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Inaugural Messages

Foreword to the Inaugural Issue of the *Journal of Biblical and Ancient Studies (JBAS)*

Cilliers Breytenbach*

It is a privilege to offer a few words on the occasion of the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Biblical and Ancient Studies (JBAS)*, an initiative published under the auspices of the Johannine Literature Studies of Korea (JLSK). As a non-Korean scholar and observer from outside this particular academic context, I extend my sincere congratulations to the founding editors and contributors who have brought this endeavour into being.

Launching a new academic journal is no small undertaking, particularly in a field as historically dense, methodologically diverse, and institutionally complex as biblical and ancient studies. The appearance of JBAS testifies to both scholarly ambition and a desire for international engagement. It aims to provide a platform for research on the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and related ancient texts written in classical languages—including, notably, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Coptic, and several East Asian languages such as Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. This linguistic and cultural range already signals an intention to foster dialogue across both traditions and geographies.

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At the same time, it must be said that JBAS, like all emerging journals, faces the challenge of establishing its voice and scholarly credibility. Its potential lies in whether it can consistently combine rigorous academic standards with a broad, inclusive vision. The balance between being locally rooted and globally competitive is not easily achieved. It requires long-term editorial focus, a wide network of contributors and readers, and above all, the courage to pursue original research while remaining grounded in critical discipline.

It is, therefore, encouraging to see that the first issue makes a thoughtful and deliberate start. The three inaugural essays set a tone that is both reflective and aspirational. Jörg Frey, in *“New Testament Scholarship Today: Its Challenges and Tasks,”* offers a wide-ranging and candid assessment of the state of the field. From his European perspective, Frey outlines both the legacy and limitations of modern biblical scholarship, emphasizing that critical study of the New Testament is historically contingent, culturally embedded, and always shaped by its institutional settings. He traces the field’s evolution—from its Enlightenment roots and ecclesial entanglements to its present pluralism and global diversification—and reflects on the tension between academic freedom and ecclesial relevance. While he affirms the gains of multi-perspectival, interdisciplinary approaches, Frey is also clear-eyed about the risks of fragmentation and ideological misuse. His essay resists programmatic certainty and instead invites a theologically attentive, critically engaged, and culturally self-aware conversation. In this sense, his contribution both sets a high standard for the kind of work JBAS might foster and rightly cautions against presuming too much from any single institution or publication.

Sukmin Cho's essay, "*Selection and Focus, Expansion and Integration in Biblical Studies*," offers a reflective account of the journal's institutional and intellectual origins. Drawing on a decade of work within the Johannine Literature Studies of Korea, Cho argues that meaningful scholarship in biblical studies must begin with carefully chosen focal points—what he calls "selective depth"—even within a field as vast and complex as biblical and ancient studies. His essay highlights the group's sustained focus on Johannine literature, including the Gospel of John, the Johannine epistles, and Revelation, while also advocating for an expanded scholarly horizon that integrates the wider textual world of antiquity: from the Dead Sea Scrolls to early patristic writings. Cho envisions JBAS not simply as a publication outlet, but as a platform for international scholarly exchange—one that both honors the specificity of its founding focus and welcomes the collaborative integration of diverse voices, disciplines, and linguistic traditions. His essay therefore provides a programmatic vision for the journal: rigorous in its depth, yet open to dialogue and expansion.

The special theme article, "*A Study on the Adam Christology in the Gospel of John and the Possibilities of Ecological Ethics*," by Hyunte Shin, offers a theologically creative and textually grounded exploration of the Gospel of John's potential contribution to ecological ethics. Shin identifies John's creation motifs that echo Genesis 1 and argues that narrative details in John 19–20 structurally parallel Genesis 2–3. These connections support the reading of Jesus as a "new Adam" whose obedient death and resurrection inaugurate a new creation. This "Adam Christology" not only reconfigures human identity in relation to Christ but also suggests a cosmic reconciliation that extends to the whole of creation. Shin's proposal transcends anthropocentric soteriology and lays the foundation for an

ecothological ethic rooted in Johannine theology—one urgently needed in the context of today’s ecological crisis.

Taken together, these three essays provide more than thematic orientation. They outline a scholarly posture that JBAS seems keen to cultivate: one that honours traditional methods while remaining open to new questions and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The general articles in this issue further illustrate the range of the journal’s ambition. Seung Ho Bang offers an archaeological-redactional analysis of the Gideon narrative in Judges, while Suyeon Kim explores witness motifs within Luke–Acts. Wooil Moon’s comparative study of Logos and Mosaic traditions highlights theological and philosophical resonances across literary corpora, and Sung-Kwon Yim’s work on the Septuagint Psalms demonstrates how Greek renderings of Hebrew texts carry distinct theological implications.

These studies differ in focus and methodology, yet they exhibit a shared commitment to careful textual work, historical attentiveness, and interpretive depth. In that sense, they reflect the kind of intellectual pluralism that biblical and ancient studies today demand. The combination of textual, literary, theological, and archaeological approaches—especially when applied across canonical and non-canonical corpora—can foster rich conversations not only within the academy but also between disciplines, cultures, and traditions.

Still, this kind of interdisciplinary and interlingual work raises important methodological responsibilities. As I have emphasized elsewhere,¹

¹ Cilliers Breytenbach, “The Task and Future of New Testament Studies” (lecture, Presbyterian University & Theological Seminary, Seoul, May 17, 2023); and “The Task

interpretation—or exegesis—must begin with disciplined attentiveness to the text itself. Whether one approaches biblical writings or ancient texts from a philological, theological, or socio-cultural angle, the goal remains to reconstruct the communicative intent embedded within these historically situated sign-systems. This requires a rigorous engagement with grammar, genre, intertextual allusions, and the common cognitive and cultural background of the original audiences.

Such interpretive work is not neutral; it is shaped by scholarly traditions and theoretical frameworks. Yet, it must resist the temptation of reading ancient texts primarily in the light of modern questions. The responsible use of exegesis, in theological, and other academic and public contexts, depends on distinguishing between interpretation of and use of a text, between reconstructing meaning and mobilizing it for contemporary agendas. As Umberto Eco once noted, interpretation must be guided by the internal logic and constraints of the text before it can be put to use.

A journal like JBAS has an important role to play in fostering such clarity. If it succeeds in nurturing high-quality research that is methodologically transparent, historically informed, and hermeneutically aware, it may well become a meaningful voice in the international scholarly conversation. But

and Future of New Testament Studies,” *HTS Teologiese Studies* 79, no. 2 (2023): a9319, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.9319>. Eun-Woo Lee, ed., *The 122nd Anniversary of the Founding of Presbyterian University & Theological Seminary, the 23rd International Academic Conference: "The Future and Challenges of Bible Education"*, hosted by the Institute of Biblical Studies (Seoul: Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary Press, 2024), 35–59. ISBN 978-89-7369-017-6.

such a role cannot be assumed; it must be earned over time, through the steady publication of original, reliable, and relevant research.

For that reason, I applaud this first step and wish the editors and contributors perseverance and scholarly courage as they chart a course forward. May JBAS continue to cultivate an academic space where deep textual knowledge meets thoughtful interpretation, and where scholarly traditions from East and West can enter into constructive dialogue—not just in principle, but in practice.

I close with sincere congratulations and cautious optimism.

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Selection and Focus, Expansion and Integration in Biblical Studies

Sukmin Cho*

The Johannine Literature Studies of Korea (JLSK) started on December 13, 2014, when seven individuals who specialized in Johannine literature gathered under the name of the JLSK to present research papers. As time has passed, this research group has spent a decade continuing its research and presentations and has expanded. We are excited and hopeful as we look forward to the publication of the inaugural issue of the international academic journal “The Journal of Biblical and Ancient Studies (JBAS)” in June 2025.

Selection and Focus

Biblical studies are like the deep sea, so vast and profound that their depth and breadth are hard to grasp. It is clear that biblical studies are never easy, as trying to delve deeply into one specific area reveals an endless complexity. Even if one specializes in Johannine literature, it can only be a minuscule part when viewed in light of the entirety of biblical studies, which is vast like the deep sea. Moreover, considering the background of

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biblical studies and the closely related field of ancient literature, it seems evident that biblical studies is an area of scholarship that cannot be fully comprehended or researched by any single individual.

In this regard, the JLSK has selectively focused its research and presentations on the Johannine literature (Gospel of John, Johannine Epistles, Revelation) within the New Testament. Choosing the field of Johannine literature for in-depth investigation amidst the deep sea of biblical studies, and uncovering its depths to lay the groundwork for a broader understanding and interpretation, is very important.

Presenting new methodologies and creative approaches to appropriately understand and research Johannine literature, as well as identifying correlations between various ancient texts and Johannine literature to derive and publish results, remains a significant interpretive task. The unresolved enigmas of the Gospel of John, such as the authorship and dating issues, the purpose of the Gospel, and the challenges of the Johannine community, are not research topics that can be easily overlooked.

Research aimed at understanding the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Johannine epistles, as well as the independent study of the epistles themselves and their connections to various letters in the Bible, should continue to be encouraged. In the case of the Book of Revelation, there are many unresolved research topics, such as the authorship and date of writing, its relationship to apocalyptic literature, the symbolism and interpretation of numbers, and the interpretations and uses of the Revelation by heretical groups, which are all theological subjects necessitating focused study.

Expansion and Integration

However, such selective research and presentations, when viewed from the perspective of biblical studies as a whole, rely on the diligent research outcomes of other scholars and are closely connected to the results of the careful observations and studies of various ancient literature researchers. In this regard, the choice and focus should expand the scope of research to encompass the entire Old and New Testaments and ancient literatures, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the works of Philo and Josephus, as well as early Church Fathers' writings.

The JBAS published with the support of the Johannine Literature Studies in Korea, will serve as a key opportunity to broaden and deepen research on Johannine literature. As an international journal, the JBAS is expected to become a significant foundation for biblical studies research, as scholars from various countries specializing in biblical studies and ancient literature actively participate and share their research outcomes.

If domestic and international biblical scholars and specialists in ancient literature achieve a diverse and harmonious dialogue through their creative research findings, biblical studies will establish a newly expanded interpretative horizon. The various research outcomes related to biblical studies and ancient literature will broaden the understanding of biblical studies and lead to new discoveries in various fields.

Research findings that involve different languages, such as Ancient Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Coptic, and various approaches and interpretations of texts will expand the understanding of biblical studies, ultimately integrating the total research results to unfold an interpretive

horizon beyond expectations. From the perspective of academic understanding, an expanded research foundation that broadens the scope of a particular field's research and understanding will lead to the presentation of a new understanding and interpretation by integrating results from various academic studies.

The international academic journal JBAS positions itself as an academic tool that meets these expectations, and is expected to provide fruitful results beneficial to churches and Christians around the world through lively academic communication and collaborative foundations with scholars from various countries. In this regard, I sincerely thank and congratulate the Johannine Literature Studies in Korea for being able to publish the JBAS.

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New Testament Scholarship Today: Its Challenges and Tasks

Jörg Frey*

Where is New Testament scholarship today, and what are its challenges and tasks? Where are we, and where do we need to go? The launch of a new scholarly journal, devoted to the New Testament and its world, based in South Korea, and linked to Protestantism within World Christianity provides an opportunity to consider these questions. As a European scholar, I am honored by the invitation to be part of this project. This opportunity allows me to share a few general and somewhat programmatic reflections.

Of course, these are my personal perspectives and cannot claim any kind of “objectivity.” I am German by birth and now live in Switzerland. I was raised in secure living conditions and have never experienced precarity. I have been a reader of the Bible since early youth, and I am a Christian and an ordained Lutheran minister working in a Reformed context. I have taught New Testament and early Jewish texts for over thirty years at theological faculties of four European universities. I have supervised more than twenty Ph.D. candidates, as well as an equal number of postdocs and habilitation candidates from different parts of the world. I have also served as the managing editor of a leading monograph series in the field for over twenty years. This is from where I look at our field of scholarship. Others,

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from different intellectual, religious, ethnic, and economic contexts may see different perspectives. These are mine.

New Testament Scholarship in History and Today

Biblical scholarship is said to be a fruit of the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this time, a historical and critical awareness developed with the demand to “freely” investigate the canonical writings. This movement initially occurred in a Protestant context with an anti-dogmatic and anti-clerical tendency. However, this definition is too narrow. Sophisticated, scholarly readings of the Bible began much earlier, in antiquity, with Heracleon, the first commentator of John’s Gospel, and learned churchmen such as Origen and Jerome. As a service to the church, these authors interpreted texts using established methods of their time with philological rigor, philosophical depth, and often, polemical fervor. From Origen to Thomas Aquinas and Erasmus of Rotterdam, scholars explained the texts within the framework of current philosophy and theology with spiritual interest but also occasionally criticized leading doctrines or views. We should not dismiss these authors too quickly as “pre-critical” simply because we are unfamiliar with them. We can learn a lot from earlier authors, even today.

The Reformation marked a turning point. From then on, biblical texts were considered the decisive criterion for evaluating theological truth, and all theological debates had to be based on the Bible. The range of accepted writings and the precise shape of the canon then became the battlefield, with canon decisions being made in various churches (e.g., at the Council of Trent and in some Reformed confessions). The search for the oldest

available texts developed, as did closer research into the texts' language and history. Protestantism slowly embraced biblical criticism in the nineteenth century, mostly for apologetic reasons. Roman Catholicism followed after the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Orthodoxy is still hesitant, and some evangelical or Pentecostal groups still resolutely fight against the historical-critical analysis of the Bible and its results. Until the mid-twentieth century, German scholarship was the pioneer and center of biblical scholarship. The Anglo-Saxon world was more hesitant, and most other areas were not actively involved. Many consider Rudolf Bultmann, the most influential scholar of that period, to be a symbol of destructive criticism, though he is often misunderstood. However, Bultmann most clearly phrased the hermeneutical task of bridging the gap between the Bible and modernity, and this task is still relevant for today.

Much has changed during the last five or six decades. New Testament scholarship has become more international and interdenominational, incorporating scholars from other religious contexts, such as Judaism, as well as non-religious scholars. German scholarship lost its leading position to English-language scholarship. In some fields, there has been a notable "continental drift" between European and North American discourses. Earlier exegetical schools have dissolved, giving way to a greater plurality of methods. Structuralism, narratology, social history, rhetorical studies, and cultural studies have been adopted and now complement and enrich historical paradigms. There is significant interdisciplinarity with classical philology, ancient history, Oriental and Jewish studies, religious studies, and social science. Voices from the Global South are increasingly entering the debate and contributing their perspectives on the texts and their relevance. New hermeneutical paradigms have also emerged, including

socio-rhetorical, feminist, deconstruction, and various postcolonial perspectives, which now challenge the formerly dominant historical paradigm. Nevertheless, the historical paradigm has proven capable of integrating new research questions, moving beyond its former, overly one-sided focus on source or redaction criticism and the quest for “historical truth.” New Testament scholarship has become pluralistic and multi-perspectivist. This development is a gain, not a loss, and deserves to be fostered in further discussion.

Contexts and ‘Stakeholders’ of New Testament Scholarship

The multi-perspectivity of biblical studies is also a result of the plurality of social, academic, and ecclesial settings in which this research is conducted. In Middle and Northern European universities, biblical studies are primarily embedded in theological faculties, whose primary function is to educate ministers for mainstream churches, or in departments of education where school teachers are trained. Despite their connection to churches, scholars enjoy full freedom in their research and teaching. However, this privileged position is being challenged in a secularizing society. There is a need to demonstrate that biblical scholarship and theology are academic disciplines and not partisan ideologies. Therefore, exegetes must demonstrate that they use generally accepted methods of philology and history and that their work benefits society by providing cultural and historical awareness, ethical reflection, and by preventing religious radicalism and fundamentalism. This privileged status comes at a price: the danger of abandoning the connection to the reading communities of the churches and becoming fully “secularized.”

In other countries and in a global context, the societal and institutional conditions differ. Biblical studies are either taught at private or church-run seminars, which are subject to denominational creeds or restrictions of doctrine and dependent on trustees or private donors. Alternatively, they are embedded in departments of Classics, History, or Religious Studies in a non-theological setting. The academic setting affects the research questions asked. In a theological context, biblical studies are connected to church history, dogmatics, ethics, and practical disciplines. This strengthens the study of the hermeneutical and practical implications of the texts. In a non-theological context, however, biblical studies are connected to classics, history, sociology, cultural studies, and the study of other religions. There is also dependence on finances and the issue of scholarly freedom. In the context of church-run seminars, biblical scholarship must follow the requirements of the related churches. This can affect the questions, methods, and results, and even call into question the scholarly value and reliability of such research. Conversely, study programs offered in the education marketplace, without a focus on a specific profession or ministry, are only enrolled in by individuals with an intellectual interest and the financial means to undertake such studies. These programs must advertise their services, and in times of economic constraints, they are also endangered. In economically disadvantaged societies, access to education—let alone scholarly literature—is limited due to financial constraints. In some political and religious contexts, biblical studies are marginalized and hidden from society, as are many churches within global Christianity. However, it is important and desirable that all these voices be heard and connected, not only those from well-funded European and American contexts. A new journal with open online access based in an

Asian context can serve that function. It can bring new perspectives to the forefront and also help marginalized scholars and students access knowledge.

Multi-Perspectivity in Pauline and Johannine Scholarship

In what follows, I will briefly sketch aspects of the multi-perspectivity of New Testament studies, focusing on two primary areas: the study of Paul and John.

a) With regard to Paul, the variety of views is evident today, even more so than in the past. However, because Paul and his texts continue to impact societies, scholarly efforts are necessary to determine what is textually appropriate and where ideas and claims related to the apostle have been appropriated for contemporary purposes. In this regard, scholarship has a critical and public function with respect to both churches and society.

Soon after his time, the Apostle Paul became a myth and a paradigm for various claims. His letters became a model for later Christian writers, his calling a model for conversion to Christianity, and his mission to the Gentiles a model for later Christian missionaries. Soon after his death, the process of “enlargement” began. First Clement portrays Paul and Peter as models of patience and good conduct. The author of Acts portrays Paul as a pious Jew accused only for his belief in the resurrection of the dead. Second Timothy depicts him as a martyr who receives the crown of victory. Even the author of Second Peter can only veil his opposition by claiming that his opponents misunderstand the letters of “our dear brother Paul” (2 Pet 3:15). Paul became popular as a missionary in the Acts of Paul, as a

visionary of heaven and the underworld in the Apocalypse of Paul, and as a martyr in the Martyrdom of Paul. However, his Jewish identity was soon forgotten, and his sharp reasoning and theology went largely unnoticed in the early centuries. They were rediscovered later by Ambrose and Augustine and again by Martin Luther, who made decisive discoveries in Paul's letters. Luther even styled himself as a new Paul. Just as Paul defied Peter to his face (Gal 2:14), Luther defied the Pope. Paul became the hero of Protestantism and the paradigmatic testimony of faith "without works" (Gal 2:16, etc.). For a radical Protestant like Ernst Käsemann, the authentic Paul was the only true witness to the Gospel and the theology of the cross, even the "canon within the canon."

Now, the talk of "perspectives" came into play. The "New Perspective on Paul" introduced the rhetoric of the "new" against the "old," effectively portraying the "old" as outdated and illegitimate. However, such a contrast is not always fair, and perspectives can present distorted images. The picture drawn of Lutheran interpretation was often more opposed to Bultmann than informed about Luther. However, the "New Perspective" had merits in criticizing the individualistic and existential limitations of previous scholarship and in correcting the distorted image of Judaism as a religion of merit and reward. James Dunn also rightly argued that historical Paul was more concerned with including the Gentiles than with individual salvation and that patterns of participation are important alongside juridical or "justification" language. However, in my view, many "New Perspectivists" underestimated the eschatological and juridical dimensions of Paul's thought. Especially in N. T. Wright's view, a general worldview of salvation history provides the main framework, while Paul's apocalyptic views are largely neutralized.

The carousel of perspectives continues to turn. “New” was followed by “radical,” and the authors engaged here seemed particularly concerned with social relevance and present-day problems from a non-theological perspective. “Radicalism” is imaginative. John Gager explicitly wanted to “reinvent” Paul by proposing the idea of two different covenants for Jews and Gentiles and the notion that Paul did not consider Jesus to be the Messiah of Israel. While this view may be useful for Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is difficult to reconcile with Pauline texts. More recently, a “school” emerged under the label “Paul within Judaism.” Notably, these scholars are not only concerned with interpreting the apostle in the context of contemporary Judaism. They also try to deny the relevance of Paul’s statements to his fellow Jews in order to exclude any “Christian” criticism of Jewish practices. Thus, they wage battle against all traditional views, including the “Old Perspectivists” and the “New Perspectivists,” who are criticized for being anti-Jewish and overly theological in their interpretation of Paul’s universalism. However, when these recent approaches assume a rather ‘orthodox’ type of Jewish practice for Paul, with strict observance of purity and dietary regulations, this appears anachronistic, as in Paul’s time, there was a wide variety of Jewish practice in Palestine and even more so in the diaspora. In light of Gal 2:14–21 or 1 Cor 9:19–23, it is hard to deny that Paul saw consequences of the new faith in the Messiah Jesus for himself as also for other Jewish believers. But his relativization of circumcision and Torah observance remained within the realm of contemporary Jewish practices. While some of the current debates on Paul are driven by moral claims and the struggle for political correctness, there is a need for sober historical scholarship, which also impacts the theological image of Paul.

Other perspectives developed in view of different topics can be mentioned. For example, Paul's ambiguous view of women and sexuality is critically examined from feminist and deconstructivist standpoints. His stance toward the Roman Empire is analyzed from liberationist perspectives, and his stance on slavery is examined from postcolonial perspectives. Due to problematic appropriations of Pauline arguments in politics and churches, readers may feel the need to reject his views and their validity today. Conversely, Paul's enduring influence is evident not only in Global Christianity, but also in the responses of contemporary philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, and Slavoj Žižek. These debates and reactions demonstrate the lasting impact of Paul's writings and the necessity of an interpretation grounded in philological and historical analysis. This interpretation should be conducted by experts who are familiar with the languages, history, and cultures of that time and are also trained in hermeneutics to bridge the gap between the ancient world and the present. Understanding Paul's letters and thought is therefore not only a task for the church and theology but also a wider enterprise within global society that must be approached with reason and open dialogue.

b) In a different manner, the multi-perspectivity of scholarship is evident in Johannine studies. The Fourth Gospel has had the most formative effect on the formulation of the doctrines of the divinity of Jesus and of the Trinity. Throughout the ages, interpreters have considered this gospel to be the most profound, spiritual, and philosophical of the gospels. Its influence on literature, art, music, and other cultural fields cannot be overstated. It is world literature that reaches far beyond the church's boundaries. How, then,

should such a text be read? The perspectives I will outline here are inspired by questions asked by readers in different periods.

First, there is the reading of the text as an account of Jesus' earthly ministry. It is evident that John's objective is to present a factual account rather than a fictional narrative. However, from the earliest stages, readers have discerned discrepancies between the Synoptics and John in chronology, material, and language. Despite the attempts by harmonists to amalgamate the accounts, Origen had already discerned that such an endeavor was ill-advised. As long as John was attributed to an eyewitness, interpreters could assume its priority and historical validity. However, since the nineteenth century, this has been questioned, and today most scholars agree that the language and image of Jesus in the Synoptics is closer to the Jesus of history, whereas John provides a transformation regarding language, history, and theology. However, when John states that even the disciples did not understand initially, but only after Jesus' resurrection (John 2:22; 12:16), it appears that he himself was cognizant of this transformation, openly acknowledging that he was not merely recounting the story of Jesus, as the events transpired before the eyes of his contemporaries. John presents a memory of Jesus in retrospect, in the light of subsequent questions and insights, with the objective of attaining a more profound comprehension and presenting the underlying significance that lies beneath the surface. It is imperative, therefore, to acknowledge the potential for truth to transcend the confines of historical accuracy and to explore its transmission through the medium of fiction.

A second approach to reading John is to search for theological truths. Church fathers and commentators, from Irenaeus and Augustine to Thomas and modern interpreters such as Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, were

interested in this. Using various methods, these interpreters read the text as an exposition of the truth about God and Christ, the incarnation, salvation, and faith. However, the Gospel is a narrative, not a theological tract. Problems arise from incoherencies or propositions foreign to the interpreters' views in their time. Ancient and medieval readers could solve such problems by allegorizing, while others had to make decisions about problematic issues. For example, John Calvin prioritized his view of double predestination over the idea of universal salvation in his reading of John 3:16, and Rudolf Bultmann aimed to demythologize apocalyptic ideas in favor of the present-oriented eschatology he preferred. But what should we make of the problematic anti-Jewish statements attributed to Jesus? Here, at least, we must acknowledge that we cannot simply repeat and adopt John's theological views. This gospel may be the climax of New Testament theology, but if scholarship aims for honesty, its problems cannot be overlooked.

Some exegetical methods used in the twentieth century were employed to address historical and theological issues. This applies to the History of Religions School and the search for John's background in Platonism, Gnosticism, and later, Qumran. The same is true for the search for sources or redactional layers, which dominated German scholarship in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, some scholars speculated about an original document containing Jesus's discourses, excluding the objectionable miracle stories. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Julius Wellhausen reconstructed an original document without lengthy discourses that could be considered a source for the historical Jesus alongside Mark. Later, Bultmann reconstructed a Signs Source to help distance the evangelist from the miracles he narrates. In his remarkable

commentary, Bultmann reconstructs the “work of the evangelist” in a textual form that most likely never existed. This type of research was clearly dominated by content criteria and the interpreters’ wishful thinking about Jesus, history, or the evangelist. Thus, in my view, much of the source and redaction criticism in New Testament studies is “science fiction.” Scholarship must be critical but first and foremost also self-critical.

After Bultmann, historical questions were raised in a new way, albeit still hypothetically. Rather than focusing on the history of the earthly Jesus, scholars began to focus on the history of the Johannine community and its theological ideas. Using various criteria, scholars identified literary layers to reconstruct the development of the community from its Jewish-Christian origins until its disappearance within the larger church. However, these constructions were quite daring and depended on the criteria used. They were also based on the presupposition of a secluded, sectarian structure of the communities behind the gospels. The most helpful insight was J. Louis Martyn’s assertion that the debate with the Ioudaioi in John cannot be understood in terms of the historical Jesus, but rather reflects later debates between Johannine Jesus followers and the Synagogue in the post-70 CE period. Despite these general insights about anti-Jewish texts as relics of a tragedy of closeness and the “community approach,” particularly the speculation that the Synagogue liturgically expelled Jesus’s followers through additions to the daily prayer, have been decisively criticized for textual and historical reasons. The gospel is not merely a reflection of the circumstances of its composition. Again, the danger of “science fiction” arises. Will we ever avoid such impasses?

The decisive change in perspective over the last few decades was inspired by linguistics and narratology. There was a shift from source

criticism to viewing the text as a piece of literary art with a unified structure. Scholars now recognize the uncertainties of redaction-critical approaches. The perception of John's literary art in the works of Alan Culpepper, Hartwig Thyen, and Frank Moloney provides new insights into John's narrative design, rhetoric, and didactic subtleties. The text certainly has a history. It adopts sources—in my view, Mark and Luke—in a free and creative manner and draws on decades of earlier narration, preaching, and discussion within the communities of Jesus's followers. However, exploring that prehistory is mere speculation since John's language is impressively coherent. It is easier to see how the text works and how it addresses its readers by drawing on numerous Biblical and Jewish traditions, as well as a wider knowledge of Greco-Roman terms and concepts. John is certainly not a text from a secluded, sectarian context, but rather, it aims at a world of books. At the beginning, the creation story is adopted, but John goes beyond Genesis. In the end (John 21:25), the image of a world full of books about Jesus emerges. Clearly, John is not the internal self-clarification of an early Christian sect, but rather, it is a book that aspires to become literature.

The reading strategies mentioned demonstrate the methodological evolution of Johannine research over the past 200 years. While the debates on method and meaning have primarily occurred within the realm of theological interpretation, they have recently expanded to encompass literary and cultural studies. Reading John has become multi-perspectival. As a commentator, I am challenged to bridge and combine various dimensions, from literary design and intertextual relations to historical and religious contexts, the description and discussion of the text's theological claims and aims, and the varieties of its reception until the present.

New Testament Scholarship, Its Legacy and Tasks

Where has New Testament scholarship arrived? What is its legacy and task? The plurality and multi-perspectivity in these two fields of study are not losses, but gains. As I tried to indicate, things are not arbitrary; however, there is a challenge in deciding what is appropriate and plausible. Such decisions can only be personal and perspective-based. Others may challenge my conclusions, and in matters of interpretation, there is no clear-cut, universal “truth.” This is, of course, uncomfortable and challenging for many pious Christians, but it is an important insight, especially considering the worldwide community of Bible readers. The openness to discussion in biblical scholarship prevents dogmatic ideologizing and has much to offer society and churches. Will they appreciate such a service in critical solidarity?

The texts we read are foundational not only for the church, but also for Western culture and Global Christianity. As we know, these texts are used and misused, appropriated and rejected in society, politics, and popular culture. These texts have had positive and negative effects throughout history and continue to do so today. Therefore, they demand not only devout reading, but also critical reflection on their implications and dangers, as well as their limitations and the liberating force of the gospel.

Since these texts are written in foreign languages and originate from different cultures, they require philological expertise and historical and cultural awareness to be properly understood. Biblical scholarship — of the Old and New Testaments, as well as texts in between and around them — maintains awareness of the distance and otherness of these texts’ terms,

codes, and thoughts. These cannot be appropriated without further ado, at least not in responsible public readings in churches and societies.

On the other hand, many of our texts intentionally claim to have something to say about truth, God, the world, life, and death, not only due to their reception and canonicity, but also because of their content. It would be strange to ignore these claims in the false pursuit of “neutrality.” Instead, we must describe, contextualize, and possibly question the matter and claims of the text. As scholars, we advocate for our texts, ensuring their right to speak for themselves, separate from traditions, prejudices, and present-day interests. This also implies a “theological” dimension imposed not by churches or institutions, but by the texts themselves.

Methodologically, New Testament studies have learned a great deal. While philological and historical approaches form their foundation, other perspectives have been fruitfully integrated, and interdisciplinary exchange has enriched exegetical perceptions.

Biblical studies are fundamentally related to the primary community of readers, the churches, although not all of them welcome their critical inferences. However, they are also related to a wider society because our texts are related to and influential in a broader context. Reading religious texts in an academic context benefits not only the churches, but also society. Reading religious texts in an academic context grants rationality and helps churches stay connected to society. It prevents churches from retreating into sectarian seclusion and helps a secular society deal with matters of religion competently, which prevents religious radicalism and the insanity that can be triggered by Biblical texts. Scholarly freedom and a wide interdisciplinary framework, as provided by public universities, are

important conditions that prevent scholarship from becoming subservient to group interests and losing its critical and societal function.

