people in need he is moved with compassionate love for them (cf. Matt 9:36; 14:14; Mark 1:41; 6:34; 10:21; Luke 7:14).

God's compassionate love frequently appears in the face of sin and evil, meeting human apostasy with forbearance and grace. For example, though God's people deserve to be cut off after the rebellious worship of the golden calf, God freely bestows compassion and mercy upon those who choose to repent and follow him (Exod 32:26–30; 33:19). In doing so, he reveals his character, which he later proclaims to Moses: "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin" (Exod 34:6–7). Thus, God's compassion, mercy, and lovingkindness are astounding in their greatness, depth, and longevity. God is exceedingly longsuffering and patient in his compassionate and merciful love, which endures beyond all reasonable expectations.[84]

In many other instances, God responds to supplication and/or entreaty because of his great love, being moved to compassion, and relents from the execution of judgment in reaction to human entreaty and/or appropriate response (cf. Judg 2:18; Jer 18:1–10; Joel 2:13–14; Jonah 3:9–10; 4:2; cf. Matt 18:27).[85] Even though God's people repeatedly betrayed and forsook him, God

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[84] Likewise, see Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Ps 86:15; Neh 9:17, 31, among others. Accordingly, the Bible frequently speaks of the greatness or abundance of God's mercy or compassion (cf. Deut 4:31; 2 Sam 24:14; Isa 63:7; Ps 51:1; Neh 9:19, 31; Lam 3:22; Dan 9:18; 1 Chr 21:13; Luke 1:58; Eph 2:4; Jas 5:11). See the further evidence of profound divine compassion, heartfelt concern, sympathy, and mercy by way of the discussion of the רחם, חמל, חוס, οἰκτίρω, σπλαγχνίζομαι, and ἐλεέω word groups in the word studies in chapters 4 and 5, especially pages 302–7, 511–19. Likewise, God's emotional commitment to his people is apparent in his חסד, lovingkindness, which is often associated with his compassion in the OT and in some aspects closely related to the NT concept of mercy. See the word studies on pages 354–75 and 511–19. Norman H. Snaith suggests that in חסד there is "inherent in the word" something of "eagerness, ardor" and "intense devotion" of the "love of God." *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), 106. Such terms as used with divine agency demonstrate consistently that God is deeply affected by, and interested in, the lives of his creatures.

[85] See also Gen 18:22–32; Exod 32:1–14; 33:12–34:10; Isa 30:19; Pss 69:16 [17]; 102:17; 119:132; Neh 9:27; Dan 9:18; 2 Chr 7:14. For even more evidence of divine responsiveness see Deut 32:10–11; Isa 31:5; 40:11; Hos 11:8; 13:5; Ps 23:4; 1 Chr 21:15; John 10:11, 13–14; Heb 2:6; 8:9; 1 Pet 5:7. Yet, God is never unduly swayed or unreliable as are humans (cf. 1 Sam 15:29; Jer 4:28; 15:6). Thus, God's character is constant.

continued to patiently bestow compassion.[86] This compassion and mercy, which takes into account the distress and/or needs of humans, is itself a grounding of divine beneficence.[87] Such repeated, undeserved kindness manifests the depth of God's emotional attachment to human beings. Yet, God's response to entreaty is not automatic. He may also not relent (1 Sam 15:29; Jer 4:28; 15:6).[88] Thus, while God experiences strong emotions, God is nevertheless volitionally free and evaluative (see the previous two sections).

Accordingly, even God's compassion and mercy have a limit. Divine compassion is neither constant nor immutable, but conditional within real, historically significant interrelationship.[89] God's people may so persistently reject him that he withdraws his "lovingkindness and compassion" from them (Jer 16:5; cf. Isa 9:17; 27:11; 63:15; Jer 11:15; 14:10; Ezek 5:11; Hos 9:15; Ps 89:49). God, however, never wished to do so. He did everything he could do to avoid this outcome (Isa 5:1–7).[90] God thus expects appropriate response from his people (cf. Exod 20:6; Matt 5:7; 6:12, 14–15; Luke 6:36; 2 Chr 30:9). God's lovingkindness, compassion, and mercy are not unconditional (cf. Luke 1:50; Gal 6:16; Heb 10:28; Jas 2:13; Jude

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[86] Thus, "God is a compassionate God" (Deut 4:31) whose "mercies are great" (2 Sam 24:14; 1 Chr 21:13) and whose "lovingkindnesses never cease" and "compassions never fail" (Lam 3:22). He is sympathetic (cf. Isa 63:9; Heb 4:15), deeply affected by the sorrows of his people (Judg 10:16; Luke 19:41), and willing to hear, answer, and comfort (Isa 49:10, 15; Matt 9:36; 14:14). He is a God of "tender mercy" (Luke 1:78), "rich in mercy" and "great love" (Eph 2:4), "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Cor 1:3). See also many other references to the greatness of God's compassion, lovingkindness, and mercy in Isa 63:7; Ps 51:1; Neh 9:19, 31; Dan 9:18; Luke 1:58; Jas 5:11.

[87] See Ps 51:1; Matt 15:32; Luke 1:54, 78; Eph 2:4; Titus 3:4–5; 1 Pet 1:3. It is *a* grounding but not *the* only grounding (cf. Eph 2:4).

[88] For example, only wholehearted, heartfelt worship moves God, in conjunction with repentance and obedience/fidelity (cf. Mal 1:9–10). See the word study of נחם in the OT chapter. See also John C. Peckham, "The Passible Potter and the Contingent Clay: A Theological Study of Jeremiah 18:1–10," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 18 (2007): 130–50.

[89] See the discussion of the foreconditionality of divine love in the following section of this chapter.

[90] Indeed, God "sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people" yet "they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy" (2 Chr 36:15–16; cf. Heb 8:9).

21) and, thus, may be forfeited (cf. Deut 13:8 [9]; Isa 9:17 [16]; 27:11; Jer 15:1; 16:5; Ezek 5:11; Hos 13:5–8; Matt 18:27, 33, 35; Rom 11:22; Heb 8:9).[91] In this way, God's mercy and compassion are not automatic. God is not compelled to be gracious but freely bestows compassion and mercy on his creatures (Exod 33:19; Rom 9:15–16).[92]

At the same time, divine love includes justice. Though God is exceedingly compassionate and gracious he "will by no means leave the guilty unpunished" (Exod 34:6–7). God is thus willing to forgive but not to the exclusion of justice nor in the ultimate absence of the love relationship with his people that he so desires. He "longs to be gracious" to his people and "therefore waits on high to have compassion" (Isa 30:18–19; cf. 2 Chr 30:9; Hos 2:19 [21]; Joel 2:18–19; Heb 8:12).[93] Though God consistently longs to bestow compassion on his people, his compassion is often interrupted by their rebellion (Isa 5; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34). They repeatedly forsook God with other gods and thus forfeited his deliverance (Judg 10:13; 1 Sam 8:8; 1 Kgs 11:33; 2 Kgs 22:17; Jer 1:16 cf. Hos 13:5–6). Similarly, Christ lamented while pondering Jerusalem's coming hardship, "How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling" (Matt 23:37). God

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[91] For example, God's "mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear him" (Luke 1:50) and "blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matt 5:7; cf. Exod 20:6; Ps 103:13; Gal 6:16; Jude 21) but "judgment will be merciless to the one who has shown no mercy" (Jas 2:13). Thus, though its lasting nature stands in stark contrast to the fleetingness of divine anger, even divine compassion has a limit. It is not inexhaustible (cf. 2 Chr 36:15–17). In this way the efficacy and manifestation of divine compassion fluctuates, not because God is capricious, but in direct relationship to the vacillation of his wayward people. Thus, the canon does not support the contention: "Because compassion is inherent to Yahweh's nature, its disappearance is conceivable only if the order of human nature and the universe could be overthrown." H. Simian-Yofre, "רחם," *TDOT* 13:441. Interestingly, elsewhere Simian-Yofre refers to God's "absolute freedom." How can it be both?

[92] See also Pss 78:38; 135:14 [136:14]; Neh 9:19, 31; Rom 9:15–16, 18; Heb 8:12. The divine initiative is free and primary and he may reject human repentance and/or refuse compassion though he does not do so without good reason such as when "the people have become so corrupt and disloyal at their core that no hope for true and sustained repentance seems possible" and they proffer only "shallow repentance," which is not "heartfelt." Cf. Hos 5:8–6:6. Dennis T. Olson, "The Book of Judges," in *Numbers–Samuel* (vol 2 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1998), 826. Cf. Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:410.

[93] God thus waits to respond to human entreaty and repentance (cf. Jer 18:1–10). Here again, it is seen that "God never imposes His love by overriding human will." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 350.

still feels for and longs for his people in periods of their apostasy but his compassion does not reach them due to their rejection of God. Such removal of divine compassion is never arbitrary but always responsive to human infidelity and evil (cf. Hos 5:8–6:6).

**God's Intense but Always
Appropriate Passion**

God's profound love and concern for the world is further evident in his passion. Indeed, God describes himself as a "jealous God," that is, the passionate lover of his people (Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9; cf. 34:14; 4:24; 6:15; Josh 24:19; Nah 1:2).[94] God's jealousy, however, lacks the negative connotations of human jealousy. God's jealousy is a wholly appropriate and virtuous aspect of his love. It is never envious. God is never jealous *of* other gods or idols or any kind of being but his jealousy is always directed at that which rightfully belongs to him. God is thus passionate *for* his name and his people.[95]

As such, God's "jealousy," or passionate love, is always directed toward that which rightfully belongs to him. Accordingly, God's jealousy is primarily manifest as his appropriate desire for exclusive relationship with his people whom he passionately loves.[96] That is, just as spouses ought to be dedicated to one another in exclusive relationship, God expects and desires a love relationship with his people that is undiluted.

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[94] However, God's love and passion never refers to sexual desires or activity.

[95] God's passion for his "name" relates not only to self-interest but also God's concern for creatures since an accurate picture of his character is more likely to draw people to respond to his passionate love. See Ezek 39:25; John 2:17.

[96] It is thus analogous to that which spouses ought to have in a marriage relationship, though it never amounts to petty or inappropriate jealousy as often manifested in human relationships. Accordingly, Paul R. House correctly explains that jealousy "troubles many readers of Scripture who consider jealousy a solely negative trait. Jealous protection of what is rightly one's own, however, is justified. For example, most marriage partners do not want their spouses violated sexually. They are justifiably protective of an exclusive sexual relationship. . . . In these examples jealousy is a good and normal trait. God's jealousy is equally positive." Divine jealousy "is no character flaw. Instead it magnifies God's righteousness, concern, and covenant loyalty." *1, 2 Kings* (NAC 8; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 194.

However, God himself is often depicted as a scorned husband, the unrequited lover of an unfaithful wife (see Hos 1–3; Isa 62:4; Jer 2:2; 3:1–12; Ezek 16, 23; Zech 8:2; cf. 2 Cor 11:2).[97] Because of God's intense and wholly appropriate desire to receive the undiluted love and fidelity of his people, God becomes impassioned at their unfaithfulness and spiritual adultery.[98] That is, the repeated adulterous liaisons between God's people and false gods provoke his jealousy (Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 14:22; 1 Cor 10:22).[99] On the other hand, God's passion may also be directed against those who abuse and oppress his beloved people, in favor of and toward the restoration of his people (cf. Isa 26:11).[100]

God's Pain, Grief and Anger as Righteous and Loving Indignation and Wrath

Thus, God's love manifests itself not only in positive emotions but also in negative emotions. God is often provoked by his people, displeased, grieved, vexed, anguished, and/or

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[97] Elaine Adler points out that the language utilized in the marriage metaphor, including אהב, is affectionate and passionate. Cf. "The Background for the Metaphor of Covenant as Marriage" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1990), 70. "'A wife of youth' suggests all the passionate devotion of a young married couple with the bright hopes of their early married life." J. A. Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 18; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 447.

[98] See Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 14:22; Ps 77:58; cf. 1 Cor 10:22. "Yahweh is ardent in both love and justice." Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 187. Gerald L. Borchert comments, "The way Jesus reacted to the Jewish merchandising in the temple [in John 2:17] troubles some who cannot conceive of a loving Jesus being angry. But spineless love is hardly love. Instead, characteristics that adhere to anger and judgment can in fact be the obverse side of the coin of love." *John 1–11* (NAC 25A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 164.

[99] Thus, God's passion is frequently manifested in anger and wrath at their infidelity. Such negative emotions, however, are not essential to divine passion itself but the appropriate response to the actual state of affairs. Absent sin and evil, manifested in infidelity, the negative aspect of passion (as well as other emotions) would not be. In response to infidelity, God disciplines his people but such discipline is itself grounded in his passionate love for them with the hope of ultimate reclamation (cf. Prov 3:12; Rev 3:19). Moreover, as seen further above, God responds repeatedly to heartfelt entreaty and is willing to relent of discipline and return in his compassion and graciousness, which far exceed his wrath.

[100] Thus, "the Lord will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people" (Joel 2:18; cf. Zech 1:14–17). Moreover, "out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord will perform this" (2 Kgs 19:31; Isa 37:32; cf. Zech 8:2–3; Heb 10:27). See also Isa 26:11; 37:32; Zech 8:2–3; 35:6; Heb 10:27.

angered.[101] Though God worked miracles and blessed Israel abundantly they forgot him and continually rebelled against him. "How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert! Again and again they tempted God, and pained the Holy One of Israel" (Ps 78:40–41; cf. Gen 6:5–6; Isa 63:10; 1 Cor 10:5). Thus, God's emotional response to evil includes displeasure, wrath, jealousy, and when pressed, even hatred, abhorrence, and loathing. Indeed, "they provoked Him with their high places and aroused his jealousy with their graven images" so that God was "filled with wrath and greatly abhorred Israel" (Ps 78:58–59; cf. Jer 12:8; Hos 9:15; Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:8–10).

God's wrath is never arbitrary but is always the appropriate response to sin and suffering, that is, it is the result of human provocation.[102] As shall be seen further below, God's love and mercy far surpass such negative emotions, postponing and mitigating, but not cancelling, the execution of divine judgment. Yet, God's love does not nullify his justice or righteousness. True love requires justice and righteousness and thus God's anger against evil also stems from his love for all and his desire for the ultimate good of the universe. If God did not finally execute judgment against evil, the world would be left in an indefinite state of degradation, much to the

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[101] See Exod 20:5–6; 34:6–7; Ps 78:10–72; 2 Chr 28:25; 33:6; 34:24–25; Heb 3:8–10, 15. The frequent recurrence of such provocation is highly significant. "God's anger (cf. Num 14:11, 23, 43*b*) was not aroused by a single incident but by a persistent tendency to refuse his direction." William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8* (WBC 47A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 86. See also Gen 6:5–7; Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 14:22; Isa 63:10; 65:3; Jer 12:8–9; Hos 9:15; Pss 78:40–41, 58–60; 95:9–11; Mark 3:5; 1 Cor 10:5. Likewise, out of his profound love and passion for his people, God may be grieved, vexed, and angered at evil (cf. John 11:38).

[102] See Deut 32:21; 1 Kgs 14:22; Isa 65:3; Pss 78:10–72; 95:9–11; 2 Chr 28:25; 33:6; 34:24–25 among many other examples. The atrocities that elicited divine anger included child sacrifice, all kinds of debauchery that was even mixed in with worship, defiling and perverting the very means of the people's communion with God (cf. 2 Chr 33:6). In light of this, should not Yahweh be indignant at depraved wickedness? Is he not righteous to respond against evil? As such, negative divine emotions are thoroughly evaluative, not arbitrary. As D. D. Williams puts it, "what is clear is that his wrath and punishment are never unmotivated." *The Spirit*, 22. So, also Patrick D. Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah" in *Isaiah–Ezekiel* (vol. 6 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2001), 814; K. D. Schunck, "חמה," *TDOT* 13:464. Carson adds, "Where there is no sin, there is no wrath, but there will always be love in God." *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000), 67.

detriment of all of God's creatures.[103] If God loves everyone (cf. John 3:16) his concern for all

requires that he mete out justice and finally eradicate evil. God passionately hates evil, as he

should, and he will bring it to an utter end. Thus, the benefits of God's love have a limit. In the

meantime, God's discipline of his people while there is yet time to repent and turn to him is itself

out of his love and desire that they might be saved (cf. 2 Pet 3:9). Thus, God disciplines his

people "just as a man disciplines his son" (Deut 8:5) "to do good" for them "in the end" (Deut

8:16). "For whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he

delights" (Prov 3:12; cf. Heb 12:6; Rev 3:19). In all this, it is because God is love that evil

provokes him to intense, always appropriate anger.

**God's Wrath-Surpassing
Compassionate Love**

Nevertheless, God's love and mercy far surpass his negative emotions.[104] Indeed, God

continually restrains his anger in longsuffering and patience, hoping to call humans back to him

(cf. Ps 78:38) and thus, in his patience, repeatedly postpones and mitigates the execution of divine

judgment. The striking tension between God's profound love and justice is evident in the angst of

God over his people who have rejected him: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I

surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled" (Hos 11:8; cf. Isa 30:15,

18–19; Jer 3:1, 4, 8, 12).[105] Nevertheless, despite the intensity of evoked emotion, God retains

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[103] As D. C. K. Watson puts it, "Unless God detests sin and evil with great loathing, He cannot be a God of Love." *My God Is Real* (London: Falcon, 1970), p. 39, quoted in T. Lane, "The Wrath of God," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 160.

[104] Thus, the "Lord of Israel is not a Janus-faced God, a God of wrath and a God of love. The wrath of God is always subordinated to the love of God." Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:814.

[105] Thus, "there is a constant tension between justice and mercy. God is a righteous God and will not tolerate evil. Punishment is inevitable if sinful behavior persists. The world makes moral sense. God cannot abandon God's own standards of justice. And yet, God is constantly pulled in the direction of forgiveness and mercy. God is also in pain when people disobey, and God can see the terrible consequences

self-control, restraining his anger, limiting his wrath, and forgiving according to his compassion. "But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath" (Ps 78:38). Thus, God never overreacts like humans are prone to do.

God does not want to act in wrath. Even in times of judgment God "does not afflict willingly" but "if He causes grief, then He will have compassion" (Lam 3:32–33; cf. Judg 10:16). He does not want to destroy his people (cf. Isa 30:18; Luke 13:34, etc.). However, eventually, love requires action against evil, however unpalatable even to God himself. Yet, "God's anger lasts but a moment in contrast to his favor, which lasts a lifetime (Ps 30:5).[106] Thus, God's positive emotions for his people far exceed the negative, both in intensity and duration. While the consequences of iniquity may reach to the fourth generation, God "keeps lovingkindness" unto the thousandth generation (Exod 34:7). In this way, God's love exceeds all reasonable expectations and he is disposed toward positive emotions, which far exceed the negative ones in both intensity and duration (cf. Isa 54:7–10; Jer 33:26). The ultimate depth of divine love is manifested in God's giving of his own son, his beloved, for undeserving human beings (John 3:16).[107] Though the magnitude of the Father's love for the Son is beyond description, the entire Godhead desires the reconciliation of creatures to themselves so much that they made the ultimate sacrifice. There is no greater love than this (John 15:13).

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awaiting them. God wants to forgive and move on to better things if people will give at least some hint of repentance." Daniel J. Simundson, "The Book of Micah," in *The Twelve Prophets* (vol. 7 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 589. Cf. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habbakkuk, and Zephaniah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 61.

[106] See also Isa 12:1; 54:7–8; Jer 31:3, 13, 20, 25–26; Hos 14:4.

[107] "Surely, to see his son die in such a cruel fashion would break any father's heart—much more so that of our heavenly Father." Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2004), 129.

The Emotionality of Divine Love
Complements Its Volitional
and Evaluative Aspects

Though God's love is deeply emotional it is not only emotional. The emotionality of

God's love complements its volitional and evaluative aspects, all three of which are mutually

supportive and interrelated. The evaluative and emotional aspects of divine love are especially

closely related since both of them assume divine passibility and point to the fact that God can

enter into a mutually beneficial (though unequal) relationship of give-and-take with human

beings. As seen in the previous section, and earlier in this one, there is some overlap between the

evaluative aspects of God's love and emotionality. For example, God's delight in his people is

both evaluative and emotive. Likewise, God's displeasure is emotional but always evaluative.[108]

There are some, however, who have suggested that love must not be emotional if it is

commanded since, it is supposed, one cannot command an emotion.[109] In this view, love must be

volitional rather than emotional. Some have thus supposed that the love commands of Scripture

refer merely to the legal aspects of covenant relationship, that is, purely willed and external

obedience, devoid of emotion.[110] However, it is not true that love that can be commanded must be

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[108] Indeed, the contrast between divine love and hate, affection and animosity, throughout the canon strikingly portrays both the emotive and evaluative aspects of love. "Jesus himself had loved and hated keenly—hated because he loved, hated intensely whatever challenged, misrepresented, and thwarted the divine purpose on earth." James Moffat, *Love in the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1930), 54. Even C. F. H. Henry speaks of "God's enmity toward sinners" as "not merely a passive attitude but one of active hostility." *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:358. Here, C. F. H. Henry speaks as if divine wrath may be elicited but it is clear in his system that all actually stems from the omnicausal divine volition.

[109] Stein thus states, "Emotions can be elicited but not commanded. Actions and the will can be commanded." *Luke*, 206–7. Morris likewise contends, "While it is nonsense to be commanded to generate a passionate *eros*, it is not nonsense to be commanded to respond to God's love." Thus, for him, "we must not confuse love with passion or sentimentality." *Testaments of Love*, 187, 189. Similarly, W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC; London: T&T Clark International, 1997), 241; Bernard J. Bamberger, "Fear and Love of God in the Old Testament," *HUCA* 6 (1929): 39–53; J. W. McKay, "Man's Love for God in Deuteronomy and the Father/Teacher—Son/Pupil Relationship," *VT* 22 (1972): 426; Dennis McCarthy, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship between Yahweh and Israel," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 145–46.

[110] For example, based on ANE parallels, it has been suggested that the primary OT term of love, אהב, at least in Deuteronomy, belongs to technical treaty language as a "covenantal love," which is to be

non-emotional. Such a view posits a false dichotomy as if love is merely emotion or volition to the exclusion of one another.

Certainly, love toward God is to be manifest in obedience and such love is not *merely* emotional. However, can true wholehearted loyalty not involve emotions (cf. Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13)? Is not loyalty and commitment much stronger if it is also grounded in devoted affection, even zealous passion? The thoroughgoing, loving obedience God desires cannot be merely external. Rather, genuine loyalty involves the entire person (cf. Deut 4:29; 10:20; Josh 23:8).[111] Accordingly, love may be both passionate and volitional in response to command and/or entreaty. In fact, the divine love commands themselves require not merely external compliance, but internal, wholehearted response.[112] The love that God desires from humans is to come from the whole person, including the emotions.[113]

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contrasted with affection. So William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 78. Cf. McCarthy, "Notes," 144–46; Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*'āhēb, 'ahâbâ*) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52 (2002): 440; P. J. J. S. Els, "אהב," *NIDOTTE* 1:285–87; Norbert Lohfink, "Hate and Love in Osee 9, 15," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 417; Larry R. Walker, "'Love' in the Old Testament: Some Lexical Observations," in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation* (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975), 283–84. In this vein, a distinction is often made between the emotional affection in intimate personal relationships (family, friendship) as opposed to the merely political "love" of treaty contexts. Cf. Ackerman, "The Personal," 440; J. A. Thompson, "Israel's 'Lovers,'" *VT* 27 (1977): 475–81; idem, "Significance of the Verb Love in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel," *VT* 24 (1974): 334–38. See the further discussion of this in chapter 4, pages 233–8.

[111] The command to love God "requires to be exercised by the whole man and demands of him an ultimate decision . . . one which proves itself in unreserved trust." Viktor Warnach, "Love," *EDNT* 2:528. So Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:286. As Jacqueline E. Lapsley points out, "even a modern understanding of 'loyalty' is loaded with emotional content, and there is no reason to assume that ancient loyalty did not also involve the emotions in a significant way." "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 65 (2003): 352. Cf. Clements, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Numbers–Samuel*, 2:343.

[112] Thus, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:5; cf. 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:6; Josh 22:5; Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). For many more love commands see also Deut 11:1, 22; 19:9; 30:15, 16, 19–20; Josh 23:10–11; Lev 19:18; Mark 12:31; John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Rom 13:9; 1 John 3:23; 4:21; 2 John 1:5, 6; cf. Hos 3:1. Indeed, loving Jesus and/or the Father is itself related to obeying his commands (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 5:2, 3) and Jesus's love for the Father is likewise exemplified in obedience to commands (John 14:31; 15:10). Further, see especially Evan's discussion of the fact that "some emotions are ones that we have some control over, at least over time." C. Stephen Evans, "Can Love Be Commanded? Kierkegaard's View of Neighbor Love," in *Visions of Agapé: Problems and Possibilities in Human and Divine Love* (ed. C. A. Boyd; Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 76. He comes to the conclusion that "Christian love for the neighbor is a genuine emotion; it is not merely acting for the good of the other while inwardly lacking any concern for

As such, the love that God calls for is to be emotional but not merely emotional; such love is to include decision and commitment as well as emotion and evaluation. Mere emotion is not enough but neither can it be excluded from the appropriate love response that God seeks. Those who claim that love cannot be emotional if it is commanded or volitional subscribe to a false opposition of volition, evaluation, and emotion.[114] Commitment is not antithetical to emotional and passionate love. Likewise, the volitional nature of God's love does not thereby exclude its emotion or vice versa.

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the other's good. But it is the enduring kind of emotion, the kind of emotion we can work at developing." Ibid., 83. That emotional love can be commanded would seem to be required in the command, "fervently love one another from the heart" (1 Pet 1:22). Accordingly, as discussed in chapter 3, love cannot be restricted to something like purely external, "covenantal" love and, thus, it should not be conflated with the legalities of covenant. Rather, covenant itself, like election, is predicated on divine love and modeled after affectionate kinship (cf. Exod 4:31). See Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Contra Moran, "The Ancient."

[113] Accordingly, merely external obedience is consistently criticized while God repeatedly calls for wholehearted love, mercy, and justice (cf. Mic 6:8; Luke 11:42). God laments that "this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me" (Isa 29:13). God expects and desires full allegiance, devotion, and loyalty, including one's emotions. Thus, he delights in "loyalty rather than sacrifice" (Hos 6:6) and receives the offerings of "a broken spirit" and "a broken and contrite heart" (Ps 51:17). External manifestation of loving obedience to God must correspond to an internal, emotive, even passionate, devotion. Alexander To Ha Luc thus comments, "genuine inner feeling must go hand in hand with outward observance, loyalty to God must involve both." "The Meaning of *'hb* in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1982), 139. Cf. Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1:1–15:29* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 203.

[114] The biblical data simply do not present any dichotomy between volition and emotion but propose complementarity between divine volition, emotion, and evaluation. Cf. Matt 15:31; Mark 1:41. Thus, Tigay notes, "The idea of commanding a feeling is not foreign to the Torah, which assumes that people can cultivate proper attitudes." *Deuteronomy*, 76. Cf. Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 337. Lapsley adds, "The objection that feelings cannot be commanded relies on the modern notions not only that feelings exist within the private world of the individual, but also that they are uncontrollable. In order to talk about love in Deuteronomy, on the other hand, we must come up with a way to talk about emotion that does not perpetuate the modern propensity to privatize feelings and separate them from action." "Feeling Our Way," 365. For a further discussion of this issue see the demonstration of the complementarity of emotion and volition in love presented in chapters 4 and 5.

Notice, for example, that Christ in one instance is "moved with compassion," then states, "I am willing; be cleansed" (Mark 1:41). Here, volition and emotion are complementary. The biblical data simply do not present any dichotomy between volition and emotion but propose complementarity between divine volition, emotion, and evaluation. "Love and behavior motivated by love are not to be separated from emotion, and yet they are not dependent on emotion, but require wise consideration." Wallis, *TDOT* 1:110. D. T. Olson comments, "Obedience and passionate relationship characterize the full love of God." *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 51.

In all, God's love for humans is ardent, passionate, and profoundly emotional.[115] God is thus intensely interested in and affected by human beings, and may be pleased or displeased by their response to him such that the quality of his life is directly affected by the state of affairs in the world. His compassion is passionate, profoundly deep and intense, the magnitude of which is astounding. Yet it is not to be taken for granted but requires appropriate response. Such divine compassion is assiduous but not constant, highly emotive but not beyond divine control. While God is passible, however, he is not passibly inactive. Overall, the canon demonstrates that God's love is emotional but not merely emotional. Divine love includes deep affection and personal concern complementary to its volitional and evaluative aspects.

The Foreconditional Aspect of Divine Love

God's Love Is Prior to Conditions

God's love is foreconditional. This means God's love for humans is prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. God's love for everyone, his universally relational love, is bestowed on each human prior to their response and thus before any conditions have been met. As such, God's love is prior to any human action, merit, worth, or love. God voluntarily bestows his universally relational love upon everyone with the goal of enjoying a particularly relational love relationship with each human who will respond positively and, ultimately, reciprocate God's love.[116] As such, God's love is logically and ontologically prior to any other love and holds sole primacy (cf. John

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[115] This is especially exemplified by Christ who is "above all . . . 'the one who cares.'" R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 265. William Hendriksen adds, "The sorrows of the people are Christ's own sorrows, for he dearly loves these burdened ones." *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1973), 439. Further, God is compassionate and sympathetic (cf. Isa 63:9; Heb 4:15), deeply affected by the sorrows of his people (Judg 10:16; Luke 19:41), willing to hear, answer, and comfort (Isa 49:10, 15; Matt 9:36; 14:14).

[116] The reciprocation of divine love itself within a multilateral relationship will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

3:16; 2 Cor 13:11; 1 John 4:8, 16).[117] Indeed, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16) and the "God of

love" (2 Cor 13:11) who so loved the world that he gave his beloved Son (cf. John 3:16). On the

other hand, "love is from God" (1 John 4:7) and "we love, because He first loved us" (1 John

4:19; cf. John 15:16; 1 John 3:1; 4:9–10). God thus draws humans toward himself in his love and

kindness (cf. Jer 31:3; Rom 2:4). However, human response is not unilaterally effected by God's

initiative nor does it bypass human agency. That is, God's love is prior to all other love, and itself

enables other beings to freely love.[118]

God's Love Imposes Conditions

While God's love is foreconditional, God implements conditions for the reception and

continuance of his love. Scripture repeatedly depicts God's love as conditional upon human

response yet not thereby deserved. For example, God promises lovingkindness to those who love

him (Exod 20:6).[119] Elsewhere, Deut 7:12–13 states, "Then it shall come about, because you

listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you His

covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. He will love you and bless

you and multiply you."[120] Perhaps most striking are the examples in John such as when Jesus

states, "If anyone loves Me . . . My Father will love him" (John 14:23) and later proclaims, "the

Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me" (John 16:27). Here, the clear implication

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[117] The issues regarding the relationship of love to God's essence will be taken up in the final section of this chapter.

[118] The issue of human responsive love will be taken up in the next section of this chapter where the relational and multilateral nature of divine love will be explained.

[119] See also Deut 7:9; 1 Kgs 8:23; Ps 103:11, 17–18; Dan 9:4. Elsewhere, God's lovingkindness demonstrates the relational responsibility, conditionality, and expectation of appropriate response such that the ongoing reception of lovingkindness is tied to fidelity to God. Though God's lovingkindness is predicated on his free decision, the bestowal of divine lovingkindness is not strictly unilateral. God is willing to be the continual benefactor of lovingkindness but requires *willing beneficiaries.* So Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Love in the OT," *ABD* 4:379. Cf. idem, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 131; Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967), 89.

[120] See also, among many others, Hos 14:1–4 [2–5]; Joel 2:12–14; Ps 146:8; Prov 15:9; John 14:21, 23; 15:14; Jude 21.

is that obedience and love toward Jesus evoke the love of the Father and that of the Son.[121]

Likewise, the friendship relationship of love with Christ is conditional upon obedience (John 15:14).[122] Even the Father's love for the Son is apparently grounded and conditional as Christ proclaims, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again" (John 10:17).[123] Such examples, among others, depict reciprocal, conditional, motivated, and evaluative love.

Indeed, the conditionality of divine love complements, and is supported by, the evaluative aspect of God's love explained earlier in this chapter. For example, conditionality is related to evaluation since the "way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but He loves one who pursues righteousness" (Prov 15:9). That is, God appraises, delights in, and enjoys his creatures and, by its very nature, such evaluation is contingent and conditional upon the particular state of affairs. Further, as noted in the previous section, the reception of divine mercy is frequently conditional upon humans bestowing mercy to one another (Matt 5:7; 18:33, 35; cf. Jas 2:13) or otherwise contingent (Luke 1:50; 1 Tim 1:13; Gal 6:16; Jude 21). At the same time, such mercy is undeserved and unmerited (Titus 3:5).[124]

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[121] See the further discussion of the conditionality in these and other passages in conversation with biblical scholars in the sections on the foreconditional aspect of love in chapters 4 and 5.

[122] This points toward the reciprocal love relationship, which will be discussed in the next section. See also Mark 10:21–22; Matt 18:27, 33. Further, the frequent language of "abiding" in the NT suggests that the divine-human love relationship must be maintained by appropriate human response in order to continue intact. For example, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode [μονή] with him" (John 14:23). Cf. John 14:23; 15:7, 9–10; 1 Tim 2:15; Heb 8:9; 1 John 2:5–6, 10, 17; 28; 3:1, 9–11, 14–15, 17; 23–24, 35–36; 4:12, 16. Where "followers of Jesus are in view" such texts "tell us that Christians remain in the love of God and of Jesus by obedience." Carson, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648.

[123] Thus, "not even Jesus is exempt from responding to the Father's love for him in obedience." Köstenberger, *John*, 456. This is especially striking as it manifests the risk undertaken by Christ with regard to the possibility of disrupting the eternal love relationship in order to include creatures in a love relationship for which they are undeserving.

