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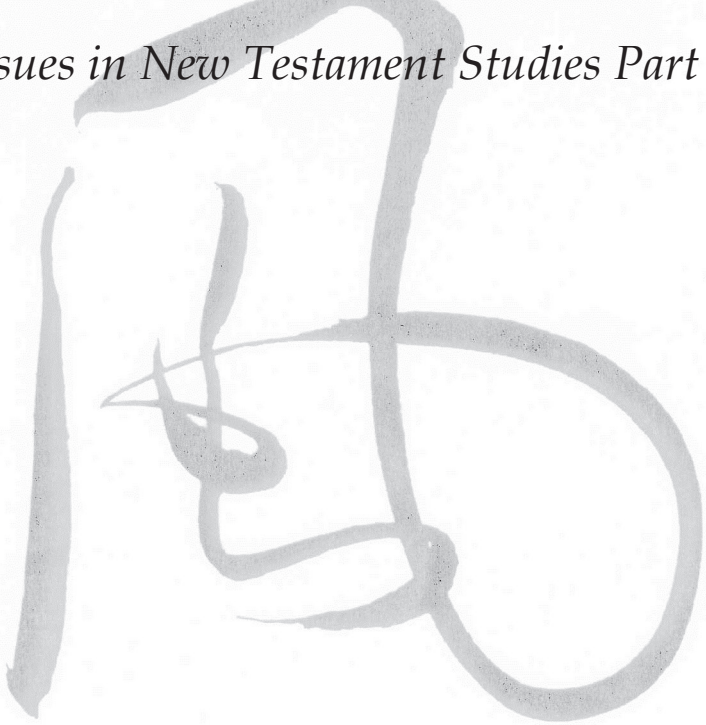
Issues on New Testament Studies (part 3)

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Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

Issues in New Testament Studies Part 3



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Issues in New Testament Studies Part III

With the publication of this edition, the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* completes its 20th year of publication. While we did not plan anything special for this anniversary, I think it is fitting, given the Pentecostal emphasis on the NT charismata, an increased focus on the ministry of women and a passion for missions that came with the Pentecostal movement, that we should focus on these NT themes in the six articles presented here. All papers were originally presented at the 25th Annual William W. Menzies Lectureship Series held on the APTS Baguio campus on January 30-February 3, 2017.

Lora Embudo leads off this edition with a two-part article denoting the current debate, which she describes as a storm, on the place of women in the prophetic ministry. One side claims that Luke validated the prophethood of women, the other says that he purposely discouraged women from it. A smaller minority, according to Embudo, hold that Luke was ambiguous about the subject. This debate is delineated in Part I. In Part II, Embudo attempts to identify Luke's stance on the issue through biblical exegesis of specific related texts in the Lukan corpus.

Following Embudo, veteran NT scholar Waldemar Kowalski deals with the alleged disconnect between what Paul says about women's role in ministry and what he actually allows them to do. Kowalski contends that Paul's teaching should be understood as being consistent with what he actually did and what he actually did actually reveals more of his position on the matter than what is commonly understood of his instructions. He then deals with the women actually mentioned in his writings, starting with the women mentioned in Romans 16: Phoebe, Priscilla (with Aquila), Mary (v6), Junia, and, to a lesser extent, the other women who appear elsewhere in his writings.

He then presents a second article, *Does Paul Really Want All Women to be Silent? I Corinthians 14:34-5*. In noting the clear evidence that Paul allowed women to pray and prophesy in public (1 Cor 11:3-16), is he contradicting himself? Is he saying that the rule of silence applies to only

certain functions in the worship service? Noting that scholars continued to be perplexed by the issue, he proceeds into weighing the issue from all sides.

Kowalski represents fairly the views of major scholars on the issue and his disagreements are honest. In dealing with the issue, he issues a clarion call to observe the first rule of exegesis of interpreting Scripture in the contexts of its original readers. This, he says, many scholars fail to do. Another problem, according to Kowalski, is that some translations either split I Corinthians 14:33 into two verses, while others leave it whole, thus complicating the exegetical picture. Like a surgeon with a scalpel, he then proceeds to cut through the quagmire and present some well thought through conclusions.

In both articles, he makes some excellent application to his and his wife, Dr. Rosemarie Kowalski's, current international church planting effort in Bandung, Indonesia, reflecting on how they understand and apply these issues within their own ministry and how their position on these issues connects with the international community that they serve.

Finally, Hirokatsu Yoshihara dives into the thorny issue of the alleged post mortem evangelistic passage of I Peter 3:18-20 and 4:6—a passage from which is drawn the teaching of the Apostles' Creed that Jesus, “descended into Hell.” This is not simply an academic issue for Yoshihara. As he explains, his native Japan, like most Majority World cultures, has a long history of ancestor veneration and love for the dearly departed, which he contends has been one of the major obstacles to the gospel in his homeland. To complicate the matter further, some Protestant ministers are now teaching that Jesus gives people a second chance to hear the gospel after they died by advocating that the gospel is still available to those in the intermediate state. The implications for this teaching are enormous. If this is so, then the entire teaching on the lostness of man without Christ might have to be reevaluated and the urgency of the biblical basis for missions and evangelism would be called into question.

Understandably, Yoshihara raises question as to whether the said Petrine passages actually teach a “Second Chance Salvation,” and, if not, what a proper response might be to those who advocate this doctrine. To address the issue, he names those involved, both Japanese and westerners, and states their positions on the matter. He then proceeds to

exegete the passages in question in response, sustaining the biblical claims of the need to accept the claims of Christ in this lifetime.

Now a word about the future. As we look now to the third decade of our Journal, we will begin to specifically target cultural themes in Asia and reflect biblically on them. Future plans call for an edition dedicated to Shame and Honor in Asia, a Biblical Perspective on Folk Religious Practices and an edition on current issues in Islam. Ideas and submissions for future editions are always welcome.

As always, feel free to contact me through www.pts.edu. I welcome your input.

Dave Johnson, DMiss
Managing Editor

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IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC CHURCH

Women Vis-À-Vis Prophecy in Luke-Acts: Part 1

by Lora Angeline B. Embudo

Introduction

A recent storm in Lucan scholarship is the polar discussion on Luke's view of women in prophetic ministry. The scholars on one side of the debate posit that Luke validated the prophethood of women, while their polar opposites assert that Luke purposely distanced women from the prophetic ministry. The minorities who don't accede to either side prefer to identify Luke's stance as ambiguous. In light of this quandary, this paper, which is divided into two parts, aims at identifying Luke's stance on women vis-à-vis prophecy with the use of a biblical theological method. This first part will summarize the current discussions on said topic then deal with specific Lucan Gospel passages that demonstrate his treatment of women in prophetic ministry.

Discussions on Luke's treatment of "women and prophecy" have been variegated in the last decades. Prior to the 1980s, Luke's writings were prominently viewed as supporting the emancipation and inclusion of women in church and society.¹ Commentators like Alfred Plummer even considered the Gospel of Luke as the Gospel for women.² However, with the rise of feminist hermeneutics, this assumption has been critically confronted. A wide divergence has emerged, where one

¹This paper will deal with Luke-Acts as a single work. Three reasons support this position: (1) both volumes were dedicated to Theophilus (Luke 1:3), with a recapitulation in the preface of Acts 1:1; (2) Acts 1 ties back to Luke 24, showing an interlocking connection; and (3) in many instances, there is a continuity of theological and literary elements, which effectively shows a fundamental unity in the two volumes. Maddox even concludes that the unity of Luke-Acts is a settled issue. Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark Ltd., 1982), 3-5; cf. Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Act* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 55-61. Operating on this premise, it is better to study Luke's motif on women and prophecy with both volumes in hand.

²Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke*, eds. C. A. Briggs, S. R. Driver, and A. Plummer, ICC series (New York, N Y: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 528.

side posits that Luke positively includes women in the prophetic ministry, while the other argues for his suppression of the female prophetic voice. The brief survey below will inform us on some elements of the debate.

Brief Survey on the Current Debate

Luke-Acts: Validating the Prophethood of Women

A major reason why Luke is viewed as favorable to women is the fact that his Gospel has more material on women than the other Synoptic Gospels. He has at least forty-two passages concerned with women, of which twenty-three are unique to his work.³ He mentions thirteen women that are not found elsewhere in the New Testament;⁴ and although most of the stories with a female motif were retained from Mark's Gospel, Luke added many episodes from his own sources.⁵ The man-woman parallels in Luke's Gospel and the couple-group descriptions in the Book of Acts have also been argued as being his way of establishing a favorable image of women and of their significant role in the community.⁶ Turid Seim points out that these narrative pairs and couple-group descriptions have the effect of making the women visible in the narrative.⁷

³Women passages unique to Luke's gospel include 1-2; 7:11-17, 36-50; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; 11:27-28; 13:10-17; 15:8-10; 18:1-8; and 23:27-31. Cf. Leonard Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Women* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1979), 254-255.

⁴Women mentioned only in Luke's gospel are the following: Elizabeth (ch. 1); Anna (2:36-38); the widow of Zarephath (4:25,26); the widow of Nain (7:11-17); the woman who was a sinner (7:36-50); the ministering women that include Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna (8:2,3); the woman in the crowd who blesses Mary's womb (11:27,28); the woman bowed down with infirmity (13:10-17); the parable of the woman who loses a coin (15:8-10); Lot's wife (17:32); the parable of the widow who continually pleaded with the unjust judge (18:1-8); and the daughters of Jerusalem (23:28).

⁵The Markan source theory for the Gospel of Luke is the most common view among scholars. It is mostly agreed that Luke used Mark and Q (the material he shares with Matthew), as well as other non-extant sources unique to Luke. The sources of Acts, on the other hand, are hard to reconstruct, the most probable theory being that Luke used oral sources as well as his own personal experience (as a companion of Paul in the "we" narratives). Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1-2:47* vol. 1 (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 178-180.

⁶Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke and Acts* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, Ltd., 1994), 12-20; cf. Elizabeth Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology, and the Parable of Pounds in the Gospel of Luke* (New York, NY: T & T Clark, Intl., 2007), 60-61.

⁷Seim lists the Man-Woman Parallels in Luke's presentation as follows: Zechariah and Mary (1:11-20, 26-38, 46-55, 61-79), Simeon and Anna (2:25-35, 36-38), Naaman and the widow in Zarephath (4:25-27), Jairus' daughter and the widow's son (7:11-17; 8:40-56), Jairus and the woman with blood (8:40-41, 43-56), the men of Nineveh and the Queen of

In addition to these gender parallels, there is a recurrent stress in the Gospel that those who followed Jesus were “both men and women” (Lk. 8:1-3; 23:49; 24:9-11). The phrase “both men and women” also appears five times in the Book of Acts (2:18; 5:14; 8:3, 12; 22:4). Most scholars consider the increase in passages with female motifs as Luke’s way of conveying the kingdom vision of Jesus’ ministry.⁸ Others, like Ben Witherington, suggest that Luke did this to justify women’s participation in the ministry of the believers’ community,⁹ saying that the early community obeyed the teachings of Jesus, who raised the status of women amid the restrictive and devaluing ideologies of Judaism.¹⁰

Craig Keener, however, goes further by noting that Luke does not just justify women’s inclusion, but also normatively involves them in end-time prophetic ministry (see Acts 2:17-18).¹¹ He comments that Luke obviously expects women to speak God’s message as prophets of the last days (e.g., Anna in Luke 2:36-38 and Philip’s four daughters in Acts 21:9).¹² Gill and Cavaness agree with this by pointing out that, in the new era of the Spirit, everyone can minister regardless of gender, status, or age.¹³ For them, Pentecost has inaugurated the time when everyone can preach about Christ, because the Holy Spirit chooses and

the South (11:31-32), the man and the woman healed on the Sabbath (14:1-6; 13:10-17), Abraham’s son and daughter (19:9; 13:16), the man who sowed seed and woman who hid yeast (13:18-19, 20-21), the shepherd with sheep and the woman with coins (15:3-7, 8-10), the men sleeping and the women grinding (17:34-35), Peter at Tomb and women at Tomb (24: 1-11), and Aeneas and Tabitha (Acts 9:32-35, 36-42). On the other hand, in Acts, narrative pairs are virtually non-existent. Instead, Luke makes use of couple-group descriptions, which include Priscilla and Aquilla (18:2, 18, 26), Felix and Drusilla (24:25), and Agrippa and Bernice (25:13, 23). Seim, 15-18.

⁸A few of those who have this view include: Eugene H. Maly, “Women and the Gospel of Luke,” *BTB* 10 (1980), 99-104; Neal M. Flanagan, “The Position of Women in the Writings of St. Luke,” *Marianum* 40 (1978), 288-304; Mark Allan Powell, *What Are They Saying about Luke?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 93-97; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation. I. The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 132-139; idem, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation. II. The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 208-281.

⁹Ben Witherington III, “Women in the Ministry of Jesus,” *Society for New Testament Studies Monograph*, Series 51 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 127.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹For Keener, Acts 2:17-18 gives us a programmatic principle that can be normative for present-day ministry, saying “The same Spirit that breaks down ethnic and cultural barriers is the same Spirit that breaks gender barriers for speaking God’s message.” Keener, *Acts*, vol. I, 638.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Deborah M. Gill and Barbara Cavaness, *God’s Women Then and Now* (Springfield, MO: Grace and Truth, 2004), 84-86; cf. Ambrose Edebe, *Your Women Did Prophecy* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2012), 61.

equips people (regardless of gender) for ministry.¹⁴ This sentiment is echoed by Seim, who succinctly writes:

The promise of the gift of the Spirit [in Joel 2:28-32a, as quoted in Acts 2:17-21] including and equipping people across boundaries established by traditional patterns of authority is realized. The Holy Spirit is poured out over all flesh expressing itself in the gift of prophecy, so that the young see visions just as much as the old have dreams, so that women speak prophetically just as well as men.¹⁵

These views have been positively accepted by women who promote inclusiveness and equality in the Church. Asian theologian Kwok Pui-lan even points to the important ministries of women today as an emulation of the early church in Acts.¹⁶ However, not all scholars agree that Luke has a positive message for women. Some, in fact, suggest that Luke wrote to intentionally distance women from the prophetic ministry.

Luke-Acts: Restricting the Prophethood of Women

The purview that Luke was “antifeminist” has been progressing since the late 1980s.¹⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza was one of those who started the ball rolling when, in an unpublished address to the General Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, she expressed her position that Luke had a restrictive theology and attitude towards women in Luke-Acts.¹⁸ In agreement with Fiorenza, Elisabeth Meier Tetlow writes:

¹⁴Gill and Cavanaugh, 86. Other scholars who agree include: Allen Black, “Women in the Gospel of Luke” in *Essays on Women in Early Christianity*, ed. Carroll Osburn (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1993), 445-468; Greg W. Forbes and Scott D. Harrower, *Raised from Obscurity: A Narrativ and Theological Study of the Characterization of Women in Luke- Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 153-155; Loren Cunningham, “Women Prophets, Evangelists, and Teachers” in *Why Not Women? A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership*, Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton, eds. (Edmonds, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2000), 58-59.

¹⁵Seim, 164.

¹⁶Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology (Introductions in Feminist Theology)*, Series 4 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 103-104.

¹⁷Concise discussion of the debate can be read in Rober Karris, “Women and Discipleship in Luke” in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (New York, NY: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 23-27.

¹⁸Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology” (presidential address, General Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, San Francisco, CA, August 24, 1978, as noted by Elisabeth Meier Tetlow, *Women and Ministry in the New Testament: Called to Serve* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 132.

It would seem that women had an important and active role in Luke's own late first-century community. This was such that he could not ignore the importance of women altogether, but, reacting negatively to their present active role, he could through the theology of his gospel attempt to argue for the restriction of women's role in the Church of his day.¹⁹

Mary D'Angelo sees this antifeminist tendency in Luke's writings as the latter's catechetical way of inviting women to respond to the Gospel in a discreet manner, of offering a limited and conventional scope for their activity, and of taming the phenomena of prophecy amongst them.²⁰ Her conjecture has something to do with a proposed tension between the necessity to educate women converts in the church of Luke's time and the anxieties that may arise if women's roles were expanded.²¹ D'Angelo writes:

I would suggest that the reduction of the role of women as prophets and leaders in the community corresponds to Luke's choice of prophecy as a means of showing the *ἀσφάλειαν* (surety, safety) of the Christian teaching—that, like the portrayals of Jews and Semites as magicians in Acts, the distancing of women from Christian prophecy and ministry serves to distinguish Christianity from threatening oriental cults.²²

As an example, she observes that, in the book of Acts, women are neither explicitly named as prophets nor are there prophetic speeches attributed to them.²³ Also, even if Luke gave a rationale for women as prophets in Acts 2:17-18 (cf. Joel 2:28-29), he does not record a female prophetic

¹⁹Tetlow accedes to Conzelmann's scheme of salvation history and studied the discipleship of women in the Lucan corpus according to the three eras—the period of Israel, the period of Jesus' ministry, and the period of the church. She concludes that "The status and role of women are greatest in the period of Israel, much less during the ministry of Jesus, and quite restricted in the period of the Church." Tetlow, 101.

²⁰D'Angelo builds on Constance Parvev's suggestion that the education of women was a concern in Luke-Acts. Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in Luke Acts: A Redactional View," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109/3 (1990) 441-461; cf. Constance Parvev, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. Rosemary Bradford Ruether (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 139-146.

²¹D'Angelo posits that Luke may have been protecting Christianity from being identified as un-Roman, magically inclined, cultic, or promotive of social disorder. In Luke's time, women prophets, priests, and leaders were usually identified as members of oriental cults. She suggests that, in Luke's mind, allowing women to liberally operate in the prophetic may be seen as socially disruptive. D'Angelo, 456-460.

²²*Ibid.*, 457.

²³*Ibid.*, 453.

speech in the narrative.²⁴ The only time Luke attributed prophetic speech to a woman was when he wrote about the servant girl with a “python” or “mantic” spirit (Acts 16:16-18).²⁵

About this story, F. Scott Spencer writes, “We are left with one disturbing fact: for whatever reason, a prophetic slave-girl proclaiming the Good News of God’s salvation—as envisioned in the Joel citation at Pentecost—is ultimately silenced and forgotten.”²⁶ This distancing of women from prophetic ministry can be assumed as Luke’s way of preventing Christianity from being identified as another eastern superstitious religion where women are out of order.²⁷ These surmises led Spencer to conclude that the prophetic promise of Joel in Acts 2:17-18 was never fully realized in the early church.²⁸ Luke-Acts, “despite its more inclusive and receptive ideals, ultimately more mirrors than challenges conventional first century Mediterranean society in its suppression of the lower-class female voice.”²⁹ Thus, for some scholars, Luke was intentional in steering women away from the prophetic ministry in an effort to present Christianity as a socially acceptable movement.

Luke-Acts: Ambiguous on the Prophethood of Women

Scholarly debate on Luke’s treatment of women and prophecy is more nuanced than just the two sides surveyed above. Some scholars have opted to conclude that Luke’s view on women and prophecy is ambiguous. For instance, Graham Twelftree, who considers Luke as generally favorable to women, still writes: “Over against this positive role and the place for women we need to take into account what can be detected as Luke’s hesitation in relation to women and prophecy.”³⁰ Seim, in considering this ambiguity, notes:

The tension in Luke’s narrative has indeed shown itself to be its ambivalent evidence both of strong traditions about women on

²⁴He names Philip’s four daughters as prophesying (Acts 21:9) but does not attribute prophetic utterances to them. In fact, immediately after they were mentioned, he highlights Agabus, who foretells Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-12). Ibid.

²⁵For D’Angelo, this is somewhat denigrating for women in prophetic ministry, because the only example Luke gives of a woman actively prophesying was a negative one. D’Angelo, 453.

²⁶F. Scott Spencer, “Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts,” *Biblical Interpretation* 7, 2 (1999), 150.

²⁷D’Angelo, 453-460.

²⁸Spencer, 136.

²⁹Ibid., 151.

³⁰Graham Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke’s View of the Church* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 122.

the one hand, and of the social and ideological controls that brought women to silence and promoted male dominance in positions of leadership on the other . . . The Lukan construction contains a double, mixed message.³¹

Hypothesis and Methodology of the Current Study

The brief survey above now leaves us in a quandary. How did Luke relate women to prophecy in Luke-Acts? Was he for, against, or unsure about women vis-à-vis the prophetic ministry? Though this paper does not plan to deal with every facet of this debate, it does aim to understand Luke's perspective on the relationship of women and prophecy. At the onset, there are two research questions—(1) What is Luke's perspective on women in relation to prophecy? and (2) What is the significance of his perspective for the church today?

As an initial hypothesis, this paper posits that amid the silencing structures of his day, Luke did not seek to distance women from the prophetic ministry. Instead, he demonstrated that the prophetic activity of women is an eschatological act of God that is both significant and vocational. To ascertain if this hypothesis is correct, this paper will employ a biblical theological method. Biblical theology is a historical-theological discipline that begins with a discovery of the meaning of the text for its original audiences and ends with a discovery of the meaning of the text for the audience today.³² This approach is most appropriate because it will help us draw out the author's theological perspective from within the scriptural data.

Thus, the first task in this study is to exegete key passages that clearly indicate Luke's treatment on women vis-à-vis prophecy within its historical setting and literary dimensions.³³ The exegeted data are analyzed to draw out the theological message of the author.³⁴ Finally, a synthesis that aims to articulate Luke's overall theological perspective on women and prophecy will be presented.

³¹Seim, 249.

³²Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 204.

³³Kostenberger and Patterson talk about the hermeneutical triad—(theology, history, and literature). In this framework, the interpreter draws out the author's theological message by first analyzing the book's historical setting and literary dimensions. For detailed explanation, read Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutic Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), 65-66. The hermeneutical triad will be used as the interpretative framework of this paper.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 693-720; cf. Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 281-283.

Prophesying Women in Luke-Acts

In Luke-Acts, seven women were explicitly recorded to have operated in the prophetic anointing—Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, and the four daughters of Philip. In this section, we will try to draw out Luke’s intention for these prophesying women.

Prophesying Women in the Gospel of Luke (1:5-2:52)

Elizabeth and Mary

a. Character Analysis of Elizabeth

⁵ Ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου βασιλέως τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἱερεὺς τις ὀνόματι Ζαχαρίας ἐξ ἡμερίας Ἀβιά, καὶ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν θυγατέρων Ἀαρὼν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς Ἐλισάβετ. ⁶ ἦσαν δὲ δίκαιοι ἀμόφτεροι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ, πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιώμασιν τοῦ κυρίου ἄμεμπτοι. ⁷ καὶ οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τέκνον, καθότι ἦν ἡ Ἐλισάβετ στεῖρα, καὶ ἀμόφτεροι προβεβηκότες ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτῶν ἦσαν (1:5-7 GNT).

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years (1:5-7 RSV).

The first prophetess in the Gospel of Luke is Elizabeth. In 1:5-7, we note that: (1) she was married to a priest and was also a daughter of a priest; (2) with her husband, she was recognized as righteous and blameless before God; and (3) she was barren and advanced in years.

As Zechariah’s wife, she was identified as ἐκ τῶν θυγατέρων Ἀαρὼν (*ek tōn thugaterōn Aarōn*, the female descendant of Aaron). This is an adjectival phrase that semantically emphasized her as a daughter of a priest. According to Jewish tradition, a priest’s marriage to a woman with priestly blood was highly encouraged for the propagation of ancestral purity.³⁵ In fact, the son of priestly descended parents could

³⁵Priests were also allowed to marry Israelite women of non-priest parents as long as they had unblemished ancestry. Joel Green, “The Gospel of Luke” *The New International Commentary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 64.

inherit the office of the father.³⁶ Thus, Elizabeth was considered an honorable wife for Zechariah since she had the right heritage.

To this ancestral purity Luke adds Elizabeth's "righteousness and blamelessness." Both she and her husband were recognized as pious Jews. Luke described them as δίκαιοι (*dikaioi*, righteous). For this context, though, their righteousness referred to their conformity to the will of God as expressed in His Law.³⁷ God himself is the judge of their righteousness, as the phrase ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ (*enantion tou theou*, in the sight of God) indicates. Their moral excellence was further explicated in the next clause, "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." The adjective πάσαις (*pasais*, all) points to the couple's obedience to the entire Law. Luke was emphatic in describing both Zechariah and Elizabeth as morally excellent and spiritually commendable. They were faithful Jews who led an upright life before God.³⁸ However, the couple had a tragic problem—Elizabeth was barren.

In a Jewish honor-and-shame society, a woman's barrenness was considered a disgrace and a sign of divine punishment,³⁹ which is why, given the preceding positive affirmations, v.7 is a huge let-down. Thus, we can sum up Zechariah and Elizabeth's social standing as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. Ancestral Purity | (+)Honor-Shame |
| b. Righteousness and blamelessness | (+)Honor-Shame |
| c. Childlessness/Barrenness | (-)Dishonored-Shameless ⁴⁰ |

³⁶Ibid.; cf. Leonie J. Archer, "Her Price Is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 60* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 137-139.

³⁷This fits a pre-cross righteousness, a righteousness from the perspective of God's law. Bock, *Luke*, 75.

³⁸OT parallels: Genesis 6:8; 7:1; and Ezekiel 4:14).

³⁹Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 65; cf. Malina and Neyrey explain that first century Mediterranean society has a pivotal value of honor and shame. Honor means a person's (or group's) feelings of self-worth and the public, social acknowledgment of that worth. In a male and female context, honor is attributed to males, while shame to females. Shame is a woman's honor—i.e., a positive symbol meaning sensitivity for one's own reputation and sensitivity to the opinion of others. People acquire honor aspiring to a certain status and having that status socially validated. Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World" in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models of Interpretation*, (ed.) Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 41-46.

⁴⁰Women are shameless (not have shame) when they aspire to a certain status which is denied them. Here, Elizabeth is shameless and Zechariah dishonored in the eyes of the community due to childlessness. Ibid., 44-46.

In the Old Testament, the absence of children was generally seen as a reproach and the source of dishonor in the community.⁴¹ The fact that the couple were both advanced in years implies the hopelessness of their situation. However, Luke's emphatic affirmations prior to v. 7 signify that Elizabeth's barrenness was neither due to sin nor divine judgment. Instead, with a mind immersed in the Old Testament, Luke uses a well-known type-scene, known as the barren-wife type-scene. He parallels Elizabeth with other Old Testament women whose childlessness was used by God to do something extraordinary. These barren-wife types include Sarah (Gen. 18:11), Rebekah (Gen. 25:21), Rachel (Gen. 29:31), Manoah's wife (Judg. 13:2, 5), and Hannah (1 Sam. 1:1-2). Readers familiar with these Old Testament figures could anticipate a divine unfolding—a reversal that would cause great joy and wonder.⁴²

Resolution of Elizabeth's 'hopeless situation' was presented through the announcement of John's birth (1:8-23). Luke writes this episode in a chiasm:

- A Service, sanctuary, people (vv. 8-10)
- B Angel's appearance and Zechariah's response (vv. 11-12)
- C Announcement of Good News (vv. 13-17; cf. v. 19)**
- B' Zechariah's objection and Angel's response (vv. 18-20)
- A' People, sanctuary, service (vv. 21-23)⁴³

The crux of the narrative unit is Angel Gabriel's Good News about the birth of John, who is proclaimed as one who would bring joy not only to the formerly barren parents, but also to many who will turn to the Lord. In v. 14, Gabriel declares, "And you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth." Bock suggests that the verb *χαρήσονται* (*charēsontai*, will rejoice) points to eschatological joy for John's entire ministry (summarized in vv. 13-17).⁴⁴ Zechariah's response, however, was not of joy but of doubt and unbelief, which resulted in his judgment—he was rendered mute by the angel.⁴⁵ Here we read an obvious parallel between Zechariah and Elizabeth's response to the news. If Zechariah responded with doubt, Elizabeth responded with

⁴¹Lev. 20:20-21; Jer. 22:30; 1 Sam. 1:5-4; and 2 Sam. 6:23.

⁴²The barren-wife type-scenes contain common features: (1) recognition of a woman's barrenness, (2) announcement of her impending conception, and (3) conception and birth of a child. In narrating vv. 5-7, Luke deliberately echoes this type-scene, especially in the Abrahamic material (Gen. 11:30; 16:1) and the story of Hannah (1 Sam. 1:1-2). Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 66.

⁴³Green, 67.

⁴⁴Bock, *Luke*, 83.

⁴⁵Zechariah's muteness, though, was not entirely a judgment. It also functioned as a sign given to guarantee the promise and guard the message until its proper time. Bock 93; cf. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 89-90.

open acceptance and praise. In vv. 24-25, Luke writes: “After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, ‘Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.’”

Elizabeth’s relief and acceptance of the news contrast with Zechariah’s doubt. Green observes that in this passage, “A woman was put forward as a recipient of God’s favor and as a model of faithfulness to God’s purpose.”⁴⁶ Hence, we see Elizabeth’s character here as one of commendable piety and faithfulness to God, receiving His favor with praise and belief. She is paralleled to Hannah (1 Sam. 1:19-20), to Sarah (Gen. 21:6), and especially to Rachel, who once declared, “God has taken away my reproach” (Gen. 30:22-23).⁴⁷

Her story alerts readers that God is up to something, that is, He is inaugurating a new era. This era is a continuation of His dealings with Israel and is earmarked by status reversal and eschatological joy. It is also a period when one decides how to respond to the Good News. Will the readers be like Zechariah and respond with doubt? Or will they be like Elizabeth and respond with joyful acceptance and faith?

b. Character Analysis of Mary

The second prophesying woman in this narrative is Mary, the mother of Jesus. We know little about her ancestry. All that Luke reveals is that, at the time of the Annunciation, she lived in Nazareth, was a virgin, and was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of David. The story goes:

²⁶Ἐν δὲ τῷ μηνὶ τῷ ἕκτῳ ἀπεστάλη ὁ ἄγγελος Γαβριὴλ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς πόλιν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἣ ὄνομα Ναζαρέθ ²⁷πρὸς παρθένον ἐμνηστευμένην ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰωσήφ ἐξ οἴκου Δαυὶδ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς παρθένου Μαρίας (1:26-27 GNT).

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary (1:26-27 RSV).

