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The Glory of the Lord Whose Likeness is as the Appearance of a Human Being/Adam: A Study of Ezekiel's Son of Man/Adam Anthropology

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THE GLORY OF THE LORD WHOSE LIKENESS IS AS THE APPEARANCE OF A HUMAN BEING/ADAM: A STUDY OF EZEKIEL'S SON OF MAN/ADAM ANTHROPOLOGY

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Ezekiel has often been criticized as a dehumanizing book. Still it is alternative humanisms that have done so much to dehumanize mankind with the totalitarianism of self-deifying individualism or the totalitarianism of collectively-imposed manmade metanarratives. Far from being a dehumanizing book, the objective of the son of man/Adam is certainly to purge his hearers of all anthropologies of autonomy and license, but this Adamic priestly prophet does this to eschatologically resurrect in them an anthropology of dependence and true freedom. Reasserting the creation theology and anthropology of Genesis, Ezekiel insists that authentic humanism, Edenic humanism (i.e., the original humanism), is grounded in the Creator God who eschatologically recreates mankind in the divine likeness and a faith-relationship with him which is maintained by the Lord GOD's life-sustaining temple presence and exercised in a royal priesthood with sacrificial love toward fellow human beings. Freedom is freedom from rebellious sin and death as well as freedom from the imposition of all manmade anthropologies as necessary ways of salvation. At the same time, it is a sacrificial choice between manifold divine goods (i.e., possible good choices) that is made within the framework of God's will as well as within a framework of complementary and different vocational duties to each other. Only at the recapitulation of all things will recreation and Edenic humanism become fully actualized.

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To Annette, Sophia, and Andreas

God's splendor gives life, and therefore those who see God shall live. This is the reason why the intangible, incomprehensible, invisible God offers himself to be seen, comprehended, and grasped by human beings; that they may have life. It is impossible to live without life, and life comes only by sharing in God; sharing in God comes through seeing God and enjoying his goodness. People, therefore, are to see God and live. The prophets had foretold this in parables: God would be seen by people who have his Spirit and constantly await his coming. … Now the glory of God is humanity fully alive, for humanity's true life is the vision of God. For if the divine presence in creation gives existence to all creatures, how much more does the revelation of the Father by the Word give perfect being to those who see God?

St. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against the Heresies* 4 in the *Benedictine Daily Prayer: A Short Breviary*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson and the Monks of Saint John's Abbey, 2nd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 1807–8.

For we believe in that God who is the almighty Creator, produces all things from nothing, the best things from those that are evil, and salvation from what is despaired of and lost. In Rom. 4:17 this is attributed to Him when it is stated that He "calls into existence the things that do not exist." And 2 Cor. 4:6 speaks of God who ordered light to shine out of darkness—not a spark from a coal but light out of darkness, like life from death, righteousness from sin, the kingdom of heaven and the liberty of the children of God from enslavement to the devil and hell.

Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Publishing House, 1955–), 8:39.

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PREFACE

Unlike other Hebrew prophets, Ezekiel is only referred to by name in a handful of passages (Ezek 1:3; 24:24; Sir 49:8; and 4 Macc 18:17) in the entire Christian Bible (Canonical Old Testament, Apocrypha, and Canonical New Testament). Instead the Lord GOD nearly always refers to him by the unique title of "son of man/Adam" (בֶּן־אָדָם). While this appellation became the distinctive title of Jesus Christ (Matt 8:20; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24; John 1:51; Acts 7:56; Heb 2:6; Rev 1:13; 14:14, etc. Cf. Dan 7:13–14) who is considered to be the second Adam par excellence in the New Testament (Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:22, 45), it is often understood as a designation of Ezekiel's membership in the human class, his creatureliness, and his mortality, if not his sinfulness on the basis of passages such as Genesis 11:5; Numbers 23:19; Psalm 8:5; 31:20; 80:17–19; 144:1–3; 145:8–12; and Daniel 8:17.

The Aramaic Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Tg. Ps.-J.) on Ezekiel recognized that this designation for the priestly prophet alludes to something more than just the aforementioned. It does not translate בֶּן־אָדָם as בְּנֵי־אֲנָשָׁא or another variation of it, which would suggest the idea of mere mortal as the targumim do in Numbers 23:19; Psalm 8:5; 146:3; Isaiah 51:12; 56:2; Jeremiah 49:18, 33; 50:40; 51:43; and Micah 5:6. Pseudo-Jonathan conversely translates בֶּן־אָדָם consistently with בַּר אָדָם, meaning "Son of Adam." "Adam" (אָדָם) is a proper noun in Aramaic (Gen 2:7, 8, 15, 16, 18. etc.). This fact did not go unnoticed as Rabbi Kimhi's comments on Ezekiel testify.[1] With this in mind, Samson H. Levey, the editor of the English translation of the Targum of Ezekiel (ArBib), writes:

> It is my contention that there may be something more esoteric in the Targum's *bar 'adam*, perhaps in opposition to the Septuagint and to those who see in *ben 'adam* a denigration of Ezekiel. … [The Targumist's] *bar 'adam* may be his way of elevating Ezekiel to the most exulted level of prophecy, since Adam was regarded in some Rabbinic opinion as a prophet who foresaw all that was to happen in the entire course of human history, generation by generation, until the resurrection. It may also be a subtle ploy relating to the mystery of the Merkabah which is integral to Ezekiel's role in Rabbinic mysticism. The association of Adam with the celestial Temple, the divine abode, and the throne of the deity is established in recognized strata from which the Targum could draw. The Merkabah tradition itself is preserved in the Intertestamental Literature, specifically in the Enoch Books, 1 Enoch xiv, 2 Enoch xx and xxi, and in the Testament of Levi v. There is a striking passage in which Adam relates to Seth, his vision of the Merkabah, after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. "When we were at prayer there came to me Michael the archangel, a messenger of God. And I saw a chariot like

[1] *The Targum of Ezekiel*, ed. Samson H. Levey, ArBib 13 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 6–7.

> the wind and its wheels were fiery and I was caught up in the Paradise of Righteousness, and I saw the Lord sitting and His face was flaming fire that could not be endured. And many thousands of angels were on the right and the left of the chariot." This is from the Vita Adae et Evae, the Jewish origin and characteristics of which Ginzberg had demonstrated, and assigned to an early period antedating the destruction of 70 C. E.[2]

Levey goes on to argue that Pseudo-Jonathan's recognition of Ezekiel as the second Adam and an Adamic priestly prophet may also have been intended to serve as a polemic against the Christian Messianic idea that Christ is the Second Adam and an Adamic priestly prophet. Even if this may have been part of the targum's intention, it does not subtract from the insight that the targum discerned from the Book of Ezekiel. In fact, the Christian Bible understood the Adamic priestly prophet Ezekiel to be both a renewed first Adam and a type of the Second Adam. This study sets out to explore the implications of Ezekiel's son of man/Adam anthropology.

[2] *The Targum of Ezekiel*, 7–8.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ADB	Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
Alter	Alter, Robert, trans. *The Hebrew Bible*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
BB	Basis Bibel
BCOTP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Pentateuch
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BHRB^{2}	van der Merwe, Christo H. J., Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (2nd ed.)
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BTCB	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
CEB	Common English Bible

CEV	Common English Version
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
ConcC	Concordia Commentary
COS	Hallo, William W. et al., eds. *The Context of Scripture*
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
DCH	Clines, David J. A., ed. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*
DOTP	Boda, Mark J., and J. Gordon McConville, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*
ESV	English Standard Version (2016)
EÜ	Einheitsübersetzung (2016)
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
FAT	Forschungen zum alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
Fox	Fox, Everett, trans. *The Schocken Bible*
GELS	Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*.
Gesenius[18]	Wilhelm Gesenius *Hebräisches und Äramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (18th ed.)
GKC	Kautzsch, E., and A. E. Cowley, eds. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (2nd ed.)
GNB	Good News Bible
Goldingay	Goldingay, John, trans. *The First Testament*
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (3rd. ed.)
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching

IBHS	Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*
IC	Illuminations Commentary
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
JANES	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JANESCU	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
Joüon	Joüon, Paul, and Takamitsu Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (2nd ed.)
JPSTC	JPS Tanakh Commentary
JR	*The Journal of Religion*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
Lamsa	Lamsa, George, trans. *Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts … Translated from the Peshitta*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEH	Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (3rd ed.)
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LU17	Die Bibel: Lutherübersetzung (2017)
LW	Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*
LXX	Septuagint

MT	Masoretic Text
NABR	New American Bible, Revised Edition
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible (2020)
NET	New English Translation (2017)
NETS	*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary*
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	Sakenfeld, Katherine Doob, Samuel E. Balentine, Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, and Eileen Schuller, eds. *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
NIDNTTE	Silva, Moisés, ed. *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology and Exegesis*
NIDOTTE	VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version (2011)
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NV	Nova Vulgata
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis

OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OEBB	Coogan, Michael D., ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible*
OEBE	Brawley, Robert L, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics*
OEBT	Balentine, Samuel E., ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Bible and Theology*
OLT	Old Testament Library
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
PdÄ	Probleme der Ägyptologie
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
RCR	Research in Contemporary Religion
REB	Revised English Bible
RNJB	Revised New Jerusalem Bible
RtOT	Reading the Old Testament Commentary Series
SBB	Stuttgarter biblischer Beiträge
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCRHier	*Scripta Hierosolymitana*
SCSB	Septuagint Commentary Series
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
Syr.	Syriac
TDNT	Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
TLOT	Jenni, Ernst, and Claus Westermann. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
Tg. Neof.	Targum Neofiti
Tg. Onq.	Targum Onkelos
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UCPNES	University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
Vulg.	Vulgate
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
YES	Yale Egyptological Studies
YOSR	Yale Oriental Series, Researches
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZB	Zürcher Bibel (2007)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM, RATIONALE, AND PROCEDURE OF THE THESIS

Ezekiel has been considered one of the most dehumanizing books of the Old Testament. It is often felt that the only way to fully affirm the theocentricity of the book is to do so at the expense of all that is truly human. The Swedish Lutheran theologian Gustaf Wingren (1910–2000) locates this misunderstanding in the "philosophy of religion" and Barthian anthropologies that have disconnected the New Testament from its foundation in the creation theology and anthropology of the Old Testament. If the philosophy of religion has made Christianity the climax of all anthropocentric religion (confusing fallen life for genuine life as the Creator intended), then Barthianism has made faith and human life unnatural and inhuman.[1]

Reading the Old Testament with Irenaeus of Lyon (ca. 130/140–200) and Martin Luther (1483–1546),[2] Wingren maintains that one can only arrive at all that is truly human by affirming theocentricity. But he also insists that the human being can only be kept from being dehumanized by grounding theological anthropology in the creation anthropology of the Old Testament. Redemption is not a flight from creation, rather redemption is realized in God's life-giving recreation or recapitulation. As Wingren puts it: "To become like Christ is to become man as the Creator intended he should be (Gen 1:26). Those who are called are intended to be images of God's son, likenesses of him (Rom 8:29). The new man is created in the likeness of God (Eph

[1] Gustaf Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), ix–xxii.

[2] Henceforth all references and abbreviations conform to Billie Jean Collins et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciples*, 2nd ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2014). See also Abbreviations in the front matter.

4:24). The growing likeness to Christ leads man … into the true life of man which is fully attained in the resurrection of the dead."[3] Wingren explains further,

> Man was created in the beginning by the creative Word, and destined to live by that which comes from the mouth of God. Men understand themselves alright and receive true human life in the hearing of God's Word. The Word reaches the objective for which it was sent out only when it effects an entrance into men. Man reaches the spring out of which he can draw human life only when the Word of the Creator comes to him. … What is given in faith signifies the deliverance of man from his unnatural condition, his restoration to the estate in which he was created. For Luther, unbelief is *demonic*. It is not "human" to doubt and "paradoxical" to believe; on the contrary, where doubt arises, it is diabolical powers that strive for mastery in human life.[4]

At first glance, Wingren's interpretation of Luther's creation theology might seem to be a theology of glory that contradicts Luther's well-known theology of the cross. But Luther found both of these theologies in Paul's reading of the Old Testament and in the Old Testament itself as evident in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545). They are really two perspectives within a unified theology. For Luther, revealed creation theology articulates what the human being was always created to be in an anthropology of dependence and freedom. It also speaks of the naturalness of faith as well as the "already" and "saint" dimensions of the human being who is eschatologically (i.e., already but not yet) recreated in Christ and who is "at the same time saint and sinner" (*simul iustus et peccator*) until the consummation all things (e.g., Eph 1; 4). Revealed theology of the cross exposes what the fallen unregenerate human being has become by choosing an anthropology of autonomy and license (i.e., theology of glory). It also speaks of the paradox of faith as well as the "but not yet" and "at the same time sinner" dimensions of the human being who is eschatologically recreated in Christ and who is "at the same time saint and

[3] Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*, trans. Victor C. Pogue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 75.

[4] Wingren, *The Living*, 13, 93.

sinner" before the consummation of all things (e.g., 1 Cor 1).[5] Taking a cue from Wingren's recovery of Luther's creation theology and anthropology,[6] this study sets out to reexamine Ezekiel's son of man/Adam anthropology (and his theology to the degree that it illuminates his anthropology) in light of Genesis creation theology and anthropology. It is the neglect of Ezekiel's use of creation theology and anthropology that has fostered a stilted interpretation of this Old Testament book.

Thesis

The hermeneutical key to the theological anthropology of the Book of Ezekiel is the distinctive title, "son of man," "son of human being" or "son of Adam" (בֶּן־אָדָם), with which the Lord GOD christened his Adamic priestly prophet. Ezekiel was not just declared son of man/Adam to signal his solidarity with fallen Adam, his creatureliness, and his inhumanity but also to signify his new recreated solidarity with the One whose Likeness is as the Appearance of a Human Being/Adam, his creaturely relationship with the Creator, and his paradigmatic renewed humanity.

Ezekiel's theology and title are grounded in Genesis's theocentric theology and its creation anthropology of dependence and freedom. The first Adam was created in the divine image and a faith-relationship with God so that he could mediate God's life-sustaining Edenic temple presence to the rest of the royal priests who were to assist him in (non-atoning) priestly

[5] Contemporary Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann is after something somewhat similar when he contrasts the tension between "Israel's Core Testimony" and "Israel's Countertestimony." See his *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

[6] Unfortunately Wingren's effort to counter the philosophy of religion and Barth pushed him so far in the opposite direction that he deviated from Luther in favor of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872). He eventually so "naturalized" faith, hope, and love that he would claim that the unbelieving human beings can cultivate faith, hope, and love apart from the gospel. Niels Henrik Gregerson, Brengt Kristensson Uggla, and Trygve Wyller, eds., *Reformation Theology for a Post-Secular Age: Løgstrup, Prenter, Wingren, and the Future of Scandinavian Creation Theology*, RCR 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 21–24, 26, 91–144.

ministry to one another as well as in royal mastery and rule of creation. Freedom is freedom from rebellious sin and death as well as freedom from the imposition of all manmade anthropologies as necessary ways of salvation. At the same time, it is a sacrificial choice between manifold divine goods (i.e., possible good choices) that is made within the framework of God's will as well as within a framework of mutually-supporting and different vocational duties to each other. When Adam severed his trust-relationship with God in pursuit of an anthropology of autonomy and license, he lost the image of God and fathered sons of man/Adam in his fallen image and with only an evil intention already at his youth.

Despite the Lord GOD's repeated acts of mercy for the sake of his name, the Israelites have only continually and willfully indulged their evil or rebellious intention via the inversion of the divine likeness, the objectification of one another, and the unpriestly profanation of the divine name before the nations. As a result, they have become the most defiant of the sons of man/Adam. The Adamic priestly prophet strips the Israelites of their radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility defenses of themselves via God's purging Word to reveal that they are corporately and personally responsible for their plight. But without another gracious theocentric act of divine recreation, the Israelites only willfully choose between various ways of dehumanizing one another which appear good to their divine likeness-deprived eyes but are really about a death-filled drive for autonomy and power.

Ezekiel was eschatologically recreated or justified as a renewed first Adam, an Adamic priestly prophet, and type of the Second Adam so that he could embody Edenic humanism (i.e., the original humanism) for Israel, re-humanize them through God's resurrecting Word, and mediate God's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence to the exiles. The more dependent human beings are on God, the more human, alive, and free they become. The more

human, alive, and free they become, the more human beings reflect the Divine. Only then can Israel, which cannot be simply equated with biological Israel, exercise sacrificial love as a royal kingdom of priests that reflect the divine likeness and make God's name holy among the nations so that they might be incorporated into Israel as well.

Until the recapitulation of all things, human recreation as well as the new temple, city, Israel, and land remain eschatological. Recreated sons of man/Adam possess trust and the divine likeness already now in their totality, but not yet in all their realized fullness. Since the rebellious intention wants to renounce relationship with God and expel the divine likeness through the quelling of a sacrificial faith-life, trust continues to waver and freedom still dabbles with license. Sacrificial love on behalf of other human beings even seems dehumanizing at times. Thus, unrepentance needs to be fended off by shame and the cross so that spiritual growth can take place. In the recapitulation of all things, faith and the divine likeness will be so realized that the sons of man/Adam will walk forever in the Lord GOD's statutes, completely free (like the Divine) of their shameful license and rebellious heart of stone. All of this transpires in the context of a fully manifested new temple, city, Israel, and land. These royal priests will then fully actualize their sacrificial choice between various goods in ways that not only completely reflect the divine likeness and make God's name holy but also fully support the individual and the common good via complementary and distinct roles in a mysterious new Edenic society.

Status of the Question

This study will now give its attention to situating itself in the context of Ezekielian anthropological research.[7] Baruch J. Schwartz surveys five approaches to the relationship

[7] For an overview of Ezekielian studies, see Andrew Mein, "Ezekiel: Structure, Themes, and Contested Issues," *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets* 190–206; Michael A. Lyons, *An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel*, T&TApp (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); C. A. Strine, "Ezekiel," *OEBT* 1:314–19; Ralph W. Klein, "Ezekiel," *OEBE* 1:258–64; L.-S. Tiemeyer, "Ezekiel: Book of," *DOTP* 214–29; Nancy R. Brown, "Ezekiel," *OEBB* 1:282–300;

between repentance and determinism in Ezekiel: The first maintains that Ezekiel is unsystematic and permits the contradiction to stand. The second contends that the book has a developmental structure where repentance becomes effective in the latter stage. The third maintains that determinism applies to Israel but not to the individual. The fourth contends that genuine repentance is possible and that determinism is rhetorical. The fifth maintains that determinism is irreversible and that the possibility of repentance is rhetorically designed to stave off demoralization. In contrast, Schwartz argues, "Ezekiel's doctrine of determinism, of God's action for his own name's sake, is the result of, not the opposite of, his belief in the absolute efficacy of repentance."[8] Schwartz contends that a non-Deuteronomistic reading of Ezekiel 20 unlocks how chapters 3, 14, 18, and 33 cohere with the book's theology. In the first stage of Ezekiel 20, God neither determines the fate of Israel's first two generations on the basis of a specific sin (except general disobedience), nor the quantity of sin attained. In the second stage, God misled later generations and prevented them from repenting (which is always efficacious) because he could not condemn them for the sins of the first two generations.[9]

Enlightenment-driven readings of the Old Testament that consider individualism to be superior to corporate ideas and the ethical to be superior to the ritual are flawed according to Joel Kaminsky. Drawing on the work of Alasdair Macintyre and David Tracy, he states, "There is evidence to suggest that the standard of justice found in Ezekiel 18, although highly appealing to our sense of fairness … fails to stand up to our common human experience. Such a view fails to take account of the fact that, while corporate ideas are sometimes less than equitable, they may

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Margaret S. Odell, "Ezekiel, Book of," *NIDB* 2:387–96; Lawrence Boadt, "Ezekiel, Book of," *ADB* 2:711–22. Note that Lyons, Strine, and Klein give special attention to the topic of anthropology.

[8] Baruch J. Schwartz, "Repentance and Determinism in Ezekiel," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies: Division A*, ed. David Assaf (Jerusalem: The World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994), 129.

[9] Schwartz, "Repentance and Determinism," 126–29.

allow for a greater leeway when it comes to divine forgiveness."[10] Since many current crises are communal and global, the Hebrew Bible's cooperate ideas may prove to be vital building blocks for developing a theology that can better address the individual's responsibilities to the community. Kaminsky concludes that not only do individuality and corporate ideas need to be affirmed, but that they also qualify and complement each other.[11]

Jacqueline E. Lapsely argues that there is a shift in the origin and form of moral selfhood in Ezekiel, although a tension remains. She describes the predominate view in the Hebrew Bible as the "virtuous moral self" paradigm which can still be found in Ezekiel 3:16–21; 14:12–23; 18; 33:1–20. This view posits that human beings have innate human agency to make moral choices and act out those moral choices.[12] After reflecting on mortality in the exile, "a shift is perceptible in Ezekiel, away from an anthropocentric and action-centered view of the moral self, and towards a view that is theocentric and knowledge-centered."[13] This view posits that humans are not innately able to make moral choices and carry out moral actions so that God must grant human beings a new heart and spirit. This is evident in Ezekiel 2; 33:30–33; 16; 20; and 23. Knowledge of God comes from the prophetic call, recognition formula, and the language of memory. Self-knowledge comes via the language of memory and shame.[14] Lapsley adds, "Ezekiel's thoughts on human self-knowledge are most often conveyed by means of shame language (forms of כלם and בוש), and the related language of self-loathing (forms of קוט). …This

[10] Joel S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 196 (London: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 188–89.

[11] Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility*, 189.

[12] Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel*, BZAW 301 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 6.

[13] Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Shame and Self-Knowledge: The Positive Role of Shame in Ezekiel's View of the Moral Self," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, SBLSymS 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 144.

[14] Lapsley, *Can These*, 6–8.

arrival at self-knowledge is equivalent to the acquisition of a new moral self, which is now capable of seeing behavior as it really is, and consequently feeling ashamed."[15]

The paradox of God's presence and absence is a significant theme in Ezekiel and different than the question of *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus* according to John F. Kutsko. In his theology of Ezekiel, Kutsko summarizes Ezekiel's monotheistic solution to this paradox, best exemplified by his kābôd-theology, that restores his people not idols. "Yahweh alone is God and idols are impotent; though not physically present, Yahweh makes himself known through his actions." [16] Building off this study, Kutsko turns his attention to the interconnected topic of the anthropology of Ezekiel. While the term "image" of God is never explicitly used in Ezekiel, Kutsko writes, "[Ezekiel] applies the concept of the human likeness in the image of God to negatively denounce foreign gods and positively to describe the divine-human relationship. … [T]his anthropological concept plays a fundamental role in his moral theology. If humans are made in the image of God, then violence is an offence against God."[17] Therefore, Ezekiel's repeated linking of idolatry and the shedding of blood as an explanation of the exile may be an allusion to the image of God theology of Genesis 9:6. In contrast to Gerhard von Rad, Kutsko concludes that Ezekiel does have a moral dimension to his oracles and not just a cultic one. While monotheism can encourage particularism, Ezekiel suggests that it can also serve as a moral ethic against violence.[18]

As a proponent of descriptive ethics over against normative ethics, Andrew Mein argues that there is tension in Ezekiel between two moral worlds. In their former world, these Jerusalem

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[15] Lapsley, "Shame, 144.

[16] John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel*, BJSUCSD 7 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 4–5, 150–53.

[17] John F. Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology and Its Ethical Implications," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, SBLSymS 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 119–20.

[18] Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology," 139.

exile elites made moral decisions that pertained to international affairs, state, and cult. In their new exile world, moral decisions have been reduced to the home and the individual as evident by the focus on communal ritual-identity-building and the domestication of ethics. Before the exile, the prophet is unsure about their ability to repent. After the exile, moral change is possible within the curtailed sphere of the home. With future salvation on the horizon, however, Ezekiel maintains that this is completely God's work, the people are passive, and repentance does not factor into the equation.[19]

The Cherubim were composite supernatural beings and divine throne bearers who preserved the boundary between the human and the Divine as well as mediated between them. Dale Launderville says, "The cherub was used in Tyre to symbolize the throne of both the human king and the divine king. The king of Tyre succumbed to the temptation to cross the boundary and claim divine status rather than remain at the boundary and accept the responsibility of mediating between the divine and human realms."[20] As prophet priest, Ezekiel enlists the exiles into his their royal, priestly, and prophetic boundary-keeping task. "The cherub's function of guarding and transporting Yhwh's presence was to find an analogy in the perceptual movements in the hearts of the exiles. Just as the cherubim moved out of Jerusalem to Babylon and carried the presence of Yhwh there, so too the exiles were obliged to adapt and encounter Yhwh in Babylon. Ezekiel promised that such an encounter would be possible because Yhwh would transform their hearts and give an infusion of his Spirit."[21]

[19] Andrew Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile*, OTM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–4, 239, 257–63.

[20] Dale Launderville, "Ezekiel's Cherub: A Promising Symbol or a Dangerous Idol?" *CBQ* 65, no. 2 (April 2003): 182.

[21] Launderville, "Ezekiel's Cherub," 183.

The prevailing paradigm for interpreting the relationship between Yahweh's רוח and Yahweh's word has been inspiration and authentication of the prophet like the pre-classical prophets. James Robson finds this to be insufficient. On the basis of Ezekiel 36:26–27; 37:1–14; and 39:21–29, he maintains, "[T]he prophet himself is a prescriptive paradigm of the transformation necessary for the addressees of the book. The book of Ezekiel … is more concerned with the transformation of the people in obedience to the word of Yahweh. Yahweh brings about the transformation of his people through the cooperation of word and רוח."[22]

In his 1989 book, Paul M. Joyce made a case for the "radical theocentricity" of Ezekiel's God. "The primary purpose of … the rhetorical device[s 'like repent' (Eze 14:6) and 'get yourselves a new heart and new spirit' (Eze 18:31)] is … to highlight responsibility for the crisis which has engulfed the nation rather than to issue a realistic call to repentance…. Thus, divine initiative has enabled human response, even if responsibility, in the fullest sense of the word, has not been altogether preserved."[23] Joyce explains, "Ultimately, however, since obedience is guaranteed [even after the new heart and spirit (Eze 36:26–27)], it would seem that the responsibility of Israel has been subsumed in the overriding initiative of Yahweh."[24] Israel must be kept from profaning Yahweh's name and his reputation ever again. If this explanation of "responsibility" and "grace" seems strained, Joyce attributes this to a "tension which ultimately defies resolution" down through "Judaeo-Christian tradition."[25] Building on his book, Joyce maintains that Ezekiel is not the founder of individual responsibility in the Old Testament. Ezekiel 9, 14, and 18 are all "subordinate to a more collective primary theme, namely the

[22] James Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel*, LHBOTS 447 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 24–25.
[23] Paul M. Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel*, JSOTSup 51 (London: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 128.
[24] Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 127.
[25] Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 127–28.

imminent onset of the thorough judgment of the nation."[26] Instead Ezekiel's contribution to the moral transformation of Israel is his radical theocentric conception of God. Joyce then drives home his earlier thesis more explicitly: "… In Ezekiel the new future is never earned by righteousness; repentance is never the ground for a new beginning. When a new future is promised it is for God's own reasons; right behavior follows only afterwards, as a consequence (as in 36:22–32)."[27] In fact, Joyce posits that the New Testament, particularly Pauline theology, is borrowing Ezekiel's conception of "grace" (חֵן), albeit the word never appears in Ezekiel.

C. A. Strine pushes back on Mein and specifically Joyce's *total* theocentric understanding of Ezekiel's God. While recognizing value in radical theocentricity, he argues for the efficaciousness of repentance in Yahweh's future community. He does this on the basis of an integrated reading sensitive to the Exodus motifs and the centricity of the land in Ezekiel 14; 18; 20; 33; and the new heart and new soul texts (11:14–21; 18:30–32; and 32:23b–38). The passing through God's judgment and possession of the land by the second generation of the exodus is meant to suggest that Yahweh's future community has the power to repent as well. Yahweh's reputation and choice fuels the second exodus, but this takes place through human agency.[28] Turning to the work of Kutsko and Stephan L. Herring, C. A. Strine states, "Ezekiel 1–11, at a literary level, corresponds to and then intentionally departs from the Mesopotamian cult statue induction ritual. The book substitutes Ezekiel for the vivified cult statue. Yhwh opens the prophet's mouth (3:27) … [to] transform him into the uniquely empowered mediator of Yhwh's

[26] Paul M. Joyce, "Ezekiel and Moral Transformation," in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, PTMS 127 (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 144.

[27] Joyce, "Ezekiel and Moral," 149.

[28] C. A. Strine, "The Role of Repentance in the Book of Ezekiel: A Second Chance for the Second Generation," *JTS*, n.s., 63, no. 2 (2012): 467–69.

message to the exiles. Ezekiel is, in short, the *imago Dei*."[29] Strine suggests that Ezekiel's modification of the mīs pî ritual's conception of image of God and omission of any mention of "image" (צֶלֶם) allowed a captive people to subvert Babylonian cultic theology through subtlety rather than a potentially dangerous frontal attack. In contrast to Kutsko and Herring's equating of P's (priestly Pentateuchal source's) *imago Dei* anthropology with Ezekiel's own, Strine uses a threefold taxonomy of mode, extent, and function to demonstrate: "Whereas P extends the *imago Dei* to all humanity and draws on the royal connotations of the concept to support its ethics, Ezekiel circumscribes the *imago Dei* to the prophet by alluding to the Mesopotamian cult statue induction ritual with the purpose of sanctioning the prophet's message."[30]

In sum, some interesting work has been done on Ezekiel's theology of the image of God in light of ancient Near East texts, though the book only uses "image" (צֶלֶם) in a different and negative sense. Still only limited study has been dedicated to the likeness of God language in the book. The son of man/Adam as one recreated in the likeness of God has remained largely untouched in recent Ezekielian anthropological scholarship. There has been some appreciation of theocentricity, its moral implications, and dependent relationship on God. Ezekiel's reflections on the individual is also no longer disconnected from the communal, though the individual has sometimes been subsumed by the collective in recent scholarship. While a good deal of anthropological analysis has been done, it has tended to stress total determinism (if not absolute predestination) on the one hand or unregenerate inherent human agency that helps effect the new heart and new spirit on the other hand. To be sure, some scholars have attempted to rectify the two by positing that different audiences or contexts are driving both themes as well. Still this

[29] C. A. Strine, "Ezekiel's Image Problem: The Mesopotamian Cult Statue Induction Ritual and the *Imago Dei* Anthropology in the Book of Ezekiel," *CBQ* 76, no. 2 (2014): 271.

[30] Strine, "Ezekiel's Image," 272.

seems rooted in anthropological conceptions that are not fully grounded in Ezekiel's reception of creation theology. The function of the temple and priesthood in Ezekiel's anthropology has been neglected as well. Thus, a further nuanced assessment of Ezekiel's theological anthropology is warranted.

Primary Sources

This study will be based primarily on the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* texts of the books of Genesis and Ezekiel.[31] It is a diplomatic edition of the Leningrad Codex which is part of the MT text tradition. This will be supplemented with the following texts. *The Hebrew University Bible's* edition of Genesis is not yet available, but its edition of Ezekiel is published.[32] It is a diplomatic edition of the Aleppo Codex, another witness of the MT text tradition. The *Biblia Hebraica Quinta's* edition of Genesis is published,[33] but its edition of Ezekiel is not yet available. It is an updated and enhanced diplomatic edition of the Leningrad Codex. Neither the Genesis nor the Ezekiel texts of the *Hebrew Biblical Critical Edition* have been published. It is a modern eclectic edition of the Hebrew Bible. Where necessary, the Göttingen Septuagint and critical editions of other ancient versions will be addressed.[34]

The LXX text tradition of Ezekiel is of particular interest. The Greek versions of Ezekiel are about five percent shorter than the MT tradition, and there are pericopal sequence differences.[35] Some are therefore convinced that the LXX translates an earlier form of the

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[31] *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. Adrian Schenker, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997).

[32] *The Hebrew University Bible: The Book of Ezekiel*, ed. Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein, Shemaryahu Talmon, and Galen Marquis (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004).

[33] *Biblia Hebraica Quinta: Genesis.* Edited by Abraham Tal. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015.

[34] *Genesis*, vol. 1 of *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, ed. John William Wevers (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974); *Ezechiel*, vol. 16, 1 of *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, ed. Joseph Ziegler, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

[35] Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 299–301.

Hebrew text. However, Marvin Sweeney has recently argued against this notion: "But the relative coherence and clarity of the Greek version of Ezekiel represents the efforts of its translators to interpret a difficult proto-Masoretic Hebrew text … for an educated Greek reading public that was accustomed to a coherent and aesthetically pleasing literary study."[36]

Plan

Following this first introductory chapter, this study of Ezekiel's theological anthropology will be comprised of four more chapters and a conclusion. The second chapter will discuss Genesis as the foundation of Ezekiel's theology and anthropology. The third chapter will examine human life independent of the Creator God. The fourth chapter will discuss how the Lord GOD alone re-humanizes fallen human life. The fifth chapter will examine the eschatological dimension of recreated human life dependent on the Creator God. The study will close with a conclusion.

Methodology

Moshe Greenberg and Daniel Block have defended the Prophet Ezekiel's authorship of most of the book. In the process, they have been instrumental in showing the merits of a synchronic approach to Ezekiel and fostering a significant trend towards canonical critical readings of the book.[37] Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, conversely, has articulated shortcomings of the synchronic approach of Greenberg and Block. He maintains that their holistic reading of the text ultimately yields only a superficial theological synthesis. He, therefore, advocates for the

[36] Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, RtOT (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2013), 5.

[37] Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983); Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22A (New York: Doubleday, 1997); Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

diachronic or redaction-historical approach. He is convinced that not only differences between the shorter Greek translation and longer Hebrew text of Ezekiel, but also the second or third century AD Old Greek Papyrus 967's arrangement of Ezekiel 36–39 demonstrates the Book of Ezekiel was still in the midst of the editorial process.[38]

Thomas Krüger sees value in the diachronic approach, but shows that its "picture of conceptually consistent authors (including editors and redactors) may be a bit unrealistic." Rather than being "boring," Krüger argues "fractures, tensions, and contradictions are not always the products of a redaction-critical exegesis, but rather their cause." Moreover, these "can also result from the complexity and inconsistency of a single author's mind or from the complexity and inconsistency of communication and the broader context of discussions to which the text contributes." Thus, a synchronic approach to these issues might actually "contribute to a refinement of and clarification of a redaction-critical interpretation."[39]

This study will take a synchronic approach to Ezekiel chiefly focused on the Masoretic Text. This approach not only allows the complexity of the received text to stand, but it also strives to engage with it on its own terms. A theologically rich and difficult text like Ezekiel particularly lends itself to this reading strategy. The historical presuppositions of a redaction-critical reading of Ezekiel can easily misjudge the origin of the text's complexity, resulting in a reductionistic reading of the text.

Significance

[38] Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, "Ezekiel: New Directions and Current Debates," in *Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Penelope Barter, FAT 112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 3–17.

[39] Thomas Krüger, "Ezekiel Studies: Present State and Future Outlook," in *Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Penelope Barter, FAT 112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 19, 23, 25.

What does it mean to be human? From where do human beings derive personhood, identity, dignity, meaning, and purpose? Is there anything human at all? There has never been a more pressing need for theological anthropology. Greek philosophical anthropologies initiated a distortion of biblical anthropology that has persisted until the present. The anthropologies of Modernity have never been able to fill the shoes of the Judeo-Christian anthropologies they have attempted to displace. Now Postmodernity has undermined the foundations upon which those anthropologies were built. Globalization has compounded the quest for what it means to be human. Conflicting worldviews are increasingly clashing on the world stage and at times in very violent ways. Technological developments like genetic engineering and artificial intelligence suggest to many that there is no image of God and that human beings are merely the evolutionary and malleable result of impersonal and material happenstance. Abortion, sexual objectification, social injustice, euthanasia, etc. all attest to the crisis of anthropology today.

This crisis of anthropology is ultimately a crisis of theological anthropology. Anthropological attempts to bracket out the theological always end up falling under their own weight. The question, "What does it means to be human," must eventually confront the question about the human's relationship to God. The teleology is inescapable. While fallen and unregenerate humans beings remain God's good creation and human in a deformed way, there is no authentic humanity apart from the Divine. The book of Ezekiel reveals why this is the case: Only an anthropology grounded in the Lord GOD who creates and justifies can save human beings from dehumanizing themselves and others.

CHAPTER TWO

GENESIS AS THE FOUNDATION OF EZEKIEL'S THEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created the human being in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and master it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that creeps on the earth."—Genesis 1:26–28.
>
> Then to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree which I commanded you, saying, 'You must not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it will grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground because from it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return." —Genesis 3:17–19.
>
> When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he fathered [a son] in his own likeness, according to his image, and he named him Seth. —Genesis 5:3.
>
> Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.—Genesis 6:5.

Genesis and Ezekiel

The recognition of Ezekiel's debt to the Pentateuch is nothing new. Critical scholars have also long recognized an affinity between Ezekiel and what proponents of the documentary hypothesis (DH) refer to as Priestly texts (P) (especially the Holiness Code [H] found in Lev 17–26) and Deuteronomist texts (D).[1] Julius Wellhausen saw so many Ezekielian parallels in P that

[1] Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and Torah*, JSOTSup 358 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002). For an overview of DH today, see Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 2nd ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019); Jan Christian Gertz, Angelika Berlejung, Konrad Schmidt, and Markus Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament* (London: T&T Clark International, 2012).

he initiated a school of thought that maintained Ezekiel pioneered P.[2] Yehezekel Kaufmann disagreed, argued that P was pre-exilic, and forged a school of his own. He made a case for Ezekiel's borrowing of ideas from P and further developing them in the exile.[3] There have been mediating positions as well. Still Kaufmann's interpretation of the direction of influence and a pre-exilic date for P has recently been bolstered by some seminal studies that have made innerbiblical literary dependence arguments for Ezekiel's borrowing from H (and by implication P). Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann has found such studies so convincing that he is surprised that many Ezekiel scholars still defend the dependence of P and H on Ezekiel or that both these sources are drawing on a third source.[4] But what scholarship has only begun to recognize is a connection between Ezekiel's call narrative and Genesis's creation of the human being. The Genesis creation theology and anthropology that Ezekiel draws on is largely found in texts deemed P (Gen 1:1–2:3; 5:1–9:29?).[5] But Ezekiel also draws on texts attributed to the Yahwists (J) (Gen 2:4b–25; 3:1–24; 4:1–26).

Creation Theology of Genesis

Ezekiel's theocentricity presupposes a reading of Genesis creation theology that best comports with the classical or traditional reading of the Genesis creation account. In the

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[2] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies (New York: The Meridian Library, 1957), 376–99.

[3] Yehezekel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. Moshe Greenberg (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 175–200, 433–46.

[4] Pohlmann, "Ezekiel: New Directions," 11–12. For recent linguistic defenses of Ezekiel's borrowing from P and H, see Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem*, CahRB 20 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1982); Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart*; Risa Levitt Kohn, "A Prophet like Moses? Rethinking Ezekiel's Relationship to the Torah," *ZAW* 114 (2002): 236–54; Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code*, LHBOTS 507 (New York: T&T Clark, 2009); Michael A. Lyons, "Transformation of Law: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26)," in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, PTMS 127 (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 1–32; Michael A. Lyons, "Extension and Allusion: The Composition of Ezekiel 34," in *Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Penelope Barter, FAT 112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 138–52. See also footnote 12.

[5] This based on the P chart found in Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 294–95. Friedman would take issue with assigning all of Gen 5:1–9:29 to P. See his *Who Wrote*, 229–37.

beginning, the one, universal, sovereign, and transcendent God created out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), the heavens, earth, and all the hosts of them. Critical scholars conversely have often explained Ezekiel's thoroughgoing monotheism as a development born of the necessity of surviving the Babylonian Captivity. Though not the first to suggest it, Hermann Gunkel most successfully promoted an interpretation that Genesis 1 is speaking of a non-Creator God (in the classical sense) who is co-eternal with his chaotic rival, the primordial deep (i.e., a sort of Hebrew Tiamat), and who orders (not creates in the classical sense) the heavens and the earth from his defeated rival.[6] Gunkel maintained that Genesis 1 borrows language and concepts from the Babylonian "creation epic," *Enūma Elish*, even though the latter focuses on how the beleaguered gods recognized Marduk as the head of the pantheon after he tore the chaotic Tiamat in two and ordered earth and sky out her.[7] Jon Levenson goes further by advancing a sort of Rabbinic process theology reading of Genesis. "Two and half millennia of Western theology have made it easy to forget that throughout the ancient Near Eastern world, including Israel, the point of creation is not the production of matter out of nothing, but rather the emergence of a stable community in a benevolent and life-sustaining order" amidst preexistent chaos. There the temple supports God in maintaining this fragile cosmic order and containing a resurgent chaos, though evil slips through at times. Still God will eventually triumph over chaos, but until then "YHWH is not altogether YHWH, and his regal power is not yet fully actualized. Rather he is the omnipotent cosmocrater only *in potential*."[8]

[6] Herrmann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[7] "Epic of Creation (1.111) (Enūma Elish)," trans. Benjamin R. Foster (*COS* 1:390–402).

[8] Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 12, 38.

Even if critical scholars are not ready to affirm the classical reading of the Genesis account, a number think that readings like those of Gunkel and Levenson go too far. Gerhard von Rad rejected a mythological interpretation of Genesis 1.[9] He does this on the grounds that it is P text.[10] But while he agrees that P's thoroughgoing monotheism, transcendence, and universalism rejects dualism and polytheism, he is not convinced that P rejects preexistent matter. The assumption is that the catalyst for P's aforementioned theology was the exile/post-exile, whereas the catalyst for creation *ex nihilo* was later Greek influence (if not the Christian Anti-Gnostic theology of the second century AD).[11] The first passage to explicitly use creation *ex nihilo* language is 2 Maccabees 7:28. But can a genuinely strict monotheism still be dated so late when scholars are increasingly making convincing cases that P is pre-exilic (or even earlier)?[12] If it was abstract Greek thought that made creation *ex nihilo* possible, why did its premiere thinkers clearly teach preexistent matter and a sort of pantheism?[13] For that matter, the only place in the

[9] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed., OLT (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 47–51.

[10] For a current Liberal European overview of P and its theology, see Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 263–66, 293–305, 321–31.

[11] Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A. S. Worrall (London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

[12] Those arguing for a preexilic date are the following: Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology: The Encroacher and the Levite: The Term 'Aboda*, UCPNES 14 (Oakland: University of California Press, 1970); Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Menahem Haran, *Temple and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Menahem Haran, "The Law-Code of Ezekiel XL–XLVIII and its Relation to the Priestly School," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 45–71; Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology*, SJLA (Leiden: Brill, 1983); Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Translation: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*, JSOTSup 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1991); Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004); Menahem Haran, "Ezekiel, P, and the Priestly School," *VT* 58, no. 2 (2008): 211–18. Those arguing for an early date are the following: Gary A. Rendsburg, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of P," *JANESCU* 12 (1980): 65–80; Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study*; Gary A. Rendsburg, "A New Look at Pentateuchal HW," *Bib* 63, 3 (1982): 351–69; Ziony Zevit, "Concerning Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P," *ZAW* 94, 4 (1982): 481–511. Those arguing for an even earlier date yet are the following: Samuel R. Külling, *Zur datierung der "Genesis-P-Stücke," namentlich des Kapitels Genesis 17* (Kampen: Kok, 1964); T. D. Alexander, "A Literary Analysis of the Abraham Narrative in Genesis," (PhD diss., Queen's University Belfast, 1982); T. D. Alexander, "Genesis 22 and the Covenant of Circumcision," *JSOT* 25 (1983): 17–22.

[13] Plato, *Tim.* 30A–B, 51A–b; Aristotle, *Phys.* 1.7; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.134–51.

Bible that might explicitly deny creation *ex nihilo* is the explicitly Hellenistic Wisdom 11:17, provided it is not talking about the matter God created on the first day from which he ordered a complete heavens and the earth (2 Pet 3:5). Should one even hold with Claus Westermann that P's Hebrew thinking was too concrete to conceptualize on some level either creation *ex nihilo* or preexistent matter when other ancient Near East cosmologies seem able to do the latter via concrete chaos myths and without abstract Greek substance ontology?[14] The first explicit articulation of an idea is rarely the first conception of it. Of course, P is not without its own significant problems. Despite one attempt to offer ancient Near Eastern evidence for the linking of documents in a serial fashion (i.e., more form criticism than the weaving DH presupposes), [15] DH has experienced significant challenges. Prominent critics have argued that P is a later edition of J and Elohist (E) texts (not a distinct source document) or just an editorial layer.[16] Discourse grammarians,[17] rhetorical critics,[18] and literary critics[19] have questioned the hypothesis further by showing a great deal of literary congruity in Pentateuch. Some have even suggested a single editor or author for Genesis.

The mythological interpretation of Genesis 1 has been disputed on mythological grounds as well. Not only have proponents of this interpretation recognized that Genesis 1 and *Enūma*

[14] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion, CC (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 46, 108–10.

[15] Jeffrey H. Tigay, "An Empirical Basis for the Documentary Hypothesis," *JBL* 94, no. 3 (1975): 329–42; Jeffrey H. Tiguy, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

[16] Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch*, BZAW 147 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977); Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

[17] Francis I. Anderson, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974).

[18] Sven Tengström *Die Hexateucherzählung: Eine literaturgeschichtliche Studie*, ConBOT 7 (Lund: Gleerup, 1976); Issac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1–11* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985); Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986). See also Yehunda T. Radday and Haim Shore, *Genesis: An Authorship Study in Computer Assisted Statistical Analysis*, AnBib 103 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1985).

[19] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

Elish are at cross purposes, there are no extant texts of *Enūma Elish* that can be dated before the first millennium BC. Wilfred G. Lambert went so far as to reject its specific influence on Genesis calling it "a sectarian and aberrant combination of mythological threads woven into an unparalleled composition … not earlier than 1100 BC."[20] Even supposing *Enūma Elish* could not have directly influenced Israel, some of its ideas are shared with other Levant (Babylonian, Canaanite, and Egyptians, etc.) cosmologies that could have. A number of scholars have argued that many (if not most) points of contact with Genesis[21] can be found in the third and second millennium BC Egyptians cosmologies (*Pyramid Texts*, *Coffin Texts*, *Book of the Dead*, and "Memphite Theology" from the *Shabaka Stone*).[22] Given the many discontinuities where scholars see allusions to ancient Near Eastern myths in the Bible, scholars have also concluded that the Bible references myths to refute them. Whereas some read Genesis 1 as forging a counter theology from Levant myths without completely freeing this theology from them,[23] others read Genesis 1 in less historicist ways and as forging something very new in the context of the ancient Near East (including a clear ontological distinction between Creator and creature that excludes preexistent matter). Therefore, they understand Genesis as recasting myths to illustrate the new

[20] Wilfred G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian of Genesis," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 2 (1965): 287–300, esp. 291.

[21] Rudolf Kilian, "Gen 1:2 und die Urgötter von Hermopolis," *VT* 16 (1965): 420–38; Viktor Nötter, *Biblischer Schöpfungsmythen* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974); Cyrus H. Gordon, "Khnum and El," SCRHier 28 (1982): 203–14; James P. Allen, *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts*, YES 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 396–400; Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, CBQMS 26 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 101–7; James E. Atwell, "An Egyptian Source for Genesis 1," *JTS* 51, no. 2 (2000): 441–77; Hans-Peter Hasenfratz, "Patterns of Creation in Ancient Egypt," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman, JSOTSup 319 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 174–78; John Strange, "Some Notes on Biblical and Egyptian Theology," in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Antoine Hirsch, PdÄ 20 (Boston: Brill, 2004), 345–58.

[22] Egyptian Canonical Compositions Cosmologies (*COS* 1:5–31).

