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The Anderson Journal of Christian Studies

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It is with great pleasure that I present this second edition of The Anderson Journal of Christian Studies. This edition includes not only contributions from faculty members of Anderson University’s College of Christian Studies, but also articles written by scholars representing our sister South Carolina Baptist colleges—North Greenville University and Charleston Southern University.

New Testament scholar Channing Crisler offers an examination of Paul’s use of locative language as theological abbreviation in the book of Romans. He contends that understanding Paul’s use of locative phrases like “under” is essential for accurate exegesis of the Pauline corpus.

Donny Mathis writes a description of Paul’s definition of the gospel. He explains how the influence of the Old Testament and pagan usage of the term relate to such an understanding.

I include a presentation of J. Hudson Taylor’s mission strategy. In my article I explore the principles that made Taylor and the China Inland Mission so successful in their mission efforts.

Peter Beck writes a helpful critique of Solomon Stoddard’s A Guide to Christ. In so doing, he points readers to a practical guide for pastors who seek to shepherd sinners seeking conversion.

Finally, Ryan Neal contributes a thought-provoking review of John Walton’s book The Lost World of Genesis One. He presents a persuasive argument for the importance of Walton’s book to the discussion regarding science, faith, the book of Genesis, and the question of origins.

I pray that this edition of our journal will encourage you in your faith. I also pray that the articles will help you in your efforts to spread the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20).

By His Grace,

Tim McKnight
Executive Editor
Although Paul could construct a lengthy argument that would make Aristotle smile, he also had a penchant for brevity. Paul packed a great deal of meaning into his letters with shorthand expressions such as “in Christ” or “under the law.” These phrases represent moments where Paul abbreviated his theology rather than explained it. As Hans Dieter Betz has observed, Paul’s writings contain many “abbreviations of theological doctrine” which originated from the “oral transmission of Paul’s theology.” The problem with these theological abbreviations is that there is no excursus, footnote, or even a parenthetical remark that explains what they mean. Consequently, these abbreviations become exegetical thorns in the interpreter’s hermeneutical flesh. They agitate the interpreter, because they are small but obviously significant. They are repeated but not explained. This article is an attempt to address this interpretive difficulty as it stands in Romans.

The argument in what follows is two-fold: (1) Romans contains theological abbreviations that are “locative” in nature; and (2) there are longer equivalents to these abbreviations that are also “locative” in nature and therefore help to explain what the abbreviations mean. By “locative,” I am referring to the way Paul uses the physical location or spatial dimension of “under” as a metaphor for a theological point that he makes in his letter. The five locative metaphors to be considered here are: “under sin,” “under the law,” “under grace,” “handed over,” and “under your
feet,” along with their respective variations. If interpreters are to understand all that Paul means by these expressions, and their impact on the letter’s argumentation, they must look to their longer equivalents, longer equivalents that can be identified by the locative sense that they share with their respective abbreviations.

**Method for the Study**

The method for the present study consists of identifying and evaluating the theological abbreviations and their longer equivalents in light of three criteria. First, the theological abbreviation must contain prepositional phrases or verbs that bear the locative sense of “under.” Second, the longer equivalent must contain a use of language that semantically and syntactically matches the abbreviation. Third, the longer equivalent must be able to explain what the abbreviation assumes but does not explicitly state, namely the cause and outcome of being placed “under” a dominating power. Once we have identified and evaluated the theological abbreviations in light of these criteria, we will consider the impact of this analysis on our understanding of Paul’s theology in Romans. After all, these are “theological” abbreviations.

**Locative Language as Metaphor**

A brief word needs to be said about locative metaphors in general before they are closely scrutinized in Romans. Specifically, it is necessary to provide a working definition of metaphor and its relationship to location. As is well known, it is not easy to define a metaphor in biblical or non-biblical literature. Debates about what a metaphor is, or is not, show no signs of abating. Although space does not permit a lengthy discussion of that debate here, there are a few things to note which will prove helpful for the analysis of metaphors in Romans.

First, any definition of metaphor generally begins with Aristotle’s classic description. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defined metaphor (μεταφέρω) as “transference.” Simply put, the metaphor’s creator “transfers” the name of one thing and gives it to something else for the sake of explanation. Next, a metaphor is intrinsically analogical. The metaphor’s creator explains an unknown entity by describing it in terms of a known entity. Third, metaphors can become quite complex. Aristotle’s definition bears this out. He explains that metaphors can signal a variety of transferences from “genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy.” It is here that terms other than metaphor become necessary, such as metonymy or synecdoche. The locative metaphors in Romans contain a level of complexity that the interpreter must address, as the conclusion will demonstrate.
It is also necessary to make a few comments about the metaphorical location “under.” In Romans, the locative metaphor “under” is signaled most often by the preposition ύπο with the accusative case or the verb παραδίδωμι. There is no question that in the NT ύπο with the accusative case indicates location. As Blass and Debrunner explain, ύπο with the accusative is a “response to the questions ‘where?’ and ‘whither?’” Harris adds that ύπο with the accusative case expresses motion and answers the question “where to?” The designated location is most often “underneath” something or someone. Metaphorically, ύπο with the accusative often conveys being “under” the domination of a power. Similarly, in certain contexts, the verb παραδίδωμι signals the same kind of metaphorical location, namely being “handed over” to an opposing force. While not every theological abbreviation related to the location “under” in Romans uses the preposition ύπο with the accusative case or the verb παραδίδωμι, the majority of them do. In the few instances that do not, the vocabulary and expressions Paul uses still share the same semantic sense of “under.”

**The Locative Metaphor “Under” as Theological Abbreviation**

We will consider seven theological abbreviations that, although expressed in different ways, contain the metaphorical location “under.” They include the following:

- For we accused beforehand that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin (ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν) (Rom 3:9).
- Who was handed over (παρέδοθη) on account of our transgressions and was raised on account of our justification (Rom 4:25).
- For sin will not lord over you; for you are not under the law (ὑπὸ νόμον) but under grace (ὑπὸ χάριν) (Rom 6:14).
- For we know that the law is spiritual but I am fleshly having been sold under sin (ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) (Rom 7:14).
- Who did not spare his own son, but handed him over (παρέδωκεν) . . . (Rom 8:32).
- For God confined all to disobedience, in order that he might have mercy on all (Rom 11:32).
- Now the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet (ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας ὑμῶν) (Rom 16:20).

We will analyze each of these theological abbreviations according to the criteria outlined above. Once again, following this analysis, we will consider how the interpretation of these abbreviations impacts our understanding of Paul’s
argument and theology in Romans.

“Under Sin” (ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν)

Romans 3:9, 7:14, and 11:32 all contain locative metaphors that function as theological abbreviations. In Romans 3:9 and 7:14, the abbreviation is contained in the prepositional phrase “under sin” (ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν). There is a variation of this abbreviation in Romans 11:32 where Paul writes that God “confined all to disobedience” (συνέκλεσεν τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπείθειαν). We will consider the abbreviation “under sin” and its variation in turn.

“Under Sin” | Romans 3:9

Paul’s statement in Romans 3:9 that both Jews and Gentiles “all are under sin” meets the three criteria of a theological abbreviation that bears the locative sense “under.” First, Paul uses the locative preposition ὑπὸ followed by the accusative noun ἁμαρτίαν. Together, the phrase functions as a locative metaphor that portrays sin as a dominant power which rules over all (i.e., Jew and Gentile). Historically speaking, Williams argues that the prepositional phrase is a metaphor that most likely refers to some form of Greco-Roman slavery well known to Paul’s recipients. Given our previous explanation of how metaphors work, the entity known to the recipients would be some form of 1st century slavery that is then used to describe the status of Jews and Gentiles as it relates to the power of sin. It is a status that Paul describes in the locative sense of “under sin.” However, even though from a purely historical perspective we can identify the known and unknown entities of the locative metaphor “under sin,” we are still limited in our understanding of the abbreviation without recourse to its longer equivalent in the letter.15 This brings us to the second and the third criteria for identifying and analyzing a theological abbreviation in Romans.

The prepositional phrase “under sin” has a longer equivalent that is semantically and syntactically congruent with it. Based on the criteria outlined above, Romans 1:24-32 becomes the most likely source for identifying the longer equivalent to the abbreviation “under sin.” Although Paul does not use ἁμαρτία in this passage, he does employ a number of expressions that are semantically related to it. Specifically, there are three terms within the broader semantic range of which ἁμαρτία is a part. They include: ἁκαθαρσία, πάθη ἀτιμίας, and ἀδόκιμος νοῦς.17 Within the flow of Paul’s argument in Romans 1:18-3:8, uncleanness, dishonorable desires, and a depraved mind are a specific subset of the more summative term “sin.”18 Additionally, the syntactical uses of these terms also match the abbreviation “under sin.” The locative metaphor “under” is implicit in the thrice-repeated
use of **παραδίδωμι** and the preposition **εἰς**, which precedes **άκαθαρσία, πάθη **άτιμίας,** and **άδόκιμος νοῦς**. Paul describes how **θεός** handed over (**παρέδωκεν**) idolatrous humanity to (**εἰς**) uncleanliness, dishonorable desires, and a depraved mind. Although the preposition **εἰς** bears the locative sense of “towards,” Paul couples it with **παραδίδωμι** so that ultimately the metaphorical location to which **θεός** hands humanity over is “under” the authority of uncleanliness, dishonorable desires, and a depraved mind.19 Or, as Paul abbreviates it in Romans 3:9, **θεός** places Jew and Gentile “under sin.”

Finally, “under sin” meets our third criterion which states that the longer equivalent must be able to explain what the abbreviation assumes but does not explain. It must specifically be able to explain the cause and outcome of being “under” a dominating power. Once again, Romans 1:18-32 is the longer equivalent that provides that explanation. Paul indicates that **θεός** places humanity “under sin” because they are idolatrous. Humanity exchanges the doxological truth that the Creator (**ὁ κτίσις**) is to be worshipped with the doxological fallacy that the creature (**κτίσις**) is to be worshipped (Rom 1:21-23, 25). Consequently, **θεός** hands humanity over to uncleanliness, dishonorable desires, and a depraved mind, as evidenced in the various sins described in Paul’s vice list. Although Paul never explicitly says that humanity is under the power of sin in Romans 1:24-32, that is how he sums up, or abbreviates his thoughts in Romans 3:9. It is here that we see how the theological abbreviation “under sin” (Rom 3:9) and its longer equivalent (Rom 1:18-32) are mutually interpretive of one another. Moreover, with respect to the outcome of being “under sin,” Romans 1:24-32, as well as the next piece of Paul’s argument in 2:1-16, indicates that the final outcome of being “under sin” is death.20 This is clear in Romans 1:32 where Paul describes people that commit the sins he delineates in his vice list as those “who, although having known the righteous requirement of God, that those who do such things are worthy of death (**κανάτω**), not only do them but also give consent to those who do them.” The referent of “death” (**κανάτος**) is ultimately eschatological wrath on the day of judgment. The link between “death” and eschatological wrath is clear from the discussion that follows in Romans 2:1-16, which contains references to the “judgment of God” (2:3), “day of wrath” (2:5), and “the day when God judges the secrets of men” (2:16).21 Therefore, the final outcome of being “under sin” is to face God’s eschatological wrath.

Yet, Paul does not reserve wrath against those “under sin” entirely for the future day of judgment. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul links the present revelation of divine wrath to God’s “handing over” of idolatrous humanity to their sin. The “handing over” is the divinely revealed consequence for humanity’s idolatry. Paul proleptically
brings future wrath into the present by announcing, “For the wrath of God (ἀγάθη θεοῦ) is being revealed (ἀποκάλυπτεται) from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom 1:18). Therefore, if we are to sum up the cause and outcome of being “under sin” as Paul abbreviates it in Romans 3:9, then we must factor in divine wrath. Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin, because they are under God’s present and eschatological wrath. They are under that wrath because of their sin.

“Having been sold under sin” | Romans 7:14

We now turn our attention to the use of “under sin” in Romans 7:14 where Paul writes, “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly having been sold under sin (περαμενός υπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν).” Obviously, this second use of “under sin” (ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν) is locative in nature. The abbreviation’s longer equivalents can be found in a few different places throughout Romans. These longer equivalents contain a number of statements that are semantically and syntactically congruent with “having been sold under sin.” They are statements that help to explain the cause and outcome of being placed in that location.

In Romans 7:14, Paul does not explain the cause behind the “I” (ἐγώ) “having been sold under sin.” For that explanation, we must look to passages that are semantically and syntactically congruent to the abbreviation. This brings us back to Romans 1:24-32 and the use of παραδίδωμι. As noted above, θεός hands humanity over to sin because of His wrath for their refusal to worship Him as Creator. In Romans 3:9, Paul’s shorthand expression for this reality is “under sin.” Yet, in Romans 7:14, he adds the participle περαμενός to the abbreviation. In this way, the longer equivalent sheds light on the abbreviation and vice versa. God placed the ἐγώ under sin because of His wrath, and the placement described in Romans 1:24-32 is likened to enslavement as a result of war in 7:14.22

The ultimate outcome for the ἐγώ “having been sold under sin” is informed by the longer equivalents in Romans 1:24-2:16 and Romans 6-7. In the former longer equivalent, the ultimate outcome is eschatological judgment, as we discussed with respect to “under sin” in Romans 3:9. This outcome is also evident in the more immediate context of Romans 6-7. For example, in Romans 6, the slave to sin ultimately receives death as his or her “wage” (Rom 6:23). Once again, Paul’s understanding of θάνατος is directly tied to eschatological judgment.23 However, Romans 6-7 also speaks about a present outcome of “having been sold under sin.” Specifically, those sold under sin are obedient to sin in the same vein that slaves are obedient to their masters.24 Additionally, those sold under sin are internally, persistently, and overwhelmingly plagued by the enemy of sin. This is clear in the language of Romans 7:15-23.
“God confined all to disobedience” | Romans 11:32

The final theological abbreviation related to the locative metaphor “under sin” is Paul’s statement in Romans 11:32, “For God confined (συγκλείσεως) all to disobedience, in order that He might have mercy on all.” Although the prepositional phrase ὑπὸ ἀμαρτίαν is absent, the same locative metaphor is implied through the verb συγκλείσεως and the prepositional phrase εἰς ἀπείθειαν. The verb συγκλέεω in this instance, and in Paul’s other uses, bears the sense of being confined to a particular area and thereby “under” a dominating force. For example, in Galatians 3:22, Paul explicitly combines συγκλείω and υφ’ ἀμαρτίαν, “But scripture confined (συγκλείσεως) all under sin (ὑπὸ ἀμαρτίαν), in order that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” Clearly, for Paul, the locative metaphor of confinement to disobedience, signified by συγκλέεω and εἰς ἀπείθειαν is conceptually related to “under sin.”

The expression “God confined all to disobedience” is also informed by the abbreviations and longer equivalents that we have already discussed, as well as the more immediate context of Romans 9-11. Once again, the longer equivalent in Romans 1:24-32 is helpful for understanding the abbreviation in Romans 11:32. There are obvious semantic and syntactical parallels between the two texts. The use of παραδίωμι in Romans 1:24, 26, and 28 corresponds to the use of συγκλείω in 11:32, and the εἰς preposition followed by ἀκαθαρσία, πάθη ἀτιμίας, and ἀδόκιμος νός corresponds to εἰς ἀπείθειαν. Therefore, just as “under sin” is a metaphor for being under the power of sin, being “confined to disobedience” is a metaphor for being under the same power. Additionally, in light of Romans 1:24-2:16 and the wider context of Romans 9-11, the cause of all being “confined to disobedience” is divine wrath for humanity’s sin and divine mercy. The latter is indicated in the purpose clause of Romans 11:32, “in order that (ἵνα) He might have mercy (ἐλεήσῃ) on all.” Therefore, the final outcome of being “confined to disobedience” is either eschatological wrath or eschatological mercy.

“Under law”—“Under grace” (ὑπὸ νόμου-ὑπὸ χάριν)

The prepositional phrases “under law” and “under grace” are also locative metaphors that can be identified and analyzed as theological abbreviations. Paul pairs them together in Romans 6:14-15:

For sin will not lord over (κυριεύσει) you; for you are not under the law (ὑπὸ νόμου) but under grace (ὑπὸ χάριν). What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law (ὑπὸ νόμου) but under grace (ὑπὸ χάριν)? May it never be.

Both phrases obviously contain the locative sense of “under” (ὑπὸ), which,
as we have seen, refers to a dominating power. The longer equivalents of these abbreviations are located primarily in Romans 5-7. In these chapters, Paul makes a number of statements that are helpful for understanding υπο νόμον and υπο χάριν, because they are both semantically and syntactically congruent with the abbreviations. They include:

But the law (νόμος) entered, in order that the transgression might abound; but where the transgression abounded, grace (ἡ χάρις) abounded all the more, in order that just as sin (ἁμαρτία) reigned (βασιλεύσῃ) in death, in this way also grace (ἡ χάρις) might reign (βασίλευση) through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 5:20-21).

Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that the body of sin might be nullified, so that we no longer serve sin (τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύων ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ); for the one who died has been freed from sin (Rom 6:6-7).

But sin (ἁμαρτία) having taken an opportunity through the commandment (διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς) produced in me all kinds of coveting; for without the law (χωρὶς νόμου) sin (ἁμαρτία) is dead. But I was living without the law (χωρὶς νόμου) formerly, but after the commandment came sin (ἁμαρτία) came to life, and I died and the commandment (ἡ ἐντολή) which was for life was found in me for death; for sin (ἁμαρτία) having seized an opportunity through the commandment (διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς) deceived me and through it killed me (Rom 7:8-11).

Clearly, in these examples, Paul personifies νόμος, ἁμαρτία, and χάρις as dominating powers. Once again, historically speaking, the metaphor he most likely has in view is some form of 1st century Greco-Roman slavery. Specifically, given some of the lexical features in Romans 5-7, it is slavery associated with a prisoner of war. Nevertheless, the historical background of the metaphor does not fully explain these verses or the explanatory power that they lend to the theological abbreviations in question. We receive further help by looking at the contrast Paul draws between the powers of sin and grace.

On the one side, sin reigns and uses the law to do so. Although Romans 5:20-21 does not explicitly portray νόμος as reigning, it is closely connected to sin’s reign. This link is more explicit in Romans 7:9-11 where Paul personifies sin as a power that uses the law to seize, deceive, and kill the ἐγώ. Therefore, when rightly understood, to be “under sin” is to be “under the law.” That is because, as Romans 7:7-25 makes clear, sin uses the law to reign over the ἐγώ.

On the other side, χάρις is a power that is associated with the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom 6:1-11). To be under grace is to be free from sin through participation in Jesus’ death to sin and resurrected life lived unto God. Jesus has
effectively overcome sin’s reign. As Paul describes it, Jesus is the one who “having been raised from the dead no longer dies, death no longer lords over (κυρεύει) Him” (Rom 6:9); therefore, to be “under grace,” is to be free from sin’s use of the law through participation in Jesus’ death and resurrection. To put it another way, using another locative metaphor, to be “under grace” is to be “in Christ.”

Yet, an understanding of the “in Christ” abbreviation is contingent on another theological abbreviation expressed in a locative metaphor, namely the expression “who was handed over.”

“Who was handed over”

(ὅς παρεδόθη)

In Romans 4:25 and 8:32, Paul describes Jesus as one whom God “handed over” (παραδίδωμι). Paul does not give a full explanation for these two expressions in their immediate contexts. What the immediate contexts do offer is the outcome of Jesus being “handed over.” In short, the outcome is the justification of and heavenly advocacy for those who believe. We will come back to this in a moment. Additionally, the immediate contexts indicate part of the cause behind Jesus being “handed over,” namely it was “on account of our transgressions” (Rom 4:25). Nevertheless, what Paul does not explicitly state in the immediate contexts of Romans 4:25 and 8:32 is where, or to what, Jesus was handed over. For this reason, these two expressions bear the marks of a theological abbreviation. In fact, they meet the criteria for identifying and analyzing a theological abbreviation and its longer equivalent.

