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Towards a Biblical Spirituality: Dwelling with God through the Exodus Sanctuary-Covenant Structure

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ABSTRACT

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY: DWELLING WITH GOD THROUGH

THE EXODUS SANCTUARY-COVENANT STRUCTURE

by

Silvia Canale Bacchiocchi

Adviser: Richard M. Davidson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TOWARDS A BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY: DWELLING WITH GOD
THROUGH THE EXODUS SANCTUARY-COVENANT STRUCTURE

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Name and degree of faculty adviser: Richard M. Davidson, Ph.D.

Date completed: April 2019

Problem

Biblical spirituality was challenged from the very start of the Christian church by competing spiritual ideologies of philosophical origins. Because the interpretation of spirituality has focused on exegetical and doctrinal approaches (micro and meso-hermeneutical levels), the grounding biblical macro-hermeneutical level of its basic presuppositions has been ignored. Yet this is the level that gives ultimate meaning to the meso and micro levels. This oversight constitutes a giant roadblock to understanding and experiencing true biblical spirituality, the consequences of which are devastating both for the individual believer (Matt 7:23), as well as for the mission, unity, and growth of the church at large.

Method

This thesis will first deconstruct the macro-hermeneutical foundations of three

primary models of Christian spirituality—classical, Protestant and modern—through their

selected representatives: Augustine, Martin Luther, and Teilhard de Chardin,

respectively. Then the biblical model of spirituality will be outlined through a

phenomenological study of the OT Exodus sanctuary-covenant structure, focusing on

seven mountain meetings between God and Israel. Finally, a summary and comparison of

the four models—classical, Protestant, modern, and biblical—will be presented.

Results

The final comparison of the four models of Christian spirituality reveals that the

three dominant models—classical, Protestant, and modern—are nearly identical in all

their macro presuppositions. The biblical model, on the other hand, stands in unique

contrast to them all in upholding 1) an analogically temporal, relational and missional

theology and ontology; 2) a wholistic anthropology; 3) a cognitive epistemology based on

faith in God's historical words/acts; 4) a unified historical cosmology; and 5) a

Christological metaphysical center where Christ operates historically through the

sanctuary covenant, granting freedom to all rational beings with the present aim of

spiritual restoration/union and the final aim of a physical restoration/reunion.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Exodus sanctuary-covenant structure offers a

spiritually compelling and biblically grounded alternative to other models of Christian

spirituality. For those seeking to be faithful to the *sola* and *tota Scriptura* principles at the most meaningful meta-hermeneutical level, it is an option that must be seriously considered.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY: DWELLING WITH GOD THROUGH

THE EXODUS SANCTUARY-COVENANT STRUCTURE

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Religion

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITEE:

_____
Richard M. Davidson, Ph.D., Adviser

_____   _____
Martin F. Hanna, Ph.D.   Date approved

Dedicated to my father Fernando Canale

in gratitude for his theological guidance and inspiration,

and to my mother Mirta for her love and prayers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	*anno Domini* (in the year of our Lord)
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
AUSSJ	Andrews University Seminary Studies Journal
BC	before Christ
ch(s).	chapter(s)
diss.	dissertation
ed	edition
ed(s)	editor(s), edited by
ESV	English Standard Version
etc.	*et cetera*, and so forth, and the rest
ibid	*ibidem*, in the same place
i.e.	*id est*, that is
LXX	Septuagint
NKJV	New King James Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
p(p).	page(s)
rev.	revised (by)
trans.	translator, translated by

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

More than ever we are living at a time of increasing fascination with the concept

of spirituality, so much so that the "spirituality phenomenon"[1] has come to define our

era.[2] Yet what is meant by this term? Indeed, *spirituality* is an ambiguous word

conveying a broad array of meanings, from a humanistic concern with the self, ethical

standards, and cosmic connectivity (generic spirituality[3]), to the experience of humans

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[1] "Those who have carefully followed developments within today's culture will be fully aware of the breadth and power of the "spirituality phenomenon" in almost every part of the world. In the West various theories have been developed to explain it. Some see it as a natural and even necessary culmination of the psychoanalytic movement inaugurated by Freud. Others attribute it to the final disillusionment with the Enlightenment's faith in progress, disillusionment generated by the wars of the 20th century. Still others construe it as a response to the meaninglessness of existence in a mass culture. And some believe it is the proper name for the wholesome breeze which entered through the windows opened by Vatican II. Whatever its cause(s), no one can deny its grip on the contemporary imagination." Sandra Marie Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy" in *Modern Christian Spirituality. Methodological and Historical Essays*, ed. Bradley C. Hanson, (Atlanta, GA: Oxford University Press, 1990), 18–19. It is noteworthy that an entire twenty-five volumes were required to cover the numerous forms of spirituality present in the world today. Ewert Cousins, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (New York: Crossroads, 1985).

[2] Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2014), 5.

[3] Bruce Demarest defines generic spirituality as the limitation of reason and science, subjectivism and self-transcendence, the rejection of dogmas, and a belief that all paths lead to God. Examples include New Age, process philosophy, and creation spirituality. *Four Views on Christian Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 13.

with a transcendent Being (religious spirituality[4]). Within the realm of religious spirituality, Christian spirituality[5] has centered on restoring the image of God in humanity.[6] In early Christianity the apostles spoke of "walking in the Spirit" (Gal 5:6), which implied restoring the image of God through the cognitive renewal of the human mind, that is, impressing the thoughts of God on the minds and hearts of humans (Rom 12:2, Phil 2:5, 2 Cor 10:5). However even during the time of the apostles the Neoplatonic mystical method for union with God presented a challenge to the church.[7] And it wasn't long after the first generation of Christians passed away that the mystical method began to replace the cognitive approach to spirituality as the means of uniting fallen humanity with God.[8]

Throughout the ensuing centuries these two methods of Christian spirituality—biblical vs. philosophical/mystical—played out, with the latter gaining the vantage

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[4] Demarest defines religious spirituality as the pursuit of God through non-Christian faiths, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. *Four Views on Christian Spirituality*, 13. Demarest probably excludes Christianity from his list of religions since his book focuses specifically on this type of spirituality. In the broader context, however, religious spirituality would clearly include the Christian religion.

[5] In Demarest's analysis, Christian spirituality is represented by four traditions: Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, progressive Protestant and evangelical. Demarest, *Four Views on Christian Spirituality*, 17.

[6] Kees Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 2002), 1.

[7] Paul warns repeatedly against the gnostic heresies attempting to infiltrate the church (1 Tim 6:20–21, Col 2:8, 1 Cor 1:18–31). Among other things Paul denounces the Neoplatonic ideas present in the over-realized eschatology in the church, where some were teaching that Jesus had already returned and was present in believers in a mystical or spiritual way (2 Thess 2:1–4, cf. 1 Thess 4:13–18). See Bacchiocchi, "The Lord's Supper in the Early Church: Covenant Extension or Eucharistic Presence?" *AUSSJ* 2 (2017): 35–55.

[8] Ibid.

ground in theology.[9] Interestingly, in the early twentieth century the Catholic church

decided to replace the centuries-old use of *mysticism* and its alternate forms (such as

mystical union and *mystical theology)* with *spirituality* and its various forms.[10] And after

Vatican II, the focus on mystical theology—known now by its new nomenclature of

spirituality—became widely adopted by many Christian traditions, serving as the glue to

bring them into ecumenical harmony.[11]

Scott Hahn notes that "until recently (the last half century or so) 'spirituality'

didn't exist as a discipline within Catholic theology. The word spirituality, when it

appeared at all, was defined simply as 'the opposite of materiality.'"[12] This interpretation

is clearly based on the Platonic spirit-body dualism, where the human spirit (believed to

be immortal/timeless) is viewed as the medium for uniting with a presumably timeless

God.[13] Thus, whether referring to the older term of *mysticism* or the newer branding of

spirituality, the traditional method of spiritual union with God in Christian theology

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[9] For a thorough study of philosophical presuppositions in the history of Christian theology see Raul Kerbs, *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo: Las Presuposiciones Filosophicas de la Teologia Cristiana: Desde Los Presocraticos al Protestantismo* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014).

[10] Bradley Holt, *Thirsty for God*: *A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 3, 7; Alister McGrath, *Christian Spirituality* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999), 6; Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality: A Brief History*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 8; and Bruce Demarest, *Four Views on Christian Spirituality*, 74.

[11] Sheldrake, *A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 2–3; Holt, 7.

[12] "'Come to the Father' The Fact at the Foundation of Catholic Spirituality" in Demarest, *Four Views on Christian Spirituality*, 74.

[13] Whenever a religious tradition understands the soul as a duality of timeless spirit and temporal body, the mystical interpretation prevails. This is not the case, however with traditions that view the soul and body as a temporal unit, such as in Seventh-day Adventism.

largely hinges on the timeless soul. As such, when Scripture is employed it is done

selectively and interpreted through underlying philosophical presuppositions that negate

the very claims of the biblical text, because ultimately the goal is to reach a mystical

union that goes beyond cognition in general and Scripture in particular.[14]

Statement of the Problem

The problem, as noted above, is that biblical spirituality was challenged from the

very start of the Christian church by competing spiritual ideologies of philosophical

origins. The recent worldwide fascination with spirituality in general and Christian

spiritual disciplines in particular brings this challenge (biblical vs.

philosophical/mystical) to the foreground, with the latter gaining momentum by the day.

Because the interpretation of spirituality has focused solely on exegetical and doctrinal

approaches (micro and meso-hermeneutical levels), the grounding macro-hermeneutical

level of its basic presuppositions has been ignored. Yet this is the level that gives ultimate

direction and meaning to the meso and micro levels. This oversight constitutes a giant

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[14] For example, basing himself on Aquinas ("God destines us for an end beyond the grasp of reason") John Coe states that the *telos* of the spiritual life "goes beyond the pages of Scripture" to a love that surpasses knowledge." See "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality" in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, Ed. Glen G. Scorgie (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016). While Scripture does state that the love of God surpasses knowledge (Eph 3:18–19), the text exhorts the Christian to comprehend/grasp (*katalambano*) and know (*gnosis*) this love, which is so vast that it goes beyond knowledge (*gnosis*). It is notable that Scripture calls us to *gnosis*, which connotes a personal knowledge/relationship that goes beyond mere *eidein* (intellectual knowledge). Similarly, God calls the Hebrew nation to *know* Him (Gen 6:3, 7) using the term *yada'* (intimate experiential knowledge) as opposed to *bin* (mere intellectual knowledge). Through the living word of Scripture, we can know Christ intellectually and, most importantly, experientially. Yet because Christ is the transcendent God, He will through all eternity have new revelations of His love to thrill our minds and hearts. Until that day Christ points to Scripture as the matrix of all Christian knowledge (John 5:39), the revealer of our personal condition (Heb 4:12–13), and the source of our spiritual transformation (Ps 19:7–9; 2 Pet 1:19).

roadblock to understanding and living out true biblical spirituality, both personal and corporate.

Purpose

The present study seeks to discover and articulate Scripture's model for spirituality (union with God) through the sanctuary-covenant structure, aiming to thereby offer a spiritually compelling and biblically authentic alternative to other major existing models. Specifically, three Christian models—classical, Protestant, and modern—will be studied, followed by a phenomenological[15] analysis of the biblical model as laid out in Exodus. Finally, a comparison of the four models will be drawn.

Justification

A correct understanding of biblical spirituality is essential because we live in an age of spiritual confusion, where countless varieties of spiritualities are peddled. And while true spirituality is able to restore and reflect God's image, a false spirituality reflects an image that glorifies a different lord. The consequences of getting the spiritual connection wrong are disastrous for it affects not only one's eternal state,[16] but also the entire body of believers, shaping church mission, unity, and growth.

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[15] Phenomenology is primarily a methodology of studying phenomena as it presents itself to the observer. Phenomenological exegesis involves three things: (1) the suspension of previously held scientific, philosophical, or theological theories (this is termed *bracketing* or *epoché*), (2) building on "things themselves," in this case the words of Scripture, and (3) describing what has been seen or heard, as opposed to trying to establish or prove an argument. Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, 296–297.

[16] Christ has warned that at the last day many Christians will come to Him claiming a spiritual union with Him that resulted in exorcisms, miracles, and prophetic utterances in His name. Yet Christ declares that He never knew them and calls their spirituality lawless (Matt

Definitions

Because spirituality is the phenomenon that occurs between two rational subjects, biblical spirituality will be defined as the relation between the divine subject (God) and human subjects, biblically understood.

Scope and Delimitations

The study of biblical spirituality will be limited to its phenomenological development in the Exodus sanctuary-covenant structure, specifically chapters 3, 6, and 19–40. Other texts will be noted where necessary, for example, the Genesis creation account will be referenced when discussing the biblical view of human nature. Also, as this study is confined to the Exodus narrative it will not explore the continuation of the sanctuary-covenant structure in Christ's earthly or heavenly ministries—although that would be the logical next step in developing a complete understanding of biblical spirituality.

Presuppositions

The foundational assumption of this study is the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura* as the authoritative ground for theological construction. Because all Scripture has been inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16), the claims of Scripture must be seriously considered in their totality (*tota Scriptura*). Finally, this study assumes that Scripture

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7:23). Clearly, a spiritual theology that is not based on God's law has devastating eternal ramifications.

presents a coherent whole grounded on basic principles of reason. The broadest principles

of reason are the meta-hermeneutical[17] categories of general ontology (Being), regional

ontology (God, humanity, the world), epistemology (knowledge), and metaphysics (what

unifies the particulars with the whole)—this latter category is also known as the principle

of articulation.[18]

Method[19]

In light of the fact that spirituality has traditionally been interpreted through the

lens of philosophical presuppositions, chapter two will address the necessary first step of

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[17] Biblical hermeneutics occurs on three levels: micro, meso, and macro. The more specific or micro-hermeneutical level relates to textual interpretation (exegesis), the middle or meso-hermeneutical level relates to doctrinal development (systematic theology), and the macro-hermeneutical level is the grounding, most foundational level (reality) of biblical interpretation. Here, theologians have traditionally viewed reality using philosophy's interpretation of Being (general ontology), God's nature (theology proper), human nature (anthropology), the world (cosmology), knowing (epistemology; which includes hermeneutics, revelation-inspiration, and theological method) and the relation of the parts to the whole (metaphysics), not realizing that Scripture provides its own unique interpretation of these questions. See Canale "Deconstructing Evangelical Theology" *AUSS* 44 (2006), 103, 104.

[18] For a thorough exposition of the principle of articulation see Roy Graf, "The Principle of Articulation in Adventist Theology: An Evaluation of Current Interpretations and Proposal." PhD Thesis, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2017.

[19] The categories that comprise the theological method are (1) The material condition, meaning the data that grounds theological thought. In biblical theology this arises from Scripture and engages all of Scripture, the *sola* and *tota Scriptura* principles, (2) The hermeneutical condition, where the data is interpreted on the basis of biblically derived, macro-hermeneutical principles, namely epistemology, ontology and metaphysics, and (3) the teleological condition or goal, ultimately this would be to understand and know God, although it would also include specific intermediary goals. Fernando Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 101–122.

deconstructing[20] the macro-hermeneutical foundations of three primary models[21] of

Christian spirituality. The reason these philosophical categories (ontology, theology,

cosmology, anthropology, epistemology and metaphysics) must be explored in relation to

spirituality is because they are the basic presuppositions of reason which the mind *always*

assumes, consciously or unconsciously, when thinking about any subject.[22] The three

primary models this study will explore—classical, Protestant and modern—will be

analyzed through their selected representatives: Augustine, Martin Luther, and Teilhard

de Chardin, respectively.

For the classical model Augustine of Hippo (354–430) will serve as

representative, not only because he is considered by many as "the Father of the Western

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[20] Deconstruction is a critical reading of traditions. In the late 1960s Jacques Derrida introduced the term philosophically. John Caputo describes it as having three components: textual, "transgressive," and messianic. In short it focuses on reading texts (textual) in a way that counters ("transgresses") interpretive tradition, with the intent of providing a new redemptive religious outlook (messianic). Canale, "Deconstructing Evangelical Theology," 105.

[21] In the present study, *model* refers to the articulation of a doctrine's essential features. Models are "ideal, simplified, and schematic accounts of a much more complex reality." While models have their limits (they are not exact, all-inclusive or provable), they are essential in helping to identify the basic characteristics of theological schools or trends. See Fernando Luis Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham, MD; Oxford: University Press of America, 2001), 76. Also *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible* (Berrien Springs, MI: Lithotech, 2005), 113–118. Other theologians who have advocated and applied the concept of models or paradigms in their theologies are Avery Dulles—in his ecclesiological ordering, and Hans Küng—in his search for an ecumenical paradigm that unifies current theologies, such as political, process, feminist, black and non-western liberation theologies. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 29; Hans Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 123–130. See also Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theolgy: Task and Methods," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011), 1:38–39.

[22] For example, the cosmological assumption that the world has evolved over time, or that there are two worlds (as in Platonic thought), will lead to a different view of spirituality than if one assumes the creation account and a unified cosmos. For more on the structure of reason in regard the mind's basic presuppositions see Kerbs, 29–39.

Church,"[23] but specifically because Augustinian spirituality became the foundation for all later Christianity.[24] Roger Olson notes that Augustine "pointed the entire West in a certain direction."[25] And in his historical compilation of spirituality, Charles Healey upholds Augustine's writings as profoundly formative for later posterity.[26] Philip Sheldrake summarizes Augustine's influence on Christian spirituality by noting that he is "without doubt the greatest thinker of Western Christianity in the early period, and his writings have dominated Western theology and spirituality ever since."[27]

The representative for the Protestant model of spirituality will be Martin Luther (1483–1540), whose reformation of the church caused spirituality to hinge not on ecclesiastical hierarchy but on the believer's direct access to God through faith, namely justification by faith.[28] Louis Bouyer states that Luther was the first to propose a "genuinely lay spirituality."[29] And Healy notes that Luther's emphasis on the Word of

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[23] Tony Lane, *A Concise History of Christian Thought*, 47. Justo Gonzales, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, 242.

[24] The Augustinian tradition in spirituality [. . .] was the common heritage of the Christian laity and of many religious orders in medieval and modern times." Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings, ed. John Farina, trans. Mary T. Clark (Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984), 3.

[25] *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 255.

[26] Healey, Charles J. *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction to the Heritage*. (Staten Island, NY: St Pauls, 2008), 71. Healey also notes patristic scholar Berthold Altaner's evaluation of Augustine: "The great bishop united in himself the creative energy of Tertullian and the breadth of spirit of Origen with the ecclesiastical sensitivity of Cyprian; the dialectical acumen of Aristotle with the soaring idealism and speculation of Plato; the practical sense of the Latins with the spiritual subtlety of the Greeks. He was the greatest philosopher of the patristic era and, without doubt, the most important and influential theologian of the Church in general." Ibid.

[27] *Spiritualty: A Brief History*, 37.

[28] McGrath, 389.

[29] Quoted in Healy, 233.

God became the center of Protestant spirituality.[30] In recent years Luther's theology of

spirituality—justification as union with God—has seen a renaissance in the Finnish

school,[31] which has been working (successfully) to foment ecumenical dialogue and

convergence,[32] most recently between Lutheran and Catholic churches.[33]

Finally, the selected representative for the modern model of spirituality will be

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). Teilhard was a trained paleontologist and Jesuit

Priest whose efforts to reconcile the modern theory of evolution with Catholic teaching

initially resulted in censorship by the Catholic church, yet his writings were later

accepted[34] and incorporated into the documents of Vatican II.[35] Teilhard's teachings have

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[30] Healy, 232.

[31] See Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005). Also, Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, MN: Lit Zwingli and Lurgical Press, 2004); Carl E. Braaten, *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: 1998); Bengt R. Hoffmann and Pearl Willemssen Hoffman, *Theology of the Heart: The Role of Mysticism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Kirk House, 2003): Bengt R. Hoffmann's *Luther & the Mystics* (Augsburg Publishing House: 1976). Volker Leppin, "Luther's Mystical Roots" in *Martin Luther: A Christian Between Reforms and Modernity (1517–2017), ed.* Alberto Melloni (Boston, MA: Hubert & Co, 2017).

[32] Karkkainen, 7–9.

[33] One example of ecumenical convergence is the Finnish school's contribution to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, which was signed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church in 1999. Bruce L. McCormack, "What's at Stake in Current Debates over Justification?" in *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates*, ed. Mark Husbands, and Daniel J. Treier (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 95.

[34] Specifically, it was Henri de Lubac, Teilhard's friend and Vatican II *periti* (theological expert), who worked to clear Teilhard of any hint of unorthodoxy and establish him as an influential Catholic thinker. Fergus Kerr, "Henri de Lubac" in *Key Theological Thinkers: From Modern to Postmodern*, eds. Staale Johannes Kristiansen and Svein Rise (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 207.

[35] Justo Gonzales calls him "the most original of the Vatican II theologians." *The Story of Christianity*, 450. And Wolfgang Smith believes Teilhard's thought was such a key component at

since been positively referenced by notable Catholic leaders such as Pope John Paul II,[36]

Joseph Ratzinger,[37] and the present Pope Francis.[38] Catholic theologian and scientist Ilia

Delio is perhaps Teilhard's most vocal disciple, having written seventeen books that, in

one way or another, support Teilhard's spiritual vision. Delio calls Teilhard "the new

Elijah, calling forth a new path of salvation in the twenty-first century."[39] Indeed,

Teilhard's impact on Christian spirituality from the time of Vatican II to the present has

been, in the words of Wolfgang Smith, "deep, pervasive, and lasting."[40] In fact, Smith

believes Teilhard's influence has permanently altered the church to the point that "in

certain respects and to some degree [the Church] has in fact turned Teilhardian."[41]

   After analyzing the hermeneutical presuppositions of spirituality present in the

classical, Protestant, and modern models, chapter three will present the biblical model of

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Vatican II that it is "difficult to distinguish the impact of Teilhardian beliefs from that of the Council. *Theistic Evolution: The Teilhardian Heresy* (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012), 225.

[36] Pope John Paul II states that "the Eucharist is also celebrated to offer 'on the altar of the whole earth the world's work and suffering' in the beautiful words of Teilhard de Chardin." *Gift and Mystery* (New York, NY: Image, 1996), 73.

[37] "Against the background of the modern evolutionary world view, Teilhard depicted the cosmos as a process of ascent, a series of unions.… From here Teilhard went on to give new meaning to Christian worship: the transubstantiated Host is the anticipation of the transformation and divinization of matter in the Christological 'fullness.' In his view, the Eucharist provided the movement of the cosmos with its direction; it anticipates its goal and at the same time urges it on." *Principles of Catholic Theology* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1987), 334. See also *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000), 28–29 and *The Unity of the Church*, vol 1. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 23.

[38] More recently, Pope Francis has referenced the contribution of Teilhard in his encyclical *Laudato Si* ("on Care for our Common Home").

[39] Ilia Delio, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2013), xvi.

[40] *Theistic Evolution: The Teilhardian Heresy*, 225.

[41] *Theistic Evolution: The Teilhardian Heresy*, 225.

spirituality through a phenomenological[42] study of the OT Exodus narrative that explores

the divine-human relation as articulated in the sanctuary-covenant structure. Specifically,

this will be developed through seven mountain meetings presenting God's sequential and

incremental model for spiritual union with man. Finally, chapter four will briefly

summarize and compare the four models—classical, Protestant, modern, and biblical.

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[42] For a definition of the phenomenological method see footnote 15.

CHAPTER 2

CLASSICAL, PROTESTANT, AND MODERN MODELS OF SPIRITUALITY

The Philosophical Foundations of Christian Spirituality

Before delving into our study of traditional Christian spirituality—as viewed

through the classical, Protestant and modern models—it is important to first understand

the philosophical origins of spirituality. The concept of Being that posited an ontological

separation between true reality (defined as timeless) and the temporal realm of the senses

was first introduced by Parmenides (540–485 BC).[43] This perspective held that humans

could know truth only by negating sensory things, a concept that was termed the *via

negativa* or way of negation.[44] Plato (c. 428–348 BC) later expanded this concept by

introducing two distinct worlds: an earthly physical world of the senses and a heavenly

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[43] Raul Kerbs, *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo: Las Presuposiciones Filosoficas de la Teologia Cristiana: Desde Los Presocraticos al Protestantismo* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014), 77. While other Greek philosophers speculated about the physical world and cosmology, Parmenides discovered the "proper theme" of philosophy, the Entity, defining it as timeless, one, uncreated, imperishable and perfect. Julian Marias, *History of Philosophy* (New York, NY: Dover, 1967), 20, 22. And it was Parmenides' interpretation of the Entity as timeless—as well as his *via negativa*—that directed the entire course of western philosophy and theology from the presocratics to the twentieth century, at which time Martin Heidegger offered an alternate interpretation of Being as temporal. Kerbs, 79. See also Norman Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena* (Berrien Spirngs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 7, 9.

[44] Kerbs, 78–79. See also Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, *Philosophy: History and Problems*, 7th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2008),16.

divine realm of the (presumably) immaterial immortal soul.[45] Centuries later Plotinus (c.

204–270) reintroduced and popularized Plato, adding to Platonic dualism the element of

divine emanation, participation, and *theosis*. Plotinus's philosophy—Neoplatonism—

presented an alternative worldview to Christianity and its narrative of creation *ex nihilo*,

separation from God through sin, and re-union with God through Christ's life and

sacrificial death. Specifically, in place of Christianity's narrative Neoplatonism presented

a worldview centered on the concept of divine emanation in a pantheistic cosmos where a

spark from the divine—composed of the One, the Nous, and the Universal-Soul—

inhabits every level in the hierarchy of beings.[46] Thus, the human soul, which had

detached from the Universal-Soul (and fallen to the earth, becoming imprisoned in a

physical body) could return to the One through the practice of ecstasy—the suppression

of all thought: to see without seeing, and ultimately encounter pure and absolute light.

The main avenues to ecstasy were music, love, and philosophy; any of these might

transport the fallen soul to the realm of the intelligible, and then to union with the One.[47]

It is important to note that by the time of Plotinus, Christianity had already

deviated from the teachings of Scripture, such as interpreted by Paul and the apostles.[48]

The first centuries AD were an age of syncretism, where ideas taken from various sources

were repackaged into new philosophies or religions. For instance, Philo (25 BC–50 AD)

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[45] Kerbs, 108–109.

[46] Neoplatonism's divinity is a graded triad (three hypostases or persons) comprised of the One, the Nous, and the Soul. Plotinus, *Enneads*, xxxi.

[47] Kerbs, *El Problema de la Identidad Biblical del Cristianismo*, 189–192.

[48] Bacchiocchi, "The Lord's Supper in the Early Church: Covenant Extension or Eucharistic Presence?" *AUSSJ* 2 (2017): 35–55.

merged Judaism with Platonism, and Origen (185–254 AD) used Stoic and Platonic foundations as his framework for Christianity.[49] But without doubt the most formidable and influential thinker to combine Platonism with the emerging Christianity was Augustine, with whom we begin our survey of Christian spirituality.

But first a word on the form the chapter will follow. The goal is to present our three models of spirituality—classical, Protestant, and modern—noting how each model views the development of spirituality or human union with God. To accomplish this we will explore each model's answers to life's core questions or ultimate presuppositions—ontology, theology, anthropology, epistemology, cosmology, and metaphysics. As mentioned previously, the reason these philosophical categories must be explored in relation to spirituality is because they comprise the basic presuppositions of reason which the mind *always* assumes, consciously or unconsciously, when thinking about any subject.[50] At the end we will summarize our findings, noting how the above-mentioned mystical philosophical foundations come back to bear fruit in each model. Specifically, we will note that their paradigms utilize and endorse the *via negativa*, timelessness of Being, human dualistic anthropology, two-world cosmology, a suprarational union with God, divinization, and panentheism.[51]

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[49] Stumpf and Feiser, 107.

[50] For example, the cosmological assumption that the world has evolved over time, or that there are two worlds (as in Platonic thought), will lead to a different view of spirituality than if one assumes the biblical creation account and a unified cosmos. For more on the structure of reason in regard the mind's basic presuppositions see Kerbs, 29–39.