[23] Brevard C. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, SBT 27 (London: SCM Press, 1960), 29–58, 70–71.

reality of Elohim.[24] Building on the aforementioned Genesis and Egyptian cosmological scholarship, Gordon H. Johnston argues that the Genesis creation account is actually a polemical refutation of Egyptian cosmology because of the striking continuities (lexical, structural, and thematic/conceptual) and the six discontinuities between them. The latter are as follows:

> First the Hebrew cosmology rejects all notion of theogony. Second, the Israelite cosmology rejects any hint of pantheism. Third, the Yahwistic version of creation is clearly monotheistic. Fourth, the apex of creation in the Hebrew version is not the generation of the sun as the image/manifestation of the sun god, but the fashioning of humanity as the image of Yahweh. Fifth the distinctive seven-day framework of Genesis 1 is an ideologically loaded paradigm shift away from the one-day patterns of recurrent creation brought about each morning with the sunrise symbolizing the daily rebirth of Rê-Amun, the sun god creator as embodiment of Atum, the primordial demiurge creator. Sixth, Yahweh is self-existent, unlike the self-generated Atum.[25]

That said, this study maintains that there are still other sufficient reasons for retaining the classical or traditional reading of Genesis, which not only undergirds Ezekiel's own theocentricity but also his theological anthropology. Four alternative approaches to the classical understanding of the syntactical relationship of the pivotal first three verse of Genesis have arisen: The first is the temporal dependent clause theory version one (TDCT1) interpretation (i.e., Gen 1:1 is a temporal clause subordinate to the v. 3 main clause and v. 2 is parenthetical), which is dualistic and rejects creation *ex nihilo*. Scholarly support for it has waned after E. A. Speiser.[26] The second is the temporal dependent clause theory version two (TDCT2) view (i.e., v.

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[24] John N. Oswalt, *The Bible Among the Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 93; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *EvQ* 46, no. 2 (1974): 81–102.

[25] Gordon H. Johnston, "Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths," *BSac* 165, no. 658 (2008): 178–94, esp. 192. See also Kenneth A. Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 90–95; 117–120; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 8–10; John D. Currid, "An Examination of the Egyptian Background of the Genesis Cosmogony," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 204, no. 4 (1991): 18–40; James K. Hoffmeier, "Some Thoughts on Genesis 1 and 2 and Egyptian Cosmology," *JANES* 15 (1983): 39–49.

[26] The great medieval Jewish commentator Rashi (1040–1105) first proposed this rendering. The scholars Johannes Baptist Bauer, Klaus Bayer, Siegfried Herrmann, P. Humbert, William R. Lane, O. Loretz, John Skinner, E. A. Speiser favors it as well as the recent translations (NJPS, NABR, CEB, Fox, Alter, and Goldingay, albeit Fox's *In the Beginning* used the classical rendering).

1 is a temporal clause dependent on the v. 2 main clause), which shares the first's outlook, but it never gained a scholarly following.[27] The third is the title theory (TT) interpretation (i.e., v. 1 is the main clause and a title that summarizes the events of vv. 2–31), which may or may not be agnostic about whether the earth is preexistent, depending on the scholar advancing it.[28] It has risen in scholarly favor. The fourth is the gap theory (GT) view (i.e., v. 1 is the main clause and v. 2 is consecutive), which sought to find in Genesis the origin of evil or support for old earth creationism, but it has not garnered contemporary scholarly support. In contrast, the classical theory (CT) interpretation maintains Genesis 1:1 is the main or independent clause and a complete sentence. Vs. 2 and 3 convey subsequent phases of the work of creation. CT best coherers with the inner logic of the Hebrew Bible and Christian Bible.[29] It has the weight of the ancient versions and the Judeo-Christian tradition.[30] It continues to have scholarly support and is favored by most modern translations as well.[31]

At the heart of issue lies the syntax of "in the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא) in Genesis 1:1. Despite the long tradition of the Masoretic pointing, the pointing is neither original nor

[27] Rabbi Ibn Ezra (1089–1164) offered this variation of Rashi's view. The scholar Gross favors it as well as the NRSV.

[28] The scholars Samuel R. Driver, Hermann Gunkel, Otto Proksch, Walther Zimmerli, Gerhard von Rad, Walther Eichrodt, Umberto Cassuto, Herbert Schmidt, Claus Westermann, P. Beauchamp, O. H. Steck, Brevard Childs, Bruce Waltke, and Victor Hamilton favor it.

[29] Exod 20:11; Ps 90:2; 102:26–28; 146:6; Prov 8:22–26; Isa 40:28; 44:24; 45:18; Jer 10:16; 51:19; Acts 17:24–28; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10–12; 2 Pet 3:7, 10; and Rev 4:11; 10:6; 21:1, 25 maintain that God alone is the eternal and transcendent creator of all things on whom all depend. 2 Macc 7:28; Rom 4:17; Heb 11:2–3 explicitly teach creation *ex nihilo*. Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5; Wis 9:1; 4 [2] Esd 6:38; John 1:1–3; 2 Cor 4:6; Heb 11:2–3; and 2 Pet 3:5 state that this creation occurred by means of God's Word, albeit 2 Pet 3:5 adds that the word used water to form the earth.

[30] The LXX, Tg. Onq., Tg. Neof., Syr., Vulg., Luther Bibel 1545, Geneva Bible 1599, and King James Version 1611 support it. Of the great medieval Jewish commentators, Kimhi (ca. 1160–1235), Nachmanides (1195–ca. 1270), and Sforno (ca. 1475–1550) among others defended this rendering, not to mention the midrashim.

[31] The scholars Carl F. Keil, Franz Delitzsch, Julius Wellhausen, Jan Ridderbos, Gerhard C. Aalders, E. König, Alexander Heidel, Herbert C. Leopold, Edward J. Young, Derek Kidner, Gerhard Hasel, Viktor Nötter, Willem H. Gispen, Gordon Wenham, Nahum Sarna, Kenneth Mathews, and Andrew Steinmann favor it. Most recent translations (NKJV, NV, REB, GNB, CEV, NLT, ZB, NIV, ESV, EÜ, CSB, LU17, NET, RNJB, NASB, BB) support it.

conclusive. The pointing of בְּרֵאשִׁית is indefinite or anarthrous. Therefore, it could be in the construct and part of a dependent temporal clause (pro TDCT1 or TDCT2). Even if רֵאשִׁית is anarthrous, the omission of the definite article often occurs in adverbial phrases with temporal terms in an absolute sense (e.g., Gen 3:22; 6:3–4; Prov 8:23; Isa 40:21; 41:4, 26; 46:10; Mic 5:1; Hab 1:12) and does not mean that these terms must be in construct.[32] It is true that רֵאשִׁית is almost always found in the construct (pro TDCT1 or TDCT2), but the explicitly monotheistic Isaiah 46:9–10 shows that it can also be anarthrous, absolute, and speaking of God's absolute sovereignty over the beginning and end of historical time.[33] בְּרֵאשִׁית could also be anarthrous because the unprecedented context was deemed sufficient to show it referred to an absolute beginning. Some Greek transliterations understood בְּרֵאשִׁית to be definite as all the ancient versions do. The Masoretic disjunctive accent tipha may lend some credence to בְּרֵאשִׁית being absolute, but the vocalization with a shewa more so.[34] Genesis 1:1 lacks a conjunction because nothing proceeds it. Its word order is not only uniquely emphatic in the opening chapter, stressing בְּרֵאשִׁית; it is also the sole place where בְּרֵאשִׁית is followed by a finite (and perfect) verb.

[32] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 3, 12.

[33] Paul Joüon and Muraoka Takamitsu, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. Muraoka Takamitsu, 2nd ed. (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2016), §137k; Walter Eichrodt, "In the Beginning," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 1–10.

[34] Alexander Sperber, *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 463–64, 627, 637; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 107n11.

The generic term for God (אֱלֹהִים) is used rather than the name of the Covenant God of Israel (יהוה). The former can be used with a plural verb to indicate foreign gods. Here אֱלֹהִים seems to be used with singular verb specifically to indicate that this is not a mere local/national deity of myth. Rather this is the one, universal, sovereign, and transcendent God that reigns over all the nations. Terence Fretheim posits:

> The addition of Yahweh to Elohim, "LORD God," in Gen 2:4–3:23 may be meant to claim that this universal creator God is none other than Israel's personal God. … The constant interchange between Yahweh and Elohim in the subsequent Genesis narratives, particularly with their lively interest in the interaction between the chosen faith and the surrounding people, may carry this universal intension forward. That this carries a missional interest may be seen in the repeated word that Abraham has been chosen for "all peoples of the earth" (Gen 12:3 and par.).[35]

Genesis 1:1's "[God] created" (בָּרָא) is pointed as a finite verb. To bring it more in line with the dependent opening temporal clause of *Enūma Elish*, it would need to be repointed as an infinitive construct. That said, *IBHS* and Joüon also call attention to a construct before a non-relative clause and finite verb construction found in Hosea 1:2 that might apply to Genesis 1:1 (pro TDCT1 or TDCT2), but *IBHS* notes that it is "extremely rare."[36] In contrast to BDB and *NIDOTTE*, many lexicographical studies argue that the root ברא "to create" (used in qal and niphal) should be distinguished from the much rarer roots ברא "to cut" (used only in piel [Josh 17:15, 18; Ezek 21:24; 23:47]) and ברא "to make oneself fat" (used only in hiphil [1 Sam 2:29]). This would mean that God is always the unique subject of the specifically theological term, ברא "to create," unlike עשׂה "to make" (and other verbs of making/doing) which even human beings

[35] Terence E. Fretheim, "אֱלֹהִים," *NIDOTTE* 1:405–6.

[36] Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *IBHS* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §9.6e; Joüon, §129p;

can do.[37] Not even the divine activity of ברא in Numbers 16:30 means "to cut." Andrew Steinmann notes:

> While at 2:3 [*created*] is used as a summary for all of God's activity in this narrative, in the first five instances it introduces new things brought into being: heavens and earth (v. 1), animate life that is endowed with *breath of* life (vv. 21, 30) and human beings bearing *the image of* God (v. 27 [three times]). *Created* is in contrast to the Hebrew word for *do* or *make*, which is used throughout this account for making and forming things from already created items or as a general word for God's work (vv. 7, 11, 12, 16, 25, 26, 31, 2:2, 3).[38]

While other scholars (pro TDCT1, TDCT2, and TT) contend that even P uses the divine activity of עשׂה (and other verbs of making/doing) as a synonym for the divine activity of ברא (Gen 1:26–27; Exo 20:11. Cf. Gen 2:7; 5:1, etc.), the fact that the divine activity of ברא is never used with an accusative of material further suggests it means more than the divine activity of עשׂה (or any other verbs of making/doing).[39] Since there is never any mention of any material from which God "creates," von Rad and Nahum Sarna also contend that בָּרָא contains the idea of creation *ex nihilo*.[40]

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[37] W. H. Schmidt, "בָּרָא," *TLOT* 1:253–56; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "בָּרָא," *HALOT* 1:153–54; David J. A. Clines, "בָּרָא," *DCH* 2:258–59; Rudolf Meyer and Herbert Donner, "בָּרָא," Gesenius[18] 172–73.

[38] Andrew Steinmann, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 50.

[39] The LXX's translation of בָּרָא in v. 1 with ποιέω rather than κτίζω is also not a significant issue. Westermann writes, "It is instructive to compare the use of the word in the Gk (cf. W. Forster, ThWNT III, 1022–1027). Of the 46 times the LXX encounters the Hebrew ברא = create, it renders it by κτίζω only 17 times; κτίζω is not found in Genesis; only ποιεῖν is used. κτίζω and ברא came to have the same meaning only after the Gr translation. The LXX translators had no Greek equivalent of the Hebrew ברא; ברא in Gen 1 together with עשׂה in Gen 2 is rendered with ποιεῖν. It is only later that κτίζω took on the special meaning of creation by God. Its original meaning was much more like that the Hebrew קנה = to found, a word which is commonly used in Ugaritic for "to create." κτίζω took on the specialized meaning mainly through the foundation of the Hellenistic cities; the founder (κτίστης) of that city is honored by the gods." See his *Genesis 1–11*, 100.

[40] Von Rad, *Genesis*, 49, 51; Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary Genesis*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 5.

The divine activity of ברא refers to the forensic and inbreathed creation and justification *ex nihilo* during the first six days in Genesis 1:1; 1:21; 1:27; 2:3–4; 5:1–2; 6:7; Deuteronomy 4:32; Psalms 89:13; 148:5; Isaiah 40:26, 28; 42:5; 45:12, 18; and Amos 4:13, though God spoke at least humans into being of dust from the ground he created *ex nihilo* (Gen 1:27; 2:7). Note that in the pre-fall context justification means humans were declared or spoken into being righteous *ex nihilo*. However, this justification is not predicated on the salvific work of Christ because there is no sin for which to atone. After the fall human beings would need to be declared or spoken into being righteous again. But justification in the post-fall context does not take place *ex nihilo* and can only happen on the basis of the salvific work of Christ according to the New Testament (Rom 3:24). The divine activity of ברא does not always mean creation *ex nihilo*.

Where this is the case, it has three analogous uses: First, the divine activity of ברא refers to the continual creation of God's *purely passive fallen creatures* that only God can do (Ps 89:48; 104:30; Eccl 12:1; Isa 54:16; Ezek 21:35; 28:13–15), though in two instances (Numbers 16:30 and Isaiah 45:7) it refers to the creation of divine punishment and calamity. Second, the divine activity of ברא refers to the eschatological, forensic, and inbreathed recreation or justification of *purely passive fallen human beings* that only God can do (Exod 34:10; Ps 51:12; 102:19; Isa 43:1, 7, 15; 45:8; 48:7; 57:19; Jer 31:22; Mal 2:10). The New Testament uses this conception of ברא for the believer's new human being/Adam, recreated in Christ and the likeness of God, "so that [the believers] might become the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) in him" (2 Cor 5:17, 21; Eph 2:10, 15; 4:24). This study will argue below that this nuance of ברא can already be found in Genesis 1:1. Third, the divine activity of ברא refers to the recreation of the *purely*

passive fallen cosmos that only God can do (Isa 4:5; 41:20; 65:17–18). According to Ephesians 1:1–10, the incarnate Jesus Christ is not only the catalyst for the eschatological recreation or justification of fallen human beings on basis of the merits of Christ but also for the eschatological recreation of the cosmos.

The biggest obstacle for CT is that "the heavens and earth" (הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) of v. 1 refer to a complete, filled, and ordered cosmos/world elsewhere in Scripture. In addition, CT seems to suggest that God created chaos in v. 2 (pro TDCT1, TDCT2, and TT). Wenham and Mathews respond that "the heavens and earth" are a merism, the focus of which is on the totality of everything that God created rather than its completeness at this juncture. The unprecedented context and construction of the first verse of the Hebrew Bible warrants this unique understanding of הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ here.[41] In fact, scholars already recognize a unique understanding for בָּרָא here, at least as the very first act of creation, lacking any accusative of material. While it is generally agreed that there is no actual battle between God and chaos (*Chaoskampf*) in Genesis 1:1–2, many still think chaos is present herein and elsewhere in the Bible. Granted the uncreated God would not have created created chaos. While his created earth is called "desolate and empty," this is neither created "chaos" nor uncreated "chaos."[42] The

[41] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 15; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, 142.

[42] The term "chaos" (χάος) is of Greek derivation. Hesiod (*Theogony* 1.16) first used it to describe the first state of the universe. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, "χάος," *A Greek-English Lexicon Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1976. Still this Greek concept has also been employed to describe concepts in ancient Near Eastern cosmologies. Some modern scholars and recent translations (e.g., NRSV, REB, GNB, CEV, NLT, CEB, NABR, CSB, RNJB, NASB) have attempted to render תֹּהוּ as "chaos" in one or more of the following: Isa 24:10; 34:11; 45:18–19. While χάος is used twice in the LXX (Zech 14:4 and Mic 1:6), it is employed to translate "valley" (גַּיְא). It is never used to translate any of the words in Gen 1:1–3. See Takamitsu Muraoka, "χάος," *GELS* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2002), 728; Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2010), 127, 174.

pointing of תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ suggest that it is an hendiadys. The meaning of תֹּהוּ is more certain than the other noun. The Genesis 1:2 couplet תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ is only found in Jeremiah 4:23–27, though both words are also found in Isaiah 34:11. Even if Jeremiah 4:23–26 is a clear reversal of Genesis 1:2, the return of the land to תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ during the exile is not characterized as chaos in Jeremiah 4:26–27, but by "desert" (מִדְבָּר) and "wilderness" (שְׁמָמָה). תֹּהוּ is also used in conjunction with words like "wind," "nothing," and "vanity," but not chaos.[43] "Thus says the LORD" in Isaiah 45:18–19 "… (He did not create [earth] desolate (תֹּהוּ), but he formed it be inhabited!): I am the LORD, and there is no other. … I did not say … Seek me in vain (תֹּהוּ)." Here Isaiah does not deny that God created the world "desolate" (תֹּהוּ); he only denies that it was to remain such. In contrast, Isaiah's strict monotheistic argument, the construction, and the semantic range of תֹּהוּ all oppose an interpretation of Isaiah 45:18–19 where God is saying he did not create the chaos that preexisted creation.[44] Unlike BDB, *DCH*, and Gesenius[18], *HALOT* rightly omits the loaded term "chaos" as a translations for תֹּהוּ, and suggests "wilderness," "wasteland," or "emptiness" for Genesis 1:2.[45] NKJV, NJPS, NV, NRSV, REB, GNB, CEV, NLT, Fox, ZB, CEB, NABR, NIV, ESV, EÜ, CSB, LU17, NET, Alter, Goldingay, RNJB, NASB, and BB also avoid the use of "chaos" to render Genesis 1:2.

[43] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 109. See also David T. Tsumura, "*Nabalkutu, tu-a-bi[ú]* and *tōhû wābōhû*," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 19 (1987): 309–15.

[44] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1991), 259. See also Brevard Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 355.

[45] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "תֹּהוּ," *HALOT* 2:1689–90.

Lexicographical studies have shown that Genesis's unarticulated "deep" (תְּהוֹם) is not based on the Akkadian feminine Tiamat. Instead both words derive from a common proto-Semitic root.[46] It is true that "desolate and empty" (תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ), "darkness" (חֹשֶׁךְ), and the "deep" (תְּהוֹם) are sometimes described as threats to sinful man. But they are also described as blessings (Gen 49:25; Deut 8:7; 33:13; Ps 78:15). In fact, Exodus 20:11, another P text, says, "The LORD made the heaven, earth, the sea, and all that is in them" (עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם). Proverbs 3:19–20; 8:24; and Isaiah 45:6–7, 12 likewise say that all the aforementioned were "founded," "established," brought forth," "formed," "created," and "made" by the utterly unique God. God even has them do his will (Gen 7:11; 8:2; Exod 14:21–22; 15:5, 8; Josh 3:15–17; Ps 18:11; 33:7; 93:1–5; 104:6; 106:9; 148:6–7; Isa 63:13; Ezek 26:19). David Toshio Tsumura argues the aforementioned are not personified chaotic rivals to God in Genesis 1 as well. Nothing is explicitly called preexistent in the Bible (save perhaps the matter of the Hellenistic Wisdom 11:17). Even the sun, moon, and stars are created on the fourth day.[47] Where the Creator God does vanquish "Rahab" (רַהַב), the "sea creature/serpent" (תַּנִּין), "sea" (יָם), the "deep," "Leviathan" (לִוְיָתָן), and "darkness" is in Biblical texts like Job 9:13; 26:12; 41:1; Psalms 74:13–14; 77:16; 89:9–10; 104:5–7, 26; Isaiah 27:1; 44:27; 51:9–11; and Revelation 21:1, 25. It is interesting that this often occurs in writings that most clearly assert God's absolute

[46] Claus Westermann, "תְּהוֹם," *TLOT* 3:1410–14; E.–J. Waschke, "תְּהוֹם," *TDOT* 15:574–81; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "תְּהוֹם," *HALOT* 2:1690–91. Cf. Michael A. Grisanti, "תְּהוֹם," *NIDOTTE* 4:275–78.

[47] David Toshio Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005). See also Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to the Ancient Near Eastern Parallels," *AUSS* 10, no. 1 (1972): 1–20; Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition of Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1986).

transcendence over other nonexistent gods/idols (Job 41:10–34; Ps 115:3–8; 135:15–18; Isa 40:12–32; 41:21–24; 44:6–20; 45:7; 45:20; 46:1–13; Lam 3:37–38). Such texts are not just employing Levant cosmological ideas to refute them, they are also lifting these ideas from their Levant creation story origins and recasting them in God's work of salvation as ciphers for God's enemies, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, etc. as Psalm 87:4; Isaiah 30:7; Jeremiah 51:34; and Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2 indicate.[48] In sum, if there is chaos of a sort in the Bible, it is the finite disorder that autonomy from God or sin have injected into the cosmos rather than something preexistent.[49] Interestingly enough, some have also made a case that Genesis 1:1 inaugurates historical thinking.[50]

Genesis 1:2 speaks of the "spirit of God" (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) hovering over the face of the waters. Most lexicons rightly spell out myriad nuances of רוּחַ, but the *DCH* correctly identities

[48] R. Reed Lessing writes, "The assumption is that when OT authors like Isaiah use terms such as רַהַב, "Rahab," or תַּנִּין "Tannin, dragon" (e.g., Is 27:1; 51:9; Pss 74:13; 89:11 [89:10]; Job 9:13), they have primordial creation battle in mind. … Isaiah's sea-battle imagery describes Yahweh's power to defeat evil as demonstrated at the exodus and consequently serves as a demonstration of Yahweh's power as he is about to exercise it through Cyrus and the Suffering Servant. Its function in Isaiah's argument is *eschatological* but not *protological*. Although the prophet uses imagery that at first glance might appear similar to West Semitic cosmological myths, no evidence exists to suggest that he thereby intends to refer to the event of Yahweh's *creation* of the world. Isaiah's decision to speak of Yahweh's power with water is Yahweh's *instrument* in victory, not his enemy. In 51:9–11, the prophet portrays Yahweh's battle with a historical enemy, Egypt, and not a *pre*historical, primeval entity." See his *Isaiah 40–55*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 66–67. See also Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1–50, Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 16 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), xxxvi.

[49] See also Eric M. Vail, *Creation and Chaos: Charting a Way Forward*, PTMS 185 (Eugene: Pickwick, 2012).

[50] Kenneth Mathews argues that "in the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) initiates history. In contrast to "beginning" (תְּחִלָּה) (Gen. 13:3; 41:21; 43:18, 20), Genesis 1:1's "beginning" (רֵאשִׁית), which is often paired with "end" (אַחֲרִית) (Job 8:7; 42:12; Eccl. 7:8; Isa. 46:10), not only suggests that a period of time has commenced, but also that there is eschatological purpose to human history from the beginning as indicated by Isaiah 46:10. See Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 119–22, 126–27. While Mesopotamians chronicled their deities' engagement in historical events, Bill Arnold adds this engagement occurred via parallel actions in the divine realm and remained mythic. In the Hebrew Bible, conversely, a transcendent God inaugurates history, has a plan for history, and works through history to reveal that plan. Bill T. Arnold, "The Weidner Chronicle and the Idea of History in Israel and Mesopotamia," in *Faith, Tradition, and History*, ed. A. R. Millard et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 129–48. See also Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation and Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mystical Symbolism in the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 11–42; Jakob H. Grønbæk, "Baal's Battle with Yam—A Canaanite Creation Fight," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 10, no. 33 (1985): 36.

three fundamental semantic domains for רוּחַ: "wind," "breath," and "spirit," though the latter two are most fluid.[51] In the immediate context of v. 2, the *DCH* thinks "wind" is the sense of רוּחַ in Genesis 3:8 and 8:1. "Breath" best translates Genesis 6:17; 7:15, 22. "Spirit" is the sense of Genesis 6:3. Moreover, the *DCH* regards Genesis 1:2's expression רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים (which does not come up again until Genesis 41:38–39) to be analogous to Genesis 6:3's רוּחִי "my [LORD's] Spirit."[52] Besides the Christian tradition, most recent translations agree with the *DCH*. Those recent translations that do not, chiefly maintain that Gen 1:2 should be rendered either "wind" or breath" rather than "spirit." Still each of these same recent translations (NJPS, NRSV, NABR, Alter, Goldingay) render רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים "spirit of God" in Genesis 41:38 and elsewhere, albeit CEB uses "God-given gifts" for Genesis 41:38 and "divine spirit/God's spirit" for other instances of רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים.[53] The chief obstacle to rendering Genesis 1:2 "spirit of God" is the assumption that this verse speaks of preexistent chaos. But this has been challenged above. Brevard Child points out that רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים never means "wind of God" anywhere else in the Old Testament.[54] Job 33:4; Psalm 33:6; and 104:30 imply that Genesis 1:2's "spirit" is not mere "wind" or "breath," but is

[51] David J. A. Clines, "רוּחַ," *DCH* 7:427–40.

[52] *HALOT* and BDB suggest "spirit" for Gen 1:2, but "breath" for Gen 6:3. Gesenius[18] conversely suggest "wind" or "spirit" for Gen 1:2. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "רוּחַ," *HALOT* 2:1197–1201; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, "רוּחַ," BDB 924–26; Rudolf Meyer and Herbert Donner, "רוּחַ," Gesenius[18] 1225–27.

[53] Most recent translations (NKJV, REB, NLT, Fox, ZB, NIV, ESV, EÜ, CSB, LU17, NET, RNJB, NASB, BB) use "spirit" in Gen 1:2 and Gen 6:3, and "breath" and "wind" in Gen 6:17 and Gen 8:1 respectively. Fox more specifically uses "rushing-spirit" in Gen 1:2 and Gen 6:3, but "rush" and "rushing-wind" in Gen 6:17 and Gen 8:1 respectively. The REB and EÜ differ only slightly in their use of "spirt" in Gen 6:17. It should also noted that GNB and CEV use "Spirit" in Gen 1:2, but latter uses "life-giving breath" in Gen 6:3. In contradistinction, NJPS and CEB uses "wind" for Gen 1:2 and "breath" for Gen 6:3. NRSV and NABR use "wind" for the former, but "spirit" for the latter. Goldingay uses "breath" for the former, but "spirit" for the latter. Alter translates both the same; he renders both as "breath."

[54] Childs, *Myth*, 34–36.

involved in the creation of life. Likewise the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים imparts life, power, or illumination elsewhere (Exod 35:31; Num 24:2; 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 19:20, 23; 2 Chr 15:1; 24:20; Ezek 11:24), though some maintain this only gets democratized later in the Old Testament.[55] The only exception is the Saul narrative where it not only imparts life, empowerment, and illumination, but also does harm to Saul (1 Sam 16:15, 16, 23; 18:10). (Note that wind has both helpful and harmful connotations in the Old Testament). The expression Spirit of the LORD (רוּחַ יְהוָֹה) occurs even more often (25x) than רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים (11x) in Old Testament (not to mention "holy spirit" [3x]). Still the former functions just like the latter, and the two are often used interchangeably. The rare verb "to hover" (רחף) is often associated with birdlike movements because of Deuteronomy 32:11, but Hamilton suggests that it could also mean "watch over" on basis of its Ugaritic parallel.[56] That would not only further shore up the meaning "spirit" for Genesis 1:2, but provide a nudge in the direction of "Spirit." If the divine activity of ברא has a recreative or justifying sense for all human beings already in Genesis 1:1, then the aforementioned suggests that the רוּחַ of Genesis 1:2 contributes to this as well. This in fact appears to be the understanding of 2 Corinthians 3:16–18 when it says the "Lord is the Spirit" and associates "the Spirit of the Lord" (τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου) with "freedom" (ἐλευθερία) and humans "being transformed into the same image" (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα) as "the glory of the Lord" (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου).

[55] M. V. Van Pelt, W. C. Kaiser, Jr., and D. I. Block, "רוּחַ," *NIDOTTE* 3:1073–78.

[56] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 114–15.

Genesis 1:3 reveals that God spoke created reality into being by divine fiat. According to 4 [2] Esdras 6:38, the heavens and earth were explicitly spoken into being on the first day of creation too. Nahum Sarna points out that ancient Near Eastern deities can energize co-substantial matter into order by releasing its inner potential via sexual procreation or even a sort of magical incantation. But only the truly supernatural God of Genesis speaks created reality (including matter, time, space, etc.) into being by his performative utterance.[57] The cosmos that God spoke into being is declared ordered, blessed, and good (Gen 1:4, 22, 31), including its pinnacle the human being whose addition makes everything "very good" (טֹוב מְאֹד) (Gen 1:28, 31; 2:18).

Regarding the Genesis 1:1–3 as a whole, everyone agrees that v. 3 is an independent clause. It has often been asserted that Genesis 2:4 is structurally parallel to Genesis 1:1 (pro TDCT1 or TDCT2). In contrast to the word order of both Genesis 2:4 and *Enūma Elish*, Genesis 1:1 word order is beth preposition + finite verb + subject noun). If *Enūma Elish* has a syntactical parallel, it is with Genesis 1:2–3 and 2:4–7 (beth preposition + non-finite verb + subject noun), not Genesis 1:1.[58] In addition, TDCT1's understanding of the relationship of the first three verses of Genesis yields a single cumbersome sentence that is atypical of Genesis's initial stylistically short sentences.[59] Ironically, even Hermann Gunkel states about Genesis 1:1, "Simply and powerfully, the author first establishes the doctrine that God created the world. No statement in the cosmogonies of other peoples approaches this first statement of the Bible."[60] GT posits that וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה in v. 2 should be translated "then the earth *became*" like Genesis 3:22. However, the

[57] Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1970), 11–13.
[58] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 96–97.
[59] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 107–8; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 142.
[60] Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 103.

disjunctive word order of v. 2 (i.e., waw-disjunctive + noun + verb) makes this translation and GT syntactically unlikely.[61] Consecutive or sequential word order is typically waw-consecutive + verb in the perfect. The TDCT2 is less cumbersome than TDCT1, but again the disjunctive word order of v. 2 is also atypical of principle clause word order.[62]

Creation Anthropology of Genesis

Genesis's creation anthropology has too often been misread due to Greek philosophical and modern anthropological presuppositions that posit a state of pure nature, non-graced natural end (τέλος) to human life, and the accommodation of the Biblical message to secular or existential ends. Genesis 1 and 2 demonstrate the unique status of human beings in a number of ways. Genesis 1 introduces a new expression: "Let us make," to show God carefully deliberated over the creation of mankind. The divine activity of ברא is used three times in Genesis 1:27 for the creation of human beings. There is only one "kind" (מִין) of human just as there is only one God. God created both males and females "in our image, according to our likeness" (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ) (Gen 1:26–27; 5:1–2). They were both enabled not only to have royal mastery and rule of creation but also to do so (Gen 1:26, 28. Cf. Wis 9:2; Sir 17:2). Genesis 2 further spells out mankind's special relationship with the LORD. The creation of the human being was a twofold process of forming and inspiring or filling with life. The LORD God took great care to form (יָצַר) the human of the dust from the ground or a rib. He then breathed into the human being the breath of life (Gen 2:7, 21–22. Cf. Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). Unlike the more common word for "breath,"

[61] *IBHS*, §§8.3b; 39.2.3.
[62] Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 137n98.

רוּחַ, the word נִשְׁמַת used in Genesis 2:7 is only used of God and man, except perhaps in Genesis 7:22. The LORD created human beings not only with the ability to live in a dependent faith-based or trust-based relationship with him but also to do so (Gen 2:16–17; 3:17).[63] Unlike animals that are driven by instinct, human beings were created with personhood, self-awareness, self-reflectiveness, and the freedom to choose between various good things (Gen 2:9, 16) rather than license as indicated by the law of forbidden fruit (Gen 2:17).[64]

The Garden in Eden and the "Tree of Life" (עֵץ הַחַיִּים) serve as a sort of Edenic temple and Torah-filled ark. The later temporary tabernacle/temples, not to mention the eschatological new temple, all echo this original Edenic temple. Ezekiel and John both situate the new temple in a new Eden or the new heavens and the new earth (Gen 1:1; 2:8. Cf. Ezek 36:35; Ezek 40–48; Rev 21:1, 22). The later temporary tabernacle/temples are where the LORD would dwell with his people and impart his life-sustaining temple presence to his people by means of a sort of tree of life; namely, the Torah-filled ark of the covenant (Gen 2:9, 16–17, 3:8. Cf. Exod 3:1–22; 25:8, 22, 31–40; Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15; 2 Sam 7:6–7; Prov 3:18–20; Ezek 28:14; John 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 2:3; 2 Tim 3:15; Rev 2:7; 21:3, 22; 22:2, 14; 19). While no atonement was necessary before the fall into sin, Adam was created as an Adamic priestly prophet to mediate God's Edenic temple presence (Gen 2:9, 16–17, 20) to Eve and their descendants, the other members of this royal priesthood (Gen 1:26–28; 2:18–25; Exod 19:6; 20:7. Cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), which maintained them all in the image of God and a faith-relationship with him. Since cherubim will assume the role of human beings after the fall, Ezekiel 28:11–19 may indirectly

[63] See also Brueggemann on primal trust in his *Theology of the Old Testament*, 466.
[64] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 224; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, 210–11.

depict Adam in high priestly attire. The rest of this kingdom of priests were to assist Adam in the priestly duties of mediating temple presence, offering the Eucharistic sacrifices (i.e., thank offerings) (of "cultivating/serving" [עָבַד] and "keeping/guarding" [שָׁמַר] of Eden [Gen 2:15. Cf. Num 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 44:14; Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5]), and reflecting the divine image and making God's name holy among each other through their helping (Gen 2:20). They further assisted Adam in the royal duties of mastery and rule of creation (Gen 1:26, 28). Cherubim assumed this role of temple guards after the fall (Gen 3:22–24. Cf. Exod 25:18–22; Ezek 1:5; 10:4). Eden seems to have a tripartite structure (Eden, garden, and world) like the temple (holy of holies, holy place, and courtyard). Eden faced east just like Ezekiel's new temple (Gen 3:24. Cf. Ezek 28:14–16; 40:6; 43:4). The temporary tabernacle/temple was to face east and was later situated on a mount just like Ezekiel's temple (Num 2:2–3; 3:38. Cf. Ezek 40:2). The tabernacle and temple had furnishings (Cf. Exod 35:31), carvings (Cf. 1 Kgs 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18–20), and gold and onyx that were reminiscent of the garden (Gen 2:11–12. Cf. Exod 25:7, 11, 17, 31). A river flowed out from Eden just like the new temple (Gen 2:10. Cf. Ezek 47:1–12; Rev 22:1–2). This river became four, one of which was named "Gihon" (גִּיחוֹן) (Gen 2:13. Cf. 2 Chr 32:30; 1 Kgs 1:33, 38, 45; 2 Chr 33:14). Creation concluded with the sanctification of Sabbath to signify the gracious relationship and rest that God created for all. The tabernacle also concluded with rest (Gen 2:2–3. Cf. Exod 31:12–17; Ezek 20:12–13).[65]

[65] Jon Levenson, "The Temple and World," *JR* 64, no. 3 (1984): 275–98; Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19–25; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 617–21; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 65; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 31, 36, 43. Daniel I. Block raises some criticisms of this idea in "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013): 3–30.

Before concluding his creating work, the LORD states that it is not "good" (טוֹב) for the human beings to be "alone" (בָּד). Since the human was created a finite, social, and trust-based beings who need a "helper" (עֵזֶר) "corresponding to him" (כְּנֶגְדּוֹ),[66] the LORD provides the man with a woman to remedy human procreative and social needs (Gen 2:18–25; 3:17). The fact that God sometimes served as a "helper" of mankind (Gen 49:25; Exod 18:4; Ps 10:14; 54:6, etc.) excludes any innate notion of inequality or inferiority in the word "helper." The fact that God sometimes served as a "helper" of mankind also shows that it is not just husbands that need helpers. All human beings need helpers corresponding to them.[67] Said differently, Edenic human equality does not preclude complementarity (i.e., a difference of [even hierarchal] role).[68] At the same time, Genesis 2:18 does not preclude social mobility, although some roles like husband and wife are fixed until resurrection (Matt 22:30). In sum, differences of role are a necessity of any functional society (Gen 2:18; Rom 12:3–5; 1 Cor 12:12–31) including Edenic ones because human beings are finite, social, trust-based creatures by design who have different gifts (Rom 12:6–8, 1 Cor 12:1–11, 28–30; Eph 4:11) and interests. Differences in role are not the result of the fall; human inequality and the asocial desire to eliminate roles altogether in the name of autonomy is the result of the fall.

Many conceptions have arisen about what the image and likeness of God in the strict sense consists of, but they are all flawed in one way or another.[69] Even though the image and

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[66] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "נֶגֶד," *HALOT* 1:666; David J. A. Clines, "נֶגֶד," *DCH* 5:604.

[67] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 227.

[68] Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, 213–14.

[69] The first is the Augustinian notion of a permanent image (consisting of memory, intellect, and will if not innate freedom) and a lost likeness, albeit a likeness that could be restored (consisting of hope, faith, and love). The second is the mental and spiritual faculties themselves that man shares with God. The third is a physical resemblance to God. The fourth is man's rule as God's representative. The fifth is the Barthian notion of an ability to enter into a

likeness of God is not explicitly defined by Genesis 1:26–27, there are some indirect clues as to its meaning. In contrast to the LXX's insertion of the conjunction "and" (*κατ᾽ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν*) between "in our image" and "according to our likeness" (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ), both Hebrew terms represent a single concept. First of all, both "image" and "likeness" are used without the other to refer to a single concept (Gen 1:27; 5:1). Second, the Hebrew preposition בְּ governs "image" in Genesis 1:26. כְּ governs "image" in Genesis 5:3. The same two prepositions govern "likeness" in these same two instances, but in reversed order. Third, the LXX uses *εἰκών* and *ὁμοίωσις* to translate צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת in Genesis 1:26 respectively. It uses *εἰκών* and *ἰδέα* to translate these same two words in Genesis 5:3. But it uses *εἰκών* to translate both Hebrew words in Genesis 1:27 and 5:1.

Some have suggested that Genesis 1:26 uses the בְּ of essence as found in Exodus 6:3 and 18:4.[70] Others have suggested it uses the בְּ of manner/norm as found in Exodus 25:40.[71] The latter seems more plausible: First, Exodus 25:40 is a closer parallel to Genesis 1:27. Second, "image" is used with both the בְּ and כְּ prepositions as noted above. There is no evidence for a כְּ of essence. The בְּ of essence normally indicates the property of the verb's subject, not the object of the verb.[72] Third, the image and likeness in the strict sense is lost (Gen 5:3. Cf. Wis 2:23; 1 Cor

confrontational I-Thou dialogue and relationship with God. See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29–31; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, 164–66.

[70] Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *BHRG*[2], 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), §39.6f; David J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *TynBul* (1968): 53–103, esp. 75–78.

[71] E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, eds., GKC, trans. A. E. Cowley, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), §119h; *IBHS*, §11.2.9b.

[72] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 136–37; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 3, 28–20.

15:49), though human beings do not cease to be human (Gen 3:22. Cf. Ps 8:5–9; 139:14–16). Fourth, substance ontology certainly has limits for conveying the ideas of the Bible. Still the way Christ "is the image of God" (ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ) (Wis 7:26; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15) is different than the way that human beings have the image of God (cf. also Exo 25:40; Heb 8:1–6; 10:1). To capture this distinction it can be said that only Christ is the essential image of God, whereas humans are in some sense the analogical, derived, normed, copied, or patterned image of God.

Since the human mastery and rule of creation in the name and stead of God is a consequence of the image and likeness of God but not the substance of it,[73] the image and likeness facilitates this mastery and rule, but the mastery and rule cannot be equated with the image and likeness. Moreover, this human mastery and rule should be understood as the kingdom of priests' stewardship of creation, not an exploitation of it. As God's creatures, the creation remains God's possession just as much as human beings remains his possession. As image bearers, human beings represent God to the creation in their dominion over it (Gen 1:26, 28. Cf. Lev 25:23–24; Deut 17:14–20; 1 Kgs 5:4; Ps 8:6–9; 72:1–20; Wis 9:2; Sir 17:2). While other ancient Near East cultures applied the divine image and divine sonship only to kings,[74] Genesis 1:26–30 indicates all human beings (males and females alike) are royal rulers and are therefore fully equal. Exodus 19:5–6's claim that Israel "shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגֹוי קָדֹושׁ) is part of the eschatological recapitulation of the original universal holy dominion by God's image bearers which 1 Peter 2:5, 9 says is exercised by a "royal priesthood" (βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα).

[73] F. J. Stendebach, "צֶלֶם," *TDOT* 12:394.

[74] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 153.

The image and likeness of God in the strict sense cannot be equated with the human spiritual, psychological, and physical faculties (much less a physical resemblance to God). After the image is lost (Gen 5:3. Cf. Wis 2:23; 1 Cor 15:49), these faculties remain, though they are fallen, deformed, disordered, and incapable of functioning properly. What is more, a dependent faith-relationship with the Creator God (Gen 2:16–17) presupposes that humans were created with a *divine/passive gift* to be capable of trusting. Following the fall and the loss of the image of God, human beings in and of themselves (i.e., via fallen *human/active love*) trust in a whole host of false gods (self, idols, etc.) but are unable to self-generate trust in God (Gen 3:17; 6:5; 8:21). Without God's *divine/passive gift*, there can be no human trust in God. Furthermore, the royal mastery and rule of creation (Gen 1:26, 28) also presuppose that humans were created with a *divine/passive gift*. Otherwise human beings would not have been able to make full graced use of these human faculties necessary for expressing their unfallen *human/active love* in properly-ordered free and responsible service to God and others. Following the fall and the loss of the image of God, human beings in and of themselves (i.e., via fallen *human/active love*) lack this capability as well (Gen 3:16–19; 9:2). Without God's *divine/passive gift*, fallen *human/active love* will never come alive again.

All of this is why later biblical texts maintained the image and likeness of God in the strict sense consisted of uprightness, immortality, holiness, righteousness, strength, and knowledge. Granted these are always understood to be a divinely-derived and analogical characteristics of the image of God. For only God was understood to be, for lack of a better word, *essentially* upright, immortal, holy, righteous, strong, and knowledgeable (Gen 1:1; 18:14; Exod 3:14; 15:11; Lev 20:26; Num 23:19; Deut 32:4; 1 Sam 2:2; Job 42:2; Ps 139:1–6; Isa 14:27; 45:21; 46:9–11; Jer 32:17, 27; Zeph 3:5; Rom 3:10; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; Rev 15:4).

Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, "God made man upright" (יָשָׁר). Wisdom 1:13; 2:23; 9:2–3 says, "God did not make death … God created the human being to be immortal/incorruptible,[75] and he made him to be an image of his own eternity" (ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ᾽ ἀφθαρσίᾳ καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν) … "to administer the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgement in uprightness of soul" (διέπῃ τὸν κόσμον ἐν ὁσιότητι καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἐν εὐθύτητι ψυχῆς κρίσιν κρίνῃ). Sirach 17:2–3, 7 also includes with the image "strength like [the Lord's] own" (καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν ἐνέδυσεν αὐτοὺς ἰσχὺν) and "understanding" (ἐπιστήμην).

Genesis 1:31; 3:17; 5:3; 6:5; and 8:21 support the association of uprightness, righteousness, and holiness with the image. Genesis 1:31 indicates that the creation of the human being in the image of God made the whole creation "very good" (טוֹב מְאֹד). This phrase is retracted after human disobedience to God's command caused a sinful rupture in God's creation (Gen 3:17; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21).

Genesis 2:16–17; 3:19; 5:3; and 5:5ff substantiate the association of immortality and strength with the image. Genesis 2:16–17 states that human beings would only die if they broke their faith-relationship with God by defying his commandment.[76] "For in the day that you eat of [the tree of the knowledge good and evil] you will surely die (מוֹת תָּמוּת)" (Gen 2:17). There are five main objections to the notion that human beings were created immortal. The first objection maintains that human beings were created mortal and designed to die because eternal life in

[75] Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds., "ἀφθαρσία," *LEH* 97; Takamitsu Muraoka, "ἀφθαρσία," *GELS* 106.

[76] See also Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), 64–65, 69; Walter R. Roehrs and Martin Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 19; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 67–68, 83; Steinmann, *Genesis*, 72.

communion with God had not yet developed in Hebrew thought.[77] This not only goes against the clearest passage of the text, Genesis 2:17, it also presupposes the fallen theology and anthropology so prevalent in the myths and worldviews of the nations that Genesis and the rest of the Bible are striving to combat. If humans really were created to die, then why were they not also created immoral, unholy, unrighteous, weak, and ignorant too? This is no less "natural" to the fallen human being not to mention the myths and worldview of the surrounding nations. The second objection recognizes that human beings were not created to die, but refrains from calling them immortal because only God is essentially immortal (1 Tim 6:16).[78] Moreover, human beings (be they created, fallen, recreated, damned, or glorified) are always reliant on one or more of God's various presences (e.g., gracious sacramental presence [Gen 2:9, 16–17; Exod 25:22; 29:43; 40:34–35; John 14:23; 15:4–5], providential presence [Gen 6:3; Jer 23:23–24; Ps 139:7–12; Acts 17:28], wrathful presence [Gen 3:22–24; Ps 139:7–12; Rev 14:10]; and glorious presence [Rev 21:3–4; 22:5]). This study is very sympathetic to this objection because human immortality could suggest that human beings were created autonomous from God. Still this study refers to it as a divinely-derived and analogical immortality because Genesis only claims humans would die if they ate from the forbidden fruit. Genesis never calls pre-fall human beings mortal. The rest of the Bible calls re/created life "immortality" (Wis 2:23; Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 15:53–54; 2 Tim 1:10). The third objection is that humans had to eat from the tree of life to turn on their immortality.[79] But Genesis never says this. It only says that eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil turned immortality off. Since they were permitted to eat of tree of life before the

[77] John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), 84; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 223–25; 266–65.

[78] Kidner, *Genesis*, 64–65; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 173; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, 211–12.

[79] Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary Genesis*, 21; John A. Goldingay, *Genesis*, BCOTP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 61–62, 82.

fall,[80] the tree of life appears to have sacramentally sustained human life in a dependent faith-relationship with God before the fall (Gen 2:9, 16–17). It is only after the fall that humans were no longer permitted to eat from the tree of life lest they enter into an irreversible state of permanent (עוֹלָם) autonomy from God (i.e., permanent death) (Gen 3:22–24). The fourth objection is that God retracted the penalty for eating the forbidden fruit in Genesis 2:17 because human did not immediately die.[81] After the fall, human beings really were condemned to die. In point of fact, the consequences of the fall, spelled out in Genesis 3:16–19, reach their literary crescendo with Genesis 3:19b. Broken faith, lack of the divine image, mortality,[82] and expulsion from Eden (i.e., spiritual death) were the immediate "already" dimension of death which also included eventually physical death (i.e., temporal death) (Gen 2:16–17; 3:17; 19; 5:3; 5:5ff. Cf. Matt 8:22; Luke 9:60; Rom 6:1–4, 6–14; Eph 2:1). Permanent autonomy from God (i.e., permanent death) was its "but not yet" for all who persisted in unrepentant sin (Gen 3:22–24. Cf. Isa 59:1–2; Dan 12:2; Matt 25:46; John 8:51; 11:25–26; Rom 5:12–19; 6:5, 23; Rev 20:6, 10, 14–15; 21:8).[83] However, God's expulsion of mankind from Eden was ultimately an act of mercy insofar as it made recreation a possibility. The fifth objection is that the mention of "dust" in Genesis 3:19 and in Genesis 2:7 is supposed to signal that human beings were really meant to die all along.[84] However, the far more significant literary allusion is Genesis 3:17's clear reference

[80] Von Rad, *Genesis*, 81–82; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 79.

[81] David J. A. Clines, "Themes in Genesis 1–11," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 490; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 172–74, 203–4, Goldingay, *Genesis*, 62.

[82] Concerning the meaning of מות in Gen 2:17; 3:3–4, see Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "מות," *HALOT* 1:562; David J. A. Clines, "מות," *DCH* 5:192.

[83] Kidner, *Genesis*, 69, 72; Roehrs and Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study*, 20. Gunkel too recognizes that God is acting to keep humans from achieving an irreversible permanent state (i.e., "immortality") in Gen 3:22–24. However, Gunkel thinks God was trying to keep a humanity that was always destined to die from becoming gods. See his, *Genesis*, 23–24.

