

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

- <sup>1</sup> Deism is the belief that God abandoned the universe after its creation and allowed it to maintain itself without His interaction with the material world. Thus, deism intrinsically denies the existence of miracles or supernatural intervention. This theology took form especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries among English theologians such as Herbert, Collins, Tindal, and Bolingbroke.
- <sup>2</sup> Sam Storms mentioned in passing how weirdness cannot be used as a criterion for discernment in a podcast session with *The Remnant Radio*. I highly recommend this podcast to readers as it addresses many of the topics related to this book in great detail and lavished with love, grace, and academic propriety.
- <sup>3</sup> Eric Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles* (JSNTSupp 231; London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 1-2 defines a miracle as “a strikingly surprising event, beyond what is regarded as humanly possible, in which God is believed to act, either directly or through an intermediary. All creation is thought to be under God’s control; a miracle occurs when God chooses to exercise that control in an unusual fashion.”
- <sup>4</sup> Jason Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (University of Chicago: University Press, 2017) argues that the perception that the scientific revolution and modernity is causing belief in the supernatural to decline is a mistake based on select readings of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers.
- <sup>5</sup> A great starting place is Stanley N. Gundry and Wayne A. Grudem, eds., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1996). See also Michael L. Brown, *Authentic Fire: A Response to John MacArthur's Strange Fire* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2015) and R.T. Kendall, *Holy Fire: A Balanced, Biblical Look at the Holy Spirit's Work in Our Lives* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014). For a powerful testimony on changing theological systems on this topic, see Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: A Former Dallas Seminary Professor Discovers that God Speaks and Heals Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1996). For abuses of the spiritual gifts in the modern Church, see Michael L. Brown, *Playing with Holy Fire: A Wake-Up Call to the Pentecostal-Charismatic Church* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Some might argue that a “manifestation” is simply making known a truth *about* God in an internal or cognitive sense, rather than an outward demonstration that showcases God’s character or presence. According to one lexicon, for example, the meaning of this word, along with its cognates, shows “a shift from the sensory domain of seeing, causing to see, or giving light to, to the cognitive domain of making something fully known, evident, and clear.” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:338, n. 9. Yet, Bultmann and Lührmann argue that this word “is the revelation imparted by the Spirit and consisting in the charismata listed... The revelation is not, then, theoretical instruction; it entails acts in which the Spirit manifests Himself. In 2 C. 4:2... Paul is describing true proclamation as a manifestation of the truth... in contrast to the craftiness of his adversaries, who falsify the Word of God.” Rudolf Bultmann and Dieter Lührmann, “Φαίνω, Φανερός, Φανερώω, Φανέρωσις, Φαντάζω, Φάντασμα, Ἐμφανίζω, Ἐπιφαίνω, Ἐπιφανής, Ἐπιφάνεια,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 9:6. Obviously, the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians were able to be witnessed through sense-perceptions of various kinds, as pointed out by Fitzmyer: “The main role of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians is described in its external “manifestation” or in the bestowal of *pneumatika*, “spiritual gifts” (12:1) for the good of the Christian church... The noun *phanerosis*, “manifestation,” is important, for Paul is not speaking only of the internal gifts of the Spirit but of the external signs of the presence and activity of the Spirit within the community” (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 32; Yale: University Press, 2008], 80, 446). The word used by Paul here is also connected with the adverb *φανερῶς*, which has the meaning of “publicly” or “openly,” suggesting these manifestations were readily observable (e.g., 2 Macc 3:28; Mark 1:45). This has caused some scholars to translate *φανέρωσις* as “public manifestation” (Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 936. In the Septuagint, the word *ἐπιφανεῖα* / *epiphaneia* is sometimes used in the same sense as *φανέρωσις* / *phanerōsis* (2 Macc 15:27; 3 Macc 5:8) for God’s manifest presence. See also Dieter Lührmann, *Die Offenbarungsverständnis bei Paulus und in paulinischen Gemeinden* (WMANT 16; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), 27 f.

Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus’ Miracles*, 32-33 notes the following regarding Josephus’ terminology for miracles: “The other significant word in Josephus’s miracle terminology, though it is not nearly so frequent, is *ἐπιφάνεια*. Its use in connexion [*sic.*] with miracles is restricted to the *Antiquities*, but there it generally means a manifestation of God’s presence or of his saving power. The most notable occurrence of the latter is at *Ant.* 2.339, where the recoiling

of the Red Sea is described as a ‘clear manifestation of God’. It has a similar sense at 9.60, where following Elisha’s miraculous capture of the Syrian army, ‘Adados was amazed at the marvel and at the manifestation of the God of the Israelites and His power.’ These are the only two instances which fit the idea of saving power (unless one also counts the reference to the ἐμφανείας τοῦ θεοῦ at 15.425). Neither the ‘divine manifestation’ of fire falling from heaven to consume Solomon’s sacrifice (8.119) nor God’s ἐπιφάνεια in the unexpected rainfall that greets Petronius’s decision to defy Caligula (18.286) are exactly saving acts, but rather signs of God’s approval. Although Thackeray’s translation does not bring out the fact, Josephus may intend to imply that Isaac’s fortuitous meeting with Rebecca (1.255) was due to a divine ἐπιφάνεια, though this would be a low-grade miracle. It is a moot point whether ἐπιφάνεια at 3.310 should be translated ‘manifestation’ (meaning that the cloud above the tabernacle is a miracle produced by God) or ‘presence’ (meaning that the cloud symbolizes the presence of God).”

- 7 Cessationists interpret several passages as pointing to certain gifts ceasing. One such example is 1 Cor 13:8-10: “As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.” Cessationists often interpret the “perfect” in this passage as referring to the completion of the biblical canon. Likewise, they interpret Eph 2:20 and similar passages as detailing how certain signs were only foundational for the Church and are no longer necessary.
- 8 Continuationists reject the interpretation that the “perfect” in 1 Cor 13:8-10 is speaking about the completion of the Bible, but instead understand it as the second coming of Jesus. Part of the reason for this is because Paul later states that when the perfect comes we will see “face to face” which elsewhere is used of meetings with either God or another human being (e.g., Gen 32:30; Exod 33:11; 2 Cor 10:1).
- 9 Continuationists, especially of the reformed tradition, will often use the phrase that they are “charismatic with a seatbelt,” which means that while they are open to the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit, it is not a major element of their faith experience or local Church dynamic. See <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-not-to-welcome-the-holy-spirit> (Accessed: September, 14, 2021).
- 10 The term “Charismatic” comes from the Greek word for “gift” (χάρισμα / *charisma*). Thus, a Charismatic is someone who is identifiable by their use of supernatural gifts. Secular scholars refer to Jesus, for example, as a “Charismatic prophet” or “Charismatic religious figure,” which means that he was viewed by his contemporaries as a miracle-worker. Charismatic Christians purposefully seek out the gifts of the Holy Spirit based on the command of Paul in 1 Cor 14:1:

“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.”

- <sup>11</sup> “Moses received Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to elders, and elders to prophets. And prophets handed it on to the men of the great assembly. They said three things: (1) “Be prudent in judgment. (2) “Raise up many disciples. (3) “Make a fence for the Torah” (*m. Avot* 1:1). Translations from the Mishnah are from Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah : A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).
- <sup>12</sup> In the 1940s, the German scholar Rudolf Bultmann wrote an influential article entitled “Neues Testament und Mythologie” (New Testament and Mythology). Bultmann argued that the New Testament accounts were being misread by both conservative and liberal scholars alike, and that the true meaning of the text and its application could only be recovered by demythologizing the text. By “demythologizing,” Bultmann meant expunging the supernatural elements of the various biblical stories. Thus, the Bible in Bultmann’s view was not credible in the sense that it provided history, but that it offered a deeper spiritual (or existential) meaning. See Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” in *Kerygma and Myth* (ed. Hans Bartsch; New York: Harper and Row, 1941), 1–44.
- <sup>13</sup> I make use of an historical-grammatical hermeneutic. A “hermeneutic” is a method or system of interpretation that is used to read a text. Christians throughout history have employed different kinds of hermeneutics to understand the meaning of the Bible. An “historical-grammatical” hermeneutic is a kind of interpretation that attempts to discover the original author’s meaning based on the historical, cultural, and linguistic context of a given passage. See Stanley E. Porter and Jason C. Robinson, *Hermeneutics: an Introduction to Interpretive Theory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2011).
- <sup>14</sup> I encourage readers to engage with Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright, eds., *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic* (York Road, London: T&T Clark International, 2012). This collection of academic essays addresses the way the Holy Spirit is thought to reveal the truth and application of scripture.
- <sup>15</sup> When Paul uses the word “Scripture” here he is referring to the Hebrew Bible: “from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). For a detailed discussion on the canon of the Bible, see F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2008).
- <sup>16</sup> 1 Cor 14:29 is an excellent example: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.” In this scenario, a prophet speaks in the Church and others judge whether or not it is accurate. You can already see the issue. How

do we know if the prophet who spoke the prophecy is wrong *or* if the prophets *judging* the prophecy are wrong? In fact, there is no way to know except through subjective experiences such as the Holy Spirit confirming the words within the community to other individuals. There may be some objectively useful criteria used by those judging (e.g., scripture), but in the end the judgement is based on an internal, subjective, revelation from God and the use of wisdom. Christians who reject contemporary prophecy may not find such an example useful, but one would have had to ask these same questions in the early Church! Indeed, even in the Hebrew Bible, people would have had to use a number of apparently subjective criteria for assessing whether the prophet speaking to them was truly speaking the word of God, especially if the prophecy did not fall under the discernment rules in the Torah.

<sup>17</sup> Note, however, that this subjective experience results in objective evidence such as living holy lives.