[51] The difference between panentheism and pantheism is that the former believes "*all is in God*" (God interpenetrates humanity immanently yet transcends it timelessly), whereas the latter states that "*all is God*" (God as imminent, non-personal, and non-anthropomorphic). The term *panentheism* was coined by Karl Krause (1781–1832), a contemporary of Schleiermacher and Hegel, and popularized by Charles Hartshorne in the mid-twentieth century. As such, while it is anachronistic to refer to anyone prior to the twentieth century as a panentheist, their theology can

The Classical Model: Augustine of Hippo

Interpretation of Being, God and Human Nature

The theology of Augustine (354–430) is so grounded in Platonic philosophy that he has been called "the most influential Christian Platonist of all time."[52] Stumpf and Feiser include this famous theologian in their survey of philosophy noting that "through Augustine Neoplatonism became a decisive element in the intellectual expression of the Christian faith."[53] Indeed, Augustine believed that writings of the Platonists (Neoplatonists actually[54]) "conveyed in every possible way, albeit indirectly, the truth of God and his Word."[55] Thus, following the Neoplatonic view, Augustine defines Being or *That Which Is*, as timeless and immutable.[56] As such, the only way the human subject can

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still be qualified as such. John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 26–27.

[52] Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 34. Cary also notes that it is not, as some scholars have suggested, that Augustine began as a Platonist and then moved on to a mature Catholic orthodoxy, but rather that his Platonism "grew in tandem with his Christian orthodoxy" 35.

[53] *Philosophy: History and Problems*, 112.

[54] Although Plato was the foundation for Augustine's thought, the books he read and the Platonism he encountered in Milan was that of Plato's followers, mainly Plotinus and his pupil Porphyry. Thus, Augustine's philosophy is more properly termed Neoplatonism. Gillian Clark, Introduction to *Augustine's Confessions: Books I–IV* (New York: NY, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 19–20.

[55] *Confessions*, 147.

[56] In Being/*That Which Is* "there is no 'has been' or 'will be', but only being, for she is eternal, but past and future do not belong to eternity." *Confessions*, 188; He [the Creator] has always existed in unchangeable eternity…. time passing away by its changefulness, cannot be co-eternal with changeless eternity." *City of God*, 397. "…in His wholeness everywhere, yet without place, eternal without time, making things that are changeable, without change of Himself, and without passion. *On the Trinity*, in P. Schaff, trans. A. W. Haddan, *St. Augustin: On the Holy*

know the divine subject is through the human soul, which Augustine also considers to be timeless (immortal) and immutable.[57] Because he held that the material body weighs down the immaterial soul,[58] spirituality, or the union with God, is achieved, as we shall see, by rising from temporal things (including the words of Scripture) to the timeless vision of truth, namely God. This is passing from faith to the beatific vision.

<div align="center">Union with God through the Soul's Higher Reason</div>

Specifically, union with God is accomplished through the soul's higher reason. Augustine views the soul as having two parts: a lower reason (*ratio inferior*), which deals with sensory-temporal contents, and a higher reason (*ratio superior*), which has prior knowledge of immutable truth and gives meaning to sensory knowledge. [59] So true knowledge does not arise from the biblical words themselves, but from the soul's higher reason interpreting the eternal ideas thought to be implicit in the words. Thus, when Augustine reflects on Scripture he engages his soul's higher reason, which, as retaining

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Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 3. 88.

[57] "God, then, made man in His own image. For He created for him a soul endowed with reason and intelligence…. And when He had formed the man out of the dust of the earth and had willed that his soul should be such as I have said—whether He had already made it, and now by breathing imparted it to man, or rather made it by breathing, so that the breath which God made by breathing…is the soul." "The human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal." Augustine, *The City of God*, 407, 412; *Confessions*, 147.

[58] After an attempt to attain a vision of God, Augustine laments, "I knew that I was not yet capable of clinging, because the perishable body weighs down the soul, and its earthly habitation oppresses a mind teeming with thoughts." *Confessions*, 138.

[59] See Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 27. Also Raul Kerbs, *El Problema de la Identidad Biblica*, 368–370. This higher reason retains the image of God and thus speaks the human soul as to God himself. *Confessions,* 337–338.

the image of God, speaks to him—or to his "inner ear"—as God. So, for example, when Scripture indicates that God is temporal, Augustine's inner ear loudly rejects that notion and interprets the opposite, namely, that God is timeless.[60]

Not only is the soul elevated (by higher reason) in interpreting Scripture, it is also able to go beyond Scripture and rational thought in order to see God as He is. This ability of the soul to elevate into the divine realm is what allows humans to exit the sensory world and enter God's "eternal now" where they can take in all knowledge with one glimpse of the beatific vision. An example of this is noted by Augustine in his *Confessions*. In his attempt to contemplate God, Augustine begins from material things, then rises to the soul, then goes further to the inner power of the soul, arriving at higher reason and finally to the source of its intelligence—a light which he terms *the Unchangeable*: "And then my mind attained to *That Which Is*, in the flash of one tremulous glance. Then indeed did I perceive your invisible reality."[61] Because Augustine

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[60] In this way, anything Augustine says when spiritually inspired is as if God Himself is speaking. We see an example of this when Augustine questions the Genesis account of creation: "Surely, Lord, this scripture of yours is true, since you are its author and you are trustful—indeed Truth itself? Why then do you tell me that there is no element of time in your seeing, whereas your scripture tells me that day after day you saw that your work was good? I was even able to count these occasions, and find out how many times you looked at your creatures. You reply to me, because you are my God, and *you speak loudly in your servant's inner ear,* bursting through my deafness; you cry out to me "Listen human, creature: what my scripture says, I myself say, but whereas scripture says it in terms of time, my Word is untouched by time, because he subsists with me eternally, equal to myself. *What you see through my Spirit, I see, just as what you say through my Spirit, I say.* You see these things in terms of time, but I do not see in time, nor when you say these things in temporal fashion do I speak in a way conditioned by time." *Confessions,* 13. 29. 44.

[61] *Confessions*, 138–139.

espouses the Neoplatonic teaching that all beings participate, to some degree, in divinity, the road to absolute truth and the vision of God happens by turning within.[62]

Another example occurs later in the *Confessions*, when Augustine recounts having a joint vision with his mother, Monica, as she was waiting to board a boat in Ostia, Italy. After speaking about God's works "we arrived at the summit of our own minds; and this too we transcended, to touch that land of never-failing plenty were you pasture Israel for ever…. We just touched the edge of [*That Which Is*] by the utmost leap of our hearts."[63] Augustine continues in rapturous poetry, speaking of of the need to pass beyond the soul to hear the word of God himself, "not through fleshy tongue nor angel's voice, nor thundercloud, any riddling parable, *hear him unmediated …* and in a flash of thought touch that eternal Wisdom."[64] Here we see that biblical narratives, parables and prophetic utterances must be left behind: "all other visions, so far inferior, be taken away, and this [beatific] sight alone ravish him who saw it, and engulf him and hide him away, kept for inward joys, so that this moment of knowledge—this passing moment that left us aching for more—there should be life eternal."[65]

The Role of Scripture

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[62] "The way to knowing God goes from mutable things to the interiority of the soul, and from there to eternal truths that are in the mind of God. It is an interior way…. Only in his spiritual interiority can man find God, who is a spiritual being." Kerbs, 373. My translation. See also Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[63] *Confessions*, 9. 10. 24.

[64] Ibid. 9. 10. 25. Italics mine.

[65] Ibid.

For Augustine, the divine words of Scripture do not truly reveal God as He is "in himself," but as He is "for us."[66] In other words, they are merely a temporal wrapping for eternal truth, a stepping stool to the "unmediated" vision of eternal Wisdom. We can see Augustine's distinction between God "in himself" and God "for us" in the distinction he establishes between the outward and inner ear. Speaking of the Genesis creation account, Augustine says

> These words of yours, in their temporal expression, would be reported by the *outward ear t*o the mind of any discerning listener whose *inner ear* was attuned to your eternal Word. The mind would then compare the words sounding in time with your silent Word in eternity, and say, "*These are something different, totally different. They are far below me and have no being*, since they are fleeting and ephemeral; but the Word of my God is above me and abides for ever."[67]

In this way Augustine dismisses the reality of God's words in Scripture, which are only "truth for the eyes of the flesh," not truth itself.[68] Moreover, as one begins to contemplate truth itself, Scripture is no longer needed: Anyone "resting upon faith, hope and love . . .

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[66] This distinction between God "for us" and God "in Himself" refers back to Greek dualistic philosophy. Early Christianity adopted Greek dualism in the economic and immanent Trinity, the former denotes God's acts in the history of redemption (time), while the latter refer to God in His eternal ontological essence (timelessness). The immanent Trinity is considered the true God, namely God "in Himself," while all historical actions—including Scripture—belonging to the temporal economic Trinity are looked down on as God "for us," namely an illusion (without being) or, at best, a distortion of the real God. See Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 64–73, 79, and Kerbs, 220. Hence Augustine quotes God as saying that His truth (spoken in the intuitive "inner ear") is "totally different" than what is recorded in Scripture (words having "no being"). Biblically there is a distinction between the fullness of God in Himself (God's transcendence) and what He reveals, yet what God reveals in history and Scripture is not an illusion without being, but is authentic reality. The reality of God's historical acts and words will be explored further in chapter 3.

[67] *Confessions*, 11. 6. 8. Italics mine.

[68] Kerbs, 384, 385.

does not need the Scriptures except for the purpose of instructing others."[69] Yet even

faith is no longer needed when the greater virtue—love—is known: What timelessness is

to temporality, truth is to faith,[70] so that the sum of redemption history is love.[71]

Therefore, Augustine teaches that even an erroneous interpretation of Scripture is

acceptable as long as it foments the greater virtue of love.[72]

It is clear that Augustine's view of Being—and therefore of God—as timeless and

immutable, makes God incapable of interacting in human history let alone cognitively

communicating with humans from within space and time. Instead of the engaged personal

God of Scripture, Augustine's God statically preordains all things in His timeless

eternity, and history merely plays it out.[73] Thus, the Augustinian view of spirituality is

that the divine and human subjects cannot know each other cognitively in real historical

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[69] *On Christian Doctrine* in *St. Augustin's City of God and Christian Doctrine,* P. Schaff, ed., trans. J. F. Shaw (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887). (Vol. 2, p. 534).

[70] In this Augustine is referencing a saying by an unidentified Greek philosopher. *On the Trinity*, 18. 24.

[71] The goal of redemption history is to understand that "the fulfillment and the end of the Law, and of all Holy Scripture, is the love of an object which is to be enjoyed, and the love of an object which can enjoy that other in fellowship with ourselves." *On Christian Doctrine,* 534.

[72] If, on the other hand, a man draws a meaning from [the Scriptures] that may be used for the building up of love, even though he does not happen upon the precise meaning which the author whom he reads intended to express in that place, his error is not pernicious, and he is wholly clear from the charge of deception." *On Christian Doctrine.* 1. 36.

[73] "But if we speak of that 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." *City of God*, 22.2. Augustine's writings are merely what God has preordained or willed for His glory: "Eternity belongs to you, O Lord, so surely you can neither be ignorant of what I am telling you, nor view what happens in time as though you were conditioned by time yourself. Why then am I relating all this to you at such length? Certainly not in order to inform you. I do it to arouse my own loving devotion toward you, and that of my readers, so that together we may declare Great is the Lord, and exceedingly worthy of praise…. See, then, how long a tale I have told you, as best I could and as I truly wanted to, because *you first willed that I should confess to you*, my Lord and God. *Confessions*, 11. 1. 1.

life. Instead to "know" God, humans must surpass everything temporal (including

Scripture) and be suspended in a timeless contemplation of a luminous vision of love that

enthralls the soul.

Cosmology

Thus far we have noted how Augustine's view of Being (timeless, immutable)

conditions his view of God's nature (timeless, immutable), human nature (dualism of

timeless soul and temporal body), and knowing (abstraction of timeless truths/mystical

contemplation). Augustine's view of timeless Being also determines his cosmology

which accommodates evolution through progressive creationism.[74] Reflecting on the

Genesis creation narrative, Augustine explains that God placed rational "seeds" in the

world which would spawn the creation of visible entities when conditions were ripe for

their generation.[75] In short, Augustine's God created a world with the inherent power to

generate new life forms.[76] Though neither Augustine nor any of his contemporaries

believed in the evolution of species (a theory which would be presented by Darwin some

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[74] This is an example of minimal accommodation of evolution. An example of maximal accommodation would be process theology. See Canale, *Creation, Evolution and Theology*, 124.

[75] For Augustine this progressive creation comes about through the agency of angels, both good and evil: "so it is not right to think not only the bad but even the good angels to be creators, if, through the subtilty [sic] of their perception and body, they know the seeds of things which to us are more hidden, and scatter them secretly through fit temperings [sic] of the elements, and so furnish opportunities of producing things, and of accelerating their increase. But neither do the good angels do these things, except as far as God commands, nor do the evil ones do them wrongfully, except as far as He righteously permits. *On the Trinity*, 3.8.13.

[76]James Schaefer, *Theological Foundations for Environmental Ethics: Reconstructing Patristic and Medieval Concepts* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 123. Augustine believed the good angels scatter the rational seeds in the elements and help to create the favorable conditions for their germination and development. Thus, while not creators, they are secondary causes to God's primary creative act.

fourteen centuries later), "yet Augustine developed a theological framework that could accommodate this later scientific development."[77]

Metaphysics

A second and final consequence of Augustine's timeless view of Being is seen in his metaphysics, or the concept that holds all things together, which for Augustine is participation[78] in God.[79] Mutable things exist because there is an immutability in which all things participate.[80] This participation in God is expressed through the Platonic hierarchy of Being, where everything shares some likeness with the Supreme Good, which is God. In this way, Augustine's metaphysics is implicitly panentheistic.[81]

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[77] Alister McGrath, *The Passionate Intellect* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010), 145.

[78] Philosophical participation in God is ontological, panentheistic, and automatic. Biblical partaking of God is relational, voluntary and involves the reflection of His image (*imago Dei*). The human is made in structural (psychophysical unity), relational, and functional/missional resemblance to God (see appendix A). Whether humans reflect God's image (instead of Satan's) hinges on exercising faith in God's words/promises—for it is through these that we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).

[79] "Divine goodness, condescending to the needs of our exile, sends us appearances, as if warning us that what we seek cannot be found here below, but that, by these things, we must return to the beginning from which we came, for if we didn't have our center there, we wouldn't seek these things here." Quoted in Kerbs, 372.

[80] Kerbs, 371.

[81] The term *panenetheism* was coined by Karl Krause (1781–1832) but wasn't popularized until the mid-twentieth century. Hence while it is anachronistic to refer to anyone prior to that time as a panentheist, John Cooper believes the term "implicit panentheism" can apply to anyone whose ideology fits its description. He believes Neoplatonism is "the genuine fountainhead of classical panentheism" and qualifies Augustine under this terminology. He distinguishes five categories of qualification: implicit vs. explicit panentheism; personal vs. nonpersonal panentheism; part-whole vs. relational panentheism; voluntary and/or natural panentheism; and classical (divine determinist) or modern (cooperative) panentheism. John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 26–29.

Panenetheistic participation occurs because God is the sovereign determinant of all things in the hierarchy of being, first spiritual beings; then bodily creatures; and lower inanimate beings at the bottom of the hierarchy.[82] For Augustine, Christ is above other men "not because he was the Truth in person, but on account of the outstanding excellence of his human nature and his more perfect participation in wisdom."[83]

Summary

Augustine believed Neoplatonism was perfectly compatible with Christianity and therefore easily adopted the philosophical interpretation of Being and God as timeless. In his interpretation of human nature Augustine likewise follows the Neoplatonic division of temporal body and immortal soul. Regarding spiritual union, Augustine sees an ascending order of spiritual contemplation. The first involves the soul's higher reason (which has a prior knowledge of timeless truths), and is thereby able to take the temporal wrapping of biblical words and abstract the timeless truth they contain. For this Augustine refers to his "inner ear" which is the soul's intuition whereby God speaks directly to the soul. For the next and greater stage of spiritual union with God the soul must rise above Scripture and thought to contemplate God as He is, in one tremendous glance of pure light. Augustine's cosmology accommodates progressive creationism through the rational seeds God implants in nature and which later become visible entities. This view is coherent with Augustine's metaphysics which views all things as

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[82] Augustine, *On the Trinity*. 3.2.7–8, 3.4.9.

[83] *Confessions*, 7. 19. 25. For Augustine, Christ's incarnation, life and death add nothing to God's reality or knowledge, Christ's ministry only existed to assist human faith. Kerbs, 381.

panentheistically participating, to a greater or lesser degree, in God's immutability. This is accomplished through God's sovereign will, which ultimately determines reality.

The Protestant Model: Martin Luther

Perhaps the most renowned representative of the Protestant model of spirituality is Martin Luther (1483–1540), the beacon of the Reformation. This title is rightly earned for few have boldly confronted ecclesiological injustices like Luther, spoke up tirelessly against heresy, or devoted their life to the translation, interpretation, and propagation of God's word. Yet, while Luther upheld *sola Scriptura* in theory, in practice he was a man of his time and continued to be influenced by the tacit meta-hermeneutical presuppositions undergirding the ideologies of his day.

For one, Luther's theology is significantly indebted to medieval mystical theology, a fact that has only come to light in the past decade or so.[84] A notable influence in this area was Pseudo-Dionysius, whose writings were a central part of "a serious monk's spiritual diet."[85] Luther read Pseudo-Dionysius "to the extent that he knew the Dionysian corpus (which is not very large, about 250 pages in a modern English

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[84] Volker Leppin, "Luther's Mystical Roots" in *Martin Luther: A Christian Between Reforms and Modernity* (1517–2017), ed. Alberto Melloni (Boston, MA: Hubert & Co, 2017), 157.

[85] Karl Froehlich, "Pseudo-Dionysius and the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century" in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 41. Luther's notes on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* mention Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy* several times in a positive light. Also, in his first lecture on the Psalms Luther praised Pseudo-Dionysius, in particular his negative theology which he termed the "most perfect" theology in comparison to what he termed "babbling" scholastic theology. Yet by his second lecture on the Psalms he had begun to be critical of him stating "Dionysius is most pernicious; he platonizes more than he Christianizes." Yet, even while rejecting aspects of Pseudo-Dionysius, Luther continued to be accepting of mystical theology in general, now mostly through Bernard of Clairvaus and Johannes Tauler. Leppin, 159–160 and Froehlich, 43–44.

translation) almost by heart."[86] Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 400s–500s) merged Christianity with Neoplatonism through his mystical theology.[87] Grounding himself on Platonic dualism, Pseudo-Dionysius defines mysticism (spirituality) as the union of the immortal soul with an immaterial timeless God[88] through the way of unknowing (*via negativa*) that transcends all sensory-perception and cognition.[89] His three stages of mystical progression—purification, contemplation and union—climax in advanced contemplation where "the mind must be left behind" to go beyond sense perception.[90] For Pseudo-Dionysius, this is how Moses contemplated God on Sinai.[91]

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[86] Knut Alfsvåg, "Luther as a reader of Dionysius the Areopagite," *Studia Theologica* 65:2 (2011): 101–114, 2.

[87] Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500 AD) defined mystical theology as "symbols and ritual" that lead us beyond a cognitive relation to God to a real union with Him in the "truly mystic darkness of unknowing." Thus, according to Pseudo-Dionysius, mystical theology does not persuade us, it acts on us. See F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone, eds. 3rd ed. rev. "Mysticism, Mystical Theology" *ODCC*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1134.

[88] The Supreme Cause "is not substance, nor is it eternity or time." *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 141.

[89] To reach the immaterial timeless God one must abandon "everything perceived and understood, everything perceptible and understandable, all that is not and all that is, and, with your understanding laid aside, to strive upward as much as you can toward union with him who is beyond all being and knowledge." *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 136, 139.

[90] Paul Rorem, *Pseudo Dionysius, A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 191.

[91] On Sinai Moses "breaks free of them, away from what sees and is seen, and he plunges into the truly mysterious darkness of unknowing. Here, renouncing all that the mind may conceive, wrapped entirely in the intangible and the invisible, he belongs completely to him who is beyond everything. Here, being neither oneself nor someone else, one is supremely united to the completely unknown by an inactivity of all knowledge, and knows beyond the mind by knowing nothing. *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, 137.

A second mystical influence on Luther was a volume he edited and endorsed entitled *Theologia Germanica*.[92] Luther claims that aside from Scripture and St. Augustine this book contained the highest wisdom concerning God, Christ, mankind, and all things.[93] In this writing, the author advocates moving beyond sensory things and even reason to enter into union with God through the power of the soul.[94] This extra-sensory, suprarational union occurs timelessly and allows the participant to enter into the mind of God.[95]

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[92] This volume is thought to have been written in the late fourteenth century by an anonymous author. Luther assumed the author to be John Tauler, an early fourteenth-century German mystic, Neoplatonist, and disciple of Meister Eckhart. Luther was so moved by the writing that he edited two editions, one in 1516 and another in 1518.

[93] In his 1518 edition Luther states "For this noble little book, poor and unadorned as it is as far as wording and purely human wisdom are concerned is all the richer and abundantly precious in true knowledge and divine wisdom. And, if I may speak with biblical foolishness: *Next to the Bible and Saint Augustine no other book has come to my attention from which I have learned—and desired to learn—more concerning God, Christ, man, and what all things are.*" *The Theologia Germanica of Martin Luther*, ed. and trans. Bengt Hoffman (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980), 53, 54.

[94] "It has been asked whether it be possible for the soul, while it is yet in the body, to reach so high as to cast a glance into eternity, and receive a foretaste of eternal life and eternal blessedness. This is commonly denied … But St. Dionysius maintains it is possible." Then quoting Dionysius: "For to behold the hidden things of God, you shall forsake sense and the things of the flesh, and all that the senses can apprehend, and that reason of her own powers can bring forth, and all things created and uncreated that reason is able to comprehend and know, and shall take your stand upon an utter abandonment of yourself…and enter into union with Him who is, and who is above all existence and knowledge." Theologia Germanica, trans. Susanna Winkworth (Mesa, AZ: Scriptoria, 2014), 11–12.

[95] The author explains that, just as Christ's created soul had two eyes—a right for looking into eternity and a left eye for looking at things in time—so too man's right eye was the way in which his soul might look into timelessness to achieve union with God: "And as soon as a man turns himself in spirit, and with his whole heart and mind *enters into the mind of God which is above time*, all that ever he has lost is restored in a moment. And if a man were to do thus a thousand times in a day, each time a fresh and real union would take place; and in this sweet and divine work stands the truest and fullest union that may be in this present time. For he who has attained this, asks nothing further, for he has found the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal Life on earth." Ibid, 12. Italics mine.

A third influence on Augustine was William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347) who rejected the rational methodology (the abstraction of truth through higher reason seen in Augustine and later Aquinas) of the *via antiqua*, developing instead the faith-based, experiential *via moderna* of nominalism.[96] Ockham's voluntarism[97] and "razor" principle[98] also exerted a profound influence on Luther's theology. A fourth and final influence on the Augustinian monk was none other than St. Augustine, whose writings Luther upheld as second only to Scripture.[99]

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[96] Ockham's nominalism drove a lasting wedge of opposition between faith and reason, so that from that point onwards, theology's "sola fideism" was generally viewed as a statement against human reason. Olson, 353.

[97] Ockham distinguished between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* (absolute and ordered power). God's absolute power is noted in the structure of universal laws, yet God is not bound to these. He has absolute power which is untamed and even irrational for humans, so much so, Ockham states, that God could have decided to be incarnated in a rock, a tree or a donkey. Olson, 354–355. We will see this played out in discussing Luther's view of the "hidden God." Biblically speaking, God's omnipotence reveals His absolute power (*potentia absoluta*), yet Scripture demonstrates that God uses His power within a designated order (*potentia ordinata*) of love, reason and truth (1 John 4:8; Isa 1:18, Titus 1:2 cf. Heb 6:18). In other words, God has bound Himself to His word/laws in the structure of universal laws, and He assures us of His constancy by stating that He immutably abides by this established order (Mal 3:6; James 1:17; Heb 13:8).

[98] Ockham's razor was the term later used to designate Ockham's rule of parsimony, that is, the elimination of unnecessary entities. In Luther this will be noted in his reduction of Scripture to Justification by Faith, specifically the letter to the Romans, and the ontological reduction of God to the cross, specifically in the sacramental host that exemplified the Real Presence. Kerbs, 586; Bacchiocchi, 375–376.

[99] See A.G. Dickens, *Martin Luther and the Reformation* (New York, 1967), 22–31; Heiko Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation* (New York, 1966) 127; Daniel Day Williams, "The Significance of St. Augustine Today," in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*, ed. Roy W. Battenhause (Grand Rapids: 1979), 3–5; and Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "On Partaking of the Divine Nature: Luther's Dependence on Augustine," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 22:1 (Spring 1984).

Thus, although Luther may have verbally reviled philosophy[100] through Pseudo-Dionysius, the *Theologia Germanica*, Ockham, and Augustine,[101] he nonetheless adopted the standard philosophical view of Being as timeless.[102]

Interpretation of God's Being

Because, like a domino effect, Being determines the other meta-hermeneutical areas, Luther's view of God is likewise timeless. God knows all temporal events instantaneously and simultaneously.[103] Luther explains,

> For God does not see time longitudinally; He sees it transversely, as if you were looking transversely at a tall tree lying before you. Then you can see both ends at the same time. This you cannot do if you look at it longitudinally. With our reason we cannot look at time in any other way than longitudinally. Beginning with

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[100] Indeed I believe that I owe to the Lord this duty of crying out against philosophy and turning men to Holy Scripture. . ." LW, XV, 236; "Reason [i.e. philosophy] is the Devil's greatest whore; by nature and manner of being she is a noxious whore; she is a prostitute, the Devil's appointed whore, whore eaten by scab and leprosy who ought to be trodden underfoot and destroyed, she and her wisdom . . . Throw dung in her face to make her ugly. She is and she oughtt to be drowned in baptism." *LW* XVI, 142–148.

[101] Luther held that the theology of the entire church (not just Augustine) was "authentic" until 1,100 AD, at which point the church came under a "Babylonian captivity" for 400 years through certain church excesses, such as indulgences and the claim of papal infallibility. Eric Metaxas, *Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World*, (New York, NY: Viking, 2017), 167, 169.

[102] Raul Kerbs notes "in proposing a pedagogical order that goes from the church fathers to the Scriptures, rather than a critical order that goes from the Scriptures to the church fathers, Luther fails to see that through the church fathers he is adopting the philosophical interpretation of the presuppositions of the mind." *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo: Las Presuposiciones Filosophicas de la Teologia Cristiana: Desde Los Presocraticos al Protestantismo*, (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014), 575, my translation. Bruce McCormack has likewise noted that "the Reformers' refusal to engage directly issues of theological ontology made them blind to the extent to which they continued to subscribe to ontological assumptions which could, logically, *only fund a Catholic ordering of regeneration and justification*." "What's at Stake in Current Debates over Justification?" in *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates*, ed. Mark Husbands, and Daniel J. Treier (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 84, emphasis original. See also Canale, *Secular Adventism?*, 38–40.

[103] Kerbs, 575.

Adam, we must count one year after the other until the Last Day. But in God's sight everything is in one heap. What is long for us is short for Him and vice versa. Here there is neither measure nor number. [104]

Because God is timeless and humans exist in time, Luther affirms the two-world dichotomy of Neoplatonism establishing a timeless heavenly world and an earthly temporal world.[105]

Furthermore, the separation between God's timelessness and human temporality means that, like Augustine, Luther separates what God is "in himself" (timeless and hidden) from what He is "for us" (temporal revelation seen in works and darkness). Here is where the Neoplatonic/Dionysian *via negativa* enters. Because God cannot truly reveal himself, He presents two personas or faces, namely, a revealed God and a mysterious hidden God. The revealed God is seen in the gospel of grace exemplified in the teachings of Jesus. This is all we should proclaim and concern ourselves with.[106] The hidden God is a dark, mysterious and omnipotent God who is the first cause of everything that happens in history, even the devil and sin.[107] This hidden God is the basis for Luther's view of double predestination where God has two wills: a revealed gospel will for the salvation of those elected in Christ, and a hidden dark will that predestines everyone else as instruments of evil and condemnation.[108] It is not that God foresees future human actions

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[104] "The Catholic Epistles" in *Luther's Works (LW)*, 55 vols, ed Jaroslav Pelikan et al. (St. Louis, MO/ Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House, Fortress Press, 1958–1986), 30: 196.