[124] The conditionality of divine love further complements the conditionality of divine blessings, which are clearly revealed in the covenant stipulations with corresponding blessings and curses. God's blessings flow from God's love and provide an explicit example of the actions that are grounded in divine love. Just as God's universally relational love is bestowed foreconditionally, God's blessings are also often

Texts such as John 14:21; 16:27 and others refer to a special, intimate, relational love that moves beyond God's universally relational love that he freely bestows on all prior to response and the intimate, relational love without which God's universally relational love is not sustained indefinitely. That is, God loves those who respond to his son in love in a way that is not afforded to "the world" who freely choose not to respond.[125] As such, God's love is both prior to human love and, yet, responsive to and conditioned upon human love that is responsive to God's prior love. This is the foreconditionality of divine love.[126]

Thus, it is apparent in such passages that love for God is itself a real condition of receiving or maintaining God's universal, relational love (cf. John 14:21, 23; 16:27; 1 John 4:8)

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explicitly foreconditional; God grants blessings to his people prior to conditions but continued blessings are predicated on conditions that humans are expected to fulfill (cf. Deut 7; Lev 26; Pss 5:12; 111:4–5). On the other hand, divine love may be manifest not only by immediate blessing but also discipline, which God intends for the greater good of his creatures (cf. Deut 8:5; Prov 3:12; Heb 12:6, 10; Rev 3:19). Divine blessings are unmerited but not unconditional and may be forfeited since God expects appropriate response from the object(s) of his blessing(s). See the abundance of evidence of the conditionality, and potential forfeiture, of divine beneficence in the sections on the foreconditional aspect of love in chapters 4 and 5. Milgrom even contends that "all blessings and curses, even when nonexplicit are optatives." Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (vol. 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2286.

[125] For example, compare God's universal love in John 3:16 with his particular love for the righteous in Ps 146:8 and for the cheerful giver in 2 Cor 9:7. This distinction between God's universally relational and particularly relational love will be further discussed in the next section.

[126] God deeply desires to bless the people, but his doing so is contingent upon not only their external obedience, but also their internal disposition. Thus, God extends benevolence universally, that is, he wills everyone's best good, yet his beneficence is limited by the actual state of affairs insofar as actual divine blessings are contingent and conditional. Consider God's stirring declaration: "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deut 5:29; cf. 4:40; 6:24; 12:28). Such a love relationship is not unilaterally predicated on God's will and thus cannot amount to unilateral and arbitrary divine beneficence. As such, the conditionality of blessing entails the reality of contingent reward. See Gen 22:16–18; 26:4–5; 32:25–28; Exod 19:5; 23:25; Lev 26:3–17; Deut 11:26–28; Luke 6:35; 11:28; 14:14; Gal 3:9; Eph 6:24; Jas 1:25; 1 John 3:21–22. Such rewards even include salvation as the result of the eschatological, evaluative judgment (cf. 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 5:11; cf. 2 Thess 2:10). Importantly, the temporary and partial suspension of the consequences of judgment, spoken of previously in this chapter, is also apparent in that humans often do not (immediately) receive their just deserts in this disordered world (cf. Job; Eccl 3:16–17; 8:12, 14; 9:2; Matt 5:45). That is, there is not always a one-to-one correlation between behavior and the reception of blessings or curses. Accordingly, one should not view the conditionality of divine beneficence as if it amounts to a thoroughgoing theology of (immediate) retribution. The conditionality of divine beneficence is much more complex. Often retribution, whether positive or negative, is deferred rather than immediate. Ultimately, full justice awaits the eschaton. See the sections on the foreconditional aspect of love in chapters 4 and 5 for a further description of the interplay between divine love, blessing, and conditionality.

and, thus, of salvation itself (cf. 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12). Indeed, one cannot have true faith in Christ without love for God and his children (cf. 1 John 3:14; 5:1).[127] Faith is thus the human response to God's prior love and itself entails a reciprocal response of love on the basis of that faith in, and acceptance of, God's prior love for us. As has been seen earlier, though the human love response is itself imperfect, God not only provides the initiating love that enables human response but also mediates this loving response such that it is acceptable to God (cf. 1 Pet 2:5). As such, love is a real condition of relationship with God and at the same time only comes about because of God's prior, foreconditional gift of love that draws the Christian to freely respond to God's love and therefore be party to God's particular, relational love (cf. Jer 31:3; 1 John 4:7).[128] God's love is thus prior and posterior to human response, in different respects, but nevertheless conditional.[129] This is the foreconditionality of divine love.[130] Such love is not meritorious, it does not earn

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[127] Faith and love go hand in hand in the NT and one cannot even love God without the prior initiating love of God. But one must respond to that initiating love in faith *and* love. Edward Malatesta comments that one remains in death "until he has chosen to make love a conscious activity." *Interiority and Covenant: A Study of [einai en] and [menein en] in the First Letter of Saint John* (AnBib 69; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 259–60. Stephen S. Smalley comments on 1 John 3:14, "The evidence, as well as the test, of having crossed over from spiritual death into the dimension of eternal life is both practical and objective; it is fraternal love." *1, 2, 3 John* (WBC 51; Dallas: Word, 2002), 189. Such love for the brethren is itself indirectly love for God (cf. 1 John 5:1).

[128] Thus, anyone who loves is "born of God" (1 John 4:7) but they were not "born of God" by God's unilateral and unconditional decree. They had to respond to God's prior action (1 John 5:1; cf. John 3:16). In this way, one cannot love God without God's prior action, while without response to God's prior action there is no ongoing relationship of love. Accordingly, I believe that one who tries to remove the exhortative and paraenetic function of statements such as 1 John 3:14; 4:7; 1 Cor 8:3 overlooks their motivational intentionality. It seems, then, that God's prevenient love prompts prevenient grace, which effects a partial regeneration that allows human response. I refer to such regeneration as partial because one does not stop sinning upon being born again. Thus, the one who is born again must "grow in respect to salvation" (cf. 1 Pet 2:2, 5) and the full results of generation are therefore neither instantaneous nor automatic. A full discussion of the complex relationship between being born again and loving God, however, is beyond the scope of this work. For the purposes of this work, Moffat puts it well: "The experience of God's love is thus a growing experience, into which the Christian enters more and more as he is faithful." *Love*, 265.

[129] Hendriksen rightly states, "Why cannot God's love *both* precede and follow ours? That is exactly what it does, and that is the beauty of it: first, by *preceding* our love, it creates in us the eager desire to keep Christ's precepts; then, by *following* our love, it rewards us for keeping them! Nothing could ever be more glorious than such an arrangement!" *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1953), 2:281–82.

[130] Accordingly, it is not true that if love is necessary for the reception of God's gift of eternal life

salvation, but it is the requisite, appropriate response to God's love (cf. 2 Tim 4:8).[131] God's love

is bestowed prior to conditions, it is undeserved, and, at the same time, there are conditions

attached to it.

**The Conditionality and Unconditionality
of Divine Love**

While divine love is never deserved or merited, it is in many ways conditional and thus

humans may forfeit God's love such that it does not reach them. God himself declares in response

to the rebellion of his people: "All their evil is at Gilgal; Indeed, I came to hate them there!

Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will love them no

more" (Hos 9:15; cf. Jer 11:15; Jer 14:10). Elsewhere God states, "'I have withdrawn My peace

from this people,' declares the Lord, 'My lovingkindness and compassion'" (Jer 16:5; cf. Ps

89:49).[132] Likewise Romans speaks of "the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell,

severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you will also be

cut off" (Rom 11:22; cf. Matt 18:27–33). Elsewhere, Jude exhorts, "Keep yourselves in the love

of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life" (Jude 21). The

reality of the forfeiture of divine love is further implied in the many statements that God will

again love his people (Hos 14:1–4) and restore them (Jer 30:18; Ezek 39:25; Joel 2:12–14; Heb

8:9, 12). Moreover, one need only look at the numerous instances of divine hatred and abhorrence

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that such love is thereby meritorious. Such love does not earn salvation but it is the requisite, appropriate response to God's call and love, a necessary corollary of true faith, which is the conduit of salvation. Salvation is no less a gift because the condition is faith (with the necessary corollary of love).

[131] Since divine love is a gift, creatures have no claim upon it. Indeed, humans need not even exist but for the will of God to create and sustain them. In this way, divine love is never deserved or merited (though it may be warranted).

[132] The reality of the forfeiture of divine love is further implied in the many statements that God will return and restore his people. Cf. Jer 30:18; Ezek 39:25; Hos 14:1–4 [2–5]; Heb 8:9, 12. Carson refers to "God's conditional, covenantal love." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648. Cf. Ceslas Spicq, *Agape in the New Testament* (3 vols.; St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1963), 31.

(Pss 5:5; 11:5; Jer 12:8; Hos 9:15, etc.) to dismiss the sentimental notion that God's love is monolithic, constant, and altogether unconditional.[133]

Yet, though divine love may be forfeited, it is surpassingly enduring, steadfast, and reliable, but not thereby altogether constant or unconditional. Indeed, God's love reaches beyond all responsibilities and expectations.[134] The amazing longevity of God's love (universal and particular) is especially evident in God's enduring, but not unilaterally permanent, commitment to his vocationally elect people (cf. Rom 11:28).[135]

Yet, some texts appear to depict God's love as everlasting and thus unconditional. For example, God's love is described as an "everlasting love" (Jer 31:3; cf. Rom 8:35, 39).[136] Elsewhere, it is repeatedly asserted that God's "lovingkindness is everlasting" (cf. Ps 136).[137] Yet, as seen above, God's love is conditional and may be forfeited. Indeed, God may even come to hate the objects of his love and proclaim that he "will love them no more" (Hos 9:15). There is thus some apparent tension between two streams of statements regarding divine love, those that

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[133] Indeed, all the divine angst proclaimed by the prophets over God's wayward people, the unrequited love, abandonment, separation, and the hope of reconciliation must be overlooked or treated as somehow "unreal" if Jer 31:3 or other texts are asserted as defining the divine-human love relationship as strictly unconditional and constant.

[134] While love and lovingkindness often take place in the context of covenant, they far surpass covenant obligations and expectations. See the word studies in chapter 4, pages 223–40 and 354–75. God is willing to forgive all those who genuinely come to him and repent in response to his prevenient grace and foreconditional love (cf. Jer 3). However, the opportunity to repent and turn to God is not everlasting (Heb 3:15; 4:7; cf. Ps 95:7–8).

[135] Throughout the canon, God continued to bear long with his elect because of his love for their forebears, which itself grounded their election in the first place. As such, in this instance, divine love for the Israelites defies the expectations of human evaluation in accordance with the salvation-historical divine decision. Snaith speaks of this "determined persistence" of divine love as the "over-plus of God's love." Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 141.

[136] See the discussion of the meaning of the phraseology of Jer 31:3 in chapter 4, pages 387–8.

[137] Beyond the repetition of this refrain in all 26 verses in Ps 136 it occurs in Jer 33:11; Pss 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1–4, 29; 1 Chr 16:34, 41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 7; 20:21. Likewise, reference is made of God's "everlasting lovingkindness" (Isa 54:8). See the repeated collocations of חסד and עולם in the word study of חסד in chapter 4, pages 354–75. Elsewhere, God proclaims that his חסד will not be removed, nor his covenant of peace shaken (Isa 54:10; cf. Lam 3:22; Pss 103:17; 117:2). Note, however, that חסד is also spoken of as conditional elsewhere. See chapter 4, pages 354–75.

speak of the everlasting nature of God's love and those that depict it as conditional and subject to forfeiture. If both of these points are taken seriously, there is apparently both an unconditional and conditional aspect to divine love.[138]

God's Subjective and Objective Love

This apparent tension does not amount to contradiction but may be understood by distinguishing between the subjective and objective aspects of divine love made apparent when one carefully considers the evidence of both streams. God's subjective love is that which he wills independently of external factors, it is non-evaluative and grounded entirely in himself as subject. As such, it is unconditional and permanent. God's objective love, on the other hand, evaluatively takes into account the disposition and actions of the other and is therefore conditional and requires reciprocal love for its permanent continuance.[139] That is, God's subjective love is that which is grounded in himself as subject independent from the response, or lack of response, from human beings. God's objective love refers to that love which corresponds to, and is affected by, the disposition and/or actions of its object. God's love is thus unconditional with respect to God's will (subjective love) but conditional with respect to God's evaluation (objective love).

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[138] This illustrates the interpretive danger of absolutizing any one of the elements of divine love such that God's love is wholly unconditional (and thus disinterested) or that God's love is merely a direct response to human actions; neither can be supported by examination of all of the evidence.

[139] Even Snaith, who asserts that God's אהב is utterly "unconditioned," recognizes conditionality by asserting that חסד is a "conditional" love, always within the context of covenant. *The Distinctive Ideas*, 95. However, as has been seen in this study, it is neither true that אהב is unconditional nor that חסד always operates within covenant. See chapter 4, pages 223–40 and 354–75. Similarly, Charles E. B. Cranfield, who contends that divine love is "spontaneous" and "not caused by any worth or attractiveness in its object, but rather creates worth in its object," nevertheless recognizes that "while all the OT agrees that God's love for Israel was spontaneous in origin, there is observable a tendency to understand its continuance as conditional on Israel's behaviour (e.g. Deut 5:10; Exod 20:6; Deut 7:9–13), and the possibility of regarding it as a reward for human merit arises." "Love," *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (ed. Alan Richardson; New York: Macmillan, 1950), 132. Notice also Eugene H. Merrill's reference to divine lovingkindness as "unconditional" as "the basis for covenant election" but within "relationship, however, ḥesed is part of a reciprocal process, a disposition conditioned upon . . . love (āhăbâ) and obedience." *Deuteronomy* (NAC 4; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 148. Post writes, "*Agape* may appear unconditional and therefore universal in its initial outreach, but eventually it requires that the recipient undergo a change of heart—a conversion grounded in the narratives and community that themselves sustain *agape* in the history of salvation." *A Theory of Agape*, 83.

This dovetails in part with God's universally relational love and his particularly relational love, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter and will be illuminated further in the following section. In many ways, God's objective love corresponds to God's particularly relational love, which includes God's evaluative joy and delight over humans who love him and others and is conditional upon the free reciprocation of divine love by humans.[140] On the other hand, God's subjective love is the basis of, but not identical with, God's universally relational love, which is bestowed on all human beings foreconditionally.[141] God's subjective love thus refers to God's unchanging disposition of unilateral and non-evaluative love for everyone, that is, love that is independent of the disposition and/or actions of its object that God has toward all of his creation. This subjective disposition of love prompts God's universally relational love, which bestows loving actions initially on all creatures and aims toward, but does not unilaterally effect, reciprocal love relationship (God's particularly relational love).

God's subjective love is, therefore, the prior, unchanging, and independent ground of God's universally relational love, which, in turn, is manifested in loving actions that reach creatures. While God's subjective love is itself everlasting and unconditional it does not eternally benefit creatures since humans may finally reject God entirely, thus forfeiting the love relationship beyond repair. While God's subjective love remains in God's disposition even after such forfeiture, it does not reach its objects who have finally rejected loving relationship with God and, accordingly, no longer receive God's love (cf. Jer 31:3; Hos 9:15). That is, those who finally reject God forfeit his universally relational love (as well as the opportunity to enjoy particularly relational love). That humans who have made such a final decision no longer receive God's relational love does not mean that God's subjective love has ceased. Rather, it means that

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[140] Notice the correspondence to the volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally relational aspects of divine love.

[141] It is also the indirect basis of God's particularly relational love since God's universally relational love is the prior condition that makes particularly relational love possible.

God's subjective love no longer reaches them (via his relational love) since they have removed themselves from the sphere of God's loving actions. God always loves everyone subjectively in the sense that he remains desirous of a love relationship with them and himself remains loving. He never removes his love from anyone who wishes to receive his love. However, the object(s) of God's love may reject intimate relationship with God and, if persistent in such rejection, forfeit the reception of divine love altogether.

Thus, while God's universally relational love is foreconditional but not unconditional, God's subjective love is unconditional; it endures even if it is finally unrequited. One may reject God's desire for a love relationship, but that does not quench his desire but merely prevents God's desire from coming to fruition and prevents those who reject it from receiving its benefits. When God's universally relational love is persistently unrequited and thus forfeited, God's subjective love remains as God's longing, his unfulfilled wishes, aspects of his compassion and sympathy, and sorrow over his lost ones.[142]

In all this, God's love itself (that is, his subjective love) is, like him, everlasting (cf. Jer 31:3; Rom 8:35, 39). Thus, there is no danger that he will arbitrarily remove his love from any creature. Humans, however, may forfeit God's relational love (universal and particular). Then, only his subjective love, that desire to be in relationship with his lost one, remains. However, the lost one comes to non-existence and in this way God's purely subjective love is thus finally objectless.[143] It is in the subjective respect(s) that divine love and lovingkindness are described as

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[142] The emotionality of love thus appears to overlap between the subjective and unconditional and objective and conditional aspects of divine love. In one sense, God longs for relationship with his unrequited lover, and this includes emotionality that continues even after the rupture of the particular, relational love (cf. Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34). On the other hand, the fullness of divine emotions, which include delight, pleasure, and enjoyment of its object(s), does not obtain once the intended object of God's love finally rejects the entrance into, or continuance, of the particular, love relationship. Further, as has been seen, the fullness of divine compassion and mercy may be forfeited by persistent rejection of God's overtures. It is not clear to what extent this includes God's feelings of compassion since it appears that some aspects of these may remain as purely subjective feelings while others are evaluative and responsive (objective).

[143] Walther Eichrodt states, "The very greatness of the offer is what makes the situation so

eternal. That is, God does not will to remove love but remains benevolent toward all. In this regard, his love is unchanging and constant, but this is not descriptive of all aspects of divine love. Rather, the objective aspects of divine love, specifically predicated on human response, may amount to the disruption and even, eventually, total rupture of the relationship as it regards specific humans.[144] There is apparent tension between God's subjective and objective love only because of the existence of sin and evil followed by God's decision to continue his love to beings who deserve destruction. However, God's subjective and objective loves will, in the eschaton, be in perfect harmony.

While God's subjective love is permanent, God's relational love (both universal and particular) is contingent. That is, the universally relational love that God bestows foreconditionally as well as the particularly relational love (objective love), which is the product of God's universally relational love and human reciprocation of that love, is conditional and subject to forfeiture. The removal of love, however, is always in response to human disposition or action (cf. Isa 5:2–7). Throughout Scripture, God's people repeatedly decide to reject God and not the other way around (cf. Jer 15:6; Neh 9:19). When God finally cuts off such people it is only in response to their decision to shut him out.[145] God, however, never unilaterally removes his love (cf. Heb 13:5). On the contrary, as has been seen above, God's love itself is everlasting.

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perilous; for love that seeks the ultimate response, the surrender of the personal will, cannot but destroy those who resist it. Condemnation is always close at hand." *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. A. Baker; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 254. Further, Eichrodt comes close to something like this canonical model when he states that "though men may admittedly violate its terms and thus lose the right to participate in it. Such love shines forth unalterably like the sun in heaven and constitutes the inner strength of the eternal divine order." Ibid., 256. However, while he recognizes both parts of the tension he overlooks the overall congruity between them, thinking it "impossible to rationalize" the tension between Hosea's statements of the discontinuance (9:15) and continuance (14:4) of divine love. Ibid., 253.

[144] This give-and-take of divine love will be taken up in further detail in the next section of this dissertation, which deals with the multilaterally relational aspect of divine love.

[145] Thus, "any breakdown in relationship between Yahweh and Israel is the responsibility of the latter, not the former. Yahweh is in the right, Israel is in the wrong." John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC 30; Dallas: Word, 1989), 242. Cf. Neh 9:33. In this way, "There is a point when God abandons sinners to their wicked desires (cf. Rom. 1:28)." Woodstra, *The Book of Joshua*, 337–38.

Thus, love does not run out but humans may refuse to receive and reciprocate it. In this way, those who finally reject God's loving overtures thereby forfeit the relationally responsive aspects of God's love and exclude themselves from relationship with him.

In all this, God's subjective love and objective love differentiate between that love which belongs to God's character independent of any external objects (his subjective love) and that which corresponds to, and is affected by, creatures (objective love). Therefore, it should not be thought that some of the five aspects (volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally relational) of God's love in relation to the world correspond to his subjective love and others correspond to his objective love. All five aspects correspond to God's objective love since they all refer to God's love in relation to the world while God's subjective love is prior to, and the ground of, God's relationship to the world and thus prompts his universally relational love that reaches out toward the ideal of particularly relational love.[146]

**Corporate Unconditionality
and Conditionality**

Beyond the important distinction between God's subjective and objective love, God's love is also unconditional in a corporate sense. That God will love and save a people, the plan of salvation itself is unconditional. However, the identity of the specific recipients of that saving divine love is conditional. As such, humans can forfeit their place as beneficiaries in the relationship. This corporate unconditionality is apparent in the related themes of remnant and the so-called grant-type covenant. God's promises will come to fruition for God's people, that is, those who respond to God as part of a faithful remnant (cf. Isa 65:8–9; Rom 9:6; 11:7, 22–23). As such, the remnant theme itself implies unconditionality and conditionality.[147] In the sense that it

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[146] As mentioned above, the five aspects of divine love correspond to God's objective love in relation to the world. God's subjective love on the other hand is grounded in himself and thus non-relational, non-evaluative, and unconditional. However, like his objective love it is voluntary and includes emotion.

[147] On the remnant see the brief discussion in chapters 4 and 5, pages 260-1, 391, and 466–7.

affirms that God's promises will come to fruition for God's people it affirms corporate

unconditionality yet it manifests conditionality on the individual level with respect to who will be

included in that faithful remnant (cf. Isa 65:8–9; Rom 9:6; 11:7, 22–23). As such, the very

concept of "remnant" presumes that God's love does not endure forever unto all its intended

objects.

Perhaps even more striking is the parallel with the so-called grant-type covenant evident

in the OT, especially with regard to the Davidic covenant, wherein there is a promise of blessings

granted to a faithful vassal and his progeny that will extend to future generations independent of

lapses in, and therefore punishment of, a particular generation or individuals (cf. Ps 103:17–

18).[148] Further, in the NT there is a thematic overlap as well since it could be argued that Christ

himself functions as the entirely faithful vassal who warrants (indeed merits) the bestowal of

grant-type covenant promises such that all his offspring are privy to God's kingdom, which will

not be taken away from his offspring. However, particular intended recipients of the covenant

promise(s) may forfeit their place and thus not actually receive the covenant blessings. In this

way, Christ stands as the ultimate guarantor of God's loving, covenant promises in this revelatory

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[148] The grant type of covenant basically consists of gifts from a sovereign to an individual and his descendants who had loyally served him, with the assurance that the gifts will not be taken away from him or his progeny. M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 184–203. See the brief discussion of this in the OT chapter. As mentioned in that OT chapter the complexity of both ANE covenants and biblical covenants defies one-to-one correlation with the so-called covenant of grant. However, the parallel is striking and may shed light on the tension between conditionality and unconditionality with regard to the divine-human relationship. Merrill puts it this way, "(1) God's promises to the fathers were, indeed, without condition and qualification (Gen 13:14–17; 15:18; 17:8; etc.), but (2) any individual or generation in succession to the patriarchs could appropriate their blessings only through faith and obedience (Gen 15:6; Exod 19:5; Deut 4:40; 5:16, 29, 33). To put it another way, the pledge of redemption and conquest by Israel was a settled and nonnegotiable matter (the unconditional side of the covenant), but their reality in the experience of individual Israelites or even a generation of them was contingent on covenant faithfulness (the conditional side) . . . (cf. Lev 26:27–45; Jer 31:31–37; 32:36–40; Ezek 36:22–31; 37:1–14)." *Deuteronomy*, 173. Similarly, John N. Oswalt comments, "On the one hand nothing could prevent God's promises to Abraham, Moses, and David from being realized: the nation was elect and would be ruled over by a descendant of David. But those promises guarantee nothing to the individuals of any generation. If they sin, they will be punished; if they are righteous, they will be rewarded (Ezek. 18:1–24). Election promises made to the nation will not be participated in automatically by individuals." *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 90–91.

microcosm of God's loving relationship (intended or real) with the world. In this way, among others, he is the antitype of David to whom the grant-type promises were made at least partially because of his faithfulness (cf. 1 Kgs 15:4–5). With this in mind the concept of human beings being adopted in Christ becomes even more striking. When it is remembered that covenant itself is based on kinship (see OT metaphors), Christ stands as the progenitor (and at the same time "brother" and "husband" due to the canonical penchant for mixed metaphors) of the recipients of God's promises: the "elect" and "beloved" in the objectively "Elect" and "Beloved" One.[149]

Overall, the foreconditionality of divine love means that God bestows love on humans before any conditions have been put in place and/or met but then expects humans to respond appropriately to his love. Accordingly, God's particularly relational love is conditional upon appropriate responsiveness to God's universally relational love. God never unilaterally determines to remove his love from any object and in this limited sense God's love may be thought of as, subjectively, unconditional. However, the object of God's love may reject intimate relationship with God and, if finally persistent in this regard, thus forfeit the reception of divine love altogether. In all this, God's love is ontologically and logically prior to human love and itself the grounding of all love while the divine-human love relationship is itself contingent upon reciprocal human response.

<p style="text-align:center">The Multilaterally Relational Aspect of Divine Love</p>

God's Love Is Ideally Reciprocal

The multilaterally relational aspect of love means that God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into particular, intimate relationship only with those who

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[149] I am not here asserting univocity between the so-called grant-type covenant evident in the OT and these themes and concepts in the NT, but the overlap is indeed striking and may present a helpful, canonical model for understanding the foreconditionality of divine love, especially the complex aspects of subjectively unconditional and objectively conditional divine love. This requires further analysis that goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

respond appropriately.[150] All of the other aspects of divine love fit together within the context of this (ideally) reciprocal relationality of divine love. Scripture consistently depicts God as a personal and relational being who desires a reciprocal love relationship of give-and-take with his creatures. While the persons of the Trinity loved one another before the world was created (cf. John 17:24), God's love relationship with creatures had a beginning. Likewise, the canonical depiction of election, covenant, and blessing, as well as aspects of conditionality and unconditionality, assumes relational responsiveness.

Thus, the covenant and kinship descriptors of the divine-human relationship depict God as a relational and responsive being who bestows love and longs for humans to love him in return.[151] For example, the marriage metaphor explicitly models the give-and-take involved in the divine-human love relationship (cf. Hos 1:6; 2:4 [6]; 11:8; Jas 4:4). Likewise, the parent-child adoption metaphor points to God's profound love for his people as well as the expectations that he has for his children in return.[152] Both metaphors depict God's profound and lasting affection for his people as well as his desire for reciprocal love from his people. As such, these metaphors

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[150] Here, two terms should be defined in order to avoid confusion. First, I use the term "multilateral" here because divine love is even more than bilateral not only in its Trinitarian nature but also in the tri-relationality between God as lover, a human as beloved, and that same human as one who should love God's children, reciprocating God's love back to him (cf. Matt 25:40; 1 John 4:21; 5:1). These relationships are further described below. Second, the term "reciprocal" is not used to refer to a disposition and/or action that expects or receives an equal or symmetrical reaction but to the expectance or reception of an appropriate reaction. In other words, "reciprocal" does not require a relationship of equals nor that the disposition and/or action flows equally.

[151] Similarly, divine חסד, which often, but not always, functions in the context of covenant, also manifests the reciprocal relationality of divine love. It is free and voluntary but not altogether spontaneous, often taking place within the commitment of the covenant relationship, but not restricted thereby. It is a basic grounding characteristic of God that makes the covenant meaningful and reliable. It is unmerited but not altogether unconditional and assumes a relation that will be reciprocated when/if occasion arises (even if חסד itself is not, or cannot be). See the further discussion of חסד in chapter 4, pages 354–75.

[152] For example as God's children, certain behavior is expected; they "are the sons of the LORD" (Deut 14:1), "a holy people" whom the LORD has "chosen" as "His own possession" (Deut 14:2). The reality of the requisite response for the maintenance of such relationship is evident in that Israel "acted corruptly toward" God and are "not His children, because of their defect" (Deut 32:5; cf. 32:18–21). As adoptees, believers will share in Christ's victory and through him they may be transformed, and will finally be at glorification, into his image, being presented holy and blameless to him, and as such, perfectly loveable (cf. Eph 5:27).

depict the ideal of reciprocal and loyal love by both parties, which assumes bilateral freedom and volition.[153] However, both metaphors depict Israel's repeated and persistent unfaithfulness toward God wherein God is a devoted parent and faithfully loving husband, unjustly dishonored, scorned, wounded, and pained, whose overtures are rejected in a repetitive cycle of unrequited love.[154] God, in his amazing longsuffering love, repeatedly works to draw his people back to him but will not irresistibly determine their return and, eventually, gives his people over to their choice.[155]

In all this, the God-human love relationship depends upon God's free decision to create and sustain the world and his ongoing willingness to entertain a love relationship with human beings even after the Fall. God's relationship with the world is thus non-essential to his being. It is freely initiated by God but also contingent upon the free response of human beings. That is, God's decision to create the world and thus voluntarily bestow his love on creatures does not by itself effect the reciprocal love relationship that God desires. As such, God's love relationship with the world is not unilaterally willed by God. God desires a reciprocal love relationship with human beings wherein humans freely love God in response to his prior love.

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[153] This conception fits the basic definition of covenant according to Gary N. Knoppers as not merely a unilateral or one-sided oath but a "formal agreement involving two or more parties" and that consequently, "affects those parties." Such agreements are "inevitably bilateral." "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?" *JAOS* 116 (1996): 696. Importantly, marriage and adoption are both voluntary, rather than merely natural, relationships. This implies that the divine-human relationship is voluntary rather than necessary. Yet, at the same time, deep and intense affection is evident both in such metaphors and elsewhere throughout the prophets, which suggests relationship that is not only volitional but also profoundly emotional. The divine-human relationship is thus depicted as both more than voluntary (i.e., pathos, compassion) but also not less than voluntary.

[154] God is recurrently represented as a disrespected and unloved father or a scorned, cuckolded husband, the victim of unrequited love (cf. Isa 1:2, 4; 30:9; 56:7–8; Jer 2:24–25; 3:1, 4, 20; Ezek 16:15, 25–26; Hos 11:2; Mal 1:6; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34). Such rebellion brings divine discipline (Isa 63:10; Ezek 16:42–43) and the rupture of the special relationship between God and his people. They have no rightful claim to the continuance of the special relationship as "wife" (Jer 3:1) or as God's children (Hos 1:6, 9; 2:4; cf. Jer 4:22). Nevertheless, despite their unfaithfulness and apostasy, God maintains a heartfelt call for their repentance and return in his graciousness and love (Jer 3:12–14, 22) upon which the restoration depends (Jer 4:1; cf. 31:21–22; Hos 2:2 [4]; 10:12; 14:1–3 [2–4]). Cf. Hos 2:14; 3:1; Jer 3:19, 22. Those who return God "will love freely" (Hos 14:3–4 [4–5]) and with them he promises to make a new covenant (cf. Jer 31:31–36; Ezek 16:60–62; Hos 2:19–20 [21–22]; Heb 9:15).

[155] See the discussion of significant bilateral freedom above in the section on the volitional aspect and below in this chapter in the discussion of the ontological implications of this model of divine love.

This is evident not only in kinship metaphors (see above) but also elsewhere throughout the canon. Scripture is consistent that God strongly desires that human beings reciprocate his love. As such, the love relationship intended by God is one of give-and-take, which presumes the volitional freedom of both God and creatures. As has been seen, God can and does take delight in his creatures and values human love. Accordingly, he is disappointed, displeased, and frequently pained when his love is unrequited (Hos 9:15; 11:8; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34). Nevertheless, God goes out of his way to seek reciprocal love relationship with his creatures, overcoming all obstacles save one. He will not irresistibly determine the will of the one who rejects him. Thus, God's actions of creation and providence aim at the goal of the reciprocation of divine love though appropriate response. That is, God desires and works toward mutually responsive, though not symmetrical, love relationship with human beings. Accordingly, God bestows love universally and foreconditionally and seeks reciprocal love.[156] The ideal divine-human relationship is thus reciprocal but it is not thereby symmetrical. God and humans relate mutually, but not equally.

The Multilateral Circle of Love

The reciprocation of divine love amounts to a particular relationship of divine love. These relationships are universally available but not universal; they are particular and intimate. The various particular divine love relationships constitute a multirelational circle of love including: (1) love between the members of the Trinity, (2) love from God to humans, (3) love from humans to God, and (4) love from believers to one another, which itself amounts indirectly to human love toward God.

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[156] Thus, W. Günther comments, "God's activity is love, which looks for men's reciprocal love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16)." W. Günther and H. G. Link, "αγαπαω," *NIDNTT* 2:542.

Love between the members of the Trinity consists of a reciprocal love relationship that

pre-dates creation itself and models the ideal nature of all love relationships (cf. John 17:24).[157]

The Father loves the Son (Matt 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9–10; 17:23–24, 26) and Christ

loves the Father and does exactly what the Father commands (John 14:31). In this way, Jesus

models the appropriate human response to God: love manifest in obedience.

The Father and Son not only love one another but also love human beings. Thus, the Son

loves his followers intimately (John 13:1; cf. 11:5; 13:34; 14:21; 15:12; 21:7, 20). Indeed, the

Father's love for the Son is the model of the Son's love for his followers: "Just as the Father has

loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love" (John 15:9). Likewise, the Father intimately

loves those who belong to Christ. He "loved" Christ's followers "even as" he loved Christ (John

17:23; cf. 14:21, 23). Importantly, God's love is itself reciprocally responsive to human love

toward God and/or Christ (cf. Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4; John 14:21, 23;

16:27), which implies the validity and value of human love toward God.[158]

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[157] Here and elsewhere one might wonder what the role of the Holy Spirit is in such love. Though theologians have made various suggestions, there is little information in this regard compared to that regarding the love of the Father and Son. One should remember that the canon reveals the Trinity progressively such that the Father-Son love relationship is itself not explicitly revealed until the NT and, even then, the most explicit statements about Father-Son love come in John, which is widely considered to be written later than many (if not all) other books of the NT. Since the Spirit is revealed most explicitly in the NT, specifically with regard to the Spirit's role in the post-resurrection church, it should not be surprising that there is a lack of data regarding the Spirit's role in the multilateral love relationship. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

The evidence that exists in this regard is somewhat vague. Paul speaks of the "love of the Spirit" (Rom 5:30), an ambiguous genitive, as well as the Colossians' "love in the Spirit" (Col 1:8). The "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom 5:5, KJV) and love is itself a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). The "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" is placed in parallel with "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "the love of God" in a Trinitarian formula (2 Cor 13:14; cf. Phil 2:1). It is further implied that the Spirit loves humans since the Spirit manifests love toward humans in action (not leastwise in Rom 8:26). Likewise, the Spirit comes as the "comforter," thus replacing Christ on earth. As such, it is implied that the Spirit should likewise be seen as a partner in such love relationship, both intra-trinitarian and divine-human. In this way, the information about the love and activity of the Spirit strongly suggests that the Spirit loves humans even as the Father and the Son and also enters into the intra-trinitarian love relationship. However, there is little canonical information on either of these points.

[158] Likewise, "with the kind" (חָסִיד) God shows himself "kind" (חסד) (2 Sam 22:26 = Ps 18:25 [26]).