The repetitive mention of *παρθένος* (*parthenos*, virgin) in v. 27 reflects Luke’s intent to emphasize Mary’s chaste state. Although the word could refer to “girl” or “maiden,” the context of the annunciation narrative makes it clear that *parthenos* meant a state of being sexually

⁴⁶Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 81.

⁴⁷For a complete discussion on barren-wife type scenes, read John Petersen, *Reading Women’s Stories: Female Characters in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 36-37.

untouched. Mary herself confirms this in v. 34, when she replied to the Angel: “Πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω” (*pōs estai touto epei andra ou ginōskō*). The word γινώσκω here denotes sexual knowledge (cf. Hebrew usage in Gen. 4:1, 17), such that Mary’s response can be literally translated as: “How can this be since I have no sexual knowledge with any man?” The TEV simply translates it: “How can this be since I am a virgin?” Luke’s emphasis on Mary’s virginity is founded on his motivation to present Jesus’ conception as unparalleled and unique. There had been no reports of virgin conception either in pre-Christian Judaism or in Paganism.⁴⁸ Unlike Elizabeth, Mary has no Old Testament typology. Her virgin conception is an unheard-of wonder.

The idea of a virgin conception, though, was quite astounding to Mary. Initially, she could not grasp the possibility of such phenomenon (cf. 1:34). But the Angel Gabriel’s words to her were convincing and comforting. He assures that: (1) Mary is a favored one who is and will be accompanied by God (1:30); (2) she will conceive a son, destined to be the promised Davidic Messiah (1:31-33); (3) since she is a virgin (v.34), her son will be the Spirit-conceived Son of God, a creative role of the Spirit unique and unparalleled (1:35); (4) a confirmatory sign of this announcement is Elizabeth’s pregnancy (1:36); and (5) nothing is impossible with God (1:37).

Gabriel affirms at the onset that Mary is a recipient of grace. In his initial address, he declares: “Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ” (Rejoice, favored one; the Lord is with you). The word κεχαριτωμένη (*kecharitōmenē*, favored one) connotes God’s favor or grace given to a person. This address is reminiscent of Gideon’s call in Judges 6:12.⁴⁹ Somehow Luke parallels Gabriel’s address to Mary with the Angel of the Lord’s address to Gideon. Hence, the annunciation to Mary is unlike that to Zechariah. In Mary’s case, Luke modified the birth oracle form so that it reflects a call/commissioning narrative.⁵⁰ The Lucan idea is that Mary isn’t just hearing a birth announcement, but also receiving a call to be the vessel for the conception and birth of the Messiah. There are risks if she accepts this. She may get into trouble with Joseph (Matt. 1:18-19); she may be identified as either shameless or without honor if she is suspected of adultery; and/or if convicted, she may be stoned to death. However, the Angel’s statement — “The Lord is with you!” (v.28)—and

⁴⁸Some consider the young woman in Isa. 7:14 as a precursor to Mary, but Nolland asserts that the Jews never read Isaiah 7:14 in this way. The idea of virgin conception was also not borrowed from Paganism. The fact that Jesus was born without a human father (a true parthogenesis) is unprecedented. John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:20*, 35A (Colombia: Word, Inc., 1989), 58.

⁴⁹J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator’s Handbook of the Gospel of Luke*, Helps for Translators Series, (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1971), 51.

⁵⁰Nolland, 40-41.

his comforting words—“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God” (v. 30)—assures her (and the readers) that this is divinely initiated.

In fact, the phrase, “for you have found favor with God,” is a well-known Old Testament one.⁵¹ Usually it is used to refer to a favor received because of a request made or a reward for good deeds.⁵² However, in Mary’s case, the *χάριν* (*charin*, grace or favor) was given freely out of God’s good pleasure. The use of *χάρις* as favor freely given, is repetitive in Luke-Acts (cf. Lk. 2:40; Acts 7:10, 46; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3). In this context, then, Mary’s character exemplifies a person who received God’s special favor, not because of her deeds or of an earnest for it, but because of God’s initiative. She is an object of His initiative and grace.

Furthermore, Mary’s attitude was that of a model saint. She replied to Gabriel, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (v. 38). Mary demonstrated her readiness (Ἰδοῦ, behold)⁵³ and her humility by declaring her status as ἡ δούλη κυρίου (*hē doulē kuriou*, the bondmaid or female servant of the Lord).⁵⁴ With willingness she declares: γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου (*genoito moi kata to rēma sou*—i.e., let it happen to me or let this be whenever he pleases, according to your word).⁵⁵

Thus, we see Mary’s character transforming from perplexity to humble acceptance. Her acceptance is significant, taken at a possible personal loss. There is risk in submitting to God’s plan; but as the δούλη of God, she willingly accepts her call. Luke’s portrayal of Mary is as a round character. She was portrayed first as perplexed with the sudden announcement, but later received God’s message and bravely accepted a call that is unique in human history. She submitted herself to the plan of God at the risk of socio-religious stigma. She is a model believer, an object of God’s initiative and grace, and a pattern of faith.

⁵¹Reilling and Swellengrebel, 53-54.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³The word Ἰδοῦ (*idou*, behold) is a Hebraism that expresses readiness to serve or listen (cf. 1 Sam. 3:5, 6, 8). Reilling and Swellengrebel, 63.

⁵⁴The word δούλη (*doulē*, like *doulos*) is used when someone of high rank is addressed by somebody of lower rank. Walter Bauer, William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 205; cf. Acts 2:18 from the Joel 2 citation; cf. 1 Samuel 1:11 (Hannah’s response).

⁵⁵The optative mood of γένοιτό (*genoito*, let this be) connotes her acceptance of the announcement and call.

c. Elizabeth and Mary's Prophesying (1:39-56)

Lastly, these two meet when, with haste (μετὰ σπουδῆς, *meta spoudēs*), Mary travels to Elizabeth's hometown.⁵⁶ Some have commented that this hasty action would be out of character for the chaste woman,⁵⁷ especially since the journey to the hill country of Judea would take three to five days.⁵⁸ But in the narrative context, Luke impresses a sense of eagerness to confirm that which Gabriel announced to Mary. Her haste is better understood as an eagerness to visit Elizabeth, with whom she shares a miraculous motherhood. Mary's departure reflected instant obedience to God's leading. Luke frames this episode in a travel motif:

- A. Mary travels to Elizabeth's town (v. 39)
- B. Mary's greeting (v. 40)
- C. The Baby's response and Elizabeth's infilling (v. 41)
- C'. Elizabeth's explanation and prophetic utterance (vv. 42-45)
- B'. Mary's *Magnificat* (vv. 46-55)
- A'. After three months, Mary travels back to Nazareth (v. 56)

Within this frame, Luke highlights the interaction between the two women, as well as the phenomena of their prophesying. The story goes:

<p>⁴¹καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἤκουσεν τὸν ἀσπασμὸν τῆς Μαρίας ἡ Ἐλισάβετ, ἐσκίρτησεν τὸ βρέφος ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου ἡ Ἐλισάβετ, (1:41 GNT)</p>	<p>⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:41 RSV)</p>
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⁵⁶Unique in the Gospels, this account has no parallel stories. It is also significant because it not only links the two birth oracles, but also the two birth events. However, the source of this account is disputed. Many argue that Luke created the scene to parallel John and Jesus, while others say that the account came to Luke in its present form. Bock asserts that the closest possibility is that Luke arranged the materials together with the other infancy traditions. His parallelism does not necessarily mean he composed the scene, especially since some details are unnecessary if parallelism was Luke's main concern. These details cannot be explained by a theory of Lucan creation. For further explanation, see Bock, *Luke*, 101, 132-133.

⁵⁷Blaise Hospodar, "Meta Spoudes in Lk. 1:39," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 18 (1956), 14-18.

⁵⁸Elizabeth's hometown would be in the hill country of Judea just outside Jerusalem. It is estimated to be 70-80 miles from Nazareth and would take 3-5 days of travel. Mark L. Strauss, "Luke" in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, ed. Clinton Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 334.

At Mary's greeting, the babe in Elizabeth's womb "leaped" (v. 41a). In the Old Testament, leaping was an expression of joy (Mal. 4:2)—e.g., David leaped and danced before the Lord (2 Sam. 6:16). Jewish tradition also accepts the idea of unborn children anticipating prenatally their later positions in life (cf. Gen. 25:22-23).⁵⁹ Thus, when the Spirit-filled baby in Elizabeth's womb (cf. Lk. 1:15) reacted to the presence of the Baby in Mary's womb, the former was attesting to the Lordship of the latter.

Luke uses this to testify to the superiority of Jesus, but at the same time to give a prolepsis of John the Baptist's ministry as the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah. This prenatal activity is confirmed by Elizabeth's explanation of the baby's joyful recognition of his Lord (v. 44).⁶⁰ The fact that Luke did not narrate how Elizabeth knew about Mary's pregnancy strongly impresses upon readers that her perception came from the Spirit's revelation. Elizabeth, who felt the baby's movement, had been ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου (*eplēsthē pneumatos hagiou*), filled with the Holy Spirit, v. 41b) at that same moment. In the Old Testament, the term "filled with the Spirit" was often associated with the Spirit's charismatic/prophetic activity.⁶¹

Luke follows this association by characterizing the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts as the Spirit of prophecy.⁶² The phrase "filled with the Holy Spirit" appears three times in the Lucan Gospel, while it appears six

⁵⁹However, it is doubtful that the struggle between Jacob and Esau is in view here. David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke" in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 260.

⁶⁰Nolland, 66.

⁶¹It occurs five times in LXX (Exod. 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9; Isa. 11:3). In all five occurrences, the term "filled with the Spirit" invariably describes a charismatic activity of the Holy Spirit. Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, 2003), 66. cf. Strauss, 334.

⁶²Discussions on Luke's pneumatology and view on prophecy can be read from the works of the following scholars: P. S. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1976); D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London, UK: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1979); Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile these Concepts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005); Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 54 (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1991); *idem.*, "The Distinctive Character of Luke's Pneumatology", *Paraclete* 25 (1991), 17-30; *idem.*, "The Spirit of Prophecy, Luke-Acts and Pentecostal Theology: A Response to Max Turner," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (1999), 49-74; Roger Stronstad, "Prophethood of All Believers: A Study of Luke's Charismatic Theology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Sup Series 16 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); *idem.*, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012); Craig Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospel and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).

times in the Book of Acts.⁶³ In both, Luke uses the phrase to identify the source of prophetic enabling.⁶⁴ For instance, in the Gospel, having been filled with the Spirit, Elizabeth uttered an inspired speech (1:41). Zechariah, too, after being filled, prophesied about the Messiah and the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation through Him (1:67-79). John the Baptist, who had been filled from the womb, grew in wisdom and ministered as a prophet. For Luke, then, being “filled with the Spirit” is being enabled by the Spirit to function in the prophetic anointing.

This proposition is demonstrated in 1:41-45, where a Spirit-filled Elizabeth witnessed to the unborn Messiah. Through charismatic inspiration she cried out:⁶⁵

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord (1:42-45 RSV).

Here we read Elizabeth’s prophetic speech/praise. She witnesses to the Lordship of the unborn Jesus and reaffirms the favored status of Mary, in congruence with Gabriel’s prior declaration. She explicitly identifies Mary as “the mother of my Lord” and interprets the supernatural recognition of the unborn John as a leap for joy (*ἀγαλλιᾶσαι, agalliasai*)—a joy which looks back to 1:14 and proleptically looks forward to 1:47, where rejoicing is related to God’s redemptive action. Lastly, she addresses Mary as blessed, happy, or fortunate (*μακαρία, makaria*) because of her faith. Elizabeth, too, expresses certainty that God’s promises will be fulfilled. Overall, her prophetic speech/praise can only come from a charismatic revelation of God’s activity and plan in the life of Mary and the unborn Messiah. Her humility and joy at being part of this divine unfolding are also evident in her speech. Clearly, Luke identified her here as a prophetess who uttered inspired speech/praise, received charismatic revelation, and experienced eschatological joy and wonder in the redemptive act of God.

⁶³Lk. 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2: 4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52.

⁶⁴This prophetic enabling in Luke-Acts consisted of inspired utterance (Lk. 1:67; Acts 2:4; 4:8), charismatic revelation (Lk. 1:41), accompanying signs (Acts 9:17; 13:9), and eschatological joy (Acts 13:52).

⁶⁵Ἀνεφώνησεν (*anaphōnein*, to cry out) is used in Koine Greek for solemn or significant announcements. Bock, 136.

Mary responded to Elizabeth's prophetic speech by bursting out with a Spirit-inspired hymn.⁶⁶ Her *Magnificat* may be considered as a prophetic hymn/song.⁶⁷ First, she identifies God as the origin of her rejoicing. The phrase, καὶ ἠγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου (*kai ēgalliasen to pneuma mou*, and my spirit rejoices) in v. 47 connotes a rejoicing due to the Spirit's revelation of God's acts. She rejoices in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation and in the favorable role she has been given in that plan. Second, she exalts God's gracious dealings with Israel and with those who fear him from generation to generation (v. 50). The entire hymn is ripe with the theme of eschatological reversal—i.e., those considered lowly, powerless, and underprivileged will be raised up, while the proud, powerful, and oppressive will be brought down (vv. 52-53).⁶⁸

Lastly, the hymn declares the certainty of the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel (vv. 55a-55b). Hence, her *Magnificat* is a prophetic hymn which proclaims that the miraculous conception of the Messiah has set into motion God's eschatological work. The advent of God's kingdom has occurred and salvation has come. In this narrative unit, Elizabeth and Mary are both characterized as pious women, models of faith, and operating in prophecy as the Spirit inspired them. Their prophetic utterances are verbal (either as speech or song), charismatically inspired, and filled with eschatological joy and wonder. Their miraculous motherhood, although not linked to the prophetic ministry, plays a role in God's plan of salvation and sets in motion the eschatological in-breaking of God's kingdom.

Anna, the Prophetess

a. Character Analysis of Anna

³⁶Καὶ ἦν Ἄννα προφῆτις, ³⁶And there was a
 θυγάτηρ Φανουήλ, ἐκ φυλῆς prophetess, Anna, the daughter of
 Ἀσήρ· αὕτη προβεβηκυῖα ἐν Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she

⁶⁶Cho asserts that Mary's *Magnificat* is derived from the inspiration of the Spirit, contra Dunn who argues that the Spirit only functions soteriologically in relation to Mary. Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 139; cf. J. D. G. Dunn, "Baptism in the Spirit: A Response to Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993), 3-27.

⁶⁷Mary's *Magnificat* has the features of Jewish poetry as well as of prophetic hymns, which contains a forth-telling and foreshadowing of God's salvific act, rooted in His covenantal promises. For further discussion on prophetic hymns, read Köstenberger and Patterson, 326, 339-340.

⁶⁸The contrasting fates of the rich and the poor illustrate "eschatological reversal," where God's peaceful and just kingdom is declared as in-breaking or coming in his actions. There is a certainty to God's fulfillment of his promises to his people Israel. Bock, *Luke*, 147.

ἡμέραις πολλαῖς, ζήσασα μετὰ ἀνδρὸς ἕτη ἑπτὰ ἀπὸ τῆς παρθενίας αὐτῆς ³⁷καὶ αὐτὴ χήρα ἕως ἐτῶν ὀγδοήκοντα τεσσάρων, ἢ οὐκ ἀφίστατο τοῦ ἱεροῦ νηστείας καὶ δεήσεων λατρεύουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν. (2:36-37 GNT)

was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, ³⁷and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. (2:36-37 RSV)

After Jesus' birth, his parents brought him to the temple in Jerusalem (2:22). There the baby Jesus was first seen by Simeon (2:23-35) and then by Anna (2:36-38). Luke presents these two characters in a gender doublet or man-woman pair,⁶⁹ both being prophets of Jewish piety. As a counterpart to Simeon, Anna is immediately introduced as a prophetess from the tribe of Asher. As such, Luke places her in a category with Old Testament prophetesses like Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judg. 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14), and Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3).⁷⁰ The explicit designation of her prophetic office identifies Anna as a revelatory agent of God. By implication, she is a woman endowed with the Spirit (cf. 1:67; 2:25). In verses 36-37, Luke adds to her prophetic activity a lifestyle of piety and devotion. Her biographical data are as follows:

Description	Significance
1. She was a daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher.	-- She is a faithful Jew; an Israelite descendant.
2. She was of great age.	-- She is a symbol of respectful status in her world. ⁷¹
3. She was a widow for a long time.	-- She is an ascetic figure, marrying only once and then devoting herself to God in widowhood. ⁷²
4. She did not depart from the temple but worshipped	

⁶⁹The use of gender doublets or man-woman parallel is plentiful in Luke-Acts. A comprehensive list can be read in: Seim, *Double Message*, 15.

⁷⁰In the Talmud, seven Old Testament women are identified as prophetesses—Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther. Strauss, 347; cf. Bock, *Luke*, 251.

⁷¹The redundant phrase αὐτὴ προβεβηκυῖα ἐν ἡμέραις πολλαῖς (*hautē probebēkua en hēmerais pollais*) is a Hebraism that translates literally as “she was very old in her many days” (cf. Gen. 18:11; Josh. 13:1; 23:1). Bock, 251. This advanced age is a symbol of respectful status. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 151.

⁷²Luke shares features with Judaism, since in the latter, widowhood served as models. A paradigmatic example is Judith, the pious heroine of Israel (Jdt. 16:23). Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 151; cf. Seim, *Double Message*, 185-248.

with fasting and prayer night and day.	-- She demonstrated extraordinary devotion to the worship of God and to prayer.
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Overall, Anna is a perfect example of female piety. Her piety and devotion serve as the background and justification for her primary narrative role as a prophethess.

b. Anna’s Prophesying (2:38)

<p>³⁸καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐπιστᾶσα ἀνθωμολογεῖτο τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλάλει περὶ αὐτοῦ πᾶσιν τοῖς προσδεχομένοις λύτρωσιν Ἰερουσαλήμ. (2:38 GNT)</p>	<p>³⁸And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. (2:38 RSV)</p>
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The phrase “καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐπιστᾶσα” (*kai autē tē hōra epistasa*, and coming up at that very hour) indicates that Anna came up to the temple at the exact hour Jesus was presented by his parents. Here we read a strong connotation of divine orchestration, because her coming to the temple at that moment couldn’t have been a coincidence. Given the charismatic insight that is characteristic of the prophetic vocation, the Holy Spirit most likely led her to the baby at that exact moment. Recognizing the child and his significance to Israel, she immediately offers praise (ἀνθωμολογεῖτο, *anthōmologeito*) to God.⁷³ Her instant response comes from an acknowledgement that her “praying and fasting night and day” has not been in vain. In the Messiah she sees the answer to her prayers and the fulfillment of Israel’s hope of redemption. She goes on to proclaim about Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. The word “Jerusalem” here represents all of Israel, especially those who await the Messianic redemption (cf. Zeph. 3:14-20; Isa. 40:2; Zech. 9:9f).

Anna’s prophesying, although not recorded word for word, (1) contains the Good News of God’s redemption through the birth of Jesus, (2) declares that fulfilment of God’s promise has come, and (3) overall reflects the same content and mood of Mary’s *Magnificat* and Zechariah’s *Benedictus*.⁷⁴ Unlike Simeon, her prophesying was not only addressed to the parents, but also was far-reaching and enduring. The word ἐλάλει, in “καὶ ἐλάλει περὶ αὐτοῦ” (*kai elalei peri autou*, and she

⁷³*Anthōmologeito* is a hapax legomena that refers to giving of praise in exchange for God’s act. Bock, *Luke*, 252-253.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 253.

spoke about him) is an imperfect tense with a durative meaning. This strongly suggests that she spoke about the child-Messiah till long afterwards. Her action affirms that her primary function in the narrative is prophetic proclamation. In summary then, Anna is a prophetess who is portrayed as a model of female Jewish piety. Her function in the infancy narrative is prophetic proclamation of the redemptive act of God through the Messiah.

Synthesis—Implication of Prophesying Women in the Infancy Narratives

These texts in the Lucan Gospel demonstrate that God uses women as agents of his revelation. This phenomenon has, as its precedence, Old Testament models like Sarah, Deborah, Miriam, and Huldah. In salvation history, Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna are not the first women to operate in the prophetic anointing. In fact, there is no biblical evidence for the claim that women are distanced from the prophetic ministry because prophetesses are traditionally accepted. Also, there is no evidence that prophetesses have a gender-restricted audience. The case of Anna in Luke 2:38 is a specific example of a wide audience that a prophetess could reach with her message. More importantly, we see in Luke's infancy narrative a tension between a continuation of Old Testament prophecy and an early expression of the in-breaking eschatological era. Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna stand as both signposts to the dawning of a new age and as preliminary examples of the coming general outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy.

Women Vis-À-Vis Prophecy in Luke-Acts: Part 2

by Lora Angeline B. Embudo

Introduction

In Part 1, we surveyed the modern scholarship on Luke's treatment of women in relation to prophecy. We specifically studied key passages in the evangelist's Gospel, with the goal of ascertaining his purview on women in prophetic ministry. In Part 2, we shall discuss key passages in the Book of Acts using a more textual critical approach. The findings will then be synthesized and unified under a pervading theological motif. It is this paper's aim to reveal a timeless Lucan message not only for the first century church, but also for the Filipino church today.

Prophesying Women in Luke-Acts

Prophesying Daughters in the Acts Narrative (Acts 2:17-28; 21:9)

The rest of Luke's Gospel shifts its focus to Jesus, who in his earthly ministry functioned as the eschatological prophet, par excellence. The motif on "women and prophecy" picks up after Christ's ascension, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), and with the mention of Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9).

Textual-Critical Implications of Acts 2:17-18

Acts 2:17-18 is the first part of Luke's Petrine sermon (2:17-21) that aimed to explain the events the crowd witnessed on the day of Pentecost (2:1-13). Lucan Peter explained that the believers who spoke in different tongues were not drunk, but rather the glossolalia and ecstatic displays were a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28-32 (3:1-5 LXX). Here we read dialectic, in a formula much like the *pesharim* in the Qumran

scrolls.¹ Luke was saying, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Joel 2:28-32 was a prophecy set in the backdrop of his summons to true repentance. Israel had just endured an invasion of locusts, a precursor of worst things to come in “the day of the Lord” (1:1-2:17). After assuring the people that God will take pity on them and restore them (2:18-27), he prophesied that the Spirit will be poured out, with accompanying wonders in the sky and on the earth (2:28-31) and that those who called on the name of the Lord will be delivered (2:32). This outpouring was “for all people,” and the result will be that they will prophesy and see visions. According to Joel, the sign of the Spirit’s in-breaking activity (and of God’s activity and presence as well) is prophetic inspiration accompanied by visions and dreams.

Thus, when Lucan Peter explained the ecstatic events witnessed by the crowd, he pointed to the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. The glossolalia and exuberance were but prophetic activities akin to Old Testament prophetic behavior (1 Sam. 10:5-6, 10-13; 19:20-24). Simply said, the Pentecost event was the astounding fulfillment of God’s promise to pour out His Spirit in the days of the Lord.

Due to several departures from the LXX, many have agreed that Luke was not just quoting the Joel passage; rather he interpreted and applied it to the current situation.² In relation to the current study, four textual changes from the LXX will help us understand the implications of Acts 2:17-18 for women vis-à-vis prophecy: (1) change from *μετά ταῦτα* to *ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις* and insertion of *λέγει ὁ θεός* in Acts 2:17a; (2) insertion of *γε* in Acts 2:18a; (3) double insertion of *μου* after male servants and female servants in Acts 2:18a; and (4) addition of *καὶ προφητεύσουσιν* in Acts 2:18b.

¹There is dialectic in Peter’s sermon. On one end is the significance of the Pentecost event as the fulfillment of a prophecy; while on the other end is the significance of an obscure prophecy as understood in light of current events. This can be compared to the Pesharim, an exegetical method used by writers of the Qumran scrolls. With it they interpret a prophecy relevant to the present time. The approach is much more common in Luke’s Petrine Sermon and reflects Luke’s knowledge of early apostolic preaching. Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1-2:47* vol. 1 (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 873-874.

²Most scholars agree that Luke translated from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew scripture due to the predominance of Septuagintal terms and ideas. Regardless, the Septuagint translation of Joel 3:1-5 has no major variations from the Hebrew. John Stratzich, *Joel’s Use of Scripture and the Scripture’s Use of Joel: Appropriation and Resignification in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007) 255-287; c.f. Josep Ruis-Camps and Jenny Reed-Heinundinger, “The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: a Comparison with the Alexandrian Traditions,” *Library of New Testament Studies* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 181.

a. Change from μετὰ ταῦτα to ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις and insertion of λέγει ὁ θεός in Acts 2:17a

Joel begins his prophecy with the phrase καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα (*and it shall come to pass afterwards*), a generic temporal expression which simply states that the event prophesied will happen sometime in the future.³ Contextualizing this, Luke's Petrine sermon specifies the temporal frame to ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις (*in the last days*).⁴ This alteration is most likely theological rather than stylistic. It has the effect of specifying the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy to an eschatological time. According to Peter's sermon, this eschatological time has dawned and the astounding events at Pentecost are signs of its arrival.⁵ The insertion of λέγει ὁ θεός (*says God*) further highlights the significance of the events that will come about, since God is identified as the speaker of the quotation. Plus, the prophetic formula placed clause-medially serves as a focus marker, giving prominence to the core of Peter's sermon, viz. the outpouring of the Spirit.⁶

Thus, both alterations contextualize Joel 2 to the discourse context of Acts 2.⁷ It theologially emphasized that the events of Pentecost belong to the activity of God in the last days. The in-breaking of prophetic activity is an eschatological act of God and is a prolepsis to the consummation of the kingdom. Interestingly, this prophetic enabling is not limited to key church figures; instead, it is available to the entire community, even to women. This exemplary inclusion is reinforced by Luke's insertion of γε in Acts 2:18a.

b. Insertion of γε in Acts 2:18a

Runge poses a dilemma in determining the function of the clause καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας (*and on the male slaves and on the female slaves*) in Joel 3: 2 (LXX).⁸ He proposes these two options: (1)

³C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles: The Acts of the Apostles vol. 1* (London, UK: T & T Clark, 1994, 2004), 136.

⁴Steve Runge, "Joel 2:28-32a in Acts 2:17-21: The Discourse and Text-Critical Implications of Variations from the LXX" in 'Greek Bible' Section, *Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting* (San Diego, CA: Nov. 17-20, 2007), 3.

⁵Peter's "last days" did not begin at Pentecost. It began during the birth of the Messiah (Luke 1-2), and will be consummated in His return (Acts 1:6-7). Keener, *Acts vol. 1*, 878-879.

⁶Runge proposes that, by placing the formula clause-medially (and not clause-initial or clause-final), Luke effectively delayed the disclosure of what will happen, creating a greater sense of expectancy. Runge, 3.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Runge notes that the clauses in Joel 3:1c-1d, "And your sons and daughters will prophesy, and your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions,"

the clause is fronted in a contrastive manner, similar to vv. 3:1c-1d; or (2) the clause was fronted for emphatic purposes.⁹ If it is contrastive, then the clause will answer the question: “In comparison to the elders or young men, what happens to the male slaves and female slaves when they receive the Spirit?” But if it is emphatic, then the clause functions to answer the question, “Who else will receive the Spirit’s prophetic gift?” Either way is plausible for the text; but Runge concludes that, in the case of the LXX, the function of the clause is ambiguous.¹⁰

Runge’s conclusion is why Luke’s insertion of $\gamma\epsilon$ in Acts 2:18a is worth deliberating. In Luke’s rendition, he begins the clause with a prepositional phrase “καί $\gamma\epsilon$ ” (*kai ge*, and even) before he mentions the topical clause. Considering the ambiguity of the LXX, this insertion has the effect of disambiguating the function of the topical clause $\epsilon\pi\iota$ τοῖς δούλους μου καὶ $\epsilon\pi\iota$ τὰς δούλας μου (*and even on my male slaves and on my female slaves*).¹¹ The preposition $\gamma\epsilon$ clarifies that the speaker is not contrasting the topics, but rather he is emphasizing the extreme extent of the Spirit’s outpouring.¹² Basically, Luke’s Petrine sermon declares, “Who else shall receive the outpouring of the Spirit? The young, the old,—even my male and female servants!” Luke makes explicit the inclusivity or impartiality of the eschatological gift, which was ambiguous in Joel’s prophecy. This properly suggests that, for Luke, the Spirit of prophecy surmounts socio-cultural, age, and gender barriers. The exemplary extent of the Spirit’s reception only reinforces the idea that the entire community of believers (regardless of age, gender, or status) is expected to be an eschatological community of prophets.¹³

functioned contrastively—that is, sons and daughters and old men and young men were fronted to show how they are different from each other. However, the function of the next clause in verse 2, “Even on the male and female slaves, I will pour out my spirit in those days,” is a bit uncertain. Runge wonders if the clause was fronted for a contrastive purpose or for an emphatic purpose. Runge, 5.

⁹Runge, 5.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Runge explains that when two coordinating conjunctions are used together, they often function to disambiguate the intended meaning of a clause. Ibid., 4.

¹²Runge, 5.

¹³For a discussion on the prophethood of all believers see Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke’s Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, 2003), 114-124; cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke-Acts to Contemporary Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011); cf. Keener, *Acts* vol. 1, 282-283.

c. Double insertion of μου after male servants and female servants in Act 2:18a

Luke's double insertion of μου in ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου (*in my male servants and in my female servants*) effectively conveys their role as God's own bondservants, rather than some generic slave. These words echo Mary's response to Gabriel in Luke 1:38, when she identified herself as the δούλη (*female bondservant*) of God. Mary serves as an example of a bondservant, that of being an agent of God's purposes in the eschaton. In the same way that she was used as a prophetic witness, believers who submit themselves to God as His bondservants may also receive prophetic enabling.

d. Addition of καὶ προφητεύουσιν in Act 2:18b

Undoubtedly, the insertion of this phrase is a theological reinforcement. In Joel's prophecy we can already identify the prophetic character of the Spirit's outpouring. But Luke's Petrine sermon makes it more explicit by inserting the phrase, καὶ προφητεύουσιν (*and they will prophesy*). He makes clear that the result of the eschatological gift is prophetic power. The Spirit poured out is the Spirit of prophecy. The recipients of this gift are members of the community of salvation and bondservants of God regardless of age, status, or gender (e.g. Mary).