[105] *LW*, 26: 8; 30:196.

[106] Roger Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 388.

[107] Ibid, 388.

[108] Luther takes his voluntarism from the philosophy of William of Ockham who distinguished two powers in God: *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*—God's absolute power (hidden timeless will) and His ordered power (revealed will in nature). Anything God does is necessarily good, not because there is any inherent goodness in it, but because God wills it.

and predestines accordingly, God arbitrarily decides who will be saved and who

damned.[109]

Interpretation of Human Nature

The timeless view of Being also determines Luther's interpretation of human

nature,[110] which he views as composed of a temporal body and a timeless soul that leaves

the body at death.[111] This body-spirit dualism is then reflected in Luther's reason-faith

opposition.[112] While Augustine believed man's higher reason to be the function of the

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There is no immutable goodness in God, only His unrestricted suprarational will. It is in this same way that Luther interprets God's omnipotence. Olson, 354–355.

[109] *LW*, 33: 37.

[110] Luther interpretation here is inconsistent, while at times he appears to advocate for a holistic view of man as a union of spirit and body that makes up the soul, his more numerous statements on the dualism of body and soul establish his interpretation as the traditional view of man as comprised of a temporal body and timeless soul. See Kerbs, 593–594.

[111] Luther affirms that at death the soul departs from the body: "If God looks upon you, all the angels, saints, and all creatures will fix their eyes upon you. And if you remain in that faith, all of them will uphold you with their hands. And *when your soul leaves your body*, they will be on hand to receive it, and you cannot perish" *LW* 42: 112, my italics. The immortal soul is also sensorial: "It's true that souls hear, feel, and see after death, but how this occurs we don't understand." 54: 446–447. Speaking of Eccl 3:20 where Scripture says men return to dust, Luther argues that this should not be "twisted to refer to the mortality of the soul." *LW*, 15: 60. There are some, such as Jürgen Moltmann, who maintain that Luther advocates soul sleep. *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology*, eds. John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), 248–249. However, "soul sleep" for Luther is a living sleep: "it is certain that the souls [of the dead] are living and are in peace." He continues noting the difference between physical sleep and soul sleep, saying the former "has no knowledge whatever [. . . .] But the soul does not sleep in the same manner. It is awake. It experiences visions and the discourses of the angels and of God. [. . .] God preserves the waking soul." Thus Luther sees the soul as immortal, and soul sleep as "deeper" than physical sleep, for in it the soul is able to communicate with God. *LW*, 4:313.

[112] For example, Luther states that the immortality of the soul cannot be understood by earthly men, but only by the sons of God who belong to heaven. *LW*, 15: 60. Here we also note how Luther's body-soul dichotomy is reflected in a similar reason-faith opposition, where the immortality of the soul cannot be ascertained by human reason, but only through the gift of divine faith given to the elect.

illumined soul, which enabled it to see the beatific vision, Luther links human reason not

with the soul, but with man's physical and fleshy nature. Luther's hatred of Aristotle's

philosophy[113] results in his rejection of reason in general, which he terms that "great

whore."[114] Luther's opposition between reason and faith, results in a theology that

scholars have often viewed as "incoherent" and "paradoxical."[115] In effect, Luther's view

of faith is the non-cognitive (suprarational) equivalent of Augustine's cognitive

abstraction: both providing a timeless means for humans to reach timeless truth (God).[116]

Thus, while the reason of the flesh/body deals with the temporal sphere, the faith of the

soul focuses on the future timeless realm, essentially negating the past-present-future

scope of redemption history.[117] Ultimately for Luther faith has nothing to do with what is

visible or taught in the revealed Word, instead it deals with invisible things in the

timeless realm, specifically union with God.

Cosmology

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[113] In keeping with the Neoplatonism of his mentors (Augustine and the author of *Theologia Germanica*), Luther is more sympathetic with Plato, finding him closer to Scripture: "It seems that perhaps in Egypt Plato picked up a few sparks of thought, seemingly from the discourses of the patriarchs and the prophets, and for this reason came closer to the truth. *LW*, 1:4.

[114] "[In Luther] reason becomes a wisdom of the flesh that stands in opposition to God; and that fleshy wisdom is philosophy. Behind philosophy, the devil's horns can be detected, for he is always at play, tempting some unwitting soul with his harlot." Kerbs, 569, my translation.

[115] Olson, 386, 387.

[116] Kerbs, 592.

[117] Kerbs, 591.

In keeping with his faith-reason dichotomy, Luther says that even though it is incomprehensible, we must by faith accept the six-day creation narrative in Genesis.[118] However, a consistent reading of this account would uphold the seventh day as uniquely blessed by God above the rest. Instead, Luther posits that humans need just one day of rest, and that any day will do.[119] Furthermore, Luther's two-world cosmology results in the eschatological elimination of the earthly realm in preference for the heavenly realm of timelessness.[120] This negates God's sequential creation as a changeless divine order that was upheld on this earth by the prophets and Christ,[121] and will be retained in the future life.[122]

Union with God

Luther believed the union with God was effected through faith in the eucharistic words of institution ("this is my body"). In the debates with Zwingli, which revolved around the interpretation of Christ's words of institution, Luther fought to establish the

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[118] "Therefore so far as this opinion of Augustine is concerned, we assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorically or figuratively, i.e., that the world, with all its creatures, was created within six days, as the words read. If we do not comprehend the reason for this, let us remain pupils and leave the job of teacher to the Holy Spirit." *LW*, 1:5.

[119] "It is not necessary to observe the sabbath [sic] or Sunday because of Moses' commandment. Nature also shows and teaches that one must now and then rest a day, so that man and beast may be refreshed [. . .] it is clear that he who does not need rest may break the sabbath [sic] and rest on some other day, as nature allows." *LW*, 40: 98.

[120] Luther explains, "Here everything goes by number: hours, days, and years in succession. Now when you want to look at the life to come, you must erase the course of this life from your mind. You dare not think that you can measure it as this life is measured. There everything will be one day, one hour, one moment. *LW*, 30: 196.

[121] Exod 16:4, 23–29; 20:11; 31:17, Isa 56:6, 7, Mark 2:27, 28, Luke 4:16; John 15:10.

[122] Isa 66:23.

real/physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In the process Luther articulated his

Christ-centered panentheism,[123] explaining that Christ's body is physically and

substantially present in *all earthly matter*.[124] Yet he urges believers not to look for Christ

in nature (though He is corporally present there), but only in *Christ's words of institution*

spoken at the mass. This is where salvific human faith must be exercised. For it is faith in

these four words that provides the means to union with God.[125]

Luther explains: "Thus the sacrament is for us a ford, a bridge, a door, a ship, and

a stretcher, by which and in which we pass from this world into eternal life. Therefore

everything depends on faith."[126] When this faith is exercised the believer unites with God

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[123] As mentioned in Augustine, the term "implicit panentheism" can apply to anyone whose ideology fits its description. See Cooper, *Panentheism*, 26–30.

[124] Luther references Eph 4:22: "He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." Luther then argues "not only according to his divine nature, but also *according to his human nature*, he is lord of all things, has all things in his hand, and *is present everywhere* [. . . .] *Christ is all around us and in us in all places* [. . .] he is *present in all creatures*, and I might find him *in stone, in fire, in water, or even in a rope*, for he certainly is there, yet he does not wish that I seek him there apart from the Word, and cast myself into the fire or the water, or hang myself on the rope. He is present everywhere, but he does not wish that you grope for him everywhere. Grope rather where the Word is, and there you will lay hold of him in the right way." *LW*, 36: 342. My italics. Luther also underscored the material omnipresence of Christ: "Heaven and earth are his sack; as wheat fills the sack, so *he fills all things*. And as a seed bears a stalk, an ear, and many kernels [. . .] much more is *Christ able to distribute himself whole and undivided into so many particles*. *LW*, 36: 343. My italics. Two years later (1528), after more rebuttals from Zwingli, Luther further detailed his Christ-centered Panentheism specifying three modes for Christ's omnipresence: circumscribed, uncircumscribed and replete. See Bacchiocchi, "Luther in the Eucharistic Debates: *Sola Scriptura* or the Divinization of Man?" in *Scripture and Philosophy: Essays Honoring the Work and Vision of Fernando Luis Canale*, eds. Tiago Arrais, Kenneth Bergland, and Michael F. Younker, (Berrien Springs, MI: Lithotech, 2006), 371–372.

[125] For Luther everything depended on the word *is* in "this *is* my body," to change it to *signifies* "opens a soteriological distance between Christ and the communicant that contradicts the promise of the words of institution…. [*the eucharist] is the saving function of the sacrament together with the word of God*." Hans-Martin Barth, *The Theoloogy of Martin Luther: A Critical Assessment* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 238. Emphasis mine.

[126] *LW,* 35: 66.

and becomes "a new man in a new world where there is no Law, no sin, no conscience, no death, but perfect joy, righteousness, grace, peace life, salvation and glory."[127] It is through the eating of Christ's body—while exercising faith in the promise/word—that union and salvation is effected:

> The heart cannot eat it physically nor can the mouth eat it spiritually. So God arranges that the mouth eats physically for the heart and the heart eats spiritually for the mouth, and thus *both are satisfied and saved by one and the same food . . .* Perishable food is transformed into the body which eats it: this food, however transforms the person who eats it into what it is itself and makes him like itself, spiritual, alive, and eternal. . . . So, when we eat Christ's flesh physically and spiritually, *the food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself and out of fleshy sinful, mortal men makes spiritual, holy, living men.*[128]

The "Word of God" for Luther was not a rational revelation of God in Scripture (for Luther had repudiated the rational methodology of the *via antiqua*, adopting in its place the faith-based, experiential *via moderna* of Ockham's nominalism). Instead, the Word of God for Luther boiled down to Christ's commands—first baptism and thereafter the eucharist—that connected us mystically with Him.

Metaphysics

Ultimately, what holds all things together in Luther's view is God's sovereign and timeless will in establishing the salvation of the elect and the condemnation of the reprobate—Luther's double predestination.[129] While Luther focuses on the revealed God

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[127] *LW*, 26:8.

[128] *LW* 37:93; 37:87.

[129] "God's love toward men is eternal and immutable, and his hatred is eternal, being prior to the creation of the world, and not only to the merit and work of free choice; and everything takes place by necessity in us, according as he either loves or does not love us from all eternity." *LW*, 33: 199. See also Kerbs, 589–590.

and His *revealed will* (the gospel of justification by faith for the elect) Luther's less prominent hidden God is the one whose sovereign and inscrutable will must not be questioned, but adored.[130] God's timeless double predestination thus becomes the timeless metaphysical principle of immutable unity before which historical time is secondary. All that matters in Luther's system is God's sovereign will,[131] to the utter denial of human freedom.[132] "In effect, just as the conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood [of Christ] is the work of divine omnipotence before which man is passive, the entire work of salvation is the product of the same omnipotence, before which man is passive."[133]

Summary

Although Luther upheld Scripture, he nonetheless adopted the underlying philosophical hermeneutics of the church fathers (such as Augustine) and other early mystical influences (such as Pseudo Dionysius and the *Theologia Germanica*).[134]

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[130] "We must not ask the reason for the divine will, but simply adore it." *LW*, 33: 61.

[131] "God does not lie, but does all things immutably, and that his will can neither be resisted nor changed nor hindered." *LW*, 33: 43.

[132] "Everything that happens, even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently, happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God. For the will of God is effectual and cannot be hindered, since it is the power of the divine nature itself." *LW*, 33: 37–38. "Compelled by inescapable logic [we must] admit that just as we do not come into being by our own will, but by necessity, so we do not do anything by right of free choice, but as God has foreknown and as he leads us to act by his infallible and immutable counsel and power." *LW*, 33: 191.

[133] Kerbs, 592. My translation.

[134] Luther's endorsement of Augustine and Pseudo Dionysius does not encompass all they wrote, but primarily the adoption of their meta-hermeneutical presuppositions (the *via negativa*, God's timelessness, dual human nature, and a suprarational faith). At the meso and micro hermeneutical areas Luther could be critical. Among other things, Luther disagreed with Augustine on ecclesiology, the sacraments, and purgatory. For Luther's critique of Pseudo

Luther's philosophical interpretation was noted in his view of God as timeless, his understanding of humans as a body-spirit dualism, and finally in spirituality (the union of the divine subject with the human subject) as a non-cognitive or suprarational act, where faith in God's timeless words (*hoc est corpus meum*) effects God's real presence and confirms salvation. It was also noted that Luther's metaphysics—the relation of the parts with the whole—centered on God's sovereign and timeless will of double predestination (salvation for some, damnation for the rest), which must not be questioned but only adored. Regarding Luther's cosmology we noted that while he accepts the seven-day creation, he does not believe in a special seventh-day blessing either for this world or the next.

The Modern Model: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Cosmology[135]

Seeking to integrate the doctrine of evolution with Christianity, Teilhard (1881–1955) accommodates the concept of a "creation" within evolution. Instead of God's intentional seven-day creation account in Scripture, Teilhard declares that the earth arose through some "unbelievable accident" millions of billions of years ago.[136] Yet once

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Dionysius see Knut Alfsvåg, "Luther as a reader of Dionysius the Areopagite," *Studia Theologica* 65:2 (2011): 101–114.

[135] I start the study of Teilhard's meta-hermeneutical structure looking at his cosmology rather than Being or God (as done with Augustine and Luther) because, as a theistic evolutionist, his cosmic vision largely determines the other categories.

[136] "Some thousands of millions of years ago, not it would appear, by a regular process of astral evolution, but as *the result of some unbelievable accident* a brush with another star? An internal upheaval?) a fragment of matter composed of particularly stable atoms was detached from the surface of the sun. . . [thus] another heavenly body—a planet this time—had been born." *The Phenomenon of Man*, 67. Italics mine.

chance had unleashed this accidental genesis, God (or intuition)[137] jumped in to direct

evolution (orthogenesis).[138] Teilhard explains the ensuing theistic evolution in terms of

panentheism, "to create is for God to unite. To unite, to form one with something, is to be

immersed in it; but to be immersed (in the plural) is to become a particle within it."[139]

Moreover, Teilhard sees evil as an integral and necessary part of the evolutionary ascent:

"at every degree of evolution, we find evil always and everywhere, forming and

reforming implacably in us and around us [. . . .] evil appears necessarily and as

abundantly as you like in the course of evolution—not by accident [. . .] but through the

very structure of the system."[140] Thus, instead of the biblical system where God creates

everything good (and degeneration occurs only through sin), the structure of Teilhard's

cosmological system not only makes God responsible for evil, it also—in defining evil as

the formative and reformative quality in humans—redefines evil as good, even divine. In

other words, evil propels the divine engine of orthogenesis, so that all things—even error,

darkness, and evil—must be viewed as sacred. And this "truth" is arrived at only by

faith.[141]

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[137] "In every domain, when anything exceeds a certain measurement, it suddenly changes its aspect, condition or nature. The curve doubles back, the surface contracts to a point, the solid disintegrates, the liquid boils, the germ cell divides, *intuition suddenly bursts* on the piled up facts…" *The Phenomenon of Man*, 78. Emphasis mine.

[138] "The earth was probably born by accident; but, in accordance with one of the most general laws of evolution, *scarcely had this accident happened than it was immediately made use of and recast into something naturally directed.*" *The Phenomenon of Man*, 74. Italics mine. Orthogenesis, is the

[139] Quoted in McCarty, 47.

[140] *The Phenomenon of Man*, 312–313.

[141] *The Divine Milieu*, 30, 65. Like Augustine and Luther, Teilhard believes that through persistent faith we can be assured that God is concealed in darkness: "the unleashing of dark moral forces" that terrify us, "in truth, the huge and dark thing, the phantom, the storm—if we

Interpretation of Human Nature

Because of his religious conviction in evolution, Teilhard builds his mystical

theology around man: "I have chosen man as the centre, and around him I have tried to

establish a coherent order between antecedents and consequents."[142] Teilhard sees human

nature (and all matter) as having two types of energy: (1) an external energy which is the

subject of science and (2) an internal energy which he terms *spiritual or psychic* energy,

which is "the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge."[143] Thus we

see that Teilhard views man as the traditional philosophical dualism of an external body

and an internal soul (or psychic energy), which is immortal.[144]

Moreover, Teilhard sees the evolution of man as a process of divine immersion[145]

occurring over four continuing stages, each called a "genesis": (1) *cosmogenesis*,

emergence of primal matter some fifteen billion years ago; (2) *biogenesis,* emergence of

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want it to be so, is you! [. . . .] We have only to believe. And the more threatening and irreducibly
reality appears, the more firmly and desperately must we believe. Then, little by little, we shall
see the universal horror unbend, and then smile on us, and then take us in its more than human
arms." Ibid., 112.

[142] "All science must be referred back to him." *The Phenomenon of Man*, (New York,
NY: HarperCollins, 2002), 29. While traditional theology begins with the doctrine of God and
revelation and then proceeds to understand the world and man "Teilhard begins with the artifacts
of the world, develops an anthropology, and then a cosmic picture…. Teilhard starts with the
empirical data and shows how there is a mystery within this data which holds it all together."
McCarty, 54.

[143] *The Phenomenon of Man*, 55.

[144] Teilhard's friend and advocate, Henri de Lubac, notes that "the entire work of Pere
Teilhard de Chardin can be regarded as one vast proof—renewed in a scientific perspective—for
the immortality of the human soul and the existence of God." *Teilhard Explained*, 41.

[145] God guides the evolutionary ascent "by partially immersing himself in things, by
becoming 'element' and then, from this point of vantage in the heart of matter, assuming the
control and leadership of what we now call evolution." *The Phenomenon of Man*, 293–294.

life occurring some two billion years ago; (3) *noogenesis*, the appearance of thought making primal man human, occurring about million years ago; and (4) *Christogenesis* when the historical Jesus is incarnated,[146] unleashing a process of Christ consciousness which will end in the Omega Point and final exit[147] of humanity into the timeless and immaterial realm of God. In this we see that Teilhard holds to the traditional Platonic two-world cosmology, in which matter and time must be ultimately overcome by spirit and timelessness.

<center>Interpretation of God</center>

Teilhard believes God guides the evolutionary ascent "by partially immersing himself in things, by becoming 'element' and then, from this point of vantage in the heart of matter, assuming the control and leadership of what we now call evolution."[148] This form of theistic evolution is essentially panentheism, in which God is "partially"

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[146] Ronald J. Wilkins, *The Emerging Church: The Story of the Roman Catholic Church from Its Beginnings to the Present* (Dubuque, IO, William C. Brown Pub, 1981), 209.

[147] This final step requires the "breaking away of [the soul] from its temporo-spatial frame to join up with the supreme and universal focus Omega." Ibid, 309. Raul Kerbs defines Teilhard's Parousia as an "exit" that goes beyond space, time and matter into the final convergence. At the final end of the Omega point, matter, space and time are overcome, so that the spirit may exist without those "limitations." Kerbs interprets this as the classic "visio Dei" or vision of God in timelessness, only interpreted in evolutionary perspective, which Teilhard extends beyond what current science would deem scientific. This is because Teilhard seeks to reinterpret and ground the classical view of the immortality of the soul after death through the concept of a growing spiritualization that ends suppressing or overcoming the world of space, time and matter. *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo: Las Presuposiciones Filosoficas de la Teologia Cristiana: Desde la Reforma al Presente.* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, forthcoming).

[148] *The Phenomenon of Man*, 293–294.

immersed in temporal matter, yet transcends timelessly above it.[149] In other words,

Teilhard adopts the traditional interpretation of God (and Being) as immaterial and

timeless.[150] However, in divinizing matter (particularly through the incarnation, baptism,

and passion of Christ) Teilhard holds that the entire universe is the body of God.[151] Thus,

Teilhard interprets God panetheistically, as having an immanent spatio-temporal body

(the world), while still retaining the traditional interpretation of God as a timeless,

immaterial, transcendent Spirit.

God as transcendent Spirit emerges when Teilhard discusses the Omega point—

the "Soul of souls"—which gathers up all time and space in order escape time and

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[149] Teilhard notes that the world is not "one with God" by identification (God becoming all) but by differentiation "(God all *in everyone*)." Phenomenon of Man, 310. Italics original.

[150] It is important to note that the Christ of Teilhard bears little resemblance to the Jesus of Scripture, whom Teilhard disdainfully dismisses in preference for a super-animating cosmic Christ. Teilhard sees Jesus of Galilee as "only a man" and "an equal." Directing himself in prayer to God he states, "Sometimes people think that they can increase your attraction in my eyes by stressing almost exclusively the charm and goodness of your human life in the past. But truly, O Lord, if I wanted to cherish only a man, then I would surely turn to those whom you have given me in the allurement of their present flowering. Are there not . . . enough irresistibly lovable people around us? Why should we turn to Judeaea two thousand years ago? No, what I cry out for…is something very different from an equal to cherish: it is a God to adore." *The Divine Milieu*, 101.

[151] Teilhard prays, "Grant, Lord, that your descent into the universal Species may not be for me just something loved and cherished…but may become for me truly a real Presence. Whether we like it or not by power and by right you are incarnate in the world, and we are all of us dependent upon you…. If I firmly believe that everything around me is the body and blood of the Word, then for me… is brought about that marvelous 'diaphany'." *Hymn of the Universe*, 21–22. "At the inception of the [incarnation] there had to be a transcendent act which, in accordance with mysterious but physically regulated conditions, should graft the person of a God into the human cosmos. *Hymn of the Universe*, trans. Gerald Vann (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1969), 149–150.

space.[152] Throughout history, humans individually unite with Omega upon their deaths,[153] yet there will be a final moment at the end of time—when all things will converge timelessly into Omega so that Christ may be "all in all."[154]

Role of Scripture

Teilhard announces, at the very outset of *The Phenomenon of Man*, that his theology is not built on supernatural revelation but on natural man—man as interpreted through the scientific lens of evolution.[155] In other words, Teilhard observes man as a phenomenon of evolution and from there seeks to accommodate the concept of Christianity. Next, like Augustine and Luther, Teilhard interprets Christianity suprarationally, that is, through the ability of the timeless soul (*psyche*) to intuit timeless truth,[156] and this is the way that Teilhard then reads Scripture. Because Teilhard's aim is to reconcile faith and science, he selects biblical texts that can easily be accommodated with his theistic evolution. These are the following: Eph 4:9 (used to support the

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[152] *The Divine Milieu*, 270–271.

[153] "All round us, one by one, like a continual exhalation, 'souls' break away [from their dead bodies], carrying upwards their incommunicable load of consciousness" to Omega. *The Divine Milieu*, 272.

[154] "Christ, principle of universal vitality because sprung up as man among men, put himself in the position (maintained ever since) to subdue under himself, to purify, direct, and superanimate the general ascent of consciousness into which he inserted himself.… And when he has gathered everything together and transformed everything, he will close in upon himself and his conquests, thereby rejoining … the divine focus he has never left. Then…God shall be all in all." *Phenomenon of Man*, 309–310.

[155] *The Phenomenon of Man*, 29, 33.

[156] For the psyche is "the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge. *The Phenomenon of Man*, 55. Thus, like Augustine, who must tune his soul's "inner ear" to hear God's interpretation of Scripture, Teilhard counsels his readers to "focus [their] *soul's eyes*" in order to see God everywhere. *The Divine Milieu*, 9. Italics mine.

panentheistic descent of God into matter), Col 1:17, 18; 2:10 (interpreted to imply that

the world is the physical body of God, and Christ its head), and Col 2:10 ("Christ is all

and in all," which Teilhard uses to endorse panentheistic evolution).[157] Besides exercising

faith in the unique interpretation of these select texts of Scripture, Teilhard clings to

Christ's words—"This is my body"— in Matt 26:26, Mark 14:22, and Luke 22:19 as the

nucleus of Scripture and fountain of grace. For it is these words that both reveal Christ

and operate salvation. Teilhard prays, "Teach me to adore [the world] by seeing you

concealed within it, O Lord, repeat to me the great liberating words, the words which at

once reveal and operate: *Hoc est Corpus meum*."[158] Thus we see that Teilhard's use of

Scripture is highly selective, interpreted through the intuitive power of the immortal soul,

and guided by the aim of reconciling Christianity with theistic evolution.

Union with God: Completing the Incarnation

From the perspective that God did not enter the world through the historical

Christ (as in Scripture), but through His immersion into every molecule of the material

world, union with God seems to be a given. But this immersion was only the beginning of

an incarnation that is to be completed by humans.[159] After Christ's incarnation, all matter

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[157] McCarty, 99.

[158] *The Divine Milieu*, 112.

[159] Teilhard explains, "the incarnation [of Christ] will be complete only when the part of chosen substance contained in every object—given spiritual import once in our souls and a second time with our souls in Jesus—shall have rejoined the final centre of its completion . . . It is through the collaboration which he stimulates in us that Christ, starting from all created things, is consummated and attains his plenitude." *The Divine Milieu*, 25.

became deified and it is through faith in this deification of matter (supported by the previously mentioned biblical texts) that humans may complete the incarnation of God.

Teilhard distinguishes two ways in which humans are deified or enter into "mystical union"[160] to complete the incarnation. First, humans complete the incarnation through the "divinization of activity." *All* human action, Teilhard states, participates in the creative power of God and perfecting of Christ.[161] Thus, not only noble actions perfect Christ, but rather "*whatever we do*"[162] serves to fulfill our being and Christ's being: "*nothing* here below is *profane* for those who know how to see. On the contrary, everything is sacred."[163] Secondly, humans complete Christ's incarnation through the "divinization of passivity," which Teilhard defines as things that happen to humans, such as illness and aging. Even moral weakness deifies, for God is in every thing and every act.[164] Finally death, which Teilhard defines as "evil itself,"[165] also contains God ("The

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[160] *The Divine Milieu*, 21.

[161] *The Divine Milieu*, 26.

[162] *The Divine Milieu*, 26. Emphasis original.

[163] *The Divine Milieu*, 30. Emphasis original. Elsewhere Teilhard adds, "the effort of mankind, even in realms inaccurately called profane, must, in the christian [sic] life, assume the role of a holy and unifying operation." Ibid., 65.

[164] "The more deeply and incurably the evil is encrusted in my flesh, the more it will be you that I am harboring." *The Divine Milieu*, 57.

[165] For Teilhard, evil is an integral and necessary part of the evolutionary ascent—it forms and reforms humans: "at every degree of evolution, we find evil always and everywhere, forming and reforming implacably in us and around us [. . . .] evil appears necessarily and as abundantly as you like in the course of evolution—not by accident [. . .] but through the very structure of the system." *The Phenomenon of Man*, 312–313. Not only does Teilhard make God responsible for evil, but in making evil the reforming quality in humans he redefines evil as good, even divine. In other words, even the profane is sacred. *The Divine Milieu*, 30, 65.

Master of death"[166]), because it is through death that God "will make us undergo the required dissociation [that we may] become fullness and unity in God."[167] An event in which man will exit time and space in order to become fully one with God.[168]

This way of seeing the world—through the divinization of human activity and passivity—is what Teilhard calls the upward climb to the "highest possible spiritualization."[169] But this mode of seeing is achievable only by faith: "The mystery will be accomplished. But on one condition: which is that *we shall believe* that *this* [the incarnate Word] has the will and the power to become for us the action—that is to say the prolongation of the Body of Christ."[170]

Metaphysics

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[166] *The Divine Milieu*, 48, 67. It is interesting that Satan and sin are not mentioned, instead God is the origin of all weaknesses and failings, both physical and moral. However, Teilhard later refers to "the powers of evil" stating that "in the course of the spiritual evolution of the world, certain conscious elements in it, certain monads, deliberately detached themselves from the mass that is stimulated by your [God's] attraction" (Ibid, 124). Yet it is possible that God, through the process of orthogenesis, directed these monads to deliberately detach, since, in the end, Teilhard believes evil to be a necessary and reforming part of the evolutionary incarnation (*The Phenomenon of Man*, 312–313). Also, Teilhard believes God has "forbidden" him to hold that anyone will be damned. Thus, he concludes *The Divine Milieu* by offering a prayer that all will be saved. *The Divine Milieu*, 126–127.

