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THE USE OF NAKEDNESS IMAGERY AS THEOLOGICAL
LANGUAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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THE USE OF NAKEDNESS IMAGERY AS THEOLOGICAL
LANGUAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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To Kathleen, my greatest friend and love in this life.

To Reas, Justin, Ethan, Evelyn, and Benjamin, my blessings from the Lord.

It is done.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ANE	Ancient Near East
<i>ANEP</i>	James B. Pritchard, ed., <i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 2 nd ed.
<i>ANET</i>	James B. Pritchard, ed., <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3 rd ed.
<i>ANF</i>	Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, <i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325</i> , 10 vols.
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles Briggs, Edward Robinson, and Wilhelm Gesenius, eds, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, With an Appendix Containing Biblical Aramaic</i>
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms
ConC	Concordia Commentary
CC	Continental Commentaries
<i>DCH</i>	David J. A. Clines, <i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> , 8 vols.
GKC	E. Kautzsch, ed. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , 2 nd ed.
<i>HALOT</i>	Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , 5 vols.
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>

<i>IBHS</i>	Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
Joüon	Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> , 2 nd ed.
JPSTC	JPS Torah Commentary
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
NAC	New American Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	William A. VanGemeren, ed., <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Ethics</i> , 5 vols.
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
<i>NPNF</i> ¹	Philip Schaff, <i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , Series 1, 14 vols.
<i>NPNF</i> ²	Philip Schaff, <i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , Series 2, 14 vols.
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SHBC	Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary
<i>TDOT</i>	G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , 16 vols.
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
<i>TWOT</i>	R. Laird Harris, Gleason L Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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PREFACE

This preface could easily be as long as this dissertation, recognizing all those who loved, challenged, and carried me through this process. I thank my king, Jesus, for being a God I can love and hope in with all my might and never be disappointed. Thank you for the desire to learn, to teach, and to serve your people. Please now give me the strength to continue well until I breathe no more.

I am grateful for all my co-workers through the years, keeping my head on my shoulders, providing not just a job to pay the bills, but a community to live life with. Your encouragement, conversations, and the many laughs have made heavy burdens lighter. I am particularly grateful for my Global Campus colleagues whose patience and many prayers have made the completion of this project possible. I also want to thank my neighbor Ralph, our “Indiana Grandpa” whose investment of love and care for my family exemplifies the role of Neighbor (Matt 22:39).

I am grateful for the faithfulness, investment, and friendship of the numerous professors and colleagues at Southern Seminary. Drs. Gregg Allison and Adam Howell agreed to serve on my dissertation committee, and I am grateful for their input on this project. I want to thank especially my doctoral supervisor, Dr. T. J. Betts, for taking a chance on a married man with four children (five now) who was working a full-time job. I never felt pressured by him, but he always had advice and encouragement whenever I needed it. At one point during my studies, he and his wife took our five children to a local festival for the day so that my wife and I could have time together, a task, I am quite certain, that falls outside the expected duties written into a faculty contract. He also gave me numerous opportunities to assist him with classes, allowing me to teach regularly and learn how to instruct a course.

When considering Ph.D. studies, I wanted to work under someone who modeled robust scholarly study yet had a heart of love for the Lord and for his church. I knew Dr. Betts was that man when I observed him serving regularly with the same sincerity in our church's nursery as he did in the classroom or pulpit. Dr. Betts, thank you for your example, patience, encouragement, service, and your regularly-spoken belief that I could finish this degree.

I am also grateful for my brothers and sisters and the ministry staff at Ninth and O Baptist Church. Thank you for pouring into my family and me for over a decade. It is intimidating to pull off our masks and expose the good, bad, and ugly to each other, but the fruit is remarkable. I have been blessed to work closely with many of you in ministry, and I will probably never realize fully how much I learned and grew because of our labor together. To Dr. Bill Cook, my pastor, thank you for your faithful teaching, prayer, encouragement, and exhortation. I am a better husband, father, and minister because of your investment in my life.

Adam and Liz Howell are the dearest friends Kathleen and I could ever hope for. We have laughed and cried together, ministered together, and pushed each other onward in life, straining to glorify God with all our might. I am in awe at what the Lord has done. Liz, your love and support for Kathleen is a priceless treasure to me. Adam, brother, it is an honor and delight to do life with you. I would have fallen long ago without your steady friendship (Prov 18:24).

For over a decade, my family has carried us through the M.Div. and Ph.D. with their prayer, encouragement, and much-needed holidays to visit and rest as a family, graciously giving up time and experiences with us so that we could pursue this training and opportunity. Thank you all. I want to extend thanks specifically to my parents, Rod and Donna Hanley, my grandparents, Ralph and Dequita Hanley, my parents-in-law, Rick and Erin Urbanek, my brother and his wife, Aaron and Kristin Hanley, and my Sis (Jennifer Fintel).

Team Hanley, thank you. My words are woefully inadequate. Thank you for your patience and understanding during the many Saturdays and library nights I spent working on this project. Reas, Justin, Ethan, Evelyn, and Benjamin, I hope you will always know that my heart was at home with you, and I couldn't wait to come back and read with you, wrestle, or hear about the latest adventure you had experienced. Being your dad is an honor and joy. We were all blessed by the wisdom of your mother for inventing Family Fun Night early in the Ph.D. process, a day we could all anticipate and hold onto through long semesters and seasons. To the reader of Proverbs, let it be known that I found אִשְׁת־חַיִל (Prov 31:10). Kathleen is a woman whose worth surpasses all wealth. We have laughed more than we have cried (sometimes to keep from crying). We have brought five little image-bearers into this world, and there is no one I would rather walk hand-in-hand with through life than her. Our story is a great adventure. She keeps my heart in heaven and my feet on the ground, reminding me never to miss the beauty of the things I study. Kathleen, thank you. We did it. Let's go to the beach.

Ryan Cole Hanley

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen 2:25).¹ “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths” (Gen 3:7). The first few pages of the Old Testament use nakedness imagery to reveal theological truth. Even thousands of years after Genesis was written, the concept of humans being naked without shame is difficult to imagine. Yet Genesis 2:25 envisions an environment in which basic human modesty was seemingly irrelevant.² Only a few verses later though, the couple finds themselves ashamed and sewing together fig leaves to cover their nakedness. Before sending them away from Eden, YHWH provides clothing for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21). By the time of the Prophets, Israel, metaphorically represented as a prostitute, has turned away from following YHWH, and Ezekiel brings this message:

¹All English references in this dissertation are from the English Standard Version unless indicated otherwise.

²This interpretation is common in modern treatments of Gen 2:25, e.g., C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R, 2006), 173; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 224-25; and Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 90-92. However, the interpretation of nakedness as an idyllic state is debated by many and is discussed in chap. 4. For example, see G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 41; Arthur George and Elena George, *Mythology of Eden* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton, 2014), 248-52; William N. Wilder, “Illumination and Investiture: The Royal Significance of the Tree of Wisdom in Genesis 3,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 51-69; and Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2013), 158-59, 172-78, as interpreters with significantly different hermeneutical presuppositions who conclude that Adam and Eve were intended to wear clothes eventually.

Therefore, O prostitute, hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your whorings with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness (Ezek 16:35-37).

The prophet declares that YHWH, who acted to cover nakedness in Genesis 3:21, will now uncover nakedness because his people are acting like spiritual prostitutes.

These are only two examples where nakedness imagery is used in the OT. Noah uncovers himself after becoming drunk (Gen 9:21). Israel is forbidden from building altars with steps, lest the priests expose their nakedness when they go to sacrifice (Exod 20:26). Illegitimate familial sexual relationships are prohibited in Leviticus 18 and 20 with the language of “uncovering nakedness” (גלה ערוה). YHWH threatens nakedness in Deuteronomy 28 as a part of the covenant curses if Israel turns away from following him. The prophets pick up this curse threat later in Israel’s history (e.g., Hos 2; Ezek 16 and 23). As Saul seeks to execute David, the Spirit of God comes upon him, and he strips himself naked, prophesying throughout the night (1 Sam 19:24). After God permits the loss of his servants, animals, and children, Job tears his robe and worships, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). In each of these texts, the biblical authors intend to convey more than the mere physical state of human nakedness. They use nakedness language to communicate theological concepts.

Several reference works have addressed the meaning of nakedness in summary form including this theological use of nakedness language. For instance, Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman state, “The biblical images evoked by the word *naked* are many and varied. They include, among other things, original innocence, defenselessness and vulnerability; exposure and helplessness; humiliation and

shame; guilt and judgment; and sexual impropriety and exploitation.”³ Indeed, numerous reference works address nakedness imagery in the Bible and identify most matters of theological significance.⁴ These studies affirm the value of this dissertation by emphasizing the validity of a theological use of nakedness imagery in the OT. Yet, their genre limits thorough discussion of the various OT texts in which nakedness imagery is used, and thus these studies also show the need for this dissertation. In fact, Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman even note, “Each of these various nuances [of nakedness] needs to be carefully identified in each scriptural context.”⁵

Numerous studies also address nakedness language in their pertinent OT texts, often commenting on the theological use of nakedness as part of the general comments on the pericope.⁶ However, the discussion in those texts typically focuses on that passage and only examines nakedness in other texts to determine a lexical meaning. In any case, no extensive treatment exists that thoroughly examines the cultural, lexical, textual, and theological data of nakedness imagery used throughout the OT. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap of study.

³Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 581.

⁴For example, see F. Brent Knutson, “Naked,” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. G. W. Bromily (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 4:480; Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 581-82; David M. Howard, “גלה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 2:861-64; Boyd V. Seevers, “ערה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:527-31; Seevers, “ערום,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:532-33; Hans-Jürgen Zobel, “גלה,” in *TDOT*, 2:476-488; H. Niehr, “ערה,” in *TDOT*, 11:343-49; Niehr, “ערום,” in *TDOT*, 11:349-54; Bruce K. Waltke, “גלה,” in *TWOT*, 1:160-62; Carl Schultz, “עור,” in *TWOT*, 656-57; and Ronald B. Allen, “ערה,” in *TWOT*, 2:695.

⁵Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 581.

⁶Most substantive commentaries will address the use of nakedness, though the level of engagement with other texts varies. This dissertation references these studies in their relevant sections in the dissertation. For example, Tremper Longman III, *Genesis, Story of God Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 51-78, engages the theological implications of nakedness in the garden story. On the other hand, Jacob Milgrom interacts with nakedness language at the anthropological and mythical level in “Sex and Wisdom: What the Garden of Eden Story Is Saying,” *Bible Review* 10, no. 6 (1994): 21, 52; and Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 188, 208.

Thesis

This dissertation argues that the biblical writers of the OT used the language of nakedness as a powerful means to communicate theological information to the reader. Though biblical reference works have recognized this theological use of nakedness imagery, the genre limits detailed analysis of the theological categories or the texts in which nakedness language occurs. Additionally, commentaries or treatments of particular texts have also highlighted the theological use of nakedness imagery in the pericope, but their genre limits discussion primarily to that text only. Thus, this dissertation seeks to address this limitation, expanding on the basic categories listed in these theological reference works by studying the use of nakedness language in specific Old Testament texts. In each text, this dissertation defines relevant terms, identifies the context, and seeks to interpret the meaning and theological function of nakedness language. Further, by researching the cultural milieu and all the relevant nakedness texts of the OT, this dissertation provides a cultural, theological, and literary context not present in treatments of individual texts.

The OT uses nakedness language to express the following concepts. First, nakedness imagery that is neutral or dissociated from connotations of shame represents human beings in their purest created form. Purity in this case is not a moral description but describes the lack of features or qualities accidental to humans as they were created by God. As such, nakedness illustrates moral naïveté or innocence (e.g., Gen 2:25), intimacy, even if by implication (e.g., Lev 18 and 20; Prov 5:19; sections of Song of Songs), and contingency (e.g., Job 1:21; Eccl 5:14).⁷

⁷Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 67, notes that contingency is a philosophical term indicating “a condition that exists when one object or being is dependent (contingent) on another and cannot exist or function in the same way without the other; the absence of necessity.” Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 582, describe Job’s condition as vulnerable and helpless. While this is true, more specifically this idea of vulnerability or exposure arises from one’s

Second, public nudity is inherently shameful in the Old Testament and comparative ANE literature. Whether one exposes his own nakedness, or he is stripped, that person is ashamed. This inherent shame thus supplies a powerful image to communicate moral status before God and other individuals. As such, nakedness illustrates moral awareness (e.g., Gen 3:7, 10, and 11), moral ignorance (Gen 9:20-27), the threat of unholy humans in the presence of God (e.g., Exod 20:26; Deut 23:12-14; Lev 18 and 20), the pitiable state of those in need of provision (e.g., Isa 58:7; Ezek 18:7, 16), wickedness toward one's fellow-man (e.g., Genesis 9; Lev 18 and 20; 2 Sam 10:4-5; Ezek 22:10; Hab 2:15), and God's rejection or punishment of the apostate (e.g., Deut 28:48; 1 Sam 19:24; Isa 20:2-4; Ezek 16 and 23; Hos 2; Nah 3:5).

Background

Considering the antiquity of the biblical text and the number of interpreters since that time, this dissertation is not the first study to investigate the theological use of nakedness imagery in specific Old Testament texts. Indeed, each passage has its own history of interpretation. The background study below shows that interpreters have long recognized that the language of nakedness in the OT serves a theological purpose, and the wide range of interpretations shows the need for research which compares and evaluates those interpretations. Much of the following discussion concerns nakedness in Genesis since those passages generated a disproportionate amount of theological reflection.

awareness of his contingency. Though this dissertation disagrees with Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 41, if he is correct regarding God's future intention to clothe Adam and Eve apart from their disobedience with the fruit, then Gen 2:25 would convey the idea of contingency as well.

Interpretation of Nakedness in the OT: Intertextual Witness

The history of interpretation for the theological use of nakedness imagery must begin within the Bible itself.⁸ While a theological use of nakedness imagery relies on a broad shared cultural understanding of nudity, one must also recognize that later biblical authors use the language of nakedness from earlier texts to convey their message. Many interpreters notice this intertextual use of nakedness after the flood narrative (Gen 9:20-27) where several literary features bring to mind the creation narrative from Genesis 1-3, including nakedness, cursing, and the covering of nakedness.⁹ Some suggest that the prohibitions against uncovering the nakedness of close relatives in Leviticus 18 and 20 presuppose the reader's knowledge of Genesis 9.¹⁰ John Sailhamer suggests an intertextual connection between Genesis

⁸For information on inner-biblical exegesis or intertextuality, see Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Umberto Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, trans. Israel Abrams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 1:79-100; Derek Drummond Bass, "Hosea's Use of Scripture: An Analysis of His Hermeneutics" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); and Benjamin Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 350-52.

⁹See, for example, T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 134; Walter E. Brown, "Noah: Sot or Saint? Genesis 9:20-27," in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and J. I. Packer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 36-60; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 2, *From Noah to Abraham*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 97; George and George, *Mythology of Eden*, 244; James McKeown, *Genesis*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 66; John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 128-36; G. V. Smith, "Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11," *JETS* 20, no. 4 (December 1977): 310-11; and Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Waco, TX: Word, 2014), 156, 199. In the Talmud, Rabbi Meir states that the tree from which Adam ate was a vine, tying it to the narrative in Genesis 9 (b. Sanh. 70a). Ephrem, *Nineteen Hymns on the Nativity of Christ in the Flesh* 1, connects the nakedness of Noah with the judgment upon Adam and Eve in the garden.

¹⁰See Frederick W. Bassett, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan a Case of Incest?" *VT* 21 (1971): 232-37; John Sietze Bergsma and Scott Walker Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)," *JBL* 124, no. 1 (2005): 25-40; and J. Severino Croatto, "¿Cuál fue el pecado de Cam con su padre Noé?: ¿Irreverencia o incesto? (Estudio de Génesis 9:20-27)," *Revista Biblica* 59 (1997): 65-76.

3:7-11 and Deuteronomy 28:48 in that the specific word used for nakedness in Genesis 3 (עירום) is used only in those two texts in the Pentateuch, indicating that the covenant curse is foreshadowed in Genesis.¹¹ Similarly, interpreters of the Prophets note intertextual connections with Leviticus and Deuteronomy especially.¹² This dissertation discusses the merits of these interpretations in their respective chapters, but it is important to note that the biblical authors are already interpreting nakedness imagery theologically in the OT texts.¹³

Interpretation of Nakedness in the OT: Jewish Literature

Ancient Jewish writings provide both cultural background regarding nakedness and show theological perspectives of the nakedness texts in the OT. Like the texts in the Writings and Prophets in the OT, there are several Jewish texts that reference the notion of clothing the naked or stripping men naked as a mark of righteousness or wickedness.¹⁴ Closely associated but on a national level, some

¹¹Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 83-84. The words used for nakedness in the Pentateuch are the adjective ערום (Gen 2:25), the noun ערוה (Gen 9:22-23; 42:9, 12; Exod 20:26; 28:42; Leviticus 18 and 20 [multiple times]; Deut 23:15; and 24:1, and the verb ערה (Lev 18:18, 19). The difference between עירום and ערום in Genesis 2 and 3 is a subtle but important distinction in his mind. Seth Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 104-05, makes this same argument with further discussion of the evidence.

¹²For example, see the argument for a connection between Hosea 2 and Deuteronomy 28 in Ryan C. Hanley, "The Background and Purpose of Stripping the Adulteress in Hosea 2," *JETS* 60, no. 1 (March 2017): 89-103. The article gives examples of several scholars who see a connection between Hosea 2 and Deuteronomy 28, though not necessarily with reference to nakedness, e.g., Bass, "Hosea's Use of Scripture," 132; Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, 1:93-94; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 398-401; John L. Mackay, *Hosea*, Mentor Commentary (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2012), 79; Mark F. Rooker, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Hosea," *Criswell Theological Review* 7.1 (1993): 64-65; and Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC, vol. 31 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), xxxi-xl.

¹³These interpretive positions by the biblical authors will also forestall numerous interpretations of the OT passages discussed later in the dissertation, e.g., entirely secular or postmodern interpretations.

¹⁴1 En. 62:13-16; 102:9; 2 En. 9:1; 10:5; 42:7-9; Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 2.71 and 2.77.

works address the concept of national leaders humiliating their captured enemies by stripping them naked.¹⁵ The Talmud addressed public discipline or execution, indicating that some level of nudity was common practice, yet still prohibiting full exposure of the sexual organs.¹⁶ Jewish literature also includes some information on matters of modesty, particularly what parts of the body are not appropriate to uncover in public or a worship setting.¹⁷

In addition to providing contextual information about cultural attitudes and practices regarding nudity, the Jewish literature also contains interpretive information helpful for understanding the use of nakedness imagery theologically in Scripture. Jubilees 3:16-17 suggested that Adam and Eve were ignorant of their nakedness and unashamed for a period of seven years before the serpent came to tempt them. Also, while Genesis 3 likely *implies* that Adam and Eve covered their nakedness with fig leaves due to shame, it does not say so *explicitly*. However, Jubilees 3:3:21-22 made this connection explicit, noting that after Eve ate from the fruit, she first covered her shame with fig leaves and then went to Adam to incite him to eat. After God exacts judgment on the trio and covers the man and woman with coats of skins, the author comments, “To Adam alone did he give the wherewithal to cover his shame, of all the beasts and cattle. On this account, it is

¹⁵Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 12.9.5; Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 7.6.4; and Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.5.

¹⁶B. Sanh. 44b-45a. A male is covered in front, but a female in front and back.

¹⁷Many of the texts covering the garden story in Genesis or the postdiluvian account of Noah seem to presume that public nudity is shameful. However, there are references indicating the immodesty of Potiphar’s wife in T. 12 Patr. 9:1ff and of Sarah’s modest reluctance to expose her breasts after the birth of Isaac in Gen. Rab. 53:9. In the Talmud, b. Šabb. 150a prohibits even thinking about the Law in a bathhouse or toilet-room, presumably, at least in the case of the bathhouse, because of the shame of a person’s nakedness. There is also evidence for categories of modesty in many of the “interpretive” texts in that they seem to presume nakedness is shameful in public and seek to explain the enigmatic statement in Gen 2:25 that the man and woman were naked but not ashamed (e.g., Jub. 3:19-22, 30-31; and Gen. Rab. 18:6).

prescribed on the heavenly tables as touching all those who know the judgment of the law, that they should cover their shame, and should not uncover themselves as the Gentiles uncover themselves” (Jub. 3:30-31). Further, Jubilees offered information for understanding the prohibitions of uncovering nakedness in Leviticus 18 and 20, utilizing the phrase to describe the sexual activity between Reuben and Bilhah and between Judah and Tamar.¹⁸

The targumim also engaged theologically with the nakedness texts of the OT, offering insight to the interpretive opinions of the authors. For example, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan translated “naked” (ערומים) in Genesis 2:25 as “wise” (חכימין), connecting the word to the “crafty” (ערום Hebrew, חכים Aramaic) serpent in Genesis 3:1.¹⁹ In Targum Jonathan, Saul still casts off his garment, but he falls before Samuel “mentally disturbed” (ברשן) instead of naked. Moreover, instead of threatening to strip his metaphorical wife naked, Targum Jonathan says YHWH threatens to remove his presence and glory from Israel (Hos 2:5).²⁰ Clearly, both Hosea and Targum Jonathan highlight YHWH’s judgment, but the targum has made the metaphor’s symbol explicit. In the chapters below, this dissertation engages the relevant texts, but these examples show theological interaction with the OT nakedness texts.

Particularly in the centuries just before and after the life of Christ, there was a tendency to interpret the biblical text symbolically, both in Jewish and Christian literature.²¹ In terms of the nakedness passages, Philo saw nakedness as

¹⁸Jub. 33:1-14 for Reuben and Bilhah; 41:23 for Judah and Tamar.

¹⁹Targum Onqelos and Targum Neofiti use ערטלי.

²⁰Tg. Neb. Hos 2:5. The author uses the terms שכינה and יקרה. See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 593 (יקרה), and 1573 (שכינה).

²¹Iain Provan, *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 12-48, notes that the practice of symbolic interpretation often followed careful

representing a mind stripped of both virtue and vice, like an innocent child.²² Yet nakedness could also represent vice, as in the case of Noah, who was naked of virtue.²³ He interpreted the Garden story variously. As an allegory, Adam was not naked physically, but naked of virtue.²⁴ According to the literal sense of the text, Philo noted that Adam was naked and sought to explain why he was not ashamed, namely: (1) They were in the part of the world where nakedness was commonplace, (2) they had no disposition of pride, (3) the climate was such that they did not need coverings, and (4) their relationship with the world around them prevented injury.²⁵ Once the couple ate of the fruit though, they received a new eye devoid of counsel which he called “opinion.” This opinion conceived the notion that they needed covering for their bodies.²⁶ Finally, he also argued that the garments were a figurative expression for their actual skin. God had previously given them intellect and life, and he now gave them bodies.²⁷

A question regarding a theological study of nakedness concerns whether an ideal or consummated kingdom of God would include a return to nakedness.²⁸

attention to the literal sense of the passage. See also Henning Graf Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 1, *From the Old Testament to Origen*, trans. Leo G. Perdue (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 33-46.

²²Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.15.

²³Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.16.

²⁴Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3.18. In Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.53, he also considers the purpose of God clothing Adam and Eve with garments of skin, which are a rudimentary form of clothing. He suggested that his purpose was to teach wisdom and virtue to the couple, particularly that frugality was a virtue.

²⁵Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.30. He does not specify if he means physical injury or some manner of psychological or emotional injury.

²⁶Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.39.

²⁷Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.53

²⁸This correlates to the question noted in n. 2 above, namely whether or not nakedness in the garden represented an idyllic state which would continue based on the couple’s obedience to YHWH’s command regarding the fruit. If it was YHWH’s intention for them to remain nude, then

This matter was addressed by at least two Jewish writings. In Genesis Rabbah 18:6, the author commented that Genesis 3:21 should have followed Genesis 2:25 immediately, thus conveying that they were naked and not ashamed and then God clothed them with garments of skin. Yet, because of the historical reality of the serpent's temptation, Moses did not want the story to end with the serpent's triumph. Instead, he wanted to show God's forgiveness and care as the final word. The Talmud also addressed this question, concluding similarly that humans will be clothed. In a conversation with Rabbi Meir about the resurrection, Cleopatra asked if humans will be restored naked or clothed. He answered that a grain of wheat provides an apt example, "The wheat is buried naked but comes out dressed in garments. The upright too will come back dressed in garments" (b. Sanh. 90b). In these Jewish writings, nakedness does not represent the ideal state, but simply an immature one.²⁹

The medieval period of Jewish interpretation largely followed the same patterns of interpreting the biblical text. Rashi and Abraham ibn Ezra adhered strictly to grammatical and linguistic matters, not fully eschewing midrash but only carefully offering interpretive decisions. However, Maimonides was less hesitant to attribute spiritual renderings of the text.³⁰ He was one of the few interpreters who considered the difference between pre-Fall Adam and post-Fall Adam. The next

presumably the eternal kingdom of God would retain this idyllic state.

²⁹While those texts are clearer on this question, 1 Enoch also envisioned an eschatological kingdom in which its members were clothed, wearing glorious white garments (1 En. 62:13-16; 90:31). Compare John's revelation of the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19. The saints there are granted to clothe themselves in fine linen, which are the "righteous deeds" of the saints (Rev 19:8).

³⁰See the discussion in Provan, *Discovering Genesis*, 22-28; Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 144-54; and Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *From Late Antiquity to the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. James O. Duke (Atlanta: SBL, 2010), 222-46.

section notes that Augustine attributed man's shame to a loss of control over his sexual organ. Maimonides argued, however, that his *knowledge* changed with regard to what is morally good or bad (רע or טוב).³¹ Previously, Adam had knowledge only of true or false things (שקר or אמת), but now he has the capacity to reason that nudity is not good.³² Maimonides also provided a discussion of the Hebrew language's lack of scientific terminology for the reproductive organs, showing a concern to understand the theological importance of nakedness as a euphemism for these body parts in the biblical text.³³

Interpretation of Nakedness in the OT: Early Christian Literature

The early church fathers gave prominent attention to Genesis as they developed their theology, and as such, the stories of nakedness in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2-3) and the postdiluvian vineyard (Gen 9) comprise the largest concentration of the texts relevant to this dissertation.³⁴ The survey below shows that much of their interaction is concerned with doctrine, even as they consider historical and anthropological matters. As the church developed its influence and doctrine, many of these nakedness texts served as support for its theological positions, particularly virginity and modesty.

Irenaeus was the earliest exegete of this era to address nakedness theologically in the texts, attempting to show Christ's humanity through a theological connection between Eve and Mary on the basis of their virginity. He

³¹Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 2. See discussion of Augustine below.

³²This interpretation continues to hold in many modern interpretations of Genesis 3. See Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 63-64; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 92; and Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 86-87.

³³Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 8.

³⁴Where the early church fathers interacted with the nakedness texts, nearly a third of those interactions occurred in Genesis 2-3 and 9.

argued that Eve's virginity was clear from Genesis 2:25:

For in Paradise they were both naked, and were not ashamed, inasmuch as they, having been created a short time previously, had no understanding of the procreation of children: for it was necessary that they should first come to adult age, and then multiply from that time onward.³⁵

Irenaeus assumed that if Adam and Eve were aware of sexual intercourse, they would have been ashamed by their nudity. This connection between nakedness, shame, and virginity was noted by many other interpreters who followed him, the prevailing notion being that Adam and Eve did not engage in sexual activity until after they were cast from the garden.³⁶ Tertullian explained further that shame was intrinsic to their nakedness after they sinned because they had attempted to gain maturity apart from the will of God.³⁷ Like the Jewish exegetes in the centuries before and after Christ, these early Christian interpreters concentrated on theological meaning from their sacred texts.

Beyond the doctrinal implications for virginity, several interpreters also addressed issues of modesty and shame as a matter of Christian virtue. These examples show the same aversion to nudity that existed in the Jewish writings. Ambrose highlighted the difference in character between Noah and Ham in Genesis 9 as a pattern for Christian behavior, "If these parts are exposed to view by chance,

³⁵Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.22.4 (ANF 1:455).

³⁶See also Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins* 5 (ANF 4:31-32); Methodius, *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins, or Concerning Chastity* 2-5 (ANF 6:348-50); Jerome, *To Gaudentius* 3 (NPNF² 6:259); and possibly John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Christian Faith* 1.11 (NPNF² 9:29). Augustine, *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans*, also held to this perspective but began to move away from the view as he began to argue for marriage as God's good design in Augustine, *Retractions, On the Good of Marriage* (NPNF⁴ 5), and Augustine, *Literal Commentary on Genesis*. Jerome, *To Pammichius* 10 (NPNF² 6:138); and Jerome, *Treatises: Against Jovinianus* 1.30 (NPNF² 6:369), also argued that Song of Songs should be interpreted symbolically, stating that the naked intimacy displayed there represented the church's ministry to Christians as well as the love that the saints ought to have for God.

³⁷Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins* 5 (ANF 4:31-32).

modesty is violated; but if on purpose, it is reckoned as utter shamelessness.”³⁸ In contrast, discussing Matthew 5, Chrysostom countered the concern that one giving up his cloak would go about naked and ashamed, stating that Adam, Isaiah, and Joseph all went about naked without shame because their virtue shone brighter than their physical appearance.³⁹ He also compared Job’s nude but virtuous display of faith to the athletes who competed naked:

When he was enveloped in all that wealth, it was not visible to the many, what a man he was. But when, like the wrestler, that strips off his garment, he threw it aside, and came naked to the conflicts of piety, thus unclothed, he astonished all who saw him; so that the very theatre of angels shouted at beholding his fortitude of soul, and applauded him as he won his crown!⁴⁰

Thus, Chrysostom interpreted these examples as virtuous. Being destitute and having nothing, they trusted God for provision.

Of the early church fathers, Augustine wrote the most extensively and specifically on the matter of nakedness in Genesis 2-3, correcting earlier spiritual interpretations that he himself had made which had led some to accuse him of being Manichaeism.⁴¹ As a result, he sought to show the literal meaning of the text of Genesis, namely that a sexual relationship was intended for Adam and Eve prior to their sin. To avoid minimizing the virtue of chastity however, Augustine

³⁸Ambrose, *Three Books on the Duties of the Clergy* 1.79 (NPNF² 10:14). See also Clement, *The Instructor* 3:6 (ANF 2:288); and Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies* 20 (ANF 5:136).

³⁹Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew* 18.2 (NPNF^d 10:122). Clement, *The Instructor* 3:6 (ANF 2:288); and Tertullian, *Anti-Marcion: The Five Books Against Marcion* 25 (ANF 3:316-17); and Tertullian, *On Exhortation to Chastity* 2 (ANF 4:50-51), also noted the humble character of the prophets characterized by their attire.

⁴⁰Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statutes to the People of Antioch* 1.18 (NPNF¹ 9:339).

⁴¹Some of his earlier works on Genesis 3 were similar to Origen. Origen, *Against Celsus* 40 (ANF 4:516), argued that the garment with which God clothed the man (symbolized for all humanity) represented the actual embodiment of human beings. Methodius, *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.2 (ANF 7:62), rejected the notion that the garments represented physical bodies but still interpreted the garments symbolically, arguing that the garments represented mortality.

differentiated sexual intercourse from sexual desire. Because shame is directly attached to lust and not nakedness, he argued that nudity in marriage was not shameful or dishonorable when it was used for procreation:

All which causes shame in that rebellion of the members which brought the accusing blush on those who after their sin covered these members with the fig-tree leaves, is not laid to the charge of marriage, by virtue of which the conjugal embrace is not only allowable, but is even useful and honourable; but it is imputable to the sin of that disobedience which was followed by the penalty of man's finding his own members emulating against himself that very disobedience which he had practised against God . . . Accordingly, that simple nudity was displeasing neither to God nor to man: there was nothing to be ashamed of, because nothing at first accrued which deserved punishment.⁴²

Augustine argued that the sexual organs would have been controlled by the will prior to the humans' disobedience but were thereafter compelled by sexual desire. This involuntary movement, and not nakedness itself, caused Adam and Eve to feel shame. Though admittedly odd, Augustine's attempt to explain the humans' disposition toward nakedness before and after their disobedience is one of the few to engage that kind of question.

Finally, the early church fathers also expressed typological interaction with the biblical nakedness texts in their liturgy. Ephraim Syrus describes a typological use of nakedness as Adam, Eve, and Noah looked toward Christ's coming to cover their nakedness:

From thy treasure-house put forth, Lord, from the coffers of Thy Scriptures, names of righteous men of old, who looked to see Thy coming! Seth who was in Abel's stead shadowed out the Son as slain, by Whose death was dulled the envy Cain had brought into the world! Noah saw the sons of God, saints that sudden waxed wanton, and the Holy Son he looked for, by whom lewd men were turned to holiness. The brothers twain, that covered Noah, saw the only

⁴²Augustine, *A Treatise on the Grace of Christ, and on Original Sin* 39 (NPNF^d 5:250). See also Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* 1:6 (NPNF^d 5:265). For his views on intercourse without the procreative purpose, see Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* 1:9, 17 (NPNF^d 5:267, 289); and Augustine, *A Treatise against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.33 (NPNF^d 5:387).

Son of God who should come to hide the nakedness of Adam, who was drunk with pride. Shem and Japhet, being gracious, looked for the gracious Son, Who should come and set free Canaan from the servitude of sin.⁴³

Later, he noted, “For him Eve also looked; for woman’s nakedness was sore, and He capable to clothe them; not with leaves, but with that same glory that they had exchanged away.”⁴⁴

On baptism, Cyril of Jerusalem also explained why converts to Christianity were baptized nude, giving three symbolic reasons derived from the biblical texts.⁴⁵ First, taking off the tunic symbolized putting off the old man with his deeds (Col 3:9). Second, the believer identified with Christ, who was stripped naked before being nailed to the cross and triumphed over the principalities and powers (Col 2:15). Finally, Cyril compared the catechumen to Adam in Eden before he sinned, “O wondrous thing! Ye were naked in the sight of all and were not ashamed; for truly ye bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden and not ashamed.”⁴⁶

In summary, pre-modern Jewish and Christian interpreters viewed the biblical text as Scripture, a revelation from God that should be interpreted for theological understanding. Thus, the nakedness texts were a means to understand

⁴³Ephrem, *Nineteen Hymns on the Nativity of Christ in the Flesh* 1 (NPNF² 13:224).

⁴⁴Ephrem, *Nineteen Hymns on the Nativity of Christ in the Flesh* 1 (NPNF² 13:224).

⁴⁵Cyril of Jerusalem, *On the Mysteries II: On Baptism* 2.2 (NPNF² 7:147). See also Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 21.3, 11; Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith* 82.10; 85.3-4; Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions* 11.28-29. See also the practice of nude immersion in Jewish washings in b. B. Qam. 82a-82b; b. Miqw. 8-9. In at least one third-century account, the woman Mygdonia is undressed and then wrapped in a linen cloth before immersion (*Acts of Thomas* 121). For a scholarly discussion on nude baptism, see John E. Farrell, “The Garment of Immortality: A Concept and Symbol in Christian Baptism” (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 1974), 60-127; Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); 950; and Laurie Guy, “Naked’ Baptism in the Early Church: The Rhetoric and the Reality,” *Journal of Religious History* 27 (2003): 133-42.

⁴⁶Cyril of Jerusalem, *On the Mysteries II: On Baptism* 2.2 (NPNF² 7:147).

something of the nature and character of God, his creation, and their relationship to one another. These interpreters shared a common perception that nakedness was an immodest or shameful state except in marital intimacy. Where virginity was prized though, even marriage did not absolve the shame of nudity. Interpretations varied too on God's intent for humans regarding clothing. Would he clothe them eventually, or did nakedness represent a state of perfection and moral innocence before God? Particularly in the Writings, nakedness also highlighted the humble state of an individual, often to commend his virtue. Finally, nakedness also represented a form of judgment, a way to illustrate the shameful state of an individual or class of people. This judgment might be in the form of actual punishment, e.g., execution or beating, or the judgment might be to characterize the godless, e.g., the Gentiles or pagans are those who go about naked.

Interpretation of Nakedness in the OT: Interpretation in the Modern Era

Though the history of biblical interpretation is far too complex to detail here, after the medieval period, a perceptible shift in extant works arose whose focus was on linguistic, historical, or sociological matters.⁴⁷ This shift often represented the detachment of biblical study from its interpretation within the constraints of orthodoxy, i.e., the Bible was studied as historical data rather than the means to discern God's revelation to mankind. The benefit of this scientific focus has been that interpreters gained significant information about the language, literature, and history of the biblical text. Yet, this theological detachment has also allowed for a

⁴⁷See Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, vols. 3 and 4; Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Medieval through the Reformation Periods* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); and Hauser and Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 3, *The Enlightenment through the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

range of studies which do not cohere theologically or historically with traditional Jewish or Christian interpretation.⁴⁸ This section highlights just some of these studies pertaining to Genesis 2-3 and addresses other pertinent views in the discussions of the OT texts below.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the impact of evolutionary scientific theories and the discovery of numerous ANE artifacts, particularly mythic texts, provided a new direction for the interpretation of Genesis. Relying on these theories regarding the evolutionary development of human culture and religion, Julius Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis had the effect of thrusting the scientific study of the Bible to the forefront, particularly in the search for literary and oral sources for the biblical texts. As such, Genesis 2-3 was treated as a mythical account of early Israelite history. This interpretive trend persists even in recent treatments.

S. R. Driver argued that the use of nakedness in Genesis 3 was an Israelite etiological mythic account of why advanced human races began to wear clothing.⁴⁹ Hermann Gunkel followed the same etiological myth approach but stated that the move from not ashamed to ashamed indicates the move from childhood to adulthood, primarily in terms of the couple's awareness of sexual differentiation.⁵⁰ In the same way a child is not concerned about his nudity, neither were Adam and Eve. He argued that this theory is confirmed in Genesis 3:7 by their desire to cover their nakedness. The only thing that could have caused this shift in the myth is their

⁴⁸This is not to say that every interpreter who studies the scientific aspects of the text are doing so in a secular or non-theological manner.

⁴⁹S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*, 4th ed. (London: Methuen and Co., 1905), 57.

⁵⁰Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis: Translated and Explained*, trans. Mark A. Biddle, 3rd ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer Press, 1997), 14.

eating of the fruit, which he calls “magical.”⁵¹ Gerhard von Rad and Walter Brueggemann discounted Gunkel’s sexual maturation interpretation, instead focusing on the *psychological* shift that took place, from innocence to guilt.⁵² S. B. Fohr built on the concept of a mythical tale, arguing that the story is more than folk tale, advocating a symbolic meaning in which shame in nakedness explains the complete loss of human unity.⁵³

In the latter half of the twentieth century, several literary approaches to biblical interpretation emerged that interacted with many texts examined in this dissertation, most notably social-scientific and reader-response approaches.⁵⁴ For example, from a feminist perspective, Lyn Bechtel posited that the garden story is not about sin or a fall. Contra von Rad and Brueggemann, she argued that Adam and Eve did not experience *guilt* but rather the threat of social *shame*.⁵⁵ The story is still a myth that shows the maturation of the human couple, but more than simply physical maturation, Bechtel argued that they developed in their independence from God. When God sends them from the garden, it is to prevent their regression back

⁵¹Gunkel, *Genesis*, 17-18. “Magical” was a term he relegated to the authors of the myth.

⁵²Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, OTL, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 83-88, and Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 48-49. Brueggemann notes that nakedness associated with social disorder anticipates Freud’s psychoanalysis theories (90-91).

⁵³S. B. Fohr, *Adam and Eve: The Spiritual Symbolism of Genesis and Exodus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 119-29.

⁵⁴For a survey of these literary approaches, see Longman, “Literary Approaches to Old Testament Study,” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 97-115.

⁵⁵Lyn M. Bechtel, “Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-3.24,” in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 84. See also Bechtel, “Shame as a Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political, and Social Shaming,” *JSOT* 49, no. 1 (February 1991): 47-66.

to the immaturity of childhood.⁵⁶

Ziony Zevit considered the text both from a social-scientific and reader-oriented perspective.⁵⁷ Similar to Bechtel, Zevit argued that the humans' lack of shame from their nakedness in the Genesis account is not one of naïve innocence but is atypically odd, and their seeking knowledge through the fruit represented an advancement of the human condition.⁵⁸ The couples' fear when they realized they were naked was not due to moral guilt but arose from social shame, much like any Westerner would hide their nakedness in the presence of another.⁵⁹

Interpretation of Nakedness in the OT:

Conclusion

This brief survey shows only a portion of the historical interpretations of

⁵⁶Bechtel, "Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis," 115-16.

⁵⁷Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 48.

⁵⁸Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 159.

⁵⁹Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 172-73. Zevit suggests that this shame of nudity would exist between the husband and wife, even in intimate settings. He references E. Alshech, "Out of Sight and Therefore Out of Mind: Early Sunni Islamic Modesty Regulations and the Creation of Spheres of Privacy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 66 (2007): 286, 90, for support. For other treatments of Genesis 2-3 from the social-scientific or reader-response approach, see Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and 'Sexuality' in the Hebrew Bible*, Biblical Interpretation Series 26 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1997); Peggy L. Day, *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989); Mary E. Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); J. Cheryl Exum, *Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women*, JSOTSup 215 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Carole R. Fontaine, *With Eyes of Flesh: The Bible, Gender, and Human Rights*, *The Bible in the Modern World* 10 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008); George and George, *Mythology of Eden*; S. Tamar Kamionkowski and Wonil Kim, *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, LHBOTS 465 (New York: T and T Clark, 2010); Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible*, *Semeia Studies* 44 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); Hillary B. Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 7 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 2-3* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007); Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Deborah W. Rooke, *A Question of Sex? Gender and Difference in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 14 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007); and Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, *Overtures to Biblical Theology* 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

nakedness language in the OT. Yet, the survey shows the variety of interpretive options and underscores the need for a study which evaluates them in terms of all the relevant OT texts. This survey has also shown a long history of interpreters who recognize the theological use of nakedness language in the biblical text, even if they disagree on what the meaning is. Therefore, this project has interpretive precedent that also demonstrates the need for a study which analyzes the texts together.

Methodology

In order to identify and describe the theological meaning of nakedness imagery in the OT, this dissertation analyzes all the OT texts which use either words or concepts associated with nakedness.⁶⁰ Using relevant exegetical methods, this dissertation interprets these texts in their biblical and historical contexts according to the intention of the author. For both pragmatic and interpretive reasons, this dissertation conducts this study according to the arrangement of the Hebrew Bible, namely Torah, Prophets, and Writings. Pragmatically, this structure is well-established historically and provides an organized structure and a manageable scope of material to study in each chapter. Moreover, studying the texts within their contexts allows the various concepts of nakedness imagery to emerge naturally rather than synthetically as a thematic approach may produce.⁶¹

This organization also reflects a traditional canonical arrangement which likely guides interpretation of the individual texts and one's view of the whole.⁶² The

⁶⁰Some texts will receive little attention when a theological use is not readily apparent. For example, in Gen 42:9, 12, Joseph uses the phrase “nakedness of the land” (ערוות הארץ) to accuse his brothers of seeking to spy out Egypt’s weaknesses. Similarly, several passages use the term “uncover” (גלה) to imply nakedness, but not every use of גלה indicates nudity.

⁶¹This study thus follows a model of biblical theology instead of systematic theology as proposed by Gerard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 195.

⁶²For example, see Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the*

Torah is foundational to the story and theology of the OT and is a literary unity according to tradition and as argued in recent canonical studies.⁶³ This dissertation shows that the use of nakedness imagery in the Torah is also important to some of the later uses and theology of nakedness. The Prophets use the language of nakedness repeatedly, expressing theological concepts of unfaithfulness and shame derived from the Torah and didactically urging a response from the audience. Though nakedness is used less in the Writings than in the Torah and Prophets, the authors there reflect on the same realities of God and humanity, illustrating the fragility of humans before YHWH but also how intimacy can still flourish between a husband and wife. Thus, for pragmatic and interpretive reasons, the tri-partite Hebrew structure provides a reasonable framework around which to build this study, though perhaps future studies utilizing a different arrangement or approach may reveal additional insights.

Conservative biblical scholarship has rightly emphasized the use of a variety of exegetical methods to derive the text's meaning.⁶⁴ Therefore, this

Hebrew Bible, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003); John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); and Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009). While this dissertation does not argue that the Hebrew Bible arrangement is inspired or that the LXX arrangement is incorrect or leads to error, it disagrees with Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, 204, that the formation of either the LXX or HB structure was not theologically motivated. Both Dempster's and Sailhamer's works offer ample evidence to the contrary. Hasel suggests that one should study the books according to their date of composition. This idea is intriguing, though it is likely impossible since consensus eludes scholarly discussions of dating.

⁶³E.g., Dempster's and Sailhamer's works in the previous footnote. See also Gary E. Schnittjer, *The Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006). Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, 202, proposes that the theology of individual books ought to be determined before placing them in their larger context. Yet, one must acknowledge also that sometimes the bigger context may clarify obscure matters in individual books.

⁶⁴See, for example, the essays in Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999); or Hasel's multiplex approach to theology in Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, 194-208.

dissertation analyzes each relevant pericope using textual, historical, and literary methods to understand the theological use of nakedness in the OT. Beginning with textual study, this dissertation analyzes the language of nakedness in the MT and supplements this examination with the LXX, targumic texts, and other ANE literature as necessary. In each of the passages, this study works synchronically, using the final form as the starting point.⁶⁵ This study also addresses any relevant text critical issues to ascertain pertinent interpretive information.⁶⁶ This method allows one to differentiate between synonyms, distinct uses of nakedness vocabulary, and also to cross-reference the use of these words in other texts, both in biblical and comparative literature, clarifying the cultural and literary context.⁶⁷

This dissertation also studies any necessary historical matters which may further clarify an understanding of nakedness in the biblical text. This analysis may include Israelite or other ancient Near Eastern cultures language, practice, or beliefs, including pertinent archaeological evidence. Historical evidence may help clarify Israel's cultural understanding of nudity, how nakedness was incorporated into legal and daily life, and in many cases, how the use of nakedness functioned theologically in the biblical text.⁶⁸

⁶⁵A study of the history behind the text may be a fruitful endeavor, but the conclusions of such studies are almost always conjectural. Moreover, in this dissertation, the aim is to interpret the use of specific language in a particular textual context.

⁶⁶The MT represents a reliable and foundational text of the OT, and as such provides a reasonable basis for study of the OT. Emendation often reveals more about the interpretive approach of the commentator than it does the intention of the original author, yet evidence of the versions necessitates a willingness to consider emendation at some points. Thus, this dissertation relies on the MT unless a sufficient reason arises to consider an alternative. Bruce K. Waltke, "Textual Criticism of the Old Testament and Its Relation to Exegesis and Theology," in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 48-64, provides a nice summary of the issues involved in textual criticism, including the use of the MT and the practice of emendation. See also Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

⁶⁷John H. Walton, "Principles for Productive Word Study," in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 158-68, delineates the issues concerning word studies in the OT.

⁶⁸For discussions of the reliability and relevance of historical studies for biblical

As biblical scholarship has moved beyond the textual and historical focus of higher criticism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, interpreters have given greater attention to the value of canonical analysis at the literary and theological level.⁶⁹ Though consensus eludes our present understanding of *how* one ought to view the text canonically, sufficient attention to the matter has shown that canonical study is necessary to properly interpret the biblical texts. This dissertation considers the effect a canonical reading has upon the understanding of nakedness in each pericope and how broadening the text's context to other books and sections of the OT provides a better reading than one might obtain otherwise.⁷⁰

Along with textual and historical analysis, one must also study the text as literature to understand its meaning.⁷¹ This dissertation interprets the use of

interpretation, see Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); Hess, *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014); James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015); and John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006). These authors discuss the dangers of the "maximalist" overreading of the historical and archaeological data while also avoiding the unnecessary skepticism of the "minimalist" positions.

⁶⁹Notable twentieth-century examples are Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); and Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology*. On the role of canon in OT theology, see Carl Schulz, "Integrating Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: Literary, Thematic, and Canonical Issues," in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 195-99.

⁷⁰Though it is not the focus of this dissertation to study the New Testament use of nakedness language, canonical interpretation is tied necessarily to an awareness of the NT message and its implications for understanding the OT. This dissertation will only address the NT briefly in the last chapter, but further study would likely show an NT use of nakedness imagery that is consistent with the conclusions of this study in the OT.

⁷¹See Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*; Tremper Longman "Literary Approaches and Interpretation," in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 100-121; Philip E. Satterthwaite, "Narrative Criticism: The Theological Implications of Narrative Techniques," in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 122-30; and Peter Cotterell, "Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis," in *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 131-57.

nakedness in the text, seeking to understand it in terms of its discourse meaning, giving appropriate weight to the locus of meaning in the words of the text and in the intent of the author to inform and to affect the reader.⁷² Such methods allow one to see how the text functions in relation to the immediate passage, the book, and the canon as a whole. Thus, studies of text and history help the interpreter understand the author's world as much as possible and better understand the intended meaning as he or she studies the literature in its narrower and wider context. The goal of this dissertation is that one understands the theological concepts the author intended to convey to the reader.⁷³ Particularly in narrative, the OT texts often teach theology by *showing* and not *telling*.⁷⁴

In summary, this study is based on the final form of the OT and proceeds according to the structure of Torah, Prophets, and Writings. The analysis locates the meaning of the pericope in the words of the text as the author intended for the reader to understand them. This dissertation uses textual, historical, and literary analysis to identify and interpret the use of nakedness imagery as theological language in the Old Testament.

This study proceeds as follows. The first three chapters serve as an introduction to the concept and interpretation of nakedness in the OT. Chapter 1

⁷²See Cotterell, "Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis," 140-42.

⁷³While it is not the aim of this dissertation to discuss the merits of the Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS), Steven E. Fowl, *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997), xiii, notes that one of the foundations of TIS is to acknowledge "throughout Christian history it has been the norm for Christians to read their scripture theologically. That is, Christians have generally read their scripture to guide, correct, and edify their faith, worship, and practice as part of their ongoing struggle to live faithfully before the triune God."

⁷⁴C. John Collins, *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1-11* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 45-46. See also V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence*, SBLDS 118 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 21-41.

introduces the topic, the need for research, and states the thesis and methodology of this dissertation. Chapter 1 also provides a brief summary of the history of interpretation among early Jewish and Christian teachers. Chapter 2 specifies, defines, and discusses the terms used for nakedness in the OT. Chapter 3 studies the ANE background of nakedness, including customs and practices which provide a backdrop for the texts in the OT.

The main body of analysis in the dissertation occurs in chapters 4, 5, and 6. These chapters examine the use of nakedness imagery in the specific OT texts, summarizing the relevant interpretations of each text, describing their contribution to the study and critiquing any weaknesses, and then showing how nakedness language conveys theological information to the reader. Each of the three chapters addresses the texts of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, respectively.

Chapter 7 summarizes the analysis and arguments of the dissertation and then highlights some areas for further research and consideration, including how the theological use of nakedness language extends into the NT.