Philip's Four Prophesying Daughters (Acts 21:9)

Some 25 years after Luke's Petrine sermon, Luke mentions Philip's prophesying daughters in Acts 21:9, the verse stating:

⁹ τοῦτῳ δὲ ἦσαν θυγατέρες
τέσσαρες παρθένοι
προφητεύουσαι. (21:9 GNT)

⁹And he had four unmarried
daughters, who prophesied.
(21:9 RSV)

Noticeably, the text is not relevant to the point that Luke was making about Paul's missionary travel and purposeful moving towards Jerusalem (see context Acts 20:16-21:17). However, a majority of scholars today agree that Luke's intent for this text had to do with both casting a favorable light on Philip and maintaining his motif on gender balance.¹⁴ In the Lucan gospel, he often paired male and female prophets (e.g., Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Zechariah, Simeon and Anna). Now in Acts, he does so again, pairing Philip's four daughters with the

¹⁴Keener, *Acts vol. I*, 3090.

prophet Agabus. The implication was that these four daughters were prophets too. This gender pairing also provides a narrative example of the fulfillment of Acts 2:17, “Your sons and daughters will prophesy.” Luke’s programmatic style of writing shows how the promise of 2:17-21 slowly came into fulfillment as the Gospel spread from Jerusalem and beyond and as the Christian communities flourished.

Interestingly, use of the present participle προφητεύουσαι (*propheteuousai*, who prophesied) instead of the noun προφήτις (prophetess, Luke 2:36) demonstrates Luke’s emphasis on the daughters’ regular prophetic activity. By inference, these daughters’ prophesying was accepted in their community and was considered as a source of honor for their Spirit-filled father.¹⁵ It also indicated the existence of a self-sustaining charismatic community in Caesarea, which may be a proof of the fulfillment of the Pentecost promise.¹⁶

Some have argued that Luke’s non-mention of the daughters’ prophetic words signified his goal to either silence them or perhaps to lessen their authority.¹⁷ But this is probably not the case. At the narrative level, Agabus’ prophecy was more germane to the point Luke was making about Paul. Warnings to Paul about suffering in Jerusalem had been given in Acts 21:4 and 21:11. Some suggest that perhaps the daughters’ prophesying also included warnings to Paul.¹⁸ But since this assumption cannot be proven, we can best surmise that Luke preferred to highlight Agabus’ prophetic words and actions, because it propelled the narrative forward. This does not mean that Luke lowered the authority or significance of the four daughters. It only means that he focused on that which could contribute to the overall plot of the story without undermining his motif on gender balance.¹⁹

Luke’s inclusion of this text tells us that he and the early Christian community acknowledged the prophetic function and role of women. In fact, Eusebius indicates that these sisters were famous and enjoyed

¹⁵In Luke’s day, the behavior of children could either bring honor or dishonor to the parents. Being a man of the Spirit, Phillip would have been honored by the community because of the Spirit-filledness of his four virgin daughters. It would also identify him as a man fit for his evangelistic/prophetic office. Keener, 3092; cf. Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke and Acts* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, Ltd., 1994), 181; cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, SBL Diss. Ser. 39 (Missoula, MT, 1977), 53.

¹⁶Seim, 182-183.

¹⁷Mary Rose D’ Angelo, “Women in Luke Acts: A Redactional View,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109/3 (1990), 453-460; cf. F. Scott Spencer, “Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts,” *Biblical Interpretation* 7, 2 (1999), 150; Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 95-96.

¹⁸Grudem, 95.

¹⁹See also Craig Keener, *Acts vol. I*, 3091-3092.

public recognition from the first century and onwards.²⁰ They were said to have died in Asia Minor, where charismatic activity was ongoing and somewhat ecstatic in the early centuries.²¹ Thus, Turid Seim's observation was correct when she wrote: "For Luke, the daughters' share in the gift of the Holy Spirit equipping them for prophetic activity is a significant feature of the eschatological fulfillment as promised by the prophet Joel."²² Simply said, Luke's record of prophesying daughters, although fewer in Acts, gives evidence to the continued prophetic activity of women in the Christian communities.

Synthesis—Implications of Prophesying Daughters in Acts

The first part of Luke's Petrine sermon, Acts 2:17-18, explicitly declares that, in the last days, women are also recipients of the promised prophetic gift, regardless of age or status. The only qualifications needed are that they should be members of the salvific community and that they are willing to be bondservants of God. This eschatological gift was promised in the prophecy of Joel and realized on the day of Pentecost. It is characterized by prophetic enabling accompanied by visions and dreams. Its recipients are not gender-bound, for the Spirit of prophecy is inclusive and impartial. The in-breaking of prophecy among God's people is both: (1) a sign that the believers have entered the interim era of the last days and (2) a vocational empowerment for the task of witnessing. A proof that the impartiality or inclusivity of this promise has been realized is Luke's record of Philip's four prophesying daughters in Acts 21:9, which can be dated twenty-five years after Peter's Pentecost sermon. Luke's mention of them certainly indicates that women continued to be active in prophecy in the communities and that their prophesying was an accepted practice of the church.

Conclusion and Contemporary Relevance

Conclusion

We can better understand Luke's perspective on "women and prophecy" within his motif on the dawn of the eschatological era. He emphasized that the eschatological era is characterized by the outpouring of the Spirit, which results in the universalization of prophetic activity. These activities include inspired verbal utterance, charismatic revelation, signs and wonders, and Spirit-inspired joy—all of which overflow in

²⁰Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica III*, AD 326, 31.39; cf. Seim, 181.

²¹Seim, 181.

²²*Ibid.*, 183.

praise. The intensity of prophetic activity in the community of both male and female believers serves as a sign that the “last days” has begun. It is also a prolepsis to the consummation of the kingdom.

This eschatological era is also characterized by status reversal, which is linked with the fulfillment of God’s covenant purposes. Luke reversed the status of women, who in his days were marginalized. The barren, the virgin maiden, the widow, and the single daughters represent women on the outskirts of society. Both Jewish and Greco-Roman structures predominantly silenced their voices and confined them to the sphere of the household. Yet Luke portrays how the Spirit of God chooses women as agents of His revelation and proclamation. They are raised from obscurity and their status reversed. In the Kingdom of God, those who are lowly are lifted high; those who are silenced prophesy; those who are found incredible are validated. The presence of God among His people is the underlying power behind this reversal.

Lastly, the eschatological era is characterized by inclusivity or impartiality not only of salvation, but also of prophetic empowerment. The outpouring of the Spirit is upon “all flesh,” and the call and enablement for prophetic ministry are inclusive and impartial—as inclusive and impartial as the salvation offered by Christ. There is now only one ministering body—Christ’s body—to which believers belong. Ministry is thus founded on the freedom and responsibility of being part of the Body of Christ and in having received prophetic/charismatic empowerment. Therefore, gender, race, age, or social status no longer define ministerial qualification. Rather, identification with Christ and Spirit-giftedness enables and qualifies one to participate in end-time ministries.

Hence, for Luke, the prophetic activity of women is an expected exemplary phenomenon that serves both as a sign of the dawning of the eschatological age and as a vocational empowerment for last-days’ witness. Scriptural evidence strongly negates the idea that Luke distanced women from prophecy. His careful arrangement of sources not only validates the prophethood of women, but also encourages its proper and continuous observance. Moreover, Luke was never ambiguous in relating women to the prophetic ministry. Instead, he makes explicit what was ambiguous in Joel’s prophecy. It is, therefore, only right to conclude that Luke considers the prophetic ministry of women as acceptable for the church of his day.

Contemporary Relevance for Today's Church

From a hermeneutical standpoint, Luke-Acts sets a repeatable biblical precedent for the church today.²³ Luke teaches via biblical narrative a timeless truth that is applicable for the church in the interim. This truth states that, in the last days, the Spirit of prophecy will be given to all believers for the task of universal witness (Acts 1:8; 2:17-39). There is an urgency and radical tone to this task, so much so that everyone—whether male or female, young or old, slave or free—is called to participate (Luke 10:1-16; Acts 2:1-39; 21:9). There are no longer gender or race requirements, but only the necessity of faith in Christ (Acts 2:38-39) and the eager reception of the gift of the Spirit (Luke 11:9-13) for those willing to be God's δούλους /δούλας. This eschatological task will continue in the inter-advent until Jesus' glorious return (Acts 3:21).

Contemporary Relevance for the Filipino Church

This conclusion is encouraging, especially to Filipino women in church ministry. Although the Philippines ranked 7th among 144 countries in the world in terms of gender parity, it falls to the 61st position in terms of women in ministerial position.²⁴ It seems that, amid the country being predominantly Christians, it still has inhibitions as to women occupying ministerial positions. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church still denies the priesthood of women and relegates them to lay positions in the church. Also, the majority of Evangelical churches deny the prophetic voice of women, preferring their silence in the assembly or limiting their roles to non-verbal ministries. While this may be amenable to those women who have neither calling nor gifting in verbal ministries, what about those gifted prophetically? What about

²³Gordon Fee wisely points out that, "In matters of Christian practice, a biblical precedent that comes to us by way of narration or implication alone may often be regarded as a repeatable pattern for the later church." Gordon Fee, "Priority of Spirit Gifting for Church Ministry," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 245-246.

²⁴The Global Gender Gap Index of 2016 reported that the Philippines ranked 7th out of 144 countries in the world in terms of gender parity. However, Filipino the number of women in ministerial positions only garnered a score of 0.250, landing them in the 61st rank. World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report 2016," <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=PHL> (accessed March 2, 2017).

those gifted and called to preach, teach, exhort, and expound Scripture?²⁵ Are they to remain silent? The answer is, of course, a clear “no!”

This study in Luke-Acts has already demonstrated that the Spirit of God empowers both men and women in the last days. There is a promise for the outpouring of the Spirit on the entire Christian community. This outpouring serves to empower everyone to participate in God’s end-time activities. A limitation on women based on their gender and not on their gifting is discouraging for the mission of the Filipino church, especially in light of the Filipino diaspora.

Studies show that, in 2015, at least 2.4 million Filipinos worked abroad as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).²⁶ The percentage of female OFWs was higher than that of males (51.1 % vs. 48.9%).²⁷ This means that Christian Filipino women are dispersed around the globe as domestic helpers, nurses, English teachers, etc., some of whom may have the call and gifting to be end-time prophets of Christ. Equipping, ordaining, and encouraging these women would contribute greatly to the proclamation of the Gospel in areas where traditional church programs cannot reach. The Filipino church must consider that this diaspora may be part of God’s plan. Luke-Acts makes it clear that the Spirit’s gender inclusivity is meant to not only edify the church, but also for efficient gospel witness. Perhaps it is time to recognize that the Filipina Christian is an untapped potential for the church’s end-time mission.

In light of this, the Filipino church should consider taking steps to encourage the acceptance and practice of biblical equality in the church. This move towards parity in ministerial roles is not for feminism’s sake, but ultimately for the fulfillment of the church’s mission in the world.

²⁵Ellis notes that prophetic ministry includes: forth-telling, foretelling, exhortation, teaching, healing, and expounding Scripture (like Jesus’ earthly ministry). He concludes that the role of the prophet may overlap with that of the elder as it does that of the apostle and teacher, especially in certain teaching functions. E. Earle Ellis, “The Gospel of Luke,” *New Century Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 170 ff.; cf. Colin Brown, “Prophet,” *New International Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume 3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 87-89.

²⁶The Philippines Statistics Authority, “Total number of OFWs estimated at 2.4 million (Results from the 2015 survey on Overseas Filipinos),” <https://psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-24-million-results-2015-survey-overseas-filipinos> (accessed March 3, 2017).

²⁷*Ibid.*

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The Role of Women in Ministry: Is There a Disconnect between Pauline Practice and Pauline Instruction?

by Waldemar Kowalski

Introduction

There seems to be almost universal agreement that Paul restricted women's role in ministry, largely based on two texts—1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15.¹ Pauline authorship is not crucial to the interpretation of these texts on the role of women. In fact, one of the significant obstacles to authenticity and Pauline authorship is the traditional reading of the 1 Timothy passage as antagonistic to ministry roles for women. This makes many scholars uncomfortable—as perhaps it well should.

I'd like to tell you how I got to this place. One of my favorite courses to teach has been Corinthian Correspondence. It is encouraging to see that a body of believers with the many problems that the Corinthians had could still be addressed as "saints." Maybe there's hope for us today.

Tracing back in my teaching notes, I ran into a problem the first time I taught this course. The class studied the books in sequence; and while there are problems to be resolved in 1 Corinthians 11 as related to worship, it is also clear that women fully participated in prayer and in prophecy. Then came 1 Cor 14:34-35, which seems to say that women are not to speak at all in the assembly. In fact, some translations split v. 33 in the middle, making silence for women a universal rule. Was Paul confused or forgetful of what he'd written earlier in the same letter? Or was my reading of one or the other of these passages incorrect? I expect God's Word to agree with itself and certainly expect coherence within the work of a single writer, especially in the same letter.

¹Opinions on Pauline authorship for the Pastoral Epistles differ widely, with a majority of modern scholars rejecting Pauline authorship entirely or at least expressing significant doubt. For a survey of these, see Mark Harding, *What Are They Saying About the Pastoral Epistles?*, Watsa Series (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2001), 9-27, or any recent commentary. There are substantial reasons to accept Pauline authorship, as proposed by scholars like Spicy, Towner, Luke Timothy Johnson, and others. I also favor Paul as author of the Pastoral Epistles.

So I asked myself what I shall also ask you. If someone's instructions are at odds with their practice, what is the more accurate statement of their belief? If someone insists that they love dogs but you see them kicking and throwing stones at a dog, what do you think about their alleged affection for dogs? Or if a wife insists that her husband is loving and kind but becomes silent and afraid every time he is near, what do you suspect? Even more so, if I tell you to do something but you observe that I do something very different, what will you conclude about what I value?

Thus, before we explore the Pauline instruction, let us examine Pauline practice. If our investigation reveals that Pauline practice is indeed at odds with Pauline instruction, so be it. We are trying to discern Paul's true belief. Let's look more closely at these well-understood texts, re-reading them. The first recipients and the early church seem to have understood these texts without the consternation that we display—so maybe it's time to re-read them. This is God's Word and we are not to change its meaning to suit ourselves.

Pauline Practice and Instruction in 1 Corinthians

We will begin with the context of congregational worship in 1 Corinthians, an obvious place to start being 1 Cor 11:1-16. This passage deals with women's role in and their permission to participate in worship. The reader encounters some important material well before Chapter 11, however.

The 1984 edition of the NIV begins 1 Cor 1:10 with "*I appeal to you, brothers;*" while the 2011 revision renders this as "*I appeal to you, brothers and sisters.*" Between these, the 1984 is textually more accurate, while the 2011 is contextually more accurate. As a scholar with strong feelings about alteration to the text, I do not approve of altering the text to make it gender-neutral. Note that Paul is clearly addressing an audience that is not exclusively male. In fact, 1 Cor 1:10 is the beginning of his exhortation to unity and against divisions, of which he was informed by someone connected with Chloe, a woman. There will be twenty uses of "brothers" in 1 Corinthians, several being in contexts that explicitly address women as well as men.² None of the word "brothers" in 1 Corinthians is used in a context that excludes women. We could debate whether males or females are more inclined to engage in divisive behavior, but Paul addresses both males and females as

²Cf. 1 Cor 7:24, 29 and 14:6, 20, 26, 39.

needing to curtail divisiveness.³ It is probable that the Corinthian divisiveness involved women as well as men.

Ancient and modern scholars consider the term *adelphoi* (“brothers”) to refer to family members or siblings, without being gender-specific. In fact, Thiselton states, “It would be more misleading to translate ἀδελφοί as ‘brothers’ (NJB, NIV) than as ‘brothers and sisters’ (NRSV, Collins, and Fee).”⁴ My personal approach is to read the text as it stands, including in my translation. I note to my students that the original audience did not hear this as being gender-specific any more than the classic meaning of “mankind” refers only to males.

1 Corinthians 7 confronts the original hearers with culturally revolutionary ideas. Paul addresses marriage and especially sexual relations within marriage with a radically egalitarian perspective. We will not be exploring this right now, as my focus is a woman’s role in ministry rather than her role in her family. The discussion of divine design and familial relations will have to wait for another occasion.

At the same time, Paul emphasizes his own unmarried state, considers it God’s gifting, and touts the desirability of singleness for others (1 Cor 7:6-8).⁵ He is not removing marriage from its key role in Jewish or Christian life but is talking about purposeful singleness. Generally, marriage is still God’s ideal.

So, in what situation is singleness preferable? Paul centers his focus on communicating the gospel, on doing the work of the ministry. He mentions a “present crisis” (v. 26) and a need for focused devotion on the Lord by both men and women (vv. 32-35). Just how singleness improves one’s ability to focus in this way is a topic of discussion among scholars. Early in this chapter Paul points out that “*to burn with passion*” can be a great hindrance to the life of a single believer (v. 9).

In the end, we can affirm that Paul saw singleness as a benefit to his life of ministry. We cannot, however, state that he was calling men and women specifically to a ministerial role similar to his. It may be that “*undivided devotion to the Lord*” is purely personal and internal, but my feeling is that so strong an appeal for singleness has as its goal more than

³Cf. references to division among men in 1 Tim 2:8; 3:3 and women in Phil 4:2 (Euodia and Syntyche).

⁴Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 114. Thiselton cites Fee, Collins, and especially Lightfoot, who notes that classical Greek uses this word to refer to siblings (i.e., a brother and sister. Cf. also Scott Munger, “Women, the Church, and Bible Translation,” in *SIL Bible Translation Conference* (Dallas, TX: 2013), 3. Munger stresses that *adelphoi* meant “siblings in a family.”

⁵Cf. Fee, pp 284-88.

a private expression. I do not think Paul's ultimate concern was that the Corinthians be free of anxiety; rather, my guess is that more is going on here. But we have little besides Paul's zeal for the gospel to suggest what his ultimate goal may have been.

Before we move to Chapter 11, note in Chapter 9 Paul mentions that the other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Peter traveled with their believing wives.⁶ We don't know whether he refers here to the right to be married or (more likely) the right of Christian leaders to be supported with their families rather than only themselves. In any case, although singleness was seen by Paul as a better state for himself, that does not seem to have been the perspective of most of the other leaders and ministers of the early church.

Thiselton takes the approach that "The communities expect to support the married couple, on the assumption that the wife shares her husband's Christian concerns and will support him, in turn, in these concerns."⁷ This suggests an active role together in ministry, although the text does not explicitly state this.⁸

The surprise in 1 Cor 11:2-16 for some scholars might be that this passage clearly assumes that women have a role in ministry. The debate is not whether they are to pray and prophesy. A careful reading shows instructions on *how* both men and women are to participate in the worship service. Please don't miss this point. Although some approaches to this passage read as if only women are being addressed, Paul is instructing both men and women. In fact, men are addressed in 1 Cor 11:4 before he turns his attention to women.⁹ If this passage only deals with women's hair length and head coverings, Paul used too many words, and we are in danger of missing his intention.

If you are re-reading the text to see if I am fairly presenting this passage, you may want to know what Paul means in a few of his statements. For instance, what does "head" mean in vv. 3-7, 10, 13? Why is hair length or hairstyle so important to him? And what's with the angels in v. 10? I will not focus on these topics now, as, again, our job is to determine Paul's real stance on women in ministry.¹⁰

⁶1 Cor. 9:5.

⁷Thiselton, 680.

⁸The pastor's wife has wielded enormous influence, as can be seen already with Katherine von Bora, Luther's wife, who was an active participant in theological conversations.

⁹Thiselton draws attention to this with some bemusement over the propensity of commentators to focus on women to the exclusion of men. Thiselton, 825.

¹⁰There are excellent resources on dress and head covering in virtually all recent commentaries, especially Thiselton, NIGTC. But I would recommend most highly Bruce Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows* for his insightful and thorough handling of this topic.

The task is to explore what Paul believes by investigating Pauline practice. We will explore several tough questions in 1 Corinthians 11 to determine whether they are relevant to Pauline practice. If not, we will note this and continue. Most of the difficult material in this passage does not change its subtext (and our main text)—i.e., that both men and women participated in congregational worship.

The definition of κεφαλή (*kephalē*, “head”) is part of another discussion. Whatever it means in this passage does not change the core idea—that a literal demand for total silence by women in church (as 1 Cor 14:34-35 suggests) is at odds with Paul’s normal and approved congregational practice in 1 Cor 11:2-16.

Our passage starts with a commendation: “*I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you*” (v. 2). What a contrast between this statement and the introduction to the next section, starting at v. 17: “*In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.*” Paul is saying here that it would be better if they did not meet, specifically in regard to how they conduct the Lord’s Supper (i.e., Communion). He is not instructing the Corinthians to cease observing the Lord’s Supper; rather, he is telling them they’re doing it wrong.

What is Paul praising in v. 2? 1 Cor 11:3-16 offers instruction and culminates in a rather annoyed “This is the final word on this!” in v. 16. What is the apparent activity addressed in this passage? What are they doing? Men and women are praying and prophesying together, which is what Paul praises. If you can find another focus for Paul’s commendation, please tell me, for I do not see another candidate in the text.

Thiselton considers this “the eschatological inclusion of men and women as active participants in prayer and prophetic speech, in contrast to the issue of clothing, which Paul believes must still generate signals of gender distinctiveness on the basis of the order of creation, which still holds sway even in the gospel era.”¹¹ This makes good sense. Paul praises them for something they’re doing, while correcting how they do it. He sets the stage for more severe correction regarding Communion with a commendation for what they are doing well (i.e., praying and prophesying together) but tells them to adjust their practice.

From there we go directly into contentious territory. What does Paul mean by “head,” κεφαλή, in v. 3? In following verses, “head” is literally anatomical—the end of the human body farthest from the feet. But in v. 3, “*the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man,*

¹¹Thiselton, 811.

and the head of Christ is God.” This is not about the upper end of a human body.

My focus here is not on male-female relationships in Pauline teaching and congregations but on Paul’s consistency. Did he permit—even promote—a role for women in ministry? This discussion on clothing, hair styles, and demeanor of both men and women (NB this mutuality is important) may blind us to the most glaring fact. There is NO debate here on whether women are to pray and prophecy, just on *how* they (and men) are to do so.

Paul’s Greetings (and Commendations) of Women in Romans 16

Let us turn our attention now to the final chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans, generally considered to have been written shortly after his letters to the Corinthians. While 1 Corinthians 11 stimulated my interest in Paul’s apparent inconsistency, Romans 16 made me angry over historic cases of assumed understanding and refusal to read the text. That chapter has an extensive list of friends and co-workers in ministry, including women—and more than a little bit of controversy. The controversy centers on these women and how they are described in the text as historically interpreted by the church.

Phoebe

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me (Rom 16:1-2).

In these verses, Paul commends Phoebe, “*a deacon of the church in Cenchreae.*” She is named as “*the benefactor of many people, including me.*” Cenchreae was one of the two seaports serving Corinth and was only thirteen kilometers from Corinth proper. Paul may not have mentioned Phoebe elsewhere, but he speaks highly of her to the Romans and places her in the first position in these greetings. He introduces her to the Roman congregation with a letter of commendation, a common practice in the ancient world.¹²

¹²Paul refers to this practice in 2 Cor 3:1 and asks whether the Corinthians now need a letter of introduction commending him, who “gave them birth” so to speak. For more on such letters of commendation, cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 786; and Chan-Hie

I realize that using the term “assumption” is risky. However, in the process of re-reading the text, we do our best to lay aside our pre-existing assumptions and either come back to our first conclusion or to a different one. We will make a few assumptions here. Paul is giving Phoebe an introduction which suggests that she is planning to visit Rome. Many scholars think she may have carried his letter from Corinth (where he wrote to the Romans) to Rome. Otherwise, there is not much reason for him to start his list of greetings by mentioning an unknown person from another city. Perhaps many of you, like myself, value Paul’s letter to the Romans very highly. Considering the cost of producing an epistle like this, he probably chose his courier carefully; thus, we may all owe a significant debt to Phoebe.¹³

Phoebe could have read (and performed) the letter to the Romans. Col 4:16 and 1 Thess 5:27 give instructions to “*have this letter read*” to the congregation. Jankiewicz suggests that “It is also probable that Phoebe read the letter to many Roman congregations and was able to provide commentary on everything that could have been misunderstood, thus providing needed clarifications.”¹⁴ Who better to explain things than the individual who had just recently been with the writer and was trusted by them?

Another reasonable assumption is that she holds an official position of deacon in the congregation of Cenchreae. *Diakonos* can mean “helper,” which is the word used in a few translations. However, in a church context, virtually all more recent commentaries agree the word should be rendered “deacon” (not “helper” or “deaconess”). Paul uses this term of himself (e.g., Col 1:23, 25) and his fellow workers. The phrase “*deacon of the church*” argues for an official role whose precise scope and responsibility we do not know. This does not prove that Phoebe occupies a role like Paul’s.¹⁵ It may mean “leader and preacher,”

Kim, *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation*, Dissertation Series (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972).

¹³Cf. Craig S. Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), 1. Keener cites Richards, who estimated the cost of producing Romans at \$2,275 US in 2004. The cost and difficulty of producing letters in antiquity meant that most were much shorter: “The average ancient papyrus letter was 87 words; the orator Cicero was more long-winded, averaging 295 words (with as many as 2,530 words); and the philosopher Seneca averaged 995 words (with as many as 4,134). The extant letters attributed to Paul average 2,495 words, while Romans, his longest, has 7,114 words.” *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁴Darius Jankiewicz, “Phoebe: Was She an Early Church Leader?,” *Ministry* 85, no. 4 (2013): 11.

¹⁵Cf. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 914, esp. his comments in n. 9.

or it may indicate some other position—but it does not mean “housemaid.”

Things become even more uncertain with the description of Phoebe as “benefactor.” The word Paul uses, *προστάτις* (*prostatis*), is a noun used only here in the NT. Elsewhere, it is a verb, Moo saying that “Paul seems to use the verb only to mean ‘direct,’ ‘preside over.’”¹⁶ The word can be used to speak of one’s superior. A paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) some years ago argued that Paul’s letter of commendation was not only requesting help for Phoebe, but also was, in fact, written to present to the Romans a person who was over Paul himself.¹⁷ Moo states that Paul uses the verbal form specifically to indicate leadership but ends up rejecting that sort of meaning here. He points out that, while Phoebe is a “*deacon of the church*” in v. 1, here she has been the “*benefactor of many people*” rather than “of the church.”¹⁸ (Moo may be reading too much into a stylistic variation.)

We can reasonably conclude that Phoebe held an official role as a deacon in the church at Cenchræa.¹⁹ What we do not know is her position relative to Paul and what help she rendered him. The ESV calls her a “patron,” the NIV and others a “benefactor,” and the CEV and YLT call her a “leader.”²⁰ In re-reading Paul’s words about Phoebe, we must be careful not to assign her a role that exceeds the truth; but at the same time, we should also not lower her to the level of “domestic help.” Many English translations leave the impression that Phoebe was simply hired help. Paul implies that her status was much higher.

Priscilla

Greet Priscilla and Aquilla, my co-workers in Christ Jesus.
They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches

¹⁶Ibid., 916.

¹⁷Unfortunately, as far as I can find, that paper has not been published where it could otherwise have received either support or correction.

¹⁸Moo, 916.

¹⁹Cf. Esther Yue L. Ng, “Phoebe as Prostatist,” *Trinity Journal* 25, no. 1 (2004): 13. Ng concludes that Phoebe provided hospitality to Paul and that this was the extent of her role in relation to him.

²⁰Cf. Jankiewicz, “Phoebe,” 12. Jankiewicz states: “A careful reading of Romans 16:1, 2 thus offers us a new glance at this remarkable woman who appears to be a close associate of Paul in spreading the gospel of Christ; who served as a leader of her house church in Cenchræa; who, despite all the dangers associated with travel on Roman roads, accepted the task of carrying the message of salvation to the Roman church; and who was recognized by Paul and others as a Christian leader in her own right.” Jankiewicz renders plausible assumptions as firm assertions. It is clear that the extent of Phoebe’s role, ministry, and position is in dispute.

of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house (Rom 16:3-5a).

Paul talks at some length in vv.3-5a about Priscilla (or Prisca) and Aquila, co-workers who have risked their lives for him. All the Gentile churches are indebted to them, and they have a house church. Both were involved in ministry, Priscilla's role being substantial. They together (with Priscilla named first) "*explained the way of God more adequately*" to Apollos (Acts 18:26), who subsequently had a significant teaching ministry, including in Corinth.

It is remarkable that Priscilla is named first in most texts naming them as a couple.²¹ Many scholars see this as an indication of her lead role in their shared ministry—or perhaps her higher social status. Significantly, both Luke (Acts 18:18-26) and Paul (Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19) give Priscilla precedence in naming before Aquila, although this could simply be a case of authorial variation (i.e., avoiding saying the same thing over and over again). However, I believe that naming the most significant person first was a usual and deliberate practice, at least for Luke and Paul.²²

Luke seems to do this intentionally, as in the case of the team of Barnabas and Saul/Paul. Up to Acts 13:42, Barnabas precedes Saul,²³ whose name changes to Paul with his encounter with Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:9-12). Luke then characterizes the team as "*Paul and his companions*" in Acts 13:13. We also learn that John (Mark) left them, which would later lead to breaking up the duo. From that point on, with few exceptions, Paul is identified as the main speaker and named before Barnabas.²⁴ In Acts 14:12, when the crowd in Lystra wants to honor what they see as a visitation of the gods, Barnabas is named first. The crowd explicitly identifies Paul as the "*chief speaker*," as recorded by Luke. Commentators differ on why Barnabas is named first in vv. 12, 14. Kistemaker suggests that, because Paul was speaking and "doing all the work," he was considered an underling to Barnabas, who must be served

²¹Cf. Acts 18:18, 26; Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19. The two exceptions are Acts 18:2 and 1 Cor 16:19, where Aquila is named first.

²²Cf. James Choung, "May Women Teach?" www.jameschoung.net/may-women-teach.pdf (accessed March 16, 2016). Choung points out the examples of Paul over Barnabas and of James over Peter and John in Gal 2:9.

²³Cf. Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:1, 2, 7.