We begin with Paul’s description of Jesus in Romans 4:25 as “One who was handed over (παραδίδωμι) on account of our transgressions and was raised on account of our justification.” Paul’s use of the verb παραδίδωμι indicates a metaphorical location that, in light of the previous analysis, is best described as being placed “under” a dominating power. Since Paul does not explain the expression, the question becomes “under” what power did God place Jesus? This prompts us to look for a longer equivalent to the abbreviation, an equivalent that bears the same locative stamp of “under.” Once again, Romans 1:18-32 provides a likely candidate. Paul’s thrice-repeated use of παραδίδωμι with θεός as its subject is semantically and syntactically congruent with the expression ὅς παρεδόθη in Romans 4:25. Just as θεός hands over idolatrous humanity to sin, and by consequence divine wrath and eventual eschatological judgment, the divine agent implicit in the aorist passive verb παρεδόθη is θεός, who handed Jesus over as well. Yet, if θεός handed Jesus over in the same way that he handed over idolatrous humanity, does it follow that Paul means to say in Romans 4:25 that θεός placed Jesus “under” the power of sin,
divine wrath, and eschatological judgment? Can such a robust theological concept be implied in the two word abbreviation ὄς παρεδόθη? Or is this simply a case of over-theologizing Paul?

Based on the semantic and syntactical connection between Romans 1:24-32 and 4:25, we can conclude that the abbreviation ὄς παρεδόθη indeed assumes that God placed Jesus under the power of sin, divine wrath, and eschatological judgment, with some qualifications. Paul makes some distinctions between God handing over idolatrous humanity to sin, and all that ensues, from His handing over of Jesus. First, there is a difference of causation. God placed humanity under sin because of its own idolatry and transgressions. By contrast, God did not hand Jesus over for his own sin but for the sin of others. This is clear in Romans 4:25. Once again, the theological abbreviation and its longer equivalent shed interpretive light on one another.28 We are also helped at this point by Paul’s description of Jesus in Galatians 2:20, “Now I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and that which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and handed himself over (παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν) for me.” In this use of παραδίδωμι, Jesus actively hands himself over to sin and death in contrast to the passive action indicated in Romans 4:25. It is a “handing over” motivated by Jesus’ own love for others.29 Second, there is a difference between the outcome that results from the “handing over” of idolatrous humanity and that of Jesus. As we saw in Romans 1:24-2:16, the outcome of humanity being handed over to sin is eschatological judgment and condemnation. By contrast, Romans 4:25 indicates that the outcome of Jesus being handed over and raised from the dead is the justification (δικαίωσις) of the believer.

We now turn our attention briefly to the abbreviation in Romans 8:32. The expression “He handed Him over for us all” (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν) is a theological abbreviation that is implicitly locative and receives some explanation in the immediate context. The explicit subject of παρέδωκεν is θεός, but, as with the abbreviation in Romans 4:25, Paul does not explain to what, or where, God handed over His son. Once again, the longer equivalent in Romans 1:18-32 indicates that God handed His son over to the power of sin, divine wrath, and eschatological judgment. This is confirmed in the immediate context of Romans 8:32 where Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions to show that God handed Jesus over to death and condemnation (Rom 8:33-34).30 Finally, the unique outcome of God’s “handing over” in this context is the ongoing advocacy of the resurrected Jesus who as Paul says “was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (Rom 8:34).
“Under your feet”
(ὑπὸ τοῦ πόδας ὑμῶν)

The final theological abbreviation to consider comes from Paul’s statement in Romans 16:20a, “Now the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet (ὑπὸ τοῦ πόδας ὑμῶν).” As is well known, this verse is not without its interpretive difficulties. Some argue that Romans 16:17-20 is a non-Pauline interpolation. Others question whether Paul is referring to the final apocalyptic defeat of Satan or something less than that, perhaps something related to the “defeat” of false teachers in Rome. For our purposes, we will deal with Romans 16:20a as it stands. Specifically, we want to examine the expression in light of our criteria for identifying and analyzing a theological abbreviation.

Clearly, Paul uses ὑπὸ as a locative metaphor to indicate a dominant power. In this case, unlike what we have seen up to this point, the dominant power is the community to whom Paul writes. God will soon “crush Satan” under the feet of the Romans. Additionally, there is perhaps some connection to Paul’s admonition that the Romans beware of false teachers and the announcement that Satan will be crushed. However, beyond these few clues, the immediate context offers no further explanation of the metaphor.

We are also faced with interpretive difficulties when we search for the expression’s longer equivalent. The prepositional phrase “under your feet” and the reference to Σατανὰς in Romans 16:20 do not occur elsewhere in the letter; therefore, it is difficult to find a longer equivalent within Romans that is semantically and syntactically congruent with the abbreviation. Even outside of Romans, in the larger Pauline corpus, we do not find a longer equivalent to “under your feet.” Nevertheless, there are a few possibilities worth considering.

If Romans 16:17-20a is an allusion to the Edenic narrative in Genesis 3, it could provide some help in identifying a longer equivalent for the abbreviation. Specifically, in Genesis 3:15 MT, the divine judgment against the serpent is that “I will set enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed, he will bruise (ἐφέδρα) you on the head, and you will strike (ἐπέρριψα) him on the heel.” This promise of judgment against the serpent contains a clear locative metaphor that is, at least tangentially, semantically and syntactically congruent with the abbreviation in Romans 16:20. The reference to the seed of the woman crushing (ἐφέδρα) the serpent on the head evokes the image of a foot on top of a serpent, an image Paul clearly evokes in Romans 16:20. Paul employs the verb συντρίβω, usually rendered as “crush or break.” The LXX does not contain an instance in which ἐφέδρα is rendered as συντρίβω. However, since the verb ἐφέδρα only occurs two others time outside its use in Genesis 3:15, the absence of an explicit
semantic link between ἑιδωλία and συντρίβω is understandable. In any case, the syntactical parallel between Genesis 3:15 and Romans 16:20 is explicit. According to Paul, it is God who will crush the serpent underneath the feet of the Romans, the same location of the serpent that we see in Genesis 3:15.

Finally, if Genesis 3:15 informs the abbreviation in Romans 16:20, then the Adamic Christology of the letter also becomes a longer equivalent to “under your feet.” The typology in Romans 5 and the allusion to the serpent’s work in Romans 7:11 are especially pertinent. Any divinely orchestrated crushing of the serpent by the Romans is indissolubly linked to Christ’s obedience in death and life. In this way, the cause of Satan being “under the feet,” or authority, of the Romans is their participation in Christ’s death, life, and, presumably, return. The final outcome of Satan being crushed under the feet of the Romans will be eternal life (Rom 5:20-21).

Theological Implications of Theological Abbreviations

We have briefly analyzed each of the seven theological abbreviations in Romans that all contain the locative metaphor “under.” What we must now consider is how the individual analysis of these abbreviations can inform our overall understanding of Paul’s argument and theology. To be sure, the exegesis of individual texts, even abbreviations, is critical. We have attempted to gain at least some exegetical ground on these abbreviations and their longer equivalents. Yet, those exegetical gains must be brought to bear on how we identify and articulate the larger strands of Pauline theology.

With this in mind, what I would like to suggest is that the locative metaphor “under,” contained in the theological abbreviations of Romans, with all its respective variations and nuances, is an extended synecdoche for God’s placement of humanity, Jesus, and Satan under dominant powers. By synecdoche, I am referring to how a writer will use one part from a story or larger idea to refer to the entire thing. In Romans, the locative metaphor “under” is that one part that signals a larger narrative about God placing various figures under various powers and yet all those involved are interrelated. These figures are placed “under” powers such as sin, grace, law, and, surprisingly, the church. Each abbreviation is only part of a larger series of divine actions (i.e., synecdoche). Yet, even these series of actions are interrelated; therefore, it is appropriate to speak of an “extended” synecdoche.

When we describe the larger series of divine actions denoted in each abbreviation, the interrelationship between them becomes more evident and the “extended” synecdoche takes shape. The summary laid out here is predicated on the individual treatment of each abbreviation that I detailed in the previous sections.
With the abbreviation “under sin,” and its variation, a wrathful and merciful God places Jew and Gentile under the power of sin and death. In the case of the abbreviation describing Jesus as one “handed over,” a merciful and wrathful God placed His son under the power of sin and death and yet raised him to life for the justification of and heavenly advocacy for those who are “in Christ.” Next, the abbreviations “under law” and “under grace” indicate that out of his wrath and mercy God places those who are “in Christ” under the power of sin and the power of the crucified and risen Jesus. And finally, with the abbreviation “under your feet,” a wrathful and merciful God, in fulfillment of His prior promise, will place Satan under the power of the believing community that is “in Christ.” Clearly, these locative metaphors are “theological” abbreviations in every sense of the word.

The interrelationship between these theological abbreviations and the series of divine actions they convey can be seen in the constant juxtaposition of God’s wrath and mercy, which is always tethered somehow to the “in Christ” motif. When these abbreviations and their longer equivalents are considered in light of one another, an “extended” synecdoche emerges in which the “whole” that is signaled by the “part” (or abbreviation) is the wrath and mercy revealed “in Christ.” At the risk of oversimplification, those who are placed “in Christ” are “under grace” and experience all that is signaled by that locative language. Yet, those who are placed outside of Christ are “under” wrath and experience all that is signaled by that locative language.

Conclusion

It is clear that in Romans the small and unassuming preposition “under” (ὑπό), along with other expressions that bear the same locative stamp, are pivotal for the exegetical and theological analysis of the letter. I have not offered an exhaustive treatment of the locative language. Rather, I have attempted to alert the interpreter to the presence of theological abbreviations in Romans and offer instruction on how to “locate” their longer equivalents within the letter. Furthermore, I have offered some initial thoughts about the relationship between theological abbreviation, locative language, and Paul’s theology. One thing is certain. When Paul explains to the Christians in Rome how God’s righteousness is revealed in the gospel he preaches, he uses theological abbreviations to do so. Therefore, if the interpreter is to understand Paul’s larger argument he or she must understand even the smallest phrases, or abbreviations. Yet, one can only unpack those theological abbreviations by reading them in light of their longer equivalents. The key to “locating” those longer equivalents lies in the locative sense they share with their corresponding abbreviations.
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Notes
1. N.T. Wright has recently argued that when compared to the religious and philosophical sensibilities of the 1st century world, Paul is more closely aligned with the latter rather than the former. See, N.T. Wright, Paul and the Faithfulness of God, Vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 197-243. On Aristotle and argumentation (λόγος) in rhetoric, see Aristotle, Art of Rhetoric, Loeb Classical Library, No. 193.

2. In his seminal commentary on Galatians, Betz observes “The letter contains a considerable number of brief expressions, most of them prepositional phrases. All of them are abbreviations of theological doctrines. Their origin is unknown, but they can be most likely explained as coming from the oral transmission of Paul’s theology” in H.D. Betz, Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 27. It is the work of Todd Wilson that drew my attention to Betz’s comment. Wilson analyzed the abbreviation “under the law” in Galatians. I have borrowed some of Wilson’s nomenclature and method for this paper, but my overall thesis and purpose is somewhat different from his. See, Todd Wilson, “‘Under Law’ in Galatians: A Pauline Theological Abbreviation” Journal of Theological Studies 56 (2005): 362-92.

3. While the most well-known of these expressions is the theologically dense “in Christ” (ἐν Χριστῷ) and its variations, there are other abbreviations in the Pauline corpus that receive less attention but certainly deserve it. One significant equivalent is the compound verb prefixed with συν and prepositional phrases governed by συν. See, e.g., συναπτόμενος, συστασαρέως, and συσχέω in Rom 6:4, 6, and 8. Additionally, see Mark A. Seifrid, “In Christ: Paul” in IVP Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 511-15. For a recent treatment of ἐν Χριστῷ, see Constantine Campbell, Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).


6. Aristotle, Poetics, LCL.


8. Ibid.


13. BDAG, s.v., “παραδίδωμι.”

14. The one exception that will be discussed later is found in Rom 11:32. Yet, the abbreviation still contains a locative verb that bears the sense “under,” namely the verb συγκλείω.


16. Besides the semantic and syntactical congruity between Rom 1:24-32 and 3:9, another indication that the former is the longer equivalent of the latter is Paul’s statement in 3:9 that “we accused beforehand (προηγονομένοι) that both Jews and Greeks all are under sin.” The most likely referent of προηγονομένοι in Paul’s argumentation up to this point in the letter is Rom 1:18-32. See, N.T. Wright, *Romans* in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, ed. Robert Wall, 457.


18. Rom 1:18-3:8 contains other terms that could be described as a subset of sin. See, e.g., the various terms and expressions in Rom 2:17-24.

19. Although Jewett does not use the locative metaphor “under” in his discussion of Rom 1:24-32, his comments definitely bear this sense. He notes that the specific metaphorical location is “the custody into which sinful humans are delivered as consequence of their suppression of the truth;” Jewett, *Romans*, 167-68. Additionally, Paul’s vice list in Rom 1:24-32 gives specific examples of what being in the “custody” of uncleanness, dishonorable desires, and a depraved mind entails.


21. See also Rom 2:27.

22. Williams, Paul’s *Metaphors*, 117.


25. See “συγκλείω” in LEH; BDAG; EDNT; TDNT.

26. See Rom 6:11.

27. Rom 4:25 stimulates other questions as well, such as how Paul understood the relationship between Jesus’ resurrection and an individual’s justification.

28. We saw this in our analysis of “under sin” in Rom 3:9 and its longer equivalent in Rom
1:18-32.

29. See also, Eph 5:2, 25.

30. See esp. the participles κατακρινών and ἀποθανών.

31. Jewett argues for a non-Pauline interpolation based on four premises: (1) the verses “produce an egregious break in the flow and one of Paul’s series of greeting to honored leaders of the Roman churches;” (2) Rom 16:17-20 contradict the preceding argument in the letter; (3) “the rhetoric and vocabulary of this section are non-Pauline;” and (4) “there is a plausible redactional rationale for an interpolation at this precise location, even though it obviously interrupts the series of greetings;” Jewett, Romans, 987-88.


33. The more pressing textual issue involves Rom 16:20b.

34. Σατανάς is a variant form of the indeclinable σατάν.


36. The LXX translator of Gen 3:15 rendered ἡμῖν with τηρέω (i.e., to keep or guard)

37. See “σωτρίβω” in BDAG; EDNT; TDNT.

38. See Job 9:17; Ps 139:11.

39. A simple definition of synecdoche is “the use of a lexeme denoting a part to denote the whole instead;” Cotterell and Turner, Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation, 169.
Solomon Stoddard’s *A Guide to Christ*: 
The Pope of the Connecticut Valley and the Work of Conversion

Peter Beck

When Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729) first published *A Guide to Christ* in 1714, he was already famous, perhaps infamous. He had shocked the Congregational world of seventeenth-century New England by not only embracing the Halfway Covenant, and its break with long held views of church membership, he also proposed a hierarchical structure for the administration and preservation of the local church that smacked, according to his opponents, of Catholicism. For that Increase Mather (1639-1723) labeled Stoddard the “pope” of the Connecticut Valley.¹

Stoddard loomed large in the lives and minds of his flock in Northampton as well. Of his maternal grandfather, Jonathan Edwards once commented, “Many of [the people in Northampton] looked on him almost as a sort of deity.”² Edwards’s own appraisal acknowledged the power and influence of Stoddard. “[He was],” according to his famous grandson, “a very great man, of strong powers of mind, of great grace, and great authority, of a masterly countenance, speech, and behavior.”³ Thus, Stoddard’s effort to influence the evanglistic practices and pastoral counseling of his day with *A Guide to Christ* surprised no one, save
Increase Mather who found himself endorsing the book. Of this irony, Mather acknowledged,

> It is known that in some circles (not fundamentals in religion) I differ from this beloved author. Nevertheless, as when there was a difference of opinion between Jerome and [Augustine], Jerome said for all that, 'I cannot but love Christ in [Augustine].' So do I say concerning my brother Stoddard.

To that humble admission, Mather appended, “And I pray the Lord to bless this [book], and all his holy labors for the conversion and salvation of many of God’s elect.”

Throughout his engagement in various controversies, from the Halfway Covenant to his argument that the sacraments were converting ordinances, as Brooks Holifield observed, the “cornerstones of Stoddard’s theology were the doctrines of preparation and conversion.” Both can be seen clearly in *A Guide to Christ*. Here Stoddard offered a theological prescription for the spiritual physician who must apply salve to the broken hearts of those wounded on their way to conversion as they served as their guide to Christ.

> The work of regeneration being of an absolute necessity unto salvation, it greatly concerns ministers especially, in all ways possible, to promote the same; and in particular that they guide souls aright who are under a work of preparation.

Stoddard desired to equip ministers to diagnose correctly the symptoms of preparation in those on whom the Spirit of God was already at work. The wise minister, Stoddard counseled, guides his patients methodically through the false positives of human deceitfulness and sinful hopes to deal with their depravity, their doubts, and their eternal destiny according to the biblical prescription. Thus, Stoddard offered *A Guide to Christ* to comfort the afflicted and, when necessary, to afflict the comforted.

The Method

When a sinner, wounded in spirit, applies himself unto a minister of the gospel for counsel, it is profitable, after some inquiries concerning the time, means, and degree of their convictions and terrors, to use this method with him.

The “method” that Stoddard offered to guide the physician of souls addresses the question of the steps to conversion immediately and offers guidance quickly. The opening pages of *A Guide to Christ* outline a tripartite method that is clear and succinct. The would-be counselor should 1) address the sinful condition of the lost individual, 2) encourage that individual to avail himself of the God-ordained means of salvation, and 3) provide spiritual direction to the desired outcome, salvation.
That said, these first words of the work hint at a structure to come, a “method” by which the minister might direct the wounded soul. Unfortunately, the structure proves to be more subtle than the hint.

Too short for chapters and too long for a simple outline, the Guide leaves the reader longing for the clarity of structure and language that so often marks much of the Puritan literature from this era. While Stoddard’s words are clear and his directions profitable, structural clarity seems to be lost in his desire to answer every conceivable concern regarding the lost. Stoddard’s quest to answer any and all questions that might arise in the course of evangelistic counsel resulted in a work that arguably lacks neat categories into which his thoughts might be sorted as one attempts to dissect the book.

The apparent lack of a cohesive organizational structure means the reader cannot easily pinpoint sections of the book that correlate to the three parts of Stoddard’s “method.” For example, there’s no turning to pages 10-22 to review material related to the idea of seeking God. Instead, many of those matters that might appeal to modern readers are found spread throughout the work.

Upon closer examination, however, one does discern a “method” to Stoddard’s literary madness. It is not that the book lacks true organization. It is that the reader wrongly assumes that the author intended to address each step of his “method” chronologically and categorically. That Stoddard does not do. Rather, the bulk of the book is dedicated to the use of “means” and the “course” that the individual is to take, the steps that he is to follow if he is to find Christ. In other words, Stoddard focused his attention not on the basics of Puritan anthropology, those matters broadly assumed by his audience, but on the counsel those depraved individuals need if they are to be rescued from certain doom.

The Object of Salvation

… every man who dies in a state of nature will certainly be damned, that a state of damnation is intolerable, that the continuance of his opportunities for deliverance is very uncertain.8

The first and shortest of the three steps in Stoddard’s “method” addressed the “sinner, wounded in spirit” who “applies himself unto a minister of the gospel for counsel.”9 Here the nature of the object of salvation, fallen man, stands center stage, albeit ever so briefly.

In one short but theologically dense paragraph Stoddard covered all of the key points needed in a Gospel conversation concerning the nature of man and the great concern of his soul. The guide to Christ, the minister, must “confirm and establish” in the mind of the sinner “apprehensions of the dangerousness of a
natural condition.” Eternal damnation, Stoddard warned, awaits such people and that their future eternal state would indeed be “intolerable.” Moreover, the guide should warn those in his counsel that future opportunities to hear and respond to the Gospel are uncertain. Thus, the person under present conviction of his sins should “cherish” such feelings as a necessary means to their positive eternal end. If not, such feelings may soon wear off, never to return again. As Stoddard wrote, “Many men’s terrors are but short-lived.” Soon, he warned, the distractions of the world would once again crowd out affections for Christ and eternal concerns. The individual must recognize the desperation of his situation and pursue Christ while he may be found.10

Stoddard sprinkled other points of theology related to the nature of man throughout the work. While insufficient to construct a definitive view of his anthropology, Stoddard’s Reformed tendencies remain clear. The human condition, Stoddard contended, is one of total depravity. Man is thoroughly corrupted11 and “exceedingly bad.”12 He called the human heart “a dreadful fountain of sin.”13 In his fallen state, man is “as full of sin as a toad is full of poison.” He is

… empty of all goodness. He has no inclination to anything that is good, that there is no disposition to that which is good, but a total emptiness. … He is dead in sin, wretched and miserable, and poor, blind, and naked. … There is not one spark of goodness in him, nor any power to get any.14

In such a dreadful state election presents man his only hope. The fact that the individual in question has come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and is aware of his wicked condition, Stoddard conjectured, offers hope. These things are “hopeful signs,”15 he wrote, because “God is wont to terrify the elect in order to their conversion.”16 However, such terrors are no certain proof of election as the “reprobate” often experience similar feelings of self-preservation under the effects of “common grace.”17

Rather than underemphasizing the darkness of the seeker’s soul, the guide to Christ must highlight the depth of his depravity, if there is to be any hope of salvation. Without an awareness of his woeful condition, his sin and the need for a savior, the individual will never seek the balm of Gilead.