[167] *The Divine Milieu*, 56.

[168] Raul Kerbs defines Teilhard's Parousia as an "exit" that goes beyond space, time and matter into the final convergence. At the final end of the Omega point, matter, space and time are overcome, so that the spirit may exist without those "limitations." Kerbs interprets this as the classic "visio Dei" or vision of God in timelessness, only interpreted evolutionary perspective, which Teilhard extends beyond what current science would deem scientific. This is because Teilhard seeks to reinterpret and ground the classical view of the immortality of the soul after death through the concept of a growing spiritualization that ends suppressing or overcoming the world of space, time and matter. *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo: Las Presuposiciones Filosoficas de la Teologia Cristiana: Desde la Reforma al Presente.* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, forthcoming).

[169] *The Divine Milieu*, 71.

[170] *The Divine Milieu*, 111. Emphasis original.

Teilhardian metaphysics centers on the eucharistic Christ[171] as agent for the

cosmic incarnation and transubstantiation. Just as Luther's sacramental theology teaches

that Christ's physical body was infused in the material realm (panentheism),[172] Teilhard

likewise posits that the world is the body of Christ.[173] And as the world evolves and

grows through human actions, the incarnation of Christ into the world evolves and

grows.[174] Teilhard states that while this approach may seem overly mystical or esoteric, it

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[171] Teilhard asks, "What is . . . the concrete link which binds all these universal entities together and confers on them the final power of gaining hold of us? The essence of Christianity consists in asking oneself that question, and in answering: 'The Word incarnate, our Lord Jesus Christ." *The Divine Milieu*, 94.

[172] For Luther, this Christological immersion in matter occurred after Christ's ascension. *LW*, 36: 342.

[173] For Teilhard, Christ's immersion in matter—transforming it into the "mystical body of Christ"—occurred at His baptism: "Who can fail to perceive the great symbolic gesture of baptism in this general history of matter? Christ immerses himself in the waters of Jordan, symbol of the forces of the earth. These he sanctifies. And as he emerges . . . he elevates the whole world. Immersion and emergence; participation in things and sublimation." Teilhard then elevates a prayer to matter, "Matter, you in whom I find both seduction and strength . . . I surrender myself to your mighty layers, with faith in the heavenly influences which have sweetened and purified your waters. *The virtue of Christ has passed on to you*." *The Divine Milieu*, 80–81. Italics original. Teilhard also mentions the birth of Christ and His passion as moments in which Christ became incarnate into the world. *Hymn of the Universe*, 21–22; 149–150.

[174] *The Divine Milieu*, 25. Teilhard prays, "Grant, O God, that when I draw near to the altar to communicate, I may henceforth discern the infinite perspectives hidden beneath the smallness and the nearness of the Host in which you are concealed. I have already accustomed myself to seeing, beneath the stillness of that piece of bread, a devouring power which, in the words of the greatest doctors of your Church, far from being consumed by me, consumes me." Ibid, 99. Harvey Egan notes that "the divine milieu takes on the human-divine face of Jesus. Just as Christ said 'this is my body and blood' over the eucharistic bread and wine, Teilhard sees the entire evolutionary process as a cosmic communion. One can find Christ in all things because all things are in fact becoming the cosmic Christ." Harvey D. Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 579.

is simply another path leading to "the great highway opened up in the Church by the onrush of the cult of the Holy Eucharist."[175]

For it is the eucharistic Christ that controls and determines (as a continuing force of orthogenesis), all events and actions in history, "at every moment the eucharistic Christ controls…the whole movement of the universe."[176] It is Christ's sacramental action (extending even to hell), that sanctifies all matter. . . the eucharistic Christ is the "ultimate determinant."[177] And the teleological aim of the eucharistic Christ is to unite all things with God in eschatological transubstantiation: "As our humanity assimilates the material world, and as the Host assimilates our humanity, the eucharistic transformation goes beyond and completes the transubstantiation of the bread on the altar."[178] Thus, the eucharistic Christ is not only the agent of divine incarnation into the world, but also the agent for the transubstantiation of the world into God. Like Luther's metaphysics of double predestination that determines the eschatological outcome of humanity, the eucharistic Christ of Teilhard is an equally determining force for human history, yet the damned are ultimately not consigned to the fires of hell, but mercifully allowed to participate in the final Pleroma.[179] Finally, the human response to Christ's sovereign act

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[175] *The Divine Milieu*, 96.

[176] *The Divine Milieu*. 98.

[177] *The Divine Milieu*, 99.

[178] *Ibid.*

[179] "The fallen spirits cannot detract from the perfection of the Pleroma. Each soul that is lost in spite of the call of grace ought to spoil the perfection of the final and general union; but instead, O God, you offset it by one of those recastings which restore the universe at every moment to a new freshness and a new purity. The damned are not excluded from the Pleroma, but only from its luminous aspect, and from its beatification. They lose it, but they are not lost to it." *The Divine Milieu,* 125.

of incarnation-transubstantiation is simply, as in Luther, *faith* in the sacramental word. For it is these words that reveal Christ and operate salvation. Teilhard prays, "Teach me to adore [the world] by seeing you concealed within it, O Lord, repeat to me the great liberating words, the words which at once reveal and operate: *Hoc est Corpus meum*."[180]

In short, what holds all things together in Teilhard's metaphysics is the eucharistic Christ as the panentheistic orthogenesis which directs the progressive incarnation of all things into Christ's mystical body (Christogenesis), and the final consummation of all things into Omega's timeless mystical soul (Pleroma). This cosmic/divine operation is "the quantitative repletion and the qualitative consummation of all things: it is the mysterious Pleroma, in which the substantial *one*, and the created *many* fuse without confusion in a *whole* which, without adding anything essential to God, will nevertheless be a sort of triumph and generalisation of being."[181]

Summary

Unlike most theologies that begin with a doctrine of God, Teilhard's theology begins with an evolutionary cosmology where matter arises by chance. Shortly thereafter God decides to physically immerse himself in it and take the reins to direct the evolutionary ascent—using evil as a necessary and integral component of divinization—with the goal of exiting time and space to enter into timeless and immaterial oneness with God. Evolutionary man is defined by Teilhard as a compound composed of a visible external part and a psychic and divine inner part. In other words, Teilhard interprets man

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[180] *The Divine Milieu*, 112.

[181] *The Divine Milieu, 95.*

according to the traditional philosophical dualism of a temporal body and an immortal soul. The divine subject of Teilhard's spirituality—God—is likewise interpreted as having a temporal body (the world) and a transcendent timeless Spirit. Union between the human and divine subjects occurs as humans exercise faith in an evolutionary God (who divinizes matter and human experiences, both activities and passivities) and a Eucharistic Christ (who is the "ultimate determinant,"[182] controlling the movements of the entire universe). And it is this Eucharistic Christ, who determines the panentheistic evolutionary ascent to the timeless Pleroma, that comprises the metaphysical center of Teilhard's theology.

Conclusion

In this chapter we explored how spirituality—the relation between the divine and human subjects—has been traditionally interpreted through the meta-hermeneutical presuppositions of philosophy. We saw that all three models (classical, Protestant, and modern) define God as timeless and immaterial, and humans as a duality made up of a temporal body and an immortal soul. Moreover, all three models define union with God (spirituality) in terms of the soul's non-cognitive or suprarational ability. Thus, while all three models utilize Scripture, the selective texts they employ are not interpreted cognitively and in relation to the rest of Scripture (*tota Scriptura*), but through the immortal soul's ability to perceive timeless truth, either through higher reason (Augustine), faith (Luther), or intuition (Teilhard). Metaphysically, the spiritual glue that holds the system together is the hierarchical view of God as panentheistically determining

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[182] *The Divine Milieu*, 99.

all things. In contrast, the biblical model of spirituality offers vastly different interpretations of God's nature, human nature, spiritual union. In following, chapter three will explore these interpretations from an OT perspective, beginning with God's self-revelation to Moses at the burning bush.

CHAPTER 3

THE BIBLICAL MODEL OF SPIRITUALITY: EXODUS AND THE SANCTUARY-
COVENANT STRUCTURE

The Biblical Structure of Theological Reason

As demonstrated in chapter two, each of the three major models of Christian

spirituality—classical, Protestant, and modern—start from the philosophical

presupposition of Being as timeless and immutable. In *A Criticism of Theological*

Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions, Fernando Canale studies

the structure of theological reason, precisely revealing that Christian theology has

traditionally been constructed on the basis of a timeless ontology,[183] so that the classical

structure of theological knowledge has been, and continues to be,

"onto→theo→logical."[184] In other words, the philosophical interpretation of Being

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[183] Canale deconstructs the philosophical foundations of Christianity's classical and scientific models through their selected representatives, Thomas Aquinas and Rudolf Bultmann, respectively. See ibid., 164–282. His conclusion is that Catholicism and conservative Protestantism have followed the Aristotelian-Thomistic interpretation of reason, while liberal Protestantism followed a Kantian interpretation of reason, both of which are built on the presupposition of Being as timeless. Thus it is evident that Christianity (whether classical/conservative or scientific/liberal) has assumed that there is only one possible interpretation of Being/reality—the timeless one. However, the hypothetical character of reason (meaning that what reason knows is not certain, but merely possible) implies that there is not one fixed interpretation of reality (ibid., 54–57). It is Canale's phenomenological analysis of Exodus 3:14–15 that then provides an additional possible interpretation of Being/reality, one which is grounded in Scripture and diametrically opposed to the traditional interpretation.

[184] *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 49–51. Other scholars who have criticized the onto-theo-logical approach are Iain D. Thompson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education* (England: Cambridge University Press,

(ontos) as timeless then determines the interpretation of God's being (theos) and the epistemological framework (logos), that is, how we know God.[185] However, in a phenomenological reading of the biblical text the reader must suspend or bracket out all prior interpretations—a process termed *epoche*—in order to allow the text itself to reveal its own meaning.[186] When the biblical student takes seriously God's words in Scripture, a different structure of theological reason emerges, one in which God Himself is allowed to define His being, reality in general, and the manner in which He desires to be known. This structure, as we shall see, is theo→onto→logical.

Interpretation of God and Being: Exodus 3:14, 15

Undoubtedly, the principal reason many believers espouse a mystical, non-cognitive spirituality is due to their understanding of God's nature. If God is viewed as a timeless being (the perspective of the three models of spirituality studied in chapter two), humans must devise a way to relate to Him beyond time and space. And here is where many twist Scripture to support the immortality of the soul, thus providing the needed link between temporal humans and a timeless God. Yet, as we will explore in this chapter, Scripture presents a God that reveals Himself exclusively in time and space through a dynamic personal and missional relationship with His covenant people.

2005); Jeffrey W. Robbins, "The Problem of Ontotheology: Complicating the Divide Between Philosophy and Theology," *The Heythrop Journal* 43 (2002), 139; Henry L. Ruf, *Religion, Ontotheology, and Deconstruction* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1999); and Merold Westphal, *Overcoming Onto-Theology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2001).

[185] Ibid., 298–382.

[186] Ibid., 296–297.

Because a biblical theology of spirituality—the relation between God and humans—requires us to understand the nature of each participant, the first grounding step will be to define the nature of God's Being.

Throughout Christian history, scholars have viewed God's self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 3:14, 15 as the *locus classicus*[187] of God's Being and offered various interpretations of its meaning. Fernando Canale has explored these viewpoints as part of his quest to unveil the biblical structure of reason.[188] His analysis reveals that all historical interpretations view God's self-revelation as either an ontological statement on the timelessness of God's being, or as a historical interpretation of God's temporal manifestation indicating His presence but ignoring His ontological being. Canale sees this as an "uncritical surrender" to traditional ontological presuppositions that view God as timeless and transcendent. Instead of selecting one of the previous interpretations, he offers a phenomenological analysis of Exodus 3:14, 15 to show how God's name not only points to His presence, but also reveals His nature—His very ontic being.

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[187] Canale states that this pericope of God's self-revelation is a foundational reflection on being similar to that of Parmenides in ancient Greek thought and Martin Heidegger in contemporary philosophy. *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 292.

[188] Canale organizes his analysis in relation to Thomas Aquinas. Interestingly, prior to Aquinas some Jewish exegetes viewed Exodus 3:14, 15 as a metaphysical expression viewing the divine name in a present-past-future *temporal* formulation. Augustine and Pseudo Dionysius, on the other hand, followed a timeless understanding of the text. In a similar vein, Aquinas' interpretation emphasized the ontological components of existence, universality and simplicity—and timelessness. After Aquinas, there were three positions: (1) the classical ontological interpretation where God exists timelessly yet has a historical manifestation; (2) the refusal interpretation which views God's statement as a barrier against any human definition of His being and (3) the historical interpretation. Within the historical interpretation three trends focus either on the past, with God as Creator ("hiphil" theory), on the future, with God as Liberator ("future" theory) or on God's continuous presence throughout history ("presence" theory). Yet all three forms of the historical interpretation radically deny any ontological interpretation of Exodus 3:14, 15. Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 298–319.

The Reality of God's Appearance and Words

Canale begins his analysis by studying the concept of God's appearing in Exodus 3:2 just prior to the revealing of His name: "And the Angel of the LORD[189] appeared to him [Moses] in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush." Here both the English and Hebrew word for "appeared" (*yera'*: "to be seen," "to let oneself be seen," "to appear") are in the reflexive tense indicating that *Yahweh* is both the subject and object of the action. In other words, God both *performs* and *is* the appearance, indicating that the self-revelation is God's ontic[190] reality. God *Himself* appears.

Yet God's ontic presence is not in the bush or the fire Moses sees, but *exclusively in the words that confirm His presence*.[191] Canale elaborates,

> "…God's 'ontic presence' is not to be identified with the material place of His appearance, but with His words. Hence the meaning of God's Being does not have to be related to the material place in which His presence appears but, as in Exod 3:2, 14, 15, basically to God's words. The Being of God is 'present' and at the same time 'revealed' through and in His words."[192]

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[189] The flow of meaning in the text support this conclusion that the Angel is Yahweh Himself. See ibid. 356 as well as E. C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978) 85.

[190] "Ontic" refers to presence itself and grounds ontology as the study of what is.

[191] Interestingly, four hundred years earlier, when God establishes the original covenant with Abraham (Gen 15) He also appears in fire and words (vs. 17–21). And, a year after appearing to Moses in fire and words (the text under consideration here), God likewise reveals Himself to the Israelite nation in fire and speaks the words of the covenant: "And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. *You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form, you only heard a voice*. So He declared to you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone" (Deut 4:12–13, italics mine).

[192] Ibid, 360, 361.

Said differently, "the ontological dimension appears as soon as Being is expressed in words, that is, as it becomes 'logos'."[193] But before we move on to explore the meaning of the words that confirm God's presence we should note one critical point to our study of union with God: In revealing Himself as appearance and confirming it through words God is establishing the reality of what is perceived through the senses. In this simple act—and especially in the words connected to it—God demolishes all dualism based on Greek philosophy which separates the ideal (spiritual world of true reality) from the material world of appearances (illusion). What we see and hear are not mere appearances that point to something "real" beyond themselves, but are themselves real. As such, entirely absent is any *chorismos*[194] or gap between what God is in Himself and His appearance, which is the prevailing view of Christian spirituality. Instead, Scripture

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[193] Ibid, 338. Perotti has similarly stated "The primary occurrence which makes theology metaphysical, which makes it a logic of the *theos*, is the way of responding to revelation. As soon as this encounter with God becomes objectified by its being verbalized in accordance with the rules of logic (categorical proposition) theology becomes metaphysics" Janes L. Perotti, *Heidegger on the Divine: The Thinker, the Poet, and God* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972), 64.

[194] This *chorismos* refers to the Platonic two-world dualism that early Christianity used to create a duality in God called the *economic Trinity* and the *immanent Trinity*. The economic Trinity refers to God's acts in the history of redemption (time), whereas the immanent Trinity refers to God in His eternal ontological essence (timelessness). This latter is considered the true God, namely God "in Himself," while the historical actions—including Scripture—of the temporal economic Trinity are looked down upon as God "for us," namely an illusion or, at best, a distortion of the real God. Scripture removes this gap: the world we see and God's acts in it are real. See Canale, *Basic Elements*, 79 and Raul Kerbs, *El problema de la identidad bíblica del cristianismo* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014), 220. It is important to note that the elimination of the Platonic *chorismos* does not remove God's transcendence. God's manifestations never reveal the fullness of His Trinitarian being, yet they are nonetheless a *real* manifestation of His being, not an illusion (Job 26:14). In other words, there is no gap between what God reveals of Himself and who He is, rather the greatness of His being is progressively revealed throughout Scripture—and will continue to be revealed, in inexhaustible measure, throughout eternity.

presents Being and reality as what can be known in the created world through the senses.[195] The God who appears and reveals Himself *is* the real God.

God's Name as Temporal, Relational, and Missional

After appearing to Moses (3:2), God reveals His mission: to send Moses to Pharaoh in order to liberate the enslaved Hebrew nation. At this point Moses asks for specifics, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" (v. 13). It is now that God reveals His name, I AM THAT I AM. Canale unpacks the meaning of these words by studying the triple parallelism found in 3:14 and 15:

a) and	b) said	c) Elohim	d) to Moses	e)	f)	g)
a1) and	b1) said	c1) Elohim	d1) to Moses	e1)	f1) I AM WHO I AM	g1)
a2) and sent	b2) said	c2) He	d2) you	e2) say this to the people of Israel.	f2) I AM	g2) has me
a3) and sent	b3) said	c3) Elohim	d3) to Moses	e3) say this to the people of Israel	f3) YAHWEH the God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob	g3) has me

THIS is MY NAME forever and THIS is my memorial throughout all generations.

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[195] Ibid, 358. It is important to note (as will be developed in following) that God is analogically temporal, which means that the scope of His existence transcends full human comprehension. Yet Scripture reveals that what can be known of God by humans is perceived through their senses and not through some intuition or mystical power of the presumably timeless soul.

In the above sentences, the only construction that changes concerns God's name (f1, f2, f3). As such, it provides a window to understanding who God is and how He desires to be known. First, as previously seen, God appears and establishes His presence—His real ontic Being—in the here and now (f1), indicating that God is in the *present*. God also reveals Himself as actively involved in the *past* through His covenant relationship with the fathers (f3). Finally, God climactically extends the scope of His self-revelation into the *future*, "This is my name forever and this is my memorial throughout all generations" (Exod 3:15c). The Hebrew for "memorial" (*zkr*) means to "remember," "think (about)," "declare," "proclaim." God not only links the current revelation of His name to His past revelation to the fathers, but opens it up to every future self-revelation that is to come,[196] a point that will be critical in the ensuing mountaintop revelations.

Furthermore, the same temporal extension of God's being through the past, present, and future is emphasized in God's following words,

> Gather the elders and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me saying, I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod 3:16, 17).

These same thoughts and words were already expressed, almost verbatim, in verses 6–9 prior to the revelation of God's name, so that the revelation of His name—its meaning and memorial for all generations—is presented as the center of a chiastic structure. In

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[196] Ibid, 344. Similarly, Blackburn states, "Not only does 3:14–15 not exhaust the meaning of the name, but it suggests a future orientation," 39. As we shall see, this is precisely what God will do through the soon-to-be-revealed sanctuary-covenant structure (which points to the later incarnation and sacrifice of Christ).

both instances (3:6–9 and 3:16–17) we see God further defining His Being as one that

spans over the three temporal extensions of past, present and future: He is the God of

their fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (past)—who has visited the Israelites in their

bondage (present) and is promising to lead them in freedom to the Promised Land

(future).[197] In other words, God's presence as revealed by His name is defined as

embracing the three temporal extensions of past, present, and future.

Thus we see that God is not timeless (the prevailing view of God in Christian

tradition) but rather that He reveals Himself in and through His historical spatiotemporal

actions and interactions with His covenant people. In this way God is temporal. However,

unlike all created beings who have a clear beginning and end, God is eternal (Ps 103:15–

17; Micah 5:2). He is from eternity past and continues forever so that we cannot begin to

fathom the stretch of God's years (Job 36:25). Furthermore, God relates to time

differently than we do (2 Pet 3:8; Ps 90:4). Thus God's temporality is similar, yet

markedly different from ours, and may be qualified as being "infinitely analogical."[198]

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[197] Interestingly, this revelation of God is echoed in the Revelation of Jesus Christ when He exclaims that He is the One "who is and who was and who is to come" Rev 1:8, 4:1–8.

[198] Time may be viewed *univocally*, where time is the same for God and creation; *equivocally*, where time is totally different for God and creation; or *analogically*, where God's time and that of creation share similarities, but remain different in parts. See Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 64–73. The use of analogy (*analogia entis*, or analogy of Being) was first proposed by Aristotle and assumed the *via negativa* (timelessness) of Parmenides and two-world theory of Plato. Thus Aristotle's analogy sought to connect the temporal world to the presumably timeless realm through a hierarchy of compounds, where everything (except God, who was pure act and timeless) was a greater or lesser compound of temporality and timelessness. The implication of the traditional *analogia entis* thus implies that, on an epistemological level, Scripture too must be a temporal-timeless compound, so that the job of the interpreter is to extract and retain the timeless spiritual element to the total disregard of the temporal "wrapping" (literal word). There is, however, a second interpretation of *analogia entis*, one that is grounded philosophically on Martin Heidegger's interpretation of Being as temporal, and interpreted biblically in Fernando Canale's phenomenological study of Exodus 3:14 (noted in the main text). This temporal interpretation of the *analogia entis* is as rational as the timeless Aristotelian

Besides revealing Himself as infinitely and analogically temporal, God here also reveals His name/Being as essentially relational in nature (f3), first in the plural "your" referring to the Hebrew nation (and Moses as its representative) and then in reference to the fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This second element of the divine nature, one that is closely connected with God's analogical *temporality* and dependent on it for its expression, is God's loving *relationality*. John Peckham notes that Scripture's affirmation "God is love" indicates that "all that God *is* and *does* must be understood as congruent with divine love. That is, God's character is itself love, and God is essentially loving. The members of the Trinity have always been involved in a love relationship (compare John 17:24). Intratrinitarian love is thus essential to God, a product of God's Trinitarian, essentially related nature."[199]

interpretation, yet remains faithful to the *sola Scriptura* principle. In other words, the Bible presents a macro-hermeneutical (philosophical) alternative to classical philosophy that advances a stable foundation for constructing theological doctrine. Thus, theologians have the choice of grounding their rational study of Scripture on (1) many sources (classical/timeless *analogia entis*), which sidesteps the literal word of Scripture in search of the hidden spiritual meaning or (2) base their theology on the philosophy/macro-hermeneutics of Scripture alone (biblical/temporal *analogia entis*), which upholds and understands the biblical text at face value (phenomenologically). See also, Canale, *A Chrisiticm of Theological Reason*, 362–364; Raul Kerbs, *El problema de la identidad bíblica del cristianismo* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014), 148; Marcos Blanco evaluates Open Theism's univocal view of God and offers a biblical alternative in "The Function of Analogy to Interpret the Biblical Records of the Person and Works of God: A Hermeneutical and Methodological Approach" (PhD Thesis, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2019). For a study on the improper use of analogy (which he terms "unintelligible analogy"), see Tiago Arrais, "A Study on the Influence of Philosophical Presuppositions Relating to the Notion of the God-human Relation Upon the Interpretation of Exodus" (PhD Thesis, Andrews University, 2015), 68.

[199] John Peckham, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015), 252. God's relational loving nature is therefore first the driving force behind creation, (necessitating a divine-angelic Mediator to translate the wisdom of a transcendent God to an immanent creation) and second, God's relational loving nature is also the driving force behind redemption (necessitating a divine-human Mediator to reveal God's character and provide salvation). The latter historical event—redemption—is the mission God is currently engaged in and the co-mission He is extending to Moses, which has as its aim dwelling together in sanctuary-covenant union. Thus we see how God's analogical temporality is the foundation of His loving

Finally, the triple parallelism also reveals that God's name is intimately connected to mission (g2, g3)—He is the Sending God: First He sends Moses and later He will send the entire Israelite nation, all in order to prepare the world for the final and climactic sending of His own Son. God's mission is so connected to His name that they are basically one. In other words, "Being and mission are so essentially linked that there is, so to speak, a missionary dimension of Being and an ontological dimension of mission. Being is the very foundation of Moses' mission."[200] Likewise, W. Ross Blackburn has explored the connection of God's name to mission throughout the Exodus narrative and argues that "the Lord's missionary commitment to make himself known to the nations is the central theological concern of Exodus."[201]

In summary God's (1) infinite and analogical *temporality* is the necessary context for (2) His intimate *relational Being* to (3) engage in the *mission of redemption* which will re-unite His creation with Himself. Thus we see that biblical spirituality—the union or re-union of humans with God—must be grounded on God's self-revelation of His name as an infinitely and analogically temporal, relational, and missional Being.

Interpretation of Epistemology

As noted above, God's ontic revelation in Exodus 3:14, 15 presents the ontological framework for God (who He is), by showing that He reveals Himself

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relationality (as love must necessarily have time in which to express itself), and that God's loving relationality is the foundation for His mission of redemption.

[200] Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness and Primordial Presuppositions*, 342.

[201] Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 15.

temporally in history through His past-present-future actions and words. Canale then uses the complimentary text of Exodus 6:2–8 to ground God's epistemological dimension, that is, how we are to know and relate to Him. At this juncture in the narrative Moses is discouraged because the mission on which God has sent him is not going well. Instead of granting freedom to the Israelites, Pharaoh has oppressed them with more work.[202]

Discouraged and confused, Moses questions God, seeking to better understand Him. In response, "God spoke to Moses and said to him: 'I am the LORD.[203] I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [*El Shaddai*], but by My name LORD [*Yahweh*] I was not known to them" (6:3). Why does God say that He was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name of *Yahweh* if these patriarchs had referred to this name on more than one occasion (Gen 15:2, 7, 8, 18:14, 22:14, 27:20, 27)? Two points help clarify this question: first is the form and second is the name of the revelation. God says He "appeared" (*ra'ah*) to the patriarchs as God Almighty (*El Shaddai*), but that He was not known (*yada'*) as Lord (*Yahweh*). Both verbs are in the *niphal* representing that God is both the one who *causes* the cognitive activity and *is* the

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[202] It is interesting that Pharaoh's hardness of heart is in large portion the result of his declaration, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go" (Exod 5:2). The implication here is that a knowledge of the Lord leads to obedience and freedom, whereas ignorance of God leads to rebellion and finally death (which is what the Egyptians ultimately suffered). This is precisely why God wants Israel to know Him, that through them He might reveal Himself to the world and grant their freedom and salvation. Cf. Blackburn, 39–40.

[203] This first clause may be seen as a continuation of the parallelism in 3:14 referring to God's being, the second clause speaks about the knowledge of God. Also, just as the reflexive sense was used in 3:2 in introducing the ontological dimension of God's being, 6:3b uses *yada* in its *niphal* form as a revelational term referring to the essence of God. In other words, God Himself is the one who causes the cognitive activity.

object to be known cognitively.[204] However, it is important to note that appearing is a less intimate revelation than allowing oneself to be known. Furthermore, the first time in Scripture that *El Shaddai* appears is at Abraham's second covenant meeting (Gen 17:1). Here *El Shaddai* reaffirms that Abraham's promised son would come from his wife Sarah, then ninety years old. Abraham laughs incredulously and begs God to consider Ishmael as the son of the promise (Gen 17:16–18). But *El Shaddai*, in His very name, reveals that nothing is impossible for the Almighty, and that the covenant was to be grounded on faith. In short, *El Shaddai* is the omnipotent God who voices the miraculous covenant promise to the patriarchs. *Yahweh Elohim*, on the other hand, is first mentioned in Gen 2 as coming down to personally shape Adam's body and tenderly breathe His own breath into his nostrils. Thus *Yahweh* is introduced in Scripture as the intimate God who visits humans on a personal level and walks among them, an intimacy that was soon severed due to sin.[205] Yet the beauty of Exodus 6:3 is that what the omnipotent *El Shaddai* promises to Abraham—the personal *Yahweh Elohim* will now accomplish in the sanctuary-covenant process through which He will again dwell among them and restore their spiritual union with Him.