However, New Testament scholars are also competent in hermeneutics. We are experts in antiquity and are trained to bridge the past and present. We transmit and critically reflect on the claims and problems of our texts. Therefore, we can speak up when biblical texts are misused to create hatred or fear for ideological or business purposes. Biblical scholarship must be critical; otherwise, it is not scholarship.

In our time, expertise in critical reading is more necessary than ever. Within the global context addressed in the new *Journal for Biblical and Ancient Studies*, it is desirable for the exchange and debate to transcend borders, contexts, and continents with mutual respect, a critical mindset, and an appreciation for the great texts entrusted to us.

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Foreword for Journal of Biblical and Ancient Studies JBAS (vol. 1), 2025 (EISSN-3091-7638)

Ruben Zimmermann*

I was delighted to accept the invitation to write a brief welcome message for the first issue of JBAS. I would like to congratulate the initiators, editors, and authors on this project and issue. It takes a great deal of effort to launch an open access journal and finally bring it to publication. The journal's double-blind peer review model ensures that it meets the highest quality standards. The editorial board brings together internationally recognized scholars.

The journal's particular merits lie at various levels. On the one hand, it makes high-quality scholarship easily accessible to Korean scholars and academically interested pastors in Korea and elsewhere around the world. On the other hand, the journal offers the opportunity to make Korean research internationally accessible in English. It is also noteworthy that early career scholars are given the opportunity to publish internationally. The journal aims to publish articles from the Old and New Testaments and also to extend its scope to other ancient sources. It is thus a journal that fully meets the demands of biblical studies and ancient studies.

The first issue already provides a very good insight into this concept: With Jörg Frey—an internationally renowned scholar who is one of the leading

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figures in Johannine studies—the journal features a current insight into the state of research on the Fourth Gospel. Sukmin Cho has contributed a similarly programmatic article tracing the genesis of the Johannine Literature Studies of Korea (JLSK), which laid the foundation for the journal.

In its first issue, the journal demonstrates its connection to Johannine literature and, at the same time, its expansion to encompass the entire Bible, whether through individual articles that explore connections between the Testaments (Hyunte Shin between Genesis and John; Suyeon Kim between Isaiah and Luke-Acts), or whether articles focus specifically on the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the connections between biblical and extra-biblical texts (Wooil Moon on John and Philo).

This inaugural volume shows that JBAS is at the cutting edge of research. To give just one example: The theme of creation in the Gospel of John has been addressed very rarely, apart from in the prologue. In his Special Theme Article, Hyunte Shin not only succeeds in developing a distinctive thesis on Adamic Christology, but also in focusing it on ethical and ecological hermeneutical questions. The journal thus demonstrates its ability to connect with the latest hermeneutical developments in biblical scholarship and, above all, its relevance to the present day.

Following this promising start, I am confident that the journal will soon achieve a firm place among the internationally renowned open access journals in biblical studies. I wish the journal many more issues and volumes and, above all, an interested readership in academia and churches in Korea and around the world.

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Special Theme Article:
Ecology and Ethics in the Fourth Gospel

A Study on the Adam Christology in the Gospel of John and the Possibilities of Ecological Ethics

Hyunte Shin*

<Abstract>

This study explores the potential for an “Adam Christology” in the Gospel of John and its implications for an ecotheological ethic. The prologue (John 1) employs creation words (ἐν ἀρχῇ, λόγος, ζωή, φῶς) that closely mirror Genesis 1, situating Jesus within the origin and purpose of creation. Narrative elements in John 19–20—such as the “garden” (18:1; 19:41; 20:15), “Behold the man” (19:5), and the “gardener” (20:15)—exhibit structural parallels to Genesis 2–3, highlighting Jesus’ death and resurrection as a turning point of a “new creation.”

Through analysis of the Greek text and narrative structure, this article argues that John’s Adam Christology portrays Jesus as the one who, through obedience and life-giving ministry, overcomes Adam’s failure and inaugurates a new humanity. This Adam Christology also bears

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ecothological implications: interpreting Jesus as the “new Adam” extends his death and resurrection to the restoration of the whole of creation. John’s cosmic Christology transcends an anthropocentric salvation, envisioning reconciliation between humanity and the whole of creation. John’s Gospel thus proclaims both the beginning of creation in Christ and its eschatological consummation—a new creation and the renewal of the created order—opening up a horizon for an ecotheological reading of Adam Christology and offering a theological basis for ecological ethics in an age of climate crisis.

***Keywords**

Adam Christology; Garden (κῆπος); Logos; Ecotheological ethics; New Creation.

1. Introduction

“Adam Christology” refers to the theological framework that understands Jesus Christ as the “Second Adam” or “Last Adam.” This concept is explicitly presented in the Pauline epistles, particularly in Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21–49, where Christ is portrayed as the solution to the problem of sin and death introduced into the world through the first Adam. Through this contrast, Jesus is revealed as the representative of a new humanity and the restorer of creation.¹

How, then, is Adam Christology reflected in the Gospels, particularly in the Gospel of John? Scholars such as Raymond E. Brown,² Craig S. Keener,³ and Carlos R. S. Siliezar⁴ argue that although the Gospel of John does exhibit connections to the Genesis narrative, it does not support an Adamic Christological reading. According to these scholars, the creation imagery found in John’s Gospel serves merely as a literary device and does not align with the Pauline Adam Christology.

¹ The following books offer an in-depth examination of Adam Christology in the Pauline letters: Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007); Yongbom Lee, *The Son of Man as the Last Adam: The Early Church Tradition as a Source of Paul’s Adam Christology* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2012); Nicholas T. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

² Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* xiii-xxi (London and New York: Doubleday, 1970), 806.

³ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 1077.

⁴ Carlos R. S. Siliezar, *Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 174–90.

Nevertheless, recent trajectories in Gospel scholarship have sought to reexamine the potential for Adam Christology within the Gospels. While the Synoptic Gospels do not explicitly articulate an Adam Christology, various motifs suggest an implicit engagement with Adamic themes. For instance, Richard Bauckham contends that the accounts of Jesus' baptism and wilderness temptation may subtly allude to the testing of Adam and Christ's role as the representative of a renewed humanity, thus warranting consideration of an Adamic Christological interpretation.⁵ Joel Marcus, referencing Genesis 1:26–28, argues that in the temptation narrative of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is portrayed as the Second Adam who has been granted dominion over the entire world. Through this, he becomes the instrument through which God's reign is ultimately realized across the earth.⁶ Brandon D. Crowe contends that the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, along with the Son of Man Christology (cf. Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69), demonstrate a strong connection to the Last Adam Christology. Furthermore, he argues that the portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John—particularly in his obedience to the will of God—exhibits Adamic Christological dimensions.⁷ Mark Makowiecki argues that although Irenaeus's "new Adam" doctrine is substantially dependent on Pauline letters, the Fourth Gospel also presents an Adam Christology, as Jesus is

⁵ Richard Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 130.

⁶ Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 170–71.

⁷ Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 23–54.

portrayed as one who recapitulates Adam's life and death, particularly when viewed through an intertextual chiasmic pattern.⁸ Haesaeng Kwon, while not explicitly asserting that the Gospel of John presents an Adam Christology, examines the recent scholarly trends on this subject within New Testament studies. He contends that the Johannine account of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection strongly evokes the atmosphere of Genesis, and that this Genesis motif undergirds the new-creation significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.⁹

This study seeks to trace the implicit Adam Christology within the Gospel of John and to explore its creational and ecological ethical implications. To this end, the research undertakes a comprehensive analysis of literary correspondences, theological motifs, and symbolic associations. Focusing particularly on John's prologue (1:118) and chapters 19–20, this study aims to elucidate the structural and theological interconnections between Jesus and Adam.

⁸ Mark Makowiecki, "Irenaeus and the Adam-Christ Typology in the Gospel of John," *Themelios: An International Journal for Students of Theological and Religious Studies* 49, no. 2 (2024): 323–33.

⁹ Haesaeng Kwon, "New Creation Motif in the Gospel of John: Signs, Cross and resurrection, and Temple," *Korean Evangelical New Testament Studies* 17, no. 4 (2017): 154–58.

2. John's Prologue (1:1–18) and the Creation Story: The Significance of “In the Beginning”

The prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1–18) commences by tracing the narrative of the Gospel back to the origins of creation through literary and theological parallels with Genesis 1. Notably, John 1:1–5 deliberately evokes the structure and language of Genesis 1, presenting the story of Jesus Christ not simply as a historical biography but as the centerpiece of a cosmic creation narrative. By closely echoing the Septuagint's expression “ἐν ἀρχῇ” from Genesis 1:1, John summons the reader to the moment of creation and inaugurates a theological shift centered on the concept of the ‘Word’ (λόγος).¹⁰

The terms “Word” (λόγος), “life” (ζωή), and “light” (φῶς) mentioned in John 1:3–5 resonate profoundly with the thematic elements of Genesis 1. For example, the recurring phrase in Genesis 1, “And God said” (εἶπεν ὁ Θεός), forms a direct parallel with John 1:3's assertion that “all things were made through the Word.” This correspondence highlights how, within the framework of traditional Jewish-Hellenistic thought, where God's word functioned as the instrument of creation, John presents Jesus Christ as the ultimate agent of creation.¹¹ However, John does not simply reference the origin of creation; he also reveals its historical trajectory and teleological

¹⁰ This study employs the Nestle-Aland 28th edition for the Greek texts. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are my own translations, informed by the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

¹¹ Siliezar, *Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John*, 28–42.

direction. The terms “life” (ζωή) and “light” (φῶς) function not as mere natural elements but as central concepts symbolizing redemptive revelation and eschatological reality throughout the Gospel of John. The triadic structure in John 1:1–3—“In the beginning was the Word” (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος), “and the Word was with God” (πρὸς τὸν θεόν), and “the Word was God” (θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος)—discloses the ontological status of the λόγος, portraying the Word as distinct from yet sharing the same divine nature as God. The subsequent declaration in 1:3, “All things came into being through him,” situates Jesus at the origin of creation and proclaims him as the divine agent of the creative work.¹² John’s Christology is thus closely intertwined with creation theology, presenting Jesus not only as the messianic-eschatological redeemer but also as the one who reveals the foundation and telos of the created order. Consequently, the prologue of the Gospel of John functions as a theological declaration that both recalls the origin of creation and unveils its divinely intended purpose (τέλος). Whereas Genesis articulates the origin of the material world, the Gospel of John introduces the concept of a “new creation” centered on Jesus Christ. This new creation is not a mere repetition but is depicted as an eschatological event that consummates creation through the impartation of life (ζωή), light (φῶς), and Spirit (πνεῦμα).¹³

¹² John Painter, “Rereading Genesis in the Prologue of John?” in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. David E. Aune, Torrey Seland and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 179–81.

¹³ Edward W. Klink III, “Genesis Revealed: Second Adam Christology in the Fourth Gospel,” *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 5, no. 1 (2018): 27–28.

John 1:1–5 deliberately evokes the structure and language of Genesis 1:1–5 but does not merely recall the past act of creation; rather, it introduces a new theological turning point within that narrative. While Genesis portrays God’s declaration of the created world “good” (cf. Gen 1:10, 12, 18), the Gospel of John depicts “darkness” (σκοτία) as the prevailing reality enveloping the created order.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it
καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν
(John 1:5)

Here, darkness refers not solely to a physical phenomenon but rather to a spiritual condition marked by the absence of God’s presence and life. This concept parallels Genesis 1:2—“darkness covered the face of the deep”—indicating that creation still requires God’s active involvement for its consummation. John draws on the core concepts of “life” and “light” from Genesis but transforms them into theological symbols of redemption, resurrection, and the ultimate new creation.

in him was life, and the life was the light of all people
ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (John 1:4)

I am the light of the world.
Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου (John 8:12)

Such statements imply that life and light are not conditions for existence but serve as mediums of God’s personal revelation and salvation. The key verb in John 1:5, κατέλαβεν, can be translated either as “overcome” or “comprehend,” and John exploits this semantic ambiguity to unveil the physical opposition between darkness and light as well as the failure of recognition. This verse is intricately connected to the overarching theme in the Gospel of John, namely, the conflict between Jesus and the world (cf. John 3:19–20; 12:35), and it indicates that the Light who came into the world was not received by the darkness.¹⁴ This conflict becomes explicit in John 1:11:

He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.
εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον

In this verse, John engages in a wordplay that exploits the grammatical gender of a single term. Here, ἴδια (neuter plural) refers to “his own things” or “his own possessions,” denoting the world that belongs to Jesus (the Word/Logos), while ἴδιοι (masculine plural) designates “his own people,” specifically Israel. This nuanced wordplay highlights the separation and conflict between Jesus—the Creator—and his world. Moreover, this verse reveals a tension that extends beyond the mere Creator–creature relationship, exposing the personal dimension of belonging and rejection. Jesus is rejected by the very world and the people he brought into being, a

¹⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 75–76.

rejection that underscores the broken relationship between creation and redemption alike.¹⁵

3. Flesh (σάρξ) and the Second Adam: Intertextuality between Genesis and John

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ Πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (John 1:14)

John 1:14 proclaims the incarnation of Jesus Christ as a redemptive-historical turning point. The statement, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us,” establishes a clear intertextual connection with the narrative of Adam’s creation from the dust in Genesis 2:7. Here, “flesh” (σάρξ) does not solely denote human existence (ἄνθρωπος) in a generic sense; rather, it signifies the comprehensive state of fallen human nature. This reveals that Jesus entered into the very condition of created human existence. Although Jesus and Adam have fundamentally different origins, they share a unique, comparable status in terms of “manhood.” The Gospel of John portrays the event of the Word becoming flesh (John 1:14) as Jesus “becoming a living being,” which closely resonates with Genesis 2:7

¹⁵ *BDAG*, 467.

(LXX), where God forms Adam from the dust and breathes into him, making him a “living being.” The verb ἐγένετο (‘became’) appears in both passages, while the Genesis account uses ‘a living soul’ (ψυχὴ ζῶσα), suggesting existential parallelism, indicating that both Jesus and Adam exist as “living humans” in an existential sense. Yet, their ontological origins are fundamentally distinct: Adam is “the first man from the earth, made of dust” (1 Cor 15:47), a creature, while Jesus is “the second man is from heaven” (John 3:13; cf. 1 Cor 15:47), the Creator God who assumed flesh and entered into human existence (John 1:3, 14). Thus, while Jesus differs from Adam in origin, he also shares the same human nature. This relationship permits an analogical comparison but also entails an essential distinction.

Irenaeus, likewise, in his reading of the Johannine account of the incarnation, affirms that the Word (Logos) assumed a body like that of Adam, so that He might abolish sin through the very flesh in which sin had come to exercise its dominion.¹⁶ This statement reflects a theological logic grounded in the conviction that, just as the fall of humanity occurred in the flesh, so too must redemption be effected within the same human flesh. Irenaeus thereby underscores that the incarnation of the Logos constitutes a concrete reenactment of Adamic existence, thus laying the ontological foundation for redemption.

¹⁶ Makowiecki, “Irenaeus and the Adam-Christ Typology in the Gospel of John,” 325.

Similarly, the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo described the Logos as a divine rational principle involved in the act of creation.¹⁷ Drawing upon the wisdom traditions of Genesis and Proverbs, Philo conceived of the Logos as the “archetype of other things”¹⁸ and the “intelligible cosmos,”¹⁹ at times even ascribing to it the status of the “Image of God,”²⁰ thereby attributing to it a distinct divine hypostasis. His conceptualization of the Logos is deeply intertwined with the personified Wisdom of Jewish sapiential literature (e.g., Prov 8:22–31) and the theological role of the Torah. In particular, in *De Opificio Mundi* (“On the Creation of the World”), Philo portrays the Logos as a divine being who actively participates in God’s creative work. However, the Gospel of John develops the concept of the Logos in a manner that is decisively distinct from that of Philo. Whereas Philo presents the Logos as a symbolic and philosophical principle functioning as the archetypal reason,²¹ John bears witness to the Logos as

¹⁷ Gregory E. Sterling, “Different Traditions or Emphases? The Image of God in Philo’s *De Opificio Mundi*,” in *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated literature*, ed. Gary A. Anderson, Ruth Clements and David Satran (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2013), 41–56. A detailed study on Philo’s concept of the Logos can be found in Wooil Moon, “A Philosophical Analysis of the Concept of Logos in the Fourth Gospel,” *Korean New Testament Studies* 20, no. 2 (2013): 339–69.

¹⁸ Sterling, “Different Traditions or Emphases?,” 44.

¹⁹ Sterling, “Different Traditions or Emphases?,” 46.

²⁰ Sterling, “Different Traditions or Emphases?,” 47.

²¹ Sterling, “Different Traditions or Emphases?,” 49.

the personal God who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). In Johannine theology, the Logos is portrayed as the agent of creation, revelation, and redemption. In contrast to Philo's abstraction of the Logos as a metaphysical or cosmological entity, John concretizes the Logos as a historical and personal reality—namely, Jesus Christ. Thus, while the Johannine Logos concept shares a similar Jewish-Hellenistic background with Philo's thought, it radically transforms that conceptual framework by situating the Logos within the theological climax of the incarnation. In conclusion, although Philo's notion of the Logos offers a significant background for understanding the prologue of the Gospel of John, the evangelist transcends that background by rearticulating the Logos as the incarnate Son of God who is manifest within the history of salvation.

John 1:18 explicitly reveals the unique relationship between Jesus and God. The author of the Fourth Gospel, having introduced the λόγος in 1:1, does not simply equate the λόγος with God but distinguishes the relationship by using the phrase “toward/with God” (πρὸς τὸν θεόν), thereby highlighting both a distinction and an intimate personal relationship.²²

Similarly, John 1:14 and 1:18 portray the incarnate Word as “the only-begotten from the Father” (μονογενὴς παρὰ πατρός), that is, “the only-begotten God” (μονογενὴς θεός). This enables the reader to identify Jesus with God, yet the expression “the one who is in the bosom of the Father” (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός) underscores both the intimacy between

²² James R. Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 80.

them and their personal distinction.²³ These expressions should be interpreted as mutually complementary manner. John 1:1–2 emphasizes the unique and intimate relationship between the λόγος and God, a relationship that reflects a status unmatched by any other figure introduced in the Prologue.

For example, John the Baptist (1:6) is described as “a man sent from God” (παρὰ θεοῦ ἀπεσταλμένος), and those who receive the Word become children of God (1:12–13). Yet they remain ontologically distinct from the λόγος, who has been with God from the beginning. While believers are “born of God” (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν), the λόγος alone has eternally existed πρὸς τὸν θεόν (“with God”). Thus, John 1:14 proclaims the λόγος as “the only-begotten” (μονογενής), whose uniqueness is expressed concretely in his relationship with the Father (πατήρ) and in the manifestation of his glory (δόξα). Ultimately, the relationship between the λόγος and God (θεός) is not a matter of simple identity but is disclosed within a personal relational structure between the Father and the Son, thereby clarifying the λόγος’s identity and theological significance.

4. Jesus in the Gospel of John: The Obedient Son of God

One of the most prominent features in the narrative flow of the Gospel of John is Jesus’ complete obedience.²⁴ This obedience is not a personal

²³ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Waco: Word, 1987), 2–3.

²⁴ Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 95.

virtue but functions as an essential component of his salvific mission, closely related to his Christological self-understanding as the One who was “sent” (ἀποστέλλω, πέμπω) by the Father into the world. Jesus was not simply commissioned by the Father; rather, it signifies his being lifted up on the cross, thereby bringing about the salvation of humanity and the kosmos (3:14–16; 12:32–33). Within this framework, the Gospel’s high Christology simultaneously highlights the Son’s self-humiliation and his vicarious mission. In this regard, Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain argue that Jesus willingly laid down his life to resolve the problem of sin (1:29, 34; 8:34–36; 20:23; cf. 16:7–11).²⁵ Jesus appears as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29), an image that conveys the significance of atoning sacrifice in connection with both the symbolism of the Passover lamb and the Suffering Servant of Isa 53.²⁶

How does the Gospel of John specifically reveal Jesus’ missional identity—the intersection of God’s will and Jesus’ work? The first occasion in which Jesus explicitly refers to his works (ἔργα) appears in John 4:34, where he declares: “My food is to do the will (θέλημα) of the one who sent me and to complete his work (ἔργα).” The connection between “food” (βρῶμα) and “will” (θέλημα) recurs in chapter 6, where Jesus makes it clear that the very purpose of his descent from heaven is to accomplish the Father’s will (6:38). Especially in 6:55, where he speaks of his flesh as true food, Jesus emphasizes that his sacrificial death fulfills the Father’s will to

²⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity and John’s Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008), 160.

²⁶ Keener, *Gospel of John* 1, 453–54.

grant eternal life. Some scholars link this scene to Adam's first sin and the miracle of the manna in the wilderness, suggesting that Jesus' reference to food reverses the curse of original sin and the wilderness symbolism associated with it.²⁷ The motif of fulfilling the Father's work is also found in John 5:30 and 5:36. In 5:30, Jesus declares: "I do not seek my own will (θέλημα) but the will (θέλημα) of the one who sent me," while in 5:36, he proclaims that the Father has given him works (ἔργα) to accomplish (τελειώσω), thereby revealing once again that his mission is not to fulfill his own will but to do the work of the Father.

A crucial passage to consider when examining the relationship between God's will and Jesus' work is John 17:4. Here, Jesus prays, "I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." This statement appears to indicate that Jesus viewed his mission as already accomplished prior to the crucifixion. Donald A. Carson understands Jesus' declaration, made just before his death on the cross, as a proleptic statement—that is, a forward-looking affirmation of completed mission.²⁸ However, this declaration is not a formal anticipation but signifies a substantive completion, in that the entire ministry up to this point has been the faithful execution of the Father's will. Charles K. Barrett emphasizes

²⁷ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 113; John R. Fletcher, *Signs in the Wilderness: Intertextuality and the Narrative Imagination in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 38–41.

²⁸ Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 557.

that the use of the aorist indicative verb ἐδόξασα in John 17:4 underscores the actual past accomplishment of Jesus mission.²⁹

Leon Morris interprets the dual structure in which Jesus has already glorified the Father and will again glorify Him through the cross, connecting this theme with John 12:28.³⁰ This allows for an integrated understanding that Jesus' sign (σημεῖον, 2:11) and his decisive death following the entry into Jerusalem constitute a continuous mission glorifying God's name. John 17:4, together with John 4:34, forms an inclusio structure that links the beginning and completion of Jesus' public ministry to the Father's will and the fulfillment of His work.³¹ Herman Ridderbos argues that, through this structure, Jesus' entire life represents a continuous flow of obedience, which results in the glorification of the Father.³² Furthermore, as mentioned in John 5:36, the "works" (ἔργα) that Jesus received from the Father encompass not simply miracles or teachings but the entire redemptive mission characterized by perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice.

Viewed in this light, John 17:4 serves as a comprehensive declaration evaluating Jesus' entire public ministry. While it does not exclude or diminish the impending crucifixion, it proclaims the essential completeness of the mission already accomplished. Köstenberger and Swain understand

²⁹ Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1978), 504.

³⁰ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 718.

³¹ Francis J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 48–49; Morris, *the Gospel according to John*, 246.

³² Ridderbos, *Gospel of John*, 362–63.

such verses as reflecting the execution of the eternal covenant of salvation (*pactum salutis*) among the triune God.³³ Ultimately, Jesus' obedience in the Gospel of John goes beyond the notion of a mere moral example; it is a central theological theme that reveals His divine identity as the sent Son and the essence of His atoning mission. The fulfillment of this obedience functions as an indispensable element in glorifying the Father throughout His entire life and ministry, including the crucifixion.

5. The Implied Adam Christology in Chapters 18–20: the Motif of the Garden, Humanity, and Resurrection

The Passion and Resurrection narratives in John 18–20 invest the anonymous location of the “garden” (κῆπος) with profound theological symbolism by mentioning it three times (18:1–2; 19:41; 20:15). This setting functions not only as a narrative backdrop but rather as a theologically charged intertext that evokes the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2–3, thereby developing a theological contrast between the “first Adam” and the “second Adam.” This section aims to explore how the Johannine Adam Christology unfolds around the narrative motifs of the “garden” (κῆπος) and the “gardener” (κηπουρός). By tracing betrayal in the garden (18:1–2), death and reconciliation (19:41), and resurrection and new creation (20:15), John's Gospel presents Jesus as the “second Adam” who

³³ Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit*, 169–73.

reverses the human fall that began in Eden, thereby reconfiguring the biblical narrative of human restoration through Christ.³⁴

In the Gospel of John, the “garden” (κῆπος) as the site of Jesus’ death and resurrection functions as a symbolic stage that suggests new creation through its intertextual association with the Garden of Eden in Genesis. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, which situate Jesus’ Passion narrative in geographically specific locations such as Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives (Matt 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:39), the Gospel of John records that Jesus was arrested in a “garden” (18:1, 26), and that he was buried and resurrected in that same garden (19:41).³⁵ This series of garden-related references may be interpreted as reflecting John’s theological intention to connect the Genesis creation narrative with the Jesus event.³⁶ However, in other passages of the Septuagint, particularly Ezekiel 36:35, the Garden of Eden is indeed rendered with the term κῆπος.³⁷ Moreover, in the translation of Aquila, minuscule 135—known for consistently rendering

³⁴ Klink, “Genesis Revealed,” 37–40.

³⁵ Joachim Schaper, “The Messiah in the Garden: John 19.38–41, (royal) Gardens, and Messianic Concepts,” in *Paradise in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Views*, ed. M. Bockmuehl and G. G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17–27; Evelyn C. Hoskyns, “Genesis I–III and St John’s Gospel,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 21, no. 83 (1920): 215.

³⁶ Siliezar, *Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John*, 187.

³⁷ The Old Testament contains numerous reuses of the Garden of Eden motif, a complete listing of which is provided in Troels E. P. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 305–454; Siliezar, *Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John*, 181.

the same Hebrew term with the same Greek term—the garden in Genesis 2:8 (κῆπον) and 3:1 (κῆπου) is translated with inflected forms of the word κῆπος.³⁸ This indicates that the terminology employed in John’s Gospel does not categorically exclude the Garden of Eden, but rather demonstrates that a symbolic interpretation is possible within the diversity of biblical language. John Suggit suggests that, in New Testament literature, παράδεισος is typically used to denote the heavenly paradise of the eschatological future (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4; Rev 2:7). Accordingly, he suggests that κῆπος may have been the more appropriate term to designate an earthly garden.³⁹ Taking these linguistic and contextual considerations together, it can be argued that the Gospel of John conveys a symbolic message through the garden (κῆπος) where Jesus’ death and resurrection took place, presenting the Jesus event as the inauguration of a new creation. Furthermore, Joachim Schaper points out that κῆπος frequently appears in the Old Testament in connection with royal “private gardens” or “royal tombs” (e.g., 2 Kgs 21:18, 26; Neh 3:16), suggesting that John’s depiction of the garden as the location of Jesus’ tomb implicitly alludes to Jesus’ royal status. According to Schaper’s analysis, while both κῆπος and παράδεισος can refer to a royal garden, παράδεισος primarily evokes an ideal paradise characterized by natural landscapes, whereas κῆπος is more suited to denote a concrete and historical place, especially a royal tomb or

³⁸ Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press LLC, 2012 [reprinted from the 1875 Oxford edition]), 13, 16.

³⁹ John Suggit, “Jesus the gardener: the atonement in the Fourth Gospel as re-creation,” *Neotestamentica* 33, no. 1 (1999): 166–67.

garden.⁴⁰ Consequently, the mention of the “garden” (κῆπος) as the place where Jesus was crucified and buried in John 19:41 carries significance beyond mere background description. It can be understood as a reconfiguration of the garden motif as a symbolic space that connects creation and redemption, Adam and Christ, the first man and the true King. In the first garden, Adam rebelled against God’s will, whereas in the second garden, Jesus fully submits. Judas, like Adam, succumbs to Satan’s temptation (John 13:27) and betrays Jesus, paralleling the narrative of Eve’s temptation by the serpent in Genesis 3. However, unlike Adam’s failure, Jesus asserts control over the situation through his self-identifying declaration “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι, John 18:5–6) in the garden, progressing decisively toward God’s redemptive plan. Thus, the garden is redefined not as a site of recurring fallenness but as a place of overcoming the fall and preparing for redemption.

A survey of the Old Testament reveals that the Garden of Eden was established by God (Gen 2:8), and Adam was appointed as its “keeper and guardian” (Gen 2:15). However, as Mary L. Coloe observes, the Garden of Eden is not only depicted as human property but is repeatedly portrayed as God’s garden (Gen 13:10; Isa 51:3; Ezek 31:8). Consequently, the one who tends the garden is ultimately connected to God’s sovereign power and divine rule.⁴¹ Within this traditional framework, the portrayal of the risen

⁴⁰ Schaper, “The Messiah in the Garden: John 19.38–41, (royal) Gardens, and Messianic Concepts,” 17–27.

⁴¹ Mary L. Coloe, “Creation in the Gospel of John,” in *Creation is Groaning: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Mary L. Coloe (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013), 82.

Jesus as the “gardener” carries a dual significance. Jesus stands once again in the garden as the new Adam, representing humanity, while simultaneously appearing as the sovereign Lord who possesses and governs the garden, akin to the Creator God. This parallels the depiction of Adam in Genesis as a royal being created in the image of God, tasked with ruling over the created order (Gen 1:26–28), thereby implying Jesus’ identity and mission as the consummator of the new creation. This theological motif resonates with Pilate’s declarations in John 19, where he refers to Jesus as “Ἴδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος” (Behold the man, 19:5) and “Ἴδε ὁ Βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν” (Behold your King, 19:14). Although these statements may appear to be mere mockery or political maneuvering, theologically they function as revelatory affirmations that Jesus is the true Adam and the rightful King.⁴² Just as Adam in the Old Testament functioned as the representative of the created order, Jesus emerges as the representative of the new creation. Notably, the recurring royal imagery in the Passion narrative—such as the crown of thorns, the purple robe, and the soldiers’ mockery (John 19:2–3)—ironically yet paradoxically affirms His identity as the true King.⁴³ The climax of this narrative is found in the burial of Jesus’ body in the tomb within the garden (John 19:41). This evokes the Old Testament tradition of kings being buried in gardens (2 Kings 21:18, 26; Neh 3:16), symbolizing that Jesus died as the King and was resurrected from that very garden. Consequently, the garden in the Gospel of John functions as a symbolic

⁴² Alan Richardson, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: SCM, 1959), 197.

⁴³ David M. Litwa, “Behold Adam: A Reading of John 19:5,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 32, no. 2 (2010): 139–40.

space linking the Eden of Genesis with the eschatological new creation. At its center stands Jesus, who is not only the new Adam tending the garden but also God Himself, the Creator and Restorer of that garden. Within this dual identity, the title “the gardener” (ὁ κηπουρός) is a misunderstanding on Mary’s part but rather the most theologically precise confession.