**The Way to Salvation**

Encourage him to be in the use of means in order to his conversion; for, if they do not have hopes of obtaining mercy, either they will not seek after it or they will do it in such a careless and dull way that it will come to nothing.18

Here, too, Stoddard surprises the reader. At this point one would expect him to provide a list of means to which the guide must point and the seeker must attend.
Instead, Stoddard addressed the need for diligence in the use of means while seeking salvation. The seeker, he warned, will cease to seek if and when he forgets that which has led him to this point in his life. He will never attend to the means of conversion, if he loses sight of his horrid condition and the promise of salvation.

“God leads men through the whole work of preparation,” he counseled, “partly by fear and partly by hope.” An overemphasis on either one or the other, fear or hope, proves unhealthy. Fear without hope, or hope without fear, serves only to drive the convicted soul to despair or unfounded optimism. Neither of which, Stoddard contended, will certainly keep the individual in the way of salvation. Rather, “a mixture of fear and hope makes men diligent.” Fear reminds them of their dire situation. Hope points them to the only One who can help: the God who has “provided a glorious way of salvation” for all who come according to his prescribed plan.19

The ill use of the prescribed means often leads to spiritual disaster. The possibility of arrogance, self-righteousness and a sense of entitlement undermine the gracious nature of the means and the need for continuance in them, Stoddard cautioned. Some, he worried, might object “that he has done what he can and yet God denies grace to him,” demanding an answer as to why he must persevere in such an apparently futile endeavor.20 In response, the guide should remind his advisee “that [even] if he does what he can [availing himself of the means of grace], he may not challenge mercy from this.”21 That is, God remains free to reward or condemn as he sees fit. Moreover, no fault can be laid to God’s account. “There is no wrong done him if God sees cause to deny him.” “Neither is there any promise,” Stoddard added, “whereby God has obliged Himself to those who do all they can.” Sinful seekers, even those who apply themselves to the means available, find themselves at the mercy of God’s sovereign pleasures.22

Others, Stoddard advised, avoid the use of means for alleged fear of trusting the means rather than him who demands them. To this complaint, the guide needs to respond that such a concern fails to excuse the seeker from his task. “He may not neglect his duty by any means.” To this Stoddard added,

He must not scare himself off from his duty because he is ready to trust in it. Duty must be done, God’s command must be attended, whatever is the consequence of it. Men may not take upon them to judge when it is best to attend God’s command, and when it is dangerous, and so give themselves a dispensation from their duty.

The giving and relieving of duty belongs to the Creator alone, not the creature. The fallen man must do that which he has been given to do, even if it means risking doing it for the wrong reason. It is better to be lawful for the wrong reason than to
run afoul of the great judge. Besides, Stoddard continued, sinners have no reason to trust in their own works. If God truly reveals their sinfulness to them, they can’t but see the inadequacies of their own labors.

If God does but open their eyes to see the plague of their own heart, they will not trust in what they do. When men are thoroughly convinced of the abominations that are in their hearts, and see the hypocrisy and formality of their duties, it is impossible they should trust in them.

Any fear that one would come to trust merely in his own dutiful faithfulness rests in a flawed understanding of self. Someone so deluded, Stoddard concluded, need not fear the possibility of being led astray by wrongly trusting in his own efforts. Instead, he posited, the seeker must remain steadfast in his efforts “to find out the wickedness of [himself],” a task aided by the use of means.23

The guide to Christ, then, must continually point his patient to the cross, to keep his charge on the narrow path. The use of means will serve that end for those who have grown weary on the way but continue they must. For, Stoddard exhorted them, “God has had compassion on many greater sinners than they.” He did so through the striving of the Spirit in the way of the appointed means.24 If salvation is to be had, he will do so again through the use of means.

**The Means of Salvation**

To direct him what course to take at present.25

Finally, in the third step of his “method,” Stoddard presented the steps the guide to Christ is to show those who are hoping to find him. Here the means of salvation, the things the individual may and must do in order to conversion, are addressed.

On first glance it seems odd that *A Guide to Christ* offers little in the way of cataloging acceptable means to be used en route to conversion. Stoddard produced no lists. He gave no indication of what are and are not viable acts by which the seeker may find grace. The reader finds only scattered mentions of those things other Puritans held to be profitable duties, mostly that of Scripture reading. Apart from such references, the author proffered only one clear list of those means understood by his own generation to prove most useful: prayer, fasting, and Bible reading.26 Even then, Stoddard mentions these means only in response to concerns about the possible misuse of those things God gives for spiritual good and the related argument that such a case should limit the use of means. Such misuse proves to be Stoddard’s point of concern at this point in his “method.”

Instead of offering a definitive concatenation of suitable means, Stoddard limited his discussion of means to be used in the “course” of salvation to the three
broad categories detailed in the opening pages of his work and mentioned earlier in this present work. The convicted soul is to 1) “seek God in secret,” 2) “reform his life,” and 3) “lay himself open to the convictions of the Spirit.” Ultimately, these three steps are the means by which the lost shall be found in Christ. To these means Stoddard dedicated nearly every page of A Guide to Christ.

Seeking God personally and privately, Stoddard wrote, is a “duty.” Moreover, “it is a special means to cherish the motions of God’s Spirit in [the sinner’s] heart.” To ignore such a duty, he cautioned, risks killing off useful convictions. Focused prayer is the answer and antidote to apathy. The seeker should not content himself with generic requests for common rather than spiritual good. The guide to Christ leads his patient to “open his case plainly before God as he would to a physician if he were sick.” The goal of such pitiful prayers is to keep the sinner’s plight ever before him lest he slacken his efforts and leave the way to salvation.27

The tendency to spiritual malaise echoes throughout A Guide to Christ. Some after a period of great conviction, Stoddard recognized, grow dull, their awareness of their sin dampened and dying. Such persons the guide needs to tell that he should not expect that his sense of conviction will remain at a heightened level. Like a ship at sea, they may experience fair winds or strong tempests. That reality, however, does not excuse apathy. The sinner “must be very careful that he does nothing to quench the motions of the Spirit.”28 Prayer, Stoddard believed, is the remedy for apathy. Likewise, after seasons of conviction and seeking, the seeker often slackens his efforts. Often, Stoddard reminded his readers, the cause is discouragement.29 Such people must be encouraged by the “possibility of his obtaining mercy.”30 He must also be reminded of the great danger that awaits him who continues in apostasy. “Remind him,” Stoddard counseled, “what a miserable condition he would cast himself into if he should cast off fear and restrain prayer before God.”31 Thus, constancy in prayer keeps both his sin and his savior before the sinner and must be maintained at all costs.

Moral reform serves as a means of conversion as well. The seeker ought “to reform his life, and not to indulge himself in any sins of omission or commission in any external sins, nor in doing good actions in a sinful manner.” Stoddard did not advocate a works-based righteousness. Instead, he felt that “men who are seeking must not allow themselves to go on in a way of damnation.” In other words, salvation will not be found by those who live intentionally in sin. The way of salvation is in the other direction. To promote the desire for godly living the guide to Christ might resort to fear of hell for “if men are thoroughly scared, they will dread doing what wounds their consciences. Fear of hell will make men afraid to sin.”32
Fear, Stoddard wrote, serves as a powerful tool in the hands of a skilled Gospel worker. “The danger of a natural condition is to be solemnly set before them. Though their terrors seem to be great, yet they need to be greater.” Fear, he continued, drives the sinner to “universal reformation.” Fear, however, is not enough. “Men cannot be scared out of some sinful practices.” Self-love rather than a true love to God, Stoddard said, leads some to reform their behavior in an effort to save themselves. What is needed is an admission of his inability to save himself through his own efforts and a submission to God as his only hope. “When a man submits, he absolutely resigns himself up as a prisoner to God, is wholly broken off from his own righteousness and sufficiency, and leaves himself with God.” Until he sees himself as God sees him, the sinner enjoys no hope of salvation. Thus, self-reformation does not produce salvation but leads to it.

Finally, the seeker should truly open himself to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. As Stoddard observed, “Sometimes men are desirous to be convinced and terrified, but not too much.” Many attempt to determine the nature and extent of their convictions, yet again failing to submit themselves to God in this most basic of ways. Such is an inefficient and improper way to proceed on the way to Christ. “They will overrule their convictions as to time and degree; but, as a patient leaves himself into the hands of the surgeon, so should they leave themselves in the hand of the Spirit, when it pleases Him and as much as it pleases Him.” The Great Physician knows what they need and how to apply it. The first step toward final submission to God and the Gospel begins with submission to God’s appointed means of salvation however painful they might be.

No one wants to admit his own wickedness. Yet, Stoddard advised, this is a vital stage on the way to Christ. “It is necessary for him to be convinced of the badness of his own heart.” There is no salvation without this discovery. “God first reveals to them what they are,” he continued, “and then He reveals the excellency of Christ to them.” The more the minister dredges the dark soil of the soul, the greater God’s grace appears. “The more they see of that, the more hope there is of their being prepared for Christ.” As difficult as this stage of the journey may be, it is here that God begins to apply the healing salve of salvation. As Stoddard summarized, “The sight of the heart is like the opening of a festered wound; it prepares men for healing.” Since there is no salvation without a thorough understanding of one’s fallen condition, the sooner the discovery the sooner the spiritual recovery. Thus, the guide to Christ wisely leads his advisee into the depths of his depravity that the Spirit might convict him of his depravity and convince him of the beauty of the Gospel. Apart from this, there is no salvation.

The interested reader should note that Stoddard addressed the use of specific
means in many of his other writings and sermons. In addition to his well-known argument that participation in the ordinances could produce an informed, inward sense of faith, Stoddard argued that God uses other things beyond prayer and the attendance of worship as means of grace in the process of salvation. Creation, he reasoned in one sermon, points the sinner to God. The Law, he believed, serves as an effective means of grace. “The law, or covenant of works,” he taught his congregation, “is a means to prepare men.” The “precepts and sanctions” of the Law promote men’s conversions by revealing man’s depravity to man. “The law has … an exasperating power; it is an occasion of the workings of corruption, as the dam makes the waters swell—and so men become acquainted with their own hearts.” Works of providence, too, guide men to Christ.

The Gospel, however, proves to be the ultimate means of grace in Stoddard’s theological construct. “The glory of God appearing in mercies and judgments has a gracious effect on the hearts of the saints,” he proclaimed. As men hear of and seek to understand the Gospel, God brings to light their condition and his grace. … when they see things as they are, immediately they come; that delivers them from their enmity to Christ, and that delivers them from their fear. When they see the glory of God in the face of Christ, they make no more resistance; when they are turned from darkness to light, they turn from Satan to God. This discovery leaves an abiding impression on the heart; as man rejoices in Christ, so there is an inclination to rejoice in Him for the time to come. The heart is bent that way and it stands bent that way.

Without the Gospel proclaimed fallen man would not recognize the wickedness of his heart or the goodness of his Maker. Thus, his only hope is to place himself in the way of salvation. He must avail himself of the one way God has chosen to save. He must recognize that the Gospel is “the” means of salvation to which all others point.

The use of means, whatever they may be, keeps the sinner under the bright spotlight of God’s righteousness and grace. There is no salvation without them. “Multitudes of souls perish through the ignorance of those who should guide them in a way to heaven. Men are nourished up with vain hopes of being in a state of salvation before they have got half the way to Christ.” The appropriate use of the means insures that misguided faith and false conversions will be lost, not souls. For this reason, the guide to Christ leads his people on the path to salvation by the way prescribed by God. They avail themselves of those means that God uses to accomplish the great work of salvation: the use of those means that reveal the depths of man’s depravity and the heights of God’s goodness.
Conclusion

A man who knows there must be a work of preparation will be careful how he encourages others that they are in Christ. He will inquire how God has made way for their receiving of Christ, but another who is a stranger to it will be ready to take all for gold that glitters and, if he sees men religiously disposed, will be speaking peace to them.45

Written nearly 300 years ago for inexperienced ministers, not the tormented souls they sought to soothe, *A Guide to Christ* speaks of the minister as the guide, the one who will lead sinner from conviction to conversion. Hence, it is not a “self-help” book but, rather, an “others help” book. The sage advice given so long ago remains relevant today for another generation who, like their predecessors, live in a day of false conversions and halfway Christians. Though one might disagree with preparationism or the Reformed theology that informed it, surely all would agree with Stoddard’s great concern: “Multitudes of souls perish through the ignorance of those who should guide them in the way to heaven.”46 Perhaps, in the end, we will be able to say with the prophet Jeremiah that much is to be gained by returning to the “old paths” (Jeremiah 16:6).

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Notes
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7. Ibid., 1.
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12. Ibid., 28.
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“Dear and Venerable Pastor:”
The Mission Strategy of James Hudson Taylor

Tim McKnight

Introduction

In the beginning of 1865 over sixty percent of China’s provinces were without Protestant missionaries. Most of these unreached provinces were located in the interior of China. According to Stephen Neill’s history of Christian missions, “A revolutionary change in the situation was brought about, as is so often the case, by the faith and conviction of one man.” That man was James Hudson Taylor.

On a June day in 1849, at the age of fifteen, Hudson Taylor decided to pass the time by reading a gospel tract he had selected from his father’s library. The tract expounded upon the finished work of Christ. That very hour, Taylor’s mother was praying earnestly for her son’s salvation. Upon completing the tract, Hudson Taylor surrendered his life to Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior.

For several months after his conversion, Taylor struggled to find God’s will for his life. He wanted to serve the Lord, but was uncertain of the direction that he was to follow. In a state of desperation, Taylor prostrated himself before the Lord in prayer and promised to do whatever the Lord asked of him. Concerning this experience, Taylor wrote, “And from that time the conviction never left me that I was called to China.”
In the autumn of 1853, a twenty-one year old Hudson Taylor left for China as a missionary serving the Chinese Evangelization Society. During his tenure with this organization, Taylor began to travel further inland beyond the protection of the Treaty Ports. He went through river towns distributing tracts and preaching the gospel to the natives. Taylor resigned from the Society in 1857, however, due to his theological convictions concerning financial debt.

Taylor remained in China the following three years relying totally upon prayer and the Lord’s provision for his sustenance. During this time, he married a missionary’s daughter, Maria Dyer, and served as a medical missionary in a hospital. In 1860, however, failing health forced Hudson Taylor and his family to return to England.

During this time of recovery in England, Taylor could never rid himself of his burden for the unregenerate natives of inland China. On June 25, 1865, this burden was so great that he could not attend worship services. The knowledge that, during the worship hour, a thousand Chinese would die without Christ was more than Taylor could bear. Overwhelmed by emotion, he decided to walk along the beach. On that Brighton beach, Hudson Taylor surrendered to God’s call to found the China Inland Mission. Within a year, Taylor returned to China and began the Mission.

Concerning the China Inland Mission, Kenneth Scott Latourette asserts:

Now, in 1866, there entered upon the Empire a body, the China Inland Mission, which was to attempt the unprecedented, the presentation of the Gospel by Protestants to all the Chinese, and on a systematic plan which would supplement rather than conflict with existing missions… The founder, James Hudson Taylor, usually known as Hudson Taylor, was, if measured by the movement which he called into being, one of the greatest missionaries of all time, and was certainly, judged by the results of his efforts, one of the four or five most influential foreigners who came to China in the nineteenth century for any purpose, religious or secular.

This article will examine James Hudson Taylor’s missiological strategy. First, I will describe Taylor’s historical context. I will then identify and discuss key elements of his missions strategy. The conclusion of the paper will include an evaluation of this strategy’s effectiveness. My contention is that James Hudson Taylor’s missions strategy enabled numerous unchurched natives of inland China to obtain an awareness of the gospel.

Hudson Taylor’s Historical Context

A strategy is not formulated and implemented in a vacuum. Numerous historical factors bore upon Hudson Taylor’s missions strategy and efforts. The
work of past missionaries to China influenced Taylor’s planning and concept of missions. China’s geography and population distribution also affected Taylor and his missionaries. The rebellions and wars which occurred at the time were both a blessing and a curse to the China Inland Mission. The influence of these factors must be understood if one desires to obtain an accurate understanding and assessment of Taylor’s strategy.

The Work of Past Missionaries

Dressed in native garments, Charles Gutzlaff traveled throughout China preaching and passing out gospel tracts to the inhabitants of towns and villages. He possessed a passionate desire to spread the gospel through every province of China. Gutzlaff planned to use native evangelists as the primary means to accomplish this endeavor; however, the natives he commissioned were actually opium smokers and con artists. Gutzlaff was never able to repair the damage done to his missions society by these deceptive men.

In his teenage years, Hudson Taylor learned of the missionary efforts of Gutzlaff through a missionary magazine entitled *The Gleaner*. He was overjoyed when he read stories of natives who had given their hearts to Christ as a result of Gutzlaff’s missionary efforts. Taylor committed to pray for this missionary’s work in China and inquired of the magazine’s publisher as to how he could send donations to Gutzlaff. Hudson Taylor was so greatly influenced by this German missionary that he “sometimes spoke of him as the grandfather of the China Inland Mission.”

Hudson Taylor’s mission efforts were also influenced by the translation work of past missionaries. Robert Morrison and William Milne presented the first Chinese translation of the Bible in 1818. Morrison and Milne were also responsible for printing Protestant literature and periodicals in Chinese. These two forerunners made it possible for Taylor to distribute Chinese Bibles and tracts to the natives he encountered.

China’s Geography and Demographics

Taylor’s strategy was affected by the geographic features of China. Concerning China’s extensive river system, Taylor wrote, “The rivers of China give easy access to the great plains, and form, with their tributary streams, high roads into, or lead near to every province of the empire.” These waterways made inland China easily accessible to the missionaries of the China Inland Mission.

The population distribution of China was another factor that affected Taylor’s missions strategy. After studying the populations of each of the provinces,
Taylor found that a large number of China’s people were concentrated in a small area. In *China's Spiritual Need and Claims*, he wrote, “How interesting to the Christian philanthropist to find that about one-half of the population is located in one-quarter of its territory; in that quarter too, where access to the interior, acquisition of the spoken languages, and intercourse with the people, are beset with comparatively few difficulties.”

### Wars, Treaties, and Rebellions

In 1830 the emperor of China, Dao Guang, was resolute in his stand against the trafficking of opium by Westerners into his country. Three of his sons, including his heir, had died addicted to opium; therefore, he knew firsthand the pain and suffering that this drug would bring his people. To prevent more tragedies from occurring, Dao Guang resolved to oppose the British on the issue of the opium trade.

The British merchants in Canton, however, were equally determined to continue their lucrative opium smuggling operations. They had discovered a promising market among the numerous opium addicts in China. The merchants had warehouses in Canton that were stockpiled with thousands of chests full of opium. In their greed, these Britons defiantly ignored the emperor’s edicts against opium trade.

The hostile communication between the Chinese and English escalated throughout the 1830’s. Regrettably, in 1839 the two sides exchanged gunfire, and the First Opium War began. The Chinese, however, were no match for English firepower. In 1842, they conceded to the British and signed the Treaty of Nanking.

The requirements of this Treaty affected the foreign community in China significantly. Under its provisions, the port cities of Canton, Foochow, Ningpo, Shanghai, and Amoy were opened to foreign commerce and inhabitation. Foreigners who traveled outside of these treaty ports, however, would be subject to arrest by Chinese authorities. The Treaty also introduced the provision of extraterritoriality to the Chinese. Extraterritoriality required that all foreigners, throughout every part of China, be tried by foreign law and foreign officials. According to this provision, Chinese law and authority did not apply to the treaty ports. The British were granted legal authority over all persons, foreign or Chinese, who resided within the boundaries of these cities; as the ports expanded their boundaries, the British gained control over the new area and its people. Another provision of the Treaty allowed foreigners the right to study the Chinese language.

In addition to granting the above provisions, the Treaty of Nanking also opened the treaty ports to foreign missionaries. Missionaries from numerous
societies took residence in the ports. They established schools in which missionary recruits could study the Chinese language. Missionary physicians opened hospitals where they would share medicine and the gospel of Christ with Chinese patients. Some established schools to train native Christians and pastors. The missionaries shared the gospel with the cities’ native inhabitants; however, they were still restricted by law from carrying the gospel further inland.

