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STUDIA ANTIQUA

A STUDENT JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

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ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations are taken from *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed., 8.4.2.

AB	Anchor Bible
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i> (formerly <i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>)
<i>Enc</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>

LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

EDITOR'S PREFACE

I am happy to herald another issue of *Studia Antiqua* (SA) filled with the engaging scholarship of my peers. Having worked with SA as both a submitter and an editor, I affirm the great value of the journal in affording primarily undergraduate students an opportunity to advance their skills in research, writing, and editing to a degree beyond curricular expectations.

Although the papers in this issue were written in the fall and winter months of the 2019–20 academic year, the publication process has certainly been affected by the events of the last several months, including the global COVID-19 pandemic and the responses to systemic injustices still existent today. These experiences, notwithstanding their accompanying difficulties, have brought important reminders about the fragility of life, the value of interpersonal connections, and the role we all have in creating true equality and justice. I am proud of our contributing scholars for enduring disruptions to our academic community, especially regarding courses, face-to-face interactions with faculty, and access to scholarship. Of the seven papers submitted for consideration, five have met the high standard of acceptance into this year's issue. The authors of these accepted papers had the fortune, time, and resources to endure rounds of feedback and revision, and they did so in a season of unprecedented changes in their academic pursuits and personal lives.

The first paper of this issue, written by Jeremy Madsen, analyzes the literary archetype termed the “covenant journey” pattern within the pentateuchal narratives of Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Talitha Hart then applies scholarship on ancient Israelite gates to the entrance areas of Israelite sanctuaries up through the Temple of Herod. Kelsie Cannon presents support for the interpretation of references to raised hands throughout the book of Psalms as a motif entreating the deity for grace. Jackson Abhau's paper posits that the Fourth Evangelist alluded to the Day of Atonement throughout the Gospel of John to reinforce its theological message concerning Jesus's redemptive value. Lastly, Rachel Huntsman's paper argues that the author of the Protevangelium of James used elements of the “betrothal at the well” Hebrew Bible type-scene in its annunciation account to defend the virginal image of Mary.

I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to the many contributors and volunteers who made this issue of *SA* possible. With the journal's move to its new home in the Ancient Near Eastern Studies program, I must give thanks to Eric Huntsman for facilitating the financial support of the *SA* editorial internship and to R. Devan Jensen and the staff at the Religious Studies Center for their willingness to continue as consultants for the journal. Additional appreciation goes to this year's faculty review board for their sacrifices of time and attention despite the interruptions of the novel coronavirus in their lives. I also thank the other members of the *SA* staff: Lincoln Blumell, for his continued faculty advisement over the journal, and Jeremy Madsen, whose editorial assistance with this issue has indeed prepared him to become *SA*'s next lead editor. Lastly, I thank the readers—including you—for your support of this issue and the journal at large. The goal of academic publishing is to disseminate scholarship, and your time spent reading these papers helps their authors reach their dreams of making an impact in the academy and in the world.

Tyler Harris
Editor-in-Chief, *Studia Antiqua*

COVENANT PEOPLES, COVENANT JOURNEYS

ARCHETYPAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE NOAH, ABRAHAM, AND MOSES NARRATIVES

JEREMY MADSEN

Jeremy Madsen will graduate from Brigham Young University in April 2021 with a BA in ancient Near Eastern studies, with an emphasis in Hebrew Bible and a minor in editing. After graduation, he hopes to pursue writing and publishing on scripture-related topics.

Abstract: The stories of Noah, Abraham, and Moses display remarkable similarities. All three follow a narrative pattern where God appears in theophany to a prophet-patriarch figure, God forms a covenant with this prophet-patriarch and his people to bring them to a new land, and God guides them on a divinely-assisted journey until they reach that land. Rather than being the result of typological shaping or historical resemblance, the narrative similarities between these three stories are most likely indicative of a common narrative archetype, which this paper titles the covenant journey archetype. The thrice-fold repetition of this archetype within the Pentateuch attests to the Israelites' theological conviction that their God was a god of promises, guidance, and deliverance, who would fulfill his covenants with them as he did with their fathers.

The biblical stories of Noah, Abraham, and Moses have much in common. God, in all his terrible justice and tender mercy, dominates all three. The leading figures—Noah, Abraham, and Moses—are connected in the same genealogical chain. And all three stories play key parts in the Pentateuch, a foundational text in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Over the years, many additional parallels have been noted across these three narratives. For example, Abraham's descent into Egypt is a type of the Israelite bondage, Moses as a baby is preserved in an ark just like Noah was, and the genealogies in Genesis place Abraham as many generations after Noah as Noah is placed after Adam.¹

1. See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 375–76; Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (New York: Routledge,

The similarities between these narratives extend deeper than such surface details, however. All three stories share the same underlying narrative structure: In a time of general wickedness, God reaches out in theophany to a righteous man and his people, covenanting to deliver them and guide them to a new land. The covenant also includes promises and commandments, sacrifice at an altar, extension to future generations, and an ordinance of renewal. According to the terms of his covenant, God guides and protects the man and his people in dramatic fashion as they undertake a perilous journey. The story concludes with the death of the righteous man and the transferal of the covenant status to a successor.

The presence of these similarities begs the question of why they exist. Possible explanations include historical resemblance or deliberate typological shaping. However, historical resemblance is not an adequate criterion for explaining literary resemblance, and the nature of the similarities does not fit well with current models of typology. Instead, the deep structural resemblance between these narratives is best explained as the product of an underlying literary archetype: a set of narrative conventions that guides the stories' structures, characters, and narrative arcs. This archetype, which I will refer to as the covenant journey archetype, reflects ancient Israel's strong covenant identity and their conception of deity as a powerful and proactive divine being who regularly intervenes in history to guide, protect, and deliver his people.

DEFINING TYPOLOGICAL SHAPING

In biblical studies, a *typology* is the linking of two events in such a way that one is seen as a type—either a foreshadowing or an echo—of the other. Typologies can be divided into two categories: typological reading and typological shaping. Typological reading is a hermeneutical tactic occurring *outside* a text, while typological shaping occurs *within* a text, when the text presents a story or scene in a manner that resembles or echoes another event. Marc Brettler distinguishes two kinds of typological shaping: re-enactment and pre-enactment.² Re-enactment is when an author shapes a later event to resemble an earlier one, thereby making the earlier event a “type” of the later event. For example, some writers in the New Testament used typological shaping to depict events in Jesus's life as “re-enactments” of Old Testament scenes. Brettler also proposes that biblical authors engaged in “pre-enactment,” or the shaping of a story to be a type of a later, already-known event. For example, Brettler argues that Abraham and

1995), 51–55; Harold W. Attridge, gen. ed., *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 86.

2. Brettler, *Creation of History*, 48–49.

Sarah's descent into Egypt in Gen 12 is deliberately shaped by its author to be a pre-enactment of the Israelites' later captivity in Egypt.³ According to Brettler, typological shaping was an intrinsic part of how ancient Israelite writers composed or redacted their narratives.⁴

DEFINING NARRATIVE ARCHETYPES

The idea of literary archetypes and conventions is well established in modern literary theory. The *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines an archetype as “a symbol, theme, setting, or character-type that recurs in different times and places [in literature] so frequently or prominently as to suggest . . . that it embodies some essential element of ‘universal’ human experience.”⁵ Another literary dictionary defines an archetype as “a common and recurring representation in a particular human culture, or entire human race” that “shape[s] the structure and function of a literary work.”⁶ Scholars have identified many archetypes in literature across cultures. For example, in 1949, literary theorist Joseph Campbell wrote *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, where he identified the “hero” as a stock, archetypal character.⁷ Around the same time, Carl Jung's theory of the “collective unconscious” gave rise to the idea that a set of basic archetypal patterns are intrinsic to every human society.⁸ Whether this core set of archetypes is intrinsic or not, most scholars agree that beyond these basic patterns, each society and culture has its own set of archetypal plots, stories, and symbols tailored to its environment and values.⁹ Ancient Israel was no exception.

The idea that ancient Israel had literary conventions has been explored by the literary critic Robert Alter. In *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Alter argues that ancient Israelites were familiar with various literary “type-scenes”—distinctive patterns that certain scenes were expected to follow—just how modern readers

3. Brettler, *Creation of History*, 51–55. The typological similarity between these stories was previously identified by Michael Fishbane; see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 375–76.

4. Brettler, *Creation of History*, 59.

5. Chris Baldick, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2008), s.v. “archetype.”

6. Literary Devices: Definition and Examples of Literary Terms, s.v. “archetype,” accessed May 10, 2020, <https://literarydevices.net/archetype/>.

7. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949).

8. Carl Jung, “Instinct and the Unconscious,” in *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 8: Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, ed. Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 129–38.

9. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* states that in recent years, narrative critics “have been wary of the reductionism involved in the application of such unverified hypotheses to literary works, and more alert to the cultural differences that the archetypal approach often overlooks in its search for universals” (Baldick, *Literary Terms*, s.v. “archetype”).

expect stories within a genre to follow certain conventions or patterns within that genre. Alter provides several examples of type-scenes in Hebrew literature, including “the annunciation . . . of the birth of the hero to his barren mother; the encounter with the future betrothed at a well; the epiphany in the field; the initiatory trial; danger in the desert and the discovery of a well or other source of sustenance; the testament of the dying hero.”¹⁰ Alter argues that by determining the conventional layout of a type-scene, we can identify how specific instances deviate from the expected pattern to create suspense or direct the reader’s focus or expectations.

In the broader field of literary studies, the concept of archetypes was applied to plots in 2004 by the journalist and author Christopher Booker. In his book *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*, Booker argues that nearly every story across time and culture follows one of seven basic archetypal patterns.¹¹ One of those seven archetypal plots is the quest, which Booker describes as follows:

Far away, we learn, there is some priceless goal, worth any effort to achieve: a treasure; a promised land; something of infinite value. From the moment the hero learns of this prize, the need to set out on the long hazardous journey to reach it becomes the most important thing to him in the world. Whatever perils and diversions lie in wait on the way, the story is shaped by that one overriding imperative; and the story remains unresolved until the objective has been finally, triumphantly secured.¹²

The narratives of Noah, Abraham, and Moses all fit easily into Booker’s quest category. Beyond that, they represent a far more specific subset of the quest plot, an archetypal pattern specific to Israelite culture that we will call the covenant journey. This archetype can be separated into three stages: theophany, covenant, and journey.¹³

10. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 51.

11. Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (New York: Continuum, 2004). While Booker’s work has been criticized in the literary community for his oversimplification of literature and his critique of literary works that don’t follow one of the seven plots, his work still demonstrates how the majority of stories, particularly those written before the modern era, follow basic repeating plot archetypes.

12. Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots*, 69.

13. My analysis focuses on the final stage of the text as it has been preserved by the Masoretic tradition. Questions of form, source, and redaction criticism have been bracketed, partially to reduce the length and complexity of the analysis, partially because analyzing the earlier stages of the texts would require dividing each narrative into its respective sources, a division that the scholarly community has yet to reach a consensus about.

THEOPHANY

Each of the three narratives begins by introducing its main protagonist, the prophet-patriarch.¹⁴ All three prophet-patriarchs are depicted as in good standing with God (Gen 6:9; 15:6; Exod 3:4, 12). All three prophet-patriarchs are given a name etiology: Noah and Moses shortly upon being born (Gen 5:29; Exod 2:10), Abraham not until his name is changed by God (Gen 17:5). In all three cases, their name carries significance for their future mission.

The narrative also introduces a problematic setting: a widespread state of wickedness or oppression. Noah lives in a time when “the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth” (Gen 6:5).¹⁵ Abraham is introduced directly after the Tower of Babel narrative, where men attempting to build up a city and a name unto themselves are scattered and confounded for their arrogance. Moses is born amidst great oppression, when the Israelites’ lives are “bitter with hard service” and the Egyptians are enforcing widespread infanticide (Exod 1:11–22).

Each narrative revolves around ongoing theophanies between God and the prophet-patriarch. God does not simply appear once; rather, he plays an active role throughout each narrative. The Lord speaks to Noah multiple times: to tell him to build the ark (Gen 6:13), once the ark is built (Gen 7:1), after the flood subsides (Gen 8:15), and when Noah offers sacrifice (Gen 9:1). Similarly, the Lord speaks to Abraham at nearly every stage of his journey, usually after a trial or test of some kind: to tell Abram to leave Harran (Gen 12:1), at Shechem (Gen 12:7), after Abram separates from Lot (Gen 13:14), after the battle of the kings (Gen 15:1), to announce that Sarai will conceive and to initiate circumcision (Gen 17:1), to announce the destruction of Sodom (Gen 18:1), to command Abraham to slay Isaac (Gen 22:1), and to reaffirm Abraham’s righteousness afterward (Gen 22:15–16). The Lord speaks to Moses even more, first at the burning bush (Exod 3:4) and then at regular intervals throughout the rest of the exodus. The phrase “God spoke unto Moses” and its equivalents occur more than 55 times throughout the Pentateuch.

In each initial theophany, the Lord commissions the prophet-patriarch to do a great work. He commands Noah to make an ark and save his family and every animal from the flood (Gen 6:14). To Abram, he says, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make

14. This term seems the most apt for capturing their various roles. Abraham and Moses are each called a prophet, or *nābī* (Gen 20:7; Deut 18:15; Deut 34:10). Abraham and Noah each hold the patriarchal position as head of their family and household, while Moses becomes God’s appointed leader—de facto patriarch—over the whole house of Israel.

15. All scriptural quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version. Versification follows the English text.

of you a great nation . . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:1–3). To Moses, he directs, “I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt” (Exod 3:10). In all three cases, obedience is not optional: by accepting the commission, the prophet-patriarch is binding himself and his people into a covenant with God, where both parties are bound by sacred responsibilities.

COVENANT

Central to the covenant journey archetypal pattern is the covenant (*bĕrīt*) itself—the binding pact between God and man that sets the terms of the narrative. To Noah, the Lord says, “I will establish my covenant with you” (Gen 6:18). To Abraham, God says, “I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you” (Gen 17:7). In the exodus narrative, the covenant is not a new one, but a reaffirmation of the covenant that God had made with the Israelites’ fathers. The text states that “God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Exod 2:24), and God later tells Moses, “I have remembered my covenant. . . . I will take you as my people, and I will be your God” (Exod 6:5–7).

In all three narratives, the covenant is renewed and expanded over the course of the covenant journey. With Noah, the Lord establishes his covenant before the flood and then renews and expands it once the flood is over. Abraham’s covenant is built promise by promise throughout his lifetime. With Moses, the covenant is first extended at the burning bush, is significantly expanded at Sinai, and then is renewed in the plains of Moab before entering the promised land.

The primary term of the covenant is the promise of a new land, a land of inheritance. After the flood, God gives Noah and his posterity dominion over the entire earth: “The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth” (Gen 9:1–3). God repeatedly promises to give Abraham the land of Canaan, stating, “Unto your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Gen 15:18; see also Gen 12:7; 13:15). The Lord tells Moses from the burning bush, “I have come down . . . to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exod 3:8). Later the Lord tells the Israelites, “I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession” (Exod 6:8).

The promise of a land of inheritance is accompanied by other divine promises. After the deluge, God pledges to never again destroy the earth with a flood (Gen 8:21; 9:11). With Abraham, the Lord promises to make of him a “great

nation” and to make his name great (Gen 12:1–3). Later he promises that Abram’s seed will be innumerable (Gen 13:14–17; 15:5) and that Abram will be the father of many nations and kings (Gen 17:4–6). With the Israelites, God vows to make them his “treasured possession” and “a priestly kingdom and a holy nation,” inasmuch as they keep his covenant (Exod 19:4–8; see also Exod 29:45).

In each case, the covenant is extended to future posterity. The Lord pledges with Noah that the covenant is for “you and your descendants after you . . . for all future generations” (Gen 9:9, 12). To Abraham, the Lord vows that the covenant will extend to “you and your offspring after you throughout their generations” (Gen 17:10, 13; see also Gen 12:7). The Lord tells the Israelites that his covenant with them shall be in force “throughout your generations . . . as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children” (Exod 12:14, 24).

These blessings and promises are not free; to qualify, the covenant people must comply with the commandments that God issues. After the flood, God forbids mankind from eating the blood of animals and from shedding each other’s blood, upon price of death (Gen 9:4–6). God commands Abram to “walk before me, and be blameless” (Gen 17:1). God gives the Israelites the Decalogue (Exod 20:3–17), the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:19), the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26), and other ritual laws in Leviticus and Numbers.

In each case, the covenant is formalized by offering sacrifice at altars. After the flood, Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifice on it (Gen 8:20). Abram builds altars at the plain of Moreh (Gen 12:7), at Beth-el (Gen 12:8; 13:4), and at Hebron (Gen 13:18). To formalize the covenant, God has Abraham slaughter various animals and divide them into two piles, which “a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch” then passes through (Gen 15:17). Towards the end of Abraham’s life, God demands of him the ultimate sacrifice—that of his son Isaac—although he does not require Abraham to carry it out (Gen 22:1–19). With the Israelites, the sacrifice of the Passover lamb initiates their covenant journey out of Egypt; later, God commands them to erect an altar within the Tabernacle and offer sacrifices upon it regularly (Exod 29:38–42; 40:29).

The final aspect of the covenant is the establishment of an ordinance to remember and renew it perpetually. With Noah, God sets the bow in the cloud as a recurring reminder of his promise with all the flesh of the earth (Gen 9:12–17). With Abraham, God establishes circumcision as a ritual of renewal and reaffirmation of the covenant with all of Abraham’s seed (Gen 17:9–14). God commands the Israelites to keep the feast of the Passover every year as a “perpetual ordinance” and a “day of remembrance” of his bringing them out of Egypt (Exod 12:14–20; 13:3–10; 23:14–15). Later, the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) is added to the covenant as an additional annual renewal ceremony.

JOURNEY

Framed by moments of theophany and guided by the terms of the covenant, each narrative describes the journey undertaken by the prophet-patriarch and his household (or in Moses's case, his entire people). These journeys take various forms: Noah and his family sit in the ark for several months (or forty days); Abraham travels from Harran to Canaan, down to Egypt, then back to various locations in Canaan; and Moses leads the Israelites on a trek that will eventually last forty years. But in all three cases, these are not normal trips; these are divinely sanctioned and mandated journeys, where God is ever near and displays of divine favor are plentiful. Specific manifestations of this divine power include special salvation from a widespread punishment, divine guidance, deliverance from enemies, and the providing of sustenance.