CHAPTER 2
THE LANGUAGE OF NAKEDNESS
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Anthropological studies have shown, even in modern contexts, that cultures have differing perspectives on what constitutes nakedness and modesty.¹ Therefore, one must understand how Israel and her ancient Near Eastern neighbors viewed nakedness. Chapter 3 considers the ANE background, but first, this chapter begins this study by identifying the terminology used to convey the idea of nakedness in the Old Testament. The collation and study of these terms accomplishes two purposes: (1) identify the texts relevant to this dissertation, and (2) provide the lexical data to interpret those texts properly.

In its fundamental Hebrew sense of “uncovered,” nakedness is a term of privation. The word does not describe the existence of something, but its absence, namely, a covering. In other words, nakedness describes what is not there, implying that one naturally presumes humans’ sexual organs should be covered. In fact, when the concept of nakedness first appears in the biblical text, it reveals a prelapsarian setting in which nakedness needed an explanation, “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen 2:25). Genesis assumes the universality of clothing through the term “naked” and its qualifier, “they were not ashamed.” The author both introduced and confirmed the oddity that one could be naked, *yet not*

¹See, for example, James Velleman, “The Genesis of Shame,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 30, no 1 (2001): 27-52; and Eli Alshech, “Out of Sight and Therefore Out of Mind: Early Sunni Islamic Modesty Regulations and the Creation of Spheres of Privacy,” *JNES* 66 (2007): 267-90. Velleman notes significantly that all cultures seem to have some concept of modesty, even if it is minimal compared to Western standards.

ashamed. Genesis 2:25 highlights that the concept of nakedness only makes sense in light of the expectation that one must be clothed.

Further, it is noteworthy to consider the relationship between euphemism and nakedness in the Hebrew Bible. The word “naked” itself is a euphemistic term in both its English and Hebrew usage (e.g., עָרֹם) to the extent that nakedness refers to the sexual organs. As shown below, the terms for nakedness in Hebrew served as a euphemism for a broad range of concepts, from the sexual organs, to a readied shield or bow, to the defenseless portions of land. This use is similar to the English euphemism “private parts.” In the other direction, Hebrew also employed words euphemistically to refer to the sexual organs.² In fact, biblical Hebrew does not contain technical terms for the primary sexual organs and relies entirely on euphemism to convey this meaning.³ In his *Guide for the Perplexed*, Maimonides noted this peculiarity,

The Hebrew has no original expressions for these things, and only describes them in figurative language and by way of hints, as if to indicate thereby that these things should not be mentioned, and should therefore have no names; we ought to be silent about them, and when we are compelled to mention them, we must manage to employ for that purpose some suitable expressions, although these are generally used in a different sense.⁴

This peculiarity is particularly noteworthy in that other ANE cultures had technical terminology for the sexual organs.⁵ The euphemistic flexibility of nakedness

²The words יד (hand) and רגל (feet) are common examples.

³Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1534-35; and Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2013), 143-45.

⁴Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 3.8.

⁵See Zainab Bahrani, “Sex as Symbolic Form: Erotism and the Body in Mesopotamian Art,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, ed. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 2002), 53-58; Jerrold S. Cooper, “Virginity in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 1:91-112; Victor A. Hurowitz, “An Old Babylonian Bawdy Ballad,”

language in the Hebrew Bible has generated some discussion for the use of nakedness in a few texts such as Ruth's interaction with Boaz in Ruth 3 or the nature of the couple's encounter in Song of Songs 5. This study examines these examples of euphemism where relevant.

Lastly, regarding the use of nakedness language in this dissertation, Kenneth Clark differentiated between the terms "naked" and "nude" in the English language in his seminal work on nudity in art,

To be naked is to be deprived of our clothes, and the word implies some of the embarrassment most of us feel in that condition. The word "nude," on the other hand, carries, in educated usage, no uncomfortable overtone. The vague image it projects into the mind is not of a huddled and defenseless body, but of a balanced, prosperous, and confident body: the body re-formed.⁶

It would be anachronistic to apply Clark's terminology to the Old Testament and ANE cultural milieu, but his distinction underscores an observable difference in the ANE and OT examples of "nakedness" or "nudity." His distinction highlights the positive and negative conceptions of nakedness in a culture, and some in ANE and biblical studies have adopted his terminology.⁷ However, neither English nor Hebrew typically underscores this difference by terminology. Rather, context clarifies whether nakedness has a positive or negative connotation. Thus, this dissertation uses the terms "naked" and "nude" interchangeably and highlights any necessary distinctions as they arise in context.

in *Untying Knots and Solving Riddles: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, ed. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin, and Michael Sokoloff (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995): 543-58; and Leonid Kogan and Alexander Militarev, "Akkadian Terms for Genitalia: New Etymologies, New Textual Interpretations," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 1:311-19.

⁶Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 3.

⁷See Larissa Bonfante, "Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art," *American Journal of Archaeology* 93, no. 4 (1989): 543-70; and Julia Asher-Greve, "The Essential Body: Mesopotamian Conceptions of the Gendered Body," *Gender and History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 432-61.

Terms Used for Nakedness in the Old Testament

There is one primary verb group and its derivatives that the OT authors used which meant “naked” or “nakedness,” i.e., ערה and its by-forms, עור and ערר. Though these verbs only occur 20 times, and clearly refer to exposing nakedness only 4 of those times (Lev 20:18, 19; Isa 32:11; Lam 4:21), the noun and adjective forms are numerous and comprise the majority of texts this dissertation examines.⁸ In addition to ערה, the Old Testament also uses the verbs גלה, פשט, and חשף to present the concept of nudity. Each of these verbal forms requires an object to convey this meaning, however. By themselves, these verbs mean only “uncover,” “lay bare,” or “strip off.” The object or context clarifies what is being uncovered. The section below examines these terms, including those terms which were clearly euphemistic.

עור, ערה, and ערר: “Make Naked or Bare”

ערה means “be bare,” or “pour out,” depending on the verb stem and context.⁹ “The 2 uses of ‘*arâ* as ‘lay bare’ and ‘pour out’ do not represent two distinct meanings; we are dealing instead with modifications of the root’s basic meaning ‘be naked, empty’ so as to mean ‘lay bare,’ ‘pour out,’ or ‘empty,’ depending on the object.”¹⁰ The verb occurs 15 times, and refers clearly to exposing nakedness only 3 times (Lev 20:18, 19; Lam 4:21). Nine of the 15 occurrences are in the Piel and mean “pour out” or “empty” a vessel (Gen 24:20; 2 Chr 24:11), “lay bare” or “raze” (Hab 3:13; Zeph 2:14; Ps 137:7; and possibly Isa 3:17), and “expose for use” (Isa 22:6) or

⁸Isa 3:17 and Hab 3:13 may also refer to exposing nakedness, but the terminology is unclear. See chap. 5 below.

⁹BDB, 788; *DCH*, 6:554; *HALOT*, 2:881-82; Boyd V. Seevers, “ערה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:527-31; H. Niehr, “ערה,” in *TDOT*, 11:343-49; and Ronald B. Allen, “ערה,” in *TWOT*, 2:695.

¹⁰Niehr, “ערה,” 11:344.

“expose” as in “leave defenseless” (Ps 141:8; and possibly Isa 3:17). The Hiphil of ערה occurs 3 times, twice in Leviticus to mean “uncover” (Lev 20:18, 19), and once in Isaiah to mean “expose” (Isa 53:12).¹¹ The one occurrence of the Niphil in Isaiah 32:15 concerns the coming of the Spirit and is typically translated “poured out.”¹² Finally, the Hithpael occurs in Lamentations and means “to strip oneself naked” (Lam 4:21). See table 1 for the distribution of the verb. The occurrences clearly expressing nakedness are italicized.

Table 1. Distribution of ערה

Gen 24:20	Piel (pour out)		Hab 3:13	Piel (raze/naked?)
<i>Lev 20:18, 19</i>	<i>Hiphil (make naked)</i>		Zeph 2:14	Piel (raze)
2 Chr 24:11	Piel (pour out)		Ps 37:35	Hith (spreading?)
Isa 3:17	Piel (naked?)		Ps 137:7 (2x)	Piel (raze)
Isa 22:6	Piel (uncover shield)		Ps 141:8	Piel (defenseless)
Isa 32:15	Niph (poured out)		<i>Lam 4:21</i>	<i>Hith (strip oneself)</i>
Isa 53:12	Hiph (pour out)			

In addition to ערה, the closely-related roots עור and ערר also mean “be bare.” עור occurs just once in the OT in Hab 3:9. עריה תעור קשתך is difficult to translate but likely means that the bow is laid bare, i.e., made ready for use.¹³ ערר

¹¹Several English versions translate הערה למוות נפשו as “poured out his life or soul” (e. g. ESV, KJV, NASB). The LXX uses the term παραδίδωμι, meaning “hand over,” better communicating the idea of “expose” in the sense of “leave defenseless.”

¹²The LXX uses ἐπέρχομαι, communicating the coming or appearance of the Spirit.

¹³BDB, 735; and DCH, 6:316-17. Conversely, HALOT, 2:802-03, sees Hab 3:9 as a form of

occurs 4 times in four different stems but only conveys the idea of nakedness in Isaiah 32:11.¹⁴ Table 2 shows the distribution of עור and ערר. The occurrences clearly expressing nakedness are italicized.

Table 2. Distribution of עור and ערר

Isa 23:13 (ערר)	Poel (lay bare)
<i>Isa 32:11 (ערר)</i>	<i>Qal (be bare / strip yourself)</i>
Jer 51:58 (ערר) (2x)	Pilpel and Hithpapel (utterly laid bare)
Hab 3:9 (עור)	Niph (laid bare)

Derivatives of עור, ערה, and ערר:

Adjectives

עירם occurs 10 times in the OT and means “naked.”¹⁵ ערום and ערום are alternate spellings. The word is used in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11, showing the couple’s awareness of their nudity following their decision to eat from the forbidden tree. Deuteronomy 28:48 uses the term to describe one facet of Israel’s punishment if she is unfaithful to the terms of the covenant. In Ezekiel 16, עירם is coupled with עִרְיָהּ 3 times and refers consistently to the time in Jerusalem’s life when she was naked and

ערר II, meaning “to wake or rouse. Seevers, “ערה,” 3:529, lists Hab 3:9 as an occurrence of ערר.

¹⁴BDB, 792; *DCH*, 6:567-68; *HALOT*, 2:889; and Ronald B. Allen, “ערר,” in *TWOT*, 2:700. Seevers, “ערה,” 3:527-31; and *DCH*, 6:568, note that Isa 25:2 would be a fifth occurrence of ערר if מעיר (from a city) is emended to מוער (Hophal participle: “destroyed”). *HALOT*, 2:889; and Seevers, “ערה,” 3:527, suggest that ערר is a secondary form from ערה.

¹⁵BDB, 736; *DCH*, 6:382; *HALOT*, 2:823; Seevers, “ערום,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:532-33; Niehr, “ערה,” 11:349-54; and Carl Schultz, “עור,” in *TWOT*, 2:656. BDB, 736; *DCH*, 6:382; and Schultz, “עור,” 656, suggest that עירם is a derivative of עור. Niehr, “ערום,” in *TDOT*, 11:350-51, lists עור, ערה, and the hypothetical ערום as possibilities but does not take a position.

bare, wallowing in her own blood (Ezek 16:7, 22, 39). Ezekiel 18:7, 16 refer to clothing the naked with a garment. Finally, Ezekiel 23:29 uses the term in the same way as Ezekiel 16, except here YHWH pronounces that he will allow her enemies to return her to this state of עִירָם וְעָרְיָה (“naked and bare” ESV) because of her unfaithfulness. These uses of עִירָם address the same circumstances as עָרָם, except perhaps they add the nuance of nakedness as a punishment in Deuteronomy 28:48; Ezekiel 16:39; 23:29. Table 3 shows the distribution of עִירָם.

Table 3. Distribution of עִירָם

Gen 3:7	עִירָמָם	Ezek 16:39	עִירָם
Gen 3:10, 11	עִירָם	Ezek 18:7	עִירָם
Deut 28:48	עִירָם	Ezek 18:16	עָרוֹם
Ezek 16:7, 22	עָרָם	Ezek 23:29	עִירָם

Like עָרוֹם, עִירָם also carries the basic meaning “naked.”¹⁶ Of the 15 occurrences of עָרוֹם, one refers to the first couple in a situation without shame (Gen 2:25).¹⁷ Four refer to those who are poverty-stricken and in need of care (Job 22:6; 24:7, 10; Isa 58:7). Two refer to the concept of contingency (Job 1:21; Eccl 5:15 [5:14 MT]). Three represent the idea of vulnerability before a foe (1 Sam 19:24; Amos 2:16; Job 26:6).¹⁸ Four signify those being shamed through stripping (Isa 20: 2, 3, 4;

¹⁶BDB, 736; *DCH*, 6:556; *HALOT*, 2:882-83; Seevers, “עָרוֹם,” 3:532-33; Niehr, “עָרוֹם,” in *TDOT*, 11:349-54; and Schultz, “עָרוֹ,” 2:656. BDB, 736; and Schultz, “עָרוֹ,” 2:656, suggest that עָרוֹם derives from either עָרוֹ or עָרָה. *DCH*, 6:556, suggests עָרוֹ. *HALOT*, 2:882, lists עָרָה or the hypothetical עָרָם; Niehr, “עָרוֹם,” 11:350-51, lists עָרוֹ, עָרָה, and עָרָם as possibilities but does not take a position.

¹⁷Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 306n1, discusses this odd morphology of עָרוֹם.

¹⁸See the discussion of 1 Sam 19:24 in chap. 5.

Hos 2:3 [2:5 MT]). The last is a form of lament or mourning (Mic 1:8). Table 4 shows the occurrences of עָרוֹם.

Table 4. Distribution of עָרוֹם

Gen 2:25	עָרוֹמִים		Mic 1:8	עָרוֹם
1 Sam 19:24	עָרָם		Job 1:21	עָרָם
Isa 20:2-4 (3x)	עָרוֹם		Job 22:6	עָרוֹמִים
Isa 58:7	עָרָם		Job 24:7, 10 (2x)	עָרוֹם
Hos 2:3 (2:5 MT)	עָרְמָה		Job 26:6	עָרוֹם
Amos 2:16	עָרוֹם		Eccl 5:15 (5:14 MT)	עָרוֹם

עָרוֹם and its morphological peculiarities. עָרוֹם in Genesis 2:25 exhibits a few odd characteristics, common with many similar adjectives such as אָדָם (red) and נֶקֶד (speckled), עֶקֶד (striped), or בָּרָד (spotted). The long \bar{o} vowel reduces to a short \check{u} , giving עָרְמִים instead of עָרָמִים. Additionally, the consonant מ geminates, giving עָרְמִים instead of עָרָמִים since the Hebrew language will not tolerate a short vowel in an open syllable.¹⁹ Oddly then, rather than using עָרְמִים with the expected short \check{u} , Genesis 2:25 uses a long \bar{u} vowel instead, giving עָרוֹמִים. Gesenius states this use is simply orthographic license.²⁰ Joüon-Muraoka suggests, however, that the use of ו here is a *mater lectionis* used to represent the short \check{u} .²¹ Given that the only other plural form

¹⁹Joüon, §18e, calls this spontaneous gemination in (non-guttural) consonants. This gemination occurs regularly in adjectives (of “space” or “color”) with a *Qatul* primitive (proto-) form, as is the case with עָרוֹם. When the final consonant is inflected, gemination in this case, the *o* vowel will revert to its original *u* form (Joüon, §88d).

²⁰GKC, §90.

²¹Joüon, §7b. *Vav* serves as a *mater lectionis* for long \bar{o} and short \check{u} , particularly when

of עָרוּמִים in the OT also contains the ׀, i.e., Job 22:6, Joüion-Muraoka’s explanation is more satisfactory.²²

Different words for nakedness in Genesis 2:25; 3:7, 10, 11. English

translations of Genesis 2-3 obscure the fact that Moses uses a slightly different word for nakedness in Genesis 2:25 than he does in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11. In Genesis 2:25, he uses the form עָרוּמִים (עָרוֹם), but in Genesis 3:7, he uses the word עִירָמָם (עִירִים). Moses retains the word עִירִים in 3:10, 11 when Adam and the Lord speak to one another. Some have argued that this shift from עָרוֹם to עִירִים is intentional and significant for interpretation.

First, one must consider that עָרוֹם and עִירִים are synonyms and there is no significance to their respective uses in the pericope. Given the lack of concern by the early translators to reflect this shift, this possibility has some merit or at least signals that the significance is probably low. The Samaritan Pentateuch employs the form עָרוֹם in each case. Each of the Targums use a form of עִרְטִילִי except Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 2:25.²³ The LXX uses γυμνός consistently, and the Vulgate

followed by gemination. See F. I. Andersen and A. D. Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, *Biblica et Orientalia* 41 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986), for more examples. Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 307, suggests the use of ׀ here is a *mater lectionis* by a late copyist who no longer distinguished between long and short vowels. In S. D. Luzzatto, *The Book of Genesis: A Commentary by SHaDaL*, trans. Daniel A. Klein (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1998), 48, Shadal seems to support Joüion’s suggestion, “The *vav* is superfluous, for the singular is עִירִים; this is why the *mem* is strengthened with a *dagesh*. Not so is the homonym עָרוּמִים (“cunning”) from the noun עִרְמָה, whose singular form is עָרוֹם with a “quiescent” *vav*, so that the *mem* remains “weak,” without a *dagesh*. The Masoretes gave this a mnemonic: *Hakimin rafin ve-artila’in dehikin* (“the ‘wise’ are weak and the ‘naked’ are strong”).” Hyman Hurwitz, *Vindiciae Hebraicae* (London: Boosey and Sons, 1820), 169, also cites this mnemonic; however, this study could not locate the source of the mnemonic.

²²In Joüion, §88d, the other comparable adjectives listed, אדם, ארץ, ברד, נקד, עגל, עמק, and שֵׁרָק, follow the expected form in the plural (or feminine singular) in every use in the OT, i.e., without the ׀. Because of the guttural, גְּבוּהַ, גִּבְחַ, and שִׁקָּר do not geminate and retain the long vowel. The plural of קִטָּן uses the short *a* vowel and thus would not use a *mater lectionis*. Interestingly, the Samaritan Pentateuch, which tends to use *matres lectionis* more frequently than the MT, does not include the ׀.

²³One will notice the slight differences in spelling amongst the Targums, particularly with the presence and location of א and י. Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud*

maintains the use of *nudus* throughout. See table 5 for data concerning the translators' choices.

Table 5. Words used by translators in Genesis 2-3

Gen	MT	SP	<i>Tg. Neof.</i>	<i>Tg. Onq.</i>	<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	LXX	Vulg.
2:25	עָרוּמִים	ערמים	ערטלין	ערטלאין	חכימין	γυμνοί	<i>nudi</i>
3:7	עִרְמָם	ערמים	ערטליין	ערטלאין	ערטילאין	γυμνοί	<i>nudos</i>
3:10	עִרָם	ערום	ערטלאי	ערטלאי	ערטיליי	γυμνός	<i>nudus</i>
3:11	עִרָם	ערום	ערטיליי	ערטילאי	ערטילאי	γυμνός	<i>nudus</i>

Yet, one must note that this pericope in Genesis does, in fact, use two different adjectives to describe the couple's nakedness. Perhaps the author simply used the two terms for stylistic variation, but these two terms are nowhere else juxtaposed in the OT. Moreover, their distance from one another in this pericope makes it unlikely to be merely variation of style. Some argue that ערום and עירם each carry a distinct meaning, even if the difference is slight. Those arguing for this position fall into two main categories. The first is that the words bear inherently distinct meanings, and an ANE reader would understand that distinction as they read the text. Richard Davidson argues that ערום refers to not being fully clothed or not clothed in the normal manner, citing 1 Samuel 19:24; Isaiah 20:2; 58:7; Job 22:6;

Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 1115-16; and J. Levy, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Theil der rabbinischen Schrifttums* (Cologne: J. Melzer, 1959), 243-44, include all these spellings under the same entry, and neither makes an effort to distinguish these terms. *Tg. Ps.-J.* seems to be emphasizing the wordplay between “nakedness” and “crafty” in Gen 2:25 and 3:1. See the discussion on this wordplay below.

and 24:7, 10 as examples.²⁴ He notes, “In Genesis 3:7, 10, 11, the Hebrew word for ‘naked’ is [עירם], which elsewhere in Scripture always appears in a context of total (and usually shameful) exposure.”²⁵ As discussed in chapter 2, Herbert Niehr also argues that עירם bears an inherently negative connotation of nakedness.²⁶

These inherent distinctions, however, do not exist in the words ערום and עירם, at least not according to their use in Scripture. This argument relies on a neutral or amoral understanding of ערום and a meaning of עירם that is inherently shameful. Additionally, the argument requires that עירם always refers to total nakedness, whereas ערום might simply mean inadequately or improperly clothed. Chapter 5 examines the use of nakedness in 1 Samuel 19:24 and the texts in Ezekiel more thoroughly, but to address this argument, it is sufficient to note that these claims are not sustainable in the texts mentioned.

First, after the events of Genesis 3 and except for the situation of a marital relationship, nakedness always carries a shameful connotation in the Bible. Both adjectives in Genesis 2-3 occur in situations where nakedness is a judgment, e.g., Deuteronomy 28:48 (עירם); Hosea 2:3 (ערום), and in instances where nakedness is due to one’s pitiable situation in life, e.g., Ezekiel 8:7, 16 (עירם); Isaiah 58:7 (ערום). עירם does not always refer to total nudity as Davidson suggests, however. Ezekiel refers to a righteous man as one who “gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked [עירם] with a garment” (Ezek 18:7, 16). Clearly, the naked one in this text is juxtaposed with the hungry, representing one who is poor and downcast. He is

²⁴Richard M. Davidson, “Theology of Sexuality in the Song of Songs: Return to Eden,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27, no. 1 (1989): 122.

²⁵Davidson, “Theology of Sexuality,” 122.

²⁶Niehr, “ערום,” 11:352. Like Davidson, Niehr points to Ezek 16:7, 22, 39; 18:7, 16; 23:29 as evidence for this negative connotation. See also Shadal, *The Book of Genesis*, 48, who states, “The basic meaning of *eirum* is not a lack of clothing, but the exposure of that which ought to be covered.” He does not contrast עירם with ערום, however.

almost certainly not completely naked, and if he is, then one cannot claim that ערום represents one who is only poorly clothed in Job 22:6; 24:7, 10; or Isaiah 58:7, where the same scenario occurs. Moreover, ערום refers to total nakedness in Hosea 2:3; Job 1:21; and Ecclesiastes 5:15, where the authors point to the imagery of nakedness at birth.²⁷ See table 6 for a list of both words and their usage.

Table 6. ערום and עירם as “naked” or “inadequately clothed”

Naked	Inadequately clothed
Gen 2:25 (ערום)	Isa 58:7 (ערום)
Gen 3:7, 10, 11 (עירם)	Ezek 18:7, 16 (עירם)
1 Sam 19:24 (ערום) ²⁸	Job 22:6; 24:7, 10 (ערום)
Isa 20:2-4 (ערום)	
Ezek 16: 7, 22, 39; 23:29 (עירם)	
Hos 2:3 (ערום)	
Job 1:21; Eccl 5:15 (ערום)	

The evidence shows that both ערום and עירם refer to situations in which someone is inadequately clothed or completely naked. What is noteworthy for the distribution of these two terms is that except for Genesis 2-3, the authors of the four books using an adjectival form of nakedness more than once use one or the other,

²⁷Hos 2:3 and Ezek 16:7, 22, 39, point to the exact same image, i.e., Israel/Judah naked at her birth before YHWH found and cared for her. Yet, Hosea uses the term ערום while Ezekiel uses עירם.

²⁸See chap. 5 for a discussion of partial or total nudity in 1 Sam 19:24 and Isa 20:2-4.

but not both.²⁹ Moreover, these books convey diverse situations of nakedness, i.e., total nakedness, inadequate clothing, etc., yet still use only one form of the adjective. This fact makes it more likely that Moses intended to convey a different nuance of nakedness by using two different terms in Genesis 2:25 and 3:7, 10, 11.

The second category of those who consider a distinct meaning between ערום and עירם argue that the difference in meaning is not intrinsic to the words themselves but from their context in the passage. As such, some acknowledge that ערום and עירם are virtual synonyms, and their use allows the author to set up a wordplay between ערומים in Genesis 2:25 and ערום in Genesis 3:1.³⁰ Commenting on the couple's awareness of their nakedness in Genesis 3:7 for instance, Bill Arnold states, "[Nakedness is] spelled in the expected form [עירמם], since the alternate spelling of 2:25 was used to prepare for the wordplay of 3:1."³¹ Umberto Cassuto argues similarly, "In order to make the word-play more apparent, Scripture uses in the previous verse the form עָרוּם . . . and not עִירוּם . . . which occurs subsequently in verses 7, 10, 11."³² Genesis 2:25 is the only time ערום is used adjectivally to convey

²⁹Genesis uses both, Isaiah uses ערום, Ezekiel uses עירם, and Job uses ערום.

³⁰The following note a wordplay: Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 66; James McKeown, *Genesis*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 32-34; Allen P. Ross, *Genesis*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 51; John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 84; and Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 102-3, 471-74; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 24; Jack M. Sasson, "Welō' yitbōššū (Gen 2:25) and Its Implications," *Biblica* 66 (1985): 418-20; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), 73; and H. Niehr, "ערום," 11:349-54.

³¹Arnold, *Genesis*, 66n138. Arnold tries to show that the use of serpent imagery is a plan to demythologize Canaanite Baalism. Skinner, *Genesis*, 73, states that the difference in spelling is due either to ערום being a by-form of עירם or more probably that ערום derives from a different root (ערה). Thus, he notes the two are synonyms and highlights the two different spellings without addressing why the author may have spelled it differently.

³²Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, *From Adam to Noah*,

nakedness in the Pentateuch, and the other occurrences use עירם. Yet this statement obscures the fact that the only other adjectival use of nakedness in the Pentateuch occurs in Deuteronomy 28:48, hardly establishing a pattern of use. In fact, outside the Pentateuch, ערום, not עירם, comprises the majority of adjectival uses, occurring fourteen times while עירם occurs only six. Thus, Arnold's statement that עירם is the expected usage is not sustainable and does not adequately explain the distinct uses of ערום and עירם in the passage. Moreover, against Cassuto's assertion, the possible wordplay between "naked" and "crafty" would function just as well if Moses continued to use the term ערום in Genesis 3:7, 10, and 11.

John Sailhamer also argues for a form of this category, namely that ערום in Genesis 2:25 establishes the expected term for nakedness in the passage, which is then altered when one comes to עירם in Genesis 3:7. The two words are practically synonyms, but he argues that their use in this text and others establishes a nuanced distinction. Both terms are rare in the Pentateuch. ערום occurs only in Genesis 2:25, and עירם occurs only in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11 and Deuteronomy 28:48. In the blessings and curses section of the covenant, the Israelites are warned, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything" (Deut 28:47-48). As such, Sailhamer argues,

In distinguishing the first state of man's nakedness [ערום] from the second [עירם], the author has introduced a subtle yet perceptible clue to the story's meaning. The effect of the fall is not simply that the man and the woman become aware of their "nakedness" [ערום]. Rather, they come to know that they are "naked" [עירם] in the sense of being "under God's judgment."³³

trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 143.

³³Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 84.

Thus, Sailhamer concludes that the reader would perceive the synonyms distinctly and connect Moses's use of עירם in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11 to the warning in Deuteronomy 28:48.³⁴ עירם is the kind of nakedness one would associate with exile and judgment.

Perhaps Sailhamer is correct that Moses used עירם instead of ערום in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11 and Deuteronomy 28:48 intentionally to connect the same idea of nakedness as punishment, but some have rightly critiqued Sailhamer's methodology, particularly that he claims to know the author's purpose for these connections as he composed the Pentateuch and thus tends to over-read linguistic correspondence between texts.³⁵ Authorial intent is not always obvious, and Sailhamer often neglects to provide criteria for determining authorial intent other than highlighting the textual or thematic correspondence. He correctly perceives that the same theological weight is attached to nakedness in Genesis 3 and Deuteronomy 28, but one can deduce the negative aspect of nakedness from the context of disobedience and punishment without appealing to an authorially-intended inner-textual link between them.³⁶

In summary, the discussion in the section above shows that ערום and עירם do not bear obviously distinct meanings and serve primarily as synonyms of one

³⁴See also Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 119, who argues similarly. Niehr, "ערום," 11:352, also notes the connotation derived from Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, but, as mentioned in the section above, he seems to distinguish the terms at their level of intrinsic meaning.

³⁵For example, see James M. Hamilton, "John Sailhamer's *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: A Review Essay*," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14, no. 2 (2010): 62-76; and Stephen Dempster, "Magnum Opus and Magna Carta: *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*," *Themelios* 36, no. 1 (2011): 42-47.

³⁶While most use the term "intertextual" broadly to describe the connection between texts, Sailhamer specifies "inner-textuality" to refer to textual connections within a literary work, such as the Pentateuch. Thus, the author or editor utilizes words, phrases, and themes to create an intentional literary structure which communicates his message. See John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 209-12.

another. First, the terms convey the same information elsewhere in the OT. Second, except for Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the translations of Genesis 2-3 use the same word in Genesis 2:25 as in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11, suggesting that early interpreters saw no significance in the use of two different terms. Finally, except for Moses's use in Genesis 2-3, the remaining OT authors use either ערום or עירם in their texts, but not both terms. Since the terms are not definitionally distinct, the literary context must determine any nuance between them. Chapter 4 considers a possible literary intention behind Moses's use of the two words in Genesis 2-3.

Derivatives of עור, ערה, and ערר: Nouns

עָרָה occurs 53 times, 32 of which occur in Leviticus 18 and 20. This noun means “nakedness” but is more specifically a term for the sexual organs in the OT.³⁷ ערוה also occurs in 3 texts which indicate something other than the nakedness of the sexual organs. Joseph uses ערוה metaphorically as a term referring to the undefended, vulnerable parts of Egypt when he accuses his brothers of being spies (Gen 42:9, 12). Additionally, in Deuteronomy 23:14 (23:15 MT); 24:1, the phrase עֲרֹת דְבָר occurs, meaning literally “nakedness of a thing.”³⁸ See table 7 for the distribution of ערוה in the OT.

עָרִיהַ derives from ערה and means “bareness” or “nakedness.”³⁹ It occurs 6 times, 5 of which are construct phrases. In Ezekiel, עירם is used in the phrase עִירָהּ וְעָרִיהָ, which is commonly translated “naked and bare” (Ezek 16:7, 22, 39; 23:9).⁴⁰

³⁷BDB, 788; *DCH*, 6:555-56; *HALOT*, 2:882; Seevers, “ערה,” 3:528-30; Niehr, “ערה,” 11:345-48; and Allen, “ערה,” 2:695. These lexicons all suggest ערוה derives from ערה.

³⁸See chap. 4 for a discussion of this term.

³⁹BDB, 789; *DCH*, 6:557; *HALOT*, 2:883; Seevers, “ערה,” 3:528-30; Niehr, “ערה,” 11:345-48; and Allen, “ערה,” 2:695. These lexicons all suggest עריה derives from ערה.

⁴⁰See ESV, KJV, NASB. The NIV and CSB translate as “stark naked.”

Micah 1:11 has עֲרִיָה-בִשָּׁת, combining the ideas of nakedness and shame. In Habakkuk 3:9, עֲרִיָה intensifies YHWH's readying of his bow, עֲרִיָה תִעוֹר קִשְׁתּוֹךְ. See table 8 for the distribution of עריה.

Table 7. Distribution of עֲרוּהָ

Gen 9:22, 23	Noah's nakedness		Isa 20:4	Nakedness of Egypt
Gen 42:9, 12	Nakedness of land		Isa 47:3	Babylon's nakedness
Exod 20:26	Priest's nakedness		Ezek 16:8, 36, 37 (4x)	Jerusalem's nakedness
Lev 18:6-19 (24x)	Term for sexual relationship		Ezek 22:10	Father's nakedness
Lev 20:11-21 (8x)	Term for sexual relationship		Ezek 23:10, 18, 29	Samaria's and Jerusalem's nakedness
Deut 23:14 (23:15 MT)	Nakedness of a thing		Hos 2:11	Israel's nakedness
Deut 24:1	Nakedness of a thing		Lam 1:8	Jerusalem's nakedness
1 Sam 20:30	Nakedness of mother		Ezra 4:14	King's nakedness

Table 8. Distribution of עֲרִיָה

Ezek 16:7, 22, 39	Jer. as a woman		Mic 1:11	Defeated captives
Ezek 23:29	Jer. as a woman		Hab 3:9	Readiness of Y's bow

Less Common Derivatives of עור, ערה, and ערר

A few less common words remain that derive from the verbs עור, ערה, and ערר

ערר (Hab 2:15),⁴¹ and מְעָרִים (2 Chr 28:15)⁴² each occur once and mean nakedness, referring to the sexual organs in Habakkuk and to the destitute condition of war captives in Chronicles. In 1 Kings 7:36, מֵעַר refers to a bare space in which figures were carved in the temple decorations.⁴³ Additionally, the term describes the nakedness or vulnerability of Nineveh when YHWH comes to judge (Nah 3:5). עָרָה likely derives from ערה, and refers to a “bare place” along the Nile River (Isa 19:7).⁴⁴ Finally, in Psalm 102:17 (102:18 MT), עֲרֵרָה refers to the naked or destitute whose prayers YHWH hears.⁴⁵ Table 9 shows the distribution of these words in the OT.

Table 9. Distribution of less common derivatives

1 Kgs 7:36	מֵעַר		Isa 19:7	עָרָה (poss.)
Hab 2:15	מְעָרִים		Ps 102:17	עֲרֵרָה
Nah 3:5	מֵעַר		2 Chr 28:15	מְעָרִים

גלה: “Uncover”

The verb גלה is more common than ערה, occurring 196 times in the OT,

⁴¹BDB, 735; *DCH*, 5:391; *HALOT*, 2:611; and Schultz, “עור,” 2:656. These lexicons suggest that מעור derives from עור.

⁴²BDB, 736; *DCH*, 5:415; *HALOT*, 2:616; Seevers, “ערום,” 3:532-33; and Schultz, “עור,” 2:656. These lexicons suggest מערם is from the root עור and probably a by-form of ערום.

⁴³BDB, 789; *DCH*, 5:410; *HALOT*, 2:615; Seevers, “ערה,” 3:528; Niehr, “ערה,” 11:345-48; and Allen, “ערה,” 2:695. These lexicons all suggest that מער derives from ערה. BDB, 789; and Seevers, “ערה,” 528, also include מערה (Judg 20:33) as a form of מער. English translations follow Codex Vaticanus and translate as the place name Μααρηγαβε “Maareh-Geba” (e.g., ESV, NASB) or follow Codex Alexandrinus, τὸ εὐμὲν τῆς Γαβα “west of Gibeah” (e.g., CSB, NIV).

⁴⁴BDB, 788; *DCH*, 6:554; and Allen, “ערה,” 2:695. “Reed” might be a better definition, which follows the LXX and seems to make better sense of the verb יבש (to dry up). *HALOT*, 2:882; and Seevers, “ערה,” 3:528, suggest “reed.”

⁴⁵BDB, 792; *DCH*, 6:568; *HALOT*, 2:887; Seevers, “ערה,” 3:530; and Allen, “ערה,” 2:700.

though only 47 of those likely pertain to nakedness.⁴⁶ גלה expresses two primary meanings, which some suggest may reflect two distinct verbal roots.⁴⁷ As a transitive verb, גלה means “to uncover,” and can refer to physical uncovering, such as a garment (e.g., Gen 9:21; Lev 18:6-19), or it can mean uncover in the sense of “reveal,” as in uncover the eyes or ears (e.g., 1 Samuel 9:15; 20:2; 22:8; Job 33:16) or the appearance of a spiritual being (e.g., Gen 35:7; 1 Sam 2:27; 3:7).⁴⁸ These transitive meanings occur in the Qal, Niphal, Piel, Pual, and Hithpael stems.

Intransitively, גלה means “to remove” or “go into exile” (e.g., 2 Kgs 15:29; 24:14; 2 Chr 36:20). The intransitive meaning occurs in the Qal, Hiphil, and Hophal stems. The Qal then is the only stem that uses the transitive and intransitive meanings. The intransitive use of גלה is common in the Prophets to describe YHWH’s covenant judgment of Israel and Judah for their apostasy. The terms גולה (e.g., Ezra 1:11; Neh 7:6; Esth 2:6) and גלות (e.g., 2 Kgs 25:27; Isa 20:4; Jer 29:22), which refer to the persons taken from Israel and Judah in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles as well as the concept of exile as an event, derive from this intransitive meaning of גלה. Table 10 lists the occurrences of גלה pertaining to nakedness.

⁴⁶גלה occurs 187 times in Hebrew and 9 times in Aramaic. Its use is distributed across all major sections of the OT.

⁴⁷For lexical information, see BDB, 162-63; *DCH*, 2:348-52; *HALOT*, 1:191-92; David M. Howard, “גלה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 1:861-64; Hans-Jürgen Zobel, “גלה,” in *TDOT*, 2:476-88; and Bruce K. Waltke, “גלה,” in *TWOT*, 1:160-61. Howard, “גלה,” 1:861; Zobel, “גלה,” 2:477; and Waltke, “גלה,” 1:161, suggest that the transitive and intransitive occurrences of גלה derive from one root. BDB, 162-63; and *HALOT* 1:191-92, do not take a position.

⁴⁸The Greek ἀποκαλύπτω conveys the nuance of “reveal” in the LXX.

Table 10. Distribution of גלה

Gen 9:21	Hith (himself)	Isa 57:8	(Piel (bed
Exod 20:26	Niph (nakedness)	Jer 13:22	(Niph (skirts
Lev 18:6-19 (17x)	Piel (nakedness)	Ezek 16:36, 37	Niph (nakedness) Piel (nakedness)
Lev 20:11-21 (7x)	Piel (nakedness)	Ezek 22:10	Piel (nakedness)
Deut 22:30 (23:1 MT)	Piel (skirt)	Ezek 23:10, 18, 29 (4x)	Piel (fornication, nakedness) Niph (nakedness)
Deut 27:20	Piel (skirt)	Hos 2:10 (2:12 MT)	Piel (lewdness?)
2 Sam 6:20 (3x)	Niph (himself)	Nah 3:5	(skirt) Piel
Isa 47:2, 3 (3x)	Piel (veil, leg) Niph (nakedness)	Ruth 3:4, 7	Piel (feet)

פשט: “Strip Off”

Another verb used to express the concept of nakedness in the OT is פשט. Like גלה and ערה, the object of the stripping determines whether or not פשט concerns nakedness. פשט occurs 43 times in the OT and means “to strip or take off” and, among other uses, can refer to clothing (e.g., Lev 6:11), the spoils of war (e.g., 1 Sam 31:8), or skinning an animal (e.g., Lev 1:6).⁴⁹ פשט occurs in the Qal, Piel, Hiphil, and Hithpael. Though פשט is used in judgment contexts (e.g., Hosea 2:5; Ezekiel 16:39; 23:26), the English word “strip off” conveys a more forceful act than

⁴⁹BDB, 832-33; DCH, 7:790-92; HALOT, 3:980-81; Boyd V. Seevers, “פשט,” in NIDOTTE, 3:704-06; H. Schmoldt, “פשט,” in TDOT, 12:129-32; and Victor P. Hamilton, “פשט,” in TWOT, 2:741.

פִּשַׁט implies. For instance, the removal of Aaron’s clothing (Num 20:26, 28) does not imply a forceful act or one of judgment. In these cases, “remove” might be a better translation. Table 11 shows these uses of פִּשַׁט discussed in this dissertation.

Table 11. Distribution of פִּשַׁט

Gen 37:23	Hiph (robe)		Ezek 26:16	Qal (garments)
1 Sam 19:24	Qal (garments)		Hos 2:5 (2:3 MT)	Hiph (“her”)
Isa 32:11	Qal (“herself”)		Job 22:6	Hiph (garments)
Ezek 16:39	Hiph (garments)		Song 5:3	Qal (tunic)
Ezek 23:26	Hiph (garments)			

הִשָּׁח: “Strip Off”

The final verb to consider is the word הִשָּׁח, which means “strip off” or “bare.”⁵⁰ הִשָּׁח occurs 11 times in the OT, always in the Qal, but of those, only 3 incorporate nakedness language to speak of YHWH’s judgment, i.e., Isaiah 20:4; 47:2; Jeremiah 13:26. Jeremiah 49:10 and Joel 1:7 also use הִשָּׁח to speak of judgment, stating that the land is laid bare. Though these texts do not use nakedness imagery, the concept of exposure conveys the same vulnerability as being naked. Lastly, Isaiah 52:10 and Ezekiel 4:7 use הִשָּׁח with זָרוּעַ to express the threat of YHWH exposing his arm to display his power over his enemy, in Isaiah to deliver his people and in Ezekiel to destroy them. Table 12 shows the distribution of הִשָּׁח with italics indicating the texts using nakedness language.

⁵⁰BDB, 362; *DCH*, 3:326; *HALOT*, 1:359; Boyd V. Seevers, “הִשָּׁח,” in *NIDOTTE*, 2:302-03; and Leonard J. Coppes, “הִשָּׁח,” in *TWOT*, 1:329.

Table 12. Distribution of חֲשָׁף

Ps 29:9	forests		<i>Jer 13:26</i>	<i>lift skirts</i>
<i>Isa 20:4</i>	<i>captives' buttocks</i>		Jer 49:10	the land of Edom
Isa 30:14	scoop water		Ezek 4:7	Ezekiel's arm as YHWH
<i>Isa 47:2</i>	<i>lift skirts</i>		Joel 1:7	fig tree and vine's bark?
Isa 52:10	YHWH's arm		Hag 2:6	draw wine

Miscellaneous Words Indicating Nakedness

Apart from words specifically translated as “nakedness,” e.g., עירום, ערוזה, etc., the idea of nakedness is also expressed through various other words or euphemisms. The words בֶּשֶׂר (flesh), יָד (hand), מְבוּשִׁים (place of shame), and רַגְלַי (feet) likely refer to the male sexual organs in the texts listed in table 11.⁵¹ The female sexual organ is not described at all except in the sense of רֶחֶם (womb).⁵² However, the secondary sexual organs for a woman, i.e., her breasts (שָׁדַיִם or שְׂדָיִם) do imply situations of nakedness in a few texts. Some of these texts then convey the idea of nakedness by euphemistically referring to the primary male sexual organs or the female secondary sexual organs. Table 13 shows the distribution of these terms.

⁵¹Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 143-45, lists several other occurrences of these words, which he suggests refers to the male sexual organs.

⁵²Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 3.8, also suggests קבה in Num 25:3 for the woman's womb when Phineas spears through the belly the Israelite man and the Midianite woman he brought into the camp. There however, the term probably refers more generally to her abdomen.

Table 13. Texts referring to the primary and secondary sexual organs

בֶּשֶׂר ⁵³	Exod 28:42	You shall make for them linen undergarments to cover their “flesh of nakedness.”
	Ezek 16:26	“big of flesh,” i.e., large sexual organs
	Ezek 23:20	flesh as donkey’s flesh
יָד ⁵⁴	Isa 57:8	You have looked at “a hand”
רִגְלֵי ⁵⁵	2 Kgs 18:27	“Waters of their feet” (urine)
	Exod 4:25 (poss?)	Zipporah touched the foreskin to his feet
דָּד ⁵⁶	Prov 5:19	Let her breasts fill you with delight (intimacy)
	Ezek 23:3, 8, 21	Israel’s/Judah’s spiritual adultery
שָׁד ⁵⁷	Ezek 16:7	Referring to naked “Israel” when she matured
	Ezek 23:3, 21	Israel’s/Judah’s spiritual adultery
	Hos 2:2 (2:4 MT)	Put away adultery from her breasts, lest I strip...
	Song 1:13; 4:5; 7:3, 8, 9	Sexual intimacy

⁵³BDB, 142; *DCH*, 2:77-80; *HALOT*, 164; Robert B. Chisholm, “בֶּשֶׂר,” in *NIDOTTE*, 1:777-79; N. P. Bratsiotis, “בֶּשֶׂר,” in *TDOT*, 2:317-32; and John N. Oswalt, “בֶּשֶׂר,” in *TWOT*, 1:135-36.

⁵⁴BDB, 388-91; *DCH*, 4:82-94; *HALOT*, 386-88; Manfred Dreytza, “יָד,” in *NIDOTTE*, 2:402-05; Peter R. Ackroyd, “יָד,” in *TDOT*, 5:393-426; and Ralph H. Alexander, “יָד,” in *TWOT*, 1:362-64.

⁵⁵BDB, 919-20; *DCH*, 7:411-14; *HALOT*, 1184-86; Victor P. Hamilton, “רִגְלֵי,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:1048-49; F. J. Stendebach, “רִגְלֵי,” in *TDOT*, 13:309-24; and William White, “רִגְלֵי,” in *TWOT*, 2:831-32.

⁵⁶BDB, 186; *DCH*, 2:416; *HALOT*, 214; Chisholm, “דָּד,” in *NIDOTTE*, 1:922; and *TWOT*, 1:184.

⁵⁷BDB, 994; *DCH*, 8:265-66; *HALOT*, 1416-17; Chisholm, “שָׁד,” in *NIDOTTE*, 4:46-47; Manfred Oeming, “שָׁד,” in *TDOT*, 14:408-12; and Hamilton, “שָׁדָה,” in *TWOT*, 2:906-7.

Conclusion: The Language of Nakedness in the OT

From these terms, one can see that the OT communicated the concept of nudity primarily through privative language. By using language that expresses a covering being taken away, the reader is left to fill in the gaps of what remains once the covering is removed. Thus, when one “makes naked his sword,” the reader imagines a sword absent the leather sheath which conceals it. Or, when Joseph accuses his brothers of coming to Egypt “to see the nakedness of the land,” one imagines the parts of the land that are uncovered, i.e., “defenseless,” or apropos for this study, “naked” (Gen 42:9. 12).

Moreover, with the concept of nakedness, the periphrastic or euphemistic language signifies the idea so vividly, that the term “nakedness” itself is inseparable from what it depicts. The euphemism comes to mean the thing about which the word alludes. Thus, “nakedness” essentially equals “sexual organ” in many of the examples which appear in the dissertation below. Where it occurs elsewhere, the reader will hear nakedness in its original sense of “uncovered.” Before looking at the texts themselves however, this dissertation first discusses the ANE perspective regarding nudity to establish a context in which the biblical nakedness imagery operated.

CHAPTER 3

NAKEDNESS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The Old Testament texts arose in the cultural milieu of Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbors. Thus, it is important that one understands the ANE context of nudity in order to compare or enlighten the biblical texts if possible. This chapter presents data that describes the ANE perspective on nudity, providing background and context for the discussion of OT texts in the subsequent chapters.

The sections below describe the ANE perspective of dress and nakedness. First, what was considered normative dress, and what were the standards of modesty in those cultures? As with many societies, expectations of dress were multivalent, with differences in class, gender, and occupation being a factor in these expectations. Second, in what ways, if any, did ANE cultures perceive nakedness positively? Some cultures perceived nakedness or lower standards of modesty *functionally* in work and religious or ritual contexts. Additionally, the Greek perspective of nakedness as an aesthetic appeal to the ideal human in art and athletic displays is well-known. Third, how was nakedness wielded negatively in ANE societies? Some legal texts proscribe stripping as a form of punishment, and several depictions show nakedness in the context of warfare, particularly as a means of evoking shame and psychological distress.¹

Modesty in Everyday Life: ANE Clothing

Functionality and climate played a significant factor in the dress of ANE

¹A practice attested in the OT as well. See 2 Sam 10:1-7; 1 Chr 19:1-5; and Isa 20:1-4.

men and women, yet every culture possessed a standard of modesty.² Modesty generally focused on the primary sexual characteristics, thus both genders in every ANE culture covered their reproductive organs.³ In most cases, the women covered their entire bodies, and often the men did as well. The details listed below show that a modesty of dress pervaded the ANE cultures, and thus any instances of nakedness in everyday life were exceptional and conveyed exceptional circumstances.⁴

Much of our knowledge of ANE dress habits is derived from pictorial evidence, thus making specific conclusions tentative. Often, depictions of nakedness represent extraordinary or idealized situations, e.g., the Greek ideal nude, depictions of some deities, or scenes of warfare.⁵ Julia Asher-Greve also notes,

²See J. C. Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (New York: International Universities Press, 1930), 16-24. Flugel categorizes the psychological purposes for clothing as decoration, protection, and modesty. Interestingly, his analysis is based entirely on pragmatic concerns, and he suggests that perhaps one day, nakedness will be the normal dress, as it is the most practical attire (Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes*, 237-38). He notes that modesty alone prohibits nakedness in most societies since protection and decoration are unnecessary. Flugel's categories remain consistent in psychological literature up to the present time, though as expected, disagreements and clarifications abound. See also George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); Herbert Blumer, "Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection," *Sociological Quarterly* 10 (1969): 275-91; R. J. Goldman and J. D. Goldman, "Children's Perceptions of Clothes and Nakedness: A Cross-National Study," *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 104 (1981): 163-85; Lois M. Gurel and Marianne S. Beeson, *Dimensions of Dress and Adornment: A Book of Readings*, 3rd ed. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1979); Susan B. Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing and Personal Adornment* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1985), 32-53; James Laver, *Costume in Antiquity* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1964); Ronald A. Schwarz, "Uncovering the Secret Vice: Toward an Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment," in *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, ed. Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwarz (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1979), 23-45; and Phyllis G. Tortora and Keith Eubank, *Survey of Historic Costume: A History of Western Dress*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fairchild, 1994), 1-7.

³The concept of modesty and shame figures heavily in Genesis 2-3 and is a key concept for expressing the crucial change of the human couple's relationship to God and one another before and after eating the fruit of the tree. Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes*, 21, affirms the psychological significance of modesty and clothing: "It may indeed be said that clothes resemble a perpetual blush upon the surface of humanity."

⁴This is not to say that every ANE culture had the same standard of modesty nor that every culture's standard of modesty was similar to the biblical perspective.

⁵The sections below detail these situations, but see Julia Asher-Greve, "The Essential Body: Mesopotamian Conceptions of the Gendered Body," *Gender and History* 9 (1997): 432-61; and Julia Asher-Greve and Deborah Sweeney, *On Nakedness, Nudity, and Gender in Egyptian and*

Naked masculine figures can also enhance another figure's representation as in the case of the bearded and clothed leader whose power and seniority are accentuated when accompanied by nude, strong, courageous, younger men; these young men are not "genderless" slavelike people.⁶

Thus, an artist may render figures clothed or nude in order to highlight the status of the primary character in the depiction, e.g., a king or family head. Therefore, one must exercise caution when interpreting ANE depictions of nudity, particularly when describing cultural norms.