[84] Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 83.

("which I commanded you, saying, 'you shall not eat of it'" [לְאׇ תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ]) to Genesis 2:17 ("you shall not eat from it" [לְאׇ תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ] for in that day that you eat of it you will surely die"). In fact, Genesis 3:17 curse's reference to Genesis 2:17 expects the reader to recall the rest of the Genesis 2:17 quotation which explicitly links death only to eating the forbidden fruit. The omission of the "breath of life" in Genesis 3:19 conversely does just as much to undermine the literary connection between Genesis 3:19 and 2:7 as the mention of "dust" does in both passages to promote it.[85] If the tree of life would have never sustained ongoing life in the first place, why would human beings now need to be barred from it (Gen 3:22–24)?

Genesis 3:22 and 5:3 support the connection between the image and authentic understanding and knowledge. Granted human beings were created to grow in experiential knowledge, Christ himself grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52). But Genesis never states Adam and Eve lacked knowledge and understanding. They were after all created with moral responsibility (Gen 2:16–17). What is more, Genesis 3:1 explicitly makes the point that it was the craftiness of the serpent that baited them into rebelling against God (Gen 3:5). But after the fall, God makes this seemingly hyperbolic statement: "Behold, the human being has become like one of us in knowing good and evil (לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע)" (Gen 3:22; 5:3). Human beings really did become like God not in the sense that they gained an elevated sort of knowledge but in the sense that they became autonomous knowers. Von Rad states, "The guiding principle of [human] life is no longer obedience but his autonomous knowing and willing, and thus he has really ceased to understand himself as creature."[86] When human beings tried to steal Godlike autonomy and

[85] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 83.
[86] Von Rad, *Genesis*, 97; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 165–66, Steinmann, *Genesis*, 66.

knowledge, they traded the authentic understanding and knowledge of the divine image for a fallen manmade understanding and knowledge. Since they were not created to be autonomous, it only obscured their minds with the lens of sin. After the fall, the phrase "good and evil" could refer to growth in experiential discernment but only by those regenerated who did so properly (Lev 27:12, 14; Num 24:13; Deut 1:39; 2 Sam 14:17; 19:36; 1 Kgs 3:9; Eccl 12:14; Isa 7:15–16); namely, by a faithful use of divine revelation (Prov 3:13; 8:10–11; 30:1–6).

The New Testament concurs with this understanding of the image of God. Romans 5:12; 8:10; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 53–55; and Revelation 21:4 attribute death to the sinful fall of Adam. Ephesians 4:23–24 explains the restoration of the divine image and likeness in terms of being "renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new human being, which according to [the likeness of] God has been created in true righteousness and holiness" (*ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας*). Luke 1:74–75 agrees, while Colossians 3:10 adds "the new [human being]" … "is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him" (*τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν*). Some New Testament texts simply equate the image and likeness of God that is being renewed in believers or at least its glorified version with Christ himself (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49). Note also that none of these or other recreation texts of the Bible ever suggest that man was recreated only to be immoral, mortal, unholy, unrighteous, weak, and ignorant.

When human beings tried to achieve autonomy from God and deify themselves (Gen 3:1–8), their misuse of free will dehumanized themselves. The idea that this represents an evolutionary emancipation and self-actualization of humankind rather than a fall (2 Esd 7:118)

goes against the whole thrust of Genesis's creation theology and anthropology. There is not even the smallest hint of modernity's notion that mankind's fall and expulsion from Eden brought about anything positive for mankind (Gen 3:16–19, 22–24).[87] Human beings only forfeited their freedom by choosing autonomy (Gen 6:5; 8:21). Authentic human knowledge and self-realization via a properly-ordered divine/human enculturation was abandoned too. Moreover, Genesis creation theology and the rest of the Bible not only maintain that those humans with the image of God (created, recreated, and glorious mankind) are dependent on God, but even those deformed humans without it (fallen, damned mankind) never become so autonomous that they can exist without at least by one or more of God's various presences.

The fall broke the human beings' faith-relationship with God (Gen 3:16) and cost them the image and likeness of God in the strict sense. Adam's descendants were now fathered in his sinful mortal image rather than God's holy immortal image according to what some critical scholars recognize to be a P text (Gen 5:3. Cf. Wis 2:23; 1 Cor 15:49).[88] Consequently, human beings not only brought pain into the world (Gen 3:17), they brought death into it as well (Gen 2:16–17; 3:19. Cf. Rom 5:12; 8:10; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 53–55; Rev 21:4). The physical death of each of their descendants is only one aspect of this death (Gen 5:5, 8, 11, etc). Henceforth human beings are only autonomous knowers of a fallen manmade knowledge (Gen 3:22). They now suffer from an evil intention or inclination from youth, too (Gen 6:5; 8:21. Cf. Ps 51:7; 143:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 14:23; Heb 11:6). As a result, human mastery and rule as stewards of creation was problematized. Power struggles would occur between husbands and wives, not to mention between all humans and their helpers (Gen 3:16). If it were not enough that human beings objectified themselves when they tried to demote (or better undeify) and depersonalize the

[87] See also Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 210–12.
[88] Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 294–95.

LORD and personalizer (Gen 3:6, 12–13, 16–17), they also corrupted the creation and turned it against them. Nature would defy humans, and the animals came to fear them following the flood (Gen 3:17–19; 9:2. Cf. Sir 17:4).

In the wake of the fall, the Bible only speaks about the image and likeness in the wide sense (Gen 9:6 [i.e., another P text])[89] or about what the image and likeness in the strict sense was (Gen 5:1–2. Cf. Wis 1:13; 2:23; 9:2–3; Sir 17:2–3, 7; Jam 3:9). The exception to this is when the image and likeness of God in the strict sense is being renewed in a human being via God's creative or justifying Word (Luke 1:74–75; Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 11:7; 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). The wide sense refers to the vestige of the image and likeness, the retention of the deformed human faculties and existence.

Granted the human beings that God had formed (יָצַר) remain his good human creation and have not become essentially evil to speak in substance ontology terms (Gen 3:22. Cf. Ps 8:5–9; 139:14–16). God does not make evil (albeit he does make calamity [Isa 45:7]). Still they have become deformed human beings and are only innately capable of civil righteousness or external moral conformity (Rom 14:23; Heb 11:6). Even after the flood decreation and recreation (Gen 6–7; 8:17; 9:1), the original full Edenic human capabilities have been lost, as God himself declares: "Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (וְכָל־יֵצֶר֙ מַחְשְׁבֹ֣ת לִבּ֔וֹ רַ֖ק רַ֥ע כָּל־הַיּ֖וֹם) and this already "from his youth" (מִנְּעֻרָ֑יו) (Gen 6:5; 8:21 [i.e., P texts according to some].[90] Cf. Ps 51:7; Jer 17:9). Put otherwise, this evil "intention" (יֵצֶר) to seek the false

[89] Friedman, *Who Wrote*, 229–37; Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 294–95.

[90] Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 294–95.

humanism of autonomy and license remains even in the regenerate human being until the full restoration of the image of God. After the flood when all that was left was favored Noah and his family, God declared once again that human beings, Noah and his family included, possessed this evil intention from youth (Gen 6:8; 8:21. Cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:23–24; Col 3:10). Thus, the diluvian purge and recreation did not remove this evil intention (Cf. 1 Pet 3:20–21). Still Genesis clearly rejects the notion that human beings were divinely determined to be evil and holds them morally responsible for their *willful* sins (Gen 3:16–19; 4:6–7, 11–12; 6:5–7).

Conclusion

Genesis's conception of God is not that of a cosmically-enmeshed conqueror of preexistent chaos and mere organizer of eternal matter. The book does not speak of chaos as a rival who has only been defeated by God, but remains undestroyed until God is capable of bringing about the consummation of things. Biblical texts that do employ Levant cosmological ideas (Job 9:13; 26:12; 41:1; Ps 74:13–14; 77:16; 89:9–10; 104:5–7, 26; Isa 27:1; 44:27; 51:9–11; Rev 21:1, 25) are often embedded in texts that most strongly champion God's absolute transcendence over other nonexistent gods/idols (Job 41:10–34; Ps 115:3–8; 135:15–18; Isa 40:12–32; 41:21–24; 44:6–20; 45:7; 45:20; 46:1–13; Lam 3:37–38). When Biblical texts make such references, they do so not only to refute them but also to recast them as ciphers in God's work of salvation. The finite disorder that God's creatures injected into the cosmos in their quest for autonomy from God is the closest approximation to chaos in the Bible. The picture of God in Genesis conversely is that of the one, universal, sovereign, transcendent God of the universe (Gen 1:1–3). He created and justified human beings *ex nihilo* in his own image and in a faith-relationship with himself to have a special status in the creation as the stewards of creation (Gen

1:26–28; 2:16–17; 3:17). This forensic and inbreathed creation and justification occurred via his performative Word and life-giving Spirit (Gen 1:1–3; 2:7–8).

Human beings were created upright, immortal, holy, righteous, strong, knowledgeable, and in a dependent relationship of trust with their life-giving Creator God (Gen 1:26–27, 31; 2:16–17, 3:17, 19, 22; 5:3; 5:5ff; 6:5; 8:21. Cf. Eccl 7:29; Wis 1:13; 2:23–24; 9:2–3; Sir 17:2–3, 7; Luke 1:74–75; Rom 5:12; 8:10; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 53–55; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; Rev 21:4). Nevertheless, uprightness, immortality, holiness, righteousness, strength, and knowledge are divinely-derived and analogical because only God is essentially such (Gen 1:1; 18:14; Exod 3:14; 15:11; Lev 20:26; Num 23:19; Deut 32:4; 1 Sam 2:2; Job 42:2; Ps 139:1–6; Isa 14:27; 45:21; 46:9–11; Jer 32:17, 27; Zeph 3:5; Rom 3:10; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; Rev 15:4). The Garden in Eden and tree of life functioned like an Edenic temple and Torah-filled ark that would have maintained Adam, Eve, and their descendants in the divine image and a faith-relationship with God, albeit their equality did not preclude different roles in paradise. The chief reasons for affirming this conception of the divine image and creation as justification or humanization are the following: A dependent faith-relationship with the Creator God (Gen 2:16–17) presupposes that humans were created with a *divine/passive gift* to be capable of trusting. Mankind proves incapable of self-generating faith without an image-restoring recreative speech act (Gen 6:5, 8; 12:1–3; 15:5). This royal priesthoods' mastery and rule of creation (Gen 1:26–30) also presuppose that humans were created with a *divine/passive gift* to carry out this task, but mastery and rule is problematized after the loss of the image (Gen 3:17–19; 9:2. Cf. Sir 17:4).

In the aftermath of their disobedience and forfeiture of the divine image, human beings are no longer called "very good" (Gen 1:31) but rather are only said to possess an evil intention from youth (Gen 3:17; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21). "Death" is only associated with divine law breakers who

have lost the image of God which includes all Adam's descendants (Gen 2:16–17; 3:19; 5:3; 5:5ff). After the fall, God states that human beings have indeed become like God in that they have become autonomous knowers, albeit of a fallen manmade understanding and knowledge (Gen 3:22; 5:3). Given what was lost in the fall, the recreative or justifying nuance of ברא that is prevalent in so-called Second Isaiah and elsewhere is clearly warranted in Genesis 1 and 2 too. Ringgren starts to recognize as much when he writes, "Basically this view [old theology of election] is already anticipated in the Pentateuchal sources J and P by the genealogical connection between creation and the history of Israel, which points to Israel."[91] Other books of the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament, as noted above, substantiate this conception of the image and the equation of creation and justification.

After Adam and Eve's attempt to gain autonomy from God (Gen 3:1–8), human beings lost the image of God in the strict sense (Gen 5:1–3) and were expelled from the LORD's Edenic temple presence (Gen 3:22–24) because they had broken faith with their Creator God (Gen 2:16–17; 3:17). As a result, "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5; 8:21). Man become a deformed human person, but he remains a human person nevertheless (Gen 3:22; Ps 8:5–9; 139:14–16) because he retains the image of God in the wide sense (Gen 9:6). The persistence of this evil intention from youth remains just as true for favored Noah (Gen 8:21), who had experienced the diluvian recreation (Cf. 1 Pet 3:20–21), as it would for Ezekiel. Human sin did not just disorder mankind, it disordered the rest of creation, turning it against them (Gen 3:17–19; 9:2; Sir 17:4). Still God holds human beings personally responsible for their willful sins even after the fall (Gen 3:16–19; 4:6–7, 11–12; 6:5–7).

[91] Helmer Ringgren, "בָּרָא," *TDOT* 2:247–48. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 98; Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, "בָּרָא," *NIDOTTE* 1:728–35.

To explain further, this same God therefore is a God of law and grace, who graciously created human beings with what one might more simply call divine/passive righteousness and reveals this to them so that human beings would not mistakenly assume they could forge a manmade relationship with God via what one might more simply call the human/active righteousness of their obedience to the law of the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16–17). It is only in divine/passive righteousness and a faith-relationship with God that the human (spiritual, psychological, and physical) faculties are graced and thus empowered to express human/active righteousness in freedom and sacrificial love first towards God, then to the other, and finally to the rest of creation (Gen 1:26–30; 2:15–24). Before the fall, human beings had the will power to choose freedom or condemn themselves to license (Gen 3:6). The Spirit of God/Spirit of the Lord moreover facilitated this freedom (Gen 41:38–39; 2 Cor 3:16–18; etc.). After the fall, human faculties no longer have their full graced powers and only willfully choose civil righteousness and license (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:7; Rom 14:2; Heb 11:6). From the Edenic perspective, freedom (strictly speaking) is the ability to choose between manifold "authentic goods" which the divine image and faith-based relationship with God makes possible. Otherwise God or the saints in heaven would not be free. Nevertheless, fallen human beings remain responsible for their sin. Even though they do not exercise Edenic freedom, they were not predetermined to sin and still possess the will power to choose "external goods" (i.e., civil righteousness) and various evils (i.e., license).

Before the fall, God's law conversely provided the framework (but not the empowerment) for human freedom to thrive without falling into licentiousness (Gen 2:16–17; Josh 1:8; Ps 119:9, 105). God's law was written into the heart of mankind just as assuredly as it was written into the cosmos (Sir 17:11; Rom 1:20; 2:14–15). God assumed that even a fallen

Cain could still intuit that murder was evil (Gen 4:6–7) before he decreed a commandment against it (Gen 9:6). After the fall, God's law condemned sin (Gen 3:14, 16–19; Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; Rom 3:20; 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 3:24) and curbed evil in the world as well (Gen 9:6; Rom 2:14–15; 1 Tim 1:9–10). Thus, God's law was never intended to be a means of grace, but rather goal posts wherein the human fruits of God's grace could be properly channeled. Said differently, human/active righteousness is the necessary and natural effect of divine/passive righteousness but not the cause of it (Gen 1:26–28, 31; 2:16–17; 3:17–19; Matt 7:17–20; John 15:1–17; Rom 3:20; Gal 3:21; Eph 2:1–10). Autonomy presumes that human/active righteousness keeps one in dependent-relationship with God, puts one into dependent-relationship with God, or even makes one fully human so that a dependent-relationship with God is unnecessary.

If only the divine activity of ברא could create or justify the first human beings with divine/passive righteousness and in faith-relationship with God, then it stands to reason that it takes another divine act of eschatological recreation or justification to resurrect that image of God and faith-relationship with God (Exod 34:10; Ps 51:12; 102:19; Isa 43:1, 7, 15; 45:8; 48:7; 57:19; Jer 31:22; Mal 2:10; 2 Cor 5:17, 21; Eph 2:10, 15; 4:24). This new life of faith or trust is called eschatological (not gradual) because the believer already possesses it in its totality (John 1:12–13; 3:3; 5:24; Rom 6:6–11; 2 Cor 5:17–18; Titus 3:5; 1 John 5:1; Jam 1:18; Rev 20:5) although not yet in all of its fullness (Rev 20:6). Since this is a divine creation, the notion of a saving human/active righteousness is as foreign to the "favor/grace" (חֵן) and "righteousness" (צְדָקָה) that Noah and Abraham received "by faith" (i.e., וְהֶאֱמִן בַּיהוָה) in Genesis 6:8 and 15:6 as it is to Romans 4:1–5 and Hebrews 11:7–9. A state of pure nature, an ungraced natural end to

human life, is a post-Biblical philosophical development in Christian thought that accommodates Scripture to foreign and naturalistic anthropology.[92] Still grace does not subsume creation, grace makes creation and revealed theology possible.[93] For apart from strict monotheism and its cosmic justice, there is only monistic determinism or dualistic/polytheistic cyclical license (for one capricious god's virtue is another god's vice).[94] Only monotheism can provide some explanation for both freedom and evil.

[92] Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1998).

[93] See also Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 131–65; Claus Westermann, *Creation*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1974).

[94] See also Sarna, *Understanding*, 16–18.

CHAPTER THREE

HUMAN LIFE INDEPENDENT OF THE CREATOR GOD

> Then he said to me, "Son of man/Adam, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, those nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have committed rebellious sin against me to this very day. "And I am sending you to them who are brazenfaced and hardhearted sons; and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'" As for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.—Ezekiel 2:3–5.
>
> Then he said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is very, very great, and the land is filled with blood, and the city is full of perversion; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!'"—Ezekiel 9:9.
>
> The Glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.—Ezekiel 11:23.
>
> "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, house of Israel?'"—Ezek 33:11.

Ezekiel's Historical Context, His Person, and His Book

To better understand the Book of Ezekiel, some historical context is necessary.[1] As the Neo-Assyrian imperial power waned, King Josiah (r. 640–609 BC) inaugurated the last golden age of Judah and began a religious reform in 622.[2] He died at the Battle of Megiddo (609).[3] There Josiah tried to thwart an alliance between Pharaoh Necho II (r. 609–595) and the last Assyrian king, Ashur-uballit II (r. 611–608), at Haran against the rising Neo-Babylonian Empire

[1] For an overview of the history, see John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 310–59; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 439–97.

[2] The subsequent chronology is based on Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 251–70.

[3] For an overview of the relevant Biblical geography, see Anson F. Rainey and Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Carta, 2014), 254–77.

and its King Nabopolassar (r. 625–605) (2 Kgs 23:28–30; 2 Chr 35:20–27). When pharaoh returned from this failed Haran venture, he deposed Josiah's son Shallum, whose name had been changed to King Jehoahaz (r. 609), and carried him into exile in Egypt. Pharaoh Necho II then enthroned Jehoahaz's older brother, Eliakim, and renamed him Jehoiakim (r. 609–597) (2 Kgs 23:30–37; 2 Chr 36:1–5; Jer 22:11–12). He had little concern for the plight of his people, built a new palace, and burned the scroll of Jeremiah (Jer 22:13–14; 36:1–32). In 605, Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 604–562) defeated the Egyptians at the Battles of Carchemish and Hamath. He succeeded his father, Nabopolassar, as King of Babylon soon thereafter (Jer 46:2). That same year Jeremiah prophesied the seventy-year Babylonian Captivity (609–539) (Jer 25:1, 9–12; 29:10). In addition, the first wave (605) of Judahite exiles were taken into captivity in Babylon which included royals, nobles, and the Prophet Daniel (Dan 1:1–7). Not unlike an Edenic Cherub, Nebuchadnezzar II expelled Judahites from the land and the Jerusalem temple (i.e., the first Israelite temple), the central locus of recreation (Ezek 1:1, 5:5; 38:12. Cf. Gen 3:24). Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel maintained that King Nebuchadnezzar II did so as a servant or instrument of the LORD (Ezek 29:17–21. Cf. Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10).[4] In 604, Nebuchadnezzar II conquered Ashkelon and pushed as far as the Brook of Egypt. Judah now became a Babylonian vassal (2 Kgs 24:1, 7). Jehoiakim rebelled three years later (601/600) when the Egyptians were able to repel the Babylonians. He died in 597, but his son, Coniah or King Jehoiachin (r. 598–597), must have continued the rebellion. Nebuchadnezzar II laid siege to Jerusalem between 598 and 597 (2 Kgs 24:2–17; 2 Chr 36:5–10; Jer 22:18–19; 36:30: Dan 1:1–7). Jehoiachin and the intelligentsia including the Prophet Ezekiel were then taken in the second wave of exiles in 597 (2 Kgs 24:12–

[4] Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel*, SHBC (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 376–77. Ezek 28:13–16 describes the King of Tyre conversely as a rebellious guardian cherub of Eden whom the Lord GOD will expel from his mountain. See Launderville, "Ezekiel's Cherub," 165–83.

17; 2 Chr 36:6–7, 10; Jer 22:24–28; 52:28; Ezek 1:1–2; 40:1). Nebuchadnezzar II enthroned Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah, whom he renamed Zedekiah (r. 597–586), in his place. But in 594 Zedekiah was persuaded to plot against Babylon with the other nations and Pharaoh Psammetichus (Psamtik) II (r. 595–589) (Jer 27:1–3; 38:14; Ezek 17:15). The false Prophet Hananiah predicted the return of the exiles in two years (Jer 28:1–4). Zedekiah visits Babylon (Jer 51:59). Then in 589, Zedekiah rebelled (2 Kgs 24:17–20; 2 Chr 36:11–16; Jer 27:4–8; 52:1–3; Ezek 17:13, 15–19). The Edomites now capitalized on the situation and invaded Judah (Ps 137:7; Lam 4:21–22; Obad 1:10–14). As a result, the Babylonians destroyed a number of Judahite cities including the fortified cites of Lachish and Azekah (Jer 34:7). The siege of Jerusalem began on January 15 (Tebeth 10), 588; the city fell on July 18 (Tammuz 9), 586; and the temple was destroyed (2 Kgs 25:1–21; 2 Chr 36:17–21; Jer 39:1–10; 52:4–27; Ezek 17:20–21; 24; 33:21–22). Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) (r. 589–570) failed to relieve Jerusalem and would later be assassinated (Jer 44:29–30; Ezek 29:1). The third wave of exiles (586) ensued which included a blinded King Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:7, 11–12; 2 Chr 36:20–21; Jer 39:7, 9; 52:11, 15, 52:29; Ezek 17:20). A fourth wave of exiles occurred in 582 (Jer 52:30). Next, Nebuchadnezzar II made Gedaliah (r. 586), the son of Ahikam and a Jeremiah supporter, governor of Judah from Mizpah (2 Kgs 22:12; Jer 26:24). After Gedaliah was assassinated by Ishmael (a member of the deposed Davidic house) in 586, much of the Judahite remnant fled to Egypt, taking the Prophet Jeremiah along with them (2 Kgs 25:22–26; Jer 40–43). In 561, Jehoiachin was freed from prison and enjoyed a seat at the table of Nebuchadnezzar II's successor, Evil-merodach (r. 562/1–560). The latter was known in Babylon as Amel-Marduk (2 Kgs 25:27–30; Jer 52:31–34). He was deposed by Neriglissar (r. 560–556). His son, Labashi-Marduk (r. 556), was in turn deposed by Nabonidus (r. ca. 555–539) whose son, Belshazzar, began to co-rule in 553/550.

Finally, the Persians took over the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539. In 538/537 Cyrus the Great of Persia (r. 539 to 530) issued an edict that permitted the return of Jews to Israel and the rebuilding of the temple (2 Chr 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4). While the Babylonians did not resettle a foreign population in Judah like the Assyrians did in Samaria, the Edomites took control of part of Judah.

Ezekiel's name means "God is strong," "God strengthens," or "May God strengthen." This is quite fitting given that Lord GOD (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה) (Ezek 2:4) would "hard[en]" him to minister as a "watchman" to the "rebellious house" of Israel (Ezek 3:8–9, 17). Ezekiel is only mentioned by name in Ezekiel 1:3; 24:24; Sirach 49:8; and 4 Maccabees 18:17,[5] otherwise he is referred to as "son of man/Adam" (בֶּן־אָדָם) (Ezek 2:1). If the thirtieth year of Ezekiel 1:1 refers to his age, Ezekiel was probably born in 622/23. Ezekiel was the son of Buzi. His family must have had a high status for him to be taken early in the exile.

As a member of priestly family of high status (Ezek 1:3), Ezekiel probably grew up in Jerusalem. He was likely born and initially educated in the milieu of King Josiah's religious reform which included the restoration of the temple and an unified Israel (2 Kgs 22:3; 2 Chr 34:8). He thus was well aware that when the temple was defiled by the Israelites, a tradition had developed of leaders who purged and purified it (Asa [1 Kgs 15:9–14; 2 Chr 14:1–6], Hezekiah [2 Kgs 18:3–7; 2 Chr 29–31], and Josiah [2 Kgs 22:3–23:25; 2 Chr 34–35].[6] Josiah died just when Ezekiel would have entered his teens. In addition, Ezekiel would have heard the Prophet Jeremiah, his older contemporary, with whom he shares a number of themes.

[5] The priest whose name is often transliterated Jehezkel in 1 Chr 24:16 is a different individual. The superscription to some LXX texts of Ps 64 (MT 65) reads: "a psalm, of David, an ode, of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, from the words of the congregation as they were about to depart."

[6] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 10–13, 38.

The MT's Ezekiel 1:3 is syntactically unclear whether Ezekiel or his father is being called a Zadokite "priest" (כֹּהֵן). The LXX's "Priest Iezekiel son of Bouzi" (Ιεζεκιηλ υἱὸν Βουζι τὸν ἱερέα) unambiguously designates Ezekiel as a priest (NETS).[7] His legal arguments, ritual knowledge, and stress on the holiness code are evidence of a priestly formation. However, Ezekiel was probably neither consecrated as a priest nor did he perform priestly functions before the exile. Some have disputed the priestly aspect of his call and ministry, but this is unwarranted.[8] The fact that Ezekiel seems to have been called into his office at the age of thirty (i.e., the age priests began their service) (Ezek 1:1), began to perform this office a week later (i.e., the timeframe for a priestly ordination) (Ezek 3:15–16. Cf. Exod 29:35–37; Lev 8:33–35), and possibly concluded this office at the age of fifty (i.e., the age priests ended their service) supports the notion that he was priestly prophet (Ezek 29:17. Cf. Num 4:3, 23, 30; 1 Chr 23:3). The designation "Son of man/Adam" has both Adamic and priestly connotations (Ezek 2:1. Cf. Gen 1:26, 28; 2:9, 15, 20; Num 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 28:11–19; 44:14).[9] Ezekiel sought to maintain ritual purification (Ezek 4:12–15. Cf. Lev 11:1–15:33; 21:1–24; Num 19:1–22). As Lord GOD's "watchman" (צֹפֶה) he performed priestly teaching and judging (Ezek 3:17. Cf. Lev 10:8–11; Deut 17:8–13, 18; 21:5; 31:24–29; 33:10; Jer 18:18; Ezek 44:24). He not only tried to represent God to the Israelites and intercede on their behalf (Ezek 9:8; 11:13. Cf. Mal 2:4–7; Heb 5:1–3), he also mediated God's life-sustaining new temple presence to the

[7] John W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary Based on Iezekiēl in Codex Vaticanus*, SCSB (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 232.

[8] Sweeney provides a helpful overview of some of the priestly aspects of Ezekiel's call and ministry. See his *Reading Ezekiel*, 9–19. Corrine L. Carvalho even argues that the book portrays Ezekiel more like a priest than a prophet. She also maintains that Ezekiel functioned much less like a prophet than was typical of the prophets in general. See her "Ezekiel," in *The Paulist Biblical Commentary*, ed. José Enrique Aguilar Chiu, et al. (New York: Paulist Press, 2018), 733.

[9] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 10–11, 31, 36, 43.

Israelites via his oracles (Ezek 11:16. Cf. Lev 9:6, 23; Ezek 44:15–16). Ezekiel was not permitted to mourn the passing of his wife just as Aaron was not permitted to mourn the passing of his sons Nadab and Abihu (Ezek 24:15–24. Cf. Lev 10:1, 6). The "turban" (פְּאֵר) (Ezek 24:17, 23) Ezekiel was to put on after his wife's passing is associated with joy (Isa 61:10), luxury (Isa 3:20), and priesthood (Ezek 44:18. Cf. Exod 39:28).[10] While there is no evidence that he ever conducted priestly sacrifices (Lev 1:1–7:38; Deut 33:10; Joel 1:13), he oversaw the cult of a whole new temple via his "Torah of the temple" (תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת) (Ezek 43:11–12). Ezekiel was unique among the Major Prophets including Jeremiah who was of priestly descent (Jer 1:1). Ezekiel was an explicitly *priestly* "prophet" (נָבִיא) (Ezek 2:5; 33:33) called to serve the Israelite exiles on foreign Babylonian soil.

Ezekiel married at some point, but he does not appear to have had any children (Ezek 24:15–24). Most likely on April 22 (Nisan 10) of 597 BC, King Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and other intellectuals were taken in the second wave of exiles (Ezek 1:1–2).[11] He was deported to Tel-abib, Babylon along the Chebar Canal (near ancient Nippur [modern Nuffar, Iraq], southeast of the city of Babylon) where he had his own house (Ezek 1:3; 3:15; 8:1).[12] The modern city of Tel-Aviv, Israel gets its name from Ezekiel's promise of resurrection for the exilic community in Tel-abib, Babylon (Ezek 37:1–14). Since Jerusalem would be destroyed and the exiles would be restored, it is ironic that the Jerusalemites regarded these exiles as those forsaken by God (Ezek 11:15). Even though Psalm 137 captures the melancholy and resentment of the exiles, they

[10] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "פְּאֵר," *HALOT* 2:908–9.

[11] The subsequent Ezekiel chronology is based on Finegan, *Handbook*, 264–65 and "Table 2. Ezekiel's Dated Oracles in Historical Context" in Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 28–29.

[12] For an overview of Ezekielian geography, see Rainey and Notley, *The Sacred Bridge*, 29, 223, 254, 260, 264–69.

actually could enjoy a relatively unfettered existence.[13] Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego achieved high political office (Dan 2:49). The exiles were permitted to have Jewish elders conduct their affairs (Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1). They could become quite prosperous (Jer 29:5; Ezra 1:6; 2:65, 68–69). The exiles continued to have correspondence with those remaining in Judah and remained well-informed about each other (Ezek 33:21. Cf. Jer 29:1, 15, 25).[14] Ezekiel was probably fifty years old when he received his last oracle in 571. A Jewish tomb associated with Ezekiel is located in Al Kifl, Iraq.

Ezekiel may have wrote down some of his oracles (e.g., Ezek 1–33) before delivering them (Ezek 3:26; 33:22). The waw conversive beginning his book does not link it with an earlier book as evident by the opening of other Old Testament books (e.g., Ruth, Esther).[15] Unlike other prophets, the book is written from a uniquely first person perspective (save Ezek 1:2) that not only validates his prophetic ministry in the face of detractors, but also has the performative speech act effect of molding the hearer or reader into a fellow son of man/Adam by sharing in Ezekiel's experiences. The book further differs from other prophets in that Ezekiel's writing has more prose than even Jeremiah. Ezekiel is not only known for his cultural breadth and theological depth, but also his literary expertise as well.[16] Zimmerli has the most extensive catalogue and discussion of the literary genres or forms found in the book. These include speeches, formula, visions, sign-actions, gestures and expressive actions, speeches using a figure (legal accusations, fable of animals and plants, laments for the dead), work-song, historico-theological narrative, casuistic schematizing, sermon against classes of the people, thematically

[13] Corrine L. Carvalho suggests that some may have also been used for maintaining the irrigation ditches based on the location. See her "Ezekiel," 736.

[14] Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylon during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1979).

[15] *IBHS*, §33.2.4b.

[16] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962–65), 2:222–23.

arranged sections, legal sayings, rituals (including priestly regulations, sacrificial rules, boundary descriptions), descriptions, disputation-oracle (argument), quotations, oaths, proof-of-identity sayings, and metrical structure.[17]

Critical scholars regard the book of Ezekiel to be one of the most tightly constructed in the Old Testament, though the MT of Ezekiel has been challenged in modern times.[18] The book is punctuated by three theophanies (Ezek 1:1–3; 8:1–3; 40:1–2). It is often said to have a basic three part structure: predestruction oracles of judgment for Israel (Ezek 1–24); postdestruction oracles of judgment for the nations (Ezek 25–32), and postdestruction oracles of consolation for Israel (Ezek 33–48). This is true except that Ezekiel's call and the new temple vision really constitute their own distinct parts (Ezek 1–3; 40–48 respectively).[19] Ezekiel further set himself apart from other prophets by structuring his book with thirteen precise dates with oracles attached to them that generally follow chronological order (Ezek 1:1–3/3:16; 8:1; 20:1–2; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; 33:21; 40:1). These dates appear to be keyed to Jehoiachin's exile (Ezek 33:21; 40:1). The fact that Jews continued to view Jehoiachin as the last legitimate king may be the reason for this (Cf. Jer 22:28–30).[20] These can be calculated by cross-referencing Babylonian annals and eclipse dates in ancient archives.

On July 31 (Tammuz 5), 593, the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel and the hand of the LORD came upon (Ezek 1:1–3). After he beheld the throne-chariot vision, the Spirit filled him, and he was called into the priestly prophetic office. Tg. Ps.-J. supplies the following explanation

[17] Walther Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, trans Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 21–41. See also Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 15–17, 23–26, 30–41.

[18] Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 452–61.

[19] Michael D. Coogan and Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 375.

[20] Seals have been discovered at two sites in Judah that read: "Eliakim, Steward of Jehoiachin." See Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 372.

of the thirtieth year associated with this oracle: "It was in the thirtieth year, from the time that Hilkiah the High Priest found the Book of the Torah in the temple, in the court under the entrance; during the night, after the beginning of moonlight: in the days of Josiah son of Amon king of tribe of the House of Judah" (Ezek 1:1 [ArBib]). But as Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185–254) first suggested, the thirtieth year mentioned in Ezekiel 1:1 probably refers to Ezekiel's age. Once again, the apparent correspondence between Ezekiel's call and the timeframe of his oracles (Ezek 1:1; 3:15–16; 29:17) with that of a priest's ordination and the timeframe of a priest's career provides credence for this interpretation (Exod 29:35–37. Cf. Lev 8:33–35; Num 4:3, 23, 30; 1 Chr 23:3). While this manner of reporting age is atypical, it may have a parallel with Noah (Gen 7:6, 11; 8:13).[21] Meanwhile, Zedekiah plots against Babylon, the false prophet Hananiah prophesizes the exiles' imminent return, and Zedekiah visits Babylon. A week (i.e., August 7, 593) after his call, the word the LORD gave Ezekiel his watchman oracle which concluded with the hand of the LORD coming upon him and the Spirit filling him again (Ezek 3:16). On September 17, 592,[22] the priestly prophet had a Spirit-facilitated vision of the temple abominations and the departure of the divine presence as the elders sat around him in his home (Ezek 8:1). When some of the elders came to Ezekiel to inquire of the LORD (August 14, 591), the word of the LORD gave Ezekiel oracles about Israel's rebelliousness since the exodus (Ezek 20:1–2). This marks the end of Hananiah's false prophecy about the exiles' return in two years. On January 15, 588,[23] the word the LORD gave Ezekiel the allegory of the pot as Nebuchadnezzar II's siege of Jerusalem begins (Ezek 24:1). At this point, Ezekiel's wife died,

[21] John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 20 (Downer's Grove: IVP Academic, 1969), 39; Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 20–21. Others suggest it refers to the thirtieth year after King Josiah's reform began (622) (Tg. Ps.-J.), thirtieth year after the last Jubilee (Seder Olam Rabba, Rashi), or the thirty year after the exile.

[22] Block says this occurred on September 18.

[23] Block says this occurred on January 5, 587

but the Lord GOD would not permit him to mourn her because the coming disaster was too deep for tears (Ezek 24:15–24). As Pharaoh Hophra tried to relieve Jerusalem, the word the LORD told Ezekiel to prophesy against pharaoh and Egypt on January 7, 587 (Ezek 29:1). This is the first of seven oracles against Egypt. A little more than a year later (April 29, 586), the priestly prophet received an oracle from the word of the LORD that Egypt would fall to Babylon (Ezek 30:20). The word of the LORD gave Ezekiel an oracle that Pharaoh is a fallen cedar of Lebanon on June 21, 586 (Ezek 31:1). It took a little less than six months for a Jerusalem fugitive to reach Ezekiel on January 8 (Tebeth 5), 585 and report to him that the holy city had fallen (Ezek 33:21). Governor Gedaliah was soon assassinated, and many Jews fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. Ironically before the destruction of Jerusalem, many found Ezekiel's oracles and sign acts to be amusing. It is as if they thought he were executing street theatre or performance art (Ezek 21:5; 33:30–32). On February 3, 585, Ezekiel received an oracle from the word of the LORD against Tyre as Nebuchadezzer II commenced a thirteen year siege of Tyre (Ezek 26:1). The word the LORD came to Ezekiel and had him utter a lament or a dirge over Pharaoh and Egypt on March 3, 585 (Ezek 32:1). On March, 18, 585, the word of the LORD had Ezekiel wail over the multitude of Egypt (Ezek 32:17). Not until April 28, 573 did the hand of the LORD come upon Ezekiel again. But on this occasion, he received his grand vision of a new temple (Ezek 40:1). The last recorded oracle of Ezekiel's prophetic career came from the word of the LORD on April 26, 571. Since Nebuchadnezzar II failed to capture Tyre (which occurred later under the Greeks), Ezekiel reveals that the Lord GOD has offered him Egypt as a sort of consolation prize (Ezek 29:17).

In contrast to his writing, the priestly prophet himself has often been disparaged for the devastating condemnations and the strange sign acts the Lord GOD bound him to utter and

commanded him to perform (Ezek 2:7; 3:4, 26–27). This is despite examples of intercession (Ezek 9:8; 11:13; 21:5). For the purpose of a sign act, he laid on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, only to lay on his other side for another forty (Ezek 4:4–8). His metaphorical description of Israel as a nymphomaniac adulteress and practitioner of child sacrifice, coupled with his metaphorical description of God's brutal punishment for her, has been considered highly offensive (Ezek 16. Cf. Ezek 23). He even obeyed the Lord GOD in not grieving his own wife's death (Ezek 24:15–24). As a result of his unusual sign acts, oracles, and visions, some contemporary scholars have suggested that Ezekiel was not just a clericalist, but they have gone so far as to suggest that he was mentally ill, sexually abused, misogynistic, pornographic, violent, and immoral.[24] David Halperin even claims the reason for this is because he was sexually abused,[25] whereas Daniel Smith-Christopher is more measured when he dubs him a PTSD sufferer.[26] It has also been argued that Ezekiel had experienced an extra-terrestrial encounter with a UFO.[27] But such assessments have started to fade as focus has shifted more to the theological function of Ezekiel's visions, oracles, and sign acts rather than trying to tease out the psychological profile of the prophet (often independent of any consideration of God's power upon him). This is not to say that Ezekiel could not have had a unique personality or that he had not suffered any trauma from the exile. But are Ezekiel's sign acts really more unusual than the other prophets (Cf. Isa 20:2–6)?

[24] Fokkelien Van Dijk-Hemmes, "The Metaphorization of Woman in Prophetic Speech: An Analysis of Ezekiel XXIII," *VT* 43, no. 2 (1993):162–70; S. R. Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel*, OTM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[25] David J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 133–34.

[26] Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of the Exile*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 75–104.

[27] Erich von Däniken, *Chariots of the Gods*, trans. Michael Heron (New York: Ban, 1971); Josef F. Blumrich, *The Spaceships of Ezekiel*, (New York: Bantam, 1974).

Although modern society has felt it even harder to warm up to the person of Ezekiel and his theology, scholars have recognized the significant impact that the Book of Ezekiel has had on the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (1 Enoch and Apocryphon of Ezekiel), Dead Sea Scrolls (Damascus Document, Hodayot, and Temple Scroll), New Testament (Pauline and Johannine literature), not to mention the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.[28] The book has some of the most profound visions in all the Bible. His chariot-throne theophany shaped Jewish Merkabah mysticism and Christian iconography of an enthroned Christ surrounded by the four Gospels. The dry bones vision fostered much reflection about physical and national resurrection. The nature and realization of Ezekiel's new temple has fueled all sorts of (sometimes politically-loaded) hopes and interpretations.

Hidden Creator God's Purgation of the Son of Man/Adam

Ezekiel's call and other parts of his book have many unique parallels with Genesis.[29] These suggest that this son of man/Adam and Adamic priestly prophet has been called to embody and declare a purging message of rebellion, decreation (or lack of justification), and expulsion from Eden. The book begins with a prophetic "vision/s" (מַרְאוֹת) that set the theocentric tone for the book.[30] The vision becomes more indescribable and awesome as it unfolds each ascending level, driving home the Creator/creature distinction (Ezek 1:1). The book ominously begins along Chebar canal with the unique and later influential expression "heavens were opened" (נִפְתְּחוּ הַשָּׁמָיִם) (Ezek 1:1). Nearly the same expression "the floodgates of the

[28] For an overview of the history of Ezekiel's interpretation, see Dale Launderville *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, IC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Forthcoming).

[29] Iain M. Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 59; John A. Goldingay, "Ezekiel," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 625–26; Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, LHBOTS (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 33–36.

[30] This may be an intensive plural (GKC, §124e) or a plural of generalization (Joüon, §136j).

heavens were opened” (וַאֲרֻבֹּת הַשָּׁמַיִם נִפְתָּחוּ) was last found when the flood unleashed judgment upon an unrepentant and recalcitrant fallen humanity (Gen 7:11).[31] Ezekiel then has a vision of the utterly transcendent Creator “God” (אֱלֹהִים) of the heavens and the earth (Ezek 1:1. Cf. Gen 1:1) who is accompanied by the “word of the LORD” (דְּבַר־יְהוָה) (Ezek 1:3. Cf. Gen 1:3; Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5) and the “Spirit” (רוּחַ) (Ezek 1:12, 20; 2:2. Cf. Gen 1:2), later called the “Spirit of the LORD” (רוּחַ יְהוָה) (Ezek 11:5) or the “Spirit of God” (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) (Ezek 11:2). The fact that the Creator God appears on unclean foreign soil (Ezek 4:13. Cf. Amos 7:17)—the supposed turf of other gods—reaffirms Genesis’s notion that there is no land that does not belong to him. All things belong to him alone (Ezek 18:4). The vision continues with an ominous storm wind coming from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire and a bright light around it (Exod 19:16–19; 24:17; 40:38; Num 16:35; Ps 18:11–14), and in the midst of it, in the midst of the fire, something like the gleam of חַשְׁמַל (Ezek 1:4). חַשְׁמַל has fostered much speculation and even the modern Hebrew word for “electricity.” But its meaning remains elusive and uncertain. The *DCH* and Gesenius[18] suggests “amber” or perhaps “bronze.”[32] The former is the intention of the LXX’s “electrum” (ἤλεκτρον). If this vision makes allusions to Babylonian religious symbols or the abode of Baal (i.e., “north/Zaphon” [צָפוֹן]) context indicates that the Lord GOD’s appropriation of them is intended to assert the reality of the living Lord GOD and his superiority over dead

[31] Abraham Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible: Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible in Hebrew and Aramaic, Roots, Words, Proper Names, Phrases and Synonyms*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sefer, 1990), 968–69nn107, 109; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 22; Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 52–53.

[32] David J. A. Clines, “חַשְׁמַל,” *DCH* 3:333; Rudolf Meyer and Herbert Donner, “חַשְׁמַל,” Gesenius[18] 408–9.

idols (Deut 5:26; Jos 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; Psa 42:2; 84:3; Jer 10:10; 23:36; Dan 6:21, 27; Hos 2:1).[33] The vision does not ultimately come from the north but from the opening of the heavens (Ezek 1:1).[34]

While there is no explicit mention of a chariot, Ezekiel 1 has also come to be known as the chariot-throne or Merkabah (מֶרְכָּבָה) vision because of 1 Chronicles 28:18; Sirach 49:8 (Ps 18:10; 104:3–4), as well as the references to cherubim, wheels, mobility, and throne. From the midst of the fire, something like the gleam of חַשְׁמַל (Ezek 1:4), were the likenesses of four living creatures that are later called "cherubim," the throne bearers and boundary keepers of God (Ezek 1:5; 10:1. Cf. Ps 18:11; 80:2; 99:1). They were Spirit (רוּחַ)-empowered hybrid beings consisting of hooved feet, four wings, and four faces (human, lion, ox, and eagle), alluding to God's omnipotence, completeness, and holiness (Ezek 1:5–12. Cf. Dan 7:2–8?).[35] Long associated with the ark of the covenant/throne of God and tabernacle/temple (Exod 25:18–22; 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; 37:7–9; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Kgs 6:23–35; 7:29, 36; 2 Kgs 19:15), the cherubim's multidirectional sight and ability to adjust God's chariot-throne in all direction (as indicated by its eye-covered and probably "topaz [or perhaps 'beryl' or 'chrysotile']" [תַּרְשִׁישׁ] gleaming spherical wheels [Exod 28:30; 39:13])[36] makes God's omnipresence and omniscience explicit (Ezek 1:15–21). As boundary keepers, the cherubim also barred unholy access to Eden's Torah-filled ark; namely, the tree of life (Gen 2:9; 3:24; Exod 25:22, 31–40; Prov 3:13–20).[37]

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[33] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 92.

[34] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 42.

[35] Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, trans. Cosslett Quin, OTL (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 56–59; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 54–59.

[36] David J. A. Clines, "תַּרְשִׁישׁ," *DCH* 9:680.

[37] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 26–34; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 30–21; Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 58–59.

The likeness of the cherubim was something like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving back and forth between them. The fire was bright and lightning was flashing from the fire (Ezek 1:13–14. Cf. Gen 15:17). When they moved their wings, Ezekiel could hear the sound of many waters, the almighty, and tumult like the sound of an army (Ezek 1:23–24. Cf. Ps 29:3; Rev 1:24). Above the cherubim was the likeness of an "expanse" (רָקִיעַ) (Ezek 1:22. Cf. Gen 1:6), like the awesome gleam of crystal. This word רָקִיעַ is only used seventeen times in the Bible and is almost completely unique to Genesis and Ezekiel (save Ps 19:2; 150:1; Dan 12:3).[38]

There, upon the likeness of a lapis lazuli-appearing throne, was the "appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD" (מַרְאֵה דְּמוּת כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה) (Ezek 1:28. Cf. Gen 2:4). Lo and behold, the Lord GOD (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה) (Ezek 2:4) of Israel truly is none other than the Creator "God" (אֱלֹהִים) (Ezek 1:1. Cf. Gen 1:1). Some translations try to express the transcendence of אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה by rendering it "Sovereign LORD" (GNB, NLT, NIV, NET) or "the Master, the Lord" (Alter). The Rabbis later called the Glory of the LORD the "Shekinah" (שְׁכִינָה) which Tg. Ps.-J. introduces into Ezekiel 1:14. But this, the Lord GOD's life-sustaining presence, which had always abided at Sinai and the Israelite tabernacle/temple (Exod 24:16, 17; 29:43; 40:34–35; Lev 9:6, 23; Num 14:10, 21–22; 16:19, 42; 20:6; 1 Kgs 8:11; Ps 24:7, 10; 26:8; 29:3; Isa 6:3) was now going to abandon the Jerusalem temple. The brightness around the Glory of the LORD is said to be "like appearance of a rainbow" (כְּמַרְאֵה הַקֶּשֶׁת). The Creator God had instituted this as sign that he would not destroy the earth again with a flood because of the evil intention from

[38] Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 1092.

youth in mankind (Ezek 1:28. Cf. Gen 6:5; 8:21; 9:9–17). But might the persistence and increase of this human evil from youth drive the Creator GOD once again to decreate the earth by another means (Cf. Gen 8:21; 9:11, 15; Deut 32:22)? Since the Lord GOD really is the one, universal, sovereign, and transcendent Creator God rather than a mere tribal God bound to the Israelite temple and land (Exod 29:45–46), the Judahites have not been exiled because the Lord GOD has been defeated by the Babylonian gods. No, worse than that, this terrifying vision of the post-fall Creator God means that the Lord GOD not only can purge and exile Israel, but he apparently intends to do just that.