<sup>18</sup> In Colossians, Paul refers to the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου / *stoicheia tou kosmou*, often translated as “elemental spirits of the world.” στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia* is connected with philosophy and empty deceit in Col 2:8, which confuses whether the elemental spirits are meant to refer to human teachings or malevolent supernatural forces. Early Christian interpreters dealt with the term στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia* in both of these ways. Clement takes the term to refer to a human invention: “For Paul too, in the Epistles, plainly does not disparage philosophy; but deems it unworthy of the man who has attained to the elevation of the Gnostic... figuratively calling it “the rudiments of this world,” as being most rudimentary, and a preparatory training for the truth” (*Strom.*, 6.8; compare Tertullian, *adv. Marc.*, 5.19). It is possible that there is little differentiation between στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia* as human precepts and as demonic influence as E. Schweizer, “Slaves of the Elements and Worshipers of Angels: Gal 4.3, 9; Col 2.8, 18, 20,” *JBL* 107 (1988): 468 states: “it is difficult to draw a clear line between these views and a belief in personal demonic beings. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 149 draws this conclusion as well, stating that in the ancient world it was not uncommon to personify the elements, stars, and other cosmological features. στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia* is used to refer to demonic spirits explicitly in *T. Sol.* 8:2 “we are heavenly bodies [στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia*], rulers of this world of darkness,” and 18:1-2 “...all at once, with one voice they said, “we are thirty-six heavenly bodies [στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia*], the world rulers of the darkness of this age”,” though the dating of this work is contentious. Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 67-77 concludes in his work on the subject that the στοιχεῖα / *stoicheia* most probably refers to supernatural forces, especially if one reads the

term in the context of Gal 4:3, 9 and not 2 Pet 3:10-12 or Heb. 5:10 as Andrew J. Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul's Teaching* (N.V. Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1964) proposes.

- <sup>19</sup> George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 189.
- <sup>20</sup> Although our hearts can sometimes be filled with deceit (Jer 17:10), God has given Christians a new heart (Ezek 11:19) and it is those who have a pure heart that will see God (Matt 5:8). The Psalmist asks “who will ascend the hill of the LORD?” The answer is someone “who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Ps 24:3-4).

## CHAPTER 1

- <sup>21</sup> The meaning of the word “holy” has been debated by scholars for centuries. In the 1800s, the German scholar Wolf Wilhelm Friedrich von Baudissin argued that the Hebrew term *qodesh* was derived from a root meaning “to cut” or “to separate” (see W.W. Baudissin, “Der Begriff der Heiligkeit im AT,” in *Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte* [Leipzig: Grunow, 1878], 2:1–142). This etymological argument had been held for centuries, such as by the medieval Jewish scholar Rashi. Scholars who accept this etymological argument simultaneously attribute this separation as having to do with moral perfection and purity (Desmon T. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. 3rd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012], 244). Others see the meaning of “holy” and “pure” as synonyms (Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism: The Haskell Lectures, 1972–1973* [Leiden: Brill, 1973]). Still others think the idea of separation is an outdated view and based on an etymological fallacy (Philip P. Jensen, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* [JSOT Supplement 106; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 48 n. 4). I have avoided use of the word “separate” as much as possible. The reason for this is because it unintentionally suggests that God is not involved with the world (i.e., deism).

Rudolf Otto argued against the meaning of holy as separation, instead describing it as a present force that is simultaneously “wholly other” (Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rationa* [Trans. J. W. Harvey; New York: Oxford University Press, 1958], 9-11, 88-89). This idea was shared by others who saw holiness as something above human perception that inspired awe (Nathan Söderblom, “Holiness (General and Primitive),” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* [Ed. J. Hastings; New York: Scribner, 1914], 6:731–41). Divine

otherness as the meaning behind God's holiness has been a common thread among biblical scholars and anthropologists. See, for example, Johannes Hänel, *Die Religion der Heiligkeit* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1931); H. P. Müller, "qdš," in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (ed. E. Jenni and C. Westermann; Trans. M. E. Biddle; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 3:1103–1118; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 2006); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000).

- <sup>22</sup> People often think that being "impure" and "unholy" are synonymous with being sinful. This is not the case. Ritual impurity and moral impurity are distinct categories in the Hebrew Bible. A person can be ritually impure and not sin. If, however, in a ritually impure state they enter sacred space, this is considered a moral sin. The best treatment on this subject is Matthew Thiessen, *Jesus and the Forces of Death: The Gospel's Portrayal of Ritual Impurity Within First-Century Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020).
- <sup>23</sup> The terms "Old Testament" and "Hebrew Bible" are synonymous. While most Christians have traditionally used "Old Testament," in academic settings "Hebrew Bible" is the preferred jargon. I have alternated between the two throughout this book.
- <sup>24</sup> Readers will note that God does seem to "change His mind" or "repent" in various passages of the Hebrew Bible. For example, God is "sorry" that He made human beings in Gen 6:6. Similarly, Exod 32:14 says that God "relented" from punishing Israel (compare Jonah 3:10). Some Christians view these verses as figures of speech (called *anthropomorphism*) and are simply applying human-like actions to God so that they are understandable by the reader. These verses have led other Christians to adopt what is referred to as "open theism," the belief that God is not fully omniscient in the sense that He progresses and learns throughout time. For a treatment of this belief system, one can consult Greg Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000). See also A. B. Caneday, "Review of The Implausible God of Open Theism: A Response to Gregory A. Boyd's God of the Possible." *Journal of Biblical Apologetics* 1 (2000): 66-84.
- <sup>25</sup> One of the more confusing aspects of God's nature is that He is holy because He is a spirit. God criticizes Israel in Isa 31:3, for example, stating that "The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit." Here, Israel has relied on Egypt's forces to help them in victory, but God demonstrates His holy nature by pitting the human Egyptian armies against spirit. The term "flesh" (Hebrew בשר / *basar*) seems to be used here as an idiom for weakness (Gen 6:3; 2 Chr 32:8; Ps 56:4, 11, 78:39; Jer 17:5), not simply that they have a body. Thus, for God to be a spirit means that He is strong in contrast to weak human bodies who are incapable of the supernatural strength possessed by God.

- <sup>26</sup> This cloud motif also appears in the New Testament (Mark 9:7). Barry D. Smith, *The Indescribable God: Divine Otherness in Christian Theology* (Eugene: OR; Pickwick Publications, 2012), 6. Much of my introduction is indebted to the work of Smith who, among many things, is both an excellent scholar, teacher, and mentor.
- <sup>27</sup> The doctrine that Jesus emptied himself of certain divine attributes is referred to by theologians as “kenosis”.
- <sup>28</sup> The English word “form” is a translation of the Greek word μορφή / *morphe*. Scholars argue about what the best translation and understanding of this term means. For a review of the different literature and arguments, see R. P. Martin, “Carmen Christi Philippians 2:5–11,” in *Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge, 1967; Grand Rapids, 1983), 99-133; G. F. Hawthorne, *Word Biblical Themes: Philippians* (Waco, 1987), 71–75; C.A. Wanamaker, “Philippians 2.6–11: Son of God or Adamic Christology?” *NTS* 33 (1987): 179–193; T.Y.C. Wong, “The Problem of Pre-Existence in Philippians 2,6–11,” *ETL* 62 (1986): 267–282.
- <sup>29</sup> The word “weird” itself was used in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to refer to the ability to manipulate or control fate. It later was used in the sense of “uncanny” or “supernatural” in Middle English. Shakespeare famously reintroduced the word after its decline in the 16<sup>th</sup> century through his designation of the three “weird sisters” in Macbeth.
- <sup>30</sup> BCE (Before Common/Christian Era) and CE (Common/Christian Era) are equivalent to BC (Before Christ) and AD (*Anno Domini*: Latin for “year of our Lord”). BC and AD were the inventions of a 6<sup>th</sup> century monk named Dionysius Exiguus. BCE and CE have been used as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, most commonly by Jewish scholars. In academic settings, BCE and CE are preferred as a culturally neutral alternative. While certain denominations, such as the Southern Baptists, argue for the importance of maintaining the traditional BC/AD system, I have used BCE/CE throughout out of habit. <https://www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/on-retaining-the-traditional-method-of-calendar-dating-b-c-a-d/>.
- <sup>31</sup> Quotes from apocryphal/deuterocanonical books are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).
- <sup>32</sup> This passage from Wisdom of Solomon has been interpreted as a messianic prophecy about Jesus for millennia. See David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 43; New York: Doubleday, 1979), 119. In Wis 16:16, the plagues God sent on Egypt are also called “strange” (Greek: ξένοις / *xenois*), as is the salvation that the righteous receive (Wis 5:2).



- <sup>33</sup> Josephus makes use of the Greek word *παράδοξος* / *paradoxos* multiple times in the context of miracles. Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, 28 lists the following: “*Ant.* 2.223, 295, 345; 3.1, 30, 38; 5.28; 10.214 and perhaps also 2.216, 267, 285; 3.14; 9.14, 58, 60, 182; 10.24, 28; 13.282; 18.63.”
- <sup>34</sup> This is where we get our English word “moron” from.

## CHAPTER 2

- <sup>35</sup> I first heard this saying in the movie *Finger of God* by Darren Wilson.
- <sup>36</sup> The Psalmist, for example, says that God “works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples” (Ps 77:14). The parallelism between working wonders and making known his might is meant to illustrate how God’s miracles reveal His character.
- <sup>37</sup> See 1 Thess 4:3, 5:18; 1 Pet 2:15; John 6:40.
- <sup>38</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 2.266-7 retells the story of Moses and the burning bush in this way: “a fire fed upon a thornbush, yet did the green leaves and the flowers continue untouched, and the fire did not at all consume the fruit branches, although the flame was great and fierce. Moses was affrighted at this strange sight (Greek: *παράδοξος* / *paradoxos*), as it was to him, but he was still more astonished when the fire uttered a voice, and called to him by name...” Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, 29 suggests that the phrase translated here as “strange sight” could be better translated as “miraculous spectacle”.
- <sup>39</sup> In the Exodus story, God refers to Himself as “I am who I am.” The name Yahweh comes from the Hebrew יהוה / *yhwh*. Thus, the name is a derivation of either הוה / *hwh* or היה / *hyh*. Raymond Abba suggests that the phrase found in Exodus should not be translated as “I am who I am,” but as a kind of retort: “It does not concern you”. See Raymond Abba, “The Divine Name Yahweh,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80, no. 4 (December 1961): 320–28.
- <sup>40</sup> This passage has had a long interpretive history. Here are just a few resources: Ronald B. Allen, “The ‘Bloody Bridegroom’ in Exodus 4:24–26,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 259–269; G. W. Ashby, “The Bloody Bridegroom: The Interpretation of Exodus 4:24–26,” *The Expository Times* 106.7 (1995): 203–205; William Dumbrell, “Exodus 4:24–26: A Textual Re-Examination,” *Harvard Theological Review* 65.2 (1972): 285–290; Serge Frolov, “The Hero as Bloody Bridegroom: On the Meaning and Origin of Exodus 4,26,” *Biblica* 77.4 (1996): 520–523; Bernard P. Robinson, “Zipporah to the Rescue: A Contextual Study of Exodus 4:24–6,” *Vetus Testamentum* 36.4 (1986): 447–461.

