



THE JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL SOUL CARE

*Advancing Scholarship for the Biblical Care of Souls
within Higher Education.*

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This journal is dedicated to the generation of men and women whose commitment to the Word of God and care of souls has laid the groundwork for a resurgence of biblical soul care. *The Journal of Biblical Soul Care* is a reflection of your dedication to the sufficient Word of God and its ability to speak into the complexities of human nature and experience. The editorial team desires to promote Christian scholarship in the wake of your effective reorganization and apologetic of biblical soul care.

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EDITORIAL: A NEW ERA OF BIBLICAL SOUL CARE

Greg E. Gifford¹

David Powlison was the first to subscribe to *The Journal of Biblical Soul Care* in 2017. It was surprising to even me! Of note, it was this year, 2019, that David Powlison had the distinct privilege of meeting his Savior, for whom he had labored so many years. Powlison's passing represents a new era of biblical soul care, one in which a second and third generation of counselors are arising. Powlison had led the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF) for many years both formally and informally. Furthermore, he was a key player in biblical counseling/soul care as he was singularly responsible for re-introducing the doctrine of humans as worshippers.² Powlison brought a genteel and thoughtful manner to the counseling conversation, one that has defined biblical soul care since. His successor, Alasdair Groves, is now manning the helm of CCEF. Groves is a former pastor, something not true of Powlison, having served on staff at two churches before coming to CCEF.³ He, like Powlison, both received their Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.⁴ Groves represents that the era of biblical soul care continues, yet it is still a *new era*.

In late 2018 through 2019 there have been seismic shifts within leading biblical counseling organizations. A few things are of note: CCEF is the leading publications branch of biblical soul care and it now directed by Alasdair Groves, who is a direct descendent of David Powlison. Heath Lambert relinquished the helm as Executive Director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors to Dale Johnson. Johnson is a professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) in Kansas City, MO only after teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) in Ft. Worth, Texas.⁵ Like Lambert, Johnson will both serve as director of ACBC while serving

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² For more on this topic consider Powlison's article, "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair'," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, vol. 3, no. 12 (Winter 1995): 45. It was here that the idea of "heart themes" and "Idols of the Heart" were resurrected. For instance, it was just a few years later that Elyse Fitzpatrick published her work, *Idols of the Heart* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001). Powlison took the verbiage of Ezekiel 14:4 and provided counselors a helpful way to understand human motivation.

³ Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, "About," accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.ccef.org/people/alsadair-groves/>.

⁴ The Gospel Coalition, "Alasdair Groves," accessed <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/profile/alsadair-groves/>.

⁵ Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Dale Johnson," accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.mbts.edu/about/faculty/dale-johnson/>. Alex Sibley, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Dale Johnson elected executive director of ACBC," April 19, 2018, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://swbts.edu/news/professors/dale-johnson-elected-executive-director-acbc/>.

as a faculty member at MBTS. Of note, for the second-consecutive term, ACBC will have a Southern Baptist as their Executive Director.⁶

Wayne Vanderwier, the former Executive Director of Overseas Instruction in Counseling to Andrew Rogers. Rogers is a former pastor and current professor at Boyce College in Louisville, KY.⁷ Vanderwier, also a former pastor, stepped down in August of 2019 for Rogers to succeed him as Executive Director.⁸ As with Johnson, Rogers is also a professor at a Southern Baptist institution. Each of these transitions between Powlison-Groves, Lambert-Johnson, and Vanderwier-Rogers indicates the second- and third-generation biblical counselors are now leading this movement.

A few common themes that we have seen this year is a transition for what could be termed ‘third generation’ biblical counselors are now leading flagship biblical counseling/soul care organizations.⁹ Furthermore, these leadership transitions have been to former pastors. And finally, the Southern Baptist footprint in the field of biblical soul care continues to increase with the transition of OIC and ACBC leadership.¹⁰ 2018 to 2019 has been a year of paramount importance in terms of leadership transitions in biblical counseling. Those in biblical counseling should take great heart in the significance of these new directors all possessing theological training, two of which hold terminal degrees in theological studies. Yet, there remains a void of academic, upstream conversations taking place. To date, the *JBSC* is the only academic journal within the field of biblical counseling. A year of significant transitions and still a year where scholarship for the cause of soul care has remained underdeveloped.

The *Journal of Biblical Soul Care* (JBSC) has not published articles in one-year. As I noted in our first volume, the work of scholarship in soul care is slow-moving. Upstream conversations are difficult to cultivate when we are immersed in downstream ministry—something I see as laudable. However, this Fall we have continued to lean into the important, albeit difficult work of this journal. I think you will be pleased with the results. Jim Brooks takes an all-too-important topic—Eschatology—and articulates the importance of biblical eschatology to soul care. Tom Sugimura provides a historical synopsis of soul care during the American Japanese internment World War II, and I have provided a view of John Owen’s perspective on habits.

⁶ Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, “History,” accessed November 1, 2019, <https://biblicalcounseling.com/about/history/>.

⁷ Andrew J.W. Smith, “Boyce Adds Old Testament and Biblical Counselor Professors,” Southern News, June 19, 2017, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://news.sbts.edu/2017/06/19/boyce-college-adds-old-testament-biblical-counseling-professors/>.

⁸ Wayne Vanderwier, Biblical Counseling Coalition, “An Announcement: Leadership Transition at OIC,” August 5, 2019, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2019/08/05/an-announcement-a-leadership-transition-at-oic/>.

⁹ Of note, Heath Lambert introduced these categories in his work, *Counseling After Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

¹⁰ This is not to mention the location of the Biblical Counseling Coalition headquarters on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Biblical Counseling Coalition, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/leadership/>.

May these articles enrich you and your love for people. And may we honor Christ and the Scripture in these efforts of advancing scholarship!

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

—1 Timothy 1:17

ARTICLES

ESCHATOLOGY AND SOUL CARE

Jim Brooks¹

The Bible portrays the unfolding of redemptive history as a grand drama in four movements: creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. Creation reminds us that we are dependent on the good Creator, who made this world for human flourishing. The fall was humanity's declaration of independence from God, so that now sin, chaos, and death are inherent within the created order. God's emphatic judgment on Satan, however, reveals that sin would not jeopardize his eternal plans:

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (Gen 3:15).²

This verse reveals God's broad goal of redemptive history. Adam's sin plunged his progeny into the darkness of sin and the horrors of satanic hatred, but the divine promise is that one of Eve's descendants would one day rise to defeat these enemies forever.³ This descendant was the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Person and work secured redemption for his chosen ones, and who will one day secure Satan's final defeat (Rev 20:10). The final act of redemptive history will occur when the eschatological vision promised in Genesis 3:15—and declared throughout Scripture—is fully realized when Christ returns as Sovereign King to establish his eternal Kingdom. Eschatology is God's exclamation point of his sovereign goodness.

Discussions about eschatology, unfortunately, may conjure up all too common visions of wild-eyed fanatics holding "The End Is Near" signs on street corners or failed date-setting predictions of the Second Coming, which result in embarrassment to the name of Christ.

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² All biblical quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the English Standard Version.

³ Commentators disagree if "seed" in this passage denotes the collective descendants of Eve (all humanity) with Christ being the primary representative or if the word refers to only Christ. See J. P. Lewis, "The Woman's Seed (Gen 3:15)," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 3 (1991): 299–300, who argues that the first part of the verse refers to Eve's collective descendants and the second half to one descendant, Jesus.

Eschatological studies within the church tend to be limited to charts and endless debates concerning raptures, tribulations, Antichrists, and millenniums. What is oftentimes lost in the study of eschatology, however, is the biblical authors' embrace of the doctrine as a motivation for godly living in this fallen world. Eschatology is, perhaps, the most underutilized doctrine among biblical counselors for soul care.⁴

My thesis for this article is quite simple: Biblical counselors ought to embrace eschatology as a practical doctrine in their counsel of others. "Biblical counselors" are those who rely on the sufficiency of Scripture to meet any non-medical issues that may arise with counselees. Such counselors are not limited to a specific ministry of counseling but may include pastors, Sunday school teachers, elders, or anyone in the church who ministers to others.⁵ "Eschatology" is defined as an "already, but not yet" reality. Inaugurated eschatology has "already" been established with Christ's resurrection so that the world is currently in the "end times" (discussed in more detail below). Consummated eschatology is the "not yet" part of the equation that will be fully realized when Christ returns to establish his eternal Kingdom. Due to limitations, only these two broad aspects of eschatology will be examined in this article: first, applying inaugurated eschatology to those engaged in persistent sin (1 Cor 10:1-13) and, second, using consummated eschatology to give hope to sufferers (Rom 5:1-5).

Readers of this article, no doubt, will have differing eschatological convictions. My intent is not to argue for one eschatological position over another. My hope is to dispel the perception that eschatology is an esoteric doctrine bereft of practical value by giving examples of how the New Testament authors used it as an essential motivator for Christ-followers to live worthy of the gospel.

⁴ A conclusion based on conversations with Stuart Scott. Perhaps G. K Beale expresses the same idea at the end of his massive *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010): "A book on practical theology and preaching could be written on this topic [the practicality of eschatology in Christian living], but I must leave that task to others because the length that this book has already been reached" (962).

⁵ John Piper defines "biblical counseling" as "God-centered, Bible-saturated, emotionally-in-touch use of language to help people become God-besotted, Christ-exalting, joyfully self-forgetting lovers of people" (John Piper and Jack Delk, "The Glory of God: The Goal of Biblical Counseling," in *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, ed. James MacDonald [Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2013], 24.). David Powlison defines biblical counseling by distinguishing its common commitments: (1) God is at the center of counseling; (2) commitment to God has epistemological consequences (authority of Scripture, the opposition of sin); (3) sin is the primary problem counselors must deal with; (4) the gospel of Christ is the answer; (5) the biblical change process must aim at progressive sanctification; (6) the situational difficulties people face operate within the sovereign design of God; and (7) counseling is fundamentally a pastoral activity and must be church-based (David Powlison, "Biblical Counseling in Recent Times," in *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically*, ed., John MacArthur [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005], 27–29).

Inaugurated Eschatology and Soul Care

The Old Testament prophets envisioned a future time when God would establish a new covenant with his people (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 46:22-32). The key provision of the new covenant is God's promise that his people will receive a new heart and a new spirit because he will pour out his Holy Spirit within them (Ezek 36:27). Jesus, on the eve of his death, lifted the cup at the Last Supper and instructed his disciples, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20).⁶ Jesus' death and resurrection established the long anticipated new covenant, which inaugurated the eschaton as a present reality. Richard Gaffin's detailed study of the resurrection led him to conclude that Christ's resurrection heralded in the new age in which we now live:

We have found that the resurrection of Christ is *the* pivotal factor in the whole of the apostle's soteriological teaching. Not only is the resurrection (as it is constitutive of the ascension and heavenly session) the climax of the redemptive history of Christ; it is also that from which the individual believer's experience of redemption derives in its specific and distinguishing character and in all aspects of its inexhaustible fullness. For in transforming Christ's person, the resurrection and no other event (or consideration) constitutes him as life-giving Spirit to those joined to him. It and no other event inaugurates the new age, the eschatological aeon, into which others are brought, so that he might be "firstborn among many brothers."⁷

The eschaton in the post-resurrection world is not limited to a series of "not yet" future events awaiting fulfillment, but is an "already" present reality.

The New Testament authors understood that they had witnessed the transformation from the old age into the new inaugurated eschatological age. Peter's sermon at Pentecost declared the pouring out of the Spirit as an eschatological event: "And in the last days it shall be,' God declares, 'that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh'" (Acts 2:17, a quote from Joel 2:28). The author of Hebrews proclaimed that "in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb 1:2; also 9:26) and that Jesus "appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26). Peter insists that Christ "was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you" (1 Pet 1:20). John advised his readers, "Children, it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).

Eschatological ideas are used to express the deep ontological transformation the gospel wields on the souls of Christ's followers. Paul declared that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17; see also Gal 6:15).

⁶ See also 1 Cor 11:25. Jesus is called "the mediator of a new covenant" (Heb 9:15; 12:24) and his followers are "ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor 3:6).

⁷ Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), 135 (italics in original).

The gospel creates “one new man” (Eph 2:15) and Paul urged his readers to “put on the new self” (Eph 4:24). The word translated “new” in the preceding passages is *kainós*, which connotes “new in nature” or “new in kind,” and “denotes the new and miraculous thing that the age of salvation brings.”⁸ The post-resurrection follower of Christ is a different kind of person found under the old covenant— he or she is an inaugurated eschatological being, who is blessed with the provisions of the new (*kainos*) covenant.

The reality of this new eschatological age heralded in by Christ’s resurrection was embraced by the New Testament authors as a strong motivation for living a life worthy of Christ. Paul, for example, applied the idea that Christ-followers are inaugurated eschatological souls to those in the Corinthian church who claimed Christ as Lord and Savior, yet continued to live in persistent sin.

Inaugurated Eschatology and Persistent Sin (1 Cor 10:1-13)

One of the most common verses used by biblical counselors is 1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”⁹ This familiar verse is one of great truth but, unfortunately, is sometimes divorced from its context. Some, but not all, in the Corinthian church claimed to be members of the new covenant community by professing Christ as their Lord and Savior, yet were engaged in ongoing, unrestrained, and unrepentant sin. Biblical counselors may find themselves trying to minister God’s Word to counselees comparable to these Corinthians. Applying 1 Corinthians 10:13 and its hopeful message of overcoming temptation becomes much more powerful when it is grounded in the inaugurated eschatological context from which it springs.

Israel’s wilderness blessings (1 Cor 10:1-5). The “for” at the beginning of the passage (1 Cor 10:1) connects it with Paul’s argument at the end of chapter 9. Paul was arguing for the need for self-control over the natural sinful impulses, “lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor 9:27). Continuing this thought, he first highlights three astounding divine blessings everyone in the exodus generation experienced before calling attention to their sins.

First, the exodus itself was a blessing in that they were freed from slavery (1 Cor 10:1). The exodus was *the* redemptive event of the Old Testament. The divine cloud Paul draws attention to initially appeared when Israel left Egypt (Exod 13:21). God intervened with the protecting cloud against Egyptian reprisals as the nation crossed the Red Sea (Exod 14:19-

⁸ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament [TDNT]* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), s.v. “καίνός,” by Walter Grundmann.

⁹ The common usage of this verse is illustrated by Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, eds., *Counseling the Hard Cases* (B & H Academic, Nashville, TN, 2015). The book’s Scripture index shows that 1 Cor 10:13 was the most referenced verse in the book. Indeed, every author used 1 Cor 10:13 at least once when describing his or her case study.

20). The cloud was a visible representation of God's glory, presence, and favor of his chosen nation as a people separated to himself.¹⁰

Second, they were blessed with baptism into Moses (1 Cor 10:2) through the presence of the glory-cloud and through the redemption accomplished by the crossing of the Red Sea. Baptism in this context has the sense of identification, in that God's deliverance from the Egyptians formally established Israel's identity as "a separate and sacred body, set apart for God alone."¹¹ The nation was "baptized into Moses" because he was the appointed divine leader, served as God's representative to them, and was the mediator of the old covenant (Exod 24:4-8).

Third, they were blessed with spiritual sustenance (1 Cor 10:3-4). God graciously sustained them in the harsh desert environment by miraculously providing every person with enough food (Exod 16; Num 11) and water, which sprang from a rock (Exod 17:1-7; Num 20:8-11). Paul's identification of the water-providing Rock as Christ means that "he is not thinking of a material rock following them, or a movable well, but of the divine source of the water that journeyed with them. He understands the replenishing rock in a spiritual sense, not a physical sense."¹² Israel in the wilderness was physically sustained not by natural means, but by supernatural blessings, and the source of these blessings was Christ.

The author of Hebrews makes clear that Jesus is greater than Moses (Heb 3:3) and, consequently, the new covenant is superior to the old (Heb 8:13). Accordingly, new covenant Christ-followers living in this age of inaugurated eschatology receive the same blessings as did the exodus generation, but with greater profundity. First, the redeemed in Christ experience an "exodus" from slavery to sin to freedom in Christ.¹³ Christ-followers are the Father's chosen

¹⁰ See Exod 14:24; 33:9, 19; Num 12:5; 14:14; Deut 31:15; Neh 9:12, 19; Ps 99:7. The divine cloud made several appearances subsequent to the exodus: at the ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant (Exod 24:15-18), and at the dedication of the tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38) and Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 8:10-12). Ezekiel saw the cloud leave the temple as a sign of God's displeasure of Israel's continuing sin (Ezek 8:1-11:25). Evidence suggests that the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) was the glory cloud returning back to earth (see Gregory K. Beale, "The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost. Part 1, The Clearest Evidence," *Tyndale Bulletin* 56 [2005]: 76-83; Gregory K. Beale, "The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost. Part 2, Corroborating Evidence," *Tyndale Bulletin* 56 [2005]: 63-66; Jud Davis, "Acts 2 and the Old Testament: The Pentecost Event in Light of Sinai, Babel, and the Table of Nations," *Criswell Theological Review* 7 [2009]: 44-45; Jacques Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles* [New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1979], 35-43; and Sejin Park, *Pentecost and Sinai: The Festival of Weeks as a Celebration of the Sinai Event* [New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2008]).

¹¹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1963), 391.

¹² D. E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 456-57. "Rock" was a common description of God (Gen 49:24; Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31; Pss 18:31; 62:2; 78:35; 89:26; 95:1). Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Tosner believe these material provisions are called "spiritual" because they were given by the Spirit (*The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010], 448).

¹³ The following give a good overview of understanding the exodus as a paradigm for New Testament believers: Paul E. Deterding, "Exodus Motifs in First Peter," *Concordia Journal* 7, no. 2 (1981): 58-65; Fred L.

people, who enjoy his presence, blessings, and favor (Eph 1:3-6). Disciples of Christ “are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Pet 4:14).¹⁴ Believing and receiving the gospel of Christ separates his followers from the slavery of sin to the freedom of obeying God in righteousness (Rom 6:17-18).

Second, the redeemed in Christ are baptized into him (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27) so that physical baptism is the person’s declaration that he or she has entered the new covenant (1 Pet 2:9). The Christ-follower identifies with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection (Eph 2:4-7). Jesus is God’s chosen Son (Luke 9:35), serves as the Father’s representative (John 1:18; 14:6-11), and is the mediator of the inaugurated eschatological new covenant (Heb 9:15; 12:24).

Third, eschatological new creations are spiritually sustained in this eschatological age with sublime blessings that find their source in the risen Savior. Conversion results in the former Christ-enemy being redeemed (bought with the price of Christ’s blood), reconciled (a former enemy of God transformed into his child), justified (declared righteous by God), sanctified (declared holy by God), regenerated (given a new nature that desires to please God), and forgiven (the punishment of sin is forgiven, sin’s power is being lessened through sanctification, and its presence will one day be removed when the child of God is in the very presence of Christ). In Christ, the child of God is lavished with grace (favor which is not deserved), mercy (the removal of judgment which is deserved), wisdom (the ability and desire to live life pleasing to the Father), and power (the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit to give strength to live for Christ). In Christ, the one who was naturally hostile to God is now the Father’s adopted child (made part of his family), his heir (the beneficiary of every spiritual blessing), his righteous one (covered with the righteousness of Christ), his holy one (set apart to receive his blessings), his beloved one (showered with his eternal love), his sheep (who are led and cared for by the Good Shepherd), his ambassador (representatives of God to the world), his minister (who minister to others in his name), and his vessel of honor (God displays his people as his prized possession). All who are in Christ are preserved (he will not abandon his children), protected (he watches over his people), prayed for (the Son and the Holy Spirit intercede for the forgiven ones), and

Fischer, “The New and Greater Exodus: The Exodus Pattern in the New Testament,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 20, no. 1 (Fall 1977): 69-79; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000); and Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000).

¹⁴ Biblical evidence suggests that the glory-cloud in the Old Testament was, in fact, a physical manifestation of the Glory-Spirit. In his recount of Israel’s history, Nehemiah intimated the Spirit led and instructed the nation in the pillar of cloud and fire (Neh 9:19-20). Isaiah lamented Israel’s spiritual decline so that they “grieved His Holy Spirit” (63:10). As he recalled God’s mighty salvific act at the Red Sea, Isaiah plaintively inquired: “Where is he who put his Holy Spirit in the midst of them?” (Isa 63:11). At the Red Sea, the Glory-presence was “in the midst” of Israel” as “a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night” (Num 14:14). Similarly, the Lord encouraged Zerubbabel by reminding him of the Exodus: “As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst” (Hag 2:5). At Sinai, God “called to Moses from the midst of the cloud” (Exod 24:16).

defended (Christ is the Advocate who speaks for the justified). The redeemed eschatological child of God is forever sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13).