Clearly Ezekiel is deeply imbued with the theocentricity of Genesis that distinguishes the fallen human creature from the wrathful hidden God (*deus absconditus*) in no uncertain terms. The priestly prophet is very careful to maintain the awesome and mysterious transcendence and otherness of God. He refuses to domesticate God in a couple ways: First, Ezekiel indicates that his encounter with the Glory of the LORD was divinely mediated via מַרְאֶה which is translated both as "vision" and "appearance" (Ezek 1:1, 5, 13–14, 16, 26–28).[39] Second, he repeatedly used the preposition "as/like" (כְּ), indicating that he is offering the best qualified approximations that humans could receive (Ezek 1:4, 7, 13–14, 16, 22, 25, 26–28). Third, even though Ezekiel's recorded human words are called divinely revealed and inspired (Ezek 1:3; 2:2, 7–9; 3:1–4, 16, 26–27. Cf. Jer 36:2; Ezek 2:5; 33:33; Hab 2:2), his strained language shows the difficulty in mediating this ineffable vision in embodied verbal form (2 Cor 12:2–4).[40] Since this is also the reason Ezekiel 1 is so difficult, attempts that presume to "repair" the text are misunderstanding

[39] In contrast, Odell maintains this is not the feminine *mar'â* meaning "vision," but the "plural form for the masculine term *mar'eh*, 'appearance …' since references back to 1:1 always use the masculine singular *mar'eh* (Ezek 8:4; 43:3)." Thus, she argues that it was a unique "direct encounter with YHWH, not unlike that of Moses (cf. Exod 3:3)." See her *Ezekiel*, 17.

[40] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 89.

the point of the strained language.[41] Fourth, the utterly transcendent Lord GOD to whom all souls belong (Ezek 18:4) can even lay stumbling blocks for unrepentant human beings, mislead them, and even give them statutes that are not good (Ezek 3:20; 14:9; 20:25).

Thus, this vision caused Ezekiel to "fall on [his] face" in terror (Ezek 1:28. Cf. Rev 1:17). His solidarity with fallen Adam, his creatureliness, and his inhumanity became more painfully apparent as the vision of the Glory of the LORD unfolded. This fallen "son of man/Adam" (בֶּן־אָדָם/υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου) (Ezek 2:1, etc.) (who bore Adam's fallen likeness like all his descendants)[42] experienced the existential dread of the hidden God (*deus absconditus*) (Ezek 39:23–24)[43] through God's purging Word (law) (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:3–10; 3:1–3. Cf. Gen 3:14, 16–19; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6). This was so that Ezekiel would be freed of rebellion and the lust for death to take up a priestly prophetic commission. Still this vision also filled him with horror because it foreshadows the Lord God's removal of his life-sustaining presence from the Jerusalem temple,

[41] Steven Tuell, *Ezekiel*, NIBCOT 10 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 19.

[42] *IBHS*, §9.5.3b: "[Son of …] indicate[s] the relationship of an individual to a class of beings." To capture this, CEB and BB translate בֶּן־אָדָם "human one." REB, Alter, and Goldingay translate it "man." C. Westermann, "אָדָם," *TLOT* 1:39: "Thus this address [son of man] implies the same juxtaposition of God and humanity as in Isa 31:3 and 2:11, 17, with the exception that here the prophet himself, in his bare, finite creatureliness, is contrasted with God." H. Haag, "בֶּן־אָדָם," *TDOT* 2:163 adds: "There is nothing in the address *ben 'adham* that would lead one to think it has an affectionate ring, for it emphasizes remoteness rather than nearness, and the rule of God rather than the fatherhood of God." To capture this, NJPS, NRSV, and GNB render בֶּן־אָדָם "mortal." Chrys C. Caragounis, "בֵּן," *NIDOTTE* 1:675 goes even further: "[The] first occurrence of 'son of man' in point of order is Gen 11:5 (the Babel tower story). This first use probably gives the theological significance of 'son of man' in his alienation from God, which is the characteristic sense of the expression in the OT. The theological difference between 'man' and 'son of man' seems to be that whereas the former was the product of God's hands, being created in his likeness (Gen 5:1), the latter is the product of fallen man, produced in human likeness (Gen 5:3) and epitomizing humanity's fall. As such the 'son of man' becomes not only the object of God's wrath and punishment, but also his grace and redemption (cf. Ps 8; 31:20; 80:17–19; 144:1–3; 145:8–12)." The ancient versions (LXX, Syr., Vulg.) and most recent translations (NKJV, NV, CEV, NLT, NABR, NIV, ESV, EÜ, CSB, LU17, NET, RNJB, NASB) conversely take a more neutral stance rendering בֶּן־אָדָם "son of man." It should also be noted that Tg. Ps.-J. makes a point to render it "son of Adam."

[43] In contrast to this thesis, John F. Kutsko rejects the notion that God's absence (law) and presence (grace) is related to the concept of *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus.* See his *Between Heaven and Earth*, 4–5, 150–53.

his purging the rebellious from the land, and his expulsion of a remnant from Israel. Ezekiel may even have initially feared a new and permanent cherubic barrier to God's life-sustaining temple presence as well (Gen 3:24). The reason the book has proven so unsettling to hearers past and present is because its theology of the cross is a relentless and devastating refutation of the fallen human anthropological presuppositions (i.e., a theology of glory) that mankind has struggled to normalize ever since the fall. According to an anthropology of autonomy and license, any God that would unleash wrath, destruction, and judgment on human beings must be an unjust God. Now that the Lord GOD has shown that he has orchestrated Israel's predicament, he will demonstrate at length why Israel has merited it (Ezek 7:27).

Lord GOD Purges the Israelites via the Ministry of His Adamic Priestly Prophet

This theophany of the transcendent Lord GOD first of all foreshadows his horrifying and incomprehensible departure from the Jerusalem temple because the Israelites have so corrupted and defiled it. But this encounter is also the eschatological recreation of Ezekiel as a new son of man/Adam as well as his call and empowerment to serve as an Adamic priestly prophet. However, the latter will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Before Ezekiel can prophesy to the sons of Israel of recreation, along with a new temple, city, Israel, and land, his call (Ezek 1–3) stipulates that he must first embody the scroll of "lamentations, mourning, and woe" (קִנִּים וְהֶגֶה וָהִי) (Ezek 2:10). Only then can he preach God's purging Word (Ezek 2:3–7. Cf. Gen 3:14, 16–19; 1 Sam 2:6; Rom 3:20; Gal 3:24; 2 Cor 3:6) followed by his resurrecting Word (Ezek 11:14–21. Cf. Gen 3:15; 22:5; Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 11:17–19) so that an undeserving Israelite "remnant" might be free of its rebellious sin (Ezek 5:2; 6:8–10; 12:16; 14:22–23; 20:41; 28:25; 39:28) and be divinely reconstituted as a new Israel (Ezek 11:17–20; 16:59–63; 20:33–44; 28:25–26; 34:11–31; 36:22–38; 37:1–28; 39:25–29). Affirming both corporate and personal

responsibility (Ezek 2:3–8; 3:6–11, 16–21; 9:1–11; 14:1–23; 18:1–32; 33:1–20; 34:1–31),[44] the Adamic priestly prophet was recreated to preach a theocentric condemnation of the Israelites (i.e., Sovereign God is just and therefore only punishes unrepentant individuals and generations alike) as well as a collective guilt condemnation of them (i.e., the sons of man/Adam retain the rebellious intention and are responsible for actualizing it). In addition, the son of man/Adam was recreated to strip the Israelites of their radical theocentric defenses of themselves (i.e., Sovereign God predetermines everything so that there is no real collective or personal responsibility) as well as false corporate responsibility defenses of themselves (i.e., the "innocent" exilic generation is collectively and unjustly punished for the sins of their fathers).

The Lord GOD continues Ezekiel's commissioning, declaring, "Son of man/Adam, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, those nations of rebels (אֶל־גּוֹיִם הַמּוֹרְדִים), who have rebelled against me; they and their fathers have committed rebellious sin (הֵמָּה וַאֲבוֹתָם פָּשְׁעוּ) against me to this very day (הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה)" (Ezek 2:3). This, Ezekiel is supposed to declare to them: "[W]hether they listen or not (וְהֵמָּה אִם־יִשְׁמְעוּ וְאִם־יֶחְדָּלוּ)—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet was among them" (Ezek 2:5). Apart from some of the elders (Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1), this rebellious house was so dulled to his message that they did not appear to recognize Ezekiel as a prophet until his oracles came true (33:32–33. Cf. Deut 18:22). From this, one can already discern that the fallen Israelites are quite capable of refusing God's grace, and they are doing just that. The Lord GOD also will not facilitate repentance and belief against their wills, nor will he repent and believe for them (Ezek 2:7; 3:11, 19, 27; 33:4–5, 9). This picture of God is

[44] Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 30–31; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 122–27; Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Ezekiel," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: One Volume Commentary*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 458–59.

theocentric but not radically theocentric. The Israelites remain fully responsible for their predicament.[45]

Despite the Israelites' repeated rebuffs of his mercy (Ezek 2:3; 20:1–44), the Divine provides the Israelites one more opportunity to repent via the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel.[46] A week later at the second part of his commissioning, the Lord GOD appoints Ezekiel to conduct the priestly gatekeeper task of serving as a "watchman" or "sentinel" (צָפֶה) for the house of Israel (Ezek 3:16–21; 33:1–20. Cf. Lev 10:10–11; Jer 6:17).[47] Ezekiel is personally obligated to his fellow Israelites using the genre of Biblical case law.

> This text [Ezekiel 3:17–21] recalls the pattern of case law in the ancient world, where a statement of consequences in the singular follows a general statement of the case involved (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, pp. 94–95). Once more, Ezekiel's priestly background, and particularly his knowledge of priestly Torah, is evident. The effect of this form of presentation. As K. Darr observes, is "*to address personally every member of the larger group*" ["The Book of Ezekiel," in *NIB* 6 [ed. L Keck; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001], p. 1134, emphasis hers). Darr argues, as a result, against the claim that personal responsibility is set forth here; instead, Ezekiel is affirming the ancient Israelite notion of corporate responsibility.[48]

Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte conversely maintain that criminal law codes of the ancient Near East are focused on individual responsibility and hardly ever speak about collective responsibility. Israelite collective responsibility is associated with divine judgment. Hence Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte regard Ezekiel's criticism of the exiles' conception of collective responsibility particularly in Ezekiel 18 to mark a new principle of individualism.[49] Since Biblical case law makes group claims on the basis of an individual case, it is hard to bracket out

[45] Joyce raises doubts about human responsibility both before and after recreation in his *Ezekiel*, 30–31.
[46] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 49.
[47] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 12–13; 36. For the personal pastoral care dimension of this watchman office, see, von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:230–33.
[48] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 22.
[49] Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 462–63.

the law's validity for the individual without nullifying its validity for the group. For this reason, it is difficult to imagine that each particular Israelite is not also declared personally or individually responsible for his or her own rejection by what follows here. Moreover, if Ezekiel is found to be a faithful watchman, then he is told that he himself will not bear personal responsibility for any Israelite that falls. But if Ezekiel fails to warn a "wicked person" (רָשָׁע) of his looming death, the Lord GOD says to the prophet, "[The Lord GOD] will require a reckoning for [the wicked person's] blood from [Ezekiel's own] hand" (וְדָמוֹ מִיָּדְךָ אֲבַקֵּשׁ) (Ezek 3:18, 20; 33:6–8). But if the "wicked person" (רָשָׁע) rejects Ezekiel's warning, the wicked person will then "die" (יָמוּת) and Ezekiel will deliver "[his] soul/life" (אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ) (Ezek 3:19).

Next Lord GOD said, "If the righteous person (צַדִּיק) turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I put a stumbling block (מִכְשׁוֹל) before him, he will die" (Ezek 3:20). But notice that "I put a stumbling block before him" is the last in a series of protases before the apodosis "he will die." The stumbling block therefore does not cause or predetermine the unrighteous person's death. Rather the stumbling block's goal is to expose sin and injustice so that the Israelite might repent before he completely gives himself over to evil, and it is too late to repent (Isa 8:6–8, 14; Jer 6:21; Jam 1:13). But if the unrighteous person so trips over this stumbling block that he persists in refusing to repent, then his fall is God's condemnation for rebuffing this prophetic warning.[50] The Lord God's focus on Israelite unrepentance in Ezekiel 2:5; 3:17–21 signals the obduracy of each Israelite's rebelliousness. But he never indicates that

[50] Carl Friedrich Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, trans James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 1:59–61; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 127–29; Roehrs and Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study*, 539; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 147.

he has predetermined their judgment so that repentance would be futile.[51] To the contrary, Ezekiel 3:21 explicitly indicates that the righteous person (if there were any), who heeds Ezekiel's warning and does not sin, will live. Not only that, but the parallel account in Ezekiel 33:19–20 (Ezek 33:5, 14–16) explicitly states that the wicked person who repents shall live. This offer comes from the very same Lord GOD who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked person either before the fall of Jerusalem or afterwards but that the wicked person should repent and live (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11).[52] Tuell concludes with respect to Ezekiel's use of Biblical case law, "Although we must understand Ezekiel against the backdrop of priestly theology, stressing corporate responsibility, in many ways he subverts those ancient principles. Personal responsibility is a consistent theme in the book of Ezekiel (See, e.g. 18:1–32)."[53] Tuell further adds: "Still, *Ezekiel* certainly is personally responsible for his actions on Israel's behalf, suggesting that something more is going on here than the restatement of traditional ideas."[54]

That said, Ezekiel is no prophet of autonomy. Even the heart of his theocentric and collective guilt indictment of the Israelites is that Adam's efforts to be autonomous from God and other human beings ironically only perpetuated a multigenerational, systemic, and willful intention to rebel in his descendants who in turn are each responsible for their actualization of this intention. An autonomous conception of individuality is tantamount to the very thing Ezekiel's creation theology and anthropology opposes. Autonomy presumes that human/active righteousness (and not divine/passive righteousness) keeps one in a dependent-relationship with God, puts one into a dependent-relationship with God, or even worse makes one fully human so

[51] The latter is maintained by Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 26–27, 30.

[52] Note that many critical commentators argue that Ezek 3:16–21 was added to the call narrative and that the parallel accounts in Ezek 18 and 33 were original. See Odell, *Ezekiel*, 48.

[53] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 16.

[54] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 22.

that a dependent-relationship with God is unnecessary. It forgets that human beings were designed to be finite, social, and trust-based creatures rather than autonomous pseudo-gods. Old Testament teachings about collective responsibility, properly understood help safeguard these ideas.

The Lord GOD never explicitly has Ezekiel say: "[Every] intention of the human heart is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21; 6:5). Still the LORD's repeated assessment of the human condition comes immediately to mind when the vision evokes both the flood (Ezek 1:1; 6:6, 13; 7:2; 13:13. Cf. Gen 6:7, 13; 7:2, 4, 11, 23) and "the rainbow which is in the clouds on the day of rain" (כְּמַרְאֵה הַקֶּשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה בֶּעָנָן בְּיוֹם הַגֶּשֶׁם) (Ezek 1:28. Cf. Gen 9:9–17; Rev 4:3; 10:1).[55]

Some scholars have come to recognize this reference once again as an allusion to the post flood rainbow.[56] The flood account has been assigned to P by some critical scholars too.[57] God first gave the rainbow as a covenant to all nations that he would not destroy the earth again with a flood despite the persistence of this evil intention. Of the seventy-six times קֶשֶׁת is found in the Hebrew Bible, it only means "rainbow" in Genesis 9:13, 14, 16; and Ezekiel 1:28.[58] The fact that Ezekiel is so rife with allusions to Genesis further suggests that the rainbow serves to provide more than just a polychromatic experience of the Lord GOD. Sweeney agrees and explicates his understanding of its relevance for the temple theme of the book:

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[55] T. Kronholm and Heinz-Jozef Fabry, "קֶשֶׁת," *TDOT* 13:206; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "קֶשֶׁת," *HALOT* 7:339–40; David J. A. Clines, "קֶשֶׁת," *DCH* 7:339–40; Rudolf Meyer and Herbert Donner, "קֶשֶׁת," Gesenius[18] 1201.

[56] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 58; Roehrs and Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study*, 538; Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 59. See also other Ezekiel scholars on Ezek 1:28 in recent academic Study Bibles: Tova Ganzel in *The Jewish Study Bible: Second Edition*, 1040; Mark Rooker in *CSB Study Bible*, 1250; John T. Strong in *The CEB Study Bible*, 1320.

[57] Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 294–95.

[58] Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 1039–40. The word is also used this way in Sir 43:11 and 50:7, but probably not used this way in 2 Sam 1:18.

> The Genesis narrative makes it clear that YHWH will act against creation if the sanctity of creation is not maintained. YHWH unleashes a flood to destroy creation, because the shedding of blood has corrupted the sanctity of creation and makes a covenant with humanity in the aftermath of the flood that specifies the means by which blood, considered holy because it is the source of life, may be shed (Gen 6–9). Consequently, the temple serves as a means to give expression to the sanctity of creation. … The holy context in which such offerings are made is meant to limit human violence, i.e., by limiting the types of animals that may be offered and by circumscribing the circumstances in which such offerings are made. … The improper shedding of blood defiles the temple—and creation itself—and requires that the temple and creation be purged or resanctified in the aftermath of such defilement.[59]

Ezekiel speaks of this evil intention in the human heart from youth when the Lord GOD calls him to prophesy lamentation, mourning, and woe to the sons of Israel, "those nations of rebels" (אֶל־גּוֹיִם הַמּוֹרְדִים) (Ezek 2:3).[60] He continuously convicts the Israelites with having a systemic and willful rebellious intention: "They and their fathers have committed rebellious sin against me to this very day" (הֵמָּה וַאֲבוֹתָם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי עַד־עֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה) (Ezek 2:3, etc.). It is so entrenched that Ezekiel will later trace the history of their rebellion all the way to the exodus (Ezek 2:3; 20:1–44). Even Ezekiel's rejection of the sour grapes proverb does not fundamentally deny this multigenerational, systemic, and willful intention to rebel.[61] He only repudiates the radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility use of it (Ezek 18:1–4).

If it were not bad enough that the Israelites are called "nations," a term often reserved for unbelieving heathen gentiles (Ezek 2:3; 5:5–6. Cf. Ps 44:3; 79:1, 10; Lam 1:3; 2:9),[62] the Lord God explains the fundamental reason for their plight is their treasonous betrayal of the Divine. The following terms so closely associated with Ezekiel: "to rebel" (מָרַד) (Ezek 2:3; 17:15; 20:38.

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[59] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 9, 30.

[60] Odell thinks the plural "nations" may be intended to reference both northern and southern kingdoms, indicating that the grand story arc of Israelite history has been one of rebellion. See her *Ezekiel*, 40. Note also that for Ezekiel, Israel includes all twelve tribes (Ezek 37:15–28; 47–48).

[61] See also von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:224–30, 233–34.

[62] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "גּוֹי," *HALOT* 1:182–83.

Cf. Num 14:9), "to rebel" (מָרָה) (Ezek 5:6; 20:8, 13, 21. Cf. Num 20:10, 24; 27:14; Deut 1:26, 43; 9:7, 23–24; 31:27), and "rebelliousness" (מְרִי) (Ezek 2:5–9; 3:9, 26–27; 12:2–3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6. Cf. Num 17:25; Deut 31:27) are intended to echo Moses's charge that Israel is completely guilty of turning away from God.[63] But the reason the book of Ezekiel is so focused on Israel's rebellious defiance of the Lord GOD is because it represents the complete and total repudiation of a faith relationship with God (Gen 2:16–17; 3:17). The Lord GOD even goes so far as to suggest the "brazenfaced and hardhearted" (קְשֵׁי פָנִים וְחִזְקֵי־לֵב) Israelites will be more hardened to Ezekiel's message than the pagan gentiles only because they have repeatedly forsaken it (Ezek 2:4; 3:6–7; 5:5–9. Cf. Zech 7:12; Matt 12:45). Ezekiel is so fixated on rebelliousness because he insists that human beings actually are responsible for willing it no matter how multigenerational and systemic it is. L. Schwienhorst captures the deliberateness and onus found in the Hebrew verbs and nouns that Ezekiel employs to capture this rebellious intention:

> The subject is always obligated to obey another by natural inferiority (son/parents; Israel/Yahweh). A deliberate, willful decision to disobey is always present. This decision is totally at variance with what one would expect. It is a reaction of rebellion. It is always condemned and results in punishment and/or change of heart and confession coupled with a plea to be forgiven. Thus *mārâ* is a word of negative import denoting willful, fundamental, and rebellious disobedience. … In Ezekiel, therefore, the phrase, "house of rebelliousness," after the analogy of the "house of Israel," has become a second name for Israel. Israel's rebelliousness finds expression in total incomprehension of the prophet's message, which therefore needs "unraveling" (17:22ff.) and outrageous symbolic action (12:2f.). In Ezekiel the people's rebelliousness tend towards obduracy.[64]

Coupled with this rebellious intention and lack of a faith-relationship with God is the loss of the divine likeness. According to Genesis 2:16–17; 3:19; 5:3; 5:5ff; Wisdom 2:23–24; Sirach

[63] Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 709–11; Carvalho, "Ezekiel," 737.

[64] L. Schwienhorst, "מָרָה," *TDOT* 9:7–8.

17:3; Romans 5:12; 8:10; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 53–55; and Revelation 21:4, the loss of the immortality and strength is symptomatic of the loss of the likeness of God. Ezekiel's focus on Israel's death-drive makes the same connection between death and the loss of the likeness of God. By repudiating their divine creation (justification or humanization) and a dependent faith-relationship, the very font and source of true human life (Ezek 3:19; 21; 7:13; 18:4, 23, 32; 33:11; 36:23–38. Cf. Gen 1:1; 2:7), the Israelites are making an existential and licentious choice for a decreation (un-justification or dehumanization) and autonomy (i.e., a "faith-relationship" with death [Ezek 3:18, 20; 5:12; 6:12; 7:15; 9:4–11; 12:13; 13:19; 17:16; 18:4, 13, 17–18, 20–21, 24, 26, 28; 28:8, 10; 31:14; 33:8–9, 13–15, 18, 27, esp. 18:23, 31–32; 33:11. Cf. Gen 2:16–17; 3:19; 5:5, 8, 11, etc., Rom 5:12], the very font and source of "false human life" or better anti-life).[65] K. –J. Illman, H. Ringgren, and H. –J. Fabry explain, "Sin and the resulting guilt are sometimes given as reasons for death. Especially in the book of Ezekiel this is expressed in formulaic expressions.…"[66] However, K. –J. Illman, H. Ringgren, and H. –J. Fabry go on to suggest the meaning of "death" and "life" in this book are vague because they overlook their eschatological dimensions in Genesis and Ezekiel. For example, spiritual death (i.e., the already broken faith, lack of divine image, and mortality the exiles are currently experiencing [Ezek 18:31–32; 33:11. Cf. Gen 3:17, 19; 5:3; 5:5, etc.) which includes eventual physical death (Gen 2:16–17; 3:17; 19; 5:3; 5:5ff.) must be distinguished from the permanent death that the Lord GOD is trying to keep them from (i.e., the but not yet permanent autonomy from God [Ezek 18:4, 20. Cf. Gen 3:22–24]). This is why, K. –J. Illman, H. Ringgren, and H. –J. Fabry continue, "In the case of Ezekiel it should be noted that life and death are extremely vague concepts. 'Life'

[65] Stephan L. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 19–21.

[66] K. –J. Illman, H. Ringgren, and H. –J. Fabry, L. Schwienhorst, "מות," *TDOT* 8:198.

shifts between 'stay alive, survive," on the one hand, and 'enjoy the fullness of life with God in a functioning covenantal relationship' on the other. The antithesis is 'die' or 'death,' expressed by the formulas of the death sentence."[67]

During the prophet's call (Ezek 3:18–20), the Lord GOD states that he will require the blood of the rebellious. Carl Friedrich Keil remarks: "As מָוֹת תָּמֻוּת [Ezek 3:18] reminds us of Gen. ii 17, so is the threatening, 'his blood will I require at thy hand,' an allusion to Gen. ix. 5."[68] Throughout the rest of the book, the shedding of blood is equated with dehumanization and idolatry even where no physical blood is being shed. This association seems to be an allusion to the prohibition against murder in Genesis 9:4–6 as Kutsko has pointed out in contemporary scholarship. To explain further, human beings had been created in the likeness of God and all lifeblood belongs to him. God's original intention was for human beings to be likenesses of God who freely reflect the divine likeness and bear his name out in thanks toward him and in service to others as the stewards of creation. But when humans try to deify themselves or commit idolatry with false images (i.e., idols), they unavoidably reduce God to an idol and dehumanize themselves and other humans (i.e., shed blood). Since it is God's likeness that human beings were to reflect, the dehumanization of human beings becomes a *de facto* direct assault on God. Thus, Kutsko makes the claim so counterintuitive to fallen human anthropology that monotheism actually provides a powerful moral ethic against violence.[69] Self-dehumanization happens, moreover, because the sole universal ground for authentic humanity and personhood (i.e., a dependent faith-relationship with the one true personal God) is replaced with the totalitarianism of self-deifying individualism or the totalitarianism of collectively-imposed manmade

[67] K. –J. Illman, H. Ringgren, and H. –J. Fabry, L. Schwienhorst, "מות," *TDOT* 8:198.
[68] Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 1:49.
[69] Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology," 119–20, 139.

metanarratives. The only way to make self-deification or collective alternative religiosities possible is first to degrade God and second to dehumanize other human beings, forcing them spiritually, psychologically, and even physically to capitulate to an artificial reality that cannot support human life. With all this in mind, Ezekiel drives home just how much the Israelites have repudiated the likeness of God and have given themselves over to a licentious choice for false human life when he deploys the Genesis 9:4–6 language of bloodshed (Ezek 7:23; 9:9; 16:36, 38; 18:10; 22:2–4, 6, 9, 12–13, 27; 23:37, 45; 24:6–9; 35:6; 36:18) to describe the severity of their crimes against humanity and their treachery against the Creator to whom the lifeblood alone belongs. The sad irony of it all is that every Israelite attempt to deify false gods and ultimately themselves (Ezek 28:1–19; 29:1–16) only objectified themselves (Ezek 16:1–63; 23:1–49) and other human beings (Ezek 5:10; 19:3, 6; 20:31; 22:2–12, 23–31; 27:13; 34:1–10) as Ezekiel illustrates quite graphically.

The exchange of uprightness, righteousness, and holiness for the evil intention from youth is symptomatic of the loss of the likeness of God too (Gen 1:31; 3:17; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Eccl 7:29; Wis 9:2–3; Luke 1:74–75; Eph 4:23–24). However, the Israelites have rebelled against the "[Lord GOD's] ordinances by doing wickedness more than the nations and against [his] statutes" (אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי לְרִשְׁעָה מִן־הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת־חֻקּוֹתַי) (Ezek 5:6; 16:47–52; 23:11). Since the Lord GOD only kills the unrepentant sinner (Ezek 18:4, 20), and the exiles are dying (Ezek 18:31–32; 33:11), they cannot be righteous either. Not only have Israelites turned from their righteousness, they are unable to turn from their wickedness: "It is not for your sake that I am about to act, house of Israel" (לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) "but for the sake of my holy name which you have profaned among the nations" (כִּי אִם־לְשֵׁם־קָדְשִׁי אֲשֶׁר חִלַּלְתֶּם בַּגּוֹיִם) (Ezek 36:22. Cf. Deut 7:7).

With respect to holiness (a special interest of the priestly class), the Israelites have done far more than mix the unholy with the holy, they have "defiled" (טִמֵּאת) the locus of God's recreative holy presence (i.e., his sanctuary), themselves, and others (Ezek 5:11; 14:11; 18:6, 11, 15; 20:7, 18, 30–31, 43; 22:3–5, 10–11, 26; 23:7, 13, 17, 30, 38; 33:26; 36:17–18; 37:23; 43:7–8). They have committed manifold "abominations" (תּוֹעֵבַת) (Ezek 5:9, 11; 6:9, 11; 7:3–4, 8–9, 20; 8:6, 9, 13, 15, 17; 9:4; 11:18, 21; 12:16; 14:6; 16:2, 22, 36, 43, 47, 50–51, 58; 18:12–13, 24; 20:4; 22:2, 11; 23:36; 33:26, 29; 36:31; 43:8; 44:6–7, 13) and "detestable things" (שִׁקּוּצִים) (Ezek 5:11; 7:20; 11:18, 21; 20:7–8, 30; 37:23), including within the temple itself. The notion of abominations, which is so prevalent in Ezekiel, are not limited to cultic impurities but also include social and ethics sins (e.g., Ezek 22:11; 33:26).[70] Still the fact that things deemed cultically unclean in the Old Testament are considered clean in the New Testament (Acts 10:9–16) suggests that the ultimate goal of cultic purity is to demonstrate creature's willing dependence on the Creator, especially when one cannot understand the purposes of God. The Israelites have raised up "high places" (בָּמוֹת) (Ezek 6:3, 6; 16:16; 20:29; 36:2; 47:3) as well. Things have gotten so severe that Ezekiel's transcendent Lord GOD uncharacteristically describes "how [he] was broken by their adulterous heart" (נִשְׁבַּרְתִּי אֶת־לִבָּם הַזּוֹנָה) and over "their eyes which played the adulteress" (וְאֵת עֵינֵיהֶם הַזֹּנּוֹת) after their idols (Ezek 6:9).[71] Instead of living out the missiological calling of the likeness of God, the Israelites have willfully and

[70] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "תּוֹעֵבָה," *HALOT* 2:1702–4; Carvalho, "Ezekiel," 740.

[71] The MT's reading is so atypical of Ezekiel's picture of God that some follow other manuscripts and amend it to "I have broken their hearts." See Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 180. But Odell is right that it is best to retain the more difficult MT reading especially in light Ezekielian usage of this verb elsewhere. See Odell, *Ezekiel*, 82.

sacrilegiously subverted it by making a manmade "image" (צֶלֶם) (Ezek 7:20; 16:17; 23:14) and "idols" (גִּלּוּלִים) (Ezek 6:4–6, 9, 13; 8:10; 14:3–7; 16:36; 18:6, 12, 15; 20:7–8, 16, 18, 24, 31, 39; 22:3–4; 23:7, 30, 37, 39, 49; 30:13; 33:25; 36:18, 25; 37:23; 44:10, 12). The Israelites continue to commit desecrations despite the fact it jeopardized God's presence among them as Leviticus 20:3 and Numbers 19:20 warned long ago. The Israelites have also profaned the Sabbaths which were to serve as "a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them" (כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשָׁם) (Ezek 20:12–13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8, 26; 23:38. Cf. Gen 2:2–3).

Here it must be noted that Ezekiel employs Genesis's phrase "likeness" (דְּמוּת) (Gen 1:26–27) for his allusions to the restoration of the likeness of God. He employs "image" (צֶלֶם) or "idols" (גִּלּוּלִים) for references to manmade idols (i.e., that to which humankind has nonsensically forfeited its creation birthright). Ezekiel does not use Genesis's phrase "image" (צֶלֶם) for humans most likely because the term could be understood as a cultic idol by his day, though it was probably not a technical term for such.[72] Block thinks this word's apparent etymology, "carved image," as opposed to the more abstract "likeness" (דְּמוּת) may also account for Ezekielian usage."[73] That being the case, Ezekiel makes intentional use of the word "image" (צֶלֶם) for idols, as Kutsko noticed, to show how it has been "subversively" misappropriated to attack the dignity of God and humans.[74] Ezekiel also makes extensive use of the Leviticus-derived word "idols"

[72] F. J. Stendebach, "צֶלֶם," *TDOT* 12:390–91; H. Wildberger, "צֶלֶם," *TLOT* 3:1081.
[73] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 107–8.
[74] Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology," 119–20.

(גִּלּוּלִים) to show just how nonsensical this misappropriation really is (Lev 26:30). After all, this word probably literally means, "dung things, dung idols."[75]

According to Genesis 3:22; 5:3; Sirach 17:7; and Colossians 3:10, the disordering of understanding and knowledge is a mark of the loss of the likeness of God as well. The Lord GOD testifies to this when he declares, "They will know that I am the LORD" (וְיָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה) (Ezek 5:13, etc. Cf. Exod 6:7; 7:5; 14:4, 18; 16:12; 29:46; 31:13). According to Paul Joyce, the recognition formula occurs fifty-four times in its basic form in the book and twenty more times in minor variations.[76] It indicates that the understanding and knowledge of both the Israelites and the nations (Ezek 36:23, 36; 37:28; 38:16, 23; 39:7, 21, 23, 27) has been disordered by this rebellious intention.

A consequence of the likeness of God is that those who bear it are to be stewards of creation (Genesis 1:26–30; 2:15–24; Wis 9:2; Sir 17:2). They were to have royal mastery and rule over creation (i.e., represent God to it and not exploit it) (Lev 25:23–24; Deut 17:14–20; 1 Kgs 5:4; Ps 8:6–9; Ps 72). If Genesis 3:16–19; 9:2; and Sirach 17:4 suggest this stewardship has been problematized by human disobedience, Ezekiel does so in spades. Throughout the book, the destruction of Jerusalem is connected with the idolatrous, unholy, false, exploitative, and violent actions of both the political and religious leaders (Ezek 7:26–27; 11:1–3; 13:1–23; 14:1–11; 22:23–31; 34:1–31; 45:9). Ezekiel does not even shy away from suggesting they act like a ravenous non-human lion or wolf that "devoured human beings" (אָדָם אָכָל) (Ezek 19:3, 6; 22:25, 27). In Ezekiel 34:2–6, he says that the "shepherds of Israel" (רֹעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) have exploited their

[75] H. D. Preuss, "גִּלּוּלִים," *TDOT* 3:1–5.

[76] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 27–28, 91; Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 433–36nn359–86, 467–504.

Israelite sheep by eating the fat, clothing themselves with the wool, slaughtering the fat, failing to feed the flock, not taking care of the sick, and not seeking the lost. In contrast to the kind of "rule" (רדה) that image bearers were to exercise, "With force and harshness you have ruled them" (וּבְחָזְקָה רְדִיתֶֽם אֹתָם וּבְפָֽרֶךְ) (Ezek 34:4. Cf. Gen 1:26). As a result, the Lord GOD checks and demotes the Israelite political leaders and non-Zadokite priests (Ezek 34:1–11; 44:10–14; 45:9). In place of the latter, the Lord GOD will raise Zadokite priests (Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). In place of the former, he will raise up an eternal Davidic "prince" (נָשִׂיא) (Ezek 34:24; 37:25; 44:3; 45:7–22; 46:2–18; 48:21–22), if not a David "king" (מֶלֶךְ) (Ezek 37:24). But exploitation is not limited to the shepherding ruling class (Ezek 34:16–22).[77] The Lord GOD also speaks of selfish and destructive behavior among the "fat and strong [sheep]" of the "flock" (צאֹן) (Ezek 34:15): "Fat and strong I will destroy" (וְאֶת־הַשְּׁמֵנָה וְאֶת־הַחֲזָקָה אַשְׁמִיד) (Ezek 34:16, 20–21). The ancient versions read "watch over" instead of "destroy" but this is probably a misreading of the Hebrew.[78]

All humans were to be responsible and answerable royal priests who stewarded God's creation. After the fall God recreated Israel by grace (Deut 7:7–9) as a kingdom of priests where the priests were to mediate God's life-sustaining temple presence to the Israelites and the Israelites in turn assisted in the priestly reflecting of the likeness of God and making his name holy among the nations (Gen 1:26–28; Exod 19:5–6; 20:7. Cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10;

[77] Walther Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, trans. James D. Martin, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 217, 222–23; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 159; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 700–701, 705–7; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 292.

[78] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 257–58.

20:6).[79] The Lord GOD's continual condemnation of Israel for profaning his name among the nations (Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, 39; 36:20–23; 39:7, 25; 43:7–8. Cf. Rev 1:6; 5:9–10) is really an indictment of all Israel for failing to realize their missiological calling as a kingdom of priests as spelled out at Sinai and Eden. This indictment of Israel is a major theme of the book that only confirms that the nations were clearly suffering from the evil intention, loss of the divine likeness, and lack of a faith-relationship too. What is more, the Israelites did not just refuse to serve as the Lord GOD's instrument of recreation, they actually chose to profane God's name among the nations.

But when all is said and done, the greatest evidence that the Israelites have lost the likeness in the strict sense is the Lord GOD's desire to recreate them just as he had already done for Ezekiel. Without this likeness, they cannot turn from their wickedness (Ezek 36:22) but will only choose between various forms of rebellion. This is why they remain corporately responsible for their licentious anthropology of autonomy.

Since their stubbornness was so deep-seated, Lord GOD had Ezekiel perform a number of sign acts that complemented his oracles to let his message percolate. These sign acts and oracles often illustrated how Israel would reap the Levitical curses their rebellion had sown (Lev 26:14–39; Deut 28:15–68).[80] Sign acts functioned by making simile comparisons (i.e., just as the prophet has done such-and-such, so people/God will experience/do such-and-such) (Ezek 4:9–13; 12:11; 24:22–24. Cf. Isa 20:3; Jer 13:9–11; 19:11–12; 28:11; 51:64; Hos 3:1). For example, the prophet's actions (i.e., the sign) signified the people or God (i.e., the referent) either in representational way (iconic) (e.g., Ezek 4:1–2) or figurative way (e.g., symbolic) (Ezek 5:1–4).[81]

[79] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 16–17.
[80] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 92–96.
[81] K. G. Friebel, "Sign Acts," *DOTP* 707–13.

Apparently some of Ezekiel's hearers were so dulled to his message about the imminent fall of unrepentant Jerusalem that they took his oracles and sign acts to be nothing more than amusing street theatre (Ezek 21:5; 33:30–32). The initial sign acts foreshadow the inevitability of the siege of Jerusalem due to Israel's unrepentance (Ezek 3:24–27), the siege itself (Ezek 4:1–8), the famine (coupled with uncleanness and cannibalism) during the siege (Ezek 4:9–17; 5:10), and the three different fates of the Jerusalemites (i.e., death for a third by fire, pestilence, and famine; death for another third by the sword; and pursuit by the sword for those that scatter) (5:1–17).[82]

Functioning like a poetic crescendo to the previous chapters, Ezekiel 7 articulates the Lord GOD's pitiless and compassionless wrath, anger, and judgement upon the soil of Israel (Ezek 5:11; 7:2–4, 8–9; 8:18; 9:5, 10). The subsequent three chapters will then legitimize (Ezek 6:10; 14:23) and concretize God's hard-to-stomach destruction of Jerusalem. This destruction will be so severe that only an undeserving remnant (Ezek 5:2; 6:8–10; 12:16; 14:22–23; 20:41; 28:25; 39:28) would survive the sort of "blott[ing] out" (וְנִמְחוּ) (Ezek 6:6. Cf. Gen 6:7; 7:4, 23) and "the end" (הַקֵּץ) that had not been known since the days of Noah (Ezek 7:2; 13:13; 14:14, 20. Cf. Gen 6:13).[83] The Israelites brought this condemnation down on more than themselves. It falls upon the "mountains of Israel," the "hills," the "stream-beds," the "valleys," the "soil of Israel," even to the "four corners of the earth" as well. The natural world is so bound up with the human one that it suffers for human sin too just as the LORD God foretold to Adam (Ezek 6:2–3, 14; 7:2, 4; 12:29–20, etc. Cf. Gen 3:17–19; 6:12–13; 9:2; Sir 17:4).[84] All of this is because of Israel's inversion of the priesthood (Ezek 7:10–11. Cf. Num 17:1–28), idolatry, and dehumanizing

[82] For why this does not mark an end of his priestly status, see Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 39–41.
[83] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 133; Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 630; Lapsley, "Ezekiel," 459–60.
[84] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 9, 30, 43–44.

"violence" (חָמָס) (Ezek 7:11, 23–24; 8:17; 9:9; 12:19: 22:26) parallels the inversions of God's design committed by those taken by the flood (Cf. Gen 6:11, 13). The final verse of chapter 7 drives home the point that this is all happening because Israel deserved it, not because the Lord GOD is some kind of tyrannical megalomaniac: "According to their way I will deal with them, and by their judgments I will judge them" (Ezek 7:27).

The One whose "Likeness as the Appearance of Fire/Man" now returns with a "splendor" (זֹהַר) that inspired the name of Jewish Kabbalah's central text, the *Zohar* (Ezek 8:1–2. Cf. Ezek 1:26). Nevertheless, he comes to give Ezekiel an unholy vision of the destruction of Jerusalem (Cf. Jer 44:18). The vision opens with four scenes of pagan worship in the temple: First, Ezekiel beholds the "image of jealousy" (סֶמֶל הַקִּנְאָה) north of the gate of the altar (Ezek 8:5–6. Cf. Deut 4:16). The unique term סֶמֶל recalls the Asherah that King Manasseh placed in the temple (2 Kgs 21:7; 2 Chr 33:7, 15). Then Ezekiel sees the seventy elders and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan offering incense before "every form of creeping things and detestable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel" when he passed though the doorway after he dug through the hole in the wall at the entrance to the court (Ezek 8:10–11. Cf. Lev 20:25; Deut 4:15–18). The vision is an inversion of the order of creation and the elder's duties (Cf. Gen 1:24; Exod 24:1–11; Num 11:16–25). Next, he beholds women near the north gate of the temple entrance conducting a wailing ritual for the death of the Sumerian god Tammuz, associated with the changing of the seasons (Ezek 8:14). Finally, Ezekiel sees twenty-five men with their backs to the temple, facing eastward and worshiping the sun at the entrance to the temple in the inner court (Ezek 8:16–18. Cf. Joel 2:17). This chief abomination recalls the sun worship that flourished during the days of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:5).

This unholy tour is followed up with the purging of Jerusalem (Ezek 9) that will not actually occur until Ezekiel 24. In the words of Goldingay, "The scene of killing and marking forms a horrifying parody of the Passover story,"[85] another P text according to the critical scholarship.[86] One priest-like linen clad man is to "pass over" (עֲבֹר) the city and "put a tav" (וְהִתְוִיתָ תָּו) on the foreheads of the "men who sigh and groan" (הָאֲנָשִׁים הַנֶּאֱנָחִים וְהַנֶּאֱנָקִים) over the abominations (Ezek 9:4. Cf. Exod 12:7, 12–13, 26–30; Rev 7:3–4; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4). Five others are to accompany him killing without pity anyone (old men, young men, maidens, little children, women, and elders) who is not marked with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, a tav,[87] which originally looked like the English letter "X" or a cross (Ezek 9:5–6).[88] The linen clad man then takes coals and fire from the cherub and scatters them through the city (Ezek 10:2, 7). Opponents of individuality in Ezekiel typically recognize on some level that the Lord GOD deals with people as individuals in this pericope just he does Ezekiel 14:12–23 and 34:17–22.[89] Repentance also cannot be dismissed here as irrelevant because those who were marked were those that sighed and groaned. Ezekiel's own hyperbole notwithstanding (Ezek 5:1–4; 7:1–13; 8:18; 9:8; 11:13), they were included among the exilic remnant (Ezek 5:2; 6:8–10; 12:16; 14:22–23; 20:41; 28:25; 39:28).[90] At the same time, it cannot be said that repentance merited them deliverance. Repentance is part the recreative work of the Lord GOD whereby he facilitates

[85] Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 631; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 102.

[86] Friedman, *Who Wrote*, 229–37; Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 294–95.

[87] Sweeney maintains that these priest-like figures sacrificed these unrepentant humans in place of animals for their improper shedding of blood (Gen 9:6). See his *Reading Ezekiel*, 60–61.

[88] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 275–81.

[89] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 23, 25.

[90] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 279.

genuine human sorrow over rebellious sin (Ezek 11:19; 36:26. Cf. 1 Kgs 18:37; Jer 31:18–19; Lam 5:21; Acts 5:31; Rom 2:4).

Ezekiel is next told to prophesy against the Jerusalem leaders' notion that they (i.e., choice meat) would be preserved in the city (i.e., pot) by turning their metaphor against them (i.e., Jerusalem is a purging pot and only the slain [i.e., meat] will be left therein) (Ezek 11:1–13). For those who thought Jerusalem could never fall and practiced the faith in an unrepentant external manner, the Lord GOD reasserted the Genesis creation theology claim that he can be present everywhere and that the land of Israel itself is not somehow nearer to God than elsewhere.[91] The life-sustaining presence that is removed from the temple is the Lord GOD's gracious sacramental presence as opposed to various other presences. Still, just before the Glory of the LORD departs Jerusalem from the hill (i.e., Mount of Olives) east of the city (Ezek 10:19; 11:22–23. Cf. Zech 14:1–9; Acts 1:9–12), the word the LORD promises to gather the exiles, recreate them (with one heart and new spirit), and return them to the land (Ezek 11:14–21. Cf. Ezek 3:7). Thus, Ezekiel 11:14–21 serves as a sort of protoevangelium to the Book of Ezekiel (Gen 3:15).

There is no place in the book that captures the madness of an anthropology of autonomy and the dehumanization of self that stems from demoting God and dehumanizing the neighbor more than Ezekiel 16 and 23 (Deut 7:7; Rev 18). Focusing on Ezekiel 16, the prophet provides a provocative and highly sexualized metaphor of the fallout from Israel's rebelliousness. Ezekiel's use of the unfaithful wife picture to describe Israel is nothing new (e.g., Hosea), but the perversions and violence described here push this metaphor to new heights. Israel is an abandoned child that the Lord GOD graciously makes his bride (i.e., faith-relationship) and

[91] Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 633. See also Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 140.

lavishes with every adornment. But her nymphomania (i.e., rebelliousness) soon escalates into prostituting herself, experimenting with sexually deviant behavior, committing child sacrifice to feed idols, and finally paying her lovers for sexual favors (i.e., nations) all to sustain her insatiable lust for a euphoria of licentiousness. The degree of her unfaithfulness is so egregious that even daughters of the Philistines are ashamed of her (Ezek 16:1–34). In response, her husband (i.e., Lord GOD) has her lovers publicly strip her naked, has a crowd stone her to death, and finally has her cut into pieces with swords (Ezek 16:35–42).

Some scholars fear that this chapter presupposes a demeaning role for women and might be used to legitimatize domestic violence. Other scholars point out that a metaphor is being employed, albeit one that at least has latent power to demean women by feminizing sin or by not punishing her lovers with equal severity. For those that are repulsed by Ezekiel's theology and anthropology, the metaphor raises insurmountable concerns. But even for those that struggle to share it, the metaphor is not without its great challenges. The fact that Ezekiel still pleads for his undeserving countrymen, despite the inevitable fall of Jerusalem, suggests that the metaphor remained shocking and offensive for him, too (Ezek 9:8; 11:13; 21:5). The rhetorical power of this metaphor seems to be exactly why the Lord GOD had Ezekiel deploy such a provocative and challenging metaphor. Human beings have become so consumed with narcissism that all they see is an excessive and unjust Lord GOD who needs to be rebelled against. This is why it takes a metaphor as shocking and shaming as this one for human beings to start to recognize just how inhuman they have become without the likeness of God and how blind they have been to their degradation of the Lord GOD, the Creator of the Cosmos.

This study has much more in common with Paul Joyce's affirmation of Ezekiel's theocentricity and theology of grace than his detractors.[92] Nevertheless, Joyce's notion of a radical (i.e., total) theocentricity in Ezekiel has led him to make the following problematic conclusions: The Lord GOD has predetermined his judgment on the Israelites so that repentance is of no consequence.[93] Human beings never really become recreated so that they themselves actually believe and live.[94] Joyce's acceptance of the premise that the Old Testament (including Ezekiel) essentially only functions with a primitive notion of corporate responsibility has led him to two more problematic conclusions: There is only marginal evidence for individual or personal responsibility for rebellious sin in the book.[95] Despite his attempt to shore up corporate responsibility for generational rebellious sin, Joyce's radical theocentricity causes him to raise doubts even about the reality of corporate responsibility both before and after recreation.[96] This study has already challenged Joyce's notions in Ezekiel's commissioning and the vision of the Jerusalem purge (Ezek 1:28–3:21; 9:1–11; 33:1–20). Now the remainder of the book will be addressed. The reason for doing so is because Joyce's arguments obscure the fact that Ezekiel is actually stripping the Israelites of their radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility defenses of themselves.