Despite gaining all of the above provisions under the Treaty, the British still could not trade opium legally with the Chinese. The Chinese government adamantly refused to include the legalization of opium as one of the provisions of the Treaty of Nanking. After the Second Opium War, however, the Chinese conceded and legalized opium in the Treaty of Tientsin (1860).

Although this Treaty legalized the opium trade, it also contained a number of provisions that were instrumental in opening China to missionaries. The Treaty opened the cities of Newchwang, Chefoo, T’aisan, Tamsui, Swatow, Kiungchow, Nanking, Hankow, Kiukiang, and Chinkiang to foreign inhabitation, commerce, and control. Foreigners could now purchase property within the treaty ports and within the interior of China. Missionaries could buy facilities in which to begin new works throughout China. Another provision of the Treaty of Tientsin allowed foreigners to travel freely outside of the treaty ports. It was now possible for missionaries to travel or reside legally in any area of China. Through the Treaty, the Chinese government extended toleration and protection to both native Christians and foreign missionaries. If harassed, these Christians were to be protected by Chinese troops.

Hudson Taylor and the missionaries of the China Inland Mission rejoiced in the positive results of the Treaties of Nanking and Tientsin; however, they also realized that the advance of the missionaries into inland China came at a horrible cost. They were uncomfortable with the knowledge that the concessions the Chinese made were a direct result of military conflict. It also grieved the missionaries that Tientsin made the provinces open to both the missionaries and the opium trade alike. The treaties also birthed, within many of the Chinese, a strong prejudice against foreigners; the missionaries were often the target of violent attacks resulting from this prejudice. The missionaries of the China Inland Mission believed that the opportunity to reach inland China with the gospel outweighed the negative results of the treaties. They resolved to “come in and claim for God and righteousness what would otherwise have proved naught but a devil’s triumph.”

In addition to the Opium Wars and their resulting treaties, rebellions also affected Hudson Taylor’s missionary efforts. In some rebellions, foreign missionaries were merely caught in the crossfire, while in others, they were the target of the
uprising. In both cases, the rebellions presented foreign missionaries with the possibility of experiencing physical harm.

There were numerous situations that rebellions placed the lives of the missionaries of the China Inland Mission in peril. The day that Taylor first arrived in China, he walked the streets of Shanghai between the guns of government forces and rebels fighting for the city. While serving in Yangchow, the Taylors and a group of their missionaries were attacked by a riotous mob that claimed they were “foreign devils” who ate Chinese babies. During the riot, Maria Taylor and her children jumped from the second floor of their residence in order to save themselves from the fire the crowd started in the house. The rebellion that had the most profound effect upon Taylor and the China Inland Mission involved the Chinese group known as the Boxers. The Boxers were given permission by the Imperial government to annihilate all foreigners living in China. At the end of the slaughter, fifty eight missionaries and twenty-one children from the China Inland Mission were dead. Despite these dangers, the missionaries remained determined to share the gospel with the Chinese people.

**Hudson Taylor’s Missions Strategy**

Shortly after Hudson Taylor answered God’s call to found the China Inland Mission, during his recuperation in England, he began to ponder how the Mission would accomplish its goal of granting the people of China an awareness of the gospel. In developing his strategy, Taylor relied upon prayer and the knowledge he had gained from his previous experiences in China. After he had deliberated for a number of days, a “definite plan began to unfold itself, based upon a few broad principles…” The principles of Hudson Taylor’s missions strategy were:

1. The Mission was to be interdenominational and international.
2. The Mission would recruit missionaries based primarily upon their spiritual qualifications. Although education degrees were welcome, they were not required of missionary recruits.
3. The Mission would rely upon faith in God alone to obtain its financial support. Missionaries were not guaranteed a salary, but were encouraged to depend upon God for their sustenance. No one would solicit funds from any individual or organization. No debt would be accrued by the mission.
4. The missionaries would conform to the social and cultural traditions of the Chinese people as far as Scripture would allow. All missionaries would learn the Chinese language, eat Chinese food, wear Chinese garments, and live in Chinese residences.
5. The Mission’s headquarters would be located in China. Hudson Taylor, the Director of the Mission, would have full authority and
control over the Mission and its missionaries.

6. The primary purpose and priority of the Mission was to preach the Gospel to all the people of China. All other activities of the Mission were secondary to this task. This objective involved placing two missionaries in each of the unevangelized provinces of China.  

Openness in Recruiting

Open recruiting was an important element of Hudson Taylor’s missions strategy. While many of the other missionary societies in China possessed denominational and national ties, the China Inland Mission was interdenominational and international. Taylor was concerned that the Mission not draw funds or personnel away from any one particular denomination and, in so doing, hinder their efforts. He also believed the Mission’s recruiting efforts would be more successful if they drew from the whole Body of Christ. This openness to Protestant candidates from all countries and denominations allowed Taylor to place more missionaries in China than the other mission societies.

Taylor believed that prayer provided the foundation for recruiting missionaries. He believed strongly that God was the only One who could provide missionaries to China. When he spoke to congregations concerning the need for missions in China, he asked them to pray that God would raise up the men and women needed to share the gospel to the Chinese. Taylor also encouraged his missionaries to pray that a particular number of recruits would answer the call to China. Each year, God answered these prayers and sent the China Inland Mission its needed recruits.

Taylor also preached messages on missions as he toured churches in various countries. In these sermons, he would use colorful illustrations, statistics, and visual aids to help congregations understand the plight of the multitudes of lost souls in China. Rather than recruit solely for the China Inland Mission, he would emphasize the Great Commission’s mandate that all believers make disciples of the nations. In his messages, Taylor often “challenged any believer of reasonable health and qualifications to justify why he or she should not go, in light of the Scripture and the unmet needs in the world.”

Although Taylor invited all to answer the call to missions, he required that missionary candidates possess certain spiritual qualifications before they could serve in China. He believed the spiritual qualifications outweighed any other endowment a person may possess. In the screening process, candidates were asked questions concerning their salvation experience, spiritual growth, and their call to missions. All those who desired to join the China Inland Mission were also questioned concerning: (1) The inspiration of the whole canonical Scripture. (2) The Bible
the ultimate and only rule and guide for the Christian. (3) The Trinity. (4) The pollution of the whole race through the fall of Adam. (5) The atoning merit of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (6) Future rewards and punishments. (7) The limitation of probation to this life. Taylor also required all missionary recruits to sign a confessional statement affirming these beliefs.

Because he based the selection of missionaries on spiritual requirements rather than education, Taylor made it possible for a larger number of lay persons to serve in China. Although he welcomed those candidates who had degrees, he did not make a certain level of education mandatory for candidates. Hudson Taylor did not believe that lack of education would hinder the candidates from learning the Chinese language and customs. In *China’s Spiritual Need and Claims* he wrote, “But still more important is the fact, that the spoken languages in many parts of China are so easy of acquisition that now missionaries of moderate ability may begin to use the vernacular of almost any part of China after a few month’s study.” If a candidate had a heart for God and a desire to share the gospel with the Chinese, Taylor could teach them what they needed to know. He believed the Chinese people’s need for evangelists outweighed their need for scholars.

One of the most controversial aspects of Taylor’s recruiting efforts involved his willingness to send single women as missionaries to inland China. He believed the Chinese women needed to hear the gospel from someone of their own gender. To accomplish this task, teams of women traveled throughout the interior of China preaching the gospel and handing out tracts. These women also ministered in opium refuges and mission hospitals. Missionaries from other mission societies criticized Taylor for allowing the women to travel in such dangerous territory. They also claimed that he was placing himself in a position to be tempted, because these women sometimes lived with the Taylor family. Despite this criticism, Hudson Taylor continued to recruit single women for mission service in China. He remained true to his belief that all believers who are spiritually qualified should be given the opportunity to be missionaries.

Taylor informed all of his missionaries that the China Inland Mission was a faith mission. These missionaries would need to become totally dependent on God for their survival. With this knowledge, hundreds of China Inland Mission recruits left for China.

**A Faith Mission**

Another element of Taylor’s missions strategy was the requirement that the members of the China Inland Mission trust in God alone to provide personnel and money. Hudson Taylor often told his missionaries, “Depend upon it, God’s work
done in God’s way, will never lack supplies.”32 Taylor had faith in God’s providential care. Before Taylor had ever been to China, a man asked him how he would fare for himself as a missionary. Taylor replied that, like the disciples of the Bible, he would rely upon the faith that God would provide for his needs.33 Throughout his journals, letters, and writings he emphasized that God had never failed to provide for his personal needs or the needs of the Mission.

This faith in God’s providence and provision stemmed from Hudson Taylor’s view of the Bible. He believed in the verbal inspiration of the Bible.34 Because it was divinely inspired, Taylor believed missionaries could have confidence in the Bible’s promises that God would care for the needs of His children. He sometimes mentioned that God would contradict His very character if He failed to carry out any of His vows written in Scripture. Hudson Taylor asserted that these biblical promises of God’s providential care should be applied to the strategy and work of the China Inland Mission.

The missionaries of the China Inland Mission would not receive regular salaries. They were to live and minister in the faith that God would provide the money, food, and shelter that they needed. This reliance on faith alone caused the missionaries to turn constantly to God in prayer. This aspect of Taylor’s strategy also brought the missionaries of the China Inland Mission closer together.35

Because he believed that the Mission must rely totally upon God for its welfare, Hudson Taylor refused to solicit funds. By soliciting donors, Taylor felt he would be drawing needed funds away from other mission societies. If the China Inland Mission experienced financial need, he would merely ask Christians in England and other countries to pray that it would be met. Time after time, Taylor testified that funds came into the Mission at the exact moment they were needed.

In addition to refusing to solicit funds, the founder of the China Inland Mission also disallowed the accumulation of debt. Concerning this matter, he wrote, “Credit to any extent we might have had, could we have conscientiously availed ourselves of it; but this we felt to be unscriptural in itself, as well as inconsistent with the position we were in,--namely that serving God, and subsisting on what He Himself had given us, or might from time to time supply.”36 Taylor felt so strongly about this issue that he resigned from the Chinese Evangelization Society after discovering that they were accumulating a large amount of debt.

To prevent the Mission from amassing debt, incoming funds were first applied to expenses. Part of the remaining money was distributed proportionally among the missionaries. If any money was left over after these steps had been taken, it was applied to new works. No new work would start, however, if the proper funds were not available. If there was not enough money to fund the work, then it was
not God's will for it to occur at that time. Taylor believed that God would always provide the Mission with sufficient funds to accomplish His will.

In addition to placing their faith in God to provide for their finances, Taylor also encouraged the missionaries to trust in God's sovereign will in times of hardship. The missionaries of the China Inland Mission encountered life-threatening situations. They shared the gospel with the Chinese in the midst of wars and rebellions. Even when missionaries lost their lives, Taylor encouraged their colleagues to rest in God's providence. In a letter written shortly after the slaughter of the Boxer Rebellion, Taylor shared the following words to his missionaries:

God has made no mistake in what He has permitted; His interest in the spread of Christ's kingdom is greater than ours; our hearts cannot but ache for the places left empty, and for the shepherdless Christians, and we are thankful for the record that 'Jesus wept.' But we trust our omnipotent Lord, and are sure that His tender heart would not have allowed such trials had there been any easier way of securing the fuller triumphs of the Gospel.37

In such times of struggle, Hudson Taylor had a burning desire to be with his missionaries. He wanted to support and encourage them in person. His desire to share in the missionaries’ experiences was one of the reasons he placed the headquarters of the China Inland Mission in China.

Field Headquarters

One of the most unique elements of Taylor’s strategy was the decision to locate the China Inland Mission’s headquarters and director in China.38 Other missionary societies located their headquarters and directors in their missionaries’ countries of origin. Hudson Taylor learned from his experiences with the Chinese Evangelization Society that it was not advantageous to have the headquarters and director of the mission located thousands of miles away from the missionaries.

Upon arriving as a new missionary in Shanghai, Taylor soon found that one of the missionary contacts the Chinese Evangelization Society had arranged for him to meet was dead.39 The other contact he was to meet had left for America. Probably due to the distance and the time it took correspondence to reach England from China, the Society either was unaware of these developments or did not have time to reach Taylor with the information prior to his arrival in China. Taylor also experienced problems with the transfer of funds from the Society to China. At one point in his missionary efforts, Taylor went without food because he had not received needed funds from the Society. Had Taylor appealed to the Society for assistance, it still would have taken months for the money to travel from England to China.
By locating the headquarters and director of the Mission in China, Taylor alleviated these problems. Because he was located with the missionaries, Taylor met with them and obtained firsthand knowledge of their situations. He was able to respond immediately to their needs. Unlike many of the directors of other societies, Taylor had missions experience and was serving alongside his missionaries; therefore, he was more able to relate to their joys, frustrations, and defeats. Hudson Taylor also personally provided them instruction and encouragement. When new missionaries came to China, Taylor welcomed them and supervised their training.

The location of the China Inland Mission's headquarters also allowed the director to lead and coordinate the Mission more effectively. Because he was on site with the missionaries, Taylor was flexible in making decisions and responding to developments. He reacted to developments and problems as they arose. Furthermore, he responded immediately to opportunities to reach new areas with the gospel and quickly concentrated personnel and resources in these areas. For example, when he heard that a route from Burma to western China had opened, Taylor sent missionaries to see if they could use the road to gain access to that part of China. Because of the location of the headquarters, the director had better communications with the missionaries. He also could send them needed funds or supplies more quickly.

As the director of the Mission, it was understood that Taylor had the last word in all related matters. Taylor had founded the Mission and developed its missions strategy; therefore, he understood the Mission's purpose and strategy better than anyone else. Out of all the missionaries in the China Inland Mission, Hudson Taylor had the most experience. He required recruits to agree to submit to his authority before they could depart for China. One area in which Taylor unapologetically exercised his authority over the missionaries was the requirement that, as far as Scripture would allow, China Inland Mission missionaries would conform to the social and cultural traditions of the Chinese people.

**Chinese Dress and Culture**

Another element of Hudson Taylor’s strategy was the requirement that the missionaries of the China Inland Mission would learn the Chinese language, wear Chinese clothes, eat Chinese food, learn Chinese customs, and live with the Chinese. This requirement distinguished Taylor and his missionaries from the other missionary societies in China.

Taylor believed that missionaries would be more successful in sharing the gospel with the Chinese if they adopted Chinese dress. He came to this conclusion as a result of experience. During his first trip to China, at the advice of Walter
Medhurst, Taylor began to wear native dress and don the queue. The entire foreign community was outraged by Taylor’s actions. These Westerners believed that Taylor was mocking foreign dignity by wearing Chinese dress. Some of the foreigners believed that he was crazy. Even missionaries from other societies criticized Taylor for this practice. They believed his actions were an “implied surrender of the superiority of Western ways.”

This idea of Western superiority was an attitude that Hudson Taylor strongly opposed. He believed the missionaries were in China to make disciples of the Chinese people, not Westernize them. The continual lack of respect that Westerners granted the Chinese would only hinder the work of the gospel. Hudson Taylor spoke against missionaries who wore Western dress and maintained Western culture. He stated that the “foreign dress and carriage of missionaries (to a certain extent affected by some of their pupils and converts), the foreign appearance of chapels, and indeed the foreign air imparted to everything connected to their work has seriously hindered the rapid dissemination of the Truth among the Chinese.”

Taylor was adamant that the missionaries of the China Inland Mission become like Chinese to the Chinese. He required every missionary to attend months of language training upon entering China. Both men and women would don Chinese dress. Taylor also required that the men wear the queue. They also learned Chinese customs. When faced with a domestic problem, the missionaries did not follow the practice of other Westerners and usurp the authority of Chinese officials by appealing to foreign consuls. Taylor made it clear that his missionaries should appeal to the local magistrate, following the process the other natives would take. By making the above efforts, the missionaries would tear down barriers that could hinder the Chinese from hearing the gospel.

The Primary Purpose

The final element and primary purpose of Hudson Taylor’s strategy was the dissemination of the gospel to all the people of China. Taylor desired to achieve this goal as quickly as possible. All of the above elements of his strategy were focused upon granting the Chinese an awareness of the gospel. Any other effort or program attempted by the Mission was secondary to this objective.

The missionaries of the China Inland Mission were pioneers in their efforts. In a large majority of provinces, they were the first Protestants to arrive. The other mission societies confined their activities largely to the seven provinces that contained the treaty ports. Some of these societies did not desire to trade the protection of consulates and gunboats for the potential dangers of the frontier in inland China. Other mission agencies focused upon establishing schools and
hospitals in the provinces of the treaty ports. Part of the reason Taylor concentrated his work upon inland China was to avoid infringing upon the work of these other mission societies.

Hudson Taylor’s focus was always upon inland China. He sought to place at least two missionaries in each of the eleven provinces of inland China that had never seen a Protestant missionary. Many times, these missionaries traveled inland utilizing China’s expansive river network. They then established a base station in the capital city of the province. As more missionaries came, more stations were founded in other cities of the province. From these stations, they traveled throughout the province preaching the gospel to its inhabitants. The missionaries often started churches in a number of these cities. Although many of them pastored these churches, their primary focus was on preaching the gospel throughout the province. Some of the native converts became evangelists and pastors and assisted the missionaries in their endeavors. Although the missionaries trained numerous converts, their primary goal was to preach the gospel throughout China.

As the missionaries established themselves in provinces, they founded hospitals, dispensaries, schools, and opium refuges. These institutions were seen as a means through which the missionaries could share the gospel with the Chinese people. The function of these institutions was subordinate to the primary task of disseminating the gospel throughout China.46

**Concluding Assessment of Taylor’s Strategy**

Hudson Taylor created a missions strategy that was distinct from those strategies possessed by other mission societies of his time. His was a faith mission that accrued no debt, paid no fixed salaries, and solicited no funds. While other societies’ headquarters were distant from their missionaries, Taylor located the China Inland Mission’s headquarters in the field. In a time when colonialism and Western superiority were popular ideas, Taylor sought to overcome prejudice. He assumed the dress, language, and customs of his host country in order to obtain a hearing for the gospel. While other mission societies remained on the coast of China, Hudson Taylor sought to bring the gospel inland. He maintained the Mission’s focus upon dissemination of the gospel to the Chinese.

Statistics from the China Inland Mission portray the effectiveness of Taylor’s strategy. In 1875, the China Inland Mission had fifty-two missionaries in the field. By 1905, the year of Taylor’s death, there were 849 missionaries serving the China Inland Mission. By 1885, 2026 Chinese converts had been baptized. In 1905 that number had increased to 13,630. By 1905 there were at least eleven missionaries in each province of China.47 Taylor had succeeded in obtaining his goal of placing
at least two missionaries in each of the unevangelized provinces.

Hudson Taylor’s evangelism strategy made it possible for numerous Chinese natives to obtain an awareness of the gospel. Perhaps, the best evaluation of Taylor came from a Chinese convert who spoke these words as he stood beside James Hudson Taylor’s corpse:

‘Dear and venerable pastor…We truly love you. We have come today to see you. We longed to look into your face. We too are your little children. You opened for us the road to heaven.’

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Notes
3. These ports were opened to Western missionaries by the Treaty of Nanking.
4. The Chinese Evangelization Society’s accumulation of debt conflicted with Hudson Taylor’s belief that the Bible prohibits Christians from being in debt. More will be mentioned in this paper concerning Taylor’s view of this issue.
7. More will be said concerning native dress in the section on Hudson Taylor’s missions strategy.
11. Although Catholic missionaries translated some of the Gospels, these two men were the first to translate the entire Bible. J. Hudson Taylor, *China’s Spiritual Need and Claims* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1887), 15. Latourette, *Missions in China*, 189.
12. Taylor, *China’s Spiritual Need*, 45.
13. Ibid.


17. Taylor and other missionaries risked arrest by preaching the gospel in rivertowns outside of the Treaty ports.

18. Many missionaries chose to appeal to their country’s consul for protection rather than trust local Chinese leaders for their well-being.


26. In the first year of the Mission, Taylor prayed that five missionaries would be sent to China. In following years, however, the number increased to seventy and one hundred.


29. Taylor, *China’s Spiritual Need*, 46.


36. Taylor, *China’s Spiritual Need*, 51.


42. Broomhall, *Survivors’ Pact*, 69.

43. Guinness, *China Inland Mission*, vol. 1, 120. A “queue” was the pigtail that the Chinese men wore.

44. Pollock, *Hudson Taylor and Maria*, 53-54.


47. For all of the above statistics, see MacGillivray, *Protestant Missions*, 163.

What is the Pauline Gospel?