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Conversely, humans love the Father and the Son reciprocally. First, consider the frequent exhortations for humans to love God and Christ, which manifest God's desire to have an intimate relationship with his creatures. For example, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:5).[159] The frequent exhortations to love God demonstrate the potential of real, human love toward God and that such love is neither necessary nor automatic. Indeed, such exhortations assume that humans are free to respond to or reject God's love and that such responses are not unilaterally determined.[160] The reality of human love toward God is also evident in many instances. Humans are repeatedly said to love Jesus (Luke 7:47; John 14:21, 23; 21:15–17; Eph 6:24; 1 Pet 1:8; cf. 2 Tim 4:8; Phlm 5; Jas 1:12).[161] Likewise, humans are also frequently said to love God (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:9; 1 Kgs 3:3; Ps 91:14; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; Jas 2:5; 1 John 5:1–3; cf. Jer 2:2; Hos 6:6; Neh 13:14; Heb 6:10).

Finally, believers are to love one another.[162] God's love for humans places a moral obligation upon humans to love one another (cf. 1 John 3:16; John 15:12).[163] As such, the recipients of divine love as "beloved" are to bestow it to others. This is the multilateral circle of

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[159] See also Deut 10:12; 11:1, 13; 13:3 [4]; 30:6; Josh 22:5; 23:11; Ps 31:23 [34]; Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; John 14:15, 28; cf. Jer 2:2; 1 Cor 16:22. Nothing short of wholehearted devotion is expected, which requires more than external action but also internal disposition (cf. Deut 6:5; Mark 12:30).

[160] On the other hand, if such responses are unilaterally determined, the exhortations appear to be superfluous. In this regard, see the discussion of bilateral significant freedom earlier in this chapter.

[161] Notice especially Peter's three-fold affirmation of love for Jesus in John 21:15–17. If such love were automatic or merely divine love flowing through a passive human agent it is difficult to make sense of Jesus' repeated question.

[162] The expectation that believers love one another is well-represented (John 13:34–35; 15:12, 17; 1 Thess 4:9; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7–8, 11–12, 20–21; 5:2; 2 John 5). Such love for one another is akin to the command to love one's neighbor (Matt 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:8–9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8). Likewise, one should love his brother (1 John 2:10; 3:10, 14).

[163] In 1 John 4:11 the phrase "we also ought [ὀφείλω] to love one another" presumes that such love is not merely the automatic outcome of love for God or election by God. Indeed, ὀφείλω never refers to an ontological obligation in the NT but always to a moral obligation, that which one owes or ought to do. Cf. 1 John 2:6; 3:16; 3 John 8.

divine love. This love toward fellow humans indirectly amounts to love toward God (1 John 4:7–8, 11–12, 20–21; 5:1–2; cf. also Matt 25:40).[164] When believers love God and one another, the circuit of love between God and his children is complete. In other words, love reaches "perfection" (cf. 1 John 4:17–18).[165]

Notably, the canon depicts strong correspondence between divine and human love. The various love relationships above are depicted as alike in nature. For example, both the Father and the Son love humans in the same way (καθώς) that the Father has loved the Son (John 15:9; 17:23; cf. Eph 5:2, 25). Just as (καθώς) the Father loves humans because of their love for the Son, so the Father loves the Son because of his obedience (John 10:17; cf. 14:31; 15:10). Conversely, believers are to obey Christ just as (καθώς) he has obeyed the Father and thus abide (μένω) in his love even as Christ thereby abides (μένω) in the Father's love (John 15:9–10).[166] Finally, just as (καθώς) the Son loves his followers they are to love one another (John 13:34; 15:12).[167] As such, in the same way that the Son loves the Father, humans are to love God and love one another.

God's Universally Relational Love

God loves everyone with foreconditional, universally relational love. God's universally relational love is the undeserved and unprompted initiating love that God bestows on each human

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[164] Hence the love that is ready to help even the least of brethren is equivalent to readiness to help the Son of Man, whereas lovelessness is the same as contempt for him. Both will be judged by the Son of Man in his day (Mt 10:40 ff.; 25:31 ff.)." Ethelbert Stauffer, "αγαπάω, αγάπη, αγαπητός," *TDNT* 1:48. Interestingly, 1 John 3:23 connects loving one another with believing in Jesus. Cf. Moffat, *Love*, 298. Note also the vertical-horizontal connection of 1 John 4:10–12, 19; cf. Heb 6:10.

[165] As such, the divine-human love relationship is to be reciprocal and is not complete, or perfect, until then. Cf. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 257; Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (AB 30; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982), 527.

[166] In this way, the love of Jesus is truly the model of human love toward God and of divine love toward humans (cf. John 17:26). Thus, "Jesus remains in his Father's love by being obedient to him (8:29; 15:10)" and "believers remain in Jesus' love by being obedient to him (15:9–11)." Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 547. This is also indicative of the conditionality of divine love. See the more extensive treatment of this concept further above.

[167] Likewise, in Ephesians Christians are to "walk in love, just as Christ also loved" them (Eph 5:2). Further, husbands are to love their wives "just as Christ also loved the church" (Eph 5:25).

being prior to any human response. God's universally relational love, which flows unilaterally

and prior to human response, initiates the possibility of a reciprocal love relationship between

God and humans. That is, God works toward drawing (but does not determine) humans into a

reciprocal love relationship by unilaterally bestowing love on each one prior to any conditions,

with the goal of eliciting a human response of love. This universal aspect of divine love is

apparent in numerous ways throughout the canon. For example, God loved the world so much

that he made the ultimate sacrifice (John 3:16; cf. Rom 5:8, 10).[168] Accordingly, God desires the

salvation of all and does not want anyone to perish (cf. Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:16; 12:32;

Acts 17:30–31; 1 Tim 2:4–6; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet 3:9; cf. Acts 10:34–35; Rom 1:5; 1 Tim 4:10).[169]

As mentioned earlier, God's universally relational love is manifest in all of his actions

that pertain to the initiation of relationship with people. That is, God's universally relational love

works through various divine actions (including creation, election, maintenance of the covenant,

and other manifestations of divine providence) to draw all human beings into a particularly

relational, intimate, reciprocal love relationship with God. As such, God's universally relational

love makes available to all human beings the opportunity to be friends of God unto redemption as

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[168] Further, he "shows love for the alien" and commands his people to do the same (Deut 10:18–19) and elsewhere Christians are exhorted to have "love for one another, and for all people" (1 Thess 3:12). Likewise, divine lovingkindness extends beyond the elect, covenant people in numerous examples (cf. Ruth 1:8; 2 Sam 15:20; Jonah 4:2). Indeed the entire "earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD" (Ps 33:5; cf. Pss 36:7 [8]; 117:1–2; 119:64; 145:8–9). Since חסד is characteristically responsive to or initiative of a reciprocal relation such texts complement the concept of reciprocal love in this section. Similarly, the universality of divine love is implied in that God is "good to all, And His mercies are over all His works" (Ps 145:9; cf. 100:1, 5) and he satisfies "the desire of every living thing" (Ps 145:16). Likewise, God is not "partial" (Deut 10:17–18; Acts 10:34–35; cf. Deut 1:17; Jonah 4:2, 11; Gal 2:6) and he bestows blessings on all his creatures, though not always equivalently (cf. Matt 5:44–45; Luke 6:35–36; Acts 14:17). John B. Polhill correctly comments, "Peter saw that God does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnic background, looking up to some and down on others. But God does discriminate between those whose behavior is acceptable and those whose attitude is not acceptable. Those who reverence God and practice what is right are acceptable to him (v. 35; cf. Luke 8:21)." *Acts* (NAC 26; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 260.

[169] "Undoubtedly God's desire is that all might be saved (e.g., Acts 17:30–31; 22:15–16; 1 Tim 2:6), but because of human freedom of choice ("whosoever," 3:16), all of humanity does not respond in believing acceptance of the Son (e.g., John 1:11–13; Rom 1:5; 10:16; 1 Tim 4:10). As a result, the rejection of God's love brings judgment or condemnation (John 3:17)." Borchert, *John 1–11*, 184.

part of the unfolding of God's marvelous plan of salvation, that is, God invites and draws them toward receiving and enjoying his particularly relational love, to which we now turn.

**God's Particularly Relational Love
for Those Who Respond**

Beyond God's foreconditional, universally relational love is his particularly relational or "insider" love, which amounts to an intimate, reciprocal divine-human love relationship toward which God's universally relational love aims. While God's universally relational love is the undeserved and unprompted initiating love that God bestows on each human being prior to any human response, God's particularly relational love refers to God's special and intimate kind of love for those who respond to him and enter into a reciprocal relationship of love with him. God's particularly relational love is thus the result of God's initiating and enabling love *as well as* the appropriate human response. Thus, God's particularly relational love does not apply to everyone but to those with whom God is involved in special relationship, that is, those who reciprocate God's love (cf. 1 Cor 16:22).

Thus, in a sense divine fatherhood is also universal, he is the creator and father of all (Mal 2:10; Eph 4:6; cf. Pss 68:5 [6]; 10:14).[170] At the same time, the intimate fatherhood of God (corresponding to his particularly, relational love) is reserved for those who respond to his overtures (Matt 5:9; Luke 6:35–36; 20:6; John 1:12; Gal 3:26; Rev 21:7; cf. Ps 103:17; Matt 12:50; par Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21; Ro 9:7–8), that is, those who have been adopted (cf. Rom 8:14–15, 23; Eph 1:5). As such, God's adoption of his people is predicated on the divine will, but is neither unilateral nor unconditional but requires appropriate response. God will neither coerce nor

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[170] Indeed, God's reference to Israel as his "firstborn" implies that he has, or intends to have, other children (Exod 4:22; cf. Gen 12:3, 22:18; 26:4; Deut 2:5, 9, 19; 32:8; Isa 19:19–25; 42:1–6; 49:6; 56:4–7; 66:18–22; Jer 4:2; 12:15–17; Zech 2:11; Amos 9:7, 12; Luke 14:23; Acts 13:17; Rom 1:5; Gal 3:28). Accordingly, from attention to the larger intention of the divine-human covenant relationship one may infer that God's intention was to adopt other peoples through Israel, his firstborn. Christ, the true "firstborn" and antitype of Israel, takes over this function as the one through whom believers may be adopted into the family of God. However, the kinship metaphor of parent-child as well as that of marriage is usually in reference to a particular, intimate, and reciprocal love relationship.

unilaterally determine human beings to love him in return. With those who respond positively to God's loving overture, God enters into particular and intimate love relationship, which amounts to a reciprocal love relationship.

Thus, in accord with the foreconditionality of love discussed earlier, the divine-human love relationship must be entered into and maintained by appropriate human response (cf. John 14:21, 23; 15:9–10; 16:27; 1 John 2:17; 3:24; 4:12, 16; Jude 21).[171] Though this reciprocal love relationship is universally available, not all accept and respond to God's foreconditional, universally relational love. As such, God's love is universal in some respects, but also particular and appropriate to specific groups and persons who respond to his love. Those who enter into the particularly relational, reciprocal love relationship with God are privy to God's intimate love, that is, "insider love."[172]

Such "insider love" relationships appear frequently in Scripture including repeated references to God's preferential love, friendship love, love for his "elect" (salvific rather than vocational), love for his "beloved," kinship love, etc.[173] To take one example, in more than one instance humans are spoken of as friends of God and/or Christ (Isa 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; John 3:29; 11:11; John 15:13–14; Jas 2:23; cf. Exod 33:11; Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34; 12:4; Jas 4:4). Such

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[171] This particularity and universality of divine love thus logically follows from what has already been seen with regard to the volitional, evaluative, emotional, and foreconditional natures of love.

[172] While God already loved these humans in the limited sense that he foreconditionally loves all humans, those who respond enter into a more intimate love relationship.

[173] Beyond friendship, which is discussed in the main text, the numerous examples of insider love include the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; cf. 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Such instances point to relationships of particular, intimate, relational love. Likewise, Christ's "own" whom he loved to the end likely corresponds to this category as well (John 13:1), in distinction from the world who "would love its own" (John 15:19). See also the many descriptions of the special status of the "beloved" and "elect" throughout the NT and to a certain extent those chosen of God in the OT (see, among many others, Deut 7:7–8, 12–13; Jas 2:5; Jude 1; Rev 17:14). Moreover, the concept of a faithful remnant itself dovetails considerably with the canonical notion of "insider love." Cf. Isa 65:8–12; Zeph 3:17. See the brief discussion in the previous section of this chapter. See also Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah" (Revised version of the author's thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1970, which was presented under title *The Origin and Early History of the Remnant Motif in Ancient Israel*, Andrews University Press, 1972). Cf. Isa 10:20–22; 37:32; 65:9, 15; Hos 11:1; Rom 11:5; 9:6, 30–32.

friendship assumes a particular, as opposed to universal, relationship and is thus a form of preferential but not arbitrary love. Moreover, a friendship relationship with God is predicated on obedience, which is itself connected to reciprocal love (John 15:14).[174] This is a relational, contingent, and conditional, though not symmetrical or equal, friendship; the greatest provisions and sacrifices have been made by God himself.[175] Accordingly, membership in such a particularly relational, intimate, and reciprocal, divine-human love relationship is not automatic but contingent (cf. John 15:14; Jas 2:23). Specifically, humans are expected to reciprocate God's love (both Father and Son) and not merely by external action but wholeheartedly (cf. Matt 10:37–38; 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; John 14:15, 21, 23–24, 28; 15:9–10; 16:27).

While God's universally relational love works toward a reciprocal love relationship with everyone, it is not unilaterally efficacious but initiatory and foreconditional while his particularly relational love is the product of God's free decision to love coupled with the human response to that love.[176] In this way, the fullness of the divine-human love relationship is reserved for the reconciliation, which can only be effectuated in the eschaton. In the meantime, God's universal

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[174] Notice Jas 4:4: "Friendship [φιλία] with the world is hostility toward God" thus "whoever wishes to be a friend [φίλος] of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas 4:4). Here, friendship signifies a mutual relationship that is grounded in reciprocality and loyalty; it is not indifferent or strictly universal (though it is available universally). Notably, the "basic requirements" of "friendship . . . are exactly the same obedience requirements as those (15:10) for abiding in his love." Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21* (NAC 25B; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 149. Importantly, however, this is in no wise a merely utilitarian friendship (cf. John 15:15).

[175] Carson is careful to make certain that it is understood that humans don't deserve Jesus' friendship saying, "This obedience is not what *makes* them friends; it is what *characterizes* his friends. Clearly, then, this 'friendship' is not strictly reciprocal: these friends of Jesus cannot turn around and say that Jesus will be their friend if he does what they say." *The Gospel according to John*, 522. Carson's point that friendship is unmerited is well-taken though it should be noted that in this dissertation the term "reciprocal" is not meant to imply an equal relationship.

[176] To say that humans are "beloved" unilaterally because they are elect would require overlooking or sterilizing the force of the exhortations to the beloved and the warning of future evaluative judgment. To say that humans are "beloved" merely due to their response to God would miss the essential divine initiative that makes such response possible. Cf. Phil 2:12–13; Jude 1, 21. As Thomas J. Oord states, "Creaturely love is not the work of God alone." "A Relational God and Unlimited Love," in *Visions of Agapé: Problems and Possibilities in Human and Divine Love* (ed. C. A. Boyd; Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 140.

love is more than the sun shining its rays on all, it includes affectionate concern, which may turn

to abhorrence and hatred, but compassion endures long. God is grieved by those who do not love

him back. However, in the end the divine-human love relationship is reserved for those who

respond to God's universal invitation; a response that is itself enabled by God's prior action and

foreconditional love toward initiating a reciprocal love relationship. In all this, the reason why

some do not enter into the multirelational circle of divine love is simply because they fail to

respond positively to, and thus reject, God's prevenient and foreconditional love, much to the

chagrin of God.

Accordingly, Scripture clearly distinguishes between those whom God loves with

universally relational love and those whom God will love forever. The former reaches every

human being foreconditionally whereas the latter only reaches those who respond and thus

participate in God's particularly relational love. The difference, then, is that those privy to God's

particularly relational love allow God to love them forever while the others reject him and thus

forfeit their status. They could have been "insiders" but they were not willing (cf. Matt 22:14;

Luke 13:34). In this way, God's particularly relational, intimate, preferential love is not arbitrary

or groundless but conditional and evaluative. Consequently, some are loved by God more

intimately than others.[177] Yet, it must be emphasized that the exclusion of those who do not enjoy

God's particularly relational love is not due to any arbitrary decision by God but is based only

upon the human decision to reject God's foreconditional love.

Importantly, God's particularly relational, intimate love is not restricted to an existing

relationship, whether covenant or otherwise. The invitation is to all. God's universal love beckons

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[177] "The Lord does not treat all people alike—to do so would demonstrate a moral indifference that is not found in the biblical view of God." Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* (NAC 7; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 458. Indeed, "with the connection between obedience and love so explicit, it should be self-evident that the circle of love in view embraces all of Jesus' true disciples, but not the 'world,' which falls within a rather different and more extended circle of love (*cf.* notes on 13:1, 34–35)." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 503. Cf. Shawn Floyd, "Preferential Divine Love: Or, Why God Loves Some People More Than Others," *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009): 359–76.

each one.[178] Those who are outsiders may become part of God's insider love.[179] Likewise, some who were "elect" and thus insiders may become outsiders; such status is contingent upon appropriate response to God (cf. Rom 11:22–23; 2 Thess 2:10–15). In the absence of appropriate response, one will not be an "insider" and eventually will forfeit the benefits of God's love altogether. That is, eventually the one who rejects God will neither enjoy God's particularly relational nor his universally relational love.

God Continues to Love Each
One Temporarily

Yet, God continues to love each human being with his universally relational love until they finally reject him. Thus, importantly, God's love for "insiders" does not conflict with the commands to love one's enemy. Rather, "enemy love," as well as love for those who are unable to repay, is part of God's universally relational love, which his children are also to model (cf. Matt 5:44–46; Luke 6:36). Thus, believers are not to restrict their love only to "those who love you" (Matt 5:46; cf. Luke 6:32).[180] At the same time, this does not rule out particular, intimate,

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[178] This is clear from the clause "whoever believes" in John 3:16; cf. Acts 10:34–35; 1 Tim 4:10; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 John 2:2. See Jerry L. Walls and Joseph Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 50–55. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, "Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995), 57–62; David L. Allen and Steve Lemke, eds., *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2010).

[179] Indeed, the canon frequently refers to the actuality or possibility of "outsiders" becoming part of "insider" love (Mark 10:21–22; John 3:16; Rom 5:8–10; 9:25–26; 2 Cor 5:19; Eph 2:3–5; cf. Isa 66:18–22; Jer 12:15–17; Zech 2:11; Ruth; Acts 10:34–35; 17:30–31; Isa 56:4–7).

[180] Notably, however, that this is in reference to the suspension rather than the nullification of evaluation is evident in that they themselves will receive eschatological reward for such love (cf. Luke 6:37–38; 14:14). Significantly, the promise of future reward for love toward one's enemy evidences the fact that evaluative love is merely suspended but not nullified (cf. Matt 5:45–6:6; Luke 6:31–37). Indeed, such human love toward the undeserving objects of God's love is itself indirectly love toward God since he (Christ) stands in as the proper object of love (as mediator) as well as the guarantor of appropriate future reward (as judge) (cf. Matt 5:45–6:6; Luke 6:31–37). Thus, the idea of loving the undeserving does not remove the proper, biblical idea of justice and reciprocality, but it subverts any merely self-serving *quid quo pro* motivation without suspending the overall ideal that all loving actions should be, and in the eschaton will be, reciprocated. See the further discussion of this passage and issue in the NT chapter, pages 546–57.

evaluative, and preferential love relationship with God and one another (John 14:21, 23; 15:13–15; 16:27).[181] The two are not mutually exclusive. In this way, God is "kind" even to "ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35; cf. Matt 5:45) and exhorts his children to therefore love their enemies (cf. Matt 5:44–46; Luke 6:27, 32, 35–36; Rom 12:14, 17, 19–21). This is descriptive of his universally relational love but it is not God's intention that they remain enemies since, if they remain so, they will ultimately face destruction. Rather, God desires that none would perish (2 Pet 3:9). Accordingly, so-called "enemy love" is aimed at overcoming relational obstacles such that the "enemy" will enter into a reciprocal love relationship with God and humans.[182] As such, divine love not only looks at the present state of things but looks toward the future, what might be. In this way, such "enemy love" is not intended to nullify evaluation, nor does it rule out intimate, reciprocal friendship with those who are willing, but is part of the partial and temporary suspension of the consequences of evaluative judgment.[183]

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[181] See Post's rejection of the assertion of love for all in contrast to particular, intimate relationships. While affirming a proper love for all he states that "nothing is more harmful to *agape* than a premature and superficial universalism that separates it from its communal grounding." *A Theory of Agape*, 116. Cf. ibid., 97–105. Cf. the distinction between the "inclusive" and "special" covenant relationships in the Bible posited by Joseph Allen, *Love & Conflict: A Covenantal Model of Christian Ethics* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995), 39–45.

[182] Thus, the call for the "beloved" to bestow love on all others, including the "evil," makes sense when it is recognized that all humans are indeed "evil" and undeserving objects of love (to varying degrees). Since the possibility remains open prior to the eschaton that the unrighteous will accept God and, finally, be transformed into a proper object of love, all such potential objects should be shown the kind of love that temporarily suspends judgment just as all humans have been the beneficiaries of this temporary suspension of the effects of judgment (cf. Deut 10:18–19; Matt 7:1–2; 18:26–33; Luke 6:37). Enemy love is thus impermanent, corresponding to the partial and temporary suspension of the effects of evaluative judgment, after which the redeemed will all be perfectly loveable. In the meantime, however, the Christian should not pre-judge who will ultimately "become" loveable (cf. 1 Cor 4:5).

[183] Indeed, there is a place for preferential and intimate love of one's circle of family or friends but not exclusively. The Christian intention should be to widen that circle of multilateral love such that all who will may be involved in the divine-human reciprocal and multilateral love relationship. Christians are to manifest love toward all in this time between the times but that does not mean that love, by definition, is non-evaluative and/or unconditional.

God's impartiality does not obviate divine judgment.[184] Therefore, God himself does not love his enemies unconditionally but, eventually, those who persist as enemies will be destroyed. The interim is the opportunity for those who are enemies (cf. Rom 5:10) to be reconciled to him, but without such reconciliation the love relationship cannot and will not continue.[185] On the other hand, God enters into an intimate and reciprocal relationship with those who respond to his love (his particularly relational love), which brings him great joy (cf. Luke 15:7; Zeph 3:17).[186] The intimate love relations that make up such "insider love" constitute the multirelational circle of love discussed above: between the members of the Trinity, from God to humans and vice versa, and from believers to one another, which is indirectly human love toward God.

Altogether, divine love is multilaterally relational. God persistently seeks a reciprocal love relationship of give-and-take with his creatures. He initiates the possibility of such a relationship with everyone through his foreconditional, universally relational love that enables and calls for a reciprocal response of love. With those who respond to this loving overture, God enters into particular and intimate love relationship that amounts to a multilateral divine-human love relationship from God to humans and vice versa and humans to one another, themselves modeled after the intra-trinitarian love relationship. Rightly understood, this requires that God's love is foreconditional and unmerited, voluntary and unnecessary, yet not arbitrary; differential

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[184] God is not removing the principles of law and justice: "Such action would not in fact be an imitation of the character of God who upholds the moral law and judges transgressors." I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978), 266. Thus, "what is unconditionally demanded is that such evaluations should be subject to the certainty that God's judgment falls also on those who judge, so that superiority, hardness and blindness to one's own faults are excluded, and a readiness to forgive and to intercede is safeguarded." Büchsel, "κρίνω," *TDNT* 5:939. In other words, it is not that such evaluation is removed but that such evaluation is partially and temporarily suspended and ultimately belongs to and will be carried out by God himself.

[185] Many in the world love darkness and reject the will of God (cf. John 3:19; 14:24) and, as such, reject God's love (cf. John 5:42; 8:42). Indeed, many hate God (Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9; Ps 68:1; Rom 1:30) and make themselves his enemy (Jas 4:4) and eventually face destruction.

[186] See the section on the evaluative nature of divine love earlier in this chapter for a rebuttal of the fallacy that love grounded in a mutually beneficial relationship is lesser than purely altruistic love and thus unfit for divinity. Further, see the discussion of divine delight and love in the same section earlier in this

and preferential, yet not altogether exclusive; intensely emotional, yet also committal, evaluative and expectant of appropriate human response rather than unilaterality. For the remainder of this chapter I will refer to this canonical model of divine love as the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love.

A Critical Comparison of the Foreconditional-Reciprocal, Transcendent-Voluntarist, and Immanent-Experientialist Models

This chapter now returns to the questions raised by the conflict of interpretations between the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models, as well as the corresponding dissatisfaction in recent theology with regard to the meaning of divine love. This chapter will now address the implications of this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love with regard to such issues in dialogue with the perspectives on divine love that have been surveyed already. Attention will be drawn especially to where this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love complements and/or departs from the positions of the exemplars by specific discussion of the systematic issues raised in the analysis of the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models (see chapter 3).

The systematic issues raised by the conflict of interpretations between the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models with regard to the meaning of divine love in relation to the world revolve around the question of the nature of the divine-human relationship with regard to two primary themes of give-and-take, that is, God's affecting and being affected. Foremost among these issues is whether God's love is unilateral or whether God and humans may share a reciprocal (though unequal) relationship of love. The answer to this primary question is heavily influenced by the answers to a number of closely related ones. First, is God the sole giver but never the receiver? In other words, is divine love only arbitrarily willed, pure beneficence

chapter as well as in the canonical chapters, pages 277–301 and 471–509.

(thematic *agape*) or may it include desire or enjoyment (thematic *eros*)? Second, does God only bestow and/or create value or might he also appraise, appreciate, and receive value? Third, does God's love include affection and/or emotionality such that God is concerned for the world, sympathetically or otherwise? Fourth, does God choose to fully love only some, or does he choose to love all, or is he essentially related to all such that he necessarily loves all? Fifth, bound up with this is the question of whether divine love is unconditional or conditional, ungrounded or grounded, and so on. The volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally relational aspects of divine love for the world respond to these questions. We now turn to each of the aspects in comparison to the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models, as well as with reference to the dissatisfaction in recent theology.

The Volitional Aspect of God's Love

The primary issue of the God-world relationship is whether it is unilateral or includes some level of reciprocity. This issue is bound up with answers to many ontological issues, including the sovereignty of the divine will, especially as it relates to the issue of determinism or indeterminism. It is no coincidence, then, that the conflict of interpretations regarding the meaning and nature of love hinges upon its relationship to the divine will.

The immanent-experientialist model proposes that love is not volitional but descriptive of an essential, and thus ontologically necessary, relation between God and creatures. God's love, then, is not voluntary but essential to his very being.[187] A divine will that chooses between objects of love is absent; there is no election love of any kind. As such, divine love is descriptive of God

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[187] God does not need *this* world but he does need *some* world in Charles Hartshorne's system. See *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1964), 108. Most panentheists agree with this perspective. "Divine freedom is an oxymoron in almost all panentheism." John W. Cooper, *Panentheism, the Other God of the Philosophers: From Plato to the Present* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 326. However, Phillip Clayton is a notable exception in his assertion of God's libertarian freedom. He states, "A free creation remains free; any effect the world subsequently has on God is a consequence of the initial free decision rather than a sign of eternal necessity." *God and Contemporary Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 93.

as the feeler of all feelings, the self-surpassing surpasser of all. Whereas the immanent-experientialist model posits that God's relationship to the world is essential to his being, according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model, divine love for the world does not take place within an essential relation, but within the context of a free, volitional relationship.[188] In other words, since divine love is predicated (partially) on the divine will, it is non-essential to God's being. God possesses the freedom to bestow love or not bestow love on his creatures.[189] Since

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[188] This is, of course, in direct contrast to the claims of the immanent-experientialist model. Oord has also argued for a form of panentheism, which he calls "Essential Kenosis Theology," such that divine love for creatures is necessary and essential to God; "God loves necessarily" and "cannot not love." *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2010), 129. Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 54–55. This also entails, among other things, that God necessarily relates with creatures and essentially lacks the power to unilaterally coerce creatures. Oord, *The Nature*, 124–26, 131, 133, 139, 147. At the same time, he claims that in a different way "God's love is free," by which he means God is free to choose among various loving actions. This is predicated on him lacking the foreknowledge to know which action would be the most loving, leaving him thus free to choose, but only between loving options. Ibid., 139–40. In his dissertation he describes this as essential free-will theism. Cf. idem, "Matching Theology and Piety: An Evangelical Process Theology of Love" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate University, 1999), 308, 320. Michael S. Horton on the other hand argues from the determinist perspective that "God is not free to decide whether he will be merciful and gracious, but he is free to decide whether he will have mercy on some rather than others." *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2011), 267. Thomas B. Talbott contends that if the statement "God is love . . . expresses a truth about the essence of God, then it is logically impossible that the person who is God should fail to love someone." *The Inescapable Love of God* (Parkland, Fla.: Universal, 1999), 113. From this premise he argues for universalism.

[189] Many scholars agree that divine love is volitional, only a few examples of which will be noted here. Trevor Hart refers to divine love as "something contingent upon God's willing to enter into such a relationship in the first place, to place himself under certain relational constraints, to be limited in his freedom by the existence of a genuinely free other." "How Do We Define the Nature of God's Love?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 109. Richard Rice "insists that love is a voluntary commitment." "Process Theism and the Open View of God: The Crucial Difference," in *Searching for an Adequate God: A Dialogue between Process and Free Will Theists* (ed. David R. Griffin, John B. Cobb, and Clark H. Pinnock; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 185. So Cooper, *Panentheism*, 328; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 102, 151. Accordingly, "the world owes its existence to God's free choice, not to metaphysical necessity." "Process Theism," in *Searching for an Adequate God* (ed. Griffin, Cobb, and Pinnock), 185. Spicq accordingly states, "Certainly God is free to grant or deny his favors." "ελεεω, ελεος," *TLNT* 1:478. Cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 109; Eichrodt, *Theology*, 252. Consider also the case K. Barth makes for God as the One who Loves in Freedom. He contends that "God's loving is necessary" as "the essence and nature of God" yet "it is also free from every necessity in respect of its object." That is, "He would still be One who loves without us and without the world" and thus "needs no other" to be "the One who loves." Further, "It is not part of God's being and action that as love it must have an object in another who is different from Him." Thus, "In the fact that He determines to love such another, His love overflows." *Church Dogmatics* (trans. G. T. Thomson; 5 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 2/1:280. In all this, "God does not owe us either our being, or in our

God's love is contingent upon his volition (but not only his volition, cf. Exod 33:19; 34:6–7; Rom

9:15–18), God's love for creatures cannot be necessary nor can it be the result of an internal

relation as is suggested by the immanent-experientialist model.[190] God is free to do otherwise than

he does and has freely decided to enter into (and remain in) relationship with creatures while he is

(and remains) ontically discrete—distinct from the world he has created.[191] Thus, divine love in

relation to the world is volitional. That is, God's love for creatures includes a free, volitional

aspect that is not necessary to his being.

On the other hand, the transcendent-voluntarist model overemphasizes the volitional

aspect of God's love. Specifically, the transcendent-voluntarist model proposes that God is the

sole giver but never the receiver of love. Divine love is purely volitional and unilateral, arbitrarily

willed, pure beneficence (thematic *agape*) to the utter exclusion of desire and/or enjoyment

(thematic *eros*).[192] The transcendent-voluntarist model thus complements the popular supposition

of so-called "election love," which conflates love and election into a single concept such that

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being His love." Ibid., 281. Cf. ibid., 2/2:166.

[190]As seen above, the very language used with regard to the divine-human relationship as covenant, as well as the closely related kinship metaphors, presumes the lack of ontological, or essential, relation and points toward a voluntary and particular (though not necessarily exclusive) love relationship. Indeed, if the possibility of the forfeiture of the covenant relationship is taken seriously, covenant cannot be descriptive of a necessary, internal relation. Further, since divine love can be removed, as explained below when the foreconditional aspect of God's love is discussed, such love cannot be necessary to God.

[191] Cf. Hart, "How Do We Define," 109. This is evident in the canonical narrative of creation (as well as the depiction of divine creation throughout the rest of the canon), which excludes the notion of panentheism. This is also apparent in the metaphor of the potter and the clay. See Peckham, "The Passible Potter." Indeed, "No biblical text suggests or implies that the world is part of God, either of his eternal nature or of his actual existence." Cooper, *Panentheism*, 323. Cooper argues further in favor of classic theism and against panentheism in saying that God's "creation of the world" is "a genuinely free choice from a number of possibilities" including "creating the actual world and/or creating another possible world, or creating nothing at all." Ibid., 325. If, on the other hand, one says God's love toward creatures is ontologically necessary then the creation and/or existence of some world is also ontologically necessary, as the immanent-experientialist model proposes. Nevertheless, some classical theists consider creation inevitable though not essential to God's being.

[192] Thus, divine love is a sovereign, volitional love, not the result of any "inner divine necessity" or emanation, but rather purely based on the totally free divine volition. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:116. See also ibid., 6:349. This conception of divine love follows from the aseity and impassibility of God according to which the sovereign will of God is the sole origin of God's *agape* love

God's love refers to his election and amounts to determinism.[193] In this view, God's love is purely the result of the immutable, timeless, divine decree and is irresistible to its object(s) while utterly unattainable for the divinely determined reprobate.[194]

However, according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model, divine love is volitional but not only volitional. The volitional aspect of divine love does not exclude passibility and is thereby not mutually exclusive to the affective-emotional and evaluative aspects of divine love. Further, divine love is closely associated with, but not identical to, God's will and election. God's foreconditional love is the basis of election.[195] It is thus incorrect to conflate God's love with

for humankind. See the discussion of this model in chapter 2.

[193] So Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 159–60, C. F. H. Henry, *Notes on the Doctrine of God*, 111; idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:106–7; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 133, 139; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 76–77, 132; Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi* (AB 25D; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 147, 165; Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), 196; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996), 587; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans* (NAC 27; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 198–99; J. I. Packer, "The Love of God: Universal and Particular," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge & Grace* (ed. T. R. Schreiner and B. A. Ware; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 280; John Piper, "How Does a Sovereign God Love?: A Reply to Thomas Talbott," *The Reformed Journal* 33 (1983): 10. See chapters 4 and 5 for numerous other examples of this view that divine love is synonymous with choice as well as numerous scholars who reject this view. Lapsley, for one, correctly points out that such conflation "effectively eliminates emotions as significant in covenant love, despite the biblical evidence to the contrary." "Feeling Our Way," 360.

