

# Andrews University Seminary Student Journal

---

Volume 2  
Number 2 *Fall 2016*

Article 1

---

8-1-2016

## Full Issue

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj>

---

### Recommended Citation

(2016) "Full Issue," *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal*: Vol. 2 : No. 2 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/vol2/iss2/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Andrews University Seminary Student Journal by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

# ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDENT JOURNAL

---

Volume 2

Fall 2016

Number 2

---

## CONTENTS

**EDITORIAL** ..... ii

### INVITED ARTICLE

BAUER, BRUCE L. Witchcraft, the Occult, and the Church ..... 1

### ARTICLES

#### OLD TESTAMENT

HIDALGO, ESTEBAN J. The *Shema* through the Ages: A Pre-Modern  
History of Its Interpretation ..... 13

#### THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

BACCHIOCCHI, SILVIA CANALE. The Lord's Supper in the Early Church:  
Covenant Extension or Eucharistic Presence? ..... 35

\*\*\*\*\*

Copyrights @ 2016 held by authors

Online edition: ISSN 2376-063X

Print edition: ISSN 2376-0621

## EDITORIAL

DENIS KAISER

Editor, Andrews University Seminary Student Journal

We are somewhat behind with our publishing schedule and are glad that we can finally publish the second issue for 2016. We are thankful for continuing article submissions and for the reviews of faculty members and doctoral students that ensure high quality in our published material. Both the articles and the entire issue are accessible at <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/>. As in the previous issues of the journal, this issue contains stimulating and thought-provoking articles. We hope that they are beneficial to you.

The sponsoring faculty member for the present issue is Dr. Bruce L. Bauer, Professor of World Mission. For many years, he was the chair of the Department of World Mission. Recently, he passed that responsibility on to Dr. Wagner Kuhn. Before joining the faculty of the Theological Seminary, Dr. Bauer served numerous years as a foreign missionary. His article in this issue of *AUSSJ* deals with various reasons why witchcraft and occult practices continue to exist among members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He further suggests several practical steps to reduce and eliminate such practices.

A second article comes from Esteban J. Hidalgo, a graduate of the Theological Seminary. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies in the area of Biblical Studies (New Testament) at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore KY. He is also an Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies at Antillean Adventist University, Mayaguez PR. In his article, he describes how different thinkers in the Second Temple period, in the time of the Church Fathers, and up to the late medieval period interpreted Deuteronomy 6:4 (the *Shema*). He underscores the persistent centrality of the *Shema* alongside its flexible understanding and application both Jewish and Christian traditions. He gives particular attention to how early Christian writers hermeneutically accommodated the doctrine of the Trinity in the oneness of God in the *Shema*.

The third article is written by Silvia Canalde Bacchiocchi, a M.A. in Religion student in Systematic Theology at Andrews University. In her study, she seeks to show how the Lord's Supper lost its relational and historical (past-present-future) covenant focus and instead became fixed on the Platonic *now* of mystical contemplation, displacing the eschatological hope of Christ's physical return with the real presence of Christ in the eucharist.

We hope that you will find food for thought, discussion, and further study as you read these articles, and that the contributions contained here encourage other graduate students to write and submit scholarly articles as well.





## WITCHCRAFT, THE OCCULT, AND THE CHURCH

BRUCE L. BAUER  
Professor of World Mission  
bbauer@andrews.edu

### *Abstract*

This paper suggests that fear, unwillingness to talk about witchcraft issues, ignorance concerning the protecting power of God, embrace of a powerless Christianity, a weak grounding in the Word of God and several other factors and conditions have permitted witchcraft and occult practices to exist among members in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Several practical steps are then listed that can be taken to reduce such practices.

Keywords: fear, witchcraft, occult, practices, practical, steps, ignorance, Church, Christianity, Seventh-day Adventist.

### *Introduction*

From the very beginning, Seventh-day Adventists have strongly emphasized the doctrine of soul sleep and the Hebrew concept of people in death—namely, that no immortal soul survives beyond death. This history raises the question of how it is possible that there is a growing problem within the church of people either living in fear of evil spiritual powers or continuing to frequent the services of occult practitioners, diviners, and mediums.<sup>1</sup> This paper will examine some of the factors and conditions that have allowed or enabled spiritualism and occult practices to infiltrate the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and it will also discuss some practical steps that can and should be taken to reverse this tendency within Adventism.

### *Factors and Conditions Permitting Spiritualism within Adventism*

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique in many parts of the world for its emphasis on a mortal soul. Most other churches teach that at a person's death, the individual's soul continues to live—a concept that fits well with worldviews that believe that ancestors continue to influence the well-being of families and communities, and also fits well with the recent increasing interest in

<sup>1</sup>See especially chapter 1—"Spiritualistic Manifestations Challenging the Adventist Church in Africa," in *The Church, Culture and Spirits: Adventism in Africa*, ed. Kwabena Donkor (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2011), 11-22.

communicating with dead friends and relatives.<sup>2</sup> Harry Potter books and movies and a constant bombardment by the media on occult themes have created a curiosity and appetite for spiritualism in much of the Western world,<sup>3</sup> and unfortunately also among some Adventist church members. It seems that the Adventist Church has not done a thorough job of educating its members and even clergy in this area of biblical instruction. In Africa, both pastors and church members alike continue to experience fear of witchcraft, evil spirits, and capricious ancestors. In many Western countries, Adventists who are not strongly grounded in biblical content are bombarded with occult themes in movies, media, and the Internet that can cause curiosity and even involvement in occult activities. Notice eight factors that have contributed to this situation:

### Fear

Among many African groups, fear of witchcraft and evil spiritual forces cause many to seek protection from non-biblical sources. Fear of evil spiritual forces is often solidly grounded in worldview assumptions, and it is this fear that is a primary factor that causes many Seventh-day Adventists to engage in occult activities that even they would admit are not biblical. Many of those involved in such activities do so secretly,<sup>4</sup> because they realize that visiting a diviner or seeking help from a fetish priest goes against biblical teaching.

#### *Fear on the Part of Pastors*

One of the saddest facts coming out in recent research among Adventists is that even pastors have so much fear of the spirits that they often refuse to discuss this topic in public for fear of attracting attacks from the evil one on them or their families. Let me share a few stories to illustrate this.

When a Doctor of Ministry student from Africa was preparing his proposal for his doctoral project, he planned to team up with the religion faculty from three Adventist universities in West Africa to present seminars on the dangers of dual allegiance and involvement in witchcraft practices. He found that the professors were willing to talk about the topic one-on-one, but they were not willing to stand in front of church members to present on witchcraft or evil spirits. Why? They feared that they or their families might be attacked by evil spirits, so they chose not to get involved.

<sup>2</sup>See chapter 11—"The Evidence: Potter Fans Turn to Witchcraft" in Steve Wohlberg, *Exposing Harry Potter and Witchcraft: The Menace Beneath the Magic* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2005), 115-124.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 118-120.

<sup>4</sup>Charles H. Kraft, "Spiritual Power: A Missiological Issue," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 361.

Another student from an African tribe known for its witchcraft practices had been a pastor for many years and taught at an Adventist university before coming to Andrews University to work on his doctorate. He told me that until he had spent several years at Andrews researching biblical and Spirit of Prophecy responses to evil spiritual powers he was always fearful of speaking openly about the topic with church members.

I have talked with other well-educated, committed Adventists who have indicated that one of the reasons they do not want to return to Africa to work after completing their degree in the West is because they do not want to live in an environment where their families may be subjected to curses and other witchcraft attacks—another indication that they continue to fear the power of evil spiritual forces.

#### *Fear on the Part of Church Members*

If pastors, church leaders, and religion teachers are themselves fearful in this area, what are the chances that the average lay person in those parts of the world would have a biblical perspective on witchcraft and spiritualism? Joseph Ndisya's doctoral research documents that some church members and even church leaders in Kenya live in such fear of the occult that many visit diviners and fetish priests in order to get protection from curses and witchcraft.<sup>5</sup> Their cultural worldview assumptions and values have not been transformed by biblical truth, so even though they know it is wrong, their fear of witchcraft is stronger than their fear of sinning by going against biblical principles.

#### Avoidance of the Issue in Public Discussions

Fear on the part of church leaders and members keeps this topic from being placed on the table for open and frank discussions. In many African countries Adventist church leaders forbid discussions on witchcraft. Without an opportunity to clearly hear what the Bible teaches, the cycle of fear cannot be broken. I have always felt that the antidote to almost all problems associated with spiritualism and occult practices is good biblical instruction and teaching. In the West, many young people are taken in by movies that focus on vampires, mediums, and other Halloween themes.<sup>6</sup> Rarely are there open and frank discussions in our churches that present the dangers of dabbling in these types of media themes.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Ndisya, "An Analysis and Response to the Fear of Evil Spiritual Forces among Kamba Christians in the Light of Biblical and Ellen G. White Teachings" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2014).

<sup>6</sup>Wohlberg, *Exposing Harry Potter and Witchcraft*, 118.

### Ignorance Concerning God's Way of Protecting His People

It seems that there is also a poor understanding of God's capacity to protect his people. In those parts of the world where spiritualism and occult practices are ingrained in a culture's worldview, there needs to be a much stronger emphasis on how angels guard and protect God's people (Ps 34:7) and on stories about how angels deliver people from danger (Acts 5:19; 12:1-19). Sermons and Bible studies on what the Bible says about angels should be prominent in those cultures.

There is also a weakness in believers' understanding about the power and protection of the Holy Spirit. Rarely in Western settings is emphasis given to 1 John 4:4, which says that the indwelling Spirit is greater—greater in power, strength, and protection—than the evil one who is in the world. How much time do we spend teaching people about the power and authority that God's people have over evil spirits? Very few Adventists realize that people in relationship with Jesus Christ have enormous power and authority over the forces of evil. Instead, too many are intimidated and fearful of the evil one.

Ellen White certainly had a worldview that included a realistic understanding of how evil spirits attack and harass God's people.<sup>7</sup> She is also very clear that God's people who live connected with God have nothing to fear. More emphasis could be given in sharing these types of situations.

### Worldviews that are Uninformed Concerning the Supernatural

Forty years ago, many Western missiologists believed that animistic practices would soon disappear and that Christianity and Islam would become the dominant religions among tribal peoples.<sup>8</sup> There has been great competition between Christianity and Islam, but instead of animistic practices disappearing, we now talk about Folk Islam and Folk Christianity, both of which involve rampant dual allegiance. What happened? Is it possible that both Christian and Muslim witnesses greatly misjudged the hold that supernatural worldview values have on people? Is it possible that the Enlightenment and Western missionary attitudes about power and the supernatural caused many to underestimate the hold of spiritualism?

The Global Mission Issues Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church recommended on April 9, 2002 a new fundamental belief that contained strong language concerning fear of evil spirits and God's protecting power, but in the end the statement was watered down and combined with the need for a

<sup>7</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 4:959.

<sup>8</sup>Alan Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973), 9; Phil Elkins, *Toward a More Effective Mission Work* (Dallas, TX: Christian Publishing, 1964), 10.

devotional life.<sup>9</sup> I have often wondered why these issues have gone unaddressed for so long. Perhaps it is because most Western pastors and theologians do not have a good understanding of how pervasive and widespread occult practices are in the majority world. I have been studying this topic for more than thirty years, and I am only beginning to realize the tremendous hold witchcraft practices have on so much of the world's population.

Lest we believe that occult activity is just a problem in Africa and Asia, I have personally been involved with several people in the Berrien Springs, Michigan area, who were being harassed by evil spirits. When they requested help from Adventist pastors, they were turned away since the pastors did not want to get involved or did not know how to help. I felt the same way the first time I met a demonized person. Early in my ministry a young girl after a Friday evening vespers approached me and hissed, "I am Satan." Her eyes did not look human and her face was twisted and ugly. I took a step back and said, "I'll be praying for you." Not having any background on how to deal with this issue left me without any understanding on how to help that girl find freedom in Jesus.

When one stops to consider the fact that all the theological training programs and schools around the world have been patterned after Western programs, with the same mix of classes and topics, it is little wonder that spiritualism and occult practices are invading our church. When I ask master and doctoral level students if they have had even one lecture on how to deal with demonization, fewer than five percent ever respond that they have. I have asked this question in Nigeria, in India, in Kenya, in England, and in America, and the response is always the same. So, one of the factors that has caused the problem is that nowhere in Adventist theological training does a pastor learn how to deal biblically with this issue. If pastors do not know how to teach and lead their members to respond to these issues from a biblical perspective, how will positive change ever take place?

### Growing Acceptance by Society of Occult Practices

Another factor that is impacting Seventh-day Adventists around the world is the growing acceptance of occult practices as just a regular part of everyday life. It used to be that occult activities were kept under cover, hidden, not out in the open, but not anymore. Billboards openly advertise psychic hot lines, and Halloween has become a prime promoter of vampires, demons, and ghosts. In Nigeria, diviners advertise their services<sup>10</sup> just as openly as psychics do in South

<sup>9</sup>Global Mission Writing Committee, "2002 Recommendations and Approved Statements," in *Adventist Responses to Cross-Cultural Mission*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2007), 2:95, 96.

<sup>10</sup>Kelvin Onongha Okey, "Towards a Missiological Model for Worldview Transformation among Adherents to African Traditional Religion in Yorubaland" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2014), 139, 140.

Bend, Indiana. Researchers have found that “belief in occult forces is growing in Europe.”<sup>11</sup> Santeria is alive and well in the Caribbean and in the USA, and spiritualism is quite wide-spread in many parts of South America. These societal attitudes also invade the church. Young people in Western nations are bombarded by a constant barrage of information about the occult.<sup>12</sup> They are curious, and if they are not solidly grounded in a biblical understanding of the ways that Satan deceives people, their curiosity can lead them to access material on the web that can result in occult harassment.

### Societal and Parental Pressures

We who live in the individualistic West probably will never comprehend the pressure that family and society can apply to force conformity. In Asia, family pressure is strongest when it comes to maintaining the family shrine. In Jonghyun Ryu’s dissertation (2014), he reported that a long-time church member in Japan performed a Buddhist ritual prayer every day for her husband who had passed away more than thirty years before.<sup>13</sup>

In many parts of Africa and Asia, there is no such thing as individual identity. The concept of self is so tied to the identity of the group that a person would find it very difficult to go against societal norms and expectations.<sup>14</sup> If an individual breaks taboos or fails to meet the community’s expectations, that person’s actions not only brings shame and dishonor on the individual himself but also on the whole family, clan, and community. These are the types of pressures many Adventists face when they decide not to honor their ancestors or perform required ceremonies. Sometimes, as demonstrated by the Japanese church member, shrines are secretly kept in closets in the home, or rituals are performed in secret, or the old practices continue long after baptism.

In addition to the matter of honoring ancestors, another area where parental and societal pressure is applied is when couples are still without children after several years of marriage. In such cases, tremendous pressure is exerted on the couple to visit a fetish priest. Even long-time church members are known to

<sup>11</sup>Nicholas C. DiDonato, “Europeans Increasingly Drawn to the Occult,” 2012, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/scienceonreligion/2012/12/europeans-increasingly-drawn-to-the-occult/>; Sabine Doering-Manteuffel, “Survival of Occult Practices and Ideas in Modern Common Sense,” *Public Understanding of Science* 20, no. 3 (2011): 292-302.

<sup>12</sup> Wohlberg, *Exposing Harry Potter and Witchcraft*, 118, 119.

<sup>13</sup>Jonghyun Ryu, “Equipping Church Members for Contextualized Discipleship in the Osaka-Central Adventist Church in Japan” (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 2014), 43.

<sup>14</sup>Ron Coody, “Surmounting Community Honor and Islamic Law in Muslim Culture,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (2014): 140, 141.

recommend certain diviners who have a reputation for curing barrenness. Not everyone caves in to these pressures, but they are certainly a factor in some members slipping into occult practices.

A good friend of mine who is an Adventist pastor in Africa shared how after he and his wife had passed several years of marriage without children, his father visited a *marabout* (a Muslim healer) to ask for his help concerning the lack of children in the son's family. The *marabout* contacted the father the next day and said that he had seen in a dream that an evil person was preventing the pastor's family from having children. He offered to counteract that evil person's influence and gave the father a black liquid that the pastor and his wife were to use to bathe with. He also prescribed animal sacrifices the pastor's family was to make. The pastor's father asked his son and daughter-in-law to use the liquid, but when the pastor told him that he was not going to use it, the father called one of the pastor's elder sisters to put more pressure on him. The family members told my friend that they knew a pastor of another denomination who did what he was asked to do, and that pastor had had children; thus, the family did not understand why my friend was refusing. The father asked the pastor three times and three times he said no. My friend told me that three things helped him withstand the parental pressure: the grace of God, his faith that God's will was best for him and his wife, and the fact that he and his wife were financially independent. What was really shocking was that sometime after that experience, a church member approached one of the pastor's friends and offered to introduce the pastor to a traditional healer who could do something to allow the family to have a child. This again shows that some Adventists are willing to seek help from any source, even unbiblical ones, in order to get out of situations that are considered shameful in their communities.