²⁴The exceptions are Acts 14:12, 14 and 15:12, 25. Acts 14:12 names Barnabas first but then names Paul as the "chief speaker." In Acts 14:14, it may be that Barnabas tore his clothes first or that his misidentification as the chief God factored into Luke's giving him precedence in naming.

as the highest deity.²⁵ In Acts 15:12, 25 at the Jerusalem Council, Barnabas is again named first, as he had more influence in this setting.²⁶ Keep in mind that Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to Antioch. He took Paul under his wing and led delivery of relief funds to Jerusalem (Acts 11:22, 25-30). In the Jerusalem context, Barnabas was their trusted person.

An additional example of deliberate naming precedence (this time by Paul) is in Gal 2:9, where James is named before Peter and John. While Peter and John are undoubtedly more significant in the whole Christian story, James has status as the leader of the Jerusalem church in this context.²⁷

A clear pattern emerges in the writings of Luke and of Paul—that the more significant individual is named first in the context of the work of a group. If our only example were Priscilla and Aquila, we might dismiss it as an intriguing coincidence. Considering the other examples, however, naming precedence seems to indicate ministry importance. As a closing comment on Priscilla and Aquila, we must not diminish the importance of Aquila as a part of the team. They are always named together, whether in ministry or socially.

Mary

Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you (Rom. 16:6).

Mary, a common name at the time, is commended as one “*who worked very hard*” for the saints (v. 6). In our English translation, we have no indication of what this work was. Instead, we need to look at the Greek word, κοπιᾶω (*kopiaō*, labor) and the typical Pauline use of this verb. Perhaps most significantly, Paul used it often of his own ministry²⁸ and explicitly of ministry by others.²⁹ The word appears three times in Romans 16. It is also used in a non-ministry context in 1 Cor

²⁵Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990), 514, 516.

²⁶Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts," in *Luke-Acts*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, Expositor's Bible Commentary (rev. ed.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 945; and F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd rev. and enl. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 338.

²⁷Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), 56; and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 121-22.

²⁸Cf. 1 Cor 15:10; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10.

²⁹Cf. 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17.

4:12;³⁰ Eph 4:28; and 2 Tim 2:6. Paul generally used this term, however, with an explicit meaning of church ministry (1 Cor 15:10; 16:16; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 4:10; and 1 Tim 5:17).³¹

In Rom 16:3-13, Paul commends individuals and couples with more detail than in the vv. 14-15. For most of these early commendations, Paul notes how their effort was benefitting the church. Mary, as with Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis (v. 12), are probably laboring in ministry. Schreiber notes that this word “probably denotes missionary work” and “What these women did specifically is not delineated, but we cannot doubt that they were vitally involved in ministry.”³² The warnings of Moo and Osborne against assigning a semi-technical sense for labor, κοπιάω, are appropriate. We cannot establish that Mary had a leadership role.³³ At the same time, Paul names Mary very early in this list of people to be greeted and commended. He describes her work with the same term that he applies to his own ministry; thus, she is not to be dismissed as simply a “worker.”

1 Cor 16:15-16 is especially interesting as a parallel among Paul’s other uses of the word “labor.” He commends the household of Stephanas for their devotion “to the service (διακονία, *diakonia*) of the Lord’s people” (v. 15). Then he urges the Corinthians “to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors (κοπιάω, *kopiaō*) at it” (v. 16). Most commentators have no hesitation in referring to Stephanas and his household as leaders or to their “service” as leadership.³⁴ Commentators less frequently make this connection to women as leaders when the same terms are used of them.

³⁰An argument could be made that Paul’s work to support his ministry was itself ministry, but our interest in use of the term κοπιάω is to explicitly denote direct ministry of teaching, preaching, and leading the church (cf. 1 Tim 5:17).

³¹The most unequivocal of these are underlined. Dunn and Schreiner offer the same lists. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Bible Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, 1988), 893-94; and Schreiner, 793-94.

³²Schreiner, 794.

³³Moo, 921; and Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, The IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2004), 406.

³⁴Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 857-58; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 829-31; Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 316-19; Richard L. Pratt and Max E. Anders, *I & II Corinthians*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 287-88; Thiselton, 1337-39; and Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “1 Corinthians,” in *Romans-Galatians*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, Expositor’s Bible Commentary (rev. ed.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 411-12. Others argue for a less defined service, so that leadership is not explicitly expressed. Cf. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 767-770;

Junia

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was (Rom. 16:7).

The story of Junia and Junias (v. 7) raises my ire. “Junias” is a masculine name, while “Junia” is a woman’s name. Their differentiation in Greek is subtle, as we shall see, and that is part of the story. Before the 13th century, the Greek word “Junia” was rendered exclusively as a woman’s name, with one arguable and unlikely exception.³⁵ From the 13th through the mid-20th centuries, the name was often translated as a man’s name, Junias.³⁶ Current convention is rather mixed. The NIV84, RSV, NASB, ASV, and The Message (among popular translations and paraphrases) opt for the male variant, Junias; whereas the NIV, KJV, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, NET, and NLT opt for the female version, Junia.

The problem is this—No early literature contains the name Junias. It could possibly be a contracted form of Junianus, which is a known name; but such a contracted form is not found anywhere in Greek literature.³⁷ On the other hand, the feminine name Junia is well known. Lampe records over 250 known uses of the name Junia and only 21 of Junianus, while there are none whatsoever of Junias in the Roman empire.³⁸

There are other questions of note. What does Paul mean by the statement that they were his kin (rendered, probably correctly, as “*fellow Jews*” by the NIV)? What about that they were in prison with him? And that they were in Christ before him?³⁹ The answers to those questions do not affect our topic of whether women may minister and even lead, so

and Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 233. NB. While Garland cites Thiselton to reject expression of hierarchy, Thiselton is explicit in using “leaders or ministers” and “leadership and service” of Stephanas and his household.

³⁵Cf. Moo, 922 n. 32. Epp offers an expanded discussion; cf. Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 33-34. Origin is sometimes stated to have identified Junia as Junias, but this is considered to be a mistranslation into the Latin by Rufinus. The “unlikely exception” comes from Epiphanius, who does render the name as Junias, but also identifies Prisca as a male.

³⁶Cf. Moo, 922.

³⁷Ibid.; Schreiner, 796. Cf. also the extensive treatment in Epp.

³⁸Peter Lampe and Marshall D. Johnson, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (London, UK: Continuum, 2003), 169. Lampe’s arguments for reading the name as Junia and feminine are extensive and persuasive; cf. especially n. 39, pp. 165-66.

³⁹This may well reflect that they were among those directly commissioned by Christ as apostles (cf. 1 Cor 15:5, 7). If such was the case, this would have put their status just after that of the Twelve; cf. Dunn, 894-95.

we will leave that for another paper. The vital issue for us is the meaning of “*They are outstanding among the apostles.*” A few scholars argue that this should read “They are respected *by* the apostles.” Although the latter reading is possible, Paul could have found better ways to say this without ambiguity. Most scholars agree that the natural reading is “*outstanding among the apostles,*” identifying this team (probably husband and wife) as apostles.

Andronicus and Junia were not the only husband and wife team. Remember Peter and the other apostles in 1 Corinthians 9 who traveled with their wives? However, this is the only place that both husband and wife are labeled as apostles. While Paul does use the word “apostle” in the sense of a messenger, emissary, or “commissioned missionary,”⁴⁰ the context here suggests that he is praising them and expressing respect beyond low-level Christian service. He notes not only they are apostles, but also they are outstanding among the apostles. I realize that most scholars argue that Paul is not here referring to Andronicus and Junia as filling an apostolic role in the same way that he himself does.⁴¹ In many cases, their evidence is that the instruction of 1 Tim 2:11-15 shows they could not be apostles in the same manner as Paul. But we do have that troublesome “outstanding” label, which makes it clear that they were not run-of-the-mill or average.⁴² Given Paul’s stringent defense of his right to the title of “apostle” in 2 Corinthians, his application of “outstanding” to Andronicus and Junia suggests that their role was significant.

Considering the early unanimous recorded agreement that Junia is a woman and an apostle, we must conclude that Junia is a woman in a role of leadership. Chrysostom, who is far from a proponent of women in leadership in his own day (c. 349-407), observes the following in his *Homilies on Romans*:

Then another praise besides. “Who are of note among the Apostles.” And indeed to be apostles at all is a great thing. But to be even amongst these of note, just consider what a great encomium this is! But they were of note owing to their works, to their achievements. Oh! how great is the devotion

⁴⁰Moo, 924. Moo notes that “When Paul uses the word in the former sense [apostle], he makes clear the source and purpose of the ‘emissary’s’ commission.” His conclusion is that “traveling missionary” is the best translation, but I would counter that the mention of being “in Christ” and suffering on his behalf makes the source of these apostles’ commission adequately clear. Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid; Schreiner, 796-97.

⁴²Cf. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity, 1988), 534. Morris labels them “notable apostles.”

(φιλοσοφία) of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle! But even here he does not stop, but adds another encomium besides, and says, “Who were also in Christ before me.”⁴³

Dunn states, “We may firmly conclude, however, that one of the foundation apostles of Christianity was a woman and wife.”⁴⁴ The evidence seems to support this strong statement.

How then does a woman in Paul’s world become a man in ours? Eldon Epp’s work on Junia offers some clues, bringing us back to that troublesome “story of Junia and Junias.” The difference between Junia and Junias in Greek is an issue of accents.⁴⁵ The oldest manuscripts do not use accents. Once these came into use, they indicated that Junia was the right reading—“To put the point sharply: there is no Greek manuscript extant that unambiguously identifies Andronicus’s partner as a male.”⁴⁶ In the 13th century, Aegidius of Rome presented the idea of Junias being a male. This was followed much more influentially by Luther’s translation in the 16th century.⁴⁷ But even the KJV/AV and all early English translations have this person as Junia!

Early in the 20th century, something changed. Critical editions of the Greek New Testament, as well as many English translations, changed the gender identity of Junia to Junias by changing the accents. In most cases, they did so abruptly, with no indication that the issue was in doubt or that previous editions had identified this person as a woman. The Nestle 13th edition of the Greek text started this switch in 1927, with no textual evidence to support the change.⁴⁸ The textual apparatus that scholars use in their research to decide what the correct reading should be was itself misleading in this case.⁴⁹ This is incredibly troubling, as this is what scholars use to determine what the original text said. It is

⁴³John Chrysostom, “Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans,” in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. B. Morris, W. H. Simcox, and George B. Stevens, vol. 11, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 555.

⁴⁴Dunn, 895.

⁴⁵Ἰουνιᾶν is the putative accusative masculine form of Ἰουνιᾶς, Junias, a name that appears in no other source but could be a contraction of Junianus. Ἰουνία is the accusative feminine form of the same lemma, Ἰουνιάς, but rendered Junia in the feminine.

⁴⁶Foreword by Beverly Roberts Gaventa, in Epp, xi.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 49.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 50. Epp labels the {A} certainty rating assigned in the UBS (pre-4th corrected edition) as “misleading.”

rare that scholars have opportunity to bypass the textual apparatus and handle the original manuscripts themselves.

Metzger's *Textual Commentary* offers an insight into what happened:

Some members [of the Committee], considering it unlikely that a woman would be among those styled "apostles," understood the name to be masculine Ἰουνιᾶν ("Junias"), thought to be a shortened form of Junianus (see Bauer-Aland, *Wörterbuch*, pp. 770 f.). Others, however, were impressed by the facts that (1) the female Latin name Junia occurs more than 250 times in Greek and Latin inscriptions found in Rome alone, whereas the male name Junias is unattested anywhere, and (2) when Greek manuscripts began to be accented, scribes wrote the feminine Ἰουνίαν ("Junia").⁵⁰

In other words, the decision of the Committee was not based primarily on linguistic scholarship, but rather on the more modern conviction (since Aegidius) that women could not have been leaders of any of the Pauline communities. This text (and the unanimous witness of the early church) must, therefore, have been in error.⁵¹

In the 1970s, quiet controversy about this change of gender started to surface. The Jubilee Edition of Nestle-Aland and UBS appeared in 1998, with Junia restored textually as a woman. Epp calls the change "an about-face in which the seven-decade reign of the masculine 'Junias' in the Erwin Nestle and Nestle-Aland editions has ended abruptly and, almost without notice, to be replaced by the feminine 'Junia.'"⁵² He further notes, "Regardless of how it came about, this was an admirable and even courageous decision."⁵³ I applaud Metzger's courage. He pointed out the textual/historical basis for a feminine reading and revealed a cultural male bias in selecting the masculine reading, even before the change in the critical texts was effected.

Why do we assume that our understanding is correct whenever we encounter women in potential ministerial or leadership roles, rather than comprehending what we are reading? Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 are engrained in our minds as the definitive expression of Paul's belief

⁵⁰Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, DE: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 475.

⁵¹Foreword Gaventa, Epp, xi-xii.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 48.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 52.

and teaching. Over and over, I read in the commentaries that Junia could not *really* be an apostle in the same sense as Paul and the Twelve, since she was a woman and we all know that Paul told women to “be silent” and forbade all teaching and authority over men. This is an example of the liability of understanding the text and underscores the urgency of continual re-reading of our text. Dunn correctly notes, “The assumption that it [the name] must be male is a striking indictment of male presumption regarding the character and structure of earliest Christianity.”⁵⁴

Epp chooses two statements by female scholars to summarize this shameful episode in textual criticism. Bernadette Brooten observed in 1977, “Because a woman could not have been an apostle, the woman who is here called apostle could not have been a woman.”⁵⁵ Elizabeth Castelli points out, “The reference to Junia the *apostolos* in 16:7 has inspired remarkable interpretative contortions, resulting ultimately in a sex-change-by-translation.”⁵⁶

So, in summary, Junia was a woman who was also an apostle. Every single writer of the first millennium, including a number who did not permit ministry by women in their day, acknowledged her to be a woman who had been singled out by Paul, together with her (probable) husband, as “outstanding among the apostles.” To cap it off, while there is much support for Junia as a known name in the Roman Empire, there is not a single case of a man named Junias, at least not until scholars invented him in the second millennium A.D.

Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis

Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord). Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord (Rom 16:12).

⁵⁴Dunn, 894.

⁵⁵Bernadette J. Brooten, “Junia . . . Outstanding Among the Apostles,” in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, ed. L. Swidler and A. Swidler (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977), 142.

⁵⁶Elizabeth A. Castelli, “Romans,” in *Searching the Scriptures, Vol. 2: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1994), 279.

The rest of the list in Romans 16 may seem anticlimactic, but it should not be, as we have more women of note. And yet, after what seems to be deliberate changing of the text to support a theological and cultural bias, we can relax and celebrate Paul's admiration for co-workers. Tryphena and Tryphosa, both women, are designated as ones "who work hard in the Lord." Paul again uses κοπιάω, "labor," one of the terms he uses mostly with a connotation of ministry. In addition, there is "my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord." Tryphena and Tryphosa seem to both still be working in ministry, while Persis has done so in the past and earned Paul's address as "my dear friend" or "my beloved."

Other Women Extended a Greeting in Romans 16

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord's people who are with them (Rom 16:13-15).

Other women singled out for greetings include *the mother of Rufus* "who has been a mother to me [Paul], too," *Julia* (probably the wife of Philologus), and the *sister of Nereus*. These may be mentioned because of hospitality offered to Paul.⁵⁷ They are not, however, identified as having labored or worked hard in the Lord nor given titles or labeled as co-workers in ministry. Keener notes of this section of Romans:

Particularly significant and different from some churches in the east is the dominance of women explicitly involved in some forms of ministry (16:1–7, 12). This is not surprising, since women exercised much more freedom in Rome (and in a Roman colony in Macedonia, Phil 4:2–3) than in much of the Greek east. Although Paul greets over twice as many men as women, he commends more women than men for ministry, perhaps partly because even in Rome their ministries still faced more challenges than men, hence invited more affirmation.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Moo, 926. Moo suggests the pairing of Philologus and Julia, with Nereus and his sister as their children, as well as the offering of hospitality as likely.

⁵⁸Keener, 185.

In summary, seventeen men and only nine women receive greetings in Rom 16:1-16, in addition to the commendation of Phoebe.⁵⁹ The situation changes when we look at those mentioned as contributing to the church—seven women, and five men.⁶⁰ Schreiner notes, “It is clear from this list that women were actively involved in ministry.”⁶¹ A few pages later, however, he argues, “One should scarcely conclude from the reference to Junia and the other women co-workers named here that women exercised authority over men contrary to the Pauline admonition in 1 Tim. 2:12.”⁶² Again we see the assumption that Pauline instruction neutralizes Pauline practice. Although of Junia, Munger points out, “Regardless, this prominent woman was a prisoner like Paul. The Romans could be brutal, but it’s doubtful they imprisoned Junia for her cooking.”⁶³

Some argue that Paul was antagonistic to women in ministry and, indeed, in leadership. If Phoebe, Priscilla, and Junia are any indication, this contention becomes extremely tenuous in re-reading Rom 16:1-12. If we have already decided that Paul never permitted women to take that sort of a role, these textual errors must be dismissed as phantasms and corrected by modern scholarship, regardless of what Paul actually did.

Additional Women Named in Pauline Practice and Context

Is the argument for Pauline practice confined to 1 Corinthians 11 and Romans 16? No, it is not. Luke and Paul mention at least three households or household churches attached to women.⁶⁴ We will not assume that these must be led by women, but it is worth seeing if we can learn more.

Lydia

The first woman listed in connection with a household is Lydia. Her conversion is the first in Europe. She likely was instrumental in founding the Philippian church (Acts 16:13-15, 40). Lydia probably was a person of status because she was named, had a lucrative and prestigious

⁵⁹The women are Priscilla (v. 3-5), Mary (v. 6), Junia (v. 7), Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis (v. 12), the mother of Rufus (v. 13), Julia (v. 15), and the sister of Nereus (v. 15). If we add Phoebe, the count is ten women, but she receives commendation rather than a greeting.

⁶⁰Epp, 21; and Lampe and Johnson, 166.

⁶¹Schreiner, 793.

⁶²Ibid., 797.

⁶³Munger, 11.

⁶⁴Tabitha, mentioned in Acts 9:36-41, is named as an active disciple. While she was apparently a person of significance, there is no indication that she was leader of a household or a household church or involved in liturgical ministry.

business, and her house apparently could accommodate a number of guests.⁶⁵ Her husband is not mentioned, leading most commentators to speculate that she was a widow or single. Peterson adds the possibility of divorce, and considers this more likely than “a single woman of means.”⁶⁶ We do not know much beyond that she was named in the start of the church in Philippi and that the church met in her house (v. 40). She was clearly the household leader, given that her household followed her in baptism (v. 15). It is a stretch to assert that “Priscilla and Lydia took an active role in the ministry of their churches.”⁶⁷ This assumption may be reasonable but is not stated in the text. Beyond Acts 16, we cannot prove that Lydia played a role in ministry in Philippi or in the life of Paul.⁶⁸

Chloe

Chloe was already mentioned in the context of 1 Cor 1:10-11. Although the NIV refers to “*Chloe’s household*,” most commentators agree that a better translation would be “Chloe’s people” (literally “those of Chloe”). These may have been her slaves, agents, or business associates. She may not have even been a Christian or from Corinth, although her people almost certainly were, given their interest in the situation occurring in the Corinthian congregation and Paul’s trust in their testimony.⁶⁹ Chloe is thus a tenuous potential “woman in ministry” and must be removed from certain consideration as a leader.

Nympha

Lastly, we have Nympha. Paul greets her in Col 4:15, along with “*the church in her house*.” Again, she was probably a widow or currently unmarried, as it would not have been “*her house*” otherwise.⁷⁰ Dunn infers that she “was probably the leader of the church there, or at least she acted as host for the gathering and for the fellowship meal

⁶⁵Cf. Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 491-92.

⁶⁶David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 461.

⁶⁷John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 349.

⁶⁸As Polhill notes, “It is surely to go too far with such speculations, however, to argue that Paul married Lydia and that she was the ‘loyal yokefellow’ of Phil 4:3.” Cf. *Ibid.*

⁶⁹Cf. Fee, 54; Garland, 43-44; and Thiselton, 121.

⁷⁰James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 285.

(including, on at least some occasions, the Lord's Supper).⁷¹ He cautions that this is an inference, but one without countering evidence in the NT. Some textual evidence suggests that the name may have been Nymphas, thus a man; but there seems to be little support for this (although more than for Junias). This is not a key element in establishing Pauline practice.⁷²

Although the above-named women are listed as head of their household or having a church in their house, this does not prove their active ministry leadership. However, their presence in the text does argue more for than against the idea of women in ministry.

Daughters of Phillip

The four unmarried daughters of Philip who prophesied, according to Acts 21:9, receive terse mention. It is difficult to discern why they are mentioned. Witherington suggests that Luke wants "to show that the prophecy of Joel reiterated and reinterpreted by Peter in Acts 2 had come true."⁷³ Luke establishes that women exercised prophetic roles in Caesarea as well as in Corinth and that such roles by women were accepted beyond the Pauline context. Philip is named as "*the evangelist, one of the Seven,*" a person of influence in the early church. His daughters' prophetic ministry, referred to without negative connotations, must have been accepted as valid. Polhill notes, "Perhaps the most significant observation in the present narrative is the testimony that there were women in the early church who were recognized as having the gift of prophecy."⁷⁴

Euodia and Syntyche

Our final example of Pauline practice regarding women and ministry is found in Phil 4:2-3. Euodia and Syntyche "*have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel.*" Paul names them as "*co-workers*" and ones "*whose names are in the book of life.*" They were of some note in the Philippian congregation and (apparently) in disagreement with each other, as Paul pleaded with them "*to be of the same mind in the Lord.*" Although some scholars speculate that these were patronesses rather than church leaders, the structure of this section does not support

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Cf. Robert W. Wall, *Colossians & Philemon*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993); and N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1986), 163.

⁷³Witherington, 633.

⁷⁴Polhill, 435.

this, as Paul will deal with financial matters in vv. 10-20.⁷⁵ In addition, Paul labels them co-workers who have contended with him for the gospel.

Euodia and Syntyche are not adversaries of Paul, even if there was friction between them. His tone is friendly in commending their work, and he names them, which he tends not to do with adversaries.⁷⁶ Witherington points out that “In Greek and Roman oratory, women were not mentioned by name unless they were notable or notorious. This is an important rhetorical signal that likely tells us something about the prominence of these women that Paul calls by name here.”⁷⁷ Their disagreement with each other is probably not theological, for Paul addresses theological disputes directly and deals with the issues involved.⁷⁸ His tone here is gentle and does not elevate one above the other, seen in the repetition of “*I plead with . . .*” and the commendations offered for their work. “He does not tell them to quit causing trouble and listen to the men. . . . They played meaningful roles in the work of the gospel and its spread.”⁷⁹

Witherington writes, “Were these women not prominent co-workers of Paul, and thus leaders in Philippi, the previous exhortations to the congregation would have sufficed to deal with the problem.”⁸⁰ Rather, they are addressed as co-workers and not dismissed as subordinates. Paul uses the term “co-worker” (συνεργός, *synergos*) 12 times in his writing. There is only one other use of the term in the NT.⁸¹ Other co-workers are prominent partners in ministry, including Priscilla and

⁷⁵Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 234.

⁷⁶Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 389-90; Jerry L. Sumney, *Philippians: A Greek Student's Intermediate Reader* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 99; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 235. Paul generally does not name individuals, and especially not enemies, in public letters. However, cf. 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 1:15; 4:14-15, these appear in a somewhat more private letter, not addressed to a congregation. Even in this context, most adversaries are not named but rather categorized.

⁷⁷Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 233-34.

⁷⁸Cf. Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1991), 146.

⁷⁹David E. Garland, "Philippians," in *Ephesians-Philippians*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (rev. ed.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 251.

⁸⁰Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 233.

⁸¹Rom 16:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 1:24; 8:23; Phil 2:25; 4:3; Col 4:11; 1 Thess 3:2; Philem 1, 24. The non-Pauline use is 3 John 8.

Aquila, Timothy (three times), Titus, and Epaphroditus, among others. This term seems to be “reserved for various early Christian leaders.”⁸²

“Contending” (συναθλέω, *synathleō*) was used “of gladiators who fought side by side.” This military imagery is applied to Epaphroditus, named in Phil 2:25 as a “*fellow soldier*.”⁸³ The root word in 4:3 is found in Phil 1:27. There it seems to be used for the corporate struggle of the Philippian congregation, with encouragement to stand firm and strive for the faith. In the case of Euodia and Syntyche, the focus is more narrowly on them and their previous struggle at Paul’s side for advancing the gospel.

We know that Euodia and Syntyche were women of importance in the church who are urged to lay aside differences for the well-being of the church. They are Paul’s co-workers who have struggled beside him for the advancement of the gospel. There is no question that they are permitted to work in ministry. Paul does not suggest that their involvement was inappropriate. In fact, because of their standing, disagreement between them is harmful to the body, so Paul urges them to settle these differences. Their specific role, title, or position is not defined in the hierarchy that existed at the time, but they are most likely leaders in some way. They are not the only leaders in Philippi, given the reference to *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* (“*overseers and deacons*”) in Phil 1:1 and the appeal to a “*true companion*” (lit. “loyal yokefellow”) in v. 3 to assist in mediating. More likely than not, they occupy some leadership role in Philippi.

Women in Pauline Practice and Context—A Summation

When we started, I proposed that the practice of an individual is a more certain indicator of their true beliefs than apparent statements or instructions. Paul intimates this himself when he tells the Corinthians that as their spiritual father:

I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church (1 Cor 4:16-17).

He urges their imitation of himself and stresses his “ways of life” (literally, as “ways” is plural) as an example for them. He expects

⁸²Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 237.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 238.

congruence, and he insists that his way of life agrees with what he teaches everywhere in every church.

Paul urges adherence to his life as well as his teaching.⁸⁴ 1 Cor 11:1⁸⁵ urges the Corinthians to “*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*” Phil 4:9, much like 1 Cor 4:16-17, explicitly connects Paul’s life and teaching as example. The Philippians are to “*put . . . into practice*” what they have learned, received, and heard from and what they had seen in him.⁸⁶ The materials passed on to them through his oral and written instructions, along with what they observed in Paul’s life, informed how they were to worship. He highly valued his practice and presented what he did alongside what he taught as instructive for the Christian community.

So, what about Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 14:34-35 found in a context of (dis)orderly worship? Does his command for women to be silent in the congregation contradict his approval of women’s participation in prayer and prophecy in 1 Corinthians 11? What about the many women he commends for their work in ministry, teaching, and leadership? We need to re-read 1 Cor 14:34-35.

Viewing Pauline Practice in the Context of Bandung, Indonesia

My wife Rosemarie and I have lived in Bandung, Indonesia, since August 2014, with the goal of planting an international English church. The idea of silencing all women in congregational settings and removing their speaking, teaching, and leadership contribution is a non-starter on many levels. First and foremost, the Bible does not teach that either men or women are to stifle God’s call and empowerment for ministry. Paul’s practice did not model nor did his teaching command that women were to be excluded from speaking, teaching, or leading in the church. In the era of the Spirit, all are empowered (Acts 2:17-18) and all are expected to contribute to the worship of God in the congregation (1 Cor 14:26). The difficult passages of 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 need to be

⁸⁴Cf. 1 Cor 4:16-17; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thess 3:7-9; etc.

⁸⁵1 Cor 11:1 belongs with the material of 1 Corinthians 10 (especially vv. 31-33).

⁸⁶O’Brien argues that it should be learned and received from and heard about and seen in, so that the first two elements speak of Paul’s teaching, while the remaining two address the testimony of what is said about Paul by others and what they have seen for themselves. Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 510. Hansen concurs: “The verbs heard and seen refer to the paradigmatic value of his life.” G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 300.

re-read. My study shows that these do not say what our English translations typically indicate.

Historically, the role of women in missions is well documented. From the inception of the Assemblies of God, single female missionaries served and ministered with distinction in roles that were not accessible to them at home and did so with God's clear favor in the harvest.

Culturally, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. Men are in a privileged position in Islam. However, in the Sundanese culture (dominant in Bandung), women play significant roles. Most young couples end up living with the bride's family, women generally "manage and make decisions for the household," and the "older women often function as the heads of the extended household."⁸⁷ Sundanese men and women occupy differing but egalitarian roles without preference in birth for sons over daughters. Males and females have equal access to education and work roles.⁸⁸

Even within Sundanese Islamicism, women are accepted as "leaders and decision-makers for the Islamic elements within the *adat* rituals, since they have the competence to recite Quranic verses and pray fluently."⁸⁹ This is accepted by men without feelings of being threatened, "since knowing and passing on ritual knowledge has traditionally been the women's role. In addition, many men do not feel they have the ability or desire to take on this responsibility."⁹⁰ In the context of the Sundanese people group, restricting women from teaching and speaking would be an alien concept.

My wife and I are a team. We preach together by preference and find strong positive response in almost all cases. Rosemarie leads our team in church planting, as that is how God has gifted her. This has not created issues with my "frail masculine ego." I am delighted that God has called her to this. I serve the church with my own gifts in theological research and teaching.

If the Bible taught that God does not empower women for ministry and that he restricts them from exercising these gifts, then this document would not exist. Our ministry would look very different. God has called Rosemarie (along with me) to plant a church in Bandung. We build on the work of many men and women that God has previously equipped and called, and we are excited to be a part of his work in Indonesia.

⁸⁷Linda Lentz, "Sundanese Lifecycle Rituals and the Status of Women in Indonesia" (diss., University of Wales, 2011), 294.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 301-304.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 306.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

Does Paul Really Want All Women to be Silent? 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

by Waldemar Kowalski

Paul's command, silencing women in the congregation (1 Cor 14:34-35), continues to perplex biblical scholars and readers. How is this instruction understood in light of previous guidelines on how women are to pray and prophesy in a congregational setting where men and spiritual powers are present (1 Cor 11:3-16, esp. v. 10)?¹ In 1 Cor 14:26 the command that "everyone" should have something to contribute anticipates that both men and women will participate in the service.²

Some scholars remove 1 Cor 14:34-35, treating these verses as a non-Pauline textual interpolation, most likely from someone antagonistic to female ministry or to women in general.³ Others choose to effectively remove them, seeing them as architectural artifacts (segregated worship spaces);⁴ cultural artifacts (exemplars of chauvinistic, male-dominated,

¹This passage gives every indication of mixed worship: the requirements make no sense in a setting of single-gender worship, as the instructions are given equally to men and women. Cf. Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 232, 238-40; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 800-805. For the importance of appearance in 1 Corinthians 11, cf. Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

²Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 690, cf. esp. 52 n. 22.

