A New Testament Theology

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for Darlene Seal,

without whom this book would not have existed
nearly so quickly or happily

Preface

Many thanks are due to Dr. Carey C. Newman, editorial director of Baylor University Press, for suggesting several years ago that I write a New Testament (NT) theology. A few friends had asked me off and on over the years if I would ever consider such a task, and I never felt ready for it. At least a couple of publishers had made similar, very informal inquiries, but Carey's request had an earnestness that made me quickly realize how serious he was. Yes, perhaps now I would, since I would be in my sixties before the project was finished. I had taught both semester- and yearlong classes on the topic at Denver Seminary in several different formats and had written textbooks surveying and introducing the NT.[1] Commentaries on Matthew, John, 1 Corinthians, and James,[2] and various other exegetical works[3] had pushed me to delve more deeply into representative portions of

[1] Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey,* 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H; Nottingham: IVP, 2009); Craig L. Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos: Acts to Revelation—An Introduction and Survey* (Nottingham: Apollos [= *From Pentecost to Patmos: An Introduction to Acts through Revelation* (Nashville: B&H)], 2006).

[2] Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992); Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Leicester and Downers Grove: IVP, 2001); Craig L. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

[3] Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: IVP, 1999; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2001); Craig L. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2005).

the NT, as had a class on the theology of Luke-Acts that I had taught several times at the seminary. I had worked through the texts of other NT books very carefully for exegesis classes on Mark, Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 Peter, and Revelation.

But it was the words of my friend and former student Dr. Michael Westmoreland-White that kept ringing in my ears: "It's all well and good to write all those books on the reliability of Scripture so we know we can trust it, but when are you going to write on its theology so we can know what to believe and what to obey?" And, as a good Anabaptist, Mike's emphasis was always on obedience! In addition, my wife, Dr. Fran Blomberg, who completed her doctorate in missiology at the International Baptist Theological Seminary then in Prague and now in Amsterdam, has been strongly influenced by various anabaptist emphases in Central Europe, so how could I dismiss this question? Even though there is only a little that is distinctively (ana)baptist about my book, I hope that readers will recognize by the time they read my conclusion that I wrote in anticipation of influencing the church to greater obedience and not just clearer insight. So, Mike, I hope this volume at least starts down the path you were wanting me to take!

As always in the prefaces to my larger books, the composition of which has spanned at least one sabbatical term, I must thank the faculty, administration, and board of trustees of Denver Seminary for granting me this special time for research and writing. In this case it was the fall of 2015, during which Fran and I again enjoyed the wonderful facilities and environment of Tyndale House, Cambridge, for the first time in eighteen years, and their extraordinary library and fellowship of scholars, now under the wardenship of Dr. Peter Williams. On the rare occasions they did not have a book I needed, I could count on the Cambridge University Library just a few blocks down the road. The challenges there were at times greater than they used to be, as their overflow sections have now been supplemented with overflow sections for their overflow sections, never in the same part of the library, and one often has to crawl under desks and comb through piles of books stacked on the floor, but I suppose that is inevitable when you try to squeeze seven million volumes into a space designed for fewer than half that many!

Back at home, Dr. Keith Wells and his staff at the Carey S. Thomas Library for Denver Seminary were as amicable and accommodating as ever. The Ira J. Taylor Library of the Iliff School of Theology in Denver continues to have amazing holdings, and librarian Katie Fisher is always helpful; the only challenge there is to find a study carrel anywhere near the biblical studies collection that is not already reserved for an Iliff

student, though the carrels seem almost never to be occupied. Emily Gill Manuel, my research assistant for two years, was extremely helpful and skilled in gathering and synthesizing material in the initial stages of my work. Ben R. Crenshaw did a little bit more during his year in that position, though largely I set him upon other projects. Alicia Duprée helped with some last-minute items the next year, especially during the fall that the manuscript came due. Dr. David Mathewson, my colleague in the NT department, read the entire manuscript in draft form and made many helpful suggestions for improvement. But no amount of thanks to Darlene M. Seal could ever be enough for the yeoman's share of work she did in helping with the research that still needed to be done after I returned from Tyndale House, and for her careful proofreading and countless suggestions for improving the style and clarity of the manuscript. In areas of her expertise (esp. in Pauline studies), she helped significantly with improving its contents as well. Much of this work she undertook during the summer between her first two years of doctoral study at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, and for this I am profoundly grateful. Her wonderful spirit and good sense of humor through it all were simply an added bonus. So I dedicate this book to you, Darlene, with many, many thanks for your friendship.

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Introduction

In recent years, friends have frequently asked me what writing projects I was working on. When I told them that my biggest venture was a NT theology, two kinds of reactions overshadowed all others. Those who had some sense of the genre of a NT theology asked, "So what is your unifying theme or themes?" Those who did not know typically replied, "So what's a NT theology?" The first question was much easier to answer than the second!

Many different centers for the teachings of the NT have been suggested over the years. When I thoroughly surveyed the options at the turn of the millennium, I compiled the following list: "kingdom, gospel, righteousness, justification, reconciliation, faith, new creation, salvation or salvation history, eschatology, Israel or the new Israel, the cross and/or the resurrection, the love of God, existential anthropology, and covenant."[1] Then I added, "Perhaps most common of all, Jesus (or Christology more generally) has been identified as a centre."[2] Not least because of the sheer number of these proposals, still other scholars have proposed various combinations of themes. Sixty-plus years ago, A. M. Hunter imagined

[1] Craig L. Blomberg, "The Unity and Diversity of Scripture," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2000), 65.

[2] Technically, I wrote "center," but it was changed to "centre" since IVP in the United Kingdom was the lead publisher.

a news reporter's digest of an early Christian sermon explaining the heart of the Christian message as something along the lines of:

> The prophecies are fulfilled, and the New Age has dawned. The messiah, born of David's seed, has appeared. He is Jesus of Nazareth, God's Servant, who went about doing good and healing by God's power, was crucified according to God's purpose, was raised from the dead on the third day, is now exalted to God's right hand, and will come again in glory for judgment. Therefore let all repent and believe and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.[3]

Eugene Lemcio finds a more streamlined six-part proclamation that he sees in all major portions of the NT: "(1) God who (2) sent (Gospels) or raised (3) Jesus. (4) A response (receiving, repentance, faith) (5) towards God (6) brings benefits (variously described)."[4]

Somewhere between the very detailed and specific digest that Hunter created and the briefer, vaguer epitome that Lemcio produced is David Wenham's four-part summary that includes a context, a center, a community, and a climax. The context is the Creator God's completing salvation for his people through Jesus, while the center is Jesus as Spirit-filled messiah and Son of God. The community is made up of those who trust in Jesus by faith, receiving the Holy Spirit and living in love with God and one another. The climax is complete restoration and final judgment at Christ's return.[5]

The problem with these more detailed, multiplex summaries is that they are arguably not unified central themes at all but clusters of enough diverse topics that would be linguistic sleight of hand to call them "centers" of NT theology. Maybe what all these varying results show is that we should stop looking for a single theme that in some way stands out or at least unifies all others in the NT. More pointedly, perhaps the search for a center presupposes more unity than actually exists among the twenty-seven books that form the NT canon. Possibly we should abandon the quest altogether and simply acknowledge that there is too much diversity among the NT authors and documents to speak of one central theme. Perhaps.

[3] A. M. Hunter, *Introducing New Testament Theology* (London: SCM, 1957; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958), 66.

[4] Eugene C. Lemcio, "The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33 (1998): 6.

[5] David Wenham, "Appendix: Unity and Diversity in the New Testament," in George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 12–13.

My introduction to Old Testament (OT) theology came as a seminary student when Walter Kaiser's *Toward an Old Testament Theology* was brand new and I was a student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where he was teaching.[6] Not surprisingly, it was a required textbook. Kaiser utilized the theme of promise as the unifying center of the OT, with the implications that if he wrote a NT theology, it would be organized around the theme of fulfillment.[7] While I understand the difficulties of boiling down the OT to one central theme are even greater than with the NT, the idea of fulfillment captivated my interest, and I fully expected a NT theology to appear from someone in the near future that would be up to date, be abreast of all the relevant scholarship, and defend fulfillment as the integrating theme for the NT. It never appeared, at least not in the twentieth century.