6. Adam Christology in John’s Gospel and Its Ecotheological Implications

Although the Gospel of John does not explicitly address contemporary ecological ethics or the care of creation, its message is deeply associated with a theology of creation. Jesus’ incarnation—along with his identity as Creator—attests to God’s profound involvement with the created world, thereby suggesting eschatological implications for the restoration of the cosmos. As this study has demonstrated, the Gospel’s narrative structure discloses a creation–new creation motif embedded within an implied Adam typology, offering a theological foundation upon which a Christian ecological vision may be constructed.

In particular, John 19–20 deploys motifs such as the “garden” (κῆπος), the declaration “Behold the man” (ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, 19:5), and creation imagery in the crucifixion and resurrection narratives. These elements converge to portray Jesus as the new Adam who redeems the human failure of the first creation and inaugurates its renewal. Unlike the first Adam, who disobeyed God in Eden, Jesus demonstrates complete obedience to the Father’s will—even unto death—within the garden setting (18:1; 19:41; cf. 4:34; 5:19, 30; 17:4). In this light, the Adam Christology in John extends

beyond a soteriological response to human sin and instead articulates a redemptive theology of creation, wherein the relational order among God, humanity, and the created world is reconfigured.

As the last Adam sent by God, Jesus enacts a vocation of self-emptying (cf. John 6:38; 4:34) in order to fulfill the will of the Father. This self-giving mission embodies an ethic of love that extends beyond the self, encompassing both human community and the created order. By doing so, Jesus offers a paradigmatic model of decentered, other-oriented existence. This model is not limited to Christ alone but is explicitly extended to his disciples: in John 17:18 and 20:21, Jesus declares that just as the Father has sent him into the world, so also he sends them.

A: <u>καθὼς</u> ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας	As you (<i>Father</i>) have sent me
B: εἰς τὸν κόσμον,	into the world,
A: <u>καὶ γὼ</u> ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς	so I have sent them (<i>disciples</i>)
B: εἰς τὸν κόσμον	into the world. ⁴⁴

This pericope implicitly discloses the Father's sending of the Son and explicitly affirms that Jesus, in turn, sends his disciples into the world. This missional dynamic, rooted in the reciprocal relationship between the Father and the Son, recurs throughout the Gospel (cf. 3:16–17; 8:16; 10:36; 12:49; 14:24; 20:21).⁴⁵ Within this theological framework, the disciples are

⁴⁴ Hyunte Shin, "A Study on the Potential of Ethics and Ecological Ethics in the Gospel of John," *Korea Reformed Theology* 82, no 2 (2024): 113.

⁴⁵ Shin, "A Study on the Potential of Ethics and Ecological Ethics in the Gospel of

presented as an extension and embodiment of Jesus' incarnational mission. Jesus establishes his love and obedience—his unreserved commitment to the will of the Father—as the paradigmatic ethical standard for his followers. This ethic transcends interpersonal morality, constituting a kenotic, self-giving love oriented toward the world—a vocation that defines the disciples' missional identity. As they embody this Christocentric ethic, the disciples function as agents of an ecotheological praxis, participating in the divine mission of reconciling and renewing the created order.

Within the narrative of the Gospel of John, the incarnate Logos (1:14) reveals the redemptive grace of God through the crucifixion, thereby incorporating the created order into the broader framework of the divine economy of salvation. Although the Gospel does not contain explicit paraenetic material or direct ecological exhortation, it nevertheless communicates a relational and missional ethic grounded in the person and work of Christ—a theological vision that implicitly embraces the entirety of creation. The disciples' participation in Jesus' paradigmatic life ultimately unveils an ecological vocation, leading all creation to manifest God's grace and glory.

7. Conclusion

Despite the fact that the Gospel of John does not present an explicit Adam Christology in the manner of the Pauline Epistles, it still contains

John,” 114.

implicit elements suggestive of such a theological trajectory. The prologue and conclusion of the Gospel exhibit structural and theological parallels to Genesis 1–3, signaling the inauguration of a new creation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Within John’s narrative, Jesus is portrayed not only as the redeemer who addresses the problem of sin, but also as the one who restores the primordial order of creation and fulfills its eschatological *telos* (τέλος).

Accordingly, the Adam Christology implied in the Gospel of John reframes human responsibility—not merely as passive reception of redemptive history, but as an active ethical vocation. In this light, discipleship entails an embodied participation in the reconciliation of humanity with the created order. This perspective reorients theological attentiveness to nature and life, positioning human existence at the intersection of creation and new creation. Ultimately, the Gospel of John presents a holistic theological vision in which the new creation in Christ is fulfilled through a reconciled and harmonious relationship among God, humanity, and the entire cosmos.

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<한글초록>

요한복음의 아담기독론과 생태윤리의 가능성에 대한 소고 신현태 *

본 논문은 요한복음에 나타난 ‘아담 기독론’의 가능성과 생태신학적 윤리에 미치는 함의를 탐구한다. 요한복음 서문(요 1 장)은 창조의 기원을 나타내는 표현들(ἐν ἀρχῇ, λόγος, ζωή, φῶς)을 사용하여 예수를 창조의 기원과 목적 안에 위치시킨다. 요한복음 19-20 장에 등장하는 내러티브 요소들—“동산”(18:1; 19:41; 20:15), “보라 이 사람이다”(19:5), “동산지기”(20:15)—는 창세기 2-3 장과 구조적 평행을 이루며, 예수의 죽음과 부활 사건이 ‘새 창조’의 전환점임을 강조한다. 헬라어 본문과 내러티브 구조에 대한 분석을 통해 본 논문은, 요한복음의 아담 기독론이 예수를 아담의 실패를 순종과 생명을 주는 사역을 통해 극복하고 새로운 인류를 시작하는 자로 묘사하고 있음을 논증한다. 이러한 아담 기독론은 또한 생태신학적 함의를 지닌다: 예수를 ‘새 아담’으로 해석하는 것은 그의 죽음과 부활이 단지 인간의 구원을 넘어서 창조 전체의 회복으로 확장됨을 의미한다. 요한의 우주적 기독론은 인간 중심적인 구원을 초월하여, 인간과 모든 피조물 사이의 화해를 상상하게 한다. 그러므로 요한복음은

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그리스도 안에서 창조의 기원을 선포할 뿐 아니라, 종말론적 완성을—새 창조와 창조 질서의 갱신을—함께 증언하며, 아담 기독론의 생태신학적 독해의 지평을 열고 기후 위기의 시대 속에서 생태 윤리를 위한 신학적 기반을 제공한다.

***주제어**

아담 기독론; 정원(κῆπος); 말씀; 생태 윤리; 창조.

General Articles

Was Gideon a Canaanite Who Worshiped Baal and the Sacred Pole (Asherah)? A Redactional and Archaeological Evaluation of Judges 6:25–32

Seung Ho Bang*

<Abstract>

The book of Judges often preserves more historically grounded accounts of early Israelite identity formation than the conquest narratives of Joshua, yet it also presents significant historiographic and archaeological challenges. One such challenge appears in the Gideon cycle (Judg 6:25–32), where Gideon—also known as Jerubbaal—is introduced as the son of Joash, who maintains an altar to Baal and a sacred pole. This raises two central questions: Why does Joash possess these cultic objects, and why is Gideon renamed in relation to Baal rather than YHWH? This article examines the redactional and tradition-historical development of this pericope and proposes two complementary interpretations: (1) that Jerubbaal was the original figure, later distinguished from Gideon through

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Deuteronomistic redaction, and (2) that the narrative reflects a transitional phase in which Canaanite religious practices were challenged and gradually integrated into Yahwism. Together, these perspectives suggest that Gideon/Jerubbaal may have originally been a Canaanite figure whose memory was reinterpreted to reflect emerging Yahwistic ideals. The passage thus preserves a trace of indigenous Canaanite religious transformation within Israelite tradition. This reading contributes to broader theories of Israel's origins, supporting the view that Israel emerged from within Canaanite society through internal social and religious reconfiguration rather than external conquest.

***Keywords**

Judges; Gideon; Jerubbaal; Baal; Asherah; Israelites; Canaanites.

1. Was Gideon a Canaanite Who Worshiped Baal and the Sacred Pole (Asherah)? A Redactional and Archaeological Evaluation of Judges 6:25–32

The book of Judges is often considered to preserve a more accurate portrayal of the territorial and religious struggle of the early Israelites in the Levant during the Late Bronze Age than Joshua.¹ Nevertheless, this does

¹ The Hebrew Bible contains two distinct accounts of how the Israelites came to possess the land of Canaan, found in the books of Joshua and Judges. The major difference between these accounts lies in the nature of Israel's conquest. The book of Joshua portrays a swift military campaign conducted over a relatively short period. During this campaign, many indigenous peoples of Canaan were defeated, and both sides of the Jordan River were occupied. By contrast, the book of Judges describes no large-scale military campaign, implying that Israel gradually took possession of the land over an extended period and in the reverse order of the Joshua account—the allotment of land preceding actual possession. Importantly, Judges indicates that Israel did not conquer the entire land of Canaan.

Current scholarship argues that the Judges account more accurately reflects a historical tradition of Israel's possession of the land than the Joshua account. For further discussion, see Abraham Malamat, "Israelite Conduct of War in the Conquest of Canaan," in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900–1975)*, ed. Frank Moore Cross (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1979), 36; Hershel Shanks, "Defining the Problems: Where We Are in the Debate," in *The Rise of Ancient Israel* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 3–4.

Source criticism may explain this discrepancy. The accounts in Joshua 1–12 are attributed to the Deuteronomistic historians, who drew on much older sources. By contrast, the accounts in Judges derive from various sources, including an older and arguably more reliable epic tradition (J) than the Deuteronomistic History, which its

not mean that Judges is free from historical and archaeological difficulties. While Judges may preserve intact memories of early Israelites' emergence in the southern Levant, it is problematic to assume that all characters portrayed as Israelites were, in fact, culturally Israelites. Joash's household in the Gideon narrative is particularly notable for its ambiguous ethnic and religious identity.² Though this ambiguity complicates traditional readings, it may provide a more nuanced perspective on Israelite origins—one that stands in contrast to the military conquest narratives found elsewhere in Judges and Joshua.

A close reading of the narrative raises two critical questions: (1) Why does Joash, Gideon's father, have an altar to Baal and the sacred pole (asherah)? (2) Why is Gideon given the name Jerubbaal, which directly references Baal? Together, these two questions raise a central issue: Was Gideon a Yahwistic Israelite from the beginning, or was he originally a

authors likely used in their compositions. J. Alberto Soggin argues that Judges 6 consists of independent episodes—vv. 11–24, 24–32, 33–35, and 36–40—which differ significantly from the Deuteronomistic introduction in vv. 1–10. However, he does not mean that other independent episodes are entirely free of the Deuteronomistic additions. For this discussion, see Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 118–22; Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 42, 45–6; Wolfgang Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1963), 112–46; Lawrence E. Stager, “Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel,” in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 127; J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 104, 108–9.

² Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges*, Berit olam (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 108.

Canaanite figure whose identity was later redefined? This article explores whether the Gideon/Jerubbaal narrative in Judges 6:25–32 preserves an early memory of Israel’s indigenous origins. Through redactional and archaeological analysis, I examine the symbolic and social significance of Baal worship, the naming of Jerubbaal, and the religious practices in Joash’s household. Situating the narrative within its likely *Sitz im Leben*, this study investigates whether the Gideon tradition reveals a more complex picture of early Israelite identity formation.

2. Six Theories on Gideon/Jerubbaal’s Identity

Although interpretive implications vary, most scholars since the late nineteenth century have regarded Judges 6:25–32 as an independent unit or at least recognized that the Gideon cycle contains different composition layers.³ A major turning point in this debate came with Julius Wellhausen,

³ For early Protestant or confessional interpretations, see Paulus Cassel, *The Book of Judges* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899), 115–16; Edward Lewis Curtis, *The Book of Judges* (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 74; John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament* (Bristol: William Pine, 1765), 815, 819. For a literary-critical approach, see Charles Fox Burney, *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes* (London: Rivingtons, 1918), xxxvii, 194–201; T. K. Cheyne, “Gideon,” in *Encyclopædia Biblica: A Critical Dictionary of the Literary, Political and Religious History, the Archaeology, Geography, and Natural History of the Bible*, vol. 2 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1899), 1719–21; Samuel Rolles Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian Books, 1897), 171; George Foot Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), xxiv–xxv, 190–91.

who in *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (1871) questioned the name Jerubbaal's originality due to its Yahwistic connotation, suggesting that it is equivalent to Jeruel (ירואל) or Jeremiah (ירמיהו).⁴ In the early twentieth century, biblical scholars distinguished Gideon from Jerubbaal as belonging to two different narratives, using source, redactional, and tradition-historical criticisms.⁵ Nevertheless, the distinction between Gideon and Jerubbaal in these analyses does not necessarily imply that they represent two distinct ethnic groups.

The century-long scholarly debate concerning the identification of Gideon and Jerubbaal can be summarized in six theories [Tab. 1].⁶

The first theory holds that Jerubbaal was given the name Gideon, גדעון ("hewer"), after he destroyed the altar of the Baal and the sacred pole.⁷

⁴ Julius Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (Göttingen: Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871), 31. Also see fn. 25.

⁵ Burney, *The Book of Judges*, 177–78, 201; G. A. Cooke, *The Book of Judges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), 68–69, 81; Emil G. Hirsch, "Gideon," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5 (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1903), 660–62.

⁶ The crucial study on this topic was conducted by J. A. Emerton, who in 1976 summarized four theories, which I have expanded to six by incorporating additional scholarly proposals. For further discussion, see J. A. Emerton, "Gideon and Jerubbaal," *Vetus Testamentum* 26, no. 4 (1976): 385–403

⁷ A. Graeme Auld, "Gideon: Hacking at the Heart of the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 39, no. 3 (1989): 263–67; William Foxwell Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (London: Athlone Press, 1968), 173; Daniel I. Block, "Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up? Narrative Style and Intention in Judges 6–9," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 3 (1997): 354; Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Sefer Shoftim* (Jerusalem: Hotsa' at Kiryat-Sefer,

Table 1: Typology of Six Naming Theories

	Naming Theory	Direction of Name Change	Key Concept
1	Post-event Naming	Jerubbaal > Gideon	“Gideon” given after destroying Baal’s altar
2	Post-event Naming	Gideon > Jerubbaal	“Jerubbaal” given after defeating the Midianites
3	Dual Names for a Single Figure	Possible Coexisting	Gideon at Ophrah Jerubbaal at Shechem
4	Post-event Naming	Jerubbaal > Gideon	“Jerubbaal” was original; name altered during Yahwistic reform
5	Dual Names for a Single Figure	Possible Coexisting	One of them was a regnal name
6	Dual Names for Distinct Figures	Possible Coexisting	Gideon at Ophrah Jerubbaal at Shechem

The second theory is the opposite: Gideon acquired the name Jerubbaal because of his victory over the Midianites in the name of Baal.⁸ The third theory states that Jerubbaal was the name Gideon used in Shechem and that Jerubbaal is also related to *Ba ʿāl-bērît*.⁹ The fourth theory suggests the two names belong to one person, but due to opposition to the Baal cult, the

1962), 168; Abraham Kuenen, *De Godsdienst van Israël tot den Ondergang van den Joodschen Staat*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: A. C. Kruseman, 1869), 302, 403–4.

⁸ Hugo Gressmann, *Die Anfänge Israels (von 2. Mosis bis Richter und Ruth): Übersetzt, Erklärt und mit Einleitungen versehen von Hugo Gressmann* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), 204; Isabelle de Castelbajac, “Histoire de la rédaction de Juges IX: Une solution,” *Vetus Testamentum* 51, no. 2 (2001): 170; Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel: With a Reprint of the Article ‘Israel’ from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 238.

⁹ Eugen Täubler, *Biblische Studien: Die Epoche der Richter* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), 266; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 94.

person acquired the name Gideon, implying that Jerubbaal was the original name.¹⁰ The fifth theory proposes that one of the names functioned as a regnal title.¹¹ This theory explains that the two different names do not necessarily stem from separate sources but could reflect a double royal name, a common feature in the ancient Near East and the later Israelite monarchy. Lastly, the sixth theory posits that Gideon and Jerubbaal are entirely distinct characters: Gideon, the Manassite judge associated with Ophrah, delivered Israel from the Midianite oppression; Jerubbaal, associated with Shechem, is the father of Abimelek.¹²

¹⁰ A. M. Honeyman, "The Evidence for Regnal Names among the Hebrews," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67, no. 1 (1948): 13–25; Emerton, "Gideon and Jerubbaal," 308–9.

¹¹ Abraham Malamat, "The Period of the Judges," in *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 3, *Judges*, ed. Benjamine Mazar (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 148; Eduard Nielsen, *Shechem: A Traditio-Historical Investigation* (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1959), 143.

¹² One of the earliest articulations of this theory is found in T. K. Cheyne's work. He reconstructs the Gideon narrative in connection with nomadic invaders, highlighting three key elements: YHWH's call of Gideon at Ophrah, the recruitment of warriors from Manasseh and Ephraim, and a surprise night assault on the Midianite camp. Regarding Jerubbaal, Cheyne proposes that he belonged to a Gadite family originally named Uribaal—a name later altered to Jerubbaal—and associates him with a separate nocturnal mission involving ten servants. Contrary to the biblical account, Cheyne links this episode to a sudden Midianite counterattack at Tabor and Karkor, which culminates in Jerubbaal's pursuit, the capture of Zebah and Zalmunna, and the making of the ephod. Cheyne, "Gideon," 1719–21. Also see Uwe Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Richterbuch* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 152; Herbert Haag, "Gideon-Jerubbaal-Abimelek," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 79 (1967): 314; Barnabas Lindars, "Gideon and Kingship," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 2 (1965): 324–26; Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche*

While the preceding discussion reflects a century of scholarship, a contrasting school of thought—championed by the minimalists or the Copenhagen School—also exists. This view holds that Judges was composed much later, often in the post-exilic period, and that its narratives function as ideological and theological functions rather than preserving earlier historical tradition.¹³ Pauline Guest, for example, argues that the judge stories reflect concerns of the author's own time, not ancient tribal folklore.¹⁴ She applies the minimalist perspective to argue that the Book of Judges is largely fictional in nature and was composed during the post-exilic period, serving as instruction and warning against dangerous liaisons with surrounding nations and their cultures.

Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch, 112–318; Roland de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978), 770–71; Timo Veijola, *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1977), 110–15.

¹³ Pauline Deryn Guest, “Dangerous Liaisons in the Book of Judges,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 11, no. 2 (1997): 241–69; Niels Peter Lemche, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 383; *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 24–30; Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 353–72.

¹⁴ Guest, “Dangerous Liaisons in the Book of Judges,” 243. Similarly, Philip R. Davies contends that the dating and content of Judges are retrospective constructions, shaped by post-monarchic theological agendas, and unsupported by archaeological evidence. *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’: A Study in Biblical Origins* (London: Continuum, 2006), 26, 149–55.

All of these theories have their own strengths and weaknesses, but the minimalist view—that the Book of Judges lacks historical value—fails to clearly explain why Joash’s son is given two names in Judges 6:25–32. However, with the exception of the third theory—which holds that Jerubbaal was the name Gideon used in Shechem—none of the others address possible indications of Gideon/Jerubbaal’s ethnicity. Furthermore, these theories have not been evaluated through alternative methodological approaches that consider how the characters are portrayed within their historical context. Before examining the ethnicity of Gideon/Jerubbaal from an archaeological perspective, however, it is prudent to first propose a viable theory grounded in redactional and tradition-historical approaches.

3. Redactional and Tradition-historical Implications for the Two Names of Joash’s Son

The Gideon cycle has been a subject of scholarly debate due to its internal contradictions, narrative tensions, and the presence of literary doublets with differing features. These discrepancies may reflect the extended compositional development of Judges 6–9.¹⁵ The Gideon cycle reveals two distinct narrative blocks. Yaira Amit identifies these blocks as

¹⁵ Auld, “Gideon,” 257–67; Block, “Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up,” 353–54; Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, The Anchor Bible 6A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 130; J. A. Emerton, “Gideon and Jerubbaal,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 27, no. 2 (1976): 289–99; Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 50–68; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 238.

having differing central subjects, character portrayals, temporal frameworks, and spatial settings.¹⁶ She identifies the first block (6:11–7:23) as centered on divine signs, portraying Gideon as a hesitant and fearful hero. Set in Ophrah and the Jezreel valley, these episodes unfold west of the Jordan River. The second block, 7:24–8:27a, mostly deals with Gideon’s leadership, portraying him as a capable military commander and is set entirely east of the Jordan River. The marked differences between these blocks have been cited as evidence of redactional activity within the Gideon cycle.

Uwe Becker proposes a complex evolution of the text. He identified two relatively disparate sets of (preliterary) traditions, namely, local traditions of Gideon and his role in the battle against Midian (6:11–24; 7:11–15, 16–22; 8:5–21) and an account of the rise and fall of Abimelek, the son of Jerubbaal (9:1–6, 21, 24–41, 46–54).¹⁷ The sixth theory (which argues for the original distinctness of Gideon and Jerubbaal) aligns with the geographical and literary differences observed in the two blocks—an explanation that other theories struggle to adequately address.

To clarify the implications of these divergent views, this section evaluates the six theories introduced earlier. Each theory offers a different explanation for the name relationship between Gideon and Jerubbaal—some proposing a name change after a key event, others asserting editorial substitution or even character conflation. The discussion below will

¹⁶ Yaira Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 233–46.

¹⁷ Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum*, 206.

consider each theory in relation to the narrative sequence, theological context, and possible historical background of Judges 6–9.

- (1) *Jerubbaal received the name Gideon after destroying Baal's altar;*
- (2) *Jerubbaal gained his name because of a victory over the Midianites;*
- (3) *Jerubbaal was at Shechem and Gideon was at Ophrah;*
- (4) *Jerubbaal was original but changed due to Yawhistic reform;*
- (5) *One of the names was a regnal name;*
- (6) *Gideon and Jerubbaal were originally two distinct individuals later merged into one figure.*

As you will see, further evidence of redactional activity emerges in the naming of Joash's son. Thus, reading the Gideon narrative raises an intriguing question: why does the narrator give Gideon the theophoric nickname Jerubbaal, which appears to associate him with the Canaanite deity Baal? There has been a suggestion to explain the meaning of the names of Gideon/Jerubbaal. Soggin argues that the name Jerubbaal would mean "let Baal prove himself to be great," and that the theophoric name contains a positive connotation: either "Baal is great" or "Baal makes (you) great."¹⁸ This interpretation may concur with the second theory: Gideon acquired the name Jerubbaal because of his victory over the Midianites in the name of Baal. However, the name Jerubbaal also appears outside Judges (in 1 Sam 12:11 and 2 Sam 11:21 as "Jerubbeshet"), whereas Gideon is attested only within the book of Judges. This may suggest that the name of Jerubbaal, which appears more widely and persistently, may be more significant and authentic than the name of Gideon.

¹⁸ Soggin, *Judges*, 125.

Given these interpretations—which challenge the traditional view that Gideon was associated with destroying the Canaanites’ altar and religious objects—the first theory, namely that Jerubbaal was given the name Gideon after destroying them, suggests that Jerubbaal is not a nickname but something like a birth name given by his father, Joash. This would accord well with the root of the name, גרע, meaning to hew and to cut down.¹⁹ This interpretation may also align with the third, fourth, and sixth theories, which suggest that Jerubbaal, a resident of Shechem, destroyed a local altar to Baal and its associated sacred pole, subsequently acquiring the name Gideon.²⁰ A major challenge to this interpretation is that the Judges 6:25–32 does not use the verb גרע, and the narrative presents the sequence in reverse: Gideon is said to have acquired the name Jerubbaal, not the other way around.

Naphtali Herz Tur-Sinai attempts to explain this issue through the substitution theory. He proposes that the verb גרע was originally used for cutting down the sacred pole in Judges 6:25, 26, and 28, just as it was used in Deuteronomy 7:5.²¹ He argues that this original usage of גרע was

¹⁹ Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 173; Auld, “Gideon,” 263–67; Block, “Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?” 353–54; Josiah Derby, “Gideon or Jerubbaal,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (2003): 182–83; Kaufmann, *Sefer Shoftim*, 168; Kuenen, *De Godsdienst van Israël*, 302, 403–4.

²⁰ If Jerubbaal’s departure from Shechem for Ophrah was motivated by religious concerns, it would lend support to Brendon Benz’s theory, which largely aligns with the ruralization, the “emergence from within,” and mixed multitude theories. For more on this possibility, see the discussion below.

²¹ Naphtali Herz Tur-Sinai, *Peshuto shel Mikra: Perush le-Setumot she-Bekitvei ha-kodesh lefi Seder Ha-Ketuvim ba-Masoret*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1962), 74.

replaced later by another verb, כרת. Tur-Sinai suggests that this substitution reflects a Midrashic interpretation of the name “Gideon,” assigned to Jerubbaal. The name may have been derived from the verb גדע (to cut down), and the change in the verb in the biblical text masks this association. His theory is further supported by the observation that גדע, used alongside נתן, שבר, and שרף באש in Deuteronomy 7:5 and 12:3, does not appear again in cultic reform contexts within the so-called Deuteronomistic History (DeutH). Instead, it appears only in 2 Chronicles 14:2 and 34:4, 7. This suggests that the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH) preferred the verb כרת over גדע when describing cultic reforms.²² This lexical pattern may support Deuteronomistic influence, though its precise editorial origin remains debated.²³

²² For the relationship between Exodus 34:13, Deuteronomy 7:5, and 12:3, see Joshua A. Berman, *Inconsistency in the Torah: Ancient Literary Convention and the Limits of Source Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 157; Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 100; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, The Anchor Bible 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 366.

²³ Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980), 275–78. According to Becker, a DtrH created a coherent Gideon-Abimelek narrative by linking two different traditions and renaming Gideon as Jerubbaal (Judg. 6:25–32). Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum*, 206–7. However, Smend and Veijola—who have a different perspective on the composition of the Deuteronomistic History—assigned Judges 6–8 to DtrN (the nomistic redactor). Rudolf Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978), 116; Veijola, *Das Königtum*, 43–45.

While these redaction-critical views refine our understanding within the Deuteronomistic framework, recent scholarship has cast doubt on the coherence or even existence of a unified Deuteronomistic redactor.²⁴ Scholars increasingly argue that the Deuteronomistic History reflects multiple layers or schools of redaction, making it difficult to ascribe particular lexical or theological choices—such as the shift from גרע to כרת—to a single redactorial intention. Judges, in particular, poses challenges to the traditional DeutH model due to its irregular structure and theology, suggesting that it might have circulated independently before

²⁴ In addition to Claus Westermann's questioning of the complex redactional history of the DeutH in his *Die Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments: gab es ein deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk?* Theologische Bücherei 87 (Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser, 1994), also see Thomas Römer, who offers a layered, redactional model of DeutH, challenging Noth's single-redactor theory. He argues in *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2007) that what we call the Deuteronomistic History was compiled in multiple stages—Josianic, exilic, and Persian—by different scribal groups or “schools,” rather than a single unified author. See also references to the multiple Deuteronomistic layers theory in fn. 4 of Gary N. Knoppers, *Prophets, Priests, and Promises: Essays on the Deuteronomistic History, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 186 (Brill, 2021), 29, and in fn. 3 of Brain Neil Peterson, *The Authors of the Deuteronomistic History: Locating a Tradition in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 166. The book of Judges also shows multiple redactional hands, countering the assumption of a single Deuteronomist behind its composition. E. Theodore Mullen Jr., “Judges 1:1–36: The Deuteronomistic Reintroduction of the Book of Judges,” *Harvard Theological Review* 77, no. 1 (1984): 33–54; Peterson, *The Authors of the Deuteronomistic History*, 165–98.

being incorporated into the DeutH at a later stage.²⁵ Therefore, while the lexical pattern supports a possible Deuteronomistic influence, this observation should be held with caution given the redactional complexity of the book.

Not only Gideon's new name in the narrative, Jerubbaal, but also Joash's name becomes instrumental in this study. Joash's Yahwistic theophoric name raises the question of why his son received a Baalistic theophoric name. The first possibility is that the names of Joash and Gideon could have been both given to them after Jerubbaal tore down the altar for Baal. But the problem is why was Gideon not given a theophoric name after YHWH like his father Joash? This question can be solved in the third point below. The second possible explanation is that since Joash had an altar for Baal, Joash may have required a more decisive shift toward YHWH, whereas Jerubbaal had already taken decisive action by tearing down the altar and building one for YHWH and was given a new name based on his action. Jerubbaal's subversive action could have been enough to warrant that he had a strong affiliation with YHWH. The third explanation is that the name of Jerubbaal originally included YHWH.²⁶ The fourth option is that Baal was indiscriminately used or legitimately used as an interpolation for YHWH in Shechem and/or Ophrah.²⁷

²⁵ Peterson, *The Authors of the Deuteronomistic History*, 165–98.

²⁶ As noted at the beginning of Section 2, Wellhausen proposed that the original name of Jerubbaal—distinct from Zerubbaal—was likely Jeruel or Jeremiah. Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 31.

²⁷ Wellhausen associated Jerubbaal with Shechem, arguing that Judges 9:27—an ancient and instructive narrative—reflects a Canaanite vintage festival in autumn. He questioned

The preceding discussion converges on the idea that Jerubbaal—arguably the original figure—was likely of Canaanite origin. Jerubbaal’s acquisition of the name Gideon suggests that the use of two different names was a deliberate attempt by later redactors and editors—who viewed Gideon as YHWH’s chosen deliverer and the conqueror of the Midianites—to avoid associating the hero with Baal.²⁸ That is to say, the name Gideon was deliberately tied to the destruction of the altar of Baal and the sacred pole, whether he was associated with Ophrah or Shechem. This observation suggests that the Gideon narrative may have been redacted with a specific theological agenda in mind. Furthermore, this analysis attests to Jerubbaal’s Canaanite ethnic affiliation. According to these theories, it is also possible that the names of Gideon and Jerubbaal represent two different persons but were merged by later redactors and editors for whom the issue of kingship had become a central concern.²⁹ That is, Jerubbaal, the father of Abimelech, was originally a Canaanite, and the identification with Gideon of Ophrah was a late redactional

the addition of a second narrative. He concluded that the first altar episode involved Baal, and that the second story was inserted to highlight Gideon’s piety for YHWH. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 94, 238–39. Similarly, Moore argued that for several centuries after the Israelite occupation of Canaan, the term *ba’al* (“proprietor”) was used by the Israelites as innocently as *el* and *adon* for YHWH. He therefore insisted that the name Jerubbaal contains a Yahwistic element. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*, 195.

²⁸ Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 173; Auld, “Gideon,” 263–67; Block, “Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?” 354; Derby, “Gideon or Jerubbaal,” 184; Kaufmann, *Sefer Shoftim*, 168; Kuenen, *De Godsdienst van Israël*, 302, 403–4.