### Seeking to Meet Needs Regardless of the Source

Compromise of biblical principles is a problem in every country of the world. Many Adventists seek to meet their needs even if it means going against the Word of God and the principles of the Church. Recent research conducted by Kelvin Onongha has found that some church members believe that people visit the diviners because they get quicker answers to their needs than when they pray and ask God for his help.<sup>15</sup>

In 2000, while I was working in Cambodia, an old church elder came down with cancer. He was prayed for and anointed; however, his condition continued to deteriorate. For weeks, his extended family continued to pressure him to visit the *krukamai*, the shaman, to allow him to perform the traditional healing ceremonies. Finally, in his desperation for healing, the elder gave in and allowed the three-day ceremony to be conducted. He died a few days later.

<sup>15</sup>Onongha, "Towards a Missiological Model," 147.

I later used this story in Cambodia when I talked with other Adventists to ask them if they would go back to the evil one's power source if they were facing the same type of situation. I wanted the new Cambodian Christians to realize that there were two very different sources of spiritual power. Many people in societies where spiritual power is a core belief are constantly looking for more or greater power. Unless there is clear teaching about God's power and Satan's power, many do not make the distinction. I have even heard it cynically said that if a barren Adventist couple receives a child from the devil by seeking the services of a fetish priest, they can still raise the child for God. In other words, the ends justify the means.<sup>16</sup>

### Weak Grounding in the Word of God

We have mentioned seven factors that have allowed spiritualism and occult practices to be practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church: (1) fear, (2) not talking openly and publically about the problem, (3) not stressing how God helps and protects his people, (4) open and growing acceptance of the occult in society, (5) theological training that fails to deal with supernatural worldview values, (6) parental and societal pressure, and (7) seeking to meet one's needs regardless of the power source. These are all factors that have not only allowed the problem to exist, but which also seem to have fostered an increase in this type of syncretism in the Church.<sup>17</sup> However, perhaps the biggest factor that has contributed to the situation is weak grounding in the Word of God. Discipleship practices are not what they used to be. Evangelistic meetings are much shorter, and instruction before baptism has been reduced, such that people are baptized much more quickly than sixty or seventy years ago. Post-baptismal care is often lacking. As a consequence, many of those entering the Seventh-day Adventist Church do so with incomplete grounding in the Word.

### *Practical Steps to Reduce Occult Practices in the Church*

How should the Adventist Church react to this growing problem? What changes could make a difference in reducing the percentage of people who dabble in spiritualism or occult practices? This section of the paper will suggest several practical steps that could easily be taken to begin to reduce these kinds of incidences in the Adventist Church.

<sup>16</sup>See also *ibid.*, 143.

<sup>17</sup>Max Douglass, "Demand for Exorcists Skyrocket as Occult Activity Increases," 2016, accessed July 6, 2017, <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/lack-of-exorcists-an-emergency>.

### Take the Issue Seriously

First, the Adventist Church must take this issue seriously. The Adventist Church has traditionally believed that an increase in spiritualism and occult activities would increase just before the return of Christ.<sup>18</sup> Yet, the question begs an answer, what has the church done to prepare its members to meet this onslaught? Every union and every conference should place an immediate emphasis on highlighting biblical principles to counteract the recent upsurge in occult practices among Adventists.

There are very different types of spiritualism that afflict the Adventist Church. In the West, people play with Ouija Boards and watch media presentations that promote occult activities. In other parts of the world, the issue is much more involved with worldview values associated with the ancestors. Most of the Adventist literature dealing with soul sleep and the state of people in death is written from the perspective of the Western problems in this area and very little deals with ancestors.

### Open and Direct Bible Teaching

#### *Teach on Christus Victor*

Adventists correctly teach on the atonement from a penal substitution perspective. This metaphor is certainly helpful in many parts of the world, but among animists and people whose primary focus is spent in searching for ways to protect themselves from the fear of evil spiritual forces, such an approach often does not inspire any great interest in hearing the gospel message.

The metaphor which does stir the heart of the animist is that of Christ, the triumphant one, who defeats the principalities and powers. In his death, Christ “disarmed the rulers and authorities” and “made a public display of them” (Col. 2:15 NASB). Conversion, therefore, is not simply personal salvation but also “cosmic redemption” from the powers (Bruce 1984, 113). This metaphor is the classical doctrine of the atonement, reintroduced to Western theology by Gustav Aulen in *Christus Victor*.<sup>19</sup>

In animistic societies in particular, the penal substitution model of the atonement should be balanced by the *Christus Victor* model. Such an emphasis could help fearful Adventists realize that Jesus Christ, in his humanity, came to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8), “destroy the one who has the power

<sup>18</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), 588, 589.

<sup>19</sup>Gailyn Van Rheen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 141.

of death, that is the devil,” and to “free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death” (Heb 2:14, 15).<sup>20</sup>

### *Teach on the Indwelling Holy Spirit*

Adventists often teach that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8), guides people into all truth (John 16:13), regenerates us (John 3:4-8), reveals Christ to us (John 16:14, 15), leads us (Rom 8:14), produces fruits of the Spirit in us (Gal 5:22, 23), and gives us spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4, 8-10). Perhaps the area where we are weakest is in not emphasizing the incredible power that the Holy Spirit makes available to every committed follower of Jesus Christ. It is God’s Spirit that empowers us (Luke 4:14; 24:49; Rom 15:19; Acts 1:8), anoints us for ministry (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38), dwells in us (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14; John 14:17), gives us access to the Father (Eph 2:22), and allows God’s people to cast out evil spirits (Matt 12:28). Many of the Cambodians I interacted with and who lived in fear of evil spirits were amazed that the Holy Spirit wanted to live in them, and once they came to know his power they realized that he truly was greater than the spirits they had feared before.

### *Teach on the Protecting Care of Angels*

As mentioned earlier, in 2002, Børge Schantz made an impassioned plea to the Global Mission Issues Committee for Adventists to add an additional fundamental belief concerning angels. He made that plea specifically in connection with the need for animistic people to better understand how God protects, guides, and helps people overcome fear of evil spiritual powers and beings.<sup>21</sup> That emphasis is still needed. I am not sure we need a fundamental belief, but it is strange that the theological issues facing the Western world are often the issues the Adventist Church focuses on, whereas the issues facing the majority world are often neglected.

<sup>20</sup>Greg Boyd, “The ‘Christus Victor’ View of the Atonement,” 2008, accessed March 16, 2014, <http://reknew.org/2008/01/the-christus-victor-view-of-the-atonement/>.

<sup>21</sup>Børge Schantz, “Ethno-Religionists and Adventist Fundamentals: Are Their Spiritual Needs Met?” in *Adventist Responses to Cross-Cultural Needs*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2007), 2:74-79.

*Teach on the Authority and Power of God's People*

People from the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, secular, and postmodern segments of society are often involved with principalities and powers. The weapons of our warfare are not better strategies or more elaborate plans. We need the power and authority of Jesus Christ in our ministries and activities. I am often amazed at how little Seventh-day Adventists understand the delegated authority and power they have as committed followers of Jesus Christ. Most Adventists who still fear evil spiritual powers do not realize who they are in Christ and that they have been given authority and power to drive out evil spirits. In our fear of Pentecostalism, Seventh-day Adventists have neglected careful biblical teaching on the authority and power available for God's people.

*Teach on Total Commitment Regardless of the Situation*

Christians live in a wicked world where sickness, suffering, death, disease, and problems of many types afflict God's people. Bad things happen to good people. When adversity strikes, when prayers and medication do not heal, when crops fail and businesses go under, Adventist members need to understand that the solution is not to search out an alternative power source, but to stand clearly on God's side and say like Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 15:13). Adventists need to understand the issues of the Great Controversy so clearly that they will reply like "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up'" (Dan 3:16-18). Until Adventist members have this conviction, the Church's responsibility to teach, disciple, and nurture is unfinished.



## THE *SHEMA* THROUGH THE AGES: A PRE-MODERN HISTORY OF ITS INTERPRETATION

ESTEBAN J. HIDALGO

Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies at  
Antillean Adventist University, Mayaguez PR

Ph.D. Student in New Testament at  
Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore KY  
ehidalgo@uaa.edu

### *Abstract*

This article traces the history of the interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:4 from its original context, through the dawning of early Christianity in the Second Temple period up to the twilight of the late medieval period. The reader will appreciate the persistent centrality of an unchanging doctrine and simultaneously discern fluidity in its meaning and application in both Jewish and Christian perspectives. Proportionally, the focus is placed on how early Christian writers hermeneutically accommodated the doctrine of the Trinity in the oneness of God as stated in the *Shema*.

Keywords: *Shema*, Deuteronomy, Monotheism, History of Interpretation, Patristics, Trinity.

### *Introduction*

Deuteronomy 6:4, often referred to as the *Shema*,<sup>1</sup> is a foundational text in both the Christian and Jewish faiths. In Judaism, it is a prayer and a confession to be recited twice a day, and in Christianity, it is part of the “greatest commandment.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The *Shema* often refers to both verses Deut 6:4-5 or to the liturgical unit of 6:4-9, or to the recitation of a number of Pentateuchal passages (Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:13-41), but in this paper it is used to refer to a single verse.

<sup>2</sup>According to the Talmud, the prescription to recite the *Shema* is biblical (*b. Ber.* 2a), it is the first thing that a child must learn to say and the last word that should come out of a believer’s mouth before he or she dies (*m. Suk.* 42a; *m. Ber.* 61a). Although the great commandment pericopes in the synoptics (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34; Lk 10:25-28) have been often reduced to a double command, to love God and love your neighbor, it was first expressed with the introductory formula of Deut 6:4 (cf. Mk 12:29). Even in modern historical-critical scholarship, Deut 6:4-5 is crucial to determine *Urdeuteronomium* and the dating of the Pentateuchal sources, since it is associated with Josiah’s reform (cf. 2Ki

Despite its centrality and its apparent simplicity, there is nevertheless not a single dominant interpretation of what it means to say that “the Lord is one”; rather, there is a broad spectrum of various proposals and beliefs.<sup>3</sup> Does the text teach monotheism, monolatry, or monism? Is it a positive reinstatement of the first commandment? Can the Trinity be read into the oneness of God? This paper traces the history of interpretation of Deut 6:4 from its original context through the dawning of early Christianity in the Second Temple period and up to the twilight of the late medieval period; the purpose of this study is for the reader to appreciate both the persistent centrality of an unchanging doctrine (the *Shema*) and simultaneously discern fluidity in meaning and application of the text in both Jewish and Christian perspectives.

This study engages Jewish and Christian sources diachronically up to the medieval era; it is subdivided into three main parts: (1) early Jewish interpretations of the *Shema*; (2) the Church fathers and the *Shema*; and (3) the medieval interpreters and the *Shema*. The discussion is not intended to be comprehensive, and neither is it strictly chronological; however, it is a representative summary from ancient sources that directly quoted Deut 6:4, and it is organized with the intent of illustrating through broad strokes a wider scope of how the *Shema* has been interpreted historically.

---

23:25). For an excellent introduction to the issues, see J. Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>There is still no scholarly consensus as to how to translate the verbless clause of Deut 6:4 or to the specific meaning of the *Shema*. As S. D. McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom” *Interpretation* (1973), 291, notes, “after the divine sentence-name in Exodus 3:14 and possibly the opening words of Genesis 1, no statement in the Hebrew Bible has provoked more discussion with less agreement than this one.” E. Borowitz, ed. *Echad: The Many Meanings of God is One* (New York: Shma, 1988), published 26 essays from a wide spectrum of Jewish voices who together suggest that there is no “one way” of interpreting “one Lord” (e.g. does it mean the Lord is coherent, unique, exclusive, singular, incomparable, comprehensive, primary or all?). The syntactical ambiguity is also reflected in the diversity of translations in Bibles today: (1) Most older English versions (like KJV, WEB, GNV, ASV, YLT, see also Luther’s 1545 German Bible) and a few modern translations (NJB, RSV, as well as Spanish NVI, and most French versions [LSG, TOB, BFC]) render “The LORD our God *is* one LORD”. (2) Other modern versions (NIV, NKJV, HCSB, TNIV, and German *Einheitsübersetzung*) translate “the LORD our God the LORD *is* one,” following most Jewish versions (JPS, CJB; see also Spanish *Reina-Valera*). More recently, especially in the last four decades, some translations read (3) “The LORD is our God, the LORD is one” (NASB, NIRV, GWNV, NET, and Spanish LBA) or (4) “The LORD *is* our God, the LORD alone” (NAB, NLT, NRSV, JPS TNK 1985 revision; the German *Schlater* has translated it this way since 1951). These four interpretative options appear in the margin of some versions, including the NIV.

*Early Jewish Interpretations of the Shema*

It is difficult to date the origins of the *Shema* with certainty. Even if it is not regarded as Moses' *ipsissima verba*,<sup>4</sup> critical scholars who date Deuteronomy during the Josianic reformation still recognize that the *Shema* exhibits roots of a deeper liturgical tradition: An ancient confession that found its way into the framework of Deuteronomy's legal core. The rhythmic repetition of the Lord's name in the verbless clause of Deut 6:4b (lit. YHWH – our God – YHWH – one), which is a slogan-like confession tucked away within Moses' parenetic context, gives scholars reason to believe it is a preliterate formulation that predates the composition of Deuteronomy.<sup>5</sup> Thus, scholars have suggested several pre-deuteronomistic applications. Some have argued that it may have been a catchphrase in support of *Monojehavismus*, that is, a cry to rally around a single manifestation of Yahweh under the Jerusalem sanctuary as opposed to a diversification of his cults.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps it was a pledge of allegiance, where Israel vowed "YHWH is our God, YHWH alone!" while implicitly recognizing the existence of the "other gods" of the surrounding nations.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, it may have carried pragmatic monotheistic connotations (although not understood in the same philosophical sense implied by post-enlightenment monotheistic ideology).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>To bridge the gap between faith and critical scholarship, Bill T. Arnold, "Deuteronomy as the Ipsissima Vox of Moses," *JTI* 4/1 (2010): 53–74, prefers the designation *ipsissima vox* of Moses to refer to Deuteronomy's Mosaic authorship instead of the traditional *ipsissima verba*.

<sup>5</sup>See T. Veijola, "Hore Israel! Der Sinn und Hintergrund von Deuteronomium vi 4-9" *VT* 42.4 (1992): 530-36.

<sup>6</sup>Support for this idea came from inscriptions that bore the title "Yahweh of Teman" or "Yahweh of Samaria". See W.F. Bade, "Der Monojehavismus des Deuteronomiums" *ZAW* 30 (1910): 81-90; J.A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud" *ZAW* 94.1 (1984): 88-93; but this position has been rightly challenged, see McBride, 295; J. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* יהוה בריים: *The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), 439.

<sup>7</sup>T. W. Mann, *Deuteronomy*, WmBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 55-56. D.I. Block would agree that it is "a cry of allegiance, an affirmation of covenant commitment... a distinguishing mark of the Israelite people [as] those (and only those) who claim YHWH alone as their God." *How I Love Your Torah, O Lord!* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011), 96-97.

<sup>8</sup>Against the polytheistic context implied in Deuteronomy, philosophical monotheism as termed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century enlightenment refers to the rational denial of the existence of many deities and an intellectual ascent to only one God; see N. MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of Monotheism*, FAT 2/1 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 5-58; E. Otto, *Deuteronomium* 4, 44-11,32, HThKAT 2 (Herder: Freiburg, 2012), 756-62. Although McDonald is correct in asserting that other gods are assumed in Deuteronomy

But, historical-critical evaluations do not directly relate to the purpose of this study; the question is how the *Shema* was interpreted, not what were its origins.<sup>9</sup> Whether or not one sees the *Shema* as derived from a previous source, oral or written, the fact remains that the first extant application of the phrase “YHWH our God YHWH is one” is in the context of Moses’ *ipsisima vox* as part of the so-called frame of Deuteronomy (chs. 1-11). Thus, the first task is to understand how the *Shema* was rhetorically applied in its literary context.

Deuteronomy 6:4 functions as a motive clause to persuade Israel towards complete allegiance to their God, in the same way that the preamble to the Decalogue (5:6-7) sets the rationale for not having any other gods before YHWH. It is the uniqueness of YHWH in delivering Israel from Egypt and slavery and then calling them to Himself that qualifies Him to be loved “with all your heart, with all your being and with all your abundance” (6:5, personal translation). The difficult syntax of the verbless clause of Deut 6:4 may have been deciphered by J. Kraut, who suggests it is a case of staircase parallelism which could be rendered in meaning as, “Yahweh, our God, is unique.”<sup>10</sup> That “YHWH is one” refers to His uniqueness, which, as part of Moses’ parenetic frame, means that there is no god like Him, for He is not only “the great, mighty and awesome God” but also One who has graciously chosen and loved Israel (Deut 4:37; 7:7-8; 10:17-22). The emphasis is not on Yahweh’s ontological nature (i.e., YHWH’s nature as God is a oneness) but on the qualitative character of Israel’s God (i.e., YHWH, which is the personal name of God, is unique). That character is sufficient to demand covenantal love and obedience from Israel in return (5:6-7; 6:4-5; cf. 10:12, 19; 11:1, 13, 22; 30:6, etc.). From this literary setting one may trace the growth of the history of its interpretation.