Those in the exodus generation were eye-witnesses of the undeniable manifestations of God's power and blessings. "Nevertheless," Paul solemnly declares, "with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor 10:5).¹⁵ God did not take pleasure or delight in¹⁶ most of that generation. Thomas Brooks observed, "Abused mercy will certainly turn into fury."¹⁷ The generation that received God's mercy found his fury as most of them were "overthrown," meaning that their dead bodies were scattered over the desert, left unburied.¹⁸

Israel's wilderness sins (1 Cor 10:6-10). Paul now segues to address Israel's wilderness sins. Their sins and the divine repercussions "took place as examples for us" (1 Cor 10:6). John Calvin insightfully discusses this phrase:

He warns us in still clearer terms that the punishments, which were inflicted on them, provide a relevant lesson for us, so that we may not provoke the wrath of God as they did. Paul says: 'in the way He punished them, God, as it were, presented us with a clear picture (*in tabla*) of His severity, so that we may take it to heart.'¹⁹

All who declare loyalty to Christ yet live dissolutely are in grave danger of divine reprisals. The great concern is that "we might not desire evil as they did" (1 Cor 10:6). Paul then rehearses four representative evils the exodus generation craved that eventually led to their destruction.

First, the sin of idolatry (1 Cor 10:6). This incident refers to Israel's worship of the golden calf, which they declared was the real god that delivered them from slavery (Exod 32:1-8). God was ready to destroy the entire nation but relented when Moses interceded for them (Exod 32:10-14). Still, about 3,000 men were killed because of the idolatry (Exod 32:28).

¹⁵ The negative report of 10 of the 12 spies seems to be the tipping point of God's patience with the nation. God's anger with the people's rebellion and unbelief brought the divine judgment that only those younger than 20 years-old, and Joshua and Caleb would survive the wilderness (Num 14).

¹⁶ The usual meaning of *eudokia*, translated here as "well-pleased," is "to take pleasure or delight in" (*TDNT*, s.v. "εὐδοκέω," by Gottlob Schrenk).

¹⁷ Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (1652; repr., Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 79. Paul states that some in the Corinthian church have suffered illness or died because of their abuse of God's mercy (1 Cor 11:30).

¹⁸ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), s.v. "καταστρώννμι." The word for "overthrown" occurs only here in the NT and Num 14:16 in the LXX.

¹⁹ John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries (trans. John W. Fraser, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), 206-7.

Second, the sin of sexual immorality (1 Cor 10:8).²⁰ Here, Paul refers to Israel's worship of Baal of Peor, the subsequent immorality that resulted, and God's judgment of a plague that killed many (Num 25:1-9). Third, the sin of testing Christ (1 Cor 10:9). Covenant people test Christ "either by forgetting his works on their behalf and subsequently calling into question his covenantal faithfulness (Num 14:22; Ps 106:14), or by directly violating his commands (Ps 78:41, 56)."²¹ This verse alludes to Israel's loathing of what God graciously provided and their craving for what he did not. God responded by sending "fiery serpents among the people," resulting in many deaths (Num 21:1-9; see Ps 78:18-22).²²

And fourth, the sin of grumbling against the Lord (1 Cor 10:10). The specific incident Paul may have had in mind is unclear, but the exodus generation was guilty of grumbling against the Lord and Moses on several occasions (Exod 15:24; 16:1-12; 17:3; Num 14:1-38; 16:11, 41; 17:5, 10). Their dissatisfaction and discontent with God's gracious provisions caused them to grumble, not *to* him in humility, but arrogantly *against* him, which is a testing (Exod 17:2) and despising of God (Num 17:11). The result is that God sent the Destroyer among them.²³

Battling temptation in the eschatological age (1 Cor 10:11-13). The divinely appointed reason for recording Israel's sins and their grave consequences in Scripture is clearly stated: "Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction" or "warning" (1 Cor 10:11; NIV). The word translated "instruction/warning" carries the idea of "influencing not merely the intellect but the will and disposition" so that "the idea is not that of punishment but of a moral appeal that leads to amendment."²⁴ God appeals to the Corinthians to denounce and repent from their sins by using Israel as his object lesson because some in the Corinthian church continued to engage in idolatry (1 Cor 5:11; 6:9; 8:1; 10:14; 2 Cor 6:16) and sexual immorality (1 Cor 5:1, 11; 6:13, 18; 7:2; 2 Cor 12:21). Practically the entire book of 1 Corinthians displays their testing of Christ. A group within the church

²⁰ Idolatry and sexual immorality oftentimes are found together. The phrase "rose up to play" (1 Cor 10:6, quote of Exod 32:6) refers to a sexual orgy (Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis [NIDOTTE]* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997], s.v. "קחצ," by Leslie C. Allen).

²¹ *NIDOTTE*, s.v. "נסה," by Terry Bremsinger.

²² The exodus generation was guilty of testing the Lord on several occasions (Exod 17:2; Num 14:22; Deut 6:16; Ps 106:14). In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira tested the Spirit and were killed by him (Acts 5:1-11).

²³ The Destroyer is, perhaps, a reference to the angel of the Lord who killed the first-born in the tenth plague (Exod 12:23; Heb 11:28). The Destroyer is not mentioned in any of the judgments brought against Israel in the desert, but, probably, "Paul has in mind the destroying angel who carries out any divine judgment" (Ciampa and Rosner, *1 Corinthians*, 726).

²⁴ *TDNT*, s.v. "voέω," by Gerhard Delling.

grumbled against Paul to the point that he eventually questioned their membership in the new covenant community (2 Cor 13:5).

“Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction.” Paul could have ended the sentence here, but he continues this thought by bringing to bear the eternal weight of inaugurated eschatology into the discussion: “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, *on whom the end of the ages has come.*” The verb “has come” was used both literally and metaphorically in Scripture. Literally, the verb was used of a person who had reached his destination (e.g. Acts 16:1). Metaphorically, however, the verb assumes the meaning of “the attainment of an objective.”²⁵ God’s objective is the eschaton and, as Gordon Fee states, is now is the driving force behind Paul’s instructions:

Paul sets everything into his thoroughly eschatological perspective.... Through his death and resurrection Jesus Christ marks the turning of the ages; the old in on its way out, the new has begun (2 Cor. 5:17). He has set the future irresistibly in motion; and the new people of God, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, who are his by grace alone, are the people of the End, “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” and “toward whom all history has had its goal.” This is what constitutes the typological element in these OT stories; ultimately the whole OT has been pointing toward its eschatological fulfillment in God’s new people.²⁶

The “ends of the ages” (also Heb 9:26) indicates that the eschatological age introduced by Christ’s resurrection is the final age in God’s redemptive-historical plan, God’s sovereign supervision of history has reached its intended destination.²⁷

Paul’s inclusion of the eschaton reminds the new creation in Christ of the greater blessings found in this new eschatological age. Moses was a great leader but still a man who sinned and died. The resurrected Messiah, the Son of God, the eternal Lord, lived a sinless life, resurrected, and rules over creation. One became a member of the old covenant by virtue of birth, but one must be spiritually reborn by the Spirit to enter into the new covenant (John 1:12-13; 3:3-7). The Holy Spirit has been poured out on the people of the End. The old covenant became obsolete (Heb 8:13), the new covenant is eternal (Heb 13:20). The Old Testament

²⁵ Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology [NIDNTT]* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), s.v. “Come,” by W. Mundle.

²⁶ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 459.

²⁷ See also Gal 4:4 and Eph 1:7-10, which show that Christ is the ultimate objective of history. This present inaugurated eschatological age “might be the *last* period, and yet be longer than any one previous period, or than all the previous periods put together. The apostle Paul was at special pains in 2 Thessalonians 2 to show, that by affirming that the last time had come, he did not mean that the world would soon come to an end” (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Explanatory and Practical: 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1949), 186.

prophets longed to experience the blessings enjoyed by those “on whom the ends of the ages has come” (Matt 13:17; 1 Pet 1:10-12).

Paul’s inclusion of the eschaton into the discussion also reminds the new creation in Christ of the greater calamities that may be experienced in this new eschatological age. The author of Hebrews expresses the distinct differences in the severity of punishments between the old and new covenant ages:

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:28-31).

Some in the Corinthian church, and some counselees encountered by biblical counselors, are spurning Christ, profaning his blood, and outraging the Spirit of grace with their persistent sins. The great instructional warning is “if the wilderness generation met such a horrifying end by spurning a concealed Christ who nurtured them throughout their journey, how much more the Corinthians will be condemned if they spurn the revealed Christ.”²⁸ These sober truths, which spring from an inaugurated eschatology, are the conceptual segues into the next two verses and form the theological vantage point for interpreting them.²⁹

“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor 10:12). “Therefore” indicates a conclusion is being drawn from previous arguments. Israel experienced unprecedented blessings from God and stood in a privileged position over all the other peoples of the world, yet temptation overwhelmed them, and they fell. Those “on whom the end of the ages have come” experience even greater blessings in Christ, have a greater standing among those outside of Christ, and, consequently, continual succumbing to temptation and sin will have weightier consequences. The verb for “fall” (*piptō*) was used previously in this passage to describe how thousands fell (died) in the desert for indulging in sexual immorality (1 Cor 10:8). The eschatological viewpoint introduced in 1 Corinthians 10:11 now gives *piptō* an “eschatological connotation.”³⁰ The fall for a presumed Christ-follower who continually spurns the Son of God is not simply death in the desert, but the fall into eternal death. This verse is

²⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 365.

²⁹ “The eschatological point of departure found in this verse casts its shadow over the next two verses as well” (Ciampa and Rosner, *1 Corinthians*, 466).

³⁰ Ibid. *Piptō* was used to describe an eschatological fall in, for example, LXX Pss 20:8; 36:12; 27:2; 35:8; 36:12; 82:7; 141:10; Prov 29:16; Isa 2:17; 24:20; Rom 11:11; 14:4; 1 Cor 13:8.

not teaching a loss of salvation but serves as a warning that no eternal assurances exist, and no eternal security is given to those who profess Christ yet indulge in spiritual salaciousness.³¹

The inaugurated eschatology that threatens the weighty specter of eternal doom is also the doctrine that undergirds the promised hope in the battle against temptation and sin. Paul's pastoral heart shines in this passage. He is burdened for his Corinthian congregation, so he warns that God is not to be trifled with and they are on a path fraught with eternal danger. Pastor Paul, however, will not allow the threat of judgment have the last word, but hope, a hope forged within the context of inaugurated eschatology.

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man" (1 Cor 10:13). The representative temptations/sins of idolatry, sexual immorality, testing Christ, and grumbling are universally experienced in this fallen world. The form of the temptation and sin may be different from one generation to the next, but the basic root temptation remains the same.³² The difference for those "on whom the end of the ages has come" is that these common temptations Israel faced "took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did" and "they were written down for our instruction" (see also Rom 15:4). Thus, we cannot claim ignorance about these "common to man" temptations or of God's severe response when consistently yielding to the temptation develops into ongoing, unrepentant sins.

"God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability" (1 Cor 10:13). God's enduring faithfulness to his children, (of both testaments) is *the* central issue in battling temptation.³³ God promises to set a protective barrier around his child so that sin is not the

³¹ John expresses the same idea in 1 John 1:6; 2:4, 15; 3:6, 8.

³² For example, no one in Moses' or Paul's day could be tempted to indulge in internet pornography. This temptation, however, springs out of the common one of craving the evils of sexual immorality.

³³ Gary D. Collier recognizes the chiasmic structure of 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 ("That We Might Not Crave Evil: The Structure and Argument of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 55 [1994]: 61).

Therefore

- A: let anyone who thinks that he stands
- B: take heed lest he fall.
- C: No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.
- D: God is faithful,
- C': and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability,
- B': but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape,
- A': that you may be able to endure it.

A chiasmus is a literary device used to structure the argument of a passage. The feature of a chiasmus is that concepts are repeated in reverse order or with some modification. Thus, in 1 Cor 10:12-13, element A is parallel in thought to element A' but, in this case, opposite to one another. The same is true for the B and C elements. The most important point of a chiasmus is the pivot around which the argument revolves. Thus, the most important idea Paul is communicating in these verses is that "God is faithful." See E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (1898; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968): 363-93 for several different examples of chiasmus used by the biblical authors.

inevitable consequence of temptation.³⁴ The difference for inaugurated eschatological people is Christ. Everyone in the Old Testament eventually yielded to sin, no one lived a sinless life. Jesus, however, “in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). Bruce Ware contends that “it stands to reason that Jesus was faced with the most difficult and relentless barrage of temptations that anyone ever has received.”³⁵ Ware continues with added insights:

[Because] Jesus never sinned, he fought every temptation, every time, fully, experiencing the unmitigated force of each temptation until he had succeeded in defeating each one, coming out the other side victorious. Isn't it clear to any of us who think about the sin of our own lives that one of the reasons we give into temptation is that the pressure is off and the battle is ended once we have given in? The immediate sense of release from the struggle is deeply appealing when we don't want to keep fighting! So, marvel at our *sinless* Savior. Because he never sinned when tempted, this means that he fought every temptation fully to the end. He never, not once, gave into that delicious and enticing longing simply to end the struggle by yielding to the temptation. Rather, he fought and fought and fought, in every temptation, every time, always coming out the other side victorious.³⁶

The Father's faithfulness to his Son is the same faithfulness he shows to his eschatological redeemed-in-Christ sons and daughters. No matter how strong, how unrelenting, how alluring, how long the temptation is for the redeemed child of God, in this eschatological age the issue is never “I can no longer fight the temptation” but “I will no longer fight the temptation.” God's faithfulness to those “on whom the end of the ages has come” prevents the former statement of ever being true.

“But with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor 10:13). Paul exhorted the Galatians to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). The way of escape from the clutches of temptation has always been through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit and not through one's own ability. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was an eschatological event and is the difference for those who live in this new age. Walter Kaiser's observation succinctly sums up the fuller ministry of the Spirit enjoyed by those living in the inaugurated eschaton:

³⁴ For example, the sons of Levi did not engage in golden calf worship but resisted the temptation (Num 32:26).

³⁵ Bruce Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 85.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 86 (italics in the original).

His arrival was not meant to mark a distinction between those Old Testament saints who were devoid of the indwelling of the Spirit and his empowering them for living holy lives. But what Pentecost signaled was the ancient promise of the Baptism of the Spirit, in which God would so effusively pour out his Spirit that it would be more like a downpour and like rivers of water flowing in the land, as understood by an inaugurated eschatology—a ‘now’ and a ‘not yet’.³⁷

If Israel’s experience of the Spirit is likened to a line, then the experience of the redeemed who live in the inaugurated eschaton is like a cube— nothing is lost between the testaments, but much is gained by those “on whom the end of the ages has come.”

Jesus, again, is the example that no Old Testament saint could match. Jesus withstood the allures of temptation not because of his deity, but because of his reliance on and submission to the Holy Spirit. Isaiah foresaw the Spirit resting upon Messiah (Isa 11:1-3; 42:1-4). The Spirit descended upon him at his baptism (Matt 3:16). Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1) when he entered the wilderness to be tempted by Satan and “returned in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14) as he left the wilderness. The Redeemer rejoiced in the Spirit (Luke 10:21). In short, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power” (Act 10:38). Jesus remained faithful and obedient to the Father, despite the powerful temptations he endured, only through the empowering ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Ware explains:

The only way to make sense, then, of the fact that Jesus came in the power of the Spirit is to understand that he lived his life fundamentally as a man, and as such, he relied on the Spirit to provide the power, grace, knowledge, wisdom, direction, and enablement he needed, moment by moment and day by day, to fulfill the mission the Father sent him to accomplish.³⁸

The Spirit-filled Jesus is the eschatological man, who serves as the example of how his redeemed are to live and overcome temptation in this eschatological age.

Like the Savior, overcoming temptations in the inaugurated eschaton is possible only through the ministrations of the powerful, indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit has been poured out on the redeemed in this new age with profound blessings. The Holy Spirit circumcises unregenerate hearts (Rom 2:29; 2 Cor. 5:5) to wash, sanctify, and justify (1 Cor 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13; Titus 1:3; 1 Pet 1:2) the chosen of the Father. The Holy Spirit was given by the Father (Rom 5:5; 1 John 3:24) to dwell within the redeemed (Rom 8:9, 11; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Gal 4:6) so that through his power (Rom 15:13, 19; Eph. 3:16) and his illumination of the Word of God (1 Cor 2:6-12), children of God may live lives of holiness (Rom. 1:4) that no longer need to yield to the power of the indwelling sin nature (Rom 7:6; 8:2, 4). The Christ-follower is not to grieve

³⁷ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (2010): 315.

³⁸ Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus*. 38. See also Gerald F. Hawthorne, *The Presence & the Power: The Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1991).

(Eph 4:30) or quench (1 Thess 5:19) the ministry of the Holy Spirit but to be led by him (Rom 8:14; Gal. 5:18), taught by him (1 Cor 2:13), filled with him (Eph 5:18), walk by him (Gal 5:16, 25), and pray what is pleasing to him (Eph 6:18; Jude 20) in order to overcome weaknesses (Rom 8:26), and experience life, peace, and joy (Rom 8:6, 13; 14:17). Through the Spirit, God “has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3). The Holy Spirit helps the redeemed in Christ overcome their natural reluctance to obey God’s Word (Gal 5:16). God has poured out his Spirit on his eschatological people so that the way to escape temptation is through him.

Implications for Biblical Soul Care

Counselees who profess Christ yet continue to habitually indulge in sin need to understand the eternal implications of this passage. Certainly, biblical counselors should explain and point all counselees to the glorious divine favors that have been granted to those in Christ. Professing Christ as Lord and Savior, however, is incomplete if it is devoid of obedience (Jas 2:14-26). Paul used inaugurated eschatology as a motivation to jar those Corinthians who were indulging in sin out of their complacency by showing them the dire nature of their eternal destination if they continued to yield themselves to what is evil. Biblical counselors who are ministering to recalcitrant counselees should not be afraid to do the same, for they have put themselves in a position of being an enemy of God (Jas 4:4). The fact that we are those “on whom the end of the ages has come” is a sober truth, which should give more weight to the counsel to be vigilant and diligent in honoring Christ with obedience.

Counselees who are struggling with temptation but are not characterized by sinful lives can take great comfort in this passage, especially the commonly used 1 Corinthians 10:13. Tempted counselees can gain much spiritual comfort and strength by knowing and understanding the practical implications of living in the inaugurated eschaton, namely, the great “exodus” they have experienced by being delivered from Satan’s dark domain to the Kingdom of Christ (Col 1;13), their identity in Christ, and the profound spiritual resources the Father has granted them in Christ. Paul used inaugurated eschatology as the underlying theological idea to introduce 1 Corinthians 10:13 to underscore the serious nature of battling temptation. Biblical counselors who minister to tempted counselees ought to follow the apostle’s lead and bring to bear the verse’s eschatological context. This counsel would give great hope by bringing to bear the divine resources we have been granted in this eschatological age and would give great impetus to the counselee to keep on fighting the good fight against temptation.

This present age is the inaugurated eschaton, governed by the new covenant, ruled over by the eschatological risen Savior, inhabited by new creations, who have a new self. As such, eschatological people “must act the way new creatures act, which is to live for Christ by viewing all of reality from the perspective of his word and not from the viewpoint of the world.”³⁹ We do not know how long this era will last, but God has graciously given us ample warning and instruction through Israel’s sinful mistakes, and the horrifying penalties the inhabitants paid for

³⁹ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 303.

them. We in this new eschatological age can learn from the nation's foolishness so that we do not repeat the same errors and fall into a greater judgment.

The redeemed of this new age are "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Time will one day give way to eternity when Christ returns in glory to visibly establish his eternal Kingdom. Consequently, the inaugurated eschatological age Jesus established by his resurrection will yield to the consummated eschaton, which will be established with his return.⁴⁰

Consummated Eschatology and Soul Care

God's *telos* for creation and his redeemed is unending and unimaginable joy in Christ as the "eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17) becomes the new reality. The New Testament authors embraced the still future joys of the consummated eschaton to encourage godly living in the present.

Life in the Consummated Eschaton (Rev 21:1-4)

What has been revealed about the future reality of the consummated eschaton is crucial for biblical counselors to understand because many encouragements and exhortations found in New Testament passages are grounded in the final future destination of the child of God (see, for example, Eph 4:20; Phil 3:17-21; 1 John 3:1-3). Revelation 21:1-4 gives the merest glimpse of what life will be like in the consummated eschaton.

"The sea was no more." The passage opens with the declaration of the new heaven and earth which is characterized by "a majestic chorus of concord and hope."⁴¹ The first hopeful quality mentioned for the consummated eschaton is "the sea was no more" (Rev 21:1). The removal of the sea is not referring to the drying up of the world's oceans and other bodies of water, but represents the culmination of the hope of King Messiah's triumph over his enemies. The eradication of the sea is the necessary condition for God to dwell with his covenant people in unhindered fellowship for all eternity.