²⁹ Block, “Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?” 355, 360, 365.

development.³⁰ Yet, the abovementioned hypotheses are purely speculative and thus must be tested against more tangible criteria than literary analysis alone.

4. Testing Judges 6:25–32 with Settlement Hypotheses

4.1. The Conquest Hypothesis

Among the three classic scholarly hypotheses of Israel's emergence in the Levant, the "conquest" hypothesis is the oldest, developed primarily in North America by the Albrightian School.³¹ Interpreting archaeological evidence unearthed during the formative years of biblical archaeology, this

³⁰ Auld, "Gideon," 257–67; Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum*, 140–208; Block, "Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?" 360; Ernst Würthwein, *Studien zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 227 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 12–28; Haag, "Gideon-Jerubbaal-Abimelek," 305–14; Hartmut Rösel, "Studien zur Topographie der Kriege in den Büchern Josua und Richter. Schluss," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 92 (1976): 10–46; Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch*, 112–318; Veijola, *Das Königtum*.

³¹ For discussions of the conquest hypothesis, see W. F. Albright, "The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 74 (1939): 1–12; *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954), 112–28; and Yigael Yadin, "The Transition from a Semi-Nomadic to a Sedentary Society," in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900–1975)*, ed. F. M. Cross (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1979), 57–68.

hypothesis explains Israel's conquest—directly derived from the book of Joshua—and suggests pan-military activity in the Late Bronze Age III (1,550–1,200 B.C.E.) and Iron Age IA (1,200–1,150 B.C.E.). If the conquest hypothesis is historical and the Gideon narrative is based on this history, then a critical question regarding the interpretation of Judges 6:25–32 arises. A total or partial conquest would imply that the people mentioned in Judges 6:25–32 were all Israelites. Although the early Israelites did not conquer all of Canaan, this fact does not imply that they coexisted with the indigenous Canaanites whom they had defeated—whether in shared settlements, as social equals, or both. Unless the indigenous Canaanites became slaves or forced laborers, hostility resulting from military conflict between Israelites and Canaanites likely led them to live in separate towns and villages.

This assumption implies a homogeneous group—either Israelites or Canaanites. Yet a close reading reveals that the people's anger is caused only by the destruction of the altar (vv. 28, 30). If the townspeople were all Israelites, then it is hard to see the reason why the people are angry with the cutting down of the altar of Baal along with the sacred pole and the building of an altar for YHWH. Indeed, in v. 30, the people demand the death penalty for Gideon solely because he has torn down the altar of Baal and cut down the sacred pole. There is no charge for building a new altar for YHWH—this may suggest a degree of religious tolerance. Thus, Jack

Sasson notes that although the townsmen were Hebrew, they appear to have held cosmopolitan religious views.³²

The absence of religious hostility toward a newly built altar for YHWH from the townspeople could be interpreted in two ways. (1) If all the people were the Israelites, they had long been practicing veneration of Baal and the sacred pole. That is, they had become nominal polytheists. (2) Alternatively, the people may have been religiously tolerant from the beginning, practicing polytheism and thus unconcerned about building a new altar in addition to those for their own deities.

The first option—that all the people were Israelites—could reflect how the biblical narrative presents the situation, and that is why the Deuteronomist charges apostasy against Israel through an unnamed prophet in Judges 6:7–10. This interpretation, however, raises problems: it is unclear why the Deuteronomistic redactors and editors would assign Gideon a theophoric name containing Baal, the very deity with whom the Deuteronomist accuses Israel of committing apostasy, unless Jerubbaal was originally a Yahwistic name—such as Jeruel or Jeremiah, as Wellhausen proposed. The second option seems to be more plausible but does not accord with the Deuteronomistic theology. Therefore, this model fails to account for the Gideon/Jerubbaal narrative.

³² Jack M. Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, The Anchor Bible 6D (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 344.

4.2. The Peaceful Infiltration Hypothesis

The peaceful infiltration hypothesis (also known as the sedentarization hypothesis) is an alternative to the conquest model.³³ This theory was initially developed by German scholars, who argued that the Albrightian school misunderstand the account in the Book of Joshua as a historical narrative and misread destruction evidence as direct proof of an Israelite military conquest. Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth claimed that semi-nomadic peoples gradually took up farming and eventually became sedentary. However, applying this theory to the Gideon narrative also raises a significant question regarding the ethnic identification of Gideon-Jerubbaal, Joash's household, and the townspeople.

This hypothesis allows for possible cohabitation between Israelites and Canaanites. Applied to the Gideon/Jerubbaal narrative, it implies that all the townspeople are Canaanites, with the exception of Joash's household. This speculation has both advantages and drawbacks for interpreting Judges 6:25–32. First, if the hypothesis holds, it becomes clear who cut down the altar for Baal and the sacred pole. The biblical passage supports this view, as the people immediately identify Gideon as the one who committed a religious crime, presumably after a very quick investigation.

Second, this hypothesis may explain the subtle hostility between the townspeople and Gideon. It could stem from ethnic differences. The

³³ For the peaceful infiltration, see Albrecht Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966); Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (New York: Harper, 1958), 68–84.

Canaanite townspeople may have viewed themselves as culturally superior³⁴—possessing more established forms of worship and a relatively stable economy—compared to Joash’s formerly nomadic household.

Alternatively, the hostility may not reflect interethnic tension but rather internal conflict sparked by the introduction of a radically different religious system—namely, monotheism. As noted in the examination of the conquest hypothesis, the townspeople’s anger is not directed at the building of the altar to YHWH but at the destruction of the altar of Baal and the sacred pole. This suggests that monotheism disrupted the religious tolerance typical of Canaanite polytheism.

Furthermore, if Joash’s household were Israelites, Gideon’s destruction of the altar becomes problematic, since the altar belongs to Joash, his father. According to the narrative, Joash appears to be a leader of the city (העיר שר) and a patron of Baal and the sacred pole. It seems unlikely that a recent nomadic outsider could attain such social and religious prominence in an agrarian, city-based society.³⁵ In fact, the narrative portrays Joash as a man of means: he owns the terebinth at Ophrah (Judg 6:11), possesses bulls,

³⁴ Stager, “Forging an Identity,” 138.

³⁵ Lot’s case may serve as a useful exception for interpreting Joash’s situation. Though from a different period, Lot—like Joash—may have gained influence in Sodom through his wealth, which earlier led to his separation from Abraham (Gen 13). This may have afforded him special status in the city. His position at the city gate and his welcome of the two angels at sundown (Gen 19:1–3) suggest he held the role of a town elder. However, as the situation escalates, the narrative reveals the townspeople’s hostility: “This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them” (Gen 19:9). This illustrates that, despite any apparent status, Lot remained an outsider in their eyes.

kids (young female goats), and servants (Judg 6:19, 25, 27), and maintains a personal altar (Judg 6:25). Moreover, he is shown to wield considerable influence among the townspeople (Judg 6:31–32). Since nomadic (desert) culture was generally regarded as inferior to urban civilization, it is difficult to imagine a nomadic outsider rising to leadership in a city.

Thus, applying this hypothesis to the ethnic identity of Gideon/Jerubbaal and the ownership of the altar yields two possibilities: 1) all the people were ethnically homogenous or 2) Joash's household, along with possibly a few others in the town, had long lived among the Canaanites and had gradually lost their nomadic and ancestral heritage. However, this hypothesis faces a challenge: the time span since the Israelites' settlement may have been too short for full assimilation into urban Canaanite society.³⁶ How many years had passed? Was that enough time to abandon their nomadic culture and adopt an urban way of life? However, this hypothesis holds significant potential for explaining the narrative. Unlike the conquest model, the peaceful infiltration hypothesis may offer a more convincing—if not complete—explanation for the etymology of the name Jerubbaal as assigned to Gideon, though it requires further examination and consideration of other factors.

³⁶ Although no universally accepted theory exists on how long it takes an ethnic group to fully assimilate into a new culture, Milton Gordon's seven-stage model of assimilation suggests the process may take at least two generations. However, the timeline may accelerate under certain conditions. Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 69–71.

4.3. The Peasant Revolution Hypothesis

In the 1950s, George E. Mendenhall proposed a new theory: that an internal revolt occurred, driven by religious motivation.³⁷ This theory later influenced Norman K. Gottwald, who expanded it from a Marxist perspective.³⁸ He claimed that during the Late Bronze Age, many cities in the Levant were ruled by feudal overlords. He proposed that the oppressed classes later aligned with the so-called ‘*Apîrû*’ after hearing a miraculous redemptive story.³⁹ Gottwald argued that the oppressed classes and the ‘*Apîrû*’ were the same people, who worshiped the same God and spoke the same language.⁴⁰ When applied to Judges 6:25–32, however, this hypothesis reveals a critical flaw. The hypothesis presents two possible ethnic configurations for the characters in the narrative: 1) all the townspeople are proto-Israelites, as they are depicted in the narrative; or 2) the townspeople are Canaanites, while Joash’s household represents the proto-Israelite group (‘*Apîrû*’), or vice versa.

Unfortunately, just like the previous hypothesis, neither case fits Joash’s social status. If Joash were socially marginalized, he would not have had farmland, a number of servants, and a personally patronized altar. It is unlikely that a peasant would have had substantial possessions. Again,

³⁷ For the peasant revolution theory, see George E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

³⁸ Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250–1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979).

³⁹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 210–19.

⁴⁰ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 401–09.

despite their nomadic lifestyle, Abraham and Lot were portrayed as wealthy, and Abraham even owned a personal army that rescued Lot once (Gen 14:1–16). Joash may have been wealthy, which would preclude his identification with an oppressed class. On the contrary, Joash appears to have held influence in both social and religious capacities.⁴¹ The fact that Joash does not appear marginalized, impoverished, or oppressed suggests that Joash's status was likely between that of a feudal lord and the oppressed class at the least—comparable to a petty noble or minor official.

Nevertheless, the text does not indicate clear oppression by a feudal lord over a lower class. If there is any oppressor in the narrative, it might be Joash himself, possibly misusing his influence over the people (Judg 6:31). Furthermore, the Masoretic text does not describe the people as peasant (פרזון), but as townspeople (העיר אנשי), who would have lived inside of either a fortified or an unfortified city (*hammā'ôz*). According to this hypothesis, the revolting peasants escaped from cities in the lowlands and valleys, seeking freedom in areas where the urban elite had little or no authority.⁴² This portrayal does not correspond to the townspeople in the Gideon story.

A similar expression used to describe peasants in the theory appears in Judges 6:2. However, the oppressive situation arose not because of urban elites, but due to the Midianites. Moreover, the situation in the Gideon narrative does not align with this theory, as the people are organized under Gideon's leadership and later fight effectively against the Midianites.

⁴¹ Schneider, *Judges*, 107.

⁴² Stager, "Forging an Identity," 140.

Hypothetically, if this were a pre-revolt stage, then the targets of the uprising would have been Joash's household or Gideon/Jerubbaal. Therefore, Joash's household and Gideon/Jerubbaal could not have been peasants or part of a socially oppressed and marginalized class. Joash's household was originally rooted in a group such as the 'Apîrû, as an extra-biblical document suggests their integration into the region's political fabric. EA 289, a letter sent by 'Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem, reports that Lab'ayu, the ruler of Shechem, gave land to the 'Apîrû.⁴³ If this were the case, it would indicate that they had lived among the Canaanites for a prolonged period and eventually became fully assimilated. Therefore, this model fails to explain Gideon/Jerubbaal's ethnicity through its core argument and instead relies on the secondary peaceful infiltration or sedentarization hypothesis.

4.4. The Ruralization, the "Emergence from within," and Mixed Multitude Theories

Scholars have increasingly questioned whether the characters in the Gideon/Jerubbaal narrative (Judg 6:25–32)—Joash's household or the broader group—should be identified as Israelites, arguing that such a classification lacks sufficient support. One alternative, less frequently discussed, is that Gideon/Jerubbaal, Joash's household, and the townspeople were Canaanites—part of a diverse population that later

⁴³ Brendon C. Benz, *The Land Before the Kingdom of Israel: A History of the Southern Levant and the People Who Populated It* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 180–81.

contributed to the formation of early Israel. This alternative points to a fourth hypothesis: the ruralization, the “emergence from within,” and mixed multitude theories.

Recent scholarship on the origins of the Israelites now place greater emphasis on archaeological data from the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I, which demonstrate both cultural continuity and discontinuity.⁴⁴ These cultural shifts suggest that, with the collapse of city-state systems in the final phase of the Late Bronze Age, a population expansion occurred in marginal “frontier” zones—settings in which early Israel began to emerge.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ William Dever argues for continuities in pottery styles and art, as well as in ideology, religion, and language, all of which are of local Canaanite origin. For example, Saul Olyan maintains that the religion of the Late Bronze Age persisted into the Iron Age I period. Contrary to the biblical portrayal of the sacred pole as idolatrous, he argues that it was a legitimate symbol in Yahwistic cults. Simultaneously, cultural discontinuities appear in settlement types, demography, house forms, social structures, and political organization—reflecting rural dispersion and a population boom in the hill country. William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites, and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 191–94; Saul M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1988), 73.

⁴⁵ Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites*, 174; Beth Alpert Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel* (Boston: ASOR, 2001), 154; Stager, “Forging an Identity,” 141–42.

Ann E. Killebrew argues that one of the most significant features of the Late Bronze Age was the emergence of centralized administration. However, this world system underwent rapid changes between the late thirteenth and early twelfth centuries B.C.E. Major forces behind this shift included the destruction of the Hittite Empire, the disintegration of the Mycenaean palace system, and the decline of Egypt’s New Kingdom. She outlines

Examining archaeological evidence in the central hill country during the Iron Age I, Israel Finkelstein suggests that the emergence of the early Israelites was rooted predominantly in Canaanite culture, which caused the collapse of Canaanite culture, not the other way around (like the conquest theory), and therefore they emerged from within it.⁴⁶ It was an internal

several potential triggers for these collapses, including natural disasters, climatic changes, technological innovations, systemic failures, and the cyclical rise and fall of urban cultures. Although identifying the exact cause is challenging, she emphasizes that the collapse of the international system and empires during the Late Bronze Age unfolded gradually, involving steady decline, episodes of destruction, site abandonment, and, in some cases, continued occupation. Consequently, she argues that during the twelfth century B.C.E., former Bronze Age centers fragmented into smaller units, and in the resulting political and economic vacuum, new ideologies and ethnic identities emerged. Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel, 1300–1100 B.C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 37.

For the socio-political conditions of the Late Bronze Age that contributed to the emergence of new political entities, see the theory of *chaosmos*, which explains the end of the Late Bronze Age as a breaking point in which the system's non-equilibrium condition persists, reaches a critical threshold, diverges, and gives rise to a new order. See Seung Ho Bang, "Tyre That Brought Chaos: An Oracle Against Systematic Economic Injustice," in *Tension in Resistance, Paradox in Freedom: Slavery Texts in the Bible and Their Readers*, eds. Soo Kim Sweeney and Stacy Davis (Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming). For the concept of *chaosmos*, see Soyoung Lee, "A Study on the Chaosmos Space Materializing a Multiple Potential World: Focusing on the Works of a Researcher" (D.F.A. diss., Kookmin University, 2014), 43, <https://data.riss.kr/resource/Thesis/000013529404>.

⁴⁶ Israel Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Early Israel: Anthropology, Environment and Archaeology," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 4 (1990): 677–86;

process. His earlier model seemed to closely align with the peaceful infiltration theory, as he insisted that pastoral groups resedentarized in the central hill country at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.E.⁴⁷ However, unlike Alt and Noth, he proposed that these groups of pastoral nomads were local.⁴⁸

Ann E. Killebrew's study of the Canaanites and early Israelites supports the ruralization theory and offers critical insight into the ethnic identity of Gideon/Jerubbaal.⁴⁹ She distinguishes between "Canaan" as a geographical designation and "Canaanites" as a label for a multiethnic population. As a result, the biblical portrayal of the Canaanites should not be interpreted as a reference to a single, cohesive ethnic group. The settlement patterns in the Canaanite sites reveal the gradual development of large urban centers during the Middle Bronze Age, reaching its peak in the thirteenth century in the coastal plain and fertile valleys.

"When and How Did the Israelites Emerge?" in *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*, ed. Brian B. Schmidt (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007), 73–83; Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 113–18.

⁴⁷ Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988), 336–51.

⁴⁸ Israel Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Israel: A Phase in the Cyclic History of Canaan in the Third and Second Millennia BCE" in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 150–78.

⁴⁹ Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 93–196.

At the end of the Late Bronze Age and into the early Iron Age, settlement patterns changed dramatically: including a notable increase in small villages in previously marginal areas, such as the hill-country region; continued occupation of several Late Bronze Age urban centers in the lowlands; and the emergence of urban centers along the southern coastal plain associated with the Philistines and other Sea Peoples.⁵⁰ These new settlement patterns delineated new social boundaries. In tandem with these shifts, cultic practices also reflect the cultural continuity and diversity of the region. Bronze Age Canaanite temples exhibit a wide range of cultic structures.⁵¹ These attest to the rich and diverse cultic heritage of Canaan and its polytheistic ideology.⁵²

Drawing on these findings, Killebrew proposes a theory similar to Finkelstein that the emergence of ancient Israel was a process of ethnogenesis, or the gradual formation of a group identity from a “mixed multitude” of people who largely originated as indigenous Canaanites.⁵³ She asserts that the worship of YHWH was the core of early Israelite ethnogenesis and distinguished them from their Canaanite origins. She characterizes the archaeological evidence of newly established Iron Age

⁵⁰ Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 97.

⁵¹ The impressive size of this Canaanite sanctuary—demonstrated by both archaeological evidence and biblical accounts—is remarkable, especially when contrasted with the typically modest worship sites of the Iron I period. Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 175.

⁵² Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 105.

⁵³ Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 149–50. Also see Avi Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006).

highland sites during the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.E. as follows: (1) the three- or four-room pillared houses, (2) a proliferation of silos, (3) the appearance of cisterns, (4) agricultural terraces, (5) absence of pig bones, (6) paucity of burials, and (7) a very limited repertoire of utilitarian ceramic containers.⁵⁴ These material culture traits spread across the central hill country, particularly in two regions: Samaria (Manasseh and Ephraim) and Judea (Benjamin and Judah). The setting of the Gideon narrative—Shechem and Ophrah—is located within the broader region of Samaria.

5. Gideon as a Canaanite

The ruralization and mixed multitude theories may satisfactorily explain the two questions that were initially posed in the beginning: (1) Why does Joash, Gideon's father, have the altar for Baal and the sacred pole? (2) Why is Gideon given a new name associated with Baal? If Gideon's family was Canaanite, it would not be surprising that Joash—despite his Yahwistic name—maintained an altar for Baal and the sacred pole. Furthermore, their Canaanite identity can also explain Joash's leadership in the town and Gideon's authority over people. If the Gideon/Jerubaal cycle reflects the emergence of the early Israelites—a loosely organized group of largely indigenous Canaanites living on the frontier who struggled to mobilize or defend effectively against invasions—then the shift from polytheism to monolatry, including the replacement of their patron deity, may represent as a key moment in their ethnogenesis. Mark Smith and Elizabeth Bloch-

⁵⁴ Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 157.

Smith argue that the narrative reflects tension between two competing groups operating in distinct religio-social spheres, each aligned with either YHWH or Baal worship.⁵⁵ This framework helps explain how what originally was a single, homogenous population evolved into two distinct groups.

The two names of the son of Joash, Gideon and Jerubbaal, also shed light on the ethnogenesis of the early Israelites. The Baal-related name Jerubbaal aligns with a Canaanite cultural background. According to the first theory, Joash's son—originally named Jerubbaal (though the name does not necessarily confirm Canaanite ethnicity⁵⁶)—was renamed Gideon after demolishing the altar of Baal and the sacred pole at Ophrah. This explanation more naturally accounts for the two names of a single character without requiring, as Wellhausen proposed, that Jerubbaal was originally a Yahwistic name in order to force his identity to conform to that of an Israelite. Or it may even explain how the two distinct figures were later merged with the one associated with YHWH by the Deuteronomistic redactor. Although Gideon is non-Yahwistic, it still connotes religious reform. Gideon's actions align with the Deuteronomistic prescriptions (Deut 7:5; 12:3).⁵⁷ In particular, the root of Gideon's name, גִּדְוֹן,

⁵⁵ Mark S. Smith and Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judges 1: A Commentary on Judges*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021), 456.

⁵⁶ Smith and Bloch-Smith, *Judges 1*, 457. For a contrasting interpretation, see Isabelle de Castelbajac, "Le cycle de Gédéon ou la condamnation du refus de la royauté," *Vetus Testamentum* 57, no. 2 (2007): 153–54.

⁵⁷ The author of the Gideon narrative appears familiar with Deuteronomy 12, as reflected in literary patterns identified by Joshua Berman and others. For further

corresponds to the word to cut down the sacred poles (ואשריהם תגדעון) in Deuteronomy 7:5.

Archaeological evidence most likely supports identifying Joash's family as Canaanite. Shechem (Tell Balâṭah) was predominantly Canaanite until the Late Bronze Age, as evidenced by the Amarna letters, which associate Shechem with Lab'ayu. In the following period, however, it became part of the northern Kingdom of Israel.⁵⁸ Brendon Benz argues that during the Late Bronze Age, Shechem functioned more like a decentralized region composed of multiple local powers, with at most a tenuous or informal connection to Lab'ayu.⁵⁹ This political flux may have created space for a new group of people—namely the Israelites—to emerge on the horizon. Later, Shechem—along with Shiloh and Dothan—lay in ruins, leaving the region without an urban center and signaling the collapse of previous social and political hierarchies. This vacuum likely enabled the eventual rise of a new ruling entity during the tenth century B.C.E.⁶⁰

As previously noted, the search for the ethnicity of Gideon/Jerubbaal in Judges 6 seems to align well with the peaceful infiltration (or

discussion, see Berman, *Inconsistency in the Torah*, 156–60; Saul M. Olyan, *Violent Rituals of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 52–53; Sasson, *Judges 1–12*, 344; Smith and Bloch-Smith, *Judges 1*, 456–57.

⁵⁸ Edward F. Campbell Jr., “The Amarna Letters and the Amarna Period,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 23, no. 1 (1960): 19–20; E. Sellin, “Die Ausgrabung von Sichem: Kurze vorläufige Mitteilung über die Arbeit im Sommer 1926,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 49, no. 4 (1926): 304–20.

⁵⁹ Benz, *The Land before the Kingdom of Israel*, 183, 242–43, 251.

⁶⁰ Omer Sergi, *The Two Houses of Israel: State Formation and the Origins of Pan-Israelite Identity* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2023), 74, 76.

sedentarization) hypothesis. This may explain why archaeologists such as Israel Finkelstein initially supported models resembling this hypothesis. In his earlier formulation, he argued that pastoralist groups became sedentary in the central hill country at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.E. However, in contrast to classic peaceful infiltration models, Finkelstein later argued that these pastoral nomads were local Canaanite groups who gradually transitioned to agrarian life—indicating that early Israel emerged from within Canaanite culture, not from outside it. Along with Nadav Na'aman, Finkelstein advocates for a low chronology, which pushes the emergence of the Northern Kingdom and its material culture to a later period than traditionally thought. This chronological revision reinforces the “emergence from within” model, as it allows more time for a gradual, endogenous development of Israelite identity and settlement patterns. In this framework, their analysis of Shechem’s role under Lab’ayu during the Amarna period highlights the region’s political instability and the later shift from Canaanite to northern Israelite culture between the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I—a change they attribute to the expansion of the Northern Kingdom.⁶¹

Examining the transitional phases of Tell Balâṭah from Canaanite to Israelite culture, Brendon Benz suggests the population consisted of both sedentary and nomadic groups—specifically, pastoralists and settled communities—who were tribally related and shared “a common social,

⁶¹ Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman, “Shechem of the Amarna Period and the Rise of the Northern Kingdom of Israel,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 55, no. 2 (2005): 172–93.

political, and even religious heritage.”⁶² He believes that not only the influx but also the departure of non-sedentary settlers contributed to the fluctuation. This interpretation makes sense if Ophrah was a rural frontier town in contrast to Shechem—suggesting that Canaanites based in Shechem may have moved back and forth between the two settlements.⁶³ While his proposition may support the peaceful infiltration or sedentarization theory, based on archaeological evidence from Tell Balâṭah,⁶⁴ it aligns more closely with the ruralization theory and the broader “emergence from within” model. Although Benz emphasizes political reasons for the abandonment of the region and the decline of Tell Balâṭah,

⁶² Benz, *The Land before the Kingdom of Israel*, 227–28, 234, 236.

⁶³ F. M. Abel and Albrecht Alt propose that Ophrah corresponds to eṭ-Ṭaiyibeh, situated between Mount Tabor and Beth-Shean, whereas Yohanan Aharoni identifies it with modern ‘Afula in the heart of the Jezreel Valley. However, because the territory of Manasseh lay south of the Jezreel Valley, Herbert Donner—aligning with Abel and Alt—places Ophrah at modern Tell Šōfar, approximately 4 km northwest of Tell Balâṭah. F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, vol. 2 (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1938), 402; Albrecht Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israels*, vol. 1 (München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), 160; Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (London: Burns & Oates, 1979), 263; Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn in Grundzügen*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 171. Regardless of its precise location, Ophrah likely had a small rural setting, as it has not been securely identified with any major sites in the region. Judges 6:26 describes the location where God instructed Gideon to build an altar as ‘*al hammā’ôz*. If this term refers to Ophrah—where Joash maintained an altar to Baal and an accompanying sacred pole—and if Ophrah functioned as a mountain stronghold or place of refuge, then its characteristics align with this interpretation.

⁶⁴ Benz, *The Land before the Kingdom of Israel*, 232.

it is plausible that political and religious affiliations were closely intertwined in influencing these social transformations—or that religious factors may even have shaped the political ones.

This transition occurred between Strata XII (ca. 1,325–1,200 B.C.E.) and XI (ca. 1,200–1150/25) at Shechem.⁶⁵ The *bēt El-bērît* (or *Ba‘āl-bērît*) mentioned in Judges 9:4, 27, 46–49—destroyed by Abimelech and his supporters—has been identified with the Canaanite fortress temple (Temple 2b) of Temenos 9/Stratum XI.⁶⁶ The archaeologist interprets the change in material culture as evidence for the emergence of a new people.⁶⁷ Lawrence Toombs argues that Shechem’s transition during this period took place without the evidence of violent military attack. Thus, he seems to favor the infiltration theory—a gradual change over time.⁶⁸ In his discussion on violent rites, Olyan does not categorize the Gideon narrative with the transfer of a group’s political affiliation as in 2 Samuel 20:1–22 and 2 Kings 10:6–10.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, from a broader perspective on early Israelite formation, the Gideon narrative may likewise reflect a shift in

⁶⁵ Edward F. Campbell, *Shechem III: The Stratigraphy and Architecture of Shechem/Tell Balāṭah*, vol. 1, *Text* (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2002), 8; Lawrence E. Toombs, “Shechem: Problems of the Early Israelite Era,” in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900–1975)*, ed. Frank Moore Cross (Winona Lake: ASOR, 1979), 69.

⁶⁶ Lawrence E. Toombs et al., “The Fourth Campaign at Balāṭah (Shechem),” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 169 (1963): 29.

⁶⁷ Toombs, “Shechem,” 70.

⁶⁸ Toombs, “Shechem,” 74.

⁶⁹ Olyan, *Violent Rituals of the Hebrew Bible*, 53–55.

political-religious affiliation, with the destruction of Canaanite cultic sites symbolizing religious reform—a key component of Israelite ethnogenesis.

6. Conclusion

In light of redactional and tradition-historical criticism of Judges 6:25–32, its broader literary context, the inadequacy of the three traditional settlement models for this pericope, and the development of alternative hypotheses, such as ruralization, the “emergence from within,” and the mixed multitude theories informed by archaeological evidence, two interpretations of the ethnic identity of Gideon/Jerubbaal—and possibly Joash’s household and the townspeople—can be proposed.

First, redaction and tradition-historical criticism suggest that Jerubbaal was the original character in the narrative, and that later Deuteronomistic redactors introduced a monotheistic dimension by distinguishing Gideon (associated with YHWH) from Jerubbaal (associated with Baal and the sacred pole). Second, the ruralization, the “emergence from within,” and mixed multitude theories suggest that the narrative may reflect a phase of rural dispersion and demographic expansion in the hill country during the twelfth century B.C.E. Although minimalists argue that Judges 6:25–32 is entirely fictional, the narrative may preserve historical kernels related to the emergence of early Israel. Sociologically, the narrative may portray the final phase of a city-based feudal society, prior to population dispersal into marginal areas such as the hill country, amid a period of social and political upheaval. Religiously, the narrative may illustrate a time when Canaanite

polytheism was challenged by emerging monotheism, leading to the development of Yahwistic belief.

Who is Gideon? Based on these two interpretations, it is plausible that Gideon/Jerubbaal in Judges 6:25–32 was originally a Canaanite. The passage may also reflect a transitional stage in which those who once worshipped Baal and the sacred pole were confronted by Yahwism and eventually assimilated into it.

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<한글초록>

기드온은 바알과 아세라를 섬긴 가나안인이었는가?: 사사기 6 장

25-32 절에 대한 편집비평적 및 고고학적 평가

방승호 *

사사기는 여호수아서의 정복 서사보다 이스라엘 초기 정체성 형성과 관련된 보다 역사적으로 신빙성 있는 전승을 담고 있는 경우가 많지만, 동시에 역사 서술과 고고학 해석에 있어 중요한 과제를 안고 있다. 이러한 과제는 특히 기드온 사이클(사사기 6:25-32)에서 두드러지는데, 이 본문에서 기드온(여룹바알로도 불림)은 바알 제단과 아세라 목상을 보유한 요아스의 아들로 등장한다. 이 장면은 두 가지 핵심 질문을 제기한다. 요아스는 왜 그러한 제의적 기물을 소유하고 있었는가? 그리고 기드온은 왜 야훼가 아닌 바알과 관련된 이름으로 개명되었는가? 본 논문은 해당 본문의 편집사적 및 전승사적 발전 과정을 분석하며, 다음의 두 상보적인 해석을 제안한다. 첫째, 여룹바알이 본래의 인물이었으며 이후 신명기계 편집 과정을 통해 기드온이라는 인물로 구분되었다는 점, 둘째, 이 본문이 가나안 종교 관행이 도전을 받으며 점진적으로 야훼 신앙 속으로 통합되어 가는 과도기를 반영하고 있다는 점이다.

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이러한 두 해석은 기드온/여룹바알이 원래 가나안 출신 인물로서, 그의 기억이 신앙의 변화와 함께 야훼 중심의 이상에 따라 재구성되었을 가능성을 시사한다. 결국 이 본문은 이스라엘 전통 안에 내재된 가나안 종교의 내적 변화 과정을 반영하는 흔적을 담고 있으며, 이스라엘의 기원을 외부 정복이 아닌 가나안 사회 내부의 사회적·종교적 재편 과정을 통해 이해하려는 최근의 해석적 흐름—소위 ‘내재적 기원’ 이론—에 힘을 실어준다.