In all three narratives, members of the covenant people experience protection and special deliverance from an otherwise widespread catastrophe. Noah and his family are the only humans spared from the flood (Gen 7:21–23). Moses and the Israelites are repeatedly spared from the plagues sent upon the Egyptians, culminating in their miraculous deliverance from the death of the firstborns (Exod 8:22–23; 9:4, 26; 10:23; 11:6–7; 12:23). In the middle of the Abraham cycle, Lot and his household are spared—on account of Abraham's intercession—from the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18–19). This deliverance, however, is conditional upon obedience, even for those who are part of the covenant people. Lot's wife, who breaks the messengers' injunction to not look back, is turned into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:17–26). Similarly, any Israelites who fail to perform the rites of the Passover are denied special salvation, despite their membership in the chosen people (Exod 12:23).

Noah, Abraham, and Moses all receive specific instructions and guidance from God. Noah is given the exact dimensions of the ark and is told when to enter into it (Gen 6:14–7:4). Abraham is told by God to journey into the Levant and is given specific instructions concerning his covenant offering to God (Gen 12:1; 15:9), the institution of circumcision (Gen 17:9–15), and the near-sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1–2). Moses is given specific directions from God for nearly every step of the exodus, and the Israelites are led in the wilderness by a column of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exod 13:21).

Deliverance from enemies, while absent from Noah's account, is repeatedly emphasized in the others. Abraham gains victory over the alliance of four kings in Gen 14 and is delivered from delicate situations in the "sister-wife" doublet episodes in Gen 12 and 20. The Israelites are miraculously delivered from the Egyptians at the Red (Reed) Sea and are given divine assistance in battle against

the Amalekites (Exod 14–15; 17), the Canaanites (Num 21:1–3), the Amorites (Num 21:21–35), and the Midianites (Num 31:1–12).

The providing of sustenance is also a common theme. After the flood, the Lord tells Noah and his sons, “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things” (Gen 9:3). Throughout Abraham’s narrative, the Lord blesses and prospers him in everything he does. In the encounters with Pharaoh and King Abimelech, Abraham is gifted considerable wealth (Gen 12:6; 20:16), so that he is “very wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold” (Gen 13:2). The Israelites are provided with manna from heaven (Exod 16) and are given water miraculously from a rock (Exod 17).

Despite all these manifestations of God’s power and favor, some among the chosen people disobey or willfully rebel, leading to divine punishment. At the end of the Noah narrative, his son Ham behaves inappropriately, for which his posterity through Canaan is cursed (Gen 9:20–27). In the Abraham narrative, Abraham’s nephew Lot devolves from selfishness—claiming the lush valley of the plain for his portion—to carelessness, as he moves close to and then into the wicked city of Sodom (Gen 13). Then he repeatedly delays obeying the directives of the divine messengers, until eventually his fear and inability to trust in the Lord lead to his impoverishment and ignominy (Gen 19:16–38). The exodus story is replete with rebellion, disobedience, and punishment. The Israelites repeatedly murmur against Moses and against the Lord, first at the shore of the Red Sea (Exod 14:10–12), then at the bitter waters at Marah (Exod 15:23–24), then about lack of food (Exod 16:2–3), then lack of water (Exod 17:2–3). In each of these cases, the Lord patiently answers their murmuring with a blessing and miracle. Then the moment of full rebellion comes when the Israelites fashion and worship the golden calf at Mount Sinai. The Lord declares that his people “have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them” (Exod 32:7–8), and he enacts severe punishment. Later incidents of rebellion, with similarly dire punishments, play out in Leviticus and Numbers (Lev 10:1–4; Num 13, 16, 21).

In each narrative, the prophet-patriarch eventually dies, but the covenant status and the Lord’s blessing continue with a chosen successor in the next generation. Noah declares that “blessed by the Lord my God be Shem,” and it is through Shem’s line that the narrative progresses to Abraham (Gen 9:26; 11:10). After Abraham dies, his legacy passes on to Isaac, the promised son of the covenant. The Lord appears to Isaac and says, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant Abraham’s sake” (Gen 26:23–24). After the death of Moses, the mantle of leadership falls upon Joshua, his faithful servant. The end of

Deuteronomy declares that “Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him,” and at the beginning of Joshua, the Lord reaffirms, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you” (Deut 34:9; Josh 1:5).

EXPLAINING THE SIMILARITIES

What should we make of this pattern? What does it mean that these three narratives share so many common elements, and what does this tell us about their composition or meaning? While three explanations are possible—historical resemblance, deliberate typological shaping, and literary archetypes—only the last adequately explains the data.

Option 1: Historical Resemblance

According to this explanation, the three narratives follow the same pattern and display similar features because the events that they recount were intrinsically similar. Rather than delve into the volatile issue of the historicity of the Pentateuch, I will instead argue why historical resemblance is not an adequate explanation even if these narratives are based in historical reality.

Historical resemblance cannot fully explain literary resemblance because the process of recounting events requires interpretation and shaping. Marc Brettler states: “All history is created. Events transpire, but people tell and record, select and reshape them, creating historical texts.”¹⁶ A historical text is therefore not an objective reconstruction of events as they actually happened, but the subjective result of an author selecting from a vast sea of events to shape a coherent narrative. This process of interpretation is succinctly described by the postmodern historiographer Keith Jenkins: “Most historiography is the attempted imposition of meaningful form onto a meaningless past.”¹⁷ Thus, if two historical events are described in a similar way, it is because the people writing about them have chosen to portray the two events as being similar. For example, a modern football game and an ancient battle can be described in very similar terms, with a nearly identical narrative arc and lexical resemblances, even though there are intrinsic differences between the two. At the same time, two ancient battles (or even the same battle) can be described in very different ways, depending on the narrator’s

16. Brettler, *The Creation of History*, 1.

17. Keith Jenkins, *On ‘What Is History?’: From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 140. In the context of the quote, Jenkins is describing the ideas of post-modernist thinker Hayden White, although the quote serves to describe Jenkins’ ideas about history as well.

point of view or the author's purpose or style.¹⁸ For these reasons, the similarities between the Noah, Abraham, and Moses narratives cannot be ascribed simply to historical resemblance. Rather, their literary resemblance requires a literary solution.¹⁹

Option 2: Deliberate Typological Shaping

The next possibility is that these narratives were intentionally shaped to be types of each other. To analyze this possibility, we first need a clear methodology for identifying typologies. Such a methodology is set forth by Michael Fishbane in *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. He identifies typologies principally in two ways: (1) by phrases that explicitly draw a comparison between two events (for example, the use of *ka'asher* in Josh 3:7: "I will be with you *as* I was with Moses" [italics mine]), and (2) by passages that share specific wording (such as the use of *tōhū wābōhū*, "waste and void," in Jer 4:23, which repeats a phrase found in Gen 1:2).²⁰ Fishbane notes that typologies can occur on the level of individual motifs, pericopes, or even entire scenarios, and that typologies may be used for events, characters, or places.²¹

According to these criteria, many typological similarities between our three narratives can be found. In the Moses narrative, the Lord frequently refers to covenant language used in the Abraham narrative. Most directly, the Lord declares to Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod 3:6). Similar language is also used to describe the promised land. The Lord promises Abraham, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites" (Gen 15:18–21). Almost identical wording is used when the Lord promises an inheritance to the Israelites: he promises to set their borders "from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates" (Exod 23:31) and promises

18. An excellent example of the same battle being described in very different ways is the contrasting prose and poetic accounts of Barak and Deborah's victory in Judg 4–5.

19. This intrinsic fluidity between a historical event and literary accounts of it also means that literary similarities—or differences—between two narratives cannot be used to argue for or against their historical accuracy. For example, the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah are described in very similar ways in 2 Kings (both kings follow a wicked king, they enact similar reforms, they both expand their territory and power, etc.). Some may argue that this literary similarity shows that the details of Hezekiah's reign were fabricated by the writer of Kings to give precedence to Josiah's reign and reforms. The argument in the text shows that such a conclusion is presumptuous.

20. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 352–53.

21. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 353.

to drive out “the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites” (Exod 23:23; see also Exod 3:8). The author of these passages in Exodus clearly wanted to typologically link the promises to the Israelites back to the promises given to their ancestor Abraham.

Many scholars have also noted the typological similarity between Abraham and Sarah’s descent into Egypt in Gen 12 and the Egyptian captivity of the Israelites.²² Some typological connections have also been suggested between the stories of Moses and Noah, most notably the use of the word *tēbâ* for both Noah’s ark and the basket in which Moses is placed as a babe.²³ The prohibitions against eating blood in Lev 17 are also similar to the commandments given to Noah in Gen 9.

However, while peripheral details such as these are evidence of typological additions, the underlying resemblance does not appear to be the result of direct and intentional typological shaping. If it was, one would expect to find more overt comparisons and similar wording of key phrases across the narratives, but they are rare. For example, after Gen 10, Noah is never mentioned again in the entire Pentateuch, and neither is the flood, the bow in the cloud, or the covenant to never again destroy the earth by flood. This lack of references suggests that the writers of the Abraham and Moses narratives either were unaware of the Noah story or didn’t concern themselves with typologically linking the Noah story to later narratives.

Option 3: Literary Archetypes and Conventions

The similarities between the Noah, Abraham, and Moses narratives are best explained as the product of a literary archetype that underlies all three stories. As mentioned above, this literary archetype can be seen as an Israelite-specific subset of Christopher Booker’s quest plot. As in the quest plot, there is a hero (the prophet-patriarch) who learns of a prize of great value (a new land of inheritance), sets out on a quest (journey) to achieve it, and overcomes perils and diversions (a global flood, the Red Sea, a lack of posterity) on the way. But the covenant journey archetype displays a number of additional features specific to it: an ongoing theophany between the hero and an all-powerful but sympathetic god; the formation of a covenant with that god, including specific promises and

22. See, for example, Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 375–76, and Brettler, *Creation of History*, 51–55.

23. Attridge, *HarperCollins Study Bible*, 86. Whether this is indeed an intentional, typologically motivated word choice is debatable. It can be argued that *tēbâ* was simply the best lexical choice available to both authors for describing a waterproof vessel without sails, oars, or rudder.

commandments, the offering of sacrifice, and terms for renewal; the dominant role of that god in guiding, protecting, and delivering the hero and his people; and the transferal of the hero's legacy to a single successor upon his death. This specific blend of features is unique to the covenant journey archetype.

By viewing these narratives through the lens of a common narrative archetype, we can explain some features that might otherwise seem to be complications. These features include the narratives' wide diversity in length, complexity, and thematic emphasis; the usage of some of the narratives' shared features in other biblical texts, and the different prominence that different narratives give to the same literary feature.

A modern analogy can help us better understand literary archetypes and why differences between narratives don't necessarily rule out archetypal similarity.²⁴ Let's say we select three books randomly from the genre of mystery. All three stories will follow a similar plot arc (a crime occurs, a detective uncovers clues, a criminal is caught), with comparable characters (the detective, the criminal, the victim, the sidekick), and scenes (the arrival of the detective, the final confrontation). Yet they may differ widely in length and complexity, from a 50-page graphic novel for children to a 700-page paperback novel for adults. The three novels might also revolve around different themes (revenge, justice, luck, love). Additionally, some of their plot elements (the sidekick, the final confrontation) may also appear in other genres, and each novel may give varying degrees of emphasis to different thematic elements. Nevertheless, all three novels still fit within, and are governed by, the same literary archetype.

This modern example helps us better understand various features in the three narratives we have examined. The first is the appearance of so many parts of the covenant journey pattern elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. For example, while God gives specific directions to Noah, Abraham, and Moses, he also gives specific directions to Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Jonah. The themes of covenant creation and covenant renewal are replete throughout biblical writings. Name etiologies upon birth are ubiquitous. Miraculous deliverance over a body of water is a type-scene that occurs with Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha. But this is to be expected. As an archetypal plot structure, the covenant journey pattern is made up of various conventions, type-scenes, characters, and motifs common across all of Israelite literature. What sets the covenant journey apart is not the inclusion of these features, but the way they work in concert to create an overall narrative. Nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible

24. In drawing on a modern analogy, I am walking in the footsteps of Robert Alter, who illustrated the concept of literary conventions with the example of American western movies and their quick-drawing heroes. See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 56–57.

does God covenant with a prophet-patriarch figure and his people to preserve them through a journey and take them to a new land. Other narratives may be similar (such as Joshua's conquest or David's rise to kingship), but they do not fit the full pattern.

Similarly, these three narratives still follow the same archetype despite differing widely in length, complexity, and thematic emphasis. The Noah story is short, straightforward in its construction (focusing on the single story of the flood, with the incident of Ham's misbehavior a short anecdote at the end), and concerned with themes of wickedness, obedience, and the preservation of life. The Abraham story is much more complex, with strings of shorter narrative units strung together and multiple plot strands carried across stories, and it addresses themes of fertility, posterity, hospitality, endogamy, and upright dealings with neighbors. The exodus narrative is massive in length (spanning four books), is interspersed with long non-narrative interruptions, and deals with themes of geopolitical strife, plagues, signs, prophetic authority, priestly ritual, and purity before God. But despite these differences, all three stories adhere to the same narrative pattern of theophany, covenant, and journey.

The fluidity of archetypal similarity also allows for some elements to occur in two narratives but not the third. Noah and Abraham each are already the patriarchs of a small family unit, while Moses is called to lead a massive conglomerate of tribes that he has no natural authority over. Noah is not led to the specific land of Canaan, but rather becomes heir to the entire earth. The act of "special deliverance," so central to the Noah and Moses narratives, is found in the Abraham narrative only as a side-plot centered on Lot and not on Abraham himself. But such deviations are only to be expected. Since an archetype is a (probably subconscious) conglomeration of expectations, it provides only a rough narrative outline rather than a rigorous set of rules. Besides that basic outline, the archetype provides a bank of possible characters, tropes, and scenes that each derivative narrative can selectively draw upon to create an original blend. In fact, such mixing and matching is necessary for two plots that share the same archetype to still be new, exciting, and original stories.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NARRATIVE ARCHETYPE

An archetype both shapes and is shaped by the values and worldview of the society that creates it. It is shaped by that society because it is the product of that society; it shapes that society because once it attains the status of archetype, it becomes a paradigm for how members of that society understand their world. The existence of the covenant journey archetype—and its use in the formative stories

of the Pentateuch—has significant implications for our understanding of ancient Israelite theological identity and consciousness.

The idea that these narratives served as a pattern for later Israelite identity has been developed by many previous scholars. David Daube, an expert on ancient law, wrote about the abiding impact of the exodus—and later stories typologically linked to the exodus—on how Israelites conceived of God’s relations with his covenant people:

As God had vindicated those relations in the exodus, one could be certain that he would vindicate them again, and again, unto the last. The kind of salvation portrayed in the exodus was not, by its nature, an isolated occurrence, giving rise to nebulous hopes for similar good luck in the future: it had its root in, and set the seal on, a permanent institution—hence it was something on which absolute reliance might be placed.²⁵

The feeling of “absolute reliance” that Daube attributes to the exodus is made even stronger by the repetition of the pattern with Noah and Abraham as well.

The covenant journey archetype reflects how the Israelites understood the nature of God and their relationship to him. They understood their god as a god of covenants, a god who makes promises with individuals and their posterities, who leads them safely through trials and danger, delivers them from the destruction that overtakes non-covenant peoples, guides them, gives them sustenance, and reiterates the covenant with them and their posterity. And he would do so not only once, but time and time again, with each generation of his children. This theological understanding helps explain the repetition of so many elements of these stories in later biblical texts. According to the Israelites’ worldview, God was likely to commune with later prophets *because* he had done so in the past. He was likely to renew his covenant with his chosen people *because* he had done so in the past. They *expected* that God’s dealings with his people in Genesis and Exodus would be repeated in later history.

The covenant journey pattern created a paradigm whereby the Israelites understood themselves as heirs of all three of these stories. As heirs of Noah, they had the inheritance of the earth and the promise to never again be wiped out by the flood; as the seed of Abraham, they had the inheritance of Canaan and the promise of prosperity; and as the followers of Moses, they had the inheritance of the law given at Sinai and the promise of protection from their enemies. This identity resounds throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible, from the “special deliverance” of Hezekiah’s Jerusalem from the Assyrians, to David’s expansion of

25. David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, All Souls Studies 2 (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 13–14.

Israel into a regional power, to Isaiah's promise of Israel's pending covenant renewal and reinstatement after exile. In other words, the stories of Noah, Abraham, and Moses were told and preserved in the form that they were because they functioned as microcosms of the story of Israel as a whole.

CONCLUSION

In ancient Israel there existed a deep, underlying conception of God's nature and role in history. One way that conception became manifest was in the covenant journey archetype, where God appeared to a righteous man and covenanted to bring him and his people to a promised land of peace and prosperity, a land where they would be God's people and he would be their God. This archetype manifested itself in three fundamental narratives of the Pentateuch—those of Noah, Abraham, and Moses—thereby cementing the Israelites' cultural and religious identity of themselves as a people of promise and their god as a mighty agent of guidance, protection, and deliverance.

Much research remains to be done about the covenant journey pattern. A similar analysis could be done on the hypothetical sources of each of these narratives to see if the covenant journey pattern is fully formed not just in the final stage of the text, but in its composite sources. Scholars could track how covenant journey themes and imagery are used in intertestamental literature and in the New Testament: for example, Paul's journey to Rome in Acts displays intriguing similarities to the covenant journey pattern, and the author of Hebrews describes Noah, Abraham, and Moses as seekers of a heavenly kingdom in his treatise on faith. Scholars could also look for parallels with the covenant journey archetype in wider ancient Near Eastern or Mediterranean literature. Virgil's *Aeneid*, for example, tells a remarkably similar story of a hero and his people being led by the gods to a new land of inheritance.²⁶

The theological understanding reflected in the covenant journey archetype has shaped not only ancient Israelite culture and religion, but the entire Judeo-Christian world for the last three millennia. In Judaism, covenant identity and the heritage of a promised land has fueled the Zionist movement and the modern

26. Leland Ryken, a professor of English, the classics, and the Bible as literature, has already identified many similarities between *The Aeneid* and the exodus: "Of all the famous epics, *The Aeneid* of Virgil is the clearest parallel to the Epic of the Exodus. . . . Both are quest stories in which a group of people travel from one geographic area to another in order to establish a stable nation in a promised land. Both stories are unified around a hero who is a leader of people and who embodies the normative values of the story. Both epics are religious epics, filled with references to the proper worship of deity." See Leland Ryken, "The Epic of the Exodus," in *Perspectives on Old Testament Literature*, ed. Woodrow Ohlsen (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 41–52, here 42.

state of Israel. In Christianity, the physical journey to the promised land has been transformed into a spiritual journey to heaven. The establishment of America was fueled in part by pious immigrants' quest for a promised land of peace, prosperity, and liberty. Whether we realize it or not, we have all been affected by the archetypal idea of covenant journeys.