Scholars likewise explain the apparent inconsistency of Exodus 6:3 via the *beth essentiae*, so called because the preposition "by" (indicated by the second letter of the

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[204] In saying that He did *not* reveal Himself in this ontological way to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, He is essentially affirming that He revealed Himself precisely in this way to Moses. This construction (*noda ti* in *niphal*) occurs only one other time in Scripture in Ezekiel 20:9. Here God affirms that He had revealed Himself—both causing the revelation and serving as its object—to Moses and, by extension, the Israelite nation.

[205] For a study of God's name as *Yahweh Elohim* in the creation account see Marla Samaan Nedelcu, "'Let us Make אדם': An Edenic Model of Personal Ontology." (PhD Thesis, Andrews University, 2018), 142–160.

Hebrew alphabet, *beth*) reveals the essence or character of the name: "[by] my name" ([*be*]*shemi*).[206] In other words, God had revealed Himself to the patriarchs in the character of God Almighty (*be'el shaddai*) and they were semantically aware of His personal creation name (*Yahweh*). Yet they had not witnessed, that is, they did not yet *yada'* the essence of this personal God. So in 3:13 Moses asks "what is His name [character]?" In other words, what is *Yahweh* capable of doing for us in this dire situation? And God answers by revealing His essence (or ontological character) of faithful covenant God who cares intimately and will deliver powerfully.

The rest of the text indicates the way in which God is to be known.[207] The construction is very similar to what we have seen in chapter three: It is in the context of the *past* covenant (v. 4); where God hears the Israelites' *present* cries (v. 5) and promises *future* redemption (v. 6). Here we see that the past covenant is the foundation on which the Israelites presented their present pleas and the basis on which God heard them and remembered to fulfill His covenant. God ends by emphasizing the cognitive dimension to Moses once again, "then you shall *know* that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord."

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[206] Walter C. Kaiser, *The Christian and the Old Testament*, (Pasadena, CA: Walter Carey Library, 1998), 66; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §11.2.5e, and *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* ed. E. Kautzsch, tr. A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), §119*i*.

[207] It is meaningful that this construction (*nodati* in *niphal*) occurs only one other time in Scripture, Ezekiel 20:9, where God refers back to the Exodus redemption. This seems to underscore God's self-revelation in the Exodus sanctuary-covenant structure as the climax of His OT revelations.

Once again God's Being is expressed temporally as He extends Himself, through His actions, in a past-present-future flow. Furthermore, He asks that in order to know Him we remember what He has said and done so that we might believe His future promises. In other words, the cognitive process must approach the "extended" subject matter (God's acts, presence, and promises in history) and gather them in "tension" in order to unite the various parts of God's revelation in a harmonious whole. This is theological knowledge. What is amazing here is that this is directly counter to every other theology and philosophy that claims oneness with God must be reached mystically, that is, beyond our cognitive reach. Instead, Scripture reveals that "it is God's Being in itself in His mystery that is opened up for human knowledge."[208]

Interpretation of Human Nature

From the previously identified interpretation of God's Being as infinitely and analogically temporal, the historical dimension of the sensorial realm is elevated into the sphere of true Being. There is therefore no need for man to hedge his bets on an immortal soul within his mortal body that can, somehow, transcend time and matter in order to commune with God because, biblically, the timeless realm does not exist. Instead, time and history are the precise and only avenues through which God reveals Himself and through which He desires to be known, thus discarding any need for a timeless soul—which is both unsupported by Scripture and diametrically opposed to its teachings. And while the interpretation of human nature is not explicit in God's revelation to Moses, it is inferred in His reference to the previously established covenant with Abraham, Isaac and

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[208] *Criticism of Theological Reason*, 373.

Jacob. Indeed, God's redemptive covenant with the patriarchs was established due to the fall of humanity after creation. As such, a brief excursus into the Genesis account of the creation and fall will assist in understanding human nature and spirituality.

At Creation

In Genesis 2:7 we read that "God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being/soul." Here we see that the ontic composition human beings (*nephesh*) is dust + breath (*ruach*[209]). *Ruach* is thereby the animating principle of physical life, so that all living creatures—including animals—have the breath of God in them (the capacity to live or exist), which sustains their lives.[210] It is important to clarify that this does not imply any divinization or divine element in humans, but simply the God-given ability to breathe and experience life. When this breath animates the formed dust, a living *nephesh* results. Although both *being*

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[209] Although the Hebrew for breath/spirit in Genesis 2:7 is the rarely used *neshamah,* its synonym *ruach* is the more commonly used term for breath/spirit. The difference between the two is that while *ruach* is a more dynamic breath/spirit, *nashaman* denotes a more peaceful physical breathing, perhaps used in Genesis 2:7 to underscore the intimate and tender nature of God's creation of Adam. Ibid., 67. Doukhan also notes that *neshamah* (instead of *ruach*) may have been used to create a play on words between *neshamah*/breath and *nephesh*/being so that "'man become a living being' would mean that he became a living, breathing being." *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary: Genesis*, 74.

[210] For texts establishing the *nephesh* of animals see Gen 1:20, 21, 24, 30; Ps 104:29–30, cf. Job 34:14–15. See also Jacques B. Doukhan, *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary: Genesis* (Silver Spring, MD: Pacific Press Review & Herald, 2016), 74.

and *soul* have traditionally been interpreted as timeless or immortal,[211] Genesis 2:7 states

that man is a *living* soul, implying that the soul is mortal.[212]

Beyond receiving the *ruach* of God necessary for existence, Genesis 1:26 states

that Adam and Eve were also created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). This meant that

their beings (*nephesh*) were created with qualities analogically similar to those of God's

being. So while all creation bears the stamp of its Creator, possessing an analogically

temporal, relational, and missional being,[213] humans, bearing the *imago Dei*, were formed

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[211] Although Platonism used *pneuma*-spirit and *psyche*-soul interchangeably, Scripture distinguishes between these. The *soul* (Hebrew *nephesh* /Greek *psyche*) is used exclusively for humans, while *spirit* (Hebrew *ruach* /Greek *pneuma)* is used to reference God and humans. *Immortality or Resurrection?*, 80. So while the human *nephesh* is mortal and his *ruach* removable, God's *Ruach* (Holy Spirit) is eternal, for God alone has immortality (1 Tim 6:16).

[212] In the last two centuries biblical scholarship has established the wholistic view of the human being. Davidson notes, "[i]t has become increasingly apparent that Genesis 2:7 (like 1:26) articulates a wholistic view of the human being; he/she does not *have* a soul, but *is* a soul, a psychophysical unity." "The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning: Gen 1–11*"* in *"What are Human Beings that You Remember Them?": Proceedings of the Third International Bible Conference Nof Ginosar and Jerusalem, June 11–21, 2012,* ed. Clinton Wahlen (Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2015), 23. Italics original. For biblical texts on the mortality of the soul/*nephesh* see Gen 37:21; Lev 19:28, 21:1, 11; 22:4; Num 5:2; 6:6 11; 9:6, 7, 10; 19:11, 13; 31:19; 35:15, 30; Deut 19:6, 11; Job 11:20; Ezek 18:4, 20; 22:25.

[213] Because God defines Being, everything that "is" partakes in the general ontological category of Being. From God's own self-revelation (theology defining ontology), we see that all that exists is *spatiotemporal, relational, and missional (see appendix A)*. It is in this way that all nature reflects the glory of God (Ps 19:1–4; Rom 1:19–20). Ellen White describes the relationality and mission of nature as follows: "Even now [post fall] all created things declare the glory of His excellence. There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself. No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but *ministers to some other life*. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but *has its ministry*." *The Desire of Ages,* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 20. My italics. It should be noted that this reflection of God's glory in creation differs vastly from the philosophical "participation in God" described in the models explored in chapter 2. Philosophical "participation in God" is ontological, panentheistic, and automatic. In contrast, the biblical "partaking of God" is relational, voluntary and involves the reflection of His image (*imago Dei*). Biblical creation is made *ex nihilo* and analogically resembles the divine Creator, yet it does not participate in God's being (as in Neoplatonic emanation). Humanity's ability to reflect the *imago Dei* hinges on exercising faith in God's words/promises—for it is through these that we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).

with unique structural, relational, and functional elements resembling those of God. The *structural* category includes similarities in mental (reason, morality, free will, creativity, etc.) and physical characteristics; the *relational* category specifically cites the images of marriage and sonship; and the *functional* category includes representing or reflecting God as overseers of His creation.[214]

The Fall

At creation the original default setting of humans was spiritual union with God, yet the creation covenant also established their spiritual freedom (Gen 2:16). Adam and Eve could choose to remain connected to God through obedience to His covenant,[215] or relinquish their union through disobedience. Thus, unlike the predestination argued by

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[214]Davidson summarizes seven major interpretations of the *imago Dei*: (1) the Spiritual/Immaterial View argues for a dualistic view that rejects any materiality in God, focusing instead on spiritual/mental similarities such as free will, reason, and objective morality; (2) the Physical View sees the image (*tselem*) of God as external; (3) the Male-Female Relationship View focuses on Genesis 1:27b and the sexual dynamic; (4) the Broader Relational Views includes all human relationships so that God's image is reflected primarily in relationships. Others include "sonship" in relation to Seth's creation in Adam's "image" (Gen 5:1–3); (5) the Royal-Functional View centers on the element of human "dominion" over the animal world (Gen 1:26); (6) the Ecological View, extends human dominion to all creation; (7) and the Multifaceted View sees each interpretation as portraying a facet of the *imago Dei*. Likewise, Davidson's biblical analysis upholds a wholistic multifaceted view of the *imago Dei*, "[t]he creation narratives apply the concept of *imago Dei* to the whole person, including structural, relational, and functional elements." "The Nature of the Human Being," 22.

[215] This creation covenant is the prototype of all later covenants. Indeed, Scripture speaks of one covenant—the *everlasting* or *eternal* covenant (Gen 9:16; 17:7, 13, 19; Num 18:19; 2 Sam 23:5; 1 Chron 16:17; Ps 105:10; Isa 24:5; 55:3; 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezek 16:60; 37:26). A covenant is an agreement between two parties (Amos 3:3). But Hosea tells us, "As at Adam, they have broken the covenant" (6:7). All subsequent covenants were therefore renewals of the everlasting covenant that had been broken by human faithlessness (Jer 31:32; Heb 8:8). One day, these promises or types would find their reality or antitype in Christ. This would be the new covenant because it held the reality to which all prior covenants pointed (Heb 9:11–15). But of all prior covenant renewals, the sanctuary covenant at Sinai is unique on at least two grounds: 1) It seeks to fulfill the initial covenant promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and 2) It is foundational in carefully and extensively articulating—through seven mountaintop meetings— God's nature as analogically temporal, intimately relational, and passionately missional.

the previously viewed models of Christian spirituality, Scripture presents a loving God who creates free moral agents (humans and other intelligent beings) with the liberty to return His love or spurn it, to obey His law of freedom or assert their will over His.

Prior to the creation of the human pair, Lucifer—who had been created perfect in the heavenly sanctuary mountain (Ezek 28:14, 15)—had willfully perverted the image of God in himself and, through his lying deceptions, led a third of the angelic hosts in rebellion against God (Ezek 28:16, Rev 12:4),[216] Cast down from the sanctuary mountain of God, Satan was permitted to tempt the new human race only at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16–17, 3:1–3). Most tragically, in trusting the false words of Satan over and against God's explicit true words, Adam and Eve adopted the false function/mission of Satan thus severing their spiritual union with God. In other words, Eve chose to believe that she was immortal, united spiritually to the serpent, and adopted his mission of spreading falsehood. The perfect gift of God—His image—had now been marred. Adam and Eve had chosen, by faith in the words of Satan, to accept the image of a new lord, with whom they were now bound in spiritual union.

Promise of Restoration

Although Eve and Adam had rejected the spirit/*ruach* of faithfulness to God, accepting in its place "a spirit [*ruach*] of harlotry,"[217] God mercifully permitted them to

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[216] It is important to note that God showed mercy to Lucifer. Ezekiel tells us that iniquity was found in Lucifer and that he progressively became filled with lies and violence. And it was after this time that He openly sinned by rejecting God and His forgiveness (28:15–16). Ellen White also tells of God's longsuffering patience: "A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of ruin into which they were about to plunge" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 39).

[217] Hos 4:12, cf. Ezek 13:3, Prov 25:28.

retain their physical being (breath of life), and promised to help restore His image in them and thus reunite them spiritually with Himself. This promise—voiced first in Genesis 3:15—revealed God's missional heart and unleashed His plan of redemption.[218] Thus, before the fall God's *Ruach* initiated creation and union between humanity and God, and after the fall God's *Ruach* initiates the restoration of spiritual union so that humans (*nephesh*) might walk in His truth and minister to others, thus reflecting the *imago Dei* again.[219] Finally, the tangible method by which God accomplishes this spiritual renewal is through His Word which is identified with God's *Ruach*[220] as both inspiring the writing of Scripture (revelation-inspiration) and its positive reception by its hearers/readers (illumination).[221]

In sum we see that Adam was created as a mortal spiritual soul sustained by God's *ruach* in two dimensions: *physically* (being-in-physical-dependence-to-God), a

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[218] Because of this promise David could boldly pray: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit [*ruach*] within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit [*Ruach*] from me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners turn back to you" (Ps 51:10–11).

[219] Similarly, Ezekiel uses *ruach* three times—11:19–20; 18:31; 36:26—as the principle of regeneration God places in believers at conversion for the purposes of walking in God's statutes and observing God's ordinances.

[220] See the parallelism in Ps 33:6: "By the word of Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath [*ruach*] of his mouth." The word of God and His breath/*ruach* exhibit creative power, compare with Ps 147:18.

[221] Just as at creation God breathed/*ruach* to create the soul/human, every text in Scripture was likewise God breathed/*theopneustos* (2 Tim 3:16) for the purposes of restoring a right relationship with God and equipping humans in mission to others. Thus Psalm 119 reveals that for those who hear or read God's spirit-filled word it cleanses (v. 9) revives (vv. 25, 107, 154), strengthens (v. 28), gives hope (v. 43), life (v. 50), comfort (v. 76), salvation (v. 123), understanding (vv. 130, 169), and guidance (v. 133). The Spirit/*Ruach* is so interconnected with the word of God that in Heb 4:12–13 the living word that convicts the heart of its readers is identified with the very eyes of God. And Revelation 19:13 reveals that the name of Jesus is, in fact, "the Word of God."

quality shared by other living creatures; and *spiritually* (being-in-spiritual-dependence-to-God), a quality unique to humanity and through which they reflected God's image as spatiotemporal, relational, and missional beings. After Eve and Adam perverted their spirits by choosing to believe Satan, God's Holy Spirit/*Ruach* intervened[222] to restore covenant relationship. And the most poignant way this restoration would be accomplished involved the creation of the sanctuary structure, in which the Holy Spirit played a significant role (Exod 35:30–36:1). In fact, there is a clear correlation between the three categories of the Genesis *imago Dei* (structural, relational, and functional) and the three categories of God's self-revelation in Exodus (spatiotemporal, relational, and missional). This congruence (see appendix A) reveals that the sanctuary covenant was intended to both reflect and restore God's image/name in humanity.

Spirituality Articulated through Seven Mountaintop Meetings

At this point in the Exodus narrative (chapters 3 and 6) God has revealed Himself as a historical, relational and missional God. Now He specifies the aim of His mission: To restore spiritual union through His sanctuary-covenant plan. Thus, the first Song of Moses, sung after God has led Israel through the Red Sea, culminates in anticipation of this dwelling together/sanctuary plan:

> You will bring them in and plant them
> In the mountain of Your inheritance,
> In the place, O LORD, which You have made
> For Your own dwelling,
> The Sanctuary, O LORD, which
> Your hands have established.

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[222] The work of the Holy Spirit is implied in God's Genesis 3:15 promise to put enmity between Satan and humanity. For since that time the Spirit works to unmask Satan's deceptions and encourage faith in God's word, to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement (John 16:8).

"The LORD shall reign forever and ever" (Exod 15:17–18).

The above passage reveals the reason God has freed the Hebrew nation from slavery: to plant them in the mountain that is His dwelling or sanctuary.[223] This purpose is in harmony with God's earlier statement to Moses at the burning bush, "And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, *you shall serve/worship God on this mountain*" (3:12, my emphasis). In other words, the sign or proof that Moses was God's servant is that they would return to the very place where God had appeared to him, to Mount Horeb, also known to as Mount Sinai (Exod 19:11; Deut. 4:10)—the mountain or dwelling of God.

This is significant because it establishes the place of God's self-revelation to Moses as the foundation from which He will continue to reveal Himself through His covenant in a series of mountaintop meetings that will culminate in His union with the Israelite nation—in God planting the people in His sanctuary. The way in which this series unfolds is riveting as it shows a clear progression, with each meeting building on the former one. Just as in the beginning God created the world in a progressive six-day sequence and rested on the 7th (Gen 1–2:1), we see a similar pattern in the creation of God's sanctuary-covenant with the Hebrew nation accomplished in 6 progressive

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[223] As will be elaborated further in this study, the sanctuary-covenant encompasses more than salvation for the Jews, it articulates God's plan of salvation for the whole world, with the Jewish nation serving as ambassadors to draw all people to God. This is noted in germ form in God's call to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and was evinced, in part, by the acceptance of some Egyptians who joined the exodus (in theory, leaving behind their gods and choosing instead to follow the God of the Hebrews, Exod 12:38). We will next see God voicing His missional intent explicitly in the first mountaintop meeting (Exod 19:6).

meetings leading up to the 7th which will unite them with God and grant them rest.[224]

However, while in the creation of the world the devil had no part, in the creation of the covenant-sanctuary he wreaks havoc. For what he most dreads is that God will unleash His divine redemptive plan and dwell with humans, offering them freedom from sin. Thus, at the end of the 6th mountaintop meeting, at the very climax of the marriage sequence and just prior to the nation's union with God, Satan "steals the bride." As such, instead of the 6th meeting being followed by climactic 7th, we will explore two "detour" mountaintop meetings that deal with the nation's apostasy and ultimately restore them— through Moses's intercession and God's longsuffering mercy— into the sanctuary-covenant relationship.

1st Meeting (Exod 19:3–9a): The Proposal

The Bible often compares God's relationship with His covenant people to a marriage, and the initial stages as a betrothal.[225] As such, the seven-step mountaintop sequence will follow this analogy, becoming more evident with each step. Here (Exod 19:3–6) we note God's marriage proposal (through Moses) to the Israelite nation:

> [3] Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: [4] 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. [5] Now if you obey me

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[224] Richard Davidson has also noted a similar parallel between the creation of the world in Genesis 1, where God speaks—"and God said"—six times, followed by the seventh day of rest, for on the Sabbath God rested. Similarly, God's specification to Moses regarding the sanctuary are divided into six sections (Exod 25:1–30; 30:11–16; 30:17–21; 30:22–23; 30:34–37; 31:1–11) each beginning with "The Lord said to Moses" and concluding with a final seventh section (31:12–17) dealing with the Sabbath.

[225] See Jer 2:2; 31:31–32; Isa 16; 54:5; 62:1–5; Hos 2:19; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:27; Rev 19:7–9. See also Rick Deadmond, *The Betrothed Bride of Messiah: Making Herself Ready for The Bridegroom*, (United States: Xulon Press, 2007).

fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, [6] you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." (Exod 19:3–6).

Just as in God's initial self-revelation to Moses at the burning bush, we see Him again presenting Himself as the God of the past, present, and future. He harkens back to the past ancestors ("house of Jacob") but now adds the recent evidence of His ardent love in saving them from the Egyptians (v. 4). Furthermore, this God of the past is eager to make a covenant with them in the present, so that *if* they obey Him fully (v. 5), in the future He will bless them above all people and use them to fill the earth with the knowledge of God (v. 5).

In this we continue to see the unveiling of the relational and missionary God. The One who originally revealed His very being in intimate connection to mission now makes His missionary heart explicit in stating the purpose or *telos* of the covenant structure, which is twofold: 1) to have an intimate relationship with Israel as His special treasure so that 2) in knowing Him, they might, in turn, become his ambassadors—a nation of priests—extending God's missionary grace and truth to all nations. An important element of this missional union is its conditionality, in other words it is not a command but a proposal: God says, "*if* you [choose to] obey My voice and keep my covenant…" In other words, the nation is free to choose whether or not they want to enter into a covenant relationship with Him. It is as if God is proposing a union of hearts and mission. And while the Pentateuch does not explicitly articulate God's relationship with Israel in terms of Husband and wife, it is nonetheless a strong thematic undercurrent that becomes explicit throughout the rest of Scripture. As such, the first step in the nation's union with God may be viewed as God's marriage proposal to His beloved Israel, declaring His

intent for their union (tender exclusivity and mission). He then awaits her response, hoping that His past actions of love, mercy, and redemption towards her will inspire her to respond with an enthusiastic "yes!" After Moses relays *Yahweh*'s words to Israel they unanimously respond, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (v. 8). Moses then ascends Sinai to relay the nation's affirmative response to enter into covenant with God. While this is technically another ascent, I do not include it in the seven sanctuary-covenant meetings because its purpose is to finalize the prior meeting (Israel's response to God's proposal[226]) rather than to initiate a new step in the sanctuary-covenant structure. As a final step in this first meeting God appoints Moses as the mediator—or friend of the Groom—through whom He will communicate with His bride (v. 9). Similarly, today God extends this covenant proposal to all, hoping that His prior acts of love will inspire our faith and cause us to accept His call for missional union. He then points us to His Mediator, Jesus Christ, asking us to believe all His words as faithful and true.

<center>2nd Meeting (Exod 19:9b–13): Consecration</center>

Now that the betrothal is official God reveals the next step in the sanctuary-covenant process: The people must prepare themselves to be in the presence of God and hear Him speak the covenant.

> [10]And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes [11] and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. [12] Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain

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[226] Umberto Cassuto notes "the verb brought back [וַיָּשֶׁב *wayyāšebh*] is used in the sense of replied [תְּשׁוּבָה *t^ešūbhā* = 'a reply'], for the proposal was in the nature of a question that required an answer." *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 227–228.

shall surely be put to death. [13]No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows—whether man or beast, he must not live.' Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up the mountain.[227]

The Israelites must know that God Himself is the Author of the covenant's stipulations so that they will respect Moses's teachings and admonitions. God is not only inviting the Israelites to hear Him speak the covenant, He is inviting them to ascend the lower half of the mountain, indicating a closer proximity to Him and their willingness to accept the priestly mission given in Exodus 19:6.[228] But first they are required to (1) spend two days self-introspection, searching their hearts for any impurity[229] and sanctifying themselves and (2) undergo an outer cleansing symbolic of their inner commitment.[230] In the betrothal process this would be akin to the bride's preparation for her wedding day, when she searches her heart to confirm her commitment, grooms her body, and prepares her

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[227] Most English translations of v. 12 supply the word "not," which does not appear in the Hebrew. Instead the Hebrew text encourages *all* the Israelites to ascend the lower half of the mountain—*after* their 3 days of consecration and *after* the ram's horn sounds, as verse 13 indicates. Considering the parallels between Sinai and the sanctuary, God would here be inviting all Israel to become a kingdom of priests, as per His original intent in 19:6. Unfortunately, Israel failed to fully consecrate themselves to God as was evidenced in their fear to ascend Mt. Sinai and their request that Moses go up for them (Deut 5:5). See Davidson, "Gracia ardiente: La misericordia de Dios reflejada en el pacto sinaitico" en *"La palabra que yo te diga, esa hablaras": Estudios selectos en el Pentateuco*, ed. Merling Alomia. (Lima, Peru: Ediciones Theolgica-Universidad Peruana Union, 2017), 91–92.

[228] Angel Rodrigues notes the structural parallels between Mt. Sinai and the sanctuary indicate that "the ancient Israelite tabernacle was to be a perpetuation of the Sinai experience." He divides Mt. Sinai into three parts, each representing a sanctuary compartment. The area surrounding the mountain represents the sanctuary's courtyard, the lower half of the mountain would be representative of the Holy Place, and the highest part would be symbolic of the Most Holy Place. Only Moses, as the high priest, was invited to ascend to the highest pinnacle (Exod 24:2). For the parallels between Mt. Sinai and the sanctuary see Angel Rodriguez, "Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24 (1986): 127–145.

[229] Cf. Ps 139:23; 2 Cor 13:5.

[230] 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 12:14; 1 John 3:3.

wedding clothes for the big day when she will marry her beloved.[231] The current

application for those wanting to reach spiritual union with God is to practice humility and

repentance, emptying the heart of any selfish thoughts, aims, or lifestyles in order to

make room for God's indwelling.

<center>3rd Meeting (Exod 19:20–20:17): God's Vows</center>

On the morning of the third day Sinai was covered in a cloud, and resonant with

thunder and lightning. Soon the trumpet sounded very loud, the sign for all Israelites to

ascend the mountain (19:13b). But instead of going up as God had requested, "all the

people who were in the camp trembled" (v 16b) and Moses went up alone, "I stood

between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord, for you

were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain" (Deut 5:5). The

people's fear and refusal to accept God's invitation to go up the mountain revealed their

failure to consecrate themselves to God, as He had requested (19:10). Thus, any

presumption on the part of some, possibly the priests[232] or heads of family, to ascend in

an unconsecrated state would have meant their annihilation, a consequence God was

seeking to avert (19:20–24).

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[231] "The rabbis' mishrashically spoke of Israel as a bride before God, her groom at Mt. Sinai. Acting as 'Friend of the Bridegroom,' Moses escorted Israel to Mt. Sinai [the Chuppah] where God as groom as already awaiting His bride. But before Moses brought 'her' before Sinai, Israel had to be immersed in a mikveh to be set aside for marriage to God. Since the metaphor of bride and groom apply to Israel and God, the Book of the Covenant [Torah] symbolically represents the ketubah, the betrothal marriage contract. The Covenant at Mt. Sinai spells out the obligations of God and Israel as ketubah does for a husband and wife." Rick Deadmond, *The Betrothed Bride of Messiah: Making Herself Ready for The Bridegroom*, (United States: Xulon Press, 2007), 46.

[232] These are not the Levitical priests (as the tribe of Levi has not yet been selected), but the first-born sons of Israelite families who were set aside for the Lord and therefore functioned as priests on an ad-hoc basis (Exod 13:12).

First Promise: The Faithful *Yahweh Elohim*

After the thunder quiets, God speaks "not alone in the awful majesty of the judge and lawgiver, but as the compassionate guardian of His people"[233] Here we note two very important points. First, God begins by reminding Israel of His previous loving actions: "I am the L‍ORD [*Yahweh*] your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." In this statement, "I am" links back to Exodus 3:14–17 where God's self-revelation was made in the context of his faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—a covenant of faith.[234] It also looks back to Exodus 6:3 where the covenant promises of *El Shaddai* to the patriarchs (to visit and redeem their descendants) have now been fulfilled in the character of the personal *Yahweh Elohim.*

Thus, the law is first and foremost a statement of God's character of faithfulness to fulfill His promised mission: the redemption of mankind. He is a loving and trustworthy personal God, who is eager to restore a more intimate connection with His people. Secondly, the grammatical structure of the Decalogue[235] can be read as either a *promise or a commandment*. Davidson notes that "the *lo* plus the imperfect in commandments 1–3 and 6–10 can be translated either as negative prohibitions or as emphatic promises [. . .] Similarly, the 4th and 5th commandments are not given in the expected imperative, but in the infinitive absolute, which again can be translated as

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[233] *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 305.

[234] Gen 15:6; cf. Rom 4:3.