Twenty-five years later, which was probably the earliest I ever even toyed with the idea of writing a NT theology, I mused about fulfillment as an integrating theme. I did some initial spadework and then dropped the topic for a while. In my teaching I was much more concerned to introduce students to the dominant and distinctive themes of each part of the NT than to focus on the quest for integration. Students for the most part know a lot of the contents of the NT, but they do not know where each is found, and they have little idea how the Bible would be impoverished if just one writer or book were omitted. Studying the repeated and the unique themes of each corpus helps to remedy this situation. Thus, when I did reflect on what my ideal one-volume NT theology might look like, even if written by someone else, issues of chapter contents dominated my thinking. But I also considered the outline of those chapters. I had always been very appreciative of the structure of an important contribution like George Ladd's text, and had expected it to be revised sooner or later.[8] I was delighted when I heard Donald Hagner was doing so, but as it turned out, all that time permitted him to do was to update the bibliographies and some of the introductory matter and commission two additional chapters on the three synoptic evangelists individually (by R. T. France) and on unity and diversity (by David Wenham).[9]

[6] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

[7] Interestingly, others on whom he built who had argued at least somewhat similarly were also all OT scholars, esp. Westermann, Zimmerli, and von Rad. Kaiser did so in part in his *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), but the focus was understandably still primarily on the OT.

[8] George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

[9] R. T. France, "Matthew, Mark, and Luke," in Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 212–45. For Wenham, see n. 5 above.

The trend in the years after Ladd, however, was very much away from keeping the corpora of the NT together.[10] People tended to compose volumes that treated every letter of Paul separately, even if they sometimes included brief segments on what united his thought. Often this pattern extended to the writings of John as well.[11] Second Peter was so similar to Jude that these two little letters had for quite some time been routinely put together, or at least back to back, and no one even asked if 1 and 2 Peter had anything in common. The fact that portions of each of these corpora of books have often been viewed as pseudonymous only fueled this trend to stress diversity at the expense of unity.[12] While I had never been convinced that kingdom was the unifying theme that Ladd thought it was, I very much appreciated the fact that he had a section that treated the Synoptic Gospels together and saw a lot of what they agreed on as most likely going back to the historical Jesus himself.[13] I was grateful that he had a section on the early church and not just on the theology of Acts. But I did not want to revert to a volume like his original edition that had no discrete treatments of Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts.

Not until Udo Schnelle's full-orbed NT theology appeared did anything close to what I was looking for emerge.[14] For a product of the German tradition of fairly skeptical scholarship, I was pleasantly surprised to see how much he was willing to attribute to Jesus and to the earliest church, rather than just to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Nevertheless, as he spoke of the varying stages of moves away from the earliest church, those more skeptical influences did often again intrude, both in terms of

[10] Leonhard Goppelt's two-volume *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981–82) appeared one year after Ladd in its original German edition (1975) and was very encouraging in how much he ascribed to the historical Jesus and in his treatment of Paul, but after that the remaining NT witnesses got very short shrift.

[11] See esp. I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2004); Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005); Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007).

[12] As demonstrated by someone otherwise as comparatively conservative as James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM, 2006).

[13] Joachim Jeremias had already paved the way with an entire volume in his projected multivolume work, *New Testament Theology*, with vol. 1, *The Proclamation of Jesus* (London: SCM; New York: Scribner's, 1971). Unfortunately, he never wrote any additional volumes. On the *theological* question of whether the teaching of the historical Jesus (and by analogy the early church) belongs in a volume on New Testament theology, see Christopher Tuckett, "Does the 'Historical Jesus' Belong within a 'New Testament Theology'?" in *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, ed. Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 231–47.

[14] Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009).

pseudonymity and in terms of what seemed to be unnecessarily late dates for various NT books. And the overall trajectory still read too much like the older works that had itemized how Palestinian Jewish Christianity morphed into Hellenistic Jewish Christianity and finally into Hellenistic Gentile Christianity.[15]

Particularly noteworthy is how little attention is paid in more liberal circles (even more so in the United States today than in Germany!) to the growing body of literature spawned in varying ways by Larry Hurtado and Richard Bauckham, which has demonstrated that a high, divine Christology was pervasively present throughout the earliest church in ways that are best explained as the vindication of the very claims and ministry of Jesus himself.[16] So much of the parceling out of the various books of the NT to the last decades of the first and even the early second centuries depends on the perception of various forms of evolutionary trajectories of theological development and vice versa.[17] The scholarship in this tradition can easily get caught up in a hermeneutical circle without realizing it. Why do we date a certain book later than early Christian tradition uniformly did (and therefore determine it to be pseudonymous)? Because it contains theology that developed only at a later point. How do we know that it developed only at a later date (and therefore that the books that contain it have to be pseudonymous)? Because it contains later theology![18] The possibility of revolutionary developments occurring very quickly after Jesus' death, if not entirely discounted, is at the most given very limited attention.[19] And assumptions about pseudonymity continue to be taken as demonstrated, despite increasingly numerous rebuttals

[15] Cf. esp. Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth; New York: Scribner's, 1965); Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity* (London: Lutterworth; Cleveland: World, 1969).

[16] See esp. Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); and Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). Much of this scholarship is nicely summarized and slightly advanced in Andrew Ter Ern Loke, *The Origin of Divine Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[17] Cf., e.g., Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings* (London: SCM; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: de Gruyter; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000).

[18] This hermeneutical circle began at least as early as Ferdinand Christian Baur in the mid-nineteenth century. See Peter Balla, *Challenges to New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Justify the Enterprise* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 153–54.

[19] The term "revolutionary developments" comes from Larry W. Hurtado, "The Gospel of Mark: Evolutionary or Revolutionary Document?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40 (1990): 15–32.

both to the concept being acceptable in early Christianity in general and to the reasons for applying it to individual NT documents.[20]

We have already begun to shade over into a discussion of the second question: What *is* a NT theology? Edward Klink and Darian Lockett have created a helpful taxonomy of whole-Bible *biblical* theologies that transfers fairly directly to *NT* biblical theologies.[21] First, there are those that involve only historical description. They may or may not privilege the canonical texts. They may survey Christian literature up through a certain date in the second century, including canonical and noncanonical literature. Their purpose is simply to describe as accurately as possible the beliefs and commitments, the doctrines and practices, contained in this literature, however diverse or contradictory they might turn out to be.[22] A second approach depicts what it believes to be the redemptive history disclosed in the NT. It most likely is arranged chronologically, focusing on developments for one period of time to the next. It may be tied to the concepts of progressive revelation or salvation history and is an overtly Christian endeavor.[23]

The third approach is what Klink and Lockett call a worldview or story approach. It could be undertaken by Christian or non-Christian alike. Whether or not a chronological model is followed, there are implied narratives behind every book in the NT. Individually, these narratives and the worldviews or approaches to reality they imply are teased out.[24] Fourth is a canonical approach, which focuses less on the historical

[20] See esp. Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2004); and Jeremy N. Duff, "A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity" (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 2008). Cf. also Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Paul and Pseudepigraphy* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[21] Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

[22] Heikki Räisänen (*Beyond New Testament Theology: A Story and a Programme* [London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990], 93–141) offers principles and models of just such a NT theology. Representatives of this perspective are more likely, however, to study religious perspectives and practices more generally rather than composing biblical theologies. For a different kind of antifoundationalist critique of conventional NT theologies, see Thomas R. Hatina, *New Testament Theology and Its Quest for Relevance: Ancient Texts and Modern Readers* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

[23] This is the approach of many of the volumes in the still-growing series New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2001–). It also has much in common with Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., and many of the offerings in the original Studies in Biblical Theology series (London: SCM; Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1952–73).