SYMBOLISM OF TEMPLE GATES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

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Abstract: The gates of the city and the temple establish boundaries between inner and outer space, while also allowing access to an area that is clearly separated from its surroundings. Throughout ancient Israel, the city gate was seen as representing economic activity, belonging, justice, and strength. I would argue that the gate of the temple represented many of the same things and was seen in a similar way. I have decided to include the tabernacle, as well as both Solomon's and Herod's temples, in this analysis, as they seem to have been seen in a similar light even if they were built and patronized in different periods.

Throughout ancient Israel, the city gate was seen as a symbol of economic activity, belonging, justice, and strength. In this paper I argue that the gate of the temple, because it served similar functions, acquired the same symbolic meaning in Israelite thought. In this paper I will first describe the various uses and roles of the city gate as understood by modern scholars, while contributing similar trends that I have observed and extracted from primary texts referencing Israelite temple gates. Then, I will examine a few specific examples where ancient writers described the temple gate with symbolic language similar to that used to describe city gates.

I have decided to include the tabernacle, as well as both Solomon's and Herod's temples, in this analysis, as they seem to have been part of a common cultural legacy even if the structures themselves were built and patronized in different periods. This study will allow for increased understanding of the Israelite temple and its symbolic value in the minds of the Israelite people. As a central institution in their society, the Israelite temple is integral to our understanding of the Israelites as a people.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The term “gate” can be rather ambiguous in ancient literature, and refers to a larger and more complex structure than what modern thinkers naturally envision, so we need to begin by defining what physical area the research is referring to. David Ussishkin described the Lachish gate,¹ a typical example of the early Iron Age gate, as one where the individual would enter the outer doors, cross a courtyard, and pass through the inner doors, which would be the ones that led into the city.² He later added, “The outer gatehouse and the open courtyard . . . constituted a rectangular structure . . . which protruded from the slope of the mound and from the walls.”³ Some ancient Israelite gates, such as the Solomonic gates of Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo, would have as many as three sets of these chambers on the inner gate, in order to deter would-be conquerors, as the gate is inevitably the weakest point of a wall.⁴ The courtyards between the doors frequently had small rooms built into the side where city business could be conducted, and many included benches built into the walls for the city elders.⁵ These rooms were also considered to be part of the overall gate structure. The entire public area around the gate is typically included when “the gate” is mentioned in ancient literature, and modern scholars follow suit for the sake of clarity and continuity. Natalie May summarized the situation well when she said, “By the ‘space of the gates’ I mean the space before, inside, and behind the gates.”⁶ When speaking of gates, we are referring to the entire structure: the building, the courtyards, the chambers built in, the open area before the gates *within* the city, and the surrounding public buildings; not merely a door in a wall.

It seems evident that the gate to the temple complex was constructed along similar lines. Both 1 Kgs 6–7 and 2 Chr 3–5 describe the structure of the temple at Jerusalem built by Solomon, but neither describes the courtyards, walls, or gates. However, Ezekiel gives a detailed description of a future temple that may

1. I have used the Lachish gate at several points in this paper because it does seem to be a typical example, as well as being well-preserved, excavated, and documented.

2. David Ussishkin, *Biblical Lachish: A Tale of Construction, Destruction, Excavation and Restoration*, trans. Miriam Feinberg Vamosh (Atlanta: Albatross, 2014), 227.

3. Ussishkin, *Lachish*, 230.

4. The Solomonic dating of the gate at Megiddo is disputed by many scholars, cf. David Ussishkin, “Was the ‘Solomonic’ City Gate at Megiddo Built by King Solomon?,” *BASOR* 239 (1980): 1–18.

5. Dale Wallace Manor, “Gates and Gods: High Places in the Gates,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 2 (1999): 235–53, here 252.

6. Natalie N. May, “Gates and Their Functions in Mesopotamia and Ancient Israel,” in *The Fabric of Cities: Aspects of Urbanism, Urban Topography and Society in Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome*, ed. Natalie N. May and Ulrike Steinert (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 77–121, here 78.

be modeled on the temple that was in Jerusalem, and he includes these features.⁷ He gives specific measurements for the temple and describes three “recesses” on either side of the gate, each of which are six cubits wide and deep, with five cubits separating each of the recesses (Ezek 40:5–16).⁸ The entire gate structure is twenty-five cubits wide and fifty cubits long, easily a comparable construction to the gate complexes found at city entrances.

The portable nature of the tabernacle precluded the possibility of a large or elaborate gate structure, and the entrance to that sanctuary was merely a curtain, although it is still referred to as “the gate of the court” (Exod 27:16). Exodus 27 details the manner in which the courtyard of the tabernacle is to be set up, and the “screen” of that gate is commanded to be made of “blue, purple, and crimson yarns,” which distinguishes it from its surroundings (Exod 27:9–19). The difference in the tabernacle’s physical structure may cause some to hesitate at assigning it similar functional and symbolic significance to later temples, but I would argue that the tabernacle as a whole, although quite different from Solomon’s temple in many aspects of construction, nevertheless performed the same functions and held the same cultural significance as the later building.

PRACTICAL USES

Controlling Access

One of the main purposes of a wall is to protect the city within, and one of the main purposes of the gate is to limit access to one, or a few, points of that wall in order that it may be better controlled. Basic city defense depends first and foremost on a strong wall and an easily defensible gate. The aforementioned gate of Lachish illustrates this principle rather well. That gate protrudes from the wall of the city, and due to the nature of the hill and the path leading to it, the only practical approach is a frontal one.⁹ This effectively narrows the approach, and guards would also be present to prevent the entry of any hostile elements through the gates.

Controlling access to the temple was also of great importance, as even animals entering in a state of uncleanness risked divine wrath.¹⁰ Hermann Gunkel proposed that at one time there may have been a question-and-answer exchange

7. It is also possible that Ezekiel’s temple is modeled on the city of Jerusalem.

8. All scriptural passages are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

9. Ussishkin, *Lachish*, 230.

10. E.g. Lev 22:21–24, Exod 30:21, Lev 10:1–2. This is also implied by the care taken to purify priests before they begin service, as in Exod 29.

at the temple gates, as per certain psalms,¹¹ but Moshe Weinfeld disputes the likelihood of such an exchange because of the lack of evidence.¹² I believe that Weinfeld is correct to view this idea with a certain amount of wariness, as the text of the Pentateuch has not preserved any such exchange, which seems unlikely if it were indeed common practice. However, in the same article, Weinfeld suggests that the text of these psalms may have been inscribed on the gate, as a reminder of who was or was not worthy of entrance, similar to some royal inscriptions found on city gates.¹³ He draws this idea from the similarities between these psalms and certain Egyptian texts that were inscribed on their temple gates, as well as by analogy with the Israelite practice of inscribing the Shema on houses and city gates.¹⁴ This would likely serve as reminder enough for most pious Israelites.

There may be objections to this point on the grounds that these ideas are highly speculative in nature, with no physical evidence to support them. But the idea of access being limited to the worthy is proved by the mere existence of these psalms. Psalm 24 is the best example. In verse three it asks, “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?” Asking the question means that not everyone will enter, and the answer tells us the reason. The next verse reads, “Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully” (Ps 24:4). Thus by implication, those who are guilty of such transgressions will not be permitted in “the hill of the Lord.” The possibilities of inscriptions or ritual exchanges in the gate are interesting and supply methods whereby these standards might have been enforced, but there was certainly a cultural understanding of worthiness requirements, with or without formal determinations of who met them.

Dividing “Us” from “Them”

The wall serves as a physical way to demonstrate who belongs to the community and who does not, while the gate allows for exchange between the two. Those who live within and without the wall may speak and dress and act similarly, but they are not the same, and the wall stands between them as a barrier to ensure

11. E.g. Pss 15 and 24, which ask and then answer several questions regarding who is permitted to enter the Lord’s house. The idea was that the priest would ask the question, and the Israelite would give the answer according to the formula. See also Donald W. Parry, “Who Shall Ascend into the Mountain of the Lord?: Three Biblical Temple Entrance Hymns,” in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Stephen D. Ricks, and Truman G. Madsen (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2002), 734–39.

12. Moshe Weinfeld, “Instructions for Temple Visitors in the Bible and Ancient Egypt,” *ScrHier* 28 (1982): 224–50, here 231.

13. Weinfeld, “Instructions,” 237–38.

14. Weinfeld, “Instructions,” 237–38.

that this is not forgotten. Tina Blomquist, in her book *Gates and Gods*, begins by making clear the importance of the gate as a liminal space that allows for exchanges between the ordered “inside” and the chaotic “outside,” with guards likely posted at these gates to keep out those elements considered a little too foreign or dangerous.¹⁵ She demonstrated this by exploring the connection between the words “city” and “to protect” in Semitic languages, expressing the idea that a city is “something that is protected by a wall.”¹⁶ This idea of separation was a comfort and protection in an ancient world where the people had so little control over those things that could most profoundly affect them and their lives.

It seems likely that the gate between temple and city represents another and higher level of division between order and chaos. All space within the temple gates is dedicated to Jehovah; it is set apart, consecrated, holy. The glory of God descended on the tabernacle to claim it when Moses had finished its construction (Exod 40:33–34), and Solomon offered an eloquent prayer to invite God to dwell in the temple he had built (1 Kgs 8:22–53). Even in the tabernacle, care was taken to separate this holy inner space from the profane outside by means of tall curtains,¹⁷ despite the transitory nature of that structure. Josephus tells us that Levites were stationed at the temple gates to ensure that nothing unworthy entered the temple precincts.¹⁸ I believe priests must have been stationed at the gates as well, which I will discuss more in a later section.

Economic Center

As ancient cities were usually quite densely packed with buildings, the gate would frequently have been one of the only places with sufficient room to set up and operate a market. When speaking of the long, low, rectangular buildings that are found near many ancient city gates, Avraham Faust suggests that a possible use for them would have been to house or support these markets, which would make them easily accessible, without blocking the flow of traffic in and out of the city.¹⁹ He cites several scholars who have expressed various opinions on their use, including many, such as Kochavi and Blakely, who believe there may have been

15. Tina Haettner Blomquist, *Gates and Gods: Cults in the City Gates of Iron Age Palestine, An Investigation of the Archaeological and Biblical Sources*, ed. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger and Stig I. L. Norin, ConBOT 46 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1999), 15–16.

16. Blomquist, *Gates and Gods: Cults in the City Gates*, 16.

17. See Exod 40:8 as one of many examples.

18. E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 81–82. Sanders references sections in Josephus’s *Against Apion*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *Jewish War*.

19. Avraham Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 101–2.

markets because of the types of vessels found in these areas.²⁰ Cat Quine observed that the open areas surrounding the gate complex made it “naturally . . . the place where people would gather.”²¹ The gate would also be convenient for such activity because strangers entering the city to buy and sell would immediately find themselves in the place where they could do so.

Like the city, the temple seems to have had a market in or near its gates where those seeking to offer sacrifice to Jehovah could purchase the animals they needed to offer. Sanders finds serious problems with the idea of animals being sold actually within the temple precincts, based on the requirements of holiness described in both Leviticus and Philo’s *On the Special Laws*.²² However, he does believe the market must have been quite near based on the writings of Philo and Aristeas,²³ and I believe this is correct. All of the Gospel writers refer to those “who were selling and buying in the temple” (Matt 21:12), and John specifically mentions the selling of oxen, sheep, and doves (John 2:14; see also Mark 11:15 and Luke 19:45). It’s unknown whether any of the money went into the actual temple treasury and therefore whether the market served as a literal representation of the temple economy or not. But all those who experienced the hustle and bustle of the temple market would have found it remarkably similar to the ordinary city markets. In their minds, it would have represented everything that the city market did, but in connection with the temple.

SOCIOCULTURAL USES

Justice

In the ancient world, court cases were frequently tried and sentences carried out in the side chambers that were built into the gates of the city. Manor explains that since city gates were frequently put under the protection of a city’s chief deity, they were “suitable places to hear cases in [the gods’] presence.”²⁴ He cites both Korah (Num 16) and the daughters of Zelophehad (Num 27) as prominent biblical examples of such practices. Stephen Russell points out that the entire story of Absalom’s undermining of his father David “depends on the assumption that city

20. There are very large quantities of everyday vessels, which makes stables or warehouses seem unlikely, although these are two of the more common suggestions by scholars (Faust cites Yadin, Holladay, Currid, and Herzog). A market would seem more likely to have large quantities of these vessels for storing and measuring purposes. Faust himself believes that these buildings were used to care for the poor and needy according to the dictates of the Law.

21. Cat Quine, “On Dying in a City Gate: Implications in the Deaths of Eli, Abner and Jezebel,” *JSTOT* 40 (2016): 399–413, here 401.

22. Sanders, *Judaism*, 87.

23. Sanders, *Judaism*, 86.

24. Manor, “Gates and Gods: High Places in the Gates,” 252.

gates were a well-known location of judicial activity.²⁵ Absalom's strategy consisted of standing in the gate so that when people came to seek justice from the king, he could point out that no officer or judge was appointed by the king to sit in the gate and hear their cause (2 Sam 15:1–6). This would have been an odd choice of venue if people did not expect to find judges in the gate.

In addition to cases being judged in the gates, sentences were carried out there, most notably executions. May notes that every aspect of the judicial process, from beginning to end, was accomplished in that space. She writes, "The gate space was used not only for tortures [involved in eliciting confessions in a trial], but also for executions."²⁶ She references such cases as Deut 17:5 and 21:18–22, which prescribe stoning to death in the gates as the punishment for adulterers or rebellious children. Cat Quine uses this to shed light on David's mourning for Abner.²⁷ This man had been an enemy in David's struggle for the rule of Israel but had recently come over to his side as a valuable ally. When Joab then slays him in the city gate, he does so as vengeance for the death of his own brother. David then laments, "Should Abner have died as the lawless die?" (2 Sam 3:33, NIV). These sources all agree that the city gate was the site of the entire judicial process, from trial through punishment.

Temple gates were also a location for justice and judgment, which is evidenced by the temple's association with the cities of refuge. Like these cities, the temple was a place to which those who had accidentally killed someone could flee to avoid the גאל הדם²⁸ until a trial could be held. It seems that at times trials were held in the temple gates, as we see in the book of Jeremiah. In chapter 26 the prophet declared that the Jerusalem temple would become like Shiloh because of the transgressions of the people of Israel. The "officials of Judah" heard about his prophecies, and the text records that they "took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the Lord" (Jer 26:10). They then held a trial in the gate of the temple, just like those in the city gates (Jer 26:11–19).

There is another evidence for judgment in temple gates. In Leviticus, instructions are given for determining cleanliness in those who have exhibited symptoms of leprosy. They are instructed to be brought to the priest, but one who may be leprosy could not be permitted to enter the temple gates, lest they defile the

25. Stephen C. Russell, "Gate and Town in 2 Sam 15:1: Collective Politics and Absalom's Strategy," *Journal of Ancient History* 3, (2015): 2–21, here 14.

26. May, "Gates and Their Functions," 100–104.

27. Quine, "On Dying," 408.

28. This is generally translated as "the redeemer of blood," but it is worth noting that the word גאל inherently refers to a relative. A more complete rendering might be "the redeeming kinsman of blood," but this is cumbersome in English, as well as being of a slightly different grammatical construction.

sanctuary (Lev 13:2). In order for the afflicted to meet with the priest, there would need to be a designated area where such a meeting could be accomplished, which was not actually within the temple precinct. I suggest that priests may have been stationed in or near the gate for the purpose of making such determinations. I readily admit the tenuous nature of the latter idea, but even if it is found to be untenable, the others still support the basic idea of judgment in the temple gates.

Propaganda

As a prominent public fixture, the city gate was also a convenient location for kings to proclaim their greatness in various stelae and inscriptions. Russell notes that kings would often “assert their claim to a town” by constructing monuments and stelae in the gates to proclaim their might, and many such monuments have been rediscovered by archaeologists.²⁹ As kings could not be forever sitting in the gates themselves, these monuments served to assert their power, even in the case of their physical absence, to the daily crowds of outsiders and city inhabitants who would pass beneath their shadow. Carey Walsh details another common illustration of power: “The posting of the heads or bodies of vanquished enemies at or on the gate for all to see is a graphic, symbolic gesture that signals a city’s strength.”³⁰ For instance, when King Jehu of Israel ousted his predecessor, Joram, he had those in charge of educating Joram’s sons kill the boys and send him the heads. When he received word that the heads had arrived, he gave orders to “lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until the morning” (2 Kgs 10:5–8). A king would never let his citizens or his enemies forget the ways in which he had already proven his mettle and his right to rule the city.

The gates of the temple may also have been decorated with tributes to the god’s triumphs in order to remind those who entered of the glory of the being they were approaching. To reintroduce an idea referenced earlier, Moshe Weinfeld believed it might be possible that certain psalms, most of which praise the glory of Jehovah, may have been inscribed on the temple gates.³¹ For instance, Ps 118:20 says, “This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it,” which almost seems to state that the verse belongs on that gate. This does not prove that these inscriptions existed, but it does support the theory. It should also be

29. Russell, “Gate and Town,” 11–12. Some examples he gives are monuments located at Carchemish and Tell Tayinat, as well as a limestone Israelite stela found at Samaria. Although it is not a monument, he also references 1 Kgs 22:10 (when the kings sit in the gate of Samaria as they make the decision to go to war) as an example of the same idea.

30. Carey Walsh, “Testing Entry: The Social Functions of City Gates in Biblical Memory,” in *Memory and the City in Ancient Israel*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 43–60, here 44.

31. Weinfeld, “Instructions,” 37–38.

mentioned that in most of the rest of the Near East, the images of the gods would regularly be paraded through the gates in various religious festivals.³² While there is no exact parallel of this in Israel due to the prohibition against images of the divine, the sentiment was likely common throughout the area.

Clearly this theory is one of the more tenuous that I have proposed, and there are several objections that could be raised. Chief among these is the lack of any archaeological evidence to support the existence of Israelite temple gate inscriptions. However, I believe there are two points that, while they do not negate that fundamental lack of evidence, do make this idea worthy of serious consideration. The first is the strong correlation between city and temple gates in other areas. We know that the Israelites were commanded to inscribe the Shema on their family doorposts and city gates (Deut 11:20), so it would make sense for similar words to be inscribed on the gate of the sanctuary, the holy city.³³ The second point is in the trace of a tradition, found in Ps 24, of gates themselves acknowledging the deity. The seventh and ninth verses in that psalm command the gates³⁴ to lift their heads in preparation for the “King of glory [to] come in” (Ps 24:10).