The biblical writers employed the mythopoetic imagery, but not the theology, of the sea from their polytheistic neighbors to show Yahweh's might, power, majesty, and sovereignty. The surrounding polytheistic religions "[deified the sea] as a chaotic entity and set over against the gods of order."⁴² The first mention of the sea is the primordial chaos that was the domain

⁴⁰ Passages indicating that this age will one day come to an end include Matt 10:22; 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3, 6, 13, 14; 28:20; Mark 13:7, 13; Luke 21:9; 1 Cor 1:8; 15:24; Heb 3:14; 6:11; 9:26; 1 Pet 4:7; Rev 2:26.

⁴¹ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 191. Scholar's disagree whether the new heaven and earth are a transformation of the current heaven and earth or are a brand-new creation because the first has been destroyed. See Gale E. Heide, "What Is New about the New Heaven and the New Earth? A Theology of Creation from Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3," *Journal for the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 1 (March 1997): 37-56 for a good argument for the former position. Isa 65:17-18 foretold a new heaven and earth.

⁴² Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 2007), 181. See Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974), for a fuller treatment.

which resisted God's rule and was described as a realm characterized by judgment, the darkness of evil and dread, lifelessness, and a raging sea (Gen 1:2). Job 26:12, for example, casts creation as an act of God's subduing the chaotic forces which opposed his rule: "By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab." "Rahab" was a mythical semi-demonic primeval monster, which sought to destroy creation. God wields his kingly authority to subdue the chaos and exert his dominion over it through the acts of creation.

God gave humanity authority to subdue the forces which would oppose their rule and to exert their dominion over the earth by spreading the glory of God throughout the earth through their children (Gen 1:28). The first couple, however, exerted their sinful self-rule, rebelled against God, followed Satan, and, as a result, created a new chaos, which is also symbolized in Scripture as a tumultuous sea in rebellion against God's kingly rule.⁴³

God, however, continues to wage war against the sea. The exodus is the climatic redemptive event in the OT and "is conceived of as a victory over the primordial powers of chaos and evil which oppose and oppress God's people."⁴⁴ Isaiah called out for God to rise up and dry up the sea for the sake of his redeemed:

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD;
awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago.
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?
Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep,
who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? (Isa 51:9-10).

The prophet calls out for the "arm of the LORD," the coming Messiah (also 53:1; see John 12:38), to arise and subdue the sea so that his redeemed may pass to the safety of their Promised Land.

The "arm of the LORD" did put on his strength and gives a glimpse of the final eschaton in his two encounters with the sea. The first (Matt 8:23-33; Mark 4:36-41; Luke 8:22-25) was a great storm of wind and surging waves which threatened to swamp the boat. The disciples woke Jesus, he rebuked the wind and the waves, and immediately "there was a great calm" (Matt 8:26) as he subdued the sea. The second (Matt 14:22-25; Mark 6:45-51; John 6:16-21) was another great storm of wind and waves but Jesus was not in the boat. He walked unaffected on the thrashing waves and the storm immediately ceased when he entered the boat. Taming and walking on the sea was a divine prerogative (Job 38:16; Ps 77:19; Isa 43:16; Hab 3:15) so that when Jesus subdues the sea "he is doing what is done only by the

⁴³ See, for example, Pss 18:15; 29:3; 4:13-14; 77:16; 89:9-10; Jer 5:22.

⁴⁴ Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1-22.5*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Journal for the Student of the New Testament* 238 (London: Academic Press, 2003), 67. Other OT passages which depict God drying up the sea as a sign of victory include Pss 106:9; 114:3; Isa 44:24-27; Isa 50:2; Jer 51:36; Nah 1:4.

transcendent Creator.”⁴⁵ The sea raged against Jesus but Jesus put the sea under his feet, a biblical symbol of mastery (1 Kgs 5:3; Pss 8:6; 110:1; Eph 1:22; 1 Cor 15:25). In both instances, the turbulent sea brought fear, but Jesus rendered the sea powerless, which resulted in the disciples’ awe and worship of him. Jesus’ mastery over the sea was not simply a demonstration of divine power but is a glimpse of the consummated eschaton breaking into history.

Revelation, echoing the rest of Scripture, uses the sea “as a symbol of chaos, the source of evil and powers hostile to God.”⁴⁶ The sea in Revelation symbolizes the realm of evil (Rev 4:6; 12:18; 13:1; 15:2), the rebellious nations who oppose God and persecute his redeemed (Rev 12:18; 13:1), death (Rev 20:13), and idolatrous practices (Rev 18:10-19).⁴⁷ Antichrist will rise from the sea (Rev 13:1). Consummated eschatology guarantees that the sea—the realm of fear, chaos, repression, dread, darkness, evil, sin, the grave, death, and suffering—will be no more because Jesus, the Arm of the LORD, will one day reign as the visible and undisputed King, who forever puts the sea under his feet so that his people will forever be freed from the pains of suffering.

“For the former things have passed away.” Isaiah envisioned the new heavens and the new earth (Isa 66:17, 22) as the great hope of God’s covenant people for a suffering-free new creation. No longer will death casts its pall over life (Isa 25:8), no sorrows will be experienced or sighings heard but only everlasting joy (Isa 35:10; 51:11), and no crying will be heard (Isa 65:19) for all these former things have passed from memory (Isa 65:17). John incorporated this Isaianic language to describe life in the consummated eschaton. The removal of the sea is the removal of the realm of suffering so that: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev 21:4).⁴⁸ The “former things” are the heartaches, miseries, griefs, despairs, and sufferings which characterize life in the current

⁴⁵ Dane Ortlund, “The Old Testament Background and Eschatological Significance of Jesus Walking on the Sea (Mark 6:45-52),” *Neotestamentica* 46, no. 2 (2012): 327.

⁴⁶ Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 65.

⁴⁷ “Sea” is also used in Revelation as a literal body of water (Rev 5:13; 7:1-3; 8:8-9; 10:2, 5-6, 8; 14:7).

⁴⁸ Mathewson points out that Rev 21:1-5 has a chiasmic structure (Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 33):

- A: The new heaven and new earth (Rev 5:1a)
- B: The first heaven and first earth have passed away (Rev 5:1b)
- C: The sea is no more (Rev 5:1b)
- D: The new Jerusalem-bride (Rev 5:2)
- D’: The dwelling of God is with humanity (Rev 5:3)
- C’: Evil and pain are no more (Rev 5:4a-c)
- B’: The former things have passed away (Rev 5:4d)
- A’: All things are made new (Rev 5a)

The literary parallel of the C and C’ elements support the idea that the meaning of the removal of the sea is expanded in Rev 5:4.

chaos. The sea-free eternity will make suffering a distant memory for which the glorified redeemed will eternally glorify God.

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (also Rev 7:17) shows God’s initiative to comfort his people: “Like a mother who bends down and tenderly wipes away the tears from the eyes of her weeping child, so the Lord God stoops down to dry the tear-filled eyes of his children. Here is a telling portrait of God’s tender mercies extended to the suffering members of his household.”⁴⁹ The verb “wipe away” was used metaphorically to mean “to wipe out, to obliterate, to cancel or destroy.”⁵⁰ God himself will annihilate all the tears his redeemed have shed throughout the centuries due to the nearly infinite varieties of suffering they have endured.⁵¹ In the consummated eschaton will be no tears of pain, injustice, fear, sickness, evil, trouble, regret, frustration, disappointment, cruelty, guilt, remorse, heartache, betrayal, misfortune—afflictions that characterize this age—for God himself will extinguish them.

The physical and spiritual death Adam secured for his progeny will, likewise, be forever gone for “death shall be no more.”⁵² Paul declared that “the last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor 15:26). Physical death is still a reality for all in this age, yet its fearful power has been nullified by the Suffering Servant who died a violent death for the spiritually dead so that they may enjoy the blessings of life. This truth caused Paul to triumphantly question: “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor 15:55). The glorious God in the new heaven and earth will wipe away all threats of death and with it all mourning and crying and pain.⁵³

The chaos-free new heaven and new earth is the realm in which God dwells and “represents the fulfillment of all his covenantal and saving promises as is the climax of all of redemptive history.”⁵⁴ King Jesus has crushed Satan’s head and the Satan-esque head residing in the human heart. The adoption of the children of God is fully consummated so that they are revealed with divinely-imputed glory. The Christ-follower is now conformed to the Son and the Son, in turn, is eternally glorified as “the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29).⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 557–58.

⁵⁰ *NIDNTT*, s.v. “Destroy,” by J. I. Packer.

⁵¹ Hell, in contrast, is characterized by continuous weeping (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28).

⁵² Hell is the second death (Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).

⁵³ See also 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14.

⁵⁴ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 848.

⁵⁵ “Firstborn” was used literally of the “the first to open the womb” (Exod 13:2). The firstborn occupied a favored position within the family as witnessed by God’s last plague on Egypt, which was specially directed against the firstborn (Exod 11:5). In Israel, all firstborn are consecrated to God (Exod 13:2) and received the rights of primogeniture (Gen 27; 43:33; 49:3; Deut 21:17). God called Israel his “firstborn” (Exod 4:22) and the future Messiah was the firstborn (Ps 89:27). Jesus is called the “firstborn” six times in the New Testament (Luke

The creation is fully restored as well as the redeemed heart (Rom 8:1). God's covenant people will be forever freed from the chaos and will enjoy the transformation of the weak, limited body "to be like his [Jesus'] glorious body" (Phil 3:21)⁵⁶ and forever enjoy the ever-deepening blessings of their eternal inheritance secured by Christ. The eternal hope of the consummated eschaton is for the child of God to bask in the glow of divine glory with unhindered fellowship (Rev 21:9-17), which, freed from the presence of sin, suffering, and death, results in everlasting praise and worship of the redeemed for the Lamb, so that the eternal song of the redeemed is, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen" (Rev 7:12).

Consummated Eschatology and Hope for Sufferers (Rom 5:1-5)

This passage begins with the declaration of the Christ-follower's status with God. God irrupted into this world of chaos and sin and manifested his righteousness in the Person of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21). Jesus was the substitutionary, propitiatory sacrifice, who satisfied God's wrath (Rom 3:25). Thus, justification, the forensic declaration of righteousness, is by faith alone in Christ alone (Rom 3:28). The result is that those who put their faith in his atoning work on their behalf now "have peace with God" (Rom 5:1). This peace is objective in nature, that is, God is at peace with those who are in Christ (see Rom 5:10). One result of justification is that "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:2).

The hope of the consummated eschaton. The verb translated "rejoice" in Romans 5:2 is oftentimes translated "boast" and usually carried a negative connotation of arrogant, self-glorifying boasting (Gal 6:13; Jas 4:8). Here, however, the boasting is legitimate and encouraged due to its object—boasting in, exalting in, rejoicing "in hope of the glory of God." Walter Brueggemann calls biblical hope "a *massive theological act* that is not about optimism or even about signs of newness; it is rather a statement about the fidelity of God who is the key player in the past and in the future."⁵⁷ Logan Jones offers that hope is "a bold and subversive act of faith."⁵⁸ Ernst Käsemann explains that this hope is not "the prospect of what might

2:7; Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5). The redeems' conformity to the Son is the highest attainment of his people and, ultimately, he then stands preeminently glorified among the "many brethren" who are conformed to his image. The "in order that" in Rom 8:29 conveys "the great [eschatological] end contemplated in the predestination of God's people" (Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Louis Kregel, 1882], 449). The Father was so well-pleased with his Son that he determined to glorify him above all others for all eternity by multiplying his image into "many brethren." The Son of God will be supremely glorified as he stands as the preeminent Head of a vast multitude made up of all the nations, those whom he redeemed through the cross, those who have been resurrected to both glorify him and sing praises to his glory for all eternity (Rev 5:8-14).

⁵⁶ See also Rom 8:30; 1 John 3:1-2.

⁵⁷ Walter Brueggemann, "Suffering Produces Hope," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (September 1998): 99 (italics in original).

⁵⁸ Jones, "The Psalms of Lament and the Transformation of Sorrow," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 61, no. 1 (Summer 20007): 53.

happen but the prospect of what is already guaranteed.”⁵⁹ Similarly, C. E. B. Cranfield denotes that Christ-centered hope is “the confident anticipation of that which we do not yet see.”⁶⁰ John Oswalt helpfully distinguishes between pagan and biblical hope:

This hope in God is not a son of querulous wishing, but a confident expectation. Unlike the pagan religions where unremitting anxiety was the rule, the Hebrew religion knew a God whose chief characteristic was faithfulness and trustworthiness (Deut 33:28; 1 Sam 12:11; Psa 27:3). This contrast between anxiety and confidence becomes all the more striking when one recalls that the pagan was never left without mechanisms whereby he felt he had some control over his destiny, while the devout Hebrew knew himself to be utterly without personal resources. But better to be utterly dependent on a gracious and dependable God, than left to one’s own devices in a sea of fickle gods, vengeful demons, and inscrutable magical forces.⁶¹

Biblical hope, then, is not wishful thinking but a confident assurance. The justified in Christ confidently boast in, rejoice in, exult in, what God has promised them because of him justifying them— “hope of the glory of God.”⁶²

The divinely-secured “hope of the glory of God” is the consummate eschatological hope John envisioned in Revelation 21. This divine glory descended on Mount Sinai with the giving of the Sinaitic Covenant (Exod 24:15-18), filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38) and Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 8:10-12) at their respective dedications. Isaiah (Isa 6:1), Ezekiel (Ezek 1), the disciples (Matt 17:1-8), Stephen (Acts 7:54-60), Paul (Acts 9:1-9), and John (Rev 1:9-20) each caught a glimpse of the glorified Christ. On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus prayed to his Father for his disciples “to see my glory that you have given me” (John 17:24). Jesus’ return will bring human history to a close to usher in the consummated eschaton “with power and great glory” and he “will sit on his glorious throne” (Matt 25:31). One day, the consummated New Jerusalem will radiate with the glory of God (Rev 21:11) and will have “no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev 21:23). The redeemed will see the Son of God’s glory, will bask in it, will live in it with an incompressible joy so that “the glory of his own divine holiness and majestic perfection will radiate in us and through us for all eternity.”⁶³ R. C. H. Lenski adds: “The glory for which we hope is the display of God’s

⁵⁹ Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 134.

⁶⁰ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, vol. 1, *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 260.

⁶¹ R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981), s.v. “חֲסֵד,” by John Oswalt.

⁶² Paul used a similar idea in other passages (Rom 8:23-24; Col 1:27; Titus 1:2; 2:11-13; 3:7). The redeemed are to be known for “boasting in our hope” (Heb 3:6).

⁶³ John MacArthur, *Romans 1-8*, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press,

blessed attributes when he completes his saving work in us by raising us from the dead, uniting our souls and our bodies, and then ushering both into the kingdom prepared for us.”⁶⁴ Paul used the hope of this eternal future glory as a motivator for sufferers to have hope in this present chaotic world.

The hope of consummated eschatology applied to sufferers. The “more than that” (Rom 5:3) signals a change in focus from the eternal to the temporal.⁶⁵ In other words, Paul now shows some practical implications of the divinely-assured consummated eschatology in present circumstances. The hope of one day living within the very glory of God in the consummated eschaton means that in this present age “we rejoice in (*kauchometha en*) our sufferings” (Rom 5:3). The meaning of *kauchometha en* (same construction in Rom 5:2) has been variously interpreted as “boasting in spite of our sufferings,” “boasting in the middle of our sufferings,” or “boasting on the basis of our sufferings.” James Dunn observes, however, that *kauchometha en* is Paul’s usual way to identify the object of the boasting.⁶⁶ The justified boast in, rejoice in, and exult the confident assurance of one day living in the presence of God’s glory for all eternity and, in this life, are to have the same attitude toward their sufferings. The reason for Paul’s bold statement is due to the chain of Father-pleasing Kingdom fruits suffering produces in the life of his eschatological sons and daughters.

First, “knowing that suffering produces endurance” (Rom 5:3). “Suffering” is any “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword (Rom 8:35).⁶⁷ The verb “produces” in this context refers to a process that produces results.⁶⁸ Suffering is designed by God to produce endurance in the lives of his redeemed. Endurance in secular Greek use was,

1991), 280.

⁶⁴ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 336.

⁶⁵ Martyn Lloyd-Jones comments of the phrase: “What he has been saying is not the end, there is something further, something which in a sense is even stronger” (D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 5* [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1971], 59).

⁶⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 250. This construction is also found in verse 2, the object of the justified’s boasting is the hope of future glory (not despite it). This construction is also found in the Pauline corpus in Rom 2:7; 5:2; 1 Cor 1:31; 3:21; 2 Cor 10:15, 17; 12:9; Phil 3:3.

⁶⁷ “Suffering is in the mind of the sufferer, and may be conveniently defined as getting what you do not want while wanting what you do not get. This definition covers all forms of loss, hurt, pain, rejection, injustice, disappointment, discouragement, frustration, and being the butt of others’ hatred, ridicule, cruelty, callousness, anger, and ill-treatment—plus all exposure to foul, sickening, and nightmarish things that make you want to scream, run, or even die (J. I. Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness: Know the Fullness of Life with God* [Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1992], 249).

⁶⁸ The verb is used with the sense of process in Rom 7:8, 13; 15:18; 2 Cor 4:17; 5:5; 7:10, 11; 9:11; Eph 6:13; Phil 2:12; Jas 1:3.

a prominent virtue in the sense of courageous endurance. As distinct from patience, it has the active significance of energetic if not necessarily successful resistance, e.g., the bearing of pain by the wounded, the calm acceptance of strokes of destiny, heroism in face of bodily chastisement, or the firm refusal of bribes. . . . [True steadfastness] is not motivated outwardly by public opinion or hope of reward but inwardly by love of honor.⁶⁹

Leon Morris defines “endurance” as “active, manly fortitude;”⁷⁰ Douglas Moo as “spiritual fortitude that bears up under, and is, indeed, made even stronger by, suffering;”⁷¹ R. C. H. Lenski simply as “brave patience.”⁷² Endurance is not a characteristic conjured up by human will but is a gift granted by God to his eschatological covenant people (Rom 15:5).

Second, “endurance produces character.” “Character” (*dokimen*) appears to be a Pauline neologism derived from the root verb *dokimos* (“to test”).⁷³ The noun “indicates the result of being tested, the quality of being approved on the basis of a trial.”⁷⁴ The soul-shaping nature of suffering forges within the new creatures in Christ a tested, proven character, such as is found in the saints populating Hebrews 11 and countless others throughout the centuries.

Third, “character produces hope” (Rom 5:4). The passage has now wrapped back on itself with inaugurated eschatological hope intertwining with consummated eschatological hope. Hope is instilled in the redeemed through two different streams, each stemming from justification by faith and each reinforcing the other. The prospect of the unimaginable life in the consummated eschaton results in eschatological hope. This eschatological hope gives the Christ-follower the ability to endure suffering with inaugurated eschatological hope, which, in turn, makes the redeemed suffer long for the hope of the consummated eschaton, which gives deeper abilities to endure suffering in the present, and so forth for an ever upward, ever expanding spiral of hope.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ *TDNT*, s.v. “μένω,” by F. Hauck.

⁷⁰ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 116.

⁷¹ Douglas Moo, *Romans 1-8*, The Wycliffite Exegetical Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 311.

⁷² R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1936), 337.

⁷³ The noun does not have any attestations prior to Paul and only Paul used the word in the New Testament (Rom 5:4; 2 Cor 2:9; 8:2; 9:13; 13:3; Phil 2:22). See, for example, Morris, *Romans*, 220.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁷⁵ Morris believes, “Steadfast endurance leads to the quality of testedness, and this in turn to hope, for the Christian who has been tested has proved God’s faithfulness and will surely hope all the more confidently” (Morris, *Romans*, 221). Theodore Pulcini said it well: “In short, tribulations are a crucible in which Christians gain a sort of existential-spiritual stamina that shows them to be approved and reinforces that hope of a glorious

Paul declares that “hope does not put us to shame, (Rom 5:5), or “does not disappoint” (NASB and NIV), which means this hope “does not rest on something that does not exist, but on God’s future plans.”⁷⁶ God’s future plans for his redeemed is the sea-less, consummated eschaton devoid of crying and pain and suffering and death. The hope of this glorious future will not disappoint “because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Rom 5:5). God’s love is identified as the cross of Christ, the propitiatory sacrifice who secured justification-hope for the redeemed (Rom 5:8). The cross, then, is the Spirit’s means of instilling hope, not only for sufferers in this age of inaugurated eschatology, but also the “hope of the glory of God,” which will be fully realized in all its glory with the consummated eschaton.