[194] Nygren refers to this as "purely theocentric love, in which all choice on man's part is excluded." *Agape and Eros*, 213. Similarly, Morris comments, "Predestination and love go together." *Testaments of Love*, 191. For K. Barth, "God's love is not merely not conditioned by any reciprocity of love. It is also not conditioned by any worthiness to be loved on the part of the loved." *Church Dogmatics* 2/1:278. Cf. John B. Webster's contention that "God's holy will is accomplished in love." It is an act of God's will "requiring no creaturely element as a cooperating cause." As such, there is "no possibility that . . . opposition on the part of the creature will somehow constitute a genuine threat to the consecrating will of God." "The Holiness and Love of God," *SJT* 57 (2004): 264, 266.

[195] Determinists suppose that the status of the "elect" is unilaterally decreed by God as an irresistible, effectual calling, which is "unstoppable" and "cannot be frustrated." So Schreiner, *Romans*, 450–51. Similarly, Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 530; cf. ibid., 531. However, the canonical statements that refer to God's elect as those who will ultimately be saved should be understood non-deterministically in light of the wider canonical evidence and may be understood, as such, in at least two ways. In either non-deterministic view of election, the statuses of "called" and/or "elect" do not mean that the individuals *qua* individuals *could* not be lost. Indeed, if the proper response of the elect were irresistibly determined by God the numerous exhortations to those elect would be superfluous (see Deut 7:11–13; 2 Pet 1:10; cf. 3:14, 17; Eph 4:1; Col 3:12; 2 Thess 1:11 and 2:13–15; Jude 1, 20–21). Rather, both approaches preserve the conditionality of the divine-human love relationship, which is apparent throughout Scripture without doing injury to the individual texts and contexts. For further evidence of such conditionality relative to election

see pages 441–71. See also MacDonald, "The Biblical Doctrine," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock), 207–29; Klein, *The New Chosen People*.

First, corporate election suggests that Scripture is speaking of the groups *as* groups but not referring specifically to the individuals who (will) make up those groups since inclusion is contingent upon response to the divine invitation. In other words, the reference is simply to a corporate group without reference to which individuals will ultimately be included in that group. The common criticism of this position is that groups are always made up of individuals. Of course, this is true. However, one may refer to a group without thereby assuming which individuals are included in the group. For instance, one might speak of next year's Indianapolis Colts or next term's United States Congress. In both cases, some individuals who will make up those groups are not even known by the speaker; the terms refer to a corporate group without identifying the individuals and without implying that the individuals that make up the group necessarily make up that group. See ibid.

Second, many (if not all) of the statements that speak of the "called" and "elect" assume divine foreknowledge such that from the standpoint of inspiration those who will respond are foreknown by God while the place of those finally included remains open to the free decisions of the individuals to accept or reject God's prevenient grace and forecondional love. This view is supported by the priority of divine foreknowledge to divine "predestination" as described in Rom 8:28–30 and strongly implied elsewhere (cf. 1 Pet 1:1–2). See Fernando Canale, "Doctrine of God," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (ed. R. Dederen; Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2000), 113–15. Cf. MacDonald, "The Biblical Doctrine," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock), 226. In this view, God knows they will be "elect" not because they are necessarily such and could not be or do otherwise but because he has infallible knowledge of their future free decisions. Of course, this assumes the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and libertarian free will. Cf. Richard Land's suggestion of congruent election. "Congruent Election: Understanding Salvation from an 'Eternal Now' Perspective," in *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (ed. David L. Allen and S. Lemke; Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2010). Compatibilism (including the transcendent-voluntarist model), process theism (including the immanent-experientialist model), and open theism reject this view based on the belief that exhaustive foreknowledge and libertarian free will are incompatible. However, open theism and process theism resolve the supposed incompatibility by denying exhaustive foreknowledge whereas deterministic compatibilists remove "libertarian" free will in favor of "free will" in the sense that the "will" is not externally "compelled" but is nevertheless controlled by the unilaterally efficacious divine will. On the former see Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 98; William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). On the latter see C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:282; Millard J. Erickson, *What Does God Know and When Does He Know It?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

However, more than one model of how divine foreknowledge and libertarian freedom might be compatible has been proposed. To take just a couple of examples, Land has utilized Boethius's view that God is eternally present and posits that election is timeless, taking into account God's universal experience of all that "will" happen. This he calls "congruent election." Land, "Congruent Election," in *Whosoever Will* (ed. Allen and Lemke). However, this view may be criticized for qualifying (or even denying) the strong language that depicts God as experiencing history in a linear fashion (at least to some degree). See Fernando Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987). William L. Craig has made a strong case for a view that utilizes middle knowledge (Molinism) to show that divine foreknowledge and libertarian free will are compatible. *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom: The Coherence of Freedom* (New York: Leiden, 1991). It is also possible that God's knowledge of future free events transcends time in a way that we do not understand such that God's knowledge is caused by the future free decisions themselves without positing God as a timeless being. This bumps up against the supposed impossibility of retroactive causation.

In either view, those who respond to the divine invitation and are thus "elect" do not thereby merit salvation. Election, like divine love, is conditional and yet unmerited. God's calling is not according to works (2 Tim 1:9) and God will not revoke the call (Rom 11:29). The recipients of "His calling" are those "who believe" (Eph 1:18–19). See the further discussion of this issue in the section on the foreconditional nature of divine love earlier in this chapter.

election since love and election relate not as interchangeable terms/concepts but within a nexus of cause and effect.

Further, the divine-human love relationship is not purely the result of God's will but human response is required to establish and maintain the particular, divine-human love relationship. According to Scripture, as seen earlier, human beings possess significant freedom, granted by God, to do otherwise than they do, including the freedom to reject God's love and forfeit love relationship with him. Indeed, the canonical data suggest that irresistibly determined love is an oxymoron.[196] While God's love is bestowed on everyone manifested in (among other things) the universal invitation and drawing of human beings to respond to God's love in kind (universally relational love), humans are free to refuse God's love and thus not enjoy love relationship with God (particularly relational love).[197]

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[196] Many scholars agree that "coerced love is not love." So James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 2002), 481; Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans* (UBS; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 166–67. Vincent Brümmer adds, "love is necessarily free." *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 177. Likewise, Fergusson states, "Coerced love . . . would not truly be love." "Will the Love," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 199. So Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 176; Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 13, 108–11; John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: Collins, 1966), 266. Likewise, Pinnock explains, "To the invitation of love, one may respond gladly or refuse. Forced love is a contradiction in terms, and God does not force his love on us." Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 74. Cf. Oord, *The Nature*, 153; idem, "Matching Theology," 308, 320. Further, Post suggests that "God refuses to eliminate human freedom, because a divine determinism would preclude the realization of communion, of which freedom is a constitutive principle." *A Theory of Agape*, 26. Similarly, Fergusson writes, "The necessary condition of freedom bestowed by the love of God, therefore, is the possibility of our rejecting him." "Will the Love," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 200. In all this, if freedom is included in the very conception of love; love cannot be irresistibly determined.

[197] This distinction between God's universally relational and particularly relational love in the foreconditional-reciprocal model differs substantially from the determinist conception that God loves all with a "common love" but with regard to salvation loves only those whom he has chosen with "efficacious love." The nature of this difference will be taken up and described later in this chapter in the section regarding ontological implications. For now, the difference boils down to the fact that "never is the implication given that God intends to accept some and to reject others. The New Testament affirms absolutely that it is God's will that all men would come to know him." B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 166–67. Schrenk adds, "It is certainly not said that from all eternity the world has been divided into the predestined and the reprobate. What is said is that everything depends upon whether one is willing or not to believe in Christ and to obey Him." *TDNT* 4:191. Cf. Marshall, "Universal Grace," 57.

Many scholars, from widely differing theological backgrounds, also reject the deterministic perspective on love.[198] Thus, while there is a strong element of volition in the God-human relationship, which is also closely associated with divine love, God's love is not to be identified with volition nor is divine love in all of its aspects merely a product of the divine will.[199] This free, volitional element of the divine-human love relationship, applied bilaterally, amounts to a rejection of determinism, process theology, and universalism.[200] In all this, according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model, the divine-human love relationship is neither unilaterally deterministic nor essential or ontologically necessary but mutually (though not symmetrically) volitional and contingent.

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[198] Oord voices the concerns of many in the "Arminian, Wesley, Holiness and other traditions" that "this doctrine sacrifices divine love." "Matching Theology," 54. Cf. ibid., 308, 320; idem, *The Nature*, 155. Brümmer believes the notion that God unilaterally chooses whom he loves and "causes us to love him . . . seems to turn God into a kind of Heavenly Conquistador." *The Model of Love*, 159–60. Cf. ibid., 54; Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther* (3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1:293. Clark H. Pinnock believes that God "could control everything" but "chooses not to do so . . . for the sake of the freedom that love requires." "Constrained by Love: Divine Self-Restraint According to Open Theism," *PRSt* 34 (2007): 149. Similarly, Thomas C. Oden, *The Living God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 75; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (trans. G. W. Bromiley; 3 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 1:438. Contra Oord, who contends that God, by nature, cannot coerce. "Matching Theology," 314. Cf. idem, *The Nature*, 126; Geddes MacGregor, *He Who Lets Us Be: A Theology of Love* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975). Talbott severely criticizes the theory of predestination as "blasphemy" that must "inevitably attribute Satanic qualities to God" and presents divine love as severely deficient. "On Predestination, Reprobation, and the Love of God: A Polemic," *The Reformed Journal* 33 (1983): 11–13.

[199] Thus, Carson correctly cautions that "Christian love cannot be reduced to willed altruism." *The Difficult Doctrine*, 28. Thomas F. Torrance suggests that God has elected all in Christ but some say no to God. "Universalism or Election," *SJT* 2 (1949): 316–18. In this way, God's logically and ontologically primary decision to create other beings is the necessary (but not sufficient) condition of the divine-human love relationship.

[200] That is, if this is taken seriously, both the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models as well as universalism are excluded since in these views the human agent cannot forfeit divine love since it is either the product of a unilateral divine decision or of an essential relation. Conversely, Fergusson suggests that if humans do not have significant freedom it seems there is "no way in which Christian theology can avoid either the Augustinian disjunction of divine love and justice on the one side, or the incipient universalism of K. Barth's doctrine of universal predestination in Christ on the other. Only a theology that recognizes the freedom finally to rebel against God can avoid the determinism of either double predestination or universalism." "Will the Love," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 196.

The Evaluative Aspect of God's Love

The evaluative aspect of divine love addresses the major question: Does God only bestow value or might he also appraise, appreciate, and receive value? The immanent-experientialist model, in direct opposition to the transcendent-voluntarist model and its supposition of divine impassibility, contends that God is the feeler of all feelings. As such, God's joy and pleasure is bound up with the world due to the ontological relationship between them.[201] That is, God always benefits or suffers along with all the joys and sorrows of the world.[202] God's pleasure or displeasure is, in fact, necessarily dependent upon the state of affairs in the world in a way that excludes discriminate evaluation.[203]

The canonical model affirms the fact that God's own life is affected by human beings. God's joy on the one hand and displeasure on the other are impacted by human events. However, whereas in the immanent-experientialist model God is necessarily bound to creatures since God's very being includes the world, the foreconditional-reciprocal model suggests (1) God identifies with the interests of others willingly rather than necessarily and (2) God's pleasure and displeasure are evaluative such that he identifies with the *best* interests of his creatures.[204] That is,

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[201] As supremely relative, God experiences all value in the world in accordance with God's perfect adequacy (internal relation) to the feelings of all as universally related. Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 91. Cf. idem, *Man's Vision*, 23, 135, 164; Daniel Day Williams, "The New Theological Situation," *ThTo* 24 (1968): 459; Charles Hartshorne, *Reality as Social Process: Studies in Metaphysics and Religion* (New York: Hafner, 1971), 156. Paul Fiddes adds, "To love is to be in a relationship where what the loved one does alters one's own experience." *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 50.

[202] Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), 28. Cf. idem, *Man's Vision*, 116, 203, 294; idem, *The Divine Relativity*, xvii; idem, *Reality as Social Process*, 160.

[203] Hartshorne argues, "The idea that God equally and solely experiences bliss in all his relations [by which he means classic theism] is once for all a denial of the religiously essential doctrine that God is displeased by human sin and human misfortune." *Man's Vision*, 195. Cf. ibid., 16, 39, 117. In this view, "God needs . . . the intrinsic beauty" of creatures' lives and "their own true happiness" not in the sense that he would cease to exist (though he does need *some* other lives) "but because the exact beauty of his own life varies with the amount of beauty in lives generally. Ibid., 164.

[204] The "best" interests of others is to be distinguished from what humans might consider their own interests. God does not identify with evil "interests." Accordingly, this is to be distinguished in two

God is affected by creatures because he willingly created them; the relation is not therefore

essential or necessary to God. Further, God does not merely feel the joy and suffering of others as

his own. Rather, God's pleasure or displeasure is evaluative. That is, God does not identify with

the evil interests that humans may value and enjoy, in contrast to Hartshorne's process

panentheism.[205] Thus, while a creature may take joy in evil, God does not take pleasure in their

pleasure in evil. God takes pleasure in the good of the world but despises evil.[206]

In this way, the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love suggests that humans

may bring God pleasure or displeasure but God's pleasure is not due to an ontological, essential

relationship but takes place because God willingly created humans and has a vested (though non-

necessary) interest in creaturely well-being. An increasing number of theologians have also

suggested that divine love is passible in some respects, without adopting the process ontology

regarding the God-world relationship.[207] Accordingly, the concept that God's love does include

evaluation, and/or that God may delight in and even enjoy his creatures, is also favored by a

number of recent theologians.[208]

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important ways from Hartshorne's view that God is internally related to all others such that "promoting their welfare contributes to his own." Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 147. Cf. ibid., 151, 163.

[205] See Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 147. Cf. ibid., 151, 163.

[206] Gary D. Badcock rightly states, "Were it true to say that God is simply indifferent to its goodness or its rebellion, or that his beneficence in relation to the world takes no account of the events that take place in it, then it would not be possible to say of him that he loves the world." "The Concept of Love: Divine and Human," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. K. J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 46. T. Lane adds in this regard that the cliché "God hates the sin but loves the sinner" is thus self-contradictory. "It is incoherent to say that God is displeased with child molestation but feels no displeasure toward child molesters." "The Wrath of God," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 155.

[207] Many of these have been seen earlier in this dissertation and others will appear interspersed throughout this section.

[208] Moltmann thus states: God is capable of receiving value, or "an increase of his riches and his bliss." *The Trinity*, 121. Likewise, T. C. Oden states, "God loves all creatures in the twofold sense that God unapologetically enjoys them for their own sake and desires their answering, enjoying love in response to eternally patient, self-sacrificial love." *The Living God*, 121. Importantly, both qualify that this is not out of divine "need," "lack," or "deficiency." Cf. ibid., 121; Moltmann, *The Trinity*, 45, 168. Cf. Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 163–71; Catherine Osborne, *Eros Unveiled: Plato and the God of Love* (Oxford:

The transcendent-voluntarist model, on the other hand, espouses the historically dominant view that God is only the benefactor but never the beneficiary in the divine-human relationship. Ontologically, God is self-sufficient in every respect and, ethically, God sacrifices his own interests (if he can be thought to actually have "interests") for those of others. Therefore, God cannot actually enjoy, delight in, take pleasure in, or receive value from the disposition and/or action of creatures, including their responsive love.[209] Accordingly, many have viewed God's love as wholly gratuitous, arbitrary, and beneficent love of the unworthy.[210] As such, this model views love as purely altruistic and outgoing gift love (thematic *agape*) such that God never

Clarendon, 1994), 65; Singer, *The Nature of Love*, 1:10; Badcock, "The Concept of Love," in *Nothing Greater* (ed. Vanhoozer), 45. In a similar vein, Brümmer criticizes the view of so-called disinterested love claiming that "pure giving without receiving is not love but mere beneficence." *The Model of Love*, 240. Thus, God may only be "said to *care for* us but not *about* us." Ibid., 132. However, Brümmer is more comfortable with the language of "need" stating, "If God does not need us, we become infinitely superfluous." Ibid., 242. Cf. Badcock, "The Concept of Love," in *Nothing Greater* (ed. Vanhoozer), 45; Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 134.

[209] See C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:306. Similarly, Nygren asserts that God is altogether "indifferent to value." *Agape and Eros*, 210.

[210] Love is beneficence, "bestowed not upon a worthy object and not for the personal advantage of the Lover but solely for the benefit of the undeserving recipient." C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:343. Likewise, Spicq contends that love is nevertheless "purely gratuitous" as human neighbor love should be. *Agape*, 53. Cf. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 77–78, 157; Martin Cyril D'Arcy, *The Mind and Heart of Love* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), 245; Alan J. Torrance, "Is Love the Essence of God?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 130, 132. Similarly, Morris contends that "we do not bring anything valuable to God—in fact, we acquire value only because we are the recipients of his love." *Testaments of Love*, 142. Accordingly, "God delights in this people simply because he chooses to do so" such that there is not "something in them that delights him." *Testaments of Love*, 93. As such, "the love of God . . . is not a love of the worthy" but "a love for the completely undeserving" and "entirely unworthy." Ibid., 128, 271, 382. Similarly, C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:342. Snaith speaks of divine love as "wholly disinterested." *The Distinctive Ideas*, 137. Kyung Hee Park adds, "God's love for his people is not based on any qualities of human behavior, but in the personal being of God himself (Deut 7:7)." "Divine Love in Hosea 11" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 36. Cf. W. E. Vine, "Love," *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 382. Cranfield contends that divine love is "spontaneous" and "not caused by any worth or attractiveness in its object, but rather creates worth in its object. The cause of God's love for Israel lies not in any qualities or potentialities of Israel but in the personal being of God himself." Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 132. Even within the canon, the question is raised when Eliphaz, one of Job's "friends," contends that humans cannot be useful or valuable to God nor bring him any pleasure (Job 22:2–3).

receives love in any way that benefits him or adds value to his life.[211] In other words, God cannot

appreciate or enjoy love from his creatures.[212]

Yet, according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model, divine love is evaluative rather

than indifferent or disinterested. God himself enjoys, delights in, takes pleasure in, and/or

receives value from the disposition and/or action of other agents. On the other hand, God is

displeased and may be grieved and vexed at sin and evil. Accordingly, the canonical data

contradict the supposition of an ontological restriction on divine evaluation and enjoyment.

Divine love is not altogether disinterested, indifferent, arbitrary, ungrounded and/or spontaneous.

Thus, the traditional conception that God is ontologically incapable of being affected by

externalities such that it is impossible for him to receive value or benefit, what we might call the

theo-ontological objection, is overcome by the canonical data of the foreconditional-reciprocal

model which present divine love as evaluative. Beyond the theo-ontological objection met above,

two other (lesser) bases for the traditional denial that humans may bring value and/or joy to God

often appear: the moral and hamartiological objections, respectively.

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[211] Cf. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:343; Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology: God, Creation* (4 vols.; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 2002), 2:367. This is in contrast to the fact that the ἀγαπάω word group, like other terms of love in the OT and NT, frequently refers to evaluative love. Thus Warnach speaks of αγαπαν in the LXX as "love in the sense of placing a high value upon some person or thing, or of receiving them with favour." *EDNT* 2:518. So Gerhard Schneider, "αγαπη," *EDNT* 1:9. Cf. Robert Joly, *Le vocabulaire chrétien de l'amour est-il original: Philein et agapan dans le grec antique* (Brussels: Univ de Bruxelles, 1968). See the brief study of the ἀγαπάω word group in the NT chapter for evidence that it is not necessarily descriptive of strictly beneficent, disinterested, altruistic, non-evaluative love toward the unworthy.

[212] "'God is love' is this: it belongs to the fullness of God's nature that he cannot be served but must overflow in service to his creation. The very meaning of God is a being who cannot be enriched but always remains the enricher." Piper, "How Does a Sovereign," 11. As such, "[God's] love for us and for his other creatures is completely disinterested." Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998), 319. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988), 127; H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 195, 200–201; Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), 186. In this way: "God loves us on the basis of that likeness of himself that he has placed within us. He therefore in effect loves himself in us. This likeness to him, however, is not our own doing, but is present in us because of his unselfish, giving, nature." Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 320.

The moral objection supposes that pure love is strictly self-sacrificial and self-abnegating. In this view, self-interest is viewed as immoral and, thus, love that receives joy from its object(s) is considered to be (implicitly or explicitly) selfish.[213] However, the Bible recognizes proper self-love and self-interest in contrast to selfishness and self-centeredness. In other words, Scripture recognizes appropriate self-interest that is not to the exclusion of other-interest.[214] For example, God commands humans to love their neighbor as themselves.[215] Likewise, consider the golden rule, which is predicated on the assumption of appropriate self-regard though not to the exclusion of other-regard (Matt 7:12; Luke 6:31; cf. Phil 2:3–4).[216] As such, the supposition that purely altruistic love (thematic *agape*) is the only true kind of "Christian" love, excluding other aspects such as attraction, enjoyment, pleasure, and responsive affection, is unwarranted.[217]

God himself exhibits proper self-interest and self-regard, which is not to the exclusion of the interests of others but voluntarily includes the best interests of his creatures.[218] That is, in the

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[213] See, for example, Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 210.

[214] Here, I use "selfishness" to refer to improper self-interest over and against the proper regard for God and others. While God has proper self-interest he is never selfish. Human beings, on the other hand, are selfish by nature. See Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 17–18.

[215] See Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; cf. Matt 19:19; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8; Eph 5:25, 28–30, 33.

[216] Accordingly, at least some kind of self-love is appropriate, contra the notion of "pure love" as wholly altruistic and self-abnegating, exclusive of all self-interest and self-regard. While it may be true that self-love is not commanded as such, it is implicitly approved in its proper place. As Wallis states, "even if the OT does not explicitly demand self-denial and altruism, it advocates the kind of behavior which equates concern for the well-being of one's neighbor with the assertion of one's own will." *TDOT* 1:111.

[217] Many scholars, both classical and contemporary, have recognized this. See, for example, Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 17–20; C. Osborne, *Eros Unveiled*, 72; Oord, *The Nature*, 13; Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.19.37 (*NPNF* 3; Albany, Oreg.: New City Press), 423–24; idem, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 26.49 (*NPNF* 4; Albany, Oreg.: New City Press), 92; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Books for the Ages 3; Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software), 326.

[218] In contrast to sinful human nature, there is no dichotomy between self-interest and other-interest in the divine disposition and/or actions because there is no conflict between them in the divine will. God's self-interest and other-interest are in perfect harmony. The problem, in this disordered and evil world, is that human self-interest and other-interest often conflict because of sin and the scarcity of resources. Eventually, there will be no conflicts of interest. The selfishness of a zero-sum game with its attendant conflicts of interest is to be replaced by sympathy and solidarity in Christ and with fellow beings. By identifying so closely with the best interests of others they become one's own.

foreconditional-reciprocal model, God's life is intimately affected by the lives of his children because he has made their best interests his own; the joy of others is integral to God's own joy.[219] Importantly, while God has proper self-interest, he is never selfish. The transcendent-voluntarist, however, might argue that any self-interest detracts from the purity of God's love for others.[220] However, one could make the case that if God is impassible, as in the transcendent-voluntarist model, God does not seek his own interests merely because he has none. That is, if nothing can actually add or subtract from the divine happiness and/or the quality of the divine life, there is no real sacrifice to be made. However, the canon depicts God as willingly binding his happiness to that of others and risking the quality of the divine life (but not existence) in allowing other significantly free beings to exist and impact history.[221]

God himself, then, is the model of proper self-love. Self-sacrificial love is often demanded by the circumstances of this sinful and disordered world.[222] However, total and utter

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[219] As such, God really does take delight in his creatures, not in the sense that he is "a self-gratifying being after all" but rather, "all that God does he does for his pleasure; but since God is wholly good, his doing what pleases him is not capricious, but what is wholly good for those he loves. God's pleasure is pure love, so what he does 'for the sake of his good pleasure' is by that very fact also on behalf of those he loves. After all, it delights God to delight his people." Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 239–40. Cf. Walter Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *Genesis to Leviticus* (vol. 1 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1994), 947. Indeed, "The fact that the biblical writers speak of God as rejoicing and suffering over the state of creation is not a superficial eliminable feature of their speech. It expresses themes deeply embedded in the biblical vision. God's love for his world is a rejoicing and suffering love. The picture of God as Stoic sage, ever blissful and nonsuffering, is in deep conflict with the biblical picture." Wolterstorff, "Suffering Love," in *Augustine's Confessions* (ed. Mann), 136.

[220] From a vastly different standpoint, the immanent-experientialist model also arrives at this conclusion that "God can make no sacrifices" due to God's essential relation to all. Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 161.

[221] Cf. Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977).

[222] Indeed, it is evident that outgoing love and placing the needs of the other "above" one's own is virtuous and praiseworthy (cf. 1 Cor 13:5; Phil 2:3–4). Christ's self-giving and sacrificial love in the incarnation and crucifixion itself exemplified the greatest love (John 15:13). However, it is crucial to recognize that the occasion for this self-sacrifice (as well as all others) is itself predicated on evil and sin. In a perfect world, absent evil and conflict, there is no need for utter self-sacrifice. There will thus come a day when utter self-sacrifice is no longer necessary, when all creaturely interests will be in harmony with God's will, which itself is directed toward the best interests of all without any conflicts of interest. Accordingly, self-sacrifice cannot be essential to divine love nor does it exhaust love's meaning. Cf. Post, *A Theory of*

self-abnegation is not ideal and is even "self-contradictory."[223] For example, Christ, who modeled the ultimate self-sacrificial love in laying down his life, is to be exalted as is appropriate to him (cf. Phil 2:9–11). Hence, one who assigns pure altruism to God's love overlooks an important aspect of God's nature as the worthy recipient of praise, worship, exaltation, and creaturely love.[224] Moreover, self-sacrifice cannot be the ultimate end of divine interest because it can't possibly serve as an ultimate end of other-interest. If God were to sacrifice his very existence then no others would exist since all existence is dependent upon God. Thus the suggestion that God is purely altruistic is ontologically self-defeating insofar as altruism suggests the ideal of self-sacrifice and absence of self-interest. Accordingly, God is not selfish or self-serving while, at the same time, God rightly desires and receives glory and exaltation.[225] In all this, divine love is evaluative but is neither selfish nor self-abnegating; though divine love is other-centered and

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Agape, 10–12. He argues that "the western tendency to idealize selfless love devoid of even the slightest iota of self-concern is an aberration from the valid ideal of unselfishness in fellowship." Ibid., 12. This is contrary to the common assertions such as "to say 'God is love' is exactly the same as to say, 'God has in His Son made atonement for the sin of the world.'" James Denney, *The Death of Christ* (London: Tyndale Press, 1951), 152.

[223] Thus Oord correctly notes, "Defining love exclusively in terms of self-sacrifice is not biblical. . . . Biblical authors affirm self-love." *The Nature*, 27. Indeed, "as a universal principle, self-sacrifice is self-contradictory. That is, if two persons each acted always self-sacrificially toward one another, neither could act self-sacrificially. Each would insist on holding the door open for the other, and thus neither would enter." Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 184. Likewise, "self-less, purely one-way love may be an understandable exaggeration of unselfishness, but its impact is essentially negative in that it undermines the circular flow of giving and receiving in which agape is sustained and supported." Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 12. Gene H. Outka agrees, saying, "The feature of self-sacrifice in itself would appear to provide no way of distinguishing between attention to another's needs and submission to his exploitation and no warrant for resisting the latter." *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 275.

[224] Indeed, though God himself models the ultimate self-sacrificial love when appropriate, he does not view others as better than himself (cf. Phil 2:3). He could not do so and be accurate. Such a prescription for Christians to do so is directed at overcoming natural selfishness, which contributes to the usual conflicts of interest. Further, while God truly is better, all humans have fallen short of God's glory (Rom 3:23). Significantly, Christ's role as servant rather than the one being served, while denying immediate self-gratification due to the evil and disordered world, contributed to Christ's ultimate delight, the salvation of his beloved and the enjoyment of a bilateral love relationship with them.

[225] The divine self-interest toward the glory of God is a proper end in itself since God is the appropriate object of worship and exaltation yet also a means to an other-directed end, the revelation of his character as part of the plan of salvation.

often manifest in self-sacrifice, it is neither necessarily nor ideally self-sacrificial. In all this, the dichotomy between self-interest and other-interest is demonstrated to be false.[226]

The hamartiological objection argues that humans are incapable of generating value or eliciting divine delight due to their inherent total sinfulness. This objection may be raised independently of whether God can receive value or not. It dovetails, however, with the common view that divine love is to be equated with love for the unworthy, that is, altogether gratuitous love.[227] However, according to Scripture, God's love is not necessarily love for the unworthy. The Father loves Christ, who is and was worthy of such love as the supremely excellent, valuable, precious, choice, and lovable Son of God.[228] Thus, while it is true that God's love for humans is unmerited, it is not true that divine love is, by nature, love for the unworthy.[229] Further, God's love for humans is mediated through the truly worthy Son. That is, humans may bring value to God through the prior and ongoing action of God, especially the mediation of Christ. Thus, the hamartiological objection is overcome by the mediation of Christ, which provides both the

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[226] Indeed, the false dichotomy between altruism and egoism is itself the outgrowth of the false thematic *agape* view that is beholden to the false ontological assumption of divine impassibility. It is the further outgrowth of a false dichotomy between altruism and proper self-regard.

[227] See the description of the transcendent-voluntarist model in this regard above.

[228] Notably, even Nygren "finds in John the concept of a love that is motivated by the inherent worth of the Son. This at once denies his own definition of agape as a love freely outflowing and unmotivated." G. Johnston, "Love in the NT," *IDB* 3:177. Nygren does not allow this to defeat his view by claiming that the Johannine conception of love is deficient. Cf. *Agape and Eros*, 158. Even Morris, who consistently emphasizes the unilateral and unconditional nature of divine love, states that "the fact that it denotes a spontaneous, unmotivated love does not mean that it can be directed only toward the unworthy." *Testaments of Love*, 138. Cf. Spicq, *Agape*, 53. But, then, what is the meaning of "denotes" and "spontaneous" and "unmotivated"? To be consistent, he must mean that God's love is *sometimes* spontaneous and unmotivated. As such, it would be incorrect to assert that God's love is, by nature, spontaneous and unmotivated, which is the impression that one gets from the broader thrust of his many statements in this regard.

[229] This is contra the assertion that divine love is "the deep and constant 'love' and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects." "Love," 382. Vacek correctly points out that "agape is not oriented only to the neediness or incompleteness of others." *Love, Human and Divine*, 163.

imputed and imparted righteousness as the proper object of divine delight. In the "Beloved" (Christ) Christians are also "beloved," in the "Elect" Christians are also "elect."[230]

In light of the evidence, then, none of the three objections to divine evaluative love stand. God can and does receive love and may enjoy, delight in, and garner pleasure from his creatures. His own delight, however, is in bringing genuine pleasure, joy, and delight to those very objects of his love. This evaluative aspect of divine love is supported by and complements the other aspects of divine love. If God's love were altogether groundless, unconditional, unilateral, and equated with arbitrary election then it could not also be evaluative since God could not enjoy or appreciate the objects of his love nor their love for him in return. Conversely, that God's love is foreconditional, multilateral, and not arbitrary complements the evaluative nature of God's love.[231] Moreover, the evaluative and emotional aspects of love dovetail regarding the issue of divine passibility. That is, both of them require that God is actually affected by the actions of the world. For evaluation, God must actually appraise objects. For the emotion described in Scripture, God must be affected by the actions of humans.

The Emotional Aspect of God's Love

This brings us to the third of five major questions around which the conflict of theological interpretation about divine love in relation to the world revolves: Does God's love include responsive, passible, affection and/or emotionality such that God is concerned for the

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[230] Since nearly all of the canon deals with a post-fall world, nearly all of the canonical information about divine love relates to God's love for the unworthy as the outworking of this decision to continue to love sinful human beings. However, since such love for the unworthy only takes place within a sinful, disordered world, love for the unworthy cannot itself be essential to divine love. Indeed, God's love predates the existence of evil (John 17:24). Thus, the form love takes toward unworthy objects is but one exemplification of love but not part of its essence. Accordingly, the operation of this relationship within a post-fall world should not be confused with the ideal divine-human love relation.

[231] Further, that God can enjoy human action makes truly meaningful reciprocal love between God and humans possible and complements the foreconditionality of divine love.

world, sympathetically or otherwise?[232] The immanent-experientialist model views God as utterly

passible and emotional as the ultimate subject and object of all the experiences of the world, the

universal feeler of all other's feelings.[233] Love, then, is identical with sympathy that takes place

by way of God's essential and internal relation to the world.[234] According to the foreconditional-

reciprocal model, however, God's love is intensely emotive and affective yet also voluntary and

evaluative by way of his contingent and external relation to the world. That is, God is not

ontologically bound to the world but has willingly entered into a relationship with the world

wherein God is affected by the lives of human beings, having attached his own interests to the

best interests of all others. God is thus passible, but not passive.[235] Thus, divine love for his

creatures is to be sharply distinguished from the kind of sympathy in process theism that amounts

to ontological dependency.[236]

On the other hand, the transcendent-voluntarist model presupposes the impassibility of

God, that is, God cannot be affected by anything external to God; he has no passions.[237]

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[232] As described earlier, emotion is used in this dissertation to refer to that which manifests a passible, affective response to the state of affairs.

[233] Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 28. Cf. idem, *Man's Vision*, 203, 294; idem, *Reality as Social Process*, 160. Accordingly, Hartshorne harshly criticizes the view that God is impassible and "passionless." *Man's Vision*, 115. Similarly, D. D. Williams states, "Impassibility makes love meaningless." *The Spirit*, 127.

[234] Indeed, for Hartshorne, "love *is* joy in the joy (actual or expected) of another, and sorrow in the sorrow of another." *Man's Vision*, 116. Cf. ibid., 266; idem, *Reality as Social Process*, 160. Such "sympathy" as "love" is itself Hartshorne's social conception of love, which is descriptive of reality. *Omnipotence*, 37.

[235] "God is no robot" but "a personal, living God" who "is incomparably affected by, even pained by, the sinner's rebellion. Acknowledging the passibility (emotions) of God does not diminish the immutability of his promissory purposes." K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 344. Cf. Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 188. "Something in the very heart of God is moved by suffering and hurt and pain." Miller, "The Book of Jeremiah," in *Isaiah–Ezekiel*, 6:814.

[236] As has been discussed already in this chapter, divine passibility does not amount to ontological necessity. God is ontically discrete, distinct from the world he has created. God chose to create other beings and consider their interests as his own. As such, there is no internal relation, no ontological necessity that God be committed to his people emotionally or otherwise.