Place of Worship

Alongside the king’s monuments, we can also find cultic installations indicating a more pious aspect to the gates. De Geus points out that there are several references in the Hebrew Bible to “the high places of the gates” (or *במִוֹת*, singular *בְּמִוָּה*), with the implication of a devotional facet.³⁵ He makes particular mention of some basins found by gates in Northern Israel, including one in the gate of Bethsaida, of such a size and shape as to be impractical for almost any non-ritual purpose.³⁶ Such a structure would be dedicated to a god, and its presence in the gate implies that the gate was seen as an appropriate holy place for that god. Ussishkin also wrote extensively to describe the cultic installation—which he suggests may be a *בְּמִוָּה*—found at Lachish of a similar structure.³⁷ This indicates a certain continuity across Israel. The presence of a cultic installation at a location indicates that the location held symbolic religious meaning for the ones who placed it there. While some of the structures found are mere tributes to deity, it does appear that many were intended for use by devotees passing through. As mentioned by de Geus above, these items are “too small . . . to have served

32. For instance, the Akitu festival in Babylon.

33. Weinfeld, “Instructions,” 238.

34. Presumably the temple gates, due to the subject matter of the psalm.

35. De Geus, *Towns*, 37. See also 1 Sam 9:12–14; 2 Kgs 23:8; and Amos 5:21.

36. De Geus, *Towns*, 95. He specifically notes Tell el-Far’ah, or Tirzah, and Bethsaida.

37. Ussishkin, *Lachish*, 233.

practical purposes; it is more likely to have been involved in some ritual using liquids.³⁸ These cultic functions tie the gate closely to the religious life of the community, and therefore to the temple itself.

SPECIFIC CASE STUDIES (CITY AND TEMPLE)

The roles played by the gates of both city and temple in everyday life informed how they were employed symbolically by the biblical writers. Above I have drawn comparisons between the physical functions of the two gates. In the following paragraphs, I will compare three commonly accepted symbolic uses of the city gate with three instances where I believe the temple gate is being used symbolically to convey similar ideas.

Economy

In 2 Kgs 7 the prophet Elisha uses the gates to reference upcoming economic reversal for Israel as a result of their deliverance from the Aramaeans. In the first verse of the chapter he prophesies, “Tomorrow about this time a measure of choice meal shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.” In this matter Elisha uses the gate to prefigure the entire economy of the city, and even the nation. The prices charged at the market set in the gate become an image depicting the economic situation of the entire nation in the wake of the retreating army.

In all four Gospel accounts, Jesus, after entering Jerusalem for his final Passover,³⁹ goes directly to the temple and cleans out those who are buying and selling in it. This is described as a purifying act. John records Jesus as saying, “Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace” (John 2:16), and Matthew reports it as, “My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a den of robbers” (Matt 21:13). It is clear that the Gospel writers perceived the market as both belonging to the temple and representing its condition. They believed that the house of Jesus’s Father was being made into a corrupt marketplace by the nature of the transactions being carried out there and that the purifying of the temple precincts required the purifying of the market.

The main challenge to this point is the difference in time between the Old and New Testament periods. But I do not believe the difference is as great as it may appear, for several reasons. To begin, while somewhat disparate in time, the location and culture of the writings is still quite propinquant. The Gospels describe events that occurred in Judea, as do the events and prophecies of the Old

38. De Geus, *Towns*, 95.

39. In John’s account this is actually set at a different period in Jesus’s ministry, but this is not especially relevant in the current instance.

Testament. While certain changes in culture did occur, most notably through the introduction of Hellenism, it is also important to note the tenacity with which the Jews clung to their former culture. The writings of the old kingdom of Judah were still treasured, as were many of the most sacred traditions of their ancestors.⁴⁰ It is also true that the authors of Matthew and John, especially, draw extensively on Old Testament imagery and symbolism in their accounts, making the case for parallels even stronger.⁴¹

Belonging

In the book of Ruth, the eponymous main character is seeking an appropriate husband who can care for her and her mother-in-law. She identifies Boaz as the nearest living relative of her deceased husband, who thus has the responsibility as גאל of marrying her.⁴² When Ruth approaches Boaz by night to ask that he grant her this right, he offers her a compliment by saying, “all the *gate* of my people know that you are a woman of strength” (Ruth 3:11, emphasis added).⁴³ This is a clear case of anthropomorphism, where the gate is standing in for the people of Boaz’s city of Bethlehem.⁴⁴ The reverse could be said as well, that the people are identified with the gate. To be included in the gate makes you part of the community; it gives you a larger role in the society as a whole. It means that you belong.

There appears to be a similar concept associated with the temple, illustrated by Ps 100,⁴⁵ where being brought into the gates establishes you as a member of the people of God, a more prestigious association than being a member of a village community. This is a psalm of thanksgiving and has a lot of temple imagery in it. The second verse urges the worshipper to “come into His presence,” which generally implies a temple setting.⁴⁶ Then we read, “Know that the Lord is God.

40. Passover, circumcision, dietary laws, and Sabbath observance being among those traditions that many Jews died to protect.

41. For instance, Matthew begins his account with a Davidic genealogy of Jesus, and then quotes Isaiah in the angel’s revelation to Joseph as to the nature of the child Mary will bear. He also repeatedly casts stories such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Temptations in the Wilderness to reflect episodes in Moses’s life. John has a similarly strong tradition, especially in the extensive parallels he draws between Jesus and the lamb of Passover and in Jesus’s frequent quotations from the Hebrew Bible, cf. John 7:38; 12:38, 40.

42. See footnote 28 for a discussion of this term.

43. My translation. The NRSV translates this as “all the assembly of my people,” but the Hebrew word is שער, lit. “gate.”

44. This is generally stated by implication, cf. Dan G. Kent, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Layman’s Bible Book Commentary 4 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 151. See also the translation in the NRSV and to a lesser degree the KJV translation.

45. Ps 118 also has some of these themes, but I elected 100 as the clearer example for my purposes.

46. Because God was believed to dwell in the temple, it was really the only place that

It is He that made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture” (Ps 100:3). This is a statement of belonging, and moreover, as *a people* and *sheep of a pasture*, it is a statement of belonging within a community, God’s community. The next phrase in the psalm is, “Enter His *gates* with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise” (Ps 100:4, emphasis added). Thus, immediately after the establishment of belonging in the divine community comes an invitation to enter within the walls of that community via the gate.

Judgment

When Absalom sought to overthrow his father, David, he stood in the city gates waylaying those who came to the city of Jerusalem seeking justice. He would say, “Your claims are good and right; but there is no one deputed by the king to hear you. . . . If only I were judge in the land! Then all who had a suit or cause might come to me, and I would give them justice” (2 Sam 15:3–4). The choice to stand in the gate was both strategic and symbolic. Because the elders of a community traditionally administered justice in the city gates, to stand in them gave additional weight and poignancy to the point he was making about the supposed lack of justice under the reign of his father.

In 1 Sam 1 we are introduced to the woman Hannah, who is unable to have any children. Although her husband does not hold this against her, it grieves her deeply, and she approaches the Lord while they are at Shiloh to make a vow that if He will give her a son, she will return him to the Lord “until the day of his death,” making the boy a Nazarite from birth (1 Sam 1:1–11). While she is offering her prayer in the tabernacle, Eli the priest is sitting by the doorpost observing her (1 Sam 1:9). If our earlier suppositions are correct, this means he is sitting in a place where judgment is customarily passed, as by the officials of Judah in the book of Jeremiah. While he sits there, he also passes judgment on her (1 Sam 1:17), which plays a role in the rest of the narrative.

CONCLUSION

In summation, I have demonstrated the similarity of the temple gate to that of the city in both practical and symbolic qualities. I have endeavored to show the distinct connections that exist between the two institutions in many of their most basic functions, and to illustrate these connections with several specific examples.

However, I have been able to do these things only in a very cursory manner, and much work remains. Each of the sections which I have covered could easily

ordinary people could come into His presence (prophets, kings, etc. sometimes seem to have received special visions outside of the temple). For example, Hannah says she will bring Samuel to “the presence of the Lord” (1 Sam 1:22), meaning to the tabernacle at Shiloh.

inspire multiple papers, not to mention the work that could be done in comparing Israel with the surrounding cultures. I urge that this work be further pursued in order that we may deepen our understanding of this ancient culture and one of its central institutions.

RAISED HANDS IN PRAYER AS AN INDUCEMENT MOTIF IN THE PSALMS

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Abstract: Two hands raised in the air is a commonly portrayed gesture in the Hebrew Bible and broader ancient Near East. Synthesizing previous research done on the same topic, this paper will strive to examine the gesture in order to show that its purpose is to induce and elicit divine favor from a superior being—typically a deity or king-like figure. The conclusion will be reached by first generally surveying the raised hands motif in the Hebrew Bible and then specifically examining the gesture in Psalms. This study will be complemented by exploring relevant extra-biblical textual and iconographic evidence within the ancient Near East.

Nonverbal communication entails the movement and position of someone's body, which serves to communicate emotions, intentions, and commands; these gestures and postures may either be nonverbal or have accompanying speech.¹ Nonverbal communication is present in the Hebrew Bible and, as John Davies points out, "[The] fact that [nonverbal communication] is mentioned at all, particularly in a corpus of literature that is not noted for its descriptive language or unnecessary coloration, makes it a topic worthy of our careful attention."² The Hebrew Bible often utilizes gestures and postures to convey deeper and symbolic meaning beyond the written text. One of these gestures, two hands raised in the air, is common not only in the Hebrew Bible but also throughout the ancient Near East. This gesture was often employed throughout the ancient Near East in depictions—both written and visual—as humans approached some kind of deity.

1. John A. Davies, *Lift Up Your Heads: Nonverbal Communication and Related Body Imagery in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018), 1.

2. Davies, *Lift Up Your Heads*, 14.

This motif of raising both hands likely served to induce divine favor from a superior being—typically a deity or king-like figure—to “increase the likelihood of a favorable response” from the superior being.³ In the Hebrew Bible, these inducement motifs are especially common in Psalms.⁴ Studying the raised hands motif in Psalms is particularly instructive in this context due to the large extent of research already done on the book itself. Additionally, due to numerous examples of inducement motifs (almost exclusively shown in the context of prayer), Psalms can serve as a case study for the Hebrew Bible as a whole to show the shared characteristics of the gesture between the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East. The purpose of this paper is to examine the two raised hands gesture, specifically used in a prayer context within the Psalms, to show that the gesture is indeed being used for inducement. This study will essentially synthesize previous scholarship done on the topic. This will be done by examining in brief the raised hands motif in the Hebrew Bible generally and then more specifically in Psalms; textual and iconographic evidence outside of the biblical text will also be displayed to show the link between this motif in the Hebrew Bible and the broader ancient Near East to strengthen its claim.

REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP

Various studies have addressed the topic of gestures and nonverbal communication within the Hebrew Bible. One of the earliest contributions to the study of ritual gestures in the Hebrew Bible came through Heinrich Vorwahl’s dissertation, *Die Gebärdensprache im Alten Testament*, published in 1932.⁵ Vorwahl suggests that ritual gestures relay magical power. Since that time, most scholars have disagreed with his assessment due to the seemingly self-contradictory nature of his work, but his study opened the door for further exploration of this particular topic.⁶

Since 1932, several scholars have contributed to the topic, but most of this work has been done in isolation. In 1986, P. R. Ackroyd published an entry for the Hebrew word “hand” in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, which

3. Stephen T. Sumner, “Hailing the Divine: Inducement Motifs in the Psalms and Levantine Inscriptions,” *JSOT* 43 (2019): 726–42, here 728. This same definition of inducement motif will be repeated throughout the rest of this paper.

4. Sumner, “Hailing the Divine,” 729. Sumner points out that of the 150 Psalms, 77 contain explicit inducement motifs and the other 73 contain similar rhetorical devices.

5. Heinrich Vorwahl, “Die Gebärdensprache im Alten Testament” (PhD diss., The Friedrich Wilhelm University, 1932).

6. For an example countering Vorwahl, see David M. Calabro, “Ritual Gestures of Lifting, Extending, and Clasp(s)ing the Hand(s) in Northwest Semitic Literature and Iconography” (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2014), 105. See also Mayer I. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 13–14.

was one of the first studies suggesting that hand gestures as found within the Hebrew Bible can encompass a wide variety of meanings, depending on context.⁷

While approached separately, the works of Mayer Gruber in 1980 and Othmar Keel in 1997 complemented each other and furthered the idea of the same gesture encompassing various meanings. Gruber focused on Semitic philology dealing with the raised hands gesture while Keel focused on expressions and iconography, specifically on hand gestures related to iconographic exegesis.⁸

David Calabro contributed to the field with his dissertation “Ritual Gestures of Lifting, Extending, and Clasp[ing] the Hand(s) in Northwest Semitic Literature and Iconography” in 2014, where he examined Northwest Semitic textual and iconographic evidence of gestures to suggest a full range of interpretations and how these gestures functioned in ritual contexts.⁹ This study is one of the first to synthesize and build off earlier scholars’ studies of this topic. His explicit and careful methodology sets his work apart from previous contributions to the topic.¹⁰ Calabro’s study includes a geographic, linguistic, iconographic, and chronologic approach, using textual sources from the Hebrew Bible, Phoenician and Old Aramaic inscriptions, and Ugaritic texts. His study of iconography includes stelae, cylinder seals, and figurines.¹¹

With regard to assigning meaning to the two hands raised motif, Keel asserts that the gesture came as a reaction to entering the presence of a deity as the human threw up his or her hands for protection from the deity’s power.¹² In 2014, Brent Strawn built on Keel’s work; he suggests that certain postures—such as raised hands—show an attitude of adoration, but, more importantly, they display an emotional, fearful response.¹³ Calabro disagrees with this assessment and instead suggests that the gesture invites, rather than wards off, the deity’s power; he further warns that it is “[inadvisable] to make a sharp distinction between worship and supplication in the context of biblical prayer, since these functions

7. Peter Ackroyd, “גָּ” *TDOT* 5:393–426. Three such meanings include striking hands to bargain or enter an agreement, taking an oath through raising the hand(s), and extending the hand.

8. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication*, and Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: Seabury, 1978).

9. Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 15.

10. For an explanation of his methodology, see Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 278–87.

11. Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 16.

12. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 313.

13. Brent A. Strawn, “The Iconography of Fear: *Yir’at Yhwh* (יראת יהוה) in Artistic Perspective,” in *Image, Text, Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster and Joel M. LeMon (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 91–134, here 124.

are often intermingled in the same prayer.”¹⁴ He goes on to suggest other possible interpretations of the gesture: it serves to expose the hands and heart to “divine view,” thereby proving that the person is pure and consequently prepared to be in the deity’s presence; it shows that the hands were not holding weapons, suggesting a kind of surrender; it attracts the attention of the deity; it shows the desire for the mortal to interact with the deity; it symbolizes life, which would suggest that executing the gesture in the presence of the deity is asking for God to give life; it displays the relationship between parties, suggesting subservience on the part of the one performing the gesture; the gesture is itself part of a larger, more complex ritual; and it is a “gesture of approach” performed as a mortal approaches the presence of the deity.¹⁵ In 2019, Sumner added onto Calabro’s studies by documenting inducement motifs in the Psalms, positing that certain gestures were employed to gain the favor and attention of the deity.¹⁶

Despite their differences, where all these scholars do agree is in the idea that certain gestures performed by mortals attract the attention—intentionally or not—and potentially the favor of the deity or higher power in some way. The original motivation of these gestures may be fear or veneration of the particular superior being, as well as any number of other intentions. The purpose of this paper is, in effect, to bridge the gap between the various scholarly interpretations of the raised hands motif by showing that this gesture was principally used as an inducement motif to increase the likelihood of a favorable response and to receive divine favor and aid from a superior being. To do so, this paper will briefly examine the raised hands motif in the Hebrew Bible generally and then more specifically in the Psalms, focusing on six particular idioms. This study will then examine examples of relevant non-biblical textual evidence and iconography to demonstrate the link between this motif in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East.

RAISED HANDS PHRASES IN PSALMS

While general hand gestures are common in the Hebrew Bible, the scope of this paper will include those gestures involving both hands being raised or lifted

14. David M. Calabro, “Gestures of Praise: Lifting and Spreading the Hands in Biblical Prayer” in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, ed. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Matthew J. Grey, David Rolph Seely, and Patty A. Smith (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 105–21, here 110.

15. Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 652–54. Calabro finds support for the claim that the gesture “served to expose the hands and heart to divine view” in Isa 1:15: “When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.” All English biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

16. Sumner, “Hailing the Divine,” 730.

up.¹⁷ To that effect, David Calabro identified eight distinct yet synonymous phrases dealing with both hands and prayer in the Hebrew Bible: *nāšā' yādayim* (“lift up the hands”), *nāšā' kappayim* (“lift up the palms”), *pāraś kappayim* (“spread the palms toward”), *peraś kappayim* (“spread out the palms”), *peraś yādayim* (“spread out the hands toward”), *šittah kappayim* (“spread forth the palms”), *heriy's yādayim* (“stretch out the hands with quick movement[s]”), and *mo'al yādayim* (“putting up of the hands”).¹⁸ The distinction of these phrases comes in the differences in language, while the synonymy of these phrases comes in their use in prayer contexts.¹⁹

Of these eight phrases, six appear within Psalms.²⁰ These six specific phrases and their accompanying passages will now be analyzed to show that they are being used as inducement motifs to increase the likelihood of a favorable response and receive divine favor from a superior being. Such analysis will in turn better help demonstrate the connection between the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East in understanding the raised hands gesture and synthesizing previous research.

The first phrase is *nāšā' yādayim* (“lift up the hands”), which is present in Ps 28:2: “Hear the voice of my supplication, as I cry to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary,” and Ps 134:2: “Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord.”²¹ In these verses, the lifted hands gesture is performed toward the deity’s dwelling place: the “holy sanctuary” in Ps 28 and “holy place” in Ps 134. In these instances, the deity’s dwelling place could serve as a representation of the deity itself.

In context, both these verses are a petition to a deity. Psalm 28 is a prayer for continued blessing, and the raised hands can be seen as a “token of a heart reaching out to God in supplication.”²² The raised hands are reaching out to the deity,

17. Phrases involving individuals raising just one hand are also common in the Hebrew Bible; some instances are additionally used in prayer contexts and some are not. While researching both one and two raised hands does not fit within the scope of the current treatise, it could be an interesting topic for further research.