³Conzelmann dismisses 33b-36 with a brief paragraph, stating that these are "to be regarded as an interpolation." Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 246. For a defense of textual interpolation, cf. Fee, 699-705; Philip Barton Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 225-267; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Interpolations in 1 Corinthians," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48, (1986): 90-92, 94. Fee argues strongly against textual emendation (transposition of vv. 34-35) and for interpolation. Thematically, the issue is not only the prohibition of female speech but also the appeal to the Law in v. 34, which is seen as non-Pauline.

⁴Among others, albeit cautiously, cf. N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 199.

or patriarchal cultures);⁵ as a Pauline citation of Corinthian material with which he disagrees;⁶ or intrusion of pagan practices in Christian worship.⁷ Still others claim the right to what has been called “experiential” interpretation (also called a Pentecostal hermeneutic).⁸ Those who have been given the Holy Spirit can re-interpret Scripture in new ways. If that interpretation “works” for them, then that re-interpretation is correct.

These views treat 1 Cor 14:34-35 as a problem to be removed. Do these approaches have merit? The idea of a Holy Spirit-given interpretation that contradicts what Scripture itself says is impossible (Gal 1:8-9). Disruptive pagan cultic practices and questions shouted out from a segregated seating area may have occurred as disorderly intrusions in Corinthian worship. But the text does not indicate this and such a suggestion does not have traction in current scholarship.⁹ Contemporary culture differs from that of Paul’s Corinth, but discarding a Pauline instruction on that basis is dangerous. What else may we discard because it does not please us? Beyond this “slippery slope,” nothing in the text indicates that this was localized either geographically or temporally, and the stress on “*all the churches*” (v. 33) and the broader Christian community (vv. 36-38) argues to the contrary.¹⁰ The notion that the Corinthian worshipers themselves were trying to curtail

⁵Cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1994), 230-33. Schüssler Fiorenza argues that single women are permitted to pray and prophesy in public, but not married women.

⁶This assumes that v. 36 is a sarcastic rebuttal of vv. 34-35. For a defense of the rebuttal view, cf. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, Reading the New Testament Series (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1987), 91-95.

⁷For the view that the problem was a disruptive and inappropriate intrusion of Greco-Roman cultic practices by female worshippers, cf. Anne B. Blampied, “Paul and Silence for ‘the Women’ in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35,” *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 13, no. 2 (1983); Catherine Kroeger, “The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman Cults of Women,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30, no. 1 (1987); Schüssler Fiorenza, 232. Cf. also Jon M. Isaak, “Hearing God’s Word in Silence: A Canonical Approach to 1 Corinthians 14.34-35,” *Direction* 24, no. 2 (1995). Isaak offers a cultural excision, stating, “Today the Western church finds itself in a cultural location where it is not ‘shameful for a woman to speak.’ Since the argument in the text is based on this time-conditioned assumption, the restriction of women in ministry is not literally normative today.” (61)

⁸This approach was taken in a sermon the writer heard as a member of the congregation. The individual promoting this view will not be named.

⁹Keener observes, “Distant seating of men and women would be difficult in a house church, and we currently lack evidence for gender segregation in early synagogues.” Craig S. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 118, n. 253.

¹⁰Compare this, for instance, to the “present crisis” language in 1 Cor 7:26, which might allow Paul’s instruction here to pertain to the Corinthian congregation at this time without setting a universal principle in place.

female involvement in worship and that Paul is countering them is dubious. This chapter is about Paul curbing rather than encouraging Corinthian disorder.¹¹

An interpolation argument seems the best contender to remove this troublesome instruction. Rather than refuting the interpolation theory, this paper argues that the verses are not a textual or thematic intrusion.¹² Vv. 34-35 continue Paul's instruction on appropriate demeanor and practice in a charismatic worship service. This work re-examines these passages to see whether the "obvious" meaning of the text, at least in the common English translations, is also the correct meaning of the text.

One reason for the readers' confusion is that the bulk of 1 Corinthians, starting with 7:1, is Paul's response to a letter received from the Corinthian church, apparently requesting his input (1 Cor 7:1).¹³ Unfortunately, the modern reader has the answer but is missing the question or problem. The Bible scholar/reader is like a detective, deducing certain contexts and situations. This is like finding someone lying unconscious on a sidewalk, clutching an open and empty bottle of aspirin. What health situation led to their condition? The need for aspirin seems clear; the problem or disease is not. This could be heart disease, a debilitating migraine, an overdose, extreme physical pain, or a number of other conditions.¹⁴ A correct diagnosis affects the proper treatment of the unconscious person. Similarly, the reader of these passages knows that there is an issue, and reads Paul's prescription, but has difficulty in establishing the cause of the problem.

Solving this puzzle requires a reconstruction of the original situation. 1 Corinthians 14 addresses orderliness in congregational worship. The whole chapter is dedicated to correct various disorders in charismatic congregational practice, including instructions on women's involvement in specific elements of congregational practice and worship in vv. 34-35.

Before reading our target verses, we need to observe that many approaches to vv. 34-35 violate one of the cardinal rules of exegesis—that of observing the context. When these two verses are viewed as an anomaly, separate from their context and the whole of the letter, it is easy

¹¹Cf. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 667; Thiselton, 1151-52; Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 279-80.

¹²Cf. also Witherington, 288; Thiselton, 1147-50.

¹³“Περὶ δὲ ὃν ἐγράψατε...” This introductory “περὶ δὲ” will recur in 7:25, 37; 8:1; 12:1; and 16:1. Cf. Fee, 266-67. Fee sees this not as “a friendly exchange, in which the new believers in Corinth are asking spiritual advice” but rather “taking exception to his position [in the Previous Letter] on point after point.”

¹⁴The use of crushed aspirin as an externally applied solution for dandruff is not likely to imply that a really large flake of dandruff hit and knocked out this mysterious patient.

to end up with an incorrect interpretation. We shall see that these verses are not about women per se, but are a part of Paul's instruction on proper congregational worship.

Some issues arise with a number of English translations. The 1984 New International Version (NIV) splits v. 33 in the middle, making the universal rule silence for women.¹⁵ The NASB, KJV, and others treat the verse as a unit: the universal rule is that God is a God of peace rather than confusion (the topic of the whole chapter). There are good reasons for preferring the punctuation of the KJV, NASB, and others. First, it makes more sense that peace is the universal rule, observed in all the churches. Second, the repetition of ἐκκλησία in vv. 33 and 34 is awkward. A third reason relates to the interpolation theories and textual variants. In some Greek manuscripts, vv. 34 and 35 appear at the end of the chapter rather than after v. 33 (one reason why some scholars consider this text added later by a scribe). If vv. 34-35 are essentially "portable," then one cannot simply tack the latter part of v. 33 onto v. 34. The newer edition of the NIV (2011) rectifies this and renders v. 33 as one logical unit.¹⁶

Several corrections to the English text are necessary. First, v. 33 proclaims that God is a God of peace and not disorder. This is to prevail in all congregations, including in Corinth. Second, the immediate context (1 Cor 14:27-36) gives good reason to question whether Paul's command is indeed an intrusion. It is noteworthy that three groups are told to be silent under a specific circumstance. The writer employs a single Greek verb with identical inflection for all three (σιγάω), varying only in that the third group is plural and the first two are singular.

First, speakers in tongues are limited to two or at the most three, and are to be silent if there is no interpreter present (1 Cor 14:27-28). Next, prophets are limited to two or three while the others judge. If a prophecy (or possibly a judgment of prophecy) is given to someone seated, the one currently prophesying is to be silent. Presumably, the prophecy being delivered has been judged and found wanting (1 Cor 14:29-30).¹⁷ The

¹⁵The NIV (1984 edition) has been the default pew Bible in many North American non-KJV evangelical churches and thus has a significant effect on what is "read in the pew." A number of the other common pew Bibles, such as the ASV, CEB, CEV, ESV, GNT, HCSB, NCV, NET, NRSV, and RSV, similarly place a full stop in the middle of v. 33.

¹⁶Common English Bibles that render v. 33 as one sentence include the Darby, Douay-Rheims, J.B. Phillips, KJV and its modern variants, NASB, NIV (2011), NLT, TNIV, and YLT.

¹⁷With the prophets, it may well be that there were to be no more than two or three prophecies before discerning or judging ensued, with more prophecies then permitted after such judging, given the references to all prophesying (vv. 26, 31). Cf. Fee, 693.

third group is “the women” of 1 Cor 14:34-35, who likewise are to be silent, with Paul employing the same Greek root word.¹⁸

The NIV and some other modern English translations render the same Greek verb three different ways: “should keep quiet” (v. 28), “should stop” (v. 30), and “should remain silent” (v. 34).¹⁹ This variation in rendering obscures the fact that a similar instruction—indeed an identical command—is given to three groups. This change in translation effectively brings about the logical separation of “the women” from the other charismatics being addressed. Correctly understanding this directive requires the reader to recognize and restore the correlation of three groups with three parallel instructions.²⁰

A further piece of the puzzle is the specific identity of “the women.” While “women” can be an appropriate translation for the plural form of γυνή, these particular women have husbands. They are to interact with their own husbands (τοὺς ἰδίους ἀνδράς). Therefore, in this context these women are specifically wives.²¹

All three groups are enjoined to silence rather than speech in a particular situation. Speech itself is not generally being forbidden. In fact, the first two groups are first instructed to speak, and secondarily told to limit that speech under certain conditions. The wives are not

¹⁸The value of more literal translations such as the NASB, ESV, and even the KJV can be seen here, as one English word, “silent,” is consistently used to render the one Greek term. The NIV obscures this from the reader, using “keep quiet,” “should stop,” and “remain silent” for the one word. It is unfortunate that the English reader has had this parallel usage hidden from him or her, and the NIV does the modern reader a significant disfavor here.

¹⁹Translations that render the three uses of σιγᾶω with substantially different English words include the CEV, Douay-Rheims, GNT, J.B. Phillips, KJV (but not NKJV), NCV, NET, NIV (all variants), and NLT. Translations that employ essentially identical English words include the AV (“keep silence”), CEB (“keep/be silent”), Darby (“be silent”), ESV (“keep/be silent”), HCSB (“keep/be silent”), NASB (“be silent”), NKJV (“keep silent/silence”), NRSV (“be silent”), RSV (“keep silence/be silent”), and YLT (“be silent”).

²⁰Miller states that “this triplet is clearly a structuring device” (67) and that a result of the inconsistent translation is that “the reader of the NIV will likely infer that Paul offers mild and specific guidance to those who speak in tongues and prophesy but gives stern and sweeping directives to women.” (68) Cf. J. David Miller, “Translating Paul’s Words About Women,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 2009, no. Spring (2009).

²¹Spurgeon argues that “Paul seems not to have differentiated between ‘wives’ and ‘women’ in this passage as he did elsewhere [citing numerous examples in 1 Cor 7]. Most likely Paul was addressing *all* women, and the phrase τοὺς ἰδίους ἀνδράς (lit., ‘their own men’) in 14:35 means their husbands, fathers, or brothers.” Spurgeon fails to prove that Paul has changed his usage between Ch. 7 and Ch. 14, and even if the reference is to male heads of households, the principle established would still stand. Spurgeon cites Witherington to support his contention, but Witherington, while noting lack of certainty, states “But probably ‘husband’ is what is meant.” Cf. Andrew B. Spurgeon, “Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168, no. July-September (2011): 321-22; Witherington, 287 n. 43.

instructed to speak, but are told to be silent, using the same word (συνάω, here in the plural form) used for the tongues-speakers and prophets.

Some scholars, especially those who interpret these as “women” rather than “wives,” suggest that women are chattering or being disruptive, perhaps because of a segregated worship facility. Others see this as a case of Christian women mimicking pagan female worship activity, which could be quite profane and disruptive. These suggestions are not likely correct, as the word used for speaking in v. 34 is used of edifying speech earlier in the chapter.²² In fact, the parallel groups also speak (λαλέω): vv. 27 and 29. Besides, this does not resolve the issue in this chapter of an apparent abrupt change of topic on order in charismatic worship.

Why might this command be limited to the wives? Why are they to ask their husbands in private? Perhaps we can deduce the issue from another clue: the verb translated as “ask” (ἐπερωτάω, *eperōtaō*).²³ In nearly all of the 56 times it appears in the New Testament (NT), the context is one of interrogation, often in a quasi- or genuinely judicial context.²⁴ It is used when Christ is being tested by the religious authorities, and also during his trial appearances. The NIV and ESV usually translate this as “ask” (45 times NIV, 54 times ESV), while the NASB uses “question” 30 times and “ask” 26 times, regardless if the context is interrogation or a simple request for neutral information. Likely, the problem here is not simply asking a question, but rather the public judgment/interrogation by a wife of her husband. That would indeed be offensive and need to be limited.²⁵

²² Cf. vv. 3, 6, 9, 19. Cf. also Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 306.

²³BDAG offers the following meanings:

1. to put a question to, ask
 - a. generally (1 Cor 14:35 is cited as being in this category of meaning) ;
 - b. of a judge’s questioning (interrogation) in making an investigation;
 - c. with regard to questioning deities;
2. to make a request, ask for.

²⁴The fifty-six usages are Matt. 12:10; 16:1; 17:10; 22:23, 35, 41, 46; 27:11; Mark 5:9; 7:5, 17; 8:23, 27, 29; 9:11, 16, 21, 28, 32, 33; 10:2, 10, 17; 11:29; 12:18, 28, 34; 13:3; 14:60, 61; 15:2, 4, 44; Luke 2:46; 3:10, 14; 6:9; 8:9, 30; 9:18; 17:20; 18:18, 40; 20:21, 27, 40; 21:7; 22:64; 23:6, 9; John 9:23; 18:7; Acts 5:27; 23:34; Rom 10:20; 1 Cor 14:35. As can be seen, the majority of these are in the gospels. Many of these are confrontational queries made of Jesus.

²⁵Cf. Wright, 199-200; Thiselton; George T. Montague, *First Corinthians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 256; Blomberg, 282. Contra this, cf. James Greenbury, “1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Evaluation of Prophecy Revisited,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51, no. 4 (2008). Greenbury argues that this interpretation (the weighing of prophecies) would not have occurred to him, and asks, “Would it have occurred to the Corinthians themselves?” (731) Greenbury ignores the fact that Paul’s instruction here is in response to questions they

There are some reasonable objections to the parallelism argument as well as issues with the terms employed in vv. 34-35. One objection is that the first two groups are given numeric limitation—two or at most three—while this is not present with the third group, the wives. However, the specific action being undertaken is the judgment (*διακρίνω*) of prophecy, which has been commanded of the entire congregation, or at least the other prophets (v. 29).²⁶ The prophets, at the very least, are expected to weigh what had been said, which would explain how a prophecy might be cut short (v. 30).²⁷ While the number of delivered prophecies was being limited, there is no such limitation on the succeeding judgments. Hence there is no limitation on the permission of women to judge prophecy: just not that of one's spouse. Beyond that, there is an obvious numeric limitation for the third group. It is a reasonable assumption that each husband would have only one wife (although this does not limit the number of overall judgments by others). Thus, the number of prophecies judged by prophets' wives is limited to the number of prophecies given.

A second objection to the parallelism argument is that the first two groups are expected to speak, except under certain circumstances. The English rendering seems to enjoin complete silence of “*the women.*” This is not actually the case, since women are previously identified as prophets (1 Cor 11:5) and instructed that prophets (or the entire congregation) are to judge prophecies (1 Cor 14:29). The charismatic wives are then a third category of those generally permitted to speak. Along with tongues-speakers and prophets, they are to limit that speech under specific circumstances. A separate instruction to speak, except under specific circumstances, is thus not needed.

Another objection is the use of *ἐὰν δὲ* (*ean de*) in vv. 28, 30, apparently missing in vv. 34-35.²⁸ This translates as “and if” and expresses a conditional instruction: “should it be the case that . . .” In v. 35 Paul uses *εἰ δέ* (*ei de*) instead, which is somewhat more definite: “but if . . .” This minor difference fits the situation well and is consistent with the previously mentioned distinctions. In the case of “the women,” it is

themselves have raised, so the modern reader can be pretty sure that the Corinthians knew what Paul was referring to.

²⁶Fee, Thiselton, and others argue for this as a reference to the entire congregation rather than just the prophets. (Cf. Fee, 694; Thiselton, 1140.) Either way, women would be present as part of the group judging.

²⁷Charismatic praxis in the Pauline communities seems to have been rather more vigorous and interactive than is common today, given the need to establish the existence of an interpretation/interpreter for tongues (vv. 5, 13, 28) and the expectation of weighing or judgment of prophecy (v. 29).

²⁸I am indebted to Prof. Takamitsu Muraoka for pointing this out during discussion following Session Three of the William Menzies Lectureship Series at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines (Feb 1, 2017).

all wives *as wives* who are instructed to abstain from public, congregational speech, “interrogating” their husbands in private.²⁹

What about the statement that it is “disgraceful” for a woman/wife to speak in church (v. 35)? The word translated “disgraceful” (αἰσχρός, *aischros*) is used in 1 Cor 11:6, where “*it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off.*” Both passages refer to things that are considered shameful in the culture of the time. The context for 1 Cor 11:6 women speaking in the congregation, disgraced not in the act of speaking but in inappropriate demeanor (an uncovered head). The disgrace of 1 Cor 14:35 would also logically be related to inappropriate actions or demeanor (interrogating one’s husband in public), not the act of speaking in itself.³⁰ The repeated use of disgrace (αἰσχρός) here in 14:34-35, echoing 11:5-6, reinforces that the activity in question has to do with charismatic worship, specifically prophecy.

Other terms connect vv. 34-35 to the overall charismatic instruction in 1 Cor. For instance, v. 31 gives “*be instructed*” (NIV) (lemma μανθάνω, *manthanō*, present subjunctive) or “*to learn*” (ESV) as one of the functions of prophecy. V. 35 states that if the wives “*want to inquire*” (NIV) (lemma μανθάνω, aorist active infinitive with the present active indicative) or “*desire to learn*” (ESV) about something, they are to do so at home. The ESV does a better job than does the NIV of letting the reader know that vv. 31 and 35 are connected by the use of the same verb, “to learn.”³¹

The precise instruction or learning in both instances is undefined. In 1 Cor 4:6 what is learned is a corrective, and this may be the case in 1 Cor 14:31 and v. 35. Paul uses a similar construction (θέλω μαθεῖν, *thelō mathein* – present active indicative with the aorist active infinitive) in Gal 3:2, where he is pressing the Galatians. He “*would like to learn just one thing*” from them: “*Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*” The “learning” in Gal 3:2 is clearly not a simple request for information but is presented with a more interrogatory intention. This matches the context of judging prophecy found in 1 Cor 14:29ff.

What about the instruction that the wives are to be “*in submission*” (ὑποτάσσω, *hupotassō*, present passive imperative) in v. 34? In v. 32,

²⁹This is another parallel, in that the tongues speakers of v. 27 are not commanded to be absolutely silent, but rather silent in the congregation, speaking between themselves and God. Likewise, these wives who desire to judge their husband’s prophecy are not enjoined to absolute silence, but rather appropriate silence for the public context.

³⁰Fee disagrees. “Again, as with the rule and prohibition in v. 34, the statement is unqualified: It is shameful for a woman to speak in church, not simply to speak in a certain way.” Fee, 708.

³¹This verb will appear also in 1 Tim 2:11.

Paul has observed that the spirits of prophets are “*subject to the control*” of those prophets (NIV) (ὑποτάσσω, present passive indicative). Again, a number of English translations imply a sweeping instruction to the wives, compared to a benign observation regarding the prophets. The NASB renders the word more consistently: “*are subject to*” (v. 32) and “*are to subject themselves*” (v. 34). Both prophets and wives are to be under control: Paul observes that the prophets can control their use of their gift and similarly instructs the wives to control their speech. The wives are instructed to “*be subject*,” albeit without specification of to whom they are subject or by whom they are subjected. Thiselton suggests, “In v. 32 the verb is used in the middle voice to denote *self-control*, or **controlled speech**.”³² Why should the use of the verb in v. 34 not also be understood as in the middle voice, so that in fact the wives are to be self-controlled or exercise controlled speech?³³ Most other Pauline uses of ὑποτάσσω are transitive and it is specified to whom or what the subject is submitting. The pattern in 1 Cor 14:34 viz. v.32 has similarity to Rom 13:5 viz. v.1. In Rom 13:1, the imperative of ὑποτάσσω, used in transitive form, commands submission to the ruling authorities, followed by intransitive use of the passive infinitive of ὑποτάσσω in v.5. Here the NIV supplies words not found in the original: “*to the authorities*,” referring back to v.1 for the implied object or reference. I suggest that the intransitive use of ὑποτάσσω in 1 Cor 14:34 should likewise be directed back to v.32. In this case, the wives who are prophets are to be in a state of self-control.

What about the reference to the Law in v. 34? Paul refers to the law six times in 1 Corinthians and a number of these are indeterminate.³⁴ The use of “law” (νόμος) in v. 34 is not a reference to an identified prohibition in the OT,³⁵ nor can it be effectively argued as deriving from later rabbinic Judaism or Josephus. Although Paul does not appeal to

³²Thiselton, 1153. Emphasis in the original.

³³BDAG does not list the middle voice as an option for ὑποτάσσω, but does distinguish between “become subject” and “subject oneself” for the passive voice. It would seem that “subject oneself” has a clear middle sense.

³⁴Of these, two references are an appeal to the Law of Moses (1 Cor 9:8, 9), one is a reference to an undefined law but likely the systems of Judaism (1 Cor 9:20), one is a general reference to the Old Testament (1 Cor 14:21), one is the observation that “the power of sin is the law” (1 Cor 15:56), and finally there is 1 Cor 14:34, which refers to another indeterminate law.

³⁵Cf. L. Ann Jervis, “1 Corinthians 14.34-35: A Reconsideration of Paul’s Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 58, no. June (1995): 56-58. Jervis argues that this reference to the law functions similarly to 1 Cor 7:19, where “Paul appeals to ‘the commandments of God’ in a similarly abstract way and for the purpose of persuasion.” The idea that this to be identified with Gen 3:16 “is a sensible choice only with an a priori understanding that the agenda of 1 Cor. 14.34-35 concerns the promotion of gender hierarchy. The circular nature of the argument is clear.” (p. 58)

law/the Law in his instructions in 1 Corinthians 11, he twice mentions the transmitting of tradition, once as introduction to the instructions on the demeanor of both men and women in worship (v. 2) and once in his preface to the ceremonial observance of communion (v. 23). Soards observes of v. 35, “Perhaps Paul is not referring to the OT at all.”³⁶ Though Paul refers here to “the law,” he may be referring to the customs of the times rather than the Pentateuch or even the whole OT, given the difficulty of citing a specific precedent for this instruction.³⁷ If the submission of women is not to some external force or object but instead a reference to self-control, the law here may be a reference to the rabbinic material about learning in a state of quietness.³⁸

I propose, then, that this is not a change of topic nor is it an intrusion.³⁹ The repetition of terms (σιγάω, λαλέω, μανθάνω, ὑποτάσσω) and parallel construction firmly embed vv. 34-35 as part of this charismatic instruction. The topic is still the proper employing of spiritual gifts in building up the congregation. All of the prophets bear responsibility to judge or weigh a prophecy as it is given (1 Cor 14:29), with no indication that the female prophets were excused from this responsibility. However, when it came to the issue of a wife judging her husband’s prophecy, she was to abstain from doing so in the congregation, doing this at home instead.⁴⁰ The disruptive effect of such public action would be offensive in virtually any society.⁴¹ The

³⁶ Soards, 306.

³⁷Cf. Grant R. Osborne, “Hermeneutics and Women in the Church,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20, no. 4 (1977): 345. Osborne cites an unpublished D. Min. thesis by A. Stouffer, and presents Stouffer as arguing “that the law should be understood in a general sense to refer to the customs of the time.” To this he responds that the articular use (ὁ νόμος) is more likely a reference to the Biblical norm, but that “this does not obviate” Stouffer’s thesis.

³⁸Among others, *m. ‘Abot 1:17; 3:14; 5:7*. Cf. also the discussion on silence or quietness while learning in Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1985), 74-81.

³⁹Payne argues that vv. 34-35 are textually separated from vv. 29 and cannot therefore be a part of the same discussion. In fact, Payne argues that vv. 30-33 are not an elaboration on v. 29a because of the statement that “all may prophesy” in v. 31. (cf. Payne, 222). This ignores the parallelism that is clearly a part of vv. 27-28 and 29-30, and in my argument, also of 34-35. Beyond that, the strong statements and commands of orderly worship of vv. 36-40 most decisively must be seen as a part of the whole instruction of 1 Corinthians 14. Consider, for instance, the parallels between vv. 33 and 36, stressing the universality of Paul’s instruction.

⁴⁰Given Paul’s reciprocation statements in 1 Cor 7, it can reasonably be assumed that the reciprocal would also be intended here. In other words, no spouse should judge their mate’s prophecy in the congregational setting. This is not explicitly stated, and the reason for this may be that husbands were not in the practice of judging their wife’s prophecy, while wives were doing so. We must keep in mind that this is a response to a specific problem in a specific congregation.

⁴¹Thiselton, 1156-61.

instruction to these wives in 1 Cor 14:34-35 is therefore dealing with charismatic events, not general behavior. These verses belong in the general instruction of 1 Corinthians 14. This passage does not restrict all women from all speech in congregational settings.

In the Context of Bandung, Indonesia

In our survey of Pauline practice, spiritually empowered and gifted women were not restricted from speaking ministry in the congregations. This even held true for prophecy, which Paul lists before and above teaching.⁴² Churches which accept and encourage contemporary exercise of spiritual gifts would experience significant loss of such activity of the Spirit if women were not permitted to use their gifts today. This is as similar in Bandung as in any North American Pentecostal or Charismatic church.

Our gatherings in Bandung are diverse in gender, race, people-group, and social status. No group or gender plays a lesser or restricted role. We do not try to take away the voice that God has given each of our participants. We value the work of all, but if the women were absent, silent, or restricted, a great deal less Kingdom work would occur.

In our context, the traditional reading of 1 Cor 14:34-35 seems alien, foreign to the surrounding culture. It does not reflect what is done in the *kampung*, the village, nor in our gatherings, the church. A contextual reading, one of respect for one's spouse in public gatherings, resonates with the people to whom we minister. Restricting women does not.

⁴²Gordon D. Fee, "Issues in Evangelical Hermeneutics Iii: The Great Watershed--Intentionality and Particularity/Eternality: 1 Timothy 2:8-15 as a Test Case," *Crux* 26, no. 4 (1990): 36.

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PENTECOSTALS and the POOR

Reflections from the Indian Context



Foreword by Byron Klaus

**A Study of 1 Peter 3:18b-20a and 4:6:
A Response to the Notion of Christ's Postmortem Evangelism
to the Un-evangelized, a View Recently Advocated in Japan
Part 1**

by Hirokatsu Yoshihara

Introduction¹

Japan has an almost 470-year history of Christian proclamation since Francis Xavier's arrival in 1549² though the Christian faith was prohibited from 1639 to 1868.³ Japan's current Christian population is only 1,955,729 (1.54%) out of 126,995,411 and its evangelical population is 596,498 (0.47%), which represents 30.5% of the whole Christian population) according to Operation World.⁴ Among many

¹This paper was presented at the 25th Annual William W. Menzies Lectureship held at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio City, Philippines on January 30 through February 3, 2017. I appreciate the audience and those who shared their questions and comments during the afternoon presentation and the evening panel discussion. Special thanks go to the postgraduate committee of the seminary, the main speaker Dr. Waldemar Kowalski, Dr. Teresa Chai, Dr. Kay Fountain, Rev. Lora Embudo, Rev. Zaldy Lim, Rev. Laurence Mascay, and Rev. Marlene Yap, as well as Dr. Chris Carter, supervisor, who was not present at the lectureship. All shortcomings and errors are mine.

²Tadataka Maruyama, "Japan," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland, and Charles van Engen (Grand Rapids, MI, 2000), 513.

³Ibid. In fact, the Tokugawa Shogunate of the period allowed Christianity for almost all of the first 10 years since its official establishment in 1602. Kentaro Miyazaki describes: "The Tokugawa government's promulgation in 1614 of a complete ban on the *kirishitan* religion in all of Japan marked the beginning of a savage persecution that produced a great many martyrs. The three decades from 1614 to 1644 were a period in which the persecution and the martyrdoms reached their peaks. By the end of this period not a single missionary was left in the country, and from then on the faithful had to maintain their faith on their own, while outwardly pretending to be Buddhists." Kentarō Miyazaki, "Roman Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan," in *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, ed. Mark R. Mullins (Boston: Brill, 2003), 4; <http://www.questia.com/read/117948975/handbook-of-christianity-in-japan> (accessed October 30, 2016).

⁴<http://www.operationworld.org/japa> (accessed October 28, 2016). On their website, Evangelicals are "enumerated" as "all affiliated Christians (church members, their children, other participants of the faith community) of denominations that are definitively evangelical in theology as explained above" and "the proportion of the affiliated Christians in other denominations (that are not wholly evangelical in theology) who would hold

suggested reasons hindering Japanese' conversion to the Christian, especially evangelical, faith is the popular practice of ancestor veneration, which "has been an important aspect of religious practice in Japan for centuries."⁵

The strong inclination of the Japanese to bonding with the deceased around them has been symbolically observed through the popularity of a song, "Sen-no Kaze-ni Natte" (literally "becoming one-thousand winds," a.k.a. "A Thousand Winds"), which has been released by various singers since 2003.⁶ It is based on an English poem, "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep," attributed to Mary Frye or one of other suggested sources.⁷ The poem tells how the poet (although dead) is awake and present around his/her living loved ones by becoming wind, light, snow, birds and stars. The song's largest hit was recorded by a professional opera singer, Masahumi Akikawa. His CD sales reached 1.2 million for two years alone, between May 2006 and March 2008. One of many YouTube clips⁸ of Akikawa's version of the song has reached more than 3 million playbacks since July 2010. The total playbacks of all of his clips of this song, and those by other singers, have reached several scores of millions.⁹ In addition, an Episcopal-affiliated educational institution,

evangelical views, whether Western in origin or otherwise." It further elaborates: "This is a theological and not an experiential definition. It does not mean that all evangelicals as defined above are actually born-again. In many nations, only 10-40% of evangelicals so defined may have had a valid conversion and regularly attend church services. However, it does show how many people align themselves with churches where the gospel is being proclaimed as such." <http://www.operationworld.org/glossary> (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁵Stephen Covell, "Religious Culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*: 147-165, ed. Yoshio Shigemoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 160.