---

as “real temptations for the affections of the Israelites” (77), a deity’s existence in the Ancient Near East was dependent on their function and actions; thus since “Yahweh does not share power, authority or jurisdiction with them, they are not gods in any meaningful sense of the word. The first commandment does not insist that the other gods are nonexistent, but that they are powerless... it leaves them with no status worthy of worship,” J.H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 87-95, 156. This may qualify the *Shema* as carrying monotheistic connotations.

<sup>9</sup>As it is appropriate for an Adventist audience, I may include the following comments by Ellen G. White: “To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God’s word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives.” *AA* 474.

<sup>10</sup>J. Kraut, “Deciphering the Shema: Staircase Parallelism and the Syntax of Deut 6:4” *VT* 61 (2011): 582-602. E. J. Hidalgo, “The Uniqueness of YHWH: The Most Probable Meaning of the Shema” (unpublished research paper, OT901 Seminar in Old Testament Interpretation, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2015).

In response to the explicit commands later in Deuteronomy concerning recitation of the *Shema* (cf. Deut 6:6-9), *the Shema* was repeated by faithful Jews as a central monotheistic confession both in liturgical settings as well as twice a day as part of normal routine, perhaps as a means of resistance against syncretism in the Hellenistic period.<sup>11</sup> L. Jacobs observes: “The fact that the schools of Hillel and Shammai debated as to how it should be read . . . ‘when you lie down and when you get up’ . . . (Ber. 1:3)” is evidence for a long-established tradition of reciting the *Shema*; such an established tradition is also attested elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> The frequent recitation may have given opportunity for sustained reflection on this text even by the laity, but only the developments available in the literary tradition are treated here.

In Zech 14:9, the *Shema* is alluded to in an eschatological context: “And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one” (NASB). In this passage, Yahweh’s oneness is no longer an epithetical characterization of Deity (i.e., YHWH is unique), but a universal recognition of His sovereignty (i.e., YHWH will be one).

This eschatological interpretation made an indelible mark on Judaism as seen later in the Talmud, but it is probably not as influential as the Greek translation of LXX-Deut 6:4. The Old Greek has significant additions, not least of which is the inclusion of the copula (i.e., is) so that it resolves the ambiguity of the verbless clause. But even more significant is the effect of translating κύριος (i.e., Lord, a title) for YHWH (i.e., God’s personal name)—a grammatical transformation that makes it possible to refer to the oneness of YHWH as a numerical oneness. Instead of the phrase being a character reference (i.e., a confession of the uniqueness of Israel’s God), this new rendering of the phrase as “the Lord our God is one *Lord* [or the Lord is one]” may have been understood as being interchangeable with “The Lord our God is one *God* [or God is one].”<sup>13</sup> It is not likely that this interchangeable notion between *Lord* and *God* would have occurred if YHWH, the name of God, would have been retained in the translation.

<sup>11</sup>On the recitation of the *Shema*, see Ps.-Hec.; Pseudo-Orpheus; Philo of Alexandria, *Spec.* 1.30; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.91. The Nash Papyrus and Deut-LXX both attest to the interpretation, “YHWH is one”. F.C. Burkitt, “The Hebrew Papyrus of the Ten Commandments” *JQR* 15 (1903): 392-408; J.W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, SCS 39 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 114.

<sup>12</sup>L. Jacobs “Shema, Reading of” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. vol. 18 (Jerusalem: Keter, 2007), 454.

<sup>13</sup>The Old Greek provides the verb “is,” a reading also attested in the Nash Papyrus. Indeed, Patristics seemed to freely quote Deut. 6:4 (either from memory or based on a variant reading) as saying “the Lord thy God is one God” instead of “one Lord” (e.g. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.2.2; Idem, 5.22.1; Ambrose, *Exposition on the Christian Faith*, 1.3.23; *Recognitions of Clement*, 2.44; etc.).

Afterwards, during the literature of the Second Temple period, one sees Deut 6:4 interpreted as an expression of the universal oneness of the Lord as both a future expectation and a present reality. For instance, 2 Macc 7:37 exhibits seven brothers willing to die as martyrs because of their belief in the oneness of God [present], but they also hope that God would “show mercy soon to our nation [future]... to make you [the king] confess that He alone is God.” In Add-Dan 3:45, the author stresses: “Let them know that you alone are the Lord God, glorious over the whole world.” Thus, the universal oneness of God does not only appear in an eschatological realization, but as a philosophical reason revealed by God to Moses. The *Letter of Aristeas*, for example, maintains that through the *Shema*, “he [Moses] proved first of all that there is only one God and that his power is manifested throughout the universe” (132). Many more examples could be produced, especially from the works of Philo, who repeatedly affirmed the existence of only “one real, and true, and living God.”<sup>14</sup>

The use of the *Shema* by NT writers also affirms early Judaism’s concept of the universal oneness of God (cf. Mark 12:29-30, 32-33; Gal 3:20; Jas 2:19). Jesus accepted the common understanding of the *Shema* during his day as seen in an evaluation of the Great Commandment pericope in the Synoptics (Mat 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). Jesus quoted the *Shema* as the “first and greatest commandment,” in keeping with the tendency among Jewish teachers of his day to search for the central, unifying tenets of the Torah.<sup>15</sup> His affirmation of contemporary Jewish orthodoxy is assumed, as seen especially in the scribe’s response, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him” (Mark 12:32; cf. Deut 4:39; Isa 44:8; 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21; 46:9).<sup>16</sup> In addition, the way Jesus responds, saying, “You are not far from the kingdom of God” (v 34), suggests that the Jesus acknowledged the relationship between the *Shema* and the reception of “the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven,” as may have been taught during the Tannaitic period, explained below.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Mishnah, the *Shema* was supposed to be heard before reading any other passage of Scripture “so that a man may first receive upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven and afterward receive upon himself the yoke of

<sup>14</sup>Philo, *Spec.* 1.65; for more references to the universal oneness of God in Second Temple Judaism, see also 313, 331-32, 344; 3.29; 4.159; *Virt.* 40, 102; *Praem.* 123; *Opif.* 100, 172; *Leg.* 1.51; 2.1-3; 3.81; *Cher.* 27, 83, 109; *Sacr.* 59; *Gig.* 64; *Conf.* 170-71; *Migr.* 134; *Fug.* 71; *Mos.* 2.168; *Decal.* 65; *Sib. Or.* 3.629; 5.285; *Apoc. Mos.* 13.5; *T. Jos.* 6.5; 8.5; etc.

<sup>15</sup>Philo, *Spec. Leg.* i. I; bShab. 31a; Philo, *Hypoth.* 7.6; bMak. 24a, etc. see G. Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 37-45.

<sup>16</sup>See K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew: And its use of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 72-76. “Mark stands closest to the LXX with the preposition ἐν in all manuscripts throughout the passage. Mark alone gives the famous first sentence of the *shema*, there too adhering to the LXX text.” (73).

<sup>17</sup>*Mishnah Berakot* 2.2. See McBride, 275-79.

the commandments.”<sup>18</sup> This meant that those whose lips would confess the oneness of the Lord accepted His authority as their Suzerain, since He removed their yoke of Egyptian bondage, and as thankful subjects, pledged allegiance to obey His commandments.<sup>19</sup> This may be adduced from the earliest Midrash, *Sifre Deuteronomy*, which relates the words of the *Shema* as a *credo* or confession in the lips of Jacob’s children who said to him, “Hear, our father Jacob, just as you do not have in your heart any sort of dispute with him who spoke and brought the world into being, [so we do not have in our heart any sort of dispute with him who spoke and brought the world into being,] but rather: ‘The Lord, our God, the Lord is one.’”<sup>20</sup> As seen in this Midrash, accepting the yoke of the kingdom, the patriarchs vowed to renounce all idolatry.

The practice of confessing the name of God, as seen through rabbinical interpretation, continued to provide identity and ethical direction for Israel and, in light of Zech 14:9, hope of an eschatological realization.<sup>21</sup> In brief, as S. D. McBride states, the prevalent view of early Judaism, like that of NT authors in general, was that the *Shema* “articulated a radical monotheism, a universal divine kingship awaiting historical actualization.”<sup>22</sup>

#### *The Patristics and the Shema*

Much like Christ affirmed Jewish faith in the *Shema* by quoting it as the foremost of the commandments, the early church fathers also acknowledged that the Jewish interpretation of the *Shema* in their days was an accurate, plain or literal reading of the text. Justin Martyr for instance, admitted that what the Jews wrote “in very thin parchment [presumably referring to the *Shema* in their phylacteries]... indeed

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>See discussion in I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the gospels*, Second Series (London: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 4-14; and A. Bucher, *Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century*, LBS (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1972), 36-118.

<sup>20</sup>*Parasbat Waethanan, Pisqa* 31.1 5C, trans. by J. Neusner, *Sifre to Deuteronomy: An Analytical Translation*, vol. 1, Brown Judaic Studies 98 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).

<sup>21</sup>*Pisqa* 31.4. “‘The Lord, our God’ – for us [in this world]; ‘The Lord is one’ – for everyone in the world [in the world to come]; And so Scripture says, ‘The Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall the Lord be one and his name one’ (Zech 14:9).” Neusner comments: “at this time, God’s name rests in greatest measure upon Israel. But in the age to come, God’s name will achieve that unity that derives from the confession of all humanity.” Ibid. See Paul’s likely appropriation in Rom 3:29f.

<sup>22</sup>McBride, “Yoke of the Kingdom,” 279. It is only later that radical (or universal) monotheism, joined with monism, is used to deny the Christian concept of the Trinity (cf. Ibid, 277, footnote 5).

we consider holy.”<sup>23</sup> Augustine asserted that the commandments that the Jews received were “just and good,” making particular reference to the first commandments positively expressed in Deut 6:4.<sup>24</sup> Irenaeus commended the Jews for adhering to the basic teaching of the *Shema* which was “loudly proclaimed” in their liturgical traditions.<sup>25</sup> And Chrysostom was pleased that the Jews had been hearing the *Shema* “everyday of their lives, and have it sounded in their ears: “The Lord your God is one Lord, and besides Him is none other.”<sup>26</sup>

The Patristic authors were aware of the Jewish devotion to the *Shema* and admired it, which implies that they agreed with the Jews’ literal interpretation of Deut 6:4 and imitated their steadfast allegiance to the “one God.” Chrysostom’s esteem for Jewish martyrs as portrayed in the Apocrypha, and his esteem for other noted heroes of the Hebrew Bible who stood against idolatry, and for all law observant Jews in general who “maintained the standard of their knowledge... of the true God,” is connected to his understanding of a plain and literal reading of Deut 6:4.<sup>27</sup> Both Christians and Jews had a shared understanding of the fundamental meaning of the *Shema* in its plain sense and adhered tenaciously to it.

The basic difference between Jews and Christians in their interpretation of the *Shema* was obviously a theological one. The *Shema* was still regarded by Christians as a confession of the one true God (identical to the Jewish view), but, as Chrysostom explained, since the coming of Christ, “the knowledge of the one true God” was not sufficient by itself; “there is need also of the knowledge of Christ.”<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Christians held that the words “Hear oh Israel” were addressed not only to literal Israel, but to spiritual Israel, those who have confessed Christ as Lord, assuming an inheritance of the Scriptures through Christ. Such an interpretation is demonstrated, for example, in Tertullian’s commentary on Deut 6:4 with a clear allusion to the prelude of the Decalogue: “These words of God by Moses are applicable certainly to whomsoever the Lord God of Israel may lead forth in like manner from the Egypt of a most

<sup>23</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 46. Evidence for this is available from the phylacteries and mezuzot found among the Judean Desert Scrolls (1QPhyl, 4QPhyl A-R, 4QMez G, 8QMez, MurPhyl, 34SePhyl, and XHev/SePhyl) which contain the text of Deut 6:4-5 in whole or in part. See A. Lange and M. Weigold, “The Text of the Shema Yisrael in Qumran Literature and Elsewhere” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honor of Julio Trebolle Barrera*, JSJS 157, edited by A.P. Otero & P.A. Torrijano Morales (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>24</sup>See Augustine, *Commentary on the Psalms* (Psalm 55:10-11).

<sup>25</sup>Irenaeus, *Adv. Her.* 5.22.1.

<sup>26</sup>Crysostom, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostle, Homily 1*.

<sup>27</sup>Crysostom, *Homily 36* (on Mat 11:1-4). Deut 6:4 is quoted.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

superstitious world and from the abode of human slavery.”<sup>29</sup> So, the patristic authors commended the Jewish faith for maintaining the fundamental knowledge of the one God, but their developed Christology became the point of departure of their understanding of the oneness of God.

Having considered Jewish and Patristic perspectives on the *Shema*, we turn next to a summary of the various ways Christians reflected on the oneness of God, apart from the *Shema*. As will be seen, some of these approaches to God’s oneness were relatively akin to Jewish and philosophical thought. Next will follow a discussion of the Trinity in the *Shema*—specifically, a summary of how Christians perceived the Trinity in the *Shema* as well as a discussion of the hermeneutics that led them to such a perception.

### The Nature of the Oneness of God in Early Christian Thought

Like their Jewish counterparts, Christian apologists who were contending against the social pressures of Greco-Roman religions ever had Deut 6:4 at the tip of their tongue or pen to refute the irrational nature of idolatrous polytheism. “For it is there [in Deut 6:4],” says Clement of Alexandria, “whence Moses, the man of God, *dissuading from all idolatry* beautifully exclaims, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord.’”<sup>30</sup> It was Augustine’s conviction that God’s purpose was to exterminate idolatry, a task once entrusted to ancient Israel, but fulfilled through the Christian mission:

Who then has effected the demolition of these systems but the God of Israel? For to this people was the announcement made by those divine voices which were addressed to Moses: “Hear, O Israel; The Lord thy God is one God. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything” . . . but who shall say that Christ and Christians have no connection with Israel? . . . For Christ was the seed of Abraham, and the same God (now in Christ) has ordered, promised and exhibited the overthrow of these superstitions.<sup>31</sup>

Another apologetic voice was that of Arnobius, who reasoned from the *Shema* that it was illogical for humans to worship more than one God and that multiple

<sup>29</sup>Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, 2, after quoting Deut 6:4 and a string of other texts from the Pentateuch. Also, Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, 3.46.1, writes: “Has the divine teaching, which abolishes the godlessness of the heathen or the idols, passed over in silence, and left the race of mankind to go entirely without provision of the knowledge of God? Not so: rather, it anticipates their understanding when it says: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God’”.

<sup>30</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, 8 (italicized for emphasis). See also *Clementine Homilies*, 1.3.57 and *Recognitions of Clement*, 2.44.

<sup>31</sup>Augustine, *The Harmony of the Gospels*, 1.26.41.

syncretistic manifestations of deities “make sport of men’s ignorance.”<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the rationality of the divine unity expressed in the *SHEMA*, Arnobius mocked the heathens who placed their faith in multiple gods:

What do you say, you who by the fear of bodily tortures, urge us to worship the gods and constrain us to undertake the service of your deities? We can be easily won, if only something befitting the conception of so great a race be shown to us. Show us Mercury, but only one; give us Bacchus, but only one... for you will never make us believe that there are four Apollos or three Jupiters.<sup>33</sup>

“Since God is one,” contended Athanasius, “it is ridiculous to suppose that there could be still another ‘lord’ of heaven and earth in addition to the Lord who is one. There is simply no room for a second Lord of all if the one true God fills all things in the compass of heaven and earth.”<sup>34</sup> For Athanasius, Deut 6:4 was so plain and logical in its affirmation of a single Lord over all that it was “ridiculous” to think anything different.

But the *SHEMA* was more than a confession of monotheism or of the unity of God among the Church Fathers: Deut 6:4 also became a springboard to praise the nature and character of the one true God, often using philosophical reasoning. Tertullian wrote: “God then is one... air’s Divider, Builder, Author, Sole God perpetual, Power Immortal is He, Him had the Law the people shown to be One God, whose mighty voice to Moses spake upon the Mount.”<sup>35</sup> And Ambrose, after quoting Deut 6:4, took the opportunity to expound on God as “unchangeable, always abiding in unity of power, always the same and not altered by any accession or diminution.”<sup>36</sup> In such theological reflection, to be *one* meant much more than being the only God in existence; it referred to his eternal being as one in a philosophical sense.

These Christian reflections on the philosophical or theological oneness of God are akin to Philo’s platonic view of God as the only one who could be One. In his allegorical interpretation of Gen 2:18, Philo explained:

God is alone: a single being: not a combination: a single nature: but each of us, and every other animal in the world, are compound beings: for instance, I myself am made up of many things, of soul and body... But God is not a compound being, nor one which is made up of many parts, but one which has no mixture with anything else; for whatever could be combined with God must be either superior to him, or inferior to him, or equal to him. But there is nothing equal to God, and nothing superior to him, and nothing is combined with him which is worse than himself; for if it were, he himself would be deteriorated; and if he were to suffer

<sup>32</sup>Arnobius, *Against the Heathen*, 3.13.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid, 3.17.

<sup>34</sup>Athanasius, *Against the Heathen*, 6.4.

<sup>35</sup>Tertullian, *Five Books in Reply to Marcion, Appendix*, 4. 31-32.