18. Because of Hebrew synonyms, sometimes “hand” will appear as “palm,” or vice versa, as well as “to” may be “toward,” or the other way around. For further discussion of these paradigms and their correlating scriptures, see Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 258, Table 11.

19. Davies gives several scriptural examples which strengthen this claim: Exod 9:29, 33; 1 Kgs 8:22, 38; Ezra 9:5; Job 11:13; Ps 146:3; Lam 3:41. See Davies, *Lift Up Your Heads*, 118.

20. The two idioms that will not be discussed in this section are *peraś kappayim* (“spread out the palms”), which is present in Isaiah and Jeremiah, as well as *mo'al yādayim* (“putting up of the hands”), which is present in Nehemiah. For further discussion on these two idioms, see Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 528, Table 11.

21. The versification in this paper follows the English versification.

22. J. W. McKay and J. W. Rogerson, *Psalms 1–50*, CBC (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 127.

requesting favor and a response.²³ Psalm 134 acts more like a command, telling other people to “lift up [their] hands” toward the deity.²⁴ John Goldingay suggests that raising the hands in this context is “a gesture of appeal” and that it is also “a gesture of dependence on Yhwh that complements direct worship of Yhwh, and in a way constitutes worship because it connotes that dependence.”²⁵ Both of these examples show how lifted hands served as an inducement motif to try and increase the likelihood of response and receiving divine favor from the deity.

The second phrase is *nāsā’ kappayim* (“lift up the palms”), which is present in Ps 63:4: “So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.” This attestation of the lifted hands gesture is a single person praying to a deity; lifted hands accompany the prayer. The context of this phrase appears to be one of thanksgiving. J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay posit that the lifted hands in this verse exemplify a “traditional attitude of prayer expressing both adoration and expectant supplication.”²⁶ Derek Kidner adds that this action gave “the body its share in expressing worship (cf. [Ps.] 134:2) or supplication ([Ps.] 28:2).”²⁷ Examined holistically, the raised hands in this psalm serve as another example of an inducement motif as the individual seeks the attention and favor of his or her deity.

The third phrase is *pāraś kappayim* (“spread the palms toward”), which is present in Ps 44:20–21: “If we had forgotten the name of our God, or spread out our hands to a strange god, would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart.” This psalm has an overall negative and bitter context.²⁸ It

23. Derek Kidner suggests that “the uplifted hands can be expressive of prayer in many moods; here as beseeching a favour, empty handed” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, TOTC [London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973], 123). John Goldingay states that “generally [prayer] in Scripture . . . involves standing as before a superior, raising one’s hand in appeal like a child in a classroom seeking to get the teacher’s attention, or opening the hands in readiness to receive, and opening one’s eyes to look to God” (John Goldingay, *Psalms 1–41*, BCOTWP [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 405).

24. Psalm 134 is widely considered the last “song of ascents,” which may suggest its use during pilgrimages to Jerusalem; in this way, the psalm could be viewed as instruction to invoke divine aid. For additional discussion on this psalm as a last “song of ascents,” see J. W. McKay and J. W. Rogerson, *Psalms 101–150*, CBC (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 141; and G. Campbell Morgan, *Notes on the Psalms* (Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1942), 264.

25. John Goldingay, *Psalms 90–150*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 572.

26. McKay and Rogerson, *Psalms 101–150*, 66.

27. Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 226.

28. John Goldingay suggests that the psalm “presupposes a situation in which the people have gone out in battle against their enemies and have been defeated” (John Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*, BCOTWP [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 37). Morgan says that “it is a prayer for deliverance from circumstances of defeat” (Morgan, *Notes on the Psalms*, 85). McKay and

is unique from the other examples from the psalms presented in this paper in that the spreading or raising of the hands is described as being performed to a “strange god” and presumably not the people’s original deity. Goldingay suggests that this could be because the people “have ignored their God’s name and ceased to call on God,” and rather than ceasing to pray altogether, they could be questioning which deity they should supplicate.²⁹ Regardless of the exact reason for the people to even consider “spreading out [their] hands” to a foreign deity, this psalm shows the power of the raised hands motif; if the people raise their hands to a different deity, their original god would likely notice. Conversely, if the people were to spread out their hands to their true deity, the verses suggest that the deity would notice and there would be an increased probability of the petition being heard, thereby serving as an inducement motif in this particular psalm.

The fourth phrase is *peras̄ yādayim* (“spread out the hands toward”), which is present in Ps 143:6: “I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.” This verse is a prayer for deliverance; the first verse of the psalm is a petition, “Hear my prayer,” to a deity because enemies were pursuing the psalmist, “crushing [his] life to the ground,” as noted in verse three. Verse seven is an additional plea for the Lord to answer quickly, and not “hide [his] face” from the psalmist. G. Campbell Morgan suggests that “in [this] situation of complete helplessness the soul prepares for its prayer, and the words which indicate the method of preparation are interesting. ‘I remember . . . I meditate . . . I muse.’ The issue of this is immediately declared, ‘I spread forth my hands unto thee.’ The earnestness of the soul is manifested in the urgent petitions which follow.”³⁰ In the psalmist’s dangerous and helpless predicament, he seeks the aid and attention of his deity by spreading out his hands in an attitude of prayer.³¹ Seen all together, these verses indicate that the stretched hands in verse six are an attempt to further petition the deity and increase the likelihood of a favorable response and divine favor in order to escape from an enemy.

The fifth phrase is *šittah̄ kappayim* (“spread forth the palms”), which is present in Ps 88:9: “My eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call on you, O Lord; I spread out my hands to you.” This psalm is a prayer of one feeling forsaken and forgotten; in verses one and two the psalmist is pleading for the Lord to hear his cry, and verses three through seven describe the psalmist’s troubles, which he

Rogerson suggest that the psalm contains “real bitterness” (McKay and Rogerson, *Psalms 1–50*, 209).

29. Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*, 46.

30. Morgan, *Notes on the Psalms*, 277.

31. McKay and Rogerson affirm that the action of spreading the hands is “a traditional attitude in both prayer and praise” (McKay and Rogerson, *Psalms 101–150*, 169).

compares to being in “the Pit” (v. 4) and “among the dead” (v. 5).³² Verse nine, then, serves as an indication that the psalmist’s action of spreading out his hands to the Lord was accompanied by speech as part of prayer. Goldingay suggests that prayer is not only words spoken to the deity, but also actions for the deity to see.³³ Consequently, the combination of words and actions (in this case, spreading out hands) is more powerful than just words or just actions and has a greater chance of eliciting divine aid. Verse ten is then a petition for “wonders,” or miracles. All of this shows how the raised hands in this psalm serve as an inducement motif to draw the attention of the deity to the miserable plight of the psalmist, with the hope of receiving divine attention and help.

The sixth phrase is *heriy’s yādayim* (“stretch out the hands with quick movement[s]”), which is present in Ps 68:31: “Let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God.” These verses essentially describe the gesture (stretched hands) that the people of Ethiopia would need to perform in a particular situation, without explaining what that particular situation could be.

Opinions regarding Ps 68 and its interpretation as a whole vary: J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay suggest that “probably no other psalm presents as many problems of interpretation as this one,”³⁴ while Kidner calls it “one of the most boisterous and exhilarating [psalms] in the Psalter,”³⁵ and Morgan proclaims it “one of the grandest of the psalms.”³⁶ Despite the differences in the perceived meaning of this particular psalm, the stretched out hands symbol is consistent with the other psalm examples presented earlier in this paper. While these verses appear to be used in a praise context and are not explicitly tied to prayer, the actions (offering sacrifice and seemingly blessing a deity) are typologically similar to prayer and other phrases of a similar context.³⁷ The hands symbolism in this verse could therefore also be included as an inducement motif as mortals interact with their deity.³⁸

32. McKay and Rogerson assert that Ps 88 is “a psalm of unrelieved gloom and anguish” (J. W. McKay and J. W. Rogerson, *Psalms 51–100*, CBC [London: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 185); and Derek Kidner suggests that there is no sadder psalm than this one (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: A Commentary on Books III–V of the Psalms*, TOTC [London: Intervarsity Press, 1975], 316).

33. Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*, 652–53.

34. McKay and Rogerson, *Psalms 1–50*, 82.

35. Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 238.

36. Morgan, *Notes on the Psalms*, 120.

37. Calabro suggests this idea (Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 256), while McKay and Rogerson also propose that the hands could be stretched out “as a token of submission and worship” (McKay and Rogerson, *Psalms 1–50*, 91). On p. 66 McKay and Rogerson also argue that the lifted or stretched hands are used in contexts of both adoration (as in Ps 134:2) and “expectant supplication” (Ps 28:2).

38. McKay and Rogerson suggest that the use of Egypt and Ethiopia in this psalm

The six phrases presented in this section describe contexts of prayer and praise within Psalms where an individual or group of people intentionally raise or stretch forth both hands in the direction of either a supreme being or the being's dwelling place. All of these instances appear to be attempts by the petitioner(s) to increase the likelihood of receiving a favorable response and divine aid from the deity, either to escape a dangerous or gloomy situation or to better offer praise and worship. Whether these gestures in Psalms were performed out of fear or veneration for the deity, they all act as inducement motifs to attract the attention and favor of a supreme being. This study helps show the connection between the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East in understanding the raised hands gesture. These connections will be further explored in the section regarding other ancient Near Eastern references.

OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSE

On the other hand, as Calabro points out, "It is important to recognize the possibility that gesture phrases in Northwest Semitic languages can be used idiomatically and that they may not necessarily imply the actual performance of a gesture act."³⁹ Additionally, Davies warns that "we need to exercise a degree of caution in endeavoring to reconstruct in any detail the physical gestures of the lived experience of the Israelites or their neighbors. . . . Texts may use hyperbole, or stylize a character's actions for their own rhetorical purposes. There may be some literary conventions which take on a life of their own with little to anchor them in the social conventions of the era the texts represent."⁴⁰ Given the antiquity of these languages and cultures, it is important to exercise caution when assigning interpretation or meaning to different gestures or motifs.

While it is true that ancient gestures are hard to interpret due to displacement in time and that ancient gestures as we perceive them may have looked entirely different than imagined today, the textual and iconographic evidence do suggest some correlation between the idea of the image of the gesture (if not the gesture itself) and its current understood meaning. The consistent appearance of the raised hands gesture in texts—both in Biblical Hebrew and in other ancient Near Eastern languages—indicates that the motif does have significance and can be studied to more deeply understand the culture and practices of the ancient world.

represent even "the most remote and exotic of the ancient nations" (McKay and Rogerson, *Psalms 1–50*, 91), and Kidner believes it represents "a remote people seeking God" (Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 244).

39. Calabro, "Ritual Gestures," 133.

40. Davies, *Lift Up Your Heads*, 4.

OTHER ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN REFERENCES

Ugaritic artifacts serve as additional examples of the raised hands gesture being used as an inducement motif in the ancient Near East. This Ugaritic evidence is often used in conjunction with Hebrew Bible studies due to the relative proximity of respective lands and kingdoms, as well as similarity between languages. Mark Smith suggests that not only the similarities between the two cultures but the differences serve to “sharpen scholarly understanding of Israelite religion, in particular its differentiation from the larger West Semitic culture of which the Ugaritic texts constitute the single greatest extra-biblical textual witness.”⁴¹ He additionally argues that “[the] study of Ugaritic remains necessary for situating ancient Israel and the Bible within their larger historical contexts.”⁴² The culture of the Hebrew Bible did not occur in a vacuum, but rather was influenced by surrounding cultures, such as that of Ugarit.⁴³

One such example is found in the Ugaritic Kirta Epic, which dates to between 1500 and 1200 BCE. In the tale, Kirta receives instructions on how to approach and entreat his region’s deity, Baal: “Ascend to the top of the tower, mount the shoulder of the wall. Lift up your hands to heaven, sacrifice to the Bull, your father [El]. Bring down [Baal] with your sacrifice, the son of Dagan with your prey.”⁴⁴ Kirta’s subsequent combined gesture and sacrifice successfully induce the deity to come down and meet him later, as told in the tablet. The idiom used in the Kirta Epic to describe raising both hands in prayer is equivalent to the Hebrew *nāšā’ yādayim*, which is also used in Pss 28:2 and 134:2.⁴⁵ This text is an example of a successful inducement motif where the reader is made aware of the answer of the deity at least partly in response to the petitioner’s raised hands.

Sumero-Akkadian religious texts also contain examples of the raised hands gesture being used as an inducement motif in the ancient Near East. Scholars often call prayers in these texts *Šuillas*, which translates to “hand-lifting.”⁴⁶

41. Mark S. Smith, “Ugaritic Studies and Israelite Religion: A Retrospective View,” *NEA* 65 (2002): 17–29, here 27.

42. Smith, “Ugaritic Studies and Israelite Religion,” 27.

43. For additional discussion about benefits of studying the Ugaritic tradition to better understand the Hebrew Bible tradition, see J. J. M. Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 5–8. Some of these reasons include better understanding of Canaanite religion and culture; contributions to understanding Hebrew lexicography, syntax, and prosody; and dating early Israelite pottery.

44. This translation comes from Calabro, “Ritual Gestures,” 108.

45. This shared idiom is likely a reflection of aspects of shared culture between ancient Israel and Ugarit, suggesting the validity of comparison between the two languages and cultures.

46. This translation is from Christopher Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-Prayers of “Hand-Lifting” (Akkadian Šuillas): An Investigation of Function in Light of the Idiomatic Meaning of the Rubric* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012), 2.

Christopher Frechette posits that these cultures used hand-lifting reciprocally with the deity. The person approaching the deity lifts his or her hand in greeting, which binds both the person and the deity to act; this reciprocity is similar to inducement in that the raised hand serves to increase the likelihood of a response from the deity, and the deity is in turn expected to acknowledge and react.⁴⁷

This motif is also common in iconography throughout the ancient Near East. One such example is iconography displayed on a stela from Balou'a, Jordan.⁴⁸ The stela's image includes three figures and traditional Egyptian characteristics, such as the double crown representing the unification of Egypt, a sun disk, and an ankh—a symbol of life in ancient Egypt. While the exact date of this piece is not known, it is generally accepted that it originates between the beginning of the Iron Age and the Late Bronze Age,⁴⁹ meaning it likely dates to the ancient kingdom of Moab. While the exact specifications of this image are not known, its similarity in time and geographical region is compelling as a means of comparing the raised hands motif between the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East.

The middle figure on this stela is a male whose hands are both raised with the palms out towards the man on the left, who is likely a deity. The figure on the right is a female and also appears to be some type of deity. Not enough writing or other evidence exists to fully explain the meaning of the gesture displayed, but it is similar to the common ancient Egyptian attitude of prayer—arms and hands raised, with the palm out—found in other textual and iconographic evidence of the period.⁵⁰

These previous examples further demonstrate that raising both hands in prayer in the ancient Near East often served to increase the likelihood of a favorable response and receive divine favor from a superior being—a deity or a king—either while in an attitude of prayer or while simply approaching the being. Due to the overlap of culture and ideas in the region, these examples consequently strengthen the claim that the image of two raised hands used in the Psalms is also an inducement motif.

47. Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-Prayers*, 2.

48. Representations of these stelae can be found in Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 311; Calabro, "Ritual Gestures," 527; and G. Horsfield and L. H. Vincent, "Une Stèle Égypto-Moabite Au Balou'a," *RB (1892-1940)* 41 (1932): 417-44, here 423. This stela is currently housed in the Archaeological Museum of Jordan in Amman.

49. Calabro, "Ritual Gestures," 526.

50. Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 311. For additional examples of ancient Egyptian iconographic evidence, see Brent A. Strawn, "'The Fear of the Lord' in Two (or Three) Dimensions: Iconography and *Yir'at Yhwh*," in *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster, Brent A. Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 295-312.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While much study concerning gestures and nonverbal communication within the Hebrew Bible has been done up to this point, much study still remains regarding this topic. Such research could include a more comprehensive look at surrounding cultures in the ancient Near East and the correlation between how subjects were expected to act before a king or king-like figure and how mortals were expected to act before their particular deity or deities. Additionally, the study of each Hebrew phrase containing two raised hands could be expanded beyond Psalms within the Hebrew Bible. A study of gestures involving just one hand could also be conducted to synthesize findings and potentially strengthen the idea of the inducement motif within the Hebrew Bible.

CONCLUSION

The image of two raised hands is common throughout the ancient Near East in many contexts, but especially in situations where mortals, in a prayer-like attitude, are approaching a deity or otherwise superior power. As Gruber put it, “Each verbal language tends to be accompanied by a well-developed language of postures, gestures, and facial expressions operating in consonance with verbal language to effect communication. One should expect, therefore, that communication with deities should likewise be accompanied by characteristic postures, gestures, and facial expressions.”⁵¹ The raised hands image is one such characteristic posture employed by mortals.

Most scholars agree that the motif serves on some level either to attract a deity’s attention in some way or as a reaction to the deity’s response, but scholars do not agree beyond that as to the motif’s meaning and purpose. This paper has examined both language—biblical and non-biblical—and iconography within the ancient Near East to show that, when paired with prayer, the raised hands gesture serves as an inducement motif to increase the likelihood of a favorable response and divine favor from the deity toward the mortal performing the gesture, regardless of the petitioner’s original perceived emotion or intention. While this paper focused specifically on Psalms, this same pattern exists in the broader ancient Near East as evidenced in ancient texts and iconography.

51. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication*, 22.

TAKING AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD

EGŌ EIMI AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN JOHN

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Abstract: The presence of Jewish themes and allusions in the Gospel of John has received much scholarly attention in recent decades. This study follows this trend, exploring several possible connections between the Day of Atonement and the Johannine narrative. In this paper, I argue that these connections—which include John the Baptist’s identification of Jesus with the Lamb of God, echoes of the scapegoat ritual, high-priest-like prayers, and the repeated use of the phrase *egō eimi*—were deliberately incorporated into the narrative by the author of John as pointed allusions to the Day of Atonement. For the original audience, as well as today’s careful reader, these echoes reinforce the Evangelist’s purpose in writing—namely, convincing his audience to believe “that Jesus is the Messiah” (John 20:31)—by demonstrating Jesus’s role in the expiation of his community’s sin.