Mesopotamian and Levantine Clothing

The dress of each Mesopotamian culture utilized the same basic functional characteristics and varied from one another only in decorative style. Men and women in the earliest Sumerian cultures wore loincloths and skirts (*kaunakes*) of varying lengths, made either of sheepskin or woven from wool.⁷ The men's skirt began at the waist, and the women either wore an additional garment to cover their torso or a longer garment which began at the shoulders. Later, garments were woven from wool or flax, and the material and style became fuller and more elaborate. Yet, in general, their dress functioned to cover the same areas of the body. The Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian cultures adopted this same kind of clothing.⁸ Unlike the

Mesopotamian Art, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 220 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Academic Press, 2006), 125-76.

⁶Julia Asher-Greve, "Images of Men, Gender Regimes, and Social Stratification in the Late Uruk Period," in *Gender through Time in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Diane Bolger (New York: AltaMira Press, 2008), 139. She describes cylinder seals whose purpose is to convey the status of the seal's owner.

⁷For information on Sumerian dress and textile information, see Mary Harlow, Cecil Michel, and Marie-Louise Nosch, *Prehistoric, Ancient Near Eastern, and Aegean Textiles and Dress: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Ancient Textiles Series 18 (Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2014); Cecil Michel and Marie-Louise Nosch, *Textile Terminologies in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean from the Third to the First Millennium B. C.*, Ancient Textiles Series 8 (Philadelphia, Oxbow Books, 2010); Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998); Tortora and Eubank, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 19-20.

⁸Melissa Leventon, *What People Wore When: A Complete Illustrated History of Costume from Ancient Times to the Nineteenth Century for Every Level of Society* (New York: St. Martin's

dress of women in Mediterranean cultures, Mesopotamian iconography depicts female clothing covering their upper bodies, with few exceptions. Their law codes also referenced free married women veiling their faces, further indicating a more restrictive form of modesty in clothing than Mediterranean women.⁹

Levantine clothing differed little in functionality and extent from their Mesopotamian counterparts. The men wore knee-length tunics, and the women's skirts reached from their shoulders to the ankles.¹⁰ Perhaps because of prohibitions against making images (Exod 20:4), depictions of Israelite clothing are rare and found typically in the records of foreign nations.¹¹

Griffin, 2008), 16-17; Tortora and Eubanks, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 20-24. George Perrot and Charles Chipiez, *A History of Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, trans. Walter Armstrong (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1884), 2:91-94, compares the crudity of Assyrian nude depictions to the Egyptian examples. The Egyptians depict nakedness with grace and idealize the nude form, whereas the Assyrian examples are disproportional. He suspects that since the Assyrian culture avoids the nude, they are not as familiar with or concerned to depict the idealized human form. Apart from the depiction of naked captives, Assyrian art also depicts a rare nude of Assyrian soldiers swimming on inflated goat-skin bladders. See Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains: A Narrative or An Expedition to Assyria During the Years 1845, 1846, and 1847* (London: John Murray, 1867), 128; and Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon: A Narrative or a Second Expedition to Assyria During the Years 1849, 1850, and 1851* (London: John Murray, 1882), 441.

⁹Middle Assyrian Law, §40. See Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed., SBL Writings from the Ancient World 6 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 168; Middle Assyrian Palace Decree, §21, also restricts a man from seeing the bared shoulder of a palace woman. See Roth, *Law Collections*, 206. These examples should not be taken to mean that Mesopotamian cultures were particularly modest or had an aversion to the nude form. See Zainab Bahrani, "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia," *Notes in the History of Art* 12, no. 2 (1993): 12-19. In fact, nudity was prevalent in Mesopotamian iconography.

¹⁰For Hittite culture, nudity is depicted of the goddess Ishtar primarily. See Trevor Bryce, *Life and Society in the Hittite World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 146-47, 152; and J. G. Macqueen, *The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor*, rev. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 100-01.

¹¹Alfred Rubens, *The History of Jewish Costume* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, and Co., 1967), 5-14. Assyrian artists purportedly depict Jehu on the Black Obelisk, and the Lachish Siege Reliefs also show Jewish captives from the city. Nadav Na'aman, "Transcribing the Theophoric Element in North Israelite Names," *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* 19, no. 1 (1997): 19-20; and Irit Ziffer, "Portraits of Ancient Israelite Kings?" *BAR* 39, no. 5 (2013): 41-51, argue however that the image of Jehu likely does not accurately depict the king but is a generic image of a tribute-bearer. On the other hand, Ziffer, "Portraits of Ancient Israelite Kings?" 41-51, argues that some paintings on pithoi found at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Buildings A and B depict an Israelite king. Ze'ev Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012), 69, suggests that the king is

Mediterranean Clothing

In the warm climate of Egypt, clothing for men consisted of a loincloth or wrap worn around the waist (*schenti*), and their upper bodies may or may not have been covered.¹² Women wore a loose-fitting robe (*kalasiris*), which in some cases may have exposed one or both breasts.¹³ It was typical for young children to be clothed like their parents or to be naked, and depictions show some workers and servants wearing little or no clothing.¹⁴ It is not clear if the nudity of Egyptian servants would have been a humiliating situation. Usually, those who worked naked are depicted in same-gender scenarios; thus, it is possible that nakedness would have been taboo in the presence of the other sex.¹⁵ It is notable though, that by the New

Joash, but Nadav Na'aman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet 'Ajrud through the Lens of Historical Research," *Ugarit Forschungen* 43 (2011): 300-324, argues that the period best fits the reign of Jeroboam II. The tomb of an Egyptian aristocrat, Khnumhotep II depicts several Semites, though it is not certain they are Israelite.

¹²These descriptions of ANE dress generalize not only cultures with distinctions of class and climate, but also chronological development. Scholars of ANE cultures note the development of clothing in their respective societies, but for the purpose of this dissertation, it is sufficient to note that most distinctions of clothing involved material or style differences and not trends in modesty, particularly regarding the covering for the sexual organs. For an overview of Egyptian dress see E. J. W. Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Mary G. Houston and Florence S. Hornblower, *A Technical History of Costume*, vol. 1, *Ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Persian Costume and Decoration*, 2nd ed. (London: A and C Black, 1954); Marion Sichel, *Costume of the Classical World* (London: Batsford Academic and Education, 1980); Eugen Strouhal, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (London: Opus Publishing, 1992), 77-89; Tortora and Eubanks, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 26-34; and Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1993).

¹³See Leventon, *What People Wore When*, 14-15; Cassandra Vivian, *Western Desert Handbook: An Explorer's Handbook* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 321; and especially Egyptologist Helen Strudwick, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (London: Amber Books, 2006), 376.

¹⁴Regarding the nudity of Egyptian children, see Strouhal, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 25; and Vogelsang-Eastwood, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing*, 7. On the working class, see Strudwick, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, 376.

¹⁵Strouhal, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 42-43. He states that no depictions of naked workers portray the opposite sex being present. See also the story of Setna Khaemuas in William Kelly Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 435-69. In this story, a naked Setna tries to find clothing with which to gird himself as Pharaoh approaches.

Kingdom, all classes tended to wear some clothing and women covered their entire bodies.¹⁶

Other Mediterranean cultures exhibited similar characteristics as Egyptian modesty standards.¹⁷ Some examples of Minoan women's fashion show them covering the sexual organs but leaving the breasts exposed.¹⁸ Also, as in Egypt, Minoan men wore loincloth-like garments initially, and later fuller skirts.¹⁹ Greek men and women covered their bodies with the *chiton*, a kind of tunic which was pinned at the shoulder and gathered with a belt at the waist.²⁰ For men, the *chiton* extended to the knees, and the women wore them to their ankles. Depending on their class and the season, both sexes might have worn additional outer garments.²¹

¹⁶Strudwick, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, 376. It is important to note again that evidence is circumstantial. Images of women from the same period show some figures with breasts covered.

¹⁷For information on early Mediterranean dress, see Marybelle S. Bigelow, *Fashion in History: Western Dress, Prehistoric to Present* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing, 1970); J. Hawkes, *The World of the Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963); Sarah L. Hilker, "The Iconography and Use of Minoan Versus Mycenaean Wall Paintings," (MA Thesis, University of North Carolina, 2014); Mary G. Houston, *Ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Costume* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003); M. Johnson, *Ancient Greek Dress* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1964); John L. Myres, "Minoan Dress," *Man* 50 (1950): 1-6; Blanche Payne, *History of Costume: From Ancient Egypt to the 20th Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); David J. Symons, *Costume of Ancient Greece* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987).

¹⁸The "Snake Goddess" figurine is shown with this kind of costume. It is uncertain whether this kind of dress would have typified women of Knossos. For examples from the same period in which women covered their breasts, see Johnson, *Ancient Greek Dress*, 11-12; and Tortora and Eubanks, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 41.

¹⁹Houston, *Ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Costume and Decoration*, 11-14; Johnson, *Ancient Greek Dress*, 5; Tortora and Eubanks, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 39-42.

²⁰Houston, *Ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Costume and Decoration*, 39-52; Johnson, *Ancient Greek Dress*, 15-22; Tortora and Eubanks, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 42-50.

²¹The Greeks are well-known for their display of the nude form in art and athletic competition. The section below on the aesthetic function of nudity covers these phenomena. See Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 23-24, 72; Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.10.3; Leventon, *What People Wore When*, 24-27; and Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.5-6.

Conclusion: Clothing in the ANE

In everyday life, people wore clothing as an expression of modesty, with Mesopotamian and Levantine standards being more restrictive than their Mediterranean neighbors.²² Yet, with specific circumstances excepted, clothing of the primary sexual organs was practiced universally.²³ In all cultures, clothing rules for women typically were more restrictive. Even in the Greek culture, which featured naked athletic competition and perfected the nude sculpture, there was originally a taboo of female nudity.²⁴

Socially, the restrictions [on female nudity] were equally strong. Whereas the young men stripped naked for exercise and habitually wore no more than a short cloak, Greek women went about draped from head to foot, and were confined by tradition to their domestic duties. The Spartans alone were an exception. Their women scandalized the rest of Greece by showing their thighs and competing in athletic sports.²⁵

Nakedness represented an uncivilized state or a departure from what was normal. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the character Enkidu is a wild, untamed man who lives among the animals without clothing. He is a strange being to the civilized in the story, but it is noteworthy that as Enkidu himself becomes civilized, he dons clothing before joining the ranks of society.²⁶ Nakedness is seen in this situation as animal-like, i.e., primitive. Yet his sexual encounter with a prostitute awakens his

²²Tortora and Eubanks, *Survey of Historic Costume*, 17-18, note though that the climate also influenced the type of dress in the various cultures.

²³Diane Bolger, *Gender through Time in the Ancient Near East*, Gender and Archaeology Series (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008), 139; Asher-Greve, "The Essential Body," 432-61; and Asher-Greve and Sweeney, *On Nakedness, Nudity and Gender in Egyptian and Mesopotamian Art*. The sections below detail the specific situations in which nakedness was practiced in ANE societies.

²⁴Clark, *The Nude*, 72.

²⁵Clark, *The Nude*, 73. See Euripides, *Andromache* 590ff.

²⁶Specifically, the harlot who had sexual relations with Enkidu covered him with clothing as he became wise and "like the gods." See Tablet ii, 28-31, in *ANEP*, 44.

“wisdom” to the ways of civilized man, and Enkidu breaks fellowship with the beasts with which he once associated. Wearing clothing was an essential marker of his move from uncivilized to civilized.²⁷

Though clothing was a normative expectation, examples of nakedness abound in art and literature in the ANE. Each culture differed from the other in specifics or extent, yet situations existed in which nakedness was a part of society. The next sections detail these exceptional circumstances.

Naked and Not Ashamed: Functional and Aesthetic Nakedness in Work, Ritual, Art, and Sport

This section covers nakedness that is understood positively in its culture. Positive in this case does not necessarily indicate something good or desirable, but it means that the individual or culture does not perceive nudity in these circumstances to be shameful. Two primary categories exist: (1) nakedness for functional purposes, i.e., work or religious/ritual occasions, and (2) aesthetic, i.e., art and sport. Of course, sexual intimacy would also exist in this category. However, since nakedness is a necessary condition for intimacy, it does not qualify as an exceptional event in any ANE culture and is not necessary to cover in this section.²⁸

Due to the nature of iconography in the ANE, many artifacts overlap in

²⁷Julia Asher-Greve, “Decisive Sex, Essential Gender,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, ed. Simo Parpola and R. M. Whiting (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 1:14-15; Bahrani, “The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia,” 16; John A. Bailey, “Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3,” *JBL* 89, no. 2 (1970): 137-50; and Ronald A. Veenker, “Forbidden Fruit: Ancient Near Eastern Sexual Metaphors,” *HUCA* 70/71 (1999-2000): 57-73. See the discussion in chap. 4 regarding the role of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* for interpreting Genesis 3, particularly whether or not sexual knowledge was a part of Adam and Eve’s new-found knowledge.

²⁸However, see Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 2013), 175. He suggests that some non-Western cultures keep themselves covered even during intercourse as a means of preserving modesty, citing a study by E. Alshech, “Out of Sight and Therefore Out of Mind: Early Sunni Islamic Modesty Regulations and the Creation of Spheres of Privacy,” *JNES* 66 (1997): 286, 290.

discussions of the various categories listed below. Explanations rarely accompany ANE images, and thus scholars can only speculate the meaning of the various artifacts. Moreover, scholars often disagree with one another regarding the purpose or meaning of the same artifact. Thus, one could categorize an artifact in multiple sections due to an overlap of specific attributes or because opinions differ as to the purpose or function of the artifact. However, the sections below serve only to introduce the roles of nakedness in the ANE and do not attempt to discuss the nuances of categorizing the artifacts.

Functionality: Work

In the ANE, one's vocation may have required nakedness or near-nakedness. Since clothing might impede the work and the individuals were often outside the public eye, people may have relaxed the social taboo of nudity in order to accommodate efficiency or comfort.²⁹ For example, some depictions show fishermen working without clothing. In one, the god Ea stands before three naked men who are wearing only straps of leather tied around their waists.³⁰ One of the men carries his pole and catch of fish, and the other two appear to be engaged in combat before Ea's throne.³¹ The Bible even recounts an instance where Peter is naked or minimally dressed (γυμνός) while fishing and puts on his outer robe (ἐπενδύτης) before he returns to shore to meet Jesus (John 21:7).³² Other Egyptian iconography depicts

²⁹Houston, *Ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Costume*, 18-20.

³⁰Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, 4th ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2016), 35.

³¹See the section below on the functional use of nakedness in sport. Evidence abounds for the Greek practice of nude competition, but evidence for its practice in other ANE cultures is scarce.

³²The text simply says that he was γυμνός, though English translations convey this as “stripped for work” (ESV and NASB), “nothing on under [his outer garment]” (NET), “he had taken [off his outer garment]” (CSB and NIV). The KJV translates this more formally as “naked.” For nakedness as “minimally dressed,” compare Isa 58:7 or Jas 2:15.

working class males and females laboring nude.³³ Additionally, in a rare occurrence of Assyrian nudity, a few reliefs show several soldiers swimming in a river on inflated animals skins.³⁴

In each of these, the context is similar in that only members of the same gender are present, and nudity serves a functional purpose, minimizing clothing which could impede their work. Minimal or no clothing in the realm of work, then, would carry no concept of shame or humiliation to the extent that the workers stripped themselves in a same-gender context, and did so to increase comfort or efficiency.

Functionality: Nakedness in Religion and Ritual

Perhaps the most well-known examples of nakedness in the ANE are in the practice of religion and ritual.³⁵ Some of the earliest ANE iconography are terracotta figurines, typically female and often nude.³⁶ Additionally, some depictions show

³³Houston, *Ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Costume*, 18-20; Yvonne Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom: Studies in Orientation and Scene Content* (London: KPI, 1987), plates 10, 12, 19, 21-22; figs. 103, 111-15, 117, 128, 144, 180, 191, 194, 208; and Gay Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), 78. Asher-Greeve and Sweeney, *On Nakedness, Nudity and Gender in Egyptian and Mesopotamian Art*, 121; and Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 78, note that the depictions show clothed and unclothed workers, which may serve to distinguish classes.

³⁴Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, 128; and Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 441.

³⁵For a helpful survey of approaches to the study of religion, see Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 25-32.

³⁶Scholarly literature on ANE figurines abounds, but some important works are Julia A. Assante, "Style and Replication in 'Old Babylonian' Terracotta Plaques: Strategies for Entrapping the Power of Images," in *Ex Mesopotamia et Syria Lux: Festschrift für Manfred Dietrich zu seinem 65.*, ed. Oswald Loretz, Kai A. Metzler, and Hanspeter Schaudig, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 281 (Munich: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002), 1-29; Assante, "The Lead Inlays of Tikulti-Ninurta I; Pornography as Imperial Strategy," in *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students*, ed. Jack Cheng and Marian Feldman (Boston: Brill, 2007), 369-407; Marie Thérèse Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la mésopotamie antique*, Bibliothèque Archéologique Et Historique 85 (Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner, 1968); Eva Andrea Braun-Holzinger, *Figürliche bronzen aus mesopotamien* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1984); Anthony Green, "Neo-Assyrian

nude figures which some have said are priests or worshipers presenting offerings to gods or goddesses (e.g., the Warka vase).³⁷ This section briefly describes some of the most important information regarding these matters.

Nude figurines. Though the function of nude figurines is obscure and suggestions abound in recent literature, archaeologists of the nineteenth century stated that these figurines pointed to a Mother-Goddess or fertility cult prevalent in the region.³⁸ However, recent scholars have questioned the existence of a Mother-

Apotropaic Figures: Figurines, Rituals and Monumental Art, with Special Reference to the Figurines from the Excavations of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq at Nimrud," *Iraq* 45, no. 1 (1983): 87-96; Raz Kletter, *The Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*, British Archaeology Reports International Series 636 (London: Tempus Reparatum, 1996); Seton Lloyd, *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: From the Old Stone Age to the Persian Conquest* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978); James Mellaart, *Catal Huyuk: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967); Alexander Pruss, "The Use of Nude Female Figurines," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 2:537-45; and Peter J. Ucko, *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete with Comparative Material from the Prehistoric near East and Mainland Greece*, Royal Anthropological Institute: Occasional Papers 24 (London: A. Szmidla, 1968).

³⁷Larissa Bonfante, "Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art," *American Journal of Archaeology* 93, no. 4 (1989): 545-46; and Bahrani, "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia," 12-19, argue that the Warka vase is an example of ritual nudity.

³⁸J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 135-46. Additionally, he considers the concept of a great Mother Goddess (331-32). Frazer originally published the book in 1890 and reflected a view of evolutionary religious development in which archaeologists and sociologists created models of ancient religious practice by comparing religious practices of primitive cultures in their own day. Much like Wellhausen's documentary theories of the Pentateuch, Frazer's theories strongly influenced anthropological studies following his work. Thus, these theories found their way into discussions of Israelite religion as well. For a study of Frazer's influences and influence, see Robert Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School: J. G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists*, Theorists of Myth 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991). Notably, the idea of the Mother Goddess originated in the nineteenth century from J. J. Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht* (Stuttgart: Kraus and Hoffman, 1861); and finds twentieth-century advocates in Robert Briffault, *The Mothers: A Study of the Origins of Sentiments and Institutions*, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1927); E. O. James, *The Cult of the Mother-Goddess: An Archaeological and Documentary Study* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959); Mellaart, *Catal Huyuk*, 180; and Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess: Unearthing the Hidden Symbols of Western Civilization* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989). The Mother Goddess theories were also advocated in the field of psychology, further comprising a holistic perspective of human religious development, e.g., Carl Jung, *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1935); and Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, Bollingen Series 47 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955).

Goddess or fertility cult, suggesting that these categories too narrowly define both the figurines and the deities they represent.³⁹ Rather, as a category of artifact, these figurines are distinct in design, detail, and site location and warrant more nuanced study as to their purpose.⁴⁰

So, what was the function of these figurines? Aurelie Daems provides a helpful study showing the physical distinctions characterizing Mesopotamian figurines according to their archaeological period.⁴¹ Because she is specific with temporal, spatial, and physical detail, her study provides a sufficient argument that no single label is adequate to describe the variety of figurines discovered in the ANE. Her survey of the contextual details of the Mesopotamian figurines summarizes and represents the work of numerous scholars.⁴²

³⁹Julia Assante, "Undressing the Nude: Problems in Analyzing Nudity in Ancient Art, With an Old Babylonian Case Study," in *Images and Gender: Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art*, ed. Silvia Schroer (Freiburg, Germany: Academic Press, 2006), 178; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1977); Piotr Bienkowski and Alan Millard, eds., *Dictionary of the Ancient Near East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000); Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 308-12; Johanna H. Stuckey, "The Great Goddesses of the Levant," *Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 37 (2002): 27-48; and Stuckey, "Ancient Mother Goddesses and Fertility Cults," *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 7, no. 1 (2007): 32-44.

⁴⁰Bahrani, "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia," 12-19; Stuart Campbell, "Feasting and Dancing: Gendered Representation and Pottery in Later Mesopotamian Prehistory," in *Gender through Time in the Ancient Near East*, 62-64; Aurelie Daems, "Evaluating Patterns of Gender through Mesopotamian and Iranian Human Figurines: A Reassessment of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Period Industries," in *Gender through Time in the Ancient Near East*, 77-78; Raz Kletter, "Asherah and the Judean Pillar Figurines Engendered?" in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 1:289-300; P. R. S. Moorey, *Idols of the People: Miniature Images of Clay in the Ancient Near East*, Schwich Lectures of the British Academy (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), 6; R. Tringham and M. Conkey, "Rethinking Figurines," in *Ancient Goddesses: The Myths and the Evidence*, ed. L. Goodison and C. Morris (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 22-45.

⁴¹Daems, "Evaluating Patterns of Gender," 82-93. She notes that roughly half of the figurines are female, designed with clear primary and secondary sex characteristics (93). The majority of the other half lack clear sex distinctions, with only 2.5 percent exhibiting clearly male sex characteristics. For a discussion of male nude iconography, see Asher-Greve, "Images of Men," 119-171.

⁴²Daems, "Evaluating Patterns of Gender," 94-101. Her work focuses on specifics of gender but is a robust resource for further study.

Studies since the middle of the twentieth century have argued that the figurines fit broadly into several categories. First, some have suggested that the figurines served as teaching tools, i.e., models to explain childbirth and mothering to young women, or perhaps even to show young girls the changes that will occur in their bodies as they mature into adulthood.⁴³ Though many have argued against a widespread fertility cult, scholars still suggest that one of the functions of the figurines was to enhance fertility.⁴⁴ Similarly related to matters of fertility, perhaps some served as totems which protected the owner of the figurine, e.g., a mother or child during pregnancy and childbirth.⁴⁵ Another possibility is that the figurines were used in various rituals or sympathetic magic.⁴⁶ For example, J. B. Mabry suggested that ancestral cults used the figurines to communicate with dead

⁴³Diane Bolger, *Gender in Ancient Cypress: Narratives of Social Change on a Mediterranean Island* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 109; Daems, "Evaluating Patterns of Gender," 82, 98; and E. Hoch, *Mbusa: A Contribution to the Study of Bemba Initiation Rites and Those of Neighbouring Tribes* (Chinsali, Zambia: Ilondola Language Centre, 1968); Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

⁴⁴J. Cauvin, *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); C. Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Marija Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974); Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991); Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*; L. Talalay and T. Cullen, "Sexual Ambiguity in Early-Middle Cypriot Plank Figures," in *Engendering Aphrodite: Women and Society in Ancient Cyprus*, ed. D. Bolger and N. Serwint (Boston: ASOR Publications, 1993), 193; and Ucko, *Anthropomorphic Figurines*, 47.

⁴⁵Assante, "Undressing the Nude," 194; E. Goring, "Figurines, Figurine Fragments, Phalli, Possible Figurative Worked and Unworked Stones, Unidentifiable Worked Stone and Pottery Fragments," in *Lemba Archaeological Project*, vol. 2.1a, *Excavations at Kissonerga-Moshilia*, ed. E. Peltenburg, *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* 70 (Jonsered, Sweden: Paul Astroms Forlag, 1998), 163; and E. O. Negahban, "Clay Human Figurines of Zaghe," *Iranica Antiqua* 19 (1984): 1-20.

⁴⁶Ucko, *Anthropomorphic Figurines*; 47-48; Mary M. Voigt, *Hajji Firuz Tepe, Iran: The Neolithic Settlement*, University Museum Monograph 50 (Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1983); Voigt, "Catal Hoyuk in Context: Ritual and Early Neolithic Sites in Central and Eastern Turkey," in *Life in Neolithic Farming Communities: Social Organization, Identity, and Differentiation*, ed. I. Kuijt (New York: Kluwer Academic, 2000), 253-93.

ancestors.⁴⁷ A final example is that the figurines served as tokens used for bartering, i.e., marriageable women were goods for sale.⁴⁸ This brief survey of suggestions shows the difficulty of interpreting the meaning of these figurines. For the purpose of this study though, these examples show that most ANE cultures were not reticent to portray nudity via terracotta figurines. Moreover, most scholars argue that the figurines served functional purposes and were not simply a form of art.

Cultic prostitution. The presumption of fertility cults also prompted closely related discussions of cultic prostitution. The nature of cultic prostitution is only implicitly related to nakedness in the ANE through ritual sexual intercourse. Yet, because of its connection with the fertility cults and nude figurines, its mention is important here. Presumably through sympathetic magic, sexual acts would provide fertility for the land. For example, as lord of rain and storms, Baal was responsible for watering the “female” land in order to produce crops. It was thought that these cultic sexual acts would provoke Baal to send rain upon the land.⁴⁹ Karel van der Toorn defines cultic prostitution as “religiously legitimated intercourse with strangers in or in the vicinity of the sanctuary. It had a ritual character and was

⁴⁷J. B. Mabry, “The Birth of the Ancestors: The Meanings of Human Figurines in Near Eastern Neolithic Villages,” in *The Near East in the Southwest: Essays in Honor of William G. Dever*, ed. B. A. Nakhai, Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research 58 (Boston: ASOR Publications, 2003), 85.

⁴⁸J. D. Forest, “Les “jetons’ non urukiens et l’échange des femmes,” in *Upon This Foundation: The ‘Ubaid Reconsidered. Proceedings from the ‘Ubaid Symposium Elsinore May 30th-June 1st 1988*, ed. E. F. Henrickson and I. Thuesen, CNI Publications 10 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1989), 199-226; and D. Wengrow, “The Changing Face of Clay: Continuity and Change in the Transition from Village to Urban Life in the Near East,” *Antiquity* 72 (1998): 785.

⁴⁹See John Day, “Does the Old Testament Refer to Sacred Prostitution and Did It Actually Exist in Ancient Israel?” in *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays: Studies in Honour of Kevin J. Cathcart*, ed. Carmel McCarthy and John F Healey, JSOTSup 375 (London: T and T Clark, 2004), 2-21; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 278; Fernando Henriques, *Prostitution and Society: A Study* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1962); Stephen Winward, *A Guide to the Prophets* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976), 49-52.

organized or at least condoned by the priesthood, as a means to increase fecundity and fertility.”⁵⁰

But does the presence of erotic literature or nude figurines support the widespread practice of cult prostitution? As with the claims made regarding fertility religions or the purpose of the nude figurines, specific evidence of cultic prostitution is inconclusive, particularly as a widespread practice.⁵¹ Scholars have pointed to two main texts from Herodotus and Strabo as evidence for the ritual.⁵² Herodotus described the following,

The foulest Babylonian custom is that which compels every woman of the land to sit in the temple of Aphrodite and have intercourse with some stranger once in her life . . . [The stranger] must say, “I invite you in the name of Mylitta” (that is the Assyrian name for Aphrodite). It does not matter what sum the money is; the woman will never refuse, for that would be a sin, the money being by this act made sacred.⁵³

While Herodotus certainly described a form of cultic prostitution, Assante notes he was writing disparagingly of a Babylonian custom, and thus his lone testimony to the practice should not legitimate its existence.⁵⁴ Likewise, S. M. Baugh argues that

⁵⁰Karel van der Toorn, “Cultic Prostitution,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:510.

⁵¹Stephanie Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hess, *Israelite Religions*, 332-35; J. Karageorghis and V. Karageorghis, “The Great Goddess of Cyprus,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 1:263-82.

⁵²Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.199; Strabo, *Geographica* 8.6.20.

⁵³Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, trans. A. D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library 117 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920). 1.199.

⁵⁴Julia A. Assante, “The *kar.kid/harimtu*, Prostitute or Single Woman? A Reconsideration of the Evidence,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 30 (1998): 5-96. She has written extensively on the subject of nudity in the art forms of Mesopotamia, see Julia A. Assante, “The Erotic Reliefs of Ancient Mesopotamia” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2000); Assante, “Sex, Magic and the Liminal Body in the Erotic Art and Texts of the Old Babylonian Period,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 1:27-51; Assante, “Style and Replication in ‘Old Babylonian’ Terracotta Plaques,” 1-29; Assante, “What Makes a ‘Prostitute’ a Prostitute? Modern Definitions and Ancient Meanings,” *Historiae* 4 (2007): 117-32; Assante, “The Lead Inlays of Tikulti-Ninurta I,” 369-407; and Assante, “Undressing the Nude,” 177-207.

Strabo's description has been misinterpreted. If the women of the temple were prostitutes, they were being used to provide funding for the temple and the city, and not engaging in a cultic ritual.⁵⁵

Ritual nudity. Another prevalent idea is that ritual nudity was common in the ANE. Bonfante distinguishes between religious nudity, which “characterizes gods and goddesses . . . and signifies fertility, fecundity, and power,” and ritual nudity, which serves as “a special mode of dressing for initiation rituals for boys and girls, for sacred prostitutes serving at the temple, for a priest sacrificing before his god.”⁵⁶ This last example of a priest, or worshiper, before his god is relevant for this study. Some suggest this reality stands behind the prohibitions against building altars with steps in Exodus 20:24-26 and requiring priests to wear linen undergarments in Exodus 28:42-43.⁵⁷ Yet, Asher-Greve argues that the nude figures in Mesopotamian art do not represent actual naked humans, and thus do not represent ritual nudity. Rather, these nude figures represent “sociocultural ‘roles’ ranging from leader or hero to worker or slave. Naked masculine figures can also enhance another figure’s representation, e.g., the bearded and clothed leader whose power and seniority are accentuated when accompanied by nude, strong, courageous younger men.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵S. M. Baugh, “Cult Prostitution in New Testament Ephesus: A Reappraisal,” *JETS* 42, no. 3 (1999): 446.

⁵⁶Bonfante, “Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art,” 545-46. Bonfante indicates that the Warka vase is an example of ritual nudity. See also Bahrani, “The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia,” 12-19, who argues similarly.

⁵⁷For example, see Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1974), 466-67; Diethelm Conrad, “Studien zum Altargesetz: Ex 20:24-26” (PhD diss., University of Marburg, 1968), 43-50; John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC, vol. 3 (Waco: Word, 1987), 320; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPSTC (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 117; and Joe M. Sprinkle, *The Book of the Covenant: A Literary Approach*, JSOTSup 174 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 35-49.

⁵⁸Asher-Greve, “Images of Men,” 139.

Aesthetic: The Ideal Human Body in Art and Sport

The Greeks were unique among ANE cultures in that they embraced civic nakedness as an expression of the ideal human body.⁵⁹ In Greek art,

Nudity has been considered the ‘archetypal state’ . . . for the Greek male. In this there seems a tacit acknowledgment that the male nude is so common in Greek art as to be unremarkable . . . It would then be the clothed, not the nude, male that needed explanation.”⁶⁰

Initially though, Greek art did not depict the nude female. This practice only emerged in the fifth century BC, and when it did emerge, like the male nude, the effect was not overtly sexual.⁶¹ Mesopotamian art, on the other hand, tended to emphasize the reverse, with the nude female occurring frequently and almost no artistic representations of the nude male.⁶² Both cultures though aestheticized the nude form, the Greeks emphasizing the ideal form and the Mesopotamians highlighting sexuality.

⁵⁹Even the other Mediterranean cultures with lower standards of modesty than Mesopotamian and Levantine groups did not advocate for the kind of civic nudity expressed in Greek society, e.g., Egypt or the Minoans.

⁶⁰Jeffrey M. Hurwit, “The Problem with Dexileos: Heroic and Other Nudities in Greek Art,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 111 (2007): 46. See also, Philip P. Betancourt, *Introduction to Aegean Art* (Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press, 2007); Lucilla Burn, *Hellenistic Art: From Alexander the Great to Augustus* (London: British Museum Press, 2004); Bonfante, “Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art,” 543-70; and Bonfante, “The Naked Greek,” *Archaeology* 43, no. 5 (1990): 28-35; G. Ferrari, *Figures of Speech: Men and Maidens in Ancient Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 114-15, 117; Adolf Fürtwangler, *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture: A Series of Essays on the History of Art* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1964); John Griffiths Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007); Jerome J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Andrew Stewart, *Classical Greece and the Birth of Western Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and A. Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 24-42.

⁶¹Clark, *The Nude*, 73-75; Zainab Bahrani, “The Hellenization of Ishtar: Nudity, Fetishism, and the Production of Cultural Differentiation in Ancient Art,” *Oxford Art Journal* 19, no. 2 (1996): 3-16; and Bahrani, “Sex as Symbolic Form: Eroticism and the Body in Mesopotamian Art,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, 1:56.

⁶²Bahrani, “Sex as Symbolic Form,” 57; and Bahrani, “Hellenization of Ishtar,” 15.

The Greek culture also originated the well-known practice of nude competition in the Olympic games.⁶³ As with their art, the Greeks idealized the nude human form in the games, their philosophy of human wholeness almost necessitating nakedness.⁶⁴

Psychologically the Greek cult of absolute nakedness is of great importance. It implies the conquest of an inhibition that oppresses all but the most backward people; it is like a denial of original sin. This is not, as is sometimes supposed, simply a part of paganism: for the Romans were shocked by the nakedness of Greek athletes, and Ennius attacked it as a sign of decadence . . . [Ennius] and subsequent moralists considered the matter in purely physical terms; but, in fact, Greek confidence in the body can be understood only in relation to their philosophy. It expresses above all their sense of human wholeness. Nothing that related to the whole man could be isolated or evaded; and this serious awareness of how much was implied in physical beauty saved them from the two evils of sensuality and aestheticism.⁶⁵

Ancient writers discussed the custom of athletic nudity extensively, highlighting the exceptional nature of public nakedness.⁶⁶ The evolution of the practice is complex, and even the Greek writers puzzled over its origin.⁶⁷ Yet it became a source of Greek pride, to the extent they stripped and humiliated their enemies for their white skin, owing to the fact that their bodies never saw the sun.⁶⁸ Moreover, several early church fathers attested to the spectacle, decrying the practice as immodest and pagan, though as the quote by Clark above reveals, even the

⁶³Bonfante, "Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art," 543-70; Bonfante, "The Naked Greek," 28-35; G. Ferrari, *Figures of Speech*, 114-15, 117; and A. Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body*, 24-42.

⁶⁴Clark, *The Nude*, 23-24.

⁶⁵Clark, *The Nude*, 24.

⁶⁶Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 5.16.2-3, describes how the women run, with less-restrictive clothing, but still are clothed. See also Plato, *The Republic* 452-457; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.6; and Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.16-19.

⁶⁷Hurwit, "The Problem with Dexileos," 46-47.

⁶⁸Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.16-19.

Romans were shocked by the athletes' nudity. Even so, Chrysostom found this image of a nude competitor apt to describe how Job's nakedness illustrated the glory of Job's faith in God.

When he was enveloped in all that wealth, it was not visible to the many, what a man he was. But when, like the wrestler, that strips off his garment, he threw it aside, and came naked to the conflicts of piety, thus unclothed, he astonished all who saw him; so that the very theatre of angels shouted at beholding his fortitude of soul and applauded him as he won his crown!⁶⁹

Thus, Chrysostom captured the ideal of the nude human, not as a being beautiful in form, but one beautiful in virtue. Job's privation of all worldly goods revealed his contingency upon his creator, and the glory of the *imago dei* shone through his pitiable state.

The comments made by the ancient writers, both Greek and non-Greek, make it clear that the Greeks were deviating from a commonly-held perspective regarding public nakedness. Though the Greeks lauded the nude form of the athlete or the hero, the games were not a spectacle in which no standard of modesty applied. The Greek women did not participate in these events, and there is some debate as to whether or not unmarried women were permitted to attend.⁷⁰ Rather, Greek society maintained standards of modesty, with nudity being displayed for specific purposes.⁷¹ Otherwise, public nudity was an occasion for shame.⁷² The

⁶⁹See also Clement, *The Instructor* 6, 11; Augustine, *City of God* 1.9; Augustine, *On the Words of the Gospel: Luke 12 15.10*; Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians* 33.2.

⁷⁰Married women were unable to attend the games.

⁷¹The section discussing nudity in religion explains that the nude athlete closely mirrored the nude statue, typically depicting gods, goddesses, and heroes. Thus, the athletes represented an image of the ideal form of the gods. See Bonfante, "Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art," 543-70, for a thorough discussion of the emergence of nudity in Greek life. Her analysis shows the uniqueness of the Greek perception of nakedness as compared to the surrounding cultures. Hurwit, "The Problem with Dexileos," 35-60, also suggests expanding the number of categories in which nudity occurred in art: (1) nudity of differentiation, (2) a nudity of youth, (3) "democratic nudity," (4) a nudity of status or class, and (5) a nudity of vulnerability and defeat (pathetic nudity).

⁷²Herodotus wrote of the general taboo of seeing nudity in the story of Lydian king

words of these ancient writers indicate that nudity was the exception and not the rule. In those circumstances, the presence of shame is set aside intentionally to convey another reality: the ideal human form. In contrast, the biblical perspective excludes these positive uses of nakedness except perhaps the relaxed modesty standard of workers.⁷³

And They Knew They Were Naked: Stripping as Punishment, Humiliation, and Deterrent

In addition to functional and aesthetic purposes for nakedness, ANE cultures also utilized the shameful aspects of nudity. Some legal literature proscribes stripping as a form of punishment. Additionally, stripping of captives or fallen enemies likely served as psychological warfare or as a means to exalt the status of victors in battle.

Stripping as Punishment: Nakedness in the Legal Sphere

Several ANE laws help clarify the contemporary perspective on nudity in society. In a few ANE laws, stripping was a form of punishment utilized to shame the criminal and serve as a deterrent to future crime. However, for stripping to serve as a deterrent to crime, there must be a standard of modesty, and nakedness must be an undesirable state in society. One Middle Assyrian Law proscribed the stripping of

Candaules who was so enamored with his wife's beauty that he sought to show her nakedness to his bodyguard Gyges. Gyges protested that it was a preposterous idea which departed from ancient wisdom and law. Candaules insisted, and Herodotus decried the act as shameful and an outrage of custom, "Among the Lydians and most of the foreign peoples it is felt as a great shame that even a man be seen naked" (Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.10.3). See also Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.92.3, in which the stripping of clothes was an example of tyranny. See discussion in Paul Christensen, "On the Meaning of γυμνάζω," *Nikephoros: Zeitschrift für Sport und Kultur im Altertum* 15 (2002): 7-38; and Carmen Soares, "Dress and Undress in Herodotus' Histories," *Phoenix* 68, no. 3/4 (2014): 222-34.

⁷³Thus, the statement in Gen 2:25 is stunning: "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." Only here does the OT recognize a public situation in which nakedness was not shameful.

a court attendant who spoke with a palace woman who had bared her shoulders.

If a woman of the palace has bared her shoulders and is not covered with even a *kindabašše*-garment, and she summons a court attendant, [saying: ‘. . . , come] hither, I wish to give you an order,’ and he tarries to speak with her—he shall be struck 100 blows. The eyewitness who denounces him shall take his clothing; and as for him, they shall tie (only) sackcloth around his waist.⁷⁴

Another law requires that if a prostitute or slave veils herself, the one who sees “shall seize her, secure witnesses, and bring her to the palace entrance . . . [and he] takes her clothing.”⁷⁵ Further, if the one who sees either of these women violating the law does not report her misdeeds, then *his* clothes are taken away and given to the one who informed against him.⁷⁶

Some biblical interpreters have argued that it was a common ANE practice for a husband to symbolize the divorce of his wife by stripping her of clothing, namely in cases where she is an adulteress.⁷⁷ This practice thus served as a background for stripping threats in the Prophets. Hosea says, for example,

Plead with your mother, plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a parched land, and kill her with thirst.⁷⁸

Before the nineteenth century, interpreters argued without discussing biblical or ANE evidence that stripping the woman was an ANE practice symbolizing that the

⁷⁴Middle Assyrian Palace Decree, §21. See Roth, *Law Collections*, 206. The man would not be entirely naked but would be given a sackcloth to tie around his waist.

⁷⁵Middle Assyrian Law, §40. See Roth, *Law Collections*, 168.

⁷⁶In addition to stripping the guilty parties, several other penalties are imposed, including 50 blows with rods, hot pitch poured over the head, tying back the ears with a cord, removal of the ears, and service to the king for a month.

⁷⁷Hos 2:5; 11:12; Isa 3:17; 47:3; Jer 13:26; Ezek 23:26. See Louis M. Epstein, *Sex Laws and Customs in Judaism* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1948), 26. See the discussion in chap. 5.

⁷⁸Hos 2:2-3 (2:4-5 MT).

man no longer had to provide for the woman's well-being.⁷⁹ Later though, scholars brought forward data purporting to support this practice in ANE case law, including a text from Tacitus's *Germania*, and some documents found at Hana and Nuzi.⁸⁰

Peggy Day argues convincingly, however, that these texts do not advocate for the actual stripping of the woman.⁸¹ These scholars conflate the distinction made between the vehicle of the metaphor and the tenor of the metaphor. Instead, the laws use the language of stripping as a metaphor for complete deprivation. While the texts may not describe actual practice in the ANE, they do reveal the use of nakedness language to symbolize the termination of the husband's responsibility to provide for the well-being of the woman.

Lastly, the incest prohibitions of Leviticus 18 and 20 take a unique form, specifying that the Israelite man refrain from uncovering the nakedness of certain familial relations. Other ANE laws also prohibit certain familial sexual relationships, i.e., incestuous relations, but these laws use terms relating to sexual activity rather

⁷⁹See the commentaries on Hosea by John Calvin; Theodore of Mopsuesta; Martin Luther; Matthew Poole; Matthew Henry; and John Gill.

⁸⁰Tacitus, *Germania* 19. T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Hosea* (Cambridge: University Press, 1884), 48; Cyrus H. Gordon, "Hosea 2:4-5 in Light of New Semitic Inscriptions," *ZAW* 54 (1936): 277-80; and William R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 227, cite Tacitus as background for Hos 2. Gordon, "Hosea 2:4-5," 277-80; and C. Kuhl, "Neue Dokumente zum Verständnis von Hosea 2:4-15," *ZAW* 52 (1934): 102-09, argue for the role of the Hana and Nuzi documents in the interpretation of Hos 2. For translation of the Hana text, see Albert T. Clay, *Epics, Hymns, Omens and Other Texts*, Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1923), 51 plate 48. The Nuzi text can be found in E. Chiera, *Excavations at Nuzi: Volume 1*, Harvard Semitic Series 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), plates 66-67; and the English translation in E. A. Speiser, "New Kirkuk Documents Relating to Family Laws," *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 10 (1930): 49-51.

⁸¹Peggy Day, "Metaphor and Social Reality: Isaiah 23:17-18, Ezekiel 16:35-37, and Hosea 2:4-5," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of Herbert B. Huffmon*, ed. John Kaltner and Louis Stulman, JSOTSup 378 (New York: T and T Clark, 2004): 63-71. See also Ryan C. Hanley, "The Background and Purpose of Stripping the Adulteress in Hosea 2," *JETS* 60, no. 1 (2017): 89-103.

than the unique “uncovering nakedness.”⁸² Why then do the biblical texts use the language of uncovering nakedness rather than the available expressions for intercourse? This anomaly is a matter for discussion in chapter 4 below. In this section, however, it is sufficient to show that the biblical text distinguishes itself from the common ANE texts prohibiting incest.

Nakedness of Enemies and Captives

Several biblical texts indicate that ANE armies would expose captives’ nakedness as a wartime practice, humiliating their enemies and serving as a deterrent to rebellion.⁸³ Isaiah 20:1-4 and 2 Samuel 10:1-7 (cf. 1 Chr 19:1-5) are both clear examples of this practice occurring or being threatened.⁸⁴ But are these texts simply figurative or hyperbolic language? Several ANE images reveal that the

⁸²E.g., Laws of Hammurabi, §154, §156; Hittite Laws, §189. See Samuel Greengus, *Laws in the Bible and in Early Rabbinic Collections: The Legal Legacy of the Ancient Near East* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 14-35, for a discussion of these forbidden relationships, both in the Bible and in the ANE laws codes. See also Shalom M. Paul, “Biblical Analogues to Middle Assyrian Law,” in *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives*, ed. Edwin Brown Firmage, Bernard G. Weiss, and John Woodland Welch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 333-50.

⁸³See Deut 28:48; 2 Chr 28:15; Isa 20:1-4; Ezek 16:37; 23:10, 26, 29; Hos 2:10 (2:12 MT); Lam 1:7-8. For more information on ANE war tactics, see Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 62 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004); H. A. Liebowitz, “Horses in New Kingdom Art and the Date of an Ivory from Megiddo,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 6 (1967): 129-34; Liebowitz, “Military and Feast Scenes on Late Bronze Palestinian Ivories,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 30 (1980): 165, 167; and H. W. F. Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984), 243-63.

⁸⁴Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 294, objects that Isaiah was not completely nude and that the symbolism did not suggest otherwise: “Isaiah’s purpose was to portray the way the Cushites and Egyptians would have to travel on foot into exile.” Wildberger notes that eighth-century images show captives being escorted clothed and that practices in one culture or era cannot be imported onto other cultures or eras. However, the preponderance of temporal and geographical ANE evidence affirms that these practices did exist in several cultures before and after Isaiah’s time and provide the necessary background for Isaiah’s warning. His point is well-taken though that one not over-read the text. Second Chr 28:15 may refer only poorly-clothed captives and not those who had been stripped naked as a war tactic. However, as the practice of stripping captives is attested in the ANE and the other biblical texts mentioned, Isaiah 20 refers to the same practice. See chap. 5 for further discussion of nakedness in these texts.

practice was widespread, both temporally and spatially.⁸⁵ Additionally, Xenophon describes a practice in which the Greeks instigated contempt for their captured enemies by stripping them naked and selling them in the market place. Their white, non-tanned skin revealed them to be soft and weak, unlike the Greeks who would train nude.⁸⁶

Several Akkadian fragments and one from Megiddo show captives being held nude. The first is a limestone fragment from the twenty-fourth century BC.⁸⁷ The Nasiriyah Stele, from the same era pictures at least six nude captives with their heads bound to a pole.⁸⁸ A third Akkadian stele was erected by Sargon in the twenty-fourth century BC on which bound prisoners can be seen nude walking in a line.⁸⁹ A carving on ivory found in Megiddo similarly depicts prisoners bound to a horse.⁹⁰

Assyrian iconography provides extensive evidence of stripping captives. One of the most notable examples comes from Shalmaneser III, who decorated his gates with several bronze bands depicting his conquests.⁹¹ A number of the bands

⁸⁵Megan Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria," *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (June 1998): 210-28, argues that because of their propagandistic nature, one ought to abandon notions that these reliefs represent historical documentation. Her point is well-taken, though one should also be cautious of relegating all aspects of these reliefs to the realm of fiction. See Marie-Henriette Gates, "Archaeology and the Ancient Near East: Methods and Limits," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel C. Snell (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 65-78; and Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 2003), 82-86.

⁸⁶Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.16-19. This example juxtaposes the dual manner in which nakedness could be both shameful and not-shameful in the Greek mind.

⁸⁷Anton Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: The Classical Art of the Near East* (New York: Phidon Publishers, 1969), figs. 134, 135.

⁸⁸Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, fig. 136.

⁸⁹Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, figs. 125, 138.

⁹⁰*ANEP*, fig. 332. This too is likely a victory stele.

⁹¹Csaba Balogh, *The Stele of YHWH in Egypt: The Prophecies of Isaiah 18-20 Concerning Egypt and Cush* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011), 315, agrees that the parading of nude captives was a practice consistent with Assyrian tactics.

show lines of bound males walking nude.⁹² On the band depicting his campaign into north Syria, there are six nude figures impaled on stakes just outside the city.⁹³ Later depictions reveal that this practice continued in Assyrian warfare. In the siege relief of Sennacherib's campaign against Lachish, three nude figures are impaled on stakes as other captives pass by.⁹⁴ In the same relief, the practice of flaying is also pictured, with two nude men stretched out preparing to have their skin cut off.⁹⁵ This practice is also shown in the reigns of Sargon II and Ashurbanipal.⁹⁶

There are also numerous depictions of fallen enemies in battle. Whether or not these depictions correspond to actual practice, the artistic representations of naked fallen enemies still evoke the shameful distinction between the victor and conquered.⁹⁷ "The well-attested use of nudity to depict the heroic and godly in the art of Mesopotamia paradoxically contrasts with the use of nudity to represent the defeated."⁹⁸ Bahrani also notes that naked foreign combatants in fight scenes

⁹²See *ANEP*, figs. 358, 362, 365; and Hugo Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder Zum Alten Testament* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926), fig. 128. *ANEP*, fig. 365, may show the exposed breasts of the women captives, who are also raising their skirt and holding one hand on their head. There is typically very little Assyrian art representing nudity amongst females, even among the captives. See Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," 221.

⁹³*ANEP*, fig. 362.

⁹⁴*ANEP*, fig. 373.

⁹⁵Pauline Albenda, "An Assyrian Relief Depicting a Nude Captive in Wellesley College," *JNES* 29, no. 3 (July 1970), 148, fig. 4. While nudity is a functional necessity in the practice of flaying, it is reasonable to conclude that public exposure serves both to humiliate the victim of torture and horrify those watching.

⁹⁶See Albenda, "An Assyrian Relief," figs. 5 and 6, respectively; and G. Maspero and A. Henry, *History of Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria* (London: Grolier Society Publishers, 1903), 7:356.

⁹⁷Bahrani, "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia," 15-16, notes the practice of stripping captives naked, though these depictions typically portray an enemy at the moment of his death. Unless the combatant fought nude, one should understand these scenes representationally. See also Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," 211; and Hurwit, "The Problem with Dexileos," 35-60.

⁹⁸Bahrani, "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia," 15.

foreshadow the impending death of the nude warrior.⁹⁹

The effect in either situation was the same. In real practice, victors would expose the nakedness of their enemies to humiliate them and send a message to other enemies or vassals. In artistic representations of combat scenes, the nudity of enemies showed their weakness and shame. The biblical text indicates in 2 Samuel 10:1-7 and the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 19:1-5 that the biblical audience was aware of this practice. Thus, when YHWH threatened to expose Israel's nakedness in Hosea 2 or Ezekiel 16 and 23, the audience would have understood that this threat was not merely symbolic language.