[24] N. T. Wright is the classic example here, esp. in the first four volumes of his series Christian Origins and the Question of God (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992–), with two volumes still projected.

events that led up to and continued throughout the composition of the books and more on the finished form of the books and on why and how they were included in the canon of the NT. What is the significance of Acts appearing between the Gospels and the letters of Paul, and what happens to Luke-Acts when it is broken up by the insertion of the Gospel of John halfway through? How do we understand the two versions of Jesus' Great Sermon (Matt 5–7; Luke 6:20-49)? What are the distinctive emphases of each discrete section? Many similar questions clamor for attention.[25] Finally comes the theological-construction approach. This is the hardest one to pin down, but it is the category that is most concerned to apply its results to the church and be held accountable by the church, and to undertake its activities in awareness of the whole history of interpretation of any particular text and the way the church has used that text within the context of its historic, creedal frameworks. It is the approach most concerned to read the OT in light of the NT and not just the NT in light of the OT.[26] One could also argue that the narrative theologies of Ben Witherington or Timo Eskola constitute a sixth category, but I am unsure if Klink and Lockett would agree.[27]

My approach contains elements of all six models but has most in common with the redemptive-historical approach. Still, because the NT documents were arguably composed within a half century from start to finish, progressive revelation does not loom nearly as important as it does in an OT theology undertaken from this perspective, which surveys books arguably composed and compiled over more than a millennium. I have also adopted the dates for the NT books that stem from taking the earliest external evidence (the testimony of second-, third-, and fourth-century Christian writers) seriously and not relying just on the internal evidence (what we can learn or infer from the contents of the documents themselves). While nothing concerning my conclusions

[25] The premier example is clearly Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

[26] Frances Watson (*Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 2nd ed. [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016]) exemplifies this approach. A full NT theology from this perspective, to my knowledge, does not yet exist. The Two Horizons NT Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005–) illustrate possibilities with individual books.

[27] The complete NT theology of Ben Witherington III (*The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*, 2 vols. [Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2009–10]) is a hybrid, with one volume dealing with individual witnesses and the second treating the collective witness from several angles, including a narrative perspective. His *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) better illustrates his understanding of narrative NT theology. See also Timo Eskola, *A Narrative Theology of the New Testament: Exploring the Metanarrative of Exile and Restoration* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

about the dominant and distinctive theologies of each writer is affected by this dating, a small handful of my overall conclusions would have to be revised if the dates I have adopted turned out to be significantly and consistently off base.

The author of a NT theology has three basic options to choose from in terms of overall structure, though each of these can be modified in a variety of ways. First, one may begin with a list of the major topics treated by the NT writers and then subdivide one's presentation of those topics according to book or corpus. In other words, one can look first, for example, to the doctrine of God, see what Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul, Hebrews, James, Peter, Jude, and John each have to say about it, and then proceed to Christology, pneumatology, sin, salvation, and so on, with the same subdivisions. One's categories, as in this example, might come largely from the world of systematic theology, or from categories that emerge as dominant in the Scriptures themselves (like law, gospel, kingdom, covenant, etc.), or from some combination of the two.[28]

Second, one can make one's primary subdivisions according to NT books or authors and then subdivide again according to one of the topical schemes of organization just described. But those primary subdivisions can proceed either chronologically or canonically, and the results can be different enough to think of these as different models, hence we label them the second and third approaches, respectively.[29] If we begin with Matthew and then subdivide his theology along the lines of God, Christ, the Spirit, sin, salvation, and so on, we may well learn the dominant and distinctive themes of his writing, but they will not appear in an overall sequence that readily facilitates their comparison with the same topics in those NT documents that were written most closely in time to Matthew. If one proceeds chronologically by book or author, one can pick up dominant and distinctive themes of each but also see if there are trajectories of development of any kind over time.

[28] For the former, see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1981); with an abbreviated variation on this approach in James D. G. Dunn, *New Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009); for the latter, Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008); and G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011). For an approach that is thematic even in all its subdivisions, see G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology*, ed. Lincoln D. Hurst (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

[29] E.g., Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament*; and Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, respectively. Sometimes only the authors or portions of the NT deemed the most significant are treated. E.g., Werner G. Kümmel, *The Theology of the New Testament according to Its Major Witnesses* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973; London: SCM, 1974).

It is this third model that our NT theology adopts. We also proceed on the conviction that we can determine with reasonable probability key teachings and claims of the historical Jesus and of the earliest church as a subset of what the Gospels and the first part of Acts highlight, respectively.[30] Our volume accepts the minority positions that date James and Jude very early; prefers the advantages that treating all of Paul's letters together yield, particularly seeing what themes cut across several or most of his epistles;[31] and similarly keeps all five of the documents historically attributed to John together, but then treats the Gospel, the letters, and the Apocalypse separately underneath each of the major topics of Johannine theology overall.[32] The two most unique features of this book's macrolevel organization involve the Pastoral and the Petrine Epistles. Without rejecting the unanimous early church tradition that 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus come from Paul, we separate them off from the other ten ascribed to him to explore the suggestion that has cropped up periodically throughout church history, and more frequently among recent scholarship, that Luke might have been Paul's amanuensis or scribe, given a measure of literary and stylistic freedom to write up Paul's thoughts and concerns, subject to his approval, with his own words and emphases. The striking number of distinctive themes that Luke and the Pastorals share can best be appreciated by treating the Pastoral Letters in a separate chapter immediately after our discussion of Luke-Acts. Finally, by dating Jude early, we are freed up to consider 1–2 Peter back to back. Without in any way denying or minimizing the blatantly obvious similarities between 2 Peter and Jude, especially in 2 Peter 2, we are able to appreciate what scholarship a little over a century ago regularly put

[30] There are remarkable similarities in this respect if one compares volumes from otherwise fairly diverse scholars such as E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, 1993); Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (London: SCM; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); James H. Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008); Armand Puig i Tàrrech, *Jesus: A Biography* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2011); Gerald L. Borchert, *Jesus of Nazareth: Background, Witnesses, and Significance* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2011); Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2012); Helen K. Bond, *The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2012); José A. Pagola, *Jesus: An Historical Approximation*, rev. ed. (Miami: Convivium, 2014); and Jens Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth: Jew from Galilee, Savior of the World* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor, 2014); and the list could be significantly extended.

[31] This approach does derive, however, from the preliminary conclusion that there is enough theological coherence and consistency from one letter to the next to make this project doable.

[32] Thus acknowledging that there *is* more uncertainty concerning common authorship here than with other groups of NT documents attributed to the same author, while still keeping the various Johannine writings grouped together.

forward even though it has rarely been presented since: there are a surprising number of similarities between the letters we call 1 and 2 Peter.[33]

How then should the topics or themes of each book or corpus be organized? At this juncture even the most biblically faithful NT theologian often reverts back to one of the traditional sequences of categories in a systematic theology. On occasion, when I have no good reason for doing otherwise, I do the same thing. But before falling back on that tradition, I try to understand the logic of the book or author itself, especially by following its sequence of unfolding thoughts, particularly in the opening portions of a document. Readers will thus want to consult the table of contents or subject and Scripture indices more consistently than they might for more predictably structured volumes in order to find where various topics appear. Eschatology, to take just one example, will not always occur last in the sequence of topics, even though it often does.[34] The initial themes in each section will vary the most consistently, according to how the book or corpus begins. Usually I include either explicit statements or at least implicit hints as to why I have adopted the sequence of topics I have. If explanations are absent altogether on a few occasions, the reader may be reassured that I did have my reasons. Often it was that I just had two or three topics left and I could not think of any good reason to deviate from the order they would have appeared in if I were writing a systematic theology!

The more I studied, the more my initial idea of fulfillment as an integrating theme grew on me. We are far enough removed now from the anti-Semitism that so discolored the biblical scholarship of the early and mid-twentieth century that it is entirely noncontroversial to say that every book of the NT is steeped in quotations, allusions, or echoes of the OT.[35] But more than this, the OT is a collection of largely open-ended books. Especially as one comes to the Latter Prophets (Isaiah–Malachi in the order of English Bibles), far more often than not a prophet's work ends by looking ahead to a time in the long-term future when all of God's promises will be fulfilled, after the short-term judgment that is so often predicted gives way to the restoration and re-creation of God's people

[33] See below, pp. 567–71.

[34] Cf. also Michael F. Bird (*Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013], 233–339), who puts eschatology as his third major section out of eight instead of at the end where tradition dictates it should appear.

[35] Leading the title of Géza Vermes' *Jesus the Jew* to cause quite the stir and even be featured in an article in *Time* magazine when it first appeared in 1973 from William Collins in London. For the zenith of anti-Semitism in the academic guild of the NT, see Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

and their world. In Isaiah 65:17-25 this is expanded to encompass even new heavens and new earth.