<sup>36</sup>Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit*, 3.15.105.

deterioration, he would also become perishable, which it is impious even to imagine. Therefore God exists according to oneness and unity; or we should rather say, that oneness exists according to the one God, for all number is more recent than the world, as is also time. But God is older than the world, and is its Creator.<sup>37</sup>

According to S. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria “is best viewed as representing a relatively self-contained Jewish Hellenism” because he lived during a period which was heavily influenced by Greco-Roman philosophy (c. 100 BCE–200 CE; the main philosophical influences at the time were Platonism and Stoicism); this Jewish Hellenism ultimately became the vehicle that carried the gospel “from Palestinian Jewish Christianity to Dispersion Gentile Christianity.”<sup>38</sup> The same kind of middle-stoicism at work in Philo influenced the later Christian thinkers of the first century, before Christian intellectualism shifted more toward Neo-Platonism by the middle of the third century.<sup>39</sup> From this philosophical background, the early Christians branched out into lofty developments of the oneness of God, but unlike Philo, they grappled with the nature of God, which would include Christ as one with the Father with the Holy Spirit, and how this could be interpreted back into the *Shema*.

### The Trinity in the *Shema*

Jews and Christians alike read the *Shema* as a monotheistic statement, but where Jews saw the “one” referring only to the Lord their God, Christians believed this oneness represented a unity of three co-eternal persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup> Speaking of Thomas’ confession when he declared Jesus to be “my Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28), Hilary of Poitiers wondered, “How did the faith of the apostle become unmindful of the principal commandment [Deut 6:4 quoted], so that he confessed Christ as God, since we are to live in the confession of the one God?”<sup>41</sup> This last phrase, with Hilary’s suggestion that Christians were living “in the confession of the one God,” implies that Christians were to engage in

<sup>37</sup>Philo, *Allegorical Interp.* 2.1.

<sup>38</sup>Samuel Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 301.

<sup>39</sup>George Boys-Stone, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy: A Study of Its Development from the Stoics to Origen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), v.

<sup>40</sup>Tertullian interprets “one God” in Deut 6:4 as a reference to “the Son being one with the Father,” and thus declares “one must convict Jews also of not genuinely attending to the Scriptures.” *Against the Heathen*, 3.46.1. See also Augustine, *Treatise on Faith and the Creed*, 9.16 and *On the Trinity*, 5.11.12.

<sup>41</sup>Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 7.12. Augustine also appeals to Thomas’ confession in Jn 20:28 to include the Trinity in the *Shema*. See Augustine, *Letter*, 238.

Judaism's traditional practice of repeating the *Shema* as a confession,<sup>42</sup> thus, affirming Judaism's basic doctrine of monotheism. However, Hilary went on to explain that after having heard Christ's statements of his oneness with the Father (Jn 10:30; 16:15; 14:11; quoted) Thomas "perceived the faith of the entire mystery through the power of the resurrection [so that he could] now confess the name of the nature without endangering the faith."<sup>43</sup> Thus, while Jews recited the *Shema* as a confession of only a single God, for Christians, the recitation of the *Shema* had a different meaning, becoming a confession that Christ is One with God.

Chrysostom likewise had an expanded understanding of the oneness of God based on the revelation of God through Christ. When commenting on John 1:18 ("No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"), Chrysostom asked, "What hath he declared? That... 'God is one'? But this all the prophets testify, and Moses continually explains, 'The Lord thy God is one Lord.'" <sup>44</sup> People already knew God was one through the *Shema*, but Christ came to declare some new knowledge about God, "that Christ is the only begotten, that God is Spirit," and other teachings peculiar to Christianity.<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere, Chrysostom spoke of the divinity of Christ in Mat 22:44, "where he made mention of 'the Lord' and 'my Lord.'" Chrysostom acknowledged that the *Shema* "said nothing of this kind [quoting Deut 6:4]" but still defended the divinity of Christ from other passages.<sup>46</sup> So, according to Chrysostom, the *Shema* in a literal sense only teaches monotheism, and by itself it would not acknowledge the Trinity, but when read through the hermeneutics of Christ, through his expansion or reinterpretation of the law, it

<sup>42</sup>Much evidence suggests that both Jews and Christians would have gathered for prayer at "the interchange of the luminaries," that is sunrise / sunset (1QS 10; Philo, *De Vita Cont.* 27-28; Jos. *War* 2.128-29; cf. Pliny, *To Trajan*, 10.96.7; Ez 8:16; *m. Tamid* 4.3-5.1; Exod 14:24; 15; Ps 57:8-9), which was, according to D. Falk, "a special time when angels must present themselves before God to praise him" (*Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. STDJ 27 [Leiden: Brill, 1998], 49, n. 120: "Job 38:7 [cf. LXX and Targ.]; Targ Ps.-J. Gen 32:27; see also *Bib. Ant.* 18.6; 11QPs<sup>a</sup> *Hymn to the Creator* 26:11-12; 2 Enoch 15; 3 Bar. 6-10; *T. Adam* 1-2; *Apoc. Moses* 7:2; 17:1; M. Philonenko, "Prière au Soleil et liturgie angélique" [1985]: 225-7"). Rather than "universally standardized wording" during these assemblies, one may trace traditional themes that were repeated, perhaps along with the *Shema*, as a daily covenantal renewal. These themes include: (1) light/darkness or creation of light; (2) angelic praise; (3) knowledge/revelation; (4) God's kingship; (5) election; (6) salvation; and (7) confession; see comparison of 4Q503; *DibHam*; 11QPs<sup>a</sup> 26:9-15; *Odes Sol.* 15; *Shema* and Benedictions (cf. Falk, *Daily Prayers*, 51, 55).

<sup>43</sup>Hilary, *Trinity*, 7.12.

<sup>44</sup>Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, *Homily* 15 (on John 1:18).

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>Chrysostom, *Homily* 72.

gains new meaning. Further insight into Chrysostom's beliefs on this subject can be found in his comments on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount:

Why did Jesus begin expounding on "thou shalt not kill" instead of the first "The Lord thy God is one Lord."? Because, had He begun thence, He must have *enlarged* it also and have brought in Himself together with His Father. But it was not as yet time to teach any such thing about Himself. [They would have considered Jesus insane] if he opened his ministry saying "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, 'I am the Lord thy God, and there is none other but me.' But I say unto you, worship me even as Him."<sup>47</sup>

This *enlarged* or expanded sense became normative through the rite of baptism where the believer confessed "the holy and ineffable Trinity" as the "one God concerning whom it is said in Deuteronomy, 'Hear, o Israel, the Lord your God is one God.'"<sup>48</sup> The relationship between baptism and the confession of the Trinity as one God, which has support in Mt 28:19-20 ("baptizing in the Name [singular] of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit [three Persons]"), is clearly seen in Origen's exhortation below:

When you decide to keep the command of this precept and reject all other gods and lords, and have no other god or lord except the one God and Lord, you have declared war on all others without treaty. When, therefore, we come to the grace of baptism, renouncing all other gods and lords, we confess the only God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>49</sup>

But for the church fathers, this theological proposition was complicated, for one could not assume "the person of the Father [to be] the same as either the Son or the Holy Spirit," nor should one confuse each member of the Godhead as three individual Gods.<sup>50</sup> For doctrinal and theological reasons, then, the "one" in Deut 6:4 was seen as a unity with a plurality of subjects, which was explained with technical terms such as *Godhead* or *Persons*. Gregory of Nyssa, after quoting the *Shema*, commented: "By the word *Godhead* it proclaims too the only-begotten God and does not divide the unity into a duality so as to call the Father and the Son two gods, although each is called God by holy writers."<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Augustine focused on the term *persons*: "whereas if we were to say three Gods, Scripture would contradict it, which says 'Hear O Israel: the Lord thy God is one God';"

<sup>47</sup>*St. Chrysostom's Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Homily 17* (on Mat 5:27-28). Italicized for emphasis.

<sup>48</sup>Fulgentius, *To Peter on the Faith*, 1.3.

<sup>49</sup>Origen, *On Exodus, Homily 8.4*.

<sup>50</sup>Fulgentius, *To Peter*, 1.3.

<sup>51</sup>Gregory of Nyssa, *On Not Three Gods*, in *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 3, ed. by j. Baillie et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 265-66.

therefore, out of the “mere necessity of speaking and reasoning, to say three persons” is more convenient.<sup>52</sup>

### Christian Hermeneutics for the *Shema*

It is appropriate to pause at this juncture in order to identify the kind of interpretation that early Christians applied to Deut 6:4 and understand how they were able to recognize the Trinity in the text. In the *Conferences of John Cassian*, Abbot Serenus explained that Scripture is like a field that produces a wide variety of food: Some passages need to be cooked up “by an allegorical interpretation” while others “shine forth clear and bright in their literal sense... [and still] furnish abundant food and nourishment in the simple sounds of the words, to the hearers.” Then he went on to quote Deut 6:4-5 as a prime example: ‘Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord; and you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.’<sup>53</sup> This simple passage, while it has “no need of any higher interpretation,” according to the Abbot,<sup>54</sup> is nevertheless in need of an *enlarged* exposition or expansion according to Chrysostom (above). It is not to be interpreted spiritually, in an allegorical sense, but neither is the passage left to the letter, or plain sense alone, for that would restrict its meaning solely to the meaning understood by the Jews—that is, that the passage is a strict prohibition of polytheism, syncretism and idolatry for those under the yoke of the kingdom. So, what term can be used to describe this dialectic?

There seems to be a “dynamic and fruitful tension,” as L. Stone suggests, “between the proximity and remoteness” with which the patristic exegetes approached the *Shema*.<sup>55</sup> Its remote meaning or literal sense was the same as that understood by the Jews of the Second Temple and early Tannaim period: The passage was a confession of the one God. This sense alone would be enough to appropriate its nearness, but in order to apply the confession of Christ as one with the Father in this passage, it needed to be re-interpreted in a higher sense, perhaps through a mimesis of the divinity of Christ and his unity with the Father to give it an *enlarged* meaning. Without taking flight into an allegorical interpretation and without resorting to typology, the *Shema* acquired this expanded meaning on its

<sup>52</sup>Augustine, *Trinity* 7.4.8. See also Ambrose, *Exposition on the Christian Faith*, 1.3.23 for a similar argument to maintain “the unity of operation and of name”.

<sup>53</sup>*The Conferences of John Cassian*, 1.8.3, in NPNF 2, 11:376.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>L. Stone suggests that the patristic exegetes recognized the “Remoteness or pastness” of the whole Bible and still confessed that it “participated integrally in lived Christian reality”. Class Notes for BS 905: History of Biblical Interpretation (Wilmore: Asbury Theological Seminary, Fall 2015).

grammar or literal sense *theologically*. Two questions remain, where did this expanded mimesis originate? And how was this view maintained biblically?

There are many texts that the church fathers cited in order to affirm the unity of the Godhead in the confession of the *Shema*, but the most explicit ones, as quoted above, are from the gospel of John.<sup>56</sup> According to McBride, the origins of the reinterpretation of the *Shema* to include “the God who is one with the exalted Christ” can be traced to “the Johannine formulation”.<sup>57</sup> Although the gospel of John does not contain the Great Commandment pericope (where the *Shema* is cited), it embodies its teaching to love God and one’s neighbor as a summary and fulfillment of the law in its ethical principle of loving one another as Christ loved them, and it replaces the confession of the oneness of Yahweh with “a declaration of the immutable ‘unity’ of God.”<sup>58</sup> After John, the confession of Christ’s oneness with the Father, as the new yoke of the kingdom, was progressively developed into a full scale theology of the Trinity, which was read into the *Shema*. Thus, Athanasius affirmed: “When we hear it said... ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,’... we understand nothing else than the very simple, and blessed, and incomprehensible essence itself of Him that is, and if the Son is from God... He is from the ‘essence’ of the Father.”<sup>59</sup>

But not all Christians saw Deut 6:4 as affirming of the unity of the Godhead; rather, in the hands of the Arian Christians it became an argument against the divinity of Christ: “It is written” they would challenge, “and they cannot deny it, that ‘there is one Lord,’ what then do they think of Christ? – That He is Lord, or that He is not Lord at all?”<sup>60</sup> In Basil’s fourth book, *Against Eunomius*, Deut 6:4 is

<sup>56</sup>“Paul shows that the trinity is one God, when he says, ‘to him be glory;’ and in the OT it is said, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God.” Augustine, *Morals of the Catholic Church*, 16.29. “The government of the Father and the Son is One (1Tim 1:1; Eph 5:5).” It is therefore one kingdom, one Godhead, according to Ambrose, “oneness in Godhead the Law hath proved, which speaks of one God.” And “if the fullness of the Godhead bodily is in Christ, then must the Father and the Son be confessed to be of one Godhead.” Ambrose, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, 3.12.102. “This is why He has equality with the Father by title expressive of unity, and what is said of the Father is said of the Son also... for the Son Himself said [something]... and the Father says [the same thing]... And of the Father it is written, ‘The Lord thy God is One Lord,’ and, ‘The God of gods, the Lord, hath spoken and called the earth’ and of the Son, ‘The Lord God hath shined upon us,’ and, ‘The God of gods shall be seen in Sion.’”

<sup>57</sup>McBride, “Yoke”, 287.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid. “This development can be traced through the Patristic period. See particularly Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 93, where the ‘double love commandment’ is used as the text for an incredible polemic against the Jews. Cf. (without the polemical overtones) 2Clement 13:14; Didache 1:2; Barnabas 19:5.”

<sup>59</sup>*De Synodis, Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia*, 3.35.

<sup>60</sup>*A Treatise of Novation Concerning the Trinity*, 30.

quoted as being among “the chief passages of Scripture which were relied on by the Arian disputants.”<sup>61</sup> Athanasius valiantly opposed such “irreligious men, [referring to the Arians, who] alleging such passages... reproached us saying... if He were God, He had not said, ‘I Alone’, nor ‘God is one.’”<sup>62</sup> Since in this theological debate both parties made use of the same text (i.e. Deut 6:4), the defenders of the divinity of Christ search for other parts of the Scripture to explain the oneness or unity of the Godhead as expressed in the *Shema*.<sup>63</sup> Ambrose, for example, stressed that “the teaching of the Law, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord’” was an affirmation that the lordship of the Father and the Son is one, as evidenced by the multiple uses of the word “Lord” in the Bible to refer to different Persons (e.g. Gen 19:24; 2Tim 1:18; Psa 110:1; cf. Mt 22:43-45), yet “the Lord is not divided... nor is there a separation... but in each case the oneness of the Lordship is expressed.”<sup>64</sup> And Augustine wrote:

Consider now for a while the passages of Scripture which force us to confess that the Lord is one God. . . . Certainly it is written, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord.’ Of whom do you think that this is said? If it is said only of the Father, then our Lord Jesus Christ is not God. Why did those words come to Thomas when he touched Christ and cried out, ‘My Lord and my God,’ which Christ did not reprove but approved, saying ‘Because you have seen, you have believed’?<sup>65</sup>

It is out of respect for the whole of Scripture as entirely harmonious and authoritative, never contradicting itself or incongruous, that the patristic exegetes compared Scripture with Scripture to produce a *theological* interpretation of a *literal* reading of the *Shema*. Hilary of Poitiers reasoned that “the same one who authorizes us to confess the Son of God as God justifies us in proclaiming the one God.”<sup>66</sup> The Trinity was seen in Deut 6:4 not by conducting a word study or by appealing to its immediate literary context, but by positioning the text within its canonical context, where latter revelations of God, such as the Divinity of Christ or the members of the Godhead, informed the theology of this passage.

<sup>61</sup>Basil, “Prolegomena, Sketch of the Life and Works of St. Basil” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 8, ed. by P. Schaff et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), xliii.

<sup>62</sup>Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 3.23-24. “...the Arians are contending with God!” continues Athanasius, There is no rivalry between the Father and the Son; “instead the Son reveals and glorifies the Father... saying ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord.’”

<sup>63</sup>*De Synodis, Councils of ariminum and Seleucia*, 3.49; Augustine, *Morals of the Catholic Church*, 9.14; Ambrose, *Exposition on the Christian Faith*, 3.12.102.

<sup>64</sup>Ambrose, *Three Books on the Holy Spirit*, 3.15.105.

<sup>65</sup>Augustine, *Letter*, 238.

<sup>66</sup>Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 5.1-2.