- <sup>41</sup> See Devorah Dimant, “Abraham the Astrologer at Qumran? Observations on Pseudo-Jubilees (4Q225 2 i 3-8),” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera* (SupJSJ 157; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 71-82.
- <sup>42</sup> For more on the topic of child sacrifice in the ancient world, see Darin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange, and K. F. Diethard Römheld, eds., *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).
- <sup>43</sup> It is possible to be faithful to God even when our theology is not perfect. It is not that Abraham was unfaithful to God, but that his obedience was perhaps rooted in both a real trust and a misunderstanding of God’s true character, which God remedies through His ceasing of the execution of Isaac.
- <sup>44</sup> A popular story circulating around the time of Jesus was that of the Maccabean martyrs. They were a group of Jews who allowed themselves to suffer death for their faith amid great persecution. In one retelling of the story, one of the martyrs brings up the story of the *Aqedat* as an example that “It is unreasonable for people who have religious knowledge not to withstand pain” (4 Macc 16:23). The story is quite embellished in this version, explaining how Isaac was very okay with his father bringing down the knife. But this martyr agrees with what we find in Paul’s writings: “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12).
- <sup>45</sup> “Leap into faith” or “leap of faith” has often been attributed to the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Many have noted, however, that this phrase does not actually appear in the works of Kierkegaard. See C.S. Evans “Is Kierkegaard an Irrationalist? Reason, Paradox and Faith,” *Religious Studies* 25 (1998): 347-362.
- <sup>46</sup> The word “riddle” can also be translated as “proverb,” which still requires an exercise in wisdom and interpretation to determine the proper meaning of the saying (Prov 1:6-7). Most commentators see this impossible riddle as just that: impossible. Even though they were given several days to guess at the riddle, they were unable to. This makes sense, since the riddle is based on an episode only Samson experienced. Some writers have attempted to allegorize or spiritualize the riddle. For example, John E. Hamlin, *At Risk in the Promised Land: A Commentary on the Book of Judges* (International Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 136-137 interprets the riddle in the following way: “The riddle, on its face a bawdy or ribald wedding night joke among male companions, carries deeper meanings. Out of the “eater” (the shambles of the old destructive order) comes “something to eat”: the hope of *shalom*, of milk and honey in the Promised Land of the future. Out of the “strong” (the broken political, economic, and military machine) comes something “sweet”: “a land of olive trees and honey, a land ... in which you will lack nothing” (Deut. 8:8–9),

where there will be the sweetness of God's word as the guide to peace (Ps. 19:10; 119:103) and "pleasant words ... like a honeycomb," bringing "sweetness to the soul and health to the body" (Prov. 16:24). The real meaning of this honey of new life and hope for a better future is discovered not by the proud, but by those who acknowledge their own need, humbly call on the Giver of life (Judg. 15:18), and offer their lives for the accomplishment of his purposes of *shalom* (16:30)."

- <sup>47</sup> In Matt 13:10-17, Jesus explains that He speaks in riddles for the express purpose of disguising its true meaning.
- <sup>48</sup> Dennis R. Cole, *Numbers* (NAC 3B; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 200.
- <sup>49</sup> 1 Tim 5:19 states that a charge against an elder (that is, a leader in the Church), should only be considered if it is on the basis of two or more witnesses.
- <sup>50</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, these words are written as nouns. Here, however, Daniel interprets them as passive verbs.
- <sup>51</sup> See John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 250-252.
- <sup>52</sup> On the pesharim, see John D. Barry, "Early Evidence of Subjective Interpretation in the pesharim of Qumran," *Revue Scriptura* 9 (2007): 119-38; George J. Brooke, "Prophetic Interpretation in the Pesharim," in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism* (ed. Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); idem., "E Pluribus Unum: Textual Variety and Definitive Interpretation in the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy H. Lim with Larry W. Hurtado, A. Graeme Auld, and Alison Jack; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 107-20; Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979); Alex P. Jassen, "The Pesharim and the Rise of Commentary in Early Jewish Scriptural Interpretation," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 19 (2012): 313-62.
- <sup>53</sup> One might consider dream interpretation as one such example. Many people in the ancient world had the ability to interpret dreams. Thus, people found it necessary sometimes to find one of these specialists to inquire the dream's meaning.
- <sup>54</sup> B. Nazir, 4b: "A nazirite like Samson is permitted to become impure from a corpse *ab initio*, as we find with Samson that he became impure" (c.f. Y. Nazir, 9:6). The "B" refers to the Bavli (=Babylonian) version of the Talmud, while the "Y" refers to the Yerushalmi (= Jerusalem) version of the Talmud. The Talmud contains two parts: 1) the Mishnah and 2) the Gemara. The Mishnah is a collection of rabbinic conversations about various points of the law or Jewish daily life. The Gemara is a commentary on the Mishnah. If you combine the Mishnah and the Gemara together, you get the Talmud. Readers may be interested in checking

out Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

<sup>55</sup> David M. Gunn, *Judges: Through the Centuries* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 208.

<sup>56</sup> There were also circumstances in which if a Nazirite came in contact with a corpse, they would need to shave their head and start growing it out again to continue the vow (Num 6:9).

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, John. G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>58</sup> Augustine's assessment of the story is quite amusing: "This man was dragged, evidently, by such greed that he was not terrified by such an extraordinary miracle and responded as if he were talking to a man...perhaps prefiguring the fact according to which God had to choose the foolish things of the world to confuse the wise" (*Quaest. Num.* 50). By "rationalist Church" it is meant to point towards those sectors of Christianity that adopt an anti-supernaturalist perspective of the accounts in the Bible or those who think the Bible is untrustworthy in its descriptions of certain supernatural phenomena. This moniker also refers to those who engage in a kind of hyper-skepticism that demands evidence of a kind that is unreasonable for a given claim (one that is often not held when discussing biblical stories).

<sup>59</sup> The terms "miracle" and "magic" are often employed as a method for ostracizing those groups we disagree with while simultaneously bolstering those groups we adhere to. This is not my intention. Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus' Miracles*, 2 defines magic as follows: "Whereas a miracle is a strikingly surprising event that is thought to be an act of God, magic is a deviant procedure in which some feat regarded as beyond normal human ability is brought about by some agency other than God." When I use the word "magic" in this context, I am referring to the unbiblical practice of trying to bypass God's will in a matter or somehow manipulating Him into doing what we want.

### CHAPTER 3

<sup>60</sup> On the topic of messianic expectations in Second Temple Judaism, see the following resources: J.J. Collins, "The Nature of Messianism in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSSHC* (2000): 119–217; James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992); Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); J. Neusner, W.C. Green, and E.S. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their*

*Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Magnus Zetterholm, ed., *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

- <sup>61</sup> This is actually the first time the term “Son of David” is used of this messianic figure.
- <sup>62</sup> Jesus often attempts to hide His messianic identity from those around Him in the Gospel of Mark. This is referred to as the “messianic secret” (German: *Messiasgeheimnis*) in New Testament scholarship. Jesus hides His identity by meeting in secret with His disciples (Mark 4:13, 34, 7:17, 9:28–29, 30–31, 10:10–11, 13:3), telling those He healed to not speak of Him to anyone else (Mark 1:43–44, 5:43, 7:36, 8:26), and silencing demons who announce His identity (Mark 1:34, 1:24–25, 3:11–12, 5:7). The term “messianic secret” was coined by William Wrede in 1901 and has been widely interpreted. See, for example, David E. Aune, “The Problem of the Messianic Secret,” *Novum Testamentum* 11 (1969): 1–31; James D. G. Dunn, “The Messianic Secret in Mark,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970): 92–117; Craig A. Evans, “Jesus’ Self-Designation ‘The Son of Man’ and the Recognition of His Divinity,” in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendet, and Gerald O’Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 29–47; Robert H. Stein, *Mark* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008).
- <sup>63</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 1.
- <sup>64</sup> According to a 2009 Barna study, nearly half of American Christians believed that Satan was merely a symbol of evil. Yet, half of those same Christians also believed that Satan or demonic spirits could still influence people somehow. <https://www.barna.com/research/most-american-christians-do-not-believe-that-satan-or-the-holy-spirit-exist/> (Last accessed: Feb. 26, 2021).
- <sup>65</sup> To quote the apologist James White: “Inconsistency is the sign of a failed argument.”
- <sup>66</sup> The idea of “adjuring” spirits to leave can be found in a number of works among the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., 4QExorcism, 11QApoctyphal Psalms). The *Greek Magical Papyri* use the terms ὀρκίζω / *horkizō* (“I adjure”) and φεῦγε / *pheuge* (“go away”). Similar terms are found in the later Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls and amulets. See Esther Eshel, “Genres of Magical Texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (ed. by A. Lange, H. Lichtenberger, and K. F. Diethard Römheld; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 395.