⁶A rather detailed description of the history of the introduction and development of the song is only found in Japanese Wikipedia. <https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%8D%83%E3%81%AE%E9%A2%A8%E3%81%AB%E3%81%AA%E3%81%A3%E3%81%A6> (accessed October 28, 2016) (Japanese). A concise introduction to the song in English with some links to its music videos and a Japanese lesson based on its lyrics is at http://japanese-lesson.com/resources/karaoke/a_thousand_winds.html (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁷<http://www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/queries/faps/#5> (accessed October 28, 2016).

⁸<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqzCwL9xDc> (accessed October 28, 2016). This is a video of Akikawa's climactic performance in 2008 as the final performer at the most popular and prestigious annual TV song festival of the country. He had been invited to sing the song for the previous two years in a row, which is unusual for this festival. This attests to the great national popularity of the song.

⁹The clips include ones with Chinese or English subtitles. It means that this song has at least attracted a lot of people's interest also from the outside of Japan. This implies that such an affectionate feeling for the close deceased is not only limited to the Japanese people. Rather, it is universal. Accordingly, ministers all around the world must consider the pastoral implications bound up with this deeply held belief. The fact that these lyrics were, in fact, originally written in English supports this perception.

Heian-Jogakuin, started selling incense with the name of the song because the school was inspired by the process of the song's making.¹⁰

One of the factors that boosted the song's popularity and thus Japanese spirituality was definitely the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.¹¹ That earthquake reportedly caused more than 20 thousand casualties and missing people. While it opened some doors for evangelism,¹² there have also been many reports about how non-Christians mourn for their loved ones lost in the disaster. These survivors claim to feel the presence of the deceased, and they continue to talk to them at their altars, tombs, and other locations of significance to their late relatives.¹³

In response to Japanese' strong affection for the deceased, around the turn of the new millennium, a Japanese evangelical minister named Arimasa Kubo started teaching his "Second-Chance Theory."¹⁴ Some¹⁵ central contentions of Kubo are: 1. "Hades is not hell."¹⁶ Based on Rev 20:14 he elaborates, "Non-Christians . . . go to Hades after death, where they remain until God's final judgment of the end of the world." 2. "The gospel exists for those in Hades as well." He bases this understanding on his interpretation of Phil 2:8-11 and Rom 10:9. 3. "Bible verses speak about the Second Chance." The Bible verses to which he refers include: Ruth 2:20, Matt 4:4, 22:32, John 5:25, 28, Rom 1:17 and 1 Pet 4:6. 4.

¹⁰<http://www.heian.ac.jp/head/public/pdf/56/agnes9.pdf> (accessed October 29, 2016) (Japanese). At <http://www.tk.heian.ac.jp/topix/okou/> (accessed October 29, 2016) (Japanese), the advertisement by the school clearly states that this incense is intended to be used while praying for blessings for loved ones in the afterlife.

¹¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aftermath_of_the_2011_T%C5%8Dhoku_earthquake_and_tsunami (accessed October 29, 2016).

¹²<http://blog.goo.ne.jp/saigaihonbu/c/27f057abab937f780eef5bae8c44bf2> (accessed October 29, 2016), for example, for some English testimonies regarding relief and evangelistic activities by Japan Assemblies of God.

¹³There is an unconnected telephone box in Otuchi, Iwate, where the living talk to the deceased as if talking on the real phone. <https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E9%A2%A8%E3%81%AE%E9%9B%BB%E8%A9%B1> (accessed October 29, 2016) (Japanese).

¹⁴<http://www2.biglobe.ne.jp/~remnant/seiseco.htm> (accessed October 29, 2016) (Japanese over several other pages starting this page). <http://www2.biglobe.ne.jp/~remnant/hades.htm> (accessed October 29, 2016) (English only on one page).

¹⁵All of the information in this paragraph is from <http://www2.biglobe.ne.jp/~remnant/hades.htm> (accessed October 29, 2016). His other contentions are: 1. "Before Christ, all who died went to Hades (Sheol)," based on Gen 37:35, 1 Sam 28:18, Eccl 9:10 and Psalm 88:3. 2. "The rich man went to Hades, not Hell," based on Jude 14-15 and Luke 16:19-31. 3. "Believers who lived before Christ are now in Heaven," based on Eph 4:8-9 and 1 Pet 3:19. 4. "Voices of praise will be heard from Hades," based on Rev 5:13. 5. "They who died before the great flood heard the message of Christ," based on 1 Pet 3:20-22. Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

“‘The Second Chance’ is not an obstacle for evangelism.”¹⁷ 5. According to 1 Pet. 3:18-20 and 4:6, “Christ preached His good news in Hades.”

Kubo identifies his argument in the tradition of William Barclay and Joel Green, especially in the exegesis of 1 Pet. 4:6. He quotes Barclay saying, “Christ descended to the world of the dead and preached the gospel there, giving them another chance to live in the Spirit of God. In some ways, this is one of the most wonderful verses in the Bible, for if our explanation is anywhere near the truth, it gives a breath-taking glimpse of a gospel of a second chance.”¹⁸ He also quotes Green, “‘the dead’ of 4:6 are dead members of the human family given postmortem opportunity to hear the good news.”¹⁹ Kubo also appeals to Yoshinobu Kumazawa,²⁰ retired president of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary,²¹ who “interprets these verses as Christ’s preaching of the good news in Hades.”²² He then concludes that these distinguished theologians “clearly taught that Jesus had descended to Hades and preached his Gospel to the people there.”²³

As these examples show, 1 Peter 3:18-22 and 4:6 are significant passages in today’s theological and pastoral scenes in Japan. Even in the theological trends in the English-speaking world, Millard Erickson identifies post-conservative evangelicalism and one of its characteristics as “a hope for a near-universal salvation. God has not left himself without a witness in all cultures, sufficient to bring people to salvation if they earnestly seek it.”²⁴ He then discusses postmortem conversion in the context of inclusivism on salvation:

A somewhat different position has sometimes been taken as an alternative to the inclusivist or implicit faith position. . . . This is the view that those who do not have an opportunity during this life to hear the gospel will be given such an opportunity after death. This is sometimes known as “eschatological evangelism” or “postmortem encounter.” This view has had

¹⁷Although there is no biblical reference provided here, Kubo compares dying, with and without believing, in Christ and states, “I choose to repent, believe in Christ and receive God’s salvation and His blessings which are given here and now, for the benefits to receive them on earth are too great to refuse.” Ibid.

¹⁸William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 249.

¹⁹Joel B. Green, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2007), 122.

²⁰Kumazawa’s doctoral degree in theology is from Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg (aka Heidelberg University).

²¹Tokyo Union Theological Seminary is a private university recognized by the Japanese government.

²²<http://www2.biglobe.ne.jp/~remnant/hades.htm> (accessed October 29, 2016).

²³Ibid.

²⁴Millard J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 30.

some support during various periods of the history of the Church. It has traditionally been based on two considerations. One is the item in later versions of the Apostles' Creed that says that Jesus "descended into Hades." The other is 1 Peter 3:17–19 and 4:6, . . .²⁵

Reflecting on these concerns and background, in this paper, I will exegete 1 Peter 3:18b-20a and 4:6 with particular reference to the notion of Jesus' postmortem evangelism to the unevangelized, a view recently advocated in Japan. My research question is: Do the verses of 1 Peter 3:18b-20a and 4:6 support the notion of postmortem evangelism that is debated in today's Japan?

In the next section, I will discuss the relationship between 1 Peter and contemporary extra-biblical literature including the non-canonical book of 1 Enoch, and some key elements, namely words and phrases, in the given text.

Arguments by Some Advocates of Postmortem Evangelism

Let me first examine major arguments by some advocates of postmortem evangelism (also known as "second-chance theory"). We will consider the positions taken by Arimasa Kubo,²⁶ Tsuneaki Kato,²⁷ William Barclay,²⁸ Bo Reicke,²⁹ Leonhard Goppelt,³⁰ and Joel Green.³¹ Arimasa Kubo (n.d.)

What then does Kubo concretely say about the above-mentioned verses?³²

²⁵Ibid., 119.

²⁶Kubo, <http://www2.biglobe.ne.jp/~remnant/hades.htm> (accessed October 29, 2016). All the quotations of his words in this section are from this website.

²⁷Tsuneaki Kato, "Yomi-ni Kudaru Kirisuto" [Christ, Who Descends to Hades]. In *Kato Tsuneaki Sekkyo Zenshu*, vol. 27: *Shitoshinjo* [Sermon Collection of Tsuneaki Kato, vol. 27: The Apostles Creed]: 337-57. Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 2006.

²⁸William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, rev. ed.

²⁹Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985).

³⁰Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, edited by Ferdinand Hahn, translated and augmented by John E. Alsup, 1st English ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993) (Original German version in 1978).

³¹Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*.

³²The following is an English translation (by Yoshihara) of the Japanese text from which Kubo constructs his arguments on his second-chance theory, though he implies that he also sees in the Greek text that "(3:18) Christ was put to death in flesh but made alive in spirit. (3:19) And in spirit, Christ went to the spirits in prison and preached the gospel. (3:20) These spirits were those who had not obeyed though God was patiently waiting . . . (4:6) It was for the dead people to be (made) alive in spirit that the gospel was preached to them." The original Japanese version was from Japan Bible Society's *Shinkyodoyaku*

- (1) The “spirits in prison” in 1 Pet 3:19 are the people in Hades.
- (2) “But Jesus actually went to Hades, not Hell. He ‘preached’ in Hades. Furthermore, the original Greek word for ‘preach’ mentioned here at the verse 1 Peter 3:19 is ‘*kerusso*’, which, in the Bible, is used always in the context of ‘preach the Gospel’” (see Matt 4:23, Luke 9:2, Acts 2:30-32, 9:20, Rom 10:8, I Cor 1:23, Gal 2:2, II Timothy 4:2 and many others). “Some people assert that ‘*kerusso*’ means to condemn; however, this is wrong. Not one citation of this term is used in that context in the Bible. The term is reserved for ‘preaching Good News.’”
- (3) “Furthermore, several verses after this [sic] we read, ‘the gospel was preached even to the dead’ (1 Peter 4:6). It is the most natural comprehension that these verses speak of Christ’s preaching of the Gospel in Hades.”
- (4) “Other people interpret these verses as Noah’s preaching to the people in Noah’s time, and Jesus was in Noah’s preaching spiritually. They say that this was not a preaching in Hades, but about preaching on earth in ancient time. What a complex interpretation they invented! It would be impossible to interpret so, unless we twist the Bible verses in many parts.”
- (5) “Considering a person’s life span prior to the Great Flood was nearly 1000 years, most people who had been born before the Flood were alive until the time of the Flood. They died in the Flood and went to Hades. They listened to the message of Jesus who descended there.”
- (6) Those who have existed since the Flood will hear the gospel when the two prophets appear (Rev 11:3-12). “Furthermore, several verses after this [sic], we read “the gospel was preached even to the dead” (1 Peter 4:6). It is the most natural comprehension that these verses speak of Christ’s preaching of the Gospel in Hades.”
- (7) When the two prophets preach the gospel while they are dead between their martyrdom and resurrection (Rev 11:3-12), all the other people that die after Noah’s flood will hear the gospel and respond either positively or negatively, for “the dead” in 1 Pet 4:6 are “physically dead people.”

As such, Kubo’s arguments are: (1) the “spirits in prison” are those dead in Hades; (2) “κηρῦσσω” has only the positive sense of “preaching the good news”; and (3) Christ descended to Hades to preach salvation

Seisho [new co-translated Bible], officially named in English as New Confessional Translation, which was a translation by both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars and translators.

while being dead before His resurrection. He did not condemn the dead nor did he preach repentance to the living in Noah's days.

Kubo's unique theology is seen in (5), where he concretely states that the dead at the time of Noah covered all of the human beings before the Flood except for Noah and his seven family members. Even if he were to concede this point, it would not affect the integrity of his argument because he contends that Jesus preached salvation to all the dead, most of who had died without believing in God. He also makes idiosyncratic arguments in (6) and (7) where he posits that those who lived and died after the Flood will remain until the end-times. Then the two prophets appear and preach the gospel in Hades during their three and half days after martyrdom. Kubo sees two stages of God's judgment: first, the destruction by the flood, and second, a destruction that does not employ water (Gen 6:15).³³

Besides his exegesis of 1 Peter, Kubo emphasizes that the teaching of postmortem evangelism does not, and should not, hinder active earthly evangelism. His rationale lies in the benefits of early entry into salvation. Evangelists can urge people to embrace the transformative life made available through the Holy Spirit now rather than entering it only in the end after a shadowy sojourn through Hades. His strong motivation to promote postmortem evangelism is to provide the first chance to those who have been dead without having an opportunity to hear the gospel here on earth and then those who have failed to accept it while alive.

Tsuneaki Kato (2006)

While Kubo's second-chance theory caused a popular debate through his monthly magazine called *Remnant*, Tsuneaki Kato, a minister of the United Christian Church of Japan and one of the most famous and influential Presbyterian preachers in the country, taught the same view on Christ's descent.³⁴ He recognizes that the phrase

³³However, it seems that Kubo still holds the "harrowing hell" notion in Jesus' preaching, not only to the antediluvian dead, but also to all the Old Testament (OT) saints who lived and died until His own time. He says, "In the eyes of his disciples, Jesus appeared to ascend alone from the Mount of Olives, but actually, a multitude of spirits from Hades are thought to have been with Jesus. Saints, prophets, and believers who had been held hostage in Hades ascended with Jesus."

³⁴Being a professor of practical theology at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, Kato also served as a visiting professor at Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg in 1986-7. He points out that the Japanese translation *yomi* for "hell" is more appropriate than the traditional *jigoku*, as "the place of darkness that spreads beyond death" because "the postmortem world of heaven and hell rather came into the church from the realm outside the Bible." Kato, "Yomi-ni Kudaru Kirisuto," 340 (I have translated all quotations from this source).

“descended to hell” was “added in a later age”³⁵ to the Apostles’ Creed. He finds it as a great comfort that the Lord is “there when one goes to *yomi*, the world of darkness, the world of death, which one may well think God’s hands do not reach,”³⁶ citing Psalm 139:8. He also expounds, “1 Peter [3:18ff] tells that the Lord Jesus Christ went to them [those who drowned in Noah’s flood] and preached the gospel to them.”³⁷ He also shows his compassion to those who have lost their non-Christian loved ones.³⁸

This is not an exegesis but a sermon based on the assumptions of Christ’s descent into Hades and preaching to the dead there. Nonetheless, he does register his reservations regarding the origin of the concerned article of the Apostles’ Creed. It is an influential example from a highly respected preacher in the nation.

William Barclay (1975)

Barclay’s arguments are similar to Kubo’s. However, it seems that Barclay, interestingly, thinks that Christ’s preaching took place not during the *triduum mortis* but after resurrection. “But when he rose again, he rose with a spiritual body, in which he was rid of the necessary weaknesses of humanity and liberated from the necessary limitations of time and space. It was in this freedom condition of perfect freedom that the preaching to the dead took place.”³⁹ Barclay’s arguments are largely speculative without detailed evidence, but his passion for God’s grace and evangelism is clearly observed, a passion shared by Kubo and Kato.⁴⁰

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 347.

³⁷Ibid., 352.

³⁸Kato states, “‘Descended to hell’ declares that the Lord Jesus is not only concerned about the salvation of the living but tries to reveal His grace, going beyond the world of death and descending to *yomi*. This also shows the width and depth of the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ,” which is elaborated as “Christ’s tremendous grace that tries to invite again into blessings the unbelieving who, for example, were destroyed in the great flood of Noah without their time and will for repentance and went down to *yomi*.” Ibid., 354-5.

³⁹Barclay, *ibid.*, 241.

⁴⁰“If Christ descended into Hades and preached there, there is no corner of the universe into which the message of grace has not come. There is in this passage the solution of one of the most haunting questions raised by the Christian faith – what is to happen to those who lived before Jesus Christ and to those to whom the gospel never came? . . . The doctrine of the descent into Hades conserves the precious truth that no man who ever lived is left without a sight of Christ and without the offer of the salvation of God.” Ibid., 242.

Bo Reicke (1985)

The exegesis by Bo Reicke, a Swedish scholar, is more technical with discussions of extra-biblical Jewish literature. One of his unique contentions is that the spirits in Noah's days were not only fallen angels but also men.⁴¹ He also points out that the 1 Peter text does not specify the time or place of Christ's descent. He also limits the significance of the teaching to two points, namely, "that Christ *preached*, and . . . that his preaching was for these *spirits*."⁴² He then emphasizes the Church's continual preaching to its oppressing community: "Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison is the prototype of the preaching of Christian messengers. Therefore, it is emphatically the duty of every Christian to proclaim the message of Christ in the midst of suffering and death to all heathen peoples, regardless of their power and the dangers involved."⁴³ Finally, Reicke speculates that the dead in 1 Pet 4:6 are all the dead,⁴⁴ but that "the spirits in prison are not to be equated with all the dead."⁴⁵

Leonhard Goppelt (1978/1993)

Goppelt's commentary is full of exegetical insights. Concerning postmortem evangelism, his position is that "'the spirits in prison' are the souls of Noah's unrepentant contemporaries."⁴⁶ He further states, however, "But 1 Peter does not restrict the audience of this proclamation, in contrast to early catholic tradition, to the righteous of the OT; Christ preaches, rather, more generally 'to the dead' (4:6), even to the most lost among them (3:19)"⁴⁷: namely, death in 4:5 is literal and, "in the context

⁴¹"Probably the people who perished in the flood are also numbered with these 'spirits.' They were the descendants of the fallen angels, and in the story of Gen vi received the punishment meted out as a consequence of the sin of the angels with the daughters of men. In speaking about persons of remote antiquity, no sharp distinctions were made between angels and men (cf. Jude 6f.). Human beings often assumed superhuman proportions. In particular those who were exceptionally evil (several examples of this kind are found in the books of Enoch and the apocalypses of Baruch, Jewish works of the last pre-Christian and first Christian centuries)." Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 2nd ed., 109-10.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 110-1.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 111.

⁴⁴"By 'the living and the dead' undoubtedly are meant all the people who ever lived, or are still living when the judgment comes. That the final judgment is imminent, vs. 6a, is also evident from the fact that the gospel has already been preached to the dead. Exactly how this was done is not stated. It is possible to imagine Christ's descent into the lower regions after his burial as the time for this preaching of the gospel, but explicit information is not given." *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 257.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 263.

of 3:19, . . . the Hades proclamation of Christ applies not only, as 3:19 made clear, to the most lost but to all the dead.”⁴⁸ He points out Christ’s extended saving grace, as do Kubo, Kato and Reicke shown above:

In rabbinic tradition, the generation of the flood were regarded as thoroughly and ultimately lost. . . . However, 1 Peter declares: Even to this most lost part of humanity Christ, the One who died and rose, offers salvation. The saving effectiveness of his suffering unto death extends even to those mortals who in earthly life do not come to a conscious encounter with him, even to the most lost among them.⁴⁹

Joel Green (2007)

Green provides a solid exegesis and his conclusion, which agrees with the majority, is that the spirits in prison are the Watchers⁵⁰ of 1 Enoch 6-16 and that Christ preached condemnation to them prior to His ascension. On the other hand, he identifies the dead in 4:6 as “dead members of the human family given postmortem opportunity to hear the good news,”⁵¹ as seen above.

Green’s evidence for this interpretation of 4:6 is unique. He denies the possibility of the believing dead because the time of 1 Peter’s writing does not look as urgent as that of Thessalonians.⁵² He appeals to the fact that “the idea of postmortem proclamation and even conversion is not as rare in early Christianity as is often postulated.”⁵³ Drawing on extra-biblical literature⁵⁴ and “baptism on behalf of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:29),⁵⁵ Green also points out: “From the early second century on, Peter was widely regarded as referring to Christ’s descent into Hades in order that he might, (1) share fully the fate of humanity, (2) conquer Death or Hades (or both), (3) rescue the righteous dead, and/or (4) proclaim salvation to the dead.”⁵⁶ He posits a hermeneutical method called “interpretive approach.”⁵⁷

⁴⁸Ibid., 289.

⁴⁹Ibid., 259.

⁵⁰Green, *1 Peter*, 123.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., 127.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Shepherd of Hermas: Ibid; Gospel of Peter: Ibid, 128; Odes of Solomon: Ibid., 128-9: “What is clear is that Ode 42 and 1 Peter share such common motifs as imprisonment and proclamation to the dead.”

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 128.

⁵⁷“For persons whose tendency is to think of Scripture providing the foundation for theological claims, an interpretive approach of the sort we have outlined will seem

Thus, advocates of postmortem evangelism come from various backgrounds. Erickson gives a concise summary of these positions on postmortem evangelism:

The theory of universal explicit opportunity holds that everyone will have an opportunity to hear the gospel in an overt or explicit fashion. Those who do not actually hear it during their lifetime here upon earth will have an opportunity in the future. There will be a second chance. After death, they will be enabled to hear. Some proponents of this theory believe that even those who have heard and have rejected will be confronted with the claims of Christ in the life hereafter. Others maintain that everyone will have a first chance, rather than a “second chance,” whether in this life through general revelation, or through a postmortem encounter with the gospel. When this belief is coupled with the idea that everyone given such an opportunity will of course accept it, the inevitable conclusion is universal salvation. This view is difficult to reconcile with Jesus’s teaching about the afterlife (see Luke 16:19–31, especially v. 26).⁵⁸

When considering this issue, we must take into account the sincerely evangelistic motivation of many of the advocates of the “Second Chance” position. Yet, some sort of critical engagement seems necessary. Therefore, in what follows, we will make some efforts in this direction.⁵⁹

problematic. This is because most of us imagine that, in order to take at face value a theological datum, it must be witnessed in Scripture. We should recall that, well into the second century, a number of Christian books circulated just as widely, or more so, than those that would eventually be collected to form the New Testament (NT) Scriptures—that is, there were no generally accepted authoritative texts that could serve this foundational role. More to the point, in the theological hermeneutic of the early Church, the witness of 1 Peter need not provide a foundation for belief in Christ’s descent into hell; rather, belief in Christ’s descent into hell might provide the lens by which to make sense of texts like 1 Pet 3:19; 4:6. For those interpreters, faithful reading of Scripture followed the divine economy by which God had assembled the mosaic of Scripture.” Ibid., 131-2. He even mentions N. T. Wright, interpreting the text through a drama, and baptism in 1 Pet 3:21 as an antitype. Ibid., 132.

⁵⁸Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 941-2. In the “Note,” Erickson names Clark Pinnock and John Sanders. Interestingly, Kubo believes that there will still be choices to accept or reject Christ even in postmortem evangelism.

⁵⁹“The view does not, however, diminish the urgency of world missions (Pinnock 1991:114). The uncertainty of all inclusivist theology makes evangelism the wiser course (1992:172). Pinnock sees postmortem encounter as providing a path of salvation for

Selected Exegetical Issues from 1 Peter 3:18b-20a and 4:6

Commentators identify 1 Peter 3:13 through 4:6 is a highly complex text for exegesis.⁶⁰ Erickson calculates the possible interpretations of the text as 180 and states the logical combinations of the exegetical choices will narrow the range down to the following six possibilities.⁶¹

1. Christ “in spirit” preached through Noah when Noah was building the ark. This was a message of repentance and righteousness, given to unbelieving persons who were then on earth but are now “spirits in prison” (i.e., persons in hell).
2. Between His death and resurrection, Christ preached to humans in Hades, giving them a message of repentance and righteousness, thus giving them opportunity to believe and be saved, though they had not availed themselves of such an offer during their time on earth.
3. Between His death and resurrection, Christ went to people in Hades and announced that He had triumphed over them and that their condemnation was final.
4. Between His death and resurrection, Christ proclaimed release to people who had repented just before the Flood. He led them from imprisonment in purgatory to heaven.
5. Between His death and resurrection or between His resurrection and ascension, Christ descended into Hades and proclaimed His triumph over the fallen angels who had sinned by mating with women before the Flood.

adherents of other faiths (1992:46–47).” Terry John Mark, Ebbie C. Smith, and Justice Anderson, *Missiology* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 425.

⁶⁰Barclay says, “This is not only one of the most difficult passages in Peter’s letter, it is one of the most difficult in the whole New Testament; and it is also the basis of one of the most difficult articles in the creed, ‘He descended into Hell.’” It is, therefore, better first of all to read it as a whole and then to study it in its various sections.” Barclay, *ibid.*, 232. William Dalton quotes from N. Brox: “Ich sehe keine Möglichkeit, zunächst durch eine Gesamt-analyse oder-übersicht ein plausibles Gesamtverständnis zu gewinnen, innerhalb dessen die Details sich erklären” [I do not see any possibility to obtain a plausible general understanding by a general analysis or survey, within which the details are explained] (Translation by Yoshihara). William Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989), 147.

⁶¹Millard J. Erickson, “Is There Opportunity for Salvation after Death?” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 (1995): 137.

6. The reference to Jesus' preaching is not to be taken literally. It is symbolic, conveying in this graphic form the idea that redemption is universal in its extent or influence.⁶²

Before anything, I would like to mention two assumptions that have been discussed among recent commentators: (1) the "descent into hell" article of the Apostles' Creed, which the advocates of postmortem evangelism emphasize as part of their basis of arguments, and (2) the relationship between the Petrine text and extra-biblical Jewish literature including 1 Enoch.

On the "descent" article of the Apostles' Creed, which seems to function as a guiding principle for postmortem evangelism, several commentators have pointed out that it has no authority or legitimacy. Erickson summarizes: "It is worth noting that the presence of the clause in the Apostles' Creed, which undoubtedly was a major factor in inducing belief in the doctrine during the medieval period, did not occur until relatively late."⁶³ I would like to confirm that our exegesis should not be controlled by the ecclesiastical creeds unless one takes such a hermeneutic position as Green's, as seen above.

Relationship between 1 Peter and Extra-Biblical Jewish Literature

In most recent commentaries, consulting extra-biblical literature⁶⁴ such as 1 Enoch is presupposed in the exegesis of 1 Peter. R. T. France

⁶²Ibid. In the following arguments, I will exclude Interpretation 6 because it only deals with what Jesus does in the passage symbolically and it does not engage with the notion of postmortem evangelism in Japan.

⁶³Ibid, 135. He continues, "It is not found universally in the creed until the eighth century, though it was found in some versions as early as patristic times. It is included in the Athanasian Creed, composed about the middle of the fifth century and accepted by both the Eastern and Western wings of the church."

Wayne Grudem gives a more concrete description: "Moreover Rufinus, the only person who includes it before 650, did not think that it meant that Christ descended into hell but understood the phrase simply to mean that Christ was "buried." . . . But this means that until A.D. 650 no version of the Creed included this phrase with the intention of saying that Christ "descended into hell." The only version to include the phrase before 650 gives it a different meaning." Wayne Grudem, "He Did Not Descend into Hell" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 1 (1991): 102, 105.

Waldemar Kowalski points out that the arguments by Erickson and Grudem are actually based on Ephesians 4 (Personal communication on January 31, 2017). Although some advocates of postmortem evangelism refer to the concerned verses in the chapter of the epistle, I will not deal with this creedal article any longer because it is not related to 1 Peter. Suffice to say that the article does not support the advocates' arguments biblically.

⁶⁴As to a brief history of the literature, Robert Charles summarizes it as follows: "This hope was to a large degree realized in the centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era, when the currency of these apocalyptic writings was very widespread, because they almost alone represented the advance of the higher theology in Judaism,

states the necessity of utilizing extra-biblical sources: “In fact, if you are not prepared to dirty your hands in the muddy waters of apocalyptic and rabbinic speculations, much of the New Testament must necessarily remain obscure. To try to understand 1 Peter 3:19–20 without a copy of the Book of Enoch at your elbow is to condemn yourself to failure.”⁶⁵

In addition to the similarities in content concerning the fallen angels in Gen 6 and the Flood,⁶⁶ however, what seems more significant is the direct historical relation between Noah and Asia Minor. Karen Jobes introduces an episode that when Jews settled in Asia Minor, one of the towns had “ark” in its name and that they believed that it was related to the settling of Noah’s ark.⁶⁷ She also states that Noah and his wife were engraved on Roman coins with the emperor on the other side over a period of five emperors, illustrating his popularity in Asia Minor.⁶⁸ She concludes: “Given . . . the remarkable interest in Noah during the later Roman period in Asia Minor, it seems likely that even Peter’s Gentile readers knew enough about the traditions of what caused the flood to understand 1 Pet. 3:19–20.”⁶⁹

What is interesting here is that while the existence of 1 Enoch and other extra-biblical literature behind 1 Peter cannot be denied, not only Jews but also Gentiles in Asia Minor may have known the story of Noah and other related information very well. In contrast, some commentators doubt that 1 Enoch was known in Asia Minor. Grudem says:

which culminated in Christianity. But our book contained much of a questionable character, and from the fourth century of our era onward it fell into discredit; and under the ban of such authorities as Hilary, Jerome, and Augustine, it gradually passed out of circulation, and became lost to the knowledge of Western Christendom till over a century ago, when an Ethiopic version of the work was found in Abyssinia by Bruce . . .” Robert Henry Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 163.

⁶⁵ R. T. France, “Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, edited by I. Howard Marshall (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 1977), 265. France, on another occasion, also says, “to try to interpret it without reference to the Book of Enoch is a recipe for chaos, making it a happy hunting-ground for extraneous ideas like purgatory and the harrowing of hell, to which it in fact gives no support.” R. T. France, “Inerrancy and New Testament Exegesis,” *Themelios* 1, no. 1 (1975): 13.

⁶⁶“But it is the Book of Enoch which gives the most detailed account of the sin and punishment of the angels, to which it returns again and again. The story is told in great detail in 1 Enoch 6–16, and the prison where the angels are bound is described in 18:12–19:2; 21:1–10. There are further references in 54:3–6, and throughout chapters 64–69. The story is told again in symbolic form in chapters 86–88, and a further reference occurs in 106:13–17.” France, *ibid.*, 270.