[237] In C. F. H. Henry's view, God as omnicausal cannot be acted upon; there is no power that

Consequently, divine love is strictly volitional, to the exclusion of evaluative and passible, emotional aspects.[238] This has been the dominant position in much of Christian theology.[239] However, according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model, while God is the omnipotent and self-existent Lord over all, he is nevertheless affected by the disposition, actions, and experiences of his creatures.[240] As such, God is not impassible.[241] Recently, a number of theologians, despite

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could impact divinity, God's love is unaffected by spatio-temporal reality since it "presupposes the exclusive voluntary initiative of the sovereign divine being whom no external power can manipulate." *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:349. Cf. Norman L. Geisler, H. Wayne House, and Max Herrera, *The Battle for God: Responding to the Challenge of Neotheism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001), 171; Bruce A. Ware, "An Evangelical Reexamination of the Doctrine of the Immutability of God" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1984).

[238] Cf. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:341, 346, 349. Recent articulations regarding God's impassibility have attempted to concurrently maintain divine impassibility *and* the ability of God to "feel," often articulated in response to the increasing criticisms of relational theologies such as process and open theism. In such a view, evaluative and emotive aspects are excluded insofar as they assume passibility, that is, insofar as they are descriptive of a divine response to external stimulus. In this way, God may have fond feelings for his creatures but such emotions are themselves purely the result of the unaffected and impassible divine will. For example, Geisler contends that God may have emotional states but "His feelings are not the result of actions imposed upon Him by others." At the same time he contends that "God cannot be acted upon by anything outside of Himself." Geisler, House, and Herrera, *The Battle for God*, 170–71. Similarly, Cooper contends that "God's pleasure and anger are not passions or emotions caused in him." That is, "classical theism denies that God's feelings are the *effects* of creaturely *causes*." *Panentheism*, 332. In this way, it is specifically disputed by some classical theists that God's impassibility means that God is uncaring or "utterly devoid of any feelings." Millard J. Erickson, *God the Father Almighty: A Contemporary Exploration of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 161. Cf. Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 276. "If God loves, it is because he chooses to love; if he suffers, it is because he chooses to suffer. God is impassible in the sense that he sustains no 'passion,' no emotion, that makes Him vulnerable from the outside, over which he has no control, or which he has not foreseen." Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine*, 60. Cf. idem, "How Can We Reconcile the Love and the Transcendent Sovereignty of God?" in *God under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God* (ed. D. S. Huffman and Eric L. Johnson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 308, 345; C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:349; Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 11; Hart, "How Do We Define," 109; K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2/1:370. Thus, God cannot be affected and any emotions he may have are not elicited but purely willed, unaffected emotions. In this way, all God's "emotions" are caused purely by the eternal decree.

[239] Thus, Morris contends that "God's love is not an emotion conditioned by the kind of people we are." *Testaments of Love*, 151. This simultaneously excludes emotionality and evaluation. As such, "passion" does not constitute "Christian love." Ibid., 276. Such a view dovetails with the supposed supremacy of ἀγάπη (see the discussion in the previous chapter) in which it is supposed to refer "to the will rather than to the emotion." Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 134. Cf. Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:38; Schneider, *EDNT* 1:9. Likewise, of OT love, William G. Cole asserts that "love in the Hebrew . . . was not ephemeral emotion but steadfast concern, involving the will rather than the feelings." *Sex and Love in the Bible* (New York: Association Press, 1959), 67. See also Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World* (Harper Torchbooks: New York, 1974).

[240] Numerous biblical scholars agree. For instance, they also recognize that God is responsive and

significant variances in their wider theology, have also come to the conclusion that God's love is

emotional and, accordingly, the divine nature is passible.[242]

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often relents. Douglas K. Stuart comments, "The idea that God would not shift direction or adjust his plans in response to prayer is foreign to the Bible but unfortunately at home with some forms of deterministic theology." *Exodus* (NAC 2; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 672. Brueggemann adds, "Such freedom on God's part is, of course, a problem for scholastic theology, which wants an immutable God, but such a God stands in deep tension with the biblical presentation of God." "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus* 1:932. Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 275; Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (OBT 14; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). For more information in this regard see chapters 4 and 5, pages 301–52 and 510–40.

[241] As has been seen earlier, divine passion and compassion may be elicited and explicitly correspond to the state of affairs. As such, they not only evidence divine passibility and intense emotion but also evaluation. Contra the view of Philo and others who dismiss divine jealousy and passion as inappropriate to God due to the presupposition of divine impassibility. See Philo, *Lectures on St. John* 113.60–61 (Yonge 163). Cf. Stumpff, *TDNT* 2: 877–88.

[242] Vanhoozer points out, "it is becoming increasingly difficult for classical theists to defend the intelligibility of the love of God as an apathetic and unilateral benevolence." "Introduction: The Love of God—Its Place, Meaning, and Function in Systematic Theology," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. K. J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 10. Further, Vacek, who wishes to exclude self-interest from thematic *agape*, nevertheless believes that "unemotional love" is not the answer. Rather, "in excluding 'being affected'" the Agapist perspective of Nygren and others "excludes love." *Love, Human and Divine*, 160. In his view, the Agapist perspective that views love as beneficence "without in any way being affected by the other" stems "from the fatal failure to distinguish between *being affected* and *acting for our own sake*." Ibid. He correctly contends that "some affectionate love is necessary." Ibid., 162. Also reacting against the Agapist view, G. Lloyd Carr states that "*agape*, at least in the Old Testament, is not to be limited to self-giving, non-sensual 'love.' It is a word filled with all the Hebrew concepts of passion, sexual attraction, friendship, obedience, loyalty, duty, and commitment to the other person." G. Lloyd Carr, *The Song of Solomon: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 17; Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 63. Similarly, see D. D. Williams, *The Spirit*, 45; Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 286. Oord contends that love "necessarily involves both intention and sympathy/empathy." *The Nature*, 30. Cf. ibid., 24; idem, "Matching Theology," 277; Rice, "Process Theism," in *Searching for an Adequate God* (ed. Griffin, Cobb, and Pinnock), 184. For Moltmann, a God incapable of suffering "is poorer than any human . . . he is also a loveless being." *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (trans. R. A. Wilson and J. Bowden; New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 222. "God's being is in suffering and the suffering is in God's being itself, because God is love." *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, 227. Cf. C. Osborne, *Eros Unveiled*, 21; Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 195. Wolterstorff suggests that "to act out of love toward something other than oneself is to value that thing and certain states of that thing. And on this point it matters not whether the love be erotic or agapic." "Suffering Love," in *Augustine's Confessions* (ed. Mann), 135. Some have even suggested that divine love (thematic *agape*) may include at least some aspects of so-called *eros*. Cf. Oord, *The Nature*, 121; D'Arcy, *The Mind and Heart*; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (London: SCMP, 1992), 261; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, eds., "חסד," *HALOT* (Leiden, Holland: Brill, 2001). In this vein, Boyd argues for a perichoresis of *agape*, *eros*, *storge*, and *philia*, modeled after the Trinity. Craig A. Boyd, "The Perichoretic Nature of Love: Beyond the Perfection Model," in *Visions of Agapé: Problems and Possibilities in Human and Divine Love* (ed. C. A. Boyd; Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008). William Klassen comments, "If ecstasy is at the center of the idea of erōs, then surely there is no true agapē without it; a God who does not care whether people respond is

Beyond the ontological presupposition of divine impassibility, a secondary rationale for the exclusion of emotionality from not only divine love, but love in general, stems from the frequent love commands in the Bible. Some argue that emotional love, by definition, could not be commanded.[243] As such, love must be volitional rather than emotional. Closely associated with this is the assumption that love, especially in the OT but in some contexts in the NT as well, might simply be a term that refers to the legal aspects of covenant relationship, a term of purely volitional commitment manifested primarily in external, legal obedience.[244]

However, the foreconditional-reciprocal model comes to the conclusion that love cannot be restricted to something like purely legal or external, "covenantal" love. Covenant itself is

hardly the God portrayed in Hosea or in the NT image of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem." "Love in the NT and Early Jewish Literature," *ABD* 4:385. Cf. Oord, "Matching Theology," 184; John A. T. Robinson, "Agape and Eros," *Theology* 48 (1945): 99; William E. Phipps, "The Sensuousness of Agape," *ThTo* 29 (1973); Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1972), 32; George H. Tavard, *A Way of Love* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1977), 133–34. Even Carson is adamant that an emotionless God is "profoundly unbiblical and should be repudiated" though he later argues for a form of impassibility. *The Difficult Doctrine*, 48. On the other hand, Carson also defends the modified view of passibility with the contention that "if the love of God is exclusively portrayed as an inviting, yearning, sinner-seeking, rather lovesick passion, we may strengthen the hands of Arminians, semi-Pelagians, Pelagians, and those more interested in God's inner emotional life than in his justice and glory, but the cost will be massive. . . . Made absolute . . . it steals God's sovereignty from him and our security from us." Ibid., 22. Further, he declares, "A God who is terribly vulnerable to the pain caused by our rebellion is scarcely a God who is in control or a God who so perfect he does not, strictly speaking, need us." Ibid., 60.

[243] Stein thus states, "Emotions can be elicited but not commanded. Actions and the will can be commanded." *Luke*, 206–7. Morris likewise contends, "While it is nonsense to be commanded to generate a passionate *eros*, it is not nonsense to be commanded to respond to God's love." Thus, for him, "we must not confuse love with passion or sentimentality." Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 187, 189. Similarly, W. D. Davies and Allison, *A Critical*, 241; Bamberger, "Fear and Love"; J. W. McKay, "Man's Love," 426; McCarthy, "Notes," 145–46.

[244] For example, based on ANE parallels, it has been suggested that אהב, at least in Deuteronomy, belongs to technical treaty language as a "covenantal love" that is to be contrasted with affection. So Moran, "The Ancient," 78. Cf. McCarthy, "Notes," 144–46; Ackerman, "The Personal," 440; Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:285–87; Lohfink, "Hate and Love in Osee 9, 15"; Walker, "'Love,'" in *Current Issues* (ed. Hawthorne), 283–84. In this vein, a distinction is often made between the emotional affection in intimate personal relationships (family, friendship) as opposed to the merely political "love" of treaty contexts. Cf. Ackerman, "The Personal," 440; Thompson, "Israel's 'Lovers'"; idem, "Significance of the Verb Love in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel." See chapter 4, pages 233–8, for a more detailed discussion and evaluation of this claim, including arguments as to why it should not be adopted.

predicated on divine love and modeled after affectionate kinship.[245] Accordingly, emotional

aspects of love are evident within the very covenantal contexts that some have asserted refer to

merely legal, covenant love, devoid of affection. As such, the love that God bestows and calls for

(within covenant or without) is emotional but not only emotional. That is, love within the divine-

human relationship includes bilateral, voluntary commitment as well as emotion and

evaluation.[246] God loves human beings with the utmost passion and affection. Conversely, love

toward God is not to be external obedience without affection toward him but internal obedience

grounded in deep-seated affection, devotion, commitment, loyalty, and even passion.[247] Love,

then, is not merely emotion but the love God bestows and the love response he seeks are alike

emotional yet also volitional and evaluative. In all this, the foreconditional-reciprocal model

strongly challenges the impassibility of God proposed by the transcendent-voluntarist model

while also departing from the undifferentiated nature of sympathy required by the essential

relationship posited by the immanent-experientialist model.

The Foreconditional Aspect of God's Love

The volitional, evaluative, and emotional natures of divine love all contribute to the view

that God's love involves significant give-and-take. In the discussion of the final two aspects of

love, this give-and-take relationality of love is taken up explicitly in response to some of the most

pressing and oft-misunderstood issues about divine love. The most pressing issue relates to

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[245] See Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*. Contra Moran, "The Ancient." See also the discussion of this in chapter 4, pages 233–8.

[246] Many scholars recognize both emotion and volition in divine love. For example, Rice explains that "love involves profound sensitivity, but it insists that love is a voluntary commitment." "Process Theism," in *Searching for an Adequate* God (ed. Griffin, Cobb, and Pinnock), 185. Oord also argues that both choice and emotion are "always present in an expression of love." *The Nature*, 30. Post contends that "an even balance or co-primacy between emotion and reason is the fitting alternative to those who would diminish the importance of either capacity." *Unlimited Love: Altruism, Compassion, and Service* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2003), 67.

[247] "Love and behavior motivated by love are not to be separated from emotion, and yet they are not dependent on emotion, but require wise consideration." Wallis, *TDOT* 1:110. D. T. Olson comments,

whether divine love is unilateral or bilateral. Bound up with this is the question of whether divine

love is necessary or contingent, unconditional or conditional, unmotivated or motivated,

ungrounded or grounded, etc.

For both the immanent-experientialist and transcendent-voluntarist models, divine love is

unconditional and cannot be forfeited. In the immanent-experientialist model, God's love is

ontologically necessary. God is internally bound to the world and his love is descriptive of that

necessary relation.[248] In the transcendent-voluntarist model, on the other hand, God's love is

dependent only upon his unilateral and arbitrary will to love. In this way, it is frequently asserted,

and popularly assumed, that divine love is unconditional.[249] Accordingly, in this model divine

love is thought to be spontaneous, unmotivated, and ungrounded.[250] As such, divine love is

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"Obedience *and* passionate relationship characterize the full love of God." *Deuteronomy and the Death*, 51.

[248] See chapter 2 for the description of Hartshorne's ontology, which requires this conception of divine love.

[249] Thus, for Snaith, divine love (אהב) is "arbitrary" and "depends solely on the will of the agent" meaning "it is unconditioned by anything outside the Nature of God." *The Distinctive Ideas*, 138. Likewise, Morris comments, "We must clearly recognize that God's love is unconditional." Morris, *Testaments of Love*, *Testaments of Love*, 31. Cf. Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 267; Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology*, 174. Similar references to God's "unconditional" love frequently appear in theological dictionaries and biblical commentaries. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 100; Köstenberger, *John*, 423; Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:280; Walker, "'Love,'" in *Current Issues* (ed. Hawthorne), 287; Stauffer, *TDNT* 1:49; A. E. Hill, *Malachi*, 167; Verhoef, 196–97, 200–201; Park, "Divine Love in Hosea 11," 37–38; Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 110. Some of these scholars appear to confuse the unmerited nature of divine love with the concept of unconditionality. Consider, for example, Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 137. Further imprecise usage of the term "unconditional" appears such as when it is stated that "God always takes the initiative in love and his people must respond to this unconditional love." Park, "Divine Love in Hosea 11," 38. Cf. Leonard J. Coppes, "רחם," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (ed. R. L. Harris et al.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 843. If humans "must respond" then love is not altogether "unconditional."

[250] Morris contends that God's love is "spontaneous and unmotivated." *Testaments of Love*, 264. Cf. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:340; ibid., 5:116; Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 210; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 137. Cranfield similarly states, "The ground of God's love for us is altogether in himself. He loves us, because he is love." Therefore, divine love is "spontaneous." "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 135, 132. Likewise, Johnston contends, "The divine love is sovereign, unmotivated save by the necessity to be itself, spontaneous, and redemptive." *IDB* 3:169. Notably, Morris qualifies that God's "spontaneous and unmotivated" love "does not mean that he may not also respond to the love men show to his Son." Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 264. However, if taken seriously this would mean that divine love is not altogether "spontaneous" or "unmotivated" but evaluative and responsive. On the other hand, Post questions "the assumption that God's love is 'unmotivated, unconditional, uncaused, and uncalculating.'" *A Theory of Agape*, 24.

unilaterally constant; the object of God's love can do nothing to inhibit, decrease, or forfeit such love since it is wholly independent of evaluation of its object(s).[251] This conception dovetails with the assumptions that have already been challenged in this chapter, that divine love is purely volitional, non-evaluative, and unaffected by external agency.[252]

However, the foreconditional-reciprocal model contends that God's love is foreconditional rather than strictly unconditional. That is, God's love is offered prior to any conditions but not exclusive to conditions. Thus, God's foreconditional love affirms that:

1. Divine love is prior to any human initiative or response and holds sole primacy regarding the divine-human love relationship.[253]

2. God voluntarily bestows his love prior to and independent of human desert or merit.[254]

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[251] For example, Morris states, "God's love" is "constant" as well as "firm and sure and steadfast, continuing no matter what happens." *Testaments of Love*, 19, 100. As God, "he will never cease to love" for the "constancy of his love depends on what he is rather than on what they are." Ibid., 12, 77. Similarly, "Love," 382. C. F. H. Henry contends that God "maintains eternal fidelity in love. He is the steadfast God, not a vacillating sovereign. *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:13. Accordingly, it is frequently asserted that God's love is "permanent" and "cannot be withdrawn." Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 133. Cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 112–13, 115, 122; Simian-Yofre, *TDOT* 13:441; Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 133; E. Ray Clendenen, "Malachi," in *Haggai, Malachi* (NAC 21A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 253; Geoffrey Grogan, "A Biblical Theology of the Love of God," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. K. J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 56; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 536. Nothing a human can do will amount to the removal of God's love if God has elected that one. So Schreiner, *Romans*, 466; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 546–47.

[252] The purported unconditionality of love is conceptually bound up with the assertion that divine love is arbitrary, unilaterally willed, election love.

[253] Oord states in this regard, "Creatures could not love if our relational God were not the Lover who initially empowers, inspires, and beckons them." *The Nature*, 21. However, "God lovingly acts first in each moment to provide agency, freedom, values, and relationship." Ibid., 129. However, it should be noted that his view differs from the one stated in this section since his "Essential Kenosis theology claims Prevenient grace is necessary grace" stemming from "God's eternal nature" while the canonical evidence suggests that divine love is volitional, not necessary. See ibid., 129.

[254] Some might use the term "prevenient" in association with God's prior love and action. For example, T. C. Oden presents the typical Arminian view of prevenient grace, which refers to "the grace that begins to enable one to choose further to cooperate with saving grace. By offering the will the restored capacity to respond to grace, the person then may freely and increasingly become an active, willing participant in receiving the conditions for justification." *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 243. Cf. Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2006), 163–64.

3. God's love expects and ultimately requires an appropriate human response, even if that response is itself imperfect.

Though God's subjective love is unconditional, God's objective love is conditional and may be forfeited.[255] Thus, while God's love for humans is surpassingly enduring, steadfast, and reliable, it is not thereby altogether constant or unconditional. Accordingly, divine love toward humans is contingent rather than necessary and God is not ontologically bound to his creatures in contrast to the immanent-experientialist model. Further, as conditional upon human response in many respects, God's love is not strictly unmotivated, spontaneous, disinterested, indifferent, or unconditional. Accordingly, the conditionality of God's love, especially its potential forfeiture, rejects both the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models as well as many other perspectives including that of universalism[256] and others.[257] On the other hand, in accord

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[255] See the discussion of the subjectivity and objectivity of God's love earlier in this chapter.

[256] For the universalist position see Talbott, *The Inescapable Love*. For a vastly different universalist conception, one that requires human freedom, see Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*. On the other hand, "The fact that God allows us as persons to retain the ability to turn away from him, excludes any form of universalism which holds that God's love *must* triumph in the end and cause all to love him." Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 179. Cf. Fergusson, "Will the Love," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 196–202; Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1:438; T. F. Torrance, "Universalism or Election," 312–14; Fritz Guy, "The Universality of God's Love," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995), 43–45. For a compelling biblical argument against universalism, see I. Howard Marshall, "Does the New Testament Teach Universal Salvation," in *Christ in Our Place* (Allison Park, Penn: Pickwick, 1989).

[257] Here, the horns of the compatibilist dilemma are apparent. For example, Schreiner, who takes a determinist position, nevertheless states, "Those who trust in Christ remain in the faith because of the preserving work of God the Father. Nevertheless, the promise that God will keep his own does not nullify the responsibility of believers to persevere in the faith. God keeps his own, and yet believers must keep themselves in God's love. . . . On the one hand, believers only avoid apostasy because of the grace of God. On the other hand, the grace of God does not cancel out the need for believers to exert all their energy to remain in God's love." *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC 37; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 483–84. Yet, he contends that "those upon whom God set his covenantal love before creating the world are those he predestined to share the eschatological image of the Son" his "chosen . . . will surely persevere and attain to glorification." Idem, *Romans*, 466. However, if Schreiner is correct, why does God not effectively draw all to him? If God can determine human beings to freely do whatever he wills, why not will that all are actually saved? See Jerry L. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should *Ever* Be a Compatibilist," *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011): 75–104. See also the compelling arguments of Plantinga against compatibilism and in favor of significant freedom of creaturely agents. Cf. Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*; idem, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). Similarly, Morris, who stresses the groundlessness, unconditionality, and unilateral constancy of divine love makes the statement that "the Lord's beloved must live as the beloved of the Lord. If they do not, they cut

with the overwhelming canonical data, some scholars correctly acknowledge the conditionality of divine love.[258]

Furthermore, as conditional, divine love is not identical with unilateral, divine beneficence.[259] Divine love is not to be conflated with beneficence though the latter is an aspect and outgrowth of the former.[260] Divine blessings are predicated on love though not unilaterally since divine love is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of divine blessing.[261]

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themselves off from the blessing that God's love is always offering." *Testaments of Love*, 31. Cf. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:308. However, this statement of Morris undercuts his emphatic position elsewhere that divine love is unconditional.

On the other hand, in criticizing all those who suggest that God's love is voluntary rather than essential, Oord contends that God's love is "unconditional" such that "God loves us no matter what we do" since "unconditional love refers to God's eternal nature as necessarily including love for creatures. God essentially loves creation, because God's essential nature includes love for the world. If God's nature did not include love for creation, Christian appeals to God's unconditional love would be baseless." *The Nature*, 133. Cf. Paul R. Sponheim, *Love's Availing Power: Imaging God, Imagining the World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011). He further contends that such a view, that God cannot not love us, provides assurance that is "unavailable to those who think God could stop loving us." Oord, *The Nature*, 132. However, it is not true that God's love must be either essential or "unconditional" to provide such assurance. All that is required is the recognition that God never arbitrarily decides to remove his love from anyone, as is affirmed in this foreconditional-reciprocal model. Accordingly, one need not worry that God will remove his love since the only way divine love will be removed is as a consequence of one's final rejection of God. As such, divine love is conditional but not capricious.

[258] For example, Carson refers to "God's conditional, covenantal love." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648. Cf. Spicq, *Agape*, 31. Further, Carson acknowledges, "it is possible for Christians not to keep themselves in the love of God." *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 648. Cf. Jude 21. Likewise, Raymond E. Brown comments, "If one turns away from the Son, one forfeits God's love." *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 641. Cf. Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (vol. 6A; Dallas: Word, 1991), 160–61.

[259] This is contra the repeated assertion that divine love is mere beneficence, that is, it is altogether gratuitous, "disinterested generous love." For instance, consider Spicq's claim that divine ἀγάπη is identical to "charity" (think *caritas*) such that God's love is always giving love and amounts to "disinterested generous love." "αγαπη," *TLNT* 1:8, 13. This is in keeping with his view that ἀγάπη love takes place within a benefactor-benefactee relationship where the superior's ἀγάπη is gift love and the inferior's love is "first of all consent, welcome, acceptance" and "gratitude . . . the love inspired in turn by generous love." *TLNT* 1:13. Thus, he refers to it as "the voluntary, purely gratuitous love which is authentic charity." Idem, *Agape*, 1:85. Nygren and others who follow his view agree with the first part, that divine love is always gratuitous and disinterested, but contend that real human love toward God is impossible. Love from humans to God is really God's own love flowing through humans to himself. See the historical survey of divine love on this view.

[260] Love is sometimes almost conflated with grace to the extent that it is seen as election love. Thus, according to Morris, the אהב "words appear to signify love freely given, love given when there is no sense of obligation. When used to refer to God they imply his grace." *Testaments of Love*, 12. Cf. Grogan, "A Biblical Theology," in *Nothing Greater* (ed. Vanhoozer), 53. In fact C. F. H. Henry goes so far as to

Yet, though God's love is conditional in many respects, it is not thereby merited. Some, however, have incorrectly conflated conditionality with merit.[262] Yet, unmerited is not the same as unconditional or disinterested. [263] Something may be conditional yet unmerited; contingent upon response but not thereby earned, or deserved, when it is received.[264] Though divine love is

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say, "only where the love of God is discerned in terms of grace—in terms of a divinely provided redemption bestowed as unmerited divine favor—that the love of God is conceived aright; in every other religious or philosophical tradition, the divine love is misconstrued." *Notes on the Doctrine of God*, 108. Cf. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine*, 185; Donald G. Bloesch, *God, the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 148.

[261] Brueggemann comments, "Christianity has for so long represented itself as a religion of free grace, that we flinch from the thought that God's gifts are conditional. Mosaic faith, however, is realistically grounded in a comprehensive 'if' (v. 22; cf. 19:5)." "The Book of Exodus," in *Genesis to Leviticus,* 1:878. Merrill on the other hand presupposes a compatibilistic perspective and contends for "the absence of any conditionality" with regard to Israel's repentance claiming that God will himself effect their repentance. See *Deuteronomy*, 128. But this begs the question, if God unilaterally effects repentance in his people, why does he not do so from the very beginning? The canon contends God is actually waiting on the people, and through trials wooing them back to the realization of their need for him (cf. Isa 30:15, 18; Matt 23:37).

[262] For example, Snaith comments, "Jehovah's love for Israel was unconditioned by anything in Israel that was good. It was wholly unmerited. It was not in the least degree because of anything in Israel that was good, or beautiful, or desirable. . . . Such is the story of God's unconditioned love." *The Distinctive Ideas*, 137. Cf. Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 148; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 100.

[263] Accordingly, the term ἀγάπη is "often used by biblical writers to mean something other than unmotivated or spontaneous love." Oord, "Matching Theology," 139. See the word study of the ἀγαπάω word group in the NT chapter.

[264] For example, someone who wins a sweepstakes who must fulfill certain minor conditions to actually receive the prize did not thereby earn the prize. The lottery winner must show the ticket but they did not thereby earn the money, though they have a rightful claim to it. Similarly, the elect are those who have accepted God's invitation, responded to his prevenient love with corresponding love (itself only possible through divine initiative and Christ's mediation) and therefore have a rightful claim to eternal life, not one that is merited or deserved but one that is ultimately predicated on the free grace and love of God.

Thus, it is apparent throughout Hosea that God's love for his people is unmerited and surpassingly enduring. Yet, it is also evident that divine love is by no means indifferent (he is grieved and deeply concerned for his beloved) nor unconditional as he clearly expects, and ultimately requires appropriate response (cf. Hos 9:15). What some interpreters deem "unconditional" may thus more accurately be referred to as "unmerited" or "undeserved" (Deut 7:7; 9:4–5). Since divine love is a gift, creatures have no claim upon it. Indeed, humans need not even exist but for the will of God to create and sustain them. In this way, divine love is never deserved or merited (though it may be warranted). God loves undeserving humans not because humans are worthy but because of his own volition, mercy, and grace (see Deut 7:7–8; Hos 3:1; Luke 6:35; Rom 5:8; Titus 3:4–5; 1 John 3:16; cf. Deut 9:4–5). However, as has been seen, divine love *qua* divine love is not necessarily love for the unworthy. Moreover, in the *eschaton*, human beings who have responded to God's love will become (by divine action) perfectly loveable. At that time, they will "warrant" divine love. That is, they will be proper objects of love as loveable. However, even then humans still will not merit or deserve, but simply warrant, God's love.

unmerited, however, this does not rule out the fact that God can and does reward appropriate (albeit imperfect) human response toward him.[265] Evaluation does not rule out divine grace or vice versa; God is gracious and, at the same time, not arbitrary. As such, the notion of unmerited love does not mean that love ultimately nullifies conditions, evaluative judgment, just deserts, or reciprocity.

In all this, divine love cannot be altogether unmotivated, ungrounded, spontaneous, disinterested, or unconditional. God's love is initiatory, prior to any human action, love, merit, or worthwhile at the same time God implements conditions for the reception and continuance of that love. Such love is foreconditional, yet unmerited. Further, this foreconditional aspect of God's love supports and is bound up with the aspects already discussed and points forward to the multilaterally relational aspect of love. The bilateral and volitional aspect of divine love is a necessary supposition of conditionality while the evaluative aspect by its very nature assumes that divine love is (at least in some ways) contingent and conditional upon actual states of affairs. In all this, God's love must be responsive and thus assumes divine passibility. Since divine love is actually evaluative, passible, and conditional, corresponding to and being affected by its object(s) it must not be unilaterally constant but contingent upon its object(s). With this in mind we now turn to the final aspect of divine love, multilateral relationality.

The Multilaterally Relational Aspect of God's Love

In this last rubric we return even more explicitly to the primary query: Is the God-world relationship unilateral or does it include some degree of reciprocality? In the immanent-experientialist model, love describes the essential relation between God and the world. All are

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[265] Bock sees divine reward as "God's acknowledgment that he has seen this meritorious love and the faithfulness it reflects," though he does not mean that it merits salvation. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994), 603. I am more comfortable in ascribing language of "warrant" rather than "merit" to such instances since even such reward is gracious since God is under no obligation, moral or otherwise, to reward human beings who, overall, have fallen far short of the divine ideal. As such, no one deserves this "reward." Even if human action were somehow "meritorious" it would

internally related to God and are part of God's very nature. Therefore, divine love is universal; there is no object outside of God's love. In fact, the divine-human love relationship is one part of the necessarily reciprocal relationality that makes up reality itself.[266] In this way, since God is essentially related to all, divine love is universal and applicable to all in an undifferentiated manner within a sympathetic, indeterministic relationship. As such, the immanent-experientialist model indiscriminately universalizes divine love.[267] The foreconditional-reciprocal model, however, contends that while it is universal in some ways, God's love is multilaterally relational in a way that does differentiate between its objects. That is, God universally seeks, but does not need, a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into particular, intimate relationship only with those who respond appropriately.[268] God's love, then, does not reach all of its objects equally but is evaluatively and conditionally responsive to the actual dispositions and/or actions of human beings.[269] The foreconditional-reciprocal model, then, stands in direct contrast with the

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be outweighed by the titanic amount of human demerit(s). Cf. Luke 17:10.

[266] Indeed, the whole being of God, the entire divine ontology, is summed up in the term "love," which "defined as social awareness, taken literally, is God." Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, 36.

[267] Hartshorne is adamant that God's love is universal and rejects the exclusive nature of divine love professed in classic theism. "God is held to love all, not just a few; always; not just at times; in all their being, not with neglect of this or that aspect; and his influence in the universal society will be paramount and the basis of its integrity." *Reality as Social Process*, 135. However, Hartshorne's universal love appears to be to the detriment of love for the individual, not in the sense that love for each individual is excluded but such that the number of the objects of divine love means that a given object of divine love is not of much importance. Hartshorne writes, "Consider now the idea that a loving God would not establish natural laws that make eventually dying a certainty for animals such as we are. God loves us, this I believe. But as what does God love us? I answer, God loves us as what we are, a certain very distinctive species of mortal animal, finite spatially and in careers. We are each divinely loved as rendered individual and definite by this finitude." *Omnipotence*, 36. Cf. idem, *Man's Vision*, 192–93. In this way, the immanent-experientialist model indiscriminately universalizes the divine love in direct contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model, which limits divine love to those whom God sovereignly elects to bestow favor upon.

[268] Despite the magnitude of his desire for loving relationship, God has no need of a human response toward his love. Intra-trinitarian love pre-exists, and would remain without divine-human love (cf. John 17:24). That God is love "is true quite independently of our being there to be loved. God is eternally love prior to, and independently of, his love for us." Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 135.

[269] The concept of insider and outsider love, divine-friendship, familial imagery, and the status as "elect" and "beloved" and to a certain extent "called" demonstrates unequivocally the fact that God's love

undifferentiated universal love of the immanent-experientialist model by distinguishing between God's universally relational and particularly relational love, neither of which is constant and/or unconditional.

The foreconditional-reciprocal model not only contrasts with the immanent-experientialist model but also stands in contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model's conception of God's love unto salvation as arbitrarily and unilaterally restricted to some. In the transcendent-voluntarist model, God's love is universal only in the sense of "common love" but love unto salvation is reserved for those who are unilaterally elected by God; the rest are damned.[270] While this correctly recognizes that God does not love all equally, in contrast to the immanent-experientialist model's undifferentiated divine love, it incorrectly contends that God does not love all equally as the result of only his timeless and unilateral divine decree such that those whom God loves fully are chosen arbitrarily.[271] As such, love unto salvation is granted only

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does not reach all objects equally. Thus, God clearly loves all with a kind of "common" or "universal" love. T. C. Oden thus correctly states, "All things are loved by God, but all things are not loved in the same way by God, since there are degrees of capacity, receptivity, and willingness among varied creatures to receive God's love." *The Living God*, 118. Likewise, Mounce adds, "God loves the entire human race (John 3:16), but those who respond to him in faith are loved in a special way." *Romans*, 64. So, Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 630. Cf. Oord, *The Nature*, 121.

[270] For example, Packer believes that particular love reaches those whom God has sovereignly elected to love while universal love corresponds to God's common grace. "The Love of God," in *Still Sovereign* (ed. Schreiner and Ware), 283. Thus God "loves all in some ways" and he loves "some in all ways." Ibid. Similarly, see C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:310, 345; Piper, "How Does a Sovereign," 10. Cf. the debate between Hunt and White on this issue in Dave Hunt and James R. White, *Debating Calvinism* (Sisters, Oreg.: Multnomah Publishers, 2004), 255–80. In this vein, Morris can adopt double predestination and at the same time state without contradiction: "God being the God that he is, his love is for all he has made." *Testaments of Love*, 80. Compare Calvin's view that "God loves men in a secret way, before they are called, if they are among the elect." John Calvin, *John* (Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software, 1998), 16:27.

[271] Determinists generally contend that God is just in doing so since all are sinners and rightly deserve punishment. That God is gracious to some who are undeserving should be praised rather than questioned. However, Davis objects by way of a striking analogy: "Suppose I discover that my two sons are both equally guilty of some wrong—say they both trampled some of my wife's beloved roses in our backyard. And suppose I say to one of them: 'You are guilty and your punishment is that you will be confined to your room.' And suppose I say to the other one: 'You are equally guilty, but as a gift of love, I'm going to let you go without punishment.' Surely it is obvious on the face of it that I have been unfair." Stephen T. Davis, "Universalism, Hell, and the Fate of the Ignorant," *Modern Theology* 6 (1990): 190. Cf.

to those whom God unilaterally and irresistibly elects and all others are damned and could not be otherwise.[272]

The foreconditional-reciprocal model, on the contrary, contends that God seeks, enters into, and maintains reciprocally responsive love relationships with human beings.[273] In doing so, God's universally relational love, which is bestowed on everyone foreconditionally, prompts God's actions toward drawing humans into a voluntary and reciprocal relationship of love (God's particularly relational love).[274] Thus, God truly loves everyone and in such a way that he works toward saving all and enjoying an everlasting, reciprocal love relationship with each one of them.[275] The reason why not all enjoy such a relationship is not due to any decision or lack of action on God's part but the result of the human's decision to reject God's loving overtures.[276]

Fergusson, "Will the Love," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better*, 190.