Some might be inclined to play down Ezekiel's stress on personal responsibility simply because he really is not the first to speak in individual terms. Adam and Eve were created as individuals and received individual punishments (Gen 2:7, 21–22; 3:16–19). The LORD likewise distinguished righteous individuals from unrighteous individuals as evident by Noah (Gen 6:9),

[92] Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 127–28, 149; Joyce, "Ezekiel and Moral," 150.
[93] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 20–23, 26–27, 30.
[94] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 27–31.
[95] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 23–26.
[96] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 17–20, 30–31.

Lot (2 Pet 2:7), Joshua and Caleb (Num 13:30; 14:6–9), Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1–24), etc.[97] That being said, Andrew Mein has rightly pointed out, "It is nevertheless hard to deny that there are strong individualistic elements running through Ezekiel."[98]

If Ezekiel 3:20 could not justify radical theocentricity, can Ezekiel 14 accomplish it? Here the Lord GOD has Ezekiel first call the house of Israel to repent of their idols and abomination (Ezek 14:6). He then has Ezekiel say in the apodosis of Ezekiel 14:9, "I, the Lord, have persuaded/misled that [false] prophet" (פִּתִּיתִי אֶת הַנָּבִיא הַהֽוּא),[99] who prophesied for the Israelites or sojourners that have deserted the Lord GOD for idols (Ezek 14:7, 9. Cf. 13:2; Hos 2:16). The pual in the protasis, "The prophet, if he is persuaded/misled (כִּֽי־יְפֻתֶּה),[100]" leaves the prophet's motives unclear. Regardless, he is guilty as Eichrodt states for he "lets himself be induced by the wish to please or by a calculated compromise … treating his client's deadly crime as if it were a venial weakness."[101] Here the Lord GOD misleads a false prophet who already misused his freedom (via commission or omission) by giving himself over to being misled. Accordingly Keil insists that the Lord GOD's actions cannot simply be reduced to his permissive will.

> As Jehovah sent the spirit in that case [1 Kgs 22:20ff], and put it into the mouth of the prophets, so is the persuasion in this instance also effected by God: not merely divine permission, but divine ordination and arrangement; though this does not destroy human freedom, but, like all "persuading," presupposes the possibility of not allowing himself to be persuaded. … But this willing on the part of God, or the persuading of the prophets to the utterance of self-willed words, which have not been inspired by God, only take place in persons who admit evil into themselves, and is designed to tempt them and lead them to decide whether they will endeavor to resist and conquer the sinful inclinations of their

[97] Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 240–41; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 532–33.
[98] Mein, "Ezekiel: Structure," 200.
[99] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "פתה," *HALOT* 2:984–85.
[100] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 384, 395–98.
[101] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 183.

> heart, or will allow them to shape themselves into outward deeds, in which case they will become ripe for judgment.[102]

The Lord GOD does this to confront the false prophet with the reality of his situation so that he would either resist via God's righteousness or succumb to evil. The Lord GOD expects believers both to refrain from putting off repentance and to remain vigilant lest they open themselves up to such dangers. This point has analogues in Exodus 4:21; 7:3–4; 8:11, 28; 9:12; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Kings 22:19–23; Jeremiah 4:10; 20:7. Although this section is theocentric, it is not radically so.

Probably the clearest expression of personal responsibility in the book occurs in Ezekiel 14:12–23. The question is whether the divine/passive righteousness of one can save an unrighteous land or their unrighteous kin. Granted a righteous intercessor or individual has been known to delay the judgment of the unrighteous, but not ultimately so (Gen 18:22–19:29). As Ezekiel insists, no one's righteousness can ultimately save another. Even if the great righteous intercessors, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in the land, "with their own righteousness they could only save their own souls" (וְאִיּוֹב הֵמָּה בְּצִדְקָתָם֙ יְנַצְּל֣וּ נַפְשָׁ֔ם) (Ezek 14:14, 20. Cf. Jer 15:1). Even if they were in the land, these three great intercessors could save "neither their sons nor daughters" (אִם־בָּנִ֥ים וְאִם־בָּנ֖וֹת) (Ezek 14:16, 18)—"neither their son nor their daughter" (אִם־בֵּ֥ן אִם־בַּ֖ת) (Ezek 14:20). "They alone would be saved (הֵמָּה לְבַדָּם֙ יִנָּצֵ֔לוּ) (Ezek 14:16; 18), "but the land would be desolate" (Ezek 14:16).

Ezekiel 18 has been ground zero for discussion of corporate and individual responsibility because both ideas are affirmed here. Ezekiel's affirmation of the rebellious intention in the Israelites, the loss of the divine likeness, and lack of a faith-relationship with God shows that he

[102] Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 1:182.

does deny the underlying theology of the sour grapes proverb (Ezek 18:1–3. Cf. Exod 20:5; 34:7; Deut 5:9; Lam 5:7; Jer 31:29–30). He only repudiates the exiles' radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility use of it. They are claiming on the basis of the proverb that they are in effect righteous and therefore undeservedly dying for the sins of their wicked fathers (Ezek 18:19). In other words, they are in denial of God's theocentric justice, their corporate rebellious intention, and their own personally responsibility for their actual rebellious sin. Now the exiles' final rebellious delusion will be unmasked. Ezekiel's strategy is to argue that the Lord GOD is indeed sovereign, but he is also just and merciful. If we would not kill a righteous or repentant individual, he surely would not kill righteous or repentant exiles: "Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine. The soul (הַנֶּפֶשׁ) who sins will die" (Ezek 18:4. Cf. Gen 2:17). Greenberg takes this to mean: "This denies that any person is morally an extension of another, God does not 'get at' a sinner through his son, nor does he impose punishment on the son as a 'limb' of his father."[103]

Using the case law example of a righteous grandfather, wicked father, and righteous son to illustrate different generations of the "house of Israel" (Ezek 18:25, 29–30), Ezekiel then insists that if the exiles really were a righteous son and their fathers were a wicked father, then the exiles would not die (Ezek 18:4–20) against the exiles' claim to the contrary (Ezek 18:19). "The soul who sins will die. The son will not suffer for the father's iniquity, nor will the father suffer for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself" (Ezek 18:20). Moreover, "If a wicked person turns from all his sins that he has done and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and righteous, he will surely live; he will not die. All his rebellious sins which he has committed will

[103] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 328. See also Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 108, 119–20.

not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has done, he will live" (Ezek 18:21–22). Since the Lord GOD only kills the unrepentant sinner (Ezek 18:4, 20), and exiles are actually spiritually dying (Ezek 18:31–32; 33:11), they cannot be righteous. But because the Lord GOD is just and merciful rather than radically theocentric, he declares: "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked … rather than that he should turn from his ways and live (וְחָיָה)'" (Ezek 18:23)?[104] But the exiles only doubled down on their false theology, claiming now that such a merciful and gracious God would be unjust and inconsistent (Ezek 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20).[105] In response to the spiritually dying exiles' protestation, the Lord GOD declares, "Cast away from you all your rebellious sins which you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies…. Therefore, repent and live (וְחְיוּ)" (Eze 18:31–32, 33:11). Here the Lord GOD employs the rhetorical move of telling them to make a new heart and new spirit themselves to show their inability to do so and culpability for their situation. God further does this to create in them repentance and a recognition of their need for a divine act of recreation. Lest there be any doubt of his gracious desire to save them, the Lord GOD had already delayed his wrath against previous Israelite generations and acted graciously to them for the sake of his name. He acted mercifully in spite of their rebelliousness just as he had promised to do to prove

[104] Duguid recognizes the nuanced way that Ezekiel employs the terms "life" and "death" here: "The one who is faithful to these requirements will 'live,' that is, enjoy the fullness of relationship with the Great King that flows from obedience. Such life is not merely physical existence, or even the future hope of return from exile, but a place among the people of the King in the presence of the King. Death, on the other hand, means estrangement from both God and the covenant community, along with all of the blessings that went with that status. To be cut off from God's people is to be 'dead' even while physically still alive, for one would be separated from the source of life. There is no life apart from the Source and Giver of Life; as Deuteronomy 30:20 puts it: 'There LORD is your life, and he will be give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'" See his *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 240.

[105] von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:227.

to all the nations the reliability of his covenant fidelity and ultimately to draw even the unbelieving nations into a relationship with him via the hallowing of his name (Ezek 20:8–9, 13–14, 17, 21–22).

Recognizing elements of personal responsibility in Ezekiel 18, Kaminsky tries to offer a mediating approach:

> The primary focus may in fact be communal, but that does not preclude a strong concern for the individual. Just as the general context qualifies the individualistic language and indicates that it is being used in the service of a communal sermon, the individualistic language qualifies the communal elements in certain ways. … [S]uch individualistic language may not indicate an attempt to assert the total moral autonomy of each individual, but it seems very likely that Ezekiel employs it as an attempt to arouse the individuals who compose the larger nations to accept responsibility for the current state of the nation.[106]

Mein attempts to offer a historical reason for why Ezekiel stresses personal responsibility more than most. He contends that exiles underwent a process of moral re-scaling. Deprived of their institutions, the exile really could not conduct moral action beyond the individual and familial level.[107] Given the fact that both the corporate and the individual have been addressed in the Old Testament before Ezekiel, perhaps the reason Ezekiel's articulation of personal responsibility is so significant is because he is trying to guard against misinterpretations of theocentricity and corporate responsibility.

No other passage has received more attention and interpretation than Ezekiel 20:25. The reason is because it concerns the practice of child sacrifice in Israel and God's culpability in it. The Lord GOD declares that he "gave [the Israelites] statutes that were not good" (נָתַתִּי לָהֶם חֻקִּים לֹא טוֹבִים) and "ordinances by which they could not live" (וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לֹא יִחְיוּ בָהֶם) (Ezek

[106] Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility*, 171–72.
[107] Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics*, 214. 1–4, 214, 239, 257–63.

20:25). Hummel lets the text stand without mollifying it with critical techniques or limiting it to the law that always accuses, exposes sin, and was never intended to be a way of salvation.

> However, to try to exculpate God by attributing the "not good" statutes to some other agent (human or demonic) finally shortchanges what God is saying through Ezekiel. The "not good" statutes were "independent of Yahweh's positive will" but yet were "enclosed within the purview of his punitive will" and were indeed given by God. Impervious to positive attempts to teach them to know and recognize God (Ezek 20:5, 7, 12, 19), the people finally had to encounter God in a life-negating judgment "so that they might know that I am Yahweh" (20:26). "In the mystery of such strange actions, Yahweh can be recognized in the mystery of his being, which here means that incomprehensibility of the holy Judge. It is God's *opus alienum*, his "alien work" (Is 28:21). … To get to the particular reference of Ezekiel 20:26, one must refer back to Exodus 13, where "every issue that opened the womb" (כָּל־פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם) occurs several times Ex 13:12, 15; also 34:19; cf. 13:2). "Every issue that opened the womb" of animals must either be sacrificed to Yahweh or "redeemed" by substitutionary sacrifice, but children "you shall redeem" (Ex 13:13; 34:20; cf. 13:15). The repeated insistence of Jeremiah (7:31; 19:5; 32:35) that Yahweh had not commanded the sacrifice of firstborn *children* makes plain that the Israelites had misinterpreted or ignored those passages in Exodus and by some syncretistic confusion had concluded that Yahweh permitted, and perhaps even commanded, such behavior. The polemic against the practice in Deut 12:29–31 makes plain that the aberration was known already in Mosaic times, but the evidence is that it had become especially common since the days of the reign of Manasseh in the seventh century.[108]

No doubt, this is a hard saying. But once again the theological point is not unique to Ezekiel. It is made elsewhere in Scripture (Isa 6:10; Matt 13:14–15; Acts 7:42; Rom 1:24; 2 Cor 2:14, 16; 2 Thess 2:11, etc.).

If the Israelites had forsaken the Lord GOD this badly despite God's manifold mercies, then rebelliousness clearly is not just an Israelite problem. The oracles against the nations (Ezek 25:1–32:32) show that the nations lack the inherit power to repent and get a new heart and spirit also. While God indicates that Israelites are responsible for the nations' evil because of their failure to reflect the divine image and make God's name holy among them, God still holds the

[108] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 599–600; Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 1:273–75; Roehrs and Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study*, 550.

nations responsible for their own evil. Nations were not divinely predetermined to sin any more than the Israelites. All of this shows that Ezekiel's articulation of fallen Israelite anthropology is really fallen human anthropology for Ezekiel as well. The tension between the Lord GOD's sole saving righteousness and the human being's sole responsibility for rebellion is the mystery of the book of Ezekiel.

Conclusion

The Book of Ezekiel opens with a terrifying encounter with the transcendent Creator God that is reminiscent of the fall and flood. If there be any doubt in the Israelite mind, the Lord GOD of Israel is revealed here to be the one and only Creator God (Ezek 1:1, 28; 2:4). Therefore, he has not been defeated by the Babylonian gods. Worse, he will remove his presence from the Jerusalem temple, purge the rebellious from the land, and expel a remnant from Israel. But before the son of man/Adam could be commissioned to preach his purging message about rebellion, decreation, and expulsion from Eden, he had to experience it himself (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:3–10; 3:1–3). Affirming both corporate and personal responsibility (Ezek 2:3–8; 3:6–11, 16–21; 9:1–11; 14:1–23; 18:1–32; 33:1–20; 34:1–31), the Adamic priestly prophet was recreated to preach a theocentric condemnation of the Israelites (i.e., Sovereign God is just and therefore only punishes unrepentant individuals and generations alike) as well as a collective guilt condemnation of them (i.e., the sons of man/Adam retain the rebellious intention and are responsible for actualizing it). In addition, the son of man/Adam was recreated to strip the Israelites of their radical theocentric defenses of themselves (i.e., Sovereign God predetermines everything so that there is no real collective or personal responsibility) as well as false corporate responsibility defenses of themselves (i.e., the "innocent" exilic generation is collectively and unjustly punished for the sins of their fathers).

Ezekiel is no prophet of autonomy. Even the heart of his theocentric and collective guilt indictment of the Israelites is that Adam's efforts to be autonomous from God and other human beings ironically only perpetuated a multigenerational, systemic, and willful intention to rebel in his descendants who in turn are each responsible for their actualization of this intention. While Ezekiel does not explicitly speak of the evil intention in the human heart from youth (Gen 6:5; 8:21), his flood/rainbow talk (Ezek 1:1, 28; 6:6, 13; 7:2; 13:13) evokes it. He repeatedly charges the Israelites with having a systemic and willful rebellious intention (Ezek 2:3, etc.). This rebelliousness is so deeply ingrained that he is able to trace it through the generations as far back as the exodus (Ezek 2:3; 20:1–44). Even Ezekiel's rejection of the sour grapes proverb does not fundamentally deny this rebellious intention. He only repudiates the radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility use of it (Ezek 18:1–4).

Ezekiel spells out the loss of the divine likeness and a lack of a faith-relationship with God in the starkest detail. While the Lord GOD has continuously extended his presence and mercy to the Israelites as his chosen land of milk and honey people (Ezek 20:1–44), the Israelites have repeatedly repudiated the likeness of God and become the most defiant and wicked among human beings (Ezek 5:6; 16:47–52; 23:11). By forsaking the Creator God the only source of human life (Ezek 3:19; 21; 7:13; 18:4, 23, 32; 33:11; 36:23–38), they have become driven by death (Ezek 3:18, 20; 5:12; 6:12; 7:15; 9:4–11; 12:13; 13:19; 17:16; 18:4, 13, 17–18, 20–21, 24, 26, 28; 28:8, 10; 31:14; 33:8–9, 13–15, 18, 27, esp. 18:23, 31–32; 33:11). Since they have objectified God and dehumanized each other, they are said to have the blood of those whom God had originally created in his holy likeness on their hands (Ezek 7:23; 9:9; 16:36, 38; 18:10; 22:2–4, 6, 9, 12–13, 27; 23:37, 45; 24:6–9; 35:6; 36:18). Since the Lord GOD only kills the unrepentant sinner (Ezek 18:4, 20), and the exiles are dying (Ezek 18:31–32; 33:11), they cannot

be righteous either. They have "defiled" the temple, themselves, and others (Ezek 5:11; 14:11; 18:6, etc.). Manifold abominations (Ezek 5:9, 11, etc.) and "detestable things" (Ezek 5:11; 7:20; 11:18, etc.) have been committed by them. The oft-declared recognition formula shows how they lack the most fundamental understanding and knowledge of the Lord GOD; namely, the fear of the LORD (Ezek 5:13, etc.). The cosmos itself is so bound up with mankind that it is not exempt from the consequences of human defiance (Ezek 6:2–3, 14; 7:2, 4; 12:29–20, etc.). Not even the Israelite religious and political rulers have ruled as the stewards of creation for they are ravenous beasts who devour the sheep (Ezek 19:3, 6; 22:25, 27). Truth be told this animal-like exploitation of the other is also found at the lower ranks of society including the sheep (Ezek 34:16, 20–21). The Israelites have so mindlessly subverted the likeness of God that they have turned their "dung things, dung idols" into images of gods (Ezek 6:4–6, 9, 13; 8:10; 14:3–7; 16:36; 18:6, 12, 15; 20:7–8, 16, 18, 24, 31, 39; 22:3–4; 23:7, 30, 37, 39, 49; 30:13; 33:25; 36:18, 25; 37:23; 44:10, 12). By doing so they have not only failed to reflect the divine likeness and make God's name holy among the nations as a kingdom of priests, they have profaned his holy name and led the nations astray (Ezek 20:9; 14, 22; 25:1–32:32; 36:20–21; 39:7). The oracles against the nations only further attest to the sad state of the fallen human condition (Ezek 25:1–32:32). Since the Israelites are completely unable to turn from their wickedness (Ezek 36:22), only a divine act of recreation can restore the divine likeness, a faith-relationship with God, and an Edenic community of freedom (Ezek 1:26–3:3; 11:17–20; 36:22–38; 37:1–14; 39:25–29).

Finally, the Adamic priestly prophet strips the Israelites of their radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility defenses of themselves. While the Lord GOD is indeed transcendent and sovereign he is also just and merciful. He only holds Ezekiel personally responsible for watching over his fellow Israelites (Ezek 3:17–18, 20; 33:6–8), but the Lord

GOD will not condemn a single righteous or repentant person (Ezek 3:21; 18:4; 33:5, 14–16; 19–20). At the same time, the Lord GOD will not repent and believe for them, nor does he facilitate repentance and belief against their wills (Ezek 2:7; 3:11, 19, 27; 33:4–5, 9). Those that received the mark during the Jerusalem purge show that the Lord GOD deals with repentant individuals just as much as he deals with repentant collectives (Ezek 9:4). Righteous intercessors or individuals may be able to delay judgement, but their righteousness can only save themselves (Ezek 14:14, 20). When the exiles tried to justify themselves by claiming they were undeservedly suffering for the sins of their fathers (Ezek 18:1–3), Ezekiel repudiates their radical theocentricity and false understanding of corporate responsibility. If the Lord GOD would not predetermine a single righteous or repentant person to die, he would not predetermine a single righteous or repentant generation to die either. Since the Lord GOD only kills the unrepentant sinner (Ezek 18:4, 20), and exiles are actually spiritually dying (Ezek 18:31–32; 33:11), they cannot be righteous. Why then does Lord GOD take great pains to get the exile to recognize their culpability? It is because he does not desire the death of the wicked person, but they should repent and live (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11). While Ezekiel used personal responsibility for the purpose of achieving corporate responsibility ends, case law would only undermine itself if it makes a law for the collective on the basis of the individual that is not valid for the individual as well. In Ezekiel's exilic context, there is little chance for Israelite moral action beyond the level of the individual and the family anyway. Even the purpose of the book's most challenging theocentric statements is to purge the hearer of the fallen anthropology of autonomy so that recreation can take place. God's call for the Israelites to make for themselves a new heart and new spirit only rhetorically drives home their complete inability to do so (Ezek 18:31).

CHAPTER FOUR

LORD GOD ALONE RE-HUMANIZES FALLEN HUMAN LIFE

> Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of lapis lazuli; and on that likeness of a throne, high up, was the likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam. … Like the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. —Ezekiel 1:26, 28.
>
> Then he said to me, "Son of man/Adam, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!" As he spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me"—Ezekiel 2:1–2.
>
> "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Though I had removed them far away among the nations, and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary in small measure for them in the countries where they had gone.'"—Ezekiel 11:16.
>
> Therefore, say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'It is not for your sake, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.' '… Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my rules and do them. And you will live in the land that I gave to your fathers, so you will be my people and I will be your God.'" "… And they will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden….'"—Ezekiel 36:22, 25–28, 35.

Ezekiel's Call vs. Other Prophetic Calls

Ezekiel's calling (Ezek 1:1–3:21) which legitimized his ministry certainly has many parallels with both classical and written prophets.[1] The overall contours of Ezekiel's call vision are reminiscent of Isaiah's temple call vision of the Trice-Holy LORD surrounded by Seraphim (Isa 6:1–13), though the details are different from Ezekiel's own. The same can be said about

[1] See also Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24,* 41–46.

Daniel's vision of the Ancient of Days and the "One like a Son of Man" (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) (Dan 7:1–28).

Even if Ezekiel was the fullest example of a priestly prophet, he was not the first example of one (Ezek 1:3. Cf. Exod 2:1; 2 Chr 24:20; Jer 1:1). Like Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa 6:1; Jer 1:2–3), Ezekiel dates his calling on the basis of an Israelite king (Ezek 1:1–2). The "the word of the LORD" (דְּבַר־יְהוָה) (Ezek 1:3, etc.) came to Ezekiel many times just as it did to Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Solomon, the Bethel prophet, Jehu, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea (1 Sam 15:10; 2 Sam 7:4; 24:11; 1 Kgs 6:11; 13:20; 16:1; 17:2; 2 Kgs 20:4; 38:4; Jer 1:4; Hos 1:1). The empowering "hand of the LORD" (יַד־יְהוָה) that came upon Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3, etc. Cf. 1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 3:15; Ezra 7:6, 28; 1 Chr 28:19. Cf. also Isa 8:11; Jer 15:7) is associated with some kings, prophets, and Ezra. Ezekiel was terrified "to see" (ראה) the LORD in some veiled sense (i.e., "vision/s" [מַרְאוֹת] in Ezekiel's case) just like the rest of the prophets back to Moses himself (Ezek 1:1, 28. Cf. Exod 3:6; 14; 24:9–11; 33:18–23). The "Spirit" (רוּחַ) Ezekiel experienced has some similarities with that experienced by Bazalel the son of Uri, Balaam, Saul's messengers, as well as some kings, classical prophets, and one other priestly prophet, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (Ezek 2:2, etc. Cf. Exod 35:31; Num 24:2; 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 19:20, 23; 1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16; 2 Chr 15:1; 24:20; Ps 51:11; Matt 23:35; Luke 11:50–51). Ezekiel's hearers would prove recalcitrant just like the hearers of other prophets (Ezek 2:2–5. Cf. Isa 6:9–10; Jer 7:13). The LORD had a seraph touch Isaiah's mouth with a live coal to put divine words into his mouth (Isa 6:6–7). God himself touched Jeremiah's tongue to do the same and only later did he eat God's "words" (Jer 1:9; 15:16). But in the case of Ezekiel, the Lord GOD fed Ezekiel a "scroll of a book" (מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר) so that he could fully internalize God's Word (Ezek 2:9–3:4). He was lifted

up and carried like Elijah (Ezek 3:12, 14: 11:24; 37:1. Cf. 1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:11, 16). Ezekiel delivered many oracles and performed sign acts just like other prophets. Finally, this priestly prophet will go on to reveal the Almighty Lord GOD (Ezek 1:24, 28. Cf. Gen 17:1; 6:3) outside the land (Ezek 2:3; Cf. Gen 12:1–3; Exod 3:1, 6–22), condemn Israel's rebellion like the days of the Exodus (Ezek 2:3–8; 20:1–43. Cf. Num 17:25; 20:10), speak of a second Exodus (Ezek 20:40–42. Cf. Exod 12:31–42), and above all else legislate a new temple Torah just to name a few significant Mosaic parallels (Ezek 40ff. Cf. Exod 24ff).

Looking at the preponderance of literary allusions, some have seen Ezekiel chiefly as a new Elijah and Elisha,[2] whereas others have regarded him to be more as a new Moses.[3] Ezekiel also shares a number of themes with his older contemporary Jeremiah ([word put into the mouth of the prophet: Ezek 3:1–3. Cf. Jer 1:9; 15:16]; [prophet as watchman: Ezek 3:17; 33:7. Cf. Jer 6:17]; [northern and southern kingdoms as sisters: Ezek 23. Cf. Jer 3:6–14]; [proverb of generational guilt: Ezek 18:2. Cf. Jer 31:29]; [false prophets: Ezek 13:10–16. Cf. Jer 6:14; 23:14–22]; [new covenant: Ezek 34:25; 37:26. Cf. Jer 31:31–34]; [you will be my people, and I will be your God: Ezek 36:28. Cf. Jer 30:22]; [renewed hearts: Ezek 11:19–20; 36:26–27. Cf. Jer 31:31–33]; [the Lord will shepherd: Ezek 34:1–22. Cf. Jer 23:3–6]; and [restoration of the Davidic dynasty: Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25. Cf. Jer 30:9]), though the two prophets work these themes out from different perspectives.[4] Since Jeremiah and Ezekiel are contemporaries that appear to be aware of each other's prophetic oracles, Ezekiel cannot really be called a new Jeremiah. The parallel themes with Second Isaiah have been more contested particularly because of the perceived lack of Zion theology.

[2] Keith W. Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets: A Study of Ezekiel's Place in Prophetic Tradition*, SBT 2/31 (London: SCM, 1975), 13–47, 69–71.

[3] Levitt Kohn, "A Prophet like Moses?" 236–54.

[4] Coogan and Chapman, *The Old Testament*, 380.

Revealed Creator God's Eschatological Recreation of the Son of Man/Adam

In contrast to these prophetic calls, Ezekiel's call and other parts of his book have many more fundamental and unique parallels with Genesis.[5] These further suggest that this renewed son of man/Adam and Adamic priestly prophet has been called to embody and declare a resurrecting message of trust, eschatological recreation (or justification), and a return to Eden all of which need to be sustained by the mediation of God's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence. The echoes of Ezekiel in Revelation suggest that Ezekiel's call was understood to be about God's reestablishment of a faith-relationship with him, his recreation, and his role as renewed first Adam and type of the Second Adam.[6] Like Ezekiel, the Apostle John, too, beheld a revelation of "One Like a Son of Man/Human Being" (ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου) (Rev 1:1, 13; 14:14. Cf. Dan 7:13), the "Glory of God" (δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ) (Rev 21:23). He eventually did eat a sweet book that turned his stomach bitter (Rev 10:8–10), and he was filled with the Spirit (Rev 1:10). Later he even took measurements of the new temple like Ezekiel (Rev. 11:1–2; 21). Unlike Ezekiel, the Apostle John is not explicitly called a son of man/Adam, and he did not perform Zadokite priestly duties because the Second Adam had now come, albeit he served a pivotal role in the New Testament public ministry. Still it is the unique priestly work of the Second Adam which Ezekiel only foreshadowed that is the basis for the eschatological re-

[5] In contradistinction to a Genesis creation setting for Ezekiel 1, Margaret S. Odell argues that the setting for Ezekiel 1 is the bent axis of Assyrian throne rooms where one entered midway along a long wall with the throne on the end. When first entering, one would see a representation or likeness of the king on the opposite wall before turning ninety degrees and seeing the king. See her *Ezekiel*, 21–32.

[6] For a chart of Ezekiel and Revelation parallels, see S. Moyise, "Prophets in the New Testament," *DOTP* 654–54. See also Steve Moyise, *Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, JSNTSup 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 64–84; Beate Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der Offenbarung des Johannes*, SBB 52 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004); Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet: The Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in Literature of the Second Temple Period*, JSNTSup 270 (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Brian Neil Peterson, *John's Use of Ezekiel: Understanding the Unique Perspective of the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

humanization of God's people so that they can *already* reign on earth as a kingdom of priests who steward creation according to John.

> And when [the Lion of the tribe of Judah/Root of David/Lamb] had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the book and to break its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you purchased (ἠγόρασας) people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made (ἐποίησας) them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they reign (βασιλευουσιν) on the earth" … And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped (Rev 5:8–11, 14. Cf. Dan 7:1–28; Rev 1:1–20).[7]

Ezekiel's opening vision affirms the Creator/creature distinction as it crashes through every conceivable ceiling of man's ability to conceptualize and define the Divine. After the heavens were opened (Ezek 1:1. Cf. Gen 7:11), which the Apocrypha, Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, and New Testament associate with theophany and Christ's consecration as prophet, priest, and king (3 Macc 6:18; 2 Bar 22:1; T. Levi 5:1; Matt 3:16; Luke 3:21; Acts 7:56, 10:11; Rev 19:11),[8] Ezekiel has a vision of the Creator "God" (אֱלֹהִים) of the heavens and the earth (Ezek 1:1. Cf. Gen 1:1). He is accompanied by the "word of the LORD" (דְּבַר־יְהוָה) (Ezek 1:3. Cf. Gen 1:3; Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5) and the same "Spirit" (רוּחַ) (Ezek 1:12, 20; 2:2; 3:12; 14; 24) who is revealed to be the life-giving "Spirit," "Spirit of the LORD" (רַוּחַ יְהוָה), or "Spirit of God" (רַוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) (Ezek 11:5, 24; 36:26–27; 37:1, 14; 39:29. Cf. Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 33:6; 104:30; Rev. 4:2).[9] In contrast to the eighth century prophets and Jeremiah, S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry

[7] For support of the variant reading βασιλευουσιν in Rev. 5:10 and the "already but not yet" reign of the priestly kingdom, see G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 361–64; Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999), 133, 142–47.

[8] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 22; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 52–53.

[9] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "רוּחַ," *HALOT* 2:1200.

make the claim: "Not until the prophets of the exilic and postexilic period does *rûaḥ* become once more a word of theological significance. The book of Ezekiel, with 52 occurrences, occupies a central position in this respect."[10] Manifold uses of רוּחַ play such a significant role in this book that Block calls Ezekiel "the prophet of the spirit."[11] This ineffable vision takes place on unclean Babylonian soil (Ezek 4:13. Cf. Amos 7:17) as a direct affront to the reality of other gods. Truly all things belong to the genuine Creator God (Ezek 18:4).

A storm wind then appears out of the north, a great cloud and flashing fire and a bright light around it, and in the midst of it, in the midst of the fire, something like the gleam of חַשְׁמַל (Ezek 1:4. Cf. Rev 4:5). In the midst of it, there were the likenesses of four living creatures that are later called cherubim, the throne bearers and boundary keepers of God (Ezek 1:5; 10:1. Cf. Ps 18:11; 80:2; 99:1). They were "Spirit" (רוּחַ)-empowered composite beings attesting to God's omnipotence, completeness, and holiness (Ezek 1:5–12. Cf. Rev 4:6–8). As throne bearers and boundary keepers of God, the cherubim are inextricably bound up with the mercy seat/throne of God, tabernacle, and temple (Exod 25:18–22; 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; 37:7–9; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Kgs 6:23–35; 7:29, 36; 2 Kgs 19:15). Their omnidirectional vision and their multidirectional maneuverability of God's eye-clad and topaz-colored spherical wheels (Cf. Exod 28:30; 39:13) drive home God's omnipresence and omniscience (Ezek 1:15–21. Cf. Rev. 4:6). The cherubim grant admission to Eden's Torah-filled ark; namely, the tree of life (Gen 2:9; 3:24; Exod 25:22,

[10] S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry, "רוּחַ," *TDOT* 13:373. See also C. Westermann," "רוּחַ," *TLOT* 3:1202–3.

[11] Daniel I. Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of רוּחַ in the Book of Ezekiel," *JETS* 32, no. 1 (1989): 27–50. See also Leonard P. Maré, "Ezekiel, Prophet of the Spirit: רוח in the Book of Ezekiel," *OTE* 31, no. 3 (2018): 553–70.

31–40; Prov 3:13–20) in their capacity as boundary keepers as well. All of this took place under the likeness of an "expanse" (רָקִיעַ) (Ezek 1:22. Cf. Gen 1:6; Rev 4:6).

Then the creative "voice" (קוֹל) of the Almighty came forth from above the expanse amidst the other sounds (Ezek 1:25; 2:1. Cf. Gen 1:3).[12] There, too, was the likeness of a throne that had the appearance of lapis lazuli. This is the same stone under God's feet when Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy were graciously permitted to approach God so that they might behold him, eat with him, and drink with him on Sinai (Exod 24:10–11). On this throne was a "likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam" (דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה אָדָם/ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου) (Ezek 1:26. Cf. Dan 7:13; Rev 1:1, 13; 14:14). Tg. Ps.-J. translates אָדָם as a proper noun and consequently renders the line: "likeness of the appearance of Adam" (דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה אָדָם) (Ezek 1:1 ArBib).[13] As this vision of the Creator "God" (אֱלֹהִים) reaches its zenith (Ezek 1:1. Cf. Gen 1:1), it turns out to be an "appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD" (מַרְאֵה דְּמוּת כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה) (Ezek 1:28; 2:4. Cf. Gen 2:4; Rev 21:23). This life-sustaining presence of the Lord GOD (Exod 24:16, 17; 29:43; 40:34–35; Lev 9:6, 23; Num 14:10, 21–22; 16:19, 42; 20:6; 1 Kgs 8:11; Ps 24:7, 10; 26:8; 29:3; Isa 6:3) will indeed depart from the Jerusalem temple, but it will be present among the exiles (Ezek 11:16).

No other book of the Bible has a higher concentration of the use of דְּמוּת (twenty-five times) than Ezekiel. Elsewhere it is only found in Genesis 1:26; 5:1, 3; 2 Kings 16:10; 2

[12] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "קוֹל," *HALOT* 2:1084; Taylor, *Ezekiel*, 58.
[13] *The Targum of Ezekiel*, 6–8, 23n19.

Chronicles 4:3; Psalm 58:5; Isaiah 13:4; 40:18; and Daniel 10:16.[14] Block maintains, "[Yahweh's] condescending appearance in human form undoubtedly finds its basis in Gen. 1:26–27, which describes human kind as created as the 'image' (*ṣelem*) and 'likeness' (*dĕmût*) of God. But in this remarkable role reversal, God appears in the 'likeness of humankind' (*dĕmût kĕmar'eh 'adām*)."[15] Goldingay adds: "For God to be humanlike when appearing links with the Israelite conviction that humanity itself is Godlike."[16] For God to be humanlike when appearing also coincides with the Christian notion of an incarnate Christ who recreates the likeness of God in his faithful.[17]

This likeness had the gleam of חַשְׁמַל and the appearance of fire. There was radiance around him like the appearance of a rainbow (Ezek 1:26–28. Cf. Gen 9:14–16; Sir 43:11–12; Rev 4:4), a sign of the covenant that the Creator God made with all nations that he would never destroy the earth again with a flood. Just as Genesis's rainbow was a sign to Noah and his family of a divinely-forged recreation and peace in the wake of an unimaginable purge of evil, so too Ezekiel's rainbow signaled the very same to the priestly prophet. Since the Lord GOD really is the one, universal, sovereign, and transcendent Creator God rather than a mere tribal God bound to the Israelite temple and land (Exod 29:45–46), the Judahites have not been exiled because the Lord GOD has been defeated by the Babylonian gods. Instead this gracious self-revelation of the Creator God in the "likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam" means that the Lord

[14] Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 268; H. D. Preuss, "דָּמָה," *TDOT* 3:257–60; A. H. Konkel, "דָּמָה," *NIDOTTE* 1:967–70.

[15] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 107–8; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 30.

[16] Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 626.

[17] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 64–68.

GOD alone not only can recreate the Israelites, but he intends to do just that and more (i.e., bring about a new temple, city, Israel, and land).[18]

Ezekiel has been so profoundly shaped by the theocentricity of Genesis that he also distinguishes the recreated human creature from the gracious revealed God (*deus revelatus*). Besides the evidence for the Lord God's transcendence elucidated in the previous chapter, the following is evidence specific to the Lord GOD as the gracious revealed God: First, Ezekiel's description of the Lord GOD's self-revelation in the "likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam" (דְּמ֣וּת כְּמַרְאֵ֔ה אָדָ֖ם) that reconstitutes the divine likeness in human beings affirms the ontological chasm between God and mankind, just as much as it affirms the elevated status of the recreated human being. Second, Ezekiel maintains throughout the book that Lord GOD alone can bring about recreation (Ezek 1:26–3:3; 11:17–20; 36:22–38; 37:1–14; 39:25–29). The prophet, likewise, remains purely passive in his recreation as suggested by the empowering "hand of the LORD … on him there" (וַתְּהִ֥י עָלָ֖יו שָׁ֑ם יַד־יְהוָֽה) (Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1).[19]

For a book that has even been called *radically* theocentric,[20] there are striking immanent references to the "human" throughout this vision that suggest human beings are to have a special status with God. First, the text makes a point of describing the human features of cherubim and not just the animal ones (Ezek 1:5, 8, 10). Second, Ezekiel falls on his face (Ezek 1:28, etc.) and

[18] Tuell also recognizes that this vision includes a gracious self-revelation of God. But while he grounds it in Sinai covenant language, this study locates it in creation language and God's life-sustaining temple presence language. See his *Ezekiel*, 12.

[19] When the "hand of the LORD" (יַד־יְהוָה) is used with the preposition עַל or אֶל (like in Ezekiel), it often denotes God's influence, revelation, aiding, or strengthening (1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 3:15; Ezra 7:6, 28; 1 Chr 28:19). When it is used with the preposition בְּ, it often denotes the striking down or destroying of enemies (Exod 9:3; Deut 2:15; Judg 2:15; 1 Sam 7:13). See Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 36.

[20] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 45; Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 128.

is repeatedly called "son of man/Adam" (בֶּן־אָדָם) throughout the book (Ezek 2:1, etc.), including during the temple vision. Third, the Glory of the Lord is revealed to be in the "appearance of the likeness of a human being/Adam" (Ezek 1:26–28), a phrase bursting with incarnational implications. If Genesis 1–2 captures both God's transcendence and immanence,[21] why should Ezekiel (which echoes so much of it) not do the same?

With all this in mind, this vision caused Ezekiel to "fall on [his] face" in not just terror but also in adoration (Ezek 1:28). These two different functions of the same vision (i.e., the one purging and the other resurrecting), which this study has now elucidated, are not unique to Ezekiel but are evident in other events of the Old and New Testaments as Peter's explication of the crucifixion attests (Acts 3:14–19). Accordingly there is no doubt that Ezekiel is called בֶּן־אָדָם to stress his solidarity with fallen Adam, his creatureliness, and his inhumanity. The previous chapter argued that the fallen sons of man/Adam (who bore his fallen image like all his descendants) had to experience the existential dread of the hidden God (*deus absconditus*) (Ezek 39:23–24) through God's purging or killing Word (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:3–10; 3:1–3. Cf. Gen 3:14, 16–19; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6) so that they would be freed of rebellion and the lust for death. But the Book of Ezekiel introduces another dimension to the expression בֶּן־אָדָם. Ezekiel is also called בֶּן־אָדָם to show his solidarity with the One whose Likeness is as the Appearance of a Human Being/Adam," his creaturely relationship with the Creator, and his paradigmatic renewed humanity. In other words, Ezekiel was recreated or justified in the likeness of God and a faith-relationship with him so that he might embody for the Israelites what it means to be truly human

[21] Joan E. Cook, "Genesis," in *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary*, ed. Daniel Durken (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2017), 46.

(i.e., what the first Adam was always created to be).[22] Not only that but this unique title marks Ezekiel out as an Adamic priestly prophet and type of the Second Adam sent to recreate Israel and mediate God's life-sustaining new temple presence to them. Pondering if Ezekiel might have become high priest had the exile not happened, Sweeney writes the following about the connotations of this title:

> YHWH commands Ezekiel to stand in the first segment of YHWH's speech in Ezekiel 2:1–2. YHWH addresses Ezekiel as *ben-'adam*, lit., "son of Adam" or "son of a human." The idiom "son of" typically designates a party as a member of a particular class.… But the term signifies much more in the case of Ezekiel. As a Zadokite priest who serves in the temple, Ezekiel—and all Zadokites for that matter—represents humanity at large as quite literally, a "son of Adam…." Insofar as Judean thought conceives the holy of holies of the temple as the Garden of Eden, the priest's entry into the holy of holies, guarded by a cherub, at Yom Kippur signifies an attempt to reenter the Garden of Eden from which Adam and Eve were expelled (See Gen 3) and thereby to reestablish the one ideal relationship between human beings and YHWH. Ezekiel describes a "spirit" that enters into him in which the divine presence of YHWH will speak through Ezekiel as YHWH's prophet."[23]

Levey goes further when he suggest Tg. Ps.-J. actually regards Ezekiel to be the second Adam and an Adamic priestly prophet as spelled out in the preface to this thesis. The targum renders אָדָם as a proper noun and consequently renders בֶּן־אָדָם "son of Adam" (בַּר אָדָם) rather than "son

[22] The word אָדָם shows up five hundred and sixty-one times in the Old Testament. The highest concentration occurs in Ezekiel (hundred and thirty-two times) where it occurs ninety-three times in the address "son of man/Adam." Ezekiel accounts for a quarter of all the times the word in used in the Old Testament. See Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 14–16nn76–98, 229–312. While most commentators argue that "son of man" has a negative connotation in Ezekiel, a few have suggested that it may have a positive connotation as well. Theodor Kliefoth writes, "God speaks with him as a man speaks with his friend; God speaks with him as a human being to a human being." See his *Das Buch Ezechiels* (Rostock: Hinstorff'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1864), 103. Duguid states: "This unusual form of address may thus be an aspect of the creation theme we saw in chapter 1. … Ezekiel himself is to be the founding member of a new community empowered by the infusion of the divine Spirit to a life of radical obedience." See his *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 69. Joyce writes, "The prophet is addressed throughout as 'Son of Man' (Heb. ben-'ādām; NRSV: 'Mortal'), and this evokes the first chapters of Genesis. See his *Ezekiel*, 33. Launderville states: "In Aramaic, 'ādām is a proper name. The figure enthroned on the celestial chariot here [Eze 1:26] has humanlike characteristics that the targumist labels Adam-like. According to Levey (1987:7), the targumist transliterates the Heb.'ādām here and in the title ben-'ādām (2:1, 3, 6, 8; 3:1, 3, 4, 10, etc.) not only to avoid Christian associations with the title 'son of man' but also to reference the elevated status of the primal Adam." *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, Forthcoming.

[23] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 31, 10–11, 17–18, 36, 43.

of man" (בְּנֵי־אֱנָשָׁא) or another variation of it (Ezek 2:1, etc. ArBib).[24] In light of the New Testament, it would be more correct to say that Ezekiel is a renewed first Adam, an Adamic priestly prophet, and type of the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. In point of fact, the son of man/Adam functioned like God's creative Word in the valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:4–8. Cf. Gen 1:3; Prov 8:22–31; John 1:1–4). Ezekiel continues to be called בֶּן־אָדָם (Ezek 40:4; 43:7, etc.) when he fell on his face (in respect and adoration again) (Ezek 43:2–3; 44:4. Cf. Rev 1:17–18; 4:8, 10–11, 14) as he was permitted one of the grandest tours in all the Bible, a vision of the new temple, and was allowed to provide Israel with a new temple Torah.[25] Finally, Revelation's remark about the glorified Christ, "the Glory of God" (Rev 21:23), being "One Like a Son of Man/Human Being" (*ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου*) (Rev 1:13; 14:14) suggests that John thinks בֶּן־אָדָם is a designation for Christification (i.e., re-humanization in the likeness of Christ).

In the midst of his call then, this fallen son of man/Adam had to experience Lord GOD's gracious self-revelation (*deus revelatus*) (Ezek 39:29) in the "likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam" (דְּמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה אָדָם) through God's resurrecting Word and life-giving Spirit (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:1–2, 8–10; 3:1–3; 11:14–21. Cf. Gen 3:15; 22:5; Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 11:17–19, Rev 4:2) so that Ezekiel would be eschatologically recreated or justified in the likeness of God and in a faith-relationship with him. Blenkinsopp senses this encounter with the Glory of the LORD in the "likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam" eschatologically reconstituted Ezekiel in the likeness of God when he writes:

> At this point we might recall the creation of humanity in Gen. 1:26–27, from the same priestly tradition mentioned earlier. There humanity (*'adam*) is created in the likeness (*demut*) of God. Here God appears in the likeness of humanity (*demut kemar'eh 'adam*).

[24] *The Targum of Ezekiel*, 6–8, 23n1.
[25] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 207–8.

> Humanity is in God's image, God is in humanity's image—a mysterious connaturality, not confined to the superior faculties (as Augustine), encompassing in some mysterious way the entire person, corporeal, psychical, and spiritual. Needless to say, and sad to say, that image is not always, perhaps not often, easy to discern. It is easier to speak of it as a goal or task rather than a present reality. Perhaps that is what Paul meant when, using the same traditional imagery, he spoke of the Christian reflecting the effulgence (*doxa*) of the Lord and being changed into his likeness from one degree to another (II Cor. 3:18).[26]

If the Creator God originally formed the first Adam in the image of God and a faith-relationship with himself through a forensic and inbreathed act of creation or justification (Gen 1:3, 1:26–27; 2:7), then only the Creator God can reform Adam's fallen progeny in the likeness of God and a trust-relationship through another such act (Ezek 1:26–3:3; 11:17–20; 36:22–38; 37:1–14; 39:25–29).[27]

In a recapitulation of the first Adam's fall and exile from Eden, the exiled son of man/Adam was lifted beyond God's Edenic throne guardians (Ezek 1:5. Cf. Gen 3:24) and even above the "expanse" (Ezek 1:22. Cf. Gen 1:6) to behold the "Glory of the LORD" whose "likeness is as the appearance of a human being/Adam" (Ezek 1:26, 28; [ὁμοίωμα ἀνδρός] 8:2? Cf. Gen 1:1; 2:4). This was so that Ezekiel could be eschatologically recreated or justified in the likeness of God and in a faith-relationship with him, which caused the son of man/Adam to "fall on [his] face" in both terror and adoration (Ezek 1:28. Cf. Gen 1:26–28). It is only faith and the likeness of God that make human beings fully human—fully alive. It is only when human beings are fully human that they reflect the Glory of the LORD.

The Lord GOD then "spoke" (וַיֹּאמֶר) his creative or justifying word to Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:1–2. Cf. Gen 1:3). As he spoke to the son of man/Adam, the life-giving "Spirit,"

[26] Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 22.

[27] In contrast to this study's argument that the Lord GOD recreated Ezekiel in the image of God in accord with Genesis creation theology, C. A. Strine thinks that Ezekiel's call is based on the creation of an Mesopotamian cult statue induction ritual; that is, an "Opening of the Mouth" ritual. See his "Ezekiel's Image Problem," 271–72.

associated with the act of creation (Gen 1:2; 2:7; Rom 8:11; Rev 4:2)[28] and prophetic empowerment (Num 11:25; 24:2; 1 Sam 10:10; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Chr 15:1; 24:20)[29] "entered into [him] and raised [him] to his feet" so that he might become a living being and an Adamic priestly prophet because he could not rise on his own (Ezek 2:1–2; 11:5, 19–20; 36:26–27; 37:14). Most recent translations render the anarthrous רוּחַ in Ezekiel 2:2 as "the Spirit" (NKJV, NLT, NIV, ESV, CSB, LU17, NASB) or "the spirit" (NABR, RNJB) because the immediate context and later contexts warrant it. GNB and BB translate it as "God's spirit." CEV translates it "his Spirit." NJPS, NRSV, REB, ZB, EÜ, and Alter conversely render it "spirit."[30] But only CEB, NET, and Goldingay translate it as "wind." Block points out:

> The text notes that the raising of the prophet occurs simultaneously with the sound of the voice, which suggests that this *rûaḥ* may be the source of the word's dynamic and energizing power. This can be none other the Spirit of God, and the *rûaḥ* that energizes Ezekiel must be the same *rûaḥ* that had animated the wheels in 1:12, 20–21, and that will control his movements throughout his ministry.[31]

Not only that, but this is the very same Spirit through which the Lord GOD later recreated the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests:

> Therefore, say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'It is not for your sake (לְֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם), house of Israel, that I am about to act (אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה), but for the sake of my holy name (כִּי אִם־לְשֵׁם־קָדְשִׁי), which you have profaned among the nations where you went. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,' declares the Lord GOD, 'when I show myself holy through you in their sight (בְּהִקָּדְשִׁי בָכֶם לְעֵינֵיהֶם). For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. Moreover,

[28] Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 24–25; Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 626; Roehrs and Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study*, 538.