[235] *Decalogue* comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew *aseret ha-Dibrot* and simply means "the ten *words*." This is how Moses introduces the Law (Exod 20:1, cf. 24:4, 8,) and how God Himself refers to the content of the two tablets in Exodus 34:1

intensive command, or emphatic promise."[236] Ellen White likewise views the Law both

as loving commands and gracious promises: "The Ten Commandments. . . are ten

promises. . . . There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus."[237] And it

is only by relating to the commandments as promises that spiritual union with God—His

image—can be restored in humans. For it is by faith in His promise that God is able to

fulfill His word in us.[238] In short, as will become evident in the second commandment,

the Decalogue is a gift of grace—a promise—that in relationship with God we will have a

life of overcoming. And this is precisely what God did: He redeemed Israel in order that

they might live in a continuous saving relationship with Him. Furthermore, His victory

not only redeemed the Israelites, it completely decimated all the false gods of the

Egyptians. God's unquestioned supremacy is so gloriously evident that His ensuing

statement: "You shall have no other gods before me," seems almost superfluous. After

the humiliation of the Egyptian gods, no Israelite wanted to be on their losing team, as

they had affirmed just a few weeks prior: "Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods?

Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod 15:11).

The prologue to the Law and its first statement/promise was therefore a testament that

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[236] "Gracia ardiente: La misericordia de Dios reflejada en el pacto sinaitico" en *"La palabra que yo te diga, esa hablaras": Estudios selectos en el Pentateuco*, ed. Merling Alomia. Lima, Peru: Ediciones Theolgica-Universidad Peruana Union, 2017. The English quotation is taken from a transcript of Davidson's original sermon.

[237] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7 vols, (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 1:1105.

[238] "The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. *Every command is a promise*; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. *It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God*." *Education*, 126. Italics mine.

because no god could compare with the glory and power of Yahweh, there simply were no other gods before Him.

Second Promise: The Husband God

Although the first commandment seems final in its brevity and simplicity, it is logically expanded in the second commandment. For just as mountaintop meetings advance in rational sequence, so the commandments advance logically, each one building upon the one before. The first commandment has developed the theme of the prologue—God's gracious faithfulness to Israel and sovereignty over all other gods—and now the second begins by stating that He is not merely the supreme God, a God of gods, rather He is *the one and only* omnipotent God, whose loving character differentiates and elevates Him above all others, leaving the rest in the dust (which is what they really are):

> [4] "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. [5] You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

These passionate words reveal the true character of God and are the condensed heart of the law, for they convey the intensely intimate and dynamic union (worship) that God is seeking with His people, something closely akin to what is experienced between a husband and wife. This statement would be equivalent to the "forsaking all others" in marriage vows today.[239] In fact, while the general structure of the Decalogue reflects

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[239] Roy Gane pictures the marital scene: "After the wedding at Sinai, where God proclaimed the covenant vows (Ten Commandments) with awesome splendor, Israel said 'I do' and they built a house (sanctuary) together, there was a journey through the wilderness of real life. Whatever happened, they were in it together. The vows he had given were not only for Israel to keep, they were his vows too. When he had said 'You shall have no other gods before me' (Exod 20:3)—the equivalent of 'forsaking all others'—he not only forbade polytheism, but he

ANE suzerain treaties,[240] presenting a basic disparity between the parties (a greater to a lesser power, such as a king to a vassal), I believe the emotive thrust of the second commandment promise is more akin to a parity-style treaty[241] such as in marriage, where both parties are equal and take on mutual obligations to love and advance the wellbeing and happiness of the other.[242] In this we note a massive condescension in the omnipotent and transcendent God who, in His eagerness to have His love returned, makes Himself vulnerable to the rejection of His bride.[243] It is for this reason that the second

also pledged himself to be Israel's God. *Leviticus, Numbers* (NIVAC 3; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 321.

[240] The main elements of suzerainty covenants are 1) *preamble*, giving the king's name and title; 2) a *historical prologue*, recording what the king has done, particularly for the vassal; 3) *obligations of the vassal* to the suzerain (eg. The vassal must not enter into alliance with other kings); 4) A *sacred location* is named—usually a sanctuary in the vassal's temple—and mention is made of yearly readings (from one to four times a year) for covenant-renewal ceremonies; 5) *Witnesses* are called to verify the implementation of the treaty; 6) *Blessings & curses* named for the vassal's faithfulness or unfaithfulness; and 7) An *oath or ratification ceremony* that often included a slaughtered animal. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 173. While not all of these elements are present in the Decalogue (3rd mountaintop meeting), they are all present in the development of the sanctuary-covenant structure: The Preamble, Historical prologue, and obligations of the vassal are in the 3rd mountaintop meeting; the sacred location is given at the 6th mountaintop meeting; witnesses are called and the treaty is ratified at the 4th mountaintop meeting; and blessings/curses are tacit in the 2nd and 5th commandments (3rd mountaintop), yet more explicit in Deut. 27 and 28

[241] There were three types of ANE covenants/treaties: 1) Royal Grant (unconditional), when a king grants land or other benefit as a gift for loyal service (cf. Gen 9:8–17; Num 25:10–31; 1 Sam 8:14; 22:7; 27:6; 2 Sam 7:5–16, Esther 8:1; Jer 31:31–34). 2) Parity, between equals, biding them to mutual friendship or at least respect. Participants called each other "brothers." (Cf. Gen 21:27; 26:31; 31:44–54; 1 Kings 5:12; 15:19; 20:32–34; Am 1:9); and 3) Suzerain-vassal (conditional), between a great king and his subject king. The great king was sovereign, demanded loyalty and service, and pledged protection. Participants called each other "lord" and "servant" or "father" and "son." (Gen 17; Exod19–24). J. D. Douglas, "Covenant" *Zondervan Bible Dictionary*, (Zondervan, 2009).

[242] Ronald Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis: An Introductory Commentary*, (Eugene, OR, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 164. See also Morrison, M. D. "Abrahamic Covenant, Critical Issues," *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*.

[243] Aron Balorda has explored the concept of God's jealousy and likewise found the vassal-suzerain structure does not quite fit the biblical covenant where, "though the distance

commandment underscores God's jealousy (*qanna'*—"ardor," "zeal," or "passion,"),

which is the appropriate response of a loving husband to anything that lures away the

attention and devotion of His wife. Aron Balorda affirms that *qanna'* is mainly rooted in

the context of a marriage relationship.[244] Similarly, Moshe Weinfeld has noted that the

references to God's jealousy and Israel's harlotry are "rooted in the husband/wife

metaphor."[245] And Ellen White agrees, "The close and sacred relation of God to His

people is represented under the figure of marriage. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, the

displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy."[246] Thus, it is the second

commandment's language of jealousy that births the metaphor of God as Husband and

Israel as His bride—a theme that will be referenced throughout the rest of the OT until

the final pages of Revelation.[247] As we will explore later, God's jealousy is not just one

of His attributes, it is quite possibly *the* defining attribute, so much so, that He will later

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between the biblical parties is far more remote than the distance between two human rulers can
ever be, the Lord is elevating His people to the position of His lawful wife, while He humbles
Himself to be her Husband, creating a much more intimate bond of unity," "The Covenant of
Phinehas as a Reward for the Jealousy of Numinal Marriage." MA Thesis, Andrews University,
2002, 139.

[244] Balorda, 61.

[245] "Berit—Covenant vs. Obligation," *Biblica* 56 (1975): 125, note 5.

[246] *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 306.

[247] David Instone-Brewer finds that "the marriage metaphor of Yahweh has very early
roots, as seen in the language of jealousy in the Decalogue and other parts of the Pentateuch."
Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context (Grand Rapids: Eardmans,
2002), 34.

make it synonymous with His name or character (34:14; cf. Ezek 39:25).[248] In other

words, God's Being is not only relational, it is jealously relational.

Third Promise: God's Name

The development of God's name or character has been progressively revealed.

First, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob God appeared (*ra'ah*) as *El Shaddai* (Exod 6:3), the

Almighty God who promised the aged Abraham and Sarah not only a son, but a nation

(Gen 17:1, 15–18). Then to Moses and the Israelite nation God made Himself known

(*yada'*) as the personal covenant God, *Yahweh Elohim* (Exod 3:14–15; 6:3). And in the

prior commandment He has heightened the intimate nature of the union He desires with

Israel—one of jealous husband. Thus the third commandment warns: "You shall not

misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who

misuses his name" (20:7). If, as we shall see, God equates His name with His

jealous/ardent love, then taking God's name in vain goes deeper than simply saying

God's name out of context or using as a curse, it means to hold lightly or disregard the

monumental revelation that God is our Husband and deserves our full devotion. We will

continue to explore this central concept of God's jealousy in more detail later, for now we

return to the next promise which is the climax of the first tablet, covering our relationship

with God.

Fourth Promise: Seal of the Law

To encourage this love relationship, God also sets apart (sanctifies) the Sabbath.

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[248] Aron Balorda has studied the concept of God's jealousy in relation to the covenant with Phinehas in Num 25.

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

The Sabbath is unique in that it reflects God's very being, for its nature is also temporal, relational, and missional. First, the temporal element of the Sabbath reflects the God's being which, as we saw, encompasses the past-present-future temporal spheres (Exod 3:14–16). In like manner, the Sabbath holds these three in tension.[249] In other words, God's present command for Israel to remember the Sabbath day points back to creation. And both the creation Sabbath and its keeping in the present require the future promise of a full Sabbath rest from sin, a rest that can only be accomplished after the destruction of death and the restoration of all creation.[250]

Second, just as at the burning bush God revealed His being as intimately relational, the Sabbath commandment likewise celebrates relationship. The Sabbath was to be a special place in time where, putting aside common work, Israel was to remember and rest in God's saving love. This is a meaningful conclusion to the first tablet since it

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[249] Sigve Tonstad studies the concept of Sabbath rest in the book of Hebrews, the last book of Scripture to explicitly mention the Sabbath. In his view, Paul's "sermon" outlining God's Sabbath rest encompasses the three time elements, "We might say that the sermon draws a triangle: one corner marked 'future', the second corner marked 'past', and the third corner 'present'. The 'future' refers to a promise unfulfilled and not yet in the possession of those who have staked their lives on it (11:10, 13–16, 39–40). The past looks to a work completed—indeed, a work 'finished at the foundation of the world' (4:1–4). And what of the 'present'? In Hebrews the 'present' concentrates on a Sabbatarian message, described as "a sabbath rest" that still remains for the people of God" (4:9).

[250] While the human pair were sinless in Eden for a time, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil testified to the presence of sin in their midst, and its potential in their lives. Thus, not until Satan and evil are destroyed can Sabbath rest be fully experienced.

contains God's seal and signature of Creator. The implication is that to God's original

creation is now added His redemptive work. Israel is doubly indebted to God—first as

their Creator and then Redeemer. It is noteworthy that before God could exercise His arm

against the Egyptians to redeem Israel, He first needed to restore the Sabbath rest day

(Exod 5:5).[251] Now that they were liberated, Israel's remembrance of God's liberating

power and future promises of land and rest would help them align their hearts in love and

worship.

Thus, while God's second commandment expressed His desire for a love

relationship with Israel—an inner commitment—His fourth commandment offers an

outer expression of this commitment that is celebrated in a weekly, twenty-four-hour

cycle. In our marriage analogy we might say it is akin to the wedding ring, for it is an

external sign of a heart covenant. Indeed, God later (6th mountain meeting), calls the

Sabbath "a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know

that I am the Lord who sanctifies you (Exod 31:13). At creation God had already set the

Sabbath apart for special, uninterrupted communion with His beloved (Gen 2:3), but in

keeping it holy the Israelites would open themselves up to receive God's special blessing:

He would make them holy. Meredith Kleine elaborates on this by comparing the Sabbath

seal (or sign) with traditional suzerain treaty seals:

> [I]t is tempting to see in the Sabbath sign presented in the midst of the ten words
> the equivalent of the suzerain's dynastic seal found in the midst of the obverse of
> the international treaty documents. Since in the case of the Decalogue the suzerain
> is Yahweh, there will be no representation of him on his seal, but the Sabbath is
> declared to be his "sign of the covenant" (Exod 31:13–17). *By means of his
> sabbath-keeping, the image-bearer of God images the pattern of that divine act of*

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[251] For support of a Sabbath rest reading in Exodus 5 see Mathilde Frey, "Sabbath in Egypt? An Examination of Exodus 5." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 39 (2015), 249–263.

creation which proclaims God's absolute sovereignty over man, and thereby he pledges his covenant consecration to his Maker. The Creator has stamped on world history the sign of the Sabbath as his seal of ownership and authority. That is precisely what the pictures on the dynastic seals symbolize and their captions claim in behalf of the treaty gods and their representative, the suzerain.[252]

In other words, as we devote the Sabbath day to commune with God, He shows us the beauty of who He is, the beauty of holiness which effects the restoration of His image in us. The Sabbath then becomes a "weeklyversary," where husband and wife focus on their love commitment and make it grow.

Thirdly, the Sabbath reveals God's missional heart. The Creator presents it as a rest day not only for the Israelites, but for everyone in the land—including servants, foreigners, and animals.[253] This missional view of the Sabbath is later expanded by the prophets, particularly Isaiah who outlines true Sabbath rest as in-reach to the poor, disenfranchised, and oppressed (Isa 58:6–14), and outreach to the gentiles who by observing the glory of God in Israel would be drawn to Him and His Sabbath covenant (Isa 56:1–8; 60:1–3). Moreover, the missional thrust of the fourth commandment extends to the second tablet,

> [12] "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
> [13] "You shall not murder.
> [14] "You shall not commit adultery.
> [15] "You shall not steal.
> [16] "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

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[252] *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1963, 2012), 18–19. Italics mine.

[253] In the next mountaintop meeting God will elaborate on the Sabbath commandment instituting rest for the land, so that the poor and the beasts of the field may benefit from it (Exod 23:10–12).

[17] "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

God will later (in the 6th mountaintop meeting) engrave the law in stone and have it placed in the ark of the covenant to indicate that it is the foundation of His government—and our union with Him—but first He speaks it personally in power and glory directly into the ears of the people, so that it will become etched in the heart-throne of each listener. Moses explains, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning" (v. 20). Although on the surface this statement seems paradoxical, it speaks truth. For there is a human fear that separates and causes us to run and hide, and a holy fear that humbles us and draws us into reverent worship. The Israelites were not to be afraid of God and run from Him. Instead, they were to fear Him, that is, have a deep and prevailing awe for the holiness of His law that would inspire in them a desire to be like God and thus protect them from sinning. Moses adds that God's desire was precisely to inspire this holy fear: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deut 5:29; cf. 6:1–3, 13; 10:20, 21; cf. Ps 119:11). The heart, then, is to be the first and most important depository of the Law, which reveals God's character. We must, in awe and reverence, draw near to God to hear His words of promise.

In the first meeting God invited the nation into a relationship of love and holiness through obedience (Exod 19:5–6). In the second meeting God asked everyone to clear the heart-throne of anything that hinders it from hearing and accepting God's word. Now, at this third meeting, God intimately reveals the covenant and shows what holiness looks like in everyday life, both in relation to Himself and others. Just as the commandment

promises were written on two tables, God divides holiness into two levels. The first most foundational level regards our relationship with Him (commandments 1–4) and looks much like a marriage commitment. God is our one-and-only Lord (v. 3), and He is rightly jealous of anyone or thing that takes our focus away from Him. Yet it is not an outward conformity He most desires, instead His focus is on *heart* obedience. We saw that God calls those who keep His covenant a "special treasure" (19:5), and He presents covenant-keeping in the ardent terms of "those who hate me" (doers of iniquity, v. 5) and "those who love Me and keep My commandments," (v. 6). We saw that the Sabbath is the seal of God's law, an outer demonstration of an inner love, which calls us to share God's character in a temporal, relational, and missional way. The second level or division of the law (commandments 5–10) flows from the first and regards our love towards others. Since, as we noted, the Ten Commandments are promises, they might be read as follows:

Prologue—Because I have lovingly redeemed you to Myself, I promise you will:

1) Know that I, Yahweh, am the only God who can save.

2) Love & honor (worship) your devoted Husband God.

3) Reverence My Name as your Husband God who is zealous/jealous for your love.

4) Remember our Sabbath weeklyversary, and share it with others.

5) Respect your parents and all authority.

6) Promote the life and wellbeing of everyone around you.

7) Cherish faithfulness in marriage and purity in your relationships.

8) Seek and advance only the truth.

9) Respect the property of others and generously share what you own.

10) Be content/grateful for all I have given you.

While the Ten Words are the heart of the sanctuary-covenant structure, God has further revelations of how the covenant structure—and our oneness with Him—should develop.

4th Meeting (Exod 20:21–24:8): Covenant Sealed

After God speaks the Law, Moses scales further up Mt. Sinai to receive civil, social and religious laws that will enlarge upon the foundational ten. These judgments (*mishpatim*) were practical amplifications of God's Decalogue that informed everyday life, offering clear instructions on how the fledgling Hebrew theocracy would operate, and providing a clear method by which the Hebrew judges (Exod 18:19–26) could evaluate difficult cases.

It is important to note that this meeting heightens the intimacy of the sanctuary structure as Moses (envoy of the Israelites who were afraid to come up the mountain) draws nearer to God (vv. 21). Likewise, this invitation for deeper intimacy reflects God's own desire to draw close to His people, carefully revealing to them detailed instructions on how to live in spiritual relationship with Him.[254] Accordingly, the first of these laws concerns the worship of God (vv. 23–26), followed by laws regarding individual rights (21:1–32), and finally property rights (21:33–22:15). Additional laws are given concerning upholding justice (23:1–9), the Sabbath (vv. 10–13), the three main religious festivals, the Angel (Christ) who would guide, command, forgive and cause them to

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[254] Ellen White describes this meeting in language that conveys a deeper intimacy: "He then came still closer to his people, who were so readily led astray, and would not leave them with merely the ten precepts of the Decalogue. . . These specific directions and requirements were given to draw erring man to the obedience of the moral law. . ." 1 SP 264

inherit the promised land (vv. 20–31), and the prohibition against making a covenant with other nations or their gods (vv. 32–33). [255]

It is noteworthy that God commences and concludes this lengthy fourth meeting by restating the second commandment, the heart of the law. His opening words to Moses are, "You have seen that I talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves" (20:23). God then concludes the meeting with "You shall make no covenant with them [other nations], nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you" (23:32–33). Knowing the powerful attraction of idolatry, God is eager to warn them of this danger and preserve them a pure and holy nation. As the seal of His favor, he promises to send His Angel (the pre-incarnate Christ) to keep them in the right path.

Moses then comes down and repeats God's words before the people to see if they will agree to the terms of covenant marriage with Him. At the first mountaintop meeting they had promised to obey the words of God, then (after consecrating their hearts) they heard the first of His two-part message proclaimed directly from the mouth of God, and now God relays to Moses the specific lifestyle He wants for His people. A holy lifestyle of union with Him that will attract other nations. Again, they are at liberty to choose or reject this climactic proposal. Yet "all the people answered with one voice and said, 'all

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[255] Scholars have compared these judgements with the Code of Hammurabi (1750 BCE). Although the Babylonian code precedes the Mosaic judgments, this does not imply any influence of Hammurabi over Moses, but rather a shared oral tradition. Scripture testifies that Abraham (who lived in the Babylonian city of Ur before the reign of Hammurabi) knew and kept God's laws and statutes (Gen 26:5). Furthermore, the critical difference is that while the purpose of Hammurabi's code was societal harmony, the Mosaic judgments centered on the worship of the one true God as the means by which Israel might reflect His image to all nations.

the words which the Lord has said we will do" (24:3). Moses proceeded to write all the words in the Book of the Covenant and on the following day he prepared to ratify the covenant. First, he erected an altar and there offered burnt offerings and peace offerings and sprinkled half of the blood on the altar; also twelve pillars were erected as a witness that the twelve tribes had accepted the covenant. Then, Moses reiterated the terms of the covenant by reading the Book of the Covenant before all the people. Unanimously the nation vowed their fidelity: "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words'" (Exod 24:7, 8).

In the sprinkling of the blood, the covenant was ratified. The Israelites understood that obedience to the covenant was essential and that breaking the covenant implied death. The blood also symbolized their cleansing from sin and consecration to divine service. In short, the fourth mountaintop meeting presents God's answer to "How should we then live?" and the nation's agreement to the stipulated lifestyle, followed by the blood ratification, which sealed the people as belonging to God. In our marriage analogy, we might say that this meeting encapsulates part two of the wedding ceremony. Part one (3rd mountaintop) presented God's vows, that is, His commandment promises to His beloved. Part two (this 4th mountaintop) elaborates on God's vows and presents the response of His bride—her vow to love, honor, and obey—which is spoken in the presence of witnesses and followed by the signing of the marriage certificate that formally authenticates the union and makes it binding.

Similar to Moses's "nuptial" Book of the Covenant, the OT prophets and especially the life and teachings of Christ offer us an updated lifestyle manual. When Christ explained the law and the prophets, He underscored the intent of the law—inner consecration and outward mission—over mere compliance to the letter of the law. However, this holy lifestyle is only possible when we daily pledge our faithfulness through the blood of the covenant Lamb. Only then, as we unite our will to His power, can we follow Christ's example. In this way we become God's faithful bride, reflecting His image to the world and drawing many to His brightness (Matt 5:16). Similarly, Moses explains, "I have taught you statues and judgments…be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statues, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Deut. 4:5, 6).

<center>5th Meeting (24:9–11): Covenant Eating</center>

After the wedding ceremony, the nation as a whole had pledged[256] themselves to obey all the stipulations of the covenant. Now the leaders and representatives of the people were invited for a special ratification dinner in the presence of God.

> [9] Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, [10] and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. [11] But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank (Exod 24:9–11).

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[256] It is interesting the old Germanic word meaning to "pledge" is the root of our modern word to "wed."

Although all the people had heard the voice of God during the 3rd mountaintop meeting, now the priests and the representatives of the people (seventy elders) are invited into the very presence of God in order that they might be strengthened to assist Moses in guiding the people. It is meaningful that they not only saw God but also ate and drank in His presence—a final rite in the ratification of the covenant.

In this 5th mountaintop we see that spiritual oneness with God requires a feeding in His presence. God had already begun to sustain the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings by supplying them with heavenly food (Exod 16:4), yet His goal was not merely to preserve their physical life but, more importantly, their spiritual union with Him. God wanted to teach them that "man shall not live on bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut 8:3, cf. Luke 4:4). Thus, through this intimate covenant eating, God teaches us today that in order to remain in covenant relationship with Him we must faithfully feed on His words of life. Furthermore, this meeting also demonstrates the privileges and responsibilities God places upon the leaders of the church.[257] The Bible warns that teachers will be judged more strictly;[258] as such, anyone in a position of spiritual authority must take greater care to daily feed from God's Word, that he or she might lead others in right paths. In terms of the marriage analogy, this would be akin to the celebration or reception following the

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[257] God had appointed Nadab and Abihu to a most sacred work, therefore He honored them in a most wonderful manner. He gave them a view of His excellent glory, that the scenes they should witness in the mount would abide with them and the better qualify them to minister in His service and render to Him that exalted honor and reverence before the people which would give them clearer conceptions of His character and awaken in them a due obedience and reverence for all His requirements." 3T, 297

[258] Ezek 3:17–18, Heb 13:7, James 3:1.

ceremony, when the married couple celebrates with family members and friends who

vow to support the couple to stay united through all the challenges life may bring.

<p style="text-align:center">6th Meeting (Exod 24:13–32:14): Sanctuary Instructions</p>

After the intimate communion meal with God, Moses made arrangements for his

absence in the camp by assigning Aaron, Hur, and the seventy elders to guide the camp.

Then he and Joshua ascended farther up the mountain, with Moses going still higher. Just

as the Israelites had to prepare their hearts for two days to receive God's spoken

commandments on the third day, so Moses had to wait for six days,[259] preparing his heart

and mind to receive the written law and the sanctuary redemption plan on the seventh

day.

> Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. [17] The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. [18] So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.[260]

On the seventh day, which was the Sabbath,[261] Moses is finally called into the cloud, into

the presence of the Lord. God's first words to Him are "Speak to the children of Israel,

that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you

shall take My offering" (Exod 25:2). This request highlights two points. First, the entire

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[259] It is interesting to note that God is the one who initiates the communication. Unlike many religious disciplines that promote rituals that promise to help us "experience God," we see that God is not to be summoned on our terms, instead we are called to wait patiently upon the Lord.

[260] Exod24:16–18.

[261] White, *Patriarch and Prophets,* 313.

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structure of the God's redemptive plan requires human cooperation, which is grounded

on God's prior actions (redemption from slavery) and propelled by faith in His promised

blessings (inheritance as His children and union with Him in the promised land). Thus,

humans are granted God's great co-mission—the great privilege of partnering with God

on a personal and corporate level for the redemption of humankind.[262] Secondly, as noted

in prior mountaintop meetings, God wants our relationship with Him to go deeper than

external acts: it should be grounded on a heart devotion from which acts of obedience

naturally flow.

God then reveals the wonderful reason for the Israelite's love offering—the

climactic union towards which the entire wedding/covenant structure has been advancing:

"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I

show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so

you shall make it." (Exod 25:8–9). Just as the almighty God condescended to speak with

Moses and reveal His name at the burning bush, and later descended to speak His

covenant directly to the Israelite nation, He now condescends to share the pattern or

model (*tabnit*[263]) of His spatio-temporal heavenly sanctuary, the family home He longs to

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[262] Although this partnership is later crystallized in Christ's great co-mission (Matt 28:18–20) this study has revealed the missionary dimension of the covenant, first in God pronouncing His name in intimate relation to mission (Exod 3:14–17) and later, in His desire to make the Israelites a nation of priests to minister to the world (Exod 19:6). Similarly, the fourth commandment (3rd mountain meeting) revisits God's creation of all humanity and His desire to grant re-creative Sabbath rest not just to the Israelites, but to all nations (Exod 20:9–11), a mission Isaiah (56, 58) will later underscore. Interestingly, in Ezekiel God recounts His experience with the Israelite nation stating—three times—that His main reason for not destroying them (as their apostasy warranted) was so His name would not be profaned among the Gentiles (Ezek 20: 9, 14, 22). And it is precisely God's great missionary love for all humanity that Moses will capitalize on in his upcoming intercessory petitions.

[263] Richard Davidson presents six possible interpretations of the Hebrew *tabnit* or "pattern." They are (1) model of the earthly sanctuary, (2) blueprint of the earthly sanctuary, (3) copy of the heavenly sanctuary, which serves as a model, (4) blueprint of the heavenly sanctuary,

one day share with His bride.[264] Throughout the next seven chapters (25–31) God

proceeds to give Moses all the details of the sanctuary construction and concludes by

handing Moses the tablets of the covenant (Exod 31:18) to be placed in the ark of the

covenant. Regarding the marriage analogy, this step would be like the builder meeting

with the husband to receive the plans for the new couple's first home, that they might

finally begin their life together.[265]

Thus the central concept of this meeting centers on the sanctuary as the locus of

God's dwelling among His people (Exod 25:8). To dwell (*shakan*) implies residing,

abiding and resting. *Shakan* is also related to the word *Shekinah*, the glory of God's

presence that would abide or rest over the mercy seat (Exod 25:21, 22). It is interesting

which serves as a model, (5) The heavenly sanctuary itself, which serves as a model, and (6) a subjective interpretation, which serves as a model. He concludes that it is either 3 or 5, that is, a copy of the heavenly sanctuary or the heavenly sanctuary itself that operates as the model for the earthly one. See *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures*, (Andrews University Seminary Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981.

[264] Davidson has explored the real nature of the heavenly sanctuary, namely as a physical building in space and time. He notes some 43 references to the heavenly sanctuary in the Old Testament and over 35 references in the New Testament, tracing the original function of the heavenly sanctuary prior to sin, its current use during the Great Controversy between God and Satan, and future use after sin and death are no more. Davidson lists the functions of the heavenly sanctuary as including: divine assembly, worship, ratification of covenant, kingship, supervision, dwelling, site of cosmic battle, and locus of atonement and forgiveness. In short, he notes the heavenly sanctuary as having three main functions: (1) Residence (palace/temple), (2) Government (command center of the universe) and (3) Assembly House for Worship (temple/church). Davidson concludes that after sin the entire New Jerusalem will be the tabernacle (*skene*) of God (Rev 21:2–3), the Most Holy Place of the restored universe. See Chapter 2 and 6 in *Song for the Sanctuary*, a preliminary draft of the BRICOM-sponsored, SDA graduate-level textbook on the Doctrine of the Sanctuary.