In sharp contrast, every NT book states (usually quite explicitly but once in a while only implicitly) that the age of the fulfillment of these promises has arrived. The Messiah has come. Israel's savior has appeared. Their spiritual exile can be over. The people of Israel are being reconstituted among Jesus' followers. A new age has been inaugurated that will embrace all people and all peoples of the world on equal terms. While not every last prophecy of the OT has come to pass, the last days have begun that will climax in the completion of everything that yet remains unfulfilled. In fact, we can go further and say that in every writer and even in every individual book of the twenty-seven NT books, this conviction (either in these words or others) shines through at the very heart of what the writer and document are trying to express. I do not want to go as far as some scholars have with their proposals for theological centers or unifying topics and argue that my proposal—hence, the fulfillment of God's word and his promises—is the only legitimate answer to the question of the most central and integrating theme of the NT.[36] Many of the other suggestions I listed earlier can certainly make strong claims to being as central. That is one main reason for using *A Theology of the New Testament* rather than *The Theology of the New Testament* as my title.

It is nevertheless interesting that the two largest NT theologies to appear in a long time, by Tom Schreiner and Greg Beale, each seem very sympathetic to my claim.[37] Beale prefers the category of new creation but buttresses it with possibly more links to the OT than anyone has ever found before.[38] What the OT promised, implicitly and explicitly, typologically and predictively, is being fulfilled on a massive scale in the NT. Schreiner's and Beale's works, however, are organized topically first of all, so they do not lend themselves to helping students learn the dominant and distinctive themes of each separate unit of the NT. So my work is scarcely just duplicating Schreiner and Beale, though I am profoundly grateful for their major undertakings. I am also hopeful that by not writing something quite as comprehensive as their major works, this volume can be more useful as it stands, without having to create a "Reader's Digest" version of my book like some have done with their fulsome tomes.[39]

[36] For a good study of the history of the discussion until a generation ago, see Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

[37] Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 23; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 16.

[38] Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 16.

[39] E.g., Thomas R. Schreiner, *Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament*

My own *Doktorvater*, I. Howard Marshall, wrote a substantial NT theology that did follow a canonical sequence, examining every document in turn, but it also attempted some syntheses of the Synoptics, the Gospels and Acts, Paul, and the writings of John. Marshall concluded that mission was the topical center,[40] just as Christopher Wright has done with the *missio Dei* (mission of God) for the whole of Scripture.[41] How could I argue with *them*? I do not; I just see mission as the natural and crucial outgrowth of the arrival of the new age, the age of fulfillment. So, as important as it is, mission is still a derivative rather than foundational concept. I also frequently speak about the theme of fulfillment as the shift in the ages, or salvation history, or the messianic era, or the last days, and so on. Salvation history got a bad rap a generation or more ago when it became synonymous in some circles with an almost postmillennial kind of belief in progress or in the advancement of society (or at least of Christian society), which seemed naive and a kind of throwback to the old nineteenth-century liberalism of the social gospel, or when it focused on God's intervention in or superintendence of postbiblical history, or when it was tied to the triumph of one particular denomination or theological tradition.[42] These are not at all what I have in mind when I use the term, but rather simply the history of God's redemptive acts for humanity as highlighted in Scripture, narrated progressively, and tied to his covenants and the various stages of the arrival of his kingdom and the fulfillment of his promises.[43] I do not, as some do, pit salvation history against apocalyptic as two different kinds of divine superintendence—the first gradual and providential and the second sudden and supernatural—assuming that God works in only one way. That God inaugurated the final era in human history with the coming of Christ that will end with his return predetermines nothing about how naturally or extraordinarily that era

Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010); I. Howard Marshall, *A Concise New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2008).

[40] Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 34–37.

[41] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2006); Christopher J. H. Wright, *Salvation Belongs to Our God: Celebrating the Bible's Central Story* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP 2008; Carlisle: Langham Trust, 2013).

[42] For an account of these and other developments and for a similar assessment, see Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Salvation-Historical Fallacy? Reassessing the History of New Testament Theology* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2004).

[43] Cf. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 1988); Jeong Koo Jeon, *Biblical Theology: Covenants and the Kingdom of God in Redemptive History* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2017).

began or about how it will end. As far as I can tell, the NT authors are very consistently both redemptive-historical and apocalyptic.[44]

I must also be transparent about other presuppositions and principles I decided on in advance. I have limited my treatment to the twenty-seven books of the NT historically agreed on by all major wings of the Christian church. I have discussed the formation of the canon briefly elsewhere;[45] others have made longer, more substantial defenses that the church's ratification in the fourth century of what was already commonly in use was a good decision and superior to other collections that might have been chosen.[46] I have focused on the contents of the canonical texts themselves, with very little treatment of alleged tradition histories or stages of compositional background. I am much more interested in what the authors present than how they got to the point of presenting it. A main goal of this work is also not to decide on how much unity or diversity there is among the various authors; I will allow the readers to judge that for themselves. One person's difference of emphasis is another's contradiction; so much depends on whether one starts with a hermeneutic of suspicion or of consent.[47] I have not tried to be comprehensive in my coverage, but I have included ample footnotes to point interested readers to those whose treatments are fuller or more important at almost every juncture. It is my hope that the book remains short enough for use in a one-semester class on NT theology in colleges or universities and seminaries. The fulsome nature of the notes will also, I trust, be of use to fellow scholars, whether or not they prefer the format I have chosen for the text itself. I am primarily interested in helping familiarize readers with the contents of Scripture, so I have not focused much on historical backgrounds and influences or on comparing and contrasting the

[44] For the apocalyptic side, see esp. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, eds., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

[45] *Can We Still Believe the Bible? An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014), 43–82.

[46] For the NT, cf. further Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2012); Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); and F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1988). Although Bruce deals briefly with the OT, the book is disproportionately about the NT. On the lively question of the gnostic and apocryphal gospels, see esp. C. E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[47] See esp. the discussion in Peter Stuhlmacher, *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

perspectives of the NT documents with other religious options of the day. That also would have made the volume much bigger and probably much less widely used.

In grouping ten of Paul's thirteen letters together, I am accepting that they do indeed have common Pauline authorship. This is not so much a presupposition but the result of decades of study, which have left me unconvinced that we have to treat 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians in some separate category as deuteropauline, with respect either to authorship or to theology. On the other hand, my main theological conclusions about Paul come from his seven undisputed letters anyway, so not a lot would change if those three were treated separately. For that same reason, I am not worried that I have not also included the Pastorals in the chapter on Paul, since it would unnecessarily duplicate material that appears immediately after my treatment of Luke-Acts. As for the Johannine corpus, if it turned out to have two or three separate authors, even less would change because I already treat the Gospel, the three epistles, and the Apocalypse discretely, at least *within* the topical headings that characterize the entire corpus. I do the same thing with the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles within my treatment of Luke-Acts, just without setting off the sections under each theme with separate headings, one for Luke and one for Acts. If 1 and 2 Peter had different authors, nothing of my theological summaries would change at all, since I deal with them entirely separately, just within the same overall chapter. I do exactly the same thing with James and Jude, without ever suggesting that *they* might have common authorship.

In other publications I have explained why I find the traditional ascriptions of authorship of the various NT books reasonable (excluding Hebrews, which has no uniform tradition surrounding it).[48] Nevertheless, it matters little to my presentation of their theologies whether those ascriptions are accurate, so I spend almost no time with thise debate and, even if only for convenience's sake, use the traditional designations when speaking of the books' writers. Where a corpus like the Johannine literature may have had multiple authors (if the tradition is wrong), again, little would change in my description of the respective theologies of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse. Too often, I fear, the *assumptions* of multiple, anonymous, or pseudonymous authors in the various NT corpora

[48] Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey,* 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H; Nottingham: IVP, 2009); Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos: An Introduction to Acts through Revelation* (Nashville: B&H; Nottingham, IVP, 2006); Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs* (Nashville: B&H, 2016); all ad loc.

predispose a scholar to exaggerate the differences among the documents in question and not notice how much they actually have in common. The reverse is of course, also possible—that assumptions of common authorship could lead to an exaggerated perception of identical themes in two or more works. But this second danger does not seem to have tainted the last century or two of scholarship nearly as often as the first.