*The Medieval Interpreters and the Shema*Christian Medieval Writers and the *Shema*:

Thomas Aquinas

Although much can be said about how Deut 6:5 was uniquely interpreted during the medieval ages as a mystical love (i.e., an experiential union with God), or as a direction towards friendship with God, not too much development occurred in the way of interpreting Deut 6:4.<sup>67</sup> The chief Christian exponent on the doctrine of God during this time was Thomas Aquinas, however, Aquinas cited his predecessor Bernard of Clairvaux as an authority who wrote about the oneness of God in these words: “among all things called one, the unity of the Divine Trinity holds the first place.”<sup>68</sup> Reflection on the word “one” as found in Deut 6:4 continued with Aquinas’ use of Aristotelian philosophy in his *Summa Theologica*: “there can only be ‘one’ principle of perfection according to the ancient philosopher, and that is God. [...] The first [principle] which reduces all [else] into one order should be only one... God.”<sup>69</sup>

In discussing whether the world is governed by one, Aquinas demonstrated his knowledge of Aristotle by judging the cause by the effect, and argued that “movement is the act of a thing moved, caused by the Mover” who governs the order he set in motion. He quoted “the philosopher (Metaph. xii; Did. xi.10) [who] expressed: ‘Things refuse to be ill governed, and multiplicity of authorities is a bad thing, therefore there should be one ruler.’”<sup>70</sup> To which he added a Christian perspective: “we confess our belief in one God and one Lord (1Cor 8:6):

<sup>67</sup>For instance, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), Hadewijch (c. 1220), Julian of Norwich (1342-1416) and others are representative writers who reflected on the commandment to love God with all the heart as a transformation of the consciousness that lead into a sense of nearness to God. For Thomas Aquinas, this kind of love (or *Caritas*) was principally a friendship of man with God, a movement towards union with and enjoyment of God. See B.V. Brady, *Christian Love: How Christians through the Ages Have Understood Love* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 125-50, 164-79. Mystical love and union with God is implied by Ambrose early in 377 when he quotes Deut 6:5 in reference to the virgins who would take the vow of virginity, see *Three Books Concerning Virgins*, 2. There seems to be a mystical interpretation of the love. Other Christian medieval authors who interpreted Deut 6:5 include the Venerable Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels*, 2.22; *The Rule of St. Benedict*, trans. by L. Doyle (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 32; and Richard of St. Victor, *Sermon 88* (“to love God is to serve God”); idem, *On the Four Degrees of Violent Love* 3.23 (“to love with the entire heart, with the entire soul, and with all of one’s strength is to expend one’s every effort, every desire, every exercise on this one thing”). See H. Feiss, *On Love: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Adam, Achard, Richard, and Godfrey of St Victor*, VTT 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 49, 266, 284-85.

<sup>68</sup>Bernard, *De Consid.* 5 in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.11.3.

<sup>69</sup>Aquinas, *Summa*, 1.11.3.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid, 1.103.3.

to us there is but one God, the Father... and one Lord: and both of these [titles] pertain to government... Therefore, the world is governed by one."<sup>71</sup>

Aquinas made a distinction between a "mathematical one" and "one" as a "metaphysical entity" or being.<sup>72</sup> The objection was posed that "a thing is said to be more *one* according as it is indivisible. Therefore, God is not more *one* than unity is *one* and a point is *one*," to which Aquinas replied: "A point, and unity which is the principle of number, are not supremely being, inasmuch as they have being only in some subject. Hence, neither of them can be supremely *one*."<sup>73</sup> For Aquinas, Deut 6:4 does not merely state that there is one God, but that God is one in essence, that is, substantively and not adjectively, and therefore the names for the Trinity may be predicated in the singular:

Divine essence is signified by way of a form... simple and supremely one... so names which signify the divine essence in a substantive manner are predicated of the three Persons in the singular, and not in the plural. This then is the reason why we say that Socrates, Plato, and Cicero are three men; whereas we do not say the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three Gods, but one God; forasmuch as in the three *supposita* of human nature there are three humanities, whereas in the three divine Persons there is but one divine essence.

So far we have been discussing Aquinas's views on the *Shema* as they arose in his philosophical discussions of the oneness of God, but Aquinas also analyzed the *Shema* in its rhetorical context, which he called the Old Law. If a moral duty is expressed by precept, it needs to be done, he explains, but two considerations are ordained to motivate its fulfillment: (1) the authority of the lawgiver; and (2) the benefit derived from the fulfillment – whether it is to attain some good or avoid some evil.<sup>74</sup> Accordingly, for Aquinas, "it was necessary that in the Old Law certain things should be set forth to indicate the authority of God the lawgiver: e.g. Deut 6:4 [quoted]."<sup>75</sup> Modern rhetorical analysts of Hebrew law define these "grammatically subordinate sentences in which the motivation for the commandment is given" as motive clauses,<sup>76</sup> which may be formulated asyndetically to the law(s) they precede.<sup>77</sup> For Aquinas, Deut 6:4 functions as a

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid, 1.11.3.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid, 1.11.4.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid 1/2.99.6.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>B. Gemser, "The Importance of the Motive Clause in the Old Testament Law," in *Congress Volume: Copenhagen*, edited by G. W. Anderson and others, VTSup. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953), 50-66 [50].

<sup>77</sup>See S. M. Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant in the Light of Cuneiform and Biblical Law* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 39; R. Sonsino, *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law*, SBLDS 45 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 75, 92-93.

motive clause (as in the quote above) that characterizes Israel's lawgiver in much the same way as does the preamble to the Decalogue (e.g. Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6):<sup>78</sup>

A master does not impose laws on others than his subjects; wherefore the precepts of a law presuppose that everyone who receives the law is subject to the giver of the law. Now the primary subjection of man to God is by faith [Heb 11:6 quoted]. Hence, faith is presupposed to the precepts of the law. For which reason that which is of faith, is set down before the legal precepts [Exod 20:2 quoted], likewise (Deut 6:4), the words Hear O Israel, the Lord your God (vul. Our God) is one, precede the recording of the precepts.

Aquinas's careful analysis of the *Shema* and the "Hebrew Law" not only places Deut 6:4 parallel to Exod 20:2/Deut 5:6 as a motive clause, but it assumes that the *Shema* sets down faith prior to any command. This is quite similar to medieval Jewish interpreters who, following the Talmud, ranked Exod 20:2/Deut 5:6 and Deut 6:4 as first and second out of 613 laws, both as positive commands that affirm the existence of one God and the necessity of faith.

#### Jewish Medieval Writers and the *Shema*: Maimonides and Others

How else did Jewish interpreters view the *Shema* in the Medieval period? Besides Aquinas, another giant of the medieval age who interpreted the *Shema* with the influence of Aristotelian philosophy but from a Jewish perspective was Moses Maimonides (c. 1135-1204). Like other Jewish interpreters of the medieval era who were naturally at pains to oppose the Christian interpretation of the Trinity in Deut 6:4, Maimonides, too, sensed a contradiction in calling the subject *one* yet predicating a *plurality*, but his interpretation involved a perspective unique from his predecessors.<sup>79</sup> He elaborated his views of the metaphysical unity of one God in his *Guide to the Perplexed*, which he described as an exegetical work, written "only to elucidate the difficult points of the law and to make manifest the true realities of its hidden meanings."<sup>80</sup> But as S. Klein-Braslavy observes,

the *Guide* [has] two basic presuppositions... (1) Maimonides assumes that the biblical text professes philosophical ideas—those elaborated in the Aristotelian

<sup>78</sup>See J.W. Watts, *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 89. "The power to command depends on the identities of both speaker and hearer, and the nature of their relationship... the characterization of the law-giver plays a vital role in persuading hearers and readers to accept law and in motivating them to obey it."

<sup>79</sup>See *Da'at Zekenim and Baba ibn Asher* to Deut 6:4; and Leon de Modena, *Magen va-Herev*, ed. by S. Simonsohn (1960), 31-32 in Louis Jacobs, "Shema", 455.

<sup>80</sup>Moses Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed* (trans. by M. Friedlander, London: Routledge & Kegan, 1904), 176.

school, mainly by the Arabic philosophers Alfarabi, Avicenna and Ibn Bajja— and (2) [since] the Bible uses diverse techniques of hiding/revealing the philosophical notions, hence, it is the interpreter's task to decipher the texts and understand them.<sup>81</sup>

For Maimonides, to recite the *Shema* was to proclaim immutable oneness, in such a way as to blur the distinction between monotheism and monism:

If you have a desire to rise to a higher state... truly to hold the conviction that God is One and possesses true unity, without admitting plurality or divisibility in any sense whatever, you must understand that God has no essential attribute in any form or in any sense whatever, and that the rejection of corporeality implies the rejection of essential attributes. Those who believe that God is One, and that He has many attributes, declare the unity with their lips, and assume plurality in their thoughts. This is like the doctrine of the Christians, who say that He is one and He is three, and that the three are one. Of the same character is the doctrine of those who say that God is One, but that He has many attributes; and that He with His attributes is One, although they deny corporeality and affirm His most absolute freedom from matter; as if our object were to seek forms of expression, not subjects of belief.<sup>82</sup>

From the quote above, one may note that Maimonides was not contending against a Trinitarian view of the *Shema* alone, but he also opposed the *Zohar*, a strongly anti-Christian text that interpreted the three divine names in Deut 6:4 as representing the unity of three powers in the Godhead.<sup>83</sup> Maimonides' view of God was that He is one and nothing else, that He has no attributes that would amount to many—that he is, as M. Wyscogrod summarizes, “indivisible, and nothing can be said about him other than that he is one.” Thus, according to Wyscogrod, Maimonides followed in the footsteps of Parmenides, and Maimonides' God is “the indescribable, impersonal absolute of the Philosophers... [which is] not the point of Deuteronomy.”<sup>84</sup> “For there is no oneness at all,” expressed Maimonides, “except in believing that there is one simple essence in which there is no complexity or multiplication of notions.”<sup>85</sup>

After the death of Maimonides, his son Abraham Maimonides (1186-1237) assumed the leadership of Egyptian Jewry and propagated “a form of pietism whose ethical concepts and ritual practices were largely inspired by Islamic

<sup>81</sup>S. Klein-Braslavy, *Maimonides as Biblical Interpreter* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011), 8.

<sup>82</sup>Maimonides, *Guide*, 153 (ch. 50).

<sup>83</sup>*Zohar*, 1:18b; 3:263a. The three powers of the Godhead symbolized by white, red and grey are either Lovingkindness (*Hesed*), Judgment (*Gevurah*), and Beauty (*Tiferet*) or Wisdom (*Hokhmah*), Understanding (*Binah*), and Beauty (*Tiferet*), depending on the *Sefirot*.

<sup>84</sup>M. Wyscogrod, in *Echad: The Many Meanings of God is One*, ed. by E. Borowitz (New York: Shma, 1988), 96.

<sup>85</sup>Maimonides, *Guide*, 43.

mysticism.”<sup>86</sup> This revivalist movement gave rise to several pietist exegetes who reinterpreted Jewish traditions in light of the Sufi traditions. Abu Sulayman Abrahm ibn Abir r-Rabi’a he-Hasid (d. 1223) was one of these pietists who read into the *Shema* the mystical notion of *fana*’ as seen in the following quote:<sup>87</sup>

It behooves the devotee to meditate on His greatness and to recall his name to the point where love is impressed in his heart by which he turns to Him until he attains the state of unity, that is the annihilation (*fana*’) of humanity and the manifestation of divinity. This is the true unity in which is attained the goal expressed in the verse: “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One” (Deut 6:4-5) and the verse: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.” Whereupon the heart will be filled with light... through the bliss of contemplating the Divine Beauty and Majesty.<sup>88</sup>

During the Medieval period, Jews were prolific, not only as observed in the writings of the *Midrash* or *Kabbalah*, but in the textual work of the Masoretes. The carefully copied Hebrew text has ever since magnified the final letters of the first and last words of Deut 6:4, *ayin* and *dalet*, spelling the word for “witness”. Abudraham comments that this was intentionally done so that as Jews addressed each other in their confession of the *Shema* (“Hear O Israel”), they would “witness” or testify, together as one, that God is one.<sup>89</sup>

### *Summary and Conclusion*

Throughout history, the *Shema* has remained a central and fundamental passage for both the Christian and Jewish faiths about who God is, but there is a history of fluctuating interpretations. In its deuteronomistic context, Deut 6:4 serves as an epithetical characterization stressing the uniqueness of YHWH, Israel’s God—a uniqueness that must be confessed in covenantal terms before one could be bound to Him in supreme loyalty (6:5). Whereas Israel originally took the text to refer only to the uniqueness of Yahweh among other gods, after the exile Israel began refusing to recognize other gods at all; instead, they expected all nations to one day universally recognize the sovereignty of their own God (Zech 14:9). With the pressure to conform to Hellenistic syncretism (which promoted multiple

<sup>86</sup>P.B. Fenton, “The Post-Maimonidean Schools of Exegesis in the East: Abraham Maimonides, the Pietists, Tanhum ha-yarusalmi and the Yemenite School” in *HBOT* 1/2 ed. by M. Saebo (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000), 434.

<sup>87</sup>*Fana*’ or obliteration of self-consciousness is a central tenet of Sufi doctrine which leads to a mystical “intuition of existential Unity,” Ibid, 446.

<sup>88</sup>Abraham He-Hasid, in P.B. Fenton, “A Mystical Treatise on Prayer and the Spiritual Quest from the Pietist Circle”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 16 (1993): 137-75.

<sup>89</sup>See L. Jacobs, “Shema”, 455-56. Referenced: Dov Baer of Lubavitch, *Kunteres ha-Hitpa’alut*, in *Likkutei Be’urim* (1868), 54a.

manifestations of the same deity across cultures) and a polytheistic worldview, faithful Jews more tenaciously rallied under the *Shema* as a positive confession that rejected idolatry, polytheism, or syncretism.

The way the NT appropriates Deut 6:4 is not fundamentally different from how ancient Judaism had maintained the *Shema*, namely as the first and central commandment of the Torah, the yoke of God's kingdom, and a basic acknowledgment of the oneness of God. Later Christian authors, however, maintained upon theological grounds that Christ must be confessed within this oneness, even if they still considered the Jewish understanding to be the plain sense of the text, over against the pagan concept of deity. The doctrine of the Trinity was then read into Deut 6:4, and apologetically explained against Arianism and against the Jewish denial of Christ's divinity.

The medieval period experienced a renaissance of Aristotelian philosophy and mysticism among both Christian and Jewish authors, so that the unity of God was perceived in more complex terms, as an absolute unity, a first principle, or a transcendental oneness that could be experienced through mystical disciplines.

This brief summary of the historical interpretation of Deut 6:4 in premodern times suggests that despite the centrality and undisputed nature of this core statement (or perhaps precisely because of it) there have been shifts in the way that interpreters have understood the text. Often these shifts have not meant a repudiation of previous theological thought, but rather a building upon it. For example, the shift from the uniqueness of Yahweh to the monotheistic confession of one God after the exile does not deny that Yahweh is unique to His covenant people; rather it clarifies that He is universally the only God in existence. Also, the Christian concept of the Trinity read into Deut 6:4 is not a return to a pagan syncretistic or polytheistic concept of God; instead it is an expansion of the meaning of "one" to include Christ and the Holy Spirit in divine unity. On the other hand, to ascribe a type of monism in this text, as Maimonides does, is not only a determined opposition against the oneness of the Trinity, but it radically departs from Deuteronomy's original context. It does not add to the descriptive uniqueness of Israel's covenantal God but rather it denies that any such attributes may be known.

The *Shema* will continue to be a central text for Christians and Jews in its plain or literal sense, but as interpreters and theologians inquire about the concept of God's oneness as expressed in Deut 6:4, it would be well to remember the history of its interpretation before adding to its variable movements that expand as time will only tell.

## **THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE EARLY CHURCH: COVENANT EXTENSION OR EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE?**

SILVIA CANALE BACCHIOCCHI  
M.A. in Religion Student in Systematic Theology  
silviab@andrews.edu

### *Abstract*

This study seeks to show how the Lord's Supper lost its relational and historical (past-present-future) covenant focus and instead became fixed on the Platonic *now* of mystical contemplation, displacing the eschatological hope of Christ's physical return with the real presence of Christ in the eucharist. This resulted from the Hellenistic interpretation of reality in general and of Christian rituals in particular. The first section explores the nature of God and the Old Testament covenant, followed by the covenant's continuity in the New Testament through the Lord's Supper. The second portion analyzes the *Didache's* Jewish-Christian perspective of the Lord's Supper and contrasts it with the Hellenistic-Christian stance of Justin Martyr and Ignatius of Antioch in order to show that the former held a symbolic (biblical) view of the Lord's Supper, while the latter began to introduce the Greek philosophical view of Christ's real presence in the eucharist.

Keywords: Covenant, *Didache*, Lord's Supper, mystical, temporality, eucharist, Platonism, presence, over-realized eschatology.

### *Introduction*

On the evening before His death, Christ celebrated the Passover meal in the upper room with His disciples. This occasion was the setting for inaugurating a new covenant and, with it, a new Christian era. Christ, the Passover lamb, offered the bread and cup as emblems of His body and blood, which, after His death, would ratify the covenant. Participation indicated the disciples' acceptance of a covenant that spanned human history—extending back to the Old Testament and stretching forward to the last day. Christ highlighted this eschatological fulfillment by stating, "I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25; cf. Luke 22:18). In Matthew, Christ adds the focus of eschatological unity: "I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new *with you* in my Father's kingdom" (26:29, emphasis mine). Paul later underscored the present union exemplified in the Lord's Supper: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the

body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body: for we all partake of that one bread” (1 Cor 10:16-17).