[265] If we consider the covenant's missiological intent, the marital sanctuary home becomes the locus from which spiritual new births and an expanding divine family are anticipated, a feat which the sanctuary union (co-mission) of God and His bride is uniquely qualified to do. God's mission then is to adopt *all* who are willing and bring them into His home: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbath, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name that is better than that of sons and daughters…an everlasting name that shall not be cut off" (Isa 46:5–7).

that the strong immanence conveyed in *shakan* was greatly minimized by the LXX's

Hellenistic translators.[266] Their Platonic mindset (still prevalent in much Christian

spirituality today) could not conceive of a timeless God residing in close and intimate

proximity with temporal humans. Yet this is precisely the magnificence of God's self-

revelation to Moses in Exodus 3:14–17—the transcendent God lives and operates in the

sequential time of human history.[267]

Moses's 6th mountaintop meeting, then, highlights the critical fact that the type of

dwelling God desires with humans is not a mystical one in a human's "immaterial and

eternal soul" existing outside of time and space, rather God seeks a concrete relationship

based on cognitive oneness that is experienced through a concrete building (sanctuary)

which articulates our spiritual union with God. God desires to be in the same physical

location as His people, He has spoken directly into their ears and manifested His presence

in the glorious fire on Mount Sinai and in the cloud that follows them day and night.

Now, through the sanctuary, His goal of spiritual union will be further achieved through

His dwelling in the Most Holy Place. And yet, as we have noted, the sanctuary's cosmic

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[266] Tiago Arrais notes five incidences in the book of Exodus where the Masoretic *shakan*/dwell is translated in the LXX by the less personal "came down" (24:16), "appear" (25:8), "called upon" (29:45; 29:46), and "overshadowed" (40:35). Arrais attributes these deviations to the effects of Hellenistic (Platonic) culture and thinking on the Jewish translators of the LXX. "A Study on the Influence of Philosophical Presuppositions Relating to the Notion of the God-human Relation Upon the Interpretation of Exodus" (PhD Thesis, Andrews University, 2015), 231.

[267] Although God is transcendent, the previous study on the essence of His being as analogically temporal reveals that God does not transcend time in the sense of being "outside of time." God's eternity is biblically expressed in terms of lifespan (Hebrew *olam*) and long periods of time (Greek *aion*). Because of God's transcendent temporality humans cannot fathom the stretch of His years (Job 36:26). They also cannot understand the depth and intricateness of how God experiences time (2 Pet 3:8; Ps 90:4) and yet time passes for God and His years continue to accumulate throughout the sequential time of cosmic history. In short, "the affirmation of divine transcendence does not assume divine timelessness but divine temporality." *Basic Elements*, 59. See also pp. 60–73.

redemption plan is not for one race of people but intended to ultimately unite all God's people in a spatiotemporal physical communion. This is seen in Christ's final prayer requesting oneness between Him, the Father, and all believers: that "they also whom You gave Me may be *with Me where I am*, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me" (John 17:24). Christ's prayer is that we be in the *same location with Him*, beholding His glory, that is, learning of His grace and truth (John 1:14). While the oneness God seeks is now effected dimly through His word (John 17:17), the ultimate goal is a face-to-face relationship with Christ our Lord in the heavenly sanctuary.[268]

Returning to the narrative we are met with a most heart-wrenching interruption to the sanctuary-covenant progression. The anticipated next step (after Moses had received the tablets of the Decalogue) was that he would descend with the good news of God's sanctuary plans and His handwritten law (the wedding ring engraved with the vows) which he would deposit in the soon-to-be-constructed mercy seat. Then, upon receiving this happy news of the husband's immanent arrival, the nation was to joyfully embark on building their sanctuary home that they might dwell with their Husband in blessed matrimony and live happily ever after, filling their family home with spiritual new births and the earth with a knowledge of God. Such was the scenario God had intended as the climax of His sanctuary-covenant progression climaxing in unity with His people. Instead, after handing Moses the law, God tragically announces:

> "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.' And the Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and

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[268] Rom 8:23–25; 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4; Heb 8:1–2; Rev 7:15; 21:16.

indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation" (Exod 32:7–10).

The whole beautiful covenant progression has been ruined. It is as if the devil has seduced the bride right after her wedding day. Israel has given herself over to harlotry, to love and serve another lord. She has taken God's own words in the prologue of the Decalogue (20:2: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage") and given the glory of His name—as her faithful Redeemer—to the vanquished gods of Egypt. Rightly indignant, God exclaims, "Let me alone that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation" (Exod 32:10). Moses, however, understood God anger as encouraging intercession.[269] Appealing to God's own testimony as Israel's faithful Redeemer (20:2), His name/reputation before Egypt (32:12), and His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (32:13), Moses successfully intercedes for the apostate nation and abates their imminent destruction (32:11–14). Yet when he descends from Sinai and takes in the extent of their apostasy, he is appalled and heartbroken, and accordingly breaks the tablets of God, signifying that Israel's marriage with God has been formally annulled.

Detour A (Exod 32:7–33:6): Moses's Intercession

In order to abate some of the great guilt resting upon the Israelite nation after the golden-calf rebellion, Moses commands the execution of the unrepentant participants and

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[269] "'Let me alone' [Moses] understood not to forbid but to encourage intercession, implying that nothing but the prayers of Moses could save Israel." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 318. Cf. Ezek 22:30 and Isa 59:16.

orders a day of consecration (Exod 32:28, 29). He then ascends Mt. Sinai to seek

atonement. Although this could be termed the 7th mountaintop experience, I will instead

call it a *detour* meeting as it not only interrupts the established progression of the

previous meetings, but destroys the whole covenant relationship.[270] It also differs in a

couple of meaningful ways from the previous meetings. First, unlike the other covenant

meetings, which God initiates and orchestrates, this one is initiated by Moses (Exod

32:29). Secondly, while the other mountaintop meetings were progressively building a

God-human relationship on the foundation of Exodus 3:12 ("When you have brought the

people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain) this hiatus meeting has no

foundation to stand on as the people have broken all previous promises of obedience and

chosen to worship another god—right on the base of Sinai. In other words, while the

focus of the previous covenant meetings was on the nation's growing union with God,

this detour—or "broken covenant" meeting—begins not even in a neutral relation, but in

high-handed rebellion against God.

Moses begins the conversation by confessing the people's great sin and proceeds

to offer Himself as an atonement for their sin. It is important to note that at the end of the

6th mountaintop meeting Moses successfully interceded for the *life* of the Israelites,

whom God was ready to consume and then create a new nation out of Moses (32:10),

(who would become the new Abraham). Yet his current ascent to intercede for the

nation's reinstatement as God's chosen people—His covenant bride—was unsuccessful.

Only Christ's future sacrifice and ministry (which the sanctuary would articulate) could

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[270] "To show his abhorrence of their crime he [Moses] threw down the tables of stone, and they were broken in the sight of all the people, thus signifying that as they had broken their covenant with God, so God had broken His covenant with them." In other words, "God's covenant with His people had been disannulled." Patriarch and Prophets, 320, 318.

atone for the sins of the people. Accordingly, God makes no mention of reinstating Israel as His covenant bride, nor voices any desire to dwell with them in sanctuary union. Instead He responds, "whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book" (32:33). God then sends a plague to punish the people (32:35), His jealous anger still waxing hot (33:5–6). Though He promises to send an angel guide, He Himself refuses to go with the nation, "for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people" (33:3). While the sacrificial devotion of Moses in attempting the nation's atonement with God—even to the point of sacrificing his own eternity with God—beautifully foreshadows the sacrificial love of Christ,[271] Moses's first attempt to restore the betrothal relationship has ended rather woefully.

"Show Me Your Glory" (Exod 33:12–34:3): Plea for Covenant Restoration

Perhaps realizing that going up the mountain unsummoned might not be wise (particularly considering the unresolved nature of the previous meeting), Moses continues to seek God's favor towards the nation in the temporary tabernacle of meeting.[272] He humbly reminds God, "this nation is *Your* people,"[273] whereupon God retorts by saying "My Presence will go with you, and I will give *you* rest."[274] Yet here "you" is in the singular, meaning that God is signaling only Moses as the recipient of His rest—while

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[271] Ellen White comments: "The intercession of Moses in behalf of Israel illustrates the mediation of Christ for sinful men. But the Lord did not permit Moses to bear, as did Christ, the guilt of the transgressor. 'Whosoever hath sinned against Me,' He said, 'him will I blot out of My book.'" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 326.

[272] Exod 33:9

[273] Exod 33:13b, italics mine.

[274] Exod 33:14, italics mine.

the remainder of the Hebrew nation remains ostracized. Disappointed but not discouraged, Moses continues to plead for the nation of Israel. He wisely and humbly unites himself to the lot of the people five times in close succession, "If Your Presence does not go with *us*, do not bring *us* up from here. For how then will it be known that *Your people and I* have found grace in Your sight, except You go with *us*? So we shall be separate, *Your people and I*, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth" (Exod 33:15, 16). Not only does Moses seek to convince God by uniting his lot with that of the adulterous nation, but also by appealing to God's mission-heart in reaching the surrounding nations. Moses's appeal convinces God who condescends to "also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in my sight, and I know you by name" (Exod 33:17). The relief and love that flood Moses's heart impel him to request one further blessing: "Please, show me Your glory" (Exod 33:18).

Although this request to see God's glory may appear to be personal, we must remember that the role of Moses throughout the Exodus narrative has been that of *intercessor* between God and the Israelite nation. More so now—with the burden of the nation's apostasy on his shoulders—Moses's great desire is to restore them to God's favor. For while God has already agreed to accompany the Israelites with His own presence, the tablets authenticating the covenant and promising the nation spiritual union with God remain a broken heap somewhere on the base of Mount Sinai. Thus, it is possible that in requesting to see God's glory, Moses is asking for permission to once again ascend Sinai (heretofore the only locus of God's glory in the covenant progression) and for God to reinstate the Israelite nation into the sanctuary-covenant dynamic. For, as we saw, God's glory has thus far been revealed only on Sinai and only in relation to the

law (3rd and 6th mountaintop meetings[275] where God revealed His covenant law; first spoken, then written). As such, Moses's request to see God's glory could be interpreted less as a passionate request to contemplate God's nature (though that may also form part of his desire) and more an entreaty to be formally reinstated into the sanctuary-covenant structure. The fact that God answers Moses's request by inviting him to ascend Sinai the following morning *with two new tablets of stone* in which He will *once again record the covenant*, may be a strong indicator that God understands Moses's request as a plea for Israel's formal reinstatement into the sanctuary-covenant progression that had been terminated by the golden calf debacle.

Also, in showing His glory God promises to do two things: reveal His goodness and proclaim His name. However, He adds: "you cannot see my face; for no man shall see Me and live. . . I will put you in the cleft of the rock and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen" (33:20–23). The Hebrew for face, *panai,* comes from a Semitic root *panah* which varies widely in interpretation. It can mean: *presence*, *face, surface,* adverb of *location (before, in front of, forward), approach,* or even *future events*. We know that God's ontic presence has already appeared to Moses at the burning bush, and that the leaders in mountaintop meeting #5 "saw God" (24:10, 11). Furthermore, Exodus 33:11 tells us that "the Lord spoke to Moses face to face." So while God might be denying Moses a fuller revelation of His *physical* face, an alternate or simultaneous interpretation for *panai* might be *before* or *towards*, as in what lies *before* God, namely, His future acts. This would align well with God's statement, "you shall see My back; but

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[275] Exod 19:18 (cf. Deut 5:24) and Exod 24:16–17, respectively.

My face shall not be seen" (34:23), since the Hebrew word for back or backside, *'achori*, can indicate one's physical *backside*, what is *behind* or, in some cases, the *past*.[276] As such, it could be argued that God is here saying "I will show you My glory in what I have already done (past acts), but I cannot now reveal to you the glory that lies before me (future acts).[277] Earlier, in the grounding meeting of Exodus 3:14–17, we noted that the way God reveals His very ontic being is precisely through His words and actions that span past, present and future events. In other words, the existential way in which one experiences or "sees" God centers not only on the light and glory surrounding the person of God, but includes the communication of His will and demonstration of His acts in history. From that understanding, as well as from the suggested interpretations for *panai* and *achorai*, one possible reading of Exodus 33:22–23 is that God will once again show Moses the glory of the covenant that was broken; that is, He will reinstate Israel into the sanctuary-covenant progression by underscoring His name/nature as the loving and merciful Husband, which was first revealed in the second commandment.

Detour B (34:4–28): Covenant Restored

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[276] Kalisch states that Exodus 33:23 "may, indeed, contain that profound idea which ancient interpreters deduced from it, that man may see the *works* of God or the *consequences* of His activity, but that he cannot penetrate into their internal principles, their motives and their ends [future aims]." Moritz Markus Kalisch, *A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament: Exodus*. (Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans: London, 1855), 441.

[277] In line with this reading, it is possible that the future glory God is referring to is that, some thirteen centuries later, He would allow Moses to witness the physical glorification of the incarnate Christ on Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17:1–5) during which Moses would encourage Christ, the Lamb of God, before His great hour of tribulation. Moses then saw the Glory of Israel face to face, representing all those who, through Christ's atonement, would be resurrected at the last day (while Elijah represented those who would be translated to heaven without seeing death).

As the 6th mountaintop meeting had tragically ended with the news of Israel's harlotry, this renewal meeting necessarily revisits the basic pattern of 6th mountaintop meeting. Moses again fasts forty days and nights[278] and God again writes the Decalogue on two stone tablets (Exod 34:28). While Scripture does not mention that God reiterated the sanctuary details, Ellen White tells us that God did reveal the plan of salvation articulated by the sanctuary.[279] Yet the reason Moses requested this meeting was not only to be assured God has forgiven the nation's harlotry but, more importantly, to know whether He will also renew the covenant, not just with Moses, but with the entire nation. In other words, the question on their minds is *will God really take back His wayward wife?*

> The next morning, as promised, the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed "The LORD, the LORD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation (Exod 34:5–7).

With thrill and trembling Moses takes in God's glory in this intimate revelation, quite possibly noting the striking parallel of God's words with those of the second commandment, given to the nation a few weeks earlier:

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[278] This is the third successive forty-day period of fasting for Moses. The first was during the 6th mountaintop meeting (Deut 9:9), the second during the probationary period of repentance and reconsecration (Deut 9:18), and the third was during this second detour meeting (Exod 34:28), intended to restore the covenant relation lost in the 6th meeting.

[279] "While Moses was in the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was pre-figured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age; and it was the heavenly light streaming from Calvary, no less than the glory of the law of God, that shed such a radiance upon the face of Moses." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 330.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. *For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments* (Exod 20:4–6, italics mine).

It is most fitting that God takes the exact commandment they had broken (bringing all others in its wake) and uses it not to condemn (for they had already suffered the due punishment of their actions), but to expand on the blessing already present in the text. While the two statements are similar, the differences are noteworthy: 1) The order is reversed, giving primacy to God's mercy and expanding on it to make explicit His longsuffering and forgiveness, 2) the mention of human love or hatred for God is omitted, possibly because God's mercy is extended even when human love is lacking, 3) it underscores that the guilty will not be cleared, and 4) while Exodus 20 presents God's jealousy as a characteristic of God, Exodus 34 reveals it as His very name. This emphasis is noted in the chiastic structure that underscores and elevates the name of God as jealous (C, C').

Second Commandment (Broken) Exodus 20:4–6	Second Commandment (Amplified) Exodus 34:6–8; 14–17
A - Idol Making - You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (20:4)	**E' – Blessings** – The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin (34:6b–7a)
B - False Worship – "You shall not bow down to them or serve them" (20:5)	**D' – Punishments** – by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the

	children's children to the third and the fourth generation. (34:7b)
C - Jealous God - For I the Lord your God am a jealous God. (20:5b)	**C' – Jealous God** – for you shall worship no other god, for *the LORD, whose name is Jealous*, is a jealous God. (34:14)
D - Punishments - Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me (20:5c)	**B' – False Worship** – "…lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they *play the harlot* with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters *play the harlot* with their gods and *make your sons play the harlot with their gods*." (34:15–16, italics mine)
E - Blessings - but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My Commandments. (20:6)	**A' – Idol Making** – You shall make no molded gods for yourselves. (34:17)

And here is where the concept of the covenant as a marriage is, so to speak, glorified. Balorda notes that "the jealousy of God stands out as the preeminent divine attribute within the covenant."[280] Other scholars extend the concept of God's jealousy as encompassing not only the covenant, but as determining the entire thrust of OT religion and the very personality of God Himself.[281] Thus, from this second detour mountaintop meeting we can see that God's glory is twofold: it reveals the harmonious blend of God's

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[280] Aron Balorda. "The Covenant of Phinehas as a Reward for the Jealousy of Numinal Marriage." (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2002), 137.

[281] Walther Eichrodt notes that it is "the idea of the jealous God which determines the whole slant of Mosaic religion, with the passionate striving of Yahweh's sole dominion and the total subjugation of man to his will" *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. baker. 2 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1961), 210. Similarly, Gerhardt von Rad notes that God's jealousy as "an emotion springing up from the very depths of personality: as the zealous one Jahweh is a person to the highest possible degree." *Old Testament Theology,* trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 2005), I:207.

grace and truth,[282] and climaxes in the revelation of His name as Israel's heartbroken yet

merciful husband who is jealous for the due attention of His beloved wife.[283] Regarding

the worship due God, it is notable that the remaining six commandments of the

Decalogue are also presented in this mountaintop meeting, though in cultic language, that

is, they specifically center on how Israel was to worship God.[284]

In summary, we see that although this section powerfully affirms God's glory—

His long-suffering mercy and justice—it is at heart an amplification of the second

commandment revealed in the 3rd mountaintop meeting. In other words, God is showing

Moses His back (*achori*) or past actions by emphasizing that His love is so deep that it

will even forgive the most painful of betrayals. Thus, to a significant degree, this meeting

is even more glorious than the one it replaces (6th) as it combines the 3rd and 6th

mountaintop meetings in a way that reveals God's name as an intensely jealous Husband

whose passionate love and mercy compel Him to take back his adulterous wife.

Building of the Sanctuary (Exod 35–39)

Now that God has again written His law on the two tablets and graciously

reinstated His sanctuary-covenant relationship with the nation, the Israelites joyfully give

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[282] Alexander Tsutserov provides a thorough study of the lexical and literary structure connecting Exod 34:6–7 and John 1:14–18. *Glory, Grace, and Truth: Ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant according to the Gospel of John*, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009).

[283] God later recounts, in words that are heavy with emotion, that He had taken the Israelites out of Egypt to give them the covenant, "My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them." Jer 31:32.

[284] Richard Davidson, "Gracia ardiente: La misericordia de Dios reflejada en el pacto sinaitico" en *"La palabra que yo te diga, esa hablaras": Estudios selectos en el Pentateuco*, ed. Merling Alomia, (Lima, Peru: Ediciones Theolgica-Universidad Peruana Union, 2017). Pagination forthcoming.

of their possessions to begin building the sanctuary, whose pattern was shown to Moses during the 6th mountaintop meeting. The whole process of construction has been compared to the creation narrative in Genesis 1.[285] Richard Davidson notes that "the striking parallel not only invites us to see the building of the sanctuary as a new creation, but to see the creation account as connected with the sanctuary."[286] Also, just as the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the earth at creation (Gen 1:2), the next clear reference to the Spirit of God in the Pentateuch is in Exodus 31:2–3 where the Spirit fills Bezalel, Aholiab and all the gifted artisans with wisdom and skill to build the sanctuary. Davidson notes some fifteen further parallels between the Genesis creation and the sanctuary,[287] leaving no doubt that the two creation events are closely connected. Not only is the actual building of the sanctuary tied to creation, but the entire development or "creation" of the sanctuary-covenant structure (as seen over the 6 mountaintop meetings) has a pattern similar to the creation account. Not only is there a day-for-day parallel (see appendix B) but it ultimately restores the mountaintop sanctuary of Eden (established at creation), thereby granting lost humanity peace and rest at the 7th meeting.[288]

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[285] Richard Davidson sees the parallel structure as consisting of "raw materials" + Six + Sabbath. Genesis 1 mentions the earth's unformed/unfilled (*tohu/bohu*) state (Gen 1:1–3), then the forming and filling take 6 days, introduced each time by "And God said," and finally concludes with the arrival of the Sabbath. Similarly, Exodus 25 first describes the gathering of materials (vv. 2–7), followed by six sections of God's detailed instructing on how to form and fill the sanctuary (ch 25–31)—each one introduced by "The Lord said to Moses"—which also concludes with a seventh section regarding the Sabbath. The 7 divine speeches are found in Exodus 25:1–30; 30:11–16; 30:17–21; 30:22–33; 30:34–37; 31:1–11; and 31:12–17). See chapter 6 in *Song for the Sanctuary,* a preliminary draft of the BRICOM-sponsored, SDA graduate-level textbook on the Doctrine of the Sanctuary.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] In fact, the sanctuary goes back even further in time to the historical period in which God created the primal dust of the earth and the heavens themselves (Prov 8:26, 27) as well as the

A significant difference between the two accounts, however, is that in the creation of the world the human role is entirely absent, while in the creation of the sanctuary-covenant structure the human role is critical. This is reflected in the parallel language identifying the workers in each creation. In the earth's creation account, "God saw everything that *he had made* and behold it was very good," and He "ended *His work which He had done*, and He rested on the seventh day from *all His work* which *He had done* (Gen 1:31; 2:1–3, italics mine). Whereas in the sanctuary creation account we note a different emphasis: "According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so *the children of Israel did all the work*. Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed *they had done it*; as the LORD had commanded, just so *they had done it*. And Moses blessed them" (Exod 39:42–43, italics mine). Just as the human factor has had to cooperate with every aspect of the divine initiatives in the development of the sanctuary-covenant structure, so in the building of the sanctuary they follow through with the divine guidance given at the 6th mountaintop meeting. Of all the positive responses they have exhibited throughout the process, this is the most involved and labor intensive, and the Israelites are eager to know whether God has approved their work. Yet the epithet "very good" and Sabbath blessing given in the Genesis creation is not mentioned by God in relation to the sanctuary creation—until the seventh mountaintop meeting, which we will explore in following.

7th Meeting (Exod 40:34–38): God Dwells with Israel

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heavenly hosts who worshiped God in the original heavenly sanctuary, the one original of which the earthly was a type (typos). See footnote 264.

The entire covenant marriage development, though tumultuous and nearly terminated, has now reached its long-awaited conclusion. Having completed their part in the construction of the sanctuary, Israel stands awaiting God's approval. "Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exod 40:34–56). God has inaugurated the seventh and final "mountaintop" meeting.[289] The glory of this meeting centers on the

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[289] Although Exodus 34:6–7 might be advanced as the 7th and final mountaintop meeting, I believe the glorious descent of God into the newly constructed sanctuary (40:34–35) is a more convincing, though figurative, 7th mountaintop meeting for the following reasons:

1) *Terminological*: Simply stated, there cannot be a "sanctuary-covenant structure" without a sanctuary (which exists only in theory in 34:6–7).

2) *Teleological* Locus *of Exodus Narrative*: The climax of the Song of Moses after the Exodus indicates that God's aim was to "bring them in and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which your hands have established" (Exod 15:17). This parallelism indicates that the sanctuary itself was interpreted to be *the mountain of God's inheritance,* where the nation as a whole might, as children of God, inherit the proximity and oneness that up to now has been the exclusive privilege of Moses. And while God's heavenly sanctuary is the ultimate goal or *telos* for Israel, the interim earthly sanctuary is the connective intermediate goal.

3) *Covenant Home*: Similarly, the covenant (Decalogue) has no home until the sanctuary is erected. Thus, it was not until this point that "mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps 85:10), making effective God's declaration in Exodus 34. "The arrival of the glory of the Lord also marks in a visible way divine mercy and forgiveness." Andrews Bible commentary on 40:34–38.

4) *Ultimate Glory*: While God's glory has appeared in a) Exodus 3:2 (grounding meeting); b) 19:18, cf. 5:24 (spoken Decalogue); c) 24:16–17 (written Decalogue); and d) 34:6–7 (reiterated Decalogue, underscoring 2nd commandment); it is not until Exodus 40:34–37 that the ultimate end of the sanctuary-covenant structure is reached, which is marked by the final and overwhelming glory of God.

5) *God's Physical Presence*: Moses's urgent plea after the golden calf sin was for the presence of the Lord (and His glory) to accompany the nation, yet while this is promised in Exodus 33:17 and affirmed to Moses in 34:6–7, it is not until 40:34–38 that Yahweh's presence actually descends and fills the tabernacle before the eyes of the whole nation.

6) *Marital Home*: If viewed from the analogy of marriage, a married couple requires a home in which to dwell together (a final goal of the sanctuary-covenant structure) which does not happen until God (the Husband) descends and inhabits the temple.

astounding reality that God has (symbolically) brought the mountain itself, His holy

sanctuary, down to the Israelite nation.[290] In a very real sense, Immanuel (God with us)

has come down to them, prefiguring the condescension and incarnation of Christ.[291] Sinai

has, in a sense, become a movable mountain in the midst of the Israelite camp,

announcing to all nations the arrival of Israel's God. For better or for worse, *Yahweh*

Elohim will be their Husband. And this is all experienced in terms of glory and fire:

"Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the

Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it,

they shouted and fell on their faces" (Lev 9:23–24).

This connection between glory/fire and God's covenant love is beautifully

highlighted in Song of Solomon 8:6: "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon

your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes

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7) *Re-creative Sabbath Rest*: The parallels with the creation narrative noted in the text (and expanded in appendix B) teach that the Seventh-day is uniquely blessed in achieving a spatiotemporal union between God and His people that brings rest; similarly, the re-creative rest promised in the sanctuary-covenant structure (Exod 33:14) is achieved only when God descends to dwell with the nation. Likewise, it is only at this point that Israel gains freedom from sin. As the Exodus from Egypt freed the Israelites from physical slavery, it is only with the construction of the sanctuary and the sacrifices at its inauguration that the Israelites gain the next level of promised freedom: from the power of sin now and the presence of sin after the antitypical day of atonement.

[290] The Song of Moses after the Exodus had proclaimed that God's purpose in redeeming Israel was to "bring them in and plant them in the mountain of your [God's] inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which your hands have established" (Exod 15:17). Angel Rodrigues notes "the ancient Israelite tabernacle was to be a perpetuation of the Sinai experience," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24 (1986): 134.

[291] John 1:14, 15; Phil 2:5–9.

of fire, the very flame of Yahweh."[292] Davidson convincingly argues that while the immediate context of this passage (the wedding song of Solomon) serves to sanctify human love and sexuality, "it *typologically* points beyond itself to the divine Lover."[293] In this we note the burning jealous love of God who, through the incarnate Son, would descend even to the grave, that through death He might eternally rescue His adulterous wife. Yet before this occurs, He prefigures it through the sanctuary-covenant marriage. We saw the flame of Yahweh first in the burning bush, when God revealed His temporal being and missionary heart eager to save all. The flame of Yahweh was noted again when God descended to speak His covenant for the first time to His betrothed Israel in terms that expressed the justice and mercy of His Husband love, "The Lord came from Sinai… From His right hand came a fiery law for them. Yes, He loves the people" (Deut 33:1–3). The flame of Yahweh was again seen blazing on Mt. Sinai when God revealed the sanctuary redemption plan to Moses, plans that anticipated Christ's incarnation, death, and heavenly ministry. And the flame of Yahweh—the pronouncement of His very name as the long-suffering Husband—was gloriously revealed in His merciful forgiveness to His adulterous bride in Exodus 34.

Now the fire is ablaze on the sanctuary altar and God's shekinah glory fills the temple: "with deep emotion the people beheld the token that the work of their hands was accepted. There were no loud demonstrations of rejoicing. A solemn awe rested upon all.

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[292] The final climax of this song is the Hebrew *salhebetya*, a compound word made up of the noun *salhebet* "flame" and the suffix '*ya*, the shortened form of the Tetragrammaton, Yah(weh). *Flame of Yahweh*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 624–625.