Implications for Biblical Soul Care

Hopelessness, perhaps, is the most powerful temptation sufferers must battle, especially if the suffering is long term without any guarantees of relief. Jay Adams counsels counselors:

It is [the counselor’s] task always to sound the note of biblical optimism that is warranted by the promises of God. A counselor must be, above much else, a man of hope. He himself must believe what he says about hope, or he will communicate the opposite. He must be fully persuaded of the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises.⁷⁷

Biblical counselors can help forge hope by helping suffering counselees understand the difference nuances of biblical hope. Hope is the confident assurance of that which is not yet known (Rom 8:24-25; Heb 11:1). Hope is born out of trust in God (Ps 71:5) and his promises (Ps 119:16, Titus 1:2; Heb 10:23). The one who has hope in God will be helped (Ps 43:5) and will not be shamed or disappointed (Rom 5:5). Trustful hope in God results in divine protection and help, both temporally and for the future eschaton (Jer 29:11). New Covenant inaugurated eschatological hope is grounded in what God has done for his child in Christ (Rom 5:2) and is strengthened through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit (Rom 15:13). Gospel-driven hope will be culminated in the future, consummated eschaton (Col 1:5) as the suffering child of God hopes in the final resurrection (Acts 23:6) where the body will be redeemed to Christlikeness (Rom 8:23-25; Phil 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3), and suffering will end (Rev 21:4). Counselees need to understand that their hope is in Christ (Eph 1:18), affectionally draw near to God because of

destiny that will crown their relationship with God (Theodore Pulcini, “In Right Relationship with God: Present Experience and Future Fulfillment: An Exegesis of Romans 5:1-11,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 36, nos. 1–2 [1992]: 70).

⁷⁶NIDNTT, s.v. “Shame,” by H. G. Link.

⁷⁷Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 39–40.

their hope in Christ (Heb 7:19) and resolve to hold fast to their hope in Christ regardless of circumstances (Heb 10:23).

God says that the eternal hope of the consummated eschaton is meant to give temporal hope and perspective to redeemed sufferers. For example, counselees who have suffered betrayal by friends, employers, church, or family members find hope as they put their hope in their eternal friendship of the betrayed Christ (Luke 12:4; John 15:13-15), whom they will see in all his glorious splendor (John 17:24; 1 John 3:1-2). Disciples who have suffered financial setbacks, material want, physical deprivations find hope as they contemplate the inestimable eternal wealth being stored up for them by the generous hand of the Father. Counselors stimulate hope with counselees suffering physical ailments when they remind them of the day when God himself will make pain cease (Rev 21:4). Suffering is designed by God to turn his people's heart-affections to the enduring substances of his eternal Kingdom, which, ultimately, glorifies him and brings hope.

The Puritans modeled for contemporary Christ-followers the practical benefits of mediating on the consummated eschaton.⁷⁸ Their most important and common subject of meditation was on heaven, particularly the consummated eschaton when Christ rules and his people live in his glory. Suffering counselees would do well to meditate on heaven because Christ currently dwells there, heavenly mindedness helps interpret the world and life's circumstances from the eternal perspective, and the consummated eschaton is the child of God's eternal home.

Eschatological hope forged in the furnace of suffering is a spiritually maturing act that signals to the chaotic sea that the child of God sees beyond its current reign to its ultimate demise and to the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. This hope of the bountiful and glorious future the child of God will experience with the Savior in the consummated eschaton translates into hope during times of suffering in this life.

Conclusion

The thesis of this article is that biblical counselors ought to embrace eschatology as a practical doctrine in their counsel of others. The two passages explored gives credibility to the underlying assumption that eschatology is a practical doctrine that informs biblical soul care and motivates for Christ honoring living. The heavy and somber implications of inaugurated eschatology toward those who claim Christ yet persist in sin was seen in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, as well as the hope this theological truth gives to those battling temptations. The temporal hope to sufferers which flows from the hope of the still future consummated eschaton was seen in Romans 5:1-5. These eschatological ideas may be applied by biblical counselors regardless of their personal convictions concerning eschatology.

⁷⁸ The ideas in this paragraph are gleaned from Joel Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 90. The entire chapter, entitled "The Puritan Practice of Meditation," is available from several Internet sites and is highly recommended.

The implications of the soul-care advantages which arise from eschatology are far broader and deeper than the two passages examined. Richard Gaffin insists that, “for Paul, eschatology is not only the goal of soteriology but also encompasses it, constituting its very substance from the outset.”⁷⁹ G. K. Beale concurs with Gaffin’s insight and expands on it:

Therefore, the apostles understood eschatology not merely as futurology but as a mindset for understanding the present within the climaxing context of redemptive history. That is, the apostles understood that they were already living in the end times, and that they were to understand their present salvation in Christ to be already and end-time reality. *Every aspect of their salvation was to be conceived of as eschatological in nature.* To put this another way, the major doctrines of the Christian faith are charged with eschatological electricity. Just as when you put on green sunglasses, everything you see is green, so Christ through the Spirit has placed eschatological sunglasses on his disciples so that everything they looked at in the Christian faith had an end-times tint.⁸⁰

If these men are correct in their assessment, then eschatology should be at the very heart of biblical counseling.⁸¹

The idea that eschatology is central to biblical soul care is evidenced by the eschatological context of cherished passages used by biblical counselors. For example:

The common “put off/put on principle” for the “new self” derived from Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 is predicated by the new covenant, which is God’s covenant with his eschatological people of this present age.⁸²

The redeemed in Christ are commanded to “not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30)—a command grounded in consummated eschatology.

Hebrews 4:12 is a mainstay verse used by biblical counselors to address the power of the Word of God in counseling. The larger context of the passage is a long discussion

⁷⁹ Gaffin, *The Centrality of the Resurrection*, 59.

⁸⁰ Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 18 (italics in the original).

⁸¹ Beale’s advice to pastors is apropos for biblical counselors: “This already-not yet end-time framework for knowing who we are and what God consequently expects from us cannot be communicated effectively in just a few sermons or Sunday school lessons; it must be woven into the warp and woof of a pastor’s teaching and expository preaching over the years. Only then can such a notion be absorbed effectively by God’s grace” (Ibid, 962).

⁸² See Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973), 171-216 for an explanation of the “put on/put off principle.”

about God's eternal rest. Hebrews 4:12 is a reason the author gives for striving to enter into this eschatological rest.

Practical applications of the consummated eschaton are unpacked throughout the New Testament. For example, Philippians 3:17-21 exhorts us to stand firm in light of the glorious body we will one day receive. Similarly, 1 John 3:1-3 gives encouragement to live pure lives because we will one day see Christ in his glory.

Galatians 5:16-26 is a powerful passage that addresses the ongoing and fierce internal war between the sinful flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:16-26), but is within the general context that "we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness" (Gal 5:5)

Romans 8:28-29 is the conclusion of eschatological truths: the redeemed are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" with the prospect of being "glorified with him" (Rom 8:17, 18). The creation and we ourselves long to see the revealing of Christ's followers in glory (Rom 8:19, 23). and "we ourselves . . . wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23).

Paul exclaims the inspiration of Scripture and its ability to teach, reprove, correct, and train in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16-17) within an eschatological context (2 Tim 3:1).

These passages are but the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" for the eschatological context of passages routinely used by biblical counselors in their ministry to others. Since God inspired the New Testament authors to couch practical theology within the context of eschatology, biblical counselors would be wise to follow their lead.

BIBLICAL SOUL CARE DURING THE JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERMENT OF WORLD WAR II

Tom Sugimura¹

On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor as a preemptive strike against America, “the sleeping giant.” Many Japanese American² Christians were attending church that Sunday morning when they heard the tragic news. Within hours, the FBI rounded up over 1,200 “persons of suspicion”: businessmen, Buddhist priests, Japanese-language teachers, and other community leaders. The Nikkei encountered frozen bank accounts, confiscation of “contraband” material such as shortwave radios, cameras, and hunting rifles. A curfew forbade them from traveling more than five miles beyond their homes or staying out past eight p.m. “[Churches] adapted schedules to accommodate evening curfews. . . . As tensions rose, Japanese pastors broadcasted restrictions and information about the pending eviction in weekly worship bulletins.”³

Ten weeks later, President Roosevelt authorized Executive Order 9066—the forced relocation and incarceration of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans from the Pacific Coast. They were stripped of their freedoms and treated like enemy prisoners of war. Many lost their homes, businesses, and savings. Years later, a congressional commission would conclude, “Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity, and the decisions which followed from it . . . were not driven by analysis of military conditions. The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.”⁴

The pre-war climate already prevented Japanese immigrants from becoming citizens or owning land. Rampant racism was even propagated by some professing Christians as biblical truth: “Did God make the Jap as he did the snake, did you hear the hiss before the words left his mouth? Were his eyes made slanting and the hiss put between his lips to warn

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² *Issei* refers to the first-generation immigrants from Japan, *nisei* refers to their second-generation children born in American, and *nikkei* refers to all Japanese Americans inclusively. Approximately 20-25 percent of Japanese Americans professed to be Christians at the beginning of World War II.

³ Anne M. Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration during WWII* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 34.

⁴ Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Citizens, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 18.

us to be on our guard?"⁵ In 1905, the San Francisco *Chronicle* ran a series of articles such as, "CRIME AND POVERTY GO HAND IN HAND WITH ASIATIC LABOR"; "JAPANESE A MENACE TO AMERICAN WOMEN"; "THE YELLOW PERIL—HOW JAPANESE CROWD OUT THE WHITE RACE."⁶ The Methodist Episcopal Church decried such rhetoric, but the *Chronicle* remarked that "while it respected the motives of the protesting pastors it felt that their judgment was biased by their missionary zeal."⁷ As the war loomed, anti-Japanese sentiments were like a powder keg ready to explode. Then after Pearl Harbor, Congressman John Rankin (D-Mississippi), spewed his opinion:

Once a Jap always a Jap. You cannot change him. . . . [I am] for catching every Japanese in America, Alaska, and Hawaii now and putting them in concentration camps and shipping them back to Asia as soon as possible. . . . This is a race war. . . . The white man's civilization has come into conflict with Japanese barbarism. . . . One of them must be destroyed. . . . Damn them! Let's get rid of them now!"⁸

Prior to the war, however, the Lord had been building his church in the Japanese American community. Since the late 1800s, many had been converted through the zealous efforts of churches and missionaries: "Christian missions provided families with child care, employment services, financial aid, and English lessons. . . . They functioned as support systems for Japanese immigrants, particularly women, who had lost the tight-knit social groups of their hometowns and extended families."⁹ The churches would teach how to properly use fork and knife and where to go for medical care. Many Issei parents sent their children to the Christian church as a safe place to learn good morals and American culture. Then by God's providence, many lives were changed by the gospel of Christ. The Nisei church matured through leadership training and ministry experience as the Lord prepared them for the traumatic uprooting to come.

At the outset of World War II, approximately one hundred Japanese American congregations had been established and each body of believers banded together for strength. For example, Seattle Japanese churches pooled resources for the selling and storing of personal property and businesses, launched charity relief for families whose husbands and fathers were held for months by the FBI for suspected espionage, and provided spiritual guidance in the midst of injustice and tragedy. One Japanese American grocer even put his entire stock of food at

⁵ Geoffrey S. Smith, "Racial Nativism," in *Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress*, ed. by Roger Daniels, Sandra C. Taylor, and Harry H. L. Kitano (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1991), 81.

⁶ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1962), 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸ John Rankin, *Congressional Record* (15 December 1941).

⁹ Blankenship, *Social Justice*, 6-7.

the disposal of his pastor. Later in wartime sermons, letters, bible studies, and personal devotions, Japanese American Christians identified with Biblical models like Job and Esther, and found inspiration in the stories of the Exodus and Exile. Yet they also used their Christian faith to reimagine their place in the world, and to construct a spirit of optimism and opportunity in the midst of a seemingly hopeless situation. Through Christianity they were able to supersede national, regional, and denominational boundaries, and pledge allegiance to a higher law and a more powerful lawgiver at a time when their own country was betraying them.¹⁰

Yasushi Wada testified to God's faithfulness when his father was arrested by the FBI. He knew the promise of Lamentations 3:22-23 to be true by experience. I praise God for His faithful guidance every step of the way. . . . My brother, sister, and I— saw our father standing on the other side of a tall wire fence. We were allowed only three minutes to talk to him. My father assured us that God would watch over all of us and that we should continue to trust in Him. His display of faith and trust in Jesus Christ enabled us to do the same and carried us through the three years of separation until we were again reunited in 1944.¹¹

In the spring of 1942, any who were at least one-sixteenth Japanese descent were informed by notices posted on telephone poles: "ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY, BOTH ALIEN AND NONALIEN, WILL BE EVACUATED FROM THE ABOVE DESIGNATED AREA BY 12:00 O'CLOCK NOON. . . ." Forced to abandon their worldly possessions, they were only allowed as much luggage as they could carry. Evacuees would reside in makeshift assembly centers until transferred to one of ten relocation centers around the country. According to Wakako Yamauchi, "Camp was the place they sent us all . . . whether one was rich or poor, alien or citizen, loyal or disloyal, we had the face of the enemy."¹² The Nikkei dealt with grief over their many losses and the shame of being considered disloyal.

The church practiced three primary forms of biblical soul care during the internment. First, they exhorted one another through the public preaching and the personal ministry of God's Word (Romans 15:14). Second, Christian fellowship strengthened them to respond like Christ in the assembly and relocation centers (Hebrews 10:24-25). Third, they were comforted by the love of non-Japanese Christians (John 13:34-35). Soul care has historically involved such "helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns."¹³ The Japanese American internment was a

¹⁰ Madeline Duntley, "Seattle, the Internment, and the Church: Inside & Outside Minidoka 1942-1948," *American Society of Church History* 161 (January 1997), 3.

¹¹ Victor N. Okada, ed., *Triumphs of Faith: Stories of Japanese American Christians During World War II* (Los Angeles: Japanese American Internment Project, 1998), 153.

¹² Wakako Yamauchi, *Songs My Mother Taught Me: Stories, Plays, and Memoir* (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1994), 243.

¹³ William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 4.

crisis in history, but an opportunity for the church to do good works for the glory of God (Matthew 5:14-16). The church today must learn from God's past faithfulness how to care for souls in present times of trouble.

Soul Care Through Preaching

Leading up to evacuation, the most foundational form of biblical soul care came through the preaching of God's Word. Like Christ exhorting his disciples in the upper room (John 14-17), what might a Christian minister say to his congregation to prepare them for unjust suffering? What hope could he offer in the face of an uncertain future? Sermons and testimonies preserved from this time depict biblical soul care during the internment.¹⁴ Reflecting on these timeless truths from Scripture can prepare present-day Christians to face their own uncertain future (Romans 15:4).

Facing Evacuation

Lester Suzuki (1909-1999) was the Nisei pastor of the Los Angeles Japanese Methodist Church. Although he could have avoided internment, he chose like Christ to suffer with his people (Philippians 2:6-7). As he boarded the bus he resolved, "Seda [my wife] and I aren't going to be bitter. This is our test. Maybe we can be reconcilers."¹⁵ His strength lay in the power of the cross as he lived out Romans 12:17-18, "Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." He trusted the Lord to work all things together for good just as in Christ's crucifixion. As Suzuki's family made their new home in a horse stable at the Santa Anita racetrack, he was appointed chairman of Christian youth activities and would prove to be a loving shepherd. He acknowledged his people's suffering and confusion, but also clung to the sovereign majesty of his God. Instead of growing bitter, he prayed for wisdom to raise up youth of godly character who would change the world for good. Suzuki's faith strengthened many in the camp.

On the Sunday before their forced removal, Suzuki preached to his church: "Brethren, we are facing the eve of evacuation. We must evacuate our homes and churches and be taken to strange places, and we will not know what will happen to us. This is our last Sunday on which we can worship in our own sanctuary."¹⁶ Like Abraham being told to leave his homeland, many elderly saints were being forced to abandon all they had worked to establish. They mourned the emotional loss of leaving behind a chapel they had built with their own hands and financed with hard-earned wages. Many had attended Sunday school in that building since childhood and were now being forced to vacate without the certainty of return.

Suzuki did not hide the suffering his people would encounter. Instead, he sought to bolster their confidence by relating their struggle to that of the early church. As Peter had

¹⁴ Allan A. Hunter and Gurney Binford, eds., *The Sunday Before: Sermons by Pacific Coast Pastors of the Japanese Race on the Sunday before Evacuation to Assembly Centers in the Late Spring of 1942* (Los Angeles: Unpublished manuscript, 1945). Ministers continued to preach God's Word in the camps both in sermons and in printed newsletters.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

written to persecuted believers dispersed from their homes and facing an uncertain future (1 Peter 1:1), they too were subject to harsh masters with little say about what would happen (2:18). Thus Suzuki reminded his church: "It is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit" (3:17-18). Christians who suffered unjustly like Jesus would also one day be rewarded in heaven (v. 22). Therefore, the church must not respond to the wrongs committed against them with angry retaliation, but with humility like the Son of God (2:21-24). They were to trust the God who judges justly and rejoice at being counted worthy of sharing in Christ's suffering (4:12-16). In this way, Suzuki prepared his church for isolation and an uncertain future in the camps: "We will not have all the splendid facilities that we have here and we will not have the constant care of a stabilized church. . . . We must look for every opportunity rather than wait for it. If there are no Christians, we should go out of our way and gather two or three and make a Christian congregation."¹⁷ He called them to worship together even if internment did not possess the comforts and security of home. The church's joy-filled response would thus bring God glory as the one who governed their lives.

In addition, God's people retained confidence that their earthly suffering was merely temporary. According to 1 Peter 5:10, "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." Suzuki expressed his faith that the church would grow and flourish in persecution like a plant in rich soil. Then in Christ, they would surely be restored to eternal glory. He reminded them that everyone eventually faces trials which cannot be overcome by human strength or ingenuity. In Christ alone, suffering refines believers (Romans 8:28-29), reveals the joy found in God (2 Corinthians 1:3-4a), and teaches the church to comfort fellow sufferers (vv. 4b-5). Even the greatest hardships can be used by God for the good of the church and the glory of Christ.

A Stone Cried Out

Shigeo Shimada (1906-1984) began following Christ in Japan. After his father disowned him for believing in a "foreign" religion, he immigrated to America for seminary studies. He arrived speaking broken English with only \$200 in his pocket, yet he clung to the truth that the God who saved him in Japan was the same God who would provide for him in a foreign country.¹⁸ He exhorted the Alameda Japanese Methodist Church on the Sunday before evacuation:

You and I are and will be suffering a great deal because of this war. This is an opportunity to test our Christian faith. Let us meet all suffering face to face and endure the coming tribulations patiently. Let us not give up hope, whatever our trial may be. I assure you that a new, better world will be born through our suffering just as a new life

¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁸ Shigeo Shimada, *A Stone Cried Out: The True Story of Simple Faith in Difficult Days* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1986), 13.

is born through the sacrifice and suffering of a mother who gives birth to a child. Remember, you are all Christians and you are all citizens of the kingdom of God. The Issei people are called enemy aliens, and unfortunately the Nisei are treated like aliens as well. However, we must not become enemy aliens of God. Please behave as children of God wherever you may go and whatever your situation may be.¹⁹

Shimada viewed the church's future tribulation as a test of their faith just as James had implored first-century Christians displaced from their homes and scattered throughout the world: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4). James did not say "if," but rather "when" trials come because suffering in this fallen world was inevitable for Christians. James also promised multifaceted trials because, like the Japanese Americans on the Sunday before evacuation, he could not foresee every potential hardship. Christians were to rejoice in the truth that faithfully enduring trials would make them more like their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Shimada counseled his church to pray for wisdom in difficult times (v. 5) and to endure their trials boldly and with patience (v. 6).

He also reminded them that they were "little Christs" who bore the image of God (Genesis 1:27; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7) and represented Jesus in their response to suffering (2 Corinthians 4:8-10). Although two-thirds of the evacuees were U.S. citizens, Nikkei Christians were to live as citizens of God's kingdom (Ephesians 2:19). As children of God they were spiritual royalty (John 1:12) and guaranteed an eternal inheritance as co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17). They might be called enemy aliens by earthly foes and have all of their possessions seized. They might lose houses and farms, businesses and churches, but they would never lose their standing with God. Thus Shimada exhorted them not to become hostile toward the everlasting faithful God who had promised to never leave them nor forsake them (Hebrews 13:5b). He urged them to live as children of the King in whichever place God called them to be royal ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Shimada himself would soon be tested as his family was assigned to live in one of the filthiest horse stables at the Tanforan Assembly Center, a former racetrack. They slept in an old horse stall which had been whitewashed without first being cleaned. Linoleum had been laid directly atop a pile of manure and the putrid smell filled the air day-and-night until it saturated their hair and clothes. Shimada greatly resented being treated like an animal until, reflecting on Christ's sacrifice, his mind was renewed (Romans 12:1-2):

As I fretted over this unfortunate circumstance, my thoughts turned to Jesus Christ who was born in a stable that must have been much worse than ours. It was not whitewashed. The floor was not covered with linoleum. It must have been filthy with the manure of animals. . . . It was fortunate that Mary had cloths; otherwise baby Jesus would have been wrapped with straw just like a baby animal. Yet Mary and Joseph did not complain about their miserable

¹⁹ Ibid., 122.

situation. When the shepherds came to meet Jesus and worship him, it was a heavenly picture. I am sure that the stable was full of glory. However, in another stable of the twentieth century there was nothing but the spirit of resentment and bitterness. Why such a difference between the two stables? It was a difference of the hearts. Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds were profoundly related with God, whereas God was absent in my heart in our stable. I was deeply ashamed of myself. When I realized that being put in a stable as the holy family had been was a unique experience, a spirit of peace replaced the resentment and bitterness in my heart.²⁰

Shimada's situation did not change. He had not been transported from the stable and the horse manure still reeked just as badly. His heart, however, was transformed by reflecting on Christ, who had been born as a helpless babe in a smelly stable. His joy was not found in the absence of sorrow, but in the presence of Christ. For God often provides "the way of escape" through his power to endure suffering (1 Corinthians 10:13). Daniel had prayed in the lions' den (Daniel 6) and Jesus went willingly to the cross (Philippians 2:8). So also, a believer's faith is not determined by circumstances, but rather his response to circumstances.