***주제어**

사사들; 기드온; 여룹바알; 바알; 아세라; 이스라엘 사람들; 가나안 사람들.

Isaiah 6:9–10 in Luke-Acts and Witness Motif

Suyeon Kim^{*}

<Abstract>

This study explores the intertextual use of Isaiah 6:9–10 in the theological framework of Luke–Acts, with particular attention to Acts 28:26–28. While this citation has traditionally been interpreted as a divine pronouncement of judgment on Jewish unbelief—anti-Jewish readings—this paper argues for a more nuanced understanding of its function within Luke’s rhetorical and narrative strategy. Rather than signaling a permanent rejection of Israel, the Isaianic citation is examined within the broader context of Luke’s witness motif and his theological vision of Israel’s partial but not total unbelief. This study critiques longstanding interpretations that reduce the Lukan narrative to a binary between Jewish rejection and Gentile inclusion. It proposes instead that Acts 26 and 28 should be read in continuity with Luke 24, wherein divine revelation enables recognition and response. Paul’s commission to “open eyes” (Acts 26:18) signals not condemnation, but hope and the continuation of God’s salvific plan,

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echoing Isaiah 42 and reversing the non-recognition of Isaiah 6. Ultimately, the study suggests that Luke's invocation of Isaiah functions not as a terminal judgment but as a prophetic challenge, retaining space for Israel's future restoration. The paper thus repositions the Isaianic quotation in Acts as a theological fulcrum for understanding the inclusive and restorative aims of Luke's witness theology.

***Keywords**

Intertextuality; Gospel of Luke; Acts of the Apostles; Isaiah 6 Anti-Judaism.

1. A Hermeneutical Debate on Acts 28:26–28

It is well established that the book of Isaiah occupies a pivotal role in the theological framework of Luke-Acts. Among the various Isaianic texts cited, Isaiah 6:9–10 has long been at the center of scholarly hermeneutical debates, particularly with respect to its appropriation in Acts 28:26–28. This passage has frequently been interpreted as a divine pronouncement of judgment against the Jewish people and, consequently, has served to undergird anti-Jewish theologies throughout Christian history. In response to such interpretive trajectories, the present study seeks to offer a revised reading of Acts 28:26–27, contending that the passage has been widely misunderstood and misappropriated. Rather than functioning as a blanket condemnation of Jewish unbelief, Luke's use of Isaiah 6 may instead reflect a more nuanced theological and rhetorical strategy.

In Rosemary Radford Ruether¹ monumental work *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, she poses a critical question: “Is it possible to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah and at the same time not condemn the Jews?” Before evaluating how the Lukan narrative addresses this question, it is imperative to first examine the longstanding issue of anti-Judaism within Lukan theology—a subject that has elicited considerable scholarly attention and debate.

The modern scholarly debate concerning the theological orientation of Luke-Acts was significantly shaped by the Tübingen School in Germany.

¹ Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and fratricide: the theological roots of anti-semitism* (New York: Seabury, 1979).

Ferdinand Christian Baur, one of its leading figures, portrayed the early history of Christianity as a site of theological and ideological conflict.² According to Baur, the early church was marked by a fundamental division between Jewish Christianity, represented by Peter, and Gentile Christianity, represented by Paul. He further argued that Acts was composed by Luke as a conciliatory narrative, designed to harmonize these opposing factions.

Joseph B. Tyson notes that Baur's Hegelian framework—according to which early Catholicism emerged as a synthesis that resolved the dialectical tension between Jewish and Hellenistic Christianity—subsequently influenced a wide array of scholars. Among those who developed or adapted Baur's model were Adolf Harnack, Albert Schweitzer, Rudolf Bultmann, Ernst Käsemann, Hans Conzelmann, and Helmut Koester. In more recent decades, this interpretive trajectory has been taken up by scholars such as Burton Mack and John Dominic Crossan.

Among those who have most significantly contributed to shaping the scholarly consensus on Lukan theology, Ernst Haenchen and Hans Conzelmann are particularly noteworthy. Many scholars today regard their work as foundational in institutionalizing a dominant interpretive paradigm concerning Luke-Acts.³ Conzelmann and Haenchen jointly maintained that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, as portrayed in the Gospels, provided the theological justification for the Gentile mission. Implicit in their reading is the assertion that the Christian proclamation to the Gentiles

² Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the scholars: critical approaches to Luke-Acts* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 14.

³ Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the scholars*, 66–90.

emerged not as a parallel initiative but as a consequence of Jewish unbelief; had the Jewish people accepted the Christian message, the Gentile mission may not have been necessitated.

Haenchen interpreted the Acts of the Apostles as a sustained effort to legitimate the Gentile mission apart from adherence to the Jewish law. For Luke, the continuity between Judaism and Christianity held fundamental theological significance across a variety of contexts. According to Haenchen, Judaism as portrayed in Luke's writings is best understood as "Resurrectionist Pharisaism." This characterization enables Haenchen to argue that, at least from Luke's perspective, Judaism and Christianity were essentially unified.⁴

Luke's narrative suggests that many Jews embraced the Christian message and responded positively to apostolic teaching. Nevertheless, this was not a universal response. Luke presents Jewish rejection of the gospel as a providential means by which God opened the path for the apostles to turn to the Gentiles.

One of the most decisive factors distinguishing nineteenth- and twentieth-century New Testament scholarship was the impact of the Holocaust. In the aftermath of the systematic extermination of Jews fueled by centuries of anti-Semitism, twentieth-century scholars began to reevaluate earlier interpretive traditions and paid increased attention to positive representations of Jews in the New Testament. By contrast, nineteenth-century scholars often emphasized negative portrayals of

⁴ E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, Trans, Bernard Noble et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971).

Judaism and Jewish characters. Although Haenchen and Hans Conzelmann challenged certain assumptions within the historical-critical tradition, their work continued to underscore its more critical perspectives on Judaism.

A significant turning point in Lukan scholarship emerged with the work of Jacob Jervell.⁵ Jervell argued that the Gospel of Luke should be understood as a fundamentally pro-Jewish text. In his view, the early Christian movement achieved a degree of legitimacy precisely because of its theological and historical continuity with Judaism.

As Tyson has observed, scholars such as Adolf Harnack and Adolf Schlatter investigated the relationship between Judaism and Christianity without adequately accounting for the historical and socio-political realities of the context. In contrast, contemporary New Testament scholarship has increasingly emphasized a more historically grounded and realistic approach to this issue. Among the most prominent figures in this trajectory is Robert Tannehill. He underscores the ambivalence in Luke-Acts regarding the problem of Judaism, offering a nuanced reading of the text. Furthermore, Tannehill argues that the tension between promise and fulfillment runs throughout Luke-Acts and remains unresolved even at its conclusion.⁶

Within this ongoing debate, the citation of Isaiah 6:9–10 in Acts 28 functions as a pivotal theological moment. Craig A. Evans contends that

⁵ Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing house, 1972).

⁶ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1994).

this quotation reflects the early Church's experience of Jewish rejection and unbelief.⁷ Conversely, scholars such as J. T. Sanders argue that Isaiah 6:9–10 constitutes the most strongly anti-Jewish passage in all of Luke–Acts. Tyson explains that Luke begins his narrative by portraying the Jews as devoutly faithful to God, but ends by depicting them as spiritually blind and resistant to God's will. According to Tyson, Acts 28 offers a conclusion that is unambiguous and definitive, presenting Jewish rejection as how the gospel is ultimately directed toward the Gentiles.⁸ Some scholars have challenged readings of Luke and Acts as anti-Jewish. Robert F. O'Toole,⁹ for instance, argues that the portrayal of Jews in Luke–Acts is complex, and that it is erroneous to equate negative statements about some Jews with anti-Judaism. According to O'Toole, Luke addresses Jews with theological and pastoral intent and does not incite anti-Jewish hostility. The term *hoi Ioudaioi* (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) does not always refer to the Jewish people as a whole, and Paul is instead depicted as the legitimate heir of Pharisaic resurrection faith (Acts 23–26). O'Toole emphasizes that Luke's negative depictions reflect specific historical conflicts, rather than a general antagonism toward all Jews. He critiques the tendency to generate anti-Judaism not from the text itself, but from its misinterpretation. Darrell Bock, likewise, sees the

⁷ Craig A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6:9–10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 127.

⁸ J. T. Sanders. "The Parable of the Pounds and Lucan Anti-Semitism", *TS* 42(1981), 660–68.

⁹ Robert F. O'Toole, "Reflections on Luke's Treatment of Jews in Luke–Acts," *Biblica* 74, no. 4 (1993): 529–55.

need to reassess the dynamics of Jewish–Roman relations in Luke–Acts. He reexamines the role that Jewish opposition and Roman involvement played in the expansion of the gospel and in the broader theological and ethnic tensions of the period. Bock stresses that Luke neither denies nor is hostile to Jewish tradition, but rather seeks to historically reconstruct the resistance of the Jewish leadership.¹⁰ Nonetheless, there are limits to viewing the complexity of Luke’s portrayal as a mere reflection of historical conflict. Luke’s theology does not merely mirror historical realities but actively interprets and reshapes them. Accordingly, this study contends that the complexity of Luke’s statements about Jews derives not solely from historical circumstances but from a theological dialectic of judgment and salvation rooted in Isaiah’s theology that undergirds Luke’s narrative.¹¹ Thus far, scholarly analyses of Acts 28 have primarily focused on its historical context, the socio-religious reality it reflects, and its literary function within the narrative framework of Acts.¹² This study proposes a

¹⁰ Darrell L. Bock, “The Jewish Opposition to the Gospel,” in *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God’s Promised Program, Realized for All Nations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 369–89.

¹¹ In recent studies, Armstrong approaches the open ending of Acts from a historical perspective, with a particular focus on the issue of dating. The abrupt ending of Acts, with Paul under house arrest and no mention of his death, is interpreted as indicative of the author’s limited knowledge of subsequent events, supporting an early date of composition. Karl Leslie Armstrong, *Dating Acts in Its Jewish and Greco-Roman Contexts*, The Library of New Testament Studies 637 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2021).

¹² Based on Hartog’s analysis, the ending of Acts 28 serves two key purposes: it invites readers to continue the apostles’ mission beyond the narrative, and it presents the Way as

different approach by examining Acts 28 through the lens of intertextuality, specifically exploring the theological relationship between Luke-Acts and the book of Isaiah.

A proper understanding of the intertextual matrix between these texts necessitates several foundational premises. First and foremost, the citation of Isaiah 6:9–10 in Acts 28 must be interpreted within the broader framework of Isaiah’s theology of judgment and salvation. The Old Testament is not cited in the New Testament in a vacuum or apart from its original literary and theological context.¹³ In Isaiah 6:9–10, the motif of

an eschatological movement open to both Jews and Gentiles within the Roman imperial context. While the conclusion of this article similarly affirms the dual pattern of response in Acts, it reaches this conclusion through a comparative analysis with *Philostratus’ Life of Apollonius of Tyana* in the cultural framework of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, the open-ended conclusion of Acts—characterized by this dual response—should not be understood as a literary product of political circumstances or Greco-Roman narrative conventions. Rather, it is a theological outcome of Luke’s Isaianic framework, which consistently operates through the dual motifs of divine judgment and salvation. Pieter B. Hartog, “Journeys without End: Narrative Endings and Implied Readers in *Acts of the Apostles* and *Philostratus’ Life of Apollonius of Tyana*,” *Religions* 15, no. 5 (2024): 606, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15050606>.

¹³ In their commentary on Acts, Joseph Shulam and Hilary Le Cornu place primary emphasis on the Jewish context of the narrative over its Roman political and cultural setting. They contend that Acts fundamentally depicts the early Jesus movement as an intra-Jewish phenomenon. Accordingly, the early church should be understood as a movement within first-century Judaism, and they underscore the importance of recovering the text’s lost Jewish framework. Joseph Shulam and Hilary Le Cornu, *A*

non-recognition (or spiritual blindness) functions as a pronouncement of judgment. By contrast, Isaiah 43 employs the motif of witness to proclaim salvation. These two motifs—non-recognition and witness—together articulate Isaiah’s theological vision of human destiny in the face of divine revelation.

Building upon these Isaianic themes, Luke-Acts reconfigures the judgment and salvation schema of Isaiah around the Christ-event. Jesus Christ becomes the interpretive and theological center through which Isaiah’s dual motifs are reappropriated. Accordingly, Acts 28 should be re-examined within the conceptual framework of Isaiah’s judgment and salvation system, particularly as expressed through the non-recognition motif in Isaiah 6:9–10.

2. A reversal of Isaiah 6:9–10 and Luke 24¹⁴

2.1. The Use of ἀνοίγειν and the Apocalyptic Shift from Judgment to Recognition

Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem, Israel: Academon, 2012).

¹⁴ Research on this topic was preceded based on the relationship between Luke and Isaiah, focusing on intertextuality. For details, see this paper. Suyeon Kim, “The Recognition Motif in the Gospel of Luke” (Th.D. Diss. Presbyterian University & Theological Seminary, 2014).

In Isaiah 6:9–10, divine judgment is portrayed through a condition of epistemic incapacity—people who cannot see, hear, or comprehend. Conversely, Isaiah 43:9–10 proclaims a salvific reversal of this condition: the previously blind and deaf are summoned and transformed into witnesses who see, hear, and understand. The revelatory agent thus resolves the existential dilemma of non-recognition. Luke 24 activates this Isaianic paradigm of salvation. On the road to Emmaus, the disciples initially exhibit the symptoms of Isaiah 6’s judgment: they see without perceiving and hear without understanding. However, upon encountering the resurrected Jesus, a series of transformative events occurs. First, their eyes begin ἀνοίγειν (to open) (Lk 24:31), signifying the restoration of perceptual faculties essential for witness. Insight is gained through the symbolic action of Jesus breaking bread. Second, the mind (νοῦς)¹⁵ of the gathered disciples in Jerusalem begin διανοίγειν (to open) (Lk 24:45). The Greek terms νοῦς (mind, understanding) and διανοίγειν (to open) are critical here. The use of διανοίγειν—a verb distinctive to Luke—underscores divine agency, particularly through its passive form. This cognitive restoration is consistent with apocalyptic motifs. The verb ἀνοίγειν (to open), common in apocalyptic literature and used by Luke (e.g., Lk 24:31), also appears in 1 Enoch 89:44 and 106:2 to denote the opening of eyes in relation to

¹⁵ The word is rare in the LXX, since καρδιά is there the main organ of understanding. In Greek Philosophy and Religion, νοῦς refers to ‘reason’ or ‘spirit’ with a more theoretical orientation. Philo uses this word for a reason as distinct from πνεῦμα as spirit. νοῦς is the best in us; it is earthly and can attain truth only as divinely instructed. J. Behm, “νοῦς,” in *TDNT*, vol. IV, 948–80.

recognition.¹⁶ In this way, Luke presents the reversal of judgment through divine intervention, aligning with Isaiah 43's vision. The Greek verb ἀνοίγειν is predominantly employed in apocalyptic literature to describe the dramatic unveiling of the heavens (the sky is opened).¹⁷ Luke similarly adopts this term in apocalyptic scenes involving either the heavens being opened or the metaphorical opening of eyes in relation to recognition (e.g., Lk 3:21; Ac 10:11; 26:18). In Lukan usage, διανοίγειν and ἀνοίγειν exhibit no substantial semantic distinction. Within Isaiah's theological framework, the paradigm of judgment is expressed through non-recognition of divine revelation, whereas the paradigm of salvation consists in the recognition of that revelation. The alternating proclamation of judgment and salvation thus accentuates the cognitive dimension of salvation. In Luke 24, the motif of judgment via non-recognition comes to an end, and a new salvific era begins wherein the disciples' eyes, ears, and hearts are opened—a conceptual echo of Isaiah 43. Luke implies that salvation involves the restoration of epistemic faculties, thereby reorienting human cognition toward divine truth.

¹⁶ In Enoch 1, the blinding of the sheep symbolizes judgment in 1 Enoch (the Dream vision: chaps. 83–90), and the opening of the sheep's eyes symbolizes salvation. For a more detailed discussion, refer to II.D.1 "The recognition motif of the 1st Book of Enoch," in Kim, "The Recognition Motif of the Gospel of Luke."

¹⁷ 1 Enoch 104:2; The Testament of Levi 2:6; 18:6; The Testament of Judah 24:2; The Testament of Abraham 7:3; 12:17, 18; The Testament of Adam 1:11; Apocalypse of Moses 18:3; 3 Maccabees: 6:18

2.2. Moses and the Prophets as Epistemological Precursors to Christological Recognition

Through the opening of their minds, the disciples come to a deeper understanding of the biblical texts. Luke uses the term συνιέναι (to understand) to articulate the moment of their cognitive awakening. This implicitly references the judgment motif of Isaiah 6:9–10, wherein lack of understanding is a sign of divine judgment. Before the passion and resurrection proclamations, the disciples fall under Isaiah’s category of non-recognition; Luke repeatedly emphasizes their incomprehension.

However, in their encounter with the risen Christ, the disciples ultimately συνιέναι (come to understand) the Scriptures. Significantly, their recognition of Jesus’ identity and mission emerges through engagement with the written Scriptures. Luke suggests that recognition of Christ’s suffering and resurrection is contingent upon first συνιέναι “Moses and the Prophets.” In this sense, Moses and the Prophets function not only as theological antecedents but as hermeneutical gateways. For Luke, they are the necessary epistemological framework through which recognition of the crucified and risen Christ becomes possible.

2.3. Perceiving Witnesses

Luke introduces the term witness (μάρτυς) in Luke 24—a lexical choice distinctive to his narrative, as it does not appear in the other canonical Gospels. This introduction signals the theological transition from divine judgment, as epitomized in Isaiah 6, to the inauguration of salvation, which

Luke progressively develops throughout Acts. The witness motif in Luke 24 is conceptually and theologically grounded in Isaiah 43, a chapter that functions as a literary and theological counterpoint to Isaiah 6.

The Greek term μάρτυς (witness) appears 53 times in the Septuagint, including seven instances in the book of Isaiah. While the term is generally employed in legal contexts (e.g., Num 5:13), its use in Isaiah 43:9 and 44:7 signifies a shift toward a religious or theological usage.¹⁸ Isaiah 43, which proclaims the reversal of the judgment found in Isaiah 6, introduces the concept of witnesses who are blind and deaf, yet summoned before the nations. This paradoxical identification highlights a transformative salvific event: those once judged for their non-recognition are now called to bear witness to divine revelation.

Luke 24 appropriates and extends this Isaianic witness motif. The intertextual relationship between Luke 24 and Isaiah 43 is marked by two key elements. First, both texts emphasize a reversal of epistemological status. In Isaiah 43, the judgment of ignorance, unbelief, and incomprehension (cf. Isa 6) is overturned, resulting in the triadic affirmation of knowing (γινώσκειν), believing (πιστεύειν), and perceiving (συνιέναι) the true identity of God (Isa 43:10). Luke 24 mirrors this transformation: the disciples, who initially fail to recognize the resurrected Jesus, are granted understanding through divine intervention (Lk 24:45). The term συνιέναι, used exclusively concerning God in the Septuagint, provides a lexical bridge linking Isaiah 6, Isaiah 43, and Luke 24. In the New Testament, συνιέναι predominantly appears in contexts where Isaiah

¹⁸ H. Strathmann, “μάρτυς,” in *TDNT*, vol. IV, 474–514.

6 is cited (e.g., Matt 13:13–15, 19, 23), reinforcing its association with the recognition of divine revelation. Second, both texts uniquely present perceiving witnesses—an innovative concept within biblical literature. Isaiah 43 identifies the blind and the deaf as God’s witnesses, thereby transforming them from objects of judgment into agents of proclamation. Likewise, in Luke 24, the disciples—whose cognitive faculties were previously impaired—have their eyes and minds opened by God, and are then commissioned as witnesses. Notably, the conjunction of the terms μάρτυς and συνιέναι appears only in Isaiah 43 and Luke 24, further evidencing their intertextual affinity. Both passages, therefore, articulate a new paradigm of witness: not merely those who have seen, but those who have come to perceive, through divine agency, the revelatory truth of God.

2.4. A Vision for the Nations and the Role of Witness

Isaiah 43 and Luke 24 converge on a universal vision that encompasses all nations. In Isaiah 43:9, individuals previously characterized as blind and deaf are summoned to serve as witnesses before all nations. Similarly, in Luke 24:47, the disciples are commissioned as witnesses to proclaim the message of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (all the nations). The recurring phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in both Isaiah and Luke underscores a shared theological emphasis on the global scope of divine revelation and salvation. This intertextual parallel not only affirms the continuity between the prophetic vision of Isaiah and the Lukan account but also redefines the role of witness as extending beyond the boundaries of Israel. Both texts present a transformative witness who, having

undergone divine illumination, is entrusted with the proclamation of God's redemptive work to all peoples. Thus, Luke 24, echoing Isaiah 43, envisions a missionary movement in which the formerly unseeing are empowered to bear testimony—not only to their people but to the entire world—about the eschatological significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.

2.5. Conclusion: Reversing Judgment through Witness and Recognition

In summary, Luke 24 both echoes and extends the theological vision articulated in Isaiah 43. Whereas Isaiah 43 prophesies that the blind and deaf shall become witnesses, Luke 24 elucidates what it is they ultimately come to see and hear: the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. By fusing Isaiah's motif of recognition with the narrative of Jesus' Passion and resurrection, Luke investigates the epistemological function of these events—how they facilitate human recognition of divine revelation.

The salvific cognition presented in Isaiah 43, which overturns the curse of non-recognition pronounced in Isaiah 6, is now realized and made manifest in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, Luke reframes Isaiah's abstract prophetic categories in the concrete historical events of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Moreover, Luke's portrayal of discipleship significantly diverges from that of Mark and Matthew. Rather than remaining within the bounds of traditional discipleship, Luke redefines the disciples as witnesses—those who have come to understand and interpret the Passion and resurrection of Christ. This concept of witness transcends the forensic or juridical

framework and aligns with the theological vision in Isaiah 43: witnesses are those who see, hear, comprehend, and believe.

Luke 24 highlights the cognitive dimension of resurrection, portraying it as a reversal of the disciples' previous inability to recognize. Isaiah 43 thereby functions intertextually to undergird and amplify this theme, contributing to Luke's articulation of salvation as the restoration of human perceptual faculties. The paradoxical paradigm—wherein the blind and deaf are transformed into perceptive witnesses—becomes embodied in Luke's resurrection narrative. This motif continues to develop in Acts, where the recognition of divine revelation is further linked with the witness-bearing mission of the church.

In conclusion, Luke 24 offers a theological resolution to the judgment of Isaiah 6 by implicitly reinterpreting it through the lens of Isaiah 43. The divine judgment that rendered Israel blind and deaf has reached its terminus; now, those who perceive God's self-disclosure are summoned to testify to the salvific reality inaugurated in Jesus Christ.

3. A Reversal of Isaiah 6:9–10 and Acts 22

3.1. Transformation on the Road through Divine Intervention (Acts 22:1–11)

Ben Witherington¹⁹ points out that scholars widely agree that the final quarter of Acts offers clear insight into the author's theological concerns and intentions. He argues that, rather than functioning primarily as an

¹⁹ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 660.

apologetic directed toward Rome, the narrative gives greater weight to substantive and constructive debates with Judaism. This observation is well-founded. Just as Paul appeals to Jewish Scripture in his arguments, so too does Luke draw extensively on the Law and the Prophets—particularly Isaianic theology—to frame his theological engagement with Judaism.

Similar to Luke 24, Acts 22 reflects and simultaneously reverses the theological paradigm of Isaiah 6. While Darrell Bock²⁰ has identified echoes of Deuteronomy 28:28–29 in this passage, the dominant theological framework involves the motif of seeing and hearing in relation to witness, as well as Isaiah’s theology of judgment and salvation. More specifically, the narrative portrays a liberation from the curse of non-recognition pronounced in Isaiah 6, effected through the divine intervention of the resurrected Jesus. Luke’s theological trajectory, deeply influenced by Isaiah’s “recognition-reversal” agenda, finds concrete expression in Acts 22.

This section examines the episode of Acts 22 in which Saul, journeying to Damascus, is symbolically positioned under the judgment of Isaiah’s non-recognition. The scene is marked by apocalyptic overtones, with terminology typically reserved for supernatural phenomena.²¹ As Saul falls to the ground, he hears a voice from heaven but loses his physical sight. Although a light is seen, the sound is reportedly unheard by his companions. However, as Bock rightly notes, the statement in Acts 22:9 that they “did not hear the voice” should not be interpreted literally.²² Rather, the phrase

²⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, ECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

²¹ Mk 13:36; Lk 2:13; 9:39; Ac 9:3; 22:6

²² Bock, *Acts*, 660.

suggests a lack of comprehension. This aligns with the motif of hearing without understanding, reminiscent of Isaiah 6:9–10. Saul’s companions thus embody the condition of non-recognition: hearing yet failing to comprehend, seeing yet failing to perceive. Although they were physically present during the revelatory moment, they did not encounter the risen Lord in a transformative way.

In contrast, Saul himself was partially engaged in the process of recognition. Though rendered blind by the divine light, he alone heard and understood the heavenly voice. His question—“What shall I do, Lord?”—reveals a radical shift from confident persecutor to humbled inquirer. The one who had previously acted with certainty against the followers of Jesus now confesses epistemic ignorance. This divine encounter on the road becomes a formative moment, preparing him for the mission that lies ahead.

Having been led into Damascus by others, Saul subsequently encounters Ananias, through whom his sight is restored (Ac 22:13). The verb employed here is ἀναβλέπειν (“to look up” or “to regain sight”). In the Acts of the Apostles, this verb appears only in 9:17–18 and 22:13. Elsewhere in the New Testament, ἀναβλέπειν typically occurs in two distinct contexts: the healing of the blind (cf. Matt 11:5; 20:34; Mk 10:51–52; Lk 7:22; 18:41–43), and Jesus’ action of looking up to heaven (cf. Matt 14:19; Mk 6:41; 7:34; Lk 9:16; 19:5). Accordingly, the restoration of Saul’s sight is not merely a physical phenomenon but functions symbolically as the reconstitution of spiritual perception—the reactivation of cognitive faculties necessary for his vocational identity as a witness to divine revelation.

A corresponding use of the term in the Septuagint, pertinent to the Lukan narrative, appears in Tobit 11:8. Tobit, an exile and a figure emblematic of Israel under divine judgment, has his sight restored through the intervention of an angel. This episode strongly parallels Saul's experience. The removal of a white film (λευκώμα) from Tobit's eyes mirrors the falling of scales from Saul's eyes. In both accounts, the elimination of an ocular obstruction results in the restoration of vision and the reception of light. Saul and Tobit—both positioned as subjects of divine judgment—undergo the recovery of sight through divine intervention. This restoration marks the beginning of a reversal of judgment by addressing the foundational issue: the epistemological incapacity to perceive (συνιέναι) revelation, which itself is both a symptom and a consequence of judgment.

Through the transformation of his perceptual faculties, Saul assumes a new identity as a witness. This shift is integral to the construction of the identity of God's chosen witness. The witness described in Acts 22 is appointed, knows, sees, and hears. The witness motif here is informed by intertextual echoes from Isaiah 6, Isaiah 43, and Luke 24. Intertextual analysis enables the uncovering of recurring theological themes within this complex literary matrix. Just as the disciples encountered the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24), Saul encounters the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Ac 22). All those who met Jesus on the road in these narratives are subsequently summoned as witnesses. In Acts 22, Paul is designated as such a witness. The Greek verb used here is *προχειρίζεσθαι*,²³ which may be rendered “to designate,” “to appoint,” “to prepare,” or “to

²³ W. Michaelis, “*προχειρίζομαι*” in *TDNT*, vol. IV, 862–63.

assign.” This verb appears twice in the context of Paul’s call (Ac 22:14; 26:16), and its semantic emphasis lies more on being appointed to a task than on the notion of divine election or foreordination. Notably, *προχειρίζεσθαι* is used exclusively by Luke in the New Testament (cf. Ac 3:20; 22:14; 26:16), and as Gerhard Michaelis notes, it is employed specifically in connection with the witness role.

Saul, formerly an adversary of God due to his state of *μὴ συνιέναι* (not perceiving), is transformed through the opening of his eyes and is subsequently *προχειρίζεσθαι* (appointed) as both a servant and a witness. The divine appointment is articulated through a triadic infinitive construction, mirroring the structure of Isaiah 43:10. In that passage, the blind and the deaf are summoned as witnesses, and the reason for their election is expressed using a purpose clause (*ἵνα*) followed by three infinitives: *γινῶναι* (to know), *πιστεῦσαι* (to believe), and *συνιέναι* (to understand). In Acts 22, the verb *προχειρίζεσθαι* is used in place of *ἐκλέγεσθαι* (to choose), the verb employed in Isaiah 43:10 LXX, indicating Luke’s literary preference. By employing *προχειρίζεσθαι*, Luke stresses that witnesshood is not self-assumed but divinely appointed.

Isaiah 43:9–10 thus stands in contrastive relation to Isaiah 6:9–10, reversing the motifs of spiritual blindness and deafness. These Isaianic themes are recontextualized and extended in Luke 24 and Acts 22. The disciples who encounter the resurrected Christ experience what may be termed cognitive salvation—an epistemological awakening that marks the end of exile. This theological trajectory, first articulated in Luke 24, reappears in Acts 22, now centered on the recognition triad: knowing, seeing, and hearing.

3.2. A Vision for the Nations and a Witness

Despite the theological significance of Acts 22 within the Lukan narrative, few, if any, scholars have recognized the continuity between the witness motif presented in this chapter and the paradigm of witness found in the book of Isaiah. This section aims to demonstrate that Luke's interest in the motifs of the nations and witness (*ethnē* and *martys*) reflects a deliberate intertextual engagement with Isaiah, particularly in his theological framing of Paul's call and mission. Among the three accounts of the Damascus event recorded in Acts, chapter 22 is uniquely directed to a Jewish audience. In contrast, Acts 9, written from the perspective of an omniscient narrator, lacks explicit audience designation, while chapter 26 is addressed before a Gentile audience, including King Agrippa, thereby making it difficult to categorize its hearers as exclusively Jewish. In Acts 22, however, the audience is clearly Jewish. The detailed characterization of Ananias in this account appears to be a conscious literary strategy intended to resonate with Jewish sensibilities. Ananias is described as a devout man κατὰ τὸν νόμον (according to the law), who μαρτυρεῖσθαι (to be well spoken of) by all the Jews living in Damascus.