[293] Davidson calls the flame of Yahweh in Song 8:6 the "supreme statement" not only regarding the biblical theology of sexuality but also concerning the theology of God. Ibid. 632. Italics original.

But the gladness of their hearts welled up in tears of joy, and they murmured low, earnest words of gratitude that God had condescended to abide with them."[294] God's glory confirmed His approval and tacitly sealed their work as being "very good." God's presence also fulfilled His promise of rest which the nation was seeking (Exod 33:14) and assured them that they would indeed be His treasured possession, drawing all nations to Him (Exod 34:10). The sanctuary-covenant structure is now complete, the God who reveals Himself in time and relationships has condescended to rescue an adulterous nation and reinstate them as His forgiven and precious bride—His partner in mission to reach and liberate an enslaved world.

And here is one final and essential point that must be underscored. For while the glory and majesty of God bedazzles, His focus appears to be less on Himself and more on His passionate desire for a relationship with Israel. We saw this in the second commandment—the heart of the law—where God sought Israel's heart love over outward compliance. This was again emphasized in the chiastic structure of Exodus 34, which demonstrated God's condescension in the complete forgiveness of Israel due to His desire to reinstate covenant oneness. Indeed, as we survey whole beautiful panorama encompassed by the seven-step structure of the sanctuary-covenant, what God seeks to underscore is not His Law, the intimate nature of covenant eating, or even the final dwelling, instead the spotlight falls prominently on Israel and her vow of obedience. This is evidenced in the chiastic center (D) of the seven mountaintop meetings (MM):

A – Invitation to Covenant Oneness (1st MM: Proposal)

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[294] White, E. G. (1890). *The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old* (Vol. 1, p. 350). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

B – Preparation of the Heart Throne (2nd MM: Preparation for wedding)

C – Covenant Spoken (3rd MM: Groom's vows)

D – Israel's Covenant Ratification (4th MM: Bride's vows;

Marriage sealed)

C' – Covenant Eating (5th MM: Reception dinner)

B'– Preparation of Sanctuary Home (6th MM: Meeting with Architect)[295]

A' – Dwelling in Covenant Oneness (7th MM: Couple cohabitate).

While each step has a critical role to play in Israel's oneness with God (the necessary prerequisite to fulfill her mission to the nations), God's emphasis is on Israel's vow to be faithful. Unlike the determining God of the other models of Christian spirituality, the biblical God extends freedom of choice to all. He does not determine or compel, He woos. More than anything else, God longs for His bride to remember not only the many gracious blessings He has heaped on her, but her promise to faithfully serve Him, both as Lord and beloved Husband.

Likewise, God's greatest desire for us today is that we remember not only His great acts of love for us, but our love for Him and the vows we have made to serve

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[295] There are two additional mountaintop meetings after the 6th, which was interrupted by the golden calf apostasy. Because the sanctuary-covenant progression has been broken (reflected by the broken Decalogue on the base of Sinai), Israel is now outside of the sanctuary-covenant relationship. Thus, I do not count these meetings as part of God's original 7-step design for union, but as "detour" meetings. For unlike the other meetings which God initiates by calling Moses to come up the mountain, these two detour meetings are initiated by Moses in an attempt to intercede for Israel and reinstate them into the covenant relationship. In Detour A (Exod 32:7–33:6) Moses successfully intercedes for the life of Israel and in Detour B (Exod 34:4–28), by Moses' request, God reinstates Israel into the covenant relationship by underscoring the second commandment (which Israel had broken), and exalting His glorious name as jealous, yet graciously merciful Husband to His wayward wife.

Him—through thick and thin, in good times and in bad, for better or for worse. Marital strife is usually a two-way street, each side contributing to the dysfunction. Yet because God is perfect, we know that any problems in our covenant marriage with Him is our fault. Thus, during times of marital disconnect we should prayerfully reacquaint ourselves with our amazing Husband God. Because, as we saw, His ardent love is as strong as death, His jealousy fiercer than the grave. God will do whatever it takes to restore covenant union with us, if we only acknowledge our faults and turn our hearts back to Him.

Summary

Unlike the models of Christian spirituality which view God as timeless and hold that union with Him must be achieved through mystical practices that target the immortal and immaterial soul, Scripture reveals a vastly different picture of God's being and of our union with Him. As we explored in this chapter, the supreme OT revelation of God's ontological nature and of humanity's relationship with Him occurs through a series of meetings on Mount Sinai that climaxed in the mountain of God's inheritance, the sanctuary through which the Lord would articulate His plan of redemption for humanity. The first grounding revelation (Exod 3:1–17) concerns God's ontic appearing to Moses. We noted that it was God's words that revealed His ontic presence and nature as one that encompasses the reality of time and space. Through spatio-temporal realities God extends Himself in the past-present-future flow of time and asks that, in order to know Him, we mentally gather this information about Him (Exod 6:1–8). In this way, the past actions of God inspire our faith in the present, helping us to act on what God has promised to do in the future. Indeed, God assures Moses that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

that He has remembered His covenant in the present and will redeem the nation in the future: "I will take you as My people and I will be your God" (Exod 6:7). In these revelations of God's name we also noted that God's being/name is essentially linked with loving relationality and heart for mission.

After the Israelites cross the Red Sea, the Song of Moses culminates in the promise that God will bring them into His holy habitation, the mountain of His inheritance which is His sanctuary dwelling (Exod 15:13, 17–18). But before God can take His bride to His sanctuary, a betrothal and marriage must take place. In this way the nation can get to know God better and decide whether they will accept or refuse Him. This is accomplished through a series of meetings on Mt. Sinai. The various meetings can be summarized as follows, each teaching an important lesson on how we can reach spiritual oneness with God today:

1) Invitation to Covenant Oneness (proposal). This is where we understand the nature of the covenant as a proposal (conditional on our acceptance) to enter into intimately personal and missional union.

2) Preparation of the Heart Throne (preparation for wedding). Take time for introspection and cleansing of heart (repentance) to discern if there is anything that would impair our relationship with God and hearing His word.

3) Covenant Spoken (Groom's vows). Personally receive and engrave God's commandment promises (His promissory wedding ring) in our mind and heart.

4) Israel's Covenant Ratification (bride's vows; marriage sealed). Accept Scripture's binding principles and prophetic guidelines—including the writings of Ellen White—that apply the Decalogue to present-day situations, facilitating a more vibrant life

of loving service (Exod 24:7). And as the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled on the altar and the people, so we, through the blood of Christ, pledge ourselves to love, honor, and obey our Husband.

5) Covenant Eating (reception dinner). As the elders ate and drank with God, we too invite Christ daily into our hearts by eating His body (savoring and digesting His words), and drinking His blood (living a life of self-sacrifice patterned after His).

6) Preparation of Sanctuary Home (preparation for home building). We then cooperate with God and His church in building His kingdom through a life of mission, aided by the Holy Spirit. In this way we make our lives a sanctuary that testifies to God's work in us and communicates to others that we have taken His side in the great controversy between God and Satan. But even at this deep and intimate stage of connection with God, the story of Israel teaches us that if we fall we can trust a merciful Savior who can grant us contrition, lead us to repentance, and restore our covenant union with Him.

7) Dwelling in Covenant Oneness (couple living together, prospect of new births). This seventh mountain meeting is reminiscent of the seventh day in creation, where God and His children rested together, delighting in each other's company. Similarly, the sanctuary, as a spatiotemporal dwelling (patterned after the heavenly spatiotemporal model), provided a unique space in time where God sought to dwell with his nation, offering them rest and communion. In our lives, the 7th mountaintop meeting is when God's special blessing comes down to us at the end of each week. With our secular work set aside we can more clearly see the beauty of God, His jealous love as our husband and redemptive mercies towards us. The two great commandments concerning God—worship

and the Sabbath—meet together beautifully on this occasion. And when we resume the work of the week, others will see by the glow on our faces and our missionary zeal that we have been with God. The Sabbath rest also helps anticipate the day God will finally dwell among us, not through the shekinah glory of an earthly sanctuary, but through the sanctuary of His own pierced body, sacrificed to restore our union with Him, "Then I John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.'"[296] On that day, God's promise to Moses "I will take you as My people and I will be your God"[297] will find ultimate fulfillment for those who walk in sanctuary-covenant oneness with their Lord.

Interpretation of Metaphysics

Through the sanctuary-covenant God has revealed His name, His redemption plan, and His glory. We have seen that God's way, or roadmap, leading to oneness with Him is found in the sanctuary.[298] The sanctuary is the key that has opened to our view God's "complete system of truth, connected and harmonious"[299] In terms of the biblical meta-hermeneutical presuppositions, God's sanctuary-covenant structure functions as a systematic framework connecting everything that exists (reality) in a coherent or rational

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[296] Rev 21:2–3.

[297] Exod 6:7

[298] Ps 77:13.

[299] Ellen White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation*. (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1888), 423.

whole. This biblical method of union or re-union is the dwelling ministry of Christ with humanity through the sanctuary-covenant structure. This framework is also called the principle of articulation, for it articulates the parts with the whole.

In the previous phenomenological analysis of Exodus we saw that spirituality is based on God's self-revelation as an analogically temporal, lovingly relational, and passionately missional Being who offers freedom of choice to all. God's mission in redeeming Israel was both to dwell with them through His sanctuary-covenant and send them into all the world with His covenant marriage invitation. In the sanctuary God's words of promise (covenant) were the foundation of union for all nations. Through the sanctuary covenant Christ would continue to mediate forgiveness and union in the OT types and thus prefigure His earthly ministry and subsequent high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. For the telos or final goal of the sanctuary was not the earthly sanctuary of types, but the coming of the great Antitype whose incarnation and heavenly ministry would one day usher in a physical reunion with His bride that would complete the spiritual union begun on earth. One day Christ Himself will bring His bride to His holy mountain in the heavenly sanctuary, that she might behold His glory and hear further revelations of His character of grace and truth, face to face, throughout all spatiotemporal eternity.[300]

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[300] John 17:24, 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4.

CHAPTER 4

COMPARISON OF MODELS AND CONCLUSION

Summary

As we noted in the introduction, the concept of spirituality requires the
interpretation of every meta-hermeneutical category: ontology, theology, anthropology,
epistemology, cosmology, and finally metaphysics, which connects them all
harmoniously. When two spiritual subjects interrelate, all of these presuppositions are at
play—usually unconsciously—and result in spiritual union. Because a false meta-
hermeneutical interpretation can lead to a false spirituality, great care must be taken to
arrive at a true biblical understanding of these categories. Only in this way can we be
assured that we are entering a true spiritual union with God. For Christ has warned us that
at the last day He will turn to many who have called Him Lord and say, "I never knew
you, depart from me you who practice lawlessness" (Matt 7:23). Yet these condemned
Christians were prophets, drove out demons, and worked many miracles in His name (v.
22). They likely attended church, read Scripture, and did many good deeds. These
Christians sincerely believed they were in spiritual union with Christ—yet Jesus calls
them lawless because their spirituality did not embrace His biblical covenant.

The problem, as we have noted, is that while traditional models of spirituality
claim to be grounded in Scripture, in practice they have adopted philosophical
interpretations, and it is through this lens that they have interpreted the biblical word,

greatly distorting the final product. Because they did not take God's words and actions in Scripture seriously, they were unable to submit to Christ's sanctuary-covenant terms for spirituality, and instead devised their own forms of spiritual union. In chapter two, three forms or models of traditional Christian spirituality were analyzed—classical, Protestant, and modern. This was followed in chapter four by a phenomenological study of the biblical model, based on the Exodus sanctuary-covenant. Below is the summary of each model followed by a comparison of the four structures.

Four Christian Models of Spirituality

Classical Model

The classical model was explored through the writings of Augustine of Hippo. Believing that Neoplatonism taught the same doctrine as Scripture, Augustine adopts the philosophical interpretation of Being and God as timeless. In his interpretation of human nature Augustine also follows Neoplatonic philosophy, dividing humans into a temporal body and an immortal soul. Epistemologically, he posits an earthly truth comprised of words that have no being, and a heavenly truth which must be reached outside of cognition. Regarding God's words in Scripture Augustine's "inner ear" taught him that even biblical words "have no being, since they are fleeting and ephemeral."'[301] His cosmology adopts Neoplatonic two-world dualism and posits a progressive creationism. This view is coherent with Augustine's metaphysics which views all things as participating, to a greater or lesser degree, in God's timeless immutability through the hierarchy of Being.

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[301] *Confessions*, 251.

Augustinian spirituality springboards from his epistemology. In other words, knowing God or Truth involves an ascending order of spiritual contemplation—first of material things, then the soul, then the soul's higher reason which abstracts timeless truth from the temporal wrapping of biblical words. Because biblical words have no being, God cannot reveal Himself in them, they merely serve as a springboard to the fourth and final step: the contemplation of God as He is, in one tremendous glance of pure light

Protestant Model

In the Protestant model of spirituality we noted that while Luther theoretically upholds *sola Scriptura* in principle, in practice his basic presuppositions are philosophically grounded. Luther's philosophical interpretation was seen in his ontological view of God as timeless, his anthropological understanding of humans as a body-spirit dualism, and finally in defining spirituality as a non-cognitive or suprarational act where faith in God's timeless words (*hoc est corpus meum*) effects Christ's real presence in the eucharist, thereby justifying sinners. Thus we see that his interpretation of justification by faith is not centered on faith in every word that proceeds from God (*sola Scriptura*), but primarily on the four words that make the eucharist (real bodily presence) of Christ's sacrifice efficacious for salvation. It was also noted that Luther's metaphysics—the relation of the parts to the whole—centered on God's sovereign and timeless will of double predestination (salvation for some, damnation for the rest). Luther warns that this divine predestination must not be questioned but adored. Finally, cosmologically Luther posits a two-world dichotomy, and although he accepts a seven-day creation, he rejects the continuance of a divine blessing upon the seventh day.

Modern Model

In the modern model we saw that Teilhard's theology begins with an evolutionary cosmology where matter arises by chance. Teilhard interprets human nature according to the traditional philosophical dualism of a temporal body and an immortal soul. He likewise interprets God's nature as having a temporal body (the world) and a transcendent timeless Spirit (world soul). We noted that spiritual union with God occurs as humans exercise faith in an evolutionary God (who divinizes matter and all human experiences) and His Eucharistic Christ—established by the four biblical words that confirm his transubstantiation, *hoc est corpus meum*. And it is this Eucharistic Christ—who determines the panentheistic evolutionary ascent to Oneness with God—that comprises the metaphysical center of Teilhard's theology.

Biblical Model

The fourth model examined was that of biblical spirituality. We noted that the supreme OT revelation of God's ontological nature and spiritual oneness with Him occurred through a series of meetings on Mount Sinai. In God's first grounding revelation (Exod 3:1–17) He revealed the divine nature (theology) as temporal, relational, and missional. Because God's nature determines Being (theo→onto→logical order), biblical ontology is likewise temporal, relational and missional. God then revealed that biblical epistemology (logos) is grounded on His words and acts, which are extended throughout spatio-temporal history (Exod 6:1–8). To attain a knowledge of God, all of these historically extended words and acts of God must be gathered in harmonious tension. Anthropologically, we noted that Scripture defines human nature as a wholistic entity. In other words, the physical human body (particularly the mind which receives God's

transformative words) is the only entity on which God operates to unite humans to Himself.[302]

After God grounded the meta-hermeneutical categories of theology, ontology, and epistemology, we saw that He led Moses and the Israelites through seven mountaintop meetings (MMs):

1st MM - Invitation to Covenant Oneness (Exod 19:3–6)

2nd MM - Preparation of the Heart Throne (Exod 19:9b–13)

3rd MM - Covenant Spoken (Exod 19:20–20:17)

4th MM - Covenant Ratification (Exod 20:21–24:8)

5th MM - Covenant Eating (Exod 24:9–11)

6th MM - Preparation of Sanctuary Home (Exod 24:13–32:14)[303]

7th MM - Dwelling in Covenant Oneness (Exod 40:34–38).

These encounters are God's manual for true spirituality, for they encapsulate how He desires to unite with humanity. The progression resembles a betrothal and marriage

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[302] In other words, from an *anthropological perspective,* Scripture defines the human being as a wholistic entity, whose body and mind are transformed into God's image by the process of cognitive renewal (Rom 12:1–2). This negates the belief in the soul as a timeless entity by which salvation is achieved (the prevailing view in the other Christian models noted in this study). Yet from a *cosmic and metaphysical perspective*, other entities—such as the Trinity and the ministry of heavenly angels—are necessary to secure the spiritual restoration of humans.

[303] There are two additional mountaintop meetings after the 6th, which was interrupted by the golden calf apostasy. Because the sanctuary-covenant progression has been broken (reflected by the broken Decalogue on the base of Sinai), Israel is now outside of the sanctuary-covenant relationship. Thus I do not count these meetings as part of God's original 7-step design for union, but as "detour" meetings. For unlike the other meetings which God initiates by calling Moses to come up the mountain, these two detour meetings are initiated by Moses in an attempt to intercede for Israel and reinstate them into the covenant relationship. In Detour A (Exod 32:7–33:6) Moses successfully intercedes for the life of Israel and in Detour B (Exod 34:4–28), by Moses' request, God reinstates Israel into the covenant relationship by underscoring the second commandment (which Israel had broken), and exalting His glorious name as jealous, yet graciously merciful Husband to His wayward wife.

arrangement, which is fitting as it underscores God's name as our passionately jealous Husband. The sequence may also be read chiastically, with the highlighted apex as God's words (covenant) together with Israel's vow to be faithful to God's words. This is evidenced in the chiastic center (D) of the seven mountaintop meetings:

A – Invitation to Covenant Oneness (1st MM: Proposal)

B – Preparation of the Heart Throne (2nd MM: Preparation for wedding)

C – Covenant Spoken (3rd MM: Groom's vows)

D – Covenant Ratification (4th MM: Bride's vows; Marriage sealed)

C' – Covenant Eating (5th MM: Reception dinner)

B'– Preparation of Sanctuary Home (6th MM: meeting with architect)[304]

A' – Dwelling in Covenant Oneness (7th MM: Couple cohabitates).

In this development we also noted the biblical interpretation of cosmology overtly expressed in the 4th commandment, which hearkens back to Genesis and God's creation of the world in seven literal days. Biblical cosmology is also implied in the 7th meeting where the Lord grants rest to Israel. Finally, the biblical interpretation of metaphysics (the unifier of all meta-hermeneutical categories) is the entire structure of the sanctuary-

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covenant. This is where everything blends harmoniously: God's being (theology) and Being in general (ontology), humanity (anthropology), understanding (epistemology), and the world (cosmology). This entire seven-step process—climaxing with the Lord's dwelling with Israel—reveals God's paradigm for spiritual union with humanity.

The seven-step pattern which God laid out for Israel's union with Him can also be applied to our lives today, demonstrating the roadmap to oneness with God[305]:

1. Commit to separate from the world and unite with God as His bride and ministry partner.

2. Cleanse our heart throne, which implies separating from sin even in our thoughts.

3. Attentively study God's words/promises in Scripture.

4. Daily renew our vows to be faithful to God, through the blood of the covenant Lamb.

5. Commune daily with Christ by digesting His words/life (all of Scripture) and sharing our words (thoughts/prayers) and life (actions) for His glory. This is character transformation.

6. Understand Christ's role in the great controversy (especially now as He ministers in the heavenly sanctuary) and co-operate in being the light of the world.

7. Keep the temporal, relational, and missional spirit of the 24-hour Sabbath day, which commemorates creation and redemption, while also anticipating final cosmic restoration.

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[305] While the original seven mountaintop meetings occurred diachronically—in sequential order—their practical application for personal and corporate spiritual life may occur synchronically, that is, simultaneously.

Comparison of Models

A quick glance at the meta-hermeneutical presuppositions of the four models reveals how they compare (see table below). While the classical, Protestant, and modern models of Christian spirituality align in nearly every category, the biblical model stands in unique contrast to them all. The ontological and theological ground for the first three models is their Neoplatonic interpretation of Being and God as timeless and ahistorical; in contrast, the biblical account is grounded on an analogically spatio-temporal, relational, and missional interpretation of God and Being. Likewise, the traditional Christian models agree in viewing human nature (anthropology) through a Platonic body-spirit dualism; whereas the biblical model presents a wholistic view of human nature. Epistemologically, the three models tap into the timeless realm through a suprarational faith, whereas the fourth model analyzed uniquely upholds a cognitive understanding of all God's acts and words in Scripture. Cosmologically, the traditional models range from progressive creationism to evolution, while the biblical interpretation is unique in that it upholds one cosmos operating under one historical timeframe initiated by a 24-hour, seven-day creation. And finally, the metaphysical interpretation of the three traditional models of spirituality center on participation in a deterministic and hierarchical God and panentheistic Christ; whereas the biblical model unites everything through the historical Christ's mediatorial work in the historical sanctuary, granting freedom of choice to all. In

short, we see that the biblical model offers a compelling alternative to the other existing

models, while remaining faithful to the *sola* and *tota Scriptura* principles (see Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of the meta-hermeneutical presuppositions of the four models of biblical spirituality: classical, Protestant, modern, and biblical.

	Ontology	Theology	Anthropology	Epistemology	Cosmology	Metaphysics
Classical (Augustine)	Timeless Immutable (Ahistorical)	Timeless Immutable	Dual: Timeless Soul/ Temporal Body	Suprarational abstraction of timeless truths	2 Worlds/ Progressive creationism	Panentheism and Predestination
Protestant (Luther)	Timeless Immutable (Ahistorical)	Timeless Immutable	Dual: Timeless Soul/ Temporal Body	Suprarational faith in eucharistic words	2 Worlds/ Creationism	Panentheism and Double Predestination
Modern (Teilhard)	Timeless Immutable (Ahistorical)	Dual: Timeless Spirit Temporal Body	Dual: Timeless Soul/ Temporal Body	Science and Suprarational (intuitive) faith in eucharistic words	2 Worlds/ Evolution	Panentheism and Predestination
Biblical	Analogically Temporal, Relational, and Missional (Historical)	Analogically Temporal, Relational, and Missional (Historical)	Temporally Wholistic Body/Soul, Relational and Missional (Historical)	Rational faith in the biblical revelation of all God's words and actions in history	1 Historical Cosmos/ Creationism (7-day Creation)	Christ's providence in history via the earthly sanctuary, patterned after the heavenly

Conclusion and Future Work

Through the sanctuary system God has revealed His name, His redemption plan, and our future glory. We have seen that God's way—or roadmap—leading to oneness with Him is found in the sanctuary-covenant system (Ps 77:13). The sanctuary is the key that has opened to our view God's "complete system of truth, connected and

harmonious."[306] Indeed, one day soon Christ's bride will be physically united to her Bridegroom. He will bring her in and plant her in His holy mountain, His heavenly sanctuary abode, that she might behold His glory and hear further revelations of His character of grace and truth, face to face, throughout all spatio-temporal eternity.[307]

As was the aim of this study, these seven OT mountain meetings orchestrated by God have revealed His plan for individual and corporate union with humanity that is grounded on God's being as a temporal-historical, passionately loving, and intensely missional God who grants free will to all. Yet this is not the complete story. Perhaps the most significant aspect of these seven meetings is that they typify or prefigure the coming ministry of the incarnate Christ. Because Israel failed in her vow to be faithful to God's covenant, Christ Himself—the Messenger of the covenant[308]—would descend to earth, into the sanctuary of the body God prepared for Him, and there live out similar mountain experiences, showing Himself victorious where Israel had failed. The historical God would send His Son in the likeness of human flesh and thus reveal His passionate love and missionary heart. Hence, this thesis has primarily assisted in laying the groundwork for an ensuing project: a NT study of Christ's mediatorial work in the sanctuary-covenant structure that will—through seven mountain antitypes—reveal His further acts in redemptive history till the final restoration of all things. Christ's advancement of the

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[306] Ellen White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation*. (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1888), 423.

[307] John 17:24, 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4.

[308] Mal 3:1.

seven OT sanctuary-covenant types for spiritual union will thus complete the current

study, offering a necessary and comprehensive analysis of biblical spirituality.

APPENDIX A

THE *IMAGO DEI* REFLECTED AND RESTORED THROUGH GOD'S EXODUS
SANCTUARY-COVENANT

	Creation – Imago Dei[309] Gen 1–2	**God's Self-Revelation** Exod 3:16–17, 6:2–8, 19–40
Structural Image	Humans are wholistic **spatiotemporal** entities—not dualistic. Both the human **body** (physical image) and **mind** (reason, free will, morality, emotions, etc.) reflect God's image (Gen 1:26). Body and mind are united in the concept of "**sonship**," where Seth is made in the image (*tselem*) of his father, Adam (Gen 5:3).	God reveals Himself to Moses as **spatiotemporal** (He appears, visits, sees, remembers, and speaks with Moses face to face; 3:16–17; 33:11) manifesting Himself primarily through His **thoughts/words** and **actions** in the temporal flow of history (Exod 6:5–8). Israel is called God's firstborn **son** (Exod 4:22).
Relational Image	God, three in one, creates humans to exist in **relationship** with Him and with one another, which includes the intimate, "one flesh" marriage relationship (Gen 1:27b; 2:23, 24).	God reveals Himself in **relationship** with the patriarchs, Moses, and the entire Israelite nation (Exod 3:14–15), which is later expressed in terms of the marriage relationship (Exod 19–40).

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[309] The three primary categories of the *imago Dei*—structural, relational, and functional—are drawn from Richard Davidson, "The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning: Gen 1–11.*"*

Functional/Missional Image	God, omnipotent Creator and Sustainer, creates humans with the **functional mission** of representing and resembling Him as they rule over and bless all creation (Gen 1:28).	God reveals Himself in mission to redeem Israel and gives them the co-mission to bless all creation by representing and resembling Him through His redemptive **sanctuary-covenant mission** (Exod 19:5–6; 20:1–17).

APPENDIX B

COMPARISON OF CREATION DAYS WITH SANCTUARY DEVELOPMENT

	7 Days of Creation (Genesis 1:1–2:3)	**7 Mountaintop Meetings** **for Spiritual Re-Creation** (Exodus 19–40)
1st Day/ Meeting	**Light separated from darkness**	**Call to separate from darkness** (the world) and be consecrated to the light (God) (Exod 19:5–6)
2nd Day/ Meeting	**Separation of waters** Creation of earthly heaven (suggestive of God's heaven)	**Washing with water** Symbolic of inner consecration. Focusing the mind and body on heavenly things. (Exod 19:10)
3rd Day/ Meeting	**Creates physical food** Herbs, trees, fruits and seeds—the food which will nurture and sustain humanity.	**Provides spiritual food** God speaks the covenant, thus providing the food which will nurture and sustain humanity: The word of God. (Deut 8:3)
4th Day/ Meeting	**Greater & lesser lights** (sun and moon), uses sanctuary word (*meorot)* for the sanctuary lampstand.	**Union of Husband and bride** Bride (moon) promises to treasure & reflect words of Husband God (Sun). (Rev 12:2)
5th Day/ Meeting	**1st "blessing"** in creation. **1st command to be "fruitful and multiply"** **1st "Life" reference**	**Covenant Blessing** God's first *blessing* to Israel as a nation/wife by inviting its representatives to a covenant meal on Sinai, likely intended to inspire their *fruitful leadership*. They see God and their *life is upheld*. (Exod 24:9–11)
6th Day/ Meeting	**God makes humans to dwell with Him in the Garden of Eden sanctuary.** Gen 2:4–25 expands the 6th day, with the Garden of Eden	**Sanctuary instructions for dwelling with God.** Provisional dwelling restored through the redemptive Seed, whose ministry is articulated in the sanctuary system. (Exod 25:8–9, 40)

	serving as a copy of the heavenly sanctuary Garden of Eden (see Gen 2:8; Ezek 28:13)	
	God's mission to humans is to take care of the earth/world, be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:26–28)	**God's sanctuary as mission center** where Israel can fulfill its call to care for the welfare of a lost world and bear eternal fruit (multiplication) for God's family. (Exod 20:10; Ps 56:6–8)
	(After Adam sins, Gen 3:15 promises the redemptive Seed).	
7th Day/ Meeting	**Sabbath rest/ Communion with God**	**Union and rest --** God descends into the sanctuary to dwell with Israel, granting them rest. (Exod 40:34–38)

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