⁶⁷Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 245.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 245–6.

Against this claim must be put the fact that even though 1 Enoch is quoted in Jude 14–15, no one has ever demonstrated that 1 Enoch was that widely known or even familiar to the great majority of churches to which Peter was writing. In a recent introduction to 1 Enoch, E. Isaac writes, “Information regarding the usage and importance of the work in the Jewish and Christian communities, other than the Ethiopian Church, is sparse ... It seems clear, nonetheless, that 1 Enoch was well known to many Jews, particularly the Essenes, and early Christians, notably the author of Jude.”⁷⁰

At least, it seems to be appropriate to take note that 1 Enoch cannot guarantee all proper exegesis of 1 Peter but that Noah himself was more surely known to Gentile readers in Asia Minor.

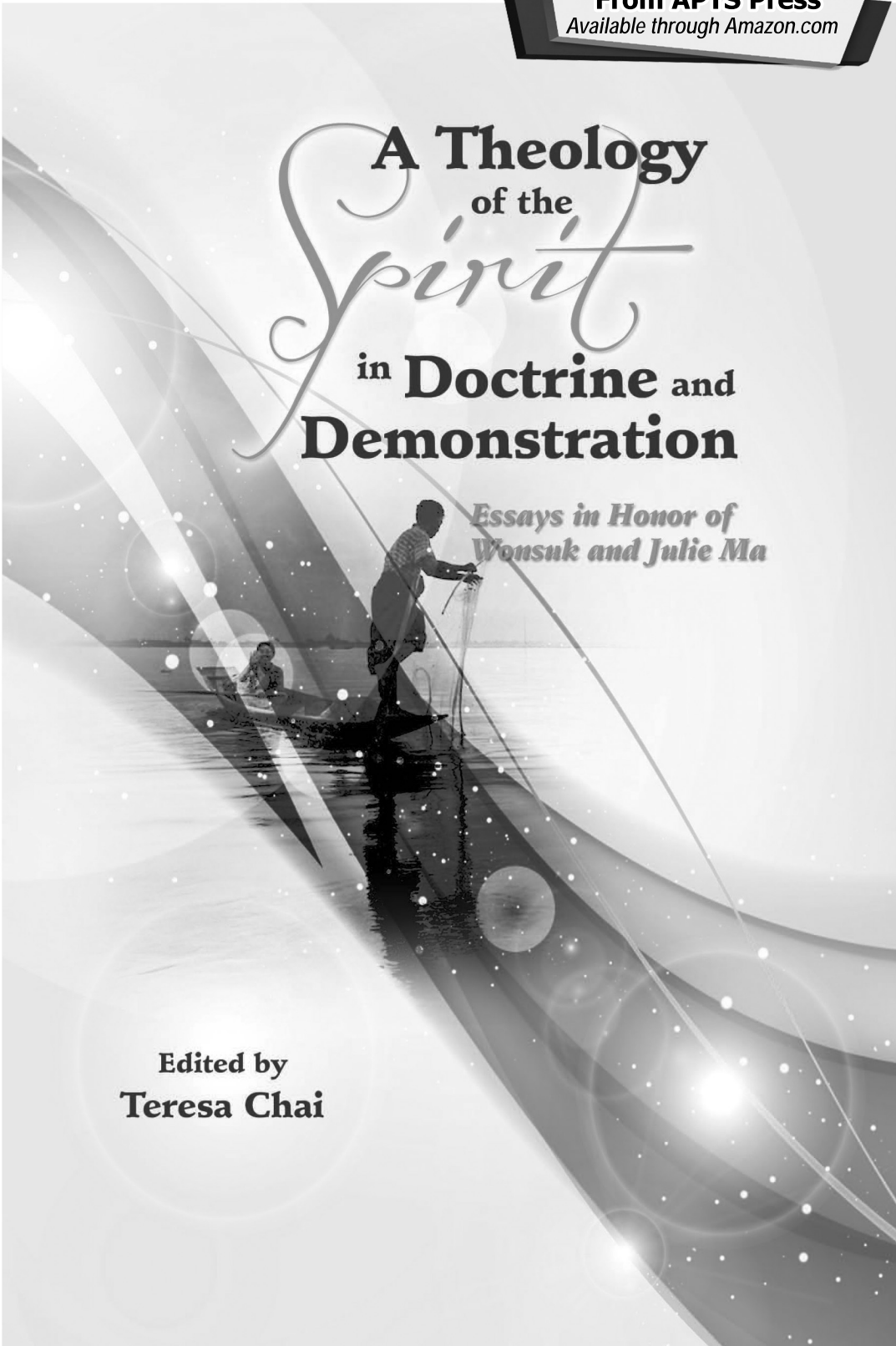
⁷⁰Wayne Grudem, “Christ Preaching through Noah,” *Trinity Journal* 7, no. 2 (1986): 17. For the same opinion, see also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 244-5.

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A Theology
of the
Spirit
in **Doctrine** and
Demonstration

*Essays in Honor of
Wonsuk and Julie Ma*

Edited by
Teresa Chai



**A Study of 1 Peter 3:18b-20a and 4:6:
A Response to the Notion of Christ's Postmortem Evangelism
to the Un-evangelized, a View Recently Advocated in Japan
Part 2**

by Hirokatsu Yoshihara

Exegesis of Some Key Elements of the Text

In the following arguments, I consider 1 Peter 3:8-4:6 as a cohesive discourse with a pedal note, fundamental motif: “repay evil with blessing because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing” (3:9).¹ With this wider literary context in view, I will focus my discussions on 3:18b-20a and 4:6, which pertain to the notion of postmortem evangelism discussed in today's Japan. The following are the concerned verses in Greek:

¹All scriptural quotations from the Bible in English are from New International Version (NIV) (2011) unless otherwise stated. The Greek text is from Nestle-Aland (NA) 28th.

Here is my assumption of the literary context:

Here, besides the exhortation to wives (3:1-6) and husbands (3:7), the discourse is for “all of you” (3:8). The pedal note, fundamental motif, of the discourse is “repay evil with blessing because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing” (3:9). In 3:10-12, avoiding evil words and deeds is talked about in the quotations from a Psalm (34:12-16). In 3:13-14, suffering even in doing good is encouraged with a hope of blessing and an exhortation not to be afraid but just to “revere Christ as Lord” (3:15). In 3:15-16, the readers are also encouraged to be ready to explain humbly and calmly about their hope to everyone asking so that malicious ones may be ashamed.

In 3:17, doing good and doing evil are compared again, and the former is said to be better. Verse 3:18 provides a reason for that, saying, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” Then, there come 3:18b-20a. 3:20b-21, which talks about eight people saved through water, which symbolizes water baptism. Verse 3:22 talks about Christ's ascension “with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”

In 4:1-2, “since Christ suffered in his body,” the readers are encouraged to keep away from sin and live accordingly. In 4:3-4 the readers are reminded that they have already experienced all kinds of vices and that the pagans, surprised that the readers did not join them in sin, may “heap abuse” on them (4:4). Here, again, doing good and doing evil are contrasted. In 4:5 the reader is reminded that those abusive non-believing ones will have to be responsible to God “the judge of the living and the dead.” Then comes 4:6.

(3:18b) . . . ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγη τῷ θεῷ θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι· (3:19) ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν, (20a) ἀπειθήσασιν ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ . . .

(4:6) εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.²

In order to properly exegete the text, I set several questions: *How*, *when* and *where* did Christ go in 3:18b-20a, and *to whom* and *what* did He preach in 3:18b-20a and 4:6? To answer these questions, I will discuss the following phrases: (1) “θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι” (3:18b), (2) “ἐν ᾧ” (3:19), (3) “τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν” (3:19), and (4) “νεκροῖς” (4:6).

“θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι”³ (3:18b)

The two participial phrases “θανατωθεὶς σαρκὶ” / “ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι” are in antithesis to the μὲν-δέ construction to modify the

²Here is some convenient transliteration and gloss for the verses:

(3:18b) ἵνα (hina: ‘so that’), ὑμᾶς (humās: ‘you’ (< ὑμεῖς)), προσαγάγη (prosaagāgē: ‘bring to’ (< προσάγω)), τῷ (tō: ‘the’ (< ὁ)), θεῷ (theō: ‘god’ (< θεός)), θανατωθεὶς (thnatōtheis: ‘kill’ (< θανατόω)), μὲν (men: ‘on the one hand’), σαρκὶ (sarki: ‘flesh’ (< σὰρξ)), ζωοποιηθεὶς (zōopoiētheis: ‘make live’ (< ζωοποιέω)), δὲ (de: ‘on the other hand’), πνεύματι (pneumatic: ‘spirit’ (< πνεῦμα)).

(3:19) ἐν (en: ‘in’), (hō: ‘who/which’ (< ὅς)), καὶ (kai: ‘even’), τοῖς (tois: ‘the’ (< ὁ)), ἐν (en: ‘in’), φυλακῇ (fulakē: ‘prison’ (< φυλακή)), πνεύμασιν (pneumasin: ‘spirit’ (< πνεῦμα)), πορευθεὶς (poreutheis: ‘go’ (< πορεύομαι)), ἐκήρυξεν (ekēryxen: ‘proclaim’ (< κηρύσσω)).

(3:20a) ἀπειθήσασιν (apeithēsasin: ‘disobey’ (< ἀπειθέω)), πότε (pote: ‘once’), ὅτε (hote: ‘when’), ἀπεξεδέχετο (apexedegeto: ‘wait eagerly’ (< ἀπεκδέχομαι)), ἢ (hē: ‘the’ (< ὁ)), τοῦ (tou: ‘the’ (< ὁ)), θεοῦ (theou: ‘god’ (< θεός)), μακροθυμία (makrothymia: ‘patience’), ἐν (en: ‘in’), ἡμέραις (hēmerais: ‘day’ (< ἡμέρα)), Νῶε (Nōe: ‘Noah’), κατασκευαζομένης (kataskeuazomenēs: ‘prepare’ (< κατασκευάζω)), κιβωτοῦ (kibōtou: ‘ark’ (< κιβωτός)).

(4:6) εἰς (eis: ‘to’), τοῦτο (touto: ‘this’ (< οὗτος)), γὰρ (gar: ‘for’), καὶ (kai: ‘even’), νεκροῖς (nekrois: ‘dead’ (< νεκρός)), εὐηγγελίσθη (euēnggelisthē: ‘preach (the good news)’ (< εὐαγγελίζω)), ἵνα (hina: ‘so that’), κριθῶσι (krithōsi: ‘judge’ (< κρίζω)), μὲν (men: ‘on the one hand’), κατὰ (kata: ‘according to’), ἀνθρώπους (anthrōpous: ‘man’ (< ἄνθρωπος)), σαρκὶ (sarki: ‘flesh’ (< σὰρξ)), ζῶσι (zōsi: ‘live’ (< ζάω)), δὲ (de: ‘on the other hand’), κατὰ (kata: ‘according to’), θεόν (theon: ‘god’ (< θεός)), πνεύματι (pneumatic: ‘spirit’ (< πνεῦμα)).

³“θανατωθεὶς” (“θανατώω”: “to cause cessation of life, put to death” (BDAG: 443)); “σὰρξ” (“of the body of Christ during his earthly ministry” (BDAG: 915); “ζωοποιηθεὶς” (“ζωοποιέω”: “to cause to live” (BDAG: 431); “πνεύματι” (“πνεῦμα”: “that which animates or gives life to the body” (BDAG: 832)).

subjunctive “προσαγάγη”⁴ (18a). Recent interpretations of “ζωοποιηθείς” seem to be in agreement that it refers to Christ’s bodily resurrection.⁵ Edmond Hiebert says, “The verb (ζωοποιηθείς), used in ten other places in the New Testament, refers to the resurrection of the dead . . . or denotes the giving of spiritual life.”⁶

France describes an interpretation that does not agree with this view: “Some commentators have interpreted ζωοποιηθείς πνεύματι of something less than, and prior to, the resurrection of Christ, of an intermediate disembodied state. This is to make the clause fit in with an interpretation of verse 19 in terms of a descent of Christ to Hades between his death and resurrection.”⁷

As stated, this bodily-resurrection interpretation itself is already a critical blow to the advocates of Christ’s descent between His death and resurrection during His intermediate state, based on 3:18-20a.⁸ In fact, the interpretative history shows that the notion was not related to this verse until Greek Fathers in second century CE.⁹ This implies, if not supports, the recent majority interpretation that “ζωοποιηθείς πνεύματι” does not mean “quicken in spirit.” Dubis states, “Instead, most recent commentators understand these nouns to refer to two modes or spheres of existence, not constituent parts of Jesus.”¹⁰

⁴“προσαγάγη” (“προσάγω”: “of Christ, who brings people to God” (BDAG: 875)).

⁵ For example, Mark Dubis, *1 Peter* (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2010), 118; Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 183; John S. Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 48, no. 2 (1986): 315.

⁶D. Edmond Hiebert, “The Suffering and Triumphant Christ,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 139 no. 554 (1982), 149. Namely, “John 5:21 [twice]; Rom. 5:17; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:22, 36, 45)” and “(John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Gal. 3:21).”

⁷France, “Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples,” 263. See also Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirit*, 42. Dubis, *1 Peter*, 119: “The pairing of ζωοποιηθείς with θανατωθείς strongly suggests that ζωοποιηθείς refers to Jesus’ bodily resurrection, not some other type of “enlivening” between Good Friday and Easter morning.”

⁸Feinberg states a problem of such a view, saying that “at the time of Christ’s preaching (if it was between death and resurrection), he had not completed the work of salvation, so he really had nothing new to offer. . . .” Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State,” 327.

⁹Witherington, *ibid.*, 184-5. “The first noncanonical mention of the idea of a descent into hell seems to be found in Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho, but it is not associated with the interpretation of this text. That does not come until Clement of Alexandria interprets 1 Peter 3:19 this way, and this then became the dominant interpretation, at least by the time of Irenaeus at the end of second century A.D.”

¹⁰Dubis, *1 Peter*, 217; “his entirety”: Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 241; not “Platonic dualism”; John Yates, “‘He Descended into Hell’: Creed, Article and Scripture Part II,” *The Churchman* 102, no. 4 (1988): 308. Also, “In the spiritual realm, the realm of the Holy Spirit’s activity, Christ was raised from the dead.” This is important because in the NT generally this “spiritual” realm is the realm of all that is lasting, permanent, eternal.” Wayne Grudem, “Christ Preaching through Noah,” *Trinity Journal* 7, no. 2 (1986): 21.

Can this “πνεῦμα” be then interpreted as the Holy Spirit? Achtemeier and some others take that view, recognizing it in the dative of agency as “by the Spirit.”¹¹ It is ambiguous grammatically and in context. I would take it in the dative of sphere respecting the antithesis.

Syntactically, I understand that the parallelism modifies “προσαγάγη.” The result translation will be “so that he might bring you to God through having been put to death in the earthly realm and been bodily resurrected in the heavenly realm.”

“ἐν ᾧ” (3:19)

The relative pronoun “ᾧ” is morphologically ambiguous between masculine and neuter. Recent commentators are in agreement that it refers to “πνεύματι” as its antecedent.¹² What is complex is its interpretation. Feinberg identifies eight choices¹³ and narrows them to four, namely “in which,” “by which,” “in whom” and “by whom.”¹⁴ One major interpretation is “in that (whose) condition” or “thus,” namely emphasizing Christ risen in the resurrected and glorious body.¹⁵ This

¹¹Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 250; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 118; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, edited by Ferdinand Hahn, translated and augmented by John E. Alsup, 1st English ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993) (Original German version in 1978), 255; Joel B. Green, *1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2007), 120; Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 3:19. Witherington says either will do. Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 182. Grudem is clearly against it, suggesting that the more explicit agentive “ὑπο” would have been used. Grudem, “Christ Preaching through Noah,” 21. So is David MacLeod. David J. MacLeod, “The Sufferings of Christ,” *Emmaus Journal* 14, no. 1 (2005): 11.

As to the discrepancy in the antithesis between dative of reference and agency, Dubis introduces Schreiner’s discussion that “such is clearly the case in passages like 1 Tim 3:16,” thus without any problem. Dubis, *1 Peter*, 118. Jobes is against this break and maintains that both are dative of reference. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 240.

¹²France, “Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples,” 268, 269; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 118, 119.

¹³“(1) in (by) the spirit, i.e., attitude, (2) in (by) the spirit world, i.e., the realm of disembodied spirits, the underworld, (3) in (by) the spirit, i.e., immaterial substance, (4) in (by) the spirit of Christ, i.e., Christ’s divine immaterial substance, (5) in (by) the realm of the spiritual relationship, (6) in (by) the sphere of the spirit, i.e., the eternal, the heavenly, thus, giving him a spiritual or glorified body as opposed to a natural body, (7) in (by) the spirit world, i.e., angelic spirit world (especially the realm or world of, evil spirits), or (8) in (by) the Holy Spirit.” Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State,” 314.

¹⁴Ibid., 319.

¹⁵France, *ibid.*, 268: “For πνεύματι in verse 18 refers, as we have seen, to Christ’s risen state. To take ἐν ᾧ as “in the spirit” must therefore mean that verse 19 is talking about an activity of Christ after his resurrection.” Also, Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 256; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 184; Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits*, 144.

leads to an interpretation that Christ proclaimed His victory after His resurrection.

Some unique interpretations are to distinguish Christ's bodily resurrection and His life back to the heavenly realm and take the latter as the interpretation here (Grudem),¹⁶ or construe the relative pronoun literally referring to the S/spirit (Feinberg).¹⁷ By positing such, Grudem argues that Christ was back to "the spiritual realm" and "in the realm of the Spirit's activity, the eternal, spiritual realm" (the realm in which Christ was raised from the dead, v 18).¹⁸ Feinberg argues that Christ was raised by the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit, He preached.¹⁹ What follows these is that Christ preached before His incarnation, in Noah's days.

The adequacy of Grudem and Feinberg's arguments has to wait for discussions of other concerned elements. Yet, these are interesting with regard to the properties and functions of "ἐν ᾧ." Grudem evidently suggests that Peter frequently uses "a relative pronoun to introduce a new subject," which "indicates that there is a strong possibility of a lack of clear chronological sequence in this section."²⁰ He elaborates:

Similarly, Peter's exchange of subject in which he first uses Christ as an example for believers (v 18), and then refers to Christ as the one who empowers and Noah as the example for believers (vv 19–20), should not be seen as unusual for Peter, who frequently can change metaphors and combine various ideas closely together in his writings (compare 1:7–8; 2:3–4, 9–10; 3:21–22).²¹

Goppelt is in the same line, recommending "thus" interpretation. "But nothing is said in the words ἐν ᾧ καὶ about the time and manner in which Christ went to the spirits in prison."²²

Witherington is against this view, but he favors "in which condition". "When Peter uses the phrase *en hō*, its antecedent is always a whole phrase that precedes, not a single word. It is thus unlikely that

¹⁶Grudem, "Christ Preaching through Noah," 21.

¹⁷Feinberg, "1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State," 335.

¹⁸Grudem, *ibid.*, 21. "It does not necessarily mean "in the resurrected body"." *Ibid.*

¹⁹Feinberg, "1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State," 335. Also, see J. Ronald Blue, "Untold Billions: Are They Really Lost?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138 (1981): 342.

²⁰Grudem, *ibid.*, 29.

²¹*Ibid.*, 29.

²²Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 256.

“in which” means “in the Spirit.””²³ Dalton, in the same position, calls “ἐν ᾧ” “a favorite idiom of the writer of 1 Peter.”²⁴

Therefore, while the “in the Spirit / whom” interpretation is linguistically plausible, the actual tendency of Peter’s usage may not necessarily support it. This needs further scrutiny. One syntactic thing to be mentioned here is the independence of the relative clause. A relative pronoun takes a finite verb.²⁵ This behavior is distinct from the participial phrase, where nominal agreement is in case, number and gender, and the infinitival phrase without any morphological agreement. A relative clause has been thus considered to constitute a more independent syntactic unit.²⁶ Jobes’ interpretation of the three participles (θανατωθείς, ζωοποιηθείς, and πορευθείς) being “grammatically linked ... by the phrase *en hō kai*” to represent “the redemptive event”²⁷ is thus not grammatically, but only conceptually, the case. The same is “πορευθείς” in verse 22: “θανατωθείς” and “ζωοποιηθείς” are syntactically linked in the μέν-δέ construction,²⁸ but “πορευθείς” is not. If they are linked it is only conceptual, which is supported by the contextual interpretations which refer to “going” to heaven, or ascension. I thus contend that “θανατωθείς” and “ζωοποιηθείς” as an antithesis modify “προσαγάγη” (so that He might bring you/provide you access to God by having been put to death . . . and raised to life . . .). Also that “πορευθείς” modifies “ἐκήρυξεν” (went and preached/proclaimed). The existence of the adverbial “καί” (even) and the pre-positioned “τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν” with an emphatic function suggests this syntactic interpretation, breaking the sequence of the three participles.

Would it then be possible, by the way, for the risen Christ to visit Hades to preach the gospel or even preach through Noah? As seen above, Barclay takes this view, at least for the former, the risen Christ being perfectly free from any limitations.²⁹ In fact, the risen Christ appears to His disciples, then disappears. He did not necessarily stay with all the disciples until His ascension. However, beyond this is only speculation. We do know for sure about Jesus’ historical birth through His historical

²³Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 184.

²⁴Dalton, *Christ’s Proclamation to the Spirits*, 145.

²⁵Namely morphologically bound by its syntactic subject (often implicit in Greek but assumed in the nominative) in person and number, which thus applies to the indicative, imperative, subjunctive and optative).

²⁶Linguistically, it is traditionally called an “island.”

²⁷Jobes, *1 Peter*, 242. Dubis shares the same view. Dubis, *1 Peter*, 119.

²⁸Thus, syntactically, I rather agree with Jobes calling these two alone to be “two aspects of the redemptive event: Christ’s death and subsequent resurrection.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 241-2.

²⁹William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 241.

ascension. At this point, the interpretations 2-4 in Erickson's list above are all eliminated because they all locate the event described in the passage between Jesus' death and resurrection. Remember that Interpretation 1 points to Jesus' (or more systematically-precisely "the Son's") proclamation of repentance in Noah's time, and Interpretation 5 leaves room for Jesus' proclamation of His victory after His resurrection. Now, I will focus on these two positions: Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 5.

“τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεῖς ἐκήρυξεν”³⁰ (3:19)

Let us here reiterate interpretations 1 and 5 of Erickson's list with proper modifications:

1. When Noah was building the ark, Christ “in spirit” or “in the Spirit” preached repentance (through him). This was a message of repentance and righteousness, given to unbelieving persons who were then on earth but are now “spirits in prison” (i.e., persons in hell or Hades).
5. After His resurrection, Christ ascended to heaven or descended into the underground and proclaimed His triumph over the fallen angels who had sinned by mating with women before the Flood.

For the sake of convenience, I will refer to these as (1) The Preaching View and (5) The Triumph View.

In the Preaching View, (a) “πνεύμασιν,” (b) “φυλακῇ,” (c) “πορευθεῖς” and (d) “ἐκήρυξεν” respectively refer to (a) Noah's contemporary unbelievers, (b) a place where those people are kept for the final judgment, (c) going from heaven to Noah and (d) repentance. In the Triumph View, on the other hand, they are (a) fallen angels in Noah's days, (b) a place where those angels are kept for the final judgment, (c) going to the place and (d) Christ's victory.

Some commentators argue that “πνεῦμα” in the New Testament (NT) absolutely refers to angels, especially if there are no modifying elements.³¹ In addition, since the exegesis of 1 Peter cannot stand now

³⁰“φυλακῇ” (“φυλακή”: “Of the nether world or its place of punishment” (BDAG: 1067)); “πνεύμασιν” (“πνεῦμα”: “that which animates or gives life to the body” (BDAG: 832)); “ἐκήρυξεν” (“κηρύσσω”: “to make public declarations” (BDAG: 543)).

³¹“Every other place in the New Testament where the term “spirits” is used it absolutely refers to nonhuman, supernatural spiritual beings, that is, good or evil angelic

without consulting 1 Enoch, the Triumph View seems to prevail.³² Witherington summarizes, “For our purposes here we note that it is ... part of 1 Enoch, which includes 1 Enoch 6–11; 64–69; 106–108 that is almost exclusively being drawn on in 1 Peter.”³³

As to “φυλακή,” the Triumph View presents clear ideas. Quoting from 1 Enoch 17-18, France says that the place of the fallen angels is in “the furthest west, where heaven and earth join.”³⁴ According to France, this idea was later developed:

The prison of the angels is elevated still further by the rather later 2 Enoch, which locates it in the second of seven heavens (2 Enoch 7:1–3; 18:3–6; cf. also Test. Lev 3:2), using a new cosmology developed in Hellenistic circles, and much valued in late Jewish and early Christian works (see e.g. 2 Cor. 12:2). It has therefore been suggested that 1 Peter 3:19 had this view in mind, and regards Christ as visiting the fallen angels in the course of his ascension (thus taking πορευθεῖς in the same sense as in verse 22), as he passed through the lower heavens towards the seventh.³⁵

spirits (e.g., Matt. 12:45; Mark 1:23, 26; 3:30; Luke 10:20; Acts 19:15–16; 16:16; 23:8–9; Eph. 2:2; Heb. 1:14; 12:9; Rev. 16:13, 14). The term only refers to human beings (for example, in Hebrews 12:23) when it is qualified (“spirits of righteous men made perfect”). It is therefore likely that Peter here meant angelic beings when he spoke of “spirits.” The fact that they are “in prison” indicates that they are evil angels or demons.” MacLeod, “The Sufferings of Christ,” 19. See also Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 184.

³²Witherington points out many echoes between 1 Enoch and 1 Peter; “For example, 1 Enoch 108 speaks of the spirits punished (1 En. 108:3–6), and this follows hard on the announcement in 1 Enoch 106:16–18 that Noah and his sons were saved”; 1 Enoch 108:3b and 1 Peter 1:23; 1 Enoch 108:8 and 1 Peter 1:7, 18; 1 Enoch 108:7–10 and 1 Peter 3:9, 16; 4:4, 16; 1 Enoch and 1 Peter 5:4, 6; 1 Enoch 108:13 and 1 Peter 1:17; 2:23; “the common use of Psalm 34 (see 1 En. 108:7–10; cf. 1 Pet 3:10–12).” Witherington, *ibid.*, 187.

Witherington continues: “None of this is a surprise when we recognize that 1 Enoch is influential in various of these Jewish Christian eschatological works. for instance, Jude not merely refers to the text of 1 Enoch in Jude 4, 6, 13; he even cites 1 Enoch 1:9 in Jude 14–15 of his discourse. Second Peter is also directly dependent on 1 Enoch at 2 Peter 2:4 and 3:13.” *Ibid.*, 188.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 270. He continues that, “there, beyond a chasm, he [Enoch] finds the prison in ‘a place which had no firmament of the heaven above, and no firmly founded earth beneath it’, which is described as ‘the end of heaven and earth.’” *Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*, 270-1. 2 Enoch 7:1, for example, reads, “And those men took me and led me up on to the second heaven, and showed me darkness, greater than earthly darkness, and there I saw prisoners hanging, watched, awaiting the great and boundless judgement.” Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 432.

The Triumph View is also supported by the assumption that “κηρύσσω” can be used both positively and negatively, as Feinberg shows, although in favor of the Preaching View.³⁶

Grudem, also in favor of the Preaching View, argues that “πνεῦμα” can refer to human beings even when used absolutely.³⁷ He further provides more concrete evidence:

The extant Greek sections of 1 Enoch use πνεῦμα 37 times. Of these 37 times, the word is used 20 times to refer to angelic or demonic spirits. However, it is used 17 times to refer to human spirits (1 Enoch 9:10; 20:3, 6[2]; 22:3, 6, 7, 9[2], 11 [2], 12, 13[2]; 98:3, 10; 103:4)—and 20 versus 17 is no overwhelming preponderance of use. We are unjustified in drawing from this data any conclusions about what Peter’s readers would have thought the phrase “spirits in prison” meant.³⁸

Not only that, but Grudem shows that the 10 examples of “πνεῦμα” in 1 Enoch refer to the dead human spirits as if they were in prison while waiting for the final judgment.³⁹ He insists that “φυλακή” is never used in the book⁴⁰—France even says Sheol or Hades “is never called φυλακή in biblical literature.”⁴¹ As to the reconciliation with the position that those alive (not in prison) in Noah’s time are described now as “spirits in prison,” Grudem suggests: “It is quite natural to speak in terms of a

³⁶“*Kērussō* is a cognate of *kērux* and has the fundamental meaning of ‘to act as a herald.’ There is nothing implicit in the meaning of the word which suggests the content of the heralding, but only that proclaiming or heralding is done. Moreover, usage of the word in the NT is inconclusive as to its meaning in 1 Pet 3:19. . . . there are also places where the passage is neutral as to the content of the proclamation or where it obviously cannot mean the proclamation of the gospel (e.g., Luke 12:3; Rev 5:2).” Feinberg, “1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State,” 325. Goppelt shows an opposite view: “But throughout the NT κηρύσσειν, ‘preach’, is used of the proclamation of salvation in Christ and the Christian message.” Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 257.

³⁷“In fact the word πνεῦμα is used ‘without a defining genitive’ to refer to a ‘departed’ human spirit (the spirit which had left Abel after Cain killed him) in 1 Enoch 22:6 and again in 22:7; another example is found in 1 Enoch 20:6 (Greek text). These examples are significant because Selwyn, Dalton, and France all emphasize 1 Enoch as the supposed background for this passage in 1 Peter.” Grudem, “Christ Preaching through Noah,” 7.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 8.

³⁹*Ibid.* “Moreover, in some of these instances the human spirits of those who have died are seen to be bound or confined in a place of waiting until they face the final judgment (1 Enoch 22:3–13 [which uses πνεῦμα 10 times in this sense]; cf 98:3), and could readily be said to be ‘in prison.’”

⁴⁰*Ibid.* “Here 1 Enoch does not use the same word Peter uses for ‘prison’ (φυλακή) when he talks about these imprisoned human spirits, but it does not use the word when it talks about imprisoned angelic spirits either (φυλακή does not occur in 1 Enoch).”