- <sup>67</sup> In the *Testament of Solomon* 2:1-7, for example, Solomon demands that the demon identify himself along with his zodiac sign and other details.
- <sup>68</sup> The early Church father, Athanasius, points out how different Jesus' miracles were compared to contemporary deities: "What man that ever was, for instance, formed a body for himself from a virgin only? Or what man ever healed so many diseases as the common Lord of all? Who restored that which was lacking in man's nature or made one blind from birth to see? Aesculapius was deified by the Greeks because he practiced the art of healing and discovered herbs as remedies for bodily diseases, not, of course, forming them himself out of the earth, but finding them out by the study of nature. But what is that in comparison with what the Savior did when, instead of just healing a wound, He both fashioned essential being and restored to health the thing that He had formed? Hercules, too, is worshipped as a god by the Greeks because he fought against other men and destroyed wild animals by craft. But what is that to what the Word did, in driving away from men diseases and demons and even death itself? Dionysus is worshipped among them, because he taught men drunkenness; yet they ridicule the true Savior and Lord of all, Who taught men temperance" (Athanasius, *On The Incarnation*, 8.49).
- <sup>69</sup> One will note that Elisha also raised a dead boy only after his second attempt (2 Kgs 4:32-37).
- <sup>70</sup> For a plethora of historical and modern accounts of miracles (many of them healing), see Craig Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (2 Vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).
- <sup>71</sup> Some examples of God sending sickness upon people as judgement are the fiery serpents found in Numbers 21, the blinding of Bar-Jesus in Acts 13, and God afflicting David's newborn child because of his sin in 2 Sam 12.
- <sup>72</sup> <https://www.aftermath.com/content/human-decomposition/> (Last accessed: September 13, 2021).
- <sup>73</sup> For an edifying read of the metaphor of slavery in the Christian life, see John MacArthur, *Slave: The Hidden Truth About Your Identity in Christ* (NSH: Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2010).
- <sup>74</sup> "Said R. Judah, "Testified Ben Bukhri in Yabneh: 'Any priest who pays the *sheqel* does not sin.'" "Said to him Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, 'Not so. But any priest who does not pay the *sheqel* sins.'" "But the priests expound this Scriptural verse for their own benefit: And every meal offering of the priest shall be wholly burned, it shall not be eaten (Lev. 6:23)." (*M. Šeq.* 1:4).
- <sup>75</sup> "[Concer]ning [the ransom:] the money of valuation which one gives as ransom for his own person will be half [a shekel,]only on[ce] will he give it in all his

day” (4QOrd<sup>a</sup> 1 II + 9, 6). Translations are from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (translations)* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997–1998).

- <sup>76</sup> This amusing miracle has many parallels to other stories from the ancient world. According to the historian Herodotus, a fisherman was inspired to bring his latest catch to King Polycrates. Polycrates had been on a ship earlier and has tossed his ring into the water. When the servants cut open the fish, they discovered the ring inside (*Histories*, 3.42). A similar story happens in the Talmud. A certain pious Jew named Yosef purchases a fish, only to find an expensive pearl inside (*b. Sabb.* 119a).
- <sup>77</sup> The Jewish Book of Judith (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE) shares a similar sentiment: “You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or understand the workings of the human mind; how do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and find out his mind or comprehend his thought?” (Jdt 8:14).
- <sup>78</sup> Examples of spirits avoiding fish can be found in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (abbreviated PGM from the Latin title *Papyri Graecae Magicae*), a large group of texts that contain spells for most everything from love to revenge. According to one spell (PGM I. 96-132), the conjured spirit assistant will complete a number of tasks with the exception of bringing their master fish or pork. Similarly, in another invocation, the ritualist who is performing a burnt offering in order to summon a god must cease from eating fish so that the ritualist may “bring the god into the greatest desire toward you” (PGM I. 291). Of the things the ritualist should avoid, fish is separated as unique from “all unclean things” and sexual intercourse, suggesting that fish was especially dangerous or displeasing to the spirit. Fish are also used as part of a threat against a daimon as insurance that the spirit will dispense revelatory knowledge to the ritualist: “Your belly is eaten by fish, and I will not stop the fish chewing your body with their mouths, nor will the fish shut their mouths” (PGM V, 280-281). Moreover, in another spell (PGM XII, 365-376), a ritual which involves engraving a spell to summon a god to torment a victim is to be performed over a “pot for smoked fish.” Since a fish is not actually being smoked during the ritual, the idea seems to be, perhaps, an extra layer of protection so that the spirit does not turn around and afflict the ritualist. The remnants of the fish in the pot (and possibly the smell) would have made the spirit aware of the possibility of fumigation.
- <sup>79</sup> The specific aversion to fish could have a number of explanations, not all of which are mutually exclusive. If Tobit was written in an Egyptian context, they may have viewed fish as taboo. On the forbidden nature of fish in Egypt, see William J. Darby, *Food: Gift of Osiris* (Academic Press, 1997), 1.171-209, 380-404; Tobias may have protected himself by consuming the fish. Tob 6:6 states that after catching the fish, Tobias roasts and eats some of it. Notably, Raphael

does not eat the fish (cf. Tob 12:19). The reason for this is not given, though it is possibly twofold. Firstly, Raphael has taken on a human form named Azariah. Sometimes, angels refuse to accept meals from humans (Judg 13:16), while other times they seem to be okay doing this (Gen 18:8). Secondly, not eating a fish may be for the same logic found in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. The medicinal purposes of fish have been examined elsewhere and the use of a fish's gall for healing eye conditions is known throughout the ancient world. For Assyrian and Babylonian examples, see W. von Soden, "Fischgalleals Heil-Mittel für die Augen," *Archiv für Orient-forschung* 21 (1996): 81-83. For classical examples, see B. Kollman. "Gottliche Offenbarung magisch-pharmakologischer Heilskünstim Buch Tobit," *ZAW* 106 (1994): 294-297 and I. Papayannopoulos, J. Laskaratos, and S. Marketos, "Remarks on Tobit's Blindness," *Koroth* 9 (1985): 181-187.

- <sup>80</sup> Early Christian writers use this term with some frequency. One writer describes how "When the man of doubtful mind sets his hand to any action, and fails in it owing to his doubtful-mindedness, grief at this enters into the man, and grieves the Holy Spirit, and crushes it out" (Herm. *Mand.* 10.2.2). The work *I Clement* describes Lot's wife as double-minded and the reason she was turned into a pillar of salt. Elsewhere the double-minded are grouped together with blasphemers, hypocrites, and the general wicked (Herm. *Sim.* 9.18.3).

## CHAPTER 4

- <sup>81</sup> The typical passages cited for teleportation miracles are as follows: Gen 5:24; 2 Kgs 2:11; Job 1:6, 7; Ezek 37:1; Matt 4:5, 8; John 6:21; Acts 8:39-40. 40:1-2; 2 Cor 12:2-4; Rev 4:1. There is some debate about whether any of these passages actually describe what is commonly thought of as physical teleportation or relocation. The idea of divine teleportation, however, is not foreign to Judaism and Christianity (2 *Bar.* 6.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.11.77; *L. Proph. Hab.* 4-7, and to a lesser degree Bel 36). In a fragmentary targum (Aramaic paraphrase) on Genesis 28:10, the following is recorded: "as soon as our father Jacob lifted up his feet from Beersheeba to go to Haran, the earth shrank before him and he found himself in Haran."

The miracle-worker, Apollonius of Tyana, is credited as teleporting as well: "and before midday he left the court, and at dusk appeared to Demetrius and Damis at Dicaearchia" (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 8.10).

The Talmud describes at least three instances of קפיצת הדרך / Kefitzat Haderech, literally translated as "contraction of road": "The Sages taught in a *baraita* with regard to land contracting to shorten a journey: For three individuals the land contracted, and each one miraculously reached his destination quickly: Eliezer, servant of Abraham, and Jacob our forefather, and Abishai, son of Zeruiah. The



Gemara elaborates: The case of Abishai, son of Zeruiah, is that which we said. The case of Eliezer, servant of Abraham, is as it is written: “And I came that day to the well” (Genesis 24:42). His intention was to say to the members of Rebecca’s family that on that day he left Canaan and on the same day he arrived, to underscore the miraculous nature of his undertaking on behalf of Abraham. The case of Jacob our forefather” (San. 95a).

In a later Jewish text called *Yalkut Shimoni*, Moses is teleported past the Egyptian guards in order to enter Pharaoh’s palace (Remez 175).

Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Macon: GA; Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1934), 80 also includes supposed examples from Origen, *On Jeremiah* 15:4, and Jerome, *On Micah* 7:6, though these do not appear to be cases of what is traditionally thought of as teleportation.

<sup>82</sup> See Ju Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (JSNTSupp; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 82-86.

<sup>83</sup> “He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the spirit of holiness uniting him to His truth, and his iniquity shall be expiated by the spirit of uprightness and humility” (1QS 3.7–8).

<sup>84</sup> “I give you thanks, Lord, because you have sustained me with your strength, you have spread your holy spirit over me so that I will not stumble” (1QH 7.6–7).

<sup>85</sup> “It is by the holy spirit of the community, in its truth, that he is cleansed of all his iniquities. And by the spirit of uprightness and of humility his sin is atoned. And by the compliance of his soul with all the laws of God his flesh is cleansed by being sprinkled with cleansing waters and being made holy with the waters of repentance. May he, then, steady his steps in order to walk with perfection on all the paths of God, as he has decreed concerning the appointed times of his assemblies and not turn aside, either right or left, nor infringe even one of all his words. In this way he will be admitted by means of atonement pleasing to God, and for him it will be the covenant of an everlasting Community” (1QS III, 7-12).

<sup>86</sup> The kind of tongues spoken about in Acts 2 are often referred to as *xenoglossia* (i.e., speaking foreign languages), while the tongues spoken about in 1 Cor 12-14 are often referred to as *glossolalia* (i.e., speaking unknown languages). Christians of various persuasions disagree on nearly every matter of whether such a distinction exists and, if it does, what that difference actually is. One of the best treatments on this subject is Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

<sup>87</sup> Stephen J. Chester, “Divine Madness? Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14.23” *JSNT* 27.4 (2005): 417-446 argues that the outsiders’ reaction to the

Corinthian Church's glossolalia should be interpreted in a positive sense of God's presence within the congregation. Chester compares ecstatic states found in other Greco-Roman religious contexts as evidence of divine possession to those witnessed by outsiders in the Corinthian Church and posits that unbelievers would have viewed the Christians as divinely inspired and not "crazy" in our modern sense of the term. Thus, Paul prefers the Corinthian Church to prophesy rather than speak in tongues because, while speaking in tongues may give evidence to outsiders that God is at work within the community, its substance does not articulate the Gospel that will lead them to saving faith.