The unique perspective of the Fourth Gospel has intrigued many of its readers and provoked a wide array of scholarship.¹ Once held to be the most Christian of the Gospels, recent scholarship has found the Gospel of John to be saturated with the Judaism of its time.² Allusions to Jewish themes and ideas make up a

1. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*, BibInt 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 137; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

2. Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’ Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, LNTS (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002); Mark S. Kinzer, “Temple Christology in the Gospel of John,” SBLSP 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 447–64; Dorothy A. Lee, “Paschal Imagery in the Gospel of John: A Narrative and Symbolic Reading,” *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies* 24 (2011): 13–26; Nicholas P. Lunn, “Jesus, the Ark, and the Day of Atonement:

significant part of the way that the narrative and the portrait of Jesus are framed. In this study, I argue that the forgiveness of sins, sanctification, and the appeasement of God's wrath—all articulated most clearly in Jewish scripture by the Day of Atonement and its rituals—form an important part of the Johannine narrative.

I argue that throughout the Gospel, the author of John alludes to rites associated with the Day of Atonement as it may have been understood by his audience. There are many points of contact, but for the purposes of this study, I will focus on four: John the Baptist's theme-setting assertion, "Here is the Lamb of God" (John 1:29); parallels between Jesus's trial and the scapegoat ritual; high priestly intercession in John 17; and the repeated use of the Greek phrase *egō eimi*.³ These allusions have roots in the Hebrew Bible and are paralleled in other post-temple reflections on Yom Kippur in rabbinic writings. The instances of correlation occur in ways and at times that suggest an underlying scheme in the narrative. This scheme points the reader to the theme of atonement and betrays an authorial purpose: to present Jesus and his story in light of the expiation of sins.

Some of these issues have been addressed by others, who have noticed a broad inclination towards temple themes in John. The temple theme has been explored generally, but not with a specific end in mind, by scholars such as Alan Kerr and Mark Kinzer, who explore the connections between Israelite cultic practice and John.⁴ In addition, several scholars have noted individual themes that suggest literary connections with Yom Kippur. For example, Jennifer Maclean has found extensive similarities between the Barabbas narrative and the scapegoat ritual.⁵ Harold Attridge, Gerald Janzen, and others have written on the priestly implications of Jesus's prayer in John 17.⁶ David Ball, Paul Anderson, and Catrin Williams have given treatment to the implications of Jesus's "I am" sayings in light of the nuances of the Greek *egō eimi*.⁷ However, so far as I can tell, no one has pre-

Intertextual Echoes in John 19:38–20:18," *JETS* 52 (2009): 731–46.

3. Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

4. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus's Body*; Kinzer, "Temple Christology"

5. Jennifer K. Berenson Maclean, "Barabbas, the Scapegoat Ritual, and the Development of the Passion Narrative," *HTR* 100.3 (2007): 309–34.

6. Harold W. Attridge, "How Priestly is the 'High Priestly Prayer' of John 17?" *CBQ* 75 (2013): 1–14;

J. Gerald Janzen, "The Scope of Jesus's High Priestly Prayer in John 17," *Enc* 67.1 (2006): 1–26.

7. David Mark Ball, *I Am' in John's Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996); Paul N. Anderson, "The Origin and Development of the Johannine *Egō Eimi* Sayings in Cognitive-Critical Perspective," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011): 139–206; Catrin H. Williams, *I am He: The Interpretation of 'Anī Hū' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, WUNT 2/113 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

sented these elements together, especially as they relate to the Day of Atonement rituals. The closest thing to a systematic synthesis of these elements is found in an article by Nicholas Lunn that deals with several possible intertextual allusions to the Day of Atonement in the Johannine passion narrative.⁸ Lunn draws several parallels together and observes that together, the parallels make a stronger case for deliberate allusion.⁹ My hope is to add to Lunn's contribution by introducing several new elements of allusion: the aforementioned Baptist's declaration, the scapegoat ritual, the priestly prayer in John 17, and the repetition of *egō eimi*.

Of course, without access to the Gospel's author, this sort of study, which attempts to identify a deliberate literary scheme in the text, can never arrive at certainty—only probability. Likewise, an isolated point or two of contact with Israelite ritual may be nothing more than coincidence. However, as cogent parallels accumulate, the likelihood of a legitimate narrative design increases dramatically.

NARRATIVE DESIGN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND JOHN

This discussion's scope falls within the jurisdiction of literary criticism. Literary criticism's methodology "assume[s] that the extant text is ordered to convey a message and . . . attempts to discover how that message is conveyed as well as what the message is."¹⁰ For this reason, matters such as the history and criticism of the text itself, worthwhile as they may be, must be set aside. This study's concern is with the text as we have it, and this study will view it as a unified whole, written with a deliberate authorial purpose. This process should begin with a few qualifying questions: Is it reasonable to assume that the Gospel's author was capable of composing a complex narrative, aided by allusions? And if this is the case, did he have an interest in the temple and the Day of Atonement rites?

The first question, that of authorial capacity, is worth asking. John's Greek is by no means impressive; in fact, it is among "the simplest Greek" in the New Testament.¹¹ Is it reasonable to expect a complex narrative in such unassuming Greek? The Gospel text suggests that the author's storytelling ability far surpasses his linguistic skill. Scholars have identified several complex narrative schemes running through the Gospel, such as the corresponding "Book of Signs" and "Book of Glory,"¹² numerical patterns of sevens and threes,¹³ and deeply ironic

8. Lunn, "Intertextual Echoes."

9. Lunn, "Intertextual Echoes," 746.

10. Ball, *I Am*, 13.

11. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 5.

12. See Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 290.

13. See Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17.

presentations.¹⁴ Mark Stibbe describes the Gospel as “artistically conceived,”¹⁵ Wm. Randolph Bynum claims that John’s use of scripture is a work of “literary and theological genius,”¹⁶ and Dorothy Lee observes that the Gospel’s use of narration to convey information “reveals the richness and diversity of the narrator’s skill.”¹⁷ Elementary Greek aside, the Gospel of John is a complex text guided by skillful narration.

Since it’s plausible that the Johannine author is capable of crafting an intricate narrative, the second question remains: Is he likely to build portions of that narrative around themes found in Day of Atonement liturgy? The studies of Kerr, Kinzer, and others have demonstrated that this is indeed likely. Kerr speaks of the probability that the author had “an interest in the Temple and its institutions,”¹⁸ and the study of cultic interests in John has become a burgeoning field in recent decades.¹⁹ The two questions are answered in the affirmative: the Gospel of John *does* betray a complex literary scheme and seems particularly interested in matters of temple and cult. Reviewing some of these relevant elements of cult will be beneficial for this study.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD: A GENERAL SURVEY

The Day of Atonement was, as Isaac Kalimi writes, “the climax of the Jewish High Holy Days,” representing “the hope for freshness and new beginning for individuals and for the collective.”²⁰ The day’s rituals served the purpose of expiating both individual and community sin and cleansing the sanctuary from defilement. The biblical prescriptions for the day are brief. Located among the Torah’s priestly legislation, Lev 16 directs the high priest, washed and wearing special linen clothing, to bring several sacrifices forward: a bull, a ram, and two

14. See George W. MacRae, “Theology and Irony in the Fourth Gospel,” in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives*, ed. Mark W. G. Stibbe (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 103–13.

15. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 22.

16. Wm. Randolph Bynum, *The Fourth Gospel and the Scriptures: Illuminating the Form and Meaning of Scriptural Citation in John 19:37* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 172.

17. Dorothy A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning*, LNTS (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 230.

18. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’s Body*, 371. See also pp. 8–19.

19. Annang Asumang and Mzayifani H. Mzebetshana, “Temple Christology in the Gospel According to John: A Survey of Scholarship in the Last Twenty Years (1996–2016),” *Conspectus* 24 (2017): 133–65; Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’s Body*; Kinzer, “Temple Christology.”

20. Isaac Kalimi, “The Day of Atonement in the Late Second Temple Period,” in *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 75.

goats (Lev 16:3–5). He casts lots over the goats, designating one as the scapegoat and the other as a sin-offering (Lev 16:6–10). Once this is done, the high priest offers the bull as a sin-offering, brings its blood into the holy of holies (along with incense), and sprinkles its blood on the mercy seat (Lev 16:11–14). He then does the same with the sin-offering goat and releases the scapegoat into the wilderness (Lev 16:15–22). After removing the sacred clothing and bathing again, he offers the ram as a burnt offering, concluding the day's rites (Lev 16:23–28). It is to be a solemn day of fasting and rest (Lev 16:29–31).²¹

Of course, since “it is evident that Lev 16 could never suffice to describe in detail the temple cult,”²² later writings expand the relatively sparse biblical injunctions. By the time the rabbis put the ritual to paper, the liturgy—in their minds, at least—had expanded. An entire Mishnah tractate, *Yoma*, is dedicated to the day's rites. The general sequence of events is unchanged, but the rabbinic literature fills in gaps, elaborates on how the procedures should be completed, and provides safeguards in the event of worst-case scenarios. It adds details such as the preparation of a substitute high priest,²³ the high priest's being kept up during the night prior to ensure ritual cleanliness,²⁴ the specifics of the scapegoat's exile,²⁵ and the words to be used when praying over the sacrifices—highly formulaic prayers invoking the divine name YHWH.²⁶ The rites were to be followed with exactness; if not, as Isaac Kalimi summarizes, “there would be neither forgiveness nor purification.”²⁷ Despite the consensus that the ritual needed to be done perfectly, there were disagreements over the nature of the liturgy, and the Babylonian Talmud recounts that a Sadducean high priest performed the ritual contrary to the Pharisees' instructions and died shortly thereafter—a reflection of divine judgment.²⁸

Like the Gospel of John, these rabbinic writings postdate the actual performance of the Day of Atonement's ritual, albeit by several centuries more. Since few other sources detail the festival's practice in the time of Jesus, it's difficult to say how accurately the rabbinic writings and John—should it be alluding to *Yom*

21. For a thorough, verse-by-verse treatment of Lev 16, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1009–84.

22. Günter Stemmerger, “Yom Kippur in Mishnah Yoma,” in Hieke and Nicklas, *The Day of Atonement*, 135.

23. Mishnah *Yoma* 1:1. All Mishnah citations are from Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

24. Mishnah *Yoma* 1:4–7.

25. Mishnah *Yoma* 4:2, 6:1–6.

26. Mishnah *Yoma* 3:8, 4:2, 6:2.

27. Kalimi, “The Day of Atonement in the Second Temple Period,” 80.

28. Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 19b. All Talmud citations are from Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary*, V: *Yoma* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

Kippur—present the liturgy. Some aspects, the scapegoat ritual and high priestly prayer among them, are attested outside of *Yoma* and are therefore, according to Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, “almost certainly historic.”²⁹ Other aspects are more dubious. In all likelihood, the extent of the Day of Atonement’s performance during the late Second Temple Period probably fell somewhere in between Leviticus’s sparse injunctions and the complex rabbinic prescriptions. However, since the temple cult had ceased by the time of both John’s and *Yoma*’s writing, the historicity of their presentation of Yom Kippur is of little importance for this study. Rather, they both reflect a later understanding of the Day of Atonement’s ritual, and parallels that occur between them are more likely the product of this understanding.³⁰ In other words, suggesting that John alludes to the Day of Atonement is less a matter of establishing congruence between the Johannine narrative and the actual ritual as it was performed during the Second Temple Period as it is of demonstrating its congruence with other post-temple reflections on what once was. On this account, the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud are valuable sources.

THE JOHANNINE NARRATIVE AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Now that the Day of Atonement has been addressed generally, the remainder of this study will be devoted to in-depth analyses of parallels between Levitical and rabbinic presentations of the holy day and the Johannine narrative. Most often, these correlations identify Jesus with either the Day of Atonement’s sacrifice or with the high priest who performs the day’s rites. These two ideas need not contradict one another; the Epistle to the Hebrews opts for a similar dual identification of Jesus as both sacrificer and sacrifice, “both high priest and victim.”³¹ John may be tapping into a similar strand of early Christian thought.

Since constructing a hypothesis around perceived parallels can be precarious, it’s worth establishing some ground rules at the outset. In *The Context of Scripture*, K. Lawson Younger outlines the challenge of the responsible scholar, who must balance his study between “overstressing the parallels” and “ignoring clear, informative correlations.”³² Drifting too far to either of these extremes—parallelomania or parallelophobia—can often prove damaging to an argument. To guard against these missteps of comparison, Younger proposes criteria for

29. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 19.

30. This article assumes a late first century date for the composition of the Fourth Gospel, which, while believed by the majority of scholars, is unproven.

31. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’s Body*, 369; see Heb 9:11–12.

32. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., “The ‘Contextual Method’: Some West Semitic Reflections,” *COS* 3:xxxvi–xxxvii.

assessing the validity of parallels: the standard of propinquity. “A parallel,” he writes, “that is closer to the biblical material in language, in geographic proximity, in time, and culture is a stronger parallel than one that is removed from the biblical material along one or more of these lines.”³³

At a basic level, the comparisons connect John and Lev 16, but since the New Testament draws not only upon the writings of the Old, but also on the shared culture of Second Temple Judaism, other sources connected with this cultural reservoir make valuable resources for this project. Rabbinic literature is especially useful, since it is concerned with the Levitical rituals but is a bit closer in time and culture to New Testament-era Judaism. Although they are late sources, the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud offer an update on Torah ritual that is probably more congruent with post-temple understanding of Yom Kippur than the laconic prescriptions of Leviticus. Again, these rabbinic sources need not be an exact copy of first-century liturgy, so long as they represent a fairly typical post-temple understanding of the Day of Atonement. The standard of geographical proximity is also favorable to these comparisons, as the various sources all share a provenance in ancient Palestine. There isn’t a clear linguistic correlation—Leviticus and the rabbinic literature being in Hebrew and John in Koine Greek—but much of the New Testament’s Greek is heavily semiticized.³⁴ With these established criteria for judging the merit of potential parallels, the four connections can now be explored in depth.

The Lamb of God

“Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This exclamation by John the Baptist opens the Johannine narrative and is often cited as evidence that the Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus as the paschal lamb. While Passover imagery is likely at work here, there’s difficulty with regarding this declaration as a wholesale identification of Jesus with the *pesah* sacrifice: Passover’s paschal lamb has no role in remitting sins, since, as Sandra Schneiders observes, “the paschal lamb was not an expiatory but a communion sacrifice.”³⁵ Although Schneiders and Dorothy Lee both argue for a paschal interpretation of John’s Jesus, they agree that this image fits a Day of Atonement rather than a Passover context. Lee writes, “the reference to taking away sin . . . suggests not

33. Younger, “Contextual Method,” xxxvii.

34. *BDF*, 3–4.

35. Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Lamb of God and the Forgiveness of Sin(s) in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 73 (2011): 1–29, here 18.

Passover but temple,” and especially suggests the ritual “on the Day of Atonement, which literally ‘takes away’ the sins of the people into the wilderness.”³⁶

So, is “the Lamb of God” the Passover sacrifice or the sacrifice of Yom Kippur? Jesus is clearly connected with the paschal lamb in other places in the Johannine narrative, particularly in the passion narrative, where the Evangelist takes care to note that Jesus’s death fulfills the Passover prescriptions of the Pentateuch.³⁷ This symbolism is widely recognized, yet the fact remains that the “paschal lamb was not ordinarily understood to take away sin,” and so the epithet attached to Jesus by John the Baptist remains problematic from the perspective of a purely paschal interpretation.³⁸ The Greek offers little in the way of clarification. Comparing the terms used in Exod 12 (Passover), Lev 16 (Day of Atonement), and John 1 yields ambiguous results. Exodus 12’s paschal lamb is *probaton* (from the Hebrew *šeh*) in the Septuagint, and Lev 16’s sin offering and scapegoat are both *chimaros* (from *šā’ir*), but John 1 uses the neutral *amnos*, which in a sacrificial context has reference only to the daily offerings.³⁹

It would appear that either no direct comparison is being made, which seems unlikely in light of John’s “constant” symbolism,⁴⁰ or that, more likely, the “Lamb of God” is intended as a “composite” figure that encompasses several ideas at once.⁴¹ While the majority interpretation of John’s “lamb” as a Passover symbol has strong merit, this conclusion should not be endorsed to the point of excluding the possibility of additional symbolism. Nicholas Lunn sees no problem with the idea that “Christ’s death is depicted at one and the same time in terms of both Passover and Day of Atonement.”⁴² Lee, in fact, sees value in this approach, adding that “both associations . . . make sense of the Johannine description of the lamb, enlarging the meaning beyond that of Passover.”⁴³ An integral part of this enlarged meaning is the removal of sin, which suggests themes from the Day of Atonement and sets the stage upon which the author intends us to view Jesus’s death—the ritual of the scape and immolated goats.

36. Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” 16.

37. John 19:28–37. For more on this, see Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” 24–26, and Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 193–98.

38. Koester, *Symbolism*, 198.

39. See Exod 29:39.

40. Koester, *Symbolism*, 12.

41. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 147.

42. Lunn, “Intertextual Echoes,” 737.

43. Lee, “Paschal Imagery,” 16–17.

The Scapegoat Ritual

The scapegoat ritual is perhaps the most famous of the Day of Atonement's prescriptions. According to Leviticus, two goats were to be brought to the temple courtyard, and as part of the day's rites, they were to be assigned by lot. One—the immolated goat—was to be made a sin offering and have its blood “sprinkl[ed] upon the mercy seat” (Lev 16:15). The other—the scapegoat—was to have the community's sins conferred upon its head and was then to be led into the wilderness, “bear[ing] on itself all their iniquities to a barren region” (Lev 16:22). Rabbinic tradition has the scapegoat humiliated on its way out of the city and then pushed off a cliff.⁴⁴ There are significant parallels between this ritual and the narrative of Jesus's sentence and Barabbas's release. Pontius Pilate, referencing “a custom that [he] release someone for [the crowd] at Passover,” asks the assembled crowd, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” (John 18:39). The crowd rejects this offer, demanding Barabbas instead (John 18:40). These two men—Jesus and Barabbas—may represent the two goats.

Modern Christian interpretation, influenced by social-scientific thought, consistently identifies the scapegoat with Jesus.⁴⁵ This wasn't always the case. So far as it can be determined, the earliest exegetes saw Jesus not as the fulfillment of the scapegoat, but as the fulfillment of the immolated goat. The author of Hebrews presents Jesus as a Day of Atonement sacrifice, Jennifer Maclean explains, “without any mention of the scapegoat,” and Origen, who “clearly understood Christ's death to be a fulfillment of the immolated goat,” “does not associate the scapegoat with Christ at all, but rather with the devil.”⁴⁶ Maclean summarizes, “the connection between Jesus and the immolated goat was so deeply imbedded in early Christianity that it could not be ignored.”⁴⁷ One can see why this was the case: Jesus was sacrificed (executed) and Barabbas was released.