⁴¹France, “Exegesis in Practice,” 271.

person's present status even when describing a past action which occurred when the person did not have that status. For example, it would be perfectly correct to say, 'Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926,' even though she did not become Queen until long after 1926."⁴² This makes enough sense to me though we may need more evidence from Greek texts.

Grudem further extends a strong argument for the Preaching View:

(1) "The OT narrative indicates that there were human beings who disobeyed God 'when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark,' but there is no indication of angelic disobedience during that time."⁴³

(2) "The entire section immediately preceding the command to build the ark (Gen 6:5–13) clearly emphasizes human sin and only human sin as the reason God brings the flood upon the earth."⁴⁴

(3) "When Peter further defines the 'spirits in prison' as those 'who disobeyed when the patience of God was waiting,' it strongly suggests that God was waiting for repentance on the part of those who were disobeying."⁴⁵

(4) "It is confirmed in 'any strand of Jewish tradition,' not only in 1 Enoch."⁴⁶

Finally, Grudem raises a hermeneutical question: "Is the usual nature of the New Testament writings such that knowledge of a specific piece of extra-biblical literature would have been required for the original readers to understand the meaning (not the historical origin, but the meaning) of a specific passage?"⁴⁷ In my brief discussion of 1 Enoch and extra-biblical literature above, I suggested that it was more

⁴²Grudem, "Christ Preaching through Noah," 8.

⁴³Ibid., 12.

⁴⁴Ibid., 13, 14. Grudem continues, "The text does not say that God was sorry that he had made angels, but that he was sorry that he had made man (v 6); it does not say that God decided to blot out fallen angels, but man (vv 6, 13). It is not the violence and corruption practiced by angels which arouses God's anger, but the violence and corruption practiced by man (vv 5, 11, 12, 13)."

⁴⁵ Ibid. Grudem further states: "Otherwise there would be no point in Peter's mentioning God's patience. Furthermore, the word ἀπεκδέχομαι, "waiting," has the nuance of hopeful or expectant waiting for something to happen ("await eagerly," BAGD, 83). The "angelic" interpretation of this passage does not seem able to do justice to this phrase, because there is no statement in the OT or NT that fallen angels ever have a chance to repent (cf 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Heb 2:16)."

⁴⁶Ibid., 14.

⁴⁷Ibid., 17.

significant that Gentile believers in Asia Minor knew Noah, even if not 1 Enoch itself so much. Jobes, though she supports the Triumph View, offers a thoughtful suggestion: “The fact that Peter neither refers to Enoch nor quotes from 1 Enoch shows that he is not interested in accrediting or exegeting 1 Enoch but is simply using a tradition that would have been familiar to his readers.”⁴⁸ Another possibility is, again, that Peter has put intentional double meaning, whereby the text could be taken as either of the Preaching or Triumph Views by obscure word choices such as giving no object to “κηρύσσω” or using “πνεῦμα” instead of “ἄγγελος” or “ἄνθρωπος” (or “ψυχή”), etc.

I would prefer the Preaching View⁴⁹ because it seems to fit better in the literary context of doing good in the midst of evil, in terms of patiently preaching God’s grace and human repentance. It naturally introduces the following passage on water baptism. In fact, it will constitute a literary unit with 3:20-21 in the key motifs of preaching and salvation, many (“spirits”) preached to and only eight (Noah’s family) saved, in parallel to the similar testimonial verses in the discourse (3:15-16; 4:4, 6).

Stating that only eight were saved even though the pre-incarnate Christ preached could be discouraging to preaching believers. Yet, it is a repeated and default reality of the Old Testament (OT), continually so to Peter’s days, surrounded by non-believers as a small community of faith, in the ungodly cultural and social milieu. It could be rather encouraging to learn that God was concerned about their testimonies even after Christ’s ascension. The Holy Spirit is with their testimonies (1:12) and sanctification (1:3). Theologically, this view also echoes with “the Spirit of Christ” (1:11) in the prophets, the God who spoke to their ancestors through the prophets (Heb 1:1) or Lukan / OT pneumatology, which is connected in prophetic activities.⁵⁰

Above all, Christ took victory—via the reminding phrase of His resurrection “δι’ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ” (3:21), which echoes with the preceding “ζωοποιηθεῖς,” the discourse goes back to the

⁴⁸Jobes, *1 Peter*, 245. She also suggests: “Peter’s allusion to the tradition of the Watchers does not necessarily require a literary knowledge of the book of 1 Enoch. The book of 1 Enoch may preserve a tradition that was more generally and widely known.” *Ibid.*, 244-5.

⁴⁹Chris Carter states that he prefers the triumph view and points out that I have not referred to J. N. D. Kelly’s commentary with the best argument for the triumph view in his judgment (Personal communication on January 23, 2017). I admit that it is a shortcoming of this paper. I will incorporate Kelly’s arguments in the future development of my research. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1969).

⁵⁰William W. Menzies, and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

redemptive events. Christ “has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him” (3:22); The readers did not have to fear fallen angels, secular authorities and powers, even if 3:19-20a does not refer to the triumph proclamation to fallen angels in Noah’s days.

The Triumph View echoes with 3:22. Since “πορευθείς” (3:19) may refer to going to the second heaven, Christ’s ascension is two-seventh (2/7) accomplished in 3:19-20a. His ascension is then retold in 3:22 more completely. Here is Grudem’s question, again: “If one holds to a preaching of condemnation in this text, it seems difficult to explain in a satisfactory way why the proclamation of final condemnation was made only to these specific sinners (or fallen angels) rather than to all those who were in hell.”⁵¹ It is true that the Noahic diluvian destruction was theologically significant in God’s salvific history as His first worldwide judgment, the second and final one to which we are awaiting today. Thus, Kubo’s contention might make sense in his system that postdiluvian sinners have to wait for their end-time release even if having accepted the gospel in postmortem evangelism. Whether preaching repentance or proclaiming victory, Noah’s days seem to be symbolic to today’s eschatological wicked generation, even if one takes the view of OT saints’ release to Heaven at Christ’s death, resurrection or ascension.

On the contrary, the Preaching View takes Noah as one of the “prophets” (1:11) and the “preacher of righteousness” along the Petrine context (2 Pet 2:5). Christ in the S/spirit only preached to Noah’s generation though the mode is not stated, assumedly as well to other generations throughout the OT days (Heb 1:1). Noah was taken as a symbolic figure from the significant first judgment, especially in the Asia Minor context, considered as the best example in teaching about water baptism in its conceptual parallelism to the water destruction.

“νεκροῖς” (4:6)

Finally, let us briefly exegete “νεκροῖς” (4:6). As seen in the introduction of some proponents of postmortem evangelism, this verse is a key verse as their basis of contention, although some directly bring their interpretation of 3:19-20a as Christ’s descent between His death and resurrection (Kubo, Kato, Reicke, Goppelt) while the other holds another view of it (Barclay). Reicke’s following word is perhaps one of the best explanations among them: “That the final judgment is imminent, vs. 6a, is also evident from the fact that the gospel has already been

⁵¹Grudem, “Christ Preaching through Noah,” 19. Carter suggests that Kelly “has answered this more than adequately” (Personal communication on January 23, 2017).

preached to the dead. Exactly how this was done is not stated. It is possible to imagine Christ's descent into the lower regions after his burial as the time for this preaching . . . but explicit information is not given."⁵²

While Green emphasizes that Christ's descent was common in early extra-biblical literature,⁵³ Dalton is cautious because it was not traditional in the Roman Catholic Church, where the dead were Noah's converted "contemporaries" or "the just" of the OT.⁵⁴

However, the literary context is clear enough to show that the discourse is about Peter's Christian readers and their non-believing contemporaries. 4:4 says, "They will heap abuse on you," succeeding which, 4:5 talks about those non-believers' future judgment and 4:6: "εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη." Interestingly, it is pointed out that "εὐαγγελίζω," which "always means to "bring good news""⁵⁵ and that it "in normal New Testament usage necessarily requires a live audience!"⁵⁶ Clement of Alexandria might have thus come up with an interpretation of the spiritual dead, namely sinners, having been evangelized to be believers.⁵⁷ "He had a strong following in the early church and this interpretation has persisted until fairly recent times."⁵⁸ Dalton finely summarizes the most recent and popular interpretation: "The preaching of the gospel to Christians who have since died is not in vain."⁵⁹ In this interpretation, "νεκροῖς" is used like "πνεύμασιν" (3:19)

⁵²Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 119.

⁵³Goppelt calls the descent interpretation "apostolic" because of the second-century popularity of this interpretation. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 263. David Horrell suggest a similar idea: "it should also be clear that there is no sharp disjunction between the various beliefs expressed in the New Testament, particularly in 1 Peter, and the second-century (and later) ideas about Christ's preaching to the dead." David G. Horrell, "'Already Dead' or 'Since Died'?" in *Becoming Christian* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 97.

⁵⁴"Just like the 'last minute conversion' of 3:19, it was elaborated and made popular in Roman Catholic circles by Robert Bellarmine. So until fairly recent times, Roman Catholic exegetes saw in the "dead" of 4:6 either the same people as the contemporaries of Noah (converted at the coming of the flood), or else, more generally, the just of the Old Testament."⁵⁴ Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits*, 53-4. Surprisingly, Dalton, a Jesuit scholar himself, says that "Roman Catholic scholars until recently have hesitated to offer an interpretation which would seem to suggest the possibility of conversion after death" against popular Catholic practice of veneration of the dead. *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁵Stewart D. F. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1897), 480.

⁵⁶Dalton, *ibid.*, 58.

⁵⁷Dalton, *ibid.*, 55-6. Dalton quotes Clement: "Et mortuis evangelizatum est, nobis videlicet, qui quondam extabamus infideles" (And the gospel was preached to the dead, namely to us, who had been unbelievers) (Translation mine).

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 56.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 59. Besides Dalton, Dubis, Jobses, Marshall and many other contemporary commentators are in this position.

in the Preaching View; namely they were alive when the event (preaching, in both verses) took place, but now, at the time of writing, they had died to be “spirits” and “dead” respectively. In fact, though this needs more scrutiny, Peter may have an inclination to be attracted by his own words in the discourse: “πνεῦμα” is found in 3:18 and “νεκρός” in 4:5 though each rendering may be different from each other.

In this paper, I would follow the most recent “since died” interpretation, namely that people became believers because the gospel/Christ was preached; they are dead now due to untold reasons but will live in the spiritual realm. It fits my assumption of the literary context, “repay evil with blessing” (3:9). Preaching in oppression (3:19) (Preaching View above) was succeeded by the descriptions of Noah’s salvation (3:20-21) and Christ’s victory (3:22). A parallel development is seen in chapter 4: Doing right in oppression (4:1-4) will lead to the oppressors’ judgment (4:5) and believers’ release and life in the heavenly realm (victory) (see the same antithesis as that in 3:18b) (4:6). Dalton summarizes, again:

Thus, as we would expect from the context of 4:1–5, the point of 4:6 is to vindicate the faithful Christians against the abuse of their pagan adversaries. While the pagan persecutor will have to give an account to him who judges the living and the dead, the faithful Christian, even in death, will live with the life of God.⁶⁰

The postmortem evangelism view should be thus rejected contextually.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have introduced the spiritual situation in Japan with regard to ancestral veneration. It is quite natural for non-Christians to remember their deceased loved ones, talk to them, and bow down to them in order to show their respect, offer requests to them and worship them in everyday life; and so may some self-claimed Christians be doing.

Arimasa Kubo’s “second-chance theory,” along with other pastors and theologians, emerged as a comfort and a hope to those who have lost their loved ones without Christ and those who are interested in the Christian faith in evangelistic settings.

⁶⁰Ibid.

However, a brief exegetical survey in this paper has shown that postmortem evangelism cannot be based on the concerned Petrine text.⁶¹ My temporary translation of the passage will be as follows:

(3:18b) . . . so that He (Jesus) might bring you [plural] to God by being killed in the earthly realm but being resurrected in the heavenly realm. (19) In the heavenly realm, by the way, He went to the spirits (now) in prison and preached (repentance). (20a) They once disobeyed when God's patience was waiting eagerly in Noah's days, when the ark was being prepared . . . (4:6) . . . because, for this, the good news was preached even to the now dead so that they might be judged according to men in the earthly realm but live according to God in the heavenly realm.

Such an interpretation may have been popular in earlier days of Christian history, when there were no canonical books, no literacy and education among lay members, or no computers and internet. In our highly informed cultural milieu, however, our exegesis must be more scientific, objective, and evidence-based while embracing the same passion for the lost as those advocates of the theory sincerely show. For me, my studies of this text have just begun. Being Japanese, how I wish there were postmortem "first-time," if not second, evangelism. Only the Lord knows the truth. May I continue to deepen my understanding of the Scripture for the sake of the Lord and the world!

⁶¹Feinberg concludes his article with these words: "Consequently, whatever one wants to say about biblical teaching concerning the intermediate state, he must say it on the basis of some other passage than this one!" Feinberg, "1 Peter 3:18–20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State" 336.

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⁶² "Logos" represents Logos Bible Software/Verbum, the integrated literature management software produced and provided by Faithlife Corporation (Bellingham, Washington, 2000-16). Its most updated version at the writing of this paper is: Version 7.2 SR-1 (7.2.0.0038: Released November 30, 2016) (accessed December 5, 2016).

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Pascal D. Bazzell, *Urban Ecclesiology: Gospel of Mark, Familia Dei and a Filipino Community Facing Homelessness, Ecclesiological Investigations vol. 19* (London: Bloomsbury-T&T Clark, 2015), hardback xvi + 252pp. ISBN: 978-0-567-65980-4, \$96.99.

If someone claims to do empirical studies in the field of theology, I am always cautious. Too many times the approach is only empirical at the surface and the results are frequently self-serving. Pascal D. Bazzell's work is a laudable exception. He sets out to study a community of homeless families in Davao City, Philippines and how it develops a sense of being church, facing the challenges of life on the streets in the name of Christ. His analysis does not only make for a fascinating read, Bazzell ends up with a variety of findings that build components of a grassroots ecclesiology in Asia. More importantly, it is serious about mapping the contours of a church that is poor and lives with the poor. As such it develops an ecclesiology of the marginalized and challenges many Western models of mission engagement in the urban slums of this world.

Bazzell begins by clarifying how a study on being a church among the homeless can be approached. How can a discourse between ecclesiology and marginalization be fostered? He sets the stage of his research project and looks at various paradigms for serving the homeless populations. His study is a careful listening to a Filipino ecclesial community facing poverty, pain, injustice and oppression and how this community is on a journey with Jesus.

The second chapter clarifies theoretical constructs and methodological principles that are essential to an empirical study. The third chapter provides a theological framework for his research. What kind of a biblical understanding of church can we apply? Pascal Bazzell suggests the metaphor of the *familia Dei*, the family of God, as a suitable model to bring the context to focus, on the one hand the presence of God's grace and on the other hand people living on the streets and calling a public park their home.

The fourth chapter is an ethnographic description of this community. How is their identity shaped and how do these people live with their common quest for survival? The stage is set for the fifth chapter in which Bazzell engages the community with a reading of the Gospel of Mark. It is not an imposition of theological ideas delivered to the homeless by an outsider, but rather an exercise by these very people as they interpret the Good News in order to understand and apply it.

In chapter six, the author succeeds in integrating the empirical and theological data. He does this by using the notion of *familia Dei* an applying it to the cultural milieu as well as to the ecclesial framework established earlier. In the final chapter Bazzell discusses the nature and implications of such an ecclesiology of the homeless. A conclusion that is open to further reflection and action.

The multi-disciplinary nature of this book makes it worthwhile reading for a variety of reasons. It provides a sociological view of the homeless in their own words (an analysis of interviews with the homeless is added in the book's appendices), it raises hermeneutical questions (reading the Gospel of Mark from the grassroots), it invites to ecumenical reflection (the church as the global *familia Dei* in spite of all its imperfections) and it evokes a missiological vision that aims at going beyond colonial or post-colonial entrapments. Pascal Bazzell refers to a large variety of theologians and social scientists. He has consulted relevant writings of Vatican II and the World Council of Churches. He is aware of the reflections of Pentecostal authors and includes Asian writers to the dialogue. His argumentation is solid. His writing style is clear and the frequent summaries help the reader to move from one subject to the other without losing sight of the main points. There are plenty of nuggets to be discovered. His chapter on ecclesiality, for instance, is worthwhile reading on its own. The price of the book may not make it affordable for every theologian and pastor, especially in the Global South, but it certainly is a volume that should be available in every seminary library.

Reviewed by J.D. Plüss

Joshua A. Kaiser, *Becoming Simple and Wise: Moral Discernment in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Vision of Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co., 2015). xiii +200 pp. paperback.

This is a book which has the potential to get readers more deeply engaged in the question of discerning and doing God's will. It is a revision of the author's doctoral dissertation which explores Bonhoeffer's understanding of discernment because this was perceived to be unploughed ground "and because the practice of moral discernment had not received adequate attention in the field of theological ethics" (ix).

In the introduction Kaiser sets the foundation for his study by asking, what does it mean to discern God's will? Through this question he reflects what he perceives to be "the best window into [Bonhoeffer's] mature ethical thinking [wherein] answering this question was central to the Christian life and required a process of moral discernment . . . [but] moral knowledge gained through universal ethical principles [was insufficient]; instead, one had to carefully discern God's will afresh on every new occasion in order to act faithfully" (1).

Kaiser highlights Bonhoeffer's concern with the practicality of discernment in the situations and contingencies of everyday life. He proposes that he aims to show that Bonhoeffer's theology of moral discernment engenders both simplicity and reflective moral deliberation from a Christological perspective, i.e. since the unity of these two concepts reflects the relationship between Christ's human and Divine natures. Moreover, he suggests, as one becomes increasingly aligned with the form of Christ, particularly through the spiritual disciplines, the same conceptual unity becomes an effective reality in the lives of believers.

The introduction concludes with Kaiser's declared intention to examine the seeming contradiction between simplicity and faith, and the deliberacy required by a reflective approach to discerning God's will. To this end, his book proposes to dissolve the tension by reconciling these opposing themes and show that "Bonhoeffer's understanding of simple obedience does not reject all manner of moral reflection but redefines its purpose and purview" (19).

Following the introduction of Chapter one, Kaiser arranges his material in a further six chapters.

Chapter Two is entitled "The Problem of Moral Discernment" and begins by attending to the two different approaches to moral living and the tension between them, i.e. the first being, as of the Pharisees of Jesus day, having knowledge of good and evil so as to make appropriate choices through reflective practice on the morals involved, and the second, as modelled by Jesus, simply obediently living according to

God's will without the need for reflective practice. In addition, Kaiser acknowledges Bonhoeffer's approach to Christian discernment has both an outer and inner dimension. The former seeks to discern God's will and the latter examines one's self.

Thus Kaiser has established his perception of the platform inherent in the question of Bonhoeffer's moral discernment ethics i.e. the tension between living in simplicity versus practicing reflectiveness.

In Chapter three Kaiser turns to Christology and its being the foundation of Bonhoeffer's understanding of moral discernment. Despite the acknowledged difficulties with Bonhoeffer's coverage of who Christ is (i.e. human and Divine) versus how this can be the case, Kaiser points to "Bonhoeffer's important description of Christ as Word, sacrament, and church-community" (59) as possibly providing an answer, along with "creation [being] grounded in Christ" so that speculation and reflection cannot replace faith in one's quest for understanding reality "and [the] risen Christ [who] makes real all that exists" (62). Moreover, Kaiser suggests that this aspect of Bonhoeffer's Christology shows how "both the ultimate [i.e. God's reality] and the penultimate [i.e. the reality of the world] find their origin in Christ" (71). Finally, that "Christ's form embodies both simplicity and moral reflection without conflict" and so do Christians as they grow in conformity to Christ (76) becomes the underlying principle for Chapter four which attends to Christian formation in relation to the practice of discernment.

Kaiser draws from a range of primary and secondary sources to engage with the issue of formation and conformation, and to show that Bonhoeffer's writings affirm that moral discernment, along with discernment of God's will, increases as one becomes more conformed (*Gleichgestaltung*) to the form (*Gestalt*) of Christ. Of the conformation process, Kaiser refers particularly to Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* and *Discipleship* texts, and points to the need to look away from self and recognise own one's connection with all of humanity (103), and "understand discernment not as an isolated spiritual activity, divorced for [sic?] the reality of the natural world, but as a human activity fully embedded in the world" (104).

Kaiser next argues his own case for the place of following spiritual disciplines in Bonhoeffer's work as a factor in growing in conformity to Christ: "spiritual exercise is significant for Bonhoeffer because it gives him the language to speak about a kind of moral reflection proper to the life of simplicity . . . [but] although he does not articulate the details of the relationship, it is clear that spiritual exercise helps to facilitate moral discernment in several ways" (107). From this, and with reference to a primary source, Kaiser argues that whilst "the disciplined practice of spiritual exercise . . . might seem an affront to Christian freedom, [it] is

actually a means to Christian freedom, insofar as true freedom exists only in doing God's will" (117).

Chapter five sees Kaiser return to the question of "whether simplicity and simple obedience . . . eliminates space for any practice of moral reflection for Christians" (120). Following a chronological study of Bonhoeffer's writings concerning obedience as commanded in scripture, Kaiser concludes "Bonhoeffer believes that Christ's disciples must combine both simplicity and wisdom in order to act rightly . . . [but whilst he] does not fully explain how simplicity and wisdom are held together in the life of a disciple, he does assert that both are grounded in the word of Christ [and hence are part of obedience]" (137). Not unreasonably then, for Kaiser, wisdom is the result of reflection so that "simple obedience, far from eliminating moral reflection, actually creates space for it insofar as the reality of Christ both shapes and focuses it" (139).

In Chapter six Kaiser turns to engagement with the realm of the penultimate. Since, for Bonhoeffer, all creation is grounded in Christ, and the world around all living beings provides the context in which God's will is discerned, Kaiser offers that, aside from the importance of simple obedience along with wisdom that comes from moral reflection, Bonhoeffer's theology of the natural order of the penultimate environment of the world suggest it further provides a complementary guide for moral discernment.

In the concluding chapter, Kaiser summarizes his points, particularly that Bonhoeffer's conception of discernment has Christology as its foundation, so that "the stronger one's connection to Christ in simple faith, the more deeply one can draw upon the natural world and natural human ability [i.e. reflective practice] in the task of moral discernment"(183).

Kaiser has used a comprehensive range of primary and secondary sources, notwithstanding the inevitable complexities that can arise when attempting to reduce one language into another, along with the potential for unconscious subjective interpretative bias that such a process may possibly engender.

As an attempt to draw essentially unprovable connections (in terms of Bonhoeffer's actual intentions) from a literature review, Kaiser's is a noble effort that brings convincing conclusions, and which provides a rich addition to the field of Christian ethics.

Reviewed by Dr. V.J.D-Davidson

Bazzell, Pascal D. and Aldrin Peñamora, eds. *Christologies, Cultures and Religions: Portraits of Christ in the Philippines*. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: OMF Lit., 2016.

I have waited for a book like this for a long time. Finally, Filipino evangelicals have begun to break out of the ill-fitting “wineskin” of western theology and have begun to give credence to doing Christology within their own context, a domain that has traditionally been dominated by Catholic scholars. The articles included here were originally presented at a theological symposium sponsored by the Koinonia Theological Seminary (KTS) in Davao City, Philippines, in 2014. The work is also co-sponsored by the Asia Theological Association, which has produced a number of excellent books by Asian theologians.

Co-editor Pascal Bazzell explains the difference between western and non-western theologies:

What sets non-Western Christologies apart from many Western Christologies is the way in which non-Western theologians not only articulate Christology from the triune God sending his son into the world (Christology from above) and from the historical Jesus (Christology from below), but also from three other points “from within” Asian contexts: the “religious other”; “cultures”; and “poverty.” Authentic Christologies in the Philippines can emerge only if they encounter the religious other, cultures and the oppressed, and the migrants and the poor. (3-4)

While this approach has some challenges to it, such as not rooting theology deeply in the soil of Scripture, this approach does take seriously the fact that theology is always done in the human context.

He goes on to say:

Some of the best Christologies today were not developed in safe environments like our classrooms, consultations, and conferences; but often in rather difficult situations marked by great loss, challenges, and pain. Sedmak pointedly remarks that “theology is about being honest to [sic] reality. And the face of reality can be painful and ugly. It is the face of slavery and famine, cancer and war, tears and blood. We do theology in the middle of the storm.” (7)

Doing theology in this manner, then, for Bazzell, leads us to the “vision of a promised land, the vision of unbroken closeness and unthreatened community.” (Ibid.)

The variety of articles in this volume is wide, reflecting the backgrounds, interests and social engagement of the presenters. The book is divided into two parts, Christology in Cultural Perspective and Christology in Inter-Religious Perspective.

In Part I, there are eight articles: *Searching for Jesus Christ in Philippine History: The Dream Does Not Die* by Mariano C. Apilado; *Encountering Jesus in the Midst of Struggle: A Christology of Struggle* by Victor Aguilan; *The Faith of Jesus as 'Pagsasalooob at Pangangatawan' [Interiorization and Embodiment]: A Cultural Approach* by Jose M. DeMesa; *Christology From a Filipino Woman's Perspective* by Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro; *A Face of Christ In Binondo, Chinatown* by Chiu Eng Tan; "My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?: Christology Amid Disasters" by Rico Villanueva; and *Manobo Blood Sacrifice and Christ's Death* by Brian Powell. The level of engagement in the culture and history of the Philippines is truly exceptional and much can be gleaned from these pages, although some articles in Part I reflect a lack of balance with Scripture—the supreme law of faith and practice. This does not hold true in Part II.

Apilado takes us on a journey of theological engagement from the Spanish colonial era in 1521 to the end of the American colonial era in 1946. He then proposes the development of an indigenous Christology, based on the incarnation of Christ and taking into account both the positive and negative factors of their colonial history and the missionaries that accompanied the colonizers. He contends that when we find the real Jesus, understood through a Filipino cultural lens, we will enjoy the true fullness and abundance of life. (22)

Aguilan writes of understanding Christ in the struggles of daily life—struggles that are embodied by and reflected in the various images of Christ that are so popular in the Philippines. He also draws on themes of western theology and global pop culture, which he contends, affects Filipino Christology.

De Mesa, a well-respected lay Catholic theologian, picks up on the theme of *Pagsasalooob* (Interiorization) and *Pangangatawan* (Embodiment) of the Kingdom of God. Here, he admits that for many years, he followed western forms of theologizing and found it difficult to think in terms of contextualizing the gospel within Filipino cultural concepts (37-8). He did, however, make the change and has produced some thought provoking work here and elsewhere. De Mesa's work also highlights the difficulty of expressing some Filipino terms in the English language. There is much to be said for doing theology in the indigenous languages.

I have serious reservations about Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro's feminist reflections on the incarnation of Christ. To begin with, she roots

her thoughts not in the God-Man, Jesus Christ, but in the Hindu concept of an avatar (53-4). Then she compares the incarnation of Christ to the “Trickster” of Native American mythology. (54) In short, she leads us down a path we would do well not to follow.

The remaining articles reflect a more conservative theological viewpoint, starting with Chiu Eng Tan’s insightful article on Christology in Binondo, Manila’s Chinatown. Chiu reflects on the mix of folk Buddhism and folk Catholicism practices there and highlights the reality of an animistic worldview where practitioners seek supernatural power in ways and means that benefit the practitioner, regardless of the source. Chiu accurately reflects that these practices are not biblical; however, he stops short of offering biblical answers. Still, his article presents excellent details for anyone wanting to understand animism in the Philippines.

Rico Villanueva provides an excellent article on Christology in disasters. Indeed, he has written much on the issue of theodicy from an Asian perspective. As usual, he provides an excellent balance between faithfulness to the Scriptures and the realities of everyday life in the Philippines.

Brian Powell’s article on Blood Sacrifice and the cross of Christ among the animistic, Manobo tribe of Mindanao provides an excellent pattern of contextualization by relating the death of Christ using cultural concepts understandable to the Manobo without compromising the message of Scripture.

Part II of the book is entitled *Christology in Inter-Religious Perspective*, seeks to relate the gospel to other religions. Given that KTS is in Mindanao, where Islam is strong, three of the articles, written by Emo Yango, Lee Joseph Custodio, and Herbert T. Ale deal with Christianity and Islam. In general, I found their articles to be excellent, especially Custodio’s article comparing Christology in Islamic writings with that of the apostle Paul.

Following Ale, Edgar Ebojo, a noted authority on NT textual variants, takes us on an interesting journey of Christology in the textual variants of the NT in the 2nd to 4th centuries of the church, reflecting on the Christological thinking of the time. He introduces this article by referring to the furious debate on the use of the translation of the Christological title “son of God” in Muslim Bible translations, which appears to be why his article is included in this part of the book. He then relates this to the history of the struggle of defining and explaining Jesus’ dual nature throughout history. He makes an excellent application to Bible translation work, which is critical to his own translation work at the Bible society.

Bazzell and Omar Abu Khalil then present some excellent insights on the Muslim-Christian dialogue, giving particular attention to the strong prophetic tradition in Islam and the prophethood of Christ. They do an excellent job of remaining faithful to the Scriptural descriptions of Christ, but they also note that Christian scholars down through the centuries have not done much reflection to Christ's role as prophet. Hopefully their contribution to this field will inspire others to take up the issue.

Aldrin Peñamora, who is heavily involved in Muslim-Christian relations throughout Southeast Asia, concludes Part II with a reflection on Christian-Muslim relations and the Eucharist. He states that it is not a good idea to try to whitewash the unsavory parts of the history of Christianity as it relates to Islam, especially because the current tensions between these two groups in the Philippines relates to "Christians" taking the Muslims' ancestral land through the force of passing laws enforced by military arms. He then goes to great length to demonstrate how reconciliation can be achieved through the meaning of the Eucharist.

The editors thoughtfully included an afterward by social anthropologist Melba Maggay who, despite her claims to the contrary, is one of the finest evangelical theologians in the Philippines. Maggay rightfully exults in the breaking free of western theological categories that this book embodies. She proposes that we move toward "contextualization from within," meaning that we select biblical themes that will be well understood within the Filipino cultural and historical context, dealing with the issues of our day. I concur. This volume is a good step in that direction.

Reviewed by Dave Johnson, DMiss

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