On the traditional view that Paul is referring to insanity, see Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and Its Hellenistic Environment* (WUNT 2/75; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 173n52; Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1979), 104; Tom Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 365; Laura Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (HTS 52; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 73; Clint Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma* (WUNT 2/230; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 255 David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 651–52; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 704–6; Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982), 133, 155.

- <sup>88</sup> The Greek phrase, τοῦ πονηροῦ / *tou ponērou*, has the definite article, which suggests that this ought to be translated with a substantive meaning (i.e., the evil one).
- <sup>89</sup> Isa 13:21, 34:14; Bar 4:35: "For fire will come upon her from the Everlasting for many days, and for a long time she will be inhabited by demons."; Tob 8:3: "The odor of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt. But Raphael followed him, and at once bound him there hand and foot."
- <sup>90</sup> This story comes from the Book of Jubilees (second century BCE), a retelling of the Biblical books of Genesis and Exodus. The passage just mentioned can be found in *Jub.* 48:2-3: "You know who spoke to you at Mount Sinai and what the prince of Maštema wanted to do to you while you were returning to Egypt—on the way at the shady fir tree. Did he not wish with all his strength to kill you and to save the Egyptians from your power because he saw that you were sent to carry out punishment and revenge on the Egyptians." Translation from James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees, Chapters 1–50* (ed. Sidnie White Crawford; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018).
- <sup>91</sup> Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Edited by Thomas Krüger; Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 418-419: "John Sailhamer,

“1 Chronicles 21:1—A Study in Inter-Biblical Interpretation,” *TJ*, n.s. 10 (1989) 37–38, following in part Willi, *Chronik als Auslegung*, 156, sees the Chronicler’s version not as an alternative view intended to replace the view of 2 Samuel 24, but as an *explanation* of 2 Samuel 24 itself. Willi believed this understanding was facilitated by the presence of the verbs סוּר and שׁוּט in 2 Sam 24:1–4 and in Job 2. The Chronicler was then merely making explicit a sense he already found in 2 Samuel 24. Sailhamer himself sees “the adversary” as “the enemies of Israel” (p. 42). Hence he interpreted 2 Samuel 24 as stating that the anger of Yahweh meant a threat of foreign invasion.”

- <sup>92</sup> Compare Sir 15:11-20: “Do not say, “It was the Lord’s doing that I fell away”; for he does not do what he hates. Do not say, “It was he who led me astray”; for he has no need of the sinful. The Lord hates all abominations; such things are not loved by those who fear him. It was he who created humankind in the beginning, and he left them in the power of their own free choice. If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice. He has placed before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose. Before each person are life and death, and whichever one chooses will be given. For great is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power and sees everything; his eyes are on those who fear him, and he knows every human action. He has not commanded anyone to be wicked, and he has not given anyone permission to sin.”

See also *1 En.* 98:4: “I swear to you, sinners, that it was not ordained <for a man> to be a slave, nor was <a decree> given for a woman to be a handmaid; but it happened because of oppression. Thus lawlessness was not sent upon the earth; but men created it by themselves, and those who do it will come to a great curse.” Translation from George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001).

- <sup>93</sup> See Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 88; Frederick E. Vokes, “The Opposition to Montanism from Church and State in the Christian Empire,” *StPatr* 4 (1961) 518–28; James L. Ash, “The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church,” *TS* 37 (1976) 227–52; William H. C. Frend, “Montanism: A Movement of Prophecy and Regional Identity in the Early Church,” *BJRL* 70 (1988) 25–34; Eugene C. Tibbs ““Do Not Believe Every Spirit”: Discerning the Ethics of Prophetic Agency in Early Christian Culture,” *HTR* 114:1 (2021): 50; R. W. L. Moberly ““Test the Spirits’: God, Love, and Critical Discernment in I John 4,” in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 296-307; David Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 224-225; Tricia Gates Brown, *Spirit in the Writings of John: Johannine Pneumatology in Social-Scientific Perspective* (LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 235-259; Gary M. Burge, “Spirit-Inspired Theology and Ecclesial

Correction: Charting One Shift in the Development of Johannine Ecclesiology and Pneumatology,” in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 179-186.

<sup>94</sup> See, however, Adam Klaus-Peter, “‘And he behaved like a prophet among them.’ (1Sam 10:11b): The depreciative use of אָבִי Hitpael and the comparative evidence of ecstatic prophecy,” *Die Welt des Orients* (2009): 3-57 and Robert R. Wilson, “Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination,” *JBL* 98.3 (1979): 321-337.

<sup>95</sup> This does not mean that we foolishly tolerate every so-called prophetic action just because someone claims they are speaking on behalf of God. Just as Jesus and Paul gave instructions about order in the Church, individual Churches are meant to have pragmatic policies in place to determine the veracity of a supposed manifestation or prophetic act.

<sup>96</sup> Jonathan Edwards states: “There is a great aptness in persons to doubt of things that are strange; especially elderly persons, to think that to be right which they have never been used to in their day, and have not heard of in the days of their day, and have not heard of in the days of their fathers. But if it be a good argument that a work is not from the Spirit of God, that it is very unusual, then it was so in the apostles’ days. The work of the Spirit then, was carried on in a manner that, in very many respects, was altogether new; such as never had been seen or heard since the world stood. The work was then carried on with more visible and remarkable power than ever; nor had there been seen before such mighty and wonderful effects of the Spirit of God in sudden changes, and such great engagedness and zeal in great multitudes--such a sudden alteration in towns, cities, and countries; such a swift progress, and vast extent of the work--and many other extraordinary circumstances might be mentioned. The great unusualness of the work surprised the Jews; they knew not what to make of it, but could not believe it to be the work of God: many looked upon the persons that were the subjects of it as bereft of reason...”

<sup>97</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.*, 4.8-23.

<sup>98</sup> Origen, *De principiis.*, 1.3.7.

## CHAPTER 5

<sup>99</sup> The parallel passage in Luke 7:35 reads “wisdom is justified by all her *children*.” Howard I. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 303-304: “the claims of wisdom are proved to be true by her children. The reference will be to those who have accepted the message of wisdom’s envoys, John and Jesus, in contrast to those who rejected them.”

- <sup>100</sup> Stanley Krippner, “Altered States of Consciousness,” in *The Highest States of Consciousness* (ed. John White; Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor/Doubleday, 1972), 1–5.
- <sup>101</sup> See Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment, A Socio-Historical Investigation* (JSOTSupp 142; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).
- <sup>102</sup> Joseph appears to have the ability to interpret his own dreams. See A. L. Oppenheim, “The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, with a Translation of the Assyrian Dream Book,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 46.3 (1956): 179–373.
- <sup>103</sup> One such example can be found in the collection of interpretations called the “Assyrian Dream-Book” (*iškar* <sup>d</sup>*Zaqīqu*): “If a man in his dream enters the gate of his city: wherever he turns, [he will (not?) attain his desire]. If he goes out of the gate of the city: wherever he turns, [he will (not?) attain] his desire” (Tablet IX, Col. I) or, more oddly, “If he sprinkles (himself) with his urine: his (sheep)-fold will expand” (Tablet VII). Some dream interpretations were based on the similar sounds of words: “If a man dreams that he is eating a raven (*arbu*); he will have income (*irbu*).” Scott B. Noegel, *Nocturnal Ciphers: The Allusive Language of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (American Oriental Series 89; New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 2007), 20.
- <sup>104</sup> Noegel, *Nocturnal Ciphers*, 36–45, 59–62, 219–20, 253–79.
- <sup>105</sup> Mark’s account has Jesus charging the disciples not to divulge “what they have seen” (Mk. 9:9), whereas Matthew’s Gospel refers to this event as a “vision” (Greek: ὄραμα / *hórama*). Nolland notes that “Twenty-one of the thirty-eight uses of ὄραμα in the LXX are in Daniel, generally in relation to apocalyptic visions.” John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 705 n. 78.
- <sup>106</sup> 2 En. 21:2A: “When I saw all these things, those men said to me: ‘Enoch, thus far is it commanded us to journey with thee,’ and those men went away from me, and thereupon I saw them not. And I remained alone at the end of the seventh heaven and became afraid, and fell on my face and said to myself: ‘Woe is me, what has befallen me?’”. 2 Enoch is found in two major recensions or manuscript traditions (A and B).

*Apoc. Mos.* 37:4-6: “And he stayed there three hours, lying down, and thereafter the Father of all, sitting on his holy throne stretched out his hand, and took Adam and handed him over to the archangel Michael saying: ‘Lift him up into Paradise unto the third Heaven, and leave him there until that fearful day of my reckoning, which I will make in the world.’ Then Michael took Adam and

left him where God told him.” See also *T. Levi* 2:5-12, 3:1-3. Translations are from Robert Henry Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

<sup>107</sup> Matthijs De Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 334.

<sup>108</sup> The early Church writer Ignatius takes things in an even more unexpected direction. His solution to avoiding heresy is to “give heed to the Prophets, and especially to the Gospel, wherein the passion is shown unto us, and the resurrection is accomplished” (*Smyr.* 7.2).

<sup>109</sup> Even authentic prophets from the Hebrew Bible seem to have “failed” prophecies. Micah’s prophecy of the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians (Mic 3:12), Ezekiel’s prophecy about the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek 26:7-14), Haggai’s prophecy of Zerubbabel (Hag 2:20-23), and Huldah’s prophecy about Josiah’s peaceful death (2 Chr 34:28) all, on the surface, appear to have gone unfulfilled, qualifying these figures as false prophets. Yet, the nature of prophecy is complicated. God spoke through prophets that certain things would happen based on certain conditions or responses by the target audience. Additionally, some prophecies were highly symbolic, using people and places as figures of speech. Thus, straightforward readings of certain prophecies may appear as contradictions or evidence of false prophecies. Yet, as Richard A. Taylor notes: “there is precedent elsewhere in the biblical text for [interpreting passages in a typical or representative sense]. In particular, David (e.g., Ezek 34:23–24) and Elijah (e.g., Mal 4:5–6) provide examples of an idealized OT individual being used to portray an eschatological figure.” Richard A. Taylor, and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi* (NAC 21A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 200, n. 36.