Yet the very act that was intended to exalt God’s covenant and unite the church in mission and expectation of Christ’s return, soon became one of the most divisive issues within Christianity. In fact, by the time of Paul’s writing of his first letter to the Corinthians, he was already having to rectify the Corinthians’ abuse of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:27-34). Thomas O’Loughlin notes that the heated eucharistic debates of the sixteenth century (between Luther, Calvin and Trent) were “but technical differences within a single intellectual paradigm in comparison with the theological shifts ... that took place unnoticed over centuries.”<sup>1</sup> Within a short time after Jesus’ death, the church began to teach that the elements were the actual body and blood of Christ, and that ritualistic participation in the eucharist offered salvific benefits. Thus, the Lord’s Supper went from a communal activity where everyone was involved, to a religious act performed by ritual experts on our behalf.<sup>2</sup> This notion drastically altered not only the role of the pastor/priest, but also the church’s understanding of soteriology and eschatology. “Having divided the Lord’s meal from meals, the ‘Christian altar’ from real tables, and made the leader distinct as one enrolled in a Christian *sacerdotium*, one then had either to abandon the practice altogether....or to discover new theologies to justify it.”<sup>3</sup>

Already during the first two centuries of Christianity the rudiments of these “new theologies” were beginning to form. These theologies entirely lost sight of the covenant’s extension throughout history and its eschatological aim. The teachings of the covenant law were forgotten, and the promise of Christ’s Parousia was equally neglected. Instead, the focus became fixed on the *present moment*. Through the words of institution, an ordained priest made Christ himself present *now* in the bread and wine. Thus, salvation became less centered on a covenant relationship with Christ and His return, and more centered on the believer’s mystical participation in the here and now.

This article explores how the Lord’s Supper lost its historical and relational covenant focus and became fixed on the Platonic *now* of mystical contemplation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Thomas O’Loughlin, *The Eucharist: Origins and Contemporary Understandings* (London and New York: Bloomsbury; T&T Clark, 2015), 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 101.

<sup>4</sup>In the use of the term *mystical/mysticism*, I am guided by the definition of Pseudo-Dionysius (c. AD 500) who coined the term “mystical theology.” He related it to “symbols and ritual (συμβολικὴν καὶ τελεστικὴν,)” that lead us beyond a cognitive relation to God “to a real union with Him in the ‘truly mystic darkness of unknowing.’” According to Pseudo-Dionysius, mystical theology does not persuade us, it acts on us. See “Mysticism, Mystical Theology,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1134.

This will be done by exploring the nature of God and the OT covenant, along with its NT continuity in the Lord's Supper. Next, the Judeo-Christian view of the Lord's Supper, as described in the *Didache*, will be contrasted with the eucharistic teachings of two early church fathers—Justin Martyr and Ignatius of Antioch.

*God's Nature:  
Analogical Temporality and Relational Love*

Before we can understand the past-present-future covenant extension of the Lord's Supper, we must first understand the Lord of the Supper. There are two basic elements of God's nature that are essential to the foundation of the covenant: 1) God's analogical temporality<sup>5</sup> and 2) His relational love. As the second Person of the Godhead, Christ was one from all eternity with the Father and Holy Spirit, yet this eternity must not be understood (as has traditionally been done by philosophy) as a static timeless reality. Instead, Scripture presents a God whose very ontological being encompasses the temporal extensions of past, present and future. Fernando Canale's phenomenological study of Exodus 3 reveals that God's proclamation—I AM THAT I AM—reveals His ontic presence in time.<sup>6</sup> He is the *I AM* of the past, present and future. The Lord declares,

I am the God of your Father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob [*past*]. . . I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows [*present*]. . . So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey [*future*] (vs. 6-8).

And yet this future redemption was not for the Israelites only. Canale notes that God defines Himself as the God of the ancestors, “the covenant God”<sup>7</sup> who reveals His being in connection to mission (“Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you” Gen 3:14). In this way, God's being is so

<sup>5</sup>Canale's term for God's nature as being *analogically temporal* indicates that God essentially acts and engages in time, yet is able to transcend it (such as through omnipresence). See *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 70-74.

<sup>6</sup>Canale deconstructs the traditional philosophical “onto-theo-logical” order of theological reason through his phenomenological analysis of Gen 3. He then reconstructs theological reason as grounded on a “theo-onto-logical” order. See *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 298-382.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 342.

intimately linked to mission that there is, so to speak, a “missionary dimension of Being and an ontological dimension of mission.”<sup>8</sup>

Not only does God’s self-revelation express His ontological dimension (as a being who reveals Himself temporally in history through His past-present-future words and acts), it also grounds God’s epistemological dimension, that is, how we are to know and relate to Him. Canale analyzes Exodus 6:2-8, where Moses, discouraged and confused, questions God (because Pharaoh is heaping more work on the Israelites instead of freeing them). God responds: ‘I am the LORD.<sup>9</sup> I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them’ (6:3). Here, the verb “known” (*noda ti*) appears in the *niphal* and represents the reflexive sense where God reveals Himself as the One who both *causes* the cognitive activity and *is* the object to be known cognitively. The rest of the text indicates the way in which God is to be known. The construction is very similar to what we have seen in chapter three: It is presented in the context of the *past* covenant (v. 4), in which God is hearing the Israelites’ *present* cries (v. 5) and promises *future* redemption (v. 6). Here we see that the past covenant is the foundation on which the Israelites raised up their present pleas and the basis on which God heard them and remembered to fulfill His covenant. God ends by once again emphasizing the cognitive dimension to Moses: “then you shall *know* that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord” (Exod 6:7, 8).

Once again, God’s being is expressed temporally as He extends Himself through His words and acts in a past-present-future flow. Furthermore, He asks that in order to know Him we remember what He has said and done so that we might believe His future promises. In other words, the cognitive process works through “extension-tension.” Humans must approach the temporally “extended” subject matter (God’s acts, presence, and promises in history) and gather them in “tension” in order to unite the various parts of God’s revelation in a harmonious whole.<sup>10</sup> This is theological knowledge. What is notable here is that such a cognitive process runs directly counter to all theologies and philosophies that claim that oneness with God must be reached mystically, that is, apart from

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>This first clause may be seen as a continuation of the parallelism in 3:14 referring to God’s being; the second clause speaks about the knowledge of God. Also, just as the reflexive sense was used in 3:2 in introducing the ontological dimension of God’s being, 6:3b uses *yada* in its *niphal* form is a revelational term referring to the essence of God. In other words, God himself is the one who causes the cognitive activity.

<sup>10</sup>Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 378.

cognition. Instead, Scripture reveals that “it is God’s Being in itself in His mystery that is opened up for human knowledge.”<sup>11</sup>

A second element of the divine nature, one that is closely connected with God’s analogical temporality, is His loving relationality. “God is love” (1 John 4:8-16) is evident in the mystery of the Trinity and in the Trinity’s relationship with the created universe. John Peckham notes that Scripture’s affirmation “God is love” indicates that “all that God *is* and *does* must be understood as congruent with divine love. That is, God’s character is itself love and God is essentially loving. The members of the Trinity have always been involved in a love relationship (cf. John 17:24). Intratrinitarian love is thus essential to God, a product of God’s Trinitarian, relational nature.”<sup>12</sup> Peckham further notes that the love of God is foreconditional<sup>13</sup> and reciprocal. “The foreconditional-reciprocal model [of God’s love] interprets the canonical evidence to mean that humans are called (invited) by God to be a part of His elect but that humans possess the God-given ability to accept or reject God’s call and, consequently, love relationship with God.”<sup>14</sup>

This is where the covenant enters. Simply stated, a covenant<sup>15</sup> is a legally binding agreement between two parties. Yet unlike most legal contracts, the aim of the divine covenant is a dynamic relationship of love.<sup>16</sup> To love another, one must act—and to act, one must have the element of time. Thus, the temporal-historical extension of God’s being and His character of relational love become the foundation for the covenant. Peckham notes, “The reciprocal aspect of the divine-human love relationship is especially evident in the covenant relationship.”<sup>17</sup> God points back to creation (and/or deliverance) as evidence of His love [past], and promises long life and salvation [future] (Deut 4:37-40, 7:7-8,

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 373.

<sup>12</sup>John Peckham, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 252.

<sup>13</sup>Peckham coins the term *foreconditional* to indicate that God’s love “in relation to the world is unconditional with respect to volition (subjective love), but conditional with respect to the ongoing God-world relationship (objective love).” Ibid., 277.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>15</sup>The Hebrew word for covenant, *berith*, is derived from a root which means “to cut,” thus a covenant is a “cutting,” of animals into two parts, with the contracting parties passing between them, thus sealing the covenant (Gen 15; Jer 34:18, 19). See M. G. Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893).

<sup>16</sup>See Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2011), 2:311.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 222.

10:15) in exchange for (or conditional on) being loved and obeyed [present]<sup>18</sup> (Deut 11:1; cf. Exod 20:5-6).<sup>19</sup>

*Old Testament: The Nature of the Covenant*

Beginning with Adam in the Garden of Eden (Hos 6:7) the Old Testament presents several “covenants” such as the ones made with Noah, Abraham, David and Solomon,<sup>20</sup> yet Scripture regularly emphasizes that God’s covenant is one, it is *the* “everlasting covenant.”<sup>21</sup> Gudmundur Olafsson points out that “the Old Testament never speaks of covenants in the plural—only singular, even though it is associated with various individuals, which supports the idea that God only had one covenant which he adapts to the needs of the different individuals and times.”<sup>22</sup>

God’s covenant at Sinai is unique among others in the Old Testament because (a) it is grounded in God’s self-revelation as a Being who is temporally present and missionally active in the past-present-future continuum of space and time, and (b) it points to His words and actions as the medium by which humans may know Him. In other words, the Sinai covenant grounds being (ontology) and knowing (epistemology). Furthermore, the covenant at Sinai involves not an individual, but an entire nation. It looks back [*past*] not to creation but to Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian slavery (Exod 20:1) through the blood of the Passover lamb (Exod 12: 11-13). It establishes God’s sanctuary presence among them [*present*] (Exod 25:8, cf. 40:34), and anticipates the [*future*] presence of the incarnate Passover Lamb and humanity’s final deliverance from slavery to sin (John 1:29, 1 Cor 5:7). Finally, the Sinai covenant has a strong missional aim in that the nation was to be

<sup>18</sup>It is important to note that the human response does not earn salvation, yet it does gain humans a love relationship with the God who is able to save them.

<sup>19</sup>Some scholars have posited a distinction between so-called promissory (unconditional) and obligatory (conditional) covenants, stating that certain covenants, such as the Abrahamic and Davidic, were unconditional. Yet closer study reveals that each covenant includes elements of conditionality and unconditionality, so that they are both promissory *and* obligatory (cf. Gen 18:19, 22:16-18, 26:4-5, 1 Kgs 2:3-4, 8:25, 9:4-9). Ibid. 222, 223. See also Gary Knoppers, “Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116:4 (1996), 670-697 and Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 14, 15.

<sup>20</sup>For a good exposition of the OT covenants, see Gully, *Systematic Theology: God as Trinity*, 2:311–377.

<sup>21</sup>The term “everlasting covenant” appears fifteen times in the Old Testament (Gen 9:16, 17:7, 13, 19, Num 18:19, 2 Sam 23:5, 1 Chron 16:17, Ps 105:10, Isa 24:5, 55:3, 61:8, Jer 32:40, 50:5, Ezek 16:60, 37:26).

<sup>22</sup>Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 313.

“a kingdom of priests and holy nation,” indicating that the people of Israel were to be intercessors on behalf of other nations as they lived out holy lives that would draw others to God (Exod 19:6, Deut 4:5-6).<sup>23</sup>

Thus, in Exodus we see that, like God's very ontological being revealed in Genesis 3, the *nature* of the covenant is presented as a temporal past-present-future extension of God's presence throughout history that has a love-relational (missional) focus. The *development* of the covenant answers the *how*. How do humans enter into a covenant relation with God? Elsewhere I have explored the development of the sanctuary-covenant structure in Exodus as an interactive seven-step process God reveals to the Israelites through a series of progressive mountaintop communications.<sup>24</sup> While all steps serve a function in revealing God's covenant love and achieving covenant oneness, there are three crucial steps that connect directly with the Lord's Supper ratification: 1) Reception of God's *covenant law* (Exod 20); 2) Israel's assent to the terms of the covenant which is ratified by the *blood of the covenant* being sprinkled on the altar and the people (Exod 24:1-8); and 3) *covenant eating* (Exod 24:9-11). The tenor of the covenant development is less like a formal contract, and more like a marriage union.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the final aim of the covenant is to abide in sanctuary union: “Let them build me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exod 25:8). Thus, while the *nature* of the covenant is temporal extension and relational love, the *development* of the covenant occurs via covenant law, covenant blood, and covenant eating.

<sup>23</sup>See also Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), and Daniel C. Juster and Don Finto, *The Irrevocable Calling: Israel's Role as a Light to the Nations* (Clarksville, MD: Lederer Books, 2007).

<sup>24</sup>The seven steps to personal and communal sanctuary-covenant union with God are: 1) an assent to the conditional nature of covenant (Exod 19:3-6); 2) personal introspection (Exod 19:8b-14); 3) heart reception of God's Decalogue (19:20-20:17); 4) acceptance of all God's prophetic teachings (20:21-23:33); 5) consumption of God's word (Christ's body), which is revealed in sacrificial living (Christ's blood) (24:9-11); 6) cooperation with the Holy Spirit for dwelling in sanctuary union with Christ (24:13-32:14); and 7) anticipation Christ's soon return and restoration of our face-to-face communion (40:17-38). Silvia Canale Bacchiocchi, “The Sanctuary-Covenant Structure as Pattern to Oneness with God” (research paper, Andrews University, 2015), 12-30.

<sup>25</sup>Although the covenant concept of God as bridegroom is extensively treated in the OT prophetic writings, it is first revealed, albeit in latent form, in the Decalogue. See Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 113-117. John Peckham has also explored the various marriage metaphors in Old and New Testaments, noting, “Just as God is depicted as the husband of his people in the Old Testament, Jesus takes on the metaphorical role of the bridegroom, who will wed his bride (the church), for whom he lovingly gave himself up (Matt 9:15; 25:1-10; Mark 2:19-20; Luke 5:34-35; John 3:29; Eph 5:23-27; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19:7; 21:9; cf. James 4:4).” *The Love of God*, 224.

*New Testament: The Lord's Supper  
as Extension of the Covenant*

In the New Testament, we note a similar progression of the Old Testament Sinai covenant. On the eve of Christ's death, the synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—describe the covenant as having a past-present-future extension. Christ exclaims, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover<sup>26</sup> [*past*] with you before I suffer: for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God [*future*].... This is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me [*present*].... This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:15-16, 20, cf. Matt 26:27-29; Mark 14:24-25).

John's apparent silence regarding the institution of the Lord's Supper on the evening before Christ's death has baffled numerous scholars and given rise to a host of theories.<sup>27</sup> Yet it is important to note that John has already presented the emblems of the Lord's Supper (covenant blood and covenant eating) in chapter 6: “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him” (6:56, cf. 15:7). Christ's seemingly cannibalistic statement caused many disciples to turn away. To those who remained Christ explained, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. *The words* that I speak to you are spirit and they are life” (6:63, italics mine). Peter likewise affirms: “You have the words of eternal life” (v. 68). Thus, when John presents the Lord's Supper sermon (John 13–17), Christ's focus is precisely on these “words of life,” namely covenant law, and he uses language that highlights the relational-love aspect of God's nature and the covenant, regularly linking our love for God with commandment keeping.<sup>28</sup> Thus

<sup>26</sup>For a study of the various views regarding whether the Lord's Supper looked back to the Passover, see Andreas J. Kostenberger, “Was the Last Supper a Passover Meal?” in *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 6–30. See also Matthew Myer Boulton, “Supersession or Subsession? Exodus Typology, the Christian Eucharist and the Jewish Passover Meal,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 66:1 (2013): 18-29.

<sup>27</sup>Daniel Augsburg explores the broad array of interpretations including “Anti-Judaism,” “Anti-Episcopacy,” “Calendrical Disagreements,” “Strong Sacramentalism,” and “Christian Oath of Secrecy.” See “John and the Institution of the Lord's Supper,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 1, no. 1 (1963): 3-24. See also Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship* (London: SCM Press, 1953), 100.

<sup>28</sup>Christ repeatedly mentions the new command to love one another (15:34, 35; 15:12, 17), and connects love with commandment keeping: “If you love me keep my words/commandments” (14:15, 21, 23); “If you abide in me and my words abide in you ...” (15:7); “Abide in my love. If you keep My commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love (15:9-10); “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (15:14); and praying to His Father: “...they have kept your word ... for I have given to them the words which You have

we see that John also grounds the nature of the Lord's Supper in temporal extension and relational love, with a development that features covenant law, covenant blood, and covenant eating.

Regarding the perspective of Paul, Oleg Kostyuk has explored the temporal extension of the covenant in relation to the Lord's Supper. He notes that Paul's statement, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor 11:26),"

encompasses three dimensions: present, past, and future. Present tense is described in the consuming of the bread and cup themselves. The present consuming of the symbols, in its turn, points to the past, that is the death of the Lord. It also points to the eschatological future that is the coming of the Lord (Parousia)."<sup>29</sup>

I would also note that the concept of proclamation in this text underscores the missional focus of the Lord's Supper. Thus we see that the evidence of both the New Testament gospels and the writings of Paul supports the covenant structure of the Old Testament, both in its *nature*—temporal extension and relational love, and in its *development*—covenant blood, covenant law, and covenant eating.

Next, we will explore how the Lord's Supper was interpreted outside of Scripture in the first two centuries of Christianity. First we will look at the *Didache*—a Judeo-Christian interpretation—and contrast it with the writings of Justin Martyr and Ignatius of Antioch, as representatives of a more Hellenistic interpretation of the Lord's Supper.