Donny Mathis

Introduction

Although modern evangelical authors employ the term gospel as a descriptor for almost everything from marriages to time management, the definition of the term seems to be the source of some confusion. While a biblical definition for the gospel has a wider scope than the Pauline epistles, this article will focus on exactly how Paul the Apostle defined εὐαγγέλιον and its cognate verb εὐαγγελίζω in his letters. These terms functioned as a shorthand way to describe the core content of what he believed and taught as he fulfilled his mission to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles (Gal 1:16; Rom 1:1-7). Paul believed that only one gospel was true and pronounced an anathema on any who would preach a message that contradicted the one that he proclaimed (Gal 1:6-8), but he only explained the contours of the gospel when the Christian communities that received his letters were questioning the validity of the message that they received from him or, as in the case of Romans, Paul must introduce himself and his message to an assembly that he did not found. Before digging into the manner in which these terms were used by Paul, the acknowledgment must be made that the modern doctrinal usage of these terms could very well be disconnected from the semantic range of the terms in the time that Paul wrote. While this theological development is inevitable, even beneficial, the biblical text should establish the conceptual framework from which this doctrinal formulation springs forth. Has the same thing happened to
the biblical concept of the gospel, which is often presented in logical propositions that all have sinned against a holy God, that death and God’s wrath is the penalty for that sin, and that Jesus died on the cross to erase the penalty and save sinners. While absolutely every one of these propositions is absolutely true, does their focus on human need and response rather than Jesus’ messianic reign give an incomplete picture of the Pauline gospel? As a result, this article will establish the conceptual framework from which the usage of the terms, \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\omicron\nu \) and \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\varsigma\omicron\alpha\iota \), emerges, examine briefly two texts where Paul defines his gospel proclamation, and evaluate the doctrinal formulation of gospel that has emerged in light of this conceptual framework. This analysis will establish that Paul’s gospel was an Isaianic declaration of the eschatological victory of Yahweh over the power of sin and death and the enthronement of Jesus as the King of the universe through his death and resurrection. This story then stands as good news for those who submit to the King because his rule was established not through conquering the people who had rebelled against him but as he died for the sins of the rebels and was raised victoriously by God so that those who submit to the King could be citizens of his kingdom.

**Isaianic Announcement or Imperial Declaration?**

Scholars have proposed two backgrounds for Paul’s use of the terms \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\omicron\nu \) and \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\varsigma\omicron\alpha\iota \), the Scriptures of Israel on one side of the debate and the use of the terms by pagans on the other, and the answer to this question came usually from whether the interpreter believed Paul based his broader theological ideas on the Hebrew Scriptures and his Jewish heritage or on ideas that he developed from Hellenism. This section will analyze the use of these terms in both their pagan and Jewish setting and will seek a synthesis that does justice to Paul as a Jew whose understanding of the Heilsplan of God is shaped by the Scriptures and to Paul the apostle to the Gentiles whose message confronts the claims of the pagan gods and goddesses.

**The Hellenistic Usage of \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\omicron\nu \) and \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\varsigma\omicron\alpha\iota \)**

The closest connection that scholars have established between the use of \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\omicron\nu \) in the New Testament and the pagan world has come from the use of the term in sacral settings, particularly when it is employed in association with the imperial cult and the promise of a future event by an oracle. Friedrich contended that the usage of \( \epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\ell\iota\omicron\nu \) in association with the emperor is extremely important for understanding the background of the term in the New Testament due to the fact that the emperor united in himself what is said about the \( \theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma \) \( \alpha\iota\theta\iota\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\varsigma \),
τύχη, and σωτηρία. The birth of the divine ruler, his coming of age, accession to the throne, and decrees were described as the glad tidings that bring peace and happiness to his subjects. The classic example of this usage of εὐαγγέλιον occurred in the Priene Inscription from circa 9 BC, which detailed the decree of the Greeks of the province of Asia that established the birthday of Caesar Augustus as the beginning of the civil year. The inscription reads

Whereas the Providence (pronoia) which has ordered the whole of our life, showing concern and zeal, has ordained the most perfect consummation for human life by giving it to Augustus, by filling him with virtue for doing the work of a benefactor among men, and by sending in him, as it were, a saviour for us and those who come after us, to make war to cease, and to create order everywhere; and whereas Caesar, when he was made manifest, has caused the hopes of those who cherished anticipations [to be outstripped by what he has actually done], inasmuch as he has not only gone beyond previous benefactors, but also has left no hope to his successors of going beyond him; and whereas the birthday of the God [Augustus] was the beginning for the world of the glad tidings [in the Greek the ‘Evangel’] that have come to men through him.

This statement concerning the majestic reign of the emperor indicated that εὐαγγέλια denoted both the proclamation of the salvation that accompanies the arrival of the king but also brought that salvation into being. The salvation was present in the proclamation.

The similarities that exist between both the biblical story of Jesus as it is revealed in the Gospels and Paul’s proclamation of a new era brought about by the death and resurrection of the Messiah and these accounts of the accession and rule of the Caesars cause many scholars to conclude that the use of the missionary term εὐαγγέλιον (though not considered with its verbal form) must be explained from the Greek tradition, particularly the traditions surrounding the worship of Caesar. These similarities caused Strecker to conclude the following:

The primary basis of the NT use of εὐαγγέλιον is probably to be found in the circle of the Hellenistic ruler cult. Although the NT does not explicitly distance itself from the terminology of the Hellenistic ruler cult or the Roman Caesar cult, this separation is made in content, for the singular εὐαγγέλιον distinguishes the Christ-event as a unique eschatological fact from all εὐαγγέλια in the non-Christian world.

Although scholars have noted often the absence of the singular noun, εὐαγγέλιον, in a sacral context in the LXX or its Hebrew equivalent as an argument that the use of the term did not come from the Jewish background, the singular form of εὐαγγέλιον is also found rarely in pagan texts during this period. As has been demonstrated, both Strecker and Friedrich emphasize this difference between the New Testament and Hellenistic texts to illustrate the New Testament’s
argument that the coming of Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom was a one time eschatological event. While certain similarities in the descriptions given to the accession of the Caesars and the establishment of Jesus’ kingdom do exist, the differences simply do not allow one to conclude unequivocally that New Testament usage of \(\textit{euvaggelion}\) is not influenced by the background of the term in the LXX, particularly in connection with its verbal form, \(\textit{euvaggelizomai}\).\(^{15}\)

**The Old Testament-Jewish Background of \(\textit{euvaggelion}\) and \(\textit{euvaggelizomai}\)**

Although the singular noun, \(\textit{euvaggelion}\), does not occur in the LXX,\(^{16}\) one cannot immediately separate \(\textit{euvaggelion}\) from its verbal form and conclude that the background of Paul’s usage of the term must come from the pagan world.\(^{17}\) The problem with this conclusion is that Paul sometimes describes his message as the \(\textit{euvaggelion} (\tau\omicron\upsilon) \textit{theou}\),\(^{18}\) which clearly refers to a message that is both from and about the God of Israel. Due to Paul’s use of this qualifier to define the shape of his gospel, a much more probable background for his use of the term would be the LXX where the theme of good news from and about God is often expressed using the verbal form \(\textit{euvaggelizomai}\).\(^{19}\) Two passages from Isaiah (52:7; 61:1) possess a particular importance for understanding the background of \(\textit{euvaggelion}\) in the NT due to the fact that a strong tradition suggests that Isaiah 61:1-2 provides an outline for Jesus’ ministry and a tradition in which both texts are alluded to in the proclamation of the kerygma by Peter in Acts 10:36-38.\(^{20}\) Paul himself explicitly cites Isaiah 52:7 in connection with his description of the gospel message that produces salvation and the need for preachers to be sent and to proclaim the message about Jesus the Messiah in Romans 10:15.\(^{21}\) This evidence demands that interpreters examine carefully the connection between the use of verbal forms of \(\textit{euvaggelizomai}\) in the LXX and the background of Paul’s \(\textit{euvaggelion}\).

In the LXX, the translators used the verbal form, \(\textit{euvaggelizomai}\), to announce or proclaim news from the battlefield\(^{22}\) and to denote the announcement that David has made Solomon the king of Israel (1 Kings 1:42), which illustrates that this cognate verb is used in the LXX in conjunction with accession of a king to the throne in an analogous manner to the use of \(\textit{euvaggelion}\) by the Greeks.\(^{23}\) The most important uses of \(\textit{euvaggelizomai}\), however, are those instances where this verb announces Yahweh’s universal victory over the powers of this world and the establishment of his kingly reign.\(^{24}\) In Psalm 96[95, LXX]:2, the translation of the Psalmist’s words exhorts the people of God to declare God’s salvation (\(\textit{euvaggelizeste} \ \eta\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\acute{r}\acute{a}n \ \epsilon\zeta \ \eta\omicron\epsilon\acute{r}\acute{a}s \ \tau\omicron\upsilon \ \sigma\omega\theta\iota\omicron\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\alpha\varsigma\omicron\upsilon\)). This command is in synonymous parallelism with the command to make known God’s glory and his wonderful works among the nations (\(\textit{\alpha\nu\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\alpha\tau\epsilon} \ \epsilon\nu \ \tau\omicron\upsilon\zeta \ \epsilon\theta\iota\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\nu \ \tau\omicron\upsilon\zeta\)).
δόξαν αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσι τοῖς λαοῖς τὰ θαυμάσια αὐτοῦ), which carries with it the declaration that the God of Israel is to be feared above all gods and is the one true God who will judge the nations. The content of the proclamation of salvation is the announcement of the accession of Yahweh to his throne to rule and to judge the nations. This verbal form is also used in Psalm 68:11[67:12, LXX], where the LXX asserts that the Lord will give a message to the ones who proclaim good news (κύριος δώσει ήμα τοῖς εὐαγγελιζόμενοις δυνάμει πολλῆ). The Psalmist defines this message by recalling God’s power in the Exodus generation in order to provide the basis for the proclamation that God will defeat the enemies of his people in this present difficulty. Both of these passages demonstrate the explicitly “religious” use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the LXX and indicate that the content of this message is focused upon the rule and reign of Yahweh over the pagan gods and the nations who worshipped them.

The translators of Isaiah used εὐαγγελίζομαι to describe the work of the messenger who announces the eschatological good news that Yahweh has returned to Zion, has established his kingly reign, and has restored Israel from the Exile in Babylon.25 The first of these occurrences is in Isaiah 40:9, in which both Zion and Jerusalem are either personified as the herald of (or the recipients of the message of) the good news (ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος), who is to declare to Judah that Yahweh has returned to shepherd his flock and defeat its enemies. Εὐαγγελίζομαι also occurs as a substantive participle in Isaiah 52:7 (ὡς ὁρᾷ ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρέων ὡς πόδες εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἀκοήν εἰρήνης ὡς εὐαγγελιζόμενος άγαθά ὅτι ἁκουστήν ποιήσω τὴν σωτηρίαν σου ἐγγυόν σωματικῶν ἐν Βασιλείᾳ σου ὁ θεός). The translators of the LXX modified the final clause of the verse from what is found in the MT (םָלֶךְ לֵילֶי מִשְׁמַר הַשְׁמִירָה פָּרָד פָּרָד) in such a way as to disrupt the poetic parallelism in the passage and to emphasize the futuristic nature of the prophecy’s fulfillment. Friedrich and U. Becker contend that this modification minimized the efficacy of the good news proclaimed and, therefore, distanced the use of the verb from its usage in the New Testament.26 Although this modification tempered the idea of an immediate realization of the prophetic promise, it did not minimize the promise that the event will take place in the future according to the plan of God. In addition, this modification did not deter Paul from employing this verse in his description of the one who is sent to preach the salvation message in Romans 10:15.27 Finally, Isaiah 60:6 foresees the procession of the exiles returning from the nations with abundant wealth and proclaiming the good news of the salvation of the Lord (το σωτηρίου κυρίου εὐαγγελισμούς) that will result in the end of the Exile and the unbounded and unending reign of Yahweh.
Isaiah’s Declaration to Caesar

Which background does the evidence suggest provides the starting point for Paul’s proclamation (εὐαγγελίζομαι) of the εὐαγγέλιον? To restate the question that has driven this investigation, “Is Paul’s gospel an Isaianic announcement or an imperial declaration?” This analysis has shown that εὐαγγέλιον does not occur on a regular basis in the LXX and that the term has been employed in pagan literature to describe the accession of the emperor to his throne and the establishment of his reign. Additionally, the translators of the LXX used εὐαγγελίζομαι in Isaiah’s prophecy to describe the work of the messenger who would proclaim to Israel that the time of the Exile was over and that Yahweh has returned to Zion to restore his people and establish his reign. In synthesizing this material, the interpreter must also pay close attention to the fact that, when Paul defined the basic content of his gospel in Romans 1:3-4 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, he explained that the death and resurrection of Jesus took place according to the Scriptures and that the gospel of God was promised by the prophets. Paul also connected his usage of εὐαγγελίζομαι to the prophetic promise in Isaiah 52:7, which speaks about the messenger of the good news who pronounces to Zion that God reigns and the Exile is over, in his discussion of the need for preachers to be sent out to proclaim the gospel.28 Paul’s use of Isaiah 52:7 in this context caused Fitzmyer to conclude, “The fact that Paul deliberately quotes Isa 52:7 in Rom 10:15, precisely in a context in which he is speaking of the preaching of ‘the gospel’ (10:16), shows that this notion of evangelion is heavily dependent on the Old Testament idea of God’s herald and his message.”29

The pagan and Jewish backgrounds for these terms, therefore, resonate with one another to create a narrative that will at the same time be faithful to the Jewish background that provided the basis for Paul’s understanding of the world and be intelligible to the pagans who heard Paul’s message about Jesus the Messiah.30 As Wright has correctly explained,

The trouble with history-of-religions study is that it regularly fails to see that what matters is not so much where an idea has come from as where it is going to. The problem is not merely that we now know that ‘Jew’ and ‘Greek’ in the first century did not live in watertight worlds—though this itself ought to make us wary of a strict either-or. It is, rather, that the Isaianic message always was about the enthronement of YHWH and the dethronement of the pagan gods; about the victory of Israel and the fall of Babylon; about the arrival of the Servant King and the consequent coming of peace and justice. The scriptural message therefore pushes itself of its own accord into the world where pagan gods and rulers stake their claims and celebrate their enthronements [emphasis original].31

The proclamation that the crucified and risen Jesus is both the messianic king
and the Son of Israel’s God stood as a direct confrontation to the claims of lordship put forward by Caesar. Paul asserted that Jesus’ death and resurrection took place according to the Heilsplan of God and that this good news demonstrated the power of God for salvation. Yahweh has brought about the realization of Isaiah’s good tidings that God reigns, and the corollary to this statement is that Caesar does not have ultimate rule.32 Wright concludes, “The more Jewish we make Paul’s ‘gospel’, the more it confronts directly the pretensions of the Imperial cult, and indeed all other paganisms whether ‘religious’ or ‘secular’” (emphasis original).33 The background for Paul’s gospel can be found in both a Jewish and Greek setting, which is appropriate given that Paul is proclaiming a message about Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Messiah, sent from the God of Israel, who is known only through faith in this Jesus, to a Gentile world.

The Content of Paul’s Gospel

After analyzing the background for Paul’s use of the term εὐαγγέλιον, the attention must turn to examination of the content of the gospel that he proclaimed and the effects of that proclamation of the good news. This investigation will focus on two key texts where Paul defines the subject matter of his message and the importance of preaching that message for his audience, namely Romans 1:1-7 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. The goal of this section is to examine precisely what Paul says about the gospel and not to investigate every detail of these passages. This interpretation of these passages will pay particular attention to the manner in which Paul describes the εὐαγγέλιον and to the connections that Paul draws between the gospel that he preached and the Old Testament Scriptures.

Romans 1:1-7: The Gospel and the Power of God

In these opening verses of Romans, Paul introduces himself to a congregation that he did not found by defining his definition of the εὐαγγέλιον in order to establish a foundation from which he can demonstrate what the preaching of the good news does and by emphasizing his call as a prophetic servant and his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. This salutation is the longest and most complex introduction to any of his letters, for in it he briefly introduces both the content and source of the εὐαγγέλιον that he proclaimed and the power that this message has for effecting salvation. This section of the letter serves the dual purpose of defending the gospel that Paul preached in his missionary journeys and of establishing that Paul and his Roman readers shared the same gospel and the same faith in Jesus as Lord.34 Due to this common faith, Paul explains in the thanksgiving-prayer section of the letter his great desire to come to Rome in order that he could strengthen their faith in the Lord, that they could encourage him in
his mission, and that he would have the opportunity to proclaim the good news in the capital city of the empire in fulfillment of his commission to evangelize the Gentiles (1:13-15). The salutation then concludes with the majestic statement of the letter's theme in the form of two carefully crafted explanatory clauses, which extol the power of the gospel for salvation and the righteousness of God that the gospel reveals.

The Foundational Nature of Paul's Apostleship

Paul’s understanding of his call as a prophet, who declares that God has intervened and completed the glorious promises that the prophets had written in the Scriptures, and his resultant mission to the Gentiles provide the context from which he proclaimed this gospel. Paul did not begin this description of himself to the Romans with a direct assertion of his own authority as an apostle but with a statement about his master by describing himself as a δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Paul’s reference to himself as a slave has Jewish overtones in that Jewish worshippers thought of themselves as slaves of God and, more importantly, this terminology was used of great leaders, like the prophets, from Israel’s past. Schreiner explains,

The term δοῦλος is probably rooted in the OT use of שָׁבָר . . . . It conveys the idea of an office that was formerly possessed by outstanding persons in the OT such as Moses, Joshua, Abraham, David, and the prophets (Josh. 14:7; 24:29; 2 Kings 17:23; Ps. 89:4, 21; Rengstorf, TDNT 2:268, 276-77). The focus of the term, though, is not on possessing a privileged office but on service to a greater authority. By using the word δοῦλος before mentioning his apostleship Paul emphasizes that the authority he exercises is a derived authority. He is a humble servant of Christ, whose will he endeavors to fulfill.

Jesus has taken a place of authority alongside of Yahweh in continuity with the traditional Jewish hope for a Messiah, who will not only be the anointed king of Israel but also the ruler of the world, and Paul served as his agent to declare the good news that brings this already established reign into being. This reference to Paul as a δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ also made the profound statement that Paul saw his ministry to the Gentiles as the fulfillment of the covenantal purpose of Israel and as the natural result of the restoration of God’s people from their exile (Isa 49:6), which coheres with his description of his call as an apostle in Galatians 1:11-17. This universal focus of Paul’s ministry is demonstrated in the purpose statement of his ministry in 1:5, “for the obedience of faith among all the nations for the sake of his name” and in Paul’s great desire to preach the gospel in Rome. Paul believed that this call to proclaim the good news to the Gentiles placed the Roman Christians under his care, which explains the reason why he wrote them and solicited their support even though he was not the founder of the assemblies in the city.
The second feature that stands out in Paul’s introductory words about himself is the emphasis that he places on his calling and being set apart as an apostle and the gracious nature of that call from Jesus the Messiah (1:5), which is reminiscent of Galatians 1:15, where he emphasizes the grace of God in calling him into service. Paul also alludes to the prophetic nature of his call and ministry in his description that he was “set apart for the gospel of God”. This consecration for his task of proclaiming the \textit{euvaggelion theou} also echoed Paul’s account of his call in Galatians 1:15 and the purification of God’s people for carrying his good news to the Gentiles (Isa 52:11). This connection that Paul makes between himself and the prophets again demonstrates that his ministry serves to advance the message of God’s eschatological deliverance promised by the prophets and fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah. God has procured his slave to do his bidding and has separated him for the sole task of preaching the good news that Israel’s God has established his reign.

The Promised Gospel

Paul first describes the gospel as the \textit{euvaggelion theou}, ὁ προφητημετα τῶν προφητῶν ἀυτοῦ ἐν γραφαὶς ἀγίαις, in which the genitive serves to qualify the gospel and the relative clause serves to demonstrate that this good news is not only the announcement of a new ruler but also the fulfillment of the prophecies given by God to his prophets. What is the main point that Paul is making in the connection that he forms between the gospel and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in 1:1b-2? Once this question is answered, the way will be cleared for developing an understanding of where the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah fit into the overarching \textit{Heilsplan} of God as Paul expounds the gospel in 1:3-4.