J. Todd Hibbard, “True and False Prophecy: Jeremiah’s Revision of Deuteronomy,” *JSOT* 35.3 (2011): 353-354 notes concerning the prophecies of Micah and Jeremiah that “the criterion of fulfillment as an indicator of true prophecy is replaced by prophecy’s function as a source of reform”; See also James L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict* (BZAW, 124; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1971).

<sup>110</sup> Nancy Mandeville Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 2006) demonstrates how in the middle ages, Christians were unable to differentiate between demonic possession and the ecstasy of the Holy Spirit, leading believers during this time to reach starkly different conclusions.

<sup>111</sup> The word translated “self-control” in English bibles is the Greek word ἐγκράτεια / egkrateia. This word is used, for example, to refer to abstaining from sex in

1 Cor 7:9 and other Jewish/Christian texts: “For there is a season for a man to embrace his wife, and a season to abstain (Greek: ἐγκρατείας / egkrateias) therefrom for his prayer” (*T. Naph.* 8:8).

- <sup>112</sup> I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Madison Ave, NY: Routledge, 1971); F. Pfister, “Ekstasis.” in *Pisculi: Studien zur Religion und Kultur des Altertums* (ed. T. Klauser and A. Rucker; 1939), 320–333.
- <sup>113</sup> In the Greek version of Gen 15:12, the translators refer to the “deep sleep” that Abraham falls into as a trance: “About the time of the setting of the sun, a trance (ἐκστασις / *ekstasis*) fell upon Abram, and behold, a great dark fear fell upon him.” Translation from Rick Brannan, Ken M. Penner, Israel Loken, Michael Aubrey, and Isaiah Hoogendyk, eds., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).
- <sup>114</sup> Compare Sir 1:16: “To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom; she inebriates mortals with her fruits.”
- <sup>115</sup> *The Works of President Edwards* (York: Wiley & Putnam, 1844), 3:282 ff.
- <sup>116</sup> Mary is said to have been “greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be” (Luke 1:19). The word for troubled is διαταράσσω / *diatarássō* and it and its cognates are used elsewhere in a variety of contexts including being disturbed by good and evil spirits (Matt 14:26; Luke 1:12; *T. Sim.* 4:9). Similarly, Mary’s act of trying to discern (Greek: διαλογίζομαι / *dialogizomai*) is used generally of discussing and reasoning (John 21:25; Heb 12:3). The cognate word λογίζομαι / *logizomai* is used in some anti-demonic contexts (e.g., *T. Sol.* 4:11). Naturally, the words used here in Luke’s Gospel are not strictly having to do with dealing with evil spirits, but with discernment in general. Mary’s discernment seems to be rigorous: “διαλογίζομαι<sup>a</sup> and διαλογισμός<sup>a</sup> appear to differ from λογίζομαι<sup>a</sup> and λογισμός<sup>a</sup> (30.9) in reflecting a greater degree of thoroughness or completeness, but this contrast is not evident in all contexts. It is possible that ἀναλογίζομαι differs somewhat from διαλογίζομαι<sup>a</sup>, but this is not evident from existing contexts.” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:350, n. 4.
- <sup>117</sup> In John 5, Jesus heals an invalid near the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. When Jesus asks the man if he would like to be healed, the man replies, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me” (John 5:7). This is a very odd response. It is odd because the man assumes that he can actually be healed by entering the pool, not by having this stranger pray for him. Early Christians thought this passage was strange too, and so inserted an explanation into some of the manuscripts of

the Gospel of John: “In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had” (John 5:3-4 KJV). There is no question among scholars that this passage is not original to John. Many explanations of what the “stirring of the waters” was have been posited, most of which reject an angelic explanation. Some evangelical scholars purport that this marginal gloss was meant to explain the local superstition of the people who believed in such mythical ideas.

The absence of discussion on this passage in some evangelical books on the topic of angels is partly due to the nature of this later interpolated section and also, I would also suggest, an affinity for denying supernatural healing from an agent other than God or one of His human agents. If this statement about the angel tells us nothing about actual beliefs from the first century, they represent ancient Christian views on the possibility of angelic healing. There is nothing unusual about first-century Jews believing that angels were capable of healing the sick. In the book of Tobit (of which Aramaic and Hebrew manuscripts have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls), the angel Raphael is used by God to bring healing and deliverance. The name Raphael comes from the Hebrew word for healing. Similarly, in the book of Jubilees (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE), an ancient retelling of Genesis and Exodus, God instructs the angels to give Noah knowledge about healing. The idea that an angel might visit someone and heal their diseases was not a foreign concept. The author of Hebrews tells us that “Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” (Heb 1:14). Psalm 91 is another such example of how angels are meant to help: “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” (Ps 91:11). The angels’ help is specifically mentioned in the context of protecting God’s people from the plague. During the time of Jesus, Psalm 91 had come to be used in exorcistic rituals. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, Psalm 91 is found among four other exorcistic songs. Evil spirits were often thought to be the cause of various illnesses; thus, the call for angels to protect people from their disease-causing powers was necessary. There is nothing particularly unbiblical or ahistorical about an angel healing someone.

So maybe an angel *did* come and heal people from time to time. That is God’s prerogative. Maybe an angel *did not* do this, and a later scribe just got carried away with his own thoughts. There is nothing dangerous about the belief that an angel could have come and healed somebody. The point is that the angel does not receive glory. When John was receiving a vision in the book of Revelation, he tells us that he “fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of



prophecy” (Rev 19:10-11). Angels do not want or accept the worship of humans. Therefore, an angelic manifestation that includes healing should not be rejected simply because it is abnormal.

<sup>118</sup> One such example is found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in a text called *4QZodiac Calendar and Brontologion* (4Q318): “[If] it thunders [in (the sign of) Taurus,] revolutions against [...] [and] affliction for the province and a swo[r]d in the cour[t] of the King and in the province [...] there will be” (2 II, 6-8).

<sup>119</sup> For examples, see: Celsus, *De Medicina* V, 28, 18B; Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, III, VII, 163; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 28. 7, 35; 28. 4, 22; Tacitus, *Historia* 4. 8; Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 7. Later rabbinical sources also contain evidence for the use of saliva in healing: BB 126b; Shab. 14.14d; 18; Sotah. 16d,37.

<sup>120</sup> John MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* (Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson Books, 2013), 37-82 gives five criteria for discerning spiritual phenomena: 1) Does it exalt the true Christ? 2) Does it oppose worldliness? 3) Does it point people to the Scriptures? 4) Does it elevate the truth? 5) Does it produce love for God and others? These questions are helpful on the surface and I think that they represent a standard starting place when discerning any kind of spiritual phenomena. Yet, these criteria also presume a lot about the person using such criteria. What one considers the “true Christ,” for example, has often been used in such a narrow capacity that even those of other orthodox Protestant denominations are considered as presenting a “false Christ” based on one’s own subjective ideas and not necessarily that of Scripture.

<sup>121</sup> One ancient example of this very thing is found in the writings of Josephus. According to *Ant.* 8.236-45, a false prophet “endeavored, by a wicked trick, to weaken” a king’s faith in a prophet named Jadon who delivered a genuine oracle to the king and who cursed the king’s hand upon his arrest. The false prophet achieved this by using “plausible words”. This false prophet is said to have “aimed to injure the truth that was in them; for he attempted to persuade him, that his hand was enfeebled by the labor it had undergone in supporting the sacrifices, and that upon its resting a while it returned to its former nature again.” Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus’ Miracles*, 27 notes: “That Josephus has Jeroboam accept these rationalizations suggests that he recognizes a certain ambiguity in miraculous signs: to see them as acts of God one must be willing to believe.”

Similarly, Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.212 states: “If anyone disbelieves these things, he neither knows God nor has ever sought to know Him; for if he did he would at once have perceived—aye, perceived with a firm apprehension—that these extraordinary and seemingly incredible events are but child’s-play to God.”

## CHAPTER 6

- <sup>122</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary, Vol. 1: Introduction and 1:1-2:47* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 852 states that “Although Paul believed that the pneumatic aspect of believers’ personalities can be controlled for the greater public good (1 Cor 14:32) and hence he would not identify tongues with pagan possession trance, he probably allowed for more exuberant aspects of speech or behavior (cf. perhaps 1 Cor 14:14–18, 23–25) that were unwelcome in, for example, the somber ritual of Roman civic cults.”
- <sup>123</sup> Reed Carlson, “Hannah at Pentecost: On Recognizing Spirit Phenomena in Early Jewish Literature,” *JPT* 27 (2018): 245-258 has argued that the exchange between Hannah and Eli in 1 Sam 1:12-18 is an example of religious ecstasy being mistaken for drunkenness. Additionally, Philo notes that “whatever soul is filled with grace is at once in a state of exultation, and delight, and dancing; for it becomes full of triumph, so that it would appear to many of the uninitiated to be intoxicated, and agitated, and to be beside itself” (Philo, *Ebr.*, 146.) It is notable that the name Hannah in Hebrew means grace.
- <sup>124</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 853. The Jewish philosopher Philo used the idea of drunkenness to describe a kind of divine inebriation from God (Philo, *Creation*, 69–71; *Alleg.*, 3.82; *Drunk*, 146–47; *Dreams*, 2.190; *Flight*, 166; *Contemp.*, 84).
- <sup>125</sup> Some Christians have taken the drunkenness of Acts 2 as a paradigm for worship or evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence in modern times. This is sometimes referred to as being “drunk in the Spirit” or other monikers such as “wrecked,” “sloshed,” or even “doing carpet time”. Those who use this terminology all seem to be identifying the same experience, that is, some kind of ecstasy or trance state where their physical actions appear as drunk-like behavior. Some Christians have an unhealthy obsession with trying to induce or seek after such experiences, almost as if trying to bypass intimacy with God. As with any manifestation, we must judge it based on the kind of fruit it produces and engage in meaningful discipleship with those experiencing such phenomena.
- <sup>126</sup> Dennis Edward Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 119.
- <sup>127</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1013-1015.
- <sup>128</sup> See Philo, *Good Person*, 86; *Hypoth.*, 11.4, 12; *Jos.*, *War*, 2.122–23; *Ant.*, 18.20; *Pliny E.*, *N.H.*, 5.73.
- <sup>129</sup> “And if the lot results in him joining the Community, they shall enter him in the order of his rank among his brothers for the law, for the judgment, for purity and for the placing of his possessions” (1QS VI, 21-22).