Conclusion: Nakedness in the Ancient Near East

This chapter provided information on the ANE perspectives of dress and nakedness. First, it clarified what was considered normative dress and what the standard of modesty was in those societies. As with many cultures, expectations of dress were multivalent, with differences in class, gender, and occupation being a factor in those expectations. What is particularly striking about ANE societies is that clothing the sexual organs was a universal practice. Even Egypt, which seemed to allow nudity in some situations, typically depicted members of every class clothed.

The ubiquity of clothing in ANE cultures is a reality often overlooked, but it is an important reality for undergirding the mindset present in the biblical text.

⁹⁹Bahrani, "The Iconography of the Nude in Mesopotamia," 16. He mentions the Royal Standard of Ur, the stele of Eannatum, and the stele of Naramsin as examples. See Henri Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 4th ed. (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970), figs. 74, 75, and 77, for the Standard of Ur and the stele of Eannatum; and P. Amiet, *L'Art d'agade au Musee du Louvre* (Paris: Éditions des Musées Nationaux, 1976), fig 27a, for the Stele of Naramsin. See also the Stele of the Vultures from Tello in Irene J. Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The Stele of Vultures and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. H. L. Kesster and M. S. Simpson, Studies in the History of Art 16 (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1985), 11-31; and the Narmer Palette in Alan B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: State and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 51.

People wear clothes, and it is shameful to be seen in public without clothing. Thus, the declaration that the man and woman were naked without shame is truly a surprising statement (Gen 2:25). Further, when YHWH threatens nakedness for apostasy, it is a warning that would have resonated across the ANE as a future possibility for humiliation and shame.

Second, the chapter considered the positive and negative functions of nakedness in the ANE. Positively, some ANE cultures permitted nudity in work contexts in which excessive dress would hinder productivity or reasonable completion of the relevant tasks. Other ANE cultures may have used nakedness in ritual or religious tasks, perhaps in the form of sexual practices which may have been symbolized in nude figurines. The other positive uses of nakedness occurred in the context of aesthetics, displaying nudity in the realms of art or athletics. In these contexts, the human form was emphasized as representative of deity or humanity at its most ideal. Apart from sexual intimacy, these positive uses of nakedness are foreign to the OT audience.

Several ANE cultures also utilized nakedness for its negative implications, in both circumstances serving to shame the one whose nudity was displayed. With its citizenry, some cultures indicate through their legal texts that nakedness served as a punishment for certain behaviors. Additionally, stripping foreign men and women served as a means of humiliating their foes and as psychological warfare against other enemies or vassal states. These negative uses of nakedness in the ANE argue against the possibility that the cultures around Israel were simply open to nudity in everyday life. Much like in modern Western societies, nakedness might have been more prevalent in the surrounding ANE cultures, yet they still possessed a sense of modesty regarding their bodies.

With the ANE context in mind, the next three chapters examine the use of nakedness imagery in the Old Testament text. First, the Pentateuch incorporates

nakedness imagery at the outset, describing the state of the first humans. Nakedness is also used in the legal texts, indicating shameful behavior among the covenant people in the presence of God. At its end, YHWH threatens to return covenant-breakers to a state of nudity as punishment for their apostasy. Next, the literature of the Prophets incorporates nakedness into narrative and prophetic discourse, utilizing inherent shame to reveal the deplorable state into which individuals, or the whole nation, had descended. Finally, the Writings express the concepts of contingency and intimacy through nakedness.

CHAPTER 4

NAKEDNESS IMAGERY IN THE PENTATEUCH

Nakedness imagery appears numerous times in the Pentateuch to communicate important theological concepts. In the story of human origins in Genesis 2-3, Moses does not merely provide historical details, i.e., humans are created without clothing.¹ Rather, nakedness communicates crucial details in the story of the man and woman in their relationship to one another and to God, both before and after their decision to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Similarly, once Noah and his family emerge from the ark, Noah becomes a vintner, inebriates himself with his wine, and uncovers his nakedness in his tent, setting in motion both evil and righteous acts from his sons (Gen 9:20-27). Nakedness language occurs in the legal material of the Pentateuch as well, prohibited in worship settings (Exod 20 and 28), incestuous familial relationships (Lev 18 and 20), or

¹Using the name “Moses” as author certainly invites disagreement, yet this dissertation uses the name Moses intentionally for the following reasons. First, Moses is the implied author of the Torah according to Jewish and Christian tradition, with several texts in the NT confirming the Jewish tradition (e.g., Matt 8:4; 19:7; 22:24; Mar 1:44; 7:10; 10:3-9; 12:19, 26; Luke 2:22; 5:14; 16:29; 20:28; 24:27; John 7:23; 8:5; Acts 3:22; 6:14; 15:1; 21:21; Rom 10:5; 1 Cor 9:9; 2 Cor 3:15). See C. John Collins, *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1-11* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 125-26, for a discussion of Moses as implied author. Second, the primary critiques against Mosaic authorship rely on arguments that have been addressed substantively in conservative works such as Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961); and Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991); and in more critical works such as Norman Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, JSOTSup 53 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987). As such, it is inappropriate to take for granted the case against Mosaic authorship as the default position. Finally, even if the reader disagrees with the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, since tradition speaks of the Pentateuch as the “Law of Moses” or simply “Moses,” precedent exists for using the term “Moses” as representing the author. Thus, the name “Moses” at least provides a suitable replacement for the term “author.”

anywhere within the camp of Israel (Deut 23:15). Finally, as Moses pronounces the blessings and curses in the covenant between YHWH and Israel, nakedness reappears as one of the threats in the curse against Israel should she fail to uphold the covenant (Deut 28:48).

Genesis 2-3: Purity, Corruption, and Restoration

Perhaps the most well-known of the nakedness passages in the OT is Genesis 2 and 3.² There, the reader encounters the man and his wife in the garden of Eden, naked but not ashamed (Gen 2:25). A few verses later, the couple eats fruit from the prohibited tree of the knowledge of good and evil and sees with newly opened eyes that they are naked (Gen 3:7). Consequently, they cover themselves with fig leaves and hide amongst the trees when they hear the Lord approaching in the garden. The Lord asks where they are, prompting the man to explain that he hid because he was naked and thus revealing that he and his wife had eaten from the forbidden tree. After detailing the punishment which would befall the couple and the snake, the Lord clothes Adam and Eve in tunics of skin and banishes them from the garden (Gen 3:21).

The discussion below argues that nakedness imagery in Genesis 2-3 functions to communicate three primary theological concepts: (1) a whole,

²The MT of Genesis 2-3 is a reliable text, and there are no textual variants which impact this study. The ancient translations also affirm the integrity of the MT with only slight variations occurring. The LXX and Targum Onqelos correspond to the vocabulary and grammar of the MT and do not pose any translation issues. Targum Neofiti words the description of the couple's shame differently, indicating *בהתתה היא בהתתה מה היא הוון ידעין לא הוון כדון לא הוון*, "and until now, they did not exist as knowers of what shame was." Targum Pseudo-Jonathan alters the concept of nakedness in Gen 2:25 entirely, using the term *חכים* (wisdom) instead of *ערים* (naked). Additionally, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan makes clear the concept of shame following the couple's disobedience in Gen 3:6. The MT and the other translations do not explicitly state that Adam and Eve are ashamed of their nakedness after their eyes are opened, though shame is implied by their desire to cover themselves with fig-leaf loincloths. In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan however, Adam states in Gen 3:11 that he hid himself from YHWH because he was ashamed of being naked and disobeying the command not to eat from the tree.

unblemished relationship between the man and woman and between the couple and God (Gen 2:25), (2) sin's permanent alteration of humans' relationship with one another and with God (Gen 3:7-19), and (3) God's work to mitigate shame and preserve the possibility for relationship, though these relationships are no longer whole and unblemished (Gen 3:21).

Genesis 2:25

Genesis 2:25 introduces the reader to the first use of nakedness in the biblical text, using the adjective ערום, meaning “naked” or “bare.”³ In this text, Moses presents the reader with a startling assertion. After describing the creation and presentation of the woman to the man, he writes, “And the two of them existed in a state of nakedness, the man and his wife, but they were not ashamed of themselves.”⁴

At least two features of this verse would surprise readers. First, the assertion that the man and woman were naked contradicts the social norms of any audience in Israel's history. As chapter 3 showed, even the least modest ANE societies expected people to wear appropriate clothing in normal public settings.⁵ In the biblical context, the only time nakedness is not condemned is in the marriage

³See chap. 2 for a discussion of ערום, including its morphological peculiarities in the plural.

⁴My translation. This translation attempts to capture the reflexive nature of the Hithpael.

⁵To review, the Mediterranean cultures exposed nakedness more often than the Levantine or Mesopotamian societies, yet even Greece, Minoa, and Egypt utilized clothing that covered the sexual organs. The examples where individuals did not cover their private parts were specific and occasional. Specifically, a person might be nude or nearly nude in work or athletic situations, and possibly for religious purposes. Yet, this exposure was occasional, with persons expected to conform to clothing standards outside these situations. Moreover, Larissa Bonfante, “The Naked Greek: How Ancient Art and Literature Reflect the Custom of Civic Nudity,” *Archaeology* 43 (1990): 28-35, has shown that even the Greeks did not normalize nudity in sporting events until the first millennium BC, likely after Genesis had been written.

relationship, e.g., Proverbs 5:19; Song of Songs 4:5; 7:3-7.⁶ Elsewhere in the Pentateuch, the Lord prohibits priests and the general population from exposing their nakedness in his presence (Exod 20:26; 28:42; Deut 23:15). Thus, the Torah otherwise attests that it would be shameful for anyone to appear in God's presence naked. Second though, Moses clarifies that the man and woman were not ashamed of their nakedness, his clarification indicating that the situation was contrary to expectation.⁷ Not only was the couple naked in public, contrary to social convention, but also, they were not ashamed of their nakedness. How is the reader to understand this lack of shame?

Shame in Genesis 2:25 (בוש). The verb used for shame in Genesis 2:25 is יתְבַשְּׁשׁוּ (Hithpoel imperfect of בוש). Most English versions translate יתְבַשְּׁשׁוּ as “they were not ashamed,” or “they felt no shame.”⁸ In the OT, the root בוש occurs in the Qal ninety-five times, Hiphil thirty times, Polel twice, and the Hithpoel one time.⁹ The basic meaning of בוש is “to be ashamed.”¹⁰ The English translations,

⁶See chap. 6 for a discussion of these texts.

⁷This clarification precludes an interpretation where their lack of shame was due to their status as a married couple alone in the garden. Moses would not need to inform the reader that they were not ashamed in such a scenario, since in the marital context, nakedness is celebrated, not condemned.

⁸E.g., the ASV, CJB, CSB, ESV, HCSB, KJV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, NLT, NRSV, RSV. Varying only the word to translate בוש, the CEB and GNB translate Gen 2:25 as, “But they were not embarrassed.” The God's Word (GW) translation and International Standard Version (ISV) translate it, “But they weren't ashamed of it,” and “They were not ashamed about it,” respectively. Both the GW and the ISV translations emphasize the fact that the couple is not ashamed about being naked, precluding an active or reciprocal nuance of the word.

⁹The two occurrences of בוש in the Polel are either from another root, or the stem changes the meaning of the word significantly (Exod 32:1; Judg 5:28). In those texts, the word carries the sense of “delay.” BDB, 101-02 sees these forms as part of the same root, i.e., “to delay (in shame.” *HALOT*, 1:170; H. Seebass, “בוש,” *TDOT*, 2:50, argues for a second root meaning of בוש, “to delay.” John N. Oswalt, “בוש,” *TWOT*, 1:97-98, argues that there is an interchange in meaning with the root יבש, “to dry up” in these two occurrences.

¹⁰BDB, 101; Oswalt, “בוש,” 1:97-98; Seebass, “בוש,” 2:50-60.

“they were not ashamed” or “they felt no shame” rightly convey the psychological sense of בושׁ, emphasizing the inner feelings or state of mind regarding shame. Yet, בושׁ also emphasizes an external dimension, namely the idea of public disgrace. John Oswalt states that בושׁ means “to fall into disgrace, normally through failure, either of self or of an object of trust.”¹¹ Shame is thus the physiological response one has, or ought to have, when becoming aware of some deficiency in himself.¹² Claus Westermann states it succinctly: “[Shame is the] reaction to being unmasked.”¹³ This deficiency may be amoral, e.g., making a mistake in public speaking, an athlete failing to perform as needed in a crucial moment, etc., or the deficiency may be moral, e.g., one cheats, acts selfishly, or disobeys a clear command.¹⁴ Yet this simple definition also fails to account for the fact that one may feel shame even when he or she is morally innocent in the situation.¹⁵ More specifically then, shame manifests itself in a *perceived* deficiency within oneself or in one’s relationship to another.

According to Gesenius, the Hithpael stem, Hithpolel in this case due to the hollow root, indicates a reciprocal understanding of shame, i.e., Adam and Eve were not ashamed before one another.¹⁶ A few interpreters have noted this reciprocal

¹¹Oswalt, “בושׁ,” 1:97. See also Seebass, “בושׁ,” 2:52.

¹²Seebass, “בושׁ,” 2:50-51. It is the lack of this inner experience of shame that ought to astound the reader in the prophetic outcry against Israel’s and Judah’s apostasy, e.g., Hosea 2; Ezekiel 16; 23, etc.

¹³Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, CC, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984), 236.

¹⁴In the amoral situations, the feeling of shame may reveal an inappropriate perspective of perfection, i.e., pride.

¹⁵For example, Tamar is ashamed when she is raped and then rejected by Amnon (2 Samuel 13), and David’s men are ashamed when half their beards are shaved (2 Samuel 10 // 2 Chronicles 19).

¹⁶GKC, §72m. See GKC, §52f, for the reciprocal use of Hithpael where Gesenius gives two other examples: Gen 42:1 and Ps 41:8. Ps 20:9 may also intend this reciprocal understanding. *IBHS*, §26.2g, agrees with Gesenius, using a slightly different translation, “And they felt no shame before

understanding of יתבששו, but typically they do not suggest that this feature significantly affects the meaning of the text.¹⁷ Jack Sasson, however, identifies יתבששו as a reciprocal action rather than being merely a psychological state, i.e., “They did not embarrass each other.”¹⁸ Sasson suggests this interpretation emphasizes the inherent qualities of the Hithpael, i.e., the factitive (they *did not shame or embarrass* each other) and the reciprocal (they did not shame or embarrass *each other*). On the basis of the reciprocal sense, he argues, “This translation implies the pair did not have the potential to find blemishes with each other because they did not perceive anatomical, sexual, or role distinctions within the species.”¹⁹

Sasson likely goes too far in suggesting that יתבששו means the couple did not perceive anatomical, sexual, or role distinctions in the species. None of the words, grammar, or literary aspects of the text require such an interpretation.²⁰ This dissertation argues below, however, that this pericope emphasizes the couple’s ignorance of evil (רע), not their sexual ignorance.²¹ Paul Joüon argues that while the reciprocal sense of the Hithpael exists, it is rare, and the only certain examples seem

one another.”

¹⁷For example, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 181; Jack M. Sasson, “Welō’ yitbōššāšû (Gen 2:25) and Its Implications,” *Biblica* 66 (1985): 418–21; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1930), 70; and Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 158-59.

¹⁸Sasson, “Gen 2:25,” 420.

¹⁹Sasson, “Gen 2:25,” 420.

²⁰Richard M. Davidson, “The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 3,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26, no. 2 (1988): 121-31, argues against interpretations like Sasson’s by appealing to a different meaning between the words עירום and עירום. See chap. 2 for an assessment of Davidson’s view.

²¹Particularly, the couple could perceive anatomical, sexual, and role distinctions, but they perceived those distinctions as *good*.

to have a special feature marking it as such.²² He thus questions the need to interpret a special sense of the Hithpael here in Genesis 2:25. If the author wanted to convey this reciprocal sense, he could have included after the verb a preposition with “the one, and . . . the other.”²³ Additionally, Joüon notes that none of the old translators of the text saw fit to indicate this reciprocal sense.²⁴ Sasson acknowledges Joüon’s objection but simply asserts that the ancient commentators would have assumed the idea of reciprocity in the Hithpael.²⁵ Yet, since the translators had linguistic options to convey the reciprocal sense, why did they not do so? The LXX translates יתבששו as an imperfect passive: ἡσχύνοντο. Targum Onqelos uses the Hithpeel participle מתכלמין. Targum Neofiti says, “They were not knowers of what shame was.”²⁶ The Vulgate is similar to English translations, “And they were not ashamed.”²⁷ None of these translations indicate reciprocity in the verbal forms or in any supporting syntax.

Instead, John Skinner and others argue convincingly that the imperfect conjugation rather than the Hithpolel stem is the more important factor regarding interpretation, conveying a frequentative use, which points to the enduring nature of their lack of shame.²⁸ Since the time of their creation, they did not experience shame

²²Paul Joüon, “Notes de lexicographie hébraïque: יתבששו (Gen 2:25),” *Biblia* 7 (1926): 74-75. The examples he claims as certain are 2 Kgs 14:8-11 and its parallel 2 Chr 25:17-21. The verb התראה occurs, and is followed by פנים, conveying the idea that the competitors were sizing one another up, i.e., they were looking one another in the face.

²³Joüon, “Notes de lexicographie hébraïque,” 75.

²⁴Joüon, “Notes de lexicographie hébraïque,” 75, “Il est remarquable que le sens réciproque n’a été vu par aucun des anciens traducteurs, pas même par le traducteur arabe de la Polyglotte, Saadia.”

²⁵Sasson, “Gen 2:25,” 419n4.

²⁶לא הוון ידעין מה היא בהתתה

²⁷Eius et non erubescabant (3rd person plural, imperfect active indicative).

²⁸See Skinner, *Genesis*, 70; C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and*

in the presence of one another's nakedness. Davidson translates יתבששו with this nuance, "they were not (at any time) ashamed."²⁹ C. John Collins argues that the imperfect is important literarily in the pericope, concluding the narrative of the creation of male and female and showing the idyllic nature of the garden setting.³⁰

Idyllic state or knowledge of sexuality? Not all interpreters agree that the couple's situation was an idyllic, ongoing state, however. If public nakedness is an inappropriate and shameful state, some argue that the couple's lack of shame before eating the fruit represents immaturity and ignorance of sexuality.³¹ According to this position, Genesis 2-3 is simply an etiology for why humans wear clothes.³² This alternative view arises primarily from competing interpretations of the nature and function of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, particularly by comparing Genesis 2-3 to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet I, Enkidu is a wild man, naked and living

Theological Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P and R Publishing, 2006), 102; A. B. Davidson, *Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1901), §44b; and GKC, §107b. GKC, §111d, states the imperfect consecutive does not represent progress in the action but explains what precedes. Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 23, suggests the Hithpolel implies mutuality, an idea similar to reciprocity. However, he argues that the meaning conveys an idyllic and ongoing lack of shame, similar to the other opinions offered here.

²⁹Davidson, *Hebrew Grammar*, §44b. Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 102; and Skinner, *Genesis*, 70, also note the importance of the imperfect to convey a frequentative meaning of בוש.

³⁰ Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 149-50.

³¹Differing from the views below but arguing that nakedness did not represent an idyllic setting, Rashi argues that Gen 3:21 would have followed immediately after Gen 2:25, i.e., God clothed them after he made them, but Moses did not want the story to end on the fall of Adam and Eve, so he placed Gen 3:21 at the end so that the story finished with God's act.

³²See Herrmann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 14-15; Sasson, "Gen 2:25," 420; and Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 158-59. Gordon P. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, vol. 1A (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 71-72, makes a similar statement, though it is unclear whether he thinks their naïve state would have continued if they had not eaten the fruit.

among the beasts.³³ Because Enkidu protects the animals from a local hunter, Gilgamesh sends the hunter with a prostitute, Shamhat, to engage Enkidu in a sexual relationship. After seven nights with the prostitute, the animals no longer come near Enkidu, and according to Shamhat, the sexual encounter has caused Enkidu to gain a form of wisdom and become like a god. In Tablet II, the text further clarifies that the prostitute clothes Enkidu's nakedness with one of her garments so that she is able to introduce him into society.

Like the beasts among whom he lived, Enkidu's nakedness represents a wild, uncivilized status in *Gilgamesh*. His sexual encounter with Shamhat serves as a catalyst for his maturation from a child-like animal to a man, possessing wisdom like the gods.³⁴ Jacob Milgrom states the parallels between Adam and Enkidu:

Biblical Adam was modeled on Mesopotamian Enkidu. Before each of them experienced sex, they were vegetarians (Gen 1:29; *Gilgamesh* I, iv, 2-4), naked (Gen 2:25; *Gilgamesh* II, ii, 27-28), and friends and protectors of the beasts (Gen 2:20; 3:1-41; *Gilgamesh* I, iii, 9-12). After sex, they eat meat (conceded to Noah, Gen 9:3 . . . *Gilgamesh* II, ii, 3-7), wear clothes (Gen 2:24; 3:21; *Gilgamesh* II, ii, 27-29, iii, 26-27), and have become enemies of the beasts (Gen 3:15; 9:2; *Gilgamesh* I, iv, 24-25; II, iii, 28-32).³⁵

Milgrom asserts, however, that the most significant parallel between Enkidu and Adam is that both are made wise and civilized as a result of sexual intercourse.³⁶ As

³³ANET, 72-98.

³⁴Julia Asher-Greve, "Decisive Sex, Essential Gender," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, ed. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 2002), 1:14-15, suggests that Shamhat's education of Enkidu not only awakened him physically and mentally through sexual intercourse, but it was also the first steps of "genderization." Being female, however, Shamhat is only able to introduce Enkidu to his masculinity and further education by sending him to battle Gilgamesh.

³⁵Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 188.

³⁶Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 188.

many others have suggested, Milgrom argues that knowing good and evil is a euphemism for sexual consciousness.³⁷ As evidence, Milgrom suggests Deuteronomy 1:39 and 2 Samuel 19:36 affirm the euphemism, where both the very young and very old are said to be those who do not know טוב and רע, i.e., they have not yet engaged or no longer engage in sexual intercourse.

The sexual knowledge position is unsustainable in the context of Genesis, however.³⁸ God had commanded the humans to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis 1:26-29, making a prohibition against sexual experience nonsensical in the story.³⁹ Against Milgrom's view, Deuteronomy 1:39 and 2 Samuel 19:36 offer no support to the sexual knowledge position of the tree in Genesis. Those texts just as easily support the idea that the knowledge of טוב and רע refers to moral discernment or general human knowledge rather than the sexual ignorance of children or the

³⁷Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 188; and Milgrom, "Sex and Wisdom: What the Garden of Eden Story Is Saying," *Bible Review* 10, no. 6 (1994): 21, 52. Other examples of this position with various nuances are Herbert Chanan Brichto, *The Names of God: Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 86-90; J. Edgar Bruns, "Depth-Psychology and the Fall," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 21 (1959): 78-82; Frederick Carl Eiselen, "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *The Biblical World* 36, no. 2 (August 1910): 101-12; Ivan Engnell, "Knowledge' and 'Life' in the Creation Story," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East: Presented to Professor Harold Henry Rowley*, ed. Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 3 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1955), 103-19; Robert Gordis, "The Significance of the Paradise Myth," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 52, no. 2 (1936): 86-94; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 11; Carlos Mesters, *Eden, Golden Age or Goad to Action*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), 42-43; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 26-28; and Ronald A. Veenker, "Forbidden Fruit: Ancient Near Eastern Sexual Metaphors," *HUCA* 70/71 (1999-2000): 57-73.

³⁸John A. Bailey, "Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3," *JBL* 89, no. 2 (1970): 138, argues against the sexual interpretation view, noting that sexual initiation had no place in Israel's religion. He holds that Genesis was a polemic against the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

³⁹See critiques of the sexual knowledge view in Louis F. Hartman, "Sin in Paradise," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20 (1958): 26-40; J. Pedersen, "Wisdom and Immortality," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 3 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1955), 238-46; Herold S. Stern, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," *VT* 8, no. 4 (1958): 405-18; and Brian Osborne Sigmon, "Between Eden and Egypt: Echoes of the Garden Narrative in the Story of Joseph and His Brothers" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2013), 101-09.

elderly.⁴⁰ Further, though the word ידע does convey a sexual relationship in some texts, e.g., Genesis 4:1, the object of the verb is crucial to determine the nuance of the word. In the case of Genesis 4:1, Adam knows *his wife Eve* with the result that she conceives a child, leaving no doubt that a sexual relationship is implied. In Genesis 2:9, 16; 3:5, however, the subject knows טוב and רע, not a person, and nothing else in the context suggests a sexual connotation. Finally, the sexual experience position would require that God himself is a sexually-experienced being, as Genesis 3:22 states: “Behold, the man has become *like one of us* in knowing good and evil.”

One cannot be sure what knowledge Moses had of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* nor how he interacted with the text if he did have access to the story. There are some shared terms between *Gilgamesh* and Genesis, but the comparative details between the stories are superficial in terms of their respective plots, which are quite dissimilar, both in content and focus.⁴¹ The danger in comparing these stories is that the supposed parallels drive interpretation of the biblical text, a tendency visible particularly in the position that the knowledge of good and evil represents sexual

⁴⁰Views advocating some form of moral or general human knowledge dominate amongst most interpreters of Genesis 2, though the nuances are numerous. For the idea of moral discernment or autonomy, see Mark E. Biddle, “Genesis 3: Sin, Shame, and Self-Esteem,” *Review and Expositor* 103 (2006): 359-70; W. Malcom Clark, “A Legal Background to the Yahwist’s Use of ‘Good and Evil’ in Genesis 2-3,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 266-78; Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 115-16; R. W. L. Moberly, “Did the Serpent Get It Right?” *JTS* 39, no. 1 (1988): 1-27. For “good and evil” as a merism for the idea of total knowledge, see George W. Buchanan, “The OT Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,” *JBL* 75, no. 2 (1956): 114-20; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, *From Adam to Noah*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 111-14; H. N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1985), 128; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 242-48. Interestingly, Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 208, makes a better case for the sexual knowledge view on literary or thematic grounds, showing that the sexual violations of Leviticus 18 led to banishment from the land. This consequence in Leviticus 18 follows the same pattern in the flood narrative following sexual crimes (Gen 6:1-4), and in his model, God exiling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden following their sexual crime. Even still, this perspective is largely conjectural and not explicitly stated in the text.

⁴¹Even in the early twentieth century, Skinner, *Genesis*, 91-92, rejected the potential literary parallels between the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Genesis, arguing that the Adapa myth provided better comparative traditions.

experience.⁴² Thus, for this study, juxtaposing the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Genesis serves biblical interpretation best by showing that the culture at that time held similar perspectives on nudity, i.e., nakedness is uncivilized, and for someone to participate in society, he or she must be clothed. Again, this consistent perspective points to the unusual circumstances of the biblical world before Genesis 3:6.

Genesis 2:25 depicts the man and woman in an idyllic and ongoing situation in which even nakedness, a privative term, is not a shameful state. In fact, as YHWH's assessment of his creation in Genesis 1:31 requires, it was a "very good" situation in which humans' sexual organs were visible. Presumably, the couple and their offspring would have remained in this naked-and-not-ashamed state except for their decision to disobey the prohibition against eating the fruit (Gen 3:6).⁴³ Genesis 2:25 depicts a scenario in which there is nothing bad (עָר) between Adam and Eve, nor between the couple and God. Juxtaposed with Adam and Eve's perception of

⁴²Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 86, addresses the danger of "parallelomania" in his discussion of the ANE literature's relevance to Genesis study. He borrowed the term "parallelomania" from an address delivered by Samuel Sandmel in 1961. See Sandmel's address in "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81, no. 1 (1962): 1-13. Mathew argues that the Hebrew dependence on Babylon is untenable in light of W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," *JTS* 16 (1965): 287-300; and A. W. Sjöberg, "Eve and the Chameleon," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlstrom*, ed. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer, JSOTSup 31 (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1984), 199-215. See Richard S. Hess, "One Hundred Fifty Years of Comparative Studies on Genesis 1-11: An Overview," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 3-26; and David Toshio Tsumura, "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood*, 27-57, for helpful treatments regarding the role of parallel accounts in biblical interpretation.

⁴³G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 41-42, 452-53; and William N. Wilder, "Illumination and Investiture: The Royal Significance of the Tree of Wisdom in Genesis 3," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 51-69, suggest that Adam and Eve would have been clothed by God following an indeterminate probationary period in which their obedience would have merited their elevation to a royal status. While consistent with a Covenant Theology framework, i.e., a "covenant of grace," this suggestion is not supported by any mention of a probation period or potential investiture in the text itself. Moreover, Adam and Eve were already given royal (ruling) status by God's mandate in Gen 1:26-31.

nudity in Genesis 3, Moses uses nakedness imagery as an effective way to demonstrate that these relationships are whole and unblemished. Collins's words on the entire passage are fitting with regard to Moses's use of nakedness imagery in Genesis 2:25:

Rhetorically, the passage serves at least two functions. First, it sets up the horror of Genesis 3: The disobedience takes place in a setting overflowing with God's abundant provision. No one should blame God for human waywardness. Second, the passage should foster yearning in those who receive it: the innocence, freshness, and abundance of the garden contrast starkly with everything the audience members know about their own families and livelihoods.⁴⁴

Genesis 3:7-11

In Genesis 3:6, Adam and Eve make the conscious decision to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had warned Adam in Genesis 2:16-17, "In the day that you eat of [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you shall surely die." Will Adam and Eve now fall dead? Will God appear and execute them? Moses writes, "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths" (Gen 3:7). Moses uses nakedness imagery again at a crucial moment in the story.

The most immediate result when the couple disobeys the clear command of YHWH is that they perceive their nakedness is shameful. First, they attempt to mitigate their shame by fashioning loincloths out of fig leaves, which temporarily resolves that tension (Gen 3:7).⁴⁵ Yet, when they hear YHWH coming, they hide

⁴⁴Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 174.

⁴⁵The "leaves of a fig tree" (עלה תאנה), would have been large and strong enough to serve as makeshift coverings. See Skinner, *Genesis*, 76; Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 92; and Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 174. "Loincloth" translates חגורה, which elsewhere refers to a belt (Isa 3:24; 1 Kgs 2:5) and possibly sackcloth (as the LXX translates חגורה in Isa 32:11).

amongst the trees (Ge 3:8). While one may suppose that it is the Lord's judgment they fear, Adam tells YHWH that he was afraid *because he was naked* (Gen 3:10).⁴⁶ YHWH's response is, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Gen 3:11).

Once again, nakedness is an important component of the plot. The reader's lingering question, "What happened to the Genesis 2:25 world?" is now resolved. Human sin is responsible for shame and has disrupted the couple's primary relationships, namely with one another and with God.⁴⁷ Whereas before, public nakedness was proof of an idyllic and harmonious world of human relationships, the man is now ashamed to be naked even in front of his wife or his God. The consequences of sin start with Adam and Eve recognizing their nakedness as shameful, but God's words to the serpent (Gen 3:14-15), the woman (Gen 3:16), and the man (Gen 3:17-19) show that sin's disruption will be more pervasive and long-lasting than shameful nakedness. To the extent that *even nakedness* was not shameful in a Genesis 2:25 world, now *even nakedness* before one's spouse or God is shameful in a Genesis 3:6 world. How much more will sin disrupt non-spousal relationships? Genesis 4-6 shows a world in which increasing jealousy, violence, and

⁴⁶Most suggest that the loincloth coverings were still insufficient to dispel the shame of nakedness, e.g., Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, 163; Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 175; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 254; Iain Provan, *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 91; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 95; and Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 232.

⁴⁷Contra arguments which suggest Genesis 2-3 is not about human sin, i.e., a "fall," but is instead a story of human maturation, e.g., James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992), 6; Lyn M. Bechtel, "Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis 2.4B-3.24," in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, ed. Athalya Brenner, The Feminist Companion to the Bible 2 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 88-90; Bechtel, "Genesis 2:4B-3:24: A Myth about Human Maturation," *JSOT* 67 (1995): 3-26; and Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 10, 159, 172-76. Sigmon, "Between Eden and Egypt," 92-101, responds to this position and shows decisively why Genesis 2-3 concerns the matter of sin and disobedience, i.e., God gives a command (Gen 2:16-17; 3:11, 17), the woman understands the command (Gen 3:2-5), the humans clearly disobey the command (Gen 3:6), the humans' relationships are disrupted (3:7-8), and consequences for the disobedience follow in which God highlights their willful disobedience, not the act of eating the fruit (Gen 3:14-19).

evil describe humanity's relationship to one another, leading God to announce universal human destruction in Noah's day (Gen 6:7).⁴⁸

The relationship of nakedness and shame. While one can see how nakedness functions in the story, namely the broken relationship between Adam and Eve and their relationship with God, why did their disobedience lead them to know they were naked and be ashamed of it? Specifically, Adam and Eve are ashamed of the other seeing their sexual organs, though they were created for one another, one flesh, and previously unashamed of their nakedness (Gen 2). Their shame comes from the exposure of their sexual organs, a fact made clear in that they fashioned loincloths, which seemed to allay their shame until they heard God approaching them in Genesis 3:8. Why were they concerned specifically about their sexual organs, and why were they still afraid when God came into the garden, though they had already covered themselves?

Sexual intimacy is one of the most intimate forms of human relationship and one which is exploited repeatedly in the OT.⁴⁹ When one is in an idyllic, "very good" environment, exposed sexual organs are not a threat, nor do they evoke a feeling of shame. This idyllic environment was actual in the case of Adam and Eve

⁴⁸Gordon Wenham, *Rethinking Genesis 1-11: Gateway to the Bible*, Didsbury Lecture Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 20-22, argues that the structure of Genesis 1-11 shows the state of man's worsening sin. For instance, Genesis 4 has many literary parallels to Genesis 3 but shows Cain as worse than Adam.

⁴⁹Consider the numerous situations only in Genesis: Ham's exposure of Noah's nakedness (Gen 9:22), Abraham's abdication of protecting Sarah (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18), Abraham and Jacob's exploitation of servants and concubines to produce offspring (Gen 16:1-4; 30:1-2), the rape of Lot by his daughters (Gen 19:30-38), Isaac's abdication of protecting Rebekah in Gerar (Gen 26:6-11), Laban's deception of Jacob through Leah (Gen 29:21-30), the rape of Dinah (Gen 34:1-4), Jacob's sons taking revenge for Dinah by tricking Hamor and the men of his city into circumcising themselves (Gen 34:13-29), Reuben's incest with Bilhah (35:22; 49:3-4), Onan and Judah's failure to uphold their duty to Tamar (Gen 38:1-11), Tamar's deception of Judah to conceive a child (Gen 38:12-30), Potiphar's wife's attempt to seduce Joseph and then her false accusation against him (Gen 39:7-23).

before the Fall, but the idyllic state can also be perceived, as in the case of a naïve young child or a married couple engaged in consensual sexual intimacy. A child is simply ignorant of the possible danger or embarrassment his nakedness presents. In a marriage, the sexual organs are good in terms of the relationship and necessary to enhance the one-flesh union. Each member of the couple extends a growing sense of trust to their spouse as their relationship matures and the threat of sinful exploitation or shameful exposure weakens.

Adam and Eve's situation in Genesis 2:25 was unique in the history of humanity. In one sense, they were like innocent children prior to their disobedience as suggested in some of the views described above. Yet the story does not suggest they were ignorant of sexual knowledge they would later learn as they matured. Rather, Adam and Eve each lacked knowledge of how the other might sinfully exploit them, particularly their sexuality.⁵⁰ They knew only what was good (טוב), which meant they only perceived the good role their sexual organs fulfilled. As such, Genesis 2 humans could be naked without shame in marital as well as non-marital relationships. Without the threat of sinful thoughts and actions, the exposure of sexual organs in the presence of another non-married human relationship is not problematic but confirms the goodness of the created order, one behaving toward and perceiving his neighbor with unwavering love and trust. One understands these observations from the explanation that the man and woman were naked but not ashamed in the presence of one another (Gen 2:25).

With these observations in place, the reader is prepared to understand the major shift that occurs in Genesis 3:7. To this point, everything and everyone in creation behaved according to the expectations with which they were designed.

⁵⁰Contra Sasson, "Gen 2:25," 418-21, who argues that they did not perceive anatomical, sexual, or role distinctions at all. Adam clearly recognized Eve as the solution to his problem of being alone, particularly his inability to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 2:23).

When Adam and Eve chose to disobey YHWH's command, however, they exposed themselves to ער (bad or evil) for the first time, and being creatures with the God-given capacity to reason and conjecture unactualized possibilities, they glimpsed the terrible wickedness of a world in which one could choose *not* to operate according to YHWH's stated intention.⁵¹ They, being not-gods, tried to wield the prerogatives of YHWH and found that they were not designed with the faculties necessary to have a knowledge of evil without being mastered by it. Paul Kissling explains,

The tree [of the knowledge of good and evil] prohibits personal, intimate knowledge of evil. Human beings are not created to be God, or even gods. God can know everything there is to know about evil and yet not be tempted by it nor tainted by it. Human beings are not so constituted."⁵²

Moses makes this shift in Genesis 3:7 clear by detailing the inner experience and action the couple takes when they encounter this not-good reality. They are exposed to the danger of others' evil thoughts and intentions, and they are also capable of evil thoughts and behaviors themselves. Because the sexual organs are the physical center of the closest intimacy humans experience, they pose the most obvious and immediate threat. Mark Biddle argues further that the sexual organs betray one's biological dependence on the opposite sex.⁵³ In seeking to be like

⁵¹R. R. Reno, *Genesis*, Brazos Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 91-92; Stern, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," 415; Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 263; and Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 252. As mentioned in chap. 1, Augustine argued that Adam and Eve's shame arose from their sexual organs being emancipated from their wills. Thus, their organs obeyed the will of their sexual desire, rather than their purposeful intent. He suggested that prior to the fall, Adam and Eve controlled the function of their sexual organs as one would a hand or a foot. Moreover, this rebellion of their members was fitting, given that the couple had rebelled against the will of God in the matter of the fruit. See Augustine, *A Treatise on the Grace of Christ, and on Original Sin* 39; and Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* 6. While admittedly an odd and specific perspective, Augustine's effort to answer questions the text does not explain is rare among interpreters.

⁵²Paul Kissling, *Genesis*, College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 2004), 161.

⁵³Biddle, "Genesis 3," 362. See also Daniel I. Block, "In Praise of Fig Leaves: A Study on Nudity from a Biblical Perspective" (Paper presented to Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN, 1985), 7. Regarding why shame is associated with the exposure of genitalia, Block speculates, "It

God (Gen 3:6), the sexual organs betray that they are mere creatures, needing not only God, but also one another to continue human life. The sexual organs thus expose the danger and hubris of a human trying to be like God.⁵⁴

As mentioned above, this knowledge was not the awakening of sexual knowledge, nor did it merely symbolize the natural maturation of a youth into adulthood. Rather, Adam and Eve came to experience or know (יָדַע) the effects of sin and evil (רָע) on their minds. Nakedness is a powerful image that conveys the post-fall reality poignantly, particularly for an Israelite audience. The ANE background study above showed the powerful role nudity played, both in positive and negative situations. This study suggests that Moses chose to highlight the couple's thoughts and actions regarding their nakedness instead of some other evil-affected reality because no other image would convey the cataclysmic shift from ideal to fallen so powerfully as the intimacy lost in these relationships. Moreover, this suggestion recognizes Moses' emphasis on the shame the couple felt rather than only on the forensic reality of their guilt before God because of their disobedience.

Different words for nakedness in Genesis 2:25; 3:7, 10, 11. As noted in chapter 2, English translations of Genesis 2-3 obscure the fact that Moses uses a slightly different word for nakedness in Genesis 2:25 (עָרֹמִים) than he does in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11 (עִירָמָם). This dissertation agrees with Arnold, Cassuto, and Sailhamer that the use of the two terms in Genesis 2-3 is significant literarily, even if it disagrees about how the author indicates that significance.⁵⁵ Rather than positing

would appear to have something to do with the sanctity of life itself. Since, in a world of sin and subject to the curse of death, the life first breathed into Adam depends for its continuity upon the reproductive capacity of the species, the organs involved bear a special sanctity.”

⁵⁴The shame is exacerbated by the fact that, as image-bearers, the couple was already designed to be “like God,” making more humans (multiplying) and ruling over the earth (Gen 1:26-30).

⁵⁵Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge

עירם as the expected word to describe the couple's nakedness, asserting that the shift in terms highlights a wordplay between Genesis 2:25 and 3:1, or suggesting that the use of עירם is an author-intended intertextual connection to Deut 28:48, it seems the simplest explanation is that the shift in terms corresponds to a shift in the couple's awareness of their nakedness following their disobedience to God's command. The shift is thus a small, literary variation that adds to the reader's awareness that the couple's situation has changed.⁵⁶

This position has the advantage of giving proper weight to the use of the two terms, i.e., they are neither unimportant nor a crucial interpretive feature. Since the early translations did not distinguish between the two terms, if Moses intended his audience to perceive the shift as highly significant, then the earliest interpreters seem to have missed it. Yet, Moses does use the two different adjectives in the passage, a practice which is not repeated in the OT. Given that the couple's perspective shifted after they disobeyed, perhaps Moses used a synonym of עירם to signal this shift, a subtle but satisfying literary technique. One may compare this to a major plot shift in a film, where the action or dialogue primarily conveys the shift, yet the musical score also changes in the background.⁵⁷ The audience may not perceive the musical shift, though it affects their experience of the scene, yet if

University Press, 2009), 66; Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, 143; and John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 84. See chap. 2 for a description of their views.

⁵⁶Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 191, may agree with this position, noting the Hebrew terms distinguish nakedness pre-fall and post-fall, but he does not develop the idea. Radak (Rabbi David Kimhi), commenting on Gen 3:7, indicates that the word (עירם) is spelled with a י here to make the syllable sound longer, forcing the reader to linger over and contemplate the term.

⁵⁷See Jessica Green, "Understanding the Score: Film Music Communicating to and Influencing the Audience," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44, no. 4 (2010): 81-94; and Scott D. Lipscomb and David E. Tolchinski, "The Role of Music Communication in Cinema," in *Musical Communication*, ed. Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David Hargreaves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 383-404.

viewers analyze the scene later, they will recognize the overall effect the musical change has on the scene. The music does not drive the meaning of the scene, but it does complement it.

As with the other suggestions regarding Moses's purpose for using two different terms, this idea conjectures authorial intent that is otherwise unstated, a well-understood difficulty with literary analysis. Yet, this proposal avoids the conflicting data shown in the other suggestions, and unlike Sailhamer's solution, it posits a literary technique employed within the same pericope rather than conjecturing a distant intertextual connection with Deuteronomy.⁵⁸ In this case, English translators of Genesis 2-3 may better serve readers by translating ערומים as "nude" in Genesis 2:25 and עירם/עירמם as "naked" in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11. These English terms are virtually synonyms like their Hebrew counterparts, and their juxtaposition in Genesis 2-3 could provide a similar literary effect in English as the Hebrew terms do.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Additionally, if Moses did intend to create a wordplay with ערום (naked) and ערום (crafty) between Gen 2:25 and 3:1, then he has already demonstrated literary artistry. On the possible wordplay, see Zvi Ron, "Wordplay in Genesis 2:25-3:1," *Jewish Biblical Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2014): 3-7; Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 11; Arnold, *Genesis*, 63; James McKeown, *Genesis, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 32; Sarna, *Genesis*, 24; Sasson, "Gen 2:25," 419; and Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 72, who note the wordplay but primarily see it aesthetically rather than significant for interpretation. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 72, attempts to reproduce this wordplay in English: "They will seek themselves to be shrewd but will discover that they are 'nude.'" Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 51; Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, 143-44; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 225; Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 84; and Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 102-03, 471-74, argue that the wordplay indicates that the couple's innocence or integrity was in danger from the serpent. Skinner, *Genesis*, 73, suggests the resemblance is merely accidental.

⁵⁹Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 3, views "nude" in the English language as a neutral or positive term, highlighted as an artistic medium. "Nakedness," on the other hand, is a negative term, conjuring ideas of fear or shame. In non-artistic settings, where "nude" is not a technical term, the English language utilizes "nudity" and "nakedness" with extensive semantic overlap. Yet, if one were to translate Genesis 2-3 using "nude" in Gen 2:25 and "naked" in Gen 3:7, 10, 11, the distinction Clark highlights might help the reader perceive the two words differently due to the shift of terms and the context of the word in the passage.

Conclusion: The Theological Use of Nakedness Imagery in Genesis 2-3

Nakedness imagery plays a crucial role in the plot of Genesis 2-3 and is not merely an incidental detail in the larger story. Through this imagery, Genesis juxtaposes the goodness of God's path with the evil of man's ways. Moses's post-Fall audience knows no greater situation of shame or feeling of exposure than public nudity. Nakedness imagery in Genesis 2:25 thus conveys the goodness of the Genesis 1-2 world. If even nakedness is not a source of shame, what else can one imagine about this world? One has nothing to fear or hide from the other. The extreme nature of the image forces one to imagine the implications of the good world in which humans think and act in accordance with God's ways. In that world, shame simply does not exist.

Nakedness imagery also conveys the extreme loss of the Genesis 3 world. Adam and Eve gained nothing good (טוב) from their disobedience; they gained only the experiential knowledge of evil (רע). Though YHWH had given his command (Gen 2:16) for their good, they acted contrary to his words and immediately knew the evil of a world in which YHWH's creatures did not follow his commands. If nakedness in the presence of one's spouse and before God was a source of shame, what else can one imagine about this world? As in Genesis 2, the extreme nature of the image allows one to conjecture the effects of evil in other areas of life. A world in which God's creatures disobey his stated intentions is a dangerous and destructive world, where sin affects even one's closest relationships, i.e., with YHWH or one's spouse.⁶⁰ One sees how much worse less-intimate relationships, i.e., with one's spouse or God, fare in the stories of Cain and Abel (Gen 4: 1-16), Lamech (Gen 4:23-

⁶⁰As mentioned above, perhaps Moses used עירם in Gen 3:7 instead of ערום as a small literary technique to highlight the relational shift. Not only does the reader perceive the change through the story's content, but even the words themselves move the reader that direction.

24), and indeed, all of humanity (Gen 6:1-6). God declared worldwide judgment finally in Genesis 6:5-7 because he saw that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5). Whereas humans previously knew only what was good, idealized by shameless nakedness, they now present themselves as knowing evil continually, clothing themselves to cover the shame and potential exploitation of their nakedness. Even the story of Noah, the righteous man who survives the flood, shows that the stain of sin is not removed from humanity as his nakedness is exploited by his youngest son.

An interpreter of Genesis 2-3 would be remiss to ignore the final word on the couple’s nakedness in the story, however. In Genesis 3:21, Moses states, “The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.” While interpreters differ on the material and implications of these “garments of skins,” it is usually agreed that YHWH’s act here is a gracious one in which he ameliorates the shameful nakedness of Adam and Eve, providing them adequate clothing.⁶¹ God establishes the pattern that it is good to cover the shame of someone’s nakedness, particularly when they are not in a position to do so. Despite their disobedience, God works to preserve the couple’s ability to relate to one another and to him.⁶² Interpreters are correct to emphasize the destructive role that

⁶¹Many interpreters have questioned if these are animal skins, or whether this act constitutes a sacrifice. Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 232, states, “People know where leather comes from. Gen 3:21 implies that God slaughtered and skinned the animals, dressed and softened the hides, and cut and sewed the hides into tunics, thereby modeling the use of animal hides for the good of humans and solving their dual problem of public nakedness and protection from the elements.” Zevit does not agree that Genesis 2-3 describes a fall narrative, yet he clearly perceives that this scene displays YHWH’s gracious act toward the shamed humans. Augustine, *On the Trinity* 12.11.16, represents the position that says their clothes were part of God’s punishment against them to remind them of their pride. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 85, argues similarly that this clothing was a reminder of their sinfulness.

⁶²From the beginning of Israel’s story, God shows himself to be merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (Exod 34:6). Among other interpreters, Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, 163, notes God’s grace and provision in his judgment.

sin played in this narrative, but they often focus on Genesis 3:21 as a theological picture of atonement.⁶³ While the atonement theme is likely implied in Genesis 3:21, interpreters should not move too quickly past the gracious nature of YHWH to cover the couple's shame. As interpreters have noted, being able to access the tree of life and live forever as sinners would be a hell of its own. Yet, to continue to live in a constant state of shame, i.e., naked, would be just as horrific. Interpreters must certainly address YHWH's justice in this story, but they should also highlight his mercy and grace.

Thus, in Genesis 2-3, nakedness imagery in Genesis 2-3 functions to communicate three primary theological concepts: (1) a whole, unblemished relationship between the man and woman and between the couple and God (Gen 2:25), (2) sin's permanent alteration of humans' relationship with one another and with God (Gen 3:7-19), and (3) God's work to mitigate shame and preserve the possibility for relationship, though these relationships are no longer whole and unblemished (Gen 3:21).

Genesis 9: The Persistent Problem of Human Sin

After God judges humanity but preserves a remnant through Noah and his family, Genesis 9:20-29 recounts the final details of Noah's life,

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah

The man will still produce food from the ground, the woman will still bear children, and the serpent (the source of temptation) will be defeated.

⁶³Perhaps this is at least partly because they are compelled to explain YHWH's justice in the passage. He had threatened death in Gen 2:17, yet here, he sends the couple away instead.

awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.” He also said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.” After the flood Noah lived 350 years. All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.⁶⁴

The details and actions of Noah and Ham have been a subject of discussion from the earliest interpreters, and the study below interacts with those discussions where relevant.⁶⁵ The primary concern for this dissertation, however, is what theological information nakedness imagery conveys in this text. This section argues that nakedness imagery in Genesis 9 functions to communicate three primary theological concepts: (1) nakedness is still shameful after the flood and communicates that human sin survived this judgment, (2) humans still threaten to undermine their relationships with one another, and (3) the possibility to do righteousness according to God’s character is still a choice one must make. These concepts emerge from the story particularly through analysis of each character’s behavior, so much of the discussion below focuses on this analysis.

Noah’s Role

First, concerning Noah’s role in this incident, the biblical text gives no explicit assessment of his actions. Much like the compressed narrative style of Genesis 3:6, Genesis 9:21 says simply, “And he drank from the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself [ויתגל] in the midst of the tent.”⁶⁶ A majority of

⁶⁴Gen 9:25-27 records the only words of Noah in his story, words of blessing and cursing.

⁶⁵The references in the discussion below detail the various proposals. In contrast, Provan, *Discovering Genesis*, 125; John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 293; and Gary Edward Schnittjer, *The Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 104, argue that there are not enough details to fully understand the “sin” in this situation. Schnittjer suggests that the author used “purposeful ambiguity” to force interpreters to wrestle with the meaning of the text.