### *Early Jewish Christianity: The Didache*

*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*,<sup>30</sup> better known as the *Didache*, is an early Christian manual or treatise that was likely circulated among the churches in Syria around the turn of the first century.<sup>31</sup> This date, however, has undergone extensive studies

given Me: and they have received them" (17:6, 8); "I have given them Your word (17:14); "Sanctify them by your truth, Your word is truth" (17:17).

<sup>29</sup>Oleg Kostyuk, "From the Lord's Supper to Parousia: Resisting the Tendencies of Over-Realized Eschatology Among Corinthian Believers" (paper presented at the Twelfth Seminary Scholarship Symposium, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 2016), 10.

<sup>30</sup>Jean Paul Audet has shown that the original title for the *Didache* was *Didachai ton apostolon* (Teachings of the Apostles), a title similar to Luke's second volume (Acts of the Apostles). Yet the title was later expanded to include the twelve apostles in order give the document greater authority. *La Didache: Instruction des Apotres* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1958).

<sup>31</sup>Roger Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 44. See also "Didache," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 482.

and scholars have recently begun to date it earlier, which would make it one of the first Christian documents, preceding some NT writings.<sup>32</sup>

The composition is generally arranged in three sections<sup>33</sup> covering ethics, practices (baptism and the Lord's Supper), and church order. The section that concerns us, regarding the Lord's Supper, is found in chapters nine and ten:

- 9:1 But as touching the eucharistic thanksgiving give thanks thus.
- 9:2 First, as regards the cup: We give You thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Your son David, which You made known to us through Your Son Jesus; Yours is the glory for ever and ever.
- 9:3 Then as regards the broken bread: We give You thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Your Son Jesus; Yours is the glory for ever and ever.
- 9:4 As this broken bread was scattered on the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom; for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

<sup>32</sup>Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 25. Aaron Milavec and Eugene LaVerdiere both argue for a mid-first century origin, and they argue for the letter's independence from the Gospels. Notably, a growing number of critics are coming to the conclusion that the *Didache* does not assume any knowledge of NT writings. See LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 135; Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 46-50; Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, and Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50-70 C.E.* (New York: Newman Press, 2003), 695-739; Marcello Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism: Jewish Roots of an Ancient Christian-Jewish Work* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 81-86.

<sup>33</sup>Eugene LaVerdiere sees a three-stage process as evolving over a period of 50 years—beginning around AD 50 and ending around AD 100. The first stage (*Didache* 1–6 and 16), covers the way of life and the way of death—along with eschatological exhortations. The OT wisdom literature employed here is indicative of the Jewish character of this early Christian community. LaVerdiere suggests that the community at this time was Christian but that its members were Jewish and still identified with their Jewish roots. Stage two (*Didache* 7–10) developed the requirements on baptism (7), fasting (7:4–8:1), the Lord's Prayer (8:2) and the Eucharist (9–10). LaVerdiere views this stage as one where the community still held to their Jewish heritage, but had begun to separate and distinguish themselves from non-Christian Jews as well as Gentiles. The third and final stage (*Didache* 11–15) offers instructions for leaders in the early Christian Community—apostles, prophets, and teachers. At this stage, LaVerdiere suggests that the community saw itself threatened by not only Jews and Gentiles, but also by other Christians and false teachers. He concludes that in order to protect itself, the *Didache* community ended up withdrawing from all Jews and Christians to the point that the community eventually died off. *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, 135-145.

- 9:5 But let no one eat or drink of this eucharistic thanksgiving, except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said: Do not give what is holy to the dogs.
- 10:1 And after you have eaten enough, give thanks thus:
- 10:2 We give You thanks, Holy Father, for Your holy name, which You have made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You have made known to us through Your Son Jesus; Yours is the glory for ever and ever.
- 10:3 Almighty Master, You created all things for Your name's sake, and gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give You thanks; but gave us spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Your Son.
- 10:4 Before all things we give You thanks that You are powerful; Yours is the glory for ever and ever.
- 10:5 Remember, Lord, Your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Your love; and gather it together from the four winds, sanctified for Your kingdom which You have prepared for it; for Yours is the power and the glory for ever and ever.
- 10:6 May grace come and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any man is holy, let him come; if any man is not holy, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.<sup>34</sup>

When the *Didache* was first published (1883), scholars noted the strong Jewish tenor of the mealtime prayers in chapters 9 and 10.<sup>35</sup> Louis Finkelstein explored the connection between *Didache* 9–10 and the *Birkat ha-mazon*, a Jewish mealtime prayer, concluding that they were essentially the same form of prayer.<sup>36</sup> Scholars have generally agreed with Finkelstein, although with minor alterations. Similarly, Jonathan Schweibert points out five uniquely Jewish elements in *Didache* 9–10, the first being, once again, the Jewish concept of “thanksgiving” and prayer at mealtime,<sup>37</sup> a rarity in Greek meal rituals.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 232-233.

<sup>35</sup>See Louis Finkelstein, “The Birkat Ha-Mazon,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 19 (1928/9): 211–62; R. D. Middleton, “The Eucharistic Prayers of the *Didache*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1935): 259–67; Martin Dibelius, “Die Mahl-Gebete der *Didache*,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 37 (1938): 32-41.

<sup>36</sup>The only difference is that the first two of the three units in the Jewish prayer were inverted in the Christian version. See “The Birkat Ha-Mazon,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 19 (1928/9): 211–62. See also Louis Ligier, “The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer: From the Last Supper to the Eucharist,” *Studia Liturgica* 9 (1973): 177; Mazza, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 18ff; and H. van der Sandt and E. Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 310–29.

<sup>37</sup>The other four uniquely Jewish elements Schweibert notes are: (2) offering the cup before the bread (an act more common in Jewish communal meals than in Greek meals);

This uniquely Jewish notion of thanksgiving at mealtimes is of interest as it introduces a new term for the Lord's Supper—the *eucharist* (thanksgiving). In Scripture, the terms for Christ's ratification of the covenant are: "the Lord's Supper,"<sup>39</sup> "communion,"<sup>40</sup> "cup of blessing," and "breaking of bread."<sup>41</sup> Scripture does use the word *eucharist*, but only as a verb to describe Christ's action of "having given thanks" (*eucharistēsas*),<sup>42</sup> not as a noun describing the event itself. Thus, in naming the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the thanksgiving/Eucharist, we note the strong Jewish tenor of the work and its Hebraic mindset. Of the four major OT sacrifices (burnt, sin, guilt, and peace), the "peace" or "fellowship" offering was the only one from which the worshipper could eat. Furthermore, Deut 7 points to thanksgiving as the prime motivation for the fellowship offering (vv. 12, 13, 15) wherein the covenant was renewed through the eating of the sacrificial animal (cf. Ps 50:5, 14). In fact, the Passover itself might be seen as a type of this fellowship sacrifice of thanksgiving (Deut 16:1-4), with its motivation—thanksgiving—highlighted in many Psalms (cf. 50:14, 23; 56:13; 107:22; 116:17-19).<sup>43</sup>

Critical to our study is that the *Didache's* thanksgiving prayer embraces the *nature of the covenant* as temporal extension: thanking God for His *past* revelation of the "vine of David" in the life of Jesus (9:2), for the *present* knowledge received through Jesus (9:3, cf. chapters 1–4), and for the *future* Kingdom that will come after this world passes away (vv. 5, 6). Of particular interest is the final phrase: "May grace come and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha! Amen" (*Didache* 10:6). The term *maranatha* ("Our Lord, come!") was used by early

---

(3) the various doxologies; (4) the petition to be gathered from the four winds or corners of the earth into the kingdom (Deut 30:3-5; Isa 11:12; and Ezek 11:7, 37:21); and (5) the Jewish acclamations of *Didache* 10:6: *Hosanna*, *Amen*, and *Maranatha*. See Schweibert, *Knowledge and the Coming Kingdom*, 115–17.

<sup>38</sup>Thus, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo (25 BC–AD 50) said, "(it would be irreverent) ... and equally unlawful to enjoy and partake of any form of food for which thanks had not been offered (*eucharistesantas*) in the proper and rightful manner." See Jonathan Schweibert, *Knowledge and the Coming Kingdom: The Didache's Meal Ritual and its Place in Early Christianity* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 114. Jean Laporte argues that *eucharistia* was Philo's customary term for meal prayers, see *Eucharistia in Philo* (New York: Mellen, 1983), 53-55.

<sup>39</sup>1 Cor 11:20. A similar expression is "The Lord's table" (1 Cor 10:21).

<sup>40</sup>1 Cor 10:16.

<sup>41</sup>1 Cor 10:16; Acts 2:42.

<sup>42</sup>Matt 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17, 19.

<sup>43</sup>John Mark Hicks, "The Lord's Table: A Covenant Meal," *Leaven* 3, no. 3 (1995): 5. See also idem, *Come to the Table: Revisioning the Lord's Supper* (Costa Mesa, CA: Leafwood Publishers, 2002).

Palestinian Christians who spoke Aramaic (underscoring the likely Jewish connection) and clearly invokes the Parousia as being still in the future.<sup>44</sup> Also, the covenant foundation of relational love is seen in the request for the Father to perfect the church “in Your love” (v. 5). The *development of the covenant* is likewise noted: covenant law (9:5),<sup>45</sup> covenant blood/body (“broken bread” 9:3-4), and covenant eating (9:5–10:1). In short, the *Didache* gives us a glimpse of one of the earliest primitive Christian celebrations of the Lord’s Supper/eucharist that retains the Hebraic covenantal view, and thereby encompasses a very different theology from what soon became the norm.

### *Over-Realized Eschatology, Presence, and Platonism*

During the decades following Christ’s ascension, various views began to surface that greatly altered the covenant view of the Lord’s Supper. In particular, the future focus of the Parousia became greatly compromised. Many new Christians began to believe that Christ’s second coming had already occurred. Thus, they held to an “over-realized” eschatology,<sup>46</sup> believing that the Parousia had already taken place—only in a mystical way.<sup>47</sup> Scholars have interpreted Paul’s focus on the bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15) and the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11) as an attempt to correct this over-realized eschatology.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, in 2 Thessalonians, Paul specifically warns against the deceptive teaching that Christ had already come and that the Parousia had been accomplished mystically: “Now brethren, concerning

<sup>44</sup>Kostyuk, “From the Lord’s Supper to Parousia,” 6-7.

<sup>45</sup>Additionally, *Didache* 1–4 teaches the “way of life” lifestyle, and is the ground of the covenant agreement entered into initially at baptism (7:1-3) and all ensuing eucharistic recommitments.

<sup>46</sup>Realized eschatology refers to belief that while Jesus’s first coming to inaugurate the kingdom of grace in our lives (Heb 1:1) has occurred, the kingdom of glory has not yet come, and will occur only when death is swallowed up (Isa 25:6-10; Rev 21:3-6). Over-realized eschatology, then, refers to a belief that Christ’s coming in glory has already occurred. See the Lord’s Supper in relation to the final death in Isaiah 25:6-10, where God destroys death and rests from the work of redemption.

<sup>47</sup>Proponents of an over-realized eschatology in the Corinthian church include Christopher L. Mearns, “Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of 1 Corinthians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 22 (1984): 19-35; Anthony C. Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” *New Testament Studies* 24, no. 4 (1978): 510–26; Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 302-304. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, [1st ] ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 108; and Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 12.

<sup>48</sup>See Kostyuk, “From the Lord’s Supper to Parousia,” 3.

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means..." (2:1-4, cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18).

Next, Paul immediately connects this deception with the "mystery of lawlessness" and "the coming [*parousia*] of the lawless one" (2:9). Not only does Paul juxtapose these two *parousias*—true and false—he also reveals that "the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (2:7). In this Paul seems to suggest not only that the false *parousia* will seek to replace Christ's physical and historical second coming with a mystical false appearing, but also that the view of Christ's mystical presence—quite possibly in the Lord's Supper—was already circulating in his day. What could account for this drastic shift in interpretation? How could the grand covenantal scheme of the Old and New Testaments, ratified by Christ's Passover dinner (and implemented by the *Didache* community) have been so easily forgotten?

### *Hellenistic Christianity*

I believe one reason the Lord's Supper lost its covenant extension in early Christianity is due to the Hellenistic culture of the early church. Already centuries before Christ, Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) had expanded his empire from Greece to India and unified the disparate nations under the Greek language and culture. So much so, that even in Palestine the Greek culture was easily assimilated within the broad Jewish community.<sup>49</sup> The dominant mentality was one of relativism and syncretism, and survival generally meant blending in.<sup>50</sup> Thus, when Christianity began to spread, most of the new converts sprang from a Hellenistic culture that used a different hermeneutical lens (subconscious presupposition) to interpret reality in general and Christian rituals in particular.<sup>51</sup> For while

<sup>49</sup> After the Greeks took over Palestine (332 BC), the Jews (particularly the upper class) accepted and even welcomed Greek culture. Many Jewish children were sent to the Greek gymnasiums, where they were educated in philosophy, sports (which they did naked), and dramatic plays. To counter gymnasiums, Jewish synagogues were started, yet these also were permeated with Greek methods and rhetorical devices. So long as the Jews were allowed to maintain their forms of worship—which they generally were at least until the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167 BC)—they remained agreeable to Hellenistic culture. See G. R. Osborne, "[Hellenism](#)," *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* 1:956–957.

<sup>50</sup> Raul Kerbs, *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo: Las Presuposiciones Filosoficas de la Teología Cristiana: Desde Los Presocraticos al Protestantismo* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014), 161–162.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 305–314; Claude Tresmontant notes, "Certain aspects of Platonism and, above all, Neo-Platonism show themselves as the irreconcilable opponents of these [biblical] systems. The fundamental outlook—be it conscious or not—of basic concepts, the

monotheistic belief in a single God was common to both Judaism and Greek philosophy,<sup>52</sup> their interpretations of the nature of the one God were diametrically opposed. In contrast to the historically extended, relationally loving Hebrew God, the God of Greek philosophy was timeless and impassible—unable to enter history, speak, or love.<sup>53</sup> There was no way to reconcile these two Gods. And yet the cacophonous clash of Hebrew and Hellenistic thought, voicing two glaringly different views of reality, was harmoniously reconciled in the syncretism of a certain Hellenistic Jew.<sup>54</sup> Philo of Alexandria (25 BC–50 AD) was a philosopher whose allegorical method of biblical interpretation allowed him to fuse Hebrew and Greek thought, interpreting the teachings of Moses and Plato as essentially one and the same,<sup>55</sup> so much so that he became known as the Hebrew Plato.<sup>56</sup> Philo's influence on early Christianity was so significant that Roger Olson claims that second-century apologists were all “simply standing on Philo's shoulders and building a Hellenistic-Christian superstructure on his Hellenistic-Jewish foundation.”<sup>57</sup>

---

premises and the problematics of these conflicting philosophies are so thoroughly different that no agreement between them could possibly be worked out. Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis?” *A Study of Hebrew Thought*, trans Michael Francis Gibson (New York: Desclee Co., 1959), xix; see also Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (London: W. W. Norton, 1960).

<sup>52</sup> The polytheism held in paganism was originally debunked by Socrates. After him, Aristotle, Neoplatonism, and Plotinus all posited one impassible, timeless and immutable God (Unmoved Mover/Prime Act, the One), who was supreme in a hierarchy of descending intermediate beings who engaged with creation. So while some still held polytheistic beliefs (Acts 17:16), the philosophy after Aristotle posited only one supreme Being/God, a feature that favored the blending of Greek philosophy with Christianity.

<sup>53</sup>See Tony Lane, *A Concise History of Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 6-8.

<sup>54</sup>Kerbs, 305.

<sup>55</sup>“The Septuagint [Greek translation of Hebrew Old Testament around the third century BC] was probably produced, not only to provide a Bible for Greek-speaking Judaism, but also to show that Judaism and Greek thought were not mutually exclusive. The writings of Philo went even further, attempting to couch Jewish theology in Hellenistic thought-forms. G. R. Osborne, “Hellenistic Judaism,” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* 1:961.

<sup>56</sup>N. L. Geisler, “Philo Judaeus,” *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 592.

<sup>57</sup>Roger Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 57. Also, David T. Runia explores the impact of Philo on early Christianity in *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993). It is important to note that Christian apologists, such as Justin Martyr, do not directly mention Philo. It is most likely that the similarities in their philosophies (such as their use of the *Logos*) have more to do with the prevalence of Neoplatonism than with any direct or indirect knowledge of Philo's works.

## Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) was the most influential second-century Christian apologist.<sup>58</sup> Born into a Greek family, he explored various philosophical schools until he settled on Platonism. Later, after a “mysterious old man” led him to Christianity, Justin became a Christian philosopher who stated that Socrates had been a “Christian before Christ” and that Christianity was the fulfillment of Platonism.<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that Justin identified the *Logos* in John 1:1 with the “cosmic *Logos*” of Neoplatonism and stoicism.<sup>60</sup> This philosophical *Logos* was an impersonal intermediary divinity (an emanation of God) who permeated and ordered everything in the universe. Justin’s teaching, linking Christianity to philosophy and Christ to the philosophical pantheistic *Logos*, seriously undermined the uniqueness of the historical covenant God and the historical relation of Christ with creation.<sup>61</sup>

Justin’s *First Apology* (c. AD 155), written as an appeal to Emperor Pius to treat Christians more justly, describes a eucharistic celebration that took place after the baptism of believers. Justin states that after a prayer and a kiss of peace, the elements (“bread and water and wine mixed with water”) were taken to the “ruler [*proestos*] of the brethren” who offered a prayer and thanksgiving. Then the deacons passed around the elements to everyone who ate “the eucharistized bread and wine and water.”<sup>62</sup> Justin elaborates on the meaning of “eucharistized” in his second description of the Eucharist (one which described the regular weekly communion):

And this food is called among us Εὐχαριστία [the Eucharist] ... For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh *by transmutation* are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh...<sup>63</sup>

Here we note that “the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh” nourish the believer through a process of “transmutation.” What exactly does Justin mean in saying the elements undergo a transmutation [*metabolen*]? Jaroslav Pelikan suggests that the transmutation could indicate either a change in the elements after consecration or to the body of the participant being transformed by

<sup>58</sup>Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 59.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>61</sup>Kerbs, *El Problema De La Identidad Biblica Del Cristianismo*, 313–16.

<sup>62</sup>Justin Martyr, *1 Apology*, lxvi.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

the gift of immortality, or to both.<sup>64</sup> Paul Bradshaw says that Justin is the first Christian writer to put forward what might be called a theory of consecration, describing a change in the bread and cup.<sup>65</sup> And Paul Jones views Justin's description as "drawing a parallel between the divine *Logos* in the incarnation and the eucharist"; according to Jones, Justin "argued almost exclusively for a realistic interpretation [of the eucharist].<sup>66</sup> Justin continues his account of the Eucharist:

For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them: that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body:" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood:" and gave it to them alone.<sup>67</sup>

Here Justin quotes almost verbatim from the biblical accounts in Mark 14:22-24 and 1 Cor 11:23-25, with one notable exception. While both biblical writers mention the covenant: "this is the blood of the covenant" and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," respectively, Justin completely omits any mention of the blood referring back to the covenant. Instead, the blood points to itself as being the reality.

Thus, we see how Justin's philosophical presuppositions appear to have affected his interpretation of the Lord's Supper as a timeless participation in Christ's mystical presence. Roger Olson points out that Justin's teachings were so influential that later Christian thinkers simply assumed the truth of his suggestions and used them to build their theologies.<sup>68</sup>

### Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius of Antioch<sup>69</sup> was one of the first Christian martyrs. His seven letters, written while he was imprisoned in Rome, contain "the first real theology in

<sup>64</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 169.

<sup>65</sup>Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 91.

<sup>66</sup>Paul H. Jones, *Christ's Eucharistic Presence: A History of the Doctrine* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 29.

<sup>67</sup>Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* lxvi.

<sup>68</sup>Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 59.

<sup>69</sup>Although the letters of Ignatius have commonly been dated from the middle of the first century to c. 100-110—a date based on Eusebius's placing him during the reign of Emperor Trajan (98-117)—recent research shows several inconsistencies in Eusebius's dating in general and with Ignatius in particular, as Ignatius's letters contain no names of officials holding Roman post or allusions to datable events. We do know that Ignatius wrote to Polycarp (d. 159) and Barnes has shown that Ignatius was familiar with the

Christianity.<sup>70</sup> In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius underscores that the elements are the real body of Christ, and he denounces those who “absent themselves from the Eucharist and the public prayers, because they will not admit that the Eucharist is the self-same body of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His goodness afterwards raised up again.”<sup>71</sup> It would appear that the people or congregation under attack celebrated a Eucharist, but they did not believe that the elements (bread and wine) represented the real body of Christ.<sup>72</sup> Thus, we note a growing tension between communities like the one that produced the *Didache*, which interpreted the Lord’s Supper historically and eschatologically, and other communities that leaned towards a mystical view of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist.

Furthermore, Ignatius interpreted the Eucharist sacramentally, terming it the “medicine of immortality.” “[Be] ready now to obey your bishop and clergy with undivided minds and to share in the one common breaking of bread—the *medicine of immortality*, and the sovereign remedy by which we escape death and live in Jesus Christ for evermore.”<sup>73</sup> Here we note that the ability to achieve immortality rested in the intercessory hands of the bishop who alone could officiate in the Eucharist: “The sole Eucharist you should consider valid is the one that is celebrated by the bishop himself, or by some person authorized by him. Where the bishop is to be seen, there let all his people be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is present, we have the catholic Church.”<sup>74</sup> In fact, Ignatius repeatedly stated that the bishop stood in the place of Christ.<sup>75</sup> As with Justin, we note Ignatius also views the elements the

---

writings of the gnostic Ptolamaeus, who was still alive in 180 AD. See Timothy D. Barnes, “The Date of Ignatius,” *Expository Times* 120, no. 3 (2008): 119-30. See also Thomas O’Loughlin who supports Barnes conclusions, stating that “the issue of Ignatius is complex for many Christian theologians in that he is often still dated to c. 100–110, whereas he [his writings] should be dated to c. 150–160 at earliest.” *The Eucharist*, 98. Though I am not committed to this date, I believe a later dating is more likely, as Ignatius presents an advanced sacerdotal view that is unparalleled by other first century writers and which would be useful in countering the gnostic heresies that apologists such as Irenaeus (130–202 AD) sought to counter.

<sup>70</sup>Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 46.

<sup>71</sup>Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. Smyr.* 7.

<sup>72</sup>Schweibert, *Knowledge and the Coming Kingdom*, 240.

<sup>73</sup>Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. Eph.* 20 (emphasis supplied).

<sup>74</sup>Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. Smyr.* 8.

<sup>75</sup>“Follow your bishop, every one of you, as obediently as Jesus Christ followed the Father. Obey your clergy too, as you would the Apostles; give your deacons the same reverence that you would to a command from God. Make sure that no step affecting the church is ever taken by anyone without the bishop’s sanction.” *Ibid.* To the church in Magnesia Ignatius wrote: “In the same way as the Lord was wholly one with the Father,

real body of Christ able to impart salvation, but he goes a step further in claiming that the bishop is an essential intermediary of this saving act. O'Loughlin points out that most early Christian writers, Ignatius foremost among them, found it convenient to "press Christian liturgical forms into the familiar shapes of Greco-Roman religion." In other words, just as sacrifices with officiant priests was an integral part of Hellenistic culture, these church fathers sought to show that Christians could also offer them ceremonies with sacrifices and priests.<sup>76</sup>

In summary, Justin and Ignatius are two representatives of second-century church leaders whose theology of the Lord's Supper supported a strong belief in the sacramental view of the real presence. While some note that there were other early church fathers who held a more symbolic view of the Eucharist,<sup>77</sup> it is important to remember that the early fathers' interpretation of "symbol" or "form" was vastly different from ours today.

In the ancient world, a symbol had almost the opposite meaning of that which it has in modern culture. A symbol in ancient society is not primarily a pointer that represents something apart from the symbol. In ancient society, a symbol participates in that which it represents, so that it can almost be said to *be* that which it represents.... In antiquity, the symbol is the presence of that which it represents and mediates participation in that reality.<sup>78</sup>

Recall Pseudo-Dionysius' interpretation of mystical theology as using "symbols and ritual" to assist in achieving oneness with God that transcends reason or thought. Thus, we can strongly suggest that the general view of the early church fathers, of whom Justin and Ignatius are prime examples, tended towards a strong view of the Lord's Supper as a mystical union with God.<sup>79</sup>

---

and never acted independently of Him ... so you yourselves must never act independently of your bishop and clergy." Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. Smyr.* 7.

<sup>76</sup>O'Loughlin, *The Eucharist*, 98.

<sup>77</sup>Jones refers primarily to the eucharistic teachings of church fathers, Clement and Origen, both of Alexandria. *Christ's Eucharistic Presence*, 30.

<sup>78</sup>William R. Crockett, *Eucharist: Symbol of Transformation*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 80. See also Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 198–99; Colman E. O'Neill, O.P., *Sacramental Realism: A General Theory of the Sacraments* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1983), 98.

<sup>79</sup><sup>c</sup>That the Eucharist conveyed to the believer the Body and Blood of Christ was universally accepted from the first [referring to patristic period], and language was very commonly used which referred to the eucharistic elements as themselves the Body and Blood. Even where the elements were spoken of as 'symbols' or 'antitypes' there was no intention of denying the reality of the Presence in the gifts. From the 4th cent., language about the transformation of the elements began to become general. In "Eucharist," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 570.

What about the *Didache*? Interestingly, it continued to circulate in various communities,<sup>80</sup> with chapters 9–10 taken up in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a compilation composed in AD 380. Although the original text is still recognizable in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, that compilation introduced two major alterations to the original: 1) Jesus now mediates creation and glory ascending to the Father, but He no longer mediates knowledge, and 2) the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus are introduced as the new matrix for the elements.<sup>81</sup> Schweibert argues that this is not an organic development of the *Didache*'s inherent logic and pattern, but a "(probably artificial) 'updating' ... which aims to bring that text into line with an emerging orthodox eucharistic pattern."<sup>82</sup> The new mystical thrust of the *Apostolic Constitutions* is evident in the new title the copyists gave this section: the "Eucharistia mystica." Mazza notes that there has been a "profound transformation" of the original text which allows the "sacramental realism ... to exert an influence on the eucharistic text."<sup>83</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In this article, we have explored how the *nature of the covenant* (Old and New Testaments) parallels God's self-revelation in Exodus 3. God's being and covenant are both grounded in 1) a past-present-future historical extension and 2) a relational love that seeks unity. The *development of the covenant*, or methodology, for achieving this oneness was noted as having three primary steps, namely, a) covenant law, b) covenant blood, and c) covenant eating. We saw how the covenant's eschatological focus was compromised in the early church by an over-realized eschatology that held Christ's Parousia had already come, something Paul sought to counteract and warn against. We also noted that the Hebrew *Didache* community continued to keep to the biblical covenant's temporal extension, focusing on Christ's Parousia as still to come (Maranatha). The Greek church fathers, on the other hand, held Platonic presuppositions that influenced their interpretation of the Lord's Supper. As a result, they ignored the covenant's temporal extension and future focus, and instead claimed the elements were the real presence of Christ's body and blood. As such, the teaching of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist appears to be an "over-realized eschatology" similar to the kind Paul warns about. If Christ is already present in the elements, His physical coming has already occurred, and if one can participate in Christ's body

<sup>80</sup>Schweibert traces *Didache* tradition during the pre-Constantinian period as seen in Rome, Asia Minor and Egypt. *Knowledge and the Coming Kingdom*, 183-237.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 247.

<sup>83</sup>Mazza, *The Origins of Eucharistic Prayer*, 61.

---

as the “medicine of immortality,” then salvation has taken place in the very act of eating and drinking.

While a comprehensive study of the biblical covenant and the Lord's Supper in relation to salvation is beyond the scope of this article, I have sought to advance a basic understanding of the nature and development of the Hebrew covenant in the Lord's Supper, and propose a probable cause for the early church's deviation from the biblical pattern, i.e. the Platonic interpretation of the covenant ritual as conveying the reality in the symbol. Among next steps for research are: exploring the name of God in His progressive (OT-NT) revelation, and delimiting the unique roles of the Trinity in achieving covenant communion, particularly the role of the Holy Spirit in assisting human-divine unity. Furthermore, I believe the connection between Paul's warning against the false Parousia in 2 Thess 2:1-13 and the development of the eucharistic real presence of Christ in the early church warrants further study.



# ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDENT JOURNAL

The Journal of the Doctoral Student Club  
of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University  
4145 East Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-1550, U.S.A.

*Editor:* Denis Kaiser  
*Associate Editor:* Iriann Marie Hausted  
*Managing Editor:* Rodrigo de Galiza Barbosa  
*Associate Managing Editor:* Flavio Prestes III

*Executive Board:* Jiří Moskala, Dean of the Seminary; Alayne Thorpe, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies & Research; Tom Shepherd, Director of the PhD in Religion and ThD Programs; C. Adelina Alexe, President of the Doctoral Student Club; Denis Kaiser, Editor of AUSSJ; John W. Reeve, Editor of AUSS; Jo Ann Davidson; Roy Gane; Wagner Kuhn; Terry Robertson.

*Communications:* E-Mail: [denis@andrews.edu](mailto:denis@andrews.edu)  
Web: <http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/>

The *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal (AUSSJ)*, established in 2014, is an online, open access, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed journal that is led, edited, and reviewed by a team of doctoral students and faculty members of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The purpose of the journal is to disseminate scholarly contributions of graduate students. Submissions may be made in the area of Systematic Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Hebrew Bible, Jewish Studies, New Testament, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Church History, Applied Theology, Mission, and Religious Education.

The opinions expressed in articles, book reviews, etc., are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

---

## GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS AND REVIEWERS

*AUSSJ* publishes research articles and brief notes on the following topics: Systematic Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Hebrew Bible, Jewish Studies, New Testament, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Church History, Applied Theology, Mission, and Religious Education.

The focus of the journal, as that of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, where *AUSSJ* is based, is biblical. A high regard for Scripture, along with elevated standards of research, characterizes the choice of articles. *AUSSJ* accepts articles written by authors of different faith persuasions, as long as this focus is taken into account.

*AUSSJ* is a refereed journal. Thus each article is read by two scholars who are competent in the area treated in the article. *AUSSJ* editors refer helpful referee comments to the author to facilitate the process of any necessary rewriting. After revising the manuscript, the author may resubmit the article. Revised manuscripts should be accompanied by a cover letter detailing the changes requested and the action taken (or the author's argument for retaining the original text). To maintain objectivity, the author's name is deleted from the manuscript copies sent to the referee, and the referees' names are deleted from any comments furnished to the author. A final decision on whether or not the article will be published in *AUSSJ* is made by the editors.

*AUSSJ* accepts articles written in English. Articles submitted to *AUSSJ* must conform to acceptable English language standards. American spelling and punctuation will be used in editing. Authors are asked to use inclusive gender language, such as "humanity" rather than "mankind," "person" or "human being" rather than "man."

For general style matters, *AUSSJ* uses Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), and subsequent editions. Scholarly abbreviations and biblical issues not covered in Turabian follow *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Patrick H. Alexander et al [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999]). For spelling, authors may refer to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam, 1986).

*AUSSJ* prefers articles of 10–25 pages, including footnotes. The main text is to be double-spaced (single space for footnotes and indented quotations). Longer articles may occasionally be accepted, if they are particularly significant and space is available in the journal (it is recommended that authors query the editor for such articles). When the editors deem that an article needs to be substantially shortened, they will return the manuscript to the author with instructions regarding the areas needing attention.

*AUSSJ* reserves the right to make necessary modifications to articles that have been submitted in order to comply with the journal's content and style. Authors of articles edited for publication will receive a set of first page proofs. Authors will carefully review the article, compare it to the original draft, note any corrections on the manuscript, and provide a cover letter detailing the changes and corrections made. *AUSSJ* asks that articles be reviewed in a prompt and timely manner.

Articles may be submitted through the *AUSSJ* website or alternatively by email (see the editor's email). *AUSSJ* will accept articles prepared in Microsoft Word.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced (single space for footnotes and indented quotations), have one-inch margins, and be left-justified. Excessive formatting should be avoided, with only block quotations, tables, figures, headings, and subheadings included. Tabs, rather than single spacing or first-line indentation should be used. Tables should be formed using standardized table templates provided in the author's word-processing software. The motto for formatting is, Keep it simple!

Quotations longer than five lines are to be indented and double-spaced. Spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviations must be reproduced exactly as in the original and care should be taken to preserve the original author's intent.

All biblical, classical, and patristic literature, Dead Sea Scrolls and related texts, Targumic material, Mishnaic and Rabbinic literature, Nag Hammadi Tractates, and journals, periodicals, and major reference works should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style* 8.2–8.4. For biblical references, no period is used following the abbreviations; a colon is used between chapter and verse. Biblical references should be placed in parentheses in the text of the article, rather than in footnotes (see *SBL Handbook of Style*). Citations of classical and patristic literature should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*. The following abbreviations should be used in parenthetical or footnote references. The terms should be spelled out when they occur in the text.

Abbreviation

chap(s).	chapter(s)
col(s).	column(s)
frg(s).	fragment(s)
n(n).	note(s)
pl(s).	plate(s)
v(v).	verse(s)

See *SBL Handbook of Style* 7.1–7.4. Page numbers included in footnotes should be all-inclusive, e.g., 110–111, 234–239 rather than 110-11 or 234–39. When a note of comment includes a bibliographic reference, this reference should be set in parentheses at the end of the comment. For instance: “But C. C. Torrey thinks that the name Cyrus has been interpolated in Isa 45:1” (“The Messiah Son of Ephraim,” *JBL* [1947]: 253).

Greek and Hebrew fonts are generally preferred rather than transliteration. Transliteration should be used primarily for ancient nonbiblical languages. Due to the problem of font compatibility, *AUSSJ* accepts only BibleWorks or SBL fonts. SBL provides free downloadable fonts at its website: <http://www.sbl-site.org/e-resources.html>. BibleWorks may be purchased from <http://www.bibleworks.com>. Before submitting Greek and Hebrew in other fonts or transliteration, please query the editor for directions.