Barabbas also fills his respective role—that of scapegoat. While most readers assume that Barabbas walks free after his release from Roman custody, a careful reading suggests another possibility. Maclean observes that the combination of the Greek verb *apolyō*, “release,” with the dative *hymin*, “to you,” “opens up new interpretative possibilities, since releasing a prisoner ‘to them’ or ‘to the crowd’ has rather ominous undertones.”⁴⁸ She continues, “we might be inclined to see

44. Mishnah *Yoma* 6:6.

45. See, for example, John P. Galvin, “Jesus as Scapegoat? Violence and the Sacred in the Theology of Raymond Schwager,” *Thomist* 46 (1982): 173–94; and René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

46. Maclean, “Barabbas,” 319, 320. See Heb 9:11–12 and Origen, *Homiliae in Leviticum* 10.2.2.

47. Maclean, “Barabbas,” 321.

48. Maclean, “Barabbas,” 321, 322. Maclean's analysis is based on the Markan narrative

the custom as one of giving up a criminal to the mob for them to enact vengeance upon.”⁴⁹ According to Maclean’s reading, Barabbas is not pardoned; rather, he is lynched by the mob, humiliated and mistreated like the scapegoat on its way out of the city.

Once modern exegetical constructs have been removed, “the parallels to the Barabbas narrative are obvious: Two goats (men) are brought before the people; one is killed, the other is released.”⁵⁰ In fact, Maclean asserts, “the narrative seems to be constructed to ensure that one is released and the other slain. This feature supports the theory that the narrative was constructed with the rituals of Lev 16 in mind.”⁵¹ Barabbas is the scapegoat; Jesus is the immolated goat. While there may be sins upon Barabbas’s head, it is the sacrifice of Jesus that brings the Day of Atonement’s promised purification from sin. The parallels now move from Jesus’s role as sacrifice to his role as sacrificer.

The Intercessory Prayer

The 17th chapter of John records a prayer offered by Jesus. The contents of this prayer prompted early commentators to recognize its priestly inclination, although the sixteenth-century theologian David Chytraeus was the first to term it as Jesus’s “High Priestly Prayer.”⁵² This interpretation is still “generally affirm[ed] by recent scholarship.”⁵³ Points of contact between Jesus’s prayer and the high priest’s prayer on the Day of Atonement include the prayers’ intercessory genre, their tripartite structure, and their focus on sanctification. The prayer, which precedes Jesus’s entrance into Gethsemane and subsequent arrest, has an “explicit intercessory nature,”⁵⁴ recalling interactions between God and many of Israel’s mediators.⁵⁵ The prerogative of mediating between YHWH and Israel belonged especially to the high priest, and nowhere is this portrayed more clearly than on

(and, to a lesser extent, that of Matthew), but the Barabbas narrative is essentially the same in the Fourth Gospel, particularly in the points that I’ve cited. The use of the verb *apolyō* with the dative *hymīn* is common to both Gospels, as is the prisoners’ presentation to the crowd and Pilate’s question as to what should be done with Jesus.

49. Maclean, “Barabbas,” 322.

50. Maclean, “Barabbas,” 313.

51. Maclean, “Barabbas,” 323. Hans Moscicke finds strong evidence to favor this conclusion of Maclean’s, although he stops short of fully endorsing her argument as a whole. See Hans Moscicke, “Jesus as Goat of the Day of Atonement in Recent Synoptic Gospels Research,” *CurBR* 17.1 (2018): 59–85, here 79–80.

52. Marianus Pale Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1–2.

53. Hera, *Christology*, 2.

54. Lunn, “Intertextual Echoes,” 738.

55. See, for example, Moses in Exod 32:11–14, 31–34, Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:27–53, and Hezekiah in 2 Chr 30:18–20.

the Day of Atonement.⁵⁶ The rabbinic expansions of Lev 16 have the high priest's offerings accompanied by solemn prayers of intercession: "O Lord, your people, the house of Israel, has committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you. Forgive, O Lord, I pray, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which your people, the house of Israel, have committed, transgressed, and sinned before you."⁵⁷ Like the high priest, Jesus also pleads his people's case before God: "I am asking on their behalf . . . sanctify them in the truth" (John 17:9, 17).

There are also structural similarities between Jesus's prayer and that of the high priest. Harold Attridge writes, "Most commentators agree that the prayer falls into three major sections, in which Jesus offers three particular petitions."⁵⁸ In the first five verses, Jesus prays on his own behalf; he uses the next fourteen to pray for his disciples; and beginning at verse twenty, he prays for those who believe the disciples' teaching. Specifically, he prays that these three beneficiaries—himself, his disciples, and the larger believing community—"may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19). Attridge notes that the "trifold structure of the prayer evokes for some readers . . . the actions and prayers of the high priest on Yom Kippur,"⁵⁹ where the high priest makes atonement "for himself *and* for his house *and* for all the assembly of Israel" (Lev 16:17).⁶⁰

Intercession and structural similarities are not all that suggest allusion; a context of sanctification is also shared by the two passages. The high priest's rites on the Day of Atonement were for the purpose of sanctifying himself, his house, and all Israel; Jesus's prayer is for the sanctification of himself, his disciples (his "house"), and the community of believers (often identified as a "new Israel").⁶¹ Kerr notes that, like that of Lev 16, Jesus's offer of sanctification "is sacrificial language."⁶² In genre, structure, and theme, the prayer of John 17 "displays some consistency with the high priestly prayers," particularly those associated with the Day of Atonement.⁶³ In John 17, Jesus is the high priest, preparing the atoning sacrifice and interceding for his people. Another aspect of the narrative also suggests this: John's use of the Greek phrase *egō eimi*.

56. Exod 28:12, 29; Lev 16:32–34. The author of Hebrews also clearly understands the high priest's Day of Atonement role as one of intercession, and like John, draws analogy between this and Jesus's role. See Heb 5:1–3; 7:25.

57. Mishnah *Yoma* 6:2; see also 3:8; 4:2.

58. Attridge, "High Priestly Prayer," 9.

59. Attridge, "High Priestly Prayer," 9.

60. Emphasis added. See also Mishnah *Yoma* 4:2.

61. Gerald Janzen comments on the shared theme of purification and also connects it with John the Baptist's declaration. See Janzen, "The Scope of Jesus's High Priestly Prayer," 20.

62. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus's Body*, 369.

63. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus's Body*, 322.

Egō Eimi and the Divine Name

Possibly in conjunction with the carefully structured presentation of Jesus's miracles, John unfolds his narrative with a series of "I am" statements from the mouth of Jesus. These "I am" logia have been the topic of a wide range of scholarship. The studies—which explore the interplay with synoptic logia, search for context within the wider Jewish and Hellenistic worlds, and draw conclusions about the identity of the Johannine Jesus—reach far beyond the scope of this discussion, but it is worthwhile to touch on a few points of relevance. These cogent points suggest that the sayings may have a context within a Day of Atonement liturgy.

It's clear that "I am," or *egō eimi* in the Greek, often has more meaning than a mere accident of grammar. These sayings of Jesus are "linked to his forgiveness of sins" and "the judgement of his enemies"—both ideas associated with the Day of Atonement—and on several occasions, the words prompt strong reactions.⁶⁴ At the temple, when Jesus concludes a discourse with the assertion, "before Abraham was, I am," his listeners respond by trying to stone him (John 8:58–59). And at his arrest in the garden, the declaration, "I am he," causes the arresting party to fall to the ground (John 18:5–6). But this isn't always the case. Sometimes, "I am" simply means "I am." How is one to decide which sayings carry added weight? Their structure may offer some clues.

In John, Jesus's *egō eimi* sayings fall into two categories: those that introduce a metaphorical image⁶⁵—such as "I am the good shepherd"—and those that occur "without an image"⁶⁶ and are grammatically independent from the rest of the sentence.⁶⁷ While there is some variety within the two patterns, the differences between the two are substantial enough to establish a "clear distinction between the formula[s]."⁶⁸ The logia in the second category, termed the "absolute" sayings,⁶⁹ are those that typically provoke strong reactions. Many commentators suggest

64. Williams, *I am He*, 6.

65. John 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5 (7 different images; 14 total occurrences).

66. Ball, *I Am*, 166.

67. John 4:26; 6:20; 8:18, 24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18: 5, 6, 8 (10 total occurrences). Two of these—4:26 and 8:18—have participial predicates and therefore cannot be completely separated from the rest of the sentence, but these sayings' construction is different enough from the first category that they can still be comfortably classified as a part of the "absolute" pattern. Both Ball and Paul Anderson, in their classifications of the Johannine "I am" logia, include 4:26 and 8:18 as part of the "absolute" family. See Anderson, "Origin and Development," 145–46, and Ball, *I Am*, 168–69.

68. Ball, *I Am*, 171.

69. Anderson, "Origin and Development," 144–47.

that these logia, which occur ten times in the Gospel,⁷⁰ “display the features of a fixed formula,” although the meaning of this formula is difficult to determine.⁷¹ Grammatically, the phrase “I am” without a predicate is meaningless. Some scholars argue that the absolute sayings amount to a “theophanic formula,” and others, a “form of self-identification.”⁷² To understand the weight of the absolute pronouncement “I am” and establish some sort of meaning, the reader must turn to the Septuagint, where two theophanic Old Testament expressions are rendered as *egō eimi*.

In response to Moses’s request for his name, God gives the well-known reply: “I AM WHO I AM” (Exod 3:14). In the Hebrew, this “name” is *’ehyeh ’āšer ’ehyeh*. The word *’ehyeh* comes from the root *hyh*—“to be”—and is also etymologically connected with the divine name YHWH.⁷³ Since this wordplay “cannot be duplicated in Greek,” the LXX opts for translation rather than transliteration and takes this phrase as *egō eimi ho ōn*—“I am The One Who Is.”⁷⁴ The other phrase, *’ānī hū’*, or “I am he,” is most prominent in a series of “declarations pronounced by Yahweh” in Isaiah’s latter half, although the phrase is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁵ Since, in an Isaianic context, it always comes from the mouth of YHWH, this expression has been interpreted as a claim to “divine immutability,” “eternal steadfastness,” “divine sovereignty,” and an “exclusive [claim] to divinity.”⁷⁶ And like *’ehyeh*, the LXX translates *’ānī hū’* as *egō eimi*. Although they are separate expressions in the Hebrew, by means of a Greek translation these two theophanic formulas became united into one phrase: *egō eimi*. Whether replacing *’ehyeh ’āšer ’ehyeh* in Exod 3:14 or *’ānī hū’* in Isaiah, *egō eimi* appears to introduce a revelation of divinity. Various scholars within the Septuagint and New Testament fields assert that the LXX translators understood *egō eimi* as a legitimate form of the divine name,⁷⁷ “equivalent to YHWH.”⁷⁸

70. Anderson, “Origin and Development,” 145–47; Ball, *I Am*, 168–69. Not all scholars agree about where the line should be drawn, but I agree with Anderson and Ball, who both identify ten total absolute logia.

71. Ball, *I Am*, 166. Note that Ball is citing earlier studies. He himself is cautious about characterizing every case of *egō eimi* as a formula. I agree that not all *egō eimi* sayings are created equal, but I feel that the absolute logia are distinct enough to represent some sort of formula. Ball seems amenable to this idea. See p. 167.

72. Williams, *I am He*, 5.

73. Austin Surls, *Making Sense of the Divine Name in Exodus: From Etymology to Literary Onomastics* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 78–79.

74. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46, 53.

75. Williams, *I am He*, 23.

76. Williams, *I am He*, 39, 41.

77. Williams, *I am He*, 58.

78. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’s Body*, 326, 329. This view is debated, but regardless, as

If *egō eimi* in its absolute form was regarded as “a formal epithet for God,” the crowds’ reactions begin to make more sense.⁷⁹ As Charles Gieschen writes, “If these absolute [*egō eimi*] sayings were not closely related to the Divine Name, why does one cause the Jews who heard it reach for stones (8.59) and another cause his arresting party to fall to the ground (18.6)?”⁸⁰ Rabbinic Judaism forbade pronouncing the divine name, and this likely represents earlier trends.⁸¹ At the one time that the rabbis allowed the name YHWH to be heard—when the high priest offered prayer on the Day of Atonement⁸²—their recollection asserts that those who heard “the Expressed Name . . . would kneel, and bow down, and fall on their faces,” recalling the reaction of the arresting party in the garden.⁸³ In fact, this reaction and three *egō eimi* sayings in the arrest episode may be the key to understanding the Johannine use of the phrase.

The three “I am” logia in the garden (John 18:5, 6, 8) represent the eighth, ninth, and tenth occurrences of *egō eimi* in its absolute form. While on its own, the number ten is intriguing for typological reasons, there is an even more interesting possibility. Rabbinic sources claim that as part of the Day of Atonement’s rites, the divine name was also expressed ten times by the high priest, culminating “at the climax of the service.”⁸⁴ Jesus’s ten absolute *egō eimi* declarations may well reflect this tradition of a tenfold ritual repetition by the high priest. If we are to regard *egō eimi* as a legitimate form of this divine name, then it is likely that John’s design with the absolute logia is meant to point his audience to a Yom Kippur tradition that is also preserved by rabbinic memory. Jesus, as both the high priest and the sacrifice, reveals his divine identity by means of Day of Atonement liturgy.

Catrin Williams summarizes, “there is no doubt that this succinct and rhythmic formulation is intended as a solemn expression of God’s self-declaration” (Williams, *I am He*, 60). Regardless of the LXX translators’ attitude towards *egō eimi*’s relationship with the name YHWH, by using the Septuagint as its primary text, the Greek-speaking Judaism would have attached divine connotations to the phrase. By Jesus’s time, *egō eimi* had been associated with theophany for generations.

79. Janzen, “The Scope of Jesus’s High Priestly Prayer,” 17–18.

80. Charles A. Gieschen, “The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology,” *VC* 57 (2003): 115–58, here 141.

81. Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 7:5. Note the similarities to Mark 14:61–64, which suggest that the Mishnah is preserving elements of a tradition that date back to at least the writing of Mark’s gospel.

82. Rachel Elijor, “Early Forms of Jewish Mysticism,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 8 vols., ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4:779. Not all scholars agree that this was the only time the name YHWH was pronounced.

83. Mishnah *Yoma* 6:2. See also Williams, *I am He*, 292.

84. Elijor, “Jewish Mysticism,” 778; Tosefta *Kippurim* 2:2, from Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta: Moed* (New York: Ktav, 1981); Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 39b.

CONCLUSION

As this study moves towards a close, a serious question remains: If the Day of Atonement is part of the narrative design, then why doesn't the author simply state it outright? Duke professor Mark Goodacre makes an argument that can be adapted by analogy to the current issue. He asks about the identity of John's "beloved disciple":

Why is it that so many people across the centuries have assumed that the beloved disciple is John, the son of Zebedee? . . . It's because the text allows the reader—it encourages the reader—to make that very identification. . . . [From what] we know about this character . . . there's only one candidate, and that candidate is, of course, John. . . . John is conspicuous by his absence in the Gospel. He's never mentioned by name and that, therefore, makes him a very obvious candidate to be the beloved disciple in John's gospel. He appears to be present—and this is something that is repeatedly missed in literature on John's gospel—he appears to be present, cloaked in anonymity, in chapter one . . . exactly where you'd expect him.⁸⁵

Goodacre makes an argument by way of exclusion: the beloved disciple plays such an important role—and John is so conspicuously absent—that the text itself suggests that the two should be identified. It's a clever literary ploy, a sort of anonymity that undermines itself with a hint that is simultaneously subliminal and obvious.

It is striking that the Day of Atonement also goes unmentioned in the Fourth Gospel. Out of Second Temple Judaism's four temple-related festivals, Yom Kippur is the only one not explicitly mentioned. Passover,⁸⁶ Tabernacles,⁸⁷ and even the non-biblical Dedication⁸⁸ all receive mention, but the absence of the Day of Atonement is glaring, which, among other things, leads some theologians to declare that "no atonement teaching is found in the Gospel of John."⁸⁹ This is not the case. As demonstrated in this study, the Fourth Gospel seems to contain imagery from Yom Kippur. Why, then, does the author fail to mention it?

To paraphrase Goodacre's argument, it may be that the text encourages the reader to identify the Gospel's narrative itself as an unfolding of Yom Kippur's

85. Mark Goodacre, *The NT Pod: A Historical Approach to the New Testament*, Episode 38: "Who is the Beloved Disciple?" 12 June 2010, <https://podacre.blogspot.com/2010/06/nt-pod-38-who-is-beloved-disciple-in.html>.

86. John 2:23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14.

87. John 7:2.

88. John 10:22.

89. George L. Carey, "The Lamb of God and Atonement Theories," *TynBul* 32 (1981): 97–122, here 97.

ritual. The Day of Atonement is conspicuous by its absence in the Gospel, but appears to be present, cloaked in anonymity, introduced in chapter one, exactly where you'd expect it. If John's Gospel is the Day of Atonement, the reader's first clue is John the Baptist's declaration, and the arrest is the culminating moment in the revelation of Jesus's identity. The passion narrative begins with the end of the *egō eimi* sayings, and from there, the parallels only grow stronger.

Other topics remain to be explored. Does Jesus's washing of his disciples' feet in John 13 correspond to the priestly washings and immersions on the Day of Atonement and elsewhere?⁹⁰ Is the otherwise puzzling mention of Jesus's cloak at the crucifixion actually a veiled allusion to the high priest's linen Yom Kippur garb?⁹¹ The high priest was to be kept up all night on the eve of the holy day and have scriptures read to him; how does this compare with John's account of Jesus's final night?⁹² John and Hebrews both seem to tap into an early Christian tradition that portrays Jesus as both high priest and sacrificial victim. Do other sources corroborate this? Are there any other meaningful interactions between the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel? All of these are interesting and potentially valuable avenues for further research.

However, the elements and connections treated in this paper are substantial enough to suggest calculated interplay between the Gospel of John and Jewish ritual. John the Baptist's declaration, the Barabbas narrative, the Intercessory Prayer, and the tenfold repetition of *egō eimi* demonstrate the possibility that the author of John deliberately incorporated themes from the Day of Atonement into his narrative. One of the arguments of the Gospel, then, is that the death of Jesus carries the salvific weight of Israel's atoning rituals. Jesus's role, in the eyes of the author of John, is to purify his community through his removal of their sins.