[29] This use of "Spirit" is associated with kings and prophets but not priests, except for the priestly prophets Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (2 Chr 24:20; Matt 23:35; Luke 11:50–51) and Ezekiel. See S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry, "רוּחַ," *TDOT* 13:390.

[30] Note that ZB, EÜ, LU17, and BB capitalize all nouns as is the custom in German.

[31] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 114–15, 115n11.

> I will give you a new heart (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ) and put a new spirit within you (וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם); and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר). I will put my Spirit within you (וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם) and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my rules and do them. And you will live in the land that I gave to your fathers, so you will be my people and I will be your God.' … 'Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. I am not doing [this] for your sake,' declares the Lord GOD, 'let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, house of Israel!'" "… And they will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden (כְּגַן־עֵדֶן)….'" (Ezek 36:22–28, 31–32, 35).

Here the Lord GOD's action for the sake of his name in Ezekiel 36:22–35 is explicitly connected with justification (Ezek 36:22–23), recreation (Ezek 36:25–27, 35), and the work of the Spirit (Ezek 36:27).[32] If Ezekiel scholars recognize this to be about the recreation of the Israelites, how can Ezekiel's call experience be anything less.

As Ezekiel's prophetic task was being spelled out, Ezekiel's favorite expression for God, "Lord GOD" (אֲדֹנָי יֱהוִה), is first used (Ezek 2:4. Cf. Rev 1:8). This is same name of God Abraham first used when he was counted righteous or justified by faith (Gen 15:2, 6, 8. Cf. Rom 4:2–3). After the initial commissioning of his prophetic call, Ezekiel does not give into rebelliousness (unlike the first Adam), but trusts God's command to eat a "scroll of a book" (מְגִלַּת־סֵפֶר) so that he can fully internalize God's purging and resurrecting Word (Ezek 2:8–3:3. Cf. 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6; Rev 5:1–14; 10:8–11) and partake from the sweetness of the wisdom tree of life to accomplish his mission (Gen 2:9, 16–17; Exod 3:1–22; 25:31–40; Prov 3:18–20; John 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 2:3; 2 Tim 3:15; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14; 19). Ezekiel could not have found the Lord GOD's scroll sweet unless he had been recreated or justified. Notice also that the New Testament recognizes the convergence of the word, wisdom, and temple, but in the person of

[32] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 1049–62.

Christ (John 1:14; 2:19, 21–22; 4:23; 14:6; Rev 2:7; 5:12; 21:1–22:21), the image of the Father, in whom the image is restored in believers. In addition to being a test, Odell maintains the scroll-eating is only a symbolic representation of the priestly eating of the sin offering associated with priestly ordination (Lev 8:2, 31) because the scroll was not a real sin offering and Ezekiel could not be fully a priest without the Jerusalem temple. She and Sweeney further point out that the week Ezekiel sat before receiving the rest of his commission (Ezek 3:16) recalls the sequestered week priests observed as part of their ordination before they could actualize their priesthood (Cf. Lev 8:33).[33] He receives this commission in "the valley" (הַבִּקְעָה) (Ezek 3:23). "The valley" is also associated with the location where Ezekiel sees the resurrection of the dry bones (Ezek 37), suggesting that his ultimate purpose is the recreation of Israel.[34]

The very same acts which once created the first Adam in the image of God and in a faith-relationship with him so that he might perform priestly duties and have royal mastery and rule over creation as one upright, immortal, holy, righteous, strong, and knowledgeable, now recreated and empowered Ezekiel to serve as an Adamic priestly prophet to Israel of recreation as well as of a new temple, city, Israel, and land. Even though all of the verbs associated with the triliteral root ברא occur infrequently in Ezekiel (Ezek 11:24, 35, 23:47; 28:13, 15), the conception of the divine activity of ברא (i.e., the eschatological recreation or justification of purely passive fallen human beings that only God can do) clearly underlies the book's theology.

The New Testament recognized this divine activity of ברא was not just fundamental to Genesis and Isaiah but also to Ezekiel when the New Testament connected recreation (in Christ)

[33] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 44–47; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 8, 24–25, 34–36.
[34] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 37.

or reconciliation with the "new human being/Adam," the "likeness of God," and the "righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:17–18, 21 says: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ), he is a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις); the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all of these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ ... so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ)." "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς) (Eph 2:10). "[Christ] has abolished the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new human being out of the two, in this way making peace" (ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην) (Eph 2:15).

> But you did not learn Christ in this way, if you have heard him and have been taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old human being (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον), which is corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind (τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν) and put on the new human being, which according to [the likeness of] God has been created in true righteousness and holiness (ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας) (Eph 4:20–24. Cf. Luke 1:74–75).

Colossians 3:10 adds "the new [human being]" … "is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him" (τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν) (Cf. 1 Cor 11:7). Even more significant is the New Testament's recognition of the role that Spirit plays in Ezekielian creation theology. 2 Corinthians 3:16–18 not only associates "the Spirit of the Lord" (τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου) with "freedom" (ἐλευθερία) but it also associates "beholding the Glory of the Lord" (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι) with "being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα

μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν).[35] Finally, the New Testament connects becoming fully human and regaining the image with being conformed to Christ and his image (John 6:53–58; Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; Eph 2:15; Heb 2:5–18), indicating that he is the image of God itself. That said, the New Testament does not just call Christ the image of God (Wis 7:26; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), it also refers to him as the "son of man" (John 1:51; 3:14; 13:31; Rev 1:13; 14:14),[36] suggesting Ezekiel is a type of Christ. Christ is the new human/Adam and image bearer par excellence as well as the consummate Adamic priestly prophet as evident already at his baptism (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:22–34; Heb 1:3; 2:17; 3:1; 4:14–5:10; 7:1–8:6; 9:1–28). It is Christ, then, that ultimately reveals what it means to be fully human.

If Ezekiel did not turn thirty until his commissioning, then he was not old enough to have been consecrated (i.e., set aside as holy via anointing or unction [Exod 30:22–33]) as a priest before the exile like the priests (Lev 8:12, 30), kings (1 Sam 16:13–14), and prophets (1 Kgs 19:16) of the Old Testament (albeit prophetic consecration may not have been universal). Could Ezekiel's call be interpreted as priestly prophetic consecration in some sense? There is some evidence for such an interpretation such as the possible connection between the date of his call and priestly consecration (Ezek 1:1), the priestly connotations of the son of man/Adam title (Ezek 2:1), the priest-like assumption of his office seven days later (Ezek 3:15–16. Cf. Exod 29:35–37; Lev 8:33–35), the Spirit's association with anointing (1 Sam 16:13–14), the parallels with Christ' baptism and consecration (Matt 3:16; Luke 3:21–22; Acts 10:38), and the priestly gatekeeper function of his watchman role (Ezek 3:17. Cf. Lev 10:8–11; Deut 33:10). However, calling this recreation and priestly prophetic call a consecration in the traditional sense is

[35] Romans 8:14 says that those led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

[36] See also J. Jeremias "ἄνθρωπος," *TDNT* 1:364–66; and Moisés Silva's remarks on "son of man" in "υἱός," *NIDNTTE* 4:538–46.

probably saying too much. Perhaps the fact that Ezekiel was called and empowered to perform an explicitly priestly prophetic office without consecration was also intended to illustrate the disordered predicament the Israelites had gotten themselves into.

Lord GOD Resurrects the Israelites via the Ministry of His Adamic Priestly Prophet

Ezekiel's ministry to the exiles demonstrates that he was a paradigmatic renewed first Adam, an Adamic priestly prophet, and a type of the Second Adam. First of all, the nature of Ezekiel's calling and his embodiment of that calling as the new son of man/Adam revealed to the Israelites that the Lord GOD alone can and intends to recreate them in the divine likeness and in a faith-relationship with God. This was so that they, too, can reflect the Glory of the LORD whose likeness is as the appearance of a human being/Adam and make his name holy among the nations as a kingdom of priests. Second, the Lord GOD used this type of the Second Adam, this priestly watchman,[37] to publicly execute God's resurrecting Word and send out his life-giving Spirit so that the Israelites really do become new sons of man/Adam themselves. Third, the Lord GOD used his Adamic priestly prophet, this type of the Greater Moses, to restore a Zadokite mediation of the Lord GOD's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence to the Israelites in anticipation of the full realization of the new temple, city, Israel, and land.

While Israelites were personally responsible for their rebellion, they too lack the ability to turn from their wickedness, repent, and recreate themselves (Ezek 36:22–23). Since no human being can recreate or justify himself, the Adamic priestly prophet had to rely on the very same performative Word that recreated him to do the same for his fellow Israelites. Ezekiel had to first preach God's killing Word (law) to purge Israel of its rebellion (Ezek 9:1–9; 20:37–38; 22:17–22, 31; 24:1–14; 34:17–19. Cf. Gen 3:14, 16–19; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6) as evident in the previous

[37] Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 12–13; 36.

chapter. Despite the coldness and dread that fallen humans feel in the face of divine transcendence and holiness, the Lord God is not an impersonal and tyrannical sadist that takes pleasure in his alien work. This is the same Lord God that takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that they should repent and live (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11). Therefore, Ezekiel exposes the inhumanity of human/active righteousness autonomous from God so that human beings would stop choosing death and forsaking life. Only then can Ezekiel begin to preach God's resurrecting Word (grace) (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Cor 3:6) so that an undeserving remnant (Ezek 5:2; 6:8–10; 12:16; 14:22–23; 20:41; 28:25; 39:28) can be divinely reconstituted (Ezek 11:17–20; 16:59–63; 20:33–44; 28:25–26; 34:11–31; 36:22–38; 37:1–28; 39:25–29. Cf. Gen 3:15; 22:5; Heb 11:17–19, Rev 4:2). This is God's resurrecting proper work which alone can re-humanize human beings with divine/passive righteousness in a faith-relationship with God. Ezekiel even provides a book written in a unique first person style (save Ezek 1:2), which calls the hearer to become the "I" along with him and thus become a fellow new son of man/Adam.[38]

One of Ezekiel's first acts as a commissioned Adamic priestly prophet was to bear the iniquity of the people. This occurred through the binding sign act (Ezek 4:4–6): "And you, lie down on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it. For the number of days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity (תִּשָּׂא אֶת־עֲוֹנָם)" (Ezek 4:4) Hummel explains both the priestly and Christological significance of the passage:

> The abrupt "and you" signals a new series of action prophecies [sign acts]. Instead of representing Yahweh to Israel, the prophet now acts as a priest representing Israel, bearing the burdens of his people's sins. More precisely, he can be taken as typifying Jesus Christ, who is "Israel reduced to one," and who bore the entire sin of the people (Is 53:5–6, 11–12). … Very similar language is used in the scapegoat ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:21–22). The sins of the people were first placed (נָתַן is the verb used there) on the head of the goat before the goat bears (נָשָׂא) them and carries them off into

[38] See also Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 8.

> the desert. Comparable language is used of the high priest. It appears in Ex. 28:36–38, part of the investiture ceremony of Aaron (the prototypical high priest), specifically in his obligation to wear a turban or miter on his forehead with a golden plate so that he could "bear the iniquities of the holy things" offered by the faithful (to make up for any lapse or deficiency) so that the offerings "may be acceptable before the Yahweh." … Even more explicit is Lev 10:16–17, where Moses expresses concerns about the improper behavior of Aaron's two surviving sons with respect to the sin offering, which, he reminds them, "has been given to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement [לְכַפֵּר] for them before Yahweh."[39]

Hummel concludes that this is only representative sin bearing because he had been exiled before he was ordained a priest.

During the vision of the Jerusalem slaughter, those that moaned and groaned were marked with a Hebrew tav, "X," or a cross (Ezek 9:4. Cf. Exod 12:7, 12–13, 26–30; Rev 7:3–4; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4). Those so marked would survive the slaughter and be included among the exilic remnant (Ezek 5:2; 6:8–10; 12:16; 14:22–23; 20:41; 28:25; 39:28). If the mark placed on the survivors was meant to recall the Passover (i.e., blood painted on Jewish doorpost), then this sign signaled more than survival. It signaled that God was performing another unilateral Exodus-like act to bring an unworthy but repentant remnant over from death to life outside the land. Block puts it well when he writes,

> The escapees will emerge from their dispersal among the nations a transformed people. The process of transformation is not without ironies. First, the spiritual renewal will occur on foreign soil, which most Israelites considered unclean or defiled. Second, to many Israelites, contact with Yahweh depended on residence in his land. Now they would learn that the very opposite was the case—continued presence in the land signified God's rejection. The future lay with the exiles.[40]

Just when Ezekiel could no longer bear the Lord GOD's judgment of Jerusalem any longer (Ezek 11:1–13), he received a oracle of restoration. Ezekiel 11:14–21 functions like a sort of protoevangelium (Gen 3:15) amidst the description of Israelite fallenness (Gen 3:14, 16–19).

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[39] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 151–52.
[40] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 230–31.

In contrast to the Jerusalemites who were convinced that they and the center of the world, the Jerusalem temple, could never fall (Ezek 11:1–13), Ezekiel 11:14–21 explicitly spells out the recapitulation of those expelled from the temple and the land. The Lord GOD has Ezekiel prophesy that it is the exiles, "the men who have the right to redeem you" (אַנְשֵׁי גְאֻלָּתֵךְ), who would redeem the land (Ezek 11:15. Cf. Lev 25:23–55; Ruth 4:6ff; Jer 32:7ff).[41] Lest one read Ezekiel's recreation theology in terms of a simple restoration of biological Israel, Ezekiel does not simply equate Israel even with the biological Israelite exiles (Ezek 9:1–11; 11:21; 20:38; 34:16–22; 47:22–23. Cf. Rom 4:16; 9:6; Gal 3:6–9).

Cook rightly observes: "In Ezekiel, for God to be paradigmatically *alive* is for God to be holy. In the emphasis on sanctification in Ezekiel one should see nothing less than the living God cultivating life. Ezekiel 40–48 establishes a utopian sanctuary occupied by the Presence precisely as God's terrestrial bridgehead in a battle on behalf of life."[42] For this reason, the Lord God reveals through his Adamic priestly prophet that already amid the exile he has extended the locus of recreation, his life-sustaining temple presence, to the exiles independent of the first Israelite temple: "[Yet] I was a sanctuary in small measure (לְמִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט) for them in the countries where they have gone" (Ezek 11:16; 8:6; 9:6. Cf. Exod 15:7; 25:8; Lev 16:33; 21:33; John 1:14; 2:19–22; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 3:12; 21:3).[43] The word מְעַט could be understood adjectively like the LXX, Vulg., NKJV, NABR, NET, Alter, and Goldingay do. But recent Ezekiel scholarship, reference works, and a few translations (ZB, CEB, EÜ, LU17) have tended to understand it adverbially in

[41] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "גְּאֻלָּה," *HALOT* 1:170. The LXX and Syr. reading "the men of your captivity" (לוּתֵךְ) is probably a misreading or scribal error. Tg. Ps.-J. and Vulg. support the MT.

[42] Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 19–21.

[43] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "מִקְדָּשׁ," *HALOT* 1:625–26.

the sense of degree,[44] though there are scholars and a number of modern translations (NRSV, REB, GNB, CEV, NLT, NIV, ESV, CSB, RNJB, NASB) that understand it temporally because of the subsequent (albeit not dependent) v. 17.[45] The translation offered above, "sanctuary in small measure," follows Block in attempting to preserve Ezekiel's apparently intended ambiguity.[46] In latter Jewish tradition, this was understood as a reference to the development of the synagogue. Tg. Ps.-J. renders it: "Therefore, say: 'Thus says the Lord God: Because I scattered them in the countries, therefore I have given them synagogues, second only to the temple, because they are few in number in the countries to which they have been exiled (Ezek 3:16 ArBib). If מְעַט is to be understood in the sense of degree, then it could mean small in comparison to the first temple. But it may also mean small extent because it is a foretaste of Ezekiel's new temple. If it is to be understood temporally, then it means for a short time until the realization of the second temple and ultimately Ezekiel's new temple. Either way the Lord GOD's use of Ezekiel's oracles to mediate God's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence to the exiles shows just how essential temple presence is for maintaining the recreated divine likeness and a faith-relationship with God. Tuell agrees though he overlooks how Ezekiel's own recreation was to exemplify what God will to do for the exiles:

> How can the exiles understand the presence of the Lord if it is unmediated by the temple with its sacred rites and rituals? At least in part, the answer would appear to be that Ezekiel the priest has himself become an intermediary between God and God's people. Several features of Ezekiel's message, and indeed of chapters 8–11 in particular, suggest this. … Still, it is Ezekiel's message, not his person, that is the center of the book,

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[44] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "מְעַט," *HALOT* 1:611; Rudolf Meyer and Herbert Donner, "מְעַט," Gesenius[18] 709–10; *IBHS*, §39.3.4b; Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 262; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 112–14; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 65. The NJPS's "diminished sanctity" is an unsubstantiated translation that goes against the theocentric thrust of the pericope. See Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 65.

[45] David J. A. Clines, "מְעַט," *DCH* 5:395; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 145; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 63; Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 150–51; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 308–9.

[46] Block, The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24, 350.

> suggesting that Ezekiel's words, not his personality, provide the point of contact between the Lord and the exilic community. … Perhaps it is Ezekiel's book, then, that becomes a means of divine presence to Ezekiel's community….[47]

In contradistinction to Levenson, the temple cultus is not about Israelites shoring up a not-yet-capable Lord GOD's ability to hold back uncreated chaos until he can finally defeat it. For Ezekiel, the temple cultus is where the Lord GOD *himself* continues to purge the Israelites of the manmade rebellious chaos of sin, atones for them (Ezek 16:63), and radiates his life-sustaining presence to them through the ministry of his priests so that his kingdom of priests can draw more and more into Israel.[48]

The Lord GOD goes on to utter a number of first person imperfect speech acts here and elsewhere through his prophet. These speech acts make the effective promise that what God has already eschatologically manifested in Ezekiel he will make eschatologically manifest in the exiles so that one day these effective promises will be fully manifested in both the exiles and Ezekiel alike. "I will gather (וְקִבַּצְתִּי) you from the peoples." "I will give you the land of Israel (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־אַדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל)," and "when they come there, they will remove (וְהֵסִירוּ) all of its detestable things and all of its abominations from it" (Ezek 11:17–18. Cf. Gen 3:24). He will recreate them, restoring Edenic faith, immortality, and strength: "I will give them one/new heart and new spirit I will put in them" (וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם) (Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:26. Cf. Gen 2:7, 16–17; 3:19; 5:3; 5:5ff; Wis 2:23–24; Sir 17:3; Rom 5:12; 8:10; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 53–55; and Rev 21:4).[49] The Lord GOD will re-humanize them and bring their

[47] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 58–59.

[48] Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence*, 12, 14–25, 38, 121–27.

[49] The MT Ezek 11:19 reads "one" (אֶחָד) heart, though some Hebrew manuscripts and the Syr. read "new." MT Ezek 18:31 and 36:26 support the "new" reading. The LXX renders it "another" (*ἑτέραν*), which is probably based on reading the Hebrew text as אַחֵר. Tg. Ps.-J. translates it "reverent" (דְּחִיל). That said, one heart also makes good sense in the exilic context and coheres with Jer 32:38 (1 Chr 12:39; 2 Chr 30:12).

repentance to fruition by removing the inhuman "heart of stone from their flesh" and giving them a "heart of flesh" (לֵב בָּשָׂר), thus undoing their brazen face and hardheartedness (Ezek 11:19. Cf. Ezek 3:6–7). Ezekiel surely would have no time for any later Gnostic anthropologies that equate spirit and flesh with the immaterial and material respectively. This "one/new heart and new spirit" finds its immediate fulfillment in the new life of faith that makes humans really alive (John 1:12–13; 3:3; 5:24; Rom 6:6–11; 2 Cor 5:17–18; Titus 3:5; 1 John 5:1; Jam 1:18; Rev 20:5). On the one hand, this one/new heart and new spirit clearly refers to something more than the fallen "breath of life" (נְשָׁמָה) (Gen 2:7; 7:22; Deut 20:16), a "living being/life/soul" (נֶפֶשׁ) (Gen 2:7; 9:5), or "breath of life" (רוּחַ חַיִּים) (Gen 6:17) that the "Spirit" (Gen 6:3) animates. Human beings retained all of these after the fall and the loss of the divine image. On the other hand, Genesis and Ezekielian creation anthropology probably speaks of the one/new heart and new spirit in terms of being a spiritually heightened breath of life and living being/life/soul to affirm an anthropology of dependence and to show that a spiritually dead life is not life at all. S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry write:

> Whereas the word *nepeš* can denote the whole person, *rûaḥ* is always said to be "within" … someone (Isa. 19:3, 14; 26:9; 63:11; Ezk. 11:19 = 36:26–27; Hos. 5:4; Hab. 2:19; Zech. 12:1; Ps. 51:12 [10]). Like "heart," *rûaḥ* denotes a person's "interior," the spiritual center from which the entire person is engaged. In the texts cited, *rûaḥ* and *nepeš* denote the vital principle, dependent on God for renewal and preservation. Therefore *rûaḥ* and *nepeš* trust in God and yearn for God.[50]

If the new spirit refers to spiritual life in all its fullness, then the one/new heart here refers to the capability to trust in the Lord GOD.

> [Yahweh] takes away a heart of stone (*lēḇ ʾeḇen*: according to 1 S. 25:37, a dead *lēḇ*) and gives a "new heart," a new and authentic life in relationship to Yahweh (Ezk.11:19; the

[50] S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry, "רוּחַ," *TDOT* 13:375–6. See also C. Westermann," "רוּחַ," *TLOT* 3:1209–10.

> MT reads *lēḇ ʾeḥāḏ* [cf. Jer 32:39], but the LXX presupposes *lēḇ ʾaḥēr*; possibly the text should be emended to read *lēḇ ḥāḏāš* as in Ezk. 18:31; 36:26; cf. 1 S. 10:9). This new creation revives those who have been turned to stone, fills them with a new *rûaḥ* and reestablishes the lost reality of the covenant, as the beneficiaries cast aside their sins (Ezek 18:31) and obey God's will (36:26).[51]

The Lord GOD's Spirit is later revealed to be the one who creates this one/new heart and spirit (Ezek 36:26–27).[52] By means of this act, he calls the Israelites to serve once again as royal priests who support the Zadokite priests in reflecting the divine likeness to the nations and making God's name holy among them (Gen 1:26–28; Exod 19:5–6; 20:7. Cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

In Edenic uprightness, righteousness, and holiness, then "they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and do them" (לְמַעַן֙ בְּחֻקֹּתַ֣י יֵלֵ֔כוּ וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַ֖י יִשְׁמְר֣וּ וְעָשׂ֑וּ אֹתָ֔ם) (Ezek 11:20. Cf. Gen 1:31; 3:17; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Eccl 7:29; Wis 9:2–3; Luke 1:74–75; Eph 4:23–2). Allen explains, "God had to break in, to do 'what the law could not do …, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled' (Rom 8:3–4). The old divine standards were to continue (cf. 20:11, 19), and the human condition was to be eschatologically changed to rise to their sublime level."[53] Not only is heartfelt living according to God's will the necessary effect rather than the cause of relationship with God (Ezek 5:6–7; 18:9, 17, 19, 21; 20:11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24; 33:14–16), the real Edenic freedom is the ability to choose between authentic goods rather than the ability to choose license. This section closes with the Lord God's renewal of his unilateral covenant of trust which is alluded to with subsequent words: "Then they will be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek 11:20. Cf. Gen 2:16–17).[54] Nevertheless, not all the

[51] H.-J. Fabry "לֵב,"*TDOT* 7:425–26. See also C. Westermann," "לֵב," *TLOT* 2:640–41.

[52] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "רוּחַ," *HALOT* 2:1200.

[53] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 165.

[54] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 354.

biological exiles' hearts would refrain from returning to their detestable things and abominations when they returned to the physical land (Ezek 11:21). Not unlike the effective promise of the protoevangelium was uttered to Adam and Eve in the middle of a catalogue of sin's consequences and the expulsion from Eden, the Lord GOD's effective promises (Ezek 11:14–21, etc.) are uttered to the exiles in the midst of sin's consequences and God's departure from Jerusalem (Ezek 11:22–25). In contradistinction to Strine, the renewal of the likeness of God is not only intended for Ezekiel, but the Israelites as well.[55]

Even though the Israelites have so broken the Sinai covenant with God that only the metaphor of a child-sacrificing nymphomaniac bride could capture God's sense of betrayal, the Lord GOD still states, "Yet I will remember my covenant with you in the day of your youth, and I will establish it with you (וַהֲקִמוֹתִי לָךְ) as an everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם)" (Ezek 16:60, 62; 20:37; 34:25; 37:26. Cf. Gen 9:12, 16; 17:7, 13, 19; Jer 31:31–35; 32:40; 50:4). The same unmerited covenant of trust was also made with Noah after the postdiluvian recreation and especially with Abraham (Lev 26:42, 45) in whom all the families of the earth would be blest (Gen 12:3). Normally the Lord GOD speaks of his atonement through the ministration of his priests. Here the Lord GOD goes on to drive home his sole priestly ability to ultimately atone for Israel in the fullest sense of the word when he says, "You will know that I am LORD" (וְיָדַעַתְּ כִּי־ אֲנִי יְהוָה) so that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth again because of your disgrace when I atone for you (בְּכַפְּרִי־לָךְ) for all that you have done" (Ezek 16:62–63. Cf. Gen 3:22; 5:3; Sir 17:7; and Col 3:10).[56] Notice also that atonement brings about a full

[55] Strine, "Ezekiel's Image," 272.
[56] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 496; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 96–97, 106.

realization of shame over sin and repentance as evident by the recognition formula. At the same time, the ultimate aim of the Ezekielian prevalence of the recognition formula in all its various permutations is the genuine restoration in the Israelites of the understanding and knowledge associated with the divine likeness.[57] If the Lord GOD only wanted to vindicate himself, he would never have brought an end to Israelite shame (Ezek 16:52, 54, 61, 63; 20:43; 36:31–32; 43:6–9; 44:6–14) as he does in the consummation of all things (Ezek 39:26). Until the consummation of all things, such shame was meant to sharpen the Israelites' consciences lest they return to their dead ways.

Ezekiel 20 provides a history of Israelite rebellions against God all the way back to the exodus. Instead of immediately pouring out his wrath on the Israelites (Ezek 20:8, 13, 21), the Lord GOD had repeatedly stayed his wrath, declaring, "But I acted for the sake of my name (וָאֲעַשׂ לְמַעַן שְׁמִי), that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations (הַגּוֹיִם) among whom [the Israelites] lived" (Ezek 20:9; 14, 22; 36:21–22; 39:7). God's action for the sake of his name in the sight of the nations should not be misunderstood as some sort of divine narcissism. His exodus action for the sake of his name (Ezek 20:5–7, 9, 41) was not only intended to prove to all the nations the reliability of God's covenant fidelity by returning the undeserving Israelites to the land flowing with milk and honey (Exod 6:2–8. cf. Gen 3:24). It was also intended to make the Israelites into a kingdom of priests that reflected the divine likeness and made his name holy among the nations (Gen 1:26–28; Exod 19:5–6; 20:7. Cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6) so that they might partake of the new Eden as well (Ezek 47:22–23. Cf. Exod 12:48–49; 22:21; Lev 19:33–34; Isa 14:1; 56:3–8; Rom 10:12; Gal 3:7–9, 28; Eph 3:6; Col 3:10–11). Even when the

[57] Lapsley, "Ezekiel," 477–78; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 27–28, 91; Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 433–36nn 359–86, 467–504.

Lord GOD finally did reassert his kingship over these rebels (Ezek 20:33) and commit himself to wrathful purging action (Ezek 20:33–39), he performed this action for the sake of his holy name too (Ezek 20:39) so as to recreate an undeserving remnant (Ezek 20:40–44). By that point there was no other way to restore his kingdom of priests and their missiological function. The Sanctifier says, "I will show myself holy through you in the sight of the nations (וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בָכֶם לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם)" (Ezek 20:41, 12; 28:25; 36:22–23, 38; 37:28; 38:23; 39:7, 25, 27). Hummel explains,

> Yahweh says, "I will show myself holy through you in the sight of the nations" (similar to 38:23), which seems to require that the new Israel will serve as a "light to the nations" (Is. 49:6), as a conduit through whom Yahweh will proclaim his saving Gospel (through which God imparts the very righteousness and holiness of Christ to all who believe). This is in contrast to former times, when his name and holiness were desecrated through Israel (20:13–16; 21–26, 39). Instead Yahweh has shown himself holy, both by his purifying judgment on his people and by his ability to effect a new Exodus, gather a new Israel, and restore his people to their homeland.[58]

Sad to say, some of the biological exiles persisted in their rebellion against God to meet their sad but chosen final end during the exile (Ezek 20:38). Even those who were undeservedly recreated would loath themselves for their evil deeds because they will now fully recognize how they disrespected their gracious God (Ezek 20:42–43). Nevertheless, the Lord GOD's graciousness abounds for "then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for my name's sake, not according to your evils ways or your corrupt deeds" (Ezek 20:44).

At this point in these divine utterances, Jerusalem fell (Ezek 33:21). The Lord GOD now takes up the fleecing of the people by political shepherds. As punishment, he checks them saying, "I will deliver (וְהִצַּלְתִּי) my flock from their mouth" and will shepherd Israel (Ezek

[58] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 613.

34:10). God will shepherd his flock through David: "Then I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David (עַבְדִּי דָוִיד), and he will feed them" (Ezek 34:23). "And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be prince (נָשִׂיא/ἄρχων) among them" (Ezek 34:24. Cf. Num 2:3; 2 Sam 3:18; 7:1–17; Hos 3:5; Jer 30:9). This eternal Davidic prince (Ezek 34:24; 37:25; 44:3; 45:7–22; 46:2–18; 48:21–22) is also called a Davidic "king" (מֶלֶךְ/ἄρχων) in Ezekiel 37:24. Here Ezekiel affirms the hope of a Messianic king of Israel, more specifically a new everlasting rule of David (Ezek 37:25), though it is not as pronounced as other prophets. Not even the Levites (much less some of the sheep themselves [Ezek 34:16–21]) refrained from fleecing the people. They too are demoted and Zadokite priesthood is elevated in their place (Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11).

The Lord GOD began to speak of the recapitulation of the land in Ezekiel 34:25–31 (Gen 1:22; 3:17–19; 9:2; Wis 9:2; Sir 17:4). It will be such that not even harmful animals will be present. The recapitulation of Eden talk gets ramped up in Ezekiel 36. Here a significant textual issue arises in the book that is reviewed in the footnote below.[59] In Ezekiel 36, the Lord GOD

[59] Greek Papyrus 967 (second or third century AD) is regarded to be a significant witness to the Greek text tradition of Ezekiel. After the Ezekiel 36:16–22b, the "Lord GOD's concern for his holy name" section, this papyrus omits Ezekiel 36:23c–38, the "I will put my Spirit within you" section. The papyrus then situates Ezekiel 37, the "valley of dry bones and I will be their God; they shall be my people' section, after Ezekiel 38–39, the "prophecy against Gog and the Lord GOD will restore Israel" section. In short, it reorganizes Ezekiel 36–48 as follows 36:1–23b; 38–39; 37; 40–48. Some scholars have therefore argued that Papyrus 967 shows the MT was still in a state of flux. They maintain that editors of the MT authored the sizable Ezekiel 36:23c–38 (i.e., 1,451 letters) to shore up the connection between the sanctifying of the holy name and the valley of the dry bones sections. The MT's Ezekiel 36:23c–38 is said to borrow from other sections, to employ unique Hebrew vocabulary, and to be uneven. They note that the Greek style of the LXX's Ezekiel 36:23c–38 is different from the Greek style of its surrounding context, suggesting a later translator made it. Finally, the Coptic-Sahidic lectionary treats Ezekiel 16–23a as a unit, and the sixth century AD Latin Codex Wiceburgensis lacks all of Ezekiel 36 (albeit it also deviates from Papyrus 967). This summary is based on Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 259–61. Other scholars have argued for the integrity of the MT. First, the recognition formula is not only found at the end of oracles (Ezek 28:22; 35:12; 37:13; 38:23; 39:28) contra the notion that Ezekiel 36:23b marks the end of the section. Second, the content of Ezekiel 36:23c–38 may well have necessitated its unique style. Third, Papyrus 967 make seventeen other significant omissions including whole columns of as many as twenty four lines. Fourth, the form critical method used to undermine the MT is not consistent with current scholarship. Fifth, the deletion of Ezekiel 36:23c–38 from 36:16–23b would yield an eight

demonstrates to the mountains of Israel, "For, behold, I am for you" (Ezek 36:9). For instance, the Lord GOD declares, "I will multiply on [the mountains of Israel] human and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful (וְרָבָ֥ו וּפָרָ֖ו); and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first" (Ezek 36:11. Cf. Cf. Gen 1:22, 28; 9:1–2; 47:27; Exod 1:7). The Lord GOD will act so decisively that this new creation will be even better than the first one.[60] The mountains of Israel will no longer "devour" human beings nor bereave your nation (וְגוֹיַ֖יִךְ; qere) of children" (i.e., a possible allusion to child sacrifice) (Ezek 36:14. Cf. Lev 20:3; Ezek 20:26). The Lord GOD then makes his most explicit declaration that Israelites are saved entirely by grace because there was nothing in them that could merit it: "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, It is not for your sake (לֹ֣א לְמַעַנְכֶ֗ם), house of Israel, that I am about to act (אֲנִ֤י עֹשֶׂה֙), but for my holy name (כִּ֣י אִם־לְשֵׁ֣ם־קָדְשִׁ֔י), which you have profaned among the nations where you went'" (Ezek 36:22. Cf. Deut 7:7). After vindicating the holiness of his great name, showing himself holy by making the Israelites holy before the nations and by returning the gathered Israelites to the land (Ezek 36:23–24),[61] the Lord GOD explicitly connects his heart-transplanting work with a regenerational baptism-like cleansing (Ezek 36:25.

verse restoration oracle that is disproportionally short compared to the others that average twenty-seven verses. The Lord GOD's defense of his holy name (i.e., Ezek 36:16–22b) would be unclear without Ezekiel 36:23c–38 (albeit this clarifying need also has been used as evidence for editorial redaction). Sixth, the reconstruction of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX is far from an exact science and fraught with speculation. One could argue that late intertestamental apocalypticism could just as easily have influenced Papyrus 967's reorientation of Ezekiel 37's resurrection oracle. Seventh, Ezekiel 36:23c–38 need not be construed as a bridge but as a regular example of Ezekiel bringing up a topic, dropping it, and then fleshing it out in a subsequent oracle. This summary is based on Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 337–43. See also Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 739–40; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 205–6.

[60] Lapsley, "Ezekiel," 473–74.

[61] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 204.

Cf. Gen 1:2; Lev 15:7, 11–12; Num 19:17–20; Psa 51:4, 9, 12–14; John 3:5).[62] Just as regenerational baptism also re-consecrates royal priests in the New Testament, Ezekiel's purifying water re-consecrates royal priests in the Old Testament. Ezekiel likewise explicitly connects this life-giving water with his Spirit for the first time since his own recreation (Ezek 2:2).

> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ) and put a new spirit within you (וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם); and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר). I will put my Spirit within you (וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם) and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my rules and do them (Ezek 36:25–27).

Regeneration will cause the Israelites to realize how they had rebelled against the Lord GOD as well as remind them that they had nothing with which to merit their recreation: "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. I am not doing [this] for your sake,' declares the Lord GOD, 'let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, house of Israel!'" (Ezek 36:31–32). Next the land will be so transformed that "they will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden (כְּגַן־עֵדֶן)….'" (Ezek 36:35; 47:1–12. Cf. Gen 2:4–14; Isa 51:3). Duguid adds, "In place of the one original *'adām* and his wife, the new garden will be filled with 'flocks of *'adām,*' that is, numerous 'people' who will fill the cites to overflowing (36:38)."[63]

[62] It is not just Christians that understood this to be a reference to baptism. The Qumran community appears to have developed a proselyte baptism from Ezek 36:25–27. Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, 248–49.

[63] Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 415–16.

So far Ezekiel has expressed some of the most transformative utterances of the Old Testament. But the exiles still felt despondent: "Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off'" (Ezek 37:11). The Lord GOD therefore ups the ante. If the Lord GOD could recreate human life from dry bones, then he can also bring about the inner and national resurrection of Israel. If he can undue physical death, then he can undo spiritual death (if not more). For this reason, the "hand of the Lord" came upon Ezekiel and the Spirit brought him out to the valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:1), probably the same valley where he was commissioned (Ezek 3:22–27). There the Lord GOD asked Ezekiel if this particular set of dry bones can be recreated: "Son of man/Adam, can these bones live?" Ezekiel's response shows that he would not deny that God can recreate even these bones and in deference recognizes that the Lord GOD can do what he wills, "Lord GOD, you know" (Ezek 37:3).

Just like the first creation and Ezekiel's own, this recreation was a twofold act of forming and inspiring or filling with life. But now Ezekiel, the son of man/Adam, would be empowered to serve as the mouthpiece or word of God.[64] His speech act likewise shows that he did indeed trust that God would do what he wills: "Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD'" (Ezek 37:5–6. Cf. Gen 1:1–3, 26–27; 2:7; Prov 8:22–31; John 1:1–4).[65] After the breathless bones received flesh, Ezekiel was then empowered like the Second Adam to send the Life-giving Spirit to them: "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Come forth from the four winds, breath (הָרֽוּחַ), and breathe (וּפְחֵי) on these slain, that they may come to life (Ezek 37:9, 14. Cf.

[64] Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 427–28; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 252.
[65] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 508.

Gen 2:7; John 16:7; 20:22; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6). Once Ezekiel did as commanded, "The breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army" (Ezek 37:10. Cf. 2:7). After recreating these dry bones, the Lord GOD explains, "'Son of man/Adam, these bones are the whole house of Israel….' Therefore prophesy (הִנָּבֵא), and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel'" (Ezek 37:11–12). Note that the next chapter will discuss the nature and meaning of Ezekiel 37 in more detail.

Similarly when the Lord GOD opens Israel's graves and returns them to the land, Ezekiel is to continue prophesying: "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, my people. I will put "my Spirit" (רוּחִי) within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your land" (Ezek 37:13–14). Ezekiel is then told to write, "For Judah and for the sons of Israel, and his companions" on one stick (עֵץ) that the Lord God will reunite with another stick on which the prophet is to write, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions" (Ezek 37:15–20. Cf. Jer 23:5–6; 31:2–6). Odell thinks each עֵץ is really a royal staff with the LXX, whereas Block thinks they are writing tablets with the Tg. Ps.-J.[66] "My servant David will [not just be prince now but] be king (מֶלֶךְ) over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in my ordinances, and keep my statutes, and observe them" (Ezek 37:24). "And they shall live on the land … forever; and David my servant shall be their prince forever (עַד־עוֹלָם)" (Ezek 37:25). He

[66] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 456–57; Block Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 401–5.

will make a "convent of peace" (בְּרִית שָׁלֹום); that is, "everlasting covenant" (בְּרִית עוֹלָם) with them. "And I will place them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forever (אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם). … And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forever (לְעוֹלָם)" (Ezek 37:26, 28). Driving home the missiological implications of the recognition formula for the nations, von Rad writes, "The final goal of the divine activity is therefore that Jahweh should be recognized and worshipped by those who so far have not known him or who still do not know him properly."[67] This oracle marks a complete reversal of the Lord GOD's separation from Israel because of their rebellious sin (Ezek 8:6; 23:38–39; 24:21; 25:3)

After the Lord GOD defeats Gog, Magog, and Israel's enemies in a cataclysmic battle (Ezek 38:1–39:20. Cf. Gen 10:2–3), he is fully vindicated in the eyes of the nations and Israel and both acknowledge him as sovereign. What is more, this final full restoration oracle is the sole explicit expression of the Lord GOD's "compassion" or "mercy" in the book:

> [I] will set my glory among the nations…. And the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward. The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against me. … Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have compassion/mercy (וְרִחַמְתִּי) on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetuated against me…. When I bring them from the peoples and gather than from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. … I will leave none of them there any longer. I will not hide my face from them any longer, for I have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel (Ezek 39:21–23, 25–29).

This defeat inaugurates the consummation of the new temple (Ezek 40:1–43:27), the new Jerusalem-like city called "The LORD is There" (40:1–2; 45:6–7; 48:15–35), the new Israel with

[67] von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:236–37.

gentile sojourners integrated among them (Ezek 44:1–46:24; 47:22–23; 48:1–35), and the new Edenic land of Israel (Ezek 36:35; 47:1–48:35). After a "man" (אִישׁ) (often associated with a cherub or Christ), whose appearance was like bronze, gives Ezekiel a guided tour of the new temple (Ezek 40:3. Cf. Gen 3:24; Zech 1:9, 19; Ezek 1:7; Dan 8:15–16; Heb 3:3; Rev 21:9, 15–16; 22:16) and the Glory of the LORD fills it with his temple presence, Ezekiel experiences a recapitulation of his recreation and call (Ezek 40:1–4; 43:1–44:4). This shows that he really is the new son of man/Adam and type of the greater Moses (Deut 18:18; 1 Chr 28:19. Cf. John 1:17). He alone is permitted to perform the crescendo and capstone of his Adamic priestly-prophetic work (i.e., mediate the new temple Torah to Israel) (Ezek 40:4), albeit only his guide (cherub or Second Adam) is permitted entry into the holy of holies to measure it (Ezek 41:4).[68] Ezekiel has now become so much so the prophet of the Lord GOD that he voluntarily declares with loosed-lips (Ezek 24:27; 33:22) a new "Torah of the temple" (תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת) to the repentant Israelites (Ezek 43:11–12. Cf. John 1:1–18, esp. 1:14–18). Previously only Moses had been permitted to declare Torah to the people and only that of the yet to be fulfilled Torah.[69] This is coupled with a vision of the consummation of the new Jerusalem, Israel, and land of Israel.

Conclusion

Since the Lord GOD really is the one, universal, sovereign, and transcendent Creator God rather than a mere tribal God bound to the Israelite temple and land (Exod 29:45–46), the Judahites have not been exiled because the Lord GOD has been defeated by the Babylonian

[68] Sweeney maintains Ezekiel was not permitted entry into the holy of holies because he was not actually a high priest. See *Reading Ezekiel*, 201–2. Following this logic, Ezekiel should not even have gotten into the holy place because he probably was not consecrated as a Zadokite priest, at least not in the traditional manner.

[69] Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48*, HSM 10 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 39–44.

gods. Instead this gracious self-revelation of the Creator God in the "likeness as the appearance of a human being/Adam" means that the Lord GOD alone not only can recreate the Israelites, but he intends to do just that and more (i.e., bring about a new temple, city, Israel, and land).

Ezekiel was not just christened son of man/Adam to signal his solidarity with fallen Adam, his creatureliness, and his inhumanity but also to signify his new recreated solidarity with the One whose Likeness is as the Appearance of a Human Being/Adam, his creaturely relationship with the Creator, and his paradigmatic renewed humanity. In a recapitulation of the first Adam's fall and exile from Eden, the exiled son of man/Adam was lifted beyond God's Edenic throne guardians (Ezek 1:5. Cf. Gen 3:24) and even above the "expanse" (Ezek 1:22. Cf. Gen 1:6) to behold the "Glory of the LORD" whose "likeness is as the appearance of a human being/Adam" (Ezek 1:26, 28; 8:2? Cf. Gen 1:1; 2:4). This was so that Ezekiel could be eschatologically recreated or justified in the likeness of God and in a faith-relationship with him, which caused the son of man/Adam to "fall on [his] face" in both terror and adoration (Ezek 1:28. Cf. Gen 1:26–28). It is only faith and the likeness of God that make human beings fully human—fully alive. It is only when human beings are fully human and fully alive that they are fully free and fully reflect the Glory of the LORD. The Lord GOD then "spoke" his creative or justifying word to Ezekiel (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:1–2. Cf. Gen 1:3). As he spoke to the son of man/Adam, the life-giving "Spirit," associated with the act of creation (Gen 1:2; 2:7; Rom 8:11; Rev 4:2) and prophetic empowerment (Num 11:25; 24:2; 1 Sam 10:10; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Chr 15:1; 24:20) "entered into [him] and raised [him] to his feet" so that he might become a living being and an Adamic priestly prophet because he could not rise on his own (Ezek 2:1–2; 11:5, 19–20; 36:26–27; 37:14). In other words, the son of man/Adam had to experience recreation himself (Ezek 1:3, 25, 28; 2:1–2, 8–10; 3:1–3; 11:14–21) before he could be commissioned to embody

Edenic humanism, preach his resurrecting message (about faith, eschatological recreation, and a return to Eden), and mediate eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence to Israel.

Ezekiel's ministry to the exiles demonstrates that he was a paradigmatic renewed first Adam, an Adamic priestly prophet, and a type of the Second Adam. First of all, the nature of Ezekiel's calling and his embodiment of that calling as the new son of man/Adam revealed to the Israelites that the Lord GOD alone can and intends to recreate them in the divine likeness and in a faith-relationship with God. This was so that they too can reflect the Glory of the LORD whose likeness is as the appearance of a human being/Adam and make his name holy among the nations as a kingdom of priests. Ezekiel even provides a book written in a unique first person style (save Ezek 1:2) which calls the hearer to become the "I" along with him and thus become a fellow new son of man/Adam. Second, the Lord GOD used this type of the Second Adam, this priestly watchman, to publicly execute God's resurrecting Word and send out his life-giving Spirit so that the Israelites really do become new sons of man/Adam themselves. Consequently, the manifold divine speech acts that the Lord GOD utters through Ezekiel are actually to recreate, not just to alleviate any doubts about the Lord GOD's sole ability to do so. Nowhere does Ezekiel more explicitly serve as the mouthpiece of God (Ezek 37:5–6. Cf. Gen 1:1–3, 26–27; 2:7; Prov 8:22–31; John 1:1–4) who send his Spirit then in the valley of the dry bones (Ezek 37:9, 14. Cf. Gen 2:7; John 16:7; 20:22; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6). Third, the Lord GOD used his Adamic priestly prophet to restore a Zadokite mediation of the Lord GOD's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence to the Israelites in anticipation of the full realization of the new temple, city, Israel, and land. He not only foreshadows the priesthood of the Second Adam when he symbolically bore the iniquities of the house of Israel (Ezek 4:4–6). This type of the Greater

Moses mediates new temple presence to the exiles via his oracles (Ezek 11:16) and even a new temple Torah (Ezek 43:12. Cf. Deut 18:19; 1 Chr 28:19; John 1:17).