Paul’s mission was first to proclaim the \textit{euvaggelion theou}. Most commentators contend that \textit{theou} is a genitive of source (or its close cousin, the subjective genitive) in distinction from the content of the gospel defined in 1:3 as the Son. While it is entirely appropriate to argue that the gospel comes from God and that it fulfills his purposes as shown in the relative clause that follows, the entire context of the salutation, particularly that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God (1:17), indicates that this construction is pregnant with meaning and that this good news is both from and about God. In commenting on this text, which Wright contends is seminal for Romans and for Paul's understanding of God, Jesus, the gospel, and his own call he explains,

Paul’s gospel was likewise a message about the one true God, the God of Israel, and his victory over the world. . . . A message about God – the one true God, the God who inspired the prophets – consisting in a
message about Jesus. A story – a true story – about a human life, death and resurrection through which the living God becomes the king of the world.49

This gospel, however, is not just about the one true God but also from God, due to the fact that the gospel also reveals the covenant plan and purpose of God to the world as is described in 1:2 and echoes of Old Testament in the statement concerning the Son in 1:3-4.50

The relative clause (διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαι) describes in broad strokes the manner in which the εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ is the fulfillment of the plan of God prophesied in the Old Testament. This statement connecting the gospel to the promises of the prophets prepares the way for Paul’s declaration that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel was also present in the law and the prophets (3:21) and in the Abraham story specifically (Rom 4:1-25).51 Paul never envisioned his gospel as a message that negated or contradicted the Heilsplan of God as it was promised in the Old Testament.52 In fact, God has fulfilled his promise to Abraham and the prophets in a way that no Jew (or Gentile, though they were not searching for Yahweh) could have ever imagined.53 God has intervened in history in the death and resurrection of Jesus to fulfill the promises that he made to Abraham and the prophecies he gave to the prophets, particularly Isaiah, about the restoration from the Exile and the glorious future of his people, which would demonstrate that the God of Israel is the one true God before whom all others will bow in subjection ( Isa 45:21-25).54 Paul, then, is entrusted with the responsibility of making the greatness of this God known to the world.55

The Person of the Gospel

After describing the gospel in terms of God and his promise of it in the Scriptures, Paul explains that this good news springs forth from the life, death, and resurrection of one person, the Son of God (1:3-4). Whether this text is original to the apostle or is a traditional text from the early church is irrelevant to our study, for our interest is on what this text tells us about the message that Paul preached in his missionary travels.56 The passage reveals a two-stage Christology in the birth of the son in the flesh and his accession to the throne that takes place at or as a result of the resurrection, but it does not relate an adoptionist Christology for the passage surely indicates that Jesus was the son prior to his birth in the flesh.57

Paul does not regularly employ the title Son of God in his letters, but when he uses this terminology, the context demands that the title has a far greater significance for Paul than can be determined by an accounting of the number of times that he calls Jesus the Son or Son of God. Paul uses this title in soteriological,
ecclesiological, and eschatological contexts, where the sonship of Jesus is a fundamental aspect of the content of the gospel and the incorporation of his people into his kingdom and where the sending of the preexistent Son into the world and the giving up of the Son to death is emphasized.\(^{58}\) Paul’s description of Jesus as the Son of God designates to him the name that was given to Israel in its adoption at the Exodus and referred to in connection with pleas for God’s deliverance\(^{59}\) and to the king, who was adopted as Yahweh’s first-born son.\(^{60}\) These two images merge in Jesus the Messiah in that membership in the people of God is contingent upon belonging to him, God’s true Son, in much the same way that having a portion in David meant belonging to the true Israel (2 Sam 19:43-20:2).\(^{61}\) Hengel also reaches a similar conclusion from Paul’s use of this title in Romans 8:3, 29, 32 and Galatians 4:1-7, where, “the ‘Son of God’ frees us to become ‘Sons of God’.”\(^{62}\)

Romans 1:3b-4 displays a bipartite structure based on the use of parallel participial constructions, which declare that Jesus was born from the line of David the King and was appointed to be the Son of God in power at his resurrection from the dead, demonstrating that Jesus was the Messiah all along.\(^{63}\) The prepositional phrase, \(\text{περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,}\) indicates that the content of the gospel both from and about God is the Son, who is described by the parallel participles.\(^{64}\) The relative clause in 1:2 then functions as a digression which serves to define the \(\text{εὐαγγέλιον \ θεοῦ/}\) as does \(\text{περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.}\) While Whitsett contends that the prepositional phrase modifies \(\text{γραφαίς ἄγιας}\) and that Paul is attempting to turn the minds of his readers to specific scriptural texts that prophesy “concerning the son,” this grammatical distinction does not alter in any appreciable way the thought conveyed, due to the fact that this son, who is the content of the gospel, fulfills all that the Scriptures promised.\(^{66}\)

**Jesus the Messiah.** The first participial clause focuses on the Son coming into human existence (\(\text{κατὰ σάρκα}\)) and being born (or becoming) from the seed of David the King which coheres with the Jewish expectation that a ruler would come from the line of David and establish the worldwide reign of Yahweh.\(^{67}\) Although Paul normally uses \(\text{σάρξ}\) with a negative connotation, here he is employing the term to denote the identification of Jesus with fallen humanity in order to defeat their ultimate enemies, sin and death, and to inaugurate the new age (5:12-21; 8:2-4).\(^{68}\) This description of Jesus as the seed of David echoes the Nathan prophecy that one from the line of David would rule forever (2 Sam 7:12-14). The connection between this description of Jesus and the Old Testament promises establishes Jesus’ Davidic, kingly heritage as an important element in content of the gospel (2 Tim 2:8).\(^{69}\) This linkage gains even more importance when Paul demonstrates in
15:12, through a citation of Isaiah 11:5, that God’s promise to restore his people from the Exile and to vindicate them through a Davidic ruler has been fulfilled in Jesus. This ruler not only reigns but also provides hope to the Jews and the Gentiles through the fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs and his resurrection from the dead. Paul’s assertion that the good news has been promised beforehand in the Scriptures and that the focus of this good news is on the Son, who is the seed of David, then leads to the conclusion that he is announcing that the messianic promises of salvation have been realized in Jesus. Jesus is the king of Israel and the world. And as Wright has stated, “The justice, peace and salvation which the Messiah would bring to the world would not be a Jewish version of the imperial dream of Rome, but would be God’s dikaiosune, God’s eirene, God’s soteria, poured out upon the world through the renewal of the whole creation.”

**Jesus, the crucified and resurrected One.** Although one might claim that Paul does not refer to the crucifixion in this passage, the crucifixion is clearly implied for it is from that horrific death that Jesus was raised. The resurrection served to demonstrate that the messianic claimant, Jesus of Nazareth, thought by all to be a failure, has been appointed by God and has acceded to his reign as the Son of God in power since (or by) his resurrection from the dead. As Wright notes,

A crucified Messiah was a failed Messiah; no first-century Jew would have needed theological exegesis of a particular text in order to make that point. The Messiah had a task to rebuild the Temple, to defeat the pagans, to rescue Israel, and bring God’s justice to the world. Anyone who died without accomplishing these things, particularly one who attacked the Temple and died at the hands of the pagans he should have been defeating, leaving Israel unredeemed and the world still unjust, was obviously not the true Messiah. This is why it took something utterly extraordinary to make anyone suppose that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. Paul is clear: It was the resurrection that marked Jesus out as “son of God” (v. 4). The resurrection reversed the verdict that all thoughtful first-century Jews would have passed on Jesus at the time of his crucifixion.

The resurrection of the crucified Jesus stands as the confirmation that his death on the cross was the defeat of sin, because death, the cohort of sin, could not hold him. This statement concerning Jesus’ resurrection and enthronement as the Son of God in power as opposed to the Son of God in weakness echoes the enthronement of the King in Psalm 2:7 and his consequent rule over the nations in 2:8. This description of the enthronement of the Son of David continues the theme of God fulfilling his promises of restoring his people through this Davidic Messiah who now rules over all and has brought salvation to all who would believe. The good news is that God reigns in the reign of Jesus the Messiah.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead inaugurates a new age, which maintains the flesh/spirit contrast in the verse, and stands as the promise of
the general resurrection of God’s people to the new life that is to come. This establishment of a new age through the resurrection from the dead has scriptural roots in that the prophets on several occasions use resurrection language to describe the restoration of Israel from the Exile and the institution of the reign of God. This theme, which could be connected to the close relationship between life (living in the Promised Land) and death (being exiled from that land) in Deuteronomy 30, arises particularly in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Although these passages use resurrection language metaphorically to illustrate the hoped for restoration, they still give evidence of the eschatological action of the creator God to intervene on behalf of his people to renew them. Paul contends that this eschatological action has ultimately taken place in the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah whose resurrection from the dead portends the resurrection of all who are God’s people. As Wright concludes, “The resurrection not only told Paul who Jesus was (the Messiah), but also what time it was (the start of the ‘age to come’).”

**Jesus our Lord.** This final confessional statement (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν), in apposition to ιωάντος, both summarizes and defines the previous participial constructions which explained Jesus’ identification with humanity as the Davidic Messiah and his enthronement as ruler through his resurrection from the dead. This statement fits with the declaration of the Psalmist that the King of the Jews will rule over all the earth (Ps 89) and with the hope of Israel that the Messiah would exercise God’s dominion over the whole world. This statement of Jesus’ reign over all the earth naturally leads to Paul’s declaration that his ministry exists to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles. The declaration that Jesus the Messiah is Lord resounds with theological import in that this term is used often as a gloss for the divine name of Yahweh in the LXX and used by Paul in his quotations of and allusions to the Old Testament to refer to Jesus (Rom 10:13 and possibly 10:16). Through the use of the term Lord, Paul contends that God has shared his glory with another, Jesus the Messiah. Paul’s references to Isaiah 45:23, one of the most fiercely monotheistic texts of the Old Testament, demonstrate this reality. In this text Isaiah declares that Yahweh alone is God, that he will restore his people, and that all the earth will bow in submission to his rule. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 14:11 referring to Yahweh as Lord in reference to the judgment that will come from God and almost immediately uses this terminology in reference to Jesus in his instruction concerning clean and unclean foods (Rom 14:14). In Philippians 2:11, which concludes a formulaic (hymnic) statement about Jesus, Paul again alludes to this passage and transforms the confession that Yahweh is Lord into the confession that Jesus is Lord. Paul also uses this terminology to equate
Jesus with God the Father in his uniquely Christian redefinition of the *Shema* (1 Cor 8:6), in which Paul remains an unwavering monotheist and also asserts that Jesus possesses the place of the κύριος within the oneness of God. As a result of Jesus’ lordship, the followers of Jesus are to render allegiance to him alone and to worship him as Lord, and Paul is compelled to call all the peoples of the earth to swear their allegiance to Jesus the Messiah as well.

In the message of the good news, Paul declares that the true king has acceded to his throne, through his shameful death on the cross and glorious resurrection, and redefines membership in the people of God around the figure of Jesus demonstrated in the confession that Jesus the Messiah is Lord. Through this basic confession (Rom 10:9), the believer is incorporated into the Messiah and his people. Jesus is the Son of God, through whom the Old Testament promises of God’s vindication of his people have been realized but not in the way that was expected. Jesus died for our sins and was raised to establish a new creation over which he sovereignly rules at the right hand of the Father.

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-5: The Gospel According to the Scriptures

Paul’s description of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 demonstrates the centrality of the cross and resurrection in his description of the gospel. Paul has saved the most important issue of the letter, the resurrection of the dead, for the end to anchor all that he has previously said in it and to form an *inclusio* with his emphasis on the crucifixion of Jesus in chapters 1 and 2. In this text Paul reminds the Corinthians that the gospel he preached to them, which caused their salvation, focused on the death and resurrection of the Messiah in accordance with the Scriptures. This summary of the good news prepares the way for a delineation of the resurrection appearances of Jesus, which provides the basis for Paul’s correction of those who are in error about the resurrection. The problem in Corinth is not that they believed the resurrection had already taken place but that they found a bodily resurrection to be a source of horror not hope. As Hays notes,

Paul insists that the fundamental logic of Christian proclamation demands belief in the resurrection of the dead; therefore, Christian hope necessarily affirms rather than rejects the body. To proclaim the resurrection of Christ is to declare God’s triumph over death and therefore the meaningfulness of embodied life. That is why, according to Paul, our future hope must be for a transformed body in the resurrection, not an escape from the embodied state.

Paul will then explain that no salvation exists without the bodily resurrection of Jesus (15:12-19) and will teach that the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah secures the bodily resurrection of those who belong to him (15:20-28). The fact of the
bodily resurrection then becomes the foundation for the ethical teachings that Paul has previously advocated in the letter (15:29-34). Paul concludes finally with a discussion of the transformation of the body and the series of events that will occur when the general resurrection takes place (15:35-57).

This formulaic statement of the gospel is shaped into four lines that detail the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and his appearances to Cephas and the twelve. The first line of the confessional material focuses on the death of Jesus “for our sins,” which appears to draw upon the substitutionary language of Isaiah 53, where the servant bears the sins of the people for their restoration, and could also echo this same Isaianic language employed by Jesus in his description of his death during his earthly ministry (Mark 10:45; 14:22-26; Matt 26:26-30). The second line of the formula, which states that he was buried, confirms and emphasizes the reality of his physical death. Fee notes, “In the present context it emphasizes the fact that a dead corpse was laid in the grave, so that the resurrection that follows will be recognized as an objective reality, not merely a ‘spiritual’ phenomenon.”

Having emphasized the reality of Jesus’ death, Paul begins his discussion of the central theme of the chapter, the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus has been raised on the third day. The use of this perfect passive verb indicates that this act of vindication was performed by God, that Jesus has been raised and still lives, and that this resurrection has resulted in a new age for the world in which the present evil age has passed and the eschatological age of salvation has begun in Jesus the Messiah. The fourth line of the confessional statement serves to confirm what has been said concerning the bodily resurrection of Jesus by demonstrating that he was seen by Cephas and the twelve and to prepare the way for Paul’s added list of those who saw Jesus alive which concludes with Paul’s description of his encounter with the risen Jesus that caused him to be set apart as an apostle.

One of the most important and interesting elements of this summary of the gospel is Paul’s statement that both the death and resurrection of Jesus took place “according to the Scriptures.” Although Paul does not elaborate on which specific texts he had in mind, some scholars propose that Paul has Isaiah 53 in mind with reference to the crucifixion and Hosea 6:2 or Jonah 1:17 in mind with reference to the third day resurrection. The general nature, however, of the statement (κατὰ τὰ γραφά) is deliberate and points to the idea that Scripture possesses a single, unified story line and that the entire biblical narrative points to these eschatological events. As Wright notes in the following:

Paul is not proof-texting; he does not envisage one or two, or even half a dozen, isolated passages about a death for sinners. He is referring to the entire biblical narrative as the story which has reached its climax in the Messiah, and has now given rise to the new phase of the same
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story, the phase in which the age to come has broken in, with its central characteristic being (seen from one point of view) rescue from sins, and (from another point of view) rescue from death, i.e. resurrection.106

In a concise summary of the gospel, Paul has declared that the entire biblical story points to the death of the Messiah, which brings about the forgiveness of and rescue from sins, and to the resurrection of the Messiah to new life, which secures the resurrection and restoration to eternal life for those who belong to him.107 Paul has placed the events of the cross and resurrection within the unfolding plan of God for Israel, which includes the arrival of the kingdom of God (15:3b-4, 24). The description of Jesus’ identification with humanity as the second Adam and of his enthronement as King in the exposition of the effects of the resurrection that follows also serves to establish that the good news is focused on the announcement that the promised messianic salvation has arrived in the kingly reign of Jesus the Messiah (15:20-28).108

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this analysis has been to develop an exegetically established definition of the gospel that Paul described in the letters that he penned. The analysis of the background for Paul’s use of ἐυαγγέλιον and ἐυαγγελιζομαι has demonstrated that the pagan usage of these terms and their usage in the LXX can be held in tension and that this fundamentally Jewish concept of the establishment of the reign of Yahweh would have been intelligible to pagan Gentiles, who lived in a world where the political ruler was viewed as a god and demanded worship. The Isaianic description of the herald of good news (ὁ ἐυαγγελιζόμενος) is of particular importance for developing the background for Paul’s use of this terminology due to his widespread citation of Isaiah in his letters and particularly his use of Isaiah 52:7 in Romans 10:15. In the original context, the ἐυαγγελιζόμενος was the one who announced the eschatological victory of God and the restoration of God’s people from their exile. Paul applied this Isaianic passage and others to describe the present situation established in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul then draws upon the promissory nature of the Isaianic good news in order to interpret the victory that has been won by God in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. As a result, Paul described the salvation secured in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah in return from exile or second exodus terms. This language was perfect for describing that God has acted in history to win the victory, to demonstrate that he alone is God, and to establish his reign but not through the defeat of the present political oppressor but through the defeat of the ultimate enemy, sin and death. Thus, the Jewish message of Yahweh’s reign also confronts the religious
pretensions of Caesar, proving his claims to be idle talk, and declares that there is one God the Father and one Lord, Jesus the Messiah.

Those texts where Paul provides a basic summary of the message that he proclaimed (Rom 1:1-4; 1 Cor 15:1-5) demonstrate clearly that Paul believed the events that make up the content of the gospel took place according to the plan of God as it was promised beforehand in the Scriptures of Israel. In Romans Paul describes his ministry in prophetic terms and defines his message as one that was consistent with (if not the same as Isaiah [10:16]) the message that was proclaimed beforehand by the Old Testament prophets. Paul understands himself to be a herald of the good news that God has intervened in history to fulfill his promise to Abraham and to redeem his people as the prophets had foretold. The summary of the gospel in 1 Corinthians also demonstrates that the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, which is the content of the good news proclaimed by the apostle to the Gentiles, took place according to the plan of God as revealed in the Scriptures of Israel. In fact, the entire biblical story points to these events through which the story reaches its climax, and the new eschatological age of God’s deliverance has begun because Jesus the Messiah has been raised from the dead (1 Cor 15:4). Jesus is then the royal Davidic Messiah (Rom 1:3-4) who has defeated the oppressors of not just Israel but all humanity and has delivered them from their exile of separation from God just as the prophets predicted, but this deliverance is not from the oppression of a monarch but from the ultimate oppressors of all humanity, sin and death. The gospel message is then both from and about Yahweh, the God of Israel, as he is revealed in Jesus the Messiah, who died on the cross and was raised from the dead in fulfillment of God’s plan. These events demonstrate that the God of Israel is the one true God of the universe and that he has intervened in behalf of his people to redeem them. In the end, the gospel is the announcement of the kingship of Jesus of Nazareth whose reign was established in his death for our sins and resurrection, and the announcement of that message brings that victory for his people into reality by causing them to believe.

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Notes

1. Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2-3. Notice what McGrath says about the concept of justification and the doctrine of justification in the following: “The concept of justification and the doctrine of justification must be carefully distinguished. The concept of justification is one of many employed with the Old and New Testaments, particularly the Pauline corpus, to describe God’s saving action toward his people. It cannot lay claim to exhaust, nor adequately characterise in itself, the richness of the biblical understanding of salvation in Christ. The doctrine of justification has come to develop a meaning quite independent of its biblical origins, and concerns the means by which man’s relationship to God is established. The church has chosen to subsume its discussion of the reconciliation of man to God under the aegis of justification, thereby giving the concept an emphasis quite absent from the New Testament. The ‘doctrine of justification’ has come to bear a meaning in dogmatic theology which is quite independent of its Pauline origins so that even if it could be shown that it plays a minimal role in Pauline soteriology, or that its origins lie in an anti-Judaising polemic quite inappropriate to the theological circumstances of today, its significance would not be diminished as a result” (Ibid., Emphasis original).


3. N. T. Wright, “Gospel and Theology in Galatians,” in *Gospel in Paul*, 223. This heading is a slight modification of one used by Wright in his discussion of the background of εὐαγγέλιον.


8. Friedrich, “εὐαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγέλιον, προευαγγέλιζομαι, εὐαγγελιστής,” 724. He explains, “This [the uniting of θεός ἄθροισις, τύχη, and σωτηρία in one person] is what gives εὐαγγέλιον its significance and power. The ruler is divine by nature. His power extends to men, to animals, to the earth and to the sea. . . . He is the saviour of the world who also redeems individuals from their difficulties (σωτηρία)” (Ibid.).

as a deity in human form. He is the protective god of the state. His appearance is the cause of good fortune to the whole kingdom. Extraordinary signs accompany the course of his life. They proclaim the birth of the ruler of the world. A comet appears at his accession, and at his death signs in heaven declare his assumption into the ranks of the gods. Because the emperor is more than a common man, his ordinances are glad messages and his commands are sacred writings. What he says is a divine act and implies good and salvation for men. He proclaims ευαγγέλια through his appearance, and these ευαγγέλια treat of him.”