Nonetheless, Paul's mission to the Gentiles is not absent from this chapter. Although not an integral component of the Damascus road narrative per se, Paul's commission to the Gentiles follows immediately in

the subsequent pericope. While in a trance in Jerusalem, Paul receives his calling to evangelize the Gentiles (Ac 22:17), in a manner analogous to Peter, who also received divine instruction in a trance to ἀπελθεῖν (go) to the Gentiles (Ac 10:10; 11:5). In both cases, divine initiative, rather than human planning, precipitated the Gentile mission. The Greek term ὄραμα (vision) is explicitly used in Peter's calling narrative to describe the revelatory experience. This term appears eleven times in the New Testament, and—with the sole exception of Mark 9:9—is used exclusively by Luke. Notable occurrences include Stephen's speech (Ac 7:31), Paul's Damascus experience (Ac 9:10), Peter's encounter with the Gentile mission (Ac 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5), Paul's Macedonian vision (Ac 16:9–10), and his vision in Corinth (Ac 18:9).

Luke employs ὄραμα to signal pivotal moments where the evangelistic trajectory shifts from a Jewish to a Gentile audience. These transitions were not organically derived from internal church strategy but were catalyzed through divine intervention. The legitimacy and necessity of the Gentile mission, therefore, are theologically grounded in God's revelatory initiative and are validated within a Jewish context.

4. A Reversal of Isaiah 6:9–10 and Acts 26

In this section, Witherington rightly underscores Luke's literary and theological aim to portray the Gospel's advance into the highest levels of Greco-Roman society, particularly through Paul's witness before political

and social elites.²⁴ He argues that the transition from a Jewish audience in Acts 22 to a Gentile audience in Acts 26 marks a significant narrative progression, one that illustrates the widening scope of the Gospel's reach. This assessment is partially correct. While the shift in audience is indeed evident and narratively intentional, it does not indicate a fundamental alteration in the theological core of Paul's message. The content of Paul's defense remains deeply rooted in Jewish theological traditions, even if the rhetorical framing may be adapted to accommodate a Gentile audience. Although certain terminological adjustments may reflect sensitivity to Gentile hearers, Paul's apologetic continues to affirm the promises made to the patriarchs and maintains a consistent focus on the forgiveness of sins—concerns thoroughly grounded in Jewish covenantal theology. In this respect, while the audience of the Gospel expands, its theological foundation remains unchanged. A change in audience does not necessitate a shift in theology; the universality of the Gospel's address does not imply a revision of its content. This study therefore argues that Paul's conversion narrative in Acts 26 is best understood through the lens of Isaianic reversal theology, particularly in dialogue with Isaiah 6. While Luke's literary composition may reflect features of contemporary rhetorical conventions—such as judicial speech forms and Greco-Roman epideictic patterns²⁵—the

²⁴ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 684–5.

²⁵ The aphorism “It hurts you to kick against the goads” in Acts 26:14 is best understood as a Greek proverb with clear parallels in classical literature (e.g., Euripides, *Bacchae* 794–95; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1624; Terence, *Phormio* 1.2.27). Suggested Jewish parallels (e.g., *Psalms of Solomon* 16:4; Philo, *De Decalogo* 87) are comparatively unconvincing and lack the proverbial structure of the Greek idiom. The expression reflects

theological substance remains distinctively Old Testament-based and unwaveringly Christocentric. To understand the mission of a witness as articulated in Acts 26, one must examine Paul's self-defense before King Agrippa. In this address, Paul refers to "the hope of the promise." Within the Lukan corpus, the term "promise" (ἐπαγγελία) almost invariably denotes God's covenantal promise, with only a single exception. In Acts 26:6, this promise is explicitly linked to ἐλπίς (hope), a term which Luke employs exclusively in Acts. Apart from its occurrence in Acts 16:19—where it pertains to economic loss—ἐλπίς is always associated with the resurrection (cf. Ac 2:26; 23:6; 24:15; 26:6, 7). Accordingly, Paul frames his witness mission around the hope of resurrection, which he identifies as the ultimate realization of God's promise to Israel.

The text underscores that Israel had not yet received the fulfillment of this eschatological promise; rather, it remained a community in anticipation of redemption. Notably, the passage establishes a theological link between the fulfillment of divine promise and Israel's hope in the resurrection. However, not all Jewish sects uniformly embraced resurrection as central to their eschatological expectation. Diverse views existed among the various factions within Second Temple Judaism. The Sadducees, for instance—representatives of the priestly and aristocratic elite—rejected belief in resurrection altogether. Nevertheless, as N. T. Wright has persuasively argued, numerous apocalyptic writings from the late Second Temple period affirm belief in the resurrection as a widespread and potent

Luke's use of Hellenistic rhetorical conventions to emphasize the futility of resisting divine will. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles* 743.

hope within apocalyptic Judaism.²⁶ The crucial theological question that looms large is: When will Israel's exile end? When will God's promised hope be fulfilled? From Luke's perspective, the resurrection constitutes the decisive answer to both. It is the climactic fulfillment of prophetic expectation and marks the inauguration of God's redemptive plan—a reversal of judgment and a vindication of hope. Thus, in Acts 26, Paul's witness to the resurrection not only defends the gospel but also redefines Israel's national and theological identity in continuity with prophetic Scripture.

4.1. Transformation on the Road Through Divine Intervention

Among the three accounts of the Damascus event in the Book of Acts, chapter 26 offers the final and most theologically developed version. In this narrative, Saul encounters the risen Jesus on the road and undergoes a transformation of his cognitive faculties. As he traveled toward Damascus, Saul states that he “saw” (εἶδον) a light from heaven shining around him and that he “heard” (ἤκουσα) a voice. He expresses confidence that he both saw and heard the glorified Jesus.

Particularly noteworthy is the use of the verb ὁράω (to see) in Acts 26:16, which appears in a different voice and tense compared to earlier accounts. This verbal variation emphasizes the revelatory and transformative nature of the encounter. It suggests that Saul's experience was not merely physical

²⁶ Nicholas T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 329.

or sensory but involved a divine unveiling that initiated his reorientation as a commissioned witness. In the broader context of Lukan theology, Acts 26 continues the theme of cognitive transformation through divine intervention—an interpretive thread that links the Damascus event with Isaiah’s prophetic tradition and the recognition motif central to Luke-Acts.

Jesus was seen by Saul, he saw Jesus himself, and he will see what Jesus appoints him to see. In the dynamic between the risen Jesus and Saul, the cognitive act of “seeing” is presented as both a completed experience and an ongoing expectation. Acts 26, more explicitly than chapters 9 and 22, underscores that Saul truly saw and heard Jesus. The narrative places strong emphasis on the fullness of divine revelation granted to Saul, marking both the culmination and continuation of his perceptual transformation.

4.1.1. The Mission of Opening (Acts 26:18)

In Acts 26:16, Saul is commissioned as a servant and witness to both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. This commissioning culminates in Acts 26:18,²⁷ which both reverses the judgment motif of Isaiah 6:9–10 and echoes the recognition motif of Luke 24. Within the broader Lukan narrative, Acts 26 represents the climax of the witness motif. In Luke 24, the witnesses come to recognize the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus;

²⁷ Tannehill observes that the imagery of turning to God and the opening of blind eyes, often associated with Gentile conversion, is also applied to Jews in Luke-Acts. Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts, 2:324.

in Acts 22, a witness is divinely appointed; and in Acts 26, the appointed witness is entrusted with a specific mission.

That mission is articulated in Acts 26:18 as the opening of the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles. The Greek verb employed here is ἀνοίγειν (to open), which also appears in Isaiah 35:5 and 42:7²⁸—texts that serve to reverse the non-recognition judgment of Isaiah 6:9–10 through the promise of restored sight. In this theological trajectory, a witness is defined not only as one whose perceptual faculties have been divinely opened, but also as one tasked with opening the eyes of others. The mission of the witness thus involves extending the gift of recognition—vision, understanding, and spiritual insight—to those still under the judgment of non-recognition.

4.1.2. The Mission of Turning (Acts 26:18)

In Isaiah 6:10, the people's eyes are closed, preventing them from turning (ἐπιστρέφειν) back to God. In contrast, Acts 26:18 depicts a reversal of this condition: people are to turn from darkness to light. Paul's mission is precisely to facilitate this transformation. It is particularly significant that both texts employ the same verb, ἐπιστρέφειν (to turn). In the Septuagint (LXX), this verb encompasses a variety of turning actions and often functions as a technical term for religious conversion or apostasy.

²⁸ Haenchen notes the connection between Acts 26:18 and Isaiah 42:7, but he fails to recognize that Isaiah 42:7 itself functions as a theological reversal of Isaiah 6. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn, ed. Robert McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 402.

The prerequisite for such a return to God is the restoration of cognitive faculties. Only when eyes, ears, and hearts are opened can one ἐπιστρέφειν—turn—to God.²⁹ The same missional concept appears in Isaiah 49:6, where the servant of the Lord is appointed to bring back (ἐπιστρέφειν) the diaspora (διασπορά) of Israel. This servant is described as a “light to the nations” and as the bearer of divine salvation (σωτηρία).³⁰

In Acts 26:18, Luke once again draws upon the theological framework of Isaiah—especially Isaiah 6, 42, and 49—to situate Saul’s mission as a reversal of Isaiah’s. Whereas Isaiah was commanded to render the people blind and prevent them from returning, Saul is commissioned to open their eyes so that they might ἐπιστρέφειν to God. His calling is, in essence, the mirror image of Isaiah’s original prophetic role. This narrative development functions as a theological proclamation that the exile is now over and a new era of restoration has begun.

4.1.3. The Contrast Between Darkness and Light: Cognitive Salvation and Deliverance from Satan

A significant theological element in Acts 26:18 is the contrast between darkness and light, expressed through the Greek terms σκότος (darkness) and φῶς (light). This duality echoes a well-established biblical motif that denotes the transition from ignorance or judgment to understanding and

²⁹ 1. Man Returns to God: Isa 6:10; 19:22; 31:6; 44:22; 45:13; 45:22; 46:8; 49:6; 55:7.

2. God returns to man: Isa 63:15; 63:17.

³⁰ Ac 13:47; Isa 49:6.

salvation. In the Septuagint, this contrast is prominently featured in the Book of Tobit. In Tobit 5:10, the protagonist laments his blindness, stating that he cannot βλέπειν (see) the φῶς of heaven and dwells in σκότος like the dead. In Tobit 14:10, the destinies of Ahikar and Nodal are contrasted: the former is said to have gone to the light, the latter to the darkness.

The Book of Tobit narrates the life of a man taken into captivity during the reign of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Having been rendered blind, Tobit lives in darkness until his son, Tobias—assisted by an angel—is able to ἀναβλέπειν (regain sight) for his father.³¹ The book culminates in Tobit's prophecy concerning the return of Israel from exile and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.³² As Evans observes, Tobit reflects the persistent Jewish conviction that Israel remained in a state of exile (Tobit 14:5).³³ The motif of blindness and the restoration of sight thus becomes a symbolic

³¹ Joseph Zimmermann, ed., *Tobit: Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958).

³² The Book of Tobit, insofar as it articulates the eschatological aspirations of Second Temple Judaism, lends itself to a meaningful analogy with the theological framework of the Book of Acts. In Tobit's narrative, the restoration of Israel is portrayed as an expectation that has yet to be fulfilled. The following scholars contend that the Book of Tobit articulates not merely the historical return from the Babylonian exile, but more fundamentally the theological hope for eschatological restoration and the full redemption of Israel. John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983). Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

³³ Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel," in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A critical Assessment of N.T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, ed. Carey C. Newman (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 77–100.

framework for understanding cognitive salvation: just as Tobit's physical sight was restored, so too will Israel experience spiritual awakening and recognition of divine truth.

The Isaianic vision in Isaiah 42:16 most closely parallels Acts 26:18. There, the Lord declares that He will ὁδηγεῖν (guide) the blind along unfamiliar paths and μεταστρέφειν (transform) σκότος into φῶς. Luke draws upon this prophetic tradition to frame Paul's mission in apocalyptic terms. The contrast between darkness and light is not merely ethical or epistemological but cosmic in scale, as it becomes intertwined with the opposition between Satan and God.

While Matthew and Mark refer to Satan mainly in the context of Jesus' temptation (Matt 4:10; Mk 1:13), the Beelzebul controversy (Matt 12:26; Mk 3:23), and the rebuke of Peter (Matt 16:23; Mk 8:33), the Lukan depiction is far more developed. In Luke-Acts, Satan is an active and powerful adversary: he ἐξαιτεῖν (demands) to sift the disciples like wheat (Lk 22:31), δέειν (binds) a woman for eighteen years (Lk 13:16), and εἰσερχεσθαι (enters) Judas to instigate betrayal (Lk 22:3). In Acts, Satan is explicitly described as possessing ἐξουσία (authority or power) from which individuals must be liberated (Ac 26:18). Moreover, he is portrayed as attempting to ψεύδεσθαι (deceive) the Holy Spirit (Ac 5:2).

Interestingly, the name "Satan" does not appear in the Septuagint, yet it is preferred in the New Testament, particularly in Luke-Acts, where it functions as a personified cosmic force opposed to God's salvific plan. In this framework, the act of ἐπιστρέφειν (turning) to God simultaneously implies deliverance from Satan's dominion—a movement from darkness

to light that represents not merely moral transformation, but cognitive and theological enlightenment on a cosmic scale.

4.1.4. Mission to the Forgiveness of Sins and Inheritance (Acts 26:18)

The theme of the forgiveness of sins (ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν) is central to the theological framework of Luke-Acts, and its roots may be traced back to the embryonic expression in Isaiah 6. In the call narrative, Isaiah—upon encountering the divine presence—becomes acutely aware of his own impurity, confessing that he dwells among a people of unclean lips. His guilt is then removed and his sin atoned through a coal taken from the altar (Isa 6:7), symbolizing divine cleansing. This foundational moment in Isaiah provides an interpretive lens through which the Lukan motif of forgiveness is to be understood: it is both a divine initiative and a prerequisite for prophetic commissioning.

In Luke-Acts, the mission of proclaiming the forgiveness of sins is transmitted progressively through three stages: the ministry of John the Baptist, the commissioning of the disciples, and the apostolic mission of Paul.

First, the forgiveness of sins is integral to the mission of John the Baptist. In the Benedictus, the prophetic song of Zechariah, forgiveness is linked with salvific knowledge: “to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins” (Lk 1:77). This connection reflects Luke’s distinctive emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of salvation. Forgiveness is not merely juridical but epistemological—it enables recognition of the salvific work of God. Furthermore, in Luke 3:3, John’s

proclamation of a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” aligns with the parallel statement in Mark 1:4. Here, repentance (μετάνοια) serves as the essential posture through which forgiveness is actualized, suggesting that such repentance is preparatory for entering the salvific economy inaugurated by God.

Second, the theme is continued in the commission of the disciples. In Luke 24:47, the proclamation of “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” acquires a new Christocentric orientation: it is now to be preached “in his name,” that is, in the name of the risen Christ. The resurrection, as the climactic event in Luke’s narrative, reconfigures the forgiveness of sins with explicit Christological content. What had been a prophetic and preparatory act in John’s ministry is now redefined as a post-resurrectional apostolic mandate. The epistemological motif persists: the disciples, having been made to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45), are now charged to proclaim repentance and forgiveness, beginning from Jerusalem and extending to all nations.

The Acts of the Apostles inherits and amplifies this Lukan theology of forgiveness. The phrase “forgiveness of sins” appears prominently in apostolic preaching (cf. Ac 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38), forming a theological bridge between the Gospel and its sequel. It is particularly notable in Acts 26:18, where Paul’s divine commission includes opening the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles so that they “may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” Here, the forgiveness of sins is not only the reversal of judgment and alienation but also the entry point into the eschatological inheritance promised to the sanctified—those set apart through faith in Christ. Thus, Acts 26:18 serves as a theological

culmination of Luke's conception of forgiveness: it is tied to divine initiative, cognitive transformation, repentance, Christological fulfillment, and eschatological inheritance. It is through this multi-faceted lens that the mission to proclaim forgiveness must be understood.

4.2. A Vision for Nations and Witnesses (Acts 26:17)

In Acts 26:17, the risen Jesus declares that He is delivering Saul from both the people (ὁ λαός) and the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη), and commissioning him to be sent back to them. The term λαός—typically referring to Israel—occupies a complex and ambivalent role throughout Luke-Acts. On one hand, the people are the intended recipients of Jesus' teaching and the apostolic proclamation; on the other hand, they can be misled, complicit in Jesus' crucifixion, or passive bystanders in moments of divine revelation. Despite this tension, Israel remains the first audience of the Gospel proclamation.

However, Saul's apostolic commission is not restricted to λαός. He is also explicitly sent to the Gentiles. This dual designation represents the universal scope of his calling and the theological expansion of the witness motif. Whereas λαός may represent those with historical covenantal ties, τὰ ἔθνη signifies the expansion of God's salvific plan to all nations. This universal horizon corresponds to the eschatological vision found in Isaiah and is consistently echoed in Luke's broader narrative arc.

4.3. Moses and the Prophets as Precursors of Recognition (Acts 26:22–23)

In the Lukan theological framework, Moses and the Prophets constitute the foundational corpus for recognizing divine revelation, particularly in relation to Christ's passion and resurrection. This scriptural base serves not merely as a source of testimony but also as the criterion by which individuals are judged regarding their cognitive responsiveness to the Gospel.

When Paul testifies before Governor Festus, he appeals to Moses and the Prophets as the basis for his proclamation (Ac 26:22–23). This hermeneutical method mirrors the post-resurrection teaching of Jesus in Luke 24, where He interprets His suffering and resurrection in light of the Law and the Prophets (Lk 24:27, 44–47). This interpretive approach becomes a hallmark of apostolic witness: understanding Christ through the lens of Scripture is integral to the role of the witness (Lk 24:48). Paul continues this scriptural persuasion before King Agrippa, aiming to demonstrate the legitimacy of his message by anchoring it in prophetic tradition (Ac 26:27–28). Yet Agrippa resists persuasion. The Greek verb *πείθειν* (to persuade) used here is significant. In Luke's Gospel, *πείθειν* is the key verb in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where Abraham declares that those who do not listen to Moses and the Prophets will not be persuaded (*πεισθήσονται*) even if someone rises from the dead (Lk 16:31). This intertextual allusion underscores the theological continuity between Luke and Acts: recognition of the risen Christ is inseparable from recognition of the prophetic Scriptures.

Agrippa's refusal to be persuaded despite hearing the Gospel parallels the rich man's brothers who would remain unconvinced even by resurrection. This narrative convergence reinforces Luke's assertion that true recognition—cognitive salvation—requires receptivity to both Scripture and resurrection, and that resistance to one implies resistance to the other.

5. Isaiah 6:9–10 and Acts 28: The Return of the Judgment Paradigm

In Luke–Acts, the apostles are commissioned as witnesses with the explicit purpose of reversing the judgment of non-recognition pronounced in Isaiah 6:9–10. Ironically, however, this same judgment resurfaces at the conclusion of Acts. In Acts 28:26–28, Paul cites Isaiah 6 directly, signifying the reactivation of Isaiah's judgment paradigm. Whereas Luke 24 signaled the inauguration of a restorative project based on the reversal of non-recognition, Acts 28 reveals a tragic regression: the judgment of spiritual blindness and deafness is once again operative—this time, against the unbelieving Jews in Rome.

To fully appreciate this narrative shift, it is essential to interpret it against the theological backdrop of exile. N. T. Wright has emphasized that, although the Jewish people had physically returned to the land, they were still existentially and theologically in exile—subject to Roman rule and awaiting true deliverance.³⁴ Wright's reading finds support in the

³⁴ Similarly, *Damascus Document* speaks of an exile continuing until the establishment of the sect. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and The People of God* (London: Society

scholarship of Craig A. Evans³⁵ and David W. Pao,³⁶ who similarly argue that first-century Jews understood themselves as living in a continued state of exile.

This broader interpretive framework lends crucial insight into the events of Acts 28. The citation of Isaiah 6 at the climax of Paul's ministry to the Jews in Rome is not incidental but theologically loaded. It demonstrates that, for those who reject the apostolic witness to Christ, the curse of non-recognition remains in force. Thus, while Luke–Acts portrays the inauguration of cognitive salvation among some (e.g., Lk 24, Ac 26), Acts 28 confirms that Isaiah's sentence of judgment still holds for those who persist in unbelief.

5.1. Precursors of Recognition: Moses and the Prophets (Acts 28:23)

Throughout Luke–Acts, Isaiah 6:9–10 is repeatedly reversed through allusive and echoic strategies. However, in Acts 28:26–28, the judgment motif reemerges definitively with a direct citation of Isaiah's oracle, signaling the return of divine condemnation. Up to this point, Luke has developed the motif of witness progressively: as eyes and ears are opened, the witnesses to the resurrection come to recognize divine revelation through the writings of Moses and the prophets. These cognitive

for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992), 268–69.

³⁵ Evans, “Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel.” 100.

³⁶ David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Eugene: Wipe and Stock Publishers, 2016), 143.

awakenings lead not only to understanding but also to a commission from heaven.

Yet, at this climactic juncture, the narrative takes an abrupt turn—suggesting a reversal of spiritual progress. The Jewish audience, rather than moving toward recognition, reenters a state of spiritual imprisonment. To appreciate the force of Isaiah’s reappearance in this context, one must closely examine the preceding scene in Acts 28:23, where Paul attempts to persuade the Jewish audience by appealing to the Law of Moses and the Prophets. This mirrors the typical preparatory stage that precedes recognition in Luke’s theological schema. Just as the disciples in Luke 24 came to perceive the meaning of Jesus’ suffering and resurrection through the interpretive framework of Moses and the Prophets, so too here, Paul employs these scriptures as the anticipated precursors to cognitive salvation.

In Luke’s theology, the Law and the Prophets serve not only as foundational texts but as divinely sanctioned conduits for revelation. This idea is prefigured in Luke 16:28–31, where Moses and the Prophets are identified as sufficient witnesses for repentance and salvation. Thus, in Acts 28, their failure to lead the people to recognition underscores the tragic persistence of unbelief and validates the renewed application of Isaiah’s judgment oracle.

5.2. The Dual Response to Witness and the Criterion of Moses and the Prophets (Acts 28:23–24)

Acts 28:23 exhibits a clear intertextual connection with Luke 16:28–31. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man implores Abraham

to send a witness to warn his brothers. The verb used for “to testify” in both Luke 16:28 and Acts 28:23 is διαμαρτύρομαι—a preferred term in Luke-Acts, where it appears ten out of the fifteen times it occurs in the New Testament. Abraham’s response underscores a theological principle foundational to Lukan theology: if one does not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will one be persuaded—even if someone rises from the dead. Thus, faith in the testimony of Moses and the prophets is presented as a necessary preliminary stage to faith in Christ.

This motif is revisited in Acts 26, where Paul testifies concerning the resurrection of Christ on the basis of Moses and the prophets. Despite the compelling nature of his argument, his audience remains unpersuaded. Importantly, Paul’s audience in Acts 26 includes not only Jews but also Gentiles, specifically Festus and Agrippa. Their rejection of the prophetic testimony aligns them with those in Acts 28 who failed to respond. Consequently, the rejection depicted in Acts 28:24 should not be understood as a categorical rejection of the Jewish people as a whole. Rather, it reflects a broader pattern of rejection determined not by ethnicity but by one’s reception of the revelatory foundation found in Moses and the prophets. In Luke-Acts, refusal to respond to divine revelation is a universal human phenomenon, transcending ethnic distinctions.

Luke-Acts consistently emphasizes separation in response to revelation. In the *Nunc Dimittis*, Simeon prophesies that Jesus will be the cause of “the falling and rising (πτῶσις καὶ ἀνάστασις) of many in Israel” (Lk 2:34). Similarly, in Luke 7:29–30, people are divided based on their response to John’s baptism—those who were baptized (βαπτισθέντες) versus those who were not (μὴ βαπτισθέντες). In the parable of the sower, Luke distinguishes

between those who have been granted to “know the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας) and those who “seeing do not see, and hearing do not understand” (ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιῶσιν, Lk 8:10).

Likewise, Acts 28:24 explicitly delineates two responses to Paul’s proclamation. Some were persuaded (πείθειν), while others disbelieved (ἀπιστεῖν). In Lukan theology, Jesus’s proclamation invariably generates division—between those who believe and are saved and those who reject and are judged.

Whereas in Isaiah the judgment and salvation are often applied corporately to nations or generations, in Luke-Acts the scope of divine response is more individuated. Within the same ethnic group or generation, individuals may experience divergent destinies based on specific criteria such as faith in Moses and the prophets, reception of baptism, or acceptance of the knowledge of salvation. Thus, even within Israel, salvation and judgment do not fall collectively but rather differentiate among individuals based on their response to divine revelation.

5.3. Isaiah’s Judgment System Reactivated

Acts 28:26–27 directly cites Isaiah 6:9–10, which had previously been referenced and echoed throughout Luke-Acts, and thereby definitively reactivates Isaiah’s judgment oracle. While Luke 8:10 contains a condensed citation of the Septuagintal version of Isaiah, the quotation in Acts 28:26–27 closely adheres to the LXX and approximates a verbatim rendering. Although the severe tone of judgment characteristic of the

Hebrew text is somewhat softened in its Septuagintal form, the invocation of Isaiah's prophecy in Acts nonetheless signals an irrevocable divine judgment upon Israel. With this citation, the motif of exile, long dormant, reemerges, indicating that the judgment of blindness and deafness has not been rescinded.

Despite this, adopting Tannehill's assessment of Acts as a tragic narrative would be an overstatement. Acts 28:24 reports that "some were persuaded" (οἱ δὲ ἐπείθοντο) by Paul's proclamation concerning the kingdom of God. This phrase parallels the positive reception of the "mystery of the kingdom" by select individuals in Luke 8:10. As Luke consistently emphasizes, the Isaianic judgment remains in effect, yet the dawn of salvation has broken. Though some among Israel reject the message, salvation (τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ) is now directed toward the Gentiles, and Luke confidently asserts, "they will listen" (Ac 28:28).

Luke thus concludes not with divine abandonment of Israel, but with a thematic shift: the narrative turns to the inclusion of the nations. The reactivation of Isaiah's judgment oracle is not the terminal point; rather, it serves to underscore the theological transition to a new missional horizon. The closing of Acts affirms the continuation of God's salvific plan through the Gentiles—not as a replacement of Israel, but as the outworking of a divine economy in which separation leads to wider inclusion.

6. Conclusion

Scholarly consensus on the ending of Luke-Acts remains elusive. The concluding narrative of Luke-Acts has been interpreted by some as

potentially contributing to anti-Semitic readings, particularly in light of the quotation of Isaiah 6:9–10 and its function as a judgment oracle. In Acts 28, Luke reintroduces the Isaianic judgment motif. Just as Israel's rejection of prophetic revelation in Isaiah's time led to exile, so too does the rejection of Paul's gospel message signify the continuation of Israel's exilic condition.

Nevertheless, Luke does not end with judgment alone. Rather, he appropriates and advances the theology of restoration and reversal found in Isaiah. Throughout Luke 24 and Acts 22 and 26, the witness motif—drawn from Isaiah 43—functions as a narrative and theological counterpoint to the curse of non-recognition in Isaiah 6. The proper understanding of Isaiah 6:9–10 in Acts 28, therefore, requires attention to the broader literary and theological arc of Luke-Acts, which steadily develops the motif of reversal. Some characters experience the undoing of cognitive incapacity and come to recognize divine revelation through the resurrection and divine intervention, while others persist in their blindness and deafness.

For Luke, judgment is not a verdict against an entire nation or generation. Rather, judgment and salvation coexist within both. The decisive criterion is not ethnicity or chronology, but the individual and communal response to Jesus the Messiah. This nuanced perspective guards against essentialist or ethnically charged readings of Acts 28.

For scholars sensitive to the theological implications of Christian texts in light of the Holocaust, the question of latent anti-Semitism in Luke-Acts remains pressing. Yet, such retrospective concerns should not be projected onto Luke's intentions. Luke's theological focus is not the ultimate fate of the Jewish people, but the unfolding of God's salvific purpose. The witness

motif, employed so centrally in Luke 24 and Acts 22 and 26, exemplifies Luke's vision of a world in which the judgment of Isaiah 6:9–10 is actively reversed and salvation is inaugurated.

Those who accept the proclamation of the witnesses—whether Jew or Gentile—are welcomed into this salvific reality. Conversely, those who reject the witness reject the salvation of God. The citation of Isaiah 6:9–10 in Acts 28, therefore, must be interpreted in continuity with the broader theological framework developed in Luke 24, Acts 22, and Acts 26, all of which are rooted in Isaiah's own theology of judgment and restoration.

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<한글초록>

누가-행전 안에 나타난 이사야 6:9-10 과 증인 모티프

김수연 *

본 연구는 누가-사도행전의 신학적 구조 안에서 이사야 6:9-10 의 상호본문적 사용을 고찰하며, 특히 사도행전 28:26-28 에 주목한다. 해당 본문은 전통적으로 유대인의 불신앙에 대한 신적 심판 선언으로 해석되어 왔으며, 결과적으로 반유대주의적 해석을 뒷받침하는 본문으로 기능해 왔다. 그러나 본 논문은 이러한 해석에 대해 이견을 제시하며, 누가의 수사학적·서사적 전략 안에서 이사야 본문의 기능을 보다 정교하고 신학적인 관점에서 재해석한다. 이사야 인용은 이스라엘의 영구적 폐기를 의미하는 것이 아니라, 이스라엘의 부분적 불신앙 속에서도 여전히 작동하는 하나님의 구원 계획과 증인 모티프 속에 위치한다. 본 논문은 누가의 내러티브를 유대인의 배척과 이방인의 수용이라는 이분법으로 환원하는 해석을 비판한다. 오히려 사도행전 26 장과 28 장은 누가복음 24 장과의 연속선상에서 읽혀야 하며, 이사야 42 장의 회복 약속과 함께 6 장의 ‘깨닫지 못함’을 반전시키는 계시적 전환의 서사로 이해되어야 한다. 이에 따라 이사야 인용은 종결적 심판이

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아니라 선지자적 도전으로 기능하며, 이스라엘의 회복 가능성을 여전히 포함하는 누가의 포괄적이고 회복적인 증언 신학의 중심축으로 제시된다.

***주제어**

상호본문성; 누가복음 24; 사도행전; 이사야 6 장; 반유대주의.

The Archetypal Mediator in John and Philo: *Logos*-Jesus and *Nous*-Moses

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<Abstract>

This paper explores the human archetypes presented in the Fourth Gospel and in Philo of Alexandria, with particular attention to their respective conceptions of the ideal human figure. Both traditions present a singular individual who mediates between God and humanity, characterizing this figure through personified metaphysical-philosophical terms and emphasizing the excellence of vision and knowledge. In the Gospel, this archetype is Jesus, the incarnate *Logos*, while in Philo, it is Moses, who embodies the pure *Nous*. Whereas previous studies have focused extensively on the conceptual parallels between Philo's and John's *logos* doctrines, they have given scant attention to the correspondence of John's personified *Logos* to Philo's personified *Nous*. To address this gap, this study examines the *Logos*-Jesus in John and the *Nous*-Moses in Philo

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by analyzing the ideas and ethical visions they articulate and discussing how they converge or diverge in their respective understandings of the ideal human. The primary methodologies include philological analysis, intertextual comparison, and the history of ideas. This paper also critically engages with scholarship on the possible connection between the Fourth Gospel and Philo, particularly the line of inquiry initiated by C. H. Dodd's 1953 proposal of shared symbols. Determining whether Philo's concept of *nous* influenced the formation of the *logos* in John lies beyond the scope of this paper.