Shimada was transferred to the Topaz Relocation Center where agitators accused Christians of being pro-American spies. The senior minister, Taro Goto, was even attacked one night and almost killed. Shimada had to sleep with a guard outside his bunkhouse, yet he continued to faithfully shepherd the flock which God had given him (1 Peter 5:1-4). Like Jesus, he was no hired hand who would flee the ministry when times were difficult (John 10:12-13), but would pastor his people at the risk of his life (v. 11). After the war, Shimada continued to pastor Japanese American churches. He also had the privilege of leading his aged father to Christ over twenty-five years after his father had disowned him and thrown him into the street. The Lord rewarded Shimada's sacrifice of leaving home in faith by transforming his father's heart to believe in Jesus.

The Tie That Binds

Donald Toriumi (1914-1980) had pastored the Los Angeles Japanese Union Church for scarcely one month when he preached on the Sunday before evacuation, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" (Romans 8:35). Paul recounted these common fears among Christians of his day before quoting from the psalms—the worship hymns of ancient Israel: "Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered" (v. 36; Psalm 44:22). Toriumi recognized that soul care was a sacred trust passed down through generations of believers both in song and in the treasury of Scripture. Therefore, he looked to Paul just as Paul had looked to the psalmists for spiritual strength in troubled times.

Paul continued, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be

²⁰ Ibid., 123-24.

able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39). Christians could overcome any difficulty by remembering that no earthly tribulation could overwhelm the church or separate God’s people “from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If believers ever doubted this truth, they could simply look at God’s loving sacrifice of sending his Son to die upon a cross (v. 32).

In conjunction with Scripture, the church also looked to historical theology as they sang a hymn penned by John Fawcett, *Blest Be The Tie That Binds*. Toriumi related Fawcett’s own sacrifice for his beloved church by remaining their minister though they could not support his salary.

The parting day came. He preached his final and farewell sermon to his beloved people. Just outside the church were several wagons loaded with the family possessions and books. After the benediction, the people still begged him not to go. Fawcett summoned all his power to keep his decision and got on the wagon. As he looked down into those tear-stained faces, his mind recalled the sorrows, temptations, joys, and the growth of the faith of these people and the present needs of each one of them. He could not leave them. He got down from the wagon and prayed with the people. As he thought of this experience, the words of the hymn which we have just sung, came to his mind.²¹

Toriumi recognized that music translated the church’s shared theology across the centuries and empathized with Fawcett’s heartbreak as he prepared the congregation for his departure. Many of Toriumi’s congregants had been baptized in Union Church. Others had been married in the sanctuary or mourned at the funerals of loved ones. As the church grieved their losses, however, Toriumi reminded them that what they practiced in the past would be carried with them to the camps:

We have brought our heartaches unto our Heavenly Father as we prayed for comfort, strength and courage. We have joined together in the partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Through sermons and the ministry of music, we came to know the presence of God, and were able to live a little more closely to Jesus’ Way of Life. Here we have found many of our friends, and deepened our fellowship. This tie that binds our hearts at the Union Church is a strong one. Even though we may be separated from each other, let us keep this tie of Union Church in our hearts.²²

Like Paul and Silas, not even persecution or prison could prevent the church from praying and singing hymns to the Lord (Acts 16:22-25). In fact, Toriumi added with hope, internment would reunite their church in fellowship with other Christians they only saw infrequently. He also encouraged them to thank God for the kindnesses offered by non-Japanese believers: “We have thousands, yes, even millions of fellow Christians thinking of us and offering to help us in any way possible.”²³ This precious fruit of Christian love could only grow in the fertile

²¹ Hunter and Binford, *The Sunday Before*, 18-19.

²² *Ibid.*, 20.

²³ *Ibid.*

soil of suffering. Toriumi then called his church to demonstrate Christian love to those they would encounter in the camps. Jesus, the elder brother, was the church's example (Mark 10:45) and followers of Christ were to imitate his sacrifice (8:34b-35). Nikkei believers in the camps who comforted themselves with the unfailing love of Christ were able to comfort others with the same love they had received (2 Corinthians 1:3-5). As John wrote, "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Abraham, The Migration Leader

Sohei Kowta (1893-1963), who pastored the Wintersburg Japanese Presbyterian Church, recalled,

On that fatal Sunday, December 7, 1941, I was listening to a radio sermon. . . . And it was right in the midst of that sermon that I learned of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japanese airplanes. . . . All that afternoon I kept myself close to the radio, at first doubting the truth of the news and . . . I went to bed still praying that the news might prove false. On the morning following, I learned that so many of the Japanese neighbors had been arrested by the F.B.I. during the night. Many anxious days and fearful nights followed among our people.²⁴

Kowta's son recalled that "on December . . . 8th, the FBI came to interrogate my father, since he was the pastor, superintendent of the Japanese Language School, and probably by inference, a leader of the Japanese community."²⁵ Kowta journaled his own experience: "Grateful to God for His grace in letting me stay at home while so many of my friends, acquaintances, and neighbors were taken away from their loved ones, I kept myself quite busy in comforting and serving our people."²⁶ He was remembered as quietly summoning the necessary strength to support his family and his congregants.

Shortly before the internment, Kowta preached a sermon on the life of Abraham (Genesis 11:30-12:9) at the Japanese Union Church of "Little Tokyo." He first contrasted the faithfulness of Abraham with the fickle nature of Abraham's father, Terah. Abraham not only followed God in faith, but also worshipped God everywhere he went. Kowta's sermon highlighted three outstanding characteristics which God's people should emulate. First, Abraham was declared righteous not by good works, but through faith in his Creator (Romans 4:1-5; Hebrews 11:8). "Abraham's faith was most clearly shown when he went out of his country in trustful obedience to God. One's faith is most well proven when he trusts in and obeys God without any reservation. Faith, trust, and obedience always go hand in hand. . . . Abraham went out not knowing whither he went. What a faith, what a trust, what an obedience it was!"²⁷ Kowta exhorted the church to trust God even in the face of future

²⁴ Sohei Kowta, "Before the Evacuation," *Desert Echoes* (1943), 8.

²⁵ "Historic Wintersburg, California" (17 February 2013), accessed at <http://historicwintersburg.blogspot.com/2013/02/reverend-sohei-kowta-sunday-before.html>.

²⁶ Kowta, "Before the Evacuation," 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

uncertainty as many, including himself, had been frantic with questions ever since the prospect of evacuation became public.

Second, Abraham was a man of hope (Romans 4:18), “In Canaan he lived a simple life, always dwelling in tents. His life was filled with many hardships and difficulties. But he was never satisfied with the life he was living.”²⁸ Instead, “he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10). Kowta called his people to hope, like Abraham, in the city of God, and not in any earthly dwelling or church building.

Third, Abraham was a man of love. Kowta recounted Abraham’s tender treatment of his selfish nephew, Lot (Genesis 13:8-9) and reminded his people, “Every crisis is a testing time of one’s character. Selfish people, during a crisis, show their selfishness to a greater measure than they do in ordinary times. Generous people reveal their generosity to a greater degree than they do at other times.”²⁹ According to Jesus, a person’s deeds reveal the attitude of their heart (Luke 6:45). So Kowta passionately pleaded,

The real need of the hour is more men like Abraham, filled with an indomitable faith in Almighty God, an undaunted hope in the future of the race, and a self-sacrificial love for others. . . . Fully equipped with these virtues, we shall then have nothing to be afraid of. Give us a desert, we shall make it a beautiful garden; give us a wasted land, we shall change it into a productive field; give us a wilderness, we shall convert it into a fruitful orchard.³⁰

Instead of focusing on how to dispose of their property and possessions, he called his people to pack spiritual necessities for camp life: “It is foolish for us to keep unusable things any longer. And we, as Christians, ought we not to dispose of the undesirable, nay harmful, qualities like selfishness, boastfulness, worldliness, as we begin our life anew at the camp? . . . But let us be sure to make at least those three dominant qualities that we find in Abraham, our own ‘personal belongings.’”³¹ Christians who possessed these qualities could establish a thriving church in any wilderness. Thus Kowta concluded his sermon by describing the church as a people, not a building:

Within a very short time, we shall have to move out from this fair city of Los Angeles, leaving “Little Tokyo” behind us. And this dear church too—this church where we have played together and prayed together; this church where we have talked together and worked together; this church where we have sung together and sacrificed together. And this pulpit which has, Sabbath after Sabbath, inspired our hearts and enlightened our minds. And this very sacred place where many young hearts were joined together

²⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 36-37.

³¹ Ibid., 37.

in marriage, and where we uttered our final farewell to our departed ones. Yes, our hearts ache as we think of leaving our dear “Little Tokyo,” but what is “Little Tokyo” for us without the Union Church in the heart of it? . . . We Japanese shall not be like the thoughtless wife of Lot. We shall not foolishly look back and weep and mourn, and turn ourselves into pillars of salt. Rather, we shall be like Abraham, the mighty migration leader; filled, not with hatred or bitterness, but with faith, hope and love. We shall go wherever God wants us to go, and as we go along we shall bless the people everywhere, as did Abraham of old.³²

Kowta implored his people to look forward like Abraham and not backward like Lot’s wife (Genesis 19:26; Luke 17:32-33). God had not called them to amass earthly accomplishments, but to go to a land where they would walk in faith, hope, and love.

We Shall Have Our Easter

John Yamazaki (1884-1985) served as rector in St. Mary’s Episcopal Church of Los Angeles before the war from 1913 to 1942, then after the war until his retirement in 1956. He preached from Philippians 3:10 on Easter Sunday 1942: “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” On Good Friday, the church had remembered the most tragic event in human history: the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The resurrection, however, made glorious even that most horrible event (1 Peter 1:3). Yamazaki explained how Christ’s disciples past and present have been transformed by this good news:

Christians can never be disappointed and defeated in their faith even in their worst circumstances. Keep in mind the disciples and followers of Jesus who lost their leader, saw their Master betrayed and taken away, witnessed His going through great sufferings, hung on the Cross with wretched criminals, and finally put to death in shame. Naturally, they were at first disappointed, feeling beaten, defeated, and utterly helpless. But when they saw that this same Jesus rose again on the third day, they became entirely different men and women. They no longer were defeated people, but courageously they carried His Gospel to the end of the world, and finally conquered that Roman Empire, the military power of that day, until, as an historian records, Justin the Emperor declared “Nazarene, thou has finally conquered me.” The power of His resurrection was felt by the world.³³

Yamazaki insisted that believers cannot know the power of Christ’s resurrection until they experience “the fellowship of his sufferings.” Good Friday must come before Easter and the sufferings of this present age must come before eternal glory.

You cannot be joyous without the experience of sufferings. You cannot be triumphant until you reach the point of seeming defeat and pay precious sacrifices which

³² Ibid., 38.

³³ Ibid., 44.

sometimes mean the loss of everything, even life itself. It is after His great passion in the Holy Week, climaxed in the Cross, that we have triumphant Easter joy. We who look forward to a better future and a better world, must expect the challenge of sufferings.³⁴

Yamazaki called for faith in God as demonstrated throughout the stories of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Babylonian exiles, and eventually Christ himself: "From Genesis to the Gospels, it is full of stories which I may term, without exaggeration, stories of 'Evacuation.'"³⁵ Yamazaki reminded the church that their hope might not be fulfilled for many generations just as God's people had spent four hundred years in Egypt before the exodus and were exiled in Babylon for seventy years. In like manner, the Nikkei had no idea how long the war would last or the extent of their internment. The Lord would direct their paths, however, even through this vale of tears (Psalm 23:3-4). Thus Yamazaki called the Nisei generation

to accept the evacuation as a great opportunity to test our qualities and prove that we all are as genuine as we profess to be. . . . The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the great assurance of all future life on earth and in heaven. We who have this living faith and hope, have a strength and support not known by those who do not know God and the power of His resurrection. We therefore have an obligation which we should accept as a privilege, to give comfort and assurance to the many who are depressed because they have not yet found the way of Christ and His life.³⁶

Citizens of Christ's kingdom must live differently than citizens of this world, for those who know the power of the resurrection and the assurance of God's love have embarked on a rescue mission to bring others into the kingdom. Thus Yamazaki concluded:

May we go out from here with an aim for the future, trusting Him and His providence. Let us go courageously in St. Paul's spirit of "fellowship in suffering", bearing the Cross of Jesus wherever we go, and let us come through victoriously in His faith. . . . In a sense, this is our Calvary, and we must be willing to say: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." We must also try, with Him, to say: "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit." But that is not all. As Jesus the Christ had His resurrection from the dark tomb, so may it be with us. We shall have our Easter and be triumphant.³⁷

Soul Care Through Christian Fellowship

In addition to ministering God's Word, a second aspect of biblical soul care was Christian fellowship in the camps. Throughout the spring of 1942, as the army hastily converted racetracks and county fairgrounds into temporary assembly centers for residence,

³⁴ Ibid., 44-45.

³⁵ Ibid., 45.

³⁶ Ibid., 46-47.

³⁷ Ibid., 48.

Nikkei Christians organized churches to shepherd fellow internees. Worship services and Sunday schools were initially held in grandstands and mess halls, but soon ministers started weekly Bible studies, prayer meetings, Sunday school, and youth fellowships. They organized counseling and chaplain ministries to care for each member in the interned church. One minister wrote, "I suddenly found myself a shepherd of five thousand souls. . . . Here I have the freedom of living an utterly self-forgetting, self-giving life. Surely the Word of God is not bound." Due to the vast material regarding this period, this article traces one representative group of Christians from the Pacific Northwest to the Puyallup Assembly Center and the Minidoka Relocation Center.

Puyallup

Families from the Seattle area were sent to the Puyallup Assembly Center on the grounds of the Western Washington State Fairgrounds. Monica Sone recounted her family's departure:

When all the busses were filled with the first contingent of Japanese, they started creeping forward slowly. We looked out of the window, smiled and feebly waved our hands at the crowd of friends who would be following us within the next two days. From among the Japanese faces, I picked out the tall, spare figures of our young people's minister, the Reverend Everett Thompson, and the Reverend Emery Andrews of the Japanese Baptist Church. They were old friends, having been with us for many years. They wore bright smiles on their faces and waved vigorously as if to lift our morale.³⁸

Puyallup was poorly misnomered, "Camp Harmony" and many mistook their barracks for a chicken farm: "They looked like chicken coops, a long row of them, and inside they were divided into cubicles. There were no ceilings, so that if a baby cried 150 feet down on the other end of this long line of cubicles, the crying could be heard throughout the entire building. Of course, there was no running water, so that for water, you had to go to the central washroom."³⁹ According to the American Friends Service Committee, "One washroom must accommodate 100 families. Mass feeding will be carried on. There is no shade and very little open space between the buildings. An eight-foot barbed wire fence surrounds the camp."⁴⁰

Residents had no church buildings, pews, or hymnals, yet within days of arrival an ecumenical Federated Christian Church organized worship services, religious education, and social programs. From the very first week, they held Sunday worship services and Sunday school in both English and Japanese. The camp itself was divided into four districts by foreboding barbed wire, so Protestants formed a congregation in each section. As Blankenship reported, "By June over 2,500 incarcerated [one-third of the population] attended

³⁸ Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston, MA: Atlantic, Little, Brown, and Company, 1953), 171.

³⁹ John Tateishi, *And Justice For All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1984), 19.

⁴⁰ Japanese American Relations Committee, *Pasadena AFSC Information Bulletin 4* (27 April 1942).

a Protestant function each week.”⁴¹ They organized their own chaplaincy system to address sick calls and also developed a music ministry. Many young Nisei like Tsutomo “Tom” Fukuyama were pushed forward into ministry despite limited experience: “Like parachute troops who are fighting almost as soon as their feet hit the ground, the young people in the Puyallup Assembly Center began setting up Sunday School the very day they landed. Working efficiently, they mobilized their forces of experienced teachers, drafted new ones where necessary, adopted graded lessons, [and] secured the supplies necessary.”⁴²

Although initial support for the Japanese was tepid, Christian ministers within the camps maintained connections with their larger denominations and fellow ministers outside the camps who would deliver helpful equipment such as bicycles, mimeographs, Sunday school materials, Bibles, hymnals, choir robes, and communion sets. Church members even persuaded the army to transport three pianos and several pulpits from Japanese church buildings in Seattle.⁴³ Seattle churches organized a Vacation Bible School (VBS) and visiting ministers were frequently invited to preach in the worship service: “On most Sundays, white pastors from Seattle, Tacoma, Puyallup, and Sumner drove to the camps—often without remuneration for their time or gas, a rationed commodity after April 1942. Over the summer, more than fifty different clergy worked with the four new congregations.”⁴⁴ Monica Sone remembered this blessed memory of home:

We went to church to listen to our Reverend Everett Thompson who visited us every Sunday. . . . It was a great comfort to see him and the many other ministers and church workers with whom we had been in contact back in Seattle. We felt that we were not entirely forgotten.

With battered spirits we met in the dimly lighted makeshift room which served as our chapel under the baseball grandstand, and after each sermon and prayer, we gained new heart. Bit by bit, our minister kept on helping us build the foundation for a new outlook. I particularly remember one Sunday service when he asked us to read parts from the Book of Psalms in unison. Somehow in our circumstances and in our environment, we had begun to read more slowly and conscientiously, as if we were finding new meaning and comfort in the passages from the Bible. “The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee [Psalm 20:1]. . . . Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help [22:11]. . . . The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” [27:1]

As we finished with the lines, “Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that

⁴¹ Blankenship, *Social Justice*, 53.

⁴² Report by the Washington Council of Churches and Religious Education, “Japanese Assembly Center at Puyallup” (8 September 1942).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Blankenship, *Social Justice*, 53.

my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever” [30:11-12], the room seemed filled with peace and awe, as if walls had been pushed back and we were free. I was convinced that this was not the end of our lives here in camp, but just the beginning. . . . The evacuation had been the biggest blow, but there was little to be gained in bitterness and cynicism because we felt that people had failed us. The time had come when it was more important to examine our own souls, to keep our faith in God and to build that way of life which we so desired.⁴⁵

Squalid conditions and an uncertain future often made ministry in the assembly centers challenging. The church, however, established a sense of normalcy by continuing recognizable practices such as preaching, singing, Bible study, and soul care. The training ground of the assembly centers would also prepare the church for more effective ministry in the future. Leaders demonstrated unity in Christ by partnering across denominational and ethnic lines and the church’s dependence on non-Japanese friends taught them to trust others. In addition, necessity pushed young people into positions of service and developed many new leaders in the Nikkei church.

By the fall of 1942, internees were transported by train from the various assembly centers to ten different relocation centers in the country’s interior. Once again, they were forced to construct new homes out of makeshift materials. Nikkei without a sustaining faith in Christ attempted to make the best of their situation with the fatalistic stance of *shikata ga nai* (“It can’t be helped”) and drawing upon the cultural value of *gaman* (internalization of emotions). “Silence about the camps represented a ‘social amnesia’ to suppress unpleasant memories and feelings.”⁴⁶ Traumatized internees could not adequately express their emotions even decades after the camps had closed. Some felt they were responsible for what had happened, while others remained bitter for life about their country’s betrayal. Psychologist Amy Mass wrote, “Executive Order 9066 confirmed our worst fears. The psychological impact of the forced evacuation and detention was deep and devastating. For the honor-conscious Issei, it was the repudiation of many years of effort and hard work in this country. For the Nisei, it was a rejection of the nation we loved, the nation to which we had pledged our allegiance.”⁴⁷ Occupations such as art, ikebana, baseball, school, and work served to pass the time, but offered no lasting hope for their situation.

By contrast, Christians found solace in their religious faith and even expressed that they were no longer “resentful for being pushed into camp, not bitter, nor discouraged, but happy, strengthened . . . through Christ.”⁴⁸ They clung to the same hope as Paul, a Roman

⁴⁵ Sone, *Nisei Daughter*, 185-86.

⁴⁶ Donna K. Nagata, Jackie H. J. Kim, and Teresa U. Nguyen, “Processing Cultural Trauma: Intergenerational Effects of the Japanese American Incarceration,” *Journal of Social Issues* 71, no. 2 (2015), 361.

⁴⁷ Amy Iwasaki Mass, “Psychological Effects of the Camps on Japanese Americans,” in *Relocation to Redress*, 160.