90. Compare John 12:3–8; 13:3–20 with Lev 16:4, 23–24 and Mishnah *Yoma* 3:2–5.

91. Lunn, "Intertextual Echoes," 742–43.

92. Compare John 18–19 with Mishnah *Yoma* 1:4–7.

WHY SHE RAN

HEBREW BIBLE WELL SYMBOLISM IN THE PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES 11.1–4

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Abstract: There are aspects of the annunciation scene—as portrayed in the Protevangelium of James—which have not yet been examined by modern scholars. These issues are important when relating to the history of well symbolism in the Hebrew Bible, which symbolism continued in force through the Second Temple period. This paper examines the symbolism of wells, fertility, and marriage and how the author of the Protevangelium of James consciously knew about this symbolism and wrote his narrative in a way that distanced Mary, the mother of Jesus, from any ideas saying that she was less than virginal.

“**And she took her water jar and went out to fill it with water.** Suddenly there was a voice saying to her, ‘Greetings favored one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.’ Mary began looking around, both right and left, to see where the voice was coming from. **She became terrified and went home.** After putting the **water jar** down and taking up the purple thread, she sat down on her chair and began to spin.”¹

Some of the most famous Hebrew Bible betrothal scenes happened at a well, such as those depicting Abraham’s servant and Rebekah (Gen 24), Jacob and Rachel (Gen 29), and Moses and Zipporah (Exod 2). Typically, ancient texts reflected a

1. The Protevangelium of James 11.1–4, emphasis added. All translations from the Protevangelium of James come from Ronald Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1995), 51–53.

masculine psychology and perspective.² However, these encounters with strange men, which typically changed the women's lives, may have been frightening for the women involved. The author of the Protevangelium of James seems to have used these themes of betrothal and fear in his retelling of the annunciation. By interweaving these themes, he was able to enhance his theme of Mary's exceptional purity and virginity by setting Gabriel's first words to Mary when she was on her way to draw water, presumably at a well.³ Furthermore, when the author depicts Mary hurrying home after hearing the disembodied voice, he implies that she is running away from the imagery of marriage and sexuality that colors biblical well scenes.

THE PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES

The Protevangelium of James is thus labeled due to its claim of being an account that occurred before the formal evangelism of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. Other names it has received are *Birth of Mary*, *Revelation of James*—credited to the epilogue of the writing—and *The Book of James* by Origen in the third century.⁴ “James” seems to refer to James the brother of Jesus, or James the Less. But while the Protevangelium of James claims to be written by James, most scholars assume it is a pseudonymous writing that dates to the latter half of the second century or the early third century.⁵ But while things such as author, dating, genre, and provenance are debated, championing Mary's purity and virginity appears to be the author's main goal.⁶ The canonical accounts also emphasize that Mary was a virgin, but the Protevangelium of James seems to be concerned with Mary's perpetual virginity, unlike the traditional infancy narratives, which only assert that Mary was a virgin before and during her pregnancy because of theological concerns surrounding

2. While the meeting in Gen 24 has Rebekah as “actor” as opposed to someone who is “acted upon,” the story still is told from the male perspective of Abraham's servant. The ratio of male/female action in these stories has previously been explored in Esther Fuchs, “Structure and Patriarchal Functions in the Biblical Betrothal Type-Scene: Some Preliminary Notes,” *JFSR* 3.1 (1987): 7–13.

3. While the Protevangelium of James does not specifically say the word “well,” the text seems to imply that Mary was on her way to a well or spring to fill her water jug (Prot. Jas. 11.1). Furthermore, many scholars, when describing the scene, describe it as “The Annunciation at the Well” Cf. David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliot, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha* (London: Routledge, 2001), 79.

4. Origen, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei*, 10.17.

5. A more conservative dating is 170–250 CE, as espoused in Paul Foster, “The Protevangelium of James,” in *The Non-Canonical Gospels*, ed. Paul Foster (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 110–53, here 113. However, some suggest the earlier dating of 150–200 CE, such as John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), 212; and Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 12.

6. Foster, “Protevangelium,” 117. Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 14–15.

Jesus's birth.⁷ This might be in response to criticisms of Mary, which asserted that she was impregnated by a Roman soldier and that she was a poor girl who needed to make her livelihood by spinning.⁸ A prime example of these rumors is in Celsus's *True Doctrine*. While the Protevangelium of James may seem like an apologetic in response to Celsus's work, Ronald Hock reminds us that Celsus was far from being unique in his opinions.⁹ Such rumors could explain why the Protevangelium of James is packed with imagery of purity and perfections, such as Mary taking seven steps during her first year (Prot. Jas. 6.2) and being fed by the hand of an angel (Prot. Jas. 10.1). In addition to implicit commentaries on her purity, explicit observations on her virginity are made in the Protevangelium of James—for example, when examined by Salome after giving birth, Mary was found to still be a virgin (Prot. Jas. 19–20). Scholars such as Pieter W. van der Horst and Lily C. Vuong have expounded on this commentary on Mary's purity in the Protevangelium of James extensively.¹⁰

The themes of the Protevangelium of James seem to be clear to scholars, but issues of authorship and cultural influences are less obvious. It is assumed that the author of the Protevangelium of James came from a Jewish background due to his extensive knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, specifically the Septuagint (LXX). This is seen by similarities in narrative and, at times, explicit citations from the text.¹¹ The names of Mary's parents, for example, seem to be taken directly from the LXX, as Joachim, a rich man, is found in Sus 4, and "Anna" is the Greek rendition of the Hebrew name "Hannah" from 1 Sam 2.¹² The similarities between Anna and Hannah have been explored by Paul Foster, who notes that not only are the names similar, but Anna's songs of lament and praise concerning her barrenness and pregnancy mirrors Hannah's from 1 Sam 2.¹³ Additionally, the annunciation to Mary in the Protevangelium of James follows a pattern of annunciation in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁴ which prepares the reader for the birth of a character who will

7. W. S. Vorster, "The Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus in the Protevangelium of James," in *A South African Perspective on the New Testament*, ed. Jacobus H. Petzer and Patrick J. Hartin (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 33–53, here 46–47.

8. Foster, "Protevangelium," 113.

9. Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 12.

10. Pieter W. van der Horst, "Sex, Birth, Purity and Asceticism in the *Protevangelium Jacobi*," *Neot* 28.3 (1994): 205–18. See also Lily C. Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James*, WUNT 358 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

11. For examples of explicit citations from the LXX text, see Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 21–22.

12. Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 10.

13. Foster, "Protevangelium," 116.

14. Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (London: Chapman, 1977), 156.

play an important role in “salvation history.”¹⁵ This pattern was followed for numerous Hebrew Bible figures, such as Ishmael, Isaac, and Samson.¹⁶

While it seems clear that the author had strong ties to the Jewish scriptures—specifically the Greek translation—many have argued that he also was influenced by the rising Christian community, its texts, and other culturally significant writings during his time. The Protevangelium of James relies heavily on the canonical infancy narratives, although the author feels secure deviating from them.¹⁷ For example, the Protevangelium of James takes the visitation of the magi scene almost directly from Matt 2, but when Herod begins slaughtering the innocents, Mary simply wraps Jesus in swaddling clothes and hides him in the manger instead of running to Egypt.¹⁸ The Protevangelium of James also has many phrases that mimic those from the canonical Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and 1 Peter.¹⁹ Ronald Hock argues that the Protevangelium of James was also influenced by Greek romances, such as Longus’s *Daphnis and Chloe*, which includes a scene where Chloe’s mother encourages her to stay inside and spin. He then asserts that this explains why Mary ran away from the well to her spindle and distaff when she hears a strange male voice, since spinning was a more virtuous activity.²⁰ Vuong furthers this assertion when she places Prot. Jas. 11.1–4 in the cultural context of concern for protecting a maiden’s virginity from “rape, seduction, and the loss of one’s virginity.”²¹

Thus far we have seen that scholarship has agreed on Mary’s purity and virginity as the central theme of the Protevangelium of James. The author of the Protevangelium establishes this theme by comparing Mary to virtuous characters from the Hebrew Bible and by presenting her as respectable in Prot. Jas. 11.1–4, where she runs home to spin when she hears the disembodied male voice. However, little scholarship has been done concerning where she was running *from*. Yes, she left the scene because she heard a male voice, but because of how carefully the author of the Protevangelium of James uses Hebrew Bible stories and symbolism, it is not unreasonable to deduce that the author set Prot. Jas. 11.1–2 near a well so that Mary could escape the imagery of marriage and

15. Raymond Brown et al., ed., *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 114.

16. Vorster, “Annunciation,” 43–44. Cf. Gen 16:10–12; 18:12–14; Judg 13:2.

17. Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 5–6.

18. Prot. Jas. 22.3–4.

19. Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 22.

20. Hock, *Infancy Gospels*, 25–27. For further reading on spinning as a respectable activity for a young woman and further reception by the Christian community of Mary spinning during the annunciation, see Catherine Gines Taylor, *Allotting the Scarlet and the Purple: Late Antique Images of the Virgin Annunciate Spinning* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

21. Vuong, *Gender and Purity*, 163–64.

sexuality (which colors biblical well scenes) and run to a setting that was deemed more virtuous.

HEBREW BIBLE WELL SYMBOLISM

Well imagery, including the act of drawing water from wells or fountains, is a common symbol for fertility, women, marriage, and sexuality in the Hebrew Bible. It is especially potent throughout the Hebrew Bible's betrothal type-scenes in the Torah and in the poetry of the Ketuvim. Furthermore, we can see that this symbolism surrounding wells and water-drawing imagery was carried over to the New Testament, and arguably, the Protevangelium of James.

Betrothal Type-Scenes

A biblical type-scene is a literary device observed in the Hebrew Bible that links stories together by setting the characters in similar scenes.²² Specifically, betrothal type-scenes connect the meetings of Abraham's servant and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and Moses and Zipporah by having all three couples meet at wells while the woman is on her way to draw water, having the man meet her family, and having a betrothal take place.

The first of the betrothal type-scenes is the narrative that results in Isaac marrying Rebekah. It is also the longest, most detailed, and most repetitive of the betrothal type-scenes. In Gen 24, Abraham's servant is searching for a wife for Isaac and in order to find her, he asks God to give him a sign that if he asks the young woman who is to marry Isaac for water, that she will offer to give water to his camels as well. When the servant goes to the well, Rebekah comes and draws him water exactly as the sign dictates. He then gives her jewelry and asks to see her family to make the request for her to marry Isaac. The servant repeats the details of the signs to her family, and while the family consents, it ultimately is Rebekah's decision to marry Isaac. All of the betrothal type-scenes follow this narrative's core structure: Man goes to a well, a woman enters the scene to draw water, the man goes home with her to meet her family, and the meeting results in betrothal.

Thus, the story of Rachel and Jacob follows this essential pattern but includes more focus on Jacob's actions as opposed to Gen 24, where the focus is on Rebekah's actions and divine intervention. In Gen 29 Jacob goes to the well, Rachel comes to water her father's flock, and upon learning that Rachel is his cousin, he kisses her and goes to meet her family. Jacob's story, of course, ends up

22. Lyle Eslinger, "The Wooing of the Woman at the Well: Jesus, the Reader, and Reader-Response Criticism," *Literature and Theology* 1.2 (1987): 167–83. See also the chapter titled "Biblical Type-Scenes and the Uses of Convention" in Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 55–78.

being more complicated than it was for Isaac, but even though Jacob is required to work for Laban for seven years before he can marry his bride, a betrothal is still arranged as part of the betrothal type-scene.

The betrothal type-scene that leads to Moses's and Zipporah's marriage is one of the least detailed and contains almost no information about Zipporah. In Exod 2, after fleeing from Egypt, Moses sits by a well. Seven sisters enter the scene and draw water, when Moses rises to defend them from shepherds who are trying to drive the sisters' flocks away. Moses then goes to meet the sisters' father and then becomes betrothed to Zipporah. Exodus 2 is completely focused on the character of Moses, and Zipporah seems to be a bit of an afterthought as compared with Gen 24, where most of the focus is on Rebekah and her actions, and with Gen 29, where even though Jacob is the main actor, he first chooses Rachel and then goes to her father for permission to marry her. Moses's marriage to Zipporah is not written as if it is important to the author or the story. The marriage serves more to connect Moses and Reuel, and tie them together as father and son-in-law. Esther Fuchs uses these stories to argue that as time progressed, the authors of the Hebrew Bible became less concerned about women and their choices, and the focus shifted entirely to the men of the Bible.²³ In turn, as the focus of betrothal type-scenes changed from women to men, the imagery associated with wells became less associated with fertility, female creation, and sexuality, to become associated purely with marriage and women belonging to men.

One of the effects of type-scenes is that they set a precedent for successive biblical narratives. Thus, if a biblical author decided to use the elements of a betrothal type-scene, the audience could guess that something about marriage would follow. One example of this is in the story of Ruth. In Ruth 2, after returning with her mother-in-law to Bethlehem, Ruth goes to the fields to gather leftover wheat. When Boaz comes to tell Ruth that she is welcome to do so, he also tells her that there is a well nearby and that she can go draw water from it when she needs to. Alter argues that the allusion to the betrothal type-scenes in Genesis and Exodus is used as a literary device to make the reader think of marriage when Boaz tells Ruth about the well.²⁴ If the author of Ruth is truly alluding to betrothal type-scenes, Ruth is likened more to Rebekah, because Ruth also acts to choose her husband. Or, if the audience, at the time Ruth was written, was accustomed to the dilution of well imagery so that it implied focus on only men, Ruth choosing her own destiny could be seen as well-written irony.

23. Fuchs, "Structure and Patriarchal Functions," 7–13.

24. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 61.

The placement of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at a well in John 4 could also be an ironic allusion. While Jesus's conversation with the Samaritan woman does not conclude in a literal betrothal, the discussion of her marital history at a well alludes to the symbol of betrothal in the Hebrew Bible. Scholars have tied the conversation from John 4 with the betrothal type-scenes. One scholar, Lyle Eslinger, argues that John 4 directly parallels Hebrew Bible betrothals in order to influence the reader to find marriage symbolism in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.²⁵ Eslinger then further associates John 4 with the double entendre wells and water imagery provide in the Hebrew Bible.²⁶ Ellen Aitken also argues that John 4 references the meeting of Rachel and Jacob. She does this by arguing nine main details, including the following: the time of the meeting is high noon, the man has knowledge of the woman previous to the encounter, and a "revelatory statement is uttered," referencing when Jacob tells Rachel he knows who she is and when the Samaritan woman says that the Messiah has come.²⁷ This encounter and its relationship to betrothal type-scenes is significant because it implies that the imagery concerning wells, water drawing, and this type of meeting at wells continued from the time Genesis was written to the Second Temple period.

Further Symbolism

Wells are used in the Hebrew Bible not only as physical places, but also as symbols, specifically symbols of fertility, life, and women. The Hebrew Bible uses wells to symbolize these things because wells were a well-understood symbol during that time period, as Carole Fontaine explains in her article "Visual Metaphors and Proverbs 5:15–20."²⁸ Fontaine uses the examples of "mother-goddess jars," sturdy jars for carrying something heavy (presumably water), decorated with breasts and an inverted triangle, traditionally accepted as depicting female genitalia, to show that water was traditionally associated with women, especially potable water used to maintain life.²⁹ These water and well metaphors are explicit in Prov 5:15–18:

25. Eslinger, "The Wooing of the Woman at the Well," 168–69.

26. Eslinger, "The Wooing of the Woman at the Well," 169–72.

27. Ellen B. Aitken, "At the Well of Living Water: Jacob Traditions in John 4," in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 348.

28. Carole R. Fontaine, "Visual Metaphors and Proverbs 5:15–20: Some Archaeological Reflections on Gendered Iconography," in *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Ronald L. Troxel, Kelvin G. Friebel, and Dennis Robert Magary (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 185–202.

29. Fontaine, "Visual Metaphors," 190–92.

Drink water out of thine own cistern,
And running waters out of thine own well.

Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad,
And rivers of waters in the streets.

Let them be only thine own,
And not strangers' with thee.

Let thy fountain be blessed:
And rejoice with the wife of thy youth.³⁰

Song of Solomon 4:12–15 also uses well imagery as the author compares “my sister, my spouse” to “a well of living waters,” and a well that is “shut up” and “sealed.” Both passages not only compare the wife to a well, but they include imagery of containment. Fontaine argues that the authors of the Hebrew Bible differed from the rest of the ancient Near East because of this idea of containment.³¹ Most of the ancient Near East had artifacts such as the “mother-goddess jars” and creation legends that include “water-women,” like Tiamat, who are unbridled and are constantly creating. The imagery associated with women in the Hebrew Bible, in contrast, appears to control these “natural” passions of women and place the responsibility of “shutting them up” or “containing” them upon their husbands.

The idea of water equaling fertility is also mentioned by the author of the Protevangelium of James himself. In Prot. Jas. 2–3, Anna—who would become the mother of Mary—laments that she has not and cannot bear children, by stating that she is not like the “fruitful waters” (Prot. Jas. 3.2). This part of her lament differs from the previously discussed parallel to Hannah’s prayer in 1 Sam 1–2 because Hannah did not include water imagery.³² Therefore, if the author of the Protevangelium of James added this imagery of “fruitful waters” to Anna’s lament, there is good reason to believe that he understood the link between water and fertility.

CONCLUSION: APPLYING WELL SYMBOLISM TO THE ANNUNCIATION IN THE PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES

As we can see, there is an abundance of marriage and sexuality symbolism imposed upon wells and water imagery throughout the Hebrew Bible, and there is evidence that this symbolism carried over into the first centuries CE—as can

30. All translations of the biblical text are from the King James Version.

31. Fontaine, “Visual Metaphors,” 200.

32. Foster, “Protevangelium,” 116.

be seen by well symbolism used in John 4 and terms such as “fruitful waters” within the Protevangelium of James. Because of these two facts, it would be naive to assume that the author of the Protevangelium of James was not aware of the marriage and sexuality symbolism surrounding well and water imagery. This, along with the knowledge of how carefully this author chose details from the lives of Mary and Jesus to emphasize Mary’s virginal purity, creates a purposeful dichotomy between Mary’s perpetual virginity and rumors of Jesus’s illegitimacy—such as those stated in Celsus’s *True Doctrine*. This dichotomy is represented by two different actions, Mary’s virginity by her spinning the veil of the temple, and imagery of marriage and sexuality through the act of her drawing water—as seen in the Hebrew Bible.

Because of this rhetorical device, it is likely that the author of the Protevangelium of James intentionally began the annunciation scene with Mary going to draw water from a well or fountain to remind readers of the marriage and sexuality imagery associated with water in the Hebrew Bible. Likewise, in keeping with his theme of honoring Mary’s exceptional and impossible purity, the author depicts Mary as leaving the well—figuratively saying that she is running away from the symbolism associated with water and wells—and shows her returning home and spinning, which is a place and activity deemed much more maidenly and virtuous.