***Keywords**

Gospel of John; Philo of Alexandria; *Logos*-Jesus; *Nous*-Moses; Plato.

1. Introduction

The aspiration to transcend the limits of ordinary human existence is not a modern phenomenon. Rather, it appears deeply rooted in the human condition, as illustrated by the story of the fall in Genesis 3. In this narrative, the serpent questions the woman regarding God’s command about the trees of the garden (Gen 3:1). The woman clarifies that only “the tree which is in the midst of the garden” is forbidden, lest they die (RSV Gen 3:3). The serpent counters that eating from the tree will not bring death but will instead open their eyes and make them “like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:4–5). Of all divine attributes, the serpent highlights vision and knowledge—symbolic of discernment and divine consciousness—as the means of becoming godlike. Despite the divine warning, the humans are compelled by the desire to possess such attributes.

This Genesis story raises a perennial theological question: what does it mean to be “like God”? What kind of human is most desirable or ideal? While conceptions of ideal humanity have varied across cultures and traditions, this paper focuses on two influential ancient perspectives: the Fourth Gospel and the writings of Philo of Alexandria. Both present a particular figure as the ideal human archetype who mediates between God and humanity, characterize this figure in personified philosophical terms, and emphasize the excellence of that figure’s vision and knowledge. In the Gospel, the archetype is Jesus, identified with the personified *Logos*. In Philo, the corresponding figure is Moses, who is associated not with the

Logos but with the *Nous*.¹ This prompts a crucial line of inquiry: if Jesus corresponds to Moses as the ideal human archetype, does the *Logos* in John correspond to the *Nous* in Philo? While previous scholarship has extensively compared the *logos* in Philo and the Fourth Gospel, scant attention has been given to the correspondence between the Johannine *Logos* and Philo's *Nous*.

This paper therefore seeks to examine how each tradition—Philo and the Fourth Gospel—defines the ideal human archetype, focusing specifically on each tradition's respective articulation of *Logos*–Jesus and *Nous*–Moses. To this end, I begin by surveying previous scholarship on the relationship between Philo's *logos* and the Johannine *logos*, noting the absence of major studies directly comparing Philo's *Nous*–Moses and John's *Logos*–Jesus. I then briefly turn to Plato—one of Philo's two principal ante-texts along with the Septuagint (LXX)—to outline the key philosophical meanings of *logos* and *nous*. Subsequently, I introduce Philo's understanding of *Nous*–Moses, followed by an analysis of *Logos*–Jesus in John. Drawing on these analyses, this study examines the notions and ethical visions expressed by each figure and discusses how they converge or diverge in their respective understanding of the ideal human being. This study employs a combination of philological analysis, intertextual comparison, and the history of ideas.

¹ In this paper, I distinguish between *Logos* (capitalized), referring to the personified *Logos* as identified with Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, and *logos* (lowercase), referring to the broader conceptual or philosophical notion of *logos* as discussed in both Philo and the Gospel. A similar distinction is made between *Nous* (capitalized), which refers to the personified *Nous* embodied in Moses in Philo, and *nous* (lowercase), which denotes the general philosophical concept of mind or intellect.

The Fourth Gospel shares numerous thematic elements with Philo—such as the personified *Logos*, the Spirit, the Son, eternal life, faith, light, and various Jewish festivals—and recent scholarship has increasingly tended to interpret these parallels as evidence of literary dependence.² A detailed assessment of literary dependence, however, lies beyond the scope of this study.

2. Previous Studies

Francis H. Colson and George H. Whitaker, in their translation of Philo's works, observed that the *Logos* appears as a personified concept in both Philo and John. They suggested that Hellenistic Jewish thought may have influenced early Christianity through Philo.³ Following a detailed comparison, Anthony W. Argyle concluded that "so many resemblances and parallels cannot all be attributed to coincidence."⁴ Charles H. Dodd interpreted the concept of the *logos* in both traditions as a mystical element oriented toward the knowledge of God.⁵ Charles K. Barrett evaluated

² For further discussion, see Wooil Moon, "Symbols in Philo and the Fourth Gospel—Revisiting Charles H. Dodd's Proposal," *Korean New Testament Studies* 31, no. 4 (2024): 545–76.

³ Cf. Francis H. Colson and George H. Whitaker, "General Introduction," *Philo I*, Loeb Classical Library 226 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), ix–xxii, xx.

⁴ Anthony W. Argyle, "Philo and the Fourth Gospel," *Expository Times* 63, no. 10 (1952): 300–302, 302.

⁵ Charles H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), 60–68, 160–168, 222.

Philo's integration of the Stoic-Platonic concept of the *logos* into Judaism as an continuation of the speculative Jewish wisdom tradition. He further recognized that Philo's *logos* corresponds both to the personified Torah in rabbinic Judaism and to the personified *Logos* in John.⁶

In contrast, Raymond E. Brown challenged Dodd's assumption, arguing that while Philo and John may share common traditions, there is no compelling evidence of direct contact.⁷ Masanobu Endo likewise contended that the Johannine prologue is not derived from Philo but reflects earlier Jewish interpretations of Genesis.⁸ Despite such skepticism, scholarly interest in the connection between Philo and the Fourth Gospel has persisted, particularly within the framework of Merkabah mysticism.⁹ Wayne A. Meeks situates this mystical context in the Moses–Sinai tradition, portraying Moses as both the messenger of God and a typological figure

⁶ Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: S.P.C.K., 1956), 40, 128.

⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), LVIII; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 133.

⁸ Masanobu Endo, *Creation and Christology: A Study on the Johannine Prologue in the Light of Early Jewish Creation Accounts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 5.

⁹ Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, Novum Testamentum Supplement 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 2–3, 147; idem, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Supplements to Numen 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 137–48; D. A. Hagner, "The Vision of God in Philo and John: A Comparative Study," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 14 (1971): 81–93.

for Israel who beholds the divine.¹⁰ James D. G. Dunn emphasized that Philo exemplified a form of Jewish intellectual engagement with Greek philosophy nearly half a century before the composition of the Fourth Gospel. According to Dunn, the Gospel emerged within the broader intellectual milieu shaped by figures like Philo, making questions of direct dependence unnecessary.¹¹

However, David T. Runia, a leading authority on Philo, considers it highly probable that Philo's concept of the *logos* influenced the Fourth Gospel, while maintaining that the incarnation of the *Logos* is a distinctive feature of John.¹² One of his key arguments is the grammatical distinction in John 1:1, where θεός with the article refers to God, while the anarthrous θεός refers to the preexistent *Logos*. This, he argues, parallels Philo's identification of the anarthrous θεός with the "most ancient *Logos*" (πρεσβύτατος λόγος, *Somn.* 1.229).¹³ Gregory E. Sterling likewise observes

¹⁰ Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967); "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 44–72; Philo, *Her.* 78; *Fug.* 208; *Somn.* 1.129.

¹¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd edition (London: SCM Press, 1989), 216.

¹² David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey III: Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 78–80.

¹³ Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2001), 82–83.

that John 1:1–5 closely mirrors Platonic terminology found in Philo’s commentary on Genesis.¹⁴

Drawling on this body of scholarship, this paper proposes that the Johannine *Logos*–Jesus, while sharing certain conceptual affinities with Philo’s *logos*, also engages with Philo’s *Nous*—as embodied in Moses—in ways that both reflect and resist his philosophical and ethical implications. By juxtaposing *Logos*–Jesus in John with *Nous*–Moses in Philo, this paper explores some convergences and divergences in their respective articulations of the ideal human archetype.

3. *Logos* and *Nous* in Plato: Conceptual Background for Philo

Plato unfolds a myth about the creation of the world (cosmos) and humankind with the mouth of Timaeus by depicting two distinct worlds. One is the world of Being (τὸ ὄν), which always exists, and the other is the world of Becoming (τὸ γιγνόμενον), which is constantly changing. The former is often referred to as the noetic world (κόσμος νοητός), while the latter is called the sensible or aesthetic world (κόσμος αἰσθητός). The noetic world is created by the Demiurge (δημιουργός) and is perceivable only through the rational faculties of *nous* and *logos* (νοήσις μετὰ λόγου). In

¹⁴ Gregory E. Sterling, “The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the Study of Christian Origins,” in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen I, Internationales Symposium zum corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum 1–4 Mai 2003, Eisenach/Jena*, ed. by Ronald Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 47.

contrast, the aesthetic world is assembled by lesser gods and goddesses and is grasped through the irrational and physical faculties of perception and opinions (δόξα μετ' αἰσθήσεως ἀλόγου).¹⁵

According to Plato, Demiurge is the best god (ὁ ἄριστος θεός) and, by nature, can do nothing but create what is good—namely, the noetic world. To generate this rational cosmos as a living organism, the Demiurge (1) transformed disorder (ἀταξία) into order (τάξις), and (2) implanted *nous* into the Soul (ψυχή).¹⁶ This living organism (τὸ ζῶον) is the “only begotten heaven” (μονογενὴς οὐρανός), whose essence is the “purest *nous*,” derived from the Demiurge himself.¹⁷ The Demiurge then fitted all forms and laws (νόμοι) into the ideal world and created time, thereby establishing a beginning and an end.¹⁸

Subsequently, the Demiurge mixed the remaining ingredients of *nous* with the physical necessity (ἀνάγκη) to form the invisible Soul of the aesthetic world (ψυχὴ τοῦ παντός). He then finely divided this unified Soul into countless seeds and scattered them into the celestial bodies—such as the earth, moon, and stars—as well as into time.¹⁹ Afterward, he summoned gods and goddesses, his divine offspring, and instructed them to fashion the visible and mortal parts of the cosmos according to his principle (ἀρχή) and laws (νόμοι), before withdrawing into his original

¹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus* 27d–28a.

¹⁶ Plato, *Timaeus* 30a–b.

¹⁷ Plato, *Timaeus* 30a–31b.

¹⁸ Plato, *Timaeus* 38b.

¹⁹ Plato, *Timaeus* 41d.

transcendent state.²⁰ Through the work of these subordinate deities, the corporeal world came into being, and with it, the bodily and sensory components of human beings emerged in the visible realm. Plato envisions the Soul of the invisible world is filled with purest *nous*, while the Soul of the visible world is a mixture of impure *nous* and necessity (ἀνάγκη), accounting for the unreliability of external and bodily perception.

For Plato, the most important part of the body is the head, as it houses the intellectual soul, especially *nous* and *logos*.²¹ Every human soul contains a seed of *nous*, though this seed is mingled with necessity and thus rendered impure. At birth, the soul loses her vision due to the shock of embodiment and becomes irrational (ἄνους). Yet education (παιδεία) in accordance with reason (κατὰ λόγον) can reopen the soul's eyes, directing them toward contemplation and the love of heavenly *Sophia*.²² Such contemplation purifies the soul by liberating it from the influence of the bodily senses and necessity, leaving behind only the pure *nous*, which is light enough to escape the body and ascend to its celestial home in the noetic realm.²³

Plato conceives that the human body is mortal, whereas the soul is immortal. He describes the soul as a composite entity consisting of three parts: (1) the head, which houses reason and resembles a miniature human being; (2) the chest, which is spirited like a lion but lacks reason; and (3)

²⁰ Plato, *Timaeus* 41a–42d.

²¹ Plato, *Timaeus* 46d.

²² Plato, *Timaeus* 44a–b, and 47b.

²³ Plato, *Timaeus* 48a.

the lower abdomen, which is wild, irrational, and likened to a many-headed beast. Plato calls the rational, miniature human as “the inner human being” (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος), and refers to the lion and the beast collectively as “the outer human being” (ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος).²⁴ Similar expressions appear in the canonical epistles, where the adverb ἔσω is used instead of ἐντός.²⁵ In *Phaedrus* 248a, 253c–d, Plato further likens the inner human being to a charioteer, and the outer parts to two horses pulling in different directions. In order for the soul to escape the body and return to the noetic realm (ἰδέα), the rational element—the inner human being—must govern and persuade the irrational parts, a task that necessitates the purification of the soul.

4. Philo and his Concept of *Nous*-Moses

Philo lived in Alexandria between 30 BCE and 50 CE. He was born a few decades before Jesus and likely continued writing for several decades after Jesus’s death, producing approximately fifty works.²⁶ He interpreted

²⁴ Plato, *Republic* 588c–589b.

²⁵ Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16.

²⁶ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18. According to Goodenough, Philo was older than Rishimacus who was born about 10 BCE. Erwin R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 9–10. Medico, however, assumes that Philo was born about 30 BCE. Henri E. del Medico, *L’énigme des manuscrits de la Mer Morte: étude sur la date, la provenance et le contenu des manuscrits découverts dans la grotte I de Qumrân* (Paris: Plon, 1957), 79; cf. Jean

the Pentateuch (LXX) through the lens of Greco-Roman philosophy and terminology, seeking to defend both Jewish faith and civil rights under Roman rule. His writings established a significant precedent for early Christians, who likewise had to articulate their beliefs within a Hellenized cultural and political environment. Christian authors served as the principal conduit through which Philo's works and thought reached later generations.

Philo is represented in a variety of ways in ancient sources. Clement of Alexandria refers to him as an “apologist of the Pythagorean school”;²⁷ Jerome compares him to Plato and identifies him as a philosopher, a biblical commentator, a descendant of the priestly line, and even a Jewish national leader who defended Jewish rights before Emperor Gaius—an image based on Josephus and Eusebius. He is further portrayed as having met Peter in Rome during the reign of Claudius (Eusebius, Jerome) and as a proto-Christian or honorary Church Father who wrote about the church founded by Mark in Alexandria (Eusebius, Jerome).²⁸ Although Philo was not a Christian, the early Church held him in high regard—so much so that, for a time, he was even classified among the Church Fathers—until the rise of modern critical scholarship prompted a reevaluation of his legacy.

Philo was widely read in Greek literature and philosophy, freely referring to the works of “Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Zeno, Socrates,

Daniélou, *Philo of Alexandria* (trans. by James Colbert; Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 2 and 27.

²⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata* 1.5, 15, 21, 23; 2.19; 4.19.
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0210.htm> (2025.6.9.).

²⁸ Flavius Josephus, *Ant.* 18.8.257–260; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 2.5, 16–18; Jerome, *Lives* 11;

Euripides, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and Chrysippus.”²⁹ However, he did not systematically adopt or exemplify the language or doctrines of any single philosophical school. As a result, his thought and methods have often been criticized as a form of eclecticism that lies outside the bounds of philosophical orthodoxy.³⁰ John M. Dillon, however, challenges this view. He characterizes Philo not as a derivative thinker bound to any one school, but as “a man who read the basic texts, such as Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, for himself.”³¹ Dillon places Philo’s philosophy within the early Middle Platonic tradition, alongside figures such as Antiochus of Ascalon, Archytas, and Eudoros of Alexandria.³² He rightly observes that what may appear as eclecticism in Philo’s thought stems not from philosophical inconsistency, but from a different aim: to demonstrate that Moses was “the very father of philosophy” as revealed through the Pentateuch.”³³

²⁹ Wooil Moon, “The Significance of Philo of Alexandria as a Tool for New Testament and Early Christian Studies,” *Korean New Testament Studies* 26, no. 3 (2019): 815–51, 832.

³⁰ Robert M. Berchman, *From Philo to Origen: Middle Platonism in Tradition* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 23. Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*, The CBQ Monograph Series 14 (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 1.

³¹ John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 145.

³² Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 143–45.

³³ Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 143. The content of this paragraph is based on the following paper mentioned above: Moon, “The Significance of Philo of Alexandria,” 832–833.

In Philo, Moses is presented as the most genius philosopher (φιλόσοφος),³⁴ “king (βασιλεύς), lawgiver (νομοθέτης), high priest (ἀρχιερεύς), prophet (προφήτης),”³⁵ “divine word (θεολόγος),”³⁶ “hierophant (ιεροφάντης), and the one most beloved by God (θεοφιλέστατος).”³⁷ His extraordinary authority and quasi-divine status derive from having God as his Father and Sophia as his Mother. He was untainted by ordinary human parentage, which in Philo’s framework, consists of assembled *nous* as father and external sense (ἡ αἴσθησις) as mother.³⁸ Instead, Moses chooses to become “the purest *nous*” (ὁ καθαρώτατος νοῦς), a soul so thoroughly purified that it participates in the divine realm. Through this transformation, he receives the heavenly Sophia, who pours out the legislative and prophetic gifts upon him without measure.³⁹

To understand what Philo means by “the purest *nous*,” we must consult at least two of his primary ante-texts, Genesis 1–3 and Plato’s *Timaeus*. According to Thomas H. Tobin, Philo’s accounts of human creation are not always consistent.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, it is generally accepted that Philo draws heavily on Platonic texts— particularly *Timaeus*—in his interpretation of

³⁴ Philo, *Mos.* 2.2.

³⁵ Philo, *Mos.* 2.292.

³⁶ Philo, *Mos.* 2.115; *Praem.* 1.53.

³⁷ Philo, *Spec.* 1.31.

³⁸ Philo, *Fug.* 1.109.

³⁹ Philo, *Congr.* 1:132.

⁴⁰ Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation on Man*, 8.

the creation narratives in Gen 1:26–27 and 2:7.⁴¹ In Gen 1:27, the statement that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God” is understood by Philo to refer to “God alone as the sole Creator” (εἷς ὁ μόνος θεὸς δημιουργός), who created the “human being of the human being” (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), identified as the “purest *nous*” (ὁ καθαρώτατος νοῦς).⁴² For Philo, the true essence of the human being is the *nous*—the purest mind—derived directly from God. This *nous* corresponds to the noetic world (κόσμος νοητός) described in Plato, which is fashioned by the Demiurge.

In Gen 1:26, God says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” For Philo, the plural “us” refers to God and His powers (δυνάμεις). Philo maintains that God Himself created the rational component of the human soul—the purest *nous*—while His powers assembled the mortal components of the human.⁴³ As a result, the corporeal human emerged as a composite of *nous* and the external senses (νοῦς μετ’ αἰσθήσεως), endowed with free will and the capacity to choose between good and evil.⁴⁴ The rational component, created by God, inclines toward the good, while the irrational components, formed by the powers, tend toward evil.⁴⁵

Philo defines the “purest *nous*” created by God as the “heavenly human

⁴¹ David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria*, 32; Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 176.

⁴² Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 176.

⁴³ Philo, *Fug.* 1:68–70.

⁴⁴ Philo, *Fug.* 1:68–71; *Opif.* 1:75.

⁴⁵ Philo, *Fug.* 1:70.

being” (ὁ οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος) or “a begotten thing”(γέννημα).⁴⁶ The heavenly human is also described as the “created *nous*,” the “image of God,” the “seal of God,” the “eye of the eye,” and the “soul of the soul.” It is imperishable, immaterial, and unconnected to any physical element, such as air or ether.⁴⁷ By contrast, Philo refers to the perishable “earthly human being” (ὁ γήϊνος ἄνθρωπος), fashioned by the divine powers, as a “molded thing” (πλάσμα).⁴⁸ The earthly human figure is the “molded *nous*” (ὁ πλασθεὶς νοῦς), which is material and mortal.⁴⁹ God breathes spirit (πνεῦμα) into the *nous* of the heavenly human in order to grant the capacity to perceive and contemplate God.⁵⁰ As a result, the heavenly person possesses “expertness, perseverance, and memory,” enabling a life of heavenly contemplation, love of wisdom (φιλοσοφία), and ultimately, immortality.⁵¹

The nation chosen for this purpose is “Israel” in Philo, and the foremost among the Israelites is Moses. For Philo, human beings are the most beloved (θεοφιλέστατος) of all animals, and among human beings, Israel is the most beloved race (τὸ θεοφιλὲς [θεοφιλέστατον] γένος) because it embodies the *nous* that contemplates both God and the cosmos, qualifying

⁴⁶ Philo, *Leg.* 1:31, 53–55; *Her.* 1:57.

⁴⁷ Philo, *Opif.* 1.66; *Leg.* 1.88.

⁴⁸ Philo, *Leg.* 1:31, 53–55; *Her.* 1:57.

⁴⁹ Philo, *Leg.* 1:31, 42, 88.

⁵⁰ Philo, *Leg.* 1.37.

⁵¹ Philo, *Leg.* 1.55; *Opif.* 1.77.

it as “the one who sees God” (θεὸν ὁρῶν).⁵² Because of this very nature of Israel, Israel is considered God’s “firstborn” (πρωτότοκος) even “regardless of its late birth.”⁵³ Israel, in Philo’s allegory, is the “most sacred vineyard,” “the dwelling of the mind,” and the “whole soul” that produces the divine fruit of virtue (ἀρετή).⁵⁴ Israel is described as “the only soul permitted to perceive God,” although it was temporarily “ensnared in the physical nets of Egypt.”⁵⁵ At that moment, God delivered Israel from Egypt through the Levites, Aaron and Moses. Owing to this salvific function, Levi is also called the “firstborn” (πρωτοτοκος) of Israel.⁵⁶

Among the Levites, Moses in particular is described as the “purest *nous*,” unmixed with any impurity, and thereby occupies a unique position like “Moses, the (most) beloved of God” (ὁ θεοφιλῆς [θεοφιλέστατος] Μωϋσῆς).⁵⁷ As the *hierophant* (ὁ ἱεροφάντης) of God’s mysteries, Moses symbolizes the heavenly *nous*, Aaron represents the *logos*, which articulates and interprets Moses verbally, and Miriam corresponds to the

⁵² Philo, *Opif.* 1.114; *Somn.* 1.108; 2.173. ὁ Ἰσραὴλ ἐστὶ νοῦς θεωρητικὸς θεοῦ τε καὶ κόσμου). For human beings as the most beloved by God among animals, see Philo, *Opif.* 1.114; *Somn.* 1.108. For Israel as the *nous* “who sees God,” see Philo, *Somn.* 2.173; *Leg.* 3. 186; *Post.* 1.63; *Sacr.* 1.134, and as the “race most beloved by God,” see Philo, *Conf.* 1.95; *Migr.* 1.63; *Her.* 1.203; *Abr.* 1.98.

⁵³ Philo, *Post.* 1.63.

⁵⁴ Philo, *Somn.* 2.172–3.

⁵⁵ Philo, *Conf.* 1.92.

⁵⁶ Philo, *Mut.* 1.207; *Sacr.* 1.119.

⁵⁷ Philo, *Leg.* 1.76; 2.88, 90; *Cher.* 1.49; *Sacr.* 1.77; *Plant.* 1.62. For Moses as the purest *nous* created by God, see Philo, *Congr.* 1.132; *Mut.* 1.117, 208; *Mos.* 113.

outward senses.⁵⁸ In this context, the term *logos* carries a twofold meaning. It can refer to (1) the divine word or law of God, and (2) the *rhēma* (ῥῆμα)—the spoken utterance that expresses it orally.⁵⁹

Philo also maintains that although the *nous* of the heavenly man is a created entity, it is capable of producing and governing the irrational parts when activated and empowered by God's *Logos*. In this role, the *nous* functions as a kind of "god" (θεός) to the irrational faculties.⁶⁰ However, the same *nous* cannot serve as the source of rational beings, since God alone is their sole source and creator.⁶¹ In Philo's view, heavenly humans are endowed with *spirit* (πνεῦμα) from God, whereas earthly humans, whose *nous* is material, are given only *breath* (πνοή). While *breath* animates the physical senses and bodily organs, it rises like vapor with limited force and perishes with the body.⁶²

According to Philo, God initially placed both kinds of human beings in Paradise. In Genesis 2:15, God commands the person with the purest *nous* to cultivate and guard Paradise; in 2:8, God also sets the earthly human in the same place. The heavenly human remains in Paradise to cultivate and preserve virtue, whereas the earthly human—represented by Adam—unable to resist desire, since his rational faculties are weakened by the

⁵⁸ Philo, *Spec.* 1.41. For Aaron as "the divine *Logos*" (ὁ ἱερὸς λόγος) or Moses' mouthpiece, see Philo, *Leg.* 1.76; 3.45, 103, 119; *Det.* 1.39, and for Miriam as the outer sense, see Philo, *Leg.* 1.76; 3.45, 103.

⁵⁹ Philo, *Post.* 1.102; *Migr.* 1.130; *Leg.* 3.176.

⁶⁰ Philo, *Leg.* 1.37–41.

⁶¹ Philo, *Leg.* 2.46.

⁶² Philo, *Leg.* 1.37–39, 42.

physical nature of sensation. Consequently, he eats from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” which is situated outside Paradise, and is ultimately expelled to cultivate the land from which he was formed.⁶³

The earthly person does not appear to have died immediately after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9, 17), but Philo asserts that he is already spiritually dead. According to Philo, there are two kinds of death: (1) in general, death is the emancipation of the soul from corporeal necessity;⁶⁴ (2) the death of the soul is a condition in which virtue is corrupted and the wicked body gains mastery over the soul.⁶⁵ To explain this death of the soul, Philo employs the metaphors of the tripartite soul and the charioteer with two horses. When the soul dies, the charioteer of reason (the tiny human being) can no longer control the horse of passion (the lion) or the horse of greed (the many-headed beast), resulting in injustice and the birth of evil.⁶⁶ For this reason, the sacred *Logos*, Aaron (ὁ ἱερὸς λόγος Ἀαρών) pleads with God’s beloved, Moses (ὁ θεοφιλὴς Μωϋσῆς) to heal Miriam’s leprosy, lest her soul be consumed by the disease of colic, which produced wicked things.⁶⁷

⁶³ Gen 2:9, 17; 3:17; Philo, *Leg.* 1.54, 90, 96, 103.

⁶⁴ Plato, *Phaedo* 80e–81a; 82d–e.

⁶⁵ Philo, *Leg.* 1.105–106.

⁶⁶ Num 12:12; Philo, *Leg.* 1.71–76; Plato, *Phaedrus* 248a, 253c–d; *Republic* 588c–589b.

⁶⁷ Num 12:13; Philo, *Leg.* 1.76.

5. The *Logos*-Jesus Concept in the Fourth Gospel

Meeks has convincingly demonstrated that, although Moses never became a king in historical reality, Philo portrays him as the ideal prophetic-royal and divine figure—just as the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus, who likewise never ruled on earth, as a divine prophet-king.⁶⁸ While Meeks rightly observes that John’s Jesus corresponds to Philo’s Moses as an archetypal human figure, he does not sufficiently explore the parallel between Philo’s personified *Nous* in Moses and John’s personified *Logos* in Jesus. This oversight is likely due in part to the fact that John never uses the term *nous* and defines Jesus as *Logos*, not *Nous*.

As noted earlier, Philo identifies Aaron—not Moses—as the personified *Logos*. Does this mean the Johannine Jesus corresponds to Aaron? Hardly! Jesus in John aligns more closely with Philo’s Moses than with Aaron. According to Philo, God revealed His essential nature—clearly and without concealment, as under the light of the sun—only to Moses the purest *Nous* (*Plant.* 1.27). This Moses is called “a friend to God” (φίλος τῷ θεῷ, Ebr. 1.94). Similarly, the *Logos*-Jesus in John is portrayed as the one who was with God, facing Him (John 1:1–2), and as the only begotten Son (μονογενής), who dwells in the bosom of the Father and has made Him

⁶⁸ Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 287. For a discussion of how the Platonic-Philonic concept of kingship resonates with the Johannine portrayal of Jesus as the only true king, see Wooil Moon, “My Kingdom Is Not from This World” (John 18:36): A History-of-ideas Approach to the Concept of King (*Basileus*) in the Fourth Gospel,” *Theological Forum* 115 (2024): 131–61.

known (John 1:18). Philo further describes Moses as the divine *Logos* (ὁ θεολόγος, *Mos.* 2.115; *Praem.* 1.53), the most holy (ὁ ἱερώτατος, *Virt.* 1.175; *Det.* 1.135), the all-wise (ὁ πάνσοφος, *Agr.* 1.20), and the most perfect (ὁ τελειώτερος, *Ebr.* 1.94).

Yet the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel not only fulfills but transcends and challenges these titles: he is not merely the *Logos* but also called “a god” (θεός) and is described as the one through whom all things were made (John 1:1–3). Whereas Philo asserts that Moses and Israel are those who have seen God, John insists that no one has seen God except the only begotten Son (1:18; 6:46). The Johannine Jesus is the divine figure who brings grace and truth that surpass the Mosaic Law (1:17). Unlike Philo’s *Nous*, which depends on auxiliary agents—such as the *Logos*-Aaron, divine spirit, energy, and senses—to produce the irrational and material realm, the Johannine *Logos* is the sole creator of all things, rational and irrational alike, without recourse to any intermediary (John 1:3–4).

In Stoic pantheism, divine λόγοι σπερματικοί pervade the universe as rational seeds composed of *ether* or *pneuma* (πνεῦμα).⁶⁹ Both Philo and John incorporate *pneuma* in their theological cosmology. “God is *pneuma*” (John 4:24) and the *pneuma* descends upon Jesus “like a dove from heaven” and remains (1:32). God sends the *pneuma* to his children to sustain their life and bestow knowledge of the truth (6:63; 14:17, 26; 16:13). The *Logos* of John is the light that illuminates both individuals and the world (1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:46), not through Stoic-style cosmic diffusion, but

⁶⁹ Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. 2, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 7.158–59.

through the “children of light” (υἱοὶ φωτός, John 12:36). In contrast, Philo’s occasional adoption of the term λόγοι σπερματικοί suggests an openness to a pantheistic framework that is absent from the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁰

Like Philo, John also distinguishes between those who are “from above” and those “from below” (John 3:31; 8:23, 47; 15:19; 18:36). Those of the earth claim descent from Abraham (8:33, 37, 39) and loyalty to Moses (9:29), but they “neither act as Abraham did” (8:39–40) nor follow “the law of Moses” (7:19). Though they claim to see, they remain blind (9:41), for they “do not know the Son or the Father” (8:19), having neither seen nor heard God (1:18; 5:38; 6:46). By contrast, the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father (10:15), and those who know and see the Son also know and see the Father (14:7). As in Philo’s schema, John’s “heavenly race” possesses superior vision and knowledge compared to those of the earthly race.