I have only very rarely mentioned foreign-language material, not because I think it unimportant, but again in order to limit the scope and size of the finished product. English-language biblical scholarship has matured and come out from under the thumb of the German academy where it remained even just a generation ago, so there are scarcely any major international perspectives that cannot be studied in English these days. There are a few, however, and I acknowledge that my volume is thereby limited as a result. My default English translation of the Bible is the 2011 edition of the New International Version, unless I indicate otherwise. Because I have been on its Committee for Bible Translation for the last decade, I have come to appreciate just how "optimally equivalent" its translation is—aiming for the best balance of accuracy and clarity possible at the same time, even while realizing that the results of that approach will slightly diminish the overall accuracy in comparison with a formally equivalent translation and slightly diminish the overall clarity in comparison with a dynamically equivalent translation.[49] But when one intentionally prioritizes either accuracy or clarity, then the other feature always gets short shrift.[50]

Those looking for a history of the modern discipline of NT theology will need to look elsewhere; good treatments already exist.[51] While very much recognizing the legitimacy of all the newer sociological, literary, empire-critical, postcolonial, and liberationist disciplines, with rare exceptions I have not delved into these for this work either, lest the work quadruple in length. Further disappointment will come upon those wanting homiletical or applicational insights at every turn. Brief remarks dealing with twenty-first-century application appear once in a while throughout this book. Still, most of my reflections on the contemporary significance of the major conclusions on the theme of the entire volume

[49] See further Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible?* 93–118, and the literature there cited on 144–48.

[50] Douglas J. Moo, "The New International Version (NIV)," in *Which Bible Translation Should I Use? A Comparison of 4 Major Recent Versions*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and David Croteau (Nashville: B&H, 2012), 78–116. Cf. also Bill Mounce, *What I Have Learned about Greek and Translation since Joining the CBT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017).

[51] See, e.g., Balla, *Challenges to New Testament Theology*, 5–47; Ladd and Hagner, "Introduction," in Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1–28.

appear in the concluding chapter. First we need to hear each writer on his own terms in his original context(s). It is time, therefore, to turn to the body of our work and begin to canvass each segment of the NT and earliest Christianity for what I take to be the heart of NT theology, seeking to elucidate its "dominant and distinctive" message both overall and by individual authors.[52]

[52] This was the approach of the NT department at Denver Seminary when I joined the faculty in 1986, which at that time comprised Donald W. Burdick, Kermit A. Ecklebarger, and William W. Klein. Whatever other revisions and updates I have made as I have taught NT theology over the years, I have not found a more sensible or important foundational task for the discipline than this.

1

Jesus

Many NT theologies do not have a separate chapter on the theology of Jesus. Some prefer simply to offer the theology of each of the four Gospels, perhaps thinking it too complicated to navigate the historical Jesus quests and build a treatment of Jesus solely on the most historically secure portions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[1] In a previous era, some merely dealt uncritically with everything attributed to Jesus in the NT, assuming that all of it comes directly from him; a few works even excluded separate discussions of the theologies of the individual evangelists.[2] Intriguingly, it has often been more liberal, German

[1] E.g., Frank J. Matera (*New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007]) has chapters on each of the four Gospels (including Acts with Luke) but none that synthesizes two or more of them, nor any that deals with Jesus separately. I. Howard Marshall (*New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* [Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2004]) does the same but separates Luke and Acts into different chapters. Then he adds a chapter on the theology of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts (184–206), but it is not the same as a treatment of Jesus from within the four Gospels. Frank Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 181–216) has one chapter in which he talks about what the four Gospels have in common, but again this is not the same as a theology of Jesus.

[2] E.g., George E. Ladd (*A Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974]) had only a section on the Synoptic Gospels, subdivided thematically, which de facto functioned as his theology of Jesus. In the revised edition (ed. Donald A. Hagner [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 212–45), a chapter by R. T. France on the individual theologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke was added, but the structure of treating the Synoptics otherwise remained unchanged.

works that have actually taken the historical Jesus seriously and as worthy of separate notice, but their "databases" of what they deem authentic or accurate have often been too restrictive.[3] The classic example was Rudolf Bultmann's two-volume work that devoted only thirty pages to Jesus as part of what he called "presuppositions and motifs of NT theology."[4]

We have chosen to focus in this chapter largely on what appears in either Mark or Q, the two oldest major Gospel sources. Almost all of Mark's contents are taken up and reused in either Matthew or Luke or both. In other words, there is little that is unique to Mark to make it suspect in the eyes of those who demand more than a single source for a given tradition.[5] While the most probable literary relationship of the first three Gospels involves Markan priority and the Q hypothesis (the existence of a collection of Jesus' sayings common to both Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark), attempts to divide Q into separate and even conflicting layers remain unconvincing.[6] Plenty of people in Jesus' milieu and before imbibed characteristics of both sage and prophet,[7] so the most common means of parceling out Q—into passages that feature Jesus as the laconic sage and those that make him an apocalyptic prophet—seems extremely tenuous.[8] We must also acknowledge that any or all of Q could

[3] As is clearly the case with Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: de Gruyter; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 217–62. Much more optimistic about what we can recover is Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 61–162.

[4] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951; London: SCM, 1958; repr., Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 1:3–32.

[5] We recognize that Mark and Matthew, Mark and Luke, and even the triple tradition of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, may often represent only one independent witness. So only Mark and Q normally provide genuinely independent double attestation. For the methodologically soundest studies of the authenticity of the various parts of the Jesus tradition, see Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, eds., *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); and Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[6] See esp. Robert H. Stein, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 49–152. Cf. also Craig L. Blomberg, "The Synoptic Problem: Where We Stand at the Start of a New Century," in *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem*, ed. David A. Black and David Beck (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 17–40.

[7] Keener, *Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, 239. Keener notes that it is our modern compartmentalizing and not ancient realities that leads to these kinds of either/or bifurcations.

[8] For a good recent overview of perspectives, see Benedict Viviano, *What Are They Saying about Q?* (New York: Paulist, 2013). The strongest overall assault on Q appears in Mark Goodacre and Norman Perrin, eds., *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2004). The most telling points in this volume consistently address all the layers of hypotheses added to the mere existence of Q, not the plausibility of the hypothesis itself.

have been one or more oral sources rather than a single written source.[9] In addition, it is interesting to see that Mark and Q are not as different in theology as many would lead us to believe.[10] The greater distinctives appear in the theology of material unique to Matthew or material unique to Luke, and especially in the theology of the uniquely Johannine narratives. Of course, one may also discern uniquely Markan *emphases*, just through his repetition of topics or strategic location of them, even if they appear on a smaller scale in one or more of the other Gospels.

Thus, we do not include teachings or actions attributed to Jesus solely on the basis of their appearance in Mark and Q, unless a reasonable cross section of scholarship has argued credibly for their authenticity. Space prevents us from acknowledging those who have done so for every saying or action we discuss, but comments will direct interested readers to more detailed discussions of the authenticity of Jesus' teaching and activity, at least in each of the main categories and subsections of his ministry that we cover. In a minority of instances, we will add in material that is uniquely Matthean or Lukan, but again only when there are significant lines of reasoning supporting its historical reliability. Usually these include close coherence in form and contents with material that is multiply attested, potentially embarrassing for early Christians, or dissimilar enough from Jesus' milieu and that of his followers that they were not likely invented by anyone other than Jesus himself.[11]

Historical Jesus research tends to focus exclusively on the Synoptics, to the neglect of John's Gospel. What John Robinson in the late 1950s dubbed "the new look" on John is hardly new any longer, yet large swaths of the academy continue to ignore a significant minority of the

[9] See esp. James D. G. Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), esp. 80–108.

[10] Rainer Riesner, "From the Messianic Teacher to the Gospels of Jesus Christ," in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1:408. Cf. esp. Edward P. Meadors, *Jesus the Messianic Herald of Salvation* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997).