[272] There is nothing the reprobate could have decided or done that could have led to their inclusion as objects of God's salvific love. J. L. Walls objects, "A being who determines (manipulates) another being to perform evil actions is himself evil. It is even more perverse if a being determines a being to perform evil actions and then holds him accountable, and punishes him for those actions." "Why No Classical Theist," 88. This echoes Flew's contention: "Certainly it would be monstrous to suggest that anyone, however truly responsible in the eyes of men, could fairly be called to account and punished by the God who had rigged his every move." Antony Flew, "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom," in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (ed. A. Flew and A. C. MacIntyre; New York: Macmillan, 1964), 163.

[273] Numerous scholars also recognize that God desires and seeks reciprocal love from his creatures. As Moffat puts it, "Love seeks love." *Love*, 280. Accordingly, "divine love" makes a "claim for reciprocal love." *Love*, 278. Cf. Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 10, 27; Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 236; T. C. Oden, *The Living God*, 119; Badcock, "The Concept of Love," in *Nothing Greater* (ed. Vanhoozer), 45–46. For J. A. T. Robinson, "Agape desires response, and desires it passionately. . . . Love yearns for a loving response." "Agape and Eros," 99. "God's love seeks communion, because otherwise the feelings of sadness and frustration explicit in Christ's crying out over Jerusalem, 'My heart is ready to break with grief' (Matthew 26:38) would be incomprehensible." Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 27. Carson comments that "the love for which we were created" is "a mutual love that issues in obedience without reserve." *The Gospel according to John*, 521.

[274] On the other hand, one is left to wonder why God "loves" the reprobate with a "common love" in the deterministic conception. As J. L. Walls puts it, "temporal blessings cannot begin to underwrite a sober claim of divine love for persons who are determined to damnation by God's unconditional choice." "Why No Classical Theist," 98. He adds that to say that God loves the arbitrarily non-elect is to use "the concept of love in a deeply idiosyncratic sense." Ibid.

[275] The universality of God's love is recognized by many scholars, though the particular understanding of such love varies. For Dunning, divine love as a "manifestation" of the divine nature "is universal rather than selective," God loves "all without discrimination. None is excluded." *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 196–97. Cf. J. L. Walls and Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*., 50–55; Oord, *The Nature*,

This difference bears out further with regard to the question of whether humans actually reciprocate God's love. While in the foreconditional-reciprocal model the divine-human love relationship is contingent upon the voluntary human reciprocation of God's love, the transcendent-voluntarist model sees divine love as unilateral such that God gives, but does not actually receive, love.[277] In that view, human "love" toward God is nothing more than God's own love flowing back to him as the result of divine determinism. This complements the suggestion of Luther that human love toward God is actually divine love that flows through the human "like a vessel or tube through which the stream of the divine blessings must flow without intermission to other people."[278] As such, human love toward God is solely the result of God's unilaterally

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20; Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, 175; T. C. Oden, *The Living God*; Klassen, *Love in the NT*, 386; Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*; Guy, "The Universality," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock). As seen above, determinists also recognize a universality to God's love, often referred to as "common love," which is not effective unto salvation. For Geisler, God is "omnibenevolent." *Systematic Theology*, 367. Cf. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine*, 22. Among these, Clendenen recognizes that "Acts 14:17; 1 Tim 2:4; and 2 Pet 3:9 teach that there is a sense in which the love of God is universal" but contrasts that with God's "love for his elect," which results from divine determinism. In his view, "divine love" that "respects human freedom, even to the extent of allowing humanity to be utterly irrational and perverse—that is, to reject the love that has created, sustained, and redeemed it" (p. 45) is a love without arms and legs, that is, not divine at all." Clendenen, "Malachi," 252. On the contrary, Guy states, "It is unthinkable that the divine love is restricted to a fortunate part of creation and that another (perhaps even larger) part is excluded. In regard to human reality, the divine love includes absolutely all, intending the ultimate good—that is, the eternal salvation—of every person." "The Universality," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock), 36. On the other hand, for an interesting discussion of whether it is even conceivable that God extend benevolence to all equally see Paul Helm, "Can God Love the World?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (ed. K. J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001).

[276] J. L. Walls puts it well in stating, "Libertarians can affirm the love of God for all persons without being disingenuous, even if some persons are damned. For God extends his love to such persons in such a way that they are truly enabled to respond. Indeed, it is my view that God gives all persons 'optimal grace,' which means they have every opportunity to accept the gospel and be saved. Despite this, some may resist grace decisively and be lost." "Why No Classical Theist," 98. See also the fascinating essay by Floyd wherein he tries to make sense of Aquinas's claim that God loves some more than others. He comes to the conclusion that "while God's love is intensely felt for all, not everyone will reciprocate it and, as a result, preclude themselves from enjoying the goods that would otherwise be available to them. . . . Even amongst people I love, I cannot maintain fellowship with them if they are unwilling to return my affection or behave in ways that promote a common life." "Preferential Divine Love," 371.

[277] In this view, love is superfluous to God. It is not only not needed but neither is it desired or valued. See C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6:62.

[278] Martin Luther, *WA* 10.1.1, quoted in Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 735. Marshall slips toward this when he suggests that humans who have received divine love "have no choice as to their response" and "cannot do anything else but show love to one another." *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.:

efficacious will.[279] Accordingly, all true love originates unilaterally with God such that love toward God is, in actuality, God's love for himself effected irresistibly through others. Therefore, human responsive love cannot be a condition with an uncertain outcome. Such a conception fits with the erroneous suppositions already discussed in this chapter including the view that divine love is unilaterally efficacious, unconditional, spontaneous, grounded, etc.

Accordingly, it is often supposed that humans cannot actually reciprocate God's love. This may take the form of denying that human love can truly be so-called *agape* love. In other words, it is supposed, humans are incapable of "true" love.[280] More basically, a deterministic metaphysics rules out reciprocal love toward God not by denying the reality of love toward God itself but by defining such love as merely the result of the unilateral, divine decree. The foreconditional-reciprocal model, however, recognizes that human love toward God is not depicted in Scripture as passive but as the appropriate response that God's prior action elicits and enables, but does not determine.[281] Indeed, Scripture consistently presents humans as voluntarily

Eerdmans, 1978), 215. Cf. Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 182. For more examples of this perspective see the introduction of this issue in the general introduction to ἀγάπη in the NT chapter.

[279] Thus, Nygren contends that a human loves God "because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him, so that he cannot do other than love God. Therein profound significance of the idea of predestination: man has not selected God, but God has elected man." *Agape and Eros*, 214. So, also, Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 191. Augustine posits human love as the unilateral work of God himself such that "He Himself loved that which He had made." *Lectures on St. John* 7.102.5 (*NPNF*[1] 7; Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software), 391. Similarly, Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996); John 16:23–27. Cf. Els, *NIDOTTE* 1: 283; Cranfield, "Love," *A Theological Word Book* (ed. A. Richardson), 133; K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 1/2: 410.

[280] Although it is clear that human אהב toward God is present, especially in the Psalms, a number of scholars have marginalized human love toward God by sometimes suggesting that all or nearly all of the instances are merely the result of the influence of the so-called Deuteronomic tradition. Cf. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 133; Els, *NIDOTTE* 1:279, 283–84. Dovetailing with this is the all-too-common rejection of human חסד toward God, which does not hold up to scrutiny. Both of these appear to stem, at least for some scholars, from the theological supposition that humans cannot benefit God. See, for example, Hans-Jürgen Zobel, "חסד," *TDOT* (ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringren; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 63. See chapter 4, pages 354–75, for a further discussion of these issues. Even Hartshorne, from a vastly different ontology, suggests that humans "do not 'love' literally, but with qualifications, and metaphorically." *The Divine Relativity*, 36.

[281] Johnston thus states correctly that if Nygren is right that human love is merely "through the invasion of the Holy Spirit, God's free, dynamic love flows from the believer toward the neighbor. It is not

reciprocating God's love.[282] Hence, God is not the only agent of true or proper love, and it is

manifestly false that human beings cannot reciprocate divine love.[283] A number of theologians

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really the believer's at all! This is to evacuate Christian love of any value, and it is to be rejected for the same reasons that one must reject the notion that faith is a moment of passivity." *IDB* 3:173.

[282] See, for instance, Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; cf. Eph 6:24; Jas 1:12; 2:5. These passages are each discussed in chapter 5.

[283] Indeed, contra Nygren and others, "*agape* can ascend from man to God." Spicq, *Agape*, 105. So Warnach, *EDNT* 2:529. Nevertheless, the determinist contends that love for God is the efficacious consequence of God's unilateral election. For the idea that God is solely responsible for his elect's love toward him see Schreiner, *Romans*, 450–51; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 530; cf. ibid., 531; Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (WUNT 37; Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1990), 59–60. Cf. Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Römer 8 als Beispiel paulinischer Soteriologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 280. Contra Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975), 350. However, the canonical evidence suggests otherwise. First, the frequent exhortations of humans to love strongly suggest that humans are free to do otherwise. Second, the reward(s) attached to love for God strongly implies the real contingency and freedom of human love toward God. Third, the canonical evidence does not accord with a thorough-going determinism. On the contrary, a determinist metaphysic has been consistently excluded by what has been seen with regard to divine love not only in this section but also throughout this and the previous two chapters. In all this, human love toward God as described in Scripture cannot be merely the result of God's will. Indeed, the many exhortations of humans to love God alone, if taken seriously, assume that humans are free to respond to or reject God's love and that such responses are not unilaterally determined by God. See the section on the volitional nature of divine love earlier in this chapter as well as the two canonical chapters for arguments and evidence in this regard.

Further, as seen earlier in this chapter, Scripture does not present human love toward God as an inferior kind of love over and against divine love but as the love that corresponds to, and reciprocates, God's love. Indeed, the canon depicts strong correspondence between divine and human love (see the earlier discussion of the multilaterally relational aspect of divine love). The canonical evidence, then, in no way supports an absolute dichotomy between human and divine love. Thus, Phipps correctly comments that "the Greek Bible does not support the common assumption that *agape* should be defined in a way that stands in contrast to ordinary human love." "The Sensuousness of Agape," 371. Likewise, Carson adds a very important qualifier saying that "doubtless God's love is immeasurably richer than ours, in ways still to be explored, but they belong to the same genus, or the parallelisms could not be drawn." *The Difficult Doctrine*, 48. To be sure, a difference in quality is implied simply by nature of the subjects of such love but the difference is not with regard to the terminology or description of the love itself. That is, God's love is perfect just as he is perfect while human love is imperfect as humans are imperfect. However, this is no way removes the reality of human love. As seen earlier, while it is true that fallen, human beings are incapable of bringing any value to God by themselves, such as truly loving him, God's prior, loving action enables a love response that grows progressively greater as one draws closer in intimate relationship with God. In the meantime, divine mediation makes up for the deficiency of human love but accepts human intentionality as pleasing through Christ. Mediation is thus a necessary condition of the divine-human love relationship. All humans who enter into this relationship do so through Christ (John 14:6). Accordingly, human love toward God is not meritorious but is contingent and conditional upon appropriate human response to God's prevenient grace and foreconditional love (cf. Jer 31:3; John 12:32; 1 Tim 2:4–6; Titus 2:11; 1 John 4:19). In this way, through God's prior action and mediation, humans can and do truly reciprocate divine love. The burden of proof, then, is on those who say human love is an inferior kind of love that is not fit to be called Christian love at all.

In all this, to say that humans can love does not therefore imply that they can do so without Christ, or in their own power. The mechanism of human love toward God is beyond the scope of this study. For

likewise recognize that free, responsive, human love toward God is necessary to the maintenance of the divine-human love relationship.[284] Thus, while it is undoubtedly true that God's love is the prior and necessary condition of human love in return, it is not itself the sufficient condition of human love toward God. Humans must choose to respond (cf. Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). Those who do not love God remain "outsiders," not privy to the intimate, particular divine-human love relationship that God intends for them (John 3:19; 8:42).

In all this, God desires a reciprocal love relationship of give-and-take with his creatures. He initiates the possibility of such a relationship through his universal offer of foreconditional love, which enables and calls for a reciprocal response of love. With those who respond to this loving overture, God enters into particular and intimate love relationship, which amounts to a multilateral divine-human love relationship from God to humans and vice versa and humans to one another, themselves modeled after the intra-trinitarian love relationship. This multilaterally relational aspect of divine love assumes each of the four aspects that have been discussed previously.[285]

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our purposes, it is sufficient to recognize that God's prevenient action and mediation are necessary but not sufficient for human love toward God. "Human love of God is, then, the result of his initiative, his prevenient call to such love." Further, "Behind the love that justified human beings have for God is God's loving call and prior choice of them, which far surpasses human love in significance." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 524.

[284] T. C. Oden thus comments, "God's love for humanity, like all love, is reciprocal. God prizes the world, and values especially human creatures, who have the freedom and imagination to respond to God and to share with God consciousness and compassion." *The Living God*, 121. Though he points out that love might not be reciprocated. Ibid., 120. Likewise, Brümmer contends that "love must by its very nature be a relationship of free mutual give-and-take, otherwise it cannot be love at all." *The Model of Love*, 161. In his view, love always "entails a desire for reciprocation" though it may be "unrequited." Ibid., 155. Post also critiques such a view stating that one-directional love is "essentially negative in that it undermines the circular flow of giving and receiving in which *agape* is sustained and supported." *A Theory of Agape*, 12. Cf. Moffat, *Love*, 278; Oord, *The Nature*, 21–22; idem, "Matching Theology," 313; Pinnock, "Constrained by Love," 149; Moltmann, *The Trinity*, 203; J. A. T. Robinson, "Agape and Eros," 99; Liz Carmichael, *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 4; John Burnaby, *Amor Dei, a Study of the Religion of St. Augustine: The Hulsean Lectures for 1938* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960), 307.

[285] As T. C. Oden puts it, "God loves all creatures in the twofold sense that God unapologetically enjoys them for their own sake and desires their answering, enjoying love in response to eternally patient, self-sacrificial love." *The Living God*, 121.

Conclusion

This foreconditional-reciprocal model agrees with the transcendent-voluntarist model that divine love includes a crucial volitional element such that God voluntarily bestows his love on creatures and, in contrast to the immanent-experientialist model, God is not engaged in a relationship with creatures that is essential to his being. On the other hand, the foreconditional-reciprocal model agrees with the immanent-experientialist model, in contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model, that divine love in relation to the world assumes divine experience of the world that profoundly affects God (passibility) as God enjoys a reciprocal love relationship with creatures.

However, whereas divine volition excludes passibility in the transcendent-voluntarist model and divine sympathetic passibility excludes divine volition from love in the immanent-experientialist model, the foreconditional-reciprocal model posits that the volitional and emotional aspects of God's love complement, rather than exclude, one another. God desires and voluntarily works toward a reciprocal relationship with all humans. This is in contrast to both the transcendent voluntarist model, wherein God irresistibly elects only some humans as the recipients of his salvific love, and the immanent experientialist model, where God's love relationship to the world is indiscriminately universal and necessary to his being. God's love is also affected by the choices and experiences of human beings, in keeping with the immanent-experientialist model but in contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model. However, in contrast to both models, God's experience of the world is evaluative such that God delights in those who respond positively to his love while those who reject God's love finally forfeit their relationship with God.

In this way, the evaluative aspect of divine love complements and bridges the volitional and emotional aspects of divine love while pointing toward a further aspect that is overlooked by both models, the foreconditionality of divine love. Whereas both models assume that divine love is unconditional, the transcendent-voluntarist model due to the priority of the divine will and the

immanent-experientialist model due to the necessary and essential relationship between God and the world, the foreconditional-reciprocal model recognizes that God bestows love prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. Those who respond positively to God's love enjoy an everlasting reciprocal love relationship with him, grounded in bilateral significant freedom, within the multilateral circle of divine love.

Potential Implications for a Canonical Theo-Ontology

The issues addressed by this canonically derived foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love are themselves bound up with answers to ontological issues relating to: (1) the sovereignty of divine will, especially as it relates to the issue of determinism or indeterminism, (2) the extent of the use of divine power (coercion/persuasion/other), (3) the acceptance, rejection, or qualification of immutability and impassibility, and (4) the nature of divine perfection and/or self-sufficiency (that is, dependence, independence, or other).[286]

As has been seen, the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models take widely different views of these issues and, accordingly, come to widely divergent and mutually exclusive views of divine love. The canonical investigation of divine love pursued in this dissertation has come to conclusions regarding the nature of divine love that differ from both models in many crucial respects. Such conclusions also point toward significant tension and/or contradiction with the underlying ontologies supposed by the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models. This section will introduce some tentative facets of a canonical ontology that are suggested by the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love, which is itself based on canonical data presented in the previous two chapters.

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[286] The positions regarding these ontological issues further limit the available options regarding whether God is affected by the world (and if so, whether according to his eternal decree, his ontological sympathetic dependency, or free relationship with others) and whether he cares *about* it or only cares *for* it, all of which establish whether God can enter into a mutually beneficial (though unequal) relationship.

It must be emphasized that these facets are tentative for at least four reasons. First, the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love presented in this work is itself tentative and open to revision based on further canonical investigation. Second, it could be misleading to attempt to derive a divine ontology from one divine characteristic, even one as major as divine love. Third, addressing the full scope of divine ontology is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. Fourth, other outlines of divine ontology may also be able to harmonize with this model of divine love and should continue to be sought. These ontological suggestions are thus to some extent speculative, relying on extrapolations from the canonical data regarding divine love. Therefore, this brief outline of ontological issues relative to this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love in no way attempts to provide a comprehensive or dogmatic answer to the issues of divine ontology. However, it is supposed that insofar as this model of divine love actually accords with the canonical data, a canonical ontology of God must account for the volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and reciprocal facets of divine love.

Significant Freedom of God and Creatures

First, with regard to the sovereignty of the divine will especially as it relates to the issue of determinism or indeterminism: This foreconditional-reciprocal model of love suggests the ontological independence and significant freedom of God as well as the significant, albeit limited, freedom of human beings.[287] In other words, this model of love suggests that God does not unilaterally determine the course of events but that agents, like God himself, possess significant freedom. As explained earlier in this chapter, by significant freedom I mean that agents have freedom to do otherwise than they do. This is assumed for God in that he is continually spoken of in language that suggests his freedom as it relates to love (among other things). Likewise, humans are depicted not only as rejecting God's will but also as having the capacity (through prevenient

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[287] See Guy, "The Universality," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock), 33.

divine action) to accept or reject God's love and to love him in return or reject his loving overtures.

With regard to the specific facets of divine love: The volitional nature of divine love emphasizes the freedom of God. He is not bound to love creatures but willingly created creatures as objects of his love. Further, he is consistently depicted as having the ability to do otherwise than what he does. The evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and reciprocal aspects of love also each point toward creaturely freedom. The evaluative and emotional aspects of love suggest that agents may act in ways that actually impact God, suggesting that he himself is not the only true agent.[288] The foreconditional and reciprocal aspects each assume that humans can (due to God's prevenient action) respond or refuse to respond to God's loving overtures. The ability of humans to reject and/or forfeit divine love requires that the divine will is not unilaterally efficacious but that significantly free beings actually affect the course of history in ways that are not in accordance with God's desires. That is, insofar as God's love is conditional and contingent upon human response, human response must itself be contingent. Likewise, the notion of mutual, reciprocal, loving relationship also implies the reality of the limited freedom of human agency. God's love may be unrequited and, accordingly, humans can choose to sever their relationship with God.

This significant freedom of creatures is further apparent in that God's ideal will is not always done. God's ideal will refers to that which God ideally desires to take place; in other words, that which would take place if all agents acted in perfect accordance with God's desires. This is to be distinguished from God's effective will, which refers to God's will that has already taken into account all factors including the wills of significantly free creatures.[289] As such, it

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[288] This will be discussed further under the question of divine immutability and impassibility.

[289] In other words, it is that which God wills in accordance with the wider matrix of creaturely freedom. This distinction is similar to the Arminian distinction between antecedent and consequent wills. I have elected not to use these terms in order to avoid any unintended connotations of ontology, especially

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includes not only the active divine will but also what might be called his permissive will, that which he allows. In this way, God's effective will is evaluative.

The distinction between God's ideal and effective will might be clarified by way of an example. God did not desire that Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit. However, while God's ideal desire was that Adam and Eve not disobey him and eat the forbidden fruit, God also desired the kind of reciprocal divine-human love relationship that is predicated on the significant freedom of both parties. God could not unilaterally effect both desires and therefore permitted Adam and Eve to depart from his ideal will in favor of allowing significant freedom.

To take one other example, God did not sadistically delight in, or ideally desire, the crucifixion of his Son (cf. Lam 3:32–33). Rather, it was his "pleasure" in the wider context of the plan of salvation. That is, because of his love for his creatures and because the death of his Son was the means of their redemption, God was "pleased to crush Him" (cf. Isa 53:10). Ideally, however, there would have never been sin and thus no occasion for such suffering and sacrifice.[290] As such, when God is said to pleasure in things that are otherwise distasteful, it is likely that God's pleasure is in the wider result rather than the things themselves (cf. Isa 53:10; Matt 11:25–26; Luke 10:21).[291] In this manner, such passages do not contradict the clear meaning of passages that state that God has no pleasure in the death of anyone (cf. Ezek. 18:23, 32;

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with regard to the operation of the divine will as it relates to providence (specifically the theoretical order of the divine decrees). For a discussion of Arminius's view of the antecedent and consequent wills of God and their implications for divine sovereignty see R. E. Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 123. Cf. Guy, "The Universality," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock), 35. Consider also Plantinga's distinction between weak and strong actualization in favor of the significant freedom of creatures *and* divine omnipotence and omnibenevolence. Cf. Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, 172–73.

[290] As Post states, divine love "takes on the form of self-sacrifice out of necessity rather than preference due to the tolerance of human freedom." *A Theory of Agape*, 33.

[291] Importantly, this view does not require meticulous providence. God's permissive will may function in accordance with wide principles of the extent of freedom afforded to creaturely agents. However, it is well beyond the scope of this work to delve more deeply into this issue of divine providence. Consider, for a brief overview of these issues of divine providence, Canale, "Doctrine of God," in *Handbook* (ed. Dederen), 118–20. Cf. Randall G. Basinger, "Exhaustive Divine Sovereignty: A Practical Critique," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis,

33:11).[292] The contrast between God's ideal and effective wills is not the result of divine volition but the result of a sinful, disordered world, which is itself the result of creaturely rebellion against God's ideal will. In the eschaton, God's ideal will shall perfectly correspond to God's effective will as shall all the other wills of significantly free creatures whose wills are freely put in subjection to, and thus harmony with, God's perfect, omniscient, and omnibenevolent will.

This brings us to perhaps the most crucial point regarding the validity of divine determinism. Specifically, that God's ideal will is not always fulfilled is apparent in that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (cf. Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11) and desires that none would perish (2 Pet 3:9; cf. 1 Tim 2:4–6). However, not all will be saved since God eventually gives people over to their desires (cf. John 3:18; Rom 1:24, 26, 28; 2:4–12; 1 John 2:17).[293] Some determinists deal with the issue of such passages by contending that "God genuinely desires in one sense that all will be saved" but at the same time claiming that "he has not ultimately decreed that all will be saved."[294] This is the distinction between God's "desired will" and "decretive will" respectively.[295] In this view, God in some sense desires that all be saved but nevertheless decrees

Minn.: Bethany House, 1995).

[292] In this way, strong statements of divine sovereignty may be reconciled with statements that assert that God's will is unfulfilled. For example, God does "whatever he pleases" does not mean that everything that happens pleases God or is unilaterally determined by the divine will (Pss 115:3; 135:6; cf. Job 23:13). Rather, what occurs is what God allows and/or wills in the greater interest of the kind of real, relational love that requires creaturely freedom.

[293] Here it should be noted that the claim of universalism, whether of the deterministic variety or otherwise, is excluded by this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love due to the recognition of the conditionality, and potential forfeiture, of divine love. See the discussion of this earlier in this chapter and in the two canonical chapters. Further, there is abundant canonical data that are not specifically related to divine love that also rule out the idea that everyone will finally be saved. See Marshall, "Does the New Testament."

[294] Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 381–82. For other ways in which other determinists avoid the conclusion that God's will is not carried out with regard to these texts see brief discussion in the NT chapter.

[295] Ibid. This is akin to Martin Luther's view of God's "hidden" will, which created a dilemma he could not resolve: "If I could by any means understand how this same God, who makes such a show of wrath and unrighteousness, can yet be merciful and just, there would be no need for faith." *The Bondage of the Will* (trans. O. R. Johnston; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 204. For a further defense of this

solely on the basis of his unilaterally efficacious will that some will be damned. However, this raises an insoluble difficulty. If God's will is unilaterally efficacious and God wants to save everyone, why does He not do so?[296]

The distinction between God's ideal and effective will of this foreconditional-reciprocal model, on the other hand, requires no position that God's revealed will is different from his "hidden" will while also recognizing that the divine will is neither simple nor monolithic. In this way, the canonical analysis presented in the previous two chapters comes to the conclusion shared by many scholars that the "fact that all are not saved can be attributed to the stubbornness of the human will rather than to the weakness of the divine intent."[297] God, in accordance with his universal love, wanted to save those who are lost but they were not willing (Isa 66:4; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34). It appears that God does not override their wills though he is ontologically capable of doing so because to do so would undercut another element of his ideal will, that there exists a divine-human love relationship, which itself requires the responsive, rather than determined, love

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view of double predestination see Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, eds., *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 2000). See especially John Piper, "Are There Two Wills in God?" in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace* (ed. T. R. Schreiner and B. A. Ware; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 2000). Cf. Harold H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950). However, in my view, this is a dogmatic assumption that goes against the preponderance of canonical evidence but does so because it is beholden to a prior commitment to the idea that salvation must be the result of unconditional election. See John C. Peckham, "An Investigation of Luther's View of the Bondage of the Will with Implications for Soteriology and Theodicy," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 18 (2007): 274–304.

[296] "To put the point most bluntly, if compatibilism is true, it is all but impossible, in the actual world, to maintain the perfect goodness of God, and altogether impossible to do so if orthodox Christianity is true." J. L. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist," 80. In his view, "if freedom and determinism are compatible, God could have created a world in which all persons freely did only the good at all times." Ibid., 82. Moreover, J. L. Walls argues persuasively that since the compatibilist view presumes that God can effect his will unilaterally then God could determine "all to freely accept his love and be saved." Ibid., 96.

[297] Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (NAC 34; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 89. So J. L. Walls and Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*; idem, "Why No Classical Theist," 98; Guy, "The Universality," in *The Grace of God* (ed. Pinnock).

of significantly free creaturely agents.[298] God thus allows wills other than his own so that in the future his ideal will shall obtain and effect the most profound joy for all creatures in the universe, including himself.[299] Accordingly, God does not irresistibly determine humans to love him.[300] Thus, insofar as humans possess the ability to reject God's ideal will God may have unfulfilled desires.[301] However, God's unfulfilled desires do not amount to ontological need, lack, or deficiency.[302] Yet, while God is himself free and sovereign, God's will is not omnicausal. On the contrary, the divine will itself takes into account the wider state of affairs, including the wills of other agents, and it thus includes evaluation.[303] In this way, the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love suggested here is mutually exclusive to determinism.

That God has bestowed significant freedom on his creatures need not require the rejection of divine foreknowledge. Although the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love is not itself dependent on divine foreknowledge (as explained in chapter 5), I believe exhaustive divine foreknowledge best accounts for the data regarding divine love and election, especially in light of Rom 8:28–30. This model of love suggests that divine omniscience, however it functions (the precise nature of which is beyond the scope of this work), is not identical with or the unilateral

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[298] Again, "coerced love is not love." See Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 481; B. M. Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 166–67.

[299] See the discussion of divine self-interest and other-interest in the following section of this chapter.

[300] "God never imposes His love by overriding human will." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 350. Indeed, "coerced love is not love." Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 481.

[301] Cf. Lev 26:21; Isa 30:9, 15, 18–19; 42:24; Ezek 3:7; Matt 23:37; Luke 7:30. See the canonical chapters for further evidence that God's ideal will is not always carried out and may be rejected.

[302] God never desires anything that would make himself ontologically greater since he has no ontological lack or need. Likewise, divine existence is in no way dependent upon creaturely wills. As such, desire does not require an ontological lack or deficiency in God but does require that God interacts with creatures in a give-and-take relationship. See the brief discussion of divine passibility below.

[303] See the significant evidence regarding the overlap between the divine will and evaluation in the canonical chapters, especially the word studies of בחר and θέλω, and חפץ and εὐδοκέω. Further, the very concept of supplication, common throughout the OT and NT, implies the potential of free creatures to affect the effective divine will (cf. Matt 6:10).

result of the divine will.[304] At the same time, the divine will is still logically and ontologically prior to all other wills. Indeed, God's will is itself the necessary condition of all other agencies. This is explicit in the notion of foreconditional love, especially the aspect of God's prior loving action(s) that enable humans to freely respond (or not) to God's call. Moreover, as shall be discussed further below with regard to divine self-sufficiency, the significant freedom of God entails that God is not required to love or enter into any kind of relationship with this or any world. He does so freely, not necessarily or essentially. Therefore, this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love rejects both the views of the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models with regard to the nature and action of the divine will.

Divine Omnipotence and Self-Limitation

Second, with regard to the extent of the use of divine power (coercion/persuasion/other): This foreconditional-reciprocal model suggests that God is omnipotent but does not exercise all of his power; that is, he does not utilize his power to effect his will omnicausally. This conclusion is itself a corollary of the previous view regarding the significant freedom of God and human beings. For the same reasons that this model of divine love rejects determinism it likewise rejects omnicausality. This in no way detracts from divine omnipotence. Here, omnipotence is defined as possessing the power to do anything (excluding, of course, logical or semantic absurdity).[305] The

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[304] For an excellent and thorough collection of the ongoing contemporary debate on foreknowledge and free will see Robert Kane, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For open theism's critical analysis of God's foreknowledge in relation to his freedom see Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge*; Clark H. Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994); Clark H. Pinnock, *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1989). Open theism has been challenged in numerous responses; one prominent example is Geisler, House, and Herrera, *The Battle for God*. For an excellent and brief discussion of the historicity of God and foreknowledge in relation to free will see Canale, "Doctrine of God," in *Handbook* (ed. Dederen). For a critique of timelessness and presentation of God's historicity and analogical temporality, see Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*.

[305] On the semantic and logical challenges to omnipotence, which do not hold up to scrutiny, see Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 151–66; P. T. Geach, "Omnipotence," in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (ed. S. M. Cahn and D. Shatz; New York: Oxford

possession of all power does not require the exercise of all power. God, being omnipotent, freely

grants power to other agents whose choices he does not unilaterally determine. In this way, God

has used his power to create other agents who also possess power, which he chooses not to

overrule.[306]

In doing so, God has voluntarily limited himself by bestowing significant freedom on

other beings. To take but one example of this: unless God were to break a promise, the very fact

that he engages with the world in a way that includes promise-making limits himself. God's oath

or promise is binding upon himself, not because there is anything external to him that can bind

him, but because in the very making of a promise he self-limits.[307] This limitation is not

ontological. It is a limitation that God voluntarily adopts and maintains.[308] Such divine self-

limitation in no way limits his power but merely limits the avenues, applications, and uses of his

power insofar as he voluntarily keeps his word. In this way, divine omnipotence does not amount

to divine omnicausality. Accordingly, God may enter in truly mutual and reciprocal relationships

University Press, 1982).

[306] The explanation of God's choice to grant free will is beyond the scope of this work but it would seem that God's love is itself a basis in accordance with the nature of divine love and God's desire for a reciprocal love relationship.

[307] Thus, Fretheim is correct in stating, "For God to promise never to do something again, and to be faithful to that promise, entails self-limitation regarding the exercise of divine freedom and power." "The Book of Genesis," in *Genesis to Leviticus* (vol. 1 of NIB; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1994), 396. Importantly, however, God need not have done so but this is "contingent upon God's willing to enter into such a relation in the first place, to place himself under certain relational constraints, to be limited in his freedom by the existence of a genuinely free other." Hart, "How Do We Define," 109. On divine self-limitation see further R. E. Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 123–24; Jack. W. Cottrell, "The Nature of the Divine Sovereignty," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995), 107–10.

[308] This is what I have earlier (see chapter 4, pages 363-4) called a soft obligation, which refers to those where the agent is free to do otherwise ontologically, but morally obligated to respond, whereas a hard obligation would refer to some kind of compulsion (internal or external). As Sakenfeld puts it with regard to חסד, "because the person is acting faithfully within a relationship initiated by God there is a clear sense that God should exercise responsible care for that person. God is free not to act on the person's behalf; he alone is powerful, so there is no recourse if he does not act." *The Meaning of Hesed*, 107. See the further discussion of this issue as well as of soft and hard obligations earlier in this dissertation, especially in the OT chapter.

with other beings, which entail mutual expectations and moral obligations. Moreover, the divine

self-limitation assumed by a genuine, reciprocal, give-and-take, divine-human relationship adds

complexity such that the world as a whole does not operate in a way in which blessing/curses

correspond universally to human disposition and/or behavior. This is a tension in Scripture not

due to divine subjectivity, but due to the thwarting of God's ideal will in the entrance of evil. As

such, this foreconditional-reciprocal model of love contradicts the transcendent-voluntarist model

in proposing that God's power is not omnicausal[309] and at the same time rejects the immanent-

experientialist model's view that God lacks the power to coerce.[310]

Divine Passibility

Third, with regard to the issue of the immutability and impassibility of God: This

foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love suggests that God is affected by the dispositions

and/or actions of his creatures and therefore not impassible nor, in this regard, immutable. The

first premise of this section, that God does not unilaterally determine the course of history, itself

entails the passibility of God. Further, the evaluative and emotional aspects of divine love assume

that God is impacted by the actual disposition and/or action of his creatures. That is, evaluation

consists of appraisal of the actual state of its object(s) and the emotions depicted in the canon are

consistently depicted as prompted by the disposition and/or action of creatures. Accordingly, in

keeping with the evidence with regard to the evaluative and emotional natures of divine love, a

biblical ontology must recognize that God is capable of emotional affection, enjoyment, and the

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[309] Contra C. F. H. Henry's view that God's will foreordains everything. History is determined by the will of God, he "plans and decrees the world and man . . . he ordains the future." *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:13. Cf. ibid., 6:48–49. For an argument in favor of freedom and against divine omnicausality, see T. C. Oden, *The Living God*, 283–85.