Since no human being can perform the divine act of recreation and sustain new life themselves, the Lord GOD unilaterally acts through his Adamic priestly prophet (Ezek 36:22–23). The Lord GOD first signaled his desire to bring the Israelites over from death to life when he marked those that moaned and groaned with a Hebrew tav (Ezek 9:6). He extended the locus of recreation, his life-sustaining temple presence, to the exiles independent of the first Israelite temple (Ezek 11:16). The Divine makes a number of first person imperfect speech acts. These speech acts make the effective promise that what he has already eschatologically manifested in Ezekiel he will make eschatologically manifest in the exiles so that one day these effective promises will be fully manifested in both the exiles and Ezekiel alike. The Lord GOD declares that he will gather Israel from the peoples (Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 34:13; 36:24; 37:21; 39:27). He will give them the land of Israel (Ezek 11:17). The Lord GOD will give them one/new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:26). He will cause them to walk in his statutes (Ezek 11:20; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24). The exiles will bear their shame to keep them from returning to their rebellion (Ezek 16:52, 54, 61, 63; 20:43; 36:31–32; 43:6–9; 44:6–14). The Lord GOD will establish an everlasting covenant with Israel (Ezek 16:60, 62; 20:37; 34:25; 37:26). He himself will atone for Israel (Ezek 16:63). The Lord GOD will shepherd them through eternal Davidic rule (Ezek 34:24; 37:25; 44:3; 45:7–22; 46:2–18; 48:21–22) and restore Zadokite priesthood (Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). He will bring about such a recapitulation of the land that a new and greater Eden will result (Ezek 34:25–31; 36:1–15; 36:35; 47:1–12). The Lord GOD will sprinkle them with regenerational baptismal-like cleansing (Ezek 36:25). He will put his Spirit within them (Ezek 36:27). The Lord GOD will effect spiritual and national resurrection

(Ezek 37:11–13). Israel and Judah will be reunited (Ezek 37:15–20). They will live in the land forever (Ezek 37:25). The Lord GOD's sanctuary will be in their midst forever (Ezek 37:26, 28). Ultimately, it is revealed that the Divine's action for the sake of his name comes from compassion for Israel (Ezek 39:25).

CHAPTER FIVE

ESCHATOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF RECREATED HUMAN LIFE DEPENDENT ON THE CREATOR GOD

> So I opened my mouth, and he fed me this scroll. He said to me, "Son of man/Adam, feed your stomach, and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth. —Ezekiel 3:2–3.
>
> The Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the LORD was strong against me. Then I came to the exiles who lived beside the Chebar Canal at Tel-abib, and I sat there seven days where they were living, causing consternation among them.—Ezekiel 3:14–15.
>
> Thus they will live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David my servant will be their prince forever.—Ezekiel 37:25.
>
> Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.—Ezekiel 47:1.

Eschatologically Recreated Human Condition before the Consummation of All Things

In his description of Old Testament prophetic calls, von Rad writes, "The complete absence of any transitional stage between the two conditions is a special characteristic of the situation. Being a prophet is never represented as a tremendous intensification or transcendence of all previous religious experience. Neither previous faith nor any other personal endowment had the slightest part in preparing a man who was called to stand before Yahweh for his vocation."[1] Odell cites this as a significant exemplar of the long-established tendency to interpret

[1] von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2:57.

prophetic calls as complete and "instantaneous transformations." She goes on to challenge this as a Romantic notion not born out by the textual evidence in Ezekiel.[2]

The fact of the matter is that both von Rad and Odell are correct about something and both are overlooking something. On the one hand, Ezekiel experienced a total forensic and inbreathed recreation or justification which, like the first creation, only the Creator God can accomplish. Ezekiel possessed the restoration of Eden (i.e., a faith-relationship with God and the divine likeness) on the day of his recreation, just as certainly as the first Adam did on the sixth day of creation. On the other hand, this recreation is eschatological for the inner recreation of faith and the divine likeness (Ezek 18:31–32; 33:11. Cf. John 1:12–13; 3:3; 5:24; Rom 6:6–11; 2 Cor 5:17–18; Titus 3:5; 1 John 5:1; Jam 1:18; Rev 20:5) has not yet become the full recreation of the whole human person. This full recreation consists of a new spirit and new heart of flesh with the heart of stone completely removed (Ezek 11:19; 36:26), walking completely in God's statutes free of all rebelliousness (Ezek 11:20; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24), everlasting life (Ezek 37:25), the potential for physical resurrection (Ezek 37:12–14. Cf. Rev 20:6), and no more need for shame (Ezek 39:26).

Until the consummation of all things when rebelliousness (i.e., the evil intention from youth) is removed, this rebellious intention persists even in Ezekiel as it does in all the recreated (Ezek 2:3, 8; 11:21; 20:1–44. Cf. Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:7; 143:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:9). For this reason, the Lord GOD maintains Ezekiel with his Word and his eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence. In addition, the Lord GOD refines and tempers him. The Lord GOD does this to facilitate Ezekiel's personal growth over against the intention to rebel and to help him meet the changing demands of his calling. Since Ezekiel is the Lord GOD's own paradigm of the

[2] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 41, 54.

rehumanization of mankind, it should come as no surprise that the son of man/Adam provides a fuller description of the eschatologically recreated human condition than the exiles themselves do.

The previous chapter's contention that Ezekiel was recreated as a paradigm for Israel of re-humanization, as an Adamic priestly prophet, and as a type of the Second Adam stand in opposition to Block's notion that Ezekiel was a hostile and rebellious prophet.[3] The persistence of the rebellious intention in all human beings notwithstanding, this section on the recreated human condition before the consummation of all things will also further demonstrate that Ezekiel was a model of Edenic humanism. He was the antithesis of the weeping and rebellious Jeremiah.[4] In the midst of his commissioning, Ezekiel's recreated trust and freedom are first demonstrated (Ezek 2:8). The Lord GOD spoke to the Adamic priestly prophet. The Spirit then entered the son of man/Adam. Next he received his initial commission to minister to the rebellious Israelites. Finally, Ezekiel experienced his first tempering. Only then could the Lord GOD anticipate from Ezekiel an affirmative response to what follows (Ezek 2:2–7): "Do not be rebellious (אַל־תְּהִי־מֶרִי) like the rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I give you" (Ezek 2:8). To categorically claim on basis of this passage that Ezekiel was actively rebelling assumes more than can be proven from the letter of the text.[5] The text does not say Ezekiel was actually rebelling. It is simply a command not to rebel. It is the response that the Lord GOD hopes for from his recreated son of man/Adam. The Lord GOD here juxtaposes the response of recreated human life with the rebelliousness of fallen Israelite life described only moments beforehand.[6] This

[3] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 11–12, 27, 78–79.
[4] von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 2:224.
[5] Zimmerli raises the question of resistance in his *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 135.
[6] Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 87.

command may very well reveal that Ezekiel had initial concerns about his call to the rebellious Israelites and about consuming a scroll of "lamentations, mourning, and woe" (קִנִּים וְהֶגֶה וָהִי) (Ezek 2:10). But this command was also a test of his recreated faithfulness. It recalls the LORD's testing of Israel with hunger and manna to teach them that one does not live on bread alone but by everything that comes from the mouth of the LORD (Deut 8:2–3).[7] Unlike the first Adam (Gen 2:16–17),[8] this renewed Adam decisively passed this strange test by neither giving into the rebellious intention nor suggesting that he was coerced into accepting this charge.[9] He accepts his office by willfully exercising his recreated trust and freedom: "So I opened my mouth (וָאֶפְתַּח אֶת־פִּי), and he fed me this scroll. He said to me, 'Son of man/Adam, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.' Then I ate it (וָאֹכְלָה), and it was sweet as honey in my mouth" (Ezek 3:2–3). This internalization of the scroll would only enhance his ability to embody God's purging and resurrecting Word as the paradigm of the re-humanization of Israel. It also helped him proclaim it to the exiles, especially after the Lord GOD loosened his tongue (Ezek 2:8–3:3).

Fear and trepidation remain in recreated human beings because the new life of faith is already but not yet. Given the task before Ezekiel, there would have been all the more reason to have doubts and concerns. The "brazenfaced and hardhearted" (קְשֵׁי פָנִים וְחִזְקֵי־לֵב) Israelite exiles (Ezek 3:6–7), whose ancestors had killed the prophets (1 Kgs 18:13; 2 Chr 24:20–21; Jer 2:30; 26:20–23), might retaliate against his oracles and sign acts. This is why the Lord GOD said to Ezekiel, "And you, son of man/Adam, neither fear them nor their words" (Ezek 2:6).

[7] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 14.
[8] Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 68–70.
[9] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 62–65; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 66, 73; Odell, *Ezekiel*, 44.

To strengthen Ezekiel's confidence in him both before and after he consumed the scroll, the Lord GOD tempered him and makes him a reliable mouthpiece of the LORD. He tempered Ezekiel through a performative pronouncement, "For you yourself (אוֹתָךְ) are thistles and thorns and you are nestled among scorpion-plants" (Ezek 2:6).[10] The Lord God adds to this, "Behold, I have made (הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי) your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. Like emery harder than flint I have made (נָתַתִּי) your forehead" (Ezek 3:8–9). In other words, the Divine reconstituted Ezekiel with a prickly and reinforced protective exterior. The Lord GOD next makes Ezekiel a reliable mouthpiece of the LORD to ensure Ezekiel and his hearers of the veracity, certainty, and power of his oracles. The Lord GOD does this through another performative pronouncement: "Moreover, I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be mute (וְנֶאֱלַמְתָּ) and cannot be a man who rebukes them…. But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth (אֶפְתַּח אֶת־פִּיךָ) and you will say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD'" (Ezek 3:26–27). In other words, whenever Ezekiel would address the exiles, he could only speak God's purging and resurrecting Word to them. This lasted at least until the fall of Jerusalem when he regained full control of his tongue again (Ezek 24:27; 33:22). The niphal of אלם in Ezekiel 3:26 cannot mean that he was silenced under all circumstances during this time.[11] He was able to orally communicate oracles (Ezek 11:25; 14:2–4). The elders kept coming

[10] Odell argues this line is often mistranslated as a description of the exiles. She contends אוֹתָךְ should be read as an emphatically marked pronoun. See her *Ezekiel*, 41, 43. The CEB translation supports this unique reading of the text.

[11] Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 160; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 15; Carvalho, "Ezekiel," 732–33, 738. In contrast Blenkinsopp argues, "Perhaps the least problematic solution is to give full weight to the loss of speech as a physical and clinical condition of aphasia, but to restrict it to the end of the first period, from the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem to the fall of the city." See his *Ezekiel*, 32.

to inquire of him (Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1). Others asked him to explain his sign acts, assuming that he could respond (Ezek 12:9; 21:7; 24:19).

Block maintains that Ezekiel was completely possessed by the Spirit of the LORD.[12] Despite some evidence for prophetic ecstasy among the Israelites, there is no clear evidence of complete possession in the case of Ezekiel. Addressing the impact of the Word of the LORD on the prophets, Preuss writes:

> If one wishes here to speak of ecstasy, then what one has is concentration ecstasy (see J. Lindblom) rather than absorption ecstasy which does not correspond well with the image of God in the Old Testament. The freedom of the prophet continues in spite of what is experienced, so that a prophet can object to what is revealed (Jer. 1:6). Likewise, the prophetic character of each individual prophet continues to exist. The "I" of the prophet is not extinguished: rather, it is taken into service.[13]

Even though Ezekiel became a reliable mouthpiece of the LORD for a time, the same God who insisted on personal responsibility and who wants humans to exercise authentic freedom in relationship with him would not have completely possessed Ezekiel. While the book does not give many snapshots of Ezekiel's volition, this study has already shown that Ezekiel was actively exercising his own volition. His recreated volition (i.e., the power to choose between authentic goods) is demonstrated by his willing consumption of the scroll. The imperfect condition of this volition (i.e., the retention of a rebellious disposition and imperfect trust) until the consummation all things is demonstrated by God's call not to give into the rebellious intention and whatever unarticulated concerns that Ezekiel may have had about his call.

After his commissioning was complete, Ezekiel says, "The Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit (וָאֵלֵךְ מַר בַּחֲמַת רוּחִי), and the hand of the

[12] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 89.

[13] Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. Leo G. Perdue (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991–92), 2:74.

LORD was strong against me. Then I came to the exiles who lived beside the Chebar Canal at Tel-abib" (Ezek 3:14–15). The rest of Ezekiel's discourse is typically rendered, "and I sat there where they were living seven days stunned/overwhelmed (מַשְׁמִים) among them" (Ezek 3:15).[14] If there is any clear evidence that Ezekiel may have ever felt coerced or now refused his commission, this is the only real support for it. Some scholars have indeed interpreted Ezekiel 3:14–15 as rebellion.[15] Rebellion is certainly possible in light of the theological anthropology of the book and given the burdensome conditions of his call. But this explanation is not completely satisfactory because Ezekiel never raised any objections like other prophets before he accepted the scroll. The most burdensome conditions of his call were only articulated a week after the Spirit returned him to the exiles (Ezek 3:16ff). After his commission was complete (Ezek 3:27), there is no other evidence of him holding a grudge against God or carrying on like a Jeremiah or a Jonah. If Ezekiel was really rebelling against God here, why was Ezekiel permitted to continue without it being addressed and remedied? Drawing on Greenberg, other scholars have attempted to interpret וָאֵלֵךְ מַר בַּחֲמַת רוּחִי to mean Ezekiel experienced a "state of ecstatic exultation" followed by a "catatonic state."[16] Appealing to the Ugaritic *mrr*, "to strengthen, empower," Dahood translates the verse, "I went forth strengthened by the fervour of my spirit."[17] Allen notes that the "embittered" (מַר) is missing in the LXX (which reads, "in a rush/impulse of my spirit" [ἐν ὁρμῇ τοῦ πνεύματός μου]) and maintains that it is a misplaced marginal note.[18] Nevertheless,

[14] BHS editors recommend on the basis of Ezra 9:3ff that the hiphil מַשְׁמִים be emended as polel so that the word can be rendered "appalled."

[15] Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 1:57; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 12, 78–79, 135–38, 141.

[16] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 61; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 27–28; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 21.

[17] Michael Dahood, "Qoheleth and Recent Discoveries," *Bib* 30 (1958): 308–10.

[18] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 13.

these explications seem a bit forced. A more likely explanation is that Ezekiel, like Phinehas (Num 25:7–8, 11), was channeling the Lord GOD's righteous anger towards the stubbornness of the Israelites.[19] K.-D. Schunck agrees that Ezekiel's "rage" (חֵמָה) here is something uniquely positive and connected with being seized by the Spirit of the LORD.[20] Dovetailing with this interpretation, the NASB follows HALOT in offering a rendering of Ezekiel 3:15 that stresses the strong causative aspect of the hiphil participle מַשְׁמִים: "I sat there seven days where they were living, causing consternation (מַשְׁמִים) among them."[21] However, Ezekiel 3:15 might instead mean the prophet himself eventually did become dispirited as he further contemplated the difficulty of a prophetic ministry to the recalcitrant Israelites who long remained dulled to his message (Ezek 33:30–33).[22] The LXX moreover simply regards Ezekiel to be "engaged/conversant" (*ἀναστρεφόμενος*) with the exiles.[23] Odell offers another interpretation that better explains the significance of the week of silence (and possibly why he was stunned) than why he raged: "Another possibility is that his period is yet one more state in the prophet's initiation. His silence would then be comparable to that of the priestly ordinands in Leviticus 8:33, whose seven-day period of seclusion prepared them for the next stage of their initiation, in which they atoned for the guilt of the people (Lev 9:1–21)."[24]

By choosing to accept his Adamic priestly prophetic office, Ezekiel knew that he would have to sacrifice some of his own freedom in order to accomplish the re-humanization of his

[19] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 71; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 119.

[20] K.-D. Schunck, "חֵמָה," *TDOT* 4:464.

[21] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "שמם," *HALOT* 2:1565.

[22] I. Meyer, "שמם," *TDOT* 15:242; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 71.

[23] Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds., "ἀναστρέφω," *LEH* 43–44; Takamitsu Muraoka, "ἀναστρέφω," *GELS* 46; Olley, *Ezekiel*, 252–53.

[24] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 47. See also Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 8, 24–25, 34–36.

fellow Israelites (Matt 20:26–28; Acts 16:3; 21:26; Rom 14:1–23; 1 Cor 8:8–13; 9:19). He accepted this curtailment of his renewed freedom because a deepening desire to reflect the divine likeness and make God's name holy is concomitant with recreation (Ezek 11:20; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24; 46:14). Eichrodt goes further when he discerns a deeper significance to Ezekiel's Adamic priestly prophetic work and suffering:

> This son of man is stripped by God of all the pretensions of birth and position. He has to descend into the depths of humiliation in order that by his work of mediation, a new work of salvation may begin and new people of God come into being. He thus comes remarkably near to the servant of God in Isa. 53, and can only be understood fully within his own historical context and significance, when the line on which he stands is extended towards the Son of Man in the New Testament. That title, the exulted name of the eschatological savior, may seem to contrast him sharply with the son of man of this book. Yet the name 'son of man' as employed by Jesus does of necessity include the idea of humiliation, as is already implied by the word throughout the Old Testament, and particularly in Ezekiel. In that this son of man shares in the weakness of humanity in a representative way, he is bringing to fulfillment something already sketched in outline in the special suffering of the prophet. … But we must recognize, in Ezekiel no less than in Jeremiah, a living inward connection with the greatest of all prophets, or, with the words of Calvin, a *praeludium eius mysterii*.[25]

The first sign acts were nevertheless the most difficult. The Lord GOD felt it necessary to simply impose some the most burdensome ones upon him for the sake the re-humanization of the Israelites. To drive home the inevitability of the siege of Jerusalem, Ezekiel was physically bound and confined to his home (Ezek 3:25). He also lost full control of his speech with the exiles until the fall of Jerusalem (Ezek 3:26–27). Odell offers an additional insight into Ezekiel's binding with cords that may demonstrate some of the exiles' earliest recognition of Ezekiel as their own priestly prophet:

> By binding Ezekiel and confining him to his house, the people allow him to symbolize their own situation in exile and thereby express their willingness to accept him as their representative. The cords with which Ezekiel is bound (ʿăbôtîm) further signify Ezekiel's role as a representative. Except in the Samson narratives, such cords are not associated with imprisonment; rather, this noun is used predominately in the Priestly literature, where it refers to the gold cords that bind the ephod and breastplate of judgment on the

[25] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 73–74.

> high priest (Exod 28:14, 22, 24, 25; 39:15, 17, 18). Since the breastplate of judgment contains stones of remembrance on which are inscribed the names of the twelves tribes, it is conceivable that these cords symbolically bind the people to the priest and keep them in his memory as he performs his duties.[26]

Besides the sign acts imposed on him, Ezekiel voluntarily performed many sign acts for the sake of divine and human ends. He performed each and every one that God asked him to execute except eat bread cooked over human excrement, but more on that later. Ezekiel conducted a mock siege to prophesy the siege of Jerusalem (Ezek 4:1–3). To symbolically assume the burden of the Jerusalemites' iniquities, he laid on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, only to lay on his other side for another forty (Ezek 4:4–8). Ezekiel baked bread made from mixture of lesser grains over excrement to foreshadow the impending famine. (Ezek 4:9–17). To show the fates of the Jerusalemites, he cut his hair, dividing it into thirds. One third the prophet burned on his siege model, one third he hacked with a sword, and one third he scattered to the wind only to pursue it with a sword (Ezek 5:1–17). He clapped his hands, stumped his foot, and cried, "Alas" to illustrate the Lord GOD's anger with their abominations (Ezek 6:11–12). To foreshadow the exile, the prophet dug a hole in wall of his home, covered his eyes, passed through the hole with his baggage, and left the city (Ezek 12:1–16). Ezekiel eats and drinks with trembling, quivering, and anxiety to illustrate Jerusalemite distress during the Babylonian invasion (Ezek 12:17–20). To foreshadow their response to God's looming judgment, he groans (Ezek 21:11–12). Ezekiel cries out and strikes his thigh to illustrate the people's gestures of grief. He also claps his hand to show the Lord GOD's anger with his people (Ezek 21:13–22). To signal the possible routes of King of Babylon's march west, the prophet puts up a signpost (Ezek 21:23–28). The prophet is not permitted to mourn the passing of his

[26] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 57–58

wife (though this may also be sign of the priestly aspect of his calling) to illustrate how the people should respond to the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek 24:15–24. Lev 10:1, 6). To prophesy the reunification of Judah and Israel, he joins two pieces of wood together (Ezek 37:15–28).[27]

The watchman of the house of Israel did more than complete all that was required to keep Israelite blood off his hands (Ezek 3:19, 21). Ezekiel protested against the Lord GOD when he told him to cook his food over human excrement (Ezek 4:12–15). This is clearly not an act of rebellion. He protested to hold God accountable to his word as the prophets and psalmists had done before him. Cooking with human excrement may not be explicitly against Levitical law (Deut 23:12–14). Still Ezekiel was trying to conform to the spirit if not the letter of his understanding of Levitical laws about purity and death.[28] His protest comes from a desire of fidelity to the Lord GOD.

As an Adamic priestly prophet, Ezekiel also tried to intercede on behalf of his undeserving fellow Israelites. Ezekiel pleads, "Ah (אֲהָהּ), Lord GOD! Will you destroy the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out your wrath on Jerusalem" (Ezek 9:8)? Later, the son of man/Adam pleads a second time, "Ah (אֲהָהּ), Lord GOD! Will you bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end" (Ezek 11:13)? The second verse lacks the interrogative הֲ, but this may have been omitted by copyists. In addition, Hebrew questions that lack it are not without grammatical precedent. GKC regards Ezekiel 11:13 to be such a question.[29] The LXX and most modern translations (except NJPS, NET, NABR, CSB, Goldingay, Alter) regard it to be an intercession

[27] These sign acts are summarized in K. G. Friebel, "Sign Acts," *DOTP* 708–9.
[28] Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 170–71.
[29] GKC, §150a.

also. These intercessions were not acts of rebellion either, despite the fact that Ezekiel was told the fall of Jerusalem was inevitable (save for a remnant of survivors).[30] If anything, it shows that Ezekiel was not the cold person he is often made out to be and the steps he was willing to take to go to bat for his fellowman. To quote Taylor, "For all Ezekiel's outward appearance of severity, beneath the hard shell there was a heart that felt deeply for and with his people."[31] Ezekiel simply could not bear to watch them die. In many ways, Ezekiel here calls to mind Abraham's pleading for wicked Sodom or Moses pleading on behalf of a recalcitrant Israel (Gen 18:22–33; Exod 32:11–14).[32]

Scholars have been more reticent about calling Ezekiel 21:5 a righteous prophetic intercession or protest. Still the interjection "ah" (אֲהָהּ) that introduces Ezekiel 21:5 only shows up at other righteous prophetic protestations (Ezek 4:14) and intercessions in the book (Ezek 9:8; 11:13).[33] In Ezekiel 21:5, the Adamic priestly prophet states that the Lord GOD's proverbs, riddles, or allegories were not having their intended effect. The prophet insists that people were not taking him seriously because his message was couched in symbolic language. His concern cannot be for himself for he had already suffered far greater humiliations in terms of sign acts. Rather his prophetic plea was for the exiles so that they would understand God's message and take it seriously.[34] Ezekiel was no doubt frustrated as he contended for the exiles in faith, but this is not the same things as rebelling against God. In light of Ezekiel 33:32, Ezekiel's plea might

[30] Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, 249, 256; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 188–89; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 58–59. See also Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 470–76, 485–86 on life in crisis and covenantal existence as alterative humanness respectively.

[31] Taylor, *Ezekiel*, 103.

[32] In contrast, Joyce argues that Ezekiel was dumbfounded in these instances, not protesting. See his *Ezekiel*, 103.

[33] Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 20.

[34] Leslie C. Allen treats this a prophetic appeal for greater clarity from God for sake of the exiles in his *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 25. Eichrodt hesitates to call it a "protest" but recognizes Ezekiel's pastoral concern here for exiles' understanding of the Lord God's intent. See his *Ezekiel*, 288.

mean that the exiles were engaged with his language but were aestheticizing his message.[35] This appears to be the intention of the NET translation of Ezekiel 21:5, "They are saying of me, 'Does he not simply speak in eloquent figures of speech?'" More likely, it means that the exiles either did not take this oracle seriously because it was only a metaphor or they were tuning out his message because they found the symbolic language too impenetrable.[36] In favor of the latter, the prophet was told right before Ezekiel 21:5 to utter an oracle that the Lord GOD would set the forest of the Negev on fire which would eventually scorch everything from south to north. This was certainly not the strangest oracle Ezekiel had uttered, though there are no forests in the south. Either way Ezekiel pleads, "Ah (אֲהָהּ), Lord GOD! They are saying of me, 'Is he not *merely* a teller of proverbs (הֲלֹא מְמַשֵּׁל מְשָׁלִים)?'" (Ezek 21:5). Slight variations of this translation are supported by *DCH*, *HALOT*, and the vast majority of modern translations.[37] Regardless, the Lord GOD appears to have recognized this as a righteous prophetic plea because he granted Ezekiel's request without any chastisement. The Lord GOD goes on to explain the symbolic language first in a brief way (Ezek 21:6–12) and then in a more expanded form (Ezek 21:13–22). In essence, God is speaking about the reversal of the exodus conquest of the land; God will cut the Israelites all off.

After the Lord GOD finally loosed his tongue (Ezek 24:27; 33:22), the new son of man/Adam could now voluntarily continue to serve as God's graced mouthpiece. It is in this capacity that he most fully foreshadows the Second Adam who sends his Spirit to resurrect the dry bones of mankind (Ezek 37:9, 14), and he most fully performs his office as an Adamic

[35] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 419.
[36] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 138–39.
[37] David J. A. Clines, "משל," *DCH* 5:537; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "משל,"*HALOT* 1:647.

priestly prophet who mediates to the exiles a new Torah of a new temple (Ezek 43:12). This is not to say that Ezekiel had suddenly been freed of the rebellious intention. God can even speak through donkeys (Num 22:22–39) and prophesy through an unbelieving high priest (John 11:51). If Ezekiel is only allowed to make his temple vision known to repentant Israelites who will put it into practice (Ezek 43:11), then Ezekiel must have been quite attuned to God via a faith-relationship to "see with [his] eyes," "hear with [his] ears," and "give attention to all that [the Lord GOD is] going to show [him] (Ezek 40:4). No matter how much spiritual growth this gracious theophany suggests Ezekiel had experienced, his eschatological recreation remains incomplete for he does not live in the land forever (Ezek 37:25).

The Israelites, as a whole, reveal significant insights into the eschatological human condition as well. The Lord GOD continually reminds them of their shame: "You will remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth again because of your disgrace, when I atoned for you and for all that you have done" (Ezek 16:63, 52, 54, 61; 20:43; 36:31–32; 43:6–9; 44:6–14). But the intention of this is not to be vindictive, otherwise God would never have permitted the Israelites to forget their shame (Ezek 39:26). Instead the purpose of this reminder is to sharpen Israelite consciences so that they do not turn back to their faith-destroying sins and their dehumanizing ways but remain repentant and committed to God (Ezek 43:10–11). It is especially because the rebellious intention remains latent in the recreated that the cross is necessary for spiritual growth (Hebrew 12:6–11). Lapsley puts it this way: "For Ezekiel this kind of shame is not toxic, but restorative; it is a form of self-knowledge. To experience this kind of shame is to penetrate all the self-deception in which human beings tend to wrap themselves, to see themselves as God sees them. Thus, one of the hallmarks of the new identity of the restored

people will be the self-knowledge resulting from the shame they experience."[38] "Restorative" also should not be understood to mean that shame itself recreates. Instead shame's purpose is to prepare the way for recreation, to exercise faith, and curb the impulse towards rebellious sin among the eschatologically recreated so that the renewed understanding and knowledge of the divine likeness becomes firmly rooted.

Even though the Lord GOD gave the exiles a heart transplant to cause them to walk in his statutes, keep his ordinances, and carefully obey his rules (Ezek 11:20; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24; 46:14), they did not perfectly do so. Some were purged during the exile (Ezek 20:38). "The fat and strong [sheep]," the Lord GOD destroyed (Ezek 34:16). "Hearts" of others would continue to pursue "detestable things and abominations" after returning to the physical land (Ezek 11:21). The post-exilic political and religious leaders would have to address marriages with idolaters, false prophets, false shepherds (political leaders), unholy priests, and the abominations and unfaithfulness of the people (Ezra 10; Neh 6:10–14; 13:23–29; Zech 10:1–5; Mal 1:6–2:9; 2:11–18; 3:6–9, 13–15). A far greater fulfillment of God's recreative and justifying work than a faith that still wavers and a freedom that still dabbles with license are clearly anticipated by these texts.[39]

New Temple, City, Israel, and Land before the Consummation of All Things

Scholars once regarded Ezekiel 40:1–48:35 to be a foreign addition to the text.[40] In contrast, some recent scholars have understood it as consisting of an Ezekielian core that was

[38] Lapsley, "Ezekiel," 463. See also Lapsley, "Shame, 144.

[39] See also Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 1:152–53; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 324–25; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 355.

[40] Charles Cutler Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy*, YOSR 18 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930).

further developed through redaction.[41] Other recent scholars hold that it is a unity originating from Ezekiel himself[42] or an editor.[43] This study's elucidation of Ezekielian anthropology and priestly theology lends further credence to the recent view that the book would be incomplete without the new temple, city, Israel and land.[44] The Lord GOD's sacramental temple presence was so vital for maintaining recreated human life that this Creator God makes his life-staining new temple presence eschatologically available to the Israelites already via Ezekiel (Ezek 11:16).

Few Biblical subjects have fostered as divided interpretations as the meaning of Ezekiel's new temple (Ezek 40:1–43:27). First, there is the view that it was supposed to find a literal fulfillment in the second Israelite temple.[45] Second, Ezekiel's new temple has been interpreted merely as an ideal or postmillennial utopian ideal.[46] Third, it has also been interpreted as a literal temple that still makes sin offerings within a dispensational premillennialistic framework.[47] Fourth, Christ and his body, the church, have been understood as its ultimate fulfillment.[48]

There are a number of problems with a literal erection of Ezekiel's new eternal temple with human hands (Ezek 37:26, 28). This new temple is already an eschatological reality for

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[41] Hartmut Gese, *Der Verfassungentwurf des Ezechiel (Kap. 40–48)*, BHT 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957), 109–15; Steven Tuell, *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48*, HSM 49 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 8–18.

[42] Moshe Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," *Int* 38 (1984): 181–202; J. G. McConville, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel: A Crux in the Interpretation of Israel's History," *TynBul* 34 (1983): 3–31; Ronald Hals, *Ezekiel*, FOTL 19 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 285–89; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 494–506; Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, VTSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 139–44.

[43] Kalinda Stevenson, *The Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48*, SBLDS 154 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1996).

[44] Levenson, *Theology of the Program*, 7–53; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 18–19.

[45] G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, ICC 21 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936), 431; Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel's Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38–48* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012), 41–53.

[46] Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 197–98; Corrine Carvalho [Patton], "Ezekiel's Blueprint for the Temple of Jerusalem" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1992); Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 3–8.

[47] LaMar Eugene Cooper, *The New American Commentary: Ezekiel: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC 17 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994).

[48] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, 505–6; Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 481–83; Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 1149–60.

Ezekiel (Ezek 11:16; 37:26–28; 40:5. Cf. Exod 25:9, 40; Heb 9:23–24).[49] There was never any historical attempt to build such a massive temple. Israel was never told to build it or how to do so (Ezek 43:11).[50] The term "pattern/plan" (תַּבְנִית) associated with the tabernacle and first Israelite temple is not used here (Exod 25:9, 40; 1 Chr 28:11–19). Ezekiel's blueprints are incomplete and are largely two dimensional.[51] Milgrom insists that at least the temple part of the final vision could feasibly be constructed.[52] But since Ezekiel's new temple could not actually fit upon the narrow temple mount which is also not the highest mountain of the immediate vicinity (Ezek 40:2), the purpose of its unusually large, perfectly symmetrical, square, and cross-shaped proportions (Ezek 42:15–20; 45:2. Cf. Ezek 45:1–9; 48:8–22) must be to convey the Lord GOD's holiness, completeness, and desire for relationship with mankind.[53] Moreover, a full realization in time of the rest of the vision (i.e., the Israelites' recreation [Ezek 36:16–38; 39:21–29], the Edenic stream flowing from the temple [Ezek 47:1–5], the transformation of Israel's ecology [Ezek 36:25; 47:6–12], and Israel's equal and parallel tribal allotments that disregards the topography of the land [Ezek 47:13–48:29]) would all require supernatural intervention. Ezekiel's "Torah of the temple" (תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת) also has noticeable differences with Moses's tabernacle Torah, not to mention the first and second Israelite temple.[54] The new temple's overall proportions and design are different than other Israelite temples. The new temple has an outer court (Ezek 40:17. Cf. 1 Kgs 7:9; Jer 19:14; 26:2; Ezek 8:3; 10:5) but no new court (2 Chr 20:5). The heavily fortified inner court where only priests could go (Ezek 40:28; 42:14; 44:19; 46:3. Cf.

[49] Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 659; Carvalho, "Ezekiel," 768.
[50] Carvalho, "Ezekiel's Blueprint," 102, 188; Carvalho, "Ezekiel," 768–69.
[51] Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 5, 7.
[52] Milgrom and Block, *Ezekiel's Hope*, 52.
[53] Stevenson, *The Vision of Transformation*, 26–30, 161–63.
[54] For Block's comparison of Mosaic Torah and Ezekielian Torah, see his *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 498–502.

1 Kgs 6:36; 2 Chr 4:9) is specifically elevated by eight steps (Ezek 40:31, 34, 37. Cf. Jer 36:10). The new temple seems to have a table of showbread (Ezek 41:22. Cf. Exod 25:23–30; Lev 24:5–9; 1 Kgs 6:20; 7:48), but it lacks the bronze sea (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:2–5), golden lampstands (Exod 25:31–40; 1 Kgs 7:49), golden altar of incense (Exod 30:1–10; Num 4:11; 1 Kgs 7:48), veil (Exod 30:6), and the Ark of the Covenant (Ezek 43:7? Cf. Exod 25:23–30). The altar has been augmented as well (Ezek 43:13–17. Cf. Exod 27:1–8; Lev 1:1–7:38; 2 Chr 4:1). The following Levitical sacrifices are offered: "Burnt offerings" (עֹלָה) (Ezek 40:38–39, 42; 43:24; 44:11; 45:15, 17, 23, 25; 46:2, 4, 12–13, 15), "sin offerings" (חַטָּאת) (Ezek 40:39; 43:19, 21–22, 25; 44:27, 29; 45:17, 19, 22–23, 25; 46:20), "guilt offerings" (אָשָׁם) (Ezek 40:39; 44:29; 46:20), "grain offerings" (מִנְחָה) (Ezek 42:13; 44:29; 45:15, 17, 24–25; 46:5, 7, 11; 46:14–15, 20), "peace offerings" (שֶׁלֶם) (Ezek 43:27; 45:15, 17; 46:2, 12), and "free will offerings" (נְדָבָה) (Ezek 46:12. Cf. Lev 1:1–7:38). Offerings are made to "atone" (כִּפֶּר/ἐξιλάσκομαι) for the altar (Ezek 43:20, 26), all the people of the land (Ezek 45:15–16); namely, the house of Israel (Ezek 45:17), and the temple (Ezek 45:20). The holy and the common are still carefully demarcated in the Ezekiel's temple (Ezek 42:14, 20; 44:19, 23. Cf. Lev 10:10; Ezek 22:26). Sabbath (Ezek 44:24; 45:17; 46:1, 3–4, 12; Lev 23:3. Cf. Gen 2:2–3; Exod 16:5, 22–23, 27–30; 20:11) and New Moon Festival (Ezek 46:6–7. Cf. Num 10:10) are celebrated along with a new First Day of the First Month Festival, Passover [Pesach with Unleavened Bread], and Tabernacles [Sukkot/Booths] (Ezek 45:18–24. Cf. Exod 12:1–28; 34:22; Lev 23:5–8; 33–43; Num 29:12–39; Deut 16:13). But the content of Ezekiel's offerings are different than Moses's own, his liturgical calendar has been altered (no Pentecost [Shavuot/Weeks]; Rosh Hashanah [Yom Teruah/Blowing Horns], Day of

Atonement [Yom Kippur], or Eight Day Festival [Shemini Atzeret]), and there is no high priest (Ezek 40:1? Cf. Exod 23:16; 30:10; 34:22; Lev 8:1–36; 16:1–34; 21:10–15; 23:9–39; Num 28:1–29:40). Those that remembered the first Israelite temple cried when they saw Zerubbabel's temple (Ezra 3:12–13). Intertestamental literature, Qumran community, the New Testament, and Rabbinic Judaism all envisioned greater fulfillments of Ezekiel's new temple than Zerubbabel's temple.

The idealistic view of the new temple may at first seem to be the easiest one to reconcile with the text and experienced phenomena unless it assumes a postmillennial utopian conception of recapitulation. However, the reason that there are no prophetic word formulas in this text is not because this is merely ideal.[55] This new temple as emphasized above is already an eschatological reality for Ezekiel and exiles, albeit one that only the Lord GOD can bring to full realization. The Adamic priestly prophet is a sacramental thinker who maintains that God's temple presence is eternally necessary for sustaining recreated human life (Ezek 11:16; 37:26, 28; 43:7, 9; 46:14). How would God's life-sustaining presence be mediated to the faithful without the temple manifesting itself in some sort of concrete sacramental sign? If this new temple is a sacramental sign whereby God radiates his holiness upon the faithful, can it be merely an ideal whereby the faithful measure how well they are living up to his holiness? The New Testament resolves this nagging issue when it explains that Christ is the new temple. New temple presence is then mediated to the faithful via his body, the Old Testament and New Testament corporate gathering of the faithful around God's Word and sacraments (which included the Levitical sacrifices in the Old Testament), dispensed by clerics functioning *in*

[55] Tyler Mayfield uses this to argue Ezekiel's temple is only an ideal. See his *Literary Structure and Setting in Ezekiel*, FAT 2:43 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 117.

persona Christi (Matt 12:6; 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; John 1:14, 2:19–22; 4:23; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:17–22; Heb 8:1–2; 9:11, 24; 10:19–20; Rev 2:7; 11:1ff [Cf. Ezek 40:3–5]; 21:1–22:21). Just like the previous view, this view brackets out the New Testament's interpretation of the Ezekiel's final vision.

There are problems with the dispensational premillennialistic view as well. This view fails to recognize that Christ himself claims his salvific work has already inaugurated his millenialistic reign (Matt 4:17; 10:7; 12:28; Luke 11:20; 17:20–21; John 18:36–37) even if it had not yet reached its consummation (Luke 19:11–12). While premillennialism tries to take the New Testament's description of end times retrograde (Matt 24:1–51) more seriously than postmillennialism's utopian view of recapitulation (Matt 19:28; Eph 1:10), premillennialism locates the consummation of Ezekiel's vision in time. Christ and the apostles, moreover, consistently maintain that Christ and his body, not a literal temple, is the new temple as demonstrated above. Christ via his body, the church, then continues to mediate God's life-sustaining new temple presence (John 1:14; 15:1–17; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:17–22; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14; Rev 21:3) and make Eucharistic sacrifices (Rom 12:1; Phil 4:18; Heb 3:15–16; 1 Pet 2:5). Nevertheless, Christ's own propitiatory sacrifice concludes the need for Levitical sin offerings that sacramentally imparted grace, retroactively covered sin via the merits of Christ, and pointed to Christ's work for the Old Testament faithful (Col 2:16–17; Heb 7:26–27; 9:8–12, 22–28; 10:1–18).[56]

This study follows the New Testament's so-called amillennialistic Christological reading of Ezekiel's new temple. God's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence was made available to the Israelites first via the oracles of the son of man/Adam (Ezek 11:16) and then via

[56] Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, ConcC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 1255.

the temple of Zerubbabel/Herod the Great (i.e., the Israelite second temple) within the rebuilt city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel (Ezra 3:1–6:22). However, this was only an immediate fulfillment of Ezekiel's new temple vision which finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ and the temple of his body, the church (Heb 9:8–12). That said, the full realization of this new temple is hidden and would only completely unfold at the second coming of Christ on the last day. To be more precise, the Logos, the heavenly temple, who had sacramentally manifested himself in the Israelite tabernacle and temples would eventually incarnate himself in the person of Christ and his body, church (Heb 8:2, 5; 9:23; Rev 21:22). This body remains hidden under the cross save for the distinguishing marks of the church until it fully becomes the church triumphant.

No other reading does more justice to both Ezekiel and the New Testament than the Christological reading.[57] Still interpretive questions do persist.[58] First, there is the charge of supersessionism or replacement theology. But if Genesis lays out the foundation of a universal human faith that requires a temple to maintain it and does not equate biological Israel with Israel (Gen 9:27; 12:3; 17:4–7; 22:18. Cf. Rom 4:16; 9:6; Gal 3:6–9), how can a Christological reading of the Old Testament be charged with supersessionism? Moreover, it is only the New Testament that makes continuation of eternal temple presence (Ezek 37:26, 28) possible in the wake of a destroyed temple. Second, a number of elements of the Israelite cult persist in Ezekiel's temple. However, Christ, the Greater Moses, did not come to do away with the law and the prophets but to fulfill them by transfiguring them in himself (Deut 18:18; Matt 5:17–20; John 1:1–18; Col 2:16–17; Heb 9:8–12; 10:1–2). The continuities and discontinuities of Ezekiel's temple Torah

[57] Stephan L. Cook even observes that Ezekiel's Zadokite temple theology uses so much anthropomorphic language to describe the Glory of the LORD that he titled an essay: "Ezekiel's God Incarnate!: The God That the Temple Blueprint Creates," in *The God Ezekiel's Creates*, ed. Paul Joyce and Dalit Rom-Shiloni, LHBOTS 607 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark 2015), 132–49.

[58] For Block's comparison of Ezekielian Torah and Rev 21–22, see his *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 502–6.

with Moses's Torah indicates Ezekiel himself recognized that this new temple would have continuities and discontinuities with the first temple. What is more, both the Old Testament and New Testaments understand that prophecy as looking in a mirror dimly (Num 12:6–8; Dan 8:27; Zech 4:13; 1 Cor 13:9–12; 1 Pet 1:10–13). For this reason, the symbolic language often associated with prophecy must both be recognized as such and not be overtaxed. Third, sin offerings are offered in the new temple even though Christ fulfilled them at his first coming. Some scholars have maintained that sin offerings were described so that the exiles could process this image. But if other essential elements of Israelite cult (e.g., the Day of Atonement) have been dropped or augmented, why not this? The presence of atoning offerings are probably intended to highlight the eschatological nature of this temple. Ezekiel 11:19 suggests that new temple presence was already being mediated to the exiles via the oracles of Ezekiel in lieu of the destroyed temple. When they returned to the land and built the second Israelite temple, God's temple presence would once again come to the Israelites via the Levitical sacrifices until Christ could fulfill them by the one theanthropic sacrifice of himself that finally could take away the sins of the world. Only then would his body, the church, receive temple presence via God's Word and sacraments alone, albeit they would continue to offer Eucharistic sacrifices. The declaration of Levitical shame in the new temple (Ezek 44:10–14), despite the promise that the Israelites were to forget their shame in the consummation of all things (Ezek 39:26), further suggests that an eschatological understanding of the temple's fulfillment in the incarnate Christ is at play. That said, no solution for the continuation of sacrifices in this temple is free from all interpretive issues.

The son of man/Adam's new temple vision is ultimately a vision of Christ, the greater son of man/Adam, and the temple of his body, the church (Matt 12:6; 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke

23:45; John 1:14, 2:19–22; 4:23; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:17–22; Heb 8:1–2; 9:11, 24; 10:19–20; Rev 2:7; 11:1ff [Cf. Ezek 40:3–5]; 21:1–22:21). The Adamic priestly prophet's new temple is without a high priest. Christ himself is its high priest (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:22–34; Heb 1:3; 2:17; 3:1; 4:14–5:10; 7:1–8:6; 9:1–28). More that that, he is a high priest of the order of Melchizadek for all humanity, something more than just a Zadokite priest.

While Levitical sacrifices are still offered in Ezekiel's new temple (i.e., until Christ fulfills them), essential components for the continuation of the Israelite cult are missing. There is no Ark of the Covenant, propitiatory "mercy seat" (כַּפֹּרֶת) of God, and Day of Atonement. The Old Testament sacrifices were means of grace that foreshadowed Christ (Col 2:16–17; Heb 10:1–2), the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and now dwells among his people (Rev 5:5–14. Cf. Isa 53:7; John 1:29; 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:18–19). The Old Testament sacrifices retroactively "atoned for/covered" (כִּפֶּר)[59] sin because of the merits of Christ, but they did, not in and of themselves, vicariously pay for sin because it is impossible for the blood bulls and goats "to take away" (ἀφαιρεῖν) *human* sin (Heb 9:9–14, 23; 10:2–12). However, Christ is a sinless high priest so he did not have to daily offer sin and guilt offerings for himself and the people. Since he is the God-man, he could offer up the sole-sufficient, Day of Atonement, and propitiatory sacrifice (ἱλαστήριον) of himself that could take away all human sin (Rom 3:25; Eph 5:2; Heb 2:17; 7:1–10, 11, 15, 17, 26–27; 9:5, 12, 22–28; 10:1–18; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rev 5:9–12. Cf. Lev 16:1–34) and ensure that the temple of his body and all those incorporated in it could never be defiled again. So all-encompassing was the suffering servant's sacrifice that the

[59] B. Lang, "כפר," *TDOT* 7:288–303.

sacrifice of this Israel-Reduced-to-One is also called a "guilt offering" in Isaiah 53:10. After all, the Lord GOD made quite clear that only he himself could fully "atone" (כִּפֶּר) for Israel (Ezek 16:63).

Through this death, Christ effected the new covenant or testament (Heb 8:7–13; 9:15–18. Cf. Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 16:60; 34:25; 37:26). Only a theanthropic high priest and victim could fully reconcile the world with God (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18–19; Col 1:13–22) and serve as the complete mediator between God and mankind (1 Tim 2:5–6; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; 1 John 2:1). On this basis, human beings are declared holy and alive by God's recreative Word (Rom 3:21–31; 4:5; 5:1, 9; 8:30; Gal 2:16; 3:8, 11; Eph 1:4; 5:25–27; Col 1:22; 3:12; Rev 20:6). Christ not only transfigured the Day of Atonement in himself. He gives Sabbath rest (Heb 4:1–13). Christ is the sacrificed Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7. Cf. Ezek 45:21). He tabernacles among his people (John 1:14). Christ sent his Spirit to inaugurate Pentecost (John 15:26–27; 16:7–14; Acts 1:8; 2:4). He even seems to be associated with the light of Hanukkah (John 1:4–9; 8:12; 9:5; 10:22–38; 12:35–36, 46).

Now that the God-man has initiated recapitulation through his salvific work (Matt 19:28; Eph 1:10), he has sent his Spirit via the temple of his body, the church, forward in mission (Mat 28:18–20; John 7:39–39; 20:21–23; Rev 21:6; 22:1–2. Cf. Ezek 47:1–12) to eschatologically recreate human life through regenerational baptism (John 3:5; Rom 6:4; Eph 5:25–27; Col 2:12; Titus 3:5; Heb 10:22; Rev 20:5–6. Cf. Ezek 36:25–27) as well as through God's purging and resurrecting Word until the full recapitulation of the new temple, city, Israel, and land take place and all manmade chaos is finally purged.