[11] For a presentation of the most commonly employed criteria of authenticity, see James H. Charlesworth, "The Historical Jesus: How to Ask Questions and Remain Inquisitive," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 1:102–4. Charlesworth treats dissimilarity, embarrassment, multiple attestation, and coherence and then itemizes twelve "possible" aspects of Jesus' life and teaching, and fifty-five "relatively certain" ones (114–23). He concludes with how impressed he is with the consensus around these issues among many of the leaders in Jesus research (p. 125). For important further nuancing of the criteria, see Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002). Proper amounts of continuity with preceding Judaism and subsequent Christianity must combine with distinctives vis-à-vis both movements for traditions to be fully plausible.

Fourth Gospel for which very credible cases have been made on historical grounds alone that Jesus said or did what is attributed to him there.[12] The Society of Biblical Literature's John, Jesus, and History Seminar is the latest significant phase of this research to identify such items.[13] Indeed, Paul Anderson, who has spearheaded much of its work, repeatedly calls for a "fourth quest for the historical Jesus" that will put the historically authenticable material in John on a par with that from the Synoptics as scholars reconstruct the Jesus of history.[14] Therefore, we will also include in our survey of Jesus' theology a short list of the items most commonly treated as trustworthy in the Fourth Gospel. I have made the case for a longer list of such material in a book-length work on John, but here I limit myself to those items for which there is broader support for historicity.[15]

I want to be very clear that not including some element of the four Gospels in this chapter on Jesus does not mean I think it is inauthentic. It just means that, *on historical grounds alone*, there is not as strong a case that can be made for its reliability as for the items I do include. Scholars have used the "historical Jesus" to mean many different things, but most commonly it refers to the portrait of Jesus that emerges from those details of the life of Jesus of Nazareth recorded in ancient sources, primarily but not exclusively the NT Gospels, that stand the greatest chance of being historically trustworthy according to the standard criteria of authenticity used in researching ancient texts and figures.[16] As has been stressed often in very recent years, this will always be Jesus as he was *remembered* and not a comprehensive, dispassionate chronicle of his life, but we all understand in ordinary life the difference between memories that are accurate enough to be useful in recovering what people did and said and those

[12] John A. T. Robinson, "The New Look on the Fourth Gospel," *Texte und Untersuchungen* 73 (1959): 338–50.

[13] Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher, eds., *John, Jesus, and History*, 3 vols. (Atlanta: SBL, 2007–2016).

[14] Sketching its contours in Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 195–219. Cf. also James H. Charlesworth, "The Historical Jesus in the Fourth Gospel: A Paradigm Shift?" *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 8 (2010): 3–46.

[15] Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2001).

[16] See esp. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 21–40. For the strengths and weaknesses of the standard criteria and for proposals for additional criteria, see Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

that are too skewed to be usable.[17] I have elsewhere repeatedly made the case for the generally reliable nature of this material, and will not repeat myself here.[18] The historical Jesus will be a subset of the real Jesus, but it should not be a significant distortion of him.

The Starting Point: Fulfillment

"'The time has come,' [Jesus] said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15). The atmosphere would have been electric whenever Jesus made this announcement during the opening phase of his public ministry throughout Galilee. These are the first recorded words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, and they function as a headline over all his teaching. The word for time is *kairos*, the term that often in the NT refers to a specially appointed and significant moment in God's dealings with humanity. "The decisively new and constitutive factor for any Christian conception of time is the conviction that, with the coming of Jesus, a unique *kairos* has dawned, one by which all other time is qualified."[19] A more literal translation of *peplērōtai* than "has come" would be "has been fulfilled." At this moment, a new era of salvation history was beginning. The perfect tense of *engizō* points to the arrival of a new state of affairs, according to Mark's interpretation of Jesus' Aramaic words.[20] The "kingdom of God," his royal reign, has drawn near.

The God in question is the God of Israel, the God of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jewish belief was consistently monotheistic in the Second Temple period, though it was a variegated that monotheism that at times allowed for other highly exalted individuals or powers in the life to come.[21] None, however, ever crossed the firm boundary between

[17] See esp. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). Cf. also Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009); and Rafael Rodriguez, *Structuring Early Christian Memory: Jesus in Tradition, Performance and Text* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

[18] See esp. Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Nottingham: IVP, 2007). Cf. also Paul R. Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

[19] Moisés Silva, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, rev. ed., 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 2:590.

[20] Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 251–59; on Mark 1:15, see p. 255. Cf. esp. George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 71–75.

[21] See esp. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Ancient Jewish Monotheism and Early Christian Devotion*, 3rd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015). Cf. also his *How*

creature and creator.[22] As in Judaism more generally, Jesus' concept of God can be summarized under the two broad categories of holiness and love.[23] He is full of mercy and compassion, but he must judge sin because nothing unholy can stand in his presence. Possibly as distinctive and characteristic as any feature of Jesus' teaching about God appears in his use of the term of endearment *Abba* for his heavenly Father (Mark 14:36)—not quite, but leaning in the direction of "Daddy."[24] Although preserved in transliteration in the Greek only this one time in the Gospels, it presumably lies behind uses of *patēr* elsewhere, especially when used in the vocative (*pater*) for direct address. But God is transcendent as well as intimate, so his name must also be treated as holy (for both points, see esp. Q 11:2 at the outset of "the Lord's Prayer"[25]).

Because of God's holiness, when Jesus begins to usher in his kingdom, he calls his audience to turn from their sins. Repentance in the Hebrew Bible "always means to alter not only views but also conduct, and that always in the sense of alteration of conduct in relationship to God, and not ethical betterment only."[26] The audience must also trust in a message that is depicted as good news (the gospel). Augustus Caesar thought that his reign brought enough peace and prosperity that it could be called the *evangel*, but OT uses were probably more to the fore in Jesus' thinking, such as Isaiah 52:7 ("How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' ").[27]

What made these tidings such good news? Had not God been on his heavenly throne since eternity past? One explanation is that of N. T. Wright, who has popularized the view that one could summarize the plight of Israel as the problem of exile.[28] True, many Jews lived in the

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on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[22] See esp. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

[23] Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 22–49.

[24] McKnight, *New Vision for Israel*, 49–65.

[25] I will follow the scholarly convention of citing a Q saying by giving the chapter and verse of its form in Luke, preceded by the symbol *Q*.

[26] Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, *The Ministry of Jesus in Its Theological Significance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).

[27] Michael F. Bird, *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 5–13, esp. 10–11.

[28] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 167–81, 268–72.

land, but the majority remained in the diaspora, outside Israel. Even those within the land were all too aware that they did not enjoy peace and prosperity as an independent nation, as God had promised them. Wright offers a helpful taxonomy of all the Jewish approaches to answering the question of what had gone wrong and how the situation was to be rectified.[29] Cutting against the grain of all of them, Jesus' message, for Wright, can be summarized in essence as announcing the end of exile, without one Roman soldier leaving his post![30] In largely parallel fashion, Kim Huat Tan sees Jesus as claiming that Zion is being restored in his ministry, even though no institutional or structural changes are occurring in the country's government.[31] This approach increasingly has been called "restoration eschatology." While one may debate whether this is the best way to categorize Jesus' teaching overall, the "end of exile" theme is a helpful way of paraphrasing Jesus' initial proclamation as he bursts onto the Israelite scene.[32]

Jesus' Forerunner: John the Baptist

The story of Jesus has its most immediate prequel in the ministry of an individual who often gets insufficient press, even though the four Gospels narrate more about him than about any other character save Jesus himself. Even the Jesus Seminar agreed that John preached repentance and baptized.[33] The herald of the good news of the gospel had a famous forerunner. We could have started with John, but because this is a chapter on *Jesus'* theology, we adopt the approach of a flashback and highlight only what best foregrounds Jesus' own ministry. John the Baptizer had already made waves in Israel. Insisting that people throughout the nation repent of their sin, receive God's forgiveness, and indicate it by immersion in the Jordan River would have shocked the majority of reasonably faithful Jews who thought that they were following the divinely ordained procedures in the Law by periodically offering animal sacrifices in the

[29] Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, 181–214.

[30] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 126–29.

[31] Kim Huat Tan, *The Zion Tradition and the Aims of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. 138–43.

[32] See the excellent and wide-ranging essays in Carey C. Newman, ed., *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright's* Jesus and the Victory of God (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1999).

[33] Robert W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar, *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 51.