⁴⁸ Gordon Chapman, *Annual Report* (1943).

citizen, who had also been unjustly treated (Acts 22:25): “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:18-19). They persevered through suffering because of their hope in God’s glorious future and encouraged one another by gathering regularly as Christ’s body. Many began to more seriously follow Christ during relocation with time on their hands to consider spiritual matters and study the Bible on a regular basis. Prayer meetings were well-attended and Christians generally more fervent as they learned to sing old and new hymns. Although not all ministers had advanced theological training, they labored faithfully with whatever skills they possessed. Evangelism was practiced daily and home visitation was more efficient within the enclosed areas of the centers. God had truly worked all things together for good.

Minidoka

Min Yasui described his first impression of the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho: “We saw the barbed-wire fences, the watchtowers, guard houses, the MP detachments, the administration housing, warehouse areas, and block after block of black, tar-papered barracks, about 120 feet long and about 20 feet wide.”⁴⁹ Monica Sone added, “On our first day in camp, we were given a rousing welcome by a dust storm. It caught up with us while we were still wandering about looking for our room. We felt as if we were standing in a gigantic sand-mixing machine as the sixty-mile gale lifted the loose earth up into the sky, obliterating everything. Sand filled our mouths and nostrils and stung our faces and hands like a thousand darting needles.”⁵⁰

The winters were sub-freezing, but the summers were possibly worse: “The sun beat down from above and caught us on the chin from below, bouncing off the hard-baked earth, and browning us to such a fine slow turn that I felt like a walking Southern fried chicken.”⁵¹ On a social level, relocation was also destroying the family structure:

Evacuation has brought about the breakdown of family life. It seems to be humanly impossible to preserve family unity and ideals in a glorified, all-the-year-round campground. Children rush in to dining halls for their daily sustenance without ever experiencing a spirit of family fellowship with a prayer of thanks for their food. They are never at home; for with their pals they are having a glorious time. The home is becoming just a place where are boys and girls sleep for the night. Parents are unable to discipline their children. . . . There is reason to believe that the collapse of home life will have far reaching effects on the character development of our children.⁵²

Other residents began to lose hope as Hanaye Matsushita wrote to her husband, Iwao, who was wrongfully imprisoned in a separate facility: “It’s unendurably hot and dusty, though

⁴⁹ Tateishi, *Justice for All*, 76.

⁵⁰ Sone, *Nisei Daughter*, 192.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁵² Tsutomu Fukuyama, “Our Home Life,” *The Herald* 2.15 (9 May 1943), 2.

eventually I'll get used to it. My body is weak and can only stand so much. I pray to God for strength and tolerance. . . . When I dwell on this situation, I have suicidal feelings, but I've got to keep myself together until your return." Iwao counseled her to trust in God through prayer: "We'll be able to give thanks no matter what may befall us. If we trust in the Lord, even if we are left alone in the wilderness, we'll not feel any loneliness."⁵³

After this initial shock, however, internees began to put both the camp and their personal lives back in order. Fukuyama wrote to another minister about the hope-filled progress in the "desert colony" at Minidoka as the church flourished in that barren soil.

The Christian churches in the center are working in a federated program. Constituent members include Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Holiness, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Over 500 are enrolled in the Church School. The two English speaking services for youth average well over 300 each Sunday. There are special Japanese speaking services for parents which reach 375-400 each Sunday. Besides these, there are evening youth fellowships and midweek services. . . . The Christian Church is busy serving in the centers. It is helping in student relocation, family relocation, ministry to those in physical need as well as spiritual need, and pointing people to the higher spiritual values of life. The plans for a community Christmas with gifts for every child has been due largely to the efforts of the Christian Church.⁵⁴

The Christian ministers at Minidoka labored in gospel partnership with one another since many had already built relationships at Puyallup. Such cooperation was a matter of necessity to care for every Christian in the camp. They dedicated the Federated Christian Church on November 1, 1943 with sermons and cherished hymns such as *Come, Thou Almighty King* and *The Church's One Foundation*.⁵⁵ They offered ministries for all ages, a Nisei youth conference, a church choir, VBS, friendship groups which met in barrack homes, and a National Christian Mission inviting speakers from around the country. That first Easter, 1500 people attended the sunrise service and nearly one hundred reportedly professed faith in Christ.⁵⁶ The church recited the Lord's Prayer together and sang the victory hymn, *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*. They took comfort to follow in the steps of Christ who had given his life as a sacrifice for many.

Some shared joyful testimonies regarding their newfound spiritual growth. Kiyoshi Ishimitsu proclaimed, "As a Christian in Minidoka I have developed, a better understanding of the world, and have something to live for. Here, I have the opportunity of teaching the Gospel

⁵³ Louis Fiset, *Imprisoned Apart: The World War II Correspondence of an Issei Couple* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997), 168-69.

⁵⁴ Letter from Tsutomu Fukuyama to K. Harper Sakaue, 2.

⁵⁵ Federated Christian Church of Minidoka, "Dedication Service" (1 November 1943). An Episcopal church at Minidoka worshipped separately from the ecumenical church and thrived under the ministry of Joseph Kitagawa ("Sunday Church Services," *Minidoka Irrigator* [21 November 1942], 2).

⁵⁶ "Over Thousand Attend Easter Sunrise Service," *The Herald* 2.16 (2 May 1943), 1.

to children.”⁵⁷ Like many before him, he realized the healing power of serving others (Acts 20:35). Mrs. Chester Sakura also praised the Lord for his promises when she felt she could no longer carry on: “Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me and ye shall find rest unto your souls” [Matthew 11:28]. “Fear thou not for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee” [Isaiah 41:10].⁵⁸ Kumeo Tsubahara added how he had been too busy for Christ before internment, but that the slower pace of camp life had reintroduced him to the means of grace: Bible study, prayer, and Christian fellowship.⁵⁹ Such testimonies declared the enduring power of God’s Word to transform lives.

Fukuyama reflected on the church’s final Easter with gratitude and praise: “We cannot but feel thankful for the blessings that God has poured upon us. Life has been good because of God’s love and guidance.” The church must first give thanks for “God’s greatest gift in the world, his only begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In His life we see life as it should be lived and by His standards all of us see our sinfulness and shortcomings. In His suffering and death on the Cross we see what divine suffering is.” Second, the church is grateful for the Christian fellowship of many outside Christians who ministered to the internees. Third, Fukuyama called the church to be thankful “for those of our number who have relocated into normal life and those who have gone into the armed services.” Lastly, he wrote,

Let us give thanks for the closing of all relocation centers. This will be our third and final Easter in camp. . . . Let us remember that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Believe it and live it in the assurance that the God who raised Christ from the dead will likewise give you the necessary resources to launch out into the deep successfully. You cannot fail if you have Christ with you. “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!”⁶⁰

Soul Care Through Acts of Kindness

A third practice of biblical soul care was the kindness shown by non-Japanese Christians who protested against injustice, eased the burden of evacuation, and ministered to Nikkei during relocation. Most of this activism came from theologically-liberal churches, while conservative evangelical churches refused to help for fear of “comforting the enemy.”⁶¹ Counselors must understand that acts of kindness often open the hearts of sufferers who initially reject biblical preaching and Christian fellowship. During the internment, Christians cared for Nikkei regardless of religious background and led many to believe in Christ.

⁵⁷ “What Christianity Means to Me in Minidoka,” *The Minidoka Herald* (February 1944), 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Tsutomu Fukuyama, “Easter Thoughts,” *The New Herald* 2.1 (1 April 1945), 1.

⁶¹ Herbert V. Nicholson and Margaret Wilke, *Comfort All Who Mourn: The Life Story of Herbert and Madeline Nicholson* (Fresno, CA: Bookmates International, 1982), 95.

Despite the overwhelming silence of the times, a handful of courageous Christians stood out for declaring the evacuation morally wrong. Walt Woodward, for example, published a community newspaper “to remind Bainbridge Islanders that ‘Island Japanese’ were not the enemy overseas but schoolmates and neighbors with the same constitutional rights as all Americans.”⁶² Woodward was a voice for the voiceless (Proverb 31:8-9) who spoke up for the Nikkei and was labeled as disloyal himself.

Others, though less vocal, demonstrated kindness through personal ministry as they considered Nikkei to be image-bearers of the Creator God (Genesis 1:26-27). They were bound by Christ to care for fellow members in God’s family (James 2:15-16) and demonstrated their faith by doing good for those in need (vv. 17-26). Esther Rhoads described waking at three in the morning to take butter rolls and milk to children waiting to be evacuated. She drove her own car to a nearby convalescent home to evacuate four feeble-bodied, elderly Nikkei who were unable to get onto the buses or trucks. Throughout the internment, she also advocated legal aid for Japanese Americans. Herbert Nicholson became known as “the truck-driving missionary” for his constant trips to visit the camps. Virginia Swanson helped residents of Terminal Island pack when they were the first to be evicted. Clara Breed, a librarian, sent hundreds of books, gifts, and letters to children who once frequented her library in San Diego. Many Christians also volunteered to teach in the camp schools to provide an education for interned children and Emery Andrews moved his family to Idaho so he could minister to his congregants. He drove an old, beat up, Chevrolet bus 56 times to Seattle (over 1500 miles round trip) to bring back supplies or attend to business for internees. His faithful ministry came at a great price as he was called a “turncoat,” “traitor,” and “Jap lover.”

Outside friends made it possible to construct a functioning church in the middle of the desert. Everett Thompson, for example, proved to be a “most worthy friend and worker” in the church at Minidoka. He conducted one of the morning services every Sunday, taught a young people’s class, and counseled them in person and by letters.⁶³ Minidoka was also located near many friendly churches and received guest preachers from neighboring towns. In exchange, young people from Minidoka sent singing groups, musicians, and their mass choir to perform concerts in outside churches. In many ways, the church was the first to break down America’s barriers of ethnicity, prejudice, and barbed wire.

Soul care through acts of kindness continued during resettlement. Although some remained in camp for the war’s duration, many left early for college, work, or the military.⁶⁴ Volunteers helped over 4,000 students continue their education at universities around the country, working tirelessly to process the necessary paperwork, procure scholarships, and make travel arrangements. Christians also established hostels throughout the country where

⁶² Shizue Seigel, *In Good Conscience: Supporting Japanese Americans During the Internment* (San Mateo, CA: Asian American Curriculum Project, 2006), 4.

⁶³ “A Friend in Need: E. W. Thompson,” *The Herald* 2.6 (14 February 1943), 2.

⁶⁴ The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, composed entirely of Japanese American soldiers, became the most decorated military unit for its size and length of service.

Nikkei could receive room-and-board for almost no cost while seeking employment. Such material assistance was necessary because everything had been taken during the evacuation and resettling Nikkei were given only \$25 and a one-way bus ticket. Japanese American churches would start again as pastors often resettled with their flocks.

By demonstrating the gospel through acts of kindness, Christians earned the opportunity to share words of comfort and counsel. Many Nikkei came to Christ in the same way that the church has cared for refugees and immigrants throughout history. Such loving involvement allows counselors to gain passport with fellow sufferers until they trust the church enough to receive further soul care. This tangible kindness ensures that the truth is spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Conclusion

The church behind barbed wire learned to identify with Paul, “We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3-5). They identified with Abraham whom God had called to make his home in a new land (4:3) and with God's people during their wilderness sojourn (1 Peter 2:11) and the Babylonian exile (Jeremiah 29:7). They identified with the longsuffering prophets and with Christ Jesus himself (Romans 8:16-17).

The mass evacuation of Japanese Americans was neither right nor wise, yet the experience nevertheless enriched their spiritual lives. They could honestly acknowledge the injustice of the internment while still upholding their faith in a sovereign God who sustained them in their weakness (Isaiah 40:30-31). The interned church encountered unique challenges and trials, but also matured by necessity. They dealt with the same problems the church has always faced and therefore clung to the same means of grace: the preaching and personal ministry of God's Word, Christian fellowship, and acts of Christ-like kindness. The church today can learn many lessons for ministering to fellow believers who face similar adversity.

JOHN OWEN'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE EFFECTS OF HABITS: HABITS PROMOTE THE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH

Greg E. Gifford¹

We had a light in this candlestick; which did not only enlighten the room, but gave light to others far and near.

—David Clarkson, Spoken of John Owen at Owen's Funeral

In the wake of the English civil war, groups of clergy were ousted because of their seemingly anti-government teachings, ministry, and perspective. These men did not seek to overthrow the government, but rather to purify the church that had become so closely married to the government. Thus, in 1662 an edict was issued to provide standardization across the Church of England and that edict was the Act of Uniformity. It was declared that there would be uniformity in the sacraments, public prayer, and all of these changes were based on the Book of Common Prayer. However, these clergy members, given the pejorative title *Puritan*, refused to adhere to this new mandate and were ejected from every formal ministry or governmental position in England. This was the Great Ejection of 1662 in which some 2,000 plus clergy members forfeited their formal positions of ministry and government leadership because of a refusal to submit to the Act of Uniformity. One of these clergy members was John Owen—a faculty of Oxford, regular chaplain of Oliver Cromwell, and English clergymen.

John Owen was considered to be one of the greatest theologians of his time, writing over twenty-one volumes of books and sermons that are still preserved to this day.² He has written on everything from the works of the Holy Spirit to the differing perspective on Scripture. He contended with other Puritans, like Richard Baxter on the Atonement, and was

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² Cf. John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 1-21 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965). John Owen "was without doubt not only the greatest theologian of the English Puritan movement but also one of the greatest European Reformed theologians of his day, and quite possibly possessed the finest theological mind that England ever produced" (Timothy Larson, David Bebbington, and Mark A. Noll, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* [Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 2003]). John Webster, professor at University of Oxford, also said, "he considered the Puritan to be the finest theological mind that England ever had produced." In Robert W. Oliver, *John Owen: The Man and His Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 43.

admired by his colleagues for his scholarship. What John Owen is little known for is his extensive writings on habit: Owen spoke more on habit than any other puritan.³ Furthermore, he would write more on the particular subject of habit than any other of his contemporaries, including his co-pastor David Clarkson who would also make great contributions to the area of habits. The researcher's thesis is that *John Owen believed that habits promote the sanctity of the church based on the union of the believer to Christ*. This will be displayed through an articulation of John Owen's belief on habits and their nature, with a transition towards the effects of habit as they pertain to the church. To begin this conversation, though, one must understand a few key definitions.

Key Terms and Concepts to Understand

To define habits the way John Owen would define them, the researcher will simply provided his definition of habits: "And the first property of a habit, is, that it inclines and disposeth the subject wherein it is, unto acts of its own kind, or suitable unto it. It is directed unto a certain end, and inclines unto acts or actions which tend thereunto, and that with evenness and constancy."⁴ It will be displayed in great detail what exactly John Owen meant by the term *habit* and how he understood habits, but the reader must note that John Owen believed habits to be both a disposition and an action.

The term *promote* is "to contribute to the growth or prosperity of."⁵ John Owen would use three terms that are summarized in this term, *promote*. The terms that John Owen would use are "*preserved, maintained and increased*."⁶ He would use this concept to help communicate that the sanctity of the church is promoted through habits.

The term *sanctity* is used to represent what Owen would describe habits as the "great purifier and sanctifier of the church, to free our minds from these corrupt affections, and inveterate prejudices, whereby we are alienated from the truth, and inclined unto false conceptions of the mind of God."⁷ He was not suggesting that this was entirely behavioristic or moralist, but rather that the Holy Spirit infused these habits by way of promoting holiness.⁸ That holiness was simply used in the biblical sense of the holiness to which all believers are called (1 Pet. 1:16).

³ John Owen dedicated seventy-three pages to the works of habit in volume 3 of his *Works* (*The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3, 1-73). The Puritan who spoke about the nature of habits in any way that would compete with John Owens would be that of his contemporary, David Clarkson. Clarkson wrote on habits in his works, too, referencing habits in a handful of locations of his volume 2 (cf. David Clarkson, *The Works of David Clarkson*, ed. James Nichol, 2nd ed., vol. 2 [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1988]).

⁴ John Owen, *Works*, 3:18.

⁵ Merriam-Webster, accessed October 13, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/promote>.

⁶ John Owen, *Works*, 3:56-57.

⁷ Owen, *Works*, 3:452-53.

⁸ Owen, *Works*, 3:10.

According to John Owen, the *church* is “a society of persons, called out of the world, or their natural worldly state, by the administration of the word and Spirit, unto the obedience of the faith, or the knowledge and worship of God in Christ, joined together in a holy band, or by special agreement, for the exercise of the communion of saints in the due observation of all the ordinances of the gospel (Rom. i.5, 6; 1 Cor. i.2, xiv.15; Heb. iii.1; James i.18; Rev. i:20; 1 Pet. ii.5. Eph. ii.21-23. 2 Cor. vi.16-18).”⁹ This is consistent with the biblical use of the term and will thus be employed throughout the entirety of this paper.¹⁰ It will also be used, as Owen used it, to apply to both the local and universal church.

The term *based* is simply used in its modern context. It simply means, “having a specified type of base or basis.”¹¹ The researcher is incorporating this term to show how John Owen based the sanctity of the church on the foundation of union with Christ through the means of habits.

The terms “Union with Christ” are being used in the way that John Owen has identified them, which is consistent with historical theology. He said,

This is that whereby we have union with Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Originally and efficiently the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and us, is the cause of this union. But formally, this new principle of grace is so. It is that whereby we become members of his bones and of his flesh (Eph. v. 30). As Eve was of Adam; she was one with him, because she had the same nature with him, and that derived from him, which the apostle alludeth unto, so are we of him, partakers of the same divine nature with him. Thus, he that is “joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. vi.17), that is, of one and the same spiritual nature with him (Heb. ii. 11.14). How excellent is this grace, which gives us our interest in, and continuity unto, the body of Christ, and to his person as our head. It is the same grace in the kind thereof, which is in the holy nature of Christ, and renders us one with him.¹²

The Union of a believer with Christ will be one of the fundamental understandings to the researcher’s thesis, as it serves as the basis for habits that promote the sanctity of the church.

⁹ Owen, *Works*, 5:505.

¹⁰ Current theologians would describe the church as “The community of all true believers for all time” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 1238. Charles Ryrie says, “an assembly of people who have been called together” in *Basic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1999), 625. And finally, John MacArthur would describe the church as “those who are true believers in Christ” in *Biblical Doctrine* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 926.

¹¹ Merriam-Webster, Merriam-webster.com, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/based>.

¹² Owen, *Works*, 3:13.

Background of John Owen

John Owen was born in 1616 to a Puritan family in Stadhams, Oxfordshire that would send him to Oxford in his early years.¹³ He would receive his BA in 1632 and his MA in 1635 from Queen's College in Oxford. After Oxford, Owen would become chaplain of a Sir Robert Dormer of Oxfordshire. He would marry Mary Rooke in 1642 and father eleven children with her, 10 of which would not live to adulthood. The only child that did live to adulthood would later die of tuberculosis.

Over the next five years Owen would publish his first work, *The Display of Arminianism*, and become an associate to Oliver Cromwell who was the "lord protector of England."¹⁴ Owen would become sympathetic to Cromwell "after the execution of King Charles I by Cromwell's partisans in January 1649, [and] Owen accompanied Cromwell on his military ventures to Ireland and Scotland (1649–50)."¹⁵ Owen would later serve as the vice-chancellor of Oxford, due in large part to Cromwell's influence, and would be forced to step out of this position around 1654 before the Great Ejection.

John Owen would spend the next decades writing and consulting with both English and New England Puritans. He wrote ferociously during this time and was even attacked by Richard Baxter for various views, some of which he defended late in his life.¹⁶ Of note, however, was co-pastor of Independent Church in London with David Clarkson for two years at the end of his life and ministry. David Clarkson is the only other Puritan who would parallel the extensive writing of Owen on habits and it would be David Clarkson that would preach the funeral of John Owen. Although he felt incompetent to speak thoroughly about the character of John Owen's, having known him for a brief period, he made a few comments in regard to his character.¹⁷ One of the comments that Clarkson made in regard to Owen was that

¹³ A Puritan's Mind, "John Owen," accessed October 16, 2017, <http://www.apuritansmind.com/puritan-favorites/john-owen/>.

¹⁴ Britannica Academic, "John Owen," accessed October 16, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/John-Owen/57791>.

¹⁵ Ibid., s.v. "Cromwell."

¹⁶ "John Owen entered into soteriological debate for essentially soteriological reasons. In 1676 he published *The Nature of Apostasy from the Profession of the Gospel*. In explaining why he wrote the book, Owen opened with this truth: "That the state of Religion is at this day deplorable in most parts of the Christian World, is acknowledged by all." These opening words parallel those of Baxter but Owen's frame of reference was quite different. Rather than fretting over Christian division, he deplored England's retreat from the Protestant Reformation. Tim Cooper, "John Owen, Richard Baxter and the Battle for Calvin in the Latter 17th Century England," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20, no. 4 (2016): 63–78.