⁶⁶My translation: וישת מן־היין וישכר ויתגל בתוך אהלה. This translation follows the Qere, אהלו,

interpreters assess Noah's deeds negatively, suggesting it was at least very foolish, if not sinful, to drink excessively and uncover himself.⁶⁷ Drunkenness at least puts someone in a vulnerable position, as Noah's descendant Lot experiences later at the hands of his daughters (Gen 19:30-38). In contrast to this negative assessment, however, Walter Brown argues that Noah's story consistently elevates his moral standing before God, and this episode is one in which Noah enjoys the produce of the ground which is no longer cursed. According to Brown, the fault is entirely on Ham, who sins against his father.⁶⁸

Brown's essay works to extricate Noah from moral culpability, showing that drinking has a positive connotation in many OT texts. He also notes that Noah would have been the first person to feel the debilitating effects of wine and should not be judged as foolish or sinful.⁶⁹ Moreover, Noah was in his own tent when he uncovered himself, and the text does not use a word for nakedness when describing Noah's role, only that he uncovered himself.⁷⁰ Brown is right to correct those who

indicating a 3ms pronoun.

⁶⁷Some examples are b. Sanh. 70a; W. Malcom Clark, "The Righteousness of Noah," *VT* 21 (1971): 261-80; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 412; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, OTL, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 116-39; Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 74; Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 129; Devora Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden: The Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History," *JBL* 113, no. 2 (1994): 205; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 128, 148-49; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 198-99; and Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 395-96, 482.

⁶⁸Walter E. Brown, "Noah: Sot or Saint? Genesis 9:20-27," in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 36-60. Tremper Longman III, *Genesis*, Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 134, agrees that Noah was not blameworthy.

⁶⁹Brown, "Sot or Saint?" 38-47. He suggests a better translation might be "He became fully content," or "He was satiated to sleep." Texts he lists detailing a positive perspective of drinking are: Gen 27:27-29; 43:34; Lev 23:15-21; Num 28:26-31; Deut 7:12-13; 14:22-27; 16:9-12; Isa 9:2; 16:9-10; Jer 31:12; Amos 9:14-15; Hag 1:6; Ps 104:14-15; and Song 5:1.

⁷⁰גלה is in the Hithpael and should be understood reflexively rather than the passively, as many English versions translate it. See GKC, §54; Joüon, §53i.

describe Noah's actions as *obviously* sinful, yet he overstates his case with regard to the obvious righteousness of Noah's actions. Drinking does bear a positive connotation in many OT passages, but drunkenness is also condemned repeatedly as a foolish action which makes one vulnerable to the sinful actions of others.⁷¹ Perhaps it is best regarding Noah's culpability to agree with Schnittjer that Genesis leaves that answer ambiguous.⁷²

Ham's Role.

Most controversially, what was Ham's role in the story, and how does the text assess his character? Interpreters have accused Ham of castrating Noah, performing some kind of homosexual act on him, engaging in a sexual relationship with Noah's wife (Ham's mother), or dishonoring Noah by viewing his nakedness and exposing it to his brothers.⁷³ The castration position primarily arose from rabbinic sources and attempts to explain Noah's seemingly harsh response (cursing) and the fact that Noah cursed Canaan instead of Ham.⁷⁴ According to this theory, Ham castrated Noah, preventing him from conceiving a fourth son, and thus Noah curses Ham's fourth son, Canaan. The text does not say that Ham castrated Noah, however, and thus this position is unsustainable.

Several also argue that Ham committed some form of an incestuous act

⁷¹Gen 19:30-35; Deut 21:20; 1 Sam 25:36; 2 Sam 11:13; 1 Kgs 16:9-10; Jer 51:39 (metaphorical); Hab 2:15; Prov 20:1; and Lam 4:21. Priests, Nazirites, and kings were thus forbidden from drunkenness (Lev 10:9; Num 6:3; Prov 31:4).

⁷²Schnittjer, *Torah Story*, 104.

⁷³For good summaries of the positions, see Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 417-20; and John Sietze Bergsma and Walker Scott Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)," *JBL* 124, no. 1 (2005): 25-40.

⁷⁴Gen. Rab. 36:7; b. Sanh. 70a; Tanh. 49-50; Pirque R. El. 23; Targ. Ps.-J. on Gen 9:24-25. For a thorough treatment of the history of this interpretation, see Albert I. Baumgarten, "Myth and Midrash: Genesis 9:20-29," in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults, Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1975), 3:55-71.

against Noah.⁷⁵ Genesis 9:24 explains that Noah awoke and knew what his son had *done* to him (אשר-עשה-לו), suggesting that Ham had committed an of indecent act against him.⁷⁶ Some suggest the passage uses euphemistic language, including uncovering (גלה) and seeing (ראה) nakedness, terms used in Leviticus 18 and 20 to refer to incestuous relations.⁷⁷ In Genesis 9, Noah uncovers his own nakedness (גלה) and Ham sees it (ראה). Moreover, the text supposedly contains erotically charged language, specifically references to wine and vineyards. According to Bergsma and Hahn, several OT texts associate these things with sexual activity, i.e., Genesis 19:30-38; 2 Samuel 11:8-13; and Song 8:2.⁷⁸ Finally, several interpreters connect Genesis 9 with two other texts associated with sexual impropriety, i.e., sons of God and daughters of men (Gen 6:1-4), and Lot and his daughters (Gen 19:30-38).⁷⁹

⁷⁵Robert W. E. Forrest, "Paradise Lost Again: Violence and Obedience in the Flood Narrative," *JSOT* 62 (1994): 15-16; Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001), 63-71; Seth Daniel Kunin, *The Logic of Incest: A Structuralist Analysis of Hebrew Mythology*, JSOTSup 185 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 173-74; Susan Niditch, *Chaos to Cosmos: Studies in Biblical Patterns of Creation*, Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities 6 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 52-53; Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 53; Anthony Phillips, *Essays on Biblical Law*, JSOTSup 344 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 245-50; O. Palmer Robertson, "Current Critical Questions Concerning the 'Curse of Ham' (Gen. 9:20-27)," *JETS* 41 (1998): 179; Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden," 199-200; Ellen van Wolde, *Stories of the Beginning: Genesis 1-11 and Other Creation Stories* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1997), 146; and Donald J. Wold, *Out of Order: Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 65-76. In b. Sanh. 70a, Shmuel suggested that Ham sodomized Noah. The Gemara justifies this interpretation by correlating "he saw" in Gen 9:22 with "he saw" in Gen 34:2, in which Shechem *saw* Dinah, took her, lay with her, and humiliated her. This position argues that *seeing* leads to sexual intercourse. The Gemara later suggests that "all" the teachers believe Ham castrated Noah, and some believe that he also sodomized him.

⁷⁶Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 65.

⁷⁷Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 66; and Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden," 198.

⁷⁸Bergsma and Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness," 30, refer to H. Hirsch Cohen, *The Drunkenness of Noah*, Judaic Studies 4 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 3-6, for a discussion of the role of wine in ANE literature.

⁷⁹Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 70; Forrest, "Paradise Lost," 15-16; Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1-11* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1985), 101-03; Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden," 199; Marc Vervenne, "What

Closely related to the paternal incest model, some argue that Ham sexually violated his mother.⁸⁰ This position uses the same evidence as the paternal incest view, yet proponents insist that uncovering the father's nakedness in Leviticus refers to intercourse with one's mother, not one's father. Leviticus 18:7-8 says,

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.⁸¹

In these verses a woman's nakedness is equated with the nakedness of her husband. Moreover, the maternal incest position argues that the prohibitions in Leviticus 18 and 20 refer to heterosexual relationships since homosexual relationships use the term "lie with" (שכב) instead of to see (ראה) or uncover (גלה) nakedness (Lev 18:22; 20:13). According to this position, Genesis 9 explains that Ham engaged in an incestuous relationship with his mother, and Bergsma and Hahn even suggest that Canaan was the result of this union.⁸²

The paternal and maternal incest positions are impressive in their attempt to make sense of an enigmatic passage and find continuity across the literary spectrum of the Pentateuch. Both positions fall prey to the same problems, however, namely that they rely on very technical and specific uses of terminology which are

Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor? A Critical Re-Examination of Genesis 9.20-27," *JSOT* 68 (1995): 43; and Wold, *Out of Order*, 70.

⁸⁰See Frederick W. Bassett, "Noah's Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan: A Case of Incest?" *VT* 71, no. 2 (1971): 232-37; Bergsma and Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness," 25-40; J. Severino Croatto, "¿Cuál fue el pecado de Cam con su padre Noé? Irreverencia o incesto? Estudio de Génesis 9:20-27," *Revista Bíblica* 59 (1997): 65-76; Madeline Gay McClenney-Sadler, *Recovering the Daughter's Nakedness: A Formal Analysis of Israelite Kinship Terminology and the Internal Logic of Leviticus 18*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 476 (New York: T and T Clark, 2007), 93-96; and Kikawada and Quinn, *Before Abraham Was*, 101-3.

⁸¹See also Lev 18:14, 16; 20:11, 20-21, which refer to the wife's nakedness as the nakedness of her husband.

⁸²Bergsma and Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness," 35.

not consistent when examining broader usage.⁸³ Bergsma and Hahn note correctly that שכב describes a homosexual relationship in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, yet that same term in Leviticus describes intercourse with one's step mother (Lev 20:11), daughter-in-law (Lev 20:12), his menstruating wife (Lev 20:18), and his uncle's wife (Lev 20:20). Moreover, Moses uses שכב to describe Lot's *heterosexual* relationship with his daughters in Genesis 19:30-38.⁸⁴ He even quotes the daughters using the term to describe their actions with their father. Not unimportantly, this is the same text Bergsma and Hahn use to argue for the incest motif in Genesis. Further, Ham is not the one who uncovers (גלה) Noah's nakedness; he only sees (ראה) it. Noah uncovers *himself*, an odd scenario for the incest views, implying that he prepared to copulate with his wife but fell asleep and allowed Ham to lie with her instead.

Perhaps most difficult to overcome for the incest views, in Genesis 19 and Leviticus 18, the text clearly narrates the sexual nature of the situation. If Moses intended for the reader to understand Genesis 9 as paternal or maternal incest, or any kind of sexual relationship, he omitted language he used elsewhere which would have made the circumstances explicit. Contra Gunkel, it seems unlikely that Moses was concerned about using offensive language due to his reader's sensitivities since he mentioned both paternal and maternal incest explicitly in Genesis 19 and 35.⁸⁵

Noah's curse seems to be an unusually harsh punishment, but the best explanation is that Ham saw his father's nakedness and exposed this information to his brothers outside, i.e., Ham dishonored his father.⁸⁶ This interpretation takes the

⁸³For a critique of these positions, see Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 317; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 419; Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 313.

⁸⁴The passage uses לבוא once in Gen 19:31 and שכב 7 times in the following verses to describe their sexual activity.

⁸⁵Gunkel, *Genesis*, 80, argues unconvincingly that a later redactor left out the details of Ham's actions because they were so offensive.

⁸⁶For proponents of this view, see Cohen, *The Drunkenness of Noah*, 14-16; Allen P.

text at face value, not requiring the reader to solve an elaborate literary puzzle. While some of the positions above are theoretically possible, the text does not lead the reader to those conclusions. Given the cultural taboo regarding nudity and the contrasting act by Shem and Japheth, i.e., walking in backward to avoid seeing Noah, it is clear that Ham acts contrary to the expectations for encountering someone naked. Bergsma and Hahn counter that the voyeurism position requires the reader to assume a taboo against the accidental sight of a naked parent which is not attested elsewhere in the OT or ANE literature.⁸⁷ This requirement is unnecessarily specific, however, focusing only on situations regarding *parental* nudity. The OT is quite clear that a righteous person is expected to cover nakedness as an act of righteousness and mercy (e.g., Isa 58:7; Ezek 16:8; 18:7, 16; Job 22:6; 24:7, 10).⁸⁸ Thus, this position commends itself by corresponding to the text of Genesis 9 and to

Ross, "The Curse of Canaan," *Biblia Sacra* 130 (1980): 223-40; Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 322-23; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 198-201; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 87; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 2, *From Noah to Abraham*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 149-54; Speiser, *Genesis*, 61; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11*, 418-20; Skinner, *Genesis*, 183; and Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 484-88. One of the primary difficulties of the voyeuristic position is explaining why Noah's judgment against Ham is so severe. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 139, suggests that Noah cursed Canaan instead of Ham because the Lord had previously blessed Ham in Gen 9:1. According to Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1519, Genesis 4Q252, col. 2, and Rabbi Judah in *Genesis Rabbah* 36:7, agree with this assessment. See Ben Zion Wacholder and Martin G. Abegg, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls: The Hebrew and Aramaic Texts from Cave Four* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 2:212-15; Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 86-89, and Ida Fröhlich, "Themes, Structure, and Genre of Peshar Genesis: A Response to George J. Brooke," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 85 (1994): 83-90, for the text and analysis of Genesis 4Q252. Perhaps Genesis 3 reflects this same position, i.e., Adam and Eve are not cursed by God. God had previously blessed the man and woman (Gen 1:28), and in Gen 3:14, 17, God curses (אָרֵר) the serpent and the ground but not the man and woman.

⁸⁷Bergsma and Hahn, "Noah's Nakedness," 27.

⁸⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 199-200, notes the Ugaritic Aqhat Epic which states that a son should take his father by the hand or carry him when he's drunk as a display of honor. Though this ANE text does not include nakedness, it shows the cultural expectation to honor one's father. Ham's actions clearly dishonored Noah. See also Mark Boda, "Ideal Sonship in Ugarit," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 25 (1993): 9-24.

the well-attested biblical expectation to cover nakedness.

Japheth and Shem's Role

After Ham sees Noah's nakedness, he goes outside to tell his brothers about it, an act that dishonors Noah. Though the dishonor is self-evident to the reader, Japheth and Shem's contrasting actions and Noah's curse upon Canaan leave no doubt. How do Japheth and Shem handle the problem of Noah's nakedness? Genesis 9:23 states, "Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness."

Moses tells the reader twice that Japheth and Shem were turned backward (אחורנית), and to avoid any lack of clarity, he also states plainly that they did not see Noah's nakedness (וערות אביהם לא ראו). The story gives the impression that Ham simply walked into the tent at the wrong time. Japheth and Shem have knowledge of Noah's nakedness, however, and they take great care to ensure that they do not look upon Noah and dishonor him. Yet, they do not simply avoid going into Noah's tent. They take a garment and cover Noah, lest someone else happen upon him in the dishonorable state. Like YHWH in Genesis 3:21, Shem and Japheth ensure that Noah's nakedness is not a source of shame for him or anyone else. In other words, they act righteously and elicit a blessing from their father when he is sober.

Conclusion: The Theological Use of Nakedness Imagery in Genesis 9

Interpreters differ greatly as to the purpose and the particular nuances of the flood narrative, but many agree that the account is patterned after the creation narrative and shows the survival of human sin in spite of God's nearly complete

destruction of humanity.⁸⁹ One sees sin's post-flood presence in God's determination to withhold similar future judgment when he says, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done" (Gen 8:21). The Lord rules out universal human destruction as the means by which he will cleanse the earth of iniquity. Whereas God's statement speaks of sin generally, the account of Noah's drunkenness gives a specific example of how sin persists in this post-flood world. Much like as in Eden, sin does not wait long to manifest itself once God creates, or re-creates, a new world.⁹⁰

The reader may wonder for a moment if the shame of nakedness was cleansed in the judgment when Noah uncovers himself in his tent (Gen 9:21).⁹¹ In a twist of the Eden account, Noah is naked and not ashamed like Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:25, though Noah's lack of shame is due to his drunken stupor rather than

⁸⁹Some of those who see a purposeful literary connection to earlier chapters of Genesis in the flood account are Brown, "Noah: Sot or Saint?" 48-49; Michael A. Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 33-34; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 163-64; Allen P. Ross, *Genesis*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 74, 80; John H. Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 129; Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 133; Sarna, *Genesis*, 55; Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden," 193-207; Emily Toler, "A Recuperative Theology of the Body: Nakedness in Genesis 3 and 9:20-27," *Denison Journal of Religion* 8 (2006): 50-65; Anthony J. Tomasino, "History Repeats Itself: The 'Fall' and Noah's Drunkenness," *VT* 42, no. 1 (1992): 128-30; and John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 346-49.

⁹⁰D. J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, JSOTSup 10 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1978), 285-309, argues rightly that Genesis 1-11 highlights two themes, one focusing on God's character, and the other on humanity's character. First, mankind tends to destroy what God has made good, usually right after God makes a fresh start. Second, specific persons or groups experience God's judgment for sin, but God is committed to creation and never fails to deliver humanity from its sin.

⁹¹Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden," 193-94, draws attention to the similarities between the Eden story, Cain's murder of Abel, and Noah's drunkenness, namely what these stories reveal about humanity and the world. Regarding Gen 9:20-27, she notes, "It is the first vignette that we are offered of the postdiluvian world, indeed the only thing we know about Noah after the flood story is completed How do God's postdiluvian words of blessing and warning play themselves out in this new world onto which Noah and his family have just stepped?"

being untainted by רע .⁹² Yet, after Ham sees Noah's nakedness, he *tells* his brothers outside (Gen 9:22). As in Genesis 3, the very fact that someone recognizes the existence of nakedness means that the knowledge of רע also exists. God addressed this concept specifically with Adam in Genesis 3:11: "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Shem and Japheth's response eliminates any possibility that nakedness had shed its shameful properties. Recognizing Noah's shame, his sons worked to cover him. Nakedness imagery communicates that sin persists in humanity after the flood.⁹³

In Genesis 2-3, nakedness exposes the reader to the presence of sin, and the couple's shame points to sin's *threat*. Here in Genesis 9, Noah's vulnerability is not merely a potential threat. Ham, faced with the choice between טוב or רע , elects to exploit Noah's shame by telling his brothers outside, showing that he is unconcerned to live according to righteousness. Whether or not Noah sinned in his drunken exposure, Ham clearly sins against his father and shows that humans still threaten to undermine their relationships with one another.⁹⁴ Thus, the conclusion to the flood

⁹²Tomasino, "History Repeats Itself," 129, notes that eating fruit *opened* the eyes of Adam and Eve, but the same act essentially *closes* the eyes of Noah, i.e., his drunkenness robbed him of knowing that he was naked.

⁹³John N. Oswalt, "Theology of the Pentateuch," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity), 857, states, "The effects of sin have gone so deeply into human nature that even if the best-behaved people alive were preserved and everyone else were destroyed, sin *as an attitude* would still rear its ugly head."

⁹⁴Some have suggested that Ham's character serves literarily to connect the primeval inhabitants of the world to well-known inhabitants in the biblical audience's time. Notably, Moses identifies Ham as the father of Canaan in Gen 9:22 and then describes how Noah's curse will affect Canaan's descendants in Gen 9:25-27, particularly Canaan's relationship to Shem. Moreover, the Lord grounds his prohibition against uncovering familial nakedness in Leviticus 18 by referencing Egyptian and Canaanite practices, "You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes" (Lev 18:3). One does not have to find specific correspondence of every detail between the texts to notice that in general, Moses describes the Canaanites as those who act contrary to God's design, exploiting the nakedness of others, even their close relatives. See Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 177-212; Cassuto, *From Noah to Abraham*, 149-50, 161; Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction*

story is that sin has survived judgment and persists in the human heart. Unlike Genesis 2-3, however, the reader is not left to guess how sin might manifest itself. Ham sins against Noah by exposing his shameful nakedness to Shem and Japheth. As in Genesis 2-3, Moses uses the imagery of nakedness to reveal this sinful pattern.

Finally, acting in accordance with God's righteous actions to cover nakedness in Genesis 3:21, Shem and Japheth coordinate to cover Noah's nakedness in Genesis 9:23, making sure that neither they nor anyone else would see him uncovered.⁹⁵ Noah confirms the righteousness of this action as he curses Canaan (Gen 9:25) but blesses Shem and Japheth (Gen 9:26-27).⁹⁶ While Ham's actions showed that sin survived the flood, a judgment designed to punish unrighteousness on the earth, Shem and Japheth's actions showed that after the flood, one must still choose the way of righteousness like their father (Gen 6:9). Nakedness is still shameful, and naked humans are vulnerable to the sinful thoughts and behaviors of others. When one encounters nakedness then, he demonstrates righteousness by covering it.⁹⁷

Exodus and Deuteronomy: Nakedness Before YHWH

The stories of Adam and Eve's fall in Eden and Noah and his sons' episode

to the Torah and Tanakh (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 104-5; Bruce Rosenstock, "Incest, Nakedness, and Holiness: Biblical Israel at the Limits of Culture," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 15 (2008): 1-30; Ross, *Genesis*, 81; and Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 129-30. In contrast, Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1519; and Milgrom, "Confusing the Sacred and Impure: A Rejoinder," *VT* 44 (1994): 554-59, argues that it is not certain one can seek intertextual allusion in legal texts, though it is possible that the author of Leviticus 18 had Genesis 9 in mind. He offers no justification for this claim, however.

⁹⁵The Prophets and Writings affirm that covering the naked is a righteous act. See Isa 58:7; Ezek 16:8; 18:7, 16; Job 22:6; 24:7, 10.

⁹⁶Cassuto, *From Noah to Abraham*, 155, notes that this is the first time a man has uttered a blessing or curse in Genesis.

⁹⁷See this expectation demonstrated in Isa 58:7; Ezek 18:7, 16, for example.

after the flood presented nakedness imagery in narrative form, conveying theological information through story. The legal texts also use nakedness language to express theology, the commandments being clear enough, though it is often difficult to ascertain the reason behind the requirement.⁹⁸ Nakedness language is conspicuously absent in Numbers, but it occurs in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. This first section considers prohibitions in Exodus and Deuteronomy against uncovering nakedness before YHWH, and the next section considers laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy against uncovering the nakedness of others.

Exodus 20:26 and 28:42

After giving Israel the commandments at Sinai, the Lord tells Moses in Exod 20:24-26 to communicate to the Israelites that they are to build altars of earth (אדמה) upon which to sacrifice their burnt offerings (עלה) and fellowship offerings (שלם).⁹⁹ If they build altars of stone, the stone must be uncut, and they may not go up by steps to ensure that their nakedness (ערוה) is not uncovered upon the altar (אשר לא תגלה ערותך עליו). Many commentators suggest that using crude building methods, i.e., soil or uncut stone, prevents Israel from the hubris of imagining they could build a sacred site worthy of God's glory, particularly a site which would reach into the heavens as was done at Babel in Genesis 11.¹⁰⁰ Further, many argue that the

⁹⁸See an excellent discussion of the need and method for understanding theology in the legal texts in Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 23-47.

⁹⁹For treatments of altars and altar laws, see Michael V. Fox et al., eds., *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996); L. D. Hawk, "Altars," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 33-37; and Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 36 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1983).

¹⁰⁰Some examples are: Daniel I. Block, "What Do These Stones Mean? The Riddle of Deuteronomy 27," *JETS* 56, no. 1 (2013): 17-41; Diethelm Conrad, "Studien zum Altargesetz: Ex 20:24-26" (PhD diss., University of Marburg, 1968), 17-18, 53-57, 123; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2002), 51-52;

prohibition against nudity before the altar is a polemic against the cultic practices of other ANE cultures.¹⁰¹

Exodus 20:24-26 describes a worship regulation for the people of Israel in general, not only the priests, and it prohibits the kind of personal offerings to God in which one's nakedness might be exposed.¹⁰² This dissertation discussed in chapter 3 that the existence and details of ANE ritual nudity is highly debated. Additionally, this chapter noted above with regard to ANE parallels that it is difficult to establish a polemical intention in a text unless the biblical author gives clear guidance.¹⁰³

Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 488-89; S. M. Olyan, "Why an Altar of Unfinished Stones: Some Thoughts on Exod 20:25 and Deut 27:5-6," *ZAW* 108 (1996): 161-71; William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-49: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 2A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 185; and Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 472-73. For a thorough treatment of Israelite altars, see especially Paul Heger, *The Three Biblical Altar Laws: Developments in the Sacrificial Cult in Practice and Theology; Political and Economic Background* (New York: DeGruyter, 1999). Rashi suggests that the prohibition against an iron tool is because an altar is designed to lengthen man's days whereas iron is designed to shorten them, i.e., a weapon takes life and would profane a site designed to uphold life.

¹⁰¹Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 257; John D. Currid, *Exodus: Chapters 19-20*, Evangelical Press Study Commentary (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2001), 61; Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 514; John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 320; Peter Enns, *Exodus*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 442; Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 243; Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 177; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 117; and Stuart, *Exodus*, 453. Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 3.45, even suggested that YHWH gave Exod 20:26 because it was well known that those who worshiped Peor did so naked.

¹⁰²That Exodus 20 refers to altars built by anyone and Exodus 28 specifically directs the priest's worship offers a solution to the enigma that Exodus 20 prohibits nakedness by forbidding steps, whereas Exodus 28 prohibits nakedness by means of linen undergarments. See August Dillman, *Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig, Germany: Hirzel, 1880), 248; Heger, *Biblical Altar Laws*, 64-65; and Sarna, *Exodus*, 116. It was not common to wear undergarments, so for a layperson to make a sacrifice and avoid nudity, he was required to build a low altar without steps. See Heger, *Biblical Altar Laws*, 67-76; Noth, *Exodus*, 227; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 452; and Sarna, *Exodus*, 117, 185. Heger, *Biblical Altar Laws*, 67, suggests that the early readers would have understood the prohibition against steps and potential exposure of nakedness to mean simply that they were to be low altars. He suggests that the theological reason was simplicity rather than avoiding ANE practice.

¹⁰³For example, Lev 18:3 states, "You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You

Exodus 20:23 does explicitly forbid the crafting of gold or silver gods, however, so it is possible that the directions regarding materials, design, and practice also serve to counter known pagan rituals. This command in Exodus 20:26 would certainly prohibit such ritual nudity if it were a widespread practice, whether or not that was the original purpose of the rule.

Scholars often interpret Exodus 28:42 similarly. There, the Lord tells Moses, “You shall make for [Aaron’s sons] linen undergarments to cover their naked flesh. They shall reach from the hips to the thighs.” Here, the Lord specifies what kind of garments the priests must wear in order to serve in the tent of meeting or before the altar in front of the Holy Place, and he mentions last these undergarments (מכנסים) which they use to cover their naked flesh (בשר ערוה). The use of the holy garments comes with a warning: “They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they go into the tent of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister in the Holy Place, lest they bear guilt and die” (Exod 28:43). As with Exodus 20, this command would prevent any kind of ritual nudity, but this passage seems even less concerned than Exodus 20 about polemicizing against pagan ritual. Instead, these regulations emphasize the need to be holy when appearing before the Lord. If one fails to comply with the Lord’s instructions, he bears the penalty of death.¹⁰⁴

Both Exodus 20 and 28 legislate against exposing one’s nakedness when appearing before the Lord to offer sacrifices. Commentators are right to note the shamefulfulness of nakedness but often turn to the polemical argument to explain why the Lord warns against nudity in these situations. Yet, it seems that a single prohibition against fashioning false gods of gold and silver is not sufficient evidence

shall not walk in their statutes.”

¹⁰⁴Note that the prelude to the altar laws in Exodus 20 emphasizes the people’s fear of the Lord (Exod 20:18-21). See Garrett, *Exodus*, 486-87, for a discussion of the function of fearing the Lord as an introduction to the Book of the Covenant.

to correlate the anti-nudity regulations with ANE rituals otherwise unattested in the OT. The polemical option seems even less compelling since the Pentateuch has its own story of nakedness which provides a sufficient context for the command without relying entirely on tentative ANE comparisons. Carpenter notes regarding the altar laws,

Whichever altar Israel chose, their physical nakedness while serving or sacrificing at the altar was to be veiled. Nudity was not prohibited in most rituals outside Israel. This view of human nakedness goes back to Genesis, where, because of the corruption of the human race, God had graciously taught them to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7, 21). It became and is a cause of shame in a fallen race (2:25; 3:7) . . . Whatever practice was current in other ancient cultures, this was to be Israel's perspective based on her inspired story of origins . . . The writer of the Pentateuch certainly traced the practice in Israel to creation; Yahweh is again reinstating his newly created people as his own people, and they are to follow the moral, ethical, and religious laws that he instilled in humanity when he created them.¹⁰⁵

In support of Carpenter's assessment, several others have noted thematic or textual parallels between the altar law, priestly coverings, and Genesis 3.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, this position also finds support in Jewish literature. *Jubilees* grounds the priestly clothing regulation to the story in Genesis 3. There, Adam makes an offering to the

¹⁰⁵Eugene E. Carpenter, *Exodus 19-40*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 69-70.

¹⁰⁶Calum M. Carmichael, *The Origins of Biblical Law: The Decalogues and the Book of the Covenant* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 73-77; Dozeman, *Exodus*, 504; Fretheim, *Exodus*, 263-78; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin, vol. 2, *The Pentateuch* (Edinburgh, T and T Clark, 1864), 128; Postell, *Adam as Israel*, 35-36, 41; Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 100-01, 289, 306. Postell, *Adam as Israel*, 35-36, reproduces a chart from Tvi Erlich, "The Story of the Garden of Eden in Comparison to the Position of Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle," *Alon Shvut for Graduates of the Har Eztion Yeshiva* 11 (1998): 20-34, an article written in Modern Hebrew. Some of the more compelling parallels involve the giving of commands of which the penalty is certain death, e.g., in the form of infinitive absolute + verb (מות תמות in Gen 2:15-17 and מות יומת in Exod 19:12), the specific commands given are broken or described in the ensuing narrative (eating the fruit in Genesis 2-3 and making false gods in Exodus 20 and 32), and the fearful response (ירא) of a sinner to hearing the voice/sound (שמע קול) of YHWH (Gen 3:8 and Exod 20:18). Ehrlich, Postell, and Sailhamer see the parallels more broadly than a few specific texts. Rather, since in their view the Pentateuch is a literary whole, the author regularly rehearses prior information to convey a consistent theological message.

Lord after God clothes his shame (Jub 3:27).

Deuteronomy 23:14

Deuteronomy 23:12-14 (23:13-15 MT) is the final legal text which prohibits nakedness in the Lord's presence. The context is a military camp according to Deuteronomy 23:9 (23:10 MT).

You shall have a place outside the camp, and you shall go out to it. And you shall have a trowel with your tools, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it and turn back and cover up your excrement. Because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.

The phrase in question, “anything indecent” (ערוֹת דָּבָר), occurs again in Deuteronomy 24:1 and is literally rendered “the nakedness of a thing.” Interpreters differ on how to translate this phrase, with options including “a naked thing” (referring to the excrement),¹⁰⁷ “anything shameful or indecent,”¹⁰⁸ or as a euphemism for one's exposed sexual organs.¹⁰⁹

ערוֹת דָּבָר in Deuteronomy 23:14 and 24:1 is difficult to categorize in this study because of the potential misunderstanding modern readers may have of the phrase as an idiom, i.e., perhaps ערוֹת דָּבָר constitutes a saying that modern audiences

¹⁰⁷Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, WBC, vol. 6B, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 541. He suggests that ערוֹת דָּבָר in 23:14 (23:15 MT) forms an inclusio with רַע דָּבָר in 23:9 (23:10 MT). According to Christensen, the phrase refers to anything that is in the open and seen by all and is likely an idiom meaning something like “caught with pants down.” Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 213-14, also suggests the phrase forms an inclusion but argues that actual nakedness (or a person or the excrement) is not intended. Rather, the meaning is “anything untoward.”

¹⁰⁸J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 358; Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1966), 147, 150; and Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 213-14.

¹⁰⁹Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, NAC, vol. 4 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 311.

do not understand. The religious leaders in Jesus' day even disputed the meaning of the phrase, suggesting that its original meaning may be lost.¹¹⁰ If the phrase is not an idiom, then its meaning would correspond to nakedness in Exodus 20:26 and 28:42, namely that nudity is shameful and ought not be exposed in the presence of God. If ערות דבר is an idiom, then its use is similar to Joseph's statement in Genesis 42:9, 12. There Joseph accuses his brothers of being spies who came to Egypt to see the nakedness of the land (ערות הארץ). Presumably, Joseph is referring to the weak (difficult to defend) or secret parts (classified information) of the kingdom. The idea is one of exposure, i.e., one sees what one ought not see.

This study prefers a non-idiomatic meaning for Deuteronomy 23:12-14 (23:13-15 MT). Nakedness generally represents the sexual organs and is self-evidently shameful. In Deuteronomy 23 then, when a soldier is relieving himself, he must leave the camp and ensure that his excrement is covered. It is imperative that one maintains standards of holiness, especially if Israel desires that the Lord would remain in their presence and defeat their enemies before them. Deuteronomy 24:1 likely has a euphemistic meaning, referring to some kind of sexual indecency.¹¹¹ As such, nakedness language in Deuteronomy 24:1 represents an incidental use of nakedness language similar to Joseph's use in Genesis 42.

Leviticus and Deuteronomy: The Nakedness of Others

The previous category discussed prohibitions against nakedness in the

¹¹⁰The Pharisees pose the question in Matt 19:3, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 206-13; 711-21, for a discussion of the Jewish debates concerning the interpretation of ערות דבר, particularly between the schools of Shammai and Hillel (*b. Git.* 90a)

¹¹¹See Jesus' interpretation of the text in Matt 5:32; 19:9, using the phrase "μη ἐπι πορνεία." The woman's sexual immorality, however, would be something short of adultery. Otherwise the death penalty would prevail (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:20-24).

presence of God. This next category concerns texts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy in which the Lord prohibits a person from uncovering the nakedness of another person.

Leviticus 18 and 20

Leviticus 18 and 20 comprise the largest collection of nakedness terms in the entire Bible. The phrase “You shall not uncover the nakedness of X” occurs twenty-seven times in these two chapters (לא תגלה ערות + noun or pronoun), a phrase most interpreters recognize as a euphemism for sexual intercourse.¹¹² Leviticus 18 only uses the phrase “do not uncover the nakedness of X” and does not clarify its meaning except perhaps in 18:14, 17, 19. Leviticus 18:14, 19 include the word “approach” (קרב) and 18:17 uses “take” (לקח), words often associated with sexual activity. Most convincingly, Milgrom demonstrates that “uncover nakedness” is a clear euphemism for sexual intercourse by pointing to Leviticus 20:11-13, 18, 20.¹¹³ Those casuistic prohibitions forbid lying with (שכב) a person and then clarify the act as uncovering nakedness (ערות + person + גלה).¹¹⁴ For example, Leviticus 20:11 states, “If a man lies with his father’s wife, he has uncovered his father’s nakedness.”

¹¹²Samuel E. Balentine, *Leviticus*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 155; Rene Peter-Contesse and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Leviticus* (Stuttgart, Germany: United Bible Societies, 1990), 272; John D. Currid, *Leviticus*, Evangelical Press Study Commentary (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2005), 239; Deborah L. Ellens, *Women in the Sex Texts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy: A Comparative Conceptual Analysis*, LHBOTS 458 (New York: T and T Clark, 2008), 80-81; Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 317; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Leviticus: A Commentary*, OTL, trans. D. W. Stott (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 247; R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980), 189; McClenney-Sadler, *Recovering the Daughter’s Nakedness*, 77, 80; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1534; Ephraim Radner, *Leviticus*, Brazos Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 189; and Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC, vol. 3A (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 242.

¹¹³Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1534.

¹¹⁴Moreover, if Lev 18:6 serves as an introduction to the entire section, then the use of קרב there may guide the understanding of the prohibitions that follow.

These texts seem at first to use nakedness language to communicate a sexual taboo against incestuous relationships.¹¹⁵ Except for Leviticus 18:19 and 20:18, which forbid a sexual relationship with a menstruating woman, every prohibition is against a sexual relationship with a blood relative or spouse of the relative. Further, the other sexual prohibitions in these passages do not use the phrase “uncover nakedness.” YHWH prohibits an adulterous relationship in Leviticus 18:20 with, “Do not give your lyings for seed” (לֹא־תִתֵּן שִׁכְבְּתְךָ לְזָרָא).¹¹⁶ Leviticus 18:22 prohibits a homosexual relationship with, “Do not lie down with a male the lyings of a woman” (וְאֶת־זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה). Finally, Leviticus 18:23 forbids bestiality, commanding the male, “Do not give your lyings,” (לֹא־תִתֵּן שִׁכְבְּתְךָ), and commanding the female, “Do not stand before an animal,” (לֹא־תַעֲמֵד לְפָנַי בְּהֵמָה). Leviticus 20 uses “uncover nakedness” with the same specificity, attaching the phrase to incestual relations or intercourse with a menstruating woman but not to adultery, homosexuality, or bestiality.¹¹⁷

These two chapters distinguish between kinds of prohibited sexual relationships with the phrase “uncover nakedness,” yet a clear rationale defies explanation. Why does Moses use “uncover nakedness” for the incestual relationships instead of a more common expression for sexual intercourse, i.e., שִׁכַּב,

¹¹⁵For thorough discussions of textual, structural, and legal matters involved in Leviticus 18 and 20, see Ellens, *Women in the Sex Texts*, 73-99, 121-47; McClenney-Sadler, *Recovering the Daughter's Nakedness*, 76-102; and Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1523-93.

¹¹⁶שִׁכְבַת is from שִׁכַּב (to lie down), though Harry M. Orlinsky, “The Hebrew Root SKB,” *JBL* 63, no. 1 (March 1944): 40, argues it is from שָׁכַב (to pour out) and refers euphemistically to the male sexual organ. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1550, agrees with him. Regardless of how one translates שִׁכְבַת, for this section, it is sufficient to show that Moses uses “uncover nakedness” to refer to an incestuous sexual relationship or one with a menstruating woman.

¹¹⁷Some of the relationships using “uncover nakedness” in Leviticus 18 do not mention uncovering nakedness in Leviticus 20, namely sex with one’s daughter-in-law (Lev 18:15; 20:12), or with a woman and her daughter (Lev 18:17; 20:14).

ידע, or לקח?¹¹⁸ And why does he use the same nakedness imagery to prohibit relations with a menstruating woman, whereas adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality use more common terms?

One option is that “uncover nakedness” has no more significance than serving as a euphemism for sexual intercourse to an audience whose modesty necessitates indirect language regarding sexual matters.¹¹⁹ Yet, this position is unlikely, considering Moses prohibits adultery with the explicit, “Do not give your lyings for seed,” where “lyings” (שכבת) likely refers to the male sexual organ (Lev 18:20).¹²⁰ This position also does not address that Moses uses שכב (Lev 18:22; 20:11-13, 18, 20) and לקח (Lev 20:14, 17, 21) in the passage to refer to the other prohibited sexual acts, i.e., adultery, homosexuality, or bestiality. Why would he use a different euphemism for those acts? Thus, Moses does not seem to use “uncover nakedness” primarily as a concession to modesty.

Milgrom offers a promising option, noting that the list of prohibited relationships or actions in Leviticus 18 and 20 concerns the failure to produce godly offspring, i.e., the sexual relationship is divorced from its primary biological and theological function.¹²¹ A sexual relationship with a menstruating woman, a member of the same gender, or an animal certainly do not have children as a goal.¹²² Only the

¹¹⁸In Gen 19:30-38, Lot gets drunk and unwittingly impregnates both his daughters. Moses uses the common terms בוא and שכב to describe their incestuous sexual activity. For a helpful list of terms indicating sexual activity (primarily sexual violation), see Hilary B. Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 7 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 248-54.

¹¹⁹Bernard J. Bamberger, *Leviticus*, Torah, a Modern Commentary 3 (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1979), 188; Peter-Contesse and Ellington, *Leviticus*, 272.

¹²⁰Orlinsky, “The Hebrew Root SKB,” 40. Moses could have used the technical term for adultery (נאם).

¹²¹Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1567. See also Balentine, *Leviticus*, 158; and Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 318-21.

¹²²One of the most compelling implications of Milgrom’s suggestion is that it explains the

incestuous and adulterous relationships could produce children, but society would consider those children illegitimate and disruptive to the familial social order. Milgrom argues further that “uncover nakedness” refers only to *unmarried* women in the text, a fact he suggests is proven by adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality using a different term to forbid the sexual behavior.¹²³ This suggestion would explain the specificity of “uncover nakedness,” i.e., a sexual relationship with an unmarried woman, yet it is not without problems.

Milgrom supports his position from Maimonides and Ziskind’s work on Leviticus 18. Maimonides argues that these incest laws prevent a man from copulating with women who would be in his presence regularly due to their familial proximity, positing that it would be easy for a man to justify some of those familial relationships if any of the women were unmarried.¹²⁴ Ziskind argues that the laws against affinal relationships prohibit the union permanently.¹²⁵ If those women were still married, the laws against adultery or rape would apply. Therefore, these laws prevent a sexual relationship with consanguineous and affinal relatives, whether or not those persons are still in a marital relationship. Milgrom, however, does not explain how one can apply this evidence to the case of a menstruating woman. Following Ziskind’s logic, if the menstruant were unmarried, then laws against nonmarital intercourse would apply.¹²⁶ Presumably then, Leviticus 18:19 and 20:18

inclusion of the anti-Molech prohibition in Lev 18:21; 20:2-5: “You shall not give any of your children [אֲנָשִׁים] to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God” (Lev 18:21).

¹²³Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1534-35.

¹²⁴Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 3.49

¹²⁵Jonathan R. Ziskind, “The Missing Daughter in Leviticus 18,” *VT* 46, no. 1 (1996): 128-29. One could understand not having a relationship with a blood relative, but what about the spouse of a blood relative after his death? Ziskind argues that this law prohibits women from being passed around within the family as wives or concubines.

¹²⁶E.g., Exod 22:16-17 (22:15-16 MT); Deut 22:13-21, 28-29.

prohibit intercourse with one's wife during her menstrual cycle, not an unmarried woman.

Putting these details together, Moses uses the phrase “uncover nakedness” to refer to illegitimate heterosexual intercourse within one's household or family unit. They all relate somehow to one's own flesh.¹²⁷ The majority of cases prohibit a sexual relationship with blood relatives or their spouses and apply permanently. The last case is a temporary ban against a sexual relationship with one's wife during her menstruation, most likely because contact with her menstrual blood puts one in an unclean state.¹²⁸ Within the larger structure of Leviticus 18-20, which focuses on holiness before the Lord, these household sexual laws guide family relationships which must be devoted to YHWH.¹²⁹ In both Leviticus 18 and 20, the sexual prohibitions, including adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality, as well as the prohibition against offering one's child to Molech are framed within the explanation that YHWH judged the Canaanites and Egyptians for committing these acts (Lev 18:3-5, 24-30; 20:22-23). The Lord's people, however, are to be holy (Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26), which manifests itself in loving one's neighbor (Lev 19:18).

Many have noted that the author used the euphemism “uncover nakedness” to highlight the shamefulness of incest, but its use to prohibit sex with a

¹²⁷Lev 18:6 uses the terms *שאר* and *בשר*, meaning a relative. *בשר* is the same word used for flesh in Gen 2:24, where the man and woman are said to become one flesh (*בשר אחד*).

¹²⁸Lev 15:19-24. Ritually then, the woman is not accessible to her husband for sexual activity.

¹²⁹For the idea of Leviticus 19 as the center of Leviticus, see Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (New York: Oxford, 2000), 235-39; Yehuda T. Radday, “Chiasmus in Hebrew Bible Narrative,” in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim, Germany: Gerstenberg, 1981), 84, 88; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1767-68, claims that Leviticus 19 is the center of the entire Torah. For the idea that these laws promote family stability as the key to a holy community, see Balentine, *Leviticus*, 155; Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, 257-58; John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Dallas: Word, 1992), 298-302; and Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1530-31.

menstruating woman undermines this claim. To refine the meaning of the phrase then, if Leviticus 18-20 requires the ethical treatment of one's neighbor as a manifestation of holiness before the Lord, then the "uncover nakedness" regulations describe compliance with this mandate *within one's household*. Moses highlights the shameful nature of illegitimate sexual activity within one's household by using language that is only associated with shame, i.e., nakedness.¹³⁰ The prohibitions against consanguineous intercourse are self-evidently shameful, but these chapters inform Israel that affinal sexual relationships are also shameful. Moreover, given the regulation against contact with a woman's menstrual blood, it would also be shameful for one to engage in a sexual relationship with his spouse during her menstrual uncleanness (Lev 15:19-24). Whereas adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, or offering one's children to Molech are acts which occur outside the home, making it likely that the community would be aware of the illicit behavior, these household relationships would occur in private within the home. The prohibitions of Leviticus 18 and 20 emphasize that one is personally responsible to YHWH for holiness. He does not simply "lie with" (שכב) the forbidden woman, he commits the shameful act of uncovering her nakedness, akin to the shameful exposure of Adam and Eve after their willful abdication of their responsibility toward holiness. The euphemism thus makes it impossible to perceive the act as anything but shameful.¹³¹

Deuteronomy 22:30 and 27:20

Deuteronomy 22:30 (23:1 MT) states, "A man shall not take his father's

¹³⁰Again, except for Gen 2:25, the only time nakedness would not be considered shameful would be in the sexual relationship of a lawful marriage.

¹³¹The euphemisms for adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality also force the mind to imagine an obscene act.

wife, and he shall not uncover his father's skirt."¹³² Baker is likely correct to translate the second ם as a *waw explicativum*: "A man may not take his father's wife, *that is*, he may not (*w^elo'*) expose his father's skirt."¹³³ In other words, there are not two prohibitions here; the second phrase clarifies the first. Baker defends his explanation by showing that Deuteronomy 27:20 supports the equivocation of these two phrases.¹³⁴ The text there reads, "Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife, for he has uncovered his father's skirt" (Deut 27:20).¹³⁵ "For" in this case translates the word כִּי and leaves no doubt that the author is explaining the reason for the prohibition. Like Leviticus 18:7-8, uncovering the nakedness of a father's wife is tantamount to uncovering the father's nakedness, whether referring to the father's sexual organs or to the nakedness of the wife who belonged to the father. In other words, the woman's nakedness "belongs" to the father. As with the prohibitions in Leviticus 18 and 20, the individual in question would be participating in an act which can only be assessed as shameful.

Conclusion: Nakedness in Legal Texts

The Pentateuch maintains a negative use of nakedness imagery after the narratives in Genesis. Being that these uses of nakedness occur in legal texts and do not contain explanation, the interpreter must exercise a measure of caution to understand the theological importance of nakedness imagery. Whether civilian,

¹³²My translation: לא־יקח איש את־אשת אביו ולא יגלה כנף אביו.

¹³³David W. Baker, "Further Examples of the *Waw Explicativum*," *VT* 30 (1980): 129-36.

¹³⁴Baker, "Further Examples of the *Waw Explicativum*," 133. Anthony Phillips, "Uncovering the Father's Skirt," *VT* 30 (1980): 38-43, disagrees, arguing that biblical laws do not repeat themselves. Baker, "Further Examples of the *Waw Explicativum*," 129-36, however, shows that the phrase in question is not merely restating the prohibition but explaining it. A similar and non-controversial use of the *waw explicativum* occurs just a few verses earlier in Deut 22:22.

¹³⁵My translation: ארור שכב עם־אשת אביו כי גלה כנף אביו

soldier, or priest, the laws against exposing nakedness pertain to every level of Israelite society. Moses uses nakedness imagery to remind his audience of their position relative to the Lord because the image is the most poignant example of their shame. Nakedness language in Exodus and Deuteronomy shows that God's people are to be vigilant in their pursuit of holiness at all times, even in their private moments.

Thus, as nakedness manifested the exposure of human sinfulness and rebellion in Genesis 3, an image that was bolstered by Noah's vulnerability in Genesis 9, so too here, when humans approach God in worship, they must remember their sinfulness, lest they die.¹³⁶ This position finds an explanation within the biblical text, is consistent with the discussion of Genesis 2-3 and 9, and also does not contradict the important work of comparative ANE studies.

Further, Moses uses nakedness imagery in Leviticus and Deuteronomy to prohibit illicit sexual activity within one's household. The Israelite is not free to live as he pleases in private. He knows from Genesis 9 that it is unholy to uncover the nakedness of another, particularly within one's own family. Because nakedness imagery is so closely associated with shame, the phrase "uncover nakedness" requires that one associate these unholy sexual unions with shame. Moreover, to the extent that nakedness imagery represents willful disobedience against God's commands (Gen 2-3), the Israelite will also be forced to recognize that this act is not

¹³⁶It is interesting that nakedness is mentioned in the texts where the Lord establishes or reestablishes a relationship with his people, i.e., Adam and Eve (Genesis 2-3), Noah and his sons (Genesis 9), and Israel here. One may also note that nakedness is mentioned or implied in the establishment of kingship, i.e., Saul's downfall (1 Sam 19:24) and David's procession into Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6:5-23), though with David, it is Michal who mentions the idea of "uncovering." One may also note that Jesus is stripped naked when he is crucified, a penalty given to those cursed by YHWH (Deut 28:48; Ezek 16:37; 23:26, 29; Hos 2:10), but the saints in Revelation are clothed (Rev 3:17-18; 16:15; 19:8). One notable omission is Abraham, though when God makes a covenant with him in Genesis 17, the sign of the covenant is circumcision, an act affecting one's ערוה. Chap. 7 mentions this idea again as a matter for further inquiry.

simply impure, it defies his God's command.¹³⁷

Lastly, implied in these legal texts is the reality that uncovering nakedness does have a good place in Israelite society, namely in marriage. Particularly evident in Leviticus 18 and 20, whereas one is prohibited from uncovering the nakedness of relatives, Moses often specifies that one's nakedness belongs to her spouse (Lev 18:7-8, 14, 16; 20:11, 20-21). By implication, uncovering the nakedness of one's spouse would be good outside the limitations of her ritual uncleanness (Lev 18:19; 20:18). Thus, the Pentateuch assumes that nakedness in marriage is good, a fact made explicit by Moses's statement in Genesis 2:25 and the necessity of nakedness for lawful sexual relations. This study explores this aspect of nakedness imagery more in chapter 6.

Deuteronomy 28:48: Stripping as a Threat

The final use of nakedness imagery in the Pentateuch occurs in Deuteronomy 28:48. After promising blessing to Israel provided she obey the commands of YHWH, Moses declares that Israel will be cursed if she disobeys the Lord's commands. In one of several summarizing curses, Deuteronomy 28:47-48 says,

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.

In a foreboding play on words, because Israel did not serve YHWH, she would serve

¹³⁷This fact, perhaps, is the strongest reason that Moses might have used the phrase "uncover nakedness" to prohibit sex with a menstruant. Certainly, one would not equivocate incest with intercourse during his wife's menstrual cycle. Yet, to the extent that either act defies the stated command of YHWH, then the act is indeed shameful and should conjure feelings of shame.

her enemies.¹³⁸ Because Israel did not respond to the Lord's abundant *provision* of everything with joy and gladness of heart, she would experience a complete *lack* of everything in hunger, thirst, and nakedness (עירם). She would be deprived of everything with which YHWH had promised to bless her in Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and of everything YHWH had done for her in their history of redemption. In summary, they would serve an enemy in the enemy's land instead of serving YHWH in their own land.¹³⁹ Tigay notes correctly that this reversal of circumstances manifests the justice of YHWH's punishment.¹⁴⁰

Nakedness imagery in Deuteronomy 28 means at least that YHWH will permit Israel's enemies to remove all the blessings he had provided for her. Yet, juxtaposed with words such as "hunger" and "thirst," nakedness here is not simply a general euphemism for deprivation. In OT societal terms, "naked" refers to those who are inadequately clothed, e.g., Isaiah 58:7; Ezekiel 18:7, 16. In Isaiah and Ezekiel, the naked are those needing care, whereas in Deuteronomy 28, YHWH strips Israel as a punishment for her unfaithfulness. As discussed in chapter 3, stripping a person naked in a civil setting served to punish them and deter others from committing the same crime. In military situations, stripping served to humiliate and demoralize one's enemies. YHWH's threat in Deuteronomy 28 would incorporate both situations. As a legal punishment, YHWH would allow Israel's enemies to denude her, serving as a punishment and deterrent for the remnant that would endure the judgment.¹⁴¹ Further, however, Israel's enemies would employ

¹³⁸See McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 407, regarding the wordplay. The notable words juxtaposed in each line are serve (עבד), YHWH your God vs. your enemies, and abundance of everything (רב כל) vs. lack of everything (חסר כל).