Those that have been eschatologically recreated in the divine likeness of the Second Adam (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; Eph 2:15; Heb 2:5–18) and in a faith-relationship are in turn

admitted into the new Edenic temple (i.e., the temple of his body, the church) where they are sustained by God's life-sustaining temple presence (John 1:14; 15:1–17; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:17–22; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14; Rev 21:3) and partake of the Torah wisdom tree of life (Gen 2:9, 16–17; Exod 3:1–22; 25:31–40; Prov 3:18–20; John 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 2:3; 2 Tim 3:15; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). Unlike the priests of old, the New Testament royal priests do not just partake of the body of their sin sacrifice, they also partake of the blood of Christ, the new covenant or new testament (Matt 26:27–28; Mark 14:23–24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:25–26. Cf. Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 16:60; 34:25; 37:26). Interestingly enough, the unworthy use of New Testament Holy Communion seems to have similar repercussions as the undiscerning handling of the holy in the Old Testament temple (1 Cor 11:27–29). Since the fallen Old Testament faithful were prohibited from consuming blood because it belonged only to God (Gen 9:4), Holy Communion texts suggest that Christ's recapitulation of all things further unpacks human beings' untapped Edenic potential in God without ultimately crossing the Creator/creature divide (Gen 6:2; Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1; 32:6, 8, 18, 20, 43?; Isa 1:2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer 31:9; Hos 2:1; Matt 5:9; Luke 3:38; 20:36; John 1:12; 10:32–36; Rom 8:14–19; 9:8, 26; 2 Cor 6:18; Gal 3:26; 4:7; Col 1:2; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 3:2).[60] Consequently, the New Testament really is just as concerned about distinguishing the holy from the profane as the Old Testament and Ezekiel are (Rom 16:17), albeit in accord with Colossians 2:16–17; Hebrews 9:8–12; and 10:1–2. At the same time, Ezekiel's stress on reflecting the divine likeness and making his God's name holy among the nations shows that neither the Old Testament nor even Ezekiel can be dismissed as insular in comparison to the New Testament.

[60] This study is especially indebted to Dale Launderville for this insight.

Until the consummation of all things, the re-humanized New Testament shepherds (John 10:11, 16; 21:16; Acts 20:38; 1 Pet 5:1–4; Rev 7:17) perform their divinely-instituted (Matt 28:18–20; John 20:21–23; Rom 10:14–17; 1 Cor 4:1–2; Eph 4:11–12) "priestly service of the gospel of God" (ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ) (Rom 15:16) by publicly preaching God's Word, mediating sacramental temple presence, and offering Eucharistic sacrifices *in persona Christi* under the Good Shepherd (Isa 66:20; 1 Cor 11:23–24; Phil 2:17).[61] They are assisted by the rest of the re-humanized kingdom of priests who profess God's Word (1 Pet 2:9; 3:15), offer the Eucharistic sacrifices (Rom 12:1; Phil 4:18; Heb 3:15–16; 1 Pet 2:5), reflect Christ's image (Rom 8:29; 15:16; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 2:15; 4:24; Col 3:10; Heb 2:5–18; 1 John 3:2), and make God's name holy among nations (Matt 6:9; 25:34–40; 28:19; Luke 11:2; John 17:6, 11; Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 1 Pet 1:17; 3:15; Rev 15:4) by imitating Christ (John 13:12–15, 34; 1 Cor 11:1; Eph 4:32; Phil 2:5; Col 3:13; 1 Pet 1:21; 1 John 2:6) all in accord with their various vocations.[62] Finally, the royal priests carry out their royal duties of mastery and rule of creation under the eternal Davidic prince in accord with their various vocations as well (1 Cor 6:2–3; Rev 5:10).

The post-exilic return of the exiles to Jerusalem is only the immediate fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision of the new city (40:1–2; 45:1–8; 46:16–18; 48:9–22, 30–35). Ezekiel's new city

[61] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, 1269, 1278–79, 1284–86.

[62] While the Levitical priesthood is subsumed in Christ, this does not mean that the divinely-called New Testament public ministry is a mere sociological development or that there is only a priesthood of all believers in the New Testament as some seem to contend. The divinely-instituted public ministry continues to perform non-atoning priestly acts *in persona Christi* as demonstrated above. Just as there is a royal priesthood in the New Testament that supports the public ministry, so too there was a royal priesthood in the Old Testament that supported the Levitical ministry. While the laity and clerics remain equal in both testaments, they have different and complementary roles in the body of Christ. Thus, Ezekiel's theological anthropology excludes both clericalism and anti-clericalism as a faith-less power grab grounded in an anthropology of autonomy and license. It is only when the clergy and laity function in concert that the mission of reflecting the divine image and making God's name holy among the nations is possible. Ezekiel's indictment against not only the Israelite shepherds and the Levites but also against their sheep assumes this anthropological insight. See also Robert W. Jensen, *Ezekiel*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 316–19.

has some parallels with Jerusalem. Ezekiel says, "[The hand of the LORD] brought me … and set me on a very high mountain, and on it to the south there was a structure like a city" (Ezek 40:2). John even calls it "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλὴμ καινὴν) (Rev 21:2). Still Ezekiel says the city is henceforth called, "The LORD is There" (יְהוָה שָׁמָּה) (Ezek 48:35). John's designation "new Jerusalem" likewise indicates that it is different from post-exilic Jerusalem. Neither post-exilic Jerusalem nor the post-exilic land manifested the full Edenic transformation described by Ezekiel or John.

An immediate fulfillment of the recreated Israelite society does occur (Ezek 44:1–46:24; 47:22–23; 48:1–35), which includes some members of the northern tribes (Luke 2:36. Cf. Ezek 37:15–28). As a result of the exploitation of the people by the political leaders and Levites, the Lord GOD checks and demotes them. He in turn established an eternal Davidic prince ([Ezek 34:24; 37:25; 44:3; 45:7–22; 46:2–18; 48:21–22] who is called a Davidic "king" [מֶלֶךְ/ἄρχων] [Ezek 37:24] on one occasion) and a Zadokite priesthood in their place (Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). This eternal Davidic prince and Zadokites find their immediate fulfillment after the exile in the Persian governorship of the Davidic princes of Judah (Ezra 1:8); namely, Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (Ezra 1:8; 5:14, 16; 1 Chr 3:17–19; Hag 1:1), as well as the restoration of Zadokite priesthood respectively (2 Sam 20:25; 1 Kgs 1:7–8; 41–45; 2:26–27; 1 Chr 6:35–38; 24:31; Ezra 3:1–13; 7:1–6; Hag 1:1; Zech 3:1–10; 6:9–14).[63]

On the one hand, Ezekiel's oracles condemning and demoting the political rulers and Levites for their abuses of the people demonstrate that Ezekiel was neither a statist nor a

[63] For connections between Ezra-Nehemiah's Persian princes of Judah and Ezek 45:1–46:24, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 224–25.

clericalist. On the other hand, the Adamic priestly prophet did not reject kingship (Ezek 37:24), albeit the Persian governorship of the Davidic princes was curtailed and hence more temple-oriented. This goes to show that Kaufmann was right to reject Wellhausen's notion that Ezekiel himself was the pioneer of Hebrew hierocracy.[64] What is important for both Genesis and Ezekiel is not that everyone become a temporal king or that all be barred from becoming a temporal king respectively. Rather human beings should conduct their royal priesthood stewardship of creation in all godly vocations and in a manner that recognizes it is really the Lord GOD who is the true king, priest, and prophet. In other words, Ezekiel acknowledges the social necessity of different dependent and complementary roles in society (even kingship) is not foreign to Genesis 1:26–28 as evident by Genesis 2:18.

Israelite kingship and the high priesthood would ultimately be subsumed in Jesus Christ, the Second Adam and the Adamic priestly prophet par excellence (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:22–34; 12:13, 15; Heb 1:3; 2:17; 3:1; 4:14–5:10; 7:1–8:6; 9:1–28; Rev 1:1–2, 5–6 [ἄρχων], 13–18; 19:16) according to the New Testament.[65] The fact that Ezekiel almost always says that eternal Davidic rule is princely rule, not to mention his discussion of what eternal Davidic rule would entail, suggests that Ezekiel recognized at some level that eternal Davidic rule would ultimately not be a return to Israelite kingship in the same way as it was before. Still a divinely-instituted human temporal rule (Rom 13:1–7) and a divinely-instituted public ministry (Matt 28:18–20; John 20:21–23; Rom 10:14–17; 1 Cor 4:1–2; Eph 4:11–12) subject to Christ both continue after the first coming of Christ (albeit in accord with

[64] Yehezekel Kaufmann, "Probleme der israelitisch-jüdischen Religionsgeschichte," *ZAW* 48 (1930): 23–43; R. J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism Since Graf*, VTSup 19 (Leiden: Brill 1970), 120–23.

[65] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, 1266–89.

Col 2:16–17) until his second coming at the consummation of the new Eden according to the New Testament.

The return to the Persian province of Yehud was the immediate fulfillment of the new land of Israel (Ezek 47:1–48:8; 48:23–29), which has expanded borders (Ezek 47:15–20) and is described in terms of being a new Eden by Ezekiel 34:25–31; 36:1–38, and 47:1–12. The recapitulation of a secure land is hidden under its opposite. It is cloaked under end times retrograde; namely, the apocalyptic battle with Gog, Magog, and Israel's enemies (Ezek 38:1–39:29) "in the latter years" (בְּאַחֲרִית הַשָּׁנִים) (Ezek 38:8, 16) after Israel has returned to the land and salvation oracles were fulfilled (Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; 38:11, 14).[66] The Lord GOD's defeat of Gog, Magog, and Israel's enemies shakes the created order (of the fish of the sea [דְּגֵי הַיָּם], the birds of heavens [וְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם], the beasts of the field [וְחַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה], and all creeping things that creep on the earth [וְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאֲדָמָה]) (Ezek 38:19–20. Cf. Gen 1:20–25). Their defeat also echoes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by the raining down of fire and sulfur (אֵשׁ וְגָפְרִית) (Ezek 38:21–22. Cf. Gen 19:24). The weapons of the vanquished will fuel Israelite fires for seven years after which the Israelite will spends seven months burying Gog and the rest of the battle carnage in an open grave in the Valley of Gog's Multitude (i.e., a play on the Valley of Hinnom) (Ezek 16:21; 20:31; 23:37. Cf. Jer 19:5; 32:35). The land will then be cleansed so that the Glory of the LORD can be manifested (Ezek 39:9–13. Cf. Lev 21:1; 22:4, 7; Num 5:2–3; 9:6; 19:11, 13). The birds and beasts will still feast on Israel's sacrificed enemies (Ezek 39:17–20. Cf. Deut 28:16–44). The New Testament conversely speaks more emphatically

[66] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, 1119–20.

of recapitulation (Matt 19:28; Eph 1:10) being hidden under end times retrograde (Matt 24:1–51).[67] Christ's first coming, death, and resurrection not only binds and casts out Satan (John 12:31–33; Eph 3:10; Col 2:15; Rev 20:1–2), it also inaugurates Christ's millennial (i.e., amillennial in the modern sense) reign through his church as the eternal Davidic prince/king (Ezek 34:24; 37:24–25; 44:3; 45:7–22; 46:2–18; 48:21–22; Matt 3:2; 28:18–20; John 18:36; Col 1:13–14; Rev 1:5–6; 5:9–10; 20:2–6). This reign is cloaked under retrograde and the eventual release of Satan, buttressed by Gog and Magog (Matt 24:4–12; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1–5; Rev 20:3, 7–8). Finally, Christ comes again to defeat Satan, raise the dead, judge (Matt 13:40–42; 25:31–46; 1 Cor 6:9–11; Rev 11:15–18; 20:10–15; 21:6–8), and bring about the consummation of the new heavens and the new earth (Mat 13:43; 25:46; Rev 21:1–22:21) from the ashes of the previous ones at the end of time (Deut 32:22; Ps 102:26; Heb 1:11; 2 Pet 3:7, 10–13). In short, the land is ultimately "Christified" (1 Pet 1:3–4; Heb 11:10, 13–16).[68]

Eschatologically Recreated Human Condition in the Consummation of All Things

Faith, the second Israelite temple, a rebuilt Jerusalem, Persian governorship by Davidic princes of Judah, Zadokite priesthood, and return to the Persian province of Yehud with some residual northerners are "the already" of this recreation. However, the "but not yet" of this recreation includes far more that will come to fruition "in the latter years" (בְּאַחֲרִית הַשָּׁנִים) (Ezek 38:8, 16). After all, the recreated Israelites' did not walk forever in the Lord GOD's statutes, completely free (like the Divine) of their shameful license or rebellious heart of stone. The second temple was destroyed. Jerusalem fell again. The Persian governorship was not eternal

[67] For an overview of historic amillennialism, see Brighton, *Revelation*, 533–87.

[68] W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

Davidic rule. Israelites will not retain the land of Israel. The northern kingdom and southern kingdom never reunited. As a result, Ezekiel's recreation texts must point to more.

This study has argued that, for Ezekiel, the full restoration of the divine likeness and unwavering trust in God is what it means to be fully human. However, 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 and Hebrews 11:1 has been understood by some to mean that human beings will not just cease to have hope (Rom 8:24–25) but also faith in any sense in the new Eden. To be sure, faith in the sense of trust in that which is unseen and hoped for will come to an end (1 Cor 7:1; 2 Cor 5:7). Likewise, faith in the sense of trust in Christ's work of salvation and the consummation of recreation in the new Eden will come to an end as well. Human beings will be glorified and experience the beatific vision (Matt 5:8; John 17:3; 1 Cor 13:8–12; 1 John 3:2). However, faith in the sense of trust or dependency on God will continue in the new Eden. If human beings were created in a faith-based relationship with God (Gen 2:16–17) and autonomy from God was the rebellious sin that caused the fall in the first Eden (Gen 3:17), then it is autonomy from God that human beings are freed from in the new Eden so that they can fear, love, and trust in God above all things (Exod 20:1–6). Trust is something more fundamental to the human condition than just seeing or knowing (Jam 2:19). Since love is the effect of faith not its cause (Gen 1:26–30; 2:15–24; Gal 5:6), love can only remain eternal if faith does as well. After all, what is not of faith is sin (Rom 14:23; Heb 1:6).[69]

When the recreation of the Israelites reaches its completion, they will be so liberated from all license that they will faithfully walk in God's statutes and never choose evil again (Ezek 11:20; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24). New Edenic freedom is complete liberation from rebellious sin and

[69] C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1933), 308–9; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1071–74.

death (John 8:36; Rom 8:21; 2 Cor 3:17; Col 2:16–17; 1 Pet 2:16; 1 John 3:9) as well as liberation from the imposition of all manmade anthropologies as necessary ways of salvation (Matt 15:9; 1 Cor 7:23; 2 Cor 6:14; Gal 2:4–5, 14; 5:1–2, 13). At the same time, it is a sacrificial choice between manifold divine goods within the framework of God's will that not only reflects the divine likeness and makes God's name holy but also is made in deference to the needs of the individual and the common good within a mysterious new Edenic social network of different and complementary vocations (Matt 20:26–28; Acts 16:3; 21:26; Rom 14:1–23; 1 Cor 8:8–13; 9:19).

Freedom without boundaries ceases to be freedom. It becomes chaos. Chaos is fundamentally asocial. Since human beings are finite dependent social beings, they cannot function with chaos. When human beings are no longer grounded in God's freedom and his concomitant boundaries, they will inevitably impose the totalitarianism of self-deifying individualism on each other or the totalitarianism of collectively-imposed manmade metanarratives on each other. They are driven to do this to remedy the chaos in their lives and reestablish some basis for the social interaction they need to function. Fallen human beings enslave, dehumanize, and objectify each other because license distorts reality for them. It continuously convinces humans that they are really choosing the good when all the while they just keep choosing the evil. Evil can never become natural because it was not natural in the first place. Evil is a creaturely glitch that creatures injected into God's harmonious and perfect creation. Human beings do not need license to be free any more than God needs license to be free. Human beings were created in the image of the Creator God, not the image of an evolving God who needs evil to become God. Therefore, new Edenic freedom cannot be construed to mean that human beings now lack freedom or agency. To be free of sin is truly what it means to reflect God who is freedom itself (Exod 33:19; Job 34:13; Ps 135:5; Isa 45:7; Jer 18:6; Lam

3:37–38). M. V. Van Pelt, W. C. Kaiser, Jr., and D. I. Block add: "Ezekiel predicts that Yahweh will give his people a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit,' that they might obey his law (Ezek 11:19, 20; 18:31; 36:26–27). When *rûaḥ* and heart are used together, the subsequent discussion typically consists of deliberate actions, not emotional descriptions (Exod 28:3; Ps 51:10[13]; Isa 65:14; Dan 5:20)."[70] Creation anthropology only becomes inhuman and coercive when rebellion is naturalized.

Life in the consummation of all things is described in term of being "everlasting" or "forever" in the sense of perpetual (עוֹלָם).[71] The compound phrase עַד־עוֹלָם is used to emphasize that the exiles, their children, and their grandchildren will live forever in the land under eternal Davidic rule. "They will live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they (הֵמָּה), and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever (עַד־עוֹלָם)" (Ezek 37:25).[72] The fact that the exiles themselves will live in the land forevermore indicates that there will be an extraordinary fulfillment of this promise.[73] This fully recreated and everlasting human condition is realized in the context of the Lord GOD's "everlasting" (עוֹלָם) covenant (Ezek 16:60; 37:26), Davidic princely rule "forever" (לְעוֹלָם) (Ezek 37:25), and the temple in their midst "forever" (לְעוֹלָם) (Ezek 37:26, 28; 46:14). This temple moreover is "forever" (לְעוֹלָם) filled with God's presence (Ezek 43:7, 9) in a new Edenic (Ezek 36:35) city and land (Ezek 40:1–48:35).[74]

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[70] M. V. Van Pelt, W. C. Kaiser, Jr., and D. I. Block, "רוּחַ," *NIDOTTE* 3:1075–77.

[71] Anthony Tomasino, "עוֹלָם," *NIDOTTE* 3:345–46; 348–49.

[72] David J. A. Clines, "עַד," *DCH* 6:256; David J. A. Clines, "עוֹלָם," *DCH* 6:305.

[73] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, 1092.

[74] David J. A. Clines, "עוֹלָם," *DCH* 6:302–4.

The purpose of Ezekiel 37 is to assure the Israelites that if the Lord GOD could recreate human life from bones, then he can bring forth the spiritual and national recreation of Israel (if not more). Does this pericope teach a physical resurrection as a historical event at the time of Ezekiel as some of the Jewish tradition has thought? Does it teach a final resurrection of the body on the last day as many but not all in the Jewish and Christian traditions understood it?[75] The exiles were certainly very well aware of people who had already been resurrected soon after death, but none that had been reduced to dry bones (1 Kgs 17:22; 2 Kgs 4:35; 13:21). While Jesus resurrected people who had recently died (Luke 7:12–15; John 11:1–45), some maintain that he was not only the causative "first fruits" or "firstborn" of the resurrection of the body (Acts 26:23; 1 Cor 15:20, Col 1:18), but the first in time to be resurrected in the full New Testament sense. However, older resurrection narratives like Hosea 6:1–3 (cf. Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 46; 1 Cor 15:4) have laid a foundation for Ezekiel 37. Most scholars recognize Isaiah 26:19 (if not Isa 52:13–53:12) and especially Daniel 12:2 as clear expressions of end times bodily resurrection in the Old Testament.[76] Dahood likewise contends that there are many references to immortality and resurrection in the Psalter.[77]

Ezekiel did not craft his message in terms of resurrection. He frames it in terms of Genesis's well-established notion of recreation as demonstrated thus far.[78] Most scholars recognize that Ezekiel 37 reflects the language and a two-step process of the LORD's creation of the human being in Genesis 2:7 if not Genesis 1:2 as well (e.g., Allen).[79] If the exiles really believed that Lord GOD created all things, then there was no theoretical reason to doubt that he

[75] Concerning the Jewish and Christian tradition, see Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, 263–64; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 749–51.

[76] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 483–84.

[77] Dahood, *Psalms I: 1–50*, xxxvi, 4–5, 33, 78, 91, 99–100, 182–83, 221–23, 252–53, 304.

[78] Lapsley, "Ezekiel," 474–75.

[79] Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 173; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 185; Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 427; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 33; 209.

could recreate physical human life even from dry bones if he so promised. In fact, Ezekiel's response to the Lord GOD's question shows that he would not deny that God could recreate even these particular bones at the present moment and in deference recognizes that the Lord GOD can do what he wills (Ezek 37:3).[80]

Many scholars assume that Ezekiel 37 is a vision, and there is some literary evidence for this. While this account uses the formula "the hand of the LORD was upon me" which introduced the three major visions of the book (Ezek 1:3; 3:22; 8:1; 40:1, but not only visions [Ezek 22:22]), Odell recognizes "the narrative does not employ Ezekiel's terms for a visionary experience," albeit she asserts "it is better understood as a narrative concerning a trance or seizure during which Ezekiel performs a symbolic act."[81] In addition to lacking a date like the aforementioned visions, the terms "vision" (חָזוֹן/מַרְאָה) or the hiphil "to see" (רָאָה) associated with visions are missing (Ezek 11:25; 40:4).[82] Likewise, the term "behold" (הִנֵּה) is hardly limited to visions.[83] Unlike other prophets, Ezekiel actually experienced (with his own prophetic speaking, seeing, and hearing) the recreation of human life from mere dry bones (Ezek 37:4, 7–10).[84] Nevertheless, Ezekiel does not make a priestly protest about being in the defiling presence of unclean unburied bones, though he may have been caught up in the moment (Num 19:11–20; Deut 21:22–23).[85] Moreover, Greenberg maintains with other scholars that Lord GOD himself explains the dry bones to be a metaphor even though God literalizes and concretizes the dry bones metaphor that the exiles had applied to themselves: "'Son of man/Adam, these bones are

[80] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 507–8; Duguid, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel*, 426–27.
[81] Odell, *Ezekiel*, 454.
[82] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, 1075.
[83] *BHRG*^{2}, §40.22.4.
[84] Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 253.
[85] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 208; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 251.

the whole house of Israel (הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל);' behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' Therefore prophesy (הִנָּבֵא), and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel'" (Ezek 37:11–12).[86]

Just as Ezekiel uses the heart to refer to the inner condition of faith, so too bones can refer to the inner spiritual health of person (Job 20:11; 21:24, Ps 31:10; 102:3; Prov 3:8; 17:20; Lam 1:13). But if scholars agree that the Old Testament does not assume the dualism of Greek anthropology, why assume the inner condition of the human being and the external condition are not interconnected? As Block states, "It follows then that any hope of victory over death and a beatific afterlife would require a reunion of the divorced components [i.e., 'physical matter and life-giving breath" from the 'nepeš'], which is exactly what happens in Ezek. 37."[87] Many scholars have found the account so extraordinary that they think the text at the very least hints at more than just inner and national recreation for the house of Israel. Linking Ezekiel 37 with Genesis 2:7, S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry for instance observe: "The boldness of the description is extraordinary, however, and it is hard to avoid asking whether there is not more behind it. Thus, for the time being, an answer to the question of resurrection is only hinted at in Ezk. 37."[88] Some critical scholars go so far as to claim Ezekiel 37 was redacted during the Maccabean period because they see evidence of individual resurrection and Ezekiel's sending of a hypostasized Spirit.[89] The New Testament appears to have understood the "earthquake" (σεισμός) and physical resurrection of Matthew 27:51–54 in terms of Ezekiel 37:1–14 and the "rattling"

[86] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 744–46; 750; Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48*, 1083.
[87] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 386.
[88] S. Tengström and H.-J. Fabry, "רוּחַ," *TDOT* 13:388.
[89] Gertz, Berlejung, Schmidt, and Witte, *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament*, 460–61.

(σεισμός [LXX]) of its recreated bones (Ezek 37:7). John 5:25–29; 11:23–26, 43; Revelation 7:14; and 11:11 likewise seem to allude to this text. Greenberg notes that the Syr. rendered Ezek 37:11: "'These are the bones *of* the whole house of Israel'—belong to all their dead, rather than 'are (a figure for) the whole mass of Israel's exiles.'"[90] All of that said, Ezekiel 37 teaches the inner and national resurrection of Israel. It affirms the possibility of physical resurrection and certainly hints that this is God's intention for the Israelites. But the full revelation of a universal bodily resurrection of believers and unbelievers alike at the end of time is not explicitly and fully taught here.

Shame had been necessary to keep the eschatologically recreated Israelites from straying into unrepentance (Ezek 16:63, 52, 54, 61; 20:43; 36:31–32; 43:6–9; 44:6–14). Once the Israelites become fully recreated, they no longer have any need of such shame. "They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetuated against me, when they live on their own land with no one to make them afraid" (Ezek 39:26, 39. Cf. Jer 31:31–34; Heb 8:12; 10:16–17). Some recent translations (NKJV, NJPS, NV, CEV, NLT, ZB, EÜ, CSB, LU17, NET, Goldingay, BB) read "they will bear (וְנָשׂוּ) their disgrace" along with the ancient versions, which is based on the MT text pointing. Other recent translations (NRSV, REB, GNB, CEB, NABR, NIV, ESV, Alter, RNJB, NASB) read "they will forget" which based on a textual emendation of the root (נשׁה instead of נָשָׂא). This emendation only makes better sense given the context is the final full restoration of Israel in the wake of the apocalyptic defeat of Gog, Magog, and Israel's

[90] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 749–50.

enemies.[91] This is also the sole place in the book were the Lord GOD says, "I will have mercy/compassion (וְרִחַמְתִּי) on the whole house of Israel" (Ezek 39:25).

New Temple, City, Israel, and Land in the Consummation of All Things

The divine warrior's apocalyptic defeat of Gog, Magog, and Israel's enemies initiates the consummation of the Israelites' recreation (Ezek 39:21–29), the new temple (Ezek 40:1–43:27), the new Jerusalem-like city called "The LORD is There" (Ezek 40:1–2; 45:6–7; 48:15–35), the new Israel with gentile sojourners integrated among them (Ezek 44:1–46:24; 47:22–23; 48:1–35), and the new Edenic land of Israel (Ezek 36:35; 47:1–48:35).[92] This final vision (Ezek 40:14–48:35) occurs around the midpoint of the exile and half way to the Jubilee (Ezek 40:1. Cf. Lev 25:3–8). The Jubilee marked a time of restoration in the land of Israel when all debts are forgiven. Hence this vision completely reverses the first part of the book and foretells of the ultimate Jubilee.[93]

The overall plan of Ezekiel's new eternal temple (Ezek 37:26, 28) is similar to other Mesopotamian temples, and especially to the first Israelite tabernacle and temple (Exod 25:1–40:38; 1 Kgs 6:1–8:66; 2 Chr 2:1–7:22). Like nesting dolls, it consists of three spheres or layers of ever-increasing holiness nestled inside each other. They are the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. At the same time, the new eternal temple complex is very unique. It is massive, symmetrical, perfectly square, and cross-shaped (Ezek 42:15–20; 45:2. Cf. Ezek 45:1–9; 48:8–22) with many other distinctive features.[94] Once the Lord GOD filled the new temple with his life-sustaining presence like the rising sun, it remains permanent with his people, never

[91] Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 217–18; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 271.

[92] For an overview of Ezekiel's new temple, city, and land of Israel, see Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 508–9, 520, 541, 550, 565, 572–73, 598, 603, 711, 733, 737.

[93] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 512.

[94] The most comprehensive recent discussion of the nuances of Ezekiel's final vision (albeit from a utopian idealist perspective) can be found in Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*.

to depart again (Ezek 43:1–5). This temple subsumes the city and eliminates the palace rather than visa versa. The word for "royal palace" (הֵיכָל), which finds its highest concentration in Ezekiel 41,[95] is used for the nave or great hall of this sanctuary. This coincides with the notion that the Lord GOD and his Christ are Israel's ultimate priest king.[96] While John spoke of a "temple" throughout his Revelation much like Ezekiel (Rev 3:12; 7:15; 11:1–2, 19; 14:15–17; 16:1, 17), by the end of the book John simply says there is no temple in the new Jerusalem because "the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev 21:22).

Ezekiel's new temple sat in the middle of the sacred allotment. Priests dwell in the north of the sacred allotment (Ezek 45:1–4; 48:8–13). The Levites live to the south of them (Ezek 45:5; 48:22). The prince possesses the lands to the side of the sacred allotment so that he may take care of his own needs and sacrifices (Ezek 45:7–8; 48:21). South of the temple is the common use land which would be used for pasture and dwellings. Ezekiel's new Jerusalem-like city called "The LORD is There" was in the middle of the common use land (Ezek 45:6; 48:15–20). John calls the new Jerusalem the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2). He provides a description of the enormous square city, its gates, and its walls (Rev 21:9–21). The Glory of the Lord and the lamb serve as the city's sun, moon, and source of all illumination (Rev 21:23).

While the northern kingdom and southern kingdom were not united under an earthly king, the faithful Israelites would be reunited with the faithful Judahites under Christ in the new heavens and the new earth, along with the faithful sojourners from the nations who are integrated into Israel (Ezek 37:15–28. Jer 23:5–6; 31:2–6. Cf. Rev 7:1–8; 21:12–14). Ezekiel provides a description of a hierarchically-ordered new Israel whose new life is sustained via a respectful and

[95] Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance*, 294–95.
[96] Goldingay, "Ezekiel," 659–60.

faithful reception of the holy mediated to them via the cult of the new eternal temple. Different temple precincts are limited to Zadokites, singers, Levites, the prince, and Israelites each of which have their unique role (Ezek 40:44–46; 42:13–14; 44:2–3, 5–9, 19; 45:1–6). Zadokites (Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11) alone perform priestly functions at the altar before the Lord GOD himself (Ezek 40:46; 42:13–14; 43:18–27; 44:15–31). The singers had their own chambers and provided music for the temple (Ezek 40:44). The Levites guard the gates, care for the temple complex, slaughter, and minister to the Israelites (Ezek 44:10–14). The eternal Davidic prince/king (Ezek 34:24; 37:25; 44:3; 45:7–22; 46:2–18; 48:21–22), who is privileged to eat and worship at the LORD's shut eastern gate (for the Lord GOD will never leave again [Ezek 43:7, 9]), performs ceremonial functions (Ezek 44:3; 45:16–46:18). The princes of Israel provide the people just balances (Ezek 44:9–10. Cf. Lev 19:35–36). The Israelites occupy the outer court and make properly measured offerings (Ezek 42:14; 44:19–20; 45:13–17). The "alien" or "foreigner" (בֶּן־נֵכָר) who is "uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh" (עֲרֵל לֵבָב וְעֲרֵל בָּשָׂר) may not enter the sanctuary (Ezek 44:9). However, Leviticus 26:41 indicates unfaithful biological Israelites can be uncircumcised in the heart.[97] Gentile sojourners, moreover, cease being uncircumcised aliens. They are integrated into the new Israel, embrace the Torah, and are allotted land. Their sons even become native-born sons of Israel (Ezek 47:22–23. Cf. Lev 19:33–34; 24:22; Num 9:14; 15:29; Deut 10:18; Rev 21:24–27).[98] Therefore, the new Israel is made up of repentant holy Israelites and holy sojourners who have incorporated into Israel, not unrepentant unholy biological Israelites and unrepentant unholy biological sojourners (Rev

[97] Carvalho, "Ezekiel," 770.
[98] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 717–19.

22:14–15). Ezekiel's missiology may not be as explicit and rich as the other prophets, but missiology is not absent in his theology despite his suffering under the hand of the Babylonians.

Although the eternal Davidic prince/king and high priesthood find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ according to the New Testament, Ezekiel's picture of recreated Israelite society indicates that God's design for creation is that human beings are to be in rightly-ordered (which can even include hierarchical) relationship with all human beings and ultimately with God from whose temple presence they derive life in all its fullness. Unlike Greek and modern anthropological trends that tend to deify human capabilities, Ezekiel does not think that complementarity is antithetical to human equality in either the first Eden or the new Eden. Rather it was mankind's failure to recognize their dependence on God and each other that brought about their dehumanization in the first place (Gen 3:17). Human equality does not necessarily preclude dependence and complementarity in Ezekiel's new Eden.

It is not just Ezekiel who thinks this way. The Old Testament and New Testament also seem to think that humans have different roles in the new Eden as the twenty-four elders consisting of the apostles and tribal patriarchs suggest (Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev 1:6; 4:4, 10; 5:5–6, 8, 10–11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4; 20:6),[99] though marriage roles no longer exist (Matt 22:30). There also appears to be different degrees of glory (Dan 12:3; Matt 16:27; 20:23; 25:21, 23; John 14:2; Rom 2:6; 1 Cor 3:8; 1 Cor 15:41; 2 Cor 9:6; Rev 22:12). All of this is not so strange when one considers that angels have different roles (Gen 3:24; 16:7; 19:1; Exod 25:18; Ps 18:10; Isa 6:2; Ezek 10:4; Dan 8:16; 10:13; Tob 12:15; Luke 1:19; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16; 1 Thess 4:16; Jude 1:9; Rev 12:7). Even the persons of the Trinity have different roles (Gen 1:1–3; Gal 4:4–5; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 15:28). Yet none of this suggests that there is angelic

[99] See also Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 323–26; Brighton, *Revelation*, 116–20.

inequality, much less inequality among the persons of the Trinity. At the same time, prophecy can only provide dim access as to how humans will be socially related to one another in the new heavens and the new earth.

The land of Israel's Edenic transformation is now fully manifested (Rev 21:1–2). From underneath this east-facing temple flows water that morphs into a river. This life-giving river transforms the entire ecology of the land. It flows into the Dead Sea, turning its waters into fresh water and filling it with life. Trees that produce fruit each month have grown up on both banks of the river. All that swarm and the fish are in abundance in the river so that fisherman can fish it from En-gedi to En-eglaim (Ezek 47:1–12. Cf. Gen 2:10; Rev 22:1–2). Since the prince has his own lands, he need not take from the people to provide for his needs, his children's needs, or his sacrifices (Lev 19:35; 25:10:10, 23–24, 42; 1 Sam 8:10–18; 1 Kgs 21:1–16). The Zadokites and Levites received their domain in sacred allotment. As for the rest of the tribes of Israel, they each receive exactly equal and parallel land allotment which are apportioned along the length of the land from north to south. The tribes of Jacob's wives, particularly Judah and Benjamin, are closest to the temple, whereas the tribes of Jacob's concubines are the furthest away. The land's previous borders have been expanded to accord with those spelled out in Numbers 34:1–15 (Ezek 47:15–20). The sojourners also receive allotments and are integrated into the people of Israel (Ezek 45:1–8; 46:16–24; 47:13–23; 48:1–35). How exactly this Christified new temple, city, Israel, and land will be fully realized at the second coming remains a mystery. For this reason, one must be careful not to speculate about it. It is not a matter of eating and drinking according to Paul (Rom 14:17).

Conclusion

Until the recapitulation of all things, human recreation is incomplete. Even though the sons of man/Adam have faith and the divine likeness in their entirety, they do not yet have them in all their realized fullness. The rebellious intention persists. After the Lord GOD had recreated Ezekiel, he still tells his prophet not to give into rebelliousness like the rebellious house of Israel (Ezek 2:8). Some think that Ezekiel resisted his call on the basis of Ezekiel 3:14–15. However, this same text can be read in a few other ways that do not support the idea that Ezekiel was rebelling. Granted Ezekiel retained the rebellious intent, but the rest of Ezekiel's call and ministry suggests that he was actually a model of faithful resistance against the rebellious intention. Even Ezekiel's protest against eating bread cooked over human excrement shows his Levitical fidelity to the Lord GOD and his commitment to Torah (Ezek 4:12–14). Shame and the cross thwart unrepentance and foster spiritual growth. The Lord GOD not only tempered Ezekiel with performative pronouncements (Ezek 2:6; 3:8–9, 26–27), but he also imposed sign acts upon him (Ezek 3:25–27). These crosses fostered his own spiritual growth and helped him embody God's purging Word to Israel. On a number of occasions, the Lord GOD reminds the Israelites of their shame (Ezek 16:63, 52, 54, 61; 20:43; 36:31–32; 43:6–9; 44:6–14). But the purpose of this shame was to prepare the way for recreation, to exercise faith, and curb the impulse towards rebellious sin.

Faith is filled with doubts. Freedom is bound up with license. Some Israelites so gave into their doubts and license that they were purged during the exile (Ezek 20:38; 34:16). Others would continue to pursue detestable things and abominations after returning to the land (Ezek 11:21). Sacrificial love seems dehumanizing at times. In addition to the sign acts imposed him, Ezekiel willingly performed sign acts that also seemed dehumanizing (Ezek 4:1–17; 5:1–17;

6:11–12; 12:1–20; 21:11–28; 24:15–24; 37:15–28). However, they were actually humane acts of sacrificial love on his part, designed to purge the Israelites of their rebellion. Ezekiel's pastoral concern for the Israelites is most clear on the occasions that he interceded on their behalf (Ezek 9:8; 11:13; 21:5). After the Lord GOD loosened his tongue, he voluntarily uttered his most uplifting messages to the Israelites like the recreation of the dry bones and the new temple Torah (Ezek 37:1–14; 43:12).

Before the first coming of Christ according to the New Testament, Zerubbabel's temple, rebuilt Jerusalem, Davidic princely governorship, Zadokite priesthood, and the return to the land of Israel are only an immediate fulfillment of the new temple, city, Israel, and land. The second temple was destroyed. Jerusalem fell again. Persian governorship was not eternal Davidic rule. Israelites will not retain the land. The northern and southern kingdom were never reunited.

In the recapitulation of all things, human recreation becomes complete. The sons of man/Adam now possess faith and the divine likeness in all their realized fullness. The new spirit and the new heart of flesh that the Spirit of the LORD (Ezek 36:27; 37:14; 39:29) gave them finally has the heart of stone completely removed (Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:25–26). Humans walk perfectly in God's statutes and ordinances, free of all rebelliousness (Ezek 11:20; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24). Such freedom is analogous to the freedom that the Lord GOD possesses. The Lord GOD neither needs rebellious sin to be free, nor is he without good choices to make in a given scenario. His eternal covenant with mankind (Ezek 16:60; 37:26) comes to its full fruition now when human beings enjoy life everlasting in an eternal land (Ezek 37:25). Physical resurrection is at least hinted at (Ezek 37:1–13). There is no more need for shame because mankind is now liberated from their rebellious intention and license (Ezek 39:26).

According to the New Testament, the new temple, city, Israel, and land find their fulfillment in Christ, the new temple of his body (i.e., the gathering of the faithful in both testaments), "The LORD is There/new Jerusalem," the new heavens, and new earth. But this all remains hidden and only partially realized until the second coming of Christ and the recapitulation of all things. Only Christ and the temple of his body, the church, can be the fulfillment of Ezekiel's new temple (Matt 12:6; 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; John 1:14, 2:19–22; 4:23; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:17–22; Heb 8:1–2; 9:11, 24; 10:19–20; Rev 2:7; 11:1ff [Cf. Ezek 40:3–5]; 21:1–22:21). Ezekiel's new temple is ultimately neither a (past or future) building nor an ideal (for human beings to live up to). It is an eternal sacramental sign (Ezek 37:26, 28; 46:14) through which the Lord GOD really imparts his life-sustaining temple presence to human beings forever (Ezek 11:19; 43:7, 9). "The LORD is There/new Jerusalem" is something more than the rebuilt Jerusalem (Ezek 40:1–2; 45:1–8; 46:16–18; 48:9–22, 30–35. Cf. Rev 21:2, 9–27). This new city is ruled by the Lord GOD's eternal Davidic prince (Ezek 37:25). Ezekiel provides a description of a hierarchically-ordered new Israel, consisting of Zadokites, singers, Levites, the prince, and Israelites, all of whom have complementary and distinct roles. These new Israelites are not limited to biological Israelites. They include sojourners who have been integrated into Israel. Israel's new life is maintained via a respectful and faithful reception of the holy mediated to them via the cult of the new eternal temple. Like the new city, the new land is eternal (Ezek 37:25). It has been expanded (Ezek 47:15–20). The land is equally allotted among the tribes (Ezek 45:1–8; 46:16–24; 47:13–23; 48:1–35). It has undergone an Edenic transformation as well (Ezek 36:35; 47:1–12. Cf. Rev 21:1–2; 22:1–22).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The facets of the Lord GOD's distinctive title for Ezekiel, the "son of man/Adam" are the real key to unlocking the Book of Ezekiel's theological anthropology. The Adamic priestly prophet was not just declared son of man/Adam to signal his solidarity with fallen Adam, his creatureliness, and his inhumanity but also to signify his new recreated solidarity with the One whose Likeness is as the Appearance of a Human Being/Adam, his creaturely relationship with the Creator, and his paradigmatic renewed humanity.

To be sure, Ezekiel's theology and title have roots in revealed theology of the cross which exposes the fallen unregenerate human being's anthropology of autonomy and license (i.e., a theology of glory). Theology of the cross also speaks of the paradox of faith as well as the "but not yet" and "at the same time sinner" dimensions of the human being who is eschatologically recreated and who is at "the same time saint and sinner" before the consummation of all things. But Ezekiel's theology and title is fundamentally grounded in revealed creation theology, which articulates what the human being was always created to be in an anthropology of dependence and freedom. It also speaks of the naturalness of faith as well as the "already" and "saint" dimensions of the human being who is eschatologically recreated and who is "at the same time saint and sinner" until the consummation all things. Ezekiel's theology and title is more specifically founded in the theocentric theology and creation anthropology of Genesis. God created the first Adam in the divine image and in a trust-based relationship with him so that Adam could mediate God's life-sustaining Edenic temple presence to the other royal

priests. They in turn were to help Adam in his (non-atoning) priestly duties to others as well as in the royal mastery and rule of creation. This image consists of a divinely-derived uprightness, immortality, holiness, righteousness, strength, and knowledge. Human love (i.e., human/active righteousness) is the necessary effect of divine gift (i.e., divine/passive righteousness), much like fruit is the necessary effect of a tree. Just as fruit does not cause the tree, so too human love does not cause the divine gift. Freedom is freedom from rebellious sin and death as well as freedom from the imposition of all manmade anthropologies as necessary ways of salvation. That said, it is also a sacrificial choice between several divine goods that is made within the framework of God's will as well as within a framework of mutually-supporting and different vocational duties to one another. In the fall, Adam broke his faith-relationship with God, forfeiting the divine image. As a result, the sons of man/Adam were fathered in his fallen image and all the intentions of their heart are evil from youth.

None of the sons of man/Adam have become as insolent as the Israelites. In response to the Lord God's multiple acts of mercy for the sake of his name, they have only persistently and deliberately indulged their evil or rebellious intention via the inversion of the divine likeness, the dehumanization of each other, and unpriestly desecration of the divine name before the nations. For this reason, the Lord GOD removed his presence from the Jerusalem temple, purged the rebellious from the land, and expelled a remnant from Israel. The Adamic priestly prophet was recreated to preach a theocentric rebuke to the Israelites as well as a collective guilt rebuke to them. With respect to the theocentric rebuke, Ezekiel insists that the Sovereign God is just and therefore only punishes unrepentant individuals and generations alike. With respect to the collective guilt rebuke, Ezekiel maintains that the sons of man/Adam retain the rebellious intention and are responsible for actualizing it. In fact, every mark and consequence of the

likeness of God in the strict sense is found wanting in the Israelites. The Adamic priestly prophet is further called to divest the Israelites of their radical theocentric and false corporate responsibility justifications of themselves via God's purging Word to show that they are corporately and personally culpable for their situation. The radically theocentric justification of themselves presumes that the Sovereign God predetermines everything so that there is no real collective or personal responsibility. The false corporate responsibility justification of themselves assumes that the "innocent" exilic generation is collectively and unjustly punished for the sins of their fathers. Since only a gracious theocentric act was able to create the first Adam in the divine likeness and a faith-relationship with God, only another such act can do the same for the fallen sons of man/Adam. Apart from such a recreative act, the Israelites will only continue to purposely choose license.

The Lord GOD is no mere tribal God bound to the Israelite land and temple. He is the one, universal, sovereign, and transcendent Creator God. The Judahites have not been exiled because the Lord GOD has been defeated by the Babylonian gods. God killed the Israelites to make them alive again. The Lord GOD does not do this to save face before the nations. He does it for the sake of his name so that he might sanctify the nations through Israel. Ezekiel was eschatologically recreated or justified as a renewed first Adam, an Adamic priestly prophet, and type of the Second Adam so that he could embody Edenic humanism for Israel, re-humanize them through God's resurrecting Word, and mediate God's eschatological life-sustaining new temple presence to the exiles. Without God's recreative action and his life-sustaining cultic presence, authentic human life cannot exist, much less remain vital. Human life cannot become humane, much less free, without mankind's dependency on God and the divine likeness. Resurrected as a new Israel and re-consecrated as royal priests, the Israelites could then practice

sacrificial love as they mirror the divine likeness and hallow God's name among the nations so that they too might be incorporated into Israel. Since no human being can perform the divine act of recreation and sustain new life themselves, the Lord GOD unilaterally acts through his Adamic priestly prophet on behalf of the Israelites. The Lord GOD sets Ezekiel forth as proof that he really can and intends to recreate them. Ezekiel speaks God's resurrecting Word and sends his life-giving Spirit as if he were the Second Adam himself. Finally, Ezekiel symbolically bears the sins of the people, restores Zadokite mediation of new temple presence, and provides a new temple Torah in anticipation of the Greater Moses. In the end, the Lord GOD's action for the sake of his name really does come from compassion for Israel.

Human recreation remains eschatological before the consummation of all things, Recreated sons of man/Adam have faith and the divine likeness already now in their entirety, but not yet in all their realized fullness. Trust continues to falter and freedom still dallies with license. Sacrificial love for the sake of one's fellow man sometimes even seems dehumanizing. The rebellious intention wants to abjure dependence on God and purge the divine likeness via the suffocation of a sacrificial faith-life. Hence shame and the cross are necessary to stave off unrepentance and facilitate spiritual growth. Just as renewed human life remains not yet fully realized, the new temple, city, Israel, and land only find immediate fulfillment in Zerubbabel's temple, rebuilt Jerusalem, Davidic princely governorship, Zadokite priesthood, and the return to the land of Israel before the first coming of Christ according to the New Testament. Nevertheless, trust and the divine likeness will be so realized in the consummation of all things that the sons of man/Adam will walk forever in God's statutes, completely free (like the Divine) of their shameful license and rebellious heart of stone. These royal priests will then fully execute their sacrificial choice between numerous goods so that they not only completely mirror the

divine likeness and hallow God's name but also fully support the individual and the common good via complementary and distinct roles in a mysterious new Edenic society. According to the New Testament, the new temple, city, Israel, and land find their fulfillment in Christ, the new temple of his body (i.e., the gathering of the faithful in both the Old and New Testaments), "The LORD is There/new Jerusalem," the new heavens, and new earth, all of which remain hidden and only partially realized until the second coming of Christ and the recapitulation of all things.

In sum, Ezekiel's theological anthropology only seems "dehumanizing" when one presupposes that autonomy from God is necessary for human liberty and flourishing. Autonomy further assumes that rebellious sin is natural, and therefore it is necessary for human freedom. Finally, autonomy has a tendency to think that living in accord with the Lord GOD's will means that believers only have one option in every scenario or at least no real choices. However, Ezekiel has revealed that human freedom and flourishing only really work in a dependent relationship with God. Human beings cannot function in ways they were never designed to work in the first place. Ezekiel has also revealed that rebellious sin is not natural, and therefore it cannot be necessary for human freedom. All the trauma that humans experience sad to say is actually the artificial result of creatures' attempting to play counterfeit "creator." Lastly, Ezekiel understands the Lord GOD's will as a framework in which there can be a number of possible good choices that one can make in any given scenario. If humans can reflect God, they can also mirror his freedom in choosing between various goods. That being said, Edenic humanism still has something more to offer. It is ultimately not self-serving in ways that alterative humanisms grounded in individual or collective autonomy inevitably are. Edenic humanism is grounded first and foremost in proper relationship with a just and merciful God, not in oneself over against others or in the majority collective over against the minority. Without being anchored in God and

his will, alternative humanisms grounded in autonomy have typically, albeit often unintentionally, fostered the dehumanization of other human beings and minorities in the name of manufactured truth claims made by a dominant individual or a majority. Now there certainly have been malignant Christendoms that have misunderstood the Edenic humanism of Christianity and committed terrible sins. However, there have been even greater genocides and atrocities committed just in the twentieth century by malignant forms of autonomous humanism. Nazi and Soviet ideologies come most immediately to mind. For this reason, Ezekiel's creation anthropology really does deserve another look as human beings contemplate what it means to be human in the twentieth-first century. It addresses a significant blind spot in anthropologies of autonomy (i.e., God's role in human anthropology) that inevitably cause dehumanization. As that astute observer of the human condition, St. Augustine of Hippo, once noted: "Our heart is unquiet until it rests in you [Lord]."[1]

[1] Augustine, "Confessions," in *The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle and Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990–), I/1:39.

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