Whereas Philo maintains a dualistic divide between the ideological (heavenly) and the sensory (earthly) realms—*Nous* being incompatible with the body—the Fourth Gospel proclaims that “the *Logos* became flesh” (1:14). This is not merely the incarnation of divine reason in a particular individual, but the collapse of boundaries between celestial *Logos* and terrestrial flesh. Their union forms a more complete but paradoxical whole. As Jennifer L. Kuss, drawing on Donna Haraway, explains:

Instead of reifying our differences and distinctions, in this moment all flesh collapses into divinity, all language (reason, logic) into flesh, all

⁷⁰ Philo, *Legat.* 55; Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 159.

nature into culture. This is not a merger or fusion that erases difference, but rather a crossing and borrowing of boundaries that complicate our categories. She uses the term natureculture to suggest that this collapse does not negate difference. Her manifesto concludes with, “The Word was made flesh in mortal natureculture.”⁷¹

6. Conclusion

In both Philo and the Fourth Gospel, the heavenly human possesses superior vision and intelligence compared to the earthly. However, the path by which God’s children come to perceive and understand divine reality differs markedly between the two. Philo locates the true essence of humanity in the recovery of incorporeal attributes through the total renunciation of bodily realities, enabling the soul to behold the invisible God. What must be cast off includes not only one’s body, emotions, and physical senses, but also interpersonal attachments such as neighbors and friends. For Philo, Israel—whose name he interprets as “the one who sees God”—is the only people to have attained such vision, and Moses is its supreme exemplar.

By contrast, the Fourth Gospel proclaims, “No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him

⁷¹ Jennifer L. Koosed, “Extreme Humanity,” in *Bible and Posthumanism*, ed. Jennifer L. Koosed (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature): 3–12, 5; cf. Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 18.

known” (John 1:18; cf. 5:37). A direct vision of invisible God is impossible; instead, one comes to know, see, and love God through the embodied words and deeds of Jesus (14:9). According to Jesus, love for one’s fellow human beings—including neighbors and friends—is the true mode of loving both the invisible Father and the visible Son. Only through such embodied and relational practice can human beings ultimately be united with the invisible God forever (14:21; 15:10, 12–15; 17:21).

Philo’s pure *nous* contemplates God from a considerable distance, excluding all sensory and emotional faculties. The Fourth Gospel, however, presents the *Logos*—identified with Jesus—as one who dwells in the bosom of the Father, learning from and loving Him in intimate unity (1:18; 17:24). Likewise, the beloved disciple reclines physically in Jesus’ bosom, symbolizing relational intimacy and learning (13:23). Jesus employs his physical body to wash the disciples’ feet, transforming a humble bodily act into a model of ethical and spiritual practice. After the resurrection, the glorified Jesus—portrayed as the consummate human—retains a tangible body: he speaks with his disciples, eats with them, and invites them to touch his wounds (20:20–27; 21:12–13). In contrast to Philo, who defines the human ideal by the renunciation of visibility and corporeality, the Fourth Gospel affirms the value of embodiment and emotion as integral to divine self-revelation. It invites readers to seek eternal truth not by escaping the visible and material, but by receiving them as conduits for communion with the invisible God.

Philo also presents a rigid hierarchy of human value: male over female, Israel over the nations, the tribe of Levi over the other Israelite tribes, Moses and Aaron over other Levites, and Moses above Aaron. This

stratification mirrors the architectural hierarchy of the Herodian Temple, which spatially segregates Gentiles, women, lay Israelites, priests, and the inner sanctuary. The Fourth Gospel, by contrast, presents Jesus as challenging and ultimately dismantling this inherited system. Declaring that the temple must be destroyed and replaced by the temple of his body (2:19–21), Jesus subverts traditional markers of religious and social distinction. He envisions a radically inclusive humanity in which each person is honored as fully human.

This vision is not merely rhetorical; Jesus enacts it at the cost of his life. In the new temple imagined by the Fourth Gospel, “the children of God” are “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (1:13), transcending all ethnic, gendered, and genealogical boundaries. These children of God love one another and participate in eternal life—not as members of a privileged class, but as human beings embraced in divine communion (1:12; 11:52).

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<한글초록>

요한복음의 로고스-예수와 필론의 누스-모세

문우일 *

이 논문은 요한복음과 알렉산드리아의 필론이 제시하는 인간 원형을 탐구하여, 각각의 전통이 추구하는 이상적 인간 유형이 어떤 유사성과 상이성을 보이고, 어떤 실천 방향을 제시하는지를 분석하기 위한 것이다. 두 전통 모두 하나님과 인간 사이를 매개하는 특정 인물을 이상적 인간으로 제시하며, 이 인물을 형이상학적 철학 용어로 의인화하여 정의하고, 그 인물의 시각과 지식의 탁월성을 강조한다. 그 인간 원형이 요한복음에서는 성육신한 로고스인 예수이고, 필론에서는 순수한 누스를 구현한 모세다. 선행 연구는 대개 필론의 로고스 개념이 요한복음의 로고스 개념 형성에 어떤 영향을 끼쳤는지에 집중했을 뿐, 요한복음의 로고스와 필론의 누스를 비교하는 일에는 거의 무관심했다. 이 공백을 메우고자, 이 논문은 요한복음의 로고스-예수와 필론의 누스-모세를 탐색하여 그 개념과 실천 방향의 유사성과 상이성을 분석한다. 이를 위한

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주요 방법론은 문헌비평, 상호텍스트성, 그리고 사상사비평을 포함한다. 이 논문은 1953년에 C.H. Dodd가 요한복음과 필론에 공통적으로 나타나는 상징 목록을 제시한 이후 진행된 요한복음과 필론의 관계에 관한 일련의 선행연구를 비평적으로 반영하고 개선하는 면이 있다. 요한복음이 로고스-예수 개념을 형성하는 데 필론의 누스-모세 개념을 실제로 참고했는지를 결정하는 일은 이 논문의 범위를 벗어난다.

***주제어**

요한복음; 알렉산드리아의 필론; 로고스-예수; 누스-모세; 플라톤.

Theological Reflection on the Septuagint Psalms 18:8–10 Based on David J. A. Clines’ Study on Psalm 19 and Genesis 2–3

Yim, Sung-Kwon^{*}

<Abstract>

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the theological meaning of LXX Psalm 18:8–10 based on the work of David J. A. Clines. By comparing MT Psalm 19 with Genesis 2–3, Clines explores the relationship between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life, and the Word of God. This thesis explores the theological perspective embedded within the Septuagint translators' rendering of the Hebrew text, with a particular focus on how the LXX translation of Psalm 18 interacts with and informs the theological framework of the Genesis 2–3 narrative. This study investigates the parallelism in LXX Psalm 18:8–10, exploring the theological interconnections and significance of the six synonymous terms that

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characterize the Word of God in the text. Through this analysis, the study elucidates the structural features of the text and highlights the theological intent of the Septuagint translator, as revealed through a comparative examination of the Hebrew original. It also examines the connection with LXX Genesis 2–3, identifying the relationship between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life, and the Word of God, and in doing so, revealing the interconnections with the Hebrew text. In addition to discussing the theological features of the Septuagint translation, this study contributes to our understanding of the interpretive currents of early Judaism.

***Keywords**

Septuagint; LXX Psalm 18; Genesis 2–3; The Word of God; Tree of Life; Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

1. Theological Nuances in the Septuagint Translation: A Study of LXX Psalm 18

The translation of biblical texts is not merely a linguistic exercise but a theological endeavor that reflects the perspectives and interpretative decisions of the translators. The Septuagint (LXX), as an early Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, offers valuable insights into how ancient translators understood and conveyed the theological nuances of the original text. Boyd-Taylor argues that LXX Psalm 18 reflects a late Hellenistic, Greek-speaking Jewish perspective in translation when compared to the Hebrew text, which is believed to be the *Vorlage*.¹ The phrase in LXX Psalm 18:5b, ‘*God has set His dwelling in the sun,*’ presents a subtle shift from the Hebrew Psalm 19:5b, which states, ‘*In them, God has set a dwelling for the sun.*’ In the Masoretic Text, the dwelling is assigned to the sun, while in the Septuagint, God establishes His own dwelling within it, reflecting a theological nuance in translation.

In both texts, the sun serves as a key poetic metaphor. In the first part of the Psalm (LXX Ps 18:2–7 / MT Ps 19:2–7), it symbolizes creation’s silent yet universal proclamation. In the next part (LXX Ps 18:8–10 / MT Ps 19:8–10), it represents the living Word of God. The Masoretic Text and the Septuagint both reveal the presence of the living God, who establishes a

¹ Cameron Boyd-Taylor, “A Place in the Sun: The Interpretive Significance of LXX-Psalms 18:5c,” in *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 31 (1998): 71–105.

relationship with and leads humanity through His Word, using the analogy of the sun and the created world.²

In general, the writers of the septuagint are frequently characterized as being as careful and literal as possible when translating from Hebrew into Greek. As divinely inspired texts conveyed through human agency, biblical texts are intrinsically situated within historical contexts, rather than existing in isolation. In this way the scripture stands as a testament to the living Word of God, conveyed and affirmed through human language and writing, shaped within historical contexts. Modern interpreters are called to approach biblical hermeneutics with awareness of its historical dimension while simultaneously listening to and following the voice of the living Word that transcends history. The translation choices made by ancient Septuagint writers reflect this interpretive stance. Henceforth, the analysis will focus on a close examination of LXX Psalm 18:8–10.

3. Parallelism in MT Psalm 19:8–10 vs. LXX Psalm 18:8–10

3.1. Parallelism in MT Psalm 19:8–10

² For a discussion of how the relational analogy of the sun and the created world in the MT Psalm 19 reveals the relationship between the living Word of God and human beings, see my article : Sung-Kwon Yim, “God Who Speaks, Humanity Who Speaks from Within: Reflections on the Theological and Anthropological Implications of הָגְיוֹן (*hegyôn*/thought) in Psalm 19:15,” in *Proceedings of the 128th Spring Conference of the Korean Society of Old Testament Studies* (Seoul, Korea: Korean Society of Old Testament Studies, 2025), 70–84.

The Hebrew text, Psalm 19:8–10, praises the Word of God in a very eloquent style. In analyzing Hebrew poetry, close attention must be given to the unique expressive methods inherent in this ancient art form. The analyses of parallelism offered by James Kugel and Adele Berlin, who consider it the most important linguistic feature, provide invaluable insights into the structure of the poetry.³

Kugel, a scholar who has made significant contributions to the analysis of parallelism in biblical poetry, has noted that the basic feature of most biblical songs and poems is the repeated use of relatively short sentence forms to form two brief clauses.⁴ These clauses are usually followed by a slight pause, after which the second part is a continuation of the first, usually with a common element, so that the second part seems to echo, answer, or correspond to the first.⁵

³ For a comprehensive overview of the development of scholarship on parallelism in Hebrew poetry, consult the following key works: Robert Lowth, *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum* (Londini: Gul. Collins, 1753), 1–352; Luis A. Schökel, *Estudios de poética hebrea* (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1963), 1–570; James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 1–360; Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 1–179; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 1–228; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 1–455; Johannes P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide*, trans. Ineke Smit (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1–243.

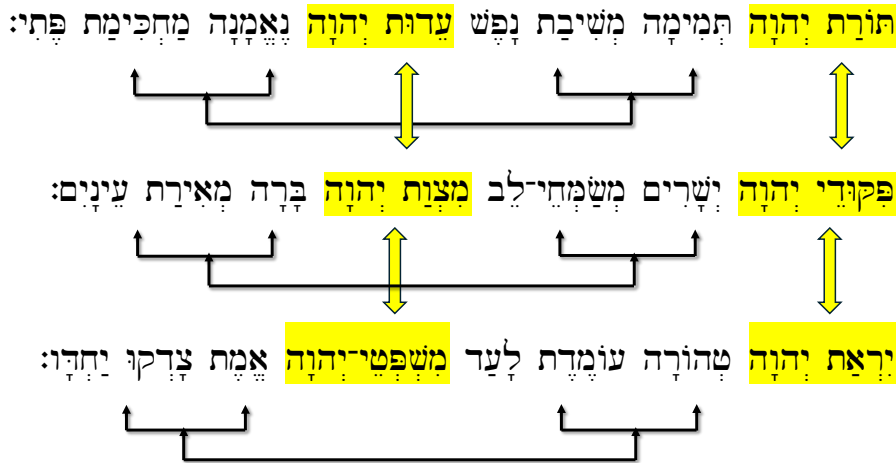
⁴ Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 1.

⁵ Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 1–2.

Kugel acknowledges that Lowth's classification of biblical parallelism into synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic types was a groundbreaking contribution to the recognition of parallel structures in Hebrew poetry. However, he also critiques this framework for narrowing the understanding of parallelism to rigid categories. In response, Kugel proposes a more dynamic interpretive model for the relationship between the two parts of a parallelistic line—A and B—summarized as: “A is so, and what’s more, B,” emphasizing continuity and intensification rather than strict formal symmetry.⁶ According to his argument, parallelism does not function merely as repetition, but rather as a cumulative and intensifying sequence that generates a dynamic momentum beyond the initial statement.

Taking these features of parallelism into account, one finds the following patterns upon closer examination of MT Psalm 19:8–10. Each verse can be divided into a first and second colon, and each colon clearly exhibits parallelism through the repeated use—six times—of a pattern consisting of a noun phrase referring to the word of God, followed by an adjective and a participial phrase. In each colon, the adjectives enumerate the divine attributes reflected in God's word, while the participial phrases offer a doxological affirmation of its power—namely, how it revives the soul, brings joy, and enables one to live with wisdom. When Kugel's analysis is applied to this structure, each colon transcends mere structural repetition, forming a cumulative and intensifying progression that generates forward-moving dynamism.

⁶ Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 1–58.

Picture 1: Parallelism in MT Psalm 19:8–10⁷

No discussion of parallelism in Hebrew poetry would be complete without mentioning Berlin, whose contributions are no less significant than those of Kugel. Moving beyond the semantics-oriented research that had predominated, she instituted—through rigorous linguistic analysis—a systematic framework for parallelism that integrates its grammatical dimensions. By grounding her research in Roman Jakobson’s linguistic theory and pursuing parallelism studies at the grammatical level, Berlin provided a systematic and comprehensive foundation for Hebrew poetic analysis that integrates earlier scholarship.⁸

⁷ Sung-Kwon Yim, “God Who Speaks,” 77.

⁸ Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 1–179.

Table 1: the linguistic dimensions of parallelism in biblical Hebrew poetry⁹

Level	Grammatical Aspect	Lexical–Semantic Aspect	Phonological Aspect
Word	Morphological equivalence	Word pairs (synonyms, antonyms, etc.)	Sound pairs (assonance, consonance)
Line/Clause	Syntactic equivalence	Semantic relations between lines	Phonological parallels across lines

When her theory of parallelism is applied to MT Psalm 19:8–10, the passage reveals a multidimensional structure of parallel progression—semantically, grammatically, and phonologically. It is therefore necessary to examine how the features of parallel progression found in the Hebrew text are rendered in the Septuagint.

2.2 Parallelism in LXX Psalm 18:8–10

In LXX Psalm 18, the invocation of solar imagery functions as a testament to the ineffable mystery of the Divine Word—a word that, while inherently inaudible, extends its presence to every corner of creation. The living Word of God, which is compared to the sun and governs all of creation, is mentioned using six different synonyms in LXX Psalm 18:8–10, forming a beautiful parallelism. Diagrammatically, these are as follows:

⁹ Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 18–9.

Table 2: Parallelism in LXX Psalm 18:8–10

	Parallelism of Nouns Expressing the Word of God	Parallelism of Adjectives Expressing Personality	Parallelism of Participles Representing Persistent Behavior
18:8a	ὁ νόμος τοῦ κυρίου (The law of the Lord)	ἄμωμος (blameless)	ἐπιστρέφων ψυχάς (Restoring souls)
18:8b	ἡ μαρτυρία κυρίου (The testimony of the Lord)	πιστή (faithful)	σοφίζουσα νήπια (Making infants wise)
18:9a	τὰ δικαιώματα κυρίου (The ordinances of the Lord)	εὐθεΐα (upright)	εὐφραίνοντα καρδίαν (Gladdening the heart)
18:9b	ἡ ἐντολὴ κυρίου (The commandment of the Lord)	τηλαυγής (radiant)	φωτίζουσα ὀφθαλμούς (Illuminating the eyes)
18:10a	ὁ φόβος κυρίου (The fear of the Lord)	ἄγνός (pure)	διαμένων εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος (Enduring for all eternity)
18:10b	τὰ κρίματα κυρίου (The judgments of the Lord)	ἀληθινά (true)	δεδικαιωμένα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (Being justified in itself)

LXX Psalm 18 corresponds to MT Psalm 19. These differences are due to differences in chapters, which were introduced as MT Psalms 9 and 10 were combined into a single psalm in LXX Psalm 9.¹⁰ MT Psalm 19, as studied by David J. A. Clines, is an implicit reference to Genesis 2–3. Clines analyzes Psalm 19 as a testimony to the superiority of the living Word of God compared to the tree of the knowledge of good evil.¹¹ Building on the foregoing discussion, this study will examine LXX Psalm

¹⁰ Since we will be discussing the theological features of the Septuagint, we will use the Septuagint as our guide for chapter organization.

¹¹ David J. A. Clines, “The Tree of Knowledge and the Law of Yahweh (Psalm XIX),” *Vetus Testamentum* 24, no. 1 (January 1974): 8–14.

18:8–10 alongside the relevant passages in LXX Genesis 2–3, with special emphasis on the participle parallelism evident in Psalm 18:8–10. This will allow us to compare the theological features of the Septuagint translations of the Psalm and Genesis texts.

3. Analyze the parallelism in LXX Psalm 18:8–10: focusing on the parallelism of participles.

3.1. The Law of the Lord is perfect and revives life (LXX Ps 18:8a)

The verb ἐπιστρέφειν, used in the phrase ‘*restoring life*,’ originally meant to return. It takes ψυχή as its object and is used in the context of restoring life or vitality through the provision of food.¹² There are four instances in the Septuagint where these two words are used simultaneously as idiomatic expressions: LXX Ruth 4:15, Lamentations 1:11, 16, and 19, all of which are related to food intake. Keeping in mind the original meaning of the verb ἐπιστρέφειν here, the phrase highlights the power of God’s living Word to spark repentance, transformation, and the renewal of souls, much like how nourishment revitalizes the body. This mirrors the Hebrew idiom combining שׁוּב and נִפְּשׁ, which conveys rejuvenation through the act of eating.

¹² This is similar to how Clines notes that the corresponding Hebrew expression in verse 8, מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ is an idiomatic expression that has uses related to the consumption of food to energize. For an analysis of the Hebrew textual expression, see Clines, “The Tree of Knowledge,” 8–9.

3.2. The Testimony of the Lord is faithful and makes children wise (LXX Ps 18:8b)

Some scholars understand the reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis as a way of expressing the whole through the parts, with ‘*good and evil*’ (טוב ורע) being merismus.¹³ This is also the way it is used in Genesis 1:1, where God created ‘*the heavens and the earth*’ (אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ). It does not mean that God literally created only the heavens and the earth, but it is an expression that indicates that God created the entire creation, including the heavens and the earth, while referring to the two representative parts of the heavens and the earth. Similarly, the expression ‘*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*’ (τὸ ξύλον τοῦ εἰδέναι γνωστὸν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ) in the Septuagint is understood as merismus, referring to knowledge and wisdom in general, including both good and evil knowledge.

This understanding testifies that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is deeply related to wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the root of wisdom and knowledge, as the book of Proverbs and elsewhere testifies (LXX Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7, etc.). In other words, obeying and following in the reverent fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου, LXX Ps 111:10). Thus, the decision faced by Adam and Eve went

¹³ Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 19; George W. Buchanan, “The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75, no. 2 (1956): 114–20.

beyond simply choosing whether to eat the desired fruit. Instead, it was really about choosing whether to listen to and obey the living God or to follow their own judgment of what seemed right.

Jewish scholars have often rejected the Christian interpretive tradition of Genesis 3 as a Fall narrative, dismissing it as an outdated view of original sin held by early Christian interpreters. Instead, they tend to interpret the Genesis account as a developmental process—from infancy to adulthood.¹⁴ They refer to the usage in Deuteronomy 1:39, where the phrase ‘*not knowing good and evil*’ is used to denote children below the age of majority as a qualification for attending the assembly. However, in the context of Deuteronomy 1:39, the term ‘children’ refers to the new generation that will be led into the Promised Land, Canaan, as the second generation of the Exodus—excluding the disobedient adult generation who refused to enter after the Exodus and after sending spies to survey the land.

Thus, the theological significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 2–3 is, at its core, to demonstrate that the fear of the Lord is the root of wisdom and knowledge. Moreover, failing to remain childlike in listening to and obeying the Word equates to turning away from and abandoning that very root of wisdom and knowledge. In other words, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil can be understood as the root of wisdom that leads to the choice to fear the Lord by abstaining from its fruit. In this context, the expression ‘*He makes children wise*’ (σοφίζουσα νήπια) in LXX Psalm 18:8b is theologically connected to ‘*the tree of the*

¹⁴ Buchanan, “The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge,” 114–20; Sarna, *Genesis*, 16–30.

knowledge of good and evil’ (τὸ ξύλον τοῦ εἰδέναι γνωστὸν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ).

3.3. The statutes of the Lord are upright and pleasing to the heart (LXX Ps 18:9a)

Regarding the Hebrew expressions in this area, Clines notes that the connection between wisdom and joy is particularly evident in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (Prov 8:30 and following; 10:1; 15:20; 17:21; 23:15, 24, 25; 29:3; Eccl 2:26).¹⁵ These texts, especially LXX Proverbs 10:1, 15:20, 23:24, and 29:3, make a direct connection between the adjective σοφός, which refers to wisdom, and εὐφραίνειν, a verb that describes the emotions that arise as a result and reward of wise action. Wise behavior is inevitably linked to listening to and obeying the Word of the living God, and LXX Psalm 18:9a attests to the joy that such wise behavior brings to a person’s innermost being.

Another Septuagint text where the verb εὐφραίνειν—which means ‘to please’—is directly linked to καρδία, or ‘heart,’ is found in LXX Proverbs 15:30: ‘*Eyes that are attentive to good things make the heart glad*’ (θεωρῶν ὀφθαλμοὺς καλὰ εὐφραίνει καρδίαν), and good tidings enrich the bones (φήμη δὲ ἀγαθὴ πιαίνει ὀστέα).

The LXX Genesis 3:6 statement about Eve’s temptation by the serpent to look at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, promising that she would be like God, is as follows ‘*And the woman saw that the tree was*

¹⁵ Clines, “The Tree of Knowledge,” 10.

good for food, and to eat from it, and it was pleasing to the eyes, and it was very good to be desired’ (καὶ εἶδεν ἡ γυνὴ ὅτι καλὸν τὸ ξύλον εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ ὅτι ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν καὶ ὡραῖόν ἐστιν τοῦ κατανοῆσαι). It expresses the outward impressiveness of the tree as if it would bring wisdom to Eve’s eyes, as the serpent tempted her.

But in reality, the root of wisdom and knowledge is listening to and obeying the Word of God in reverence. The statement from LXX Proverbs 15:30 draws a parallel between the eye and the heart—between looking and hearing words—thereby relating true joy and enrichment to wisdom on one hand and to the Word on the other. What is implied in the Proverbs, Genesis, and Psalms texts is the truth that gazing upon true wisdom, the Word of God makes the heart glad.

3.4. The Commandment of the Lord shines brightly and enlighten the eyes (LXX Ps 18:9b)

In verse 9b, the feminine singular subjective participle φωτίζουσα of the verb φωτίζειν is morphologically and semantically parallel to σοφίζουσα in verse 8b. The verb φωτίζειν, used in LXX Exodus 38:13 and Numbers 4:9 to refer to the lampstand, is also used in several texts, including LXX Nehemiah, to refer to guiding, instructing, or showing the way to do something (LXX Neh 9:12). Thus, like the verb σοφίζειν, the verb φωτίζειν is also used to refer to wisdom or perception.

The expression in LXX Psalm 18:9b about the eyes being enlightened indirectly connects the living word of God to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil of LXX Genesis 3. In LXX Genesis 3:5, the serpent tempted

Eve by telling her that in the day she ate of it, *‘your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods, knowing good and evil’* (διανοιχθήσονται ὑμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν). In verse 6, the woman *‘saw...and it was pleasing to the eyes’* (καὶ εἶδεν ἡ γυνὴ... ὅτι ἀρεστὸν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν). Eventually, in verse 7, after Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *‘their eyes were opened’* (καὶ διηνοίχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῶν δύο). In this LXX Genesis 3 narrative flow, the expression *‘eyes were enlightened’*—which employs the verb διανοίγειν in the passive voice—signifies the onset of a carnal mode of seeing, one that exists outside of God-given perception. At the same time, from the perspective of wisdom, it becomes a metonymy for ‘anti-wisdom’, representing the foolish choice to forsake the word of the living God by yielding to the serpent’s temptation.

The moment-by-moment decision to obey God in reverence for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil becomes the source of wisdom and knowledge for Adam and Eve, and the very act of abstaining from the tree’s fruit emerges as true wisdom according to the Word of God. In this context, the eulogistic statement about the Word of God in LXX Psalm 18:9b—which employs the verb φωτίζειν—can be seen as presenting the living Word of God as the genuine wisdom that overcomes the ‘anti-wisdom’ of Genesis 3.

3.5. The Fear of the Lord is pure and endures forever (LXX Ps 18:10a)

For the Hebrew text ‘*endures forever*,’ Clines relates the reference to the tree of life in MT Genesis 3:22ff and the statements in Genesis 2:17 and 3:19 that ‘*you will surely die*.’¹⁶ In the Genesis 3 narrative, after eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve experience death and finitude as a consequence of distancing themselves from the Word of God, along with the prohibition against approaching the tree of life. This is confirmed in the Septuagint, where Genesis 3:22 reads, “*lest he stretch out his hand, take from the Tree of Life, eat, and ‘live forever’*” (μήποτε...ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).”

Furthermore, the expression ‘*enduring forever*’ (διαμένων εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος) in LXX Psalm 18:10a guides us to recall the Tree of Life, which was off-limits due to the act of taking the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.¹⁷ And listening to and obeying the living Word of God is implied as eating the fruit of the Tree of Life. The eternity of the Word is also expressed in LXX Isaiah 40:8 as ‘*the Word of God remains forever*’ (τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).

¹⁶ Clines, “The Tree of Knowledge,” 12.

¹⁷ Clines, “The Tree of Knowledge,” 8–14.

3.6. The Judgments of the Lord are true and justified in themselves (LXX Psalm 18:10b)

The phrase ‘*justified in itself*’ (δεδικαιωμένα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό) reveals that the Word of God is inherently true, containing no unrighteousness or falsehood. In the Genesis 2–3 narrative, the serpent’s role is to deceive Eve into departing from this truth by falsely portraying God’s Word as unrighteous. This understanding is echoed in the New Testament, particularly in 2 Corinthians 11:3: ‘*But I am afraid that, just as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds may be led astray from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ.*’

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, LXX Psalm 18:8–10—through its intricate participial parallelism and rich theological language—functions as more than poetic praise; it acts as a hermeneutical key to understanding the theology embedded in the LXX translation of Genesis 2–3. The six participial clauses not only describe the qualities and effects of the Word of God, but also establish a theological counterpoint to the “anti-wisdom” manifested in the fall narrative. Where the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represents human autonomy apart from God’s Word, LXX Psalm 18 reorients the reader to view divine wisdom as rooted in reverent obedience and persistent relational fidelity to God.

Significantly, the Septuagint rendering of Psalm 18 does not diverge from the core theological intent of the Hebrew *Vorlage*. Rather, it honors

and carries forward its foundational insights. The Greek translation reflects a deep respect for the original theological trajectory of the Hebrew text, conveying its meaning within the interpretive frameworks of Hellenistic Judaism without imposing foreign conceptual schemes. This continuity suggests that the LXX translators sought not to revise but to illuminate the Hebrew Scriptures for their Greek-speaking contemporaries, maintaining theological integrity across linguistic boundaries.

This study, building on Clines' interpretive lens and integrating insights from LXX translation theory, reveals the nuanced theological perspective of the Greek translators. Their renderings are not theologically neutral but reflect a profound engagement with Jewish wisdom traditions, a hermeneutic of relational faithfulness, and a reinterpretation of key Genesis motifs—especially the trees and imagery associated with Eden—in light of the living Word of God.

Furthermore, this investigation may contribute to broader Septuagint scholarship by illuminating how LXX texts engage earlier scriptural traditions—subtly reshaping inherited material and potentially reinforcing theological trajectories that reflect the interpretive concerns of the Hellenistic Jewish context. In particular, the alignment between Psalmic theology and Genesis imagery presents a compelling case for understanding the Word of God not merely as law or commandment, but as the true source of life, wisdom, and joy—a theological emphasis already present in the Hebrew *Vorlage* and faithfully mirrored in the Septuagint's reframing of Genesis themes, especially in its portrayal of the Edenic alternatives.

Thus, LXX Psalm 18:8–10 emerges as a theological fulcrum that lifts the fall narrative into a framework of redemptive wisdom: where obedience becomes the path to restored perception, and divine fear is not terror but the enduring foundation of a life rightly ordered. In this way, the text invites contemporary readers—whether faith practitioners or scholars—to reconsider not only how we interpret Scripture, but how we locate ourselves within its ongoing dialogue between Word, wisdom, and life.

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<한글초록>

클라인즈(David J. A. Clines)의 시편 19 편과 창세기 2-3 장의
비교 연구에 근거한 시편 18:8-10(LXX)에 대한 신학적 고찰
임성권 *

본 소고는 클라인즈(David J. A. Clines)의 연구를 토대로 칠십인경(LXX) 시편 18 편 8-10 절의 신학적 의미를 분석하는 데 목적을 둔다. 클라인즈는 히브리어 시편 19 편과 창세기 2-3 장을 비교하면서, 선악을 알게 하는 나무, 생명나무와 하나님의 말씀 간의 관계를 탐구하였다. 본 논문은 칠십인경 기자가 히브리어 본문을 번역하는 과정에서 어떠한 신학적 이해를 반영하였는지를 규명하며, 특히 LXX 시편 18 편의 번역이 창세기 본문의 신학적 구조와 어떻게 연관되는지를 고찰한다.

본 소고는 LXX 시편 18 편 8-10 절의 평행법 구조를 중심으로, 본문에서 하나님의 말씀을 표현하는 여섯 개의 유의어들이 상호 연결되는 방식과 그 신학적 의미를 분석한다. 이를 통해 본문의 구조적 특징을 명확히 하고, 히브리어 원문과의 비교를 통해 칠십인경 기자가 의도한 신학적 메시지를 도출한다. 또한 LXX 창세기 2-3 장과의 연관성을 검토하여, 선악을 알게 하는 나무, 생명나무와 하나님의 말씀 사이의 관계를 규명하며, 이를 통해

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히브리어 본문과의 상호 연관성을 밝힌다. 본 연구는 칠십인경 번역의 신학적 특징을 논하는 동시에, 초기 유대교의 해석적 흐름을 이해하는 데 기여하고자 한다.

***주제어**

칠십인경; LXX 시편 18 편; 창세기 2-3 장; 말씀; 생명나무; 선악을 알게 하는 나무.

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