¹³⁹See Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 348; Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21-34*, 693; and Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 365.

¹⁴⁰Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 268.

¹⁴¹Deut 29:22-28. When the nations see the devastation wrought upon Israel and ask why,

stripping as a means of humiliation and demoralizing their opponents.¹⁴²

Theologically, YHWH's threat to strip Israel represents the kind of strong punishment language which characterized his threat of death in the Garden of Eden, even if the language is softened to say that he *permits* Israel's enemies to strip her. The Lord acted in Eden to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness when they had sinned, displaying his mercy and grace, not only to withhold the full measure of judgment that he had promised, but also to care for them in covering their shame. The section above on Genesis 2-3 discussed Sailhamer's position on Moses's intentional allusion of Deuteronomy 28:48 with the use of עירם instead of ערום in Genesis 3:7, 10, 11. While this study disagreed that one could claim with certainty that Moses intended his reader to connect these two texts, his statements correctly highlight the thematic correspondence between the passages. YHWH's threat in Deuteronomy 28:48 stands in stark contrast to his earlier covering of nakedness (Gen 3:21) and his commands which ensured that others cover nakedness (Exod 20:22-26; 28:42; Lev 18 and 20; Deut 23:15). He now threatens to uncover the nakedness of Israel if she abandons his covenant with him. As the passages in the Prophets show, YHWH's punishment is not the excessive raging of a jealous husband.¹⁴³ Rather, his punishment fits the crime and reveals the shamefulness of Israel's character which had been concealed by YHWH's persistent, gracious provision in spite of her growing rebellion against him.

the remnant will attest that Israel abandoned the covenant and incurred this devastation.

¹⁴²As discussed in chap. 3, stripping as a warfare tactic throughout the ANE has precedence in the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Age, as well as in the Iron Age. Thus, regardless of when one dates the composition of Deuteronomy, its audience would be aware of the practice.

¹⁴³It is important to state that the force and implications of Israel's nakedness in Deuteronomy 28 are only explicated in the Prophets. Moses does not directly connect nakedness in Deut 28:48 with the earlier texts, though on reflection, it seems that a careful reader would make the theological connections.

Conclusion: Nakedness Imagery in the Pentateuch

The Pentateuch employs a concept of nakedness that is familiar to its readers, namely that the exposure of one's sexual organs is shameful, and any public display of nakedness is inappropriate. Theologically, Moses conveys the idea that the shame which accompanies nakedness is a reminder of human disobedience and fallenness. Only a proper and thriving marriage relationship dissociates nakedness from shame. Particularly in the presence of God, nakedness is forbidden and must be protected carefully (Gen 3:8-11, 21; Gen 9; Exod 20:22-26; 28:42; Lev 18 and 20; Deut 23:15). Thus, perhaps the most surprising use of nakedness imagery is Genesis 2:25, in which Moses asserts that Adam and Eve are naked but not ashamed. This chapter concluded that nakedness imagery in this text conveys an environment of human relationships with one another and YHWH that are whole and unblemished. Only in such an idyllic setting could one's sexual organs be exposed without the presence of shame.

Genesis 3:7-11 shows the imposition of disorder on human relationships with one another and with God. Because Adam and Eve introduced the possibility of disobedience to the Creator's design, nakedness is no longer a part of the good creation but stands at the forefront of possible threats to secure and harmonious relationships. As such, humans experience shame for failing to live according to divine and human expectations of conduct, a psychological response felt most keenly by exposed sexual organs. Though they try to cover themselves and are perhaps able to alleviate their shame in the presence of one another (Gen 3:7), Adam and Eve's awareness of their nakedness betrays their disobedience to God (Gen 3:8-11). YHWH's response to the couple foreshadows his character which he displays to Moses generations later, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means

clear the guilty” (Exod 34:6-7). Even as he exiles Adam and Eve from Eden, he clothes them, a gracious and kind act which mitigates the crippling power of shame.

Ham confirmed that sin survived the purifying floodwaters when he dishonored his father by announcing Noah’s nakedness to his brothers (Gen 9:22). Nudity is still shameful, and Ham exploited this shame rather than covering it as YHWH did for Adam and Eve. Whether or not Noah sinned by stripping himself in his tent, in his drunken state, he was helpless and in need of protection. Shem and Japheth recognized his need and worked carefully to honor their father, not only refusing to look at his nakedness, but ensuring that no one else might accidentally see him (Gen 9:23).

The reader knows that nakedness is still shameful and, coupled with the theological explanation of shame’s origin in Genesis 3, the Lord leverages this awareness in the legal texts to remind the reader of the looming threat of disobedience. In Exodus 20:26 and 28:42-43, priests and worshipers are prohibited from exposing their nakedness when they approach YHWH’s altar. Additionally, Leviticus 18 and 20; and Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20, prohibit the exposure of another’s nakedness in illegitimate sexual relationships, including the temporary ban against intercourse with one’s spouse during menstruation. Notably, these texts imply that a healthy marital relationship is the proper situation in which one’s nakedness can be exposed, a microcosm of the idyllic pre-fall setting of Genesis 2:25. Thus, Moses uses nakedness imagery in situations where a person approaches either YHWH in a sacred space or a woman for a sexual relationship. Given the theological background of nakedness imagery from Genesis 2-3; 9, these regulations prohibit both a casual approach to life and intentional disobedience (i.e., sins of omission and commission), notably in texts which emphasize Israel’s holiness.

Finally, YHWH incorporates nakedness imagery into the Pentateuch a final time in Deuteronomy 28:48 in a manner that upends his requirement to keep

nakedness covered. When Israel fails to walk in holiness, carefully observing all that YHWH commanded them, he promises to bring curses upon the nation. Whereas the Lord had himself covered nakedness and mitigated shame in Genesis 3:21 and had also required his people to ensure that they keep their nakedness covered in worship and any non-marital situation, YHWH now promises to enslave them to their enemies in hunger, thirst, nakedness, and lack of everything (Deut 28:48). His mercy is not without limit; he will by no means clear the guilty (Exod 34:7). His threat to denude Israel in Deuteronomy 28 speaks higher than mere danger of captivity and destruction. Rather, YHWH indicates that he is removing his divine provision and protection from them, an indicator that the relationship is damaged beyond repair. They would not simply be captured. They would be cast out of the land without their God, their shame exposed for all to see.

CHAPTER 5

NAKEDNESS IMAGERY IN THE PROPHETS

The texts using nakedness imagery in the Prophets rely on the inherent shamefulness of nudity consistently throughout this section of the Old Testament. Similar to its use in the Pentateuch, because nakedness is deeply shameful, it serves as a powerful image. The storyline in 1 and 2 Samuel uses nakedness imagery to show YHWH's assessment of Saul and David. A significant number of the texts in the Prophets use nakedness imagery to convey the severity of apostasy, both by showing the shamefulness of apostasy through obscene adultery metaphors, and by comparing the Lord's future judgment to public stripping (e.g., Hos 2; Ezek 16; 23). If the Pentateuch associated the shame of nakedness with sin, the Prophets explore the *depths* of sin's shame in these adultery passages. Numerous texts represent the destitution of the poor through nakedness imagery and bolster the standard that the righteous are those who cover nakedness, a virtue that corresponds to YHWH's actions in Genesis 3:21 and Shem and Japheth's in Genesis 9:23. Lastly, nakedness imagery also seems to represent a posture of lamentation or mourning in Isaiah 32:11 and Micah 1:8.

Samuel: The King's Honor and Shame

Three scenes featuring nakedness imagery occur in Samuel, all involving Israel's first king, Saul.¹ The first two involve Saul directly, one where Saul strips

¹The discussion of a fourth scene involving Hanun, who instigates conflict with David (2 Sam 10:1-5) occurs below with the analysis of Isaiah 20.

himself naked under the control of God's Spirit (1 Sam 19:24), and the other when Saul uses nakedness language to shame his son Jonathan for his association with David (1 Sam 20:30). The third scene takes place between David and his wife Michal, but the author identifies Michal as "daughter of Saul" repeatedly, associating her behavior with his (2 Sam 6:12-23). In all three scenes, the author uses nakedness imagery and its association with shame to reveal the hearts of the characters involved.² These texts also support the conclusions elsewhere in this dissertation that nakedness is shameful, considered indecent in the OT world, and often represents judgment.

King Saul's Humiliation

Saul had become jealous of David and attempted to kill him repeatedly, twice with a spear (1 Sam 18:10-11; 19:9-10), through dangerous military service (1 Sam 18:13-17), through a seemingly impossible mission of acquiring one hundred Philistine foreskins (1 Sam 18:25-27), and by ordering Jonathan and his servants to assassinate him (1 Sam 19:1, 11-16). When Saul sent messengers to David's house to kill him, David escaped to Naioth in Ramah with Samuel (1 Sam 19:11-19). Saul quickly sent his messengers there to seize David, but they encountered a group of prophets with Samuel. As the messengers approached, the Spirit of God came upon them, and they began prophesying. Saul sent two more groups of messengers, who also began prophesying, before he went himself, and the Spirit of God came upon him as well. As he entered Naioth, he stripped off (יִפְשֹׁט) his garments (בִּגְדוֹ) and

²Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1999); J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*, 4 vols. (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1981-93); and Barbara Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel*, JSOTSup 365 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 2003), provide good literary analysis and tools for interpreting 1 and 2 Samuel, particularly Fokkelman's extensive four-volume work.

prophesied before Samuel, falling down naked (ערום) all day and night (1 Sam 19:24). The passage ends with the comment, “Thus it is said, ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’”

How naked was Saul? Numerous aspects of this text require attention in order to determine how nakedness imagery functions in this passage. The first concerns whether or not Saul was completely naked. פשט means “to strip off” and refers often to taking off clothing (e.g., Gen 37:23; Lev 16:23; Num 20:26, 28; 1 Sam 18:4).³ The term is basically synonymous with גלה (uncover) when referring to clothing. Some interpreters argue that Saul is not completely naked in this passage, positing that he only removes his outer garment and retains the long linen tunic worn next to the skin.⁴ They reference Isaiah 20:2 and Micah 1:8 and argue that this state of minimal dress still constitutes nakedness.⁵ Their primary reason for this conclusion is that nakedness would have been indecent in that culture, hardly a sufficient reason given that nakedness in these texts is *intended* to convey shame.

³For distribution data, see chap. 2. For lexical information, see BDB, 832-33; *DCH*, 7:790-92; *HALOT*, 3:980-81; Boyd V. Seevers, “פשט,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:704-06; H. Schmoldt, “פשט,” *TDOT*, 12:129-32; and Victor P. Hamilton, “פשט,” *TWOT*, 2:741.

⁴So Rashi and S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, 2nd ed. (1912; repr., Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1985), 160. Several follow Driver’s position, e.g., Robert P. Gordon, *1 and 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 348n47; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC, vol. 10, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 199; P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB, vol. 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 329; and David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 499. Andrew E. Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2016), 376-77, notes that פשט by itself often refers to the removal of outer garments (e.g., Num 20:26, 28; Gen 37:23; Mic 2:8; Song 5:3; 1 Sam 18:4), but he argues that the word ערום removes any doubt that Saul was nude. His comments regarding פשט, however, miss the fact that it is not the verb (פשט) that specifies the removal of the outer garments. Rather, each of the texts he lists uses specific terms to describe what is removed (e.g., מעיל, כתנת, בגד) instead of the more general בגד (garments).

⁵See the discussion of Isaiah 20 below. Interpreters of both texts often reference the other text as evidence that Saul or Isaiah were not completely naked, a circular reasoning fallacy. That such a practice would have been shameful is not in doubt. Tg. Neb. 1 Sam 19:24 states that Saul fell down “mentally disturbed” (ברשע) instead of naked.

The section below on Isaiah 20 addresses in detail the extent of the prophets' nakedness, but this dissertation concludes that Isaiah was completely naked due to the specific language of the passage and the meaning of the sign act he performed there, i.e., to represent humiliating defeat and capture by enemies.

One may note particularly that 1 Samuel 19 gives no indication that Saul was anything *but* naked. The text states simply that Saul stripped off his garments (בגד) and that he lay naked (ערם). בגד is a general term for garments and could mean that Saul only removed an outer layer, but Samuel's author demonstrates willingness to use greater specificity with regard to removing clothing in the previous chapter when Jonathan strips off (יתפשט) his robe (מעיל) along with his armor, sword, bow, and belt (1 Sam 18:4). The מעיל is an outer garment and is attested elsewhere as being worn over the כתנת (a long tunic) or the בגד (garments).⁶ Thus, Jonathan would have been wearing a tunic under his robe, exactly the same scenario Driver posits for Saul in 1 Samuel 19:24. Why would the author not call Jonathan naked (ערם), or why would he not use a term like מעיל to describe the garment Saul stripped off rather than a more general term like בגד? The burden seems to be on those arguing that Saul was not nude, but whether or not he retained any clothing, it seems that the reader is meant to imagine complete nudity when Saul falls before Samuel, a state this dissertation has shown bears strong connotations of shame.

Did prophets minister naked? Some interpreters have argued that Saul's nudity was consonant with prophetic practice, in Israel and the ANE, supporting this position with comparative religious accounts and the presence of the phrase גם הוא ("he too" or "even he").⁷ In other words, Saul *also* stripped off his garments like the

⁶E.g., Ezra tears *both* his robe (מעיל) and his garments (בגד) in grief when he hears that returned Judean exiles had intermarried with foreign women (Ezra 9:3, 5). As a priest, it is probable that he would be wearing linen undergarments (מכנסי־בד) under his garments (Exod 28:42-43).

⁷For discussions on the prophetic office and activity pertaining to 1 Samuel 19, see Joseph

other prophets. Auld is correct, however, that information regarding the prophetic office in the ANE is limited and should temper claims comparing those situations with Saul's here.⁸ Further, as the discussion above on cultic nudity in the Pentateuch showed, Israelites were expressly forbidden from exposing nakedness in a ritual context (Exod 20:26; 28:42). While those prohibitions regulated sacrifices and service in the tabernacle, surely the principle regulated prophetic activity as well. The only other examples of a prophet ministering nude are Isaiah (Isa 20:2-4) and Micah (Mic 1:8), both examples of coming judgment, not of prophetic ecstatic practice.

First Samuel 19:24 states, "And he [Saul] too stripped of his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night." The apparent meaning of גַּם הוּא is that Saul *also* stripped off his clothes, like the other prophets, and that Saul *also* prophesied before Samuel naked all day and night, like the other prophets.⁹ Grammatically, this translation is possible, but even the additive meaning of "he also," does not require a common prophetic practice. Instead, the phrase would mean that Saul and his servants, under the Spirit's control, engaged in debilitating and humiliating acts. Yet, Fokkelman and others suggest that גַּם הוּא

Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996); A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1912); Mary J. Evans, *The Message of Samuel: Personalities, Potential, Politics, and Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 118; Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 58-66; Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995); Klaus Koch, *The Prophets*, vol. 2, *The Assyrian Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 26; J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962); Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); and Edward J. Young, *My Servants the Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 88-90.

⁸A. Graham Auld, *1 and 2 Samuel: A Commentary. Old Testament Library* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2011), 229, argues that scholars simply have too little information concerning prophecy to determine whether nakedness was part of it. See also Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, TOTC, vol. 8 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 143.

⁹E.g., Klein, *1 Samuel*, 199; Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 377; and Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 498. Many common English translations (e.g., ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, RSV) use "he too" or "he also" for גַּם הוּא.

means “*even* he” rather than “*also* he,” emphasizing the unlikely actions in which the king is engaged rather than with whom he is engaged in those actions.¹⁰ In a story where all of Saul’s servants are overcome by the Spirit of God and prophesy, *even King Saul* is overcome by the Spirit and is unable to carry out the attack on David. Fokkelman comments further that the repeated use of גַּם in 1 Samuel 19:20-22 with regard to Saul’s servants emphasizes Saul’s inability to learn.¹¹ “He should have known that when Tom, Dick, and Harry are without exception drawn in by the energies around the prophet, he himself will be seized by the divine force a fortiori.”¹²

Whether or not Saul’s servants were naked in this instance, the author does not use the term עָרוּם until Saul strips off his clothes, focusing the nakedness imagery on Saul. Thus, nakedness imagery in 1 Samuel 19 likely has nothing to do with common prophetic practice, and it may or may not describe the state of Saul’s servants. Saul, however, is clearly the naked one in this scene, humiliated, overcome by the Spirit of God, and completely unable to harm his rival David.

The work of God’s Spirit. In this scene, Saul’s men are pursuing David, God’s anointed king (1 Sam 16), in order to bring him back to Saul. When they approach Samuel and the prophets, the Spirit of God falls on them, and Saul’s men also begin to prophesy. The term prophesy (נְבִיא) is associated elsewhere with the Spirit of God coming upon people (e.g., Num 11:25-29; 1 Sam 10:5-7), but נְבִיא also

¹⁰See J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*, vol. 2, *The Crossing Fates* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1986), 429. See also, Auld, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 229; Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC, vol. 7 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 210; and Klein, *1 Samuel*, 199.

¹¹גַּם הַמֶּלֶךְ occurs three times with reference to his servants and הוּא גַּם occurs four times with reference to Saul.

¹²Fokkelman, *Crossing Fates*, 278.

describes the words of Baal's prophets on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:29). Some debate exists as to the precise meaning of the word, but in general, נבוא refers to words or actions spoken on behalf of the prophet's deity.¹³ Brueggemann notes regarding prophecy in this pericope:

The actual phenomenon of prophecy is not clearly delineated here. Apparently 'prophecy' refers to some kind of ecstatic experience that causes the messengers to break out of normal, acceptable patterns of behavior and engage in frenzied or eccentric conduct not expected of the king's servants . . . This behavior is understood to be caused by the invasive, compelling power of God, who shatters all conventional categories of perception and conduct.¹⁴

In this passage, the author does not reveal the content of the prophetic words but only emphasizes that the prophesying commenced because of the Spirit's presence. The Spirit of God seizes control of those who would harm David and employs them as his spokesmen against their wills.¹⁵ God's work through the Spirit thus served a two-fold purpose: (1) to protect David from Saul and his men, and (2) to communicate YHWH's sovereignty over Israel's current king.

The shaming and rejection of King Saul. Why then does God's Spirit compel Saul to strip off his garments and fall upon the ground all day and night? Most interpreters of Samuel have argued convincingly that Saul's actions represent his humiliation and rejection as king.¹⁶ This dissertation has clarified the association between shame and nakedness in the Pentateuch and discusses below later prophets'

¹³See S. B. Parker, "Possession Trance and Prophecy in Pre-Exilic Israel," *VT* 28 (1978): 271-85; and Wilson, "Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination," *JBL* 98 (1979): 321-37.

¹⁴Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 144-45.

¹⁵Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 211, notes that Saul had earlier rejected the word of the Lord (1 Sam 15:23) and must now be YHWH's mouthpiece.

¹⁶Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 211; Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 145; Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen*, 318-21; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 199-200; and Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 378.

graphic use of nakedness imagery to accuse and judge apostate Israel and Judah. Thus, nakedness imagery has strong biblical precedent for identifying an individual's humiliation and also representing their rejection. First Samuel 19:24 attributes YHWH's direct involvement as the cause of Saul's failure to capture David and the reason Saul strips off his clothing. YHWH not only humiliates Saul by foiling his attempt to assassinate his political competition, but he also shames him publicly by stripping him of his clothing, and consequently, any dignity whatsoever.

Does this scene convey YHWH's rejection of Saul? Indeed, Saul had demonstrated persistent disregard for YHWH's commands (e.g., 1 Sam 13:8-10; 15:8-9), and Samuel had communicated to him that YHWH would not uphold his kingship nor install his son after him (1 Sam 13:14-15; 15:23, 26-28). Alter notes poignantly that Samuel's last encounter with Saul had also incorporated clothing.¹⁷ After Samuel announced that YHWH had rejected Saul as king, Saul grabbed Samuel's robe as he left, tearing it in the process. Samuel interpreted this event: "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you" (1 Sam 15:28). In this scene, it is *Samuel's* מעיל (robe) that Saul tears, but the author establishes the association of clothing with *Saul's* kingdom.¹⁸ Note also that Jonathan removes his מעיל in 1 Samuel 18:4, along with his armor and weapons, and gives them to David, affirming YHWH's choice of king.¹⁹ When Saul finds himself controlled by the Spirit in 1

¹⁷Alter, *The David Story*, 122.

¹⁸V. Phillips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence*, SBLDS 118 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), argues for a literary story arc which describes the rise and fall of Saul. This dissertation holds that Long is correct but does not take the arc far enough (he stops at 1 Samuel 15). For a good presentation of clothing representing Saul's rise and rejection, see Alter, *The David Story*, 122; Fokkelman, *Crossing Fates*, 285-86; and Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 377-79.

¹⁹For a good explanation of this interpretation, see Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 136; David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Three Structural Analyses in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 13-31, Numbers 11-12, 1 Kings 17-18)*, JSOTSup 7 (Sheffield, England:

Samuel 19, he removes *all* his clothing, which would include his מעיל, and prophesies before Samuel while YHWH's chosen king is permitted to escape. Moreover, the proverb "Is Saul also among the prophets?" recurs here, most interpreters arguing that the phrase is juxtaposed tragically with its earlier positive use in 1 Samuel 10:12, when Saul was elevated to the position of king.²⁰

Because the narratives following 1 Samuel 15 affirm YHWH's rejection of Saul, the nakedness imagery in 1 Samuel 19 not only functions to humiliate Saul and permit David to escape, but it also functions to confound Saul's grasping for a sovereignty that he cannot have. YHWH has indeed rejected Saul and establishes his own lordship in overwhelming measure, stripping the first king before his prophet and the one who will next sit on the throne. One can hardly imagine a more humiliating posture for a king.²¹

University of Sheffield, 1978), 12; Jobling, *1 Samuel*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 96; and F. Brent Knutson, "Political and Foreign Affairs," in *Ras Shamra Parallels: The Texts from Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. F. Brent Knutson, Donn F. Morgan, Duane E. Smith, and Stan Rummel (Rome: Pontificium institutum biblicum, 1972), 2:109-29. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 472-73, disagrees that Jonathan's exchange of clothing *clearly* conveys his abdication of the throne, yet he later affirms that Jonathan's actions ultimately amount to abdication! He notes that giving a garment does indicate transfer of authority in Num 20:24-28 (priesthood), 1 Kgs 19:19-21 (prophetic role), and Isaiah 22:21 (rulership). One can appreciate Tsumura's caution, but in any case, Jonathan clearly understands (1 Sam 20:14-16, 31-32) and embraces (1 Sam 23:17) David's future kingship, contrasting him with his father Saul.

²⁰E.g., Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 211; Fokkelman, *Crossing Fates*, 286; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 200; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacred Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 77; and Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 379. It was common for a time to suggest the occurrence of the proverb in 1 Sam 10:12 and 1 Sam 19:24 amounted to duplicate etiologies, a conclusion rendered unnecessary by understanding its double use as a literary device. For examples of those holding the double etiology position, see e.g., McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 183, 330; and Peter R. Ackroyd, *The First Book of Samuel*, Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 160. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 85, 194-95, also posits the double etiology position but suggests it is appropriated by a later redactor to emphasize Saul's downfall.

²¹Compare Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation in Daniel 4. While the text does not use the terminology of nakedness, his kingdom is taken away from him (עדה), and he is driven away to become like an animal, wet with dew, and hair as long as an eagle's feathers.

King Saul's Hollow Insult

Saul, undeterred in his intent to kill David, asks Jonathan where David is at the following new moon feast (1 Sam 20:24-34). Jonathan had previously agreed with David to make an excuse for his absence (1 Sam 20:1-23), and when Saul heard Jonathan's excuse and knew of his complicity in covering for David, he replied,

You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die (1 Sam 20:30-31).

What does Saul's insult in 1 Sam 20:30 mean? A precise definition eludes interpreters.²² Indeed, Auld suggests that, in his rage, Saul is barely coherent.²³ Saul is clearly incensed that Jonathan has made David a companion and recognizes that this friendship jeopardizes Saul's plans for his own dynasty, including installing Jonathan as king after him. Whatever the phrase means, interpreters generally agree that Saul uses it to shame Jonathan and incite him into bringing David back.²⁴

McCarter is likely correct that בן (son of) refers to a member of a class and not filial derivation in this instance, and Saul thus insults *Jonathan* with the pejorative "son of a perverse and rebellious woman," *not* Jonathan's mother.²⁵ First

²²Perhaps, however, one should be wary of interpreting details too precisely when working with the coarser examples of a language, such as insults.

²³Auld, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 244. See also, Fokkelman, *Crossing Fates*, 335. Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, 121, notes that Saul's logic is flawed since a perverse woman would be incapable of feeling shame. Indeed, Saul's disposition makes it likely that interpreters have spent more time analyzing Saul's words than Saul did himself.

²⁴See Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 218; Gordon, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 168; Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 397; and Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 520. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 218, specifies that Saul appealed to Jonathan's shame (at his own betrayal), guilt (shaming his mother), and greed (loss of kingship).

²⁵So McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 343; and also, Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 520. Auld, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 244; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 209; and Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 218, disagree, arguing that the slur first insulted Jonathan's mother, Ahinoam, and then Saul asserts that Jonathan is just like her. Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 178-79, posits an untenable reading, arguing that Saul is shifting blame away from himself to Ahinoam because he has learned that Jonathan is homosexual and in a relationship with

Samuel 20:31 uses בן similarly. Saul asserts that David is a בן-מוֹת (son of death), meaning David is a dead man.²⁶ In 1 Samuel 20:30, Saul charges that Jonathan belongs to the class of people “who forsake those to whom they properly owe allegiance.”²⁷ Saul is livid that Jonathan has chosen to protect David when their dominion is at stake, and he asserts that Jonathan’s choice brings shame on himself and his mother’s nakedness (לבשתך ולבשה ערות אמך).²⁸ Saul’s harsh words are unattested elsewhere, so it is difficult to know exactly what he meant by “the shame of your mother’s nakedness.” If Saul used ערוה as a specific euphemism, referring to her sexual organs, then his words may be an obscene way to refer to Jonathan’s birth.²⁹ In other words, Saul charges that Jonathan’s treachery will shame Ahinoam, the one who uncovered her nakedness to bring him into the world. Even without a precise understanding of Saul’s meaning, it is still clear that he attempts to convey shame by incorporating nakedness language to intensify his verbal assault.

In this passage, Saul further establishes that he is unfit to be king as he attempts to manipulate his son who hinders his plans for dominion. Ironically, the

David. Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen*, 341n14, agrees in principle with the view that Saul’s words are aimed to insult Jonathan, but notes that feminist theory requires one address the derogatory reference to Ahinoam.

²⁶See Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 387, 395.

²⁷See McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 343. מרדוֹת is a *hapax legomenon* derived from מרד, a verb which nearly always refers to rebellion against God or one’s ruler. A similar use occurs in Judith 16:12. Auld, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 240, notes that the LXX uses *αυτομολουντω*, a word referring to desertion in a military context.

²⁸Green, *How Are the Mighty Fallen*, 345, notes how Saul conceals his own shame, appealing instead to Jonathan’s shame and the shame Ahinoam will feel.

²⁹See Klein, *1 Samuel*, 209; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 343; Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 397; and Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 520. Alter, *The David Story*, 128, attempts to convey the degree of obscenity in modern equivalent terminology. He notes that “nakedness” here is a general term but is intended to make the reader think of sexual organs (compare the term’s use in Leviticus 18 and 20). David G. Firth, *1 and 2 Samuel*, AOTC, vol. 8 (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2009), 228, agrees that Saul’s words are obscene, but he doubts that referring to Ahinoam’s sexual organs would imply childbirth.

king who had been stripped in front of his greatest threats in the previous chapter, i.e., YHWH and David, now tries to use nakedness language to shame his own son into betraying David and disobeying YHWH. He has learned nothing, and his attempts to exploit Jonathan fail.³⁰ Jonathan is not after the approval of his father nor the throne, and he will not be shamed as his father was. He fears YHWH and affirms the king that God anointed to reign after Saul (1 Sam 20:13-16).³¹ When Jonathan thus defends his friend, Saul hurls a spear at him just as he had with David (1 Sam 18:10-11; 19:9-10; 20:33). His love for Jonathan extends only to the point that Jonathan brings him honor.³²

King Saul's Pride

David becomes king after Saul's death and, unlike Saul, exhibits a heart of humility and obeisance before YHWH.³³ After capturing Jerusalem, he arranges to bring the ark into the city in 2 Samuel 6. The author describes a jubilant celebration:

³⁰Compare Saul's shamelessness to that of Oholah and Oholibah in Ezekiel 23 (see discussion below). Only complete destruction of this persistently faithless representative of YHWH will accord with the establishment of YHWH's kingdom.

³¹Robert Polzin, *A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History*, vol. 2, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: 1 Samuel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 190, presents David as a manipulator and Jonathan as an unwitting pawn in David's schemes. This position does no justice to the portrayal of Jonathan elsewhere, including David's love and great respect for him. Conversely, Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, 122-23, compares Jonathan to John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ. Without entertaining typological discussion, one may note the similar role and quality of humility (John 3:30).

³²See Fokkeman, *The Crossing Fates*, 338-39. Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 151-52, considers the story from Saul's perspective, noting the humiliation and pain the king felt at his son's betrayal. Everyone had turned away from him, including YHWH, and now Jonathan had as well. Even still, Saul refuses to bend his neck to YHWH in humility and repentance.

³³In contrast to Saul, David did not grasp after kingship, and even though he had at least two opportunities to kill Saul (1 Sam 24:10; 26:23), he withheld his hand, even ashamed that he had cut the corner from Saul's מַעִיל (1 Sam 24:4-7). Further, after Saul was dead, David's execution of the Amalekite who killed Saul when he was mortally wounded (2 Sam 1:14-16), his treatment of Abner before and after Joab assassinated him (2 Sam 3:8-39; 1 Kgs 2:5-6), his execution of Ish-Bosheth's killers (2 Sam 4:9-12), and his kindness and provision for Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9) reveal that David did not attempt to seize or establish his reign through self-serving means.

When those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, [David] sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn (2 Sam 6:13-15).

Yet, when David's wife Michal sees the procession coming into the city, specifically David leaping and dancing before YHWH, she despises him in her heart (2 Sam 6:16).³⁴ She goes out to meet him when he comes to his house and rails against him, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" (2 Sam 6:20).

Michal, daughter of Saul. The text does not say explicitly how past events may have provoked Michal's anger toward David, but her words focus on David's lack of honor in her eyes.³⁵ The narrator has already revealed that Michal despised David in her heart (2 Sam 6:16), thus her exclamation, "How the king honored himself today!" is certainly sardonic, particularly since her explanation charges that he had uncovered himself before the servants like a vulgar fellow would (2 Sam 6:20). Michal contends that David is dishonorable because of his indecency (uncovering himself) and because of his association with and behaving like the lowest members of society (the servants' handmaidens and the vulgar fellows).³⁶

³⁴"Leaping" and "dancing" are reasonable translations of פָּזַח and כִּרְכַּר, respectively. Scholars debate precise nuance, but David's energetic movements before the Ark are clear enough. For discussion, see Gosta W. Ahlstrom, "KRKR and TPD," *VT* 28, no. 1 (January 1978): 100-02; Y. Avishur, "KRKR in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic," *VT* 26, no. 3 (January 1976): 257-61; and Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, 270.

³⁵Many have noted Michal's tragic storyline, being used by Saul to occasion David's demise (1 Samuel 18), given away by Saul as a wife to Paltiel (1 Sam 25:44), and being taken away from Paltiel as David secured Israel's loyalty (2 Sam 3:14-16), e.g., Alter, *The David Story*, 228-29; and Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, 194-95.

³⁶Based on context and the meaning of רֵק (empty), רֵקִים (vulgar fellows) likely refers to the "empty-headed" or "worthless" members of society. רֵק occurs elsewhere in Judg 9:4; 11:3; 2 Chr 13:7. See the discussion in Ackroyd, *First Book of Samuel*, 70; Robert Polzin, *A Literary Study of the*

Michal uses a form of גלה three times, the basic meaning of which is “uncover.”³⁷ The first use expresses the verbal action, namely, he has uncovered himself before the eyes of his servant’s handmaidens. The final two uses are part of a complex comparative clause in which Michal relates David’s actions to those of the vulgar fellows (כהגלות נגלות אחד הרקים). The occurrence here of גלה as the infinitive construct juxtaposed with the infinitive absolute is exceptional in the OT for any verbal root, and no consensus has emerged as to its meaning.³⁸ If one is to retain the text of the MT, Fokkelman’s suggestion seems best, namely that Michal’s unconventional use of the two infinitives reflects her vitriolic state.³⁹ Like Saul in 1 Samuel 20:30, Michal is disgusted by David’s contemptible behavior and bends decorous and linguistic convention to match her feelings toward him. The content of her tirade supports this position, being that she charges David with being indecently uncovered, though the text states clearly that he wore a linen ephod.⁴⁰ First

Deuteronomic History, vol. 3, *David and the Deuteronomist: 2 Samuel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 62; Robert Rezetko, *Source and Revision in the Narratives of David’s Transfer of the Ark: Text, Language, and Story in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13, 15-16*, LHBOTS 470 (New York: T and T Clark, 2007), 246. J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*, vol. 3, *Throne and City* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1990), 199, notes a linguistic trend from the highest to lowest members of class in Michal’s speech: Israel – his slaves – layabouts.

³⁷BDB, 162-63; *DCH*, 2:348-52; *HALOT*, 1:191-92; David M. Howard, “גלה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 1:861-64; Hans-Jürgen Zobel, “גלה,” in *TDOT*, 2:476-88; and Bruce K. Waltke, “גלה,” in *TWOT*, 1:160-61. See chap. 2 for information regarding the distribution of the term.

³⁸See linguistic information in Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, 272; and Rezetko, *Source and Revision*, 248.

³⁹Fokkelman, *Throne and City*, 199. See also A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC, vol. 11 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 98; and Andrew E. Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2017), 110. Cephas T. A. Tushima, *The Fate of Saul’s Progeny in the Reign of David* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 186-87n66, argues for reading the infinitive absolute as a finite verb and the infinitive construct adverbially, thus, “dishabilledly uncover.”

⁴⁰Anthony Phillips, “David’s Linen Ephod,” *VT* 19, no. 4 (October 1969): 485-87, makes the unlikely suggestion that the ephod was a linen loin cloth a child would wear. He conjectures this by presuming that Michal’s words describing David’s nakedness were correct and by correlating the description of the boy Samuel wearing a linen ephod in 1 Sam 2:18. According to Phillips, it must be a secular garment that was appropriate for a child but not an adult. N. L. Tidwell, “The Linen Ephod:

Chronicles 15:27 even adds that David was wearing a fine linen robe (מעיל בוץ). Indeed, David was not naked, though he was “dressed down” like a priest or commoner instead of a king.⁴¹ Her comparison of David to one of the vulgar fellows associating with the servants’ handmaidens illustrates that her focus is on her own elevated status as royalty.⁴² As the king’s wife, his dishonor is also hers, and thus Michal attempts to shame David for his righteous behavior, even using nakedness imagery to exaggerate her point.

Michal’s verbal attack resembles Saul’s outburst against Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20:30, and indeed, the narrator seems to emphasize Michal’s connection to Saul, identifying her as “the daughter of Saul” three times in this passage (2 Sam 6:16, 20, 23).⁴³ After Michal marries David (1 Sam 18:27), she appears in three

1 Samuel 2:18 and 2 Samuel 6:14,” *VT* 24, no. 4 (January 1974): 505-07, disagrees, showing the ephod’s association with the priestly role, though he still agrees that the ephod was a loin cloth. Recent studies commonly agree that the ephod was a priestly garment, e.g., Alter, *The David Story*, 227; Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 224; Fokkelman, *Throne and City*, 195; Gordon, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 234. Regarding David’s validity in a priestly role, Alter, *The David Story*, 227; Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 332; and Tony W. Cartledge, *1 and 2 Samuel*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2001), 437, note that Melchizedek also served in the role of priest and king (Gen 14:18), a connection made in other biblical texts (Ps 110:4; Heb 7:1-17). Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, 116, argues that the ephod wearers in Samuel are characterized by their role as worshiper rather than priest. Either state reflects a lower status in Michal’s perspective.

⁴¹Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist*, 66, notes that David’s nakedness has been read into the text. He is correct as far as David’s *actual* nudity is concerned. Interpreters have given too much credence to Michal’s claim, asserting that David did, in fact, expose himself. Michal did use nakedness language (i.e., גלה), but her use is hyperbolic. See also Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 333, who denies that David ephod would have exposed his nakedness.

⁴²See Alter, *The David Story*, 229. Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist*, 67, notes poignantly that the other “handmaidens” identified in Samuel are Hannah (1 Sam 1:11, 16) and Abigail (1 Sam 25:24-31), women associated with honor. Fokkelman, *Throne and City*, 196, supports the position that the text highlights Michal’s self-importance, noting that even framing her character in the window looking down (2 Sam 6:16) places her above everyone, not participating in the celebration before YHWH.

⁴³The frequency of her identification as Saul’s daughter is unusual within the same passage. Jonathan, for instance, is mentioned over 80 times in 1-2 Samuel and is identified as “Saul’s son” by the narrator fewer than ten times (this does not include identification in the words of others, particularly Saul). Note however, that “Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, son of Saul” occurs in 2 Samuel 9. There, David takes great pains to show honor to “someone remaining from Saul’s house” for the sake of Jonathan. The narrator emphasizes there David’s uncharacteristic kindness to the

additional passages before 2 Samuel 6, each time identified as “David’s wife.”⁴⁴ In 2 Samuel 6, however, Michal is only identified as “daughter of Saul.” She even refers to David in the third person, “How *the king* has honored himself” (2 Sam 6:20), and not as “husband” or even “you.” By identifying her as Saul’s daughter, the narrator shows that Michal embraced Saul’s singular focus on power and honor.⁴⁵

One more righteous than Saul. David’s response validates many of the suggestions made above with regard to Michal’s intent, “It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord” (2 Sam 6:21). More than the eyes of his servants’ handmaidens, David was dancing before YHWH. This explanation would have been sufficient to silence her complaint, but he includes the phrase, “who chose me above your father and above all his house,” to juxtapose his kind of kingship with Saul’s.⁴⁶ Saul persistently disregarded YHWH’s commands (e.g., 1 Sam 13:9; 1 Sam 15:9) and notably gave heed to God only when he feared negative consequences (e.g., 1 Sam 15:24-25, 30) or was forced into submission by God’s Spirit (e.g., 1 Sam 19:24).

house of the former king. For a discussion of the literary effect of Michal’s identity as Saul’s daughter in this passage, see D. J. A. Clines, “X, X Ben Y, Ben Y: Personal Names in Hebrew Narrative Style,” *VT* 22 (1972): 266-87.

⁴⁴In 1 Sam 19:11, she is called “David’s wife.” In 1 Sam 25:44, she is “his [Saul’s] daughter, David’s wife.” In 2 Sam 3:13-14, she is called “Saul’s daughter” and “my wife” (David’s speech).

⁴⁵See Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 106; Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 225; R. A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King: A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel*, trans. Eric J. Sharpe and Stanley Rudman (Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1964), 93-94; Gordon, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 234; and Rezetko, *Source and Revision*, 277-81. Fokkelman, *Throne and City*, 198, notes that Michal met David outside the house, by implication making her charge against him public and thus raising the stakes of societal honor and dishonor. Tushima, *The Fate of Saul’s Progeny*, 159-223, turns the David story on its head, suggesting that David is the power-hungry character using his relationships with Saul’s children to secure his kingdom.

⁴⁶See Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 252, who argues that 2 Sam 6:20-22 forms a chiasm, at the center of which is David’s declaration that YHWH had exalted him as ruler instead of Saul.

David, on the other hand, shows a proper concern to honor YHWH. In the Ark procession, narrated in two scenes (2 Sam 6:1-10, 12-19), David appears to accept Uzzah's death as a rebuke of improper reverence, and he corrects the ceremony in the second scene, specifically donning a linen ephod as he led the procession.⁴⁷ Thus, David's actions appear to support his words to Michal that it was "before YHWH" that he danced. David's reference to Saul, particularly YHWH's role in replacing him, does not seem to be a mere personal attack against Michal. Instead, David detected and countered Michal's errant perspective of honor by reminding her that Saul's downfall was a direct result of his failure to honor YHWH.

After exposing Michal's foolish attempt to teach him honor, David declares further, "I will make myself yet more contemptible [קלל] than this, and I will be abased [שפל] in *your eyes*. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor" (2 Sam 6:22). In terms of his stature before YHWH, David asserts he would become even lower (קלל), a term he used to compare himself to Saul when Saul suggested that he marry Michal (1 Sam 18:23). If he was unworthy to be the king's daughter, how much more unworthy is he to be YHWH's chosen king? Though he alleges that Michal would perceive his *humility* before YHWH as *humiliation* (שפל), David's concern reflects the perspective noted elsewhere in Samuel, namely that YHWH brings low (שפל) those who are haughty (1 Sam 2:7; 2 Sam 22:28).⁴⁸ David would rather be honored by the maidservants of his servants, i.e., the lowest of the low whom Michal despised.⁴⁹

⁴⁷See Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 331-32; and Cartledge, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 435-37. 1 Chr 15:13 reveals that David attributed the Lord's actions against Uzzah as a punishment for the Levites not carrying the Ark.

⁴⁸See also Job 40:11; Ps 18:27; 75:7; 147:6, etc.

⁴⁹"It is better to be of a lowly (שפל) spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Prov 16:19). Michal's statement regarding the servants' handmaidens expresses her contempt for the lowest-class members of the kingdom. See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *2 Samuel: A New Translation*

Thus, Michal demonstrated that her identification with Saul extended beyond parentage. Like Saul, Michal was concerned with her own honor more than honoring the Lord. Note Saul's words after Samuel told him the Lord would tear the kingdom from him and give it to someone better than him, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the Lord your God" (1 Sam 15:30). Saul not only refers to YHWH as *Samuel's* God, but he also begs Samuel to *honor him* before the elders and before Israel. Michal despised David for his impassioned dancing before the Lord, and she used nakedness language in an attempt to shame him, holding him in low esteem. Therefore, YHWH shamed Michal, "And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death" (2 Sam 6:23), ensuring that no descendant of Saul would sit on the throne.⁵⁰ YHWH describes to Eli who will be honored in Israel, "Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me (בזה) shall be lightly esteemed (קלל)" (1 Sam 2:30).⁵¹ In further validation of David's righteous behavior, the next chapter (2 Sam 7) describes the covenant YHWH makes with David, taking him from the flock as a mere shepherd to make him king over Israel with renown (2 Sam 7:8-9), to be with him and his descendants (2 Sam 7:14-15), and to establish his dynasty forever (2 Sam 7:13, 16).⁵²

with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary, AB, vol. 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 187.

⁵⁰As YHWH had decreed in 1 Sam 13:13-14. See Carlson, *David, the Chosen King*, 93; Gordon, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 235; and McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 188, for the connection between Michal's barrenness and the lack of a Saulide heir to the throne. Auld, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 415; and Cartledge, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 442, highlight the implicit shame of her barrenness. Regarding Michal's barrenness, Exod 23:26 and Deut 7:14 associate love for YHWH and obedience to his commands with a fruitful womb. One should not develop a theology of infertility based on sin or disobedience, but the OT clearly identifies YHWH as the one who opens and closes the womb (e.g., Gen 29:31; 30:2, 22; Deut 7:13; 28:4, 11, 18; 1 Sam 1:5-6; Job 10:18; Ps 17:14; 127:3; Hos 9:14).

⁵¹Compare: Michal despises David (בזה) when she sees him dancing before YHWH (2 Sam 6:16), yet David would make himself of even less esteem (קלל) before YHWH (2 Sam 6:22).

⁵²The reader of Samuel is confronted with the stunning failure of David's righteousness before YHWH when he rapes Bathsheba and then kills her husband, Uriah, to cover his sin (2 Samuel

Nakedness Imagery in Samuel

Nakedness imagery in Samuel reveals the honor or shame of the characters involved. In 1 Samuel 19, YHWH strips Saul naked in a manner that indicates both his humiliation and rejection as a king. This kind of stripping corresponds to the later prophets' warning against apostate Israel, though often those texts use nakedness language metaphorically. Saul later uses nakedness language against his own son, Jonathan, in an effort to shame him for his association with and protection of David (1 Sam 20:30). In doing so, however, Saul shames himself and Jonathan is honored as one who upholds YHWH's choice of David, consistent with his earlier act of removing his own royal attire and placing his clothing on David (1 Sam 18:4). Lastly, after David becomes king, Michal, daughter of Saul, reveals her own pride, identifying with her father's errant sense of honor. She too uses nakedness language in an attempt to shame David. Like Saul before her, her efforts also fail and lead to her own dishonor. David embraces what she perceives as shame and considers his low estate before YHWH as true honor. Michal is disgraced, both immediately by David's rebuke, but also in her lifelong childlessness. Thus, YHWH extinguishes Saul's royal line and errant view of a king's honor.

David's Men and Isaiah: Stripping as Humiliation

Numerous passages in the prophets incorporate nakedness language and preserve an account of the political practice of stripping one's enemies to shame

11). The key difference between Saul and David is not that one is sinless. Rather, when YHWH's prophet confronts David, he responds in humility and repentance (2 Sam 12:13; Psalm 51). In contrast, Saul excuses his behavior (1 Sam 15:21-22, 24), and even though he uses the same words as David, "I have sinned," he repeatedly seeks to be honored and refuses the Lord's decree regarding his kingship (1 Sam 15:27, 30-31). J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*, vol. 1, *King David* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1981), 59; and J. I. Lawlor, "Theology and Art in the Narrative of the Ammonite War (2 Samuel 10-12)," *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (1982): 193-205, note that the Bathsheba incident is situated within David's defeat of the Ammonites, keeping the matter of his virtue before the reader even as his military success exceeds that of his predecessor.

them. Several of these texts use the reality of this practice metaphorically to announce judgment (e.g., Isa 3:17; 47:2-3; Jer 49:10; Amos 2:16; Nah 2:8), but 2 Samuel 10 and Isaiah 20 describe events in which the public humiliation of stripping actually occurred. This practice of stripping as shaming is an important backdrop for YHWH's metaphorical use to warn of his judgment against apostasy, so this section examines the effect of stripping in its historical context.

2 Samuel 10: The Practice Clearly Seen

David sent an envoy of servants to Hanun, the new king of Ammon, to express condolences after the death of his father (2 Sam 10:1-2).⁵³ Several of Hanan's chief rulers convinced him, however, that these men had been sent by David to spy out the city in order to overthrow it.⁵⁴ Thus, Hanun took the men, shaved off half their beards, cut off their garments at the hips, and sent the men back to David (2 Sam 10:4).⁵⁵ Knowing their great humiliation (נבלמים מאד), David sent men to meet them along the way and diverted them to Jericho where they could stay until their beards had grown back, presumably providing clothing for the men (2 Sam 10:5). Of course, Hanun knew that his actions would create a political crisis, so he hired Syrian mercenaries and instigated war with David (2 Sam 10:6-19).⁵⁶

⁵³For a discussion of the nature of David's relationship with Nahash, who previously battled Saul in 1 Samuel 11, see Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 146; Cartledge, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 487-88; Gordon, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 250; and McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 270.

⁵⁴Fokkelman, *King David*, 44, notes the similarly arrogant and foolish advice from Rehoboam's advisors in 1 Kings 12. Compare also Joseph's feigned supposition of his brothers' reconnaissance in Genesis 42.

⁵⁵See the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 19. The basic details are the same, except that Chronicles does not specify that Hanun shaved off half of their beards, and it also uses a different word to describe how far the garments were cut, namely to the מפשעה, instead of the שת.

⁵⁶Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 269-70, suggests that Ammon was a vassal and David was ensuring that Hanun understood this relationship. Thus, Hanun's response showed his intent to free Ammon from her vassal status.

This text does not use any words listed in this dissertation that communicate nakedness, e.g., ערום, ערוה, גלה, etc., but the presence of nakedness is glaring when one considers the details given in the story. Hanun shaves off half their beards, a humiliating act that strikes directly at their masculinity.⁵⁷ Yet, he also cuts their garments in half, up to their “buttocks” (שת), or “hips” (מפשעה) as the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 19:4 states. One can easily imagine what is exposed by a robe cut in such a manner.⁵⁸ Whether or not these men would have worn some kind of loin covering, the half-beards would have had to leave the king’s presence with their nakedness exposed and pass through the city, perhaps even having to travel back toward Jerusalem in this state until they met David’s servants.⁵⁹

Nakedness language in this text clarifies the humiliating nature of exposed sexual organs and provides evidence that public nakedness was considered shameful. Additionally, this text corroborates the ANE practice of stripping as a means to humiliate one’s political foes. Hanun was not content to send David’s men away. He shamed them, knowing he would become a stench to David, and he further provoked conflict by hiring mercenaries. Fokkelman notes:

One should not underestimate the extent of this intervention. It is on a national scale and violates Israel’s very being. Hanun violates diplomats, representatives

⁵⁷As a sign of maturity and adulthood, shaving the beard would be degrading, and it likely forced an inadvertent violation of Lev 19:27. See Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 147; Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 358; Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, 287; and Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, 205. Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, 185-86, notes that shaving their beard violated their manhood, and shaving half their beard made them “half-men.” Cartledge, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 488; and McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 270, draw a connection between shaving the beard and symbolic castration, arguing that the beard was a symbol of sexual virility.

⁵⁸Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, 287, suggests that “half” refers *not* to length, but breadth, i. e. the backside would have been cut out to make them look ridiculous. He offers no reason for this suggestion, but either way, their nakedness was exposed. Alter, *The David Story*, 245, makes this same suggestion.