- <sup>130</sup> Members who join the community are called “to love his brother like himself; to strengthen the hand of the poor, the needy and the foreigner” (CD IV, 20-21).
- <sup>131</sup> “he shall be punished for three months [to half his bread. And anyone who speaks before] his fellow who is listed before him, shall be excluded [... and he shall be punished] because of them to half his bread” (4Q265 1 I, 6-8).
- <sup>132</sup> “If one is found among them who has lied knowingly concerning possessions, he shall be excluded from the pure food of the Many for a year and they shall withhold a quarter of his bread” (1QS VI, 24-25).
- <sup>133</sup> The famous quote “We must love one another or die” comes from the poem penned by W.H. Auden. This particular line was popularized after the publication of Mitch Albom’s book, *Tuesdays With Morrie* and in light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks it gained further traction.
- <sup>134</sup> Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, 14.47.
- <sup>135</sup> Suetonius, *Vitae Caesarum*, 6.16.
- <sup>136</sup> Tertullian, *Apol.*, 5.3; cf. *Ad nat.*, 1.7; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 3.18.4–19.1; 4.26.9; *1 Clem.* 1.1.
- <sup>137</sup> Pliny, *Epistles*, 10.96.
- <sup>138</sup> See Andrew McGowan “Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism Against Christians in the Second Century,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2.4 (1994): 413-442.
- <sup>139</sup> The Sadducees believed that the soul ceased to exist after death and that, therefore, there was no resurrection of the dead (Matt 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27; Luke 20:27–40; Acts 23:6–8; Jos., *War*, 2.165; *Ant.*, 18.16).
- <sup>140</sup> Polybius, 26.1.1–3; Dio Chrysoſtom, *Or.*, 40.9; Menander Rhetor, 1.3, 360.25–27.
- <sup>141</sup> See P. T. Crocker, “Ephesus: Its Silversmiths, Its Tradesmen, and Its Riots,” *Buried History* 23.4 (1987): 76–78. Paul had similar issues with a copper-smith named Alexander (2 Tim. 4:14).
- <sup>142</sup> Apollodorus, *Bib.*, 3.12.3; *Epit.*, 5.10; Lycophron, *Alex.*, 363; Fronto, *Eloq.*, 1.3; Euripides, *Iph. Taur.*, 87–88, 977–78, 1384; Appian, *Hist. rom.*, 7.9.56; Plutarch, *Lys.*, 12.1–2; Pausanias, 1.26.6.
- <sup>143</sup> Compare Herodian, 1.11.1: “As we have discovered by research, the Romans are devoted to this goddess for the following reason - a reason which it seems worth while to relate here, since it is unknown to some of the Greeks. They say that this statue of the goddess fell from the sky; the exact material of the statue is not

known, nor the identity of the artists who made it; in fact, it is not certain that the statue was the work of human hands.”

- <sup>144</sup> I. Eph. 7, 1.3263.7–9; 2.508, 509. “I. Eph.” stands for the German *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, a collection of inscriptions from Ephesus edited by Hermann Wankel.
- <sup>145</sup> Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecus*, 123–24; Lucretius, *Nat.*, 1.958–1115; 2.167–83; 5.416–31; 5.156–234; Cicero, *Nat. d.*, 1.9.21–22; Dio Chrysoſtom, *Or.*, 12.37.
- <sup>146</sup> Quintilian, *Inſt.*, 5.7.35; Diogenes Laertius, 7.1.149; Seneca, *Ben.*, 4.8.1.
- <sup>147</sup> Cicero, *Fin.*, 4.26.73; Dio Chrysoſtom, *Or.*, 47.8; Plutarch, *Demoſth.*, 6.3; 7.1; 8.5.
- <sup>148</sup> “More relevant here, some used it for hearers who collected and disseminated scraps of others’ opinions, trying to appear like philosophers merely by appropriating their jargon secondhand. For them, Paul’s thought fails to rise above the general rabble.” Craig S. Keener, *Acts* (New Cambridge Biblical Commentary; Cambridge: University Press, 2020), 433.
- <sup>149</sup> Readers may notice that they are saying he is preaching about “divinities” (plural). How could such a mistake be made on their part? Surely Paul was not a polytheist. Luke tells us that it is because Paul “he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.” The Greek word for resurrection is ἀνάστασις / *anastasis*, which was also a common female name. The philosophers appear to have misunderstood Paul’s preaching, thinking that he was talking about some new god and goddess. Chrysoſtom, *Hom. Acts*, 38.
- <sup>150</sup> Xenophon, *Hell.*, 1.4.14; Demosthenes, *Mid.*, 175; Ps.-Plutarch, *Ten Orators*, 2. Andocides, *Mor.*, 834CD; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.*, 2.266.
- <sup>151</sup> Compare Judg 17:6: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
- <sup>152</sup> Jerome H. Neyrey, “Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative” (Edited by Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin; *Semeia* 68, 1995), 115: “Modern readers, however, are not cognizant of these pivotal cultural values. We neither understand the grammar of honor nor appreciate the social dynamics in which they play so important a part. If we would interpret the narrative of Jesus’ death from the appropriate cultural point of view, we must attempt to see things through the lenses of ancient Mediterranean culture, which were those of honor and shame. In the cultural world of the New Testament, Jesus’ death by crucifixion was acknowledged as a most shameful experience. Paul merely expressed what others perceived when he labelled the crucified Christ as a σκάνδαλον to Jews and μωρία to Greeks (1 Cor 1:23).”
- <sup>153</sup> “ἐντροπή and ἐντρέπω (25.196) differ from αἰσχύνῃ<sup>a</sup> (25.189) and αἰσχύνομαι (25.190) in seeming to focus upon the embarrassment which is involved in

the feeling of shame.” Louw, and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1.309, n. 14.

<sup>154</sup> Jayson Georges and Mark D. Baker, *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2016), 37.

<sup>155</sup> See also 2 Kgs 2:15-17: “Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. And they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men. Please let them go and seek your master. It may be that the Spirit of the LORD has caught him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.” But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send.””

<sup>156</sup> “When Attalus understood that Diēgylis was hated by all his subjects for his cruelty and greed, he took a quite contrary course; and therefore, after he had taken many Thracian prisoners captive, and freely released them all, there were many that spread abroad his fame for his generosity and clemency. When many of the Thracian nobility, out of hatred towards Diēgylis, fled to him, they were kindly received; but Diēgylis, when he heard of this, tortured the hostages left by those who had fled with the most grievous torments. Many of these, that were very young and of tender age, he pulled into pieces, limb from limb, and of others he cut off their hands, feet, and heads; some he crucified, and others he hung upon trees; many women likewise were spread-eagled before they were put to death, and prostituted to the lust of every vile fellow, as in a most barbarous manner he gave up himself to all manner of filthiness. Just as this clearly evidenced his unparalleled cruelty, so it moved many spectators, who had but the least sense of humanity, with pity and commiseration” (Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.*, 33.15.1).

<sup>157</sup> “But this tax-collector did not let them go till he had tortured their bodies with racks and wheels, so as to kill them with newly invented kinds of death, fastening a basket full of sand to their necks with cords, and suspending it there as a very heavy weight, and then placing them in the open air in the middle of the market place, that some of them, being tortured and being overwhelmed by all these afflictions at once, the wind, and the sun, and the mockery of the passers by, and the shame, and the heavy burden attached to them, might faint miserably; and that the rest, being spectators, might be grieved and take warning by their punishment” (Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 3.160).

<sup>158</sup> See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 657-658; W. Klassen, “Coals of Fire: Sign of Repentance or Revenge?” *NTS* 9 (1963): 337–50.

<sup>159</sup> The “Divine Council” is a translation of the Hebrew בעדת־אל / *baadath-el*.

<sup>160</sup> The most accessible resource on this topic is Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Lexham Press, 2015). In 2 Chr 18, God asks the council how they should entice King Ahab to go to Ramoth-Gilead. The spirits in the council room then have a conversation about what to do. One spirit comes forward and offers to do the job himself. When God asks him how he will accomplish the task, the spirit answers “I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets” (18:21). God agrees with the plan and the spirit goes and does just that. Sometimes the decisions made by divine beings is synonymous with God’s decisions. Take Dan 4:17, for example: “The sentence is by the decree of the Watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones.” The Watchers are a group of divine beings that are in charge of watching things on the earth in order to report them to God. This decree, however, is also called a “decree of the Most High” (Dan 4:24). God and the Watchers agreed together on Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment, so the decree is called both a decree of the Watchers *and* of God. Other examples of this type of phenomenon are when Satan presents himself with the other divine beings in the beginning of the book of Job or in the book of Zechariah (3:1-2).

The idea of a god having a divine council is found outside of the Bible as well. These ideas are present in works from a Late Bronze-Age Semitic settlement called Ugarit (now northern Syria). The Ugaritic divine council was led by the god El. El (Hebrew: אֵל) is one of the names God uses of himself throughout the Old Testament. We know that the religious thought and writings of ancient Israel were influenced by neighboring Canaanite groups. As discoveries from Ugarit and the Ancient Near East were discovered and published, scholars began to recognize significant borrowing and overlap between Canaanite and Israelite religion. The gods El, Baal, and Asherah are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as idols and false gods, yet language and concepts from these Canaanite cults appeared to inform and shape language and imagery of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible.

For a brief history of Ugarit, see Marguerite Yon, “Ugarit: History and Archaeology,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; Trans. Stephen Rosoff; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:695–706. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, three scholars (Julian Wellhausen, F.M. Cross, and J.C. de Moor) argued that Yahweh and the Canaanite god El were the same deity. Several problems with this theory have called such a straight forward correlation into question.