¹⁷ David Clarkson spoke to this incompetency in his funeral address about his familiarity with John Owen: "It was my unhappiness that I had so little and late acquaintance with him, which makes me not competent for such an undertaking; the account that is due to the world, requires a volume, and a better hand than mine, which I hope it will meet with in time" (Owen, *Works*, 1:419).

A great light is fallen; one of eminency for holiness, learning, parts, and abilities; a pastor, a scholar, a divine of the first magnitude. ... I need not tell you of this that knew him, and observed that it was his great design to promote holiness in the power, life, and exercise of it among you. ... He has a burning and a shining light, and you for a while rejoiced in his light.¹⁸

Clarkson clearly respected and admired John Owen, which is obvious from his funeral sermon.

He spent the majority of the funeral sermon highlighting the giftedness and abilities of Owen, only to remind the church that “his conversation was not only advantageous in respect to his pleasantness and obligingness; but there was that in it which made it desirable to great persons, natives and foreigners, and that by so many, that few could have what they desired.”¹⁹ Owen seemed to have both the giftedness of a sound intellect and also a character that complimented this giftedness. The significance of this sermon for the purposes of this paper is that David Clarkson would speak about habits in a similar capacity to that of Owen, and this sermon establishes that Clarkson learned from Owen in many areas, including that of habit.²⁰

An Understanding of Owenian Habit

In order to best represent John Owen, the researcher is attempting to use the terms that John Owen would use and to define them in the way that he would use them. John Owen spoke more into habits in a systematic and concise perspective than any other of the Puritans.²¹ For Owen habits were part of the conversation of sanctification and Pneumatology. In fact, in *The Works of John Owen* the majority of volume 3 is dedicated to the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life.²² Within this volume is where John Owen situates his conversation on habits and the Holy Spirit with the effects of those habits as they pertain to the church. To begin, one must understand what Owen believed to be a habit. As mentioned above, Owen defines habits as, “And the first property of a habit, is, that it inclines and disposeth the subject wherein it is, unto acts of its own kind, or suitable unto it. It is directed unto a certain end, and inclines unto acts or actions which tend thereunto, and that

¹⁸ Owen, Works, 1:420.

¹⁹ Owen, Works, 1:420.

²⁰ For further examination of the cross-pollination of Owen to Clarkson, consult David Clarkson, *Selected Writings of David Clarkson*, ed. John Blackburn (London: Wycliffe Society, 1846). Also see Robert Oliver’s comments: “One is not surprised to discover that he had assistants during these years [1668-1684], the best known of whom was David Clarkson who was serving the church at the time of Owen’s death.” Robert W. Oliver, *John Owen: The Man and His Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 35.

²¹ Cf. footnote 2 for greater clarity on this statement.

²² John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965).

with evenness and constancy.”²³ Of note, Owen begins immediately with the effect or function of the habit. He suggests that the function of the habit is two-fold: (1) inclines and (2) disposes, which results in actions of the same type.

This inclination is towards the same genus of the habit. For instance, Owen says, “Intellectual habits are arts and sciences. When men by custom, usage, and frequent acts in the exercise of any science, art, or mystery, do get a ready facility in and unto all the parts and duties of it, they have an intellectual habit therein.”²⁴ He displays that the type of habit will help communicate the type of inclination or disposition. In this case, intellectual habits dispose one to intellectual inclinations. He also says the same is true of moral and supernatural habits.²⁵ In making this observation Owen reveals what he believes to be true about all habits and then offers a classification for those habits. Moreover, one of the fundamental aspects of every habit—in the mind of John Owen—is that habits “incline and dispose.”

Owenian Belief of the Types of Habits: Infused and Supernatural

The backbone of Owen’s discussion on habits is that he understands all habits to incline and dispose, and therefore he believes that at conversion a believer receives implanted or infused supernatural habits. He says in regards to supernatural habits, “That there is such a habit or principle supernatural, infused or created in believers by the Holy Ghost, and always abiding in them.”²⁶ Owen believed that at the point of salvation the Holy Spirit supernaturally infused habits into Christians so that those habits will “make us meet to live unto God.”²⁷ This would be more of a reference to the disposition that was mentioned above, rather than to the actions themselves—however, the disposition does incline towards the action.

According to Owen, a supernatural habit is what

I call this principle of holiness a habit; not as though it were absolutely of the same kind with acquired habits, and would in all things answer to our conceptions and descriptions of them: but we only call it so, because, in its effects and manner of operation, it agreeth in sundry things with acquired intellectual or moral habits. But it

²³ Owen, 3:18.

²⁴ Owen, 3:8.

²⁵ Owen, 3:8-9, 7.

²⁶ Owen, 3:7.

²⁷ Owen, 3:7. “There is wrought and preserved in the minds and souls of all believers, by the Spirit of God, a supernatural principle or habit of grace and holiness, whereby they are made meet for and enabled to live unto God, and perform that obedience which he requireth and accepteth through Christ in the covenant of grace; essentially or specifically distinct from all natural habits, intellectual and moral, however or by what means soever acquired or improved” (472, 274).

hath much more conformity unto a natural unchangeable instinct, than unto any acquired habit.²⁸

Owen is recognizing that the supernatural habit does have effects that are cultivated and also predisposes, as do intellectual and moral habits, however what he is primarily referring to would be more along the line of an instinct. The supernatural habit is like an instinct in the fact that this supernatural habit serves as a disposition to the acts of holiness and obedience. Owen clearly states:

a virtue, a power, a principle, of spiritual life and grace, wrought, created, infused into our souls, and inlaid in all the faculties of them, constantly abiding, and unchangeably residing, in them, which is antecedent unto, and the next cause of, all acts of true holiness whatever.²⁹

Owen is using the principle or virtue of habits in regard to what he means by a supernatural habit. Owen believes that at the point of salvation the Holy Spirit initiates and implants this new disposition and this new disposition leads to all of the acts of holiness.³⁰ The idea of virtue is something that Owen communicates as he speaks to the nature of the habit, which is an Aristotelian origination as will be displayed.³¹ Yet, Owen believed that this idea was one that was communicated throughout Scripture in the idea of God's promise to circumcise the hearts of the Israelites and grant a new heart as part of the New Covenant promise.³² However, a summary of Owen's position on habits is warranted to provide greatest clarity in regards to the way he uses the term *habit*.

Up to this point, Owen has differentiated between types of habits—intellectual, moral, natural, and supernatural—and the function of those habits. He believes that the nature of a habit entails both the disposition the habit forms and the corresponding actions of that habit. Furthermore, in regard to supernatural habits, he believes that the supernatural habits are implanted by the Holy Spirit and sustained through the power of the Holy Spirit. And he

²⁸ Owen, 3:9-10.

²⁹ Owen, 3:10. "Moral habits are nothing but strong and firm dispositions and inclinations unto moral acts and duties of their own kind; as righteousness, or temperance, or meekness" (Owen, 3:18-19).

³⁰ Furthermore, Owen believes that the Holy Spirit sustains and preserves supernatural habits after their implantation (3:10). Although moral and intellectual habits can be sustained through their exercising of them, supernatural habits are sustained through the work of the Holy Spirit.

³¹ Owen, 3:43. Also cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.C.W. Taylor (N.P.: OUP Oxford, 2006), 63.

³² Jeremiah 31:3; Deuteronomy 30:6 in Owen 3:11. "This new heart is a heart with the law of God written in it, as before mentioned ; and this new spirit is the habitual inclination of that heart unto the life of God, or all duties of obedience" (3:11).

believes that the supernatural habit is antecedent to all acts of holiness.

Owenian Definition of Natural Habits

In John Owen offering a function of habits, he offers his implicit definition of habits. As Owen defines intellectual, moral, and supernatural habits he says of each that they all incline according to their nature. Of intellectual habits, as mentioned above he says “When men by custom, usage, and frequent acts in the exercise of any science, art, or mystery, do get a ready facility in and unto all the parts and duties of it, they have an intellectual habit therein.”³³ Of moral habits, John Owen notes that

These habits do incline, dispose, and enable the will to act according to their nature ... by an assiduous diligent performance of the acts and duties of them, may attain such a readiness unto them and facility in them. ... Moral habits are nothing but strong and firm dispositions and inclinations unto moral acts.³⁴

Both of these are similar to what Owen believed in regard to supernatural habits. He says of supernatural habits “That, according to the nature of all habits, it inclines and disposeth the mind, will, and affections, unto acts of holiness suitable unto its own nature, and with regard unto its proper end, and to make us meet to live unto God.”³⁵ Owen would say that all habits incline and dispose, but that only the supernatural habits incline and dispose unto a life of godliness and piety.³⁶

The Owenian understanding of habits is that they are always inclining and disposing towards their own nature—sinful, supernatural, moral, and intellectual. This basis for the function of habits enumerates the foundation for how Owen connects the dots of habits to the work of the Holy Spirit, as displayed in his definition of supernatural habits above. He sees that in order for a Christian to possess habits that are disposing them towards the God-honoring action, that there will be an infused habit by the Holy Spirit at the point of conversion. Furthermore, this will become important as will be displayed later because Owen would argue that the moral habit of a person will help discern whether or not they are in the Spirit or not. Therefore, the importance of habits as they pertain to the sanctity of the church is to allow for evaluation of a person’s natural habits and thus show what are their

³³ Owen, 3:8.

³⁴ Owen, 3:8-9, 18-19.

³⁵ Owen, 3:7.

³⁶ Owen, 3:12. “This new heart is a heart with the law of God written in it, as before mentioned; and this new spirit is the habitual inclination of that heart unto the life of God, or all duties of obedience.” Owen even would say the same is true of sinful habits: “a sinful, depraved habit, as in many other things, so in this, differs from all natural or moral habits whatever: for whereas they incline the soul gently and suitably to itself, sinful habits impel with violence and impetuosity; when lusts are said to find or wage ‘war against the soul’ (1 Pet. 2:2)” in *Mortification of Sin* (Louisville, KY: n.p., 2013), 42-43.

inclinations.

Etiology of Owenian Habit

One must ask, why did Owen partition down habits like he did in regard to intellectual, moral, and supernatural? Where did he develop the understanding of a supernatural habit? And does he cite any other authors in support of his conclusions? Even of greater interest than the source of these ideas would also be their biblical accuracy. Is what John Owen taught in regard of biblical origins or biblical agreement? Of note, Owen quotes only one extra-biblical source in his writings on habit and that source was Aristotle and his *Nicomachean Ethics*.³⁷

Owen mentions, “As Aristotle says, ‘Virtue is a habit which maketh him that hath it good or virtuous, and his actions good.’”³⁸ Of particular importance is that Owen cites Aristotle in regard to habit and how the habit promotes actions of its own kind. He was using Aristotle’s writings to segue into his own teaching on how the nature of a habit would incline one to certain actions that are similar to that nature. Furthermore, the same classifications of habits were of Aristotelian origins.

Owen was using the terms that Aristotle employed concerning habit, but offered a biblical alternative to the Aristotelian definitions. To illustrate this, one can see the following statement by Aristotle: “Virtue too is distinguished into kinds in accordance with this difference; for we say that some of the virtues are intellectual and others moral, philosophic wisdom and understanding and practical wisdom being intellectual, liberality and temperance moral.”³⁹ Now, listen to the words of Owen: “Now all *moral habits* are seated in the will. *Intellectual habits* are not immediately affective of good or evil, but as the will is influenced by them. These habits do incline, dispose, and enable the will to act according to their nature

³⁷ This is not to say that Owen was unaffected by other extra-biblical authors. For instance, Thomas Aquinas also had a great effect upon Owen’s thought and theology. Carl Trueman notes, “Owen’s mind, then would have been filled with the kind of questions and answers which the medieval schoolmen raised in their classroom debates and, as I have argued elsewhere, what we have in Owen’s theology as a philosophical is a modified version of the thought of Thomas Aquinas.” Robert W. Oliver, *John Owen: The Man and His Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 45.

John Owen would have become intimately familiar with Aristotle in his studies at Oxford, under the tutelage of Thomas Barlow. Thomas Barlow was the Provost of Queen’s College during Owen’s tenure and was the direct mentor to him for the majority of his post-baccalaureate education. Carl Trueman notes, “His influence on Owen, both theological and metaphysical, was profound; and by all accounts they became good friends, despite significant differences on the matter of conformity” in Carl Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 3. It was most likely during this part of his education that Owen would have been exposed to the teachings of Aristotle. For further study on this topic, cross-reference the basic reading list of Thomas Barstow, *Autoschediasmata de Studio Theologiae* (Oxford, 1699).

³⁸ Owen, 3:43.

³⁹ Aristotle, Brown, L., & Ross, W. D., *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2009).

[italics mine].”⁴⁰ Owen employs the same terms as Aristotle, but offers varying definitions of those habits.

Aristotle would describe an intellectual habit as, “intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time).”⁴¹ Naturally, Aristotle was emphasizing the need for teaching in his *Nicomachean Ethic*, and says of the intellectual habit that it is based on teaching, but is a state of character.⁴² Essentially, Aristotle believed that the type of habit (i.e., intellectual) was a disposition that would lead to similar actions of the nature of that habit, something that Owen firmly taught and believed. Furthermore, Aristotle believed that to act against one’s nature would be impossible.

Aristotle said, “From this it is also plain that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. For instance, the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times.”⁴³ The nature of a habit would incline a person to act towards that nature, from Aristotle’s perspective. Now see the words of Owen on this matter:

The first property of a habit, is, that it inclines and disposeth the subject wherein it is, unto acts of its own kind, or suitable unto it. ... Habits that are acquired by many actions, have a natural efficacy to preserve themselves, until some opposition that is too hard for them, prevail against them, which is frequently (though not easily) done.⁴⁴

Owen’s thoughts on habits are strikingly similar to that of Aristotle’s, whom he quotes to support views on habits. It seems obvious that Aristotle shaped and influenced the way in which Owen thought about habit as dispositions, their classification, and also the development of those habits.⁴⁵ The table below helps to illustrate the framework that Owen developed with Aristotelian origins.

⁴⁰ Owen, 3:43.

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103A:15.

⁴² “If, then, the virtues are neither passions nor capacities, all that remains is that they should be states of character. Thus we have stated what virtue is in respect of its genus” (1106a, 12-15).

⁴³ Aristotle, 1103a, 15.

⁴⁴ Owen, 3:18.

⁴⁵ In regards to the development of habits, Owen had a biblical alternative with the idea of a supernatural habit. However, Aristotle struggled to articulate how a person can change if they cannot act apart from their nature. Ross Lesley said, “we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit: whether a person had virtue by nature was a much debated question; see especially Plato’s *Meno*. Aristotle’s compromise view, expressed here, is attractive. At VI.13 he allows a kind of ‘natural virtue’, such as a naturally brave child might possess, but distinguishes it from virtue proper. Habit is not to be thought of as unthinking, but rather as intentional habituation, which then becomes second nature” (212).

Aristotelian Categorization with Owenian Adjustments	
Owen: "Natural Habits" Aristotle: "Habits"	Owen: "Infused Habits" Aristotle: "Virtues"
Intellectual Moral Sinful	Frame of Spirit Disposition Infused Habit Supernatural Habit

Table 1: Categorization of Natural versus Infused Habits

The categories were of Aristotelian origin, but the subcategories were of Owen's creation. He would use the terms that Aristotle used, and then offer terms to identify what he meant. The over-arching categories were Natural Habits and Infused habits. Under each of these categories, there were certain Owenian words used to articulate similar truths to that of Aristotle. It is evident from this table that Owen incorporated the categories of Aristotle, but that he used his own terminology to describe Aristotelian categories. Perhaps the most descriptive way to state the etiology of habits for John Owen is that it seems like Owen read a fair amount of Aristotle growing up. This is not to debunk Owenian perspective of habit, but to suggest that the categories for habit were not of biblical origin within the thinking of Owen. Owen's understanding of habit originated from Aristotelian thinking and was critiqued with biblical thinking to form Owen's teaching.

Biblical Critique of Aristotelian Thinking

To begin, Owen held that there were certain aspects of habits that corresponded more closely to virtues than to natural habits.⁴⁶ The way that Owen parsed this out in his mind is that a habit would both a natural habit and also a disposition towards those habits, as mentioned above. Meaning, the reason one acquires the habit and the acquired habit were both part of John Owen's understanding of habit. It was from this understanding that he mentioned two key passages to articulate the instinctual/disposition component to habits: Isaiah 1:3 and Jeremiah 8:7.

Isaiah says, "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" and Jeremiah says, "Even the stork in the heavens knows her times, and the turtledove, swallow, and crane, keep the time of their coming, but my people know not the rules of the Lord." Owen was illustrating that the people of Israel were rebuked for not doing that which should have been instinct for them. Namely, they were

⁴⁶ Owen, 3:9.

rebuked for not understanding the ways of the Lord and not following them, either. The point that Owen was making is that God implants in the believer something more dynamic when he implants the infused habit: “who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the heavens (Job 35:11)?”⁴⁷

Owen believed that even animals have instincts and that in a similar way, God instructs the believer to be wiser than the animal kingdom through the implantation of animal instincts. After establishing this point, Owen sees that the promise of the New Covenant is another way of stating the fulfillment of an infused habit. According to Owen, Deuteronomy 30:6 represented the process of the infused habit. “And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deut. 30:6). About this passage, Owen said “The habit or principle which we have described, is nothing but a transcript of the law of God, implanted and abiding on our hearts, whereby we comply with, and answer unto, the whole will of God therein.”⁴⁸ Owen is simply equating the infused habit to what the Bible would call a new heart, as promised in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:33).

Concerning the practice of habits as regular or being acquired, Owen is relatively silent. The only area where he speaks of the need to practice habits is when speaking of the infused habits effects. He says, “It is true, that it is our duty, with all care and diligence, in the use of all means, to preserve, cherish, and improve both the principle itself, and its actings in these holy dispositions.”⁴⁹ The passages of Scripture that he uses to support this are passages that primarily are a reference to persevere in good works: Hebrews 6:11-12 and Isaiah 40:31.⁵⁰

An Evaluation of Owen’s Hermeneutic

Regarding habits, Owen offered many texts that were pertinent and theologically connected to the idea of frequent practice, disposition, and obedience. In his employment of the passage, he would use them in sound and hermeneutically consistent ways.⁵¹ In fact, the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3:10.

⁴⁸ Owen, 3:11. Owen would also say that the converse is true for those who are apart from Christ. He cites Romans 8:7-8 as an evidence that for those who are unbelievers, their mind is set on the flesh thus they are inclined to perform the deeds of the flesh (3:20).

⁴⁹ Owen, 3:24.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3:24. “We are to shew all diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end in the covenant unto the end; Heb. vi. 11. And in the use of means, and the exercise of grace is it, that it is infallibly kept and preserved.”

⁵¹ Of note, he simply uses the idea of instinct (Isa. 1:3; Jer. 8:7) and also the promise of the New Covenant (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 31:33). These two passages and theological suggestions are, in fact, within a framework of Christian orthodoxy. Although disagreement may come as to whom the promise of the New Covenant would be applied to, it is widely agreed that the New Covenant is, indeed, a promise to reform the heart.

question was not one of his hermeneutics but do those same principles apply? For instance, is the promise of the New Covenant a promise towards an infused habit? If so, why not just use the term of Scripture, which would be “new heart.” If one were to take issue with Owen it would be at the point of his connecting terms to biblical ideas that perhaps would be better articulated in other capacities (i.e., “new heart” instead of “infused habit”). However, one would find great difficulty to critique his hermeneutic. From this understanding, then, one can begin to understand the effects of habits in regard to the church.

Habits Promote the Sanctity of the Church: Union with Christ

John Owen believed that the habits of a person would to promote the sanctity of the church. According to Owen, the church was the called out gathering of believers, and it was the duty of all Christians to be engaged in local fellowship with those who were also called out.⁵² His ecclesiology was greatly shaped after his studies during his time at Parliament. Carl Trueman says that during Owen’s time in Parliament, he read

a little book by the Puritan emigrant to the New World, John Cotton: *The Keys of the Kingdom*. He was to credit this book with altering his opinion of church government from a broadly Presbyterian ecclesiology, where ultimate power in the church lay in the higher courts and assemblies which operated at a supra-congregational level, to that of Independency, where power was restricted to the individual congregation, albeit one with a strong eldership and not an egalitarian democracy.⁵³

It was during this time that the formation of an independent, elder-led ecclesiology would develop. He said, “The constitution of these parochial assemblies (i.e., parish churches) is not from heaven, but of men.”⁵⁴ After this point in Owen’s ministry, he began to stand firm for the new convictions he developed. There is a sense in which this conviction would cost him great comforts as the Church of England was brooding with conflict by this point.

Wedged in the middle of this ecclesiology was what John Owen taught on the relationship of habit to the sanctity of the church. John Owen emphatically taught that these habits—both infused and the natural habits—promote holiness and the sanctity of the church through union with Christ.⁵⁵ How do they promote sanctity of the church one must ask? Owen

⁵² “It is the indispensable duty of every disciple of Christ, in order unto his edification and salvation, voluntarily, and of his own choice, to join himself in and unto some particular congregation, for the celebration of divine worship, and the due observation of all the institutions and commands of Christ” in Oliver, *John Owen: The Man and His Theology*, 169.