⁵⁹Particularly due to the short distance of the trip, it is likely they did not bring a change of clothing with them. See Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, 205.

of a nation . . . This violation is felt doubly hard in Israel because it is the response to something benevolent, the vulnerable gesture of sympathy and solidarity.⁶⁰

Isaiah 20: The Practice Leveraged

In the year that Sargon of Assyria fought against and captured Ashdod, YHWH spoke through Isaiah in a sign-act of nudity, “Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet” (Isa 20:2).⁶¹ Isaiah does so, walking naked and barefoot for three years (Isa 20:3).⁶² YHWH declares that as Isaiah walked naked and barefoot, so the king of Assyria would lead away captives in shame from Egypt and Cush, this event causing Judah to be dismayed and ashamed for placing their hope in these nations (Isa 20:3-6). Through Isaiah’s message, YHWH intended to warn Judah against making an alliance with Egypt against Assyria since the Egyptian armies would be defeated (cf. Isa 30:1-7; 31:1-9).⁶³ Given

⁶⁰Fokkelman, *King David*, 44. See also Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 245; and Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, 205, who also emphasize the seriousness of Hanun’s actions.

⁶¹For Sargon’s account of his campaign against Ashdod, see *ANET*, 286-87. Ashdod had begun to rebel against Assyria in 714 BC. By 711 BC, Sargon had recaptured the city. For a general discussion, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 322; J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 267-68; Hayim Tadmor, “The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958): 22-40; and K. Lawson Younger, “Recent Study on Sargon II, King of Assyria: Implications for Biblical Studies,” in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 288-329.

⁶²For a detailed study of prophetic sign acts, see E. R. Fraser, “Symbolic Acts of the Prophets,” *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 4 (1974): 45-53; and K. Friebel, *Jeremiah and Ezekiel’s Sign Acts: Their Meaning and Function as Nonverbal Communication* (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1989).

⁶³The passage does not identify Judah as those who would be dismayed, but as Isaiah’s ministry was focused on Judah (Isa 1:1) and the historical details match the context, most take Judah as the intended audience for Isaiah’s message, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 322-23; and Young, *Isaiah 19-39*, 57. See Csaba Balogh, *The Stele of YHWH in Egypt: The Prophecies of Isaiah 18-20 concerning Egypt and Kush*, OTS 60 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 322-33, for a helpful discussion of the theological motive for the text’s message. Judah apparently rejected Isaiah’s message as Sennacherib’s Rabshakeh mocks their futile alliance with Egypt in Isa 36:6, 9; 2 Kgs 18:21. Sennacherib also records this alliance and his subsequent invasion of Palestine and Egypt in *ANET*, 287-88. Mary Katherine Y. H. Hom, *The Characterization of the Assyrians in Isaiah: Synchronic and*

the inherent shamefulness in the ANE culture regarding nudity in public, Isaiah's act of self-exposure would have undoubtedly seized their attention. Yet, as with 1 Samuel 19:24 mentioned above, some biblical commentators argue that Isaiah did not walk around completely naked but only removed his outer garment.⁶⁴ Because of the specific terminology used in Isaiah 20, this text provides a good description of how the OT understands the word "naked." For this study then, this specificity of language and the rhetorical purpose of Isaiah's sign-act warrants detailed analysis.⁶⁵

Isaiah's instructions. The Lord instructs Isaiah, "Go, and loose the sackcloth from your waist and take off your sandals from your feet" (Isa 20:2). The Old Testament never describes the material composition of "sackcloth" (קשׁ), but some interpreters posit that sackcloth was a rough, hairy cloth and was the typical prophetic garb.⁶⁶ While some of the prophets may have worn a garment of hair, e.g., Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8; 2:8) and Zechariah (Zech 13:4), Bronner notes correctly that no evidence exists of a *typical* prophetic garb, especially sackcloth.⁶⁷ Isaiah is wearing

Diachronic Perspectives, LHBOTS 559 (New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 80-83, gives a helpful summary of the details regarding the application of Isaiah's sign act to historical events.

⁶⁴So L. Bronner, "Rethinking Isaiah 20," *Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika* 22/23 (1979-80): 32-41; John Goldingay, *Isaiah*, NICOT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 122; George B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 1-27*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 345-46; Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 115; and John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, WBC, vol. 24 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 263.

⁶⁵Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 270, notes, "The strange yet widespread concern of modern scholars to save the prophet's modesty is misguided and hard to fathom and has led to very odd arguments." This dissertation agrees entirely.

⁶⁶See Goldingay, *Isaiah*, 122; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 114; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 143; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 385; and Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 19-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 54. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 264, suggests that sackcloth was the basic undergarment worn by the men. Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 292-93, argues correctly that sackcloth had many uses and cannot be relegated to any one use as a garment.

⁶⁷Bronner, "Rethinking Isaiah 20," 32-41. See also the discussion in Balogh, "Stele of

sackcloth in this text, and Daniel (Dan 9:3) covered himself with sackcloth and ashes during a fast to petition YHWH for mercy (Dan 9:3). The occasion, not their prophetic office, explains their garb.

Rather, sackcloth (שק) is a coarsely-woven material used as a sack (Gen 42:25, 27, 35; Josh 9:4), as the garb of a mourner (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; 21:10; Ps 30:11), or as the garb of one in distress, particularly one who is making a petition to God or a superior (1 Kgs 20:31; 1 Kgs 21:27; 2 Kgs 19:1; Neh 9:1; Dan 9:3).⁶⁸ A number of these examples specify that the sackcloth was fastened around the wearer's waist (מתנים) as in Isaiah 20:2.⁶⁹ The remaining uses of שק only state that the wearer is clothed in sackcloth and do not specify what part of the body the garment is covering.⁷⁰ Thus, sackcloth is either simply “worn” or it is fastened around the waist. YHWH commanded Isaiah to remove the sackcloth specifically from his waist (מתנים), making it unlikely that Isaiah took off an “outer garment.”⁷¹ Instead, by removing the sackcloth from his waist, Isaiah truly left himself naked (ערום).

YHWH,” 311-12; and Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 294.

⁶⁸The text does not specify why Isaiah was wearing sackcloth at the time. For specific instances and the possible origins for mourning or lament rituals, see Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1991); and Xuan Huong Thi Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 302 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

⁶⁹E.g., Gen 37:34; 1 Kgs 20:31-32; Isa 3:24; Jer 48:37; Ezek 37:21; Amos 8:10.

⁷⁰E.g., 2 Sam 3:31; 1 Kgs 21:27; 2 Kgs 6:30; 2 Kgs 19:1-2; 1 Chr 21:16. One notable example occurs during the siege in 2 Kgs 6:30. King Joram hears of a woman who killed and ate her son with another woman to stave off hunger. Upon hearing this account, Joram tore his garments and the passers-by notice that *under his clothes*, he is wearing sackcloth which covers his flesh (בשר may refer to his genitals).

⁷¹Contra Goldingay, *Isaiah*, 122; and Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 115, who suggest that Isaiah wore and removed a sackcloth coat. מתנים refers to the part of the body around the waist and above the knees, namely the part of the body that the priests were to cover lest their naked flesh (בשר ערוה) be exposed (Exod 28:42), the part where swords and belts were fastened (2 Sam 20:8; 1 Kgs 2:5; Neh 4:18; Isa 11:5), and the place women grasp when they are in labor (Jer 30:6).

Edward Young takes a different approach to determine that Isaiah would not have walked around entirely nude:

Isaiah need not be thought of as having gone about completely naked. This is shown by the addition of the word 'barefoot.' Had he been completely naked, there would be no need for this additional description. In going about naked, he probably was simply wearing an undergarment, and so even in the eyes of the people, was not acting against what was honorable. He was merely going against custom in such a way that attention would be drawn to himself. Passages such as 2 Samuel 6:20 show that one in such a condition would be regarded as naked.⁷²

The discussion of 2 Samuel 6 above shows that David's nakedness existed only in the mind of Michal, daughter of Saul. Neither narrative of the Ark's transfer into Jerusalem uses the term ערום or ערוה (2 Sam 6; 1 Chr 15). In fact, both texts clearly state that while dancing, David wore a linen ephod, and Chronicles adds that he wore a robe of fine linen (2 Sam 6:14; 1 Chr 15:27). Michal uses the word גלה, using nakedness language to exaggerate the actual situation because of her contempt for his non-kingly performance (2 Sam 6:20). Moreover, if David was "naked" in the same sense that Young describes Isaiah, then one cannot say Isaiah was "not acting against what was honorable," since Michal's entire speech focused on the dishonor David brought upon himself.

What does Young mean, however, by suggesting that the addition of the word "barefoot" (יחף) indicates that Isaiah was not completely nude? While he does not specify further, Young seems to assume that the word naked (ערום) is inclusive and the addition of "barefoot" would be redundant if ערום implied full nudity. This reasoning is circular, however. Because the meaning of ערום is in question, one cannot infer that barefoot is redundant. Moreover, the position does not take account of the intensifying effect of compounding terms in speech and writing,

⁷²Young, *Isaiah: Chapters 19-39*, 55.

requiring instead a precise and technical use of terminology that likely surpasses the author's intention.⁷³ One can imagine a captive standing with no clothes on and his sandals still strapped to his feet, and the term ערום would describe his state appropriately. In fact, given the context of Isaiah's actions, i.e., Assyria's treatment of its prisoners of war, such a situation could exist. The inclusion of "barefoot" in this passage serves to *highlight* Isaiah's total nakedness: not only is he naked; he even lacks his sandals. So too will Assyria treat Egypt and Cush.

This dissertation shows that when describing a person's actual state of clothing, i.e., not a symbolic use, ערום has the basic meaning of complete nakedness, though in some cases it refers to insufficient clothing, i. e. the poor and naked (Job 22:6; 24:7, 10; Isa 58:7; Ezek 18:9, 16).⁷⁴ It is thus appropriate for a reader to assume complete nudity unless context suggests otherwise, as in those texts involving the poor. Isaiah 20:2 indicates that Isaiah must take off the sackcloth from his waist and the sandals from his feet. Isaiah's obedience resulted in him walking naked (ערום), because the sackcloth was gone from his waist, and barefoot (יחף), because the sandals were removed from his feet. In both cases, the item covering a specific part of the body is removed leaving that part uncovered, a fact confirmed in Isaiah 20:4 where the Egyptian and Cushite exiles' nakedness is clarified as "buttocks uncovered" (חשופי שתי).⁷⁵ Given the specificity of this description, it is unreasonable to conclude that Isaiah was anything but completely naked.

⁷³Isaiah was not striving for academic conciseness, nor was YHWH, who was giving the instructions. Rather, the stacking of words intensifies the reader's apprehension of the message. See the use of the words "precise and technical" in the sentence to which this footnote is attached for an example of stacking words to intensify meaning.

⁷⁴The word "naked" works to describe the poorly clothed precisely *because* nakedness has the base meaning of no clothing. See the discussions below on these texts.

⁷⁵Some consider ערוה in Isaiah 20:4 to be a euphemism for genitals and not a general reference to nakedness. Thus, the text would be very specific, noting that both buttocks *and* genitals were exposed. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 321.

Isaiah's message. Isaiah 20:3-4 states that Isaiah walked around naked and barefoot as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Cush. Assyria was going to lead away captives from these nations naked and barefoot, with buttocks exposed, and those who hoped in Egypt and Cush to protect them from Assyria would be dismayed.⁷⁶ Isaiah's own nakedness was a vital component to convey what was going to happen to Egypt and Cush.⁷⁷ Chapter 3 discussed the ANE evidence for this practice of stripping naked prisoners of war, and the examination of 2 Samuel 10 above noted this practice was attested in the OT. Yet, in defense of his position that Isaiah was not completely naked, Wildberger states that it was not Assyrian practice *at that time* to lead captives naked.⁷⁸ He is correct that no extant depictions show this practice with reference to Assyria during the late eighth century. However, the discussion below shows that such a practice fits well within the Assyrian context during Isaiah's ministry.

One of the most notable examples of Assyrian iconography showing nude captives comes from Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC), approximately one century prior to Isaiah's time.⁷⁹ Several bronze bands originally decorating wooden gates were found at Shalmaneser's palace which depict his conquests. Several of the bands show lines of captive males walking or impaled nude (see figures 1 and 2).⁸⁰

⁷⁶Young, *Isaiah 19-39*, 55-58.

⁷⁷See Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 270.

⁷⁸Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 294.

⁷⁹Balogh, "Stele of YHWH," 311-12, agrees that the parading of nude captives was a practice consistent with Assyrian tactics. He mistakenly attributes the depiction on the Balawat bands of Shalmaneser III with Shalmaneser V, which would put the time frame within the era of this study.

⁸⁰See *ANEP*, figs. 358, 362, 365; and Hugo Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder Zum Alten Testament* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926), fig. 128. *ANEP*, fig. 365, may show the exposed breasts of the women captives, who are also raising their skirt and holding one hand on their head. There is typically very little Assyrian art representing nudity amongst females, even among the captives. See Megan Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity," *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (June 1998), 221.

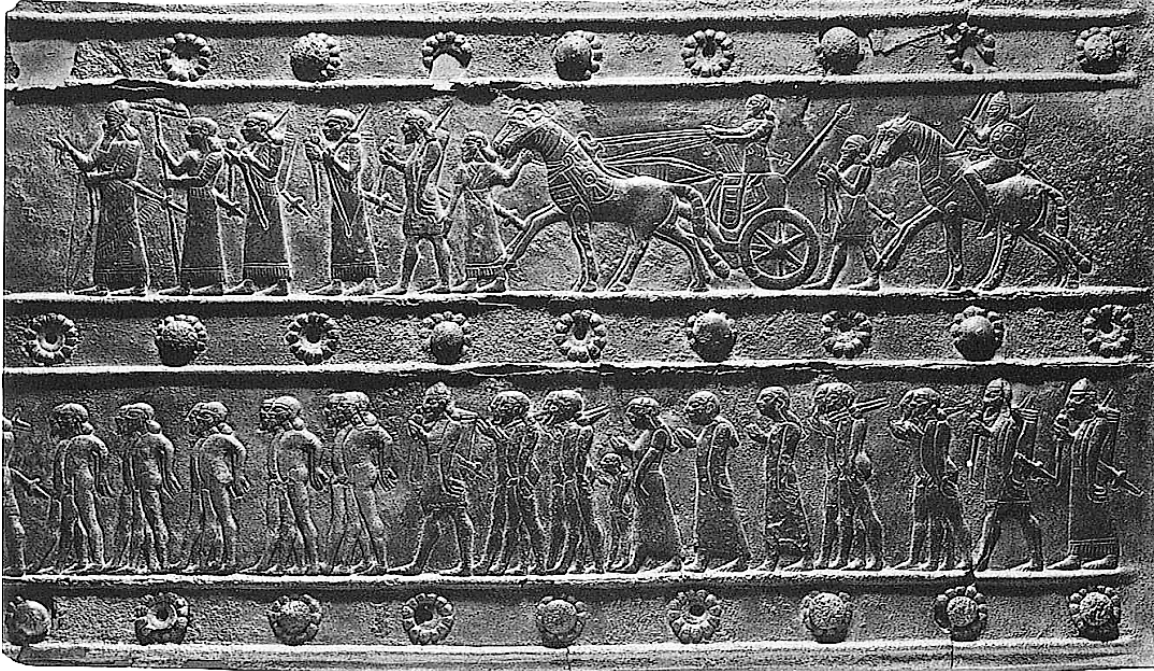


Figure 1. *ANET*, fig. 358. Captive males walking nude during Shalmaneser III's reign



Figure 2. *ANET*, fig. 362. Victims impaled nude during Shalmaneser III's reign

Additionally, Sennacherib's Lachish campaign reliefs show three nude figures impaled on stakes as other captives pass by (see figure 3).⁸¹ The same relief depicts two nude men stretched out preparing to be flayed, a practice also seen during the reigns of Sargon II and Ashurbanipal (see figure 4).⁸² Thus, Assyria is still practicing violent and humiliating acts regarding nudity against their captives in the same generation of Israel's deportation (722 BC) and the looming threat of Sennacherib in Judah (701 BC). This evidence undermines Wildberger's assertion that Assyria had departed from traditional tactics regarding stripping by the end of the eighth century BC.⁸³



Figure 3. *ANET*, fig 373. Victims impaled nude outside Lachish during Sennacherib's Lachish campaign (701 BC)



Figure 4. Albenda, "An Assyrian Relief Depicting a Nude Captive," fig. 4. Victims flayed during Sennacherib's Lachish campaign (701 BC)

⁸¹See *ANEP*, fig. 373.

⁸²Pauline Albenda, "An Assyrian Relief Depicting a Nude Captive in Wellesley College," *JNES* 29, no. 3 (July 1970), 148, figs. 4, 5, 6.

⁸³Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 294.

Assyria's use of psychological warfare to keep order and peace in their empire is well known.⁸⁴ Their tactics were mixed, leading away into exile some captives clothed, others naked, and executing others naked outside their city to incite terror in their enemies. Particularly when dealing with rebellious vassal-states, Assyria dealt brutally with soldiers and citizens in order to leave a message for the surrounding nations: Here is what happens to those who rebel against Assyria.⁸⁵ It is likely that the people of Judah would have knowledge of these Assyrian practices, and thus Isaiah's message regarding Egypt and Cush's inevitable defeat, a terrible revelation by itself, would be intensified by the sight of the naked prophet exclaiming that Judah's protectors would be led away in such a manner. No human aid will substitute for the sovereign protection of YHWH.⁸⁶

Nakedness as Humiliation: Conclusion

Isaiah 20 and 2 Samuel 10 attest to the existence of the practice of stripping as humiliation as described in chapter 3. In the case of David's men, Hanun stripped them in order to provoke a war with Israel, showing the significance of nakedness as shame in the ANE. The text is more than mere historiography, however, showing the character of David as one who is concerned for the well-being of his men. Isaiah 20 leverages the well-known practice in order to warn Judah against trusting in the strength of Egypt and Cush to protect them from the

⁸⁴See C. L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); and H. W. F. Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), 248-50. See further Michael G. Hasel, *Military Practice and Polemic: Israel's Laws of Warfare in Near Eastern Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), 51-76, for a description of Assyrian military practice in general.

⁸⁵Saggs, *The Might that Was Assyria*, 261-63.

⁸⁶For discussion of the theological message of Isaiah's sign act, see Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, NAC, vol. 15A (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2007), 368-69. Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 168-69, describes possible applications of this message in modern contexts where hope for security is not vested in world superpowers.

Assyrians. Isaiah warned them with strong rhetoric, but shockingly, he was also a living demonstration of the shameful future for those nations' citizens. Further, YHWH was not only protecting them from political folly, but as Judah's trust in the other nations amounted to apostasy against YHWH, he was also warning them of their own shameful future.

Hosea and Ezekiel: Dishonored God and Humiliated Wife

Hosea and Ezekiel also employ nakedness imagery in their ministries, but instead of describing Israel's enemies, they direct their language at Israel and Judah and use sexually charged metaphors in an effort to shock their hearers into repentance and obedience.⁸⁷ Portraying Israel and Judah as women, particularly as YHWH's wife, these metaphors incorporate the real stripping practices described in 2 Samuel 10 and Isaiah 20 above. Yet, their metaphors not only proscribe humiliating punishment, but they also describe YHWH's apostate wife as a lewd adulteress, giving herself sexually to anyone and everyone. Israel's continued existence and practices dishonor YHWH to the extent that he must respond decisively.

Hosea: God and Prophet Dishonored

YHWH commanded Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and

⁸⁷See Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); David J. Clark, "Sex-Related Imagery in the Prophets," *The Bible Translator* 33, no. 4 (October 1982): 409-13; Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005); Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro, eds., *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008); and Raymond C. Ortlund, *God's Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), for a discussion of the marital metaphor.

have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord” (Hos 1:2). When Hosea and Gomer bear children, YHWH directs him to name them symbolically, specifically Jezreel (זִרְעָאֵל), No Mercy (לֹא רַחֲמָה), and Not My People (לֹא עַמִּי). He then commands his children,

Plead with your mother, plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a parched land, and kill her with thirst (Hos 2:2-3).⁸⁸

Hosea’s marriage and children serve as prophetic signs in which YHWH uses the metaphors of adultery and stripping to communicate Israel’s apostasy and his forthcoming judgment.⁸⁹ It is difficult to discern a *precise* identity for the wife or the children in the text, as they both represent Israel in some capacity, but Garrett is probably correct that, generally, the wife symbolizes Israel’s leaders and the children represent the people.⁹⁰ The context of Hosea makes clear, however, that YHWH’s threat portends an enemy invasion and exile, a punishment for apostasy already threatened in the Pentateuch (e.g., Lev 26:18-39; Deut 4:25-26; 8:19-20; 28:15-68).

The text of Hosea describes the wife’s behavior primarily as זָנָה but also נָאֵף. Baumann analyzes the terms in detail and concludes that נָאֵף refers to adultery most often, whereas זָנָה concerns a woman’s illicit sexual behavior of any kind.⁹¹

⁸⁸Hos 2:4-5 MT. This section will follow English versification.

⁸⁹Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 24 (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 124, argue that these metaphors are prophecy and not allegory, namely because there are not two stories running parallel in which one can discern exact correspondence in the details. For further discussion on the nature of the marital metaphors, see Paul A. Kruger, “Israel the Harlot,” *JNSL* 11 (1983): 107-16.

⁹⁰Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC, vol. 19A (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 39. So too, John L. Mackay, *Hosea*, Mentor (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2012), 50-55, 83. Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 81-93, specifies that the mother is the religious elite of the nation.

⁹¹Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 43-46.

Hosea tends to use זנה or a derivative most often, and when נאף occurs, it stands in parallel or as a synonym to זנה, except in Hosea 4:2 where the term occurs in a list of several of the Ten Commandments. “Whore” would be the closest English term to translate זנה, but the discussion that follows uses the less obscene term “adulteress” to describe Hosea’s use of either זנה or נאף.⁹²

In Hosea 1:2, the subject of the adultery metaphor is Israel’s apostasy, i.e., turning away from YHWH (מאחרי יהוה). Between Hosea 1:2 and 2:2, YHWH does not specify further what “turning away” entails, though as mentioned above, the details and probability of Israel’s apostasy already existed in the Mosaic covenant. The details appear in the description of YHWH’s stripping of his metaphorical wife, however. She perceives that her “lovers” are the providers of her food, water, wool, flax, oil, and drink (Hos 2:5), as well as her vines and fig trees (Hos 2:12). She also engaged in the feast days of the Baals, offering sacrifices, adorning herself with rings and jewelry to pursue her lovers, and forgetting YHWH (Hos 2:13).

Hosea 2:2-3 warns that if Israel does not cease her adultery, YHWH will strip her naked (ערומה), make her as the day she was born, make her like a wilderness, make her like a parched land, and kill her with thirst. Because she turned away from YHWH, acting as though her lovers were the ones who gave her lavish provision (Hos 2:5, 12), he will take back his provision, including his wool and flax that cover her nakedness (Hos 2:9). He will strip her in front of her lovers, put an end to her Israelite feasts, destroy her vines and fig trees, and punish her for her false worship before the Baals (Hos 2:10-13). In this section, the metaphor and subject blur, yet the message is clear.⁹³ Israel has violated the covenant, and YHWH

⁹²See Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 46; and Ortlund, *God’s Unfaithful Wife*, 8.

⁹³It is common to attribute the origin of YHWH’s punishment in Hosea and Ezekiel to ANE stripping practices for divorce or adultery. For example, Cyrus H. Gordon, “Hosea 2:4-5 in Light of New Semitic Inscriptions,” *ZAW* 54 (1936): 277-80; and C. Kuhl, “Neue Dokumente zum Verständnis von Hosea 2:4-15,” *ZAW* 52 (1934): 102-09, are seminal works in modern discussions.

is bringing the covenant curses to bear on her.⁹⁴ See table 14 for a comparison of the covenant curses in Hosea 2 and Deuteronomy 28.⁹⁵

Table 14. Covenant curses in Hosea 2 and Deuteronomy

Curse	Deuteronomy	Hosea 2
Nakedness (ערוה, ערום)	28:48	2:3, 9-10
Bread (לחם)	8:9; 28:17, 48	2:5
Water (מתם)	8:7; 28:24	2:5
Wool (צמר)	8:13; 28:18, 48, 51	2:5, 9
Oil (שמן)	7:13; 8:8; 11:14; 28:40, 48, 51	2:5, 8
Grain (דגן)	7:13; 11:14; 28:38, 42, 48, 51	2:8-9
Wine (תירוש)	7:13; 11:14; 28:39, 42, 48, 51	2:8-9

YHWH's threat of deprivation is clear in this text, but Hosea 2:10 emphasizes also his intent to shame her publicly, "Now I will uncover her lewdness

See Ryan C. Hanley, "The Background and Purpose of Stripping the Adulteress in Hosea 2," *JETS* 60, no. 1 (March 2017): 89-103, for a survey of the supposed ANE backgrounds. Brad E. Kelle, "Hosea 1-3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship," *Currents in Biblical Research* 7 (2009): 179-216, gives a helpful summary of interpretive trends in Hosea 1-3, including the background of the stripping metaphor. The matter of background is complicated, but Baumann, *Love and Violence*, 67-81, surveys the options and concludes rightly that interpreters should be more cautious positing correspondence of meaning or practice based only on some shared vocabulary with ANE texts.

⁹⁴Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC, vol. 31 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), xxxi-xli, compiled a list of the covenant curses in the Pentateuch.

⁹⁵See Hanley, "The Background and Purpose of Stripping the Adulteress in Hosea 2," 89-103, for an argument that the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28 provide a better background for the stripping metaphor in Hosea 2 than ANE stripping practices for divorce or adultery as is commonly suggested by Hosea interpreters. See also Mackay, *Hosea*, 90.

in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall rescue her out of my hand.” The “lovers” represent Israel’s affinity for the cultures around her, particularly those who serve as allies against her enemies. Hosea 8:9-10 clarifies the identity of “lovers” in the book: “For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up.” Yet, Hosea 2 shows that Israel considered these nations to be more than allies. Rather, she perceived that they were her benefactors, providing her bread and water, wool and flax, and oil and water, i.e., the necessities for life (Hos 2:5). A husband would provide those things in a marriage, so Hosea’s metaphor compares Israel to a wife who would not only go after lovers but irrationally attribute her provision to them.

YHWH’s threat is to uncover Israel’s nakedness before her lovers (Hos 2:3, 9-10).⁹⁶ Discussions that attempt to show that stripping an adulterous wife was an acceptable practice in the ANE often distract from the stunning reality of YHWH’s threat to strip his wife.⁹⁷ The discussion of public nudity in chapter 3, as well as the discussion above on 2 Samuel 10 and Isaiah 20, clarify that public stripping would shock the people of any culture, even if it were an acceptable practice to punish an adulteress. Trying to argue for its commonness thus obscures the intent of the warning. This threat conveys how thoroughly corrupt Israel had become, and in response, YHWH threatens to treat her as he would an enemy (e.g., Isa 47:2-3; Jer

⁹⁶On the meaning of נבלות, see Saul M. Olyan, “In the Sight of Her Lovers: On the Interpretation of *nablūt* in Hos 2:12,” *BZ* 36 (1992): 255-61. He discusses the range of interpretations scholars have suggested and offers that perhaps the meaning of the word is intentionally ambiguous. The metaphorical situation of stripping lends itself to a meaning of nakedness, of the symbolic wife and of Israel’s thought. In other words, Israel’s folly, presuming that these other nations were her protection and provision instead of YHWH, will be uncovered in the sight of all the nations. Rather than a lover, she proves to be a laughingstock among those she considered equals.

⁹⁷See, e.g., Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 77-78; and Hanley, “The Background and Purpose of Stripping the Adulteress in Hosea 2,” 101-02.

49:10; Nah 2:8; 3:5; Hab 3:13; Rev 17:16).⁹⁸

Hosea thus takes the threat contained in the Mosaic covenant, along with language associating apostasy with adultery, and combines them in the powerful metaphor of stripping, symbolizing both Israel's deprivation and her humiliation.⁹⁹ Specifically, YHWH threatens to strip her naked as on the day of her birth, making her like a wilderness and parched land to kill her with thirst. This image has a double meaning. As in Job 1:21, nakedness at birth is a reminder that one comes into the world with nothing, lacking all provision and depending on someone to care for every need.¹⁰⁰ Thus, stripping the metaphorical wife describes Israel's complete deprivation of all provision. Yet YHWH's message also uses imagery that alludes to Israel's birth, i.e., when he brought her out of Egypt and into the wilderness, an allusion clarified in Hosea 2:14-15, "She came out of the land of Egypt."¹⁰¹ At that time, Israel complained that YHWH had brought them to the wilderness to kill them with thirst, the same words YHWH now uses in his threat.¹⁰² In other words, he did not intend to kill them with thirst then, but he will now.

As an important part of YHWH's message to Israel, and as further correlation to the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant, YHWH does not merely

⁹⁸See the discussion below on Ezekiel 16 for an assessment of YHWH's seemingly "abusive" behavior.

⁹⁹The language of spiritual adultery in the Pentateuch occurs in Exod 34:15-16; Lev 17:7; 20:5; Deut 31:16.

¹⁰⁰See also chap. 6 on Job 1:21 and Eccl 5:15.

¹⁰¹See Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 226. They suggest also that the allusion to the wilderness is also an implicit point of hope in Hosea's message as the wilderness was a time of testing (Deut 8:1-10). Derek Drummond Bass, "Hosea's Use of Scripture: An Analysis of His Hermeneutics" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, 88-91; and Mackay, *Hosea*, 79, argue similarly.

¹⁰²"Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" (Exod 17:3).

intend to destroy and shame his metaphorical wife. His discipline serves the purpose of arresting her attention, leading her to realize her error of reliance upon her so-called lovers and turn back to YHWH, “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her” (Hos 2:14).¹⁰³ The remainder of the chapter is a word of restoration and includes YHWH’s promise to restore the grain, wine, and oil, i.e., the provision which he had stripped from her (Hos 2:22). Like Deuteronomy 28, YHWH’s punishment in Hosea is severe, but as he promised in Deuteronomy 30:1-10, so too in Hosea, his last word is restoration.

Ezekiel: The Shameless Will Be Shamed

Ezekiel prophesies over a century after Hosea and employs the same marriage metaphor, though he presses the details of the metaphor with greater specificity.¹⁰⁴ In Ezekiel 16, the prophet portrays Jerusalem as a helpless infant, left to die until YHWH rescues her.¹⁰⁵ Once she matures sexually and YHWH takes her as a wife, she uses his provision and gifts to pursue her lovers. Similarly, Ezekiel 23 portrays Samaria and Jerusalem as two sisters who commit spiritual fornication. Ezekiel’s metaphors function in much the same way as Hosea’s, but Ezekiel’s language strains against cultural decency, bordering on pornographic.¹⁰⁶ Regarding

¹⁰³The contrast between YHWH’s treatment of his people and his enemies is remarkable. Most texts indicating that YHWH will strip his own people also convey his intent to restore them when they are humbled and repentant. On the other hand, YHWH’s treatment of his enemies shows no such hope (e.g., Isa 47:2-3; Jer 49:10; Nah 2:8; 3:5; Hab 3:13; Rev 17:16). One is restorative discipline, and the other is just punishment.

¹⁰⁴James A. Durlless, *The Metaphorical Narratives in the Book of Ezekiel* (Lewiston, NY: Edward Mellon Press, 2006), 104-07, examines the history of the adulterous wife metaphor leading up to Ezekiel’s use.

¹⁰⁵Exposure was a method of “birth control” in the ANE. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel, Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990), 77; and Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 22 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 275.

¹⁰⁶Durlless, *The Metaphorical Narratives in the Book of Ezekiel*, 132-33, lists several rhetorical purposes of Ezekiel’s use of the adultery metaphor. Regarding the use of strong language,

the graphic nature of Ezekiel's language, Block notes,

No one presses the margins of literary propriety as severely as Ezekiel. He had earlier softened potentially offensive ideas with euphemisms (e.g., 7:17). In this chapter, however, through the priestly prophet Yahweh throws caution to the wind . . . But the semipornographic style is a deliberate rhetorical device designed to produce a strong emotional response.¹⁰⁷

Ezekiel 16. In Ezekiel 16, the prophet allegorizes the history of Israel and uses nakedness imagery in three distinct ways. First, he describes Jerusalem's state before her covenant with YHWH as a naked infant, without provision and left to die (Ezek 16:3-7).¹⁰⁸ YHWH preserves the baby's life, and when she grows into adulthood, he takes her as a wife and lavishes abundant provision and beauty upon her (Ezek 16:8-14).¹⁰⁹ Second, Ezekiel employs obscene nakedness imagery, conveying in graphic detail the obscenity of Jerusalem's apostasy, as she uses YHWH's provision of splendor and fame to prostitute herself out to her lovers, i.e., neighboring ANE nations (Ezek 16:15-34). Finally, like Hosea, Ezekiel employs the metaphor of stripping to describe YHWH's punishment and humiliation of Jerusalem, namely that he will allow her "lovers" to abuse her (Ezek 16:35-43).

Ezekiel describes Jerusalem as an infant like Hosea, emphasizing her pitiable state, and even as YHWH preserves her life and as she grows into sexual

Durlesser argues that such language engages the emotions, requires one to relate to the story, and the desired outcome is that one is transformed by the message. See also Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 462.

¹⁰⁷Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 466-67. Block lists the specific occurrences of particularly graphic language, noting how euphemism serves not to soften the language, but to increase its impact.

¹⁰⁸Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 274, discusses the practices for newborn care described in Ezekiel, i.e., rubbing with salt and oil and swaddling, practices that persist in Palestine in modern times.

¹⁰⁹Meir Malul, "Adoption of Foundlings in the Bible and Mesopotamian Documents: A Study of Some Legal Metaphors in Ezekiel 16:1-7," *JSOT* 46 (1990): 106-13, suggests the phrase "in your blood, live" implies YHWH's adoption of the infant.

maturity, she is still entirely naked (ערום ועריה).¹¹⁰ As she reaches sexual maturity though, Jerusalem's nakedness is a danger not just to the elements, but she is vulnerable to those who may take advantage of her.¹¹¹ YHWH spreads the hem of his garment over her, covering her nakedness and symbolizing his marriage to her.¹¹² Thus, in this first section, nakedness represents Jerusalem's vulnerability as a helpless youth, lacking provision and protection. The inverse is YHWH's covering of her nakedness and lavish provision for her needs.

Next, Jerusalem hijacks her privileged provision and prostitutes herself to any passerby, using the very things YHWH had provided her in their marriage to support her promiscuity (Ezek 16:15-34).¹¹³ As noted in chapter 2, the OT often uses euphemism to soften the language of nakedness and sexual imagery, but Ezekiel here employs euphemism to shock his audience by *focusing* their imagination on the sexual organs. He indicts Jerusalem for "setting up shop" on the streets and spreading her legs to anyone who passes by (Ezek 16:24-25), and for prostituting herself with Egypt, her neighbor with large "flesh" (Ezek 16:26).¹¹⁴ When he handed

¹¹⁰Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 429, describes the combination of ערום and עריה as alliterative hendiadys, using a predicate adjective (ערום) and a noun (עריה) to emphasize her total nudity. She has *nothing*. See also Walther Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 324. Ezekiel and Hosea's description of Israel's birth (Hos 2:3) expresses the sense of the proverb in Job 1:21 and Eccl 5:15 that compares the nakedness of birth with one's contingency upon someone else to provide even the basic necessities of life. See the discussion of contingency in Job and Ecclesiastes in chap. 6.

¹¹¹Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 482; and Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 430.

¹¹²See Paul A. Kruger, "The Hem of the Garment in Marriage: The Meaning of the Symbolic Gesture in Ruth 3:9 and Ezek 16:8," *JNSL* 12 (1984): 79-86; and Kruger, "Symbolic Acts Relating to Old Testament Treaties and Relationships," *Journal for Semitics* 2 (1990): 156-70, for evidence that spreading one's garment over the female symbolizes a marriage covenant. See also Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 277-78; and Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 340. Deut 22:30 expresses the opposite, i. e. violation of what one's father has covered (לא יגלה בנף אטיוי).

¹¹³Ezekiel accounts for nearly all of YHWH's provision in Ezek 16:9-14 as he describes Jerusalem's promiscuous behavior in Ezek 16:15-19, e.g., jewelry, gold and silver, garments, fine flour, honey, and oil, etc.

¹¹⁴פֶּשֶׁק (opening/parting) is used only here and Prov 13:3 (opening the lips) in the OT.

her over to the Philistines, even they were ashamed of Jerusalem's behavior, yet shamelessly, she pursued also the Assyrians and Babylonians (Ezek 16:27-29). Pronouncing judgment on her, YHWH is disgusted that she was sexually aroused by and uncovered her nakedness for her lovers (Ezek 16:36).¹¹⁵ Ezekiel employs nakedness language to identify shameful behavior, like Leviticus 18 and 20, but his use is explicit and obscene, shocking all but the shameless Jerusalem.

The final use of nakedness imagery in Ezekiel 16 corresponds to Hosea's declaration (Hos 2:10) but with greater detail:

Therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure . . . I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness . . . And I will give you into their hands . . . They shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful jewels and leave you naked and bare. They shall bring up a crowd against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women. I will make you stop playing the whore, and you shall also give payment no more (Ezek 16:37-41).

YHWH's threat in Ezekiel, like in Hosea, depicts the woman's punishment as denudation.¹¹⁶ YHWH gathers the woman's lovers around her and uncovers her nakedness in front of them so that they see *all* her nakedness (Ezek 16:37). YHWH not only uncovers her nakedness, the reader is informed that her lovers will see her nakedness, leaving no doubt that she is shamed. Further, the executor of Jerusalem's

Greengberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 282, argues that its use suggests opening something that normally remains closed. בשר (flesh) occurs here as a euphemism for the male sexual organ. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 283; and Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 439.

¹¹⁵G. R. Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Ezekiel," *Biblica* 19 (1938): 65; Moshe Greenberg, "NĦŠTK (Ezek 16:36): Another Hebrew Cognate of Akkadian *naḥāšu*," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein*, ed. Maria de Jong Ellis (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), 85-86; and Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 285-86, note regarding נחשת that the term is "a reference to female genital 'distillation' produced by sexual arousal."

¹¹⁶See the notes above detailing those who perceive this practice as common for divorce or adultery. Whatever the background, the focus is on deprivation of YHWH's provision and the humiliation of the shameless woman.

punishment is ambiguous. YHWH uncovers her nakedness (Ezek 16:37) *and* her lovers strip her of her garments, leaving her naked and bare (Ezek 16:39).¹¹⁷ No doubt exists, however, that YHWH commissions the punishment and perceives that her plight will assuage the wrath and jealousy that she evoked (Ezek 16:42).¹¹⁸

Restoration, however, is the final word in this text, much like Hosea 2 (Ezek 16:53-63).¹¹⁹ Ezekiel's shocking language sets up the largest contrast possible. Infant Jerusalem was abandoned, and YHWH not only kept her alive, he even married her and made her the most beautiful woman on earth. She was not only ungrateful for his lavish grace, but she abused it and conducted herself in a shameless way that *no* ANE neighbor would permit. Even the Philistines were ashamed of her behavior (Ezek 16:27). YHWH's retributive justice is both reasonable and severe, but even then, his final word is restoration. His justice is disciplinary rather than only punitive, seeking not to destroy his wife, but through her humility

¹¹⁷See Isa 10:5-7. YHWH wields Assyria like a rod, though Assyria intends only to conquer and destroy.

¹¹⁸Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 467-470, conducts an important assessment of texts which appear to cast YHWH in an abusive light, including Hosea 2. He concludes that the metaphors portray Israel as conducting herself in a sexually promiscuous manner, and, though YHWH has appealed to her persistently, she refuses to admit her folly and is permitted to bear the consequences of her behavior. Indeed, one should permit the offensiveness of the metaphors to remain in translations in order to perceive how great Israel's sin was. YHWH exhibits patience that outstrips any other ANE deity, but he is also a God of justice (Exod 34:6-7). See also M. G. Swanepoel, "Ezekiel 16: Abandoned Child, Bride Adorned, or Unfaithful Wife," in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image, and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Press, 2003), 84-104. For an in-depth study of Ezekiel 16 and 23 from the feminist perspective, see Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife*, SBLDS 130 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). Further studies of nakedness imagery in the NT, particularly stripping, should consider the implications of YHWH's words in Ezek 16:42 when discussing the substitutionary nature of Christ's atonement as expressed in the Gospels.

¹¹⁹T. J. Betts, *Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of Tôrâ*, Studies in Biblical Literature 74 (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 92-121, demonstrates Ezekiel's reliance upon the Pentateuch, noting particularly that teaching the Torah was his message. As such, the restoration texts of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30 were indelibly linked to Ezekiel's teaching. See also Hummel, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 462-63; and Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 516-18.

and repentance regain her love and devotion.¹²⁰

Ezekiel 23. Ezekiel 23 is similar to Ezekiel 16 in many aspects, so this section highlights only new information.¹²¹ Ezekiel still uses the imagery and language of prostitution and adultery in this chapter, yet he depicts two wives of YHWH, Oholah and Oholibah, who represent Samaria and Jerusalem, respectively (Ezek 23:4). A key detail in this text is that Jerusalem had witnessed Samaria's apostasy and punishment yet still followed in her footsteps (Ezek 23:11). Moreover, describing their youth in Egypt, YHWH claims that their promiscuity began even before he took them as his own, "They played the whore in Egypt; they played the whore in their youth; there their breasts [טש] were pressed and their virgin bosoms [דד] handled" (Ezek 23:3).¹²² Thus, rather than the pitiable image of an abandoned infant as in Ezekiel 16, here Jerusalem and her sister are actively pursuing sexual relationships with their lovers.

Oholah (Samaria) pursues Assyria, and like her Egyptian lovers, the Assyrians handle her virgin bosom and pour out their promiscuous lust on her (Ezek 23:5-10). YHWH hands Samaria over to her Assyrian lovers in response, and they uncover her nakedness (גלו ערוותה), take away her sons and daughters, and kill her with a sword. Oholibah (Jerusalem) saw this occur and became even more

¹²⁰See Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr., *Ezekiel*, NAC, vol. 17 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 179, on the role of humility and repentance in her restoration. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 292-306, provides a helpful overview of the theme and critical issues concerning Ezekiel 16, including restoration language.

¹²¹Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 729, notes the significant differences between Ezekiel 16 and 23, particularly that Ezekiel 16 roots Jerusalem's defilement in cultic harlotry, Ezekiel 23 roots it in political unfaithfulness, and Ezekiel 23 does not contain a message of hope. See also Durlusser, *Metaphorical Narratives in the Book of Ezekiel*, 135-37, who shows the distinct subjects of the metaphors between Ezekiel 16 (religious apostasy) and Ezekiel 23 (foreign alliances).

¹²²דד refers specifically to the nipple, though it may also refer to the entire breast. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, AB, vol. 22A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 471, 474; and Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 698.

promiscuous than Samaria, going after both Assyria *and* Babylon (Ezek 23:11-21). Like in Ezekiel 16, Jerusalem uncovers her nakedness (תגל את-עריותה) openly, causing YHWH to turn away (Ezek 23:18). Ezekiel intensifies his graphic language, indicating that Jerusalem lusted after her lovers who had sexual organs like donkeys and emission like horses (Ezek 23:20).¹²³ Jerusalem's punishment is listed in the form of actual warfare rather than metaphor, yet some symbolic images persist, e.g., stripping off her clothing and jewelry (Ezek 23:26, 29).¹²⁴ Unlike Ezekiel 16, this chapter contains no hope of restoration, and the reader must wait until Ezekiel 34 to see what her future holds.

Nakedness Imagery in Hosea and Ezekiel

These prophets use nakedness language to emphasize three facets of Israel and Judah's existence, symbolizing both as women. First, both prophets describe the woman's earliest years as an infant, naked, without provision, and in Ezekiel's version, left to die. Next, as the infant matures into a woman, YHWH takes her as a wife, and their use of nakedness language shifts to describe her behavior toward the nations around her as adultery (גאף) and prostitution (זונה). Ezekiel uses explicit nakedness imagery and euphemism describing the sexual organs of the woman and her lovers, this language serving to shock the audience and reveal the extent of Israel's depravity. Lastly, like 2 Samuel 10 and Isaiah 20, YHWH threatens to publicly strip his metaphorical wife, shaming her through the expansionist ambitions of Assyria and Babylon.

¹²³בשר חמורים בשרם וזרמת סוסים זרמתם (The flesh of donkeys is their flesh and the emission of horses is their emission). See Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 41; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 480, for further explanation of these terms.

¹²⁴Though as the section on stripping as humiliation above shows, even this practice was a warfare tactic.

Both Hosea and Ezekiel's messages offer hope for future restoration, however. Given the extent of devastation, one is surprised that anything good could emerge through YHWH's judgment, and indeed in both Hosea 2:14-23 and Ezekiel 16:53-63; 36:1-37:28, the texts shift abruptly and surprisingly into messages of hope and restoration. Ezekiel and Hosea incorporate language from Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30, and while the shift within the prophets' messages is dramatic, the Pentateuchal promises of restoration are not unexpected.¹²⁵ YHWH restores the fortunes of his people according to the promises of his covenant, but he does not do so arbitrarily. Leviticus 26:40-42 and Deuteronomy 30:1-10 indicate that YHWH responds to the repentant hearts of his people, hearts that he himself changes (Deut 30:6). In Hosea 2:14-17, Israel responds to YHWH's wooing in the wilderness as she did in the days of her youth. To the extent that her nakedness represented the deprivation of her basic needs, YHWH promises to clothe her abundantly, providing her grain, wine, and oil (Hos 2:22). Similarly, Jerusalem responds to YHWH's punishment in repentance (Ezek 16:61), the result of his cleansing which includes a new heart (Ezek 36:27) and amounts to resurrection from the dead (Ezek 37). When she repents, YHWH clothes her with provision again (Ezek 16:53; 36:29-30, 33-35).

Other Uses of Nakedness Imagery in the Prophets

Other texts in the Prophets incorporate nakedness language as discussed in the sections above. Isaiah 57:3-11 incorporates the adulterous wife metaphor, and YHWH accuses her of opening her bed to her lover and looking at his nakedness (Isa 57:8).¹²⁶ Several texts employ stripping language as a warning or announcement

¹²⁵Betts, *Ezekiel the Priest*, 118-21, shows the Pentateuchal basis for the restoration language in Ezekiel, especially in the salvation oracles (Ezek 34-48), noting that those oracles expounded on the promise of restoration in Ezekiel 16 and 20.

¹²⁶She looks at his "hand" (טף), a euphemism for his sexual organ. See Brevard Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 466-67; R. Reed Lessing, *Isaiah 56-66*,

against Israel and Judah of YHWH's just punishment for their sin. In his indictment against Israel, Amos promises that even the mightiest of Israel's warriors will flee naked on the day of YHWH's judgment (Amos 2:16). Jeremiah describes YHWH's coming judgment against Judah and includes nakedness imagery, "I myself will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be seen (Jer 13:26)."¹²⁷

YHWH also threatens to strip, and thus humiliate, Israel's enemies, only he does not promise them a future hope. Those who are not God's people will be destroyed and shamed.¹²⁸ The Lord consigns Babylon to destruction in Isaiah: "Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your disgrace shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will spare no one" (Isa 47:2-3). Jeremiah announces Edom's defeat, "I have stripped Esau bare; I have uncovered his hiding places, and he is not able to conceal himself" (Jer 49:10). Finally, Nahum prophesies the downfall of Nineveh, "Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame" (Nah 3:5).

Isaiah and Micah both contain texts in which nakedness language suggests a form of mourning.¹²⁹ Isaiah calls out against the complacent women of Jerusalem, "Tremble, you women who are at ease, shudder, you complacent ones; strip, and make yourselves bare, and tie sackcloth around your waist" (Isa 32:11). His prophecy

ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014), 87; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 480; and Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, NAC, vol. 15B (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2009), 555.

¹²⁷See also Jer 13:22, where Judah wonders why her skirts have been removed (נגלו שוליד).

¹²⁸This theme persists in John's Apocalypse as the ten horns and beast strip Babylon naked in response to YHWH's decree of judgment (Rev 17:16-18).

¹²⁹See the discussion of mourning in Job in chap. 6.

to these women is a call to mourning for the coming destruction.¹³⁰ Similarly, Micah responds to the news of YHWH's coming judgment upon Samaria in lament, "For this I will lament and wail; I will go stripped and naked" (Mic 1:8).¹³¹

The last group of texts to consider for this chapter concerns the class of the poorly clothed, called "the naked" (עירום, ערום).¹³² All three occurrences of this class in the Prophets focus not on the state of the poor, but on the actions of the righteous person. Isaiah decries Judah's meaningless fasts and insists that YHWH looks for a fast in which one seeks justice for the oppressed and poor, including providing coverings for the naked (Isa 58:6-7). Similarly, in Ezekiel YHWH assures Judah that he will not punish the righteous for their fathers' sins. The righteous one seeks justice and cares for the needy, including feeding the hungry and clothing the naked (Ezek 18:7, 16). Righteousness toward the naked corresponds to YHWH's actions in Genesis 3:21, as well as Japheth and Shem's in Genesis 9:23.

Conclusion: Nakedness Imagery in the Prophets

Nakedness imagery in the Prophets relies on the same association with shame to evoke strong responses to the contexts the passages describe. The stories of Saul and David in Samuel incorporate nakedness language to show the *humiliation* of Saul and the *humility* of David. Saul, seeking to hold onto the kingship YHWH had taken from him is reduced to a shameful mouthpiece for God as he seeks to destroy YHWH's anointed king (1 Sam 19:24). When he uses nakedness language to

¹³⁰See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 433-35; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 367-68; Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 544-45; Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 417; and Young, *Isaiah 1-39*, 394-95.

¹³¹Rather than "stripped" as the ESV has, שולל is probably "barefoot." Like Isaiah 20, Micah's lack of attire may represent the captives who will be exiled. See Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC, vol. 32 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 20; and Bruce K. Waltke, "Micah," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas E. McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 624-25.

¹³²See the same class of "the naked" discussed in the Writings in chap. 6.

attempt to shame his son Jonathan, his words ring hollow as Jonathan affirms YHWH's choice of David, even as Jonathan is willing to strip his own garments to place them on the next king (1 Sam 18:4; 20:30). Finally, when Saul's daughter, Michal, attempts to shame David with nakedness language, David is given the opportunity to show that true honor consists of humility before YHWH. Instead of shaming David, Michal is herself shamed and bears no children throughout her life (2 Sam 6).

Isaiah 20 and 2 Samuel 10 attest to the practice of stripping in the ANE, a tactic used to humiliate one's enemy. In 2 Samuel 10, David's men are shamed by Hanun, and David shows a concern for their honor by providing a place for them to wait while their beards regrow. Isaiah dramatizes the coming defeat of Egypt and Cush, particularly the way their captives will be paraded nude into exile (Isa 20:1-6). The purpose of this dramatization is to deter Judah from trusting in Egypt and Cush as protection against the Assyrians. Both passages simply narrate situations in which nakedness occurred and do not suggest any theological meaning of nakedness imagery. They do provide background for nakedness imagery in Hosea and Ezekiel, however.