[310] This follows from Hartshorne's view of "pan-indeterminism" wherein God has all the power that is compossible with the pan-indeterminism and pan-relativity of the world and in this sense he is "the greatest possible power." *Man's Vision*, 30. Cf. idem, *The Divine Relativity*, 138; idem, *Omnipotence*, 18.

recognition and appreciation of value in the world. This assumes that God is ontologically

capable of being affected and, therefore, passible.[311]

For example, this complements the frequent depiction of God's compassion as feeling

prompted at the sight or awareness of someone else's malady and/or misfortune, an explicitly

affected state. One cannot have such "compassion" without being affected and thus passible. This

canonical depiction of divine compassion alone, if taken seriously and not dismissed as mere

anthropopathism, rules out the conception of divine impassibility. A similar case can be made

with regard to divine passion/jealousy and many other divine emotions depicted in the canon. The

interpretive maneuver of dismissing the strongly emotive language with divine agency as merely

anthropopathic does not hold up to close scrutiny. Rather, it seems to be special pleading for a

dogmatic presupposition and lacks a consistent and compelling rationale for determining which

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[311] Many scholars have come to reject the notion of divine impassibility, so much so that Ronald Goetz has stated that "the rejection of the ancient doctrine of divine impassibility has become theological commonplace." "The Suffering God: The Rise of a New Orthodoxy," *ChrCent* 103 (1986): 385. See, among many others, Post, *A Theory of Agape*, 74–76; Oord, "Matching Theology," 277; MacGregor, *He Who Lets Us Be*; Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering*; Heschel, *The Prophets*; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 222, 227; Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God*; Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*; Jung Young Lee, *God Suffers for Us: A Systematic Inquiry into a Concept of Divine Passibility* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974); Barry L. Callen, *God as Loving Grace: The Biblically Revealed Nature and Work of God* (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Publishing House, 1996); Warren McWilliams, *The Passion of God: Divine Suffering in Contemporary Protestant Theology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985); Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001); John E. Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998); George M. Newlands, *Theology of the Love of God* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 98. For a systematic discussion of divine passibility see Lee, *God Suffers For Us*. See also Marcel Sarot, *God, Passibility and Corporeality* (vol. 6; Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos Pub. House, 1992); Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering*; Joseph M. Hallman, *The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); idem, *The Coming of the Impassible God: Tracing a Dilemma in Christian Theology* (Piscataway, N. J.: Gorgias Press, 2007); For an Evangelical argument in favor of impassibility see Geisler, House, and Herrera, *The Battle for God*. For an argument that God may be impassible and yet really love in the sense of his predetermining loving "responses," see Richard E. Creel, *Divine Impassibility: An Essay in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Cf. George W. Shields, "Hartshorne and Creel on Impassibility," *Process Studies* 21 (1992): 44–59.

canonical data accurately depict God's nature and which canonical data are to be dismissed as merely accommodative language.[312]

Along with this recognition of God's passible emotion, however, one should not assume that divine emotion is to the exclusion of volition. Both are depicted in Scripture as complementary, not contradictory, aspects of divine love.[313] Likewise, the foreconditional and reciprocal aspects of love assume that God may be affected. Thus, entering into an intimate, particular love relationship with creatures is contingent upon human response, to which God is sensitive and responsive.

In contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model, this rejection of impassibility suggests that God may be affected by the actual state of the affairs of the world. In other words, God is not immune to spatio-temporal activity. On the contrary, the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love, extracted from the canonical data, suggests that God is capable and willing of opening himself up to the joys and sufferings of the world while at the same time maintaining ontological independence. If God has bestowed significant freedom on his creatures such that they really affect the world, including real contributions to joy and value on the one hand or sorrow and degradation on the other, then it is not accurate to suggest that all value is unilaterally caused by God. God sometimes creates value unilaterally (such as the origin of the world itself) but other times value is the product of God's creation and sustenance of significantly free beings along with their value-creating actions.

However, humans could bring no value to God (or anyone else) absent God's voluntary initiative since the very origin and substance of human beings is entirely dependent upon divine beneficence and grace (cf. 1 Cor 4:7). As such, creaturely contribution to the "value" and/or "joy"

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[312] For a further discussion of this issue see the discussion of this issue in the methodology section.

[313] The precise relationship between divine volition and emotion, however, is not clear from this investigation of divine love.

of the world is not meritorious but may be divinely enjoyed nonetheless. This view not only

differs from the transcendent-voluntarist model by asserting divine passibility and the enjoyment

of value that God does not himself unilaterally effect, but also differs sharply from the conception

of the immanent-experientialist model, which posits that God is ontologically bound to the joy

and sufferings of others.[314] With regard to the latter, this foreconditional-reciprocal model

suggests that God is not ontologically bound to the joy and sufferings of others and will, finally,

cut off those who persist in contributing suffering and evil to the world. In other words, the

transcendent-voluntarist model posits that God cannot be affected by others, while the immanent-

experientialist model asserts that God cannot *not* be affected by others, while the foreconditional-

reciprocal model of divine love suggests that God is affected by others, but not necessarily so.

As such, contrary to the immanent-experientialist model, God identifies with the best

interests of others voluntarily rather than necessarily. Accordingly, the conditionality of the

divine-human relationship extends to God's identification with the best interests of others.

Moreover, contrary to the immanent-experientialist model, God does not identify with the

interests of all others in an undifferentiated manner. Rather, God will continue to identify with the

interests of those who do not finally reject his interests. One example of the undifferentiated

nature of divine sympathy in the immanent-experientialist model may be instructive and highlight

the importance of this distinction. For Hartshorne, "love is taking the standpoint of the other."[315]

However, if this is true in an undifferentiated manner, as Hartshorne's view implies, it would

require that God enjoy evil to the extent that a particular creature takes pleasure therein.[316] In this

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[314] See C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:214–15; Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 197.

[315] Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 127.

[316] Accordingly, David Platt comments, "While God may derive value from the pleasure of the sadist, God also experiences the pain of the sadist's victim and in [this] view, God would derive greater enjoyment if the sadist *and* the victim both had their own value experiences enhanced rather than that the sadist achieve his pleasure at the expense of the victim." "Does Whitehead's God Possess a Moral Will?" *Process Studies* 5 (1975): 117.

way, Hartshorne's view posits that God enjoys all value and feels all suffering but presents an impoverished view of divine *evaluation*, that is, the accurate appraisal of that which is delightful or abhorrent, good or evil. Thus, it appears that Hartshorne's view focuses on awareness and immediate feeling to the detriment of the kind of divine evaluation that prompts pleasure and/or displeasure as well as acceptance and/or rejection in the canon.[317] In this foreconditional-reciprocal model, on the other hand, God does not view all creaturely "pleasure" equally nor does he delight in all that delights sinful human beings. On the contrary, God delights in righteousness and abhors evil and will finally eradicate evil, sin, and suffering.[318]

Importantly, this conception of the passibility of God does not suggest that God is passive. On the contrary, divine volition is also operative, though the precise interrelationship of divine volition and emotion is not entirely clear. God possesses the power to overrule all other wills but has chosen not to do so. In this way, he need not be affected by creatures. Indeed, this view suggests that he need not have even created creatures.[319] Such divine passibility does not necessarily deny divine immutability but does conflict with any conception of immutability that rules out the ability of God to engage the world in real give-and-take relationship (that is, one with bilateral, significant freedom).[320] At the same time, divine immutability may be affirmed if by that one means that ontologically God is not becoming greater or lesser.[321] Further, the divine

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[317] Cf. Hartshorne, *Man's Vision*, 165.

[318] Without attempting to address Euthyphro's metaethical question regarding why good is good in this limited space, the evaluative nature of divine love assumes an absolute standard of good and evil to which divine evaluation corresponds.

[319] See the discussion below.

[320] See Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, 219–23. Cf. Norman Kretzmann, "Omniscience and Immutability," *Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966): 409–21; Nicholas Wolterstorff, "God Everlasting," in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (ed. S. M. Cahn and D. Shatz; New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[321] However, as shall be further discussed below, God may become more pleased or less pleased, more joyful or less joyful, etc. In this way, God could be more or less happy depending upon the actions of the agents he has chosen to love, and as such, has chosen to bind his happiness to, without danger of non-existence or lack of power, but yes, the risk of quality of the divine life. This begs the question, why would

character is constant. He does not break his promises, he always acts in the most loving way possible and possesses the omniscience to know precisely what the most loving disposition and/or action is.[322] When human beings finally reject God, the most loving option available to him is to give them over to their own desires.[323]

Divine Perfection, Self-Sufficiency, and Sympathy

Fourth, with regard to the nature of divine perfection and/or self-sufficiency (that is, dependence, independence, or other), this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love suggests that God is ontologically independent from the world as its Creator and self-sufficient with respect to existence. At the same time, God has voluntarily bound his own interests (including his joy and/or sorrow) with the interests of his creatures in a personal manner. As such, God is not an incomplete being without the world but is perfect in this respect. Further, he is wholly good and without moral fault and, as mentioned above, is not becoming greater or lesser ontologically. Nevertheless, God includes the best interests of others in his own interests. In this way, the quality of the divine life, as it were, is voluntarily bound by God with the course of creaturely history. Yet, God is by no means passive in this regard since he exerts enormous power in providentially guiding and affecting, but not unilaterally determining, this history toward his ultimate end.

At the same time, God's love according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model suggests that God is relational, interested in his creatures, can be affected by and even the beneficiary of

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God risk it? This foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love implies that God may have done so out of his loving desire to bestow quality of life and in doing so his own quality of life is benefitted because the perfect universe does not require the mutual exclusivity of love for other and love for self. But ultimate love benefits recipient and giver, the loved and the lover. This portrays an ideal that is not yet achieved but will be achieved in the eschaton.

[322] Contra Oord who contends that God lacks "exhaustive foreknowledge" and thus does not "know with certainty which single option is the most loving." In this way, Oord posits that God is necessarily loving but free with regard to how he acts out his love. *The Nature*, 139–40.

[323] As seen in the canonical data, loving action may include discipline.

human disposition and/or action. This assumes a theo-ontology that allows for reciprocity (though not symmetrically or equally) between God and creatures. Further, the volitional aspect of divine love posits that God is not necessarily or essentially involved in a love relationship (or any other relationship) with creatures. Likewise, the foreconditional and reciprocal aspects of divine love argue that God's love for his creatures is not the product of a necessary or essential relation. That is, if divine love is conditional upon human response, and may be forfeited, it cannot be necessary or essential to God. On the contrary, God freely enters into reciprocal relationship with those who willingly respond to his loving overtures, remembering that such willing response is itself made possible by God's prevenient and sustaining action. Therefore, God is not ontologically and/or necessarily bound to the world in love.[324]

This brings us to the difficult issue of the relationship between God's essence and love. First, the essence of God includes a great deal of mystery and, as such, one should be careful with regard to dogmatic assertions on this topic. Many have posited and continue to posit that God's essence is love.[325] Theologians may mean many different things when they identify God's essence with "love."[326] Of course, since the definition of "love" itself differs widely, this should

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[324] This is in direct contrast to the immanent-experientialist model.

[325] This is the view of the immanent-experientialist model. C. F. H. Henry comes close to positing love as God's essence but denies equating love with God's essence in order to avoid obscuring the other divine characteristics that he considers equally essential to the purely simple divine essence. *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 5:81–82, 135, 6:341, 348. Many classic theists and others, however, assert that God's essence is love, without denying other divine characteristics. For example, Luther states, "God is nothing else than love." *Luther's Works* (ed. J. Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann; 55 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 30:300. So, also Augustine, *The Trinity* 15.19.37 (*NPNF* 3; Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press), 3:235; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Books for the Ages; Albany, Oreg.: Ages Software), 3:260. Cf. K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2/1:279; Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 136; Akin, *1, 2, 3, John*, 178–79; M. Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, 219; Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas*, 137; Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine*, 39; Günther and Link, *NIDNTT* 2:546; Oord, *The Nature*, 139; Horton, 265; A. J. Torrance, "Is Love the Essence," 137; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 203; Newlands, 97, 195. From a universalist perspective, Thomas Talbott also asserts that God is essentially love and argues that proponents of limited election who also assert that God's essence is love are contradicting themselves. "The Love of God and the Heresy of Exclusivism," *CSR* 27 (1997): 101.

[326] For example, compare the widely divergent views of Morris, Oord, and Talbott with one another.

be no surprise. To the extent that theologians mean that all that God *is* and *does* is congruent with

divine love there is no disagreement with this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love.

However, to the extent that such identification amounts to ontological restriction of God's

freedom with regard to his love relationship with creatures, the canonical data raise significant

issues.

Before addressing such issues it is important to first recognize that, in my view, the

canonical data simply do not provide revelation with which to assert the precise nature of the

divine essence.[327] As such, the data are insufficient to comment dogmatically on assertions

regarding the nature of the divine essence and existence. Moreover, I question whether it is

possible to make any certain pronouncement(s) that correspond to the divine essence as a whole

as this would seem to require an understanding of God's essence as a whole, which appears to be

beyond not only divine revelation but also human cognizance.[328] Therefore, I am not prepared to

make a dogmatic assertion with regard to whether God's essence and love may be equated.

Nevertheless, a few things may be said here without making claim to certitude with

regard to the relationship between divine love and divine essence. While the canonical data argue

against an essential divine-human love relationship, that does not necessarily require that love is

not a part (or the whole) of God's essence. For example, intra-trinitarian love appears to be

essential to God, a product of God's trinitarian, essentially-related nature.[329] Nevertheless, the

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[327] "God is love" is not necessarily intended to describe the divine essence as a whole (1 John 4:8, 16). Elsewhere, it is said that "God is light" (1 John 1:5) and "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). Many biblical scholars contend that the statement "God is love" is not necessarily "ontological" but descriptive of the divine character. Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 157. Similarly, Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 212–13. Further, the character of God is depicted throughout the canon as multi-faceted. While all is congruent with love, it is not clear that love should be thought of as so elastic as to actually describe God's entire essence. Cf. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 239; Grogan, "A Biblical Theology," in *Nothing Greater* (ed. Vanhoozer), 66.

[328] Further, such an assertion goes far beyond that which should be extrapolated from a study that is directed toward one divine characteristic.

[329] Indeed, the intra-trinitarian love relationship is prior to the foundation of the world (cf. John 17:24) though the details regarding the nature of this pre-creation love relationship are not revealed.

canonical data have demonstrated the crucial volitional aspect of divine love and points toward the significant freedom of God to do otherwise than he does. In this regard, the interrelationship between God's will and essence as it relates to intra-trinitarian divine love is not revealed and, in my view, may not be deduced with certainty independent of divine revelation. Here, whatever else is said about the correspondence between God's essence and love, one should not imply that love rules out the other divine characteristics that are prominent in the canon or vice versa, including the divine will. Concurrently, it is important to avoid asserting a false dichotomy between the divine will and essence. Here there is mystery upon which the canonical data investigated in this dissertation shed little light.[330]

Importantly, however, the canonical data suggest that the essential intra-trinitarian love relation does not extend to creatures, who were and are not part of God's essence. God's essence and existence are independent of creatures.[331] God is other than the world he has created and not ontologically bound to his creation. As such, it may be God's essence to love (at least within the trinity) or be loving, but the specific objects of God's love are not determined by his essence. In other words, while intra-trinitarian love may be essential to God's nature, God does not need to love creatures (indeed, he does not "need" to create at all).[332] Accordingly, the canonical data consistently depict God as free to do otherwise than what he does, including with regard to divine

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[330] It may be that God's essence does not by itself determine the content of his existence (that is, his life). In other words, who God is does not by itself necessarily determine what he does. If this is the case there is an element of divine volition that contributes to the outworking of the divine life that is not determined by his essence. On the other hand, one might assert the identity of the will and essence, such as Aquinas did. However, this would determine God's actions and thus remove his significant freedom to do otherwise than he does. Perhaps there is a coinherence of God's essence and his existence, including volition, in some matrix that we do not comprehend, and have not been given revelation to dogmatize about. The possibilities abound and demand further, careful canonical investigation.

[331] This model does not accord with the assertion of identity between the divine essence and existence insofar as it denies God's significant freedom to do otherwise than he does.

[332] See, for instance, Hart, "How Do We Define," 109.

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love toward creatures. In this way, while God may be essentially and/or characteristically loving, that should not be taken to require that God is bound to act as he does.[333]

Conclusion

This chapter has contended that God's love is volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and ideally reciprocal. First, divine love is volitional but not merely volitional. It includes a free, volitional aspect that is neither essential nor necessary to God's being yet also not arbitrary. While divine love is closely associated with the divine will and election, such concepts should not be conflated. The divine-human love relationship is neither unilaterally deterministic nor essential or ontologically necessary to God but bilaterally (though not symmetrically) volitional and contingent. Second, divine love is not indifferent or disinterested but evaluative. This means that God is capable of being affected by, and even benefitting from, the disposition and/or actions of his creatures. Further, despite human sinfulness, humans may bring value to God through the prevenient and ongoing action of God, especially the mediation of Christ. Moreover, God has a proper self-regard that is inclusive, rather than exclusive, to the best interests of his creatures.

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[333] For instance, it appears that God *could* have destroyed Sinai in Exod 32–34, though he may not have wanted to do so, and did not do so for a number of reasons. Elsewhere, the canonical data frequently suggest that God maintains his love, compassion, and mercy for creatures far beyond what is required or even reasonable and may also remove the same. While God never removes his love and compassion arbitrarily (that is, independent of appropriate evaluation), it can be removed. Indeed, some creatures become the objects of divine hatred, though not as a result of the divine will itself but as a result of their own rejection of the divine will (cf. Hos 9:15). Further, such removal of divine love and compassion is not automatic since God, by grace, maintains it long after it is deserved. The implication is that God's longsuffering and patience toward his creatures is neither morally nor ontologically obligatory. This dovetails with the nearly ubiquitous praise of God for his goodness and love throughout the canon. Since many moralists generally contend that one may not be rightly praised or blamed for an action if one could not do otherwise, would not the axiological force of such praise be compromised if God could not do otherwise than he does? Cf. J. L. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist," 84, 87–88; Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, 147; Bruce R. Reichenbach, "Freedom, Justice, and Moral Responsibility," in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (ed. C. H. Pinnock; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 1995), 296–97. Cooper contends that "an important implication of God's ontological independence is that his act of creating is truly agapic—entirely loving and gracious in giving creatures existence." *Panentheism*, 325.

Third, God's love is profoundly emotional and affective though not to the exclusion of volitional and evaluative aspects. There is no dichotomy between volition and emotion and, as such, love may be both emotional and responsive to command. Fourth, divine love is foreconditional, not altogether unconditional. That is, divine love is prior to all other love and conditions but not exclusive to conditions. Further, divine love for the world is unmerited but not unconditional as the receipt of something may be contingent upon particular conditions without thereby being deserved. The conditionality of divine love includes evaluation and the possibility of forfeiture. As such, it is not strictly unmotivated, spontaneous, disinterested, indifferent, or unconditional. Moreover, there is a conditionality and unconditionality with respect to divine love. Divine love in relation to the world is unconditional with respect to God's volition, but conditional with respect to divine evaluation.

Finally, divine love is multilaterally relational. God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into particular, intimate relationship only with those who respond appropriately. God earnestly seeks and enters into reciprocally responsive love relationships with his creatures, which amount to multilateral divine-human love relationships. However, although God's foreconditional love is universal, God does not love all equally and uniformly.

God's love according to this foreconditional-reciprocal model points to the potential ontological suggestions that God desires reciprocal relationship with human beings and, as such, decided to grant significant freedom to his creatures while also himself possessing the freedom to do otherwise than he does. This entails that God does not exercise all his power omnicausally but bestows and allows creatures to affect history. Moreover, as relationally responsive, God is passible (though not passive) and may be affected by the disposition and/or actions of his creatures. Finally, as passible, God has bound his own interests, including his joy on the one hand and suffering on the other, to the best interests of the world. Such a relation is not ontological, but volitional. In this way, God so loved the world that he gave himself.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The love of God is central to God's relationship to the world. Accordingly, this study

addressed the conflict of interpretations regarding divine love in the context of the God-world

relationship and, in so doing, shed light on the wider question of God's relation to the world.

Chapter 1 introduced the background, purpose, problem, scope, and plan of study as well as the

final-form canonical theological method employed in the investigation. Chapter 2 briefly

surveyed the historical theology of love, tracing the central conceptions of divine love and the

God-world relationship by selected, highly influential thinkers. Chapter 3 presented and analyzed

the exemplars of the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models, considering

their views of divine love in relation to the world as well as the ontologies that ground their

conceptions. Subsequently, a sample of recent reactions to both models demonstrated the current

dissatisfaction regarding the conflict of interpretations indicating the potential for paradigm

change in the theological model of interpreting God's love to the world.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 shifted to the investigation of a canonical and systematic model that

addresses the issues raised by the conflict of interpretations. Chapters 4 and 5 presented the data

from a canonical investigation of the data regarding divine love in the OT and NT. The material

from the biblical investigation of divine love was then utilized in the construction of the

foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love that addresses the conflict of interpretations seen

in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 6 finally revealed and summarized the broad outline of the

canonically derived, foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love in relation to the world, with

implications for divine ontology and the nature of God's relationship to the world. This chapter

concludes the dissertation by summarizing the findings and conclusions of the study and making some recommendations for further study.

Introduction and Methodology of the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the issue that mutually exclusive conceptions of love, and their undergirding divine ontologies, call for careful study due to the prominence of divine love in the God-world relationship. After an explanation of the background, the problem and purpose, the scope and delimitations, and the plan of study, I explained the theological method that was utilized in order to address the conflict of interpretations. Instead of extrapolating the meaning of divine love from a presupposed ontology, this study applied a final-form canonical approach to systematic theology that affords epistemological primacy to the biblical canon as a unified, but not monolithic, whole.

This approach employs phenomenological exegesis, which uses the data derived from the typical method of hermeneutical exegesis, to uncover the first principles of reality apparent in the inner logic of the text as canon (the canonical horizon), which themselves return to inform one's hermeneutical exegesis as well as the interpreter's horizon such that both forms of exegesis continually inform one another while seeking to bracket out extra-canonical suppositions and interpretive errors toward the isolation of exegetical interpretations that cohere with the full canonical context. In this way, the interpreter seeks the particular characteristics of God revealed in the canon by analyzing the data in their immediate and wider canonical context by way of hermeneutical and phenomenological exegesis, reciprocally informing one another toward a canonical and systematic model of divine love that rigorously corresponds to all the data of Scripture, to the exclusion of extra-canonical suppositions, and is internally coherent. This method was applied toward a potential resolution to the conflict of interpretations over the issue of the meaning of divine love in the God-world relationship by focusing on the biblical revelation of God's love specifically, while bracketing out extra-biblical presuppositions related to divine

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love, toward exposing a model of divine love, which itself provides implications toward a biblical ontology.

Finally, the first chapter addressed a few methodological issues of the canonical investigation, including the interpretation of figurative language relative to God, the potential application of incarnational data to one's conception of God, and the prevalence of ambiguity regarding genitive constructions and the agency of love in the NT. Overall, the approach argued that unless there are some canonical data to the contrary, the literary thrust of canonical revelation should not be cast aside as merely human accommodation since all human language about God is, to some extent, accommodative. The canonical approach maintains that canonical language, including language that is demonstrably figurative, conveys meaningful and accurate (albeit analogical) data about God as he is in himself. Therefore, non-literal and figurative language, such as metaphorical and idiomatic phraseology, must not be dismissed but should be treated carefully in accordance with the intention *in* the text by way of the textual and contextual clues regarding the intended correspondence to its referent(s), being careful not to dismiss evidence based on presuppositions of what God is actually like prior to and/or independent of the canonical data. Likewise, this chapter suggested that, as a working approach, the data relative to Christ as incarnate should be taken to apply to the divine nature by way of a modified view of *communicatio idiomatum* such that, absent compelling canonical reasons otherwise, the data regarding the incarnate Christ correspond not only to humanity but also divinity in the sense that the divine nature of Christ is capable of experiencing that which the incarnate Christ experienced since Jesus was truly God who became truly human without divesting himself of divinity. In all this, the degree of the correspondence between the understanding of such revelation and God as he actually is cannot be determined prior to the *eschaton* due to the epistemic distance between God and humans and other human limitations.

Survey of the Historical Theology of Love

Chapter 2 briefly surveyed the historical theology of divine love by way of a few, highly influential exemplars. First, the Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions of divine love were introduced. Plato's writings depict love (*eros*) as desirous and thus originating from deficiency or need. The highest love is the rational, rather than emotional, desire for the Good (*proton philon*) but God can have no such desire because, for Plato, that would signify lack of perfection. While Aristotle departs from Plato in many ways, his view likewise rules out the possibility of God's love toward creatures. For Aristotle, love (*philia*) must be toward that which is useful, beautiful, and/or good, while love for the good (of a rational and purposeful, rather than passionate, nature) is the highest, true love. Since all three types of love are directed toward something valuable to the lover and, for Aristotle, God is the impassible, unmoved mover who can receive no value and lacks nothing, God cannot love others. For both Plato and Aristotle, then, God is never the lover but only the loved.

Augustine, being indirectly influenced by Plato's conception through neoplatonism, also denies the reality of a dynamic love relationship between God and creatures while breaking significantly with Plato's conception of love by affirming that God does indeed love human beings but in a different manner than humans love God. Humans may love God as the only object of enjoyment (*frui*) but God's love for humans is different, he cannot enjoy (*frui*) them. In this way, Augustine assumes the classical ontology that God is perfect, self-sufficient, immutable, and impassible and thus can neither desire nor receive any value or enjoyment. God's love is thus defined in accordance with impassibility such that he does not love in the sense of Plato's *eros* or Aristotle's *philia* but his love is unilateral beneficence (corresponding conceptually to *agape*), which brings no benefit or enjoyment (*frui*) to God. Augustine's has been the predominant view in Christianity through the ages.

Aquinas continues the basic Augustinian premise regarding divine love and the God-world relationship while adapting Aristotelian metaphysics and ethics to medieval Christianity.

For Aquinas, as Augustine, God is self-sufficient and utterly immutable. God is the first, unmoved, and passionless mover who possesses all perfections of being and cannot be affected or desire anything. While his divine ontology rules out a mutually impactful relationship between God and the world, Aquinas nevertheless posits friendship love (*amicitia*) between God and humans, but of such a kind that God is the unilateral initiator of friendship as the benefactor and never beneficiary. Human friendship love is always directed towards some good (*amor concupiscentiae,* desirous love) that is willed toward someone (*amor amicitiae,* friendship love). Humans love (*caritas*) God in the sense of enjoying him for his own sake while God loves (*caritas*) in the sense of beneficence. For both Augustine and Aquinas, the very essence of God is a love that is a unilaterally willed, unaffected beneficence such that God loves all in some manner but only some are loved unto eternal life.

Martin Luther's view of divine love remained along the lines of that of Augustine and Aquinas. However, Luther vehemently rejects the view of human love from Augustine throughout medieval theology, viewing it as a synthesis that posits a place for egocentric human love toward God (thematic *eros)*, while Luther recognizes only divine love (thematic *agape)* as authentic, altruistic love. Humans cannot truly love God or any others except as passive agents of divine love flowing through them since God is the cause of all authentic love. God's love, on the other hand, is unilateral, non-evaluative, unmotivated, and wholly gratuitous beneficence, akin to grace. This view of divine love, congruent with that of Augustine and Aquinas, is required by the conception of God as immutable and impassible. For Luther, God's unilaterally determinative, irresistible, and wholly efficacious will is primary.

All of this provides the context for Anders Nygren's highly influential *Agape and Eros* in which he fleshes out Luther's concept of gratuitous love (*agape*) directed against *eros*. He posits an absolute dichotomy between *eros,* which is desirous and acquisitive love (whether vulgar or heavenly) that is inappropriate to God's perfect and self-sufficient nature and unfit for Christianity, and *agape,* which is the highest kind of love as purely unilaterally willed and

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altruistic beneficence. For Nygren, God's love (thematic *agape*) is spontaneous, unmotivated, indifferent to value, non-desirous and non-emotive, beneficent, condescending, gratuitous, and sovereign in relation to its object. In his view, the theme of *agape* love was specifically chosen by the NT writers to convey this indifferent, *sola gratia* type of love to the exclusion of all other types of love (*eros*, *philia,* etc.), even those in the OT. The only true agent of *agape* love is God. Humans of themselves are incapable of *agape* love such that love toward God (and others) is caused only by God's arbitrary predestination of those upon whom he bestows unconditional love. While Nygren's view has come under a great deal of criticism, it still remains very influential.

Overall, there is considerable continuity between these prominent historical conceptions of divine love, especially the classic conception of God as simple, timeless, perfect, self-sufficient, immutable, and impassible, which leads to the conception of divine love as unilateral, unmotivated, unaffected, gratuitous beneficence that entails no passion but is rationally purposive. Contemporary treatments of divine love continue to be significantly influenced by this history, whether by accepting the conceptions of *eros* or *agape*, vehemently rejecting them, or even knowingly or unknowingly assimilating and mixing them.

Conflicting Interpretations of Divine Love

Chapter 3 presented and analyzed the exemplars of the transcendent-voluntarist (Carl F. H. Henry) and immanent-experientialist models (Charles Hartshorne), which present two of the most prominent recent perspectives on divine love. This included an analytical description of each model's methodological and ontological frameworks, their conception of God's relationship to the world, and their specific view of divine love in order to clearly identify the conflict of interpretation, which illuminated the central areas of disagreement over the nature of divine love in relation to the world as well as the ontologies that ground their conceptions.

The transcendent-voluntarist model of divine love is bound up with its divine ontology of a transcendent, perfect, simple, immutable, impassible, and totally self-sufficient God, which places precise limits upon the nature of divine love. For such a God, love cannot be immanent, love cannot change God, and God can have no need or desire such that love can add no value or enrichment to the divine life. God as sovereign, rational will entails a sovereign, rational, and willed love of unilateral beneficence; hence unconditional election love, independent of its object, which corresponds to thematic *agape* to the exclusion of thematic *eros*. God is not at all affected by external reality or the decisions of creatures but orders all history and bestows love sovereignly and independently of external causes. Since God as omnicausal cannot be acted upon, there is no power that could impact divinity, God's love is wholly unmotivated and unconditional, being unaffected by spatio-temporal reality. In keeping with the sovereignty of God's will and impassibility, all divine love is predicated solely upon the eternal predestinating divine decree, independent of human action and/or response. Although the transcendent-voluntarist model insists that God has emotions, such emotions are not the result of God being affected but the result of his own unilateral and sovereign will. Accordingly, God's relationship to the world is an external one (the relativity required by an internal relation is impossible for a timeless, immutable God) and there is an absolute ontological distinction between God (the supernatural) and the world (natural) such that God is the altogether independent and voluntary creator of the world *ex nihilo*. God's loving action, which is manifested in time and space, thus stems only from the timeless providence of God according to the eternal decree (predestination). God is internally related only to himself as triune, and any potential need for love is fulfilled by intra-trinitarian love.

Consequently, divine love for other than God is superfluous to God, not only as needed but even as desired or valued. Once again, this fits with the absolute perfection of God, which entails that God is already utterly complete, thus there could be no new experience for God; all is eternally bound in the divine nature according to the eternal sovereign will of God. Moreover,

since God is absolutely simple, divine love is but one aspect of the utterly unitary essence of God. Love is thus qualified by all other perfections of God, which, together, are actually merely the simplicity of the sovereign will of God. Divine love complements divine holiness, wrath, justice, and eschatological judgment/damnation—all of which take place in strict accordance with the sovereign and efficacious will of God, which determines all history. God is thus only the loving father of whom he chooses (election love). As such, there can be no reciprocal divine-human love relationship of give-and-take.

The immanent-experientialist model, on the other hand, categorically rejects classic theism and posits divine love as divine sympathy, the feeling of all others' feelings. In this model, God is the supreme, all-inclusive mind and compound individual of the world, not identical or equivalent to the world, but more than the world (panentheism). God is essentially related to the world such that God needs *some* world (though not this particular world) to exist. However, God's existence is itself necessary while his actuality is contingent and, hence, the existence of some world is necessary. The divine-world relationship is understood within the context of the indeterministic, relativistic, spatio-temporalistic panpsychism such that all reality is an interdependent creative synthesis of partially determined and self-determined minds interacting as both subjects and objects in process. Minds are related both internally and externally where the subject of an internal relation includes and is thus affected by its relata and the object of an external relation remains unaffected. God is the supreme subject, internally related to all and thus supremely relative and all-inclusive, as well as the supreme object, an object (but not the sole object) for every subject. The supreme mind as universal subject and object corresponds to the dual transcendence (dipolarity) of the divine nature wherein God eminently exemplifies the admirable characteristics of metaphysical contraries. These poles are ontologically distinguishable yet ontically inseparable such that God is the absolute-relative, abstract-concrete, potential-actual, necessary-contingent, universal-particular, supreme compound individual. Just as the subject includes its object, God as the universal subject (concrete and relative) includes the

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universal object (abstract and absolute). He is the self-surpassing surpasser of all, the transcendental relativity (surrelativism). Although God is relationally all-inclusive, he cannot be wholly identified with (pantheism), nor wholly differentiated from (classic theism) the world. He includes the world yet is more than the world (panentheism).

Since God is internally related to all minds and thus all-inclusive he has immediate (non-mediated, direct) relations, meaning that he directly feels all the feelings of the world and changes accordingly. This essential relation of God to the world is God's universal sympathy, which is identical to his love. As ethically immutable God always loves all others with perfect adequacy, yet also grows (aesthetic perfectibility) and enjoys the ever-increasing value of the world that he includes as the supremely relative all-inclusive compound individual of the world. God's love for the world as universal subject eminently affects him, partly determining his life in joy and suffering. The world's love for God as the universal object deeply affects the world and partly determines the course of reality as God aims at the harmonious happiness of all. While God is universally affected as universal subject (and thus partially determined) he may also act by persuasion (but never coercion) upon all others as universal object such that when God moves himself he thereby creates the necessary condition (but not the sufficient condition) for the effect of the world as the interdependent, creative synthesis of social process. God is thus the most moved but also possesses the greatest compossible power.

As such, divine love, which itself constitutes the God-world relation, is dynamically relational, emotional, and supremely passible, in stark contrast to the conception of the transcendent-voluntarist model. Accordingly, for this model, love itself describes the panentheistic ontology of the creative synthesis of social reality. God as the supreme, all-inclusive mind and thus the supreme lover, the compound individual of the world who is the eminently relative all-sympathizer, not identical or equivalent to the world, but more than the world, is love—the self-loving lover of all who is loved by all.

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The transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models of love and divine ontology are thus mutually exclusive of one another. There could be no resolution of the conflict of interpretations regarding divine love without drastic revision of one or both ontologies since there is an irreconcilable difference between the transcendent, sovereignly willed, unaffected and unenriched election love of the transcendent-voluntarist model and the all-sympathetic, immanent, affected and enriched, direct and adequate, desire-filled feeling love of the immanent-experientialist model.