Jerusalem Temple for the remission of their sins (Mark 1:4).[34] Yet large numbers of the ordinary people of the land responded positively to John's summons (v. 5). His dress and diet intentionally imitated those of the OT prophet Elijah and other wilderness hermits and rabble-rousers (v. 6; cf. 2 Kgs. 1:8, Zech. 13:4).[35] Later, Jesus will explain this to some of his disciples as they come down from the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:11-13). John's popularity probably stemmed from the fact that he seemed to be acting out the role of a new Elijah as forerunner to the Messiah. Malachi had prophesied a "messenger" to prepare the Lord's way before him (Mal 3:1 [cf. also Exod 23:20]; cf. Q 7:27) and later appeared to equate that messenger with an Elijah-like figure (4:5). Even John's language about a "coming one" (Mark 1:7) probably had messianic overtones (cf. Ps 118:26).[36] The appeal to Isaiah 40:3 in Mark 1:3 (attributed explicitly to John in Matt 3:3) suggests the imminent ingathering of all the exiles.[37] Would now be the time for God's anointed to arrive and once and for all rid the land of the Romans and all other foreign powers?

A variety of ancient sources describes the Jewish conviction that prophecy had ceased after the ministry of the writing prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures.[38] This perspective may not have been universal, and numerous intertestamental Jewish documents contain prophetic elements, especially within an apocalyptic genre. Nearly a full half of the Pseudepigrapha falls into this category.[39] But this is not to say that their authors or their readers treated them as akin to works of Scripture.[40] Many people on hearing John's message most likely thought that the time of God's comparative silence, in terms of the kind of revelation that became inscripturated, was coming to an end. John posed a distinct alternative

[34] Cf. Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 106–11.

[35] On which see esp. James A. Kelhoffer, "'Locusts and Wild Honey' (Mk 1:6c and Mt 3:4c): The *Status Quaestionis* Concerning the Diet of John the Baptist," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003): 104–27.

[36] Gordon D. Kirchhevel, "He That Cometh in Mark 1:7 and Matthew 24:30," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 4 (1994): 105–11.

[37] Tucker S. Ferda, "John the Baptist, Isaiah 40, and the Ingathering of the Exiles," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 10 (2012): 154–88.

[38] See Benjamin D. Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 31–47.

[39] James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983).

[40] The debates recorded in the later rabbinic writings about what should be canonized involve a few of the books that eventually were accepted, but they give almost no evidence that any other works were ever proposed that subsequently lost out. See esp. Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 274–433.

to the scribal religion that had come to dominate in Israel, but it was not an alternative of advocating rebellion and violence, as the precursors to the Zealot movement sporadically did in the first sixty years of the first century.[41] John's approach was uniquely salvation-historical. A new era was at hand.

John's message clarifies that all is not right in the nation. His message of repentance calls Israel, focusing especially on the Jewish leaders, to demonstrate the behavior that indicates true repentance, lest they be the ones consumed by God's wrath (Q 3:7-8a, 9). Merely belonging to ethnic Israel will not guarantee election, while some who have not been a part of God's chosen people will become Abraham's spiritual descendants (v. 8b). Still, the ordinary masses of poor people would have been pleased even if just the corruption among their indigenous power brokers was diminished. Much of John's ministry can be encapsulated in this contrast between purification and judgment. It was already common practice to baptize in water, in the many Jewish *mikvaoth*, or ritual immersion pools, in order to cleanse oneself ritually, especially before entering the Temple precincts.[42] The Qumran covenanters undertook it regularly to symbolize the washing away of recent sins (1QS III, 4–9; V, 13-14; VI, 14–23). So John's call to be immersed in water was hardly revolutionary in and of itself. But he went on to promise, more surprisingly, that the one coming after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). Q 3:16 adds "and with fire." The context of verse 17 makes it clear that this is a fire of judgment, just as chaff is burned up after the wheat is separated out from it. The fire about which John speaks, however, is unquenchable, showing that the judgment is eternal. The grammar, however, suggests that one and the same ministry will mean salvation for some and condemnation for others. As Davies and Allison explain, "for the Baptist, fire and Spirit were not two things but one—'fiery breath' (hendiadys). He proclaimed that, at the boundary of the new age, all would pass through the fiery *rûaḥ* of God, a stream which would purify the righteous and destroy the unrighteous."[43]

[41] See Robert L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-historical Study* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

[42] Urban C. von Wahlde, "Archaeology and John's Gospel," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 560–66, 568–70; Urban C. von Wahlde, "The Pool of Siloam: The Importance of the New Discoveries for Our Understanding of Ritual Immersion in Late Second Temple Judaism and the Gospel of John," in Anderson, Just, and Thatcher, *John, Jesus, and History*, 2:155–73.

[43] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), 1:317. The construction is analogous though not identical to those covered by Granville Sharp's rule.

Six of the seven NT uses of the verb "baptize" followed by *en pneumati hagiō* (in, with, or by the Holy Spirit) occur in the Gospels or Acts, all referencing this specific saying of John (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5, 11:16). The seventh use comes in 1 Corinthians 12:13 in which all the Corinthians, many of them quite worldly, are said to have been baptized in, with, or by one Spirit. So it is clear that baptism in the Spirit in the NT is an initial encounter with the Spirit, not a second or repeated blessing that only some believers experience.[44] This is not to say that Christians cannot or do not have special, powerful encounters with the Spirit separate from their conversions but just that the NT never refers to these events as Spirit-*baptism*. Instead, as we will see when we consider Luke's theology (below, 407), they reflect the *filling* of the Spirit.

John's two-pronged message of cleansing and judgment seems to have focused more on the judgment theme, at least to the extent that his call for repentance was for people to avoid God's impending cataclysm. Later, Jesus would tell the little parable of the children in the marketplace in which he compares John's message to something much more austere than his own ministry of celebration (Q 7:31-35).[45] James Dunn encapsulates the difference between the message of the two men by likening Jesus' attitude to judgment as similar to John's but "tempered by grace."[46] But we must not exaggerate the difference between the two men. Both proclaimed repentance because of the kingdom's arrival, and both announced the kingdom's two-pronged inauguration of salvation and judgment.[47] Moreover, at the end of his ministry, Jesus would imply that the authority that propelled John was identical to what inspired and motivated him (Mark 11:27-33).

John would not live to see the coming of the kingdom that he foretold, which explains why Jesus could say that, of all the people in human history

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This imagery was probably the inspiration for Jesus' own use of the metaphor of baptism with fire in Mark 9:49. See Daniel Frayer-Griggs, "'Everyone Will Be Baptized in Fire': Mark 9.49, Q 3.16, and the Baptism of the Coming One," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 7 (2009): esp. 271–74.

[44] See esp. James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970).

[45] On this contrast as a historically accurate charge, despite the caricatures, see Petr Pokorný, "Demoniac and Drunkard: John the Baptist and Jesus according to Q 7:33–34," in *Jesus Research: An International Perspective*, vol. 1, *The First Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research, Prague 2005*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný, with Brian Rhea (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 170–81.

[46] Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 455.

[47] For a balanced assessment of their similarities and differences, see Jens Schröter, *Jesus of Nazareth: Jew from Galilee, Savior of the World* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2014), 90–93.

up to the time of John, none was greater than he. Nevertheless, even the least in the kingdom of God would be greater than John (Q 7:28). Everyone who lived through all of the events of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and sending of the Spirit at Pentecost would see God's kingly reign arrive and experience spiritual empowerment in a new and unprecedented way.[48] Already during his ministry after John's death, Jesus could declare to his disciples, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it" (Q 10:23-24).[49] Nevertheless, John was a great prophet and more than a prophet, as he climactically heralded the coming of God's kingdom and the king who was coming.[50] Knut Backhaus helpfully summarizes:

> If John as a Baptist popularised and radicalized [*sic*] contemporary purification rites, as a preacher he radicalised and simplified the eschatological scenario of his day: Yahweh was to come immediately in order to destroy the wicked and to restore Israel, and this imminent revolution must involve the totality of life and qualify any human safeguard. In a religious landscape which he perceived as dried up and petrified, John announced the volcanic eruption.[51]

As his ministry unfolded, Jesus would add greater complexity to this concept of Yahweh's coming. It is to this ministry, therefore, that we now must turn.