Hosea, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Nahum incorporate nakedness imagery to express the humble beginnings of humans and birth and the shameful of being unfaithful to YHWH. Both Hosea 2 and Ezekiel 16 convey the contingency of humans at their birth, emphasizing the need for YHWH's provision. Yet these prophets intensify their use of nakedness language in their descriptions of Israel and Judah's spiritual adultery, particularly Ezekiel whose language is designed to offend the senses. Additionally, these texts portray YHWH using the stripping practice to humiliate his wayward wife and accomplish her destruction, taking the threats of deprivation in the Pentateuch, i.e., Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, and unveiling the graphic details of this judgment. Ultimately, however, YHWH's intense

judgment is disciplinary and results in Israel's redemption as he regains her affection. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos use similar imagery regarding Judah and Israel's judgment, though not as detailed, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Nahum employ stripping language to warn of judgment against Babylon, Edom, and Nineveh, respectively.

The Prophets rely on the inherent shameful of nakedness language to convey powerful messages regarding the depth of human sin and the fury of YHWH's wrath. Few images can evoke the revulsion of rampant promiscuity, particularly against the backdrop of God's gracious rescue and provision. The horror of a woman being stripped naked publicly forces one to consider what led to this action. None of the uses of nakedness imagery in the Prophets express a positive connotation of nudity like Genesis 2:25. YHWH's metaphorical wife is both naked *and* ashamed. The final chapter discusses nakedness imagery in the Writings, where negative images abound, but a glimpse of Eden remains as the only positive use of nakedness language in the OT: sexual love in marriage.

CHAPTER 6

NAKEDNESS IMAGERY IN THE WRITINGS

The Writings use nakedness imagery in much the same way as the Pentateuch and Prophets. The negative context of nakedness as a shameful state functions as the primary reason nakedness imagery so powerfully conveys the author's meaning. Nakedness language occurs in several texts to indicate the helpless state of the poor and also as a backdrop to express that YHWH expects his righteous servants to cover their nakedness (Ps 102:17; Job 22:6; 24:7, 10; 2 Chr 28:15). Nakedness imagery also communicates exposure, and thus danger, before one's enemy, particularly YHWH (Ps 137:7; 141:8; Job 26:6; Lam 1:8; 4:21; Ezra 4:14). Unique to the Writings, however, this section of the Old Testament introduces the use of nakedness imagery to express the concept of contingency (Job 1; Eccl 5) and apart from Genesis 2:25, the Writings also incorporate the only other positive use of nakedness imagery in the OT, namely sexual intimacy in the marriage relationship (Prov 5 and Song of Songs).

Job and Ecclesiastes: Contingency

The book of Job represents at least three distinct uses of nakedness imagery, namely contingency, poverty, and exposure. The latter two uses are discussed below. Job 1:21 and Ecclesiastes 5:14 (5:15 MT), however, both represent the theological concept of contingency, one a declaration of trust in YHWH's plans (Job), the other a wise word of warning against materialistic toil (Ecclesiastes). Contingency is, "A condition that exists when one object or being is dependent (contingent) on another and cannot exist or function in the same way without that

other; the absence of necessity.”¹ These texts in Job and Ecclesiastes affirm human contingency, namely, that a person does not exist apart from God, and he does not control the existence of his family or material possessions.

Contingency in Job

Job received news from four messengers in sequence that he had lost all his animals, servants, and children through death or theft (Job 1:13-19). The reader knows from Job 1:6-12 that the Lord evaluated Job as unique among the people of the earth, blameless and upright (איש תם וישר), one who feared God and turned away from evil (ירע אלהים וסר מרע). When the Satan (השטן) retorts that Job only fears God because YHWH has blessed him, the Lord permits the Satan to afflict Job (Job 1:12).² Contrary to the claim of the Satan, Job does not curse God, but instead he rises, tears his robe, shaves his head, and then falls to the ground in worship (Job 1:20). He then cries out, “Naked [ערם] I came from my mother’s womb, and naked [ערם] shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). Job’s words reveal that he understands his life, family, and possessions come from God, and thus he affirms YHWH’s right to take back these things.

¹Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 67.

²Most scholarly discussions of השטן dissociate the figure from Satan (the Devil), usually because the article ה precludes the term as a proper name, and because a developed doctrine of Satan does not arise until nearer the NT era. This section translates the term woodenly as “the Satan” and leaves the reader to pursue further information in the following discussions: Samuel E. Balentine, *Job*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2006), 48-54; David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, WBC, vol. 17 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 19-22; Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A New Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 89; John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 71-73; Tremper Longman III, *Job*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 82-83; Marvin H. Pope, *Job: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB, vol. 15 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 9-11; C. L. Seow, *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 272-74; and N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job: A New Commentary* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1957), 38-45.

Job's actions in Job 1:20 depict the common rituals of one in mourning, both in the OT and in ANE practice.³ Tearing one's garments occurs frequently as a response to situations causing grief.⁴ For example, Jacob tears his garments when he believes Joseph to be dead (Gen 37:34). Contrary to expectation, Aaron is told *not* to tear his clothes after the Lord strikes down his sons, Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:6). Joshua tears his clothes after the men of Ai killed several Israelites when Achan sinned (Josh 7:6).⁵ Beside tearing garments, the OT also contains several references to shaving the head or beard.⁶ Those mourning the destruction of Moab shaved their

³The following offer significant discussion of mourning and ritual in the OT and ANE: Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Emanuel Feldman, *Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement and Mourning: Law as Theology* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1977), 79-108; Andrew M. Mbuvi, "The Ancient Mediterranean Values of 'Honor and Shame' as a Hermeneutical Lens of Reading the Book of Job," *OTE* 23, no. 3 (2010): 752-68; Xuan Huong Thi Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 302 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); and A. J. Wensinck, *Some Semitic Rites of Mourning and Religion: Studies on Their Origin and Mutual Relation* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1917).

⁴Clines, *Job 1-20*, 34; and Seow, *Job 1-21*, 281, suggest that tearing clothes identifies one with the dead. Seow goes further and suggests that tearing clothes may substitute for lacerating one's flesh, a common ANE ritual. Clines offers additional possibilities, namely that tearing garments may be symbolic of the ending of a significant element of one's life or that the violent physical exertion serves to relieve some of the shock or horror of the event. For other discussions of tearing clothes as a rite of grief or mourning, see Morris Jastrow, "The Tearing of Garments as a Symbol of Mourning, with Especial Reference to the Customs of the Ancient Hebrews," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 21 (1900): 23-39; Obiorah M. Jerome and Favour C. Uroko, "Tearing of Clothes: A Study of an Ancient Practice in the Old Testament," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39 (2018): 1-8; and Eileen F. de Ward, "Mourning Customs in 1, 2 Samuel," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23, no. 1 (1972): 1-27.

⁵Other texts noting the tearing of garments in response to death or other distressing circumstances: Gen 37:29; 44:13; Num 14:6; Judg 11:35; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 1:2, :11; 3:31; 13:19, 31; 15:32; 1 Kgs 21:27; 2 Kgs 2:12; 5:7-8; 6:30; 11:14; 18:37; 19:1; 22:11, 19; 2 Chr 23:13; 34:19, 27; Ezra 9:3, 5; Esth 4:1; Job 2:20; Isa 36:22; 37:1; Jer 36:34; 41:5; and Joel 2:13.

⁶Other texts noting the shaving (or tearing out) of the hair on one's head or beard: Isa 15:2; 22:12; Jer 7:29; 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37; Ezek 7:18; 27:31; Amos 8:10; and Mic 1:16. Though this action is a common expression of grief or distress, both Clines, *Job 1-20*, 34, and Seow, *Job 1-21*, 281, note that cutting the hair or beard is forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Deut 14:1 and Lev 19:27-28). Deut 14:1 reads, "You shall not make baldness between your eyes for the dead" (לֹא־תְשִׂימוּ קַרְחָה בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם (לְמַת). Lev 19:27-28 is a little more complicated as only cutting the body is associated with the dead. Hartley, *Job*, 77, shows, however, that Lev 19:27 seems to prohibit lacerating the skin, not cutting the hair generally (לֹא תִקְפוּ פֶאת רֵאשֵׁיכֶם וְלֹא תִשְׁחִית אֶת פֶּאת זָקֶנְךָ). Supporting this interpretation, note that neither text mentions hair specifically. If Hartley is correct, then no legal conflict occurs in the texts

heads and beards (Isa 15:2). Jeremiah calls for lamentation and shearing of the hair as he announces the coming punishment of Judah (Jer 7:29). Two other mourning actions typical of biblical examples are the donning of sackcloth and weeping, actions which Job does not perform here.⁷ Note, however, that Job's three friends display several of these mourning rites, tearing their robes, wailing, weeping, and they also throw dust on their heads toward the sky (Job 2:12).⁸

In light of these mourning rituals, along with the accompanying internal or emotional grief a person would experience, Job's final action in Job 1:20-21 contradicts expectation. After tearing his robe and shearing his hair, Job falls to the ground and worships (ויפל ארצה וישתחו), saying "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). Commentators differ on the degree of Job's grief or lamentation expressed in this event, but most generally recognize that Job's response displays great piety and trust in YHWH.⁹ Job clearly affirms the sovereignty of YHWH in his comment that YHWH gives and takes away, and he clearly blesses YHWH instead of cursing him, contrary to the Satan's claim.¹⁰ How

noted above.

⁷Texts noting the wearing of sackcloth: Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; 21:10; 1 Kgs 20:31-32; 21:27; 2 Kgs 6:30; 19:1-2; 1 Chr 21:16; Neh 9:1; Esth 4:1-4; Job 16:15; Ps 30:1; 35:13; 69:12; Isa 3:24; 15:3; 20:2; 22:12; 37:1-2; 50:3; 58:5; Jer 4:8; 6:26; 48:37; 49:3; Lam 2:10; Ezek 7:18; 27:31; Dan 9:3; Joel 1:8, 13; Amos 8:10; and Jonah 3:5-8. Texts associating weeping or wailing with grief: Gen 37:35; Deut 34:8; 2 Sam 19:2-3; Neh 1:4; 8:9; Est 4:3; Job 30:31; Amos 5:16; and Mic 1:8.

⁸Other texts associating calamity with dirt or ashes: Josh 7:6; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 1:2; 13:19; Esth 4:1-3; and Isa 47:1.

⁹Clines, *Job 1-20*, 35, for example, suggests that Job's response is atypical of the mourner and emphasizes his great piety through his restraint. Seow, *Job 1-21*, 281, and Longman, *Job*, 86, note, on the other hand, that Job's actions display both grief and restraint.

¹⁰The word "bless" (ברך), instead of "curse" (קלל), is used several times in Job to mean both "bless" (1:10, 21; 42:12) and "curse" (1:5, 11; 2:5, 9). S. R. Driver and George B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, ICC, vol. 14 (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1921), 8, suggest that ברך was a euphemism (antiphrasis) introduced by the scribes to avoid using the word "curse" to refer to God. Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and a Commentary*, TOTC, vol. 14

does nakedness imagery function in this text?

Job's use of nakedness imagery is clearly metaphorical since the robe (מעיל) he tears is an outer garment.¹¹ In other words, Job does not expose his actual nakedness when he tears his מעיל, since he would almost certainly be wearing a garment underneath, either a כתנת or the more general בגד.¹² Thus, Job's tearing of his robes is an act associated with mourning, as described above, and is distinct from his use of nakedness language.¹³ Job's use of nakedness language likely reflects a wisdom saying that emphasizes one's contingency, namely that one's birth, death, and any gain or loss in life is directly dependent on the sovereign will of YHWH.¹⁴

(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 85, represents the more common position that perhaps the antiphrastic use of בָּרַךְ was common and thus the author used it according to convention. Seow, *Job 1-21*, 254-55, suggests that the author intentionally used בָּרַךְ for both "bless" and "curse" to force the reader to negotiate its meaning. Balentine, *Job*, 49, attempts to read only the word as "bless" in each text, noting that the ambiguity requires the reader to contemplate what it means to be blessed by God. See also 1 Kgs 21:10, 13; Ps 10:3 for other contexts where בָּרַךְ means some form of cursing or derision. For other discussions or positions on this phrase, see: Clines, *Job 1-20*, 15-16; Edwin M. Good, *In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job, with a Translation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 51; Hartley, *Job*, 65; T. Linafelt, "The Undecidability of בָּרַךְ in the Prologue to Job and Beyond," *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996): 154-72; Longman, *Job*, 81; Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 9; and John H. Walton, *Job*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 59-60.

¹¹P. J. King and L. E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 269; and Seow, *Job 1-21*, 281. The מעיל most likely signified someone's status, e.g., the priests in the Torah (Exodus 28), and royal figures (1 Sam 15:27; 18:4; 2 Sam 13:18).

¹²Ezra tears both his בגד and מעיל in Ezra 9:3, 5, further corroborating that Job's בגד remained intact when he tore his מעיל.

¹³This study did not encounter the argument that Job exposed his nakedness when he tore his robes. This clarification simply anticipates the reader who may wonder if Job's use of nakedness language was associated with the tearing of garments.

¹⁴Many commentators discuss the word "there" (שמה) in Job 1:21, "and naked I will return there [שמה]." The two common interpretations suggest that שמה either refers back to the mother's womb, and represents a kind of Mother Earth perspective, or that שמה is a euphemism for Sheol, using similar language attested in Egyptian and Greek literature. Sir 40:1 and Ps 139:13, 15 are often used in support for either perspective. For discussion and various positions, see: Clines, *Job 1-20*, 37; Hartley, *Job*, 75; Seow, *Job 1-21*, 282; Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 20; and Gregory Vall, "The Enigma of Job 1:21a," *Biblica* 76 (1995): 325-42. Robert L. Alden, *Job*, NAC, vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 62; and Andersen, *Job*, 93, conclude that the interpreter should not read too much into the use of שמה. The idea is that a person comes naked into the world and goes back out of it in the same way, an interpretation that best corresponds to the similar wisdom saying in

Other biblical texts help clarify Job's statement and this idea of contingency. For example, Ecclesiastes 5:15-16 (5:14-15 MT) contains the wisdom saying in 5:15, "As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came," and then rewords the concept in 5:16 as, "Just as he came, so shall he go." Paul expresses a similar sentiment in 1 Timothy 6:7 which further clarifies the meaning of Job 1:21 and Ecclesiastes 5:15-16, "We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world."

The word "naked" provides an apt metaphor for the concept of contingency in that a person is actually born naked and must be clothed for warmth and protection. As a person's understanding of shame grows, so too does his dependence on clothing to protect him not just from the elements, but from shame as well. From birth to death, clothing is an extrinsic necessity for everyone and illustrates the concept that no one is self-sufficient. Moreover, as seen in Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve's disobedience, all human nakedness emphasizes his shamefulness. When YHWH clothed the couple in Genesis 3:21, he afforded them a sense of honor. So too, Job's statement emphasizes that not only does YHWH provide wealth and prosperity, but he is also the one who provides honor or leaves a person in his shameful state. Mbuvi's assessment of nakedness imagery in Job is worth quoting at length:

Job's confession is that humans had had no claim concerning their coming to the world and they will have no control of their going out of it, and all that is between these two points is simply YHWH's gift. Coming into the world naked is a sign of shame and should remind humans that it is in the same state of shame they shall leave the world.

In and of himself, man has no claim to honour. It has to be given from outside. And so, he can have hardly any claims of what befalls him between life and death. Man cannot have claim to anything in this world and this should

Ecclesiastes 5.

keep him in a perpetual state of humility and dependence on YHWH. YHWH is the sovereign ruler of the world and the least that a man can do, in whatever circumstances he finds himself, is to worship YHWH for who he is. Thus, Job is able to say: “May the name of YHWH be praised.”¹⁵

In biblical doctrine, all persons are dependent upon YHWH for all things.

Ecclesiastes 5:15-16 and 1 Timothy 6:7, along with Job’s words in Job 1:21, use this doctrine of contingency to motivate a certain human response.¹⁶ In Job’s case, by reflecting on his “nakedness” before the Lord, Job concludes that YHWH is sovereign over wealth or poverty, honor or shame, and his giving or withholding any of these does not determine his praiseworthiness. Thus, Job, *and the reader*, must reckon with the fact that YHWH has taken away Job’s possessions, servants, and children, and yet a person still ought to find YHWH worthy of his praise.

Contingency in Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 5:13-16 uses nakedness imagery like Job to consider the idea of contingency, stating,

There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother’s womb he shall go again, naked [ערום] as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind?

In a book whose message focuses on fearing YHWH and keeping his commands (Eccl 3:14; 5:7; 7:18; 8:12-13; 12:13-14), as well as using or relating properly to the gifts of YHWH (Eccl 2:24; 3:12, 22; 5:18-19; 8:15; 9:9), Qohelet teaches in this section that, since a person comes into the world with nothing and leaves with

¹⁵Mbuvi, “Ancient Mediterranean Values,” 759-60.

¹⁶Similar to the intended application of contingency in Ecclesiastes 5, Paul exhorts humans to be content with the provision God has given, “But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content” (1 Tim 6:6-8).

nothing, one should not exert undue effort nor place misguided security in toiling for material wealth, even if one's hope is to leave an inheritance for his children.¹⁷ The story is similar to Job's, in that a man with great wealth loses it all very suddenly.¹⁸ Whereas in Job, the awareness of his contingency guided Job to respond to YHWH righteously in spite of his loss, here in Ecclesiastes, contingency guides the reader to consider loss proactively in order to understand rightly the purpose of wealth and toil as the gifts of YHWH. If a man takes nothing with him at his death, or if these things can be lost through no fault of his own, "What gain is there to him who toils for the wind" (Eccl 5:16)? Qohelet concludes,

Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God (Eccl 5:18-19).¹⁹

¹⁷Interpreters vary significantly on the meaning of Ecclesiastes, but most agree with that the book in its current form emphasizes fear of YHWH and obedience. Additionally, the interpretation of Ecclesiastes 5 that follows aligns with most interpretations of the text, though this study focuses on the use and implications of nakedness imagery. For good discussions of this passage, see: Daniel C. Fredericks and Daniel J. Estes, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs*, AOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 144-58; Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 159-75; Roland E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, WBC, vol. 23A (Dallas: Word, 1992), 44-56; Iain Provan, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 124-37; Antoon Schoors, *Ecclesiastes*, HCOT (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2013), 416-84. Longman, *Ecclesiastes*, 37-39, has a unique (and unconvincing to this author) position on the message of Ecclesiastes, suggesting that the frame narrator (Eccl 1:1-11; 12:8-15) rejects and corrects the pessimistic and errant speeches of Qohelet (Eccl 1:12-12:7).

¹⁸The "bad venture" (ענין רע) probably represents some unforeseen negative event rather than mismanagement of business or funds. ענין רע in Eccl 1:14 refers to the "vain" occupation God has given to mankind under the sun. Similarly, Eccl 4:8 sees a work-obsessed man without friend or child as one engaged in an "unhappy business" (ESV). For this interpretation, see Provan, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 127.

¹⁹Paul uses contingency differently in 1 Timothy 6:6-8, though not contradictory to its use in Ecclesiastes, particularly in light of the greater revelation of humanity's purpose in the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (1 Tim 6:9-10).

One can see then how nakedness imagery in Ecclesiastes 5 functions similarly to its use in Job 1:21, namely that it points the reader to his or her own contingency. ערום was used twice in Job 1:21, but is only used once here in Ecclesiastes, its use implied in the first half of the phrase.²⁰ Like Job 1:21, being ערום at one's birth describes a physical situation that also provides an appropriate metaphor for one's contingency. A person also ends life ערום, though not physically. He begins and ends life with nothing extrinsic to him and must be given provision and honor by YHWH, who also has the right to take it away during his lifetime.

Conclusion: Nakedness as Contingency

In both Job and Ecclesiastes, nakedness imagery conveys the idea of contingency on either side of life's tragedies. Job's response matches how a faithful Israelite ought to perceive his place and purpose in YHWH's creation. Job's theology in his situation leads him to worship and affirm the Lord's right to give and take away. Though one ought to enjoy and delight in God's good gifts, a man has no sovereignty over them and undermines the honor ascribed to humanity when he worships YHWH only if the Lord blesses him (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5). Similar to Job, Qohelet uses nakedness imagery to remind humans of their contingency. Here though, the threat of total material loss and the reminder that one takes nothing with him when he dies serves to emphasize the theology that Job possessed. In other words, nakedness imagery in Ecclesiastes 5 prepares a person to endure the loss of everything like Job experienced. Job possessed the wisdom that Ecclesiastes 5 teaches and was thus able to respond to his loss with worship.

²⁰See Vall, "The Enigma of Job 1:21," 340; and Schoors, *Ecclesiastes*, 435, for a discussion of the syntax of Job 1:21 and Eccl 5:14.

Nakedness Imagery as Intimacy: Proverbs and Song of Songs

This dissertation has noted that nakedness imagery highlights its negative connotation in most of its occurrences in the OT. Nakedness is seen as one of the most shameful and humiliating states in the ANE, and thus it serves as a powerful image for authors wanting to convey an effective message. Except for Genesis 2:25, no other use of nakedness language in the Pentateuch or Prophets conveys a positive understanding of nakedness. Does YHWH only perceive nakedness negatively then? Chapter 4 mentioned that the prohibitions against uncovering nakedness in Leviticus 18 and 20 imply a positive situation involving nudity. If uncovering the nakedness of an illegitimate partner (familial relations) or one's spouse at an unholy time (during her menstrual cycle) was prohibited, then by implication there also exists an appropriate partner (spouse) and time (within marriage and outside states of uncleanness) that one may legitimately uncover nakedness. Along with Genesis 2:25, two texts in the Writings make explicit what the negative use of nakedness imagery in the Pentateuch and Prophets implies, namely, not only is nakedness permissible within marriage, it is to be enjoyed unashamedly.

Proverbs 5

Proverbs 5 warns a young man against the life-destroying folly of adultery. Proverbs 5:1-14 details the warning and the danger of forbidden sexual relationships. One is to keep far away from the forbidden (זרה) or foreign (נכרי) woman (Prov 5:3, 20). Solomon warns his son that a relationship with her is as bitter as wormwood and sharp as a two-edged sword (Prov 5:4). Her path leads to death instead of life (Prov 5:5). Such a choice yields one's honor to someone else and life to the merciless (Prov 5:9). The son would only regret illicit sexuality at the end of his life (Prov 5:11-14). Proverbs appeals to the reader persistently throughout the book by holding forth examples of what is desirable and what destroys, i.e., wisdom and folly. The

proper path here for the son is not simply to *refrain* from these forbidden unions.

Rather, Proverbs 5:15-19 describes the alternative:

Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

Here, nakedness imagery affirms the goodness of marital sexuality, and the powerful image serves as a foil against thoughtless, illicit intercourse.²¹ Rather than seeking pleasure in the forbidden, one should drink water from his own cistern (Prov 5:15), *not* scatter his springs abroad (Prov 5:16), and rejoice in the wife of his youth (Prov 5:18). All of these depictions refer to sexual intercourse.²² More explicitly, the young man ought to be satisfied by her (his wife's) breasts at all times, and he should go astray in her love continually (Prov 5:19).

The verbs used in Proverbs 5:19 intensify the experience of desire.

Drawing on the metaphors of cistern, well, spring, and fountain from Proverbs 5:15-18, the young man is exhorted to let his wife's breasts satiate his thirst (יִרְוֶה).²³ The

²¹Interpretations of this passage are consistent with differences only in minor details. See Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 18A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 199-210; Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, vol. 14 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 1993), 92-94; Milton P. Horne, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastes*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2003), 96-97; Paul E. Koptak, *Proverbs*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 172-76; James Alfred Loader, *Proverbs 1-9*, HCOT (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2014), 243-49; Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 161-65; Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 32-34; Leo G. Perdue, *Proverbs*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1989), 118-22; Allen P. Ross, *Proverbs*, in vol. 6 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 79-81; Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009), 150-61; and Bruce K. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 316-23.

²²See Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 36; Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 92-94; Koptak, *Proverbs*, 169-71; Loader, *Proverbs 1-9*, 243-47; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 32.

²³See BDB, 924; *DCH*, 7:426-27; *HALOT*, 3:1194-95; Robert H. O'Connell, "רוה," in *NIDOTTE*, 3:1068-70; T. Kronholm, "רוה," in *TDOT*, 13:361-65; and William White, "רוה," in *TWOT*, 2:835-36, for lexical information on רוה.

seductress uses the same word (רוה) in the Qal in Proverbs 7:18, “Come, *let us take our fill* [גרוה] of love till morning.” The Piel of רוה elsewhere describes the Lord’s *abundant watering* of the earth (Ps 65:9), the *copious tears* of a defeated people (Isa 16:9), land that is *saturated* with the blood of those fallen in God’s judgment (Isa 34:7), and is paralleled with feasting, describing the goodness of the LORD when he restores his people (Jer 31:14). Whatever is made רוה can hold no more; it is saturated and full. The wife’s breasts, and no one else’s, are to satisfy his desire for intimacy. Paralleled with her satisfying breasts, her love is to lead him astray (שגה).²⁴ שגה is used elsewhere to describe wandering sheep (Ezek 34:6), a fool with no direction (Prov 5:23), one who staggers from strong drink (Isa 28:7), and in the Pentateuch to describe “unintentional” sins (Lev 4:13; Num 15:22; Deut 27:18). שגה connotes one who lacks or forfeits the capacity to choose the appropriate path in this case. He can blindly follow his wife’s initiation of holy intimacy. Notice in both lines that the young man is acted upon, a passive participant. Much like the forbidden woman would lure the man to herself, e.g., Proverbs 7:6-23, the wife’s intimate delights beckon him, yet here, he is free to trust and succumb to her temptation.

Proverbs 5 uses the imagery of a wife’s breasts and lovemaking to leverage the sexual desire of the reader in order to warn him *away from* a forbidden relationship and *toward* his wife.²⁵ Coupled with the devastating consequences of non-marital sex, the author contends that the reader will only find these aroused sexual desires satisfied in the regular embrace of his wife.

²⁴See BDB, 993, *DCH*, 8:263-64; *HALOT*, 4:1413; Andrew E. Hill, “שגה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 4:43-44; and T. Seidl, “שגה,” in *TDOT*, 14:397-405, for lexical information on שגה.

²⁵Pornography operates with the same methodology (leveraging sexual lust) to sell a product or solicit information. Sexual desire is powerful and can motivate a person toward terrible things, e.g., Shechem’s seduction or rape of Dinah (Genesis 34), Amnon’s rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13), or a man succumbing to the seductress (Proverbs 7). Yet, in the case of Proverbs 5, sexual desire can also lure the man toward righteousness.

Song of Songs

Interpreting Song of Songs is a formidable task, its meaning depending largely on whether one reads it allegorically or literally.²⁶ As it pertains to this dissertation, however, nakedness imagery in the Song communicates the same point in either case, namely the uninhibited intimacy of the relationship between a husband and wife.²⁷ Duane Garrett describes the book's emphasis on the couple's relationship:

Song of Songs is not stark eroticism but is indeed a highly romantic book. The point is so obvious from the imagery and language of the book that it might be thought hardly worth mentioning, but it is often ignored. Note that the lovers speak to and of each other frequently and in great detail. They relish their pleasure in each other not only with physical action but with carefully composed words. Love is, above all, a matter of the mind and heart and should be declared.

The lesson for the reader is that he or she needs to speak often and openly of his or her joy in the beloved, the spouse. This is, for many lovers, a far more embarrassing revelation of the self than anything that is done with the body. But it is precisely here that the biblical ideal of love is present—in the uniting of the bodies and hearts of the husband and wife in a bond that is as strong as death.²⁸

Specific to this study, Song of Songs communicates this intimacy especially through several depictions of lovemaking (real or imagined), which

²⁶For a brief history of interpretation, see Richard M. Davidson, "Theology of Sexuality in the Song of Songs: Return to Eden," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27, no. 1 (1989): 1-19. Christopher W. Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, ConC (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2003), 451-510; and Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Commentary*, AB, vol. 7C (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 89-229, both offer extensive treatments of the history of interpretation and would be ideal starting points for a serious study on the matter.

²⁷Of course, in an allegorical interpretation, the husband and wife would symbolize the relationship between God and his people. Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, 23-26; James M. Hamilton, *Song of Songs: A Biblical-Theological, Allegorical, Christological Interpretation*, Focus on the Bible (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015), 15-34; and Davidson, "Theology of Sexuality in the Song of Songs," 18-19, incorporate both literal and allegorical elements, Hamilton and Davidson using the term "typological," and Mitchell calling it "analogical." These interpretive approaches conclude that the book addresses both marital and the divine-human relationships.

²⁸Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 379.

implies their nudity, and a few passages where the couple is clearly naked.²⁹ These texts are euphemistic and tasteful, using nakedness imagery to emphasize the intimacy and transparency of the relationship.³⁰ Neither person feels shame in their own or the other's nakedness.

An important question to consider for Song of Songs concerns the marital status of the man and woman in the book. A promiscuous relationship in Song of Songs would undermine this dissertation's claim that nakedness without shame represents whole and unblemished relationships. Proverbs 5:18 specifically identifies the female partner in that passage as "wife" (הַשֵּׂא), and does so in the context of repeated warnings against illicit sexuality in Proverbs 1-9.³¹ Some interpreters of Song of Songs argue, however, that the text does not insinuate a marriage relationship but likely refers to an unmarried couple.³² The OT perspective on non-

²⁹Contra Carey Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 29, 34-35, who argues that the couple never actually consummates their love in Song of Songs.

³⁰Pope, *Song of Songs*, 54-89, surveys several ANE texts which parallel features of Songs of Songs, particularly descriptions of beauty or sexual intimacy from the mouth of lovers. These love poems are naturally similar to Song of Songs in that the lovers describe their delight in one another and their feelings about one another's bodies. Many use more explicit descriptions of the sexual organs or acts than Song of Songs uses, but more work would be necessary to rule out the possibility that these translations betray more sensitive descriptions in the original language. J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 10-11, is certainly correct that the many euphemisms and double entendre in Song of Songs intentionally activates the imagination of the reader. One looking for sexual imagery will probably find it extensively throughout the book, a feature probably intended by the song's author. For further discussions on the use and value of double entendre in Song of Songs, see Jack M. Sasson, "On M. H. Pope's Song of Songs [AB 7c]," *Maarav* 1 (1979): 177-96; and Benjamin J. Segal, "Double Meanings in the Song of Songs," *Dor le Dor* 16 (1987-88): 249-55.

³¹The context warns against an adulterous relationship and exhorts the young man to drink from his *own* cistern or well (Prov 5:15). Clearly then, though הַשֵּׂא does not have a possessive pronoun, i.e., *your* wife, English versions correctly translate the word as "wife" and not simply "woman."

³²For example, Exum, *Song of Songs*, 8-9; Roland E. Murphy and Elizabeth Huwiler, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 243; and Foster R. McCurley, *Ancient Myths and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformations* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 101, suggest the text is ambiguous on the matter. H. Gollwitzer, *Song of Love: A Biblical Understanding of Sex* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,

marital sexuality makes that view highly unlikely, and interpreters should not ignore the canonical influence on the book's storyline, i.e., celebrated sexuality in Song of Songs *must* correspond to the Pentateuchal ideal for sexuality.³³ Moreover, those who affirmed the canonical status of the book certainly would have balked at a message of promiscuity. In other words, it is inconceivable that any Israelite audience would both affirm non-marital sexuality in Song of Songs *and* receive the book as Scripture.³⁴ Such a view conforms to a non-Yahwistic view of love and sexuality, not a biblical one.

A problem arises, however, if one interprets the book as conforming to a biblical ideal of sexuality. Unambiguous sexual language pervades the text prior to what is likely a wedding scene in Song of Songs 3:6-11. The woman longs for her beloved to kiss her with his mouth, because his love (probably "lovemaking") is better than wine (Song 1:2). She longs for the king to bring her to his chambers (Song 1:4). He is as a sachet of myrrh which lies between her breasts (1:13). She

1979), 29; Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41, no. 1 (1973): 45; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 207; and Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 230-32, 313-15, argue that the text emphasizes the couple's sexuality without concern for marriage.

³³See the Pentateuchal regulations against pre-marital sexual activity: Exod 22:16-17 (22:15-16 MT); Deut 22:13-21, 28-29. Most interpreters argue that the couple is married, e.g., G. Lloyd Carr, *The Song of Solomon*, TOTC, vol. 19 (1984; repr., Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 50; Fredericks and Estes, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs*, 295; Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 378-79; Duane A. Garrett, *Song of Songs, Lamentations*, WBC, vol. 23B (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 102-04; Hamilton, *Song of Songs*, 29; Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, 279-81; Murphy, *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 98-99; George M. Schwab, *The Song of Songs' Cautionary Message Concerning Human Love*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 41 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 132; and John Bradly White, *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholar's Press, 1978), 27.

³⁴On the canonicity of Song of Songs, discussions in both Jewish and Christian circles regarding the book concerned its interpretation and the lack of God's name in the text, not whether it should be canonical. In Christian discussions, Theodore of Mopsuestia argued that Song of Songs should be excluded due to its erotic content, but his position was condemned at the Council of Constantinople. See Fredericks and Estes, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs*, 269-71.

imagines them together, his left hand under her head and his right hand embracing her (Song 2:6). She seeks for him in the night and will not let him go until she brings him to her mother's house, specifically into the room where she was conceived (Song 3:4).

Interpreters address this problem in one of two ways. First, some suggest that the storyline of the book does not progress linearly. Scholars posit a cyclical or chiasmic structure which emphasizes the mature marital relationship throughout, and the wedding and subsequent consummation are highlighted thematically at the center of the book (Song 3:6-5:1).³⁵ Thus, according to these scholars, the "earlier" descriptions do not actually precede the couple's marriage chronologically. Instead, their love and intimacy pervade the entire book, and the author of the song deliberately places their marriage and wedding night story in the center of the book as the climax of their love. Other scholars posit a second solution that sees the story progressing linearly, but the earlier sexual language describes the increasing *longing* and sexual *tension* the couple feels leading up to their wedding and consummation.³⁶ Any couple anticipating their upcoming wedding can relate to these feelings. Supporting this position, following the wedding scene when the couple comes together sexually, the man refers to his beloved as a "locked garden," a description most commentators agree refers to her virginity (Song 4:12).³⁷ Analysis of the texts listed above reveals that either interpretation is reasonable and requires no special

³⁵Carr, *Song of Solomon*, 50; Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 56; Fox, *Song of Songs*, 225-26; Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 32-35; and Exum, *Song of Songs*, 11. Though she does not argue for the same progression of plot as the scholars mentioned above, Exum still sees recurrence of themes, motifs, tension, etc. throughout.

³⁶E.g., Fredericks and Estes, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs*, 295-96; Garrett, *Song of Songs, Lamentations*, 182-84.

³⁷E.g., Garrett, *Song of Songs, Lamentations*, 196; Longman, *Song of Songs*, 155; Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, 837; and Pope, *Song of Songs*, 488.

grammatical explanations, particularly since this is poetic literature. Both options commend a closer examination, but for the purposes of this dissertation, it is sufficient to note that reasonable explanations exist which affirm the OT sexual ethic and render the sexually promiscuous position unnecessary and unlikely.

Song of Songs contains three body imagery passages that use nakedness imagery to highlight the closeness and intimacy of the couple (Song 4:1-5; 5:10-16; 7:1-8). In these texts, the lovers express their delight and desire for each other as they gaze upon the other's body. Exum discusses the concept of "gaze" in these body imagery passages questioning whether the gaze is erotic or voyeuristic, the difference being the purpose of the gaze and participation of the one being looked upon.³⁸ She defines the voyeuristic gaze as "looking that intrudes upon that which is seen," and the erotic look as "looking that participates in that which is seen."³⁹ Whether or not one agrees with her terminology, her emphasis on the gaze is well-taken if one is to interpret Song of Songs correctly.⁴⁰ In effect, there are three "gazers" in the book, namely, the lovers, the "daughters of Jerusalem," and the reader. The daughters of Jerusalem represent the perspective of the reader within the story, privy to the intimate details of the lovers, though not participating in the couple's love.⁴¹ Exum describes the purpose and function of the body-imagery metaphors in these texts:

³⁸Exum, *Song of Songs*, 22-24. These texts are often referred to as the *wasf* passages in scholarly discussion. *Wasf* is a genre of Arabic poetry in which the lovers describe their beloved's bodies in detail, often through metaphor. See Richard S. Hess, *Song of Songs*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 31-32; and Pope, *Song of Songs*, 67, for a brief discussion of the genre.

³⁹Exum, *Song of Songs*, 158.

⁴⁰Additionally, she sees the tension between the erotic and voyeuristic gaze as ambiguous in the book. This dissertation would argue, however, that Song of Songs only invites the "erotic" gaze as she defines it, only good and only consensual. Certainly, any reader could impose a voyeuristic gaze upon the text, but such an approach only confirms the reality of the post-Genesis 3 world. Nakedness ought not be shameful, but for the self-absorbed sinner, it cannot be anything but shameful, both for himself, and for the victim of his self-serving gaze.

⁴¹See the "daughters of Jerusalem" scenes in Song 1:5; 2:7; 3:5, 11; 5:8, 16; 8:4.

Metaphor as it is used in the anatomical descriptions is particularly allied with the drive to include but also, at certain intimate moments, hold off the reader. Through metaphoric descriptions of the body, the poet invites the reader into the private world of the lovers—the inventory is intimate, the images are sometimes erotic, the overall picture is sexually suggestive. At the same time, metaphor functions as a way of keeping the reader out: the lovers seem to have their own private code, and the metaphors conceal more than they display.⁴²

Indeed, as a poem involving a couple with whom no reader actually has acquaintance, the student of Song of Songs encounters a symbolic couple whose relationship is conveyed idyllically and intimately in alluring detail, yet it in no way invites an impure or leering gaze for selfish pleasure. Even the sexually intense language remains tasteful and metaphorical, encouraging the reader to contemplate his or her own marriage and to long for the kind of intimacy and intensity portrayed in the story.

One more aspect of this “gaze” discussion is important for understanding the use of nakedness imagery in Song of Songs. Many interpreters have suggested that Song of Songs in some way alludes to Genesis 2-3.⁴³ Without devoting the space to a detailed discussion of intertextuality and the presence of allusion in Song of Songs, most should be able to concur that the kind of relationship the couple enjoys in Song of Songs agrees conceptually with the idyllic setting of Genesis 2:25.⁴⁴ Adam

⁴²Exum, *Song of Songs*, 159.

⁴³Positions vary on *how* Song of Songs uses Genesis 2-3, but for a sample of suggestions see: Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3.1, *Doctrine of Creation, Part 1* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1958), 288-329; Carr, *Song of Solomon*, 37, 60-61; Davidson, “Theology of Sexuality in the Song of Songs,” 5-6; Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 380; Provan, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 247; Tribble, “Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation,” 30-48; Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Overtures to Biblical Theology 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 145-65; Francis Landy, “The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden,” *JBL* 98, no. 4 (1979): 513-528; and Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1983), 183-265.

⁴⁴Garrett, *Song of Songs, Lamentations*, 99, cautions against reading too much into the similarities between Genesis 2-3 and Song of Songs, “One can say that the Song, over against Gen 2-3, represents sexual love as paradise regained, but it is a mistake to say that this is the intrinsic message of the Song. Rather, it is a message that *we* have created by juxtaposing the Song and Gen 2-3.” This study agrees with Garrett’s caution but recognizes that the themes are the same, even if the

and Eve's shame at their nakedness in the Garden of Eden arose because their eyes were opened to viewing one another with γ , i.e., something other than whole and harmonious intentions. In Song of Songs, the couple gazes upon one another's nakedness with delight, and they also permit their own nakedness to be seen by the other without shame. There is no tendency to cover nakedness, only to uncover and experience. In this sense, Tribble's description of Song of Songs as a "midrash" of Genesis 2-3 is apropos, certainly in terms of Genesis 2:25.⁴⁵ The book succeeds in portraying a realm in which the story's characters can celebrate the love and intimacy of the lovers without shame or the threat of shame. So too, the reader is brought into their world and may also observe without shame, experiencing in full color what Genesis 2:25 simply stated in black and white.

With the details discussed above, consider how the following texts either use explicit nakedness imagery or imply it as an obvious aspect of lovemaking. As with Proverbs 5:15-19, nakedness imagery has a positive connotation in the Song of Songs and communicates the (temporary) restoration of the unity and intimacy of Genesis 2:25 within the marital relationship. No hint of shame threatens to mar the goodness of their relationship.

author did not intentionally allude to Genesis 2-3.

⁴⁵Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), also uses the term "midrash" to describe inner-biblical exegesis within the OT. Tribble, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," 47, addresses allusion to Genesis 2-3 directly:

In many ways, then, Song of Songs is a midrash on Genesis 2-3. By variations and reversals it creatively actualizes major motifs and themes of the primeval myth. Female and male are born to mutuality and love. They are naked without shame; they are equal without duplication. They live in gardens where nature joins in celebrating their oneness. Animals remind these couples of their shared superiority in creation as well as of their affinity and responsibility for lesser creatures. Fruits pleasing to the eye and to the tongue are theirs to enjoy. Living waters replenish their gardens. Both couples are involved in naming; both couples work . . . The first couple lose their oneness through disobedience . . . The second couple affirm their oneness through eroticism . . . Whatever else it may be, Canticles is a commentary on Genesis 2-3. Paradise Lost is Paradise Regained.

The woman longs to be intimate with her beloved.⁴⁶ “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love[making] is better than wine” (Song 1:2).⁴⁷ Let the king bring me into his chambers” (Song 1:4). “While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance. My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts” (Song 1:12-13). “Let his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me” (Song 2:6 NASB).⁴⁸ “On my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves . . . When I found him whom my soul loves, I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother’s house, into the chamber of her who conceived me” (Song 3:1-4).

After the wedding scene (Song 3:6-11), the couple comes together in a sexually intimate scene, the lovers gazing upon and describing each other’s naked bodies. The man describes the woman first (Song 4:1-5), moving from her head and stopping at her breasts, clearly gazing at her naked body. As he uses poetic language to describe his desire and enjoyment of her (Song 4:1-15), she responds, “Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow. Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits” (Song 4:16). Any doubt as to the sexual intimacy of the scene is removed by the friends’ charge, “Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love” (Song 5:1). Similarly, the woman’s description of her

⁴⁶Again, assuming the couple is married, this text either describes the inexperienced woman’s imagination and longing (if the text is chronologically linear), or it could describe her longing for him based on her experience with him (if the text is chronologically cyclical).

⁴⁷An ancient Israelite man and woman would not be permitted to kiss unless married (or family). See Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, 151. דָּבַר almost certainly refers to the concrete “lovemaking,” and not simply “love” in the abstract here. See Ezek 16:8, which describes Jerusalem metaphorically as a woman reaching sexual maturity. The LXX and Vulgate translate this as “your breasts” instead of “your love,” implying a pointing of דְּבָרֶיךָ (your breasts) instead of דְּבַרְךָ (your love), as attested in the MT.

⁴⁸The ESV translates Song 2:6 in the indicative, “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me!”

beloved insinuates that she is imagining his naked body, describing his body from his head to his legs in such a way that it is clear that she has seen him without clothing (Song 5:10-16). Finally, when the man describes the woman again, he moves from her feet toward her head, describing her thighs, naval, belly, and breasts this time (Song 7:1-8). Moreover, in a rush of passion, he likens her body to a palm tree and longs to climb her and take hold of her breasts, certainly not a situation in which shame is present, either in their physical actions or his readiness to speak out loud his desire for her (Song 7:7-8).

Conclusion: Nakedness Imagery as Intimacy

Chapter 4 concluded that Adam and Eve's sin rendered nakedness shameful because the trust and intimacy between humans was now marred by the danger of sin against the other. Yet, Leviticus 18 and 20 hinted at a proper situation in which nakedness was appropriate. Proverbs 5 and Song of Songs make that situation explicit, thwarting the shame of nakedness because, rather than sinfully exploiting the vulnerability of the other, a husband and wife entrust their bodies to one another for mutual delight and intimacy. They are each committed to holiness, acting within the divinely-sanctioned context for sexual intimacy, and they are committed to the good of the other, acting only within the exclusive boundary of marriage. Thus, they are properly relating to both YHWH and one another, and nakedness becomes a good thing, necessary for sexual intimacy and free of shame. For a moment, each enjoys the intimacy of the idyllic, whole and unblemished relationships of the Genesis 2:25 world.⁴⁹ Whereas the other texts in the OT use

⁴⁹The Adamites were a group Augustine mentions who eschewed clothing because they claimed the church reconstituted the pre-Fall state of innocence. A similar group emerged among the Hussites in the fifteenth century who also called themselves the Adamites and engaged in nudism for the same reasons as their predecessors. See Howard Kaminski, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); and Robert E. Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit*

nakedness imagery *negatively* to prohibit certain actions or indict the unfaithful through law and narrative, these texts in Proverbs and Song of Songs use nakedness imagery *positively* to incite faithfulness to YHWH and to depict a measure of the wholeness and unity presented in the text of Genesis 1-2.

Other Texts Using Nakedness Imagery

The following texts use nakedness imagery to communicate the concept of deprivation, emphasizing one's vulnerability or need. Nakedness implies something ought to be covered, thus in these texts the imagery alerts the reader to the danger of the situation. This danger implies that something ought to be done, whether to provide covering for the naked or to alter the situation so that nakedness (metaphorical or actual) is prevented.

The Poor and Destitute

As with the Prophets, the Writings also mention “the naked” in terms of those who are poor, often in conjunction with “the hungry” and “the thirsty.” In terms of this dissertation, the most important facet of nakedness language in these situations is to emphasize that nakedness is an undesirable state. Thus, YHWH's disposition toward the naked is to clothe them through the mediate actions of his people. The previous chapter noted Isaiah 58:6-7, “Is this not the fast I choose . . . to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house;

in the Later Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972). The Adamite view differs from the conclusion described above in this dissertation in which the shame of nakedness is only overcome between the partners in a marriage, and only most fully during sexual intimacy. The Adamite view over-realizes Christ's atonement, insisting that the whole and unblemished relationships of the Gen 2:25 world can be attained now amongst the members of Christ's church, and it also fails to consider the biblical trajectory of nakedness and clothing. The NT seems to anticipate a continuing role for clothing in the eschaton (1 Cor 5:5; Rev 19:7-8), while at the same time expecting only whole and unblemished relationships between humans and God (Rev 21:3, 7-8, 27; 22:3). The final chapter considers these texts in more detail.

when you see the naked, to cover him?” and Ezekiel 18:5-9, “If a man is righteous and does what is just and right . . . [if he] gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, . . . he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord God.”⁵⁰ This same expectation of God’s people persists in the NT in Jesus’ declaration that those who care for the poor, including those who clothe the naked, will inherit the Kingdom of God (Matt 25:31-46).

Both Eliphaz and Job recognize that clothing the naked characterizes the righteous in Job 22:6 and 24:7-10, respectively. In Job 22:6, Eliphaz falsely accuses Job of keeping the naked (עֲרוּמִים) from their clothing, insinuating that he is unrighteous.⁵¹ “For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing and stripped the naked of their clothing” (Job 22:6).⁵² Specifically, he alleges that Job has taken a pledge (תְּחֻבָּל) from his brothers without cause, effectively stripping them of their clothing. This accusation corresponds to the Pentateuchal regulations in Exodus 22:21-27 (22:20-26 MT) and Deut 24:17, Exodus 22 being the most detailed.⁵³ In a set of regulations against oppressing the sojourner (Exod 22:21), the widow and orphan (Exod 22:22-24), and the poor (Exod 22:25-27), the Lord

⁵⁰See also Amos 2:8 where YHWH indicts the wickedness of Israel, including this same crime, i.e., keeping garments taken in pledge from the poor.

⁵¹Most scholars interpret Eliphaz’s words as described above, e.g., See Alden, *Job*, 231; Andersen, *Job*, 218; David J. A. Clines, *Job 21-37*, WBC, vol. 18A (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 550-56; and Longman, *Job*, 286-87. In contrast, Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 338, argues that Eliphaz does not accuse Job, since that would contradict his earlier assessment of Job’s character in Job 4:3-6. Rather, Tur-Sinai suggests that Eliphaz is *quoting* Job, who accused God of doing nothing while the unrighteous oppress the helpless. Only Clines, *Job 21-37*, 551, 553-54, even addresses Tur-Sinai’s position, arguing that the position convolutes the apparent meaning of the passage.

⁵²Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 339, calls this use of nakedness proleptic, since, presumably, these individuals are not naked yet. Calling them “naked” anticipates what they will become once their clothes are stripped from them.

⁵³Of course, the dating of Job would affect discussions of how these passages relate intertextually. It is sufficient to note here, however, that the expectation for the creditor is consistent throughout the OT.

prohibits creditors from keeping overnight a garment taken as a pledge of repayment. “For that is his only covering . . . in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate. (Exod 22:26-27). Eliphaz contends that Job suffers because, as a wealthy landowner, he abuses the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the widow, and the orphan contrary to the character and will of God (Job 22:6-11).⁵⁴

Job references a similar scenario in Job 24:7, 10, where he seems to be accusing or questioning why YHWH turns a blind eye to the deeds of the wicked. Notable in Exodus 22:25-27, quoted above, is the promise YHWH makes on behalf of the oppressed neighbor whose cloak was taken in pledge, “If he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate” (Exod 22:27). Job’s contention in Job 24:1-8 seems to be that the doctrine of retribution breaks down. The wicked continue to prosper despite their treatment of the poor, widow, and orphan. Specifically, in Job 24:7 the naked (ערום), i.e., the “poor” of Job 24:4, spend the night without clothes.⁵⁵ Though obvious, the complementary second line specifies why it is a bad thing for the poor to spend the night without clothing, “[They] have no covering in the cold” (Job 24:7). Job 24:10 heightens the absurdity of their situation, again showing the severity of the wickedness of those concerning whom the Lord seems to be turning a blind eye.⁵⁶ The poor are going about without proper clothing and are hungry, *even as*

⁵⁴See Balentine, *Job*, 343-46; Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2011), 238; and Hartley, *Job*, 326. Clines, *Job 21-37*, 553-57, softens Eliphaz’s accusation a bit, arguing that Eliphaz believes in just retribution theory. So here, he is suggesting that Job may be guilty of some or all of these things, even if unintentionally. Habel, *Job*, 338-39, considers the possibility that Eliphaz is “merely citing a standard roster of evils typical of an unrighteous leader.”

⁵⁵לבוש (garment) does not entail a specific type of garment but refers to clothing in general. See BDB, 528; *DCH*, 4:512-13; *HALOT*, 2:516; Robert L. Alden, “לבש,” in *NIDOTTE*, 2:757-59; J. Gamberoni, “לבש,” in *TDOT*, 7:457-68; and Andrew Bowling, “לבש,” in *TWOT*, 1:469.

⁵⁶E.g., see Alden, *Job*, 245; Balentine, *Job*, 366-69; Hartley, *Job*, 342-48; and Longman, *Job*, 301-03. Hanneke Van Loon, *Metaphors in the Discussion on Suffering in Job 3-31: Visions of Hope and Consolation* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), 199-203, compares Bildad’s use of

they are working as harvesters carrying food, namely