Chapter 3 concluded by presenting numerous examples of other, recent reactions to both models, which demonstrated the current dissatisfaction in light of the conflict of interpretations with regard to the definition of divine love itself as well as underlying ontology. At the juncture of the ongoing conflict of interpretations is whether God and humans can enter into a reciprocal love relationship, whether divine love is purely giving or might also receive and/or enjoy value, whether divine love can rightly be thought of as arbitrary election love or whether it is undifferentiated universal love or something else, and whether God's love is purely willed or may also be passive and experiential. The extent of the conflict between the models of divine love and the current dissatisfaction with both models served to indicate the potential for paradigm change, warranting investigation of the biblical data to ascertain whether progress in overcoming the perceived shortcomings of the models is attainable through a canonical methodology.

The Canonical Investigation of Divine Love in Relation to the World

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 shifted to the investigation of a canonical and systematic model in order to address the conflict of interpretations. Chapters 4 and 5 presented the canonical data of the OT and NT that were inductively collected from a broad reading of the entire canon that analyzed any texts and/or passages that might provide potential answers to the systematic questions raised in chapter 3, which revolve around whether God's love is unilateral or reciprocal, giving and/or receiving, unilaterally willed beneficence or inclusive of desire, enjoyment, and the

reception of value, impassible or passionate, partial and/or universal, necessary or unnecessary, and conditional and/or unconditional. In both chapters most of the data were grouped under five rubrics that were extracted from the canonical text: the volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and relational natures of divine love.

Chapter 4 first introduced and surveyed the most prominent word group of divine love in the OT, אהב, which may be used to refer to everything from the most virtuous love of affection and generosity, to a "love" that is more akin to lust and fades quickly after its rapacious selfishness is satisfied. Positively, אהב may connote intense affection and emotion, including delight, rejoicing, favor, et al., whether of human or divine agency. Divine אהב has an apparently volitional aspect, often related to, but not identical with, divine choice (election) but also evaluative and/or emotive, conditional though unmerited, and directed toward the ideal of mutual love (אהב) as evidenced in the abundance of commands for human love toward God as well as examples of actual love (אהב) toward God. Further, contrary to the influential view that אהב is often merely technical treaty language bereft of affection, divine אהב is not purely "covenantal," descriptive of a merely legal, lord-vassal treaty relationship, but depicts the type of emotional and affectionate אהב manifested in kinship relationships.

Similarly, chapter 5 introduced and surveyed the two most prominent word groups of divine love in the NT, ἀγαπάω and φιλέω. The ἀγαπάω word group, similar to the אהב word group, which it very frequently translates in the LXX, displays a broad range of meaning including love that is affectionate, warm, concerned with, and interested in its object(s), love in the sense of high regard, value, and appreciation for its object(s), love that includes enjoyment, pleasure, and fondness, preferential love (whether proper or improper), and love demonstrated in action, often of a beneficent nature. However, ἀγάπη is not exclusively unilateral, indifferent, beneficent, giving love toward the unworthy and thus non-evaluative, purely altruistic generosity, unconditional, utterly spontaneous, and impassible. Further, contrary to the view of some, ἀγάπη

is not uniquely descriptive of the highest divine love distinct from and exclusive of other, supposedly lesser, terms of love (i.e., *eros*, φιλέω) but may itself describe negative love. The significant increase in usage of the ἀγαπάω word group in the LXX and NT does not posit ἀγαπάω as a qualitatively greater kind of love but is likely explained by a linguistic shift around the time of the LXX. While *eros* is absent altogether in the NT and appears very rarely in the OT LXX, the φιλέω word group may also describe the highest of love, divine love itself, and overlaps significantly (even interchangeably in many contexts) with the range of meaning of the ἀγαπάω word group. The φιλέω word group may connote affectionate love, fondness, attraction, concern, special interest, and/or enjoyment/pleasure in or valuing of someone or something, often appearing in the context of close association with the potential connotation of belonging, at times in the sense of friendship or family but extending to virtually any kind of association.

<p style="text-align:center;">The Volitional Aspect of Divine Love in the OT and NT</p>

With the background of the most prominent OT and NT word groups in place, both chapters proceeded to discuss the volitional aspect of divine love toward creatures, which is neither necessary nor strictly arbitrary, closely associated with the divine will and election, but not exclusive of evaluation and emotion. Chapters 4 and 5 first introduced the prominent terminology relative to the volitional aspect of divine love. Chapter 4 surveyed the בחר and חנן word groups, while chapter 5 surveyed the semantics of election in the NT including the θέλω, βούλομαι, ἐκλέγομαι, and καλέω word groups.

The חנן word group is most often translated as favor or grace, and may refer to a positive, favorable disposition and/or action from one to another and may refer to God's favor or grace toward someone whether arbitrarily bestowed or based on positive evaluation and/or conditionality of appropriate response. בחר is the primary term of divine election or choice in the OT and thus depicts strong volition, though it often also connotes evaluation and examination as part of such decision or in reference to a desire or that which is desirable. It is often associated

with divine love but should not be conflated with it and sometimes refers to unfulfilled divine desires and overlaps with God's desire and delight.

The terms of God's will and election in the NT similarly relate closely with divine love but are not identical thereto and evidence not only divine volition but also divine desire, delight, and evaluation as well as the fact that God's will is not always carried out. The sense of God's will, desire, or that which God takes pleasure in may be depicted by both the θέλω and βούλομαι but both also refer, at times, to God's unfulfilled desires. NT terms of election, the ἐκλέγομαι and καλέω word groups, refer with divine agency to God's election and calling respectively, often with the connotation of evaluation. Both may connote the sense of an invitation that may be (or may have already been) accepted or rejected. Thus, the "called" and "elect" as they relate to the objects of divine love and/or salvation are not thus by God's unilateral decision. God's decision to love at all is a necessary but not sufficient condition for "the called" and the "elect."

In both the OT and NT, election is often for a vocational purpose and never amounts to arbitrary election of an individual or group to salvation. While election may be undeserved and foreconditional, its attendant privileges are not unconditional, wholly arbitrary, or unending. God's people are not automatically privy to God's covenantal promises, which contain elements of conditionality and unconditionality. This relational responsiveness is often depicted by kinship metaphors such as the parent-child and marriage metaphors, both of which connote the voluntary and affectionate nature of the divine-human love relationship. Further, God has the right to bestow mercy and compassion even on those who are egregiously undeserving but does not arbitrarily elect those who will receive mercy in exclusion to others. Divine election imposes conditions and responds to human responsibility, and the divine will is not depicted in the OT or NT as unilaterally efficacious. Indeed, the divine will may be unfulfilled and shows evidence of being affected and evaluative, relative to that which God desires, wants, and delights in.

Although unilateral election is not taught in the OT or NT, the priority and importance of divine volition to the divine-human love relationship is readily apparent in the correspondence (but not identity) between love and election. According to the canonical data of both testaments, divine love is volitionally free, not the product of necessity, and itself the basis of the divine-human relationship including election, covenant, and blessing. Further, the relationship of love and election overlaps with evaluation, even delight. In this way, the volitional aspect of divine love is complementary to evaluation and emotion and is not arbitrarily differential. As such, though the status of God's elect is unmerited, it is nevertheless conditional and must be maintained by appropriate human response to God. The elect are not only those loved by God but those who love God (and others) in return.

The Evaluative Aspect of Divine Love in the OT and NT

Chapters 4 and 5 moved to the evaluative aspect of divine love in the OT and NT, focusing on the data that support the thesis: Divine love is not indifferent or disinterested, but evaluative. First, the significant terms חפץ and רצה were surveyed in chapter 4, both of which associate closely with אהב at times and are often used with divine agency to portray God's often emotive and evaluative desire, delight, and/or evaluative will or wish. Chapter 5 surveyed two terms that overlap between the conceptual spheres of election and evaluative love, ἀγαπητός and εὐδοκέω, as well as the even more explicitly evaluative term of pleasure, the ἀρέσκω word group among others. The εὐδοκέω word group corresponds to the רצה and חָפֵץ word groups, often translating them in the LXX, and generally denotes desire, pleasure, delight, satisfaction, approval, preference, and /or enjoyment of an object or course of action. Often, the preference, desire, or delight is evaluative, directed at that which brings pleasure and/or is worthy of selection. Neither the OT nor NT terms refer to a unilaterally effective divine will but may refer even to God's unfulfilled desire.

ἀγαπητός, like the passive participle of ἀγαπάω, generally denotes an object of special relationship to the subject, thus beloved, one who is dearly loved, prized, and/or valued. Accordingly, the term may entail divine evaluation and affection, delight, and/or pleasure in someone who is party to a special relationship and thus relates conceptually to other such descriptors of special relationship to God such as the elect, called, and/or brethren. The ἀρέσκω word group refers to that which is pleasing, acceptable, often used with both human and divine agency, consistently in reference to grounded, evaluative pleasure.

After such word studies, chapter 5 presented two brief topical summaries that demonstrated the existence and virtue of evaluative love. First, the numerous instances of misdirected love were surveyed, showing that the NT assumes that appropriate love includes proper evaluation. Second, the objection that true love is altruistic was briefly examined according to the NT data that support the concept of proper self-regard. Self-sacrificial love is sometimes demanded by the context but is not itself ideal love. Divine love thus includes appropriate self-interest that is not exclusive to other-interest.

Both chapters proceeded after such preliminaries to survey the evidence for evaluative love, providing clear canonical evidence that God has profound desires and is affected by the disposition of humans toward him such that God's delight and enjoyment are evaluative. God can and does receive love and enjoy, delight in, and garner pleasure from his creatures. For example, divine appraisal is evident in the repeated statements of God's delight in, or desire for, heartfelt, sincere devotion to him, which is contrasted with merely external sacrifices. Thus, the distinction between those who are pleasing or approved by God and those who are displeasing to him as well as the status of elect is not the result of arbitrary election but is grounded in the actual state of affairs. God may be displeased with his people and even come to hate them, but such displeasure is never arbitrary but always evaluative.

Humans, though sinful, may bring value to God through the prevenient action of God, signified by the typical sacrificial system in the OT, which pointed toward the antitype, Christ, who mediates human offerings so that they may be acceptable to God and truly bring him pleasure. In all this, God's love is such that he often manifests emotions of delight and/or joy over his people. In the NT, Christ himself is the object of the Father's evaluative love. In both testaments, God's people are his delight, even the apple of his eye; he often rejoices over them and accepts their offerings and in the future will rejoice over them with joy.

The Emotional Aspect of Divine Love in the OT and NT

Chapters 4 and 5 proceeded to present the canonical data regarding the emotional aspect of God's love, which leads to the conclusion that God's love is profoundly emotional though not to the exclusion of volitional and evaluative aspects. First, the semantics of compassion and passion in the OT were surveyed. Both the OT and NT utilize significant terminology to depict God's profoundly emotional mother-love or compassion, which is signified by the word group of רחם in the OT and the ἐλεέω, οἰκτίρω, and σπλαγχνίζομαι word groups in the NT. רחם includes mercy but is more than mercy; it is an emotional love, a compassionate affection that often is manifested in merciful, non-obligatory action that goes beyond reasonable expectations. Likewise, the οἰκτίρω and σπλαγχνίζομαι word groups refer to God's intensely emotional compassion and correspond to the OT terminology in this regard. The basic meaning of the ἐλεέω word group, which corresponds in many respects to חסד and רחם in the OT, may include mercy, lovingkindness, heartfelt concern, compassion and/or sympathy of a strongly emotive character that is often explicitly manifested in action.

Throughout the OT and NT, God's compassionate and gracious nature is manifest in intense affection and compassion for the plight of human beings, which results in corresponding action and extends far beyond any responsibility and reasonable expectations, including that of the covenant. God's compassion is greater than that of the gentle, caring shepherd; it is even more

passionate and heartfelt than that of the mother for her suckling child. The emotional love of God

for his people is often depicted by way of kinship metaphors in both testaments, especially the

parental and marriage metaphors. The central themes of both kinship metaphors are God's

enduring and faithful affection and their continual infidelity such that God's love is often left

unrequited. In the NT, Christ is often moved to compassion by the plight of people in much the

same way that YHWH's compassionate love is manifest in the OT.

Repeatedly throughout the canon, God's freely-given, amazing compassion is recounted

as the unfailing basis of his merciful, redemptive action, often responsive to human entreaty.

However, God's compassion is not unilaterally constant but conditional; it is sometimes bestowed

prior to any conditions but ultimately its continuance requires true repentance as is poignantly

displayed in the husband-bride metaphor throughout Hosea. Although compassion cannot be

earned, it must be received; God's call seeks to evoke response.

Throughout the canon, divine compassion is complemented by divine passion; God is

both אל קנא (Deut 4:24) and אל רחום (Deut 4:31). That is, God is the compassionate and passionate

lover. In the OT, the word group קנא denotes the very strong emotions of ardor and intense

passion, related to a basic sense of zeal, passion, or jealousy, for that which belongs to one, or

envy for that which belongs to someone else. With divine agency it never refers to envy or any

other negative connotation of jealousy but always to God's appropriate passion and ardent love

for that which rightfully belongs to him. Chapter 5 introduced the ζηλόω word group, which in

the NT corresponds in meaning to the קנא word group.

God is intensely concerned for his people, yet human beings often provoke God to anger.

God's displeasure is never arbitrary but always a result of human action, which provokes God to

anger and even hatred and animosity. Because of God's passionate love, he is grieved and vexed

and provoked to jealousy when his people are unfaithful to him—the rightful passion that God

has for the exclusive relationship with his people. God's profound love itself prompts God to care

enough about his people to discipline them. Though God is often pained by the infidelity of his creatures, he is likewise greatly affected by their suffering. Indeed, the longsuffering of God's love stands in stark contrast to the fleeting nature of his anger. Thus, God's passion is balanced by his compassion, both of which described his wider love. Throughout Israel's history, there is a recurring pattern of apostasy/loss of blessing/return/restoration of blessing/apostasy, and yet, divine compassion. God repeatedly wills, and longs for, a harmonious reconciliation with his wayward people, and his compassion and grace make such reconciliation possible, but he does not unilaterally effectuate relationship.

The Foreconditional Aspect of Divine Love in the OT and NT

This section of chapters 4 and 5 focused on data that support the thesis that God's love is foreconditional and thus not altogether unconditional; bestowed prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. Before the evidence of the foreconditionality of love itself was surveyed, chapter 4 presented the meaning of חסד ("steadfast love, lovingkindness"), which overlaps not only with the foreconditionality of love but also with many other aspects of divine love. חסד, one of the most significant descriptors of God's character in the entire Scriptures, is relational conduct and/or attitude in accord with the highest virtues (love, loyalty, goodness, kindness) and beneficial to another, which meets and exceeds all expectations (often manifested in mercy and forgiveness), in which the agent is ontologically free to act otherwise, and is responsive to and/or creates or maintains the expectation (but not hard obligation) of appropriate response from the recipient. It is often translated as lovingkindness, steadfast love, loyalty, goodness, faithfulness, mercy, etc., and may connote love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, yet also faithfulness, loyalty, and strength.

Following the survey of חסד, chapter 4 explained the conditionality of divine beneficence, which overlaps in many regards with the foreconditionality of love. Though God's commitment to covenant is exceedingly enduring, the covenant relationship cannot continue forever without

positive human response in accord with the expectations of God. Likewise, chapter 5 began with an excursus on the foreconditional nature of divine blessing. In many ways, the contingency of divine blessing parallels that of divine love. Love is not identical to beneficence but the latter is an outgrowth of the former, while both are foreconditional. That is, God's love, as well as the frequent beneficent actions that flow from it, is unmerited, but not altogether unconditional.

Throughout the canon, the ontological, logical, and chronological priority of divine love is emphasized. From the unmerited election of Israel to those who love God because he loved us first in the NT, God is the sole initiator of the divine-human love relationship. His love is amazingly enduring and he freely grants mercy and compassion to undeserving people who have forfeited the privileges of their special relationship with God. God's foreconditional love for the world itself makes it possible for anyone who believes to be saved.

God's love endures beyond all reasonable expectations and is everlasting in some respects. Yet, the endurance of the relationship in particular is contingent upon appropriate human response, itself enabled by God's own prevenient action. On the other hand, there are numerous instances throughout the OT that display the conditionality of love, including its potential forfeiture, which may even elicit divine hatred. Likewise, the NT states that obedience and love toward Jesus evokes the love of the Father and that of the Son. Such examples depict reciprocal, conditional, motivated, and evaluative love such that divine love may be contingent upon and responsive to human action. If both the statements that suggest God's love is everlasting as well as those that refer to the forfeiture of divine love are taken seriously, it appears that divine love is everlasting in some respect(s), yet may nevertheless be discontinued. Thus, although the origination of divine love is foreconditional and unmerited, the continuance of his love and the attendant, promised, covenant blessings are contingent and conditional upon the human response.

As such, despite the enduring quality of divine love, it is not unilaterally permanent. God's love, lovingkindness, and compassion may be withdrawn, contingent upon the actions of the people. Human response to divine love is never primary but always secondary, impossible

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apart from God's initiative. However, response is necessary, divine forbearance and patience will not continue forever; it has a limit. That is, God bestows love freely to his creatures foreconditionally, but the continued reception of that love, and attendant personal love relationship with God, is conditional upon appropriate human response to God's initiating love. Such a view is bolstered by, though not necessarily dependent on, interesting parallels between the biblical covenants and the grant type of covenant in the ANE. As such, God's love is, in and of itself, everlasting and granted prior to conditions but its continued reception is conditional upon appropriate human response. This is the foreconditionality of divine love.

The Relational and Multilateral Aspect of Divine Love in the OT and NT

The final sections of chapters 4 and 5 present the canonical evidence regarding the multilaterally relational aspect of divine love. God's desire for reciprocal relationship is evident in the many commands for humans to love God. Moreover, beyond the many commands of love toward God there are numerous instances that manifest actual human love toward God in both the OT and the NT. Importantly, God not only desires love toward himself but also expects his people to love their fellow human beings: neighbors and aliens, which, indirectly, amounts to love toward God. God's passion for this relationship may result in temporary chastening when appropriate, but ultimately divine blessings will overflow upon those who respond to God in love, in accordance with God's character of steadfast love. Keeping God's commandments is itself a manifestation of one's love for him, and divine love is also reciprocally responsive to such manifestations of human love throughout the canon.

In all this, God's love is ideally set within the context of a reciprocal relationship predicated partially on human love for God. Accordingly, God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love but enters into and/or maintains particular, intimate relationship only with those who respond appropriately. Yet, since not all respond positively to God's loving overtures, God does not love everyone equally, though he offers the opportunity for such love to all. Therefore,

there is both a particularity and universality to God's love. God wants to include all humans in an intimate love relationship with himself but this requires that humans reciprocate God's love and God does not irresistibly determine that humans love him.

That there is special divine love reserved for some seems apparent from the numerous instances that persons or groups are specified by terms of divine endearment including "beloved," "elect," "called," etc., as well as the broad context of covenant relationality. Those who have entered into such a relationship will be "insiders" while those who reject God's overtures will remain outsiders and, eventually, forfeit God's universal, foreconditional love. In microcosm, the covenant people are treated as objects of God's insider love, though the individuals within the covenant themselves may forfeit God's love by scorning his overtures, as repeatedly took place in the history of Israel and Judah. Likewise, friendship is an example of such love that assumes a particular, as opposed to universal, relationship and is thus a form of preferential (but not arbitrary) love. Friendship with God, as all forms of "insider" love, is conditional upon appropriate human response.

However, despite the revelatory emphasis on the particular covenant relationship of God with Israel, God's love and care extends beyond the bounds of covenant unto all peoples, though not in an undifferentiated manner. Likewise, in the NT, insider status is universally offered. God consistently seeks a reciprocal love relationship with all people. Those who are privy to an ongoing, particular, and intimate love relationship with God (thus "insiders) are those who respond appropriately to God in love. As such, all humans may reciprocate God's love and thus enter into and/or maintain an intimate and particular love relationship with him. This particular, intimate, reciprocal love that God desires with human beings is not unilaterally effected by him. God initiates and makes all provisions for such a relationship but it is nevertheless conditional upon human response (i.e., foreconditional).

**A Canonical and Systematic Model of Divine
Love in Relation to the World**

Chapter 6 revealed and summarized the broad outline of a canonical and systematic model of divine love in relation to the world, with implications for divine ontology and the nature of God's relationship to the world. The five major theses, inductively derived from the canonical text, describe divine love as volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and ideally reciprocal, and were described and explained systematically.

First, divine love is volitional but not merely volitional. This contrasts with the transcendent-voluntarist model and immanent-experientialist models of divine love. The former proposes that God is the sole giver but never the receiver of love such that divine love is purely volitional and unilateral, arbitrarily willed, pure beneficence (thematic *agape*) to the utter exclusion of desire and/or enjoyment (thematic *eros*). The latter contends that love is not volitional but descriptive of an essential, and thus ontologically necessary, relation between God and creatures.

That God's love is volitional but not merely volitional means that it includes a free, volitional aspect that is not essential, necessary, or altogether arbitrary and is complementary to, not exclusive of, the other aspects of his love including evaluation and emotion. God is free to do otherwise than he does but has freely decided to love human beings; he is not compelled to love, essentially or otherwise. However, although God is ontologically free to disown his people, he will never arbitrarily remove his love. Yet, human beings may reject his love and disown him. Divine love is closely associated with God's will and election, but the divine-human relationship is not unilaterally deterministic and God's love is prior to, and the causal basis of, election. This volitional element of the divine-human love relationship, applied bilaterally, amounts to a rejection of determinism, process theology, and universalism.

Second, divine love is not indifferent or disinterested but evaluative. The immanent-experientialist model contends that as the feeler of all feelings God's joy and pleasure are bound

up with the world due to the ontological relationship between them such that God benefits or suffers along with all the joys or sorrows of the world. The transcendent-voluntarist model, on the other hand, believes God is only the benefactor but never the beneficiary in the divine-human relationship. God as self-sufficient cannot actually enjoy, delight in, take pleasure in, or receive value from the disposition and/or action of creatures, including their responsive love.

However, that divine love is not indifferent or disinterested but evaluative is evident in that God repeatedly enjoys, delights in, takes pleasure in, and/or receives value from the disposition and/or actions of creatures. On the other hand, God is displeased by evil, though his animosity is never arbitrary. Though some suggest that God should not enjoy or receive value from creatures but should be purely altruistic, God's love includes a proper self-interest that, due to his free decision, includes the best interests of all others. Far from being selfish, such divine love is truly sympathetic, manifested in Christ's self-sacrifice in response to evil. Further, while humans can bring no value to God and are unworthy of love in and of themselves, God has partially and temporarily suspended judgment. In the meantime, Christ functions as mediator such that meager human offerings, themselves only possible because of God's prevenient grace, may be received as pleasing and acceptable to God. However, there will be final judgment, including the eradication of all evil, but until then God bestows undeserved love universally on sinful humans toward his ultimate end of divine-human love relationship.

Third, God's love is profoundly emotional and affective though not to the exclusion of volitional and evaluative aspects. The immanent-experientialist model views God as utterly passible, the universal feeler of all others' feelings, such that love is identical with God's universal sympathy, and thus indiscriminate rather than evaluative. On the other hand, the transcendent-voluntarist model presupposes the impassibility of God, that is, God cannot be affected by anything external to God; he has no passions.

However, the canonical data demonstrate that God's love is emotional, including deep affection and concern for creatures. However, his love is not merely emotional but also volitional

and evaluative. Volition, evaluation, and emotion do not exclude one another, but God's love manifests all three and expects reciprocal response of not merely external obedience without affection but internal obedience grounded in deep-seated affection, devotion, commitment, loyalty, and even passion. God is affectionate, loving, devotedly interested and intimately concerned, feeling sorrow, passion, and intense anger at evil, but also compassion and the desire to restore creatures to relationship with himself. God's love is thus profoundly emotional but does not amount to undifferentiated sympathy.

Fourth, divine love is foreconditional, not altogether unconditional. For both the immanent-experientialist and transcendent-voluntarist models, divine love is unconditional and cannot be forfeited. In the immanent-experientialist model, God's love is ontologically necessary because God is internally bound to the world. In the transcendent-voluntarist model God's love is dependent only upon his unilateral and arbitrary will to love and thus unconditional, spontaneous, unmotivated, and ungrounded, and cannot be forfeited.

On the other hand, the foreconditionality of divine love means that God's love is initiatory, prior to any human action, love, merit, or worth while at the same time God implements conditions for the reception and continuance of that love. Thus, divine love is not strictly unmotivated, spontaneous, or unconditional. God has freely decided to love human beings while expecting human response, which itself is only possible because of God's prevenient love. In this way, divine love is foreconditional but never merited. While divine love is surpassingly enduring, steadfast, and reliable, it is not altogether constant or unconditional. Humans may reject God's loving overtures and, eventually, forfeit his objective love. God's purely subjective love, that is, his will to love his creatures, is unconditional while his objective love, including the benefits of divine love, is conditional and contingent upon human response. Further, the plan of salvation itself, that God will love a people, save them, etc., is unconditional. However, the specific recipients of that saving divine love are conditional. As such, humans can forfeit their place as beneficiaries in the relationship.

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Finally, divine love is multilaterally relational. God universally seeks a relationship of reciprocal love with others but enters into particular, intimate relationship only with those who respond appropriately. In the immanent-experientialist model, love describes the essential relation between God and the world. Since all are internally related to God, divine love is universal; there is no object outside of God's love. In the transcendent-voluntarist model, God's love is universal only in the sense of "common love" but love unto salvation is reserved for those who are unilaterally elected by God; the rest are damned. God gives but never receives love; all love is solely the result of God's unilaterally efficacious will.

However, according to this canonically derived, foreconditional-reciprocal model, God has chosen to bestow universal love with the intention of entering into a particular, love relationship that includes the reciprocation of divine love by its object(s). God strongly desires that human beings reciprocate his love and love those whom he himself loves in a multilateral love relationship even as the Father loves the Son and vice versa. However, although God's foreconditional love is universal, God does not love all equally and uniformly. While God loves all with a universal and prevenient love aimed at drawing humans into relationship with him, God's particular, relational love is conditional upon appropriate response, which he himself enables. Those who respond to God's love become insiders as God's beloved, elect, friends, etc. While God never unilaterally determines to remove his love from any object, any object of God's love may reject intimate relationship with God and, if finally persistent in this regard, forfeit the reception of divine love altogether. On the other hand, all those who reciprocate God's love will enjoy an unending love relationship with him in eternal bliss.

This canonically derived, foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love points to a number of potential ontological implications. First, God desires reciprocal relationship with human beings but does not effect his will unilaterally. Rather, he decided to grant significant freedom to his creatures while also himself possessing the freedom to do otherwise than he does. Accordingly, while God is omnipotent, God does not exercise all his power omnicausally but

bestows and allows creatures to affect history. In doing so, God has voluntarily limited the exercise of his power. Further, God is passible (though not passive) and may be affected by the disposition and/or actions of his creatures including enjoying and appreciating value in the world. Though God is passible, he is ontologically independent from the world as its creator, and self-sufficient with respect to existence. Yet, God has voluntarily bound his own interests (including his joy and/or sorrow) to the interests of his creatures while maintaining ontological independence from the world.

Importantly, God is by no means passive in this regard since he exerts enormous power in providentially guiding and affecting, but not unilaterally determining, this history toward his ultimate end. In all this, God's essence and existence are independent of creatures. God is other than the world he has created and not ontologically bound to his creation. As such, it may be God's essence to love (at least within the trinity) or be loving, but the specific objects of God's love are not determined by his essence. God does not need to love creatures (indeed, he does not "need" to create at all) but has voluntarily chosen to love creatures toward a reciprocal love relationship.

Conclusions

This dissertation has addressed the irreconcilable conflict of interpretations between the transcendent-voluntarist and immanent-experientialist models of divine love in relation to the world. By using a final-form canonical approach to systematic theology, a canonical and systematic model of divine love has been outlined that responds to the issues at the heart of the conflict of interpretations over the nature of divine love in relation to the world. This canonically derived, foreconditional-reciprocal model agrees with the transcendent-voluntarist model that divine love includes a crucial volitional element such that God voluntarily bestows his love on creatures and, in contrast to the immanent-experientialist model, God is not engaged in a relationship with creatures that is essential to his being. On the other hand, the foreconditional-

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reciprocal model agrees with the immanent-experientialist model, in contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model, that divine love in relation to the world assumes divine experience of the world, which profoundly affects God (passibility) as God enjoys a reciprocal love relationship with creatures.

However, whereas divine volition excludes passibility in the transcendent-voluntarist model and divine sympathetic passibility excludes divine volition from love in the immanent-experientialist model, the foreconditional-reciprocal model posits that the volitional and emotional aspects of God's love complement, rather than exclude, one another. God desires and voluntarily works toward a reciprocal relationship with all humans. This is in contrast to both the transcendent-voluntarist model, wherein God irresistibly elects only some humans as the recipients of his salvific love, and the immanent-experientialist model, where God's love relationship to the world is indiscriminately universal and necessary to his being. God's love is also affected by the choices and experiences of human beings, in keeping with the immanent-experientialist model but in contrast to the transcendent-voluntarist model. However, in contrast to both models, God's experience of the world is evaluative such that God delights in those who respond positively to his love while those who reject God's love finally forfeit their relationship with God.

In this way, the evaluative aspect of divine love complements and bridges the volitional and emotional aspects of divine love while pointing toward a further aspect that is overlooked by both models, the foreconditionality of divine love. Whereas both models assume that divine love is unconditional, the transcendent-voluntarist model due to the priority of the divine will and the immanent-experientialist model due to the necessary and essential relationship between God and the world, the foreconditional-reciprocal model recognizes that God bestows love prior to, but not exclusive of, conditions. Those who respond positively to God's love enjoy an everlasting reciprocal love relationship with him, grounded in bilateral significant freedom, within the multilateral circle of divine love.

In all this, according to the foreconditional-reciprocal model, divine love in relation to the world is volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and multilaterally relational and points toward a biblical-historical ontology. This research thus provides a path forward that is grounded in the canonical method, producing a model of divine love that addresses the issues raised by other models of divine love, is internally coherent, and rigorously corresponds to the canon of Scripture, while recognizing that this model is itself subject to revision and clarification in accordance with further canonical investigation.

Suggestions for Further Study

Further research may illuminate a number of areas related to the meaning of divine love in the context of the God-world relationship. There are abundant avenues for further research, including the implications this conception of divine love might hold for moral theology and other broad areas. However, only a few, more specific, lines of research will be suggested below.

First, there is room for further investigation into the canonical data regarding divine love, which might confirm or correct the foreconditional-reciprocal model outlined here. Second, since this dissertation focused on the revelation regarding one overarching divine characteristic and, upon that limited basis, suggested some potential implications for divine ontology, there is a great deal of work to be done toward investigating and articulating other aspects of divine ontology on the basis of a final-form canonical approach to systematic theology. Third, the conception of love derived from this investigation may have implications for the nature of intratrinitarian relations, regarding which further canonical investigation is needed.

Fourth, much work remains to be done regarding the nature of human and divine freedom in light of my suggestion of bilateral significant freedom derived from this foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love. While the debate over the nature of creaturely freedom in the history of theology is well-known, further attention should be given to the nature of divine freedom, specifically regarding the implications of God's significant freedom to do otherwise

than he does. This issue relates to the nature and extent of God's freedom to love or not love.

Fifth, systematic exploration of the connection between the divine-human love relationship and God's law, which itself corresponds to God's love, would shed further light on God's character of love *and* justice, the appropriate human response of love, and divine judgment (itself closely related to the evaluative aspect of divine love).

Sixth, the nature of God's freedom is bound to the issue of the nature of God's essence and existence and the manner of relationship between the two. Is God's existence (life) determined by his essence (nature) or vice versa? Are they to be identified with one another or conceived in some other way? If God has significant freedom, as suggested in this work, it seems that God's existence cannot be determined by his essence, but to what extent (if any) is God's freedom limited by his nature? This relates to the question regarding the relationship of God's love to his essence and his existence, regarding which the data of this study were not sufficient to provide a sufficient answer.

Seventh, considerable work is needed with regard to the nature of divine personality and relationality. This dissertation contends that God's love is passible and thus God is indeed affected by the world. How does this relate to God's nature, immutability, personhood, etc.? The particularity of divine love depicted in this study requires relationally responsive personhood. What is the nature of divine personality and how does it relate to the age-old questions of ontology and metaphysics?

Finally, this dissertation has come to the conclusion that love is manifest in action though not identical with action. Since one could make the case that all God's actions are loving, this dissertation focused on divine actions only as they related to the specific questions of this study. However, further research into the loving nature of God's actions, overlapping with theodicy, would further illuminate the full extent of God's love and goodness. Such investigation might also shed further light on the issues of God's action in relation to the final destiny of God's creatures, further addressing such issues as universalism, hell, and the divine plan of salvation.

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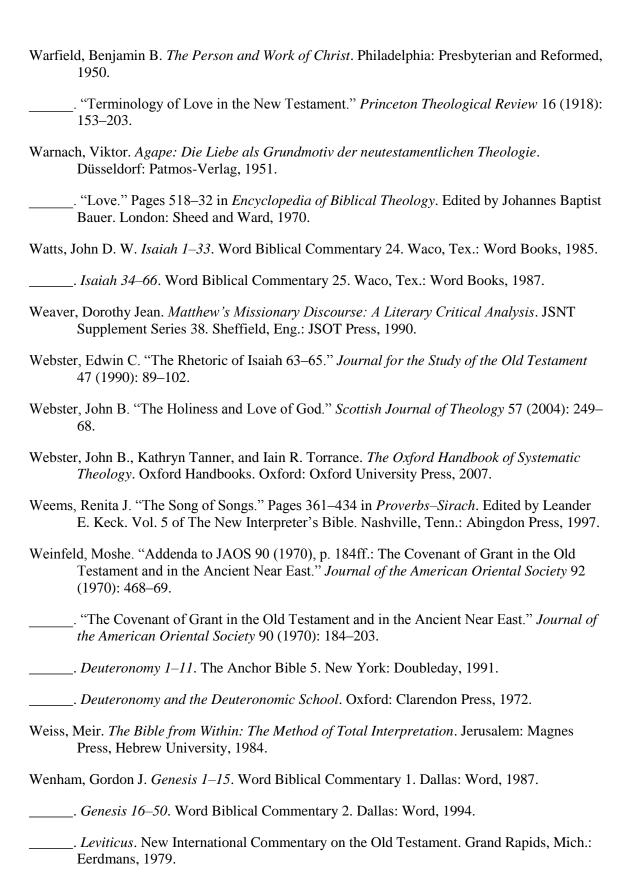Tiessen, Terrence L. *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

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