Jesus' Baptism and Temptations

John's and Jesus' ministries directly intersect at his baptism (Mark 1:9). The information surveyed thus far is unlikely to have been invented because it portrays John as a very powerful and popular preacher, whereas the early church tended to downplay his significance in favor of an increasingly exclusive focus on Jesus.[52] The Fourth Gospel notes that some of Jesus'

[48] On John's role as a "hinge" between the ages, cf. John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 172.

[49] Carroll (*Luke*, 242) calls this "an extraordinary moment of divine revelation to Israel."

[50] Schnelle (*Theology of the New Testament*, 74) nicely summarizes: "The substance of the *Baptist's message* can be identified with relative certainty; it is the proclamation of judgment and the call to repentance, entirely determined by an eschatological expectation that the end is near" (italics his).

[51] Knut Backhaus, "Echoes from the Wilderness: The Historical John the Baptist," in Holmén and Porter, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2:1773.

[52] For the view that Jesus may have initially even been a kind of disciple of John, see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, vol. 2, *Mentor, Message and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 116–30.

first disciples came out of the orbit of John's followers (John 1:35-40) and that John had to step out of the limelight so that Jesus could take center stage (3:25-30). Early on in his public ministry, Jesus was probably not as well known or as popular as John. The information about Jesus' baptism by John is most likely historical for the same reason that John's early ministry is: it puts John in the position of authority over Jesus. [53] Indeed, the baptism represents the forgiveness of sins. Early Christianity would come to believe that Jesus was sinless (2 Cor 5:21, Heb 4:15), so the church would not have created the unnecessary problem of having Jesus appear to need pardon for things he himself had done.[54] On the other hand, this does not make Jesus' baptism meaningless, as he surely could have identified with his people and been seeking corporately God's forgiveness for his nation.[55]

At Jesus' baptism, the descent of the Spirit in the form of the dove (Mark 1:10) recalls for some interpreters God's Spirit hovering, like a bird, over the waters of the earth at the beginning of creation (Gen 1:2).[56] The heavenly voice combines snippets of at least two and perhaps three OT texts that were highly influential in the developing concept of messiahship (Mark 1:11). "You are my son" alludes to Psalm 2:7, a royal and probably messianic Psalm. "Whom I love" may echo Genesis 22:2, where Isaac is called Abraham's specially loved son. "With you I am well pleased" harks back to Isaiah 42:1, the first of the Servant Songs in Isaiah, which originally depicted Israel's role. In light of these allusions, Jesus is the messianic king, a new Isaac (though he will actually be sacrificed but then raised from the dead), and a new Israel, embodying the entire nation in his life and ministry.[57]

One might expect Jesus' dramatic baptism to propel him immediately into his ministry, but instead the Spirit drives him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Mark 1:12-13; cf. Q 4:1-13). During Jesus' forty-day fast, on three specific occasions Satan challenges him to flaunt God's calling on his life.[58] All three temptations try to seduce Jesus into

[53] Cf. Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:465–67, 578–81.

[54] Robert L. Webb, "Jesus' Baptism by John: Its Historicity and Significance," in Bock and Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, 104–6. Helen K. Bond (*The Historical Jesus: A Guide for the Perplexed* [London: T&T Clark, 2012], 85) phrases it tersely: "That Jesus was baptized by John is certain."

[55] Armand Puig i Tàrrech (*Jesus: A Biography* [Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2011], 212) adds that "Jesus wished to make clear his devotion to the two foundations on which the baptisms carried out by John, the most recent of the prophets sent by God, were based: the general call to conversion and the welcoming of God's final forgiveness."

[56] Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 148.

[57] Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 165–66.

[58] On the congruence of these two accounts and on their faithfulness to the historical

pursuing an "easier" route to receive highly valued rewards. He should miraculously turn rocks into food, rather than continue to fast (Q 4:3). He ought to worship the devil and instantly receive authority over all the kingdoms of the world (vv. 5-7). And he should allow the angels to supernaturally rescue him from certain death after jumping off the Temple portico to the deepest part of the Kidron ravine below (vv. 9-11). The devil recognizes Jesus as God's Son; the first-class condition here does not introduce any doubt into the conditional clause (v. 3), and the Gospels consistently depict demons knowing Jesus' identity (Mark 1:24, 3:11, 5:7, etc.).[59]

The Hebrew Scriptures remain as prominent in the temptation episode as they were in John's ministry and at Jesus' baptism.[60] In every instance Jesus resists the devil's temptation by quoting Scripture, all three times from the early chapters of Deuteronomy. Literal food is not all that humans need for sustenance; by implication, spiritual nurture is even more important (Q 4:4; cf. Deut 8:3). Only the Lord God merits worship (v. 8; cf. Deut 6:13). And one must not test God by demanding that he intervene with miraculous aid (v. 12; cf. Deut 6:16). Of course, the devil can quote Scripture too; verses 10-11 cite Psalm 91:11-12. But a psalm that by itself seems "unbelievably naïve," as if God always protected his faithful ones from physical harm, in the context of the previous psalms cannot be correctly understood in such an absolute fashion.[61] Jesus passes the tests that Israel had failed in the wilderness when they demanded supernatural food (Exod 16), worshiped false gods (Exod 32), and were not always protected from harm because they audaciously rebelled against Yahweh's commandments (Num 16).[62] It would subsequently become clear that he also remained faithful to God where Adam and Eve had disobeyed, seeing the forbidden fruit as "good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Gen 3:6). Because of his faithfulness when tempted, Jesus can instruct his followers to pray, "lead

tradition they inherited, see esp. Luigi Schiavo, "The Temptation of Jesus: The Eschatological Battle and the New Ethic of the First Followers of Jesus in Q," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25 (2002): 141–64; and Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 82–84.

[59] "The measure of doubt introduced by a conditional protasis depends partly on the form of the protasis, but mainly on the context as a whole." K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in the New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 163.

[60] On which see esp. Birger Gerhardsson, *The Testing of God's Son (Matt. 4:1-11 & Par.): An Analysis of an Early Christian Midrash* (Lund: Gleerup, 1966).

[61] Beth LaNeel Tanner, "Psalm 91," in Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 697, 701.

[62] Cf. Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 136–38.

us not into temptation," in the sense of "do not allow us to succumb to temptation" (Q 11:4).[63] Now he is ready to embark on his public ministry.[64]

The Kingdom of God

It is widely held that the headline of Mark 1:15, with which we began in this chapter, embraces Jesus' core, authentic teaching: the announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of God.[65] If John's message heralded its imminence, with Jesus it became present. But what exactly did these spokesmen for God mean by the expression? The phrase "kingdom of God" appears nowhere in the OT and is rare in Second Temple Jewish literature, yet the concept of a theocracy, of God reigning as king, permeates Israelite religion from the days of the united monarchy onward. Zechariah 14:9 epitomizes it well: "The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name." The kingdom is thus more of a reign than a realm, more of a power than a place.[66] While it can be located anywhere, it manifests itself particularly where God's people gather and are actively engaging in his work in his world. But God's kingship or dominion extends throughout the cosmos and is not limited to his working in and through those who explicitly profess allegiance to him. Wherever the concept occurs in the OT or Second Temple Jewish literature, it refers to "an inbreaking of God into history when God's redemptive purpose is fully realized."[67]

The Present and Future Kingdom

After a period of scholarship during which a consistently futurist or eschatological school of thought prevailed, associated particularly with

[63] Osborne, *Matthew*, 230.

[64] He has also been appropriately commissioned by God through experiences in both his baptism and temptation that play the same role as did initiatory experiences for Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Enoch. See David Mathewson, "The Apocalyptic Vision of Jesus according to the Gospel of Matthew: Reading Matthew 3:16–4:11 Intertextually," *Tyndale Bulletin* 62 (2011): 89–108.

[65] Leander Keck (*A Future for the Historical Jesus* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1971], 32) observes that "this is almost universally acknowledged to be at the same time a formulation by the church and an accurate summary of what Jesus had to say."

[66] See esp. I. Howard Marshall, "The Hope of a New Age: The Kingdom of God in the New Testament," *Themelios* 11, no. 1 (1985): 5–15. Where spatial elements enter in, they have to do with the location of Jesus and his followers, the church. See, e.g., Patrick Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016).

[67] Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 58.