10. This translation comes from Ernest Barker, From Alexander to Constantine: Passages and Documents Illustrating the History of Social and Political Ideas, 336 B.C.-A.D. 337 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 212. The Greek text of the inscription can be found in Wilhelmus Dittenberger, ed., Orienter Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae (Lipsiae: Apud S. Hirzel, 1905), 2:53-55. See now other examples of the use of ευαγγέλιον with reference to the accession of Septimius Geta Caesar and G. Julius Verus Maximus Caesar in Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World, trans. Lionel Strachan (New York: George Doran, 1927), 367. See also Friedrich, “ευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγέλιον, προευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγελιστής,” 725, who notes, “Joy and rejoicing come with the news. Humanity, sighing under a heavy burden of guilt, wistfully longs for peace. Doom is feared because the gods have withdrawn from earth. Then suddenly there rings out the news that the σωτήρ is born, that he has mounted the throne, that a new era dawns for the whole world. . . . The world has taken on a new appearance.”


13. Strecker, “ευαγγέλιον,” 71. See also Friedrich, “ευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγέλιον, προευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγελιστής,” 725: “The imperial cult and the Bible share the view that accession to the throne, which introduces a new era and brings peace to the world, is a gospel for men. We can explain this only by supposing a common source. This is generally oriental. To the many messages, however, the NT opposes the one Gospel, to the many accessions the one proclamation of the → βασιλεία του θεοῦ.”

14. See Friedrich, “ευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγέλιον, προευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγελιστής,” 725, where he contends, “The NT use of ευαγγέλιον does not derive from the LXX. There is no religious use of either ευαγγέλιον or ευαγγελία in the LXX. The plur. τα ευαγγέλια is not found in the NT, nor do we have the sense of ‘reward for good news’ in the NT. The prior history of the NT concept is not to be sought in the LXX” (emphasis added).

15. Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle, 167. Cf. Strecker, “ευαγγέλιον,” 71: “The unequivocal OT-Jewish or Hellenistic-Greek source of the ευαγγέλιον can take on both OT-Jewish and Hellenistic-Greek traditional element. Thus the primary dependence of the noun on Greek-Hellenistic tradition is evident. By this means the new thing expressed by the Christian proclamation can be articulated in an intelligible way in its own environment.” Strecker concedes that there cannot be absolute separation between the use of the term in Hellenistic and Jewish environments, but he will not relinquish the conclusion that the primary background for the term comes from Hellenistic society.

16. τα ευαγγέλια (as a plural) 2 Sam 4:10; η ευαγγελία 2 Sam 18:20, 22, 25, 27; 2 Kgs 7:9. The single use of ευαγγέλιον in the context of a reward for news delivered (in this case the death of Saul) is distinct from the manner in which the term is used by Paul. See Friedrich, “ευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγέλιον, προευαγγελίζομαι, ευαγγελιστής,” 725. Friedrich contends that
there is a distinction between these two words that does not occur in any other literature.


18. Rom 1:1; 15:16; 1 Thess 2:2, 8, 9.


20. Cf. Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle, 168. Dunn also proposes in n.24 that Acts 4:27 alludes to these texts, but it seems that the references to Jesus as the anointed one are drawn from the citation of Ps 2:1-2 in the previous verse.

21. Ibid. See also Fitzmyer, “Gospel in the Theology of Paul,” 159. Fitzmyer bases his conclusion that Paul’s gospel was based on the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the Old Testament on the fact that the eschatological connotation of Paul’s gospel is opposed to the beneficial connotation that was associated with the good tidings in the imperial cult.


25. Wright, “Gospel and Theology in Galatians,” 225. See Isa 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1. See also Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle, 167, who states, “Particularly significant is Isaiah’s consistent message of encouragement in a sequence of prophecies. Isa. 40:9 calls on ‘the preacher of good news’ to proclaim to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’ Similarly Isa. 52:7 praises the one ‘who preaches the good news (evangelizomenos) of peace, who preaches (evangelizomenos) good things, who announces salvation (sōtēria), who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’’ 60:6 envisages the returning exiles preaching the good news of ‘the Lord’s salvation (sōtērion).’”

26. Friedrich, “εὐαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγέλιον, προευαγγελίζομαι, εὐαγγελιστής,” 713; Becker, “Gospel, Evangelize, Evangelist,” 109: “When the LXX was translated, this concept of the messenger of glad tidings and his effective word was no longer understood, and the meaning was weakened. The proclamation of the message was separated from the action originally associated with it (cf. e.g. Isa. 52:7, where the LXX translates, ‘Your God will be king!’”

27. Cf. Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle, 167 n. 20, who dismisses these modifications of the MT which occur in each of these passages by stating, “In each case the LXX differs from the Hebrew, but not significantly for our present purposes.”


31. Ibid. Wright asks and answers the following question: “Which of these backgrounds
[Jewish or Greek], then, is the appropriate one against which to read the New Testament evidence? I suggest that the antithesis between the two [Isaianic announcement or Imperial declaration] is a false one, based upon the spurious either-or that has misleadingly divided New Testament studies for many years” (Wright, “Gospel and Theology in Galatians,” 227).

32. See also Wright, “Gospel and Theology in Galatians,” 228: It was precisely against such ‘religious’ connotations—the boasting of pagan emperors from Babylon and Egypt, through the megalomania of Antiochus Epiphanes, and on to Imperial Rome—that the Jews of Paul’s day had set their face. When their god, YHWH, acted within history to deliver his people, the spurious gods of the heathen would then be defeated. If and when YHWH set up his own king as the true ruler, his earthly representative, all other kingdoms would be confronted with their rightful overlord.

33. Ibid.: “It is because of Jewish monotheism that there can be ‘no king but god’. In the history of ideas, and in lexicography, derivation is important; but so should be confrontation. The all-embracing royal and religious claims of Caesar are directly challenged by the all-embracing claims of Israel’s god.”


35. Schreiner, Romans, 48.


37. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 7: “The Jewish worshiper quite naturally thought of himself as God’s slave (Neh 1:6, 11; Ps 19:11, 13; 27:9; 31:16; etc.; 1QH 7.16; 9.10-11; etc.). The noun is used both in the plural and in the singular for Israel as a whole (Deut 32:36; Jer 46 [LXX 26]:27; Ezek 28:25). And great figures from the past are quite often referred to as Yahweh’s slave, particularly Moses (e.g., 2 Kgs 18:12; Neh 9:14; Ps 105:26; Dan 9:11; Mal 4:4; Josephus, Ant. 5.39), and the prophets (Ezra 9:11; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 35 [LXX 42]:15; Ezek 38:17; Dan 9:6; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6). As such the idea draws its force from Israel’s conviction that it had been chosen by the one God to be peculiarly and particularly his—Israel as belonging exclusively to Yahweh and none other, Israel’s greatest heroes honored by the title precisely because of the unconditional quality of their commitment to Israel’s God and of their part in maintaining the covenant between God and his people” (Dunn, Romans 1-8, 7). See also Peter Stuhlmacher, Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 19; and C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII, ICC, vol. 1 (Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1975), 50.

38. Schreiner, Romans, 32.

39. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 8; Wright, Romans, 415; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 51. Cranfield explains, “The fact that Paul did quite often put ‘Christ’ before ‘Jesus’ is a strong indication that (despite opinions to the contrary) he did not habitually think of ‘Christ’ as just a proper name. It is quite probable that he adopted this order here with the intention of giving special emphasis right at the beginning of the epistle to the fact that the One, whose slave he was, was the fulfilment of God’s promises and of Israel’s age-old hope” (Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 51). Wright adds, “By transliterating Χριστός (Christos) rather than translating it, most English versions of Paul have encouraged the view that the word had already become a proper name for Paul. This, however, is misleading: Paul’s careful and differentiated usage of ‘Christ,’ ‘Jesus,’ and for that matter ‘Lord’ leads to the
conclusion that he intended each word to carry its own set of overtones. And the overtones of ‘Christ’—i.e., ‘Messiah’—are, as we shall presently see, clearly royal: The Messiah is the anointed king of Israel who in Scripture was supposed to be the ruler of all other earthly monarchs (see, e.g., Pss 72:8-11; 89:27; Isa 11:1-4)” (Wright, Romans, 415). Contra Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Romans, AB, vol. 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 231, who contends that Paul uses Χριστός in a nontitular sense.

40. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 8.

41. P. T. O’Brien, Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 58-59. See also Wright, Romans, 420, who contends that this phrase carries with it echoes of the Shema (Deut 6:4-5) due to the fact that וָכַּה is often translated with a verbal form of רָפַק. He continues, “To bring the nations into ‘obedience’ would therefore mean to bring them into the family of this one God. The fact that Paul refers explicitly to the Shema prayer at the very point when he is saying just this (3:29-30) is a further indication that this train of thought is in his mind, albeit here expressed in a very compact form” (Wright, Romans, 420).

42. Schreiner, Romans, 36: “Since Paul received a call to preach to the Gentiles (v. 5), he included the Roman Christians under his apostolic oversight. This explains why he wrote to them and solicited their support, even though he had not established the churches there. Verse 6 probably indicates that the Roman community was predominantly Gentile, clarifying why Paul felt he had authority over them as the apostle to the Gentiles. . . . That the majority of believers in Rome were Gentiles is also supported by 1:13 and by the fact that more pointed exhortations are given to Gentiles in Rom. 11, 14-15.” Whether or not one agrees with Schreiner’s conclusion about the demographic make-up of the congregation, it is clear that the presence of Gentiles in this community caused Paul to believe that these congregations were a part of his ministry and mission.

43. Ibid., 33; Wright, Romans, 420. Both indicate that χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν are likely a hendiadys expressing a gracious apostleship or the grace of apostleship.

44. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 9: “ἀφορίζειν, ‘set apart,’ overlaps in meaning with γίνεσθαι, ‘holy,’ and ἁγιάζειν, ‘sanctify, consecrate’ (note particularly Ezek 45:4—Cranfield). So it is possible that Paul had in mind Lev 20:26, where the two ideas are stressed: the turn of the ages effected by Christ meant that the ideal of separation from the Gentiles now became for Paul the separation for the sake of the Gentiles (but cf. 2 Cor 6:17 = Isa 52:11)” (Ibid.). Although Dunn implies that the separation described in 2 Cor 6:17 does not cohere with a separation for the Gentiles, it seems that this separation serves the purpose of protecting the converts from their former sinful practice, which also demonstrates the power of the gospel to the pagans. It should also be noted that Paul is familiar with Isa 52 for he will quote Isa 52:7 in Rom 10:15. Finally, Dunn is also correct in his assertion that Paul’s use of ἀφορίζω is not a play on words that would indicate Paul is now a Pharisee for Jesus Christ as is proposed by Fitzmyer, Romans, 232 and Wright, Romans 415. See also Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 53-54, who agrees that this proposed reference to Pharisaism is not likely because the use of the term here differs from its use by the Pharisees.

45. Wright, Romans, 415.


47. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 54; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 10; Fitzmyer, Romans,


49. Wright, What Saint Paul Really Said, 45.

50. Wright, Romans, 416.

51. Schreiner, Romans, 38; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 56.

52. Schreiner, Romans, 38; Fitzmyer, Romans, 233; O’Brien, Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul, 67: “The OT scriptures contain the divine promises of the gospel; in addition, they reveal the unfolding purposes of God in significant events of that gospel which are announced, effected, and divinely interpreted (e.g., the call of Abraham, the Exodus from Egypt and that from Babylon). God preserved in these holy writings both the announcements and the unfolding execution of his plan of salvation.”

53. Schreiner, Romans, 38.

54. Wright, What Saint Paul Really Said, 57-58; Schreiner, Romans, 38: “Paul was thinking in particular of the OT promises of a glorious future for Israel. The verb εὐαγγελίζειν (euangelizin, to proclaim the good news) is used, particularly in the LXX of Isaiah (Isa. 40:9; 52:7; 60:6. 61:1; cf. Nah. 2:1 LXX) to denote deliverance from Babylon and return from exile. Paul believes that the salvific promises made to Israel in the OT are now being fulfilled in the gospel.”

55. Wright, Romans, 416; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 10.

56. Pre-Pauline Tradition: Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951), 49; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 5-6; Käsemann, Romans, 10; Stuhlmacher, Paul’s Letter to the Romans, 18; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 57 (with some reservation); Fitzmyer, Romans, 230. From Paul: Vern S. Poythress, “Is Romans 1:3-4 a Confessional Formula After All?,” ExpTim 87 (1976): 180-83; P. T. O’Brien, Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul, 68. See also Wright, Romans, 416-17, who rightly contends, “Like many of Paul’s more formulaic passages, this passage has generated speculation that we are here dealing with that hypothetical entity the ‘pre-Pauline formula,’ which Paul has quoted, quite possibly adapting or modifying it as he did so, in order not least to establish his credentials with an audience to whom the formula would have been familiar. It is, of course, quite possible that Paul might use formulae known to his readers but not otherwise to us, and the present passage might indeed be a case in point. But it must be stressed, here and elsewhere, that the reason why Paul quoted things, if he did, was that they expressed exactly what he intended to say at the time.” Cf. Christopher G. Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David: Paul’s Messianic Exegesis in Romans 2:3-4 (corrected as Romans 1:3-4 in ATLA Religious Database),” JBL. 119 (2000): 675, who states, “The logic behind the consensus that Paul cites a proto-creedal confession to reassure the Romans of his orthodoxy is not the dominant logic of Romans. When Paul wishes to make a point, solve a problem, or clinch an argument in Romans, he usually turns to scripture. When he
wishes to introduce himself and his gospel, he shows the Romans their common ground in a christological reading of Israel’s ‘prophets.’”

57. Schreiner, Romans, 38-39. Schreiner rightly states, “The reference to Jesus as the Son recalls Israel’s status as God’s son. Nonetheless, most scholars see a reference to Jesus’ preexistence in the words περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (perī tou huiou autou, concerning his son). Dunn’s objections to reading preexistence out of this phrase are not decisive. Jesus is the true Israel, but he is also the preexistent Son whom God sent into the world (Rom. 8:3). In other words, the term ‘Son’ works at more than one level; it designates Jesus as the true Israel and as the Son who existed before his incarnation. The placement of the words before the two participles suggests that the one who became the seed of David and was appointed God’s Son in power at the resurrection was already the Son before these events. The one who existed eternally as the Son was appointed the Son of God in power as the Son of David. The new dimension was not his sonship but his heavenly installation as God’s Son by virtue of his Davidic sonship” (emphasis original). See also Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 58.


60. 2 Sam 7:12-14; Pss 2:7; 89 [88, LXX]:26-27.

61. Schreiner, Romans, 39; Wright, Romans, 416; Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David,” 675-76. Schreiner notes, “As Paul says elsewhere, he is the singular seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), and thus the blessing of Abraham (Gal. 3:14) is available only to those who belong to the Messiah Jesus” (Schreiner, Romans, 39). Cf. Otto Betz, What Do We Know About Jesus?, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 94, who states, “What was suppressed on the cross [that Jesus would be crowned in Jerusalem as king], rose up at Easter in changed form. Quite unexpectedly God had confirmed Jesus’ messianic claim and the disciples developed it in the light of Holy Scripture. As we shall now see, the Nathan prophecy again became the basic text. The disciples believed that through Jesus, the son of David at the end-time, God had fulfilled his promise to set an eternally ruling Davidic king on the throne. Nathan’s prophecy helped them to see the resurrection of Jesus as being also an exaltation, an installation in the kingly dignity of the Messiah; thus the christological meaning of Easter became clear. Belief in Christ was formulated in accordance with II Sam. 7.12-14 and thus established on the foundation of the scriptures.”


63. Schreiner, Romans, 42-43; Wright, Romans, 416-17.

64. Fitzmyer, Romans, 233; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 11; Käsemann, Romans, 10; Schreiner, Romans 38; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 57-58.

65. Käsemann, Romans, 10; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 57-58. “It is very much better to place a comma at the end of v. 2 and take vv. 3-4 as an attribute of εὐαγγέλιον than to understand them as a continuation of the relative clause; for this punctuation yields a better balanced sentence and avoids an unbroken string of three relative clauses, the second depending on the first and the third on the second, which connecting vv. 3-4 with v. 2 involves. Having already defined εὐαγγέλιον first by θεοῦ and then by a relative clause (v. 2), Paul now defines it further by indicating its content: the message of good news
concerns God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ibid., 57).


67. Moo, Romans, 46. For a discussion of the various ways of interpreting κατά σάρκα, see Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 59-61; Fitzmyer, Romans, 234; Moo, Romans, 47; Schreiner, Romans, 41-44.

68. Schreiner, Romans, 43; Wright, Romans, 418.

69. Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David,” 675; Betz, What Do We Really Know About Jesus?, 96. See also Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 58-59: “The claim [Jesus’ Davidic lineage] not only has an apologetic significance (drawing attention to Jesus’ possession of an important messianic qualification and underlining the correspondence between promise and fulfillment (cf. v.2)), but also endorses the reality of those promises on which Israel’s messianic hopes were founded and implicitly acknowledges the true and inalienable dignity of the succession of the kings of David’s line (the fact that they dimly and unworthily, but nonetheless really, foreshadowed him who was to come, in whom God’s promise to David would be finally and completely honoured).”

70. Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David,” 664-74; Schreiner, Romans, 45. From his analysis of Romans 15:9b-12, Whitsett concludes, “The promises made to one [the seed of David] are made to the other [the seed of Abraham], because they are the same person, the Messiah. Jeremiah 33:22 already documents the fusion of these traditions when it applies the promises made to Abraham to the seed of David: ‘Just as the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the seed of my servant David and the Levites who minister to me’” (Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David,” 671-72). See also N. T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God, vol. 1 of Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 310, who connects messianic expectation in second-temple Judaism with the Old Testament in the following: “If we know anything about the formation of Jewish belief and expectation in this period we know that it had a good deal to do with the reading of scripture. And the Hebrew Bible, and the Septuagint in which many Jews were accustomed to hear it read, has a good deal to say about a coming king. The promises made to David, and often repeated, come across loud and clear. They are celebrated in the Psalms. Some of the most wonderfully poetical passages in the whole Bible include passages where the idea of a coming deliverer is prominent: we might cite, obviously, Isaiah 9 and 11, 42, and 61. True it is important not to assume that if we discover a potentially ‘messianic’ passage in the Hebrew Bible we can deduce that first-century Jews regarded it as thus; but it is even more important not to ignore the regular reading and singing of scripture as a major force in forming the total Jewish worldview, messianic expectations included.”

71. N. T. Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, vol. 3 of Christian Origins and the Question of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 266: “This verse (15:12) thus completes the huge circle that began with 1.3-5. The Davidic Messiah has been marked out by the resurrection as truly Messiah, the lord and judge of all. . . . Now he grounds the appeal for unity in the gospel once more, adding only a concluding blessing (15.13) which points to hope, hope in the power of the Holy Spirit – which to the reader of Romans can only mean one thing, namely, hope for the resurrection itself.” See also Dunn, Romans 1-8, 12, who notes that
this statement of Jesus’ Davidic sonship is “a clear assertion that Jesus was the anointed Son of David, the royal Messiah, the fulfillment of prophetic hopes long cherished among the people of Israel for the age to come” (Ibid., 12). Dunn notes the following texts which exhibit this theme: Isa 11; Jer 23:5-6; 33:14-18; Ezek 34:23-31; 37:24-28; Pss. Sol. 17.23-51; 4QFlor 1.10-13; 4QpGen 49; 4QpIsa a 2.21-28; 14-15.

73. Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 562
74. This emphasis mirrors the manner in which Paul focuses on the crucifixion of Jesus in Galatians, while still affirming the centrality of the resurrection for without it the cross would not bring about the rescue that Paul describes.
75. Wright, Romans, 418; Moo, Romans, 48-49. See also Hengel, Son of God, 62, who notes, “The passive participle ὀρισθήκειν in Rom. 1.4 is a typical divine passive, which is a periphrasis for God’s own action” (Hengel, Son of God, 62). There is some question as to whether the prepositional phrase, ἐπὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, should be seen as temporal or as the ground for Jesus’ appointment as the Son of God. Temporal: Käsemann, Romans, 12; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 62; Fitzmyer, Romans, 236. Causal: Wright, Romans, 419; F. F. Bruce, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), 73; O’Brien, Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul, 69. Given the contrast between the flesh/spirit that it seems Paul is establishing in each participial construction, the emphasis probably falls on the temporal nature of the phrase in that “since the resurrection from the dead” a new age was established. Cranfield notes, “Christ’s resurrection was scarcely the ground of His exaltation; but it was the event which was the beginning of His exalted life” (Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 62). Fitzmyer comes to a more balanced conclusion in the following: “The prep. ἐκ can denote either time or causality. The former seems preferable, because it signifies the new mode of dynamic existence that Christ enjoys as of the resurrection; but the latter cannot be excluded completely, because it would designate the resurrection itself as the source of the risen Christ’s dynamic influence” (Fitzmyer, Romans, 236).
76. Wright, Romans, 418. See also Hengel, Son of God, 64, who states, “This Messiahship of the crucified, risen and exalted Jesus went completely counter to the popular, traditional expectation of a political liberator and learned exponent of the Torah, which is the expectation that had been put about especially by Pharasaism.” See also N. T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God, 307-20, for a brief description of Jewish messianic expectation in the first century and idem, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 244.
77. O’Brien, Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul, 69; Hengel, Son of God, 64; Betz, What Do We Know About Jesus?, 96-97; Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David,” 674-78: “The context of Romans 1:4 confirms Paul’s interpretation of Ps 2 there. By combining christological interpretations of 2 Sam 7 and Ps 2, Paul fashions a twofold analysis of Christ’s divine sonship that corresponds to the pattern found in Romans 15:8a-9 and 15:12. Christ’s Davidean heritage fulfills the promises and confirms God’s faithfulness to the Jews; his appointment—that is his resurrection—relates him to the Gentiles as the mode of their inclusion in the family of Abraham and the rule of God’s Messiah” (Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David,” 677). Quite surprisingly, Fitzmyer contends that this reference to Jesus as the Son of God is not being used in a messianic sense or with the OT background sketched out above (Fitzmyer, Romans, 235).
78. Schreiner, Romans, 44; Wright, Romans, 419; Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII,
63-64; Moo, Romans, 49-50. Moo explains, “The contrast of ‘flesh’ and ‘Spirit’ is part of Paul’s larger salvation-historical framework, in which two ‘aeons’ or eras are set over against one another: the old era, dominated by sin, death, and the flesh, and the new era, characterized by righteousness, life, and the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit” (Ibid.).

79. Schreiner, Romans, 44; Wright, Romans, 419; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 15-16; Käsemann, Romans, 12. Contra Moo, Romans, 50 n. 56.

80. Wright, Romans, 419. As Wright notes, “The point is that, for Paul, God raised Jesus from the dead by the power of the Spirit (8:11), in line with the scriptural promises that attributed to the breath, wind, or Spirit of God the promised new life on the other side of death, and more particularly the new hope for exiled and desolate Israel (Ezek 37:5, 9-10, 14; Joel 3:1-5).”

81. Isa 26:19; 53:10-12; Ezek 37; Dan 12.

82. Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 92-128. Also, idem, The New Testament and the People of God, 299-334. Wright notes concerning the idea of resurrection in Isaiah 53, “We might suggest that the likely turning-point in the sequence – the moment when somebody really begins to think in terms of human beings themselves actually dying and actually being given a newly embodied life at some point thereafter – is to be found in Isaiah’s servant passages. That is where, supremely, the hope for the nation and land becomes focused on an individual, or at least what looks like an individual; even if this is a literary code for the nation as a whole, or for a group within the nations, there are signs in the text itself, as well as in subsequent interpretation, that at least some of the ‘servant’ passages in Isaiah may have an individual, representing the nation, in mind. That is where, we might also suggest, the belief that Israel’s god will restore the nation after the exile breaks through into the belief – albeit not yet expressed very clearly – that he will restore the nation’s representative after death. The earlier national hope thus transmutes, but perfectly comprehensibly, into the hope that Israel’s god will do for a human being what Israel always hoped he would do for the nation as a whole. From there we can perceive a more obvious straight line to Daniel 12, where the nation’s representative has become plural. The experience of suffering, persecution and martyrdom had, so the writer believed, brought the exile to a new and appalling climax. The suffering righteous ones had found themselves enacting, corporately, the role of Isaiah’s servant” (Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 123, emphasis original). This connection between the restoration from the Exile and resurrection becomes all the more interesting due to the connections that are drawn between the death of Jesus and the Servant in Isaiah and Paul’s understanding of his ministry in terms of the Servant who would bring the message of good news to the Gentiles.

83. Wright, Romans, 419. See also Schreiner, Romans, 44-45, who states in relation to the establishment of the new age through the resurrection of Jesus and its linkage to the restoration from Exile in the Old Testament, “The resurrection of Jesus indicates, therefore, that God has begun to fulfill his promises to Israel. The saving promises made to the nation have become a reality in and through the true Israel, Jesus the Messiah” (Ibid.).

84. Wright, Romans, 419.

85. See Dunn, Romans 1-8, 16, who explains that this statement serves to bracket the preceding formulaic statement concerning the Son. See also Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans I-VIII, 65.

86. Wright, What Saint Paul Really Said, 55-56.
87. Schreiner, Romans, 45.
88. Wright, Romans, 419.
90. N. T. Wright, The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 93-95; idem, What Saint Paul Really Said, 68, where Wright notes, “Here, as in 1 Corinthians 8:6, Paul is quoting a monotheistic text from the Old Testament. Not just any miscellaneous monotheistic text, either. This comes from Isaiah 40-55, where we find the clearest and most sustained scriptural exposition and exaltation of the one true God over all the false claimants, and at the same time the stoutest declaration of the sovereignty of the one God, ruling out all possibility of ontological dualism.”
92. Cranfield, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans I-VIII, 65; Wright, Romans, 419.
93. Schreiner, Romans, 45.
94. Richard B. Hays, First Corinthians, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 252; J. Paul Sampley, 1 Corinthians, in vol. 10 of The New Interpreter’s Bible, 973. Cf. Marion L. Soards, 1 Corinthians, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 314, who contends that the tone and placement of the passage indicate that this issue was not the central problem in the congregation.
95. There is good reason to see this use of Χριστός as titular reference to Jesus as King due to the fact that Paul makes an explicitly messianic argument in 15:20-28. See Wright, The Resurrection of the Son God, 320, 333-38, 553-63, 726-30, and idem, The Climax of the Covenant, 26-35.
96. Hays, First Corinthians, 252-53: “We should not suppose that these Corinthians understood themselves as debunkers of the gospel. On the contrary. . . they thought of themselves as hyperspiritual Christians (pneumatikoi), rich in every spiritual gift. That, however, was just the problem: they were so spiritual that they found the notion of a resurrection of the body crass and embarrassing. The phrase translated ‘resurrection of the dead’ (anastasis nekrōn) means literally ‘rising of the corpses.’ For the spiritually refined Corinthians, this was not the stuff of Christian hope; it was the scenario of a horror story. This would have been particularly true for those members of the community with greater education and philosophical sophistication—precisely the higher-status members of the church whose infatuation with wisdom, knowledge, and tongues was creating the problems with which Paul wrestles throughout the letter” (Ibid., emphasis original). See also Soards, 1 Corinthians, 315-16.
100. Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 724; Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 299. See also Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 320, who states, “It is because Jesus is Messiah that his death represents the turning point in which the present evil age is left behind and those who belong to Jesus are rescued from it; what Paul says in Galatians 1.4, that the Messiah ‘gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age’, is of the greatest relevance
here, indicating that the dealing with sins which Paul has in mind is part of, is indeed the key focal point of, the great eschatological turning-point in the divine purpose. . . . Without the resurrection, there is no reason to suppose that Jesus’ crucifixion dealt with sins, or with sin. But, with the resurrection, the divine victory over sin(s), and hence over death, is assured.”

101. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 725. See also Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 321; Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 299-300; and Robert H. Stein, “Was the Tomb Really Empty,” JETS 20 (1977): 23-29. Wright discusses the importance of the empty tomb in this passage with the following: “The fact that the empty tomb itself, so prominent in the gospel accounts, does not appear to be specifically mentioned in this passage, is not significant; the mention here of ‘buried, then raised’ no more needs to be amplified in that way than one would need to amplify the statement ‘I walked down the street’ with the qualification ‘on my feet’. The discovery of the empty tomb in the gospel accounts is of course significant because it was (in all the stories) the first thing that alerted Jesus’ followers to the fact that something extraordinary had happened; but when the story was telescoped into a compact formula it was not the principal point. The best hypothesis for why ‘that he was buried’ came to be a part of this brief tradition is simply that the phrase summarized very succinctly that entire moment in the Easter narratives” (Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 321). Contra Hans Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 255-56. Conzelmann contends that this statement does not refer to the empty tomb but is used to emphasize the reality of his death. While this reference to his burial does serve to emphasize the reality of Jesus’ death, it does not exclude a reference to the empty tomb (which he categorizes as tomb legends), particularly when this statement is considered with the resurrection appearances referenced in 15:5-11.

102. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 726; Witherington, Conflict and Community in 1 Corinthians, 300. See also Wright, The Resurrection of Son of God, 321: “‘He has been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.’ The verb is actually perfect, not (as most translations imply) aorist (‘he was raised’, matching ‘died,’ ‘was buried,’ and ‘was seen’); the Greek perfect tense indicates the ongoing result of a one-off event, in this case the permanent result that Jesus is now the risen Messiah and lord (see verse 20-28). The verb, like the others here, is passive indicating divine action; Paul regularly sees the resurrection of Jesus as a great act of the creator himself.”

103. Hays, First Corinthians, 255.


105. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 255; Soards, 1 Corinthians, 318; Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 299; Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God, 320-21; idem, What Saint Paul Really Said, 49. It should be noted that advocates of this position do not deny that several specific texts could have some specific relevance to the events described. They simply seek to emphasize the more important point that Paul is making is about God’s plan of salvation.


107. Ibid., 320-21.

108. See Wright, What Saint Paul Really Said, 59, who states when discussing 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, “He [Paul] means that the entire scriptural story, the great drama of God’s dealings with Israel, came together when the young Jew from Nazareth was nailed up by the Romans
and left to die... The shameful death of Jesus at the hands of the pagans was, for Paul the centre and starting-point of what the ‘the gospel’ was all about. It was the fulfillment of the Isaianic message. It was the proclamation of the ultimate royal victory. It was the message of good news for the world.”

109. But (someone might say) hundreds of Jews, young and old, were crucified by the Romans in the first century. Why was this execution so special? Paul’s answer would have been twofold. This crucifixion was different because of who it was that was crucified, and because of what happened next’ (emphasis added). To complete Wright’s statement, this crucifixion was special because Jesus was/is the Messiah and because on the third day his victory over sin and death was made known through his resurrection from the dead.

Book Review

The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate.

Ryan A. Neal

Science v. Religion

With the recent, and much publicized, Bill Nye and Ken Ham debate (in February 2014), the science v. religion controversy again was near the center of the public square (if it ever left). The controversy is a mixture of competing agendas, bound up with a variety of political, religious, scientific, educational, and popular questions and concerns. Some of the questions include:

1. Does Genesis have a contribution to this debate?
2. Should Genesis 1 be read in light of scientific findings, so that one can align scientific evidence with Genesis and seek biblical resonance using the empirical modes of investigation?
3. Should evolution be taught in schools?
4. Can one be a Christian and subscribe to evolution?
5. Can one be a “serious” scientist and trust Genesis?

John Walton, a professor at Wheaton College, is comfortable with these types
of questions (though he would undoubtedly reword them), even if some of his readers will not be comfortable with the answers he proffers.

The simplest entrée into his main argument is stated concisely and clearly in his introduction, which is not a simple overview of the book’s main arguments, but instead sets the frame and the tone of the work. Indeed, from the beginning he marshals support for his claims (he identifies them as 18 propositions) to such a high degree that anyone who does not agree substantially with the premise of his introduction will not find the remainder of the work persuasive (and even those who do agree with his introductory claims, may not find the 18 propositions persuasive).

In short, Walton rejects concordism, the view that we should “approach the text of Genesis as if it has modern science embedded in it or it dictates what modern science should look like” (16). If you’re still reading after page 16 then your efforts will not go unrewarded. If you subscribe to a literal, six-day, young earth model of creation, Walton is about to upend the main elements of your argument. He does so by linguistic analysis and approaching the text from the ancient Near Eastern (ANE) mindset. He does not think we should translate Genesis 1 into current science; instead he thinks we need to transport ourselves into the cultural world of ancient cosmology. Doing so, however, means changing a host of issues concerning how Genesis is typically treated.

Though Walton is clearly comfortable discussing the essential features and specific claims of both fields of study, the purpose of *The Lost World of Genesis One* is to promote a different view than the ones typically discussed when using Genesis chapter one to discuss the “origins debate.” At its core the book relentlessly pursues one key point: “Genesis 1 is Ancient Cosmology” (Proposition 1). With those 5 words, Walton seeks to turn the whole controversy on its head, by way of changing the terms of the debate.

Walton’s 18 propositions can be divided accordingly: the first eleven compose the core of his argument based on exegesis, linguistics, and theological reasoning, and the final seven explore his main thesis by way of commenting on the ways that theology and science impact society and the church.

To get a sense of whether his view is of interest, his concluding chapter, entitled “Summary and Conclusions,” is also helpful. In the second paragraph he writes:

The position that I have proposed regarding Genesis 1 may be designated the *cosmic temple inauguration view*. This label picks up the most important aspect of the view: that the cosmos [in Genesis 1] is being given its functions as God’s temple, where he has taken up his residence and from where he runs the cosmos. This world is his headquarters (p. 162; italics original).
As an example of his welcomed transparency, he claims that Genesis 1 is “ancient literature, not modern science” (162). Because Walton does not consider Genesis 1 to be teaching science, he is not committed to any specific material view of origins in his book, except to say that he is essentially opposed to those who use Genesis 1 as scientific evidence supporting any and all of the origins views. This will be welcomed by some and deemed totally outlandish by others. His contribution does more to deflect attention away from Genesis 1 and the origins debate than to engage it. In this way, his contribution has the benefit of not having to square Genesis 1 with the latest scientific findings. His view remains above the scientific fray, and in this regard may well last longer than any opponents might wish.

It’s best to situate his view as adjacent, and even at times parallel, to the discussion that concerns the key questions surrounding the relationship between science and religion, and more specifically, science and the Christian faith.

The focus of this review will be on one contested point: the compatibility of evolution with the Christian faith.

The Compatibility of Evolution with the Christian Faith.

To the consternation of some and the delight of others, Walton refuses to subscribe to evolution, but equally he refuses to deny it or forbid it as a reasonable option (see Proposition 18). His concern with various teachings of creation and evolution is not mechanistic and descriptive, but rather metaphysical and teleological. Said more specifically, on Walton’s reading of Genesis 1, the Bible does not offer a mechanistic view of origins, since the Bible is not teaching or describing creation in terms of modern science. Since the Bible does not teach modern science then evolution is neither supported nor refuted in Genesis 1.

To be clear, Walton is seemingly frustrated by both sides of this topic: the church has not appreciated Genesis 1 appropriately because it has misconstrued its genre and purpose, while he thinks too many scientists move beyond scientific discovery and promote a worldview.

Indeed, Walton’s chief concern with the science and religion dispute is teleology, by which he emphasizes that those who believe the Bible are led to believe that creation has a purpose, so creation is (or rather, must be) teleological. Where the teaching of evolution (often?) runs afoul, according to Walton, is not in its descriptions of material origins based on empirical evidence and investigation, but in its promotion of dysteleology (i.e. the view that creation has no telos, no purpose and no goal). In other words, for Walton and the cosmic temple inauguration reading of Genesis 1, provided evolution is not inextricably bound up with atheism, chance, and lacking purpose, it would be deemed acceptable,
provided it was confined to explaining physical and material creation, and was teleologically neutral.

Because some will find Walton’s view regarding evolution dangerous and charge him guilty of making a slippery slope even more slick, consider the company he keeps.

Here Walton seems to be in the same general camp as Tim Keller, even though they are approaching these questions from different angles and toward different ends. Keller addresses these issues out of apologetic concerns in his book *Reason for God* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2008; see chapters 6-7). In *Reason for God*, Keller makes it clear that he is not convinced that Genesis 1 is outlining a precise time period of the mechanism of creation. Though in the text he stops short of promoting evolution, Keller clearly offers a counterpoint to the view that people must choose between “thinking scientifically and belief in God” (p. 82). Keller, like Walton, is keenly interested in separating and untangling evolution as a worldview aligned with philosophical naturalism (which is driven by an atheistic metaphysic) from evolution as a scientific description of creation and adaptation, using mechanistic categories.

Additionally, Bruce Waltke, an OT scholar (formerly of RTS) and an inerrantist, concludes that theistic evolution is viable (see his *An Old Testament Theology*, Zondervan, 2007), joining Denis Lamoureux, an inerrantist, who presented a paper denying Adam as a historical being at the annual conference of the *Evangelical Theological Society* in November 2013. Lamoureux holds 3 doctorates and is the author of a non-specialist book on the subject, *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution* (Wipf & Stock, 2009), and a more specialized work, *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution* (Wipf & Stock, 2008).

In case readers wish to charge this current wave as being a recent fad or a new trend on its way out, consider that the gist of this view appeared 100 years ago in a couple of essays in *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915). *The Fundamentals* are a group of essays written by conservatives to combat liberal trends in theology and an overemphasis on rationalism. The writers had as their targets views that sought to undermine the authority of the Bible, especially its supernatural claims and elements, miracles, the virgin birth, etc. In other words, all of the essays in *The Fundamentals* were included to combat, not promote, liberal theology. In two of his chapters, James Orr (see ch. 11 “The Early Narratives of Genesis” & ch. 18 “Science and Christian Faith” in vol. 1) argues in a similar vein as Walton (and each time calls upon John Calvin as a supporting witness): the Bible is not teaching modern science. Again, Orr’s contribution to this topic was meant to counteract liberal theology, but in each essay he argues that evolution, as scientific observation,
not as a guiding philosophy, is compatible with the Bible. Two final notes on The Fundamentals: the authors do not present a unified view on this issue, which is interesting (see ch 14 “The Doctrinal Value of the First Chapters of Genesis”), and also, it’s not abundantly clear what elements in the theory of evolution in its 21st century iteration Orr may have accepted.

Finally, B.B. Warfield, the famous Princeton Theological Seminary professor, is usually cited as a famous proponent of theistic evolution, which is correct if one only considers his early work. Interestingly, in 1906 Warfield reviewed James Orr’s 1905 book God’s Image in Man (the book was the published version of Orr’s lectures given at Princeton Theological Seminary) and it seems most prudent to describe Warfield’s final view as ambivalent and ultimately noncommittal on the question of evolution and creation. Warfield’s later, more mature work falls short of promoting theistic evolution, but he does not reject it. In this sense, Walton aligns loosely with Keller and Warfield in allowing for evolution, rather than with Lamoureux and Orr, who promote it.

Currently, theistic evolution is a minority position for evangelicals, but it can no longer be called contrarian.

Summary Judgment

Walton’s book is recommended for those interested in seeing how a biblical scholar, who is unreservedly committed to the authority of the biblical text, attempts to grapple with the literature of Genesis 1 in the terms of its earliest audience, in their culture and from the perspective of their worldview. That is, his main concern is not to untangle the science and faith disagreement; untangling any such disagreement seems to be a clear implication and conclusion of his view, rather than its goal. Though his approach does not have apologetics as its primary goal, it is clear that for those that subscribe to the view he and Keller promote, he has radically altered and arguably neutered the terms of the dilemma that Christians often face: must I choose my faith or the latest scientific findings?

John Walton has written an engaging book aimed at neither the biblical scholar nor the scientific expert (those wanting a more in-depth analysis should read his more recent work: Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology, Eisenbrauns, 2011). Readers will find Walton’s writing style irenic, his choice of terms helpful, and his agenda transparent.

Anyone who wants to promote a literal, six-day, young earth creation model must do so by addressing Walton’s points. Though one will surely find specific propositions less than persuasive, at virtually all points his argument is compelling. The main area that, if addressed, would likely settle down some of his more
conservative opponents would be some work on Genesis 2 & 3, and also an examination, no matter how brief, of Romans 5.

The implications of his work are profound. No one who wants to discuss the issues of Genesis and creation intelligently should avoid this work. The consequences of his propositions - collectively - are monumental. His linguistic expertise and the authority in which he invokes the ANE mindset are transformative. No view that relies on concordism remains untouched. That he stops short of promoting evolution allows him to raise questions, push in one direction, but to keep the conversation going, rather than end it. His book is a good entry point for students and pastors to take the biblical text seriously, while not settling for easy answers. It is not for the faint of heart. It is challenging, methodical, and carefully crafted.

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