⁵³ Carl Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man*, 3.

⁵⁴ Oliver, *John Owen: The Man and His Theology*, 171.

⁵⁵ Of note, John Owen also said of the nature of the church that an especial society or congregation of professed believers, joined together according unto his mind, with their officers, guides or rulers, who he hath

would see that the first way that habits promote the unity of the church is through union with Christ: “Whereas, therefore, the Spirit of Christ communicated from him, for our union with him, is the cause and author of all grace and evangelical holiness in us, it is evident, that we receive it directly from Christ himself, which gives it the difference from all other habits and acts pleaded for.”⁵⁶

Again, as with habit, Owen situated this conversation within the context of the work of the Holy Spirit and suggested that the Holy Spirit—through union with Christ—causes habits that are indeed holy. The difference that Owen was seeking to clarify in this section was the understanding of habits as being moral habits, but not necessarily God-honoring habits. His objection was to those who believed that one could perform moral habits that “prepared” them for their union with Christ. However, Owen notes, “Let them that can, satisfy themselves with these things; for my part, I have no esteem or valuation of that holiness as holiness, which is not the immediate effect of the Spirit of sanctification in us.”⁵⁷ This prevents one from thinking that they can prepare themselves for union with Christ and somehow produce a level of holiness apart from the work of the Spirit in their life.

The significance of this statement is that the person who believes in their moral habit can promote holiness would disagree with John Owen. He is arguing that only through the work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life can they produce holiness. And this holiness comes through their union with Christ that affects their habits to be actual acts of holiness:

For in the same instant whereby any one is united unto Christ, and by the same act whereby he is so united, he is really and habitually purified and sanctified. For, where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, and purity, and holiness. All acts and duties of holiness, are in order of nature consequential hereunto; but the person is quickened, purified, and sanctified, in its union.⁵⁸

Union with Christ is said to be the source of the sanctity of any habits, according to Owen. This union with Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, precedes a habit becoming or contributing towards holiness. Thus, for one to be united with Christ there is a sense in which they are “really and habitually purified and sanctified.” This reference is to their infused habit that often looks like a disposition in our modern terminology.

Habits Promote The Sanctity of the Church: Discerning Habits

appointed, which do or may meet together for the the celebration of all the ordinances of divine worship, the professing and authoritatively proposing the doctrine of the gospel, with the exercise of the discipline prescribed by himself unto their own mutual edification, with the glory of Christ, in the preservation and propagation of his kingdom in the world” Robert W. Oliver, *John Owen: The Man and His Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 167.

⁵⁶ Owen, vol. 3, 61-63.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 3:61.

⁵⁸ Owen, *Works*, 3:61.

After teaching that habits would increase and promote the sanctity of the church, he also taught that to distinguish those who are moral and those who are holy would also promote the holiness of the church. His reasoning was built on the understanding that a believer is united with Christ. It goes something like this: union with Christ would help promote holiness; the ability to discern the difference between the believer and the unbeliever can be seen in habits of holiness; thus, discerning between holy or moral habits would purge unbeliever's from among the church.

Here is what Owen said,

For if that which men call morality be so derived from the Lord Christ by virtue of our union with him, it is evangelical grace; if it be not, it is either nothing, or somewhat of another nature and kind; for grace it is not, nor holiness neither. And all that I have to prove herein, is, *that the Lord Jesus Christ is a head of influence, the spring or fountain of spiritual life unto his church*, wherein I know myself to have the consent of the church of God in all ages. And I shall confine the proof of my assertion unto the ensuing positions, with their confirmation.⁵⁹

In this statement, Owen is attempting to validate that the source of holiness comes through Christ. Secondly, he then says that the discernment of what this looks like can be seen in a forsaking of sin.

Owen thought that the union with Christ would overflow into a forsaking of sin, which is not something that can be done in morality alone. He said, "It is indeed our duty so to purify and purge ourselves Therefore, the purging of ourselves is that which is not absolutely in the power of our natural abilities."⁶⁰ This purging was to be the litmus test for morality or holiness within the believer or unbeliever. Thus, if one is forsaking sin then there would be a good indicator that they were not a moral person, but a holy person. In discerning this, the church would be given great advantage and assistance in promoting sanctity. One can see that through the habits of forsaking sin that there is—most likely—a genuine believer, according to Owen. He then goes on to connect the dots to this as being a holy habit that promotes the sanctity of the church.

After stating that one can never purge sin without union with Christ, he says that

Therefore, the purging of ourselves is that which is not absolutely in the power of our

⁵⁹ "That which principally differenceth evangelical holiness, with respect unto the Lord Christ, from all other natural or moral habits or duties, and whereby he is made sanctification unto us, is, that from him, his person as our head, the principle of spiritual life and holiness in believers is derived; and by virtue of their union with him, real supplies of spiritual strength and grace, whereby their holiness is preserved, maintained and increased, are constantly communicated unto them. On the stating and proof here of, the whole difference about grace and morality doth depend, and will issue." John Owen, vol. 3, 56-57.

⁶⁰ Owen, vol. 3, 452-53.

natural abilities. For these corrupt affections possess, and are predominant in the mind itself, and all its actings are suited unto their nature, and influenced by their power. It can never, therefore, by its own native ability free itself from them. But it is the work of this great purifier and sanctifier of the church, to free our minds from these corrupt affections, and inveterate prejudices, whereby we are alienated from the truth, and inclined unto false conceptions of the mind of God.⁶¹

Owen believed that the duty of the Christian to purge themselves from sin was indeed their own duty, but a duty that was unattainable apart from the Spirit. Furthermore, that Satan promotes an inculcation of these sinful habits so as to counter the life of holiness.⁶² Thus, when a believer engages in the holy habit of forsaking sin, it was to be a “great purifier and sanctifier of the church.” This purifier is only one that can come about through the union with Christ, and was overturning the habits of sin that were once a part of the nature of the believer.

Owen goes on to state the Holy Spirit “implants in our minds spiritual habits and principles contrary and opposite unto those corrupt affections, whereby they are subdued and expelled.”⁶³ It is a symbiosis of the believer being united to Christ, and the Holy Spirit implanting supernatural habits that help the believer to put off habits of sin. Owen would say that through this purging that the church is growing in its sanctity through the means of the holy habits of forsaking sin. In his mind, union with Christ, habits of holiness, and the sanctity of the church are inextricably linked. The sanctity of the church is promoted in these ways according to Owen. Consequently, for Owen habits have a significant place in the life of the believer and the sanctity of the church. He most certainly believed that habits promote the sanctity of the church based on the union of the believer to Christ.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, in 1662 the Act of Uniformity was passed in England. This was significant because it forced men like Owen to draw lines of distinction in their ecclesiology. Up to this point, Owen for that past twenty years had been practicing a form of congregationalism that gave rise to his conviction of Independency.⁶⁴ This is to say that he was no foreigner to ecclesiology or church polity. Owen was one who would champion the form of church polity, known as Independency through his multiple writings on ecclesiology.⁶⁵ Yet, in the middle of Owen’s teaching on ecclesiology and Pneumatology, he offers insights

⁶¹ Owen, vol. 3, 452-53.

⁶² “For the artifice of Satan in turning the minds of men from the truth, is by bringing them under the power of corrupt and vicious habits, which expel that frame of spirit which is indispensably necessary unto them that would learn it.” Owen, *Works*, 3:452.

⁶³ Owen, *Works*, 3:453.

⁶⁴ Trueman, *John Owen*, 3.

⁶⁵ Trueman, 3.

into his perspective of their relationship to each other. Owen illustrates that he did, indeed, *believe that habits promote the sanctity of the church based on the union of the believer to Christ*. This has many implications, a few of which must be noted.

John Owen helps differentiate between morality and habits of *genuine* holiness. In fact, the center of his logic and teaching flow from this discernment of morality and holiness. A discussion on habits—especially the length of Owen’s discussion—would lend itself towards hyper-morality, but Owen offers a necessary corrective by suggesting that the infused habits of the Spirit must be present for the work of holy habits.

Secondarily, one can find great significance in the importance of repenting of sin. Owen notes that it shows that (1) a person is a believer, and (2) it promotes the sanctity of the church. Owen shows us that the turning of sin is emblematic of many important understandings of that person. Thus, a great implication for modern contexts would be the significance of a penitent heart and disposition towards one’s own sins. For the forsaking of sin, or the “purging” to use Owen’s term, would illustrate that a person has been united to Christ in salvation.

A final implication is that the conversation of habits can occur within a right understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of those habits. Within the field of biblical counseling, it has been the poor coordination of Pneumatology and habituation theology that has virtually ended the conversation on habits. However, Owen gets it right in the coordination of the two: he shows that a believer is called towards certain habits, but that the Holy Spirit can only work those habits in the believer. He offers a corrective that is necessary to keep the conversation of habits within its biblical confines.

Yet whatever implication can arise, one must see that John Owen clearly taught and believed in the importance of habits. His thoughts on habits were situated in his Pneumatology and were solidified by his ecclesiology. They were cultivated by the tutelage of Thomas Barlow, and a rigorous education in the classics—where he developed his framework for habits. From this background and education Owen believed that habits were of great effect on the church because by them, “we are made like unto God, that we may live unto God.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Owen, *Works*, 3:19.

REVIEWS

A REVIEW OF RUSH WITT'S *DIEHARD SINS*

By Rachel Dahlhausen¹

Introduction

Diehard. It's not a word we use often, but it is picturesque. Dictionaries define the word "diehard" as "strongly resisting change," "rigid," or "indomitable." When combined with the word "sins," the resulting picture is bleak. I think of the woman who responds to people and circumstances with constant anxiety, feeling trapped in a hopeless cycle of noise in her soul. I think of the man who has overeaten all his life in spite of repeated attempts at dieting and lifestyle change, whose weight continues to climb and spirit continues to sink. *Diehard Sins* seeks to address at the ground level sin that we've battled for years, sin that seems to be an immovable *part* of us because it's been engrained in us for so long. These are not usually big, dramatic sins. They are stubborn, "respectable," persistent sins that are a part of the pattern of our lives: struggles like anxiety and gossip and doubt and laziness. These are, as Dr. Rush Witt describes, "snail-sized sin habits that slither undetected in the shadows, beneath a fire-resistant shell, and eat up our lives from the inside out" (16). Witt, a counselor and a pastor, purposes to teach us how God and the believer work synergistically in the process of daily sanctification. God can work change that eradicates even the most entrenched habit. *Diehard Sins* is born out of Rush's own story, a story in which God used biblical counseling as the channel for God's truth to pierce the dull despair of self-improvement with God's gospel light and life.

Diehard Sins is broken into three sections and traces the pattern the reader is encouraged to follow in his daily fight with sin habits. The sections are as follows: 1. Enter with joy into your struggle against destructive daily habits, 2. Understand your real needs in the fight, and 3. Bring Christ and His provisions to bear on your beliefs and desires.

Summary

Enter with Joy into Your Struggle against Daily Sin

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Witt begins by defining sin and discussing its origin. He describes sin's effect on our relationship with God and our relationship with others; indeed, every sin is ultimately against God, even when it is manifested primarily toward others. Why does God allow a remnant of the flesh to remain? Why should I fight the diehard sins and desires that God has allowed in my life? What are the losses I will sustain if I don't fight, since my eternal security is already settled in Christ? We are reminded that the greatest reason to fight sin is because it defames God. God is supreme, and our only hope! His glory is our purpose from creation, and Jesus Christ displayed that glory when He came and rescued us from our miserable state of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. "People who have been captivated by the unrivaled magnificence of God will have no higher aim than to magnify His glory" (45). We *can* glorify God in this life, and we do this by battling our sin so that we can display God's glory.

The reader is challenged to make a list of the daily ways he personally dishonors God or fails others. We are warned not to minimize or ignore the battle within. The flesh *is* fighting, and if we are not active in using God's provisions for the battle, we will be overcome. The war is a war of faith, and we need the divine power of God in the fight. God utilizes metaphors in His Word to describe the Christian life, metaphors like running a race or fighting a battle. These word pictures communicate the need for self-discipline and training (1 Cor. 9:24-27). God is calling us to alertness and awareness (49), to repentance (50), and to devotion (50).

Witt then discusses positional and progressive sanctification. He makes several strong statements describing the emphasis Scripture puts on positional sanctification. Positional sanctification, also called relational sanctification, describes who we are in Christ. It brings great security to the believer. It magnifies the manifold mercies of God and His ability and faithfulness to work in us what He has already declared us to be. Witt takes us to Colossians 3, demonstrating that before Paul begins talking about progressing in sanctification (Col. 3:5), he describes our sanctified position in Christ. "First we grasp our status in Christ, then we grow into the likeness of Christ. The Christian life stalls out when the order is reversed" (60). 2 Peter 1:2-11 makes use of the promises that are ours in Christ to motivate us to make every effort to grow. Knowledge and practice are inextricably tied together!

Diehard Sins emphasizes *joy* in the battle with sin. What enables us to have joy as we fight? Fighting and joy are usually mutually exclusive terms! Our joy is "rooted in Christ and his work in our lives" (72). Christ's work enables us to face our sin, rather than hide from it. It enables us to acknowledge our wickedness, rather than minimize it or blame others. Our life experiences and the sins of others against us do not create the sin that comes out of our hearts. Rather, they reveal it. We must run to Jesus for grace. We must ask God for wisdom and discernment in the fight. And we must be a student of our sin. We cannot fight an enemy we do not see or will not acknowledge. Witt encourages us to observe the duration, frequency, intensity, and triggers that are

related to our diehard sin struggles, and to use those observations to understand the true needs of our hearts.

Understand the True Needs of Your Heart

Part two begins by asking us to look at our sin honestly and seek to understand what desires are driving it. Sin begins in our hearts (Prov. 4:23), so we must search our hearts. As counselors, we are familiar with the term “data gathering.” Do we use “data gathering” questions and observations in our own battle with sin? We should! Witt discusses the three fronts that the enemy uses in his attacks: our thoughts, our words, and our actions. This leads to a chapter on the heart and its ruling desires. Imitating Romans 6, Witt uses slavery as a helpful metaphor for the desires that rule us. He comments, “Spiritual slavery – in all its forms – is a voluntary experience. We are not taken captive by sin against our wills. Indeed, it is our fallen wills that make the defeat of sin elusive. All slavery to sinful desires and ways is caused by our willful participation” (105).

Witt explains how slavery to sin always involves a change of master, a forgotten identity in Christ, and a misplaced obedience. Romans 6 teaches that we are no longer slaves to sin! We have the daily and hourly responsibility of choosing our master, and we cannot serve more than one (Matt. 6:24). We have a new identity in Christ and have been given exceedingly precious gifts in our union with Him. We are naturally bent to obey our old master, and our lusts lure us toward sin as a hooked worm tantalizes a hungry fish (James 1). As Witt states, “There is no slavery without obedience to sinful impulses” (110). We must recognize the master, slave, and obedience dynamics in our battle with remaining sin so that we fight wisely. We are no longer slaves, but sons (Rom. 8:15-17). We have been mastered by the gospel of Jesus Christ, the One who has all power.

The book continues with a helpful chapter on the importance of our beliefs and desires, the two ruling influences in our hearts. Witt warns us against guarding ourselves against external sinful influences while having no vigilance concerning the worship and beliefs of our own heart. Our beliefs shape our worldview, and our worldview is the lens through which the rest of life is interpreted. Witt comments, “The battle against diehard sins is a battle of worldviews. The worldview of Scripture is at odds with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The need for right beliefs is inescapable” (122). Witt encourages “proactive” awareness of our beliefs through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, and ministry with other believers. He encourages “reactive” awareness through observing and interpreting the beliefs at work behind our sinful responses to life.

Witt also challenges us to examine our “wants.” Often good desires become something bad because the desire rules our heart rather than Christ ruling our heart. “The heart of man always pursues what it desires most” (126). Witt includes several questions we can ask ourselves to help understand what “desires” or “needs” are ruling

our hearts. Only as we understand and recognize our true beliefs and affections can we see God change us as we repent of lies and idolatrous ruling desires and believe the truth of God's Word.

Bringing Christ and His Provisions to Your Fight

A soldier walking into the battle with an AK-47 is going to have a very different confidence than the soldier carrying a BB gun. What we bring to the battle matters, and Witt reminds us of the abundant wealth of provisions in Christ and the gospel. We are first reminded of the gift of a relationship with God. God sent His Son in the in the flesh so that we might be freed from slavery to sin so that we might be freed from slavery to sin. We are indwelt by the very Spirit of God! We also have the Holy Scriptures. The Word of God is perfect, restoring the soul (Psalm 19:7). We must read it, meditate on it, memorize it, and study it!

We have the gospel, the good news that makes us right with God. Witt says to preach the gospel to yourself daily, which means you "continually face up to your own sinfulness and then flee to Jesus through faith in His shed blood and righteous life. It means that you appropriate, again by faith, the fact that Jesus fully satisfied the law of God, that He is your propitiation, and that God's holy wrath is no longer directed toward you" (quoting Jerry Bridges, 153). He reminds us of baptism and Lord's Supper's roles, not as sanctifiers, but as testimonies to us of God's ongoing care and of the centrality of the gospel. These ordinances point us to Christ and are used by God to minister to our souls.

The book concludes with an emphasis on the importance of the church in personal sanctification (Titus 2:14). God has given us the church as a means of grace, and He intends that we use this provision in our battle with indwelling sin! The church is Christ's body, designed to be knit together in love. Each member is given varying gifts for the building up of other members. Witt stresses the importance of every believer being under the ministry of a man who is faithful to feed, lead, and protect his flock. He emphasizes the need for relationships among the body, encouraging regular meetings with a smaller group within the church for fellowship and transparency. This helps us fight our sin, and helps others fight their sin! "If we allow shame or despair over our remaining sin habits to nudge us away from or out of the body of Christ, we will be the worse for it" (172). Every believer needs to ask for personal accountability from one or two other mature believers who will help him make progress in his daily battle with diehard sin habits.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Let us first look at strengths. Rush Witt is a pastor, and his shepherding heart clearly communicates care and a desire to lead the reader to the Lord and His provisions. Witt is transparent and conversational in his writing, traits that are especially winsome when dealing with sin struggles that are stubborn and shameful. *Diehard Sins* wisely reminds us that while growing in sanctification must be the goal of every believer

(Eph. 4:15), we must also be careful not to make the process of change our ultimate hope. Our hope is Christ, and our position in Him.

I also believe the progression of the book is helpful – recognizing our sin for what it is, seeing God’s glory as the ultimate goal, accepting our position in Christ, determining to fight sin in God’s strength, understanding the deeper beliefs and desires of the heart, and bringing Christ and the means of grace to the battle. Witt merely skims the surface of many great doctrines and provisions, but he is able to communicate the essential truth, and he illustrates his points practically with vignettes at each chapter. He writes, “God has wisely scattered the treasures of sanctification across the entire field, from the hills of knowledge to the valleys of practice” (21). This book traverses both the hills and valleys.

The book’s only apparent weaknesses in my opinion are stylistic ambiguities that surface occasionally in the organization or flow of argument. For example, in the first section, Witt explains that sin’s remaining effects need not cause despair; there are other remaining gifts God has given us in the fight. He lists the gifts of God’s presence, of our dependence, of the gospel, and of our vigilance. While the truths are Scriptural, referring to our dependence or our vigilance as a gift that remains is awkwardly understood. There are several similar statements throughout the book.

Occasionally, Witt’s word choice proves nebulous. Causing the reader to pause for deliberation is part of an author’s aim, but ideally those pauses are for digesting and applying, not for deciphering. In his chapter “The Art of Contented Discontentment”, Witt teaches we should be both discontent with the remaining sin in us and also content that “sin is here to stay” (56). He states, “Christians ought also to become *content* with sin.” He clarifies later saying, “we must become content with what God has decided about sin’s remaining power and presence in our lives” (56). While I agree with his concern that believers not have false expectations about Christian victory, perhaps a clearer explanation would describe the nature of the flesh (Rom. 7). Contentment with sin and contentment with indwelling sin are easily confused.

Conclusion

Witt is an encourager, and encouragement is something we need often in our battle with sin (Rom. 15:4-6). I close with Witt’s own rich summary of the book. “Because of God’s past promises, immediate presence, and future grace, we can enter with joy into our daily struggles with sin. His revealed truth and the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit help us to understand our true needs and to make a proper diagnosis. Although on this side of eternity sin will remain a persistent problem, there is hope and help in Christ, who is ever at work for the glory of the Father and the good of His people” (182). I am grateful for godly men like Rush Witt who are intent on shepherding the flock of God in both corporate worship and daily living. May we be renewed in our resolve to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us

(Phil. 2). May our counsel be saturated with Christ, until He be formed in each one of us, for His glory. May we battle our sin with joy, looking unto Jesus.

RESPONSES