<sup>161</sup> The name Baal itself is an epithet for a deity known as Hadad. Variant names were created based on the geographical location, such as Baal-Gad (Josh 11:17) and Baal-Haman (Song 8:11). Hosea and Jeremiah are the only prophets to mention Baal, though temptations to follow Baal are littered throughout the Hebrew Bible: 1) at Baal-Peor before entering the promised land, 2) during the period of the judges, 3) during the divided monarchy, and 4) under the rule of Ahab and Jezebel. Baal’s influence in early Israelite life can also be deduced

from the theophonic names (human names that incorporate a god's name) given to certain individuals such as Jerubbaal (=Gideon). That Baal worship and theophonic names were disapproved of by some writers is evidenced by the insertion of the Hebrew word בִּשְׁתָּה / *Bosheth* (shame) for characters such as Eshbaal who is renamed in 2 Sam 2:10 as Ish-Bosheth (Hebrew: אישבשת).

<sup>162</sup> See Moshe Weinfeld, "'Rider of the Clouds' and 'Gatherer of the Clouds,'" *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 5 (1973): 422–26.

<sup>163</sup> Isa 27:1 says that Yahweh "will punish Leviathan the fleeing [*brḥ*] serpent, Leviathan the twisting [*qltn*] serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea." In the Ugaritic texts, a parallel using similar language can be clearly seen: "If thou [Baal] smite Lotan, the serpent slant [*brḥ*], Destroy the serpent tortuous [*qltn*], Shalyat of the seven heads." See J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950; 3rd ed. 1969), 138. For a detailed analysis of the cosmic battle between the gods and a sea-dragon, see John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge Oriental Publications 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>164</sup> Yahweh and El share some common characteristics that have caused scholars to consider dependence or knowledge of Canaanite traditions. For example, El and Yahweh are both considered aged gods. El is referred to as "Father of years" and is portrayed as having grey hair. Of the three instances in the Hebrew Bible where Yahweh's "years" are alluded to he is called El (Job 10:5, 36:26; Ps. 102:25). Compare, for example, KTU 1.3: "I [Ball] shall [strike the top of] your [El] skull, I shall make your gray hair run [with blood], the gray hair of your beard with gore!" and Dan. 7:9. KTU stands for the German *Keil-alphabetische Texte aus Ugarit* and is the standard title for a collection of the cuneiform texts from Ugarit. The word cuneiform refers to a kind of writing that used wedge-shaped impressions (usually by use of a reed) into clay tablets that were baked to preserve the script.

Additionally, Gen 14:19-22 refers to Yahweh as "El-Elyon creator of heaven and earth" (compare Deut 32:6). The word used here for "creator" (Hebrew: קָנָה / *qanah*) is used of El in the Ugaritic texts. Names such as El-Kanah (1 Sam 1:1) seem to be based on this connection (compare Num 24:16, Deut 32:8, and Ps 18:14). Another parallel can be found in the dwelling place of Yahweh and El. Ezek 28:2-10 states "I am El, the king of Tyre declares, I sit in the seat of God in the heart of the seas." The god El is said to dwell "at the source of rivers in the midst of the double deep." Similarly, the name El-Shaddai (Hebrew: אֵל שַׁדַּי) in the Hebrew Bible seems to be based on the Akkadian word *sadu*, meaning "mountain," a reference to El's dwelling place.

For more parallels and issues with identifying parallels between the Hebrew Bible and the Ugaritic texts, see Simon B. Parker, *The Pre-Biblical Narrative Tradition*:

*Essays on the Ugaritic Poems Keret and Aqhat* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study 24; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 1–13; Mark S. Smith, *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001); idem., "Biblical Narrative between Ugaritic and Akkadian Literature: Part I: Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible: Consideration of Recent Comparative Research," *Revue Biblique* 114.1 (2007): 5–29. See also John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSup 265; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 27.

<sup>165</sup> We know that this kind of confusion *did* happen. Archaeologists have discovered inscriptions in two ancient locations, Kuntillet' Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, that mention "Yahweh and his Asherah," referring either to a cultic object or a goddess partner that some Israelites apparently worshipped alongside the God of Israel. See Richard S. Hess, "Yahweh and his Asherah? Epigraphic Evidence for Religious Pluralism in Old Testament Times." in *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism* (ed. A. D. Clarke and B. W. Winter; Cambridge: Tyndale, 1991), 5–33. Additionally, the golden calves erected by Jeroboam may be associated with the god El, who is sometimes called "Bull-El."

<sup>166</sup> Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 1 (1962): 1–13.

<sup>167</sup> Three of the most basic tenants of religious studies are that 1) religions are internally diverse, 2) religions change over time, and 3) religious influences are embedded in all dimensions of culture. I highly recommend the YouTube channel *ReligionForBreakfast*, which does a great job of expounding these basic concepts for a general audience.

## CONCLUSION

<sup>168</sup> Sam Storms lists 7 ways we quench the Holy Spirit:

1) We quench the Holy Spirit when we rely decisively on any resource other than the Holy Spirit for anything we do in life and ministry

2) We quench the Spirit whenever we diminish his personality and speak of him as if he were only an abstract power or source of divine energy.

3) We quench the Spirit whenever we suppress or legislate against his work of imparting spiritual gifts and ministering to the church through them.

4) We quench the Spirit whenever we create an inviolable and sanctimonious structure in our corporate gatherings and worship services, and in our small groups, that does not permit spontaneity or the special leading of the Spirit.



5) We quench the Spirit whenever we despise prophetic utterances (1 Thessalonians 5:20).

6) We quench the Spirit whenever we diminish his activity that alerts and awakens us to the glorious and majestic truth that we are truly the children of God (Romans 8:15–16; Galatians 4:4–7).

7) We quench the Spirit whenever we suppress, or legislate against, or instill fear in the hearts of people regarding the legitimate experience of heartfelt emotions and affections in worship.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/seven-ways-to-quipen-the-spirit> (Last accessed: February 17, 2021).

<sup>169</sup> Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2002), 261–262: “Interestingly, Plutarch, the priest of Apollo at Delphi, used the same vocabulary as found here in his apologetic against the diminished confidence in the oracle of that famous sacred city. The priestesses had ceased giving forth prophecies in verse, which led some to the conclusion “either that the prophetic priestess does not come near to the region in which is the godhead, or else that the spirit has been completely quenched (*tou pneumatou pantapasion apesbesmenou*) and her powers have forsaken her” (*Moralia* 402B). The “quenched spirit” had to do with the cessation of prophecy. The presence of the Spirit in the church was linked inextricably with prophecy among the people of God (Luke 1:67; Acts 2:17; 19:6; 28:25; Eph. 2:5; Rev. 22:6); so it does not surprise in the least that our author should respond to any attempt to prohibit its use with the exhortation, “Do not quench the Spirit.” This was not the first occasion, then, in which the people of God questioned prophecy, even those utterances that were legitimate (Num. 11:26–29; Amos 2:12; Mic. 2:6). We are not told why some members of the church wanted to curtail prophetic activity in the community, but we do know that during this era there was a rising scepticism about the validity of prophecy. Some hundred years earlier Cicero brought into question the validity of divination in general, of which prophecy was a subset. Scepticism about the oracles was fueled especially by the Epicureans, against whom Plutarch sets his defense of Delphi. But the tradition of scepticism goes back even further to the time of Xenophanes and Euripides (sixth and fifth centuries B.C., respectively). Paul later affirmed that prophecy would one day come to an end (1 Cor. 13:8–10), but only as an eschatological event.”

<sup>170</sup> The exact interpretation of God’s method here is debated. See, for example, Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*. (The New American Commentary, Vol. 8; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 223–224: “He receives this word in “a gentle whisper.” Perhaps the Lord attempts to teach Elijah not to expect always the miraculous and wondrous deliverance from problems. Maybe God wants

“to signify to the prophet that He did not work in His earthly kingdom with the destroying zeal of wrath, or with the pitiless severity of judgment.” Or the Lord may simply try to explain to Elijah that he works in small ways at this time. God speaks in a quiet voice here to a prophet drained of strength. The next passage will reveal still further the Lord’s willingness to labor with relatively limited human resources. Regardless of the meaning of the natural wonders, however, it is God’s word alone that will heal the prophet in this moment of crisis.”

<sup>171</sup> *1 En.* 60:11–13: “And the other angel who went with me and showed me what was hidden told me what is first and last in the heaven in the height, and beneath the earth in the depth, and at the ends of the heaven, and on the foundation of the heaven. And the chambers of the winds, and how the winds are divided, and how they are weighed, and (how) the portals of the winds are reckoned, each according to the power of the wind, and the power of the lights of the moon, and according to the power that is fitting: and the divisions of the stars according to their names, and how all the divisions are divided.” See also *Rev* 7:1, *1 En.* 41:3, and *2 Bar.* 48:3–5.

<sup>172</sup> Some readers may be familiar with John MacArthur’s 2013 book and conference *Strange Fire*, a criticism of the modern Charismatic movement. The book is titled after the episode in Leviticus where Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, offer “strange fire before the Lord” (10:1). Fire shoots out of the altar and engulfs the two, killing them. MacArthur connects this episode with the “strange fire” of unauthorized worship that Charismatics offer God and the possible judgement that they could endure because of it. The passage does not tell us exactly what the nature of this strange fire was, nor why they were punished, though it is possible that it was actually an improper incense offering, condemned elsewhere in *Ex.* 30:9. Later rabbis proposed a dozen different explanations of what Nadab and Abihu did wrong, such as entering too far into the sanctuary. MacArthur’s approach to discerning what is and is not “strange fire” is based partially on the *criterion of weirdness*. During the *Strange Fire* conference, he shows video clips of various Charismatic preachers and the seemingly shocking behavior that they engage in. The panelists then spend time laughing, mocking, and deriding the people in those videos. Some of their criticisms are warranted. The clips are sometimes devoid of context, but more importantly he does not compare the activities of the prophets and God’s ecstasy in his equation. Whatever the offense was of Nadab and Abihu, the idea of offering strange worship to God should be taken seriously. God has determined how he ought to be worshiped and both Charismatics and Cessationists must take this into consideration. See J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB. New York: Doubleday, 1991), 599, 633; R. Kirschner, “The Rabbinic and Philonic Exegeses of the Nadab and Abihu Incident (Lev 10:1–6),” *JQR* 73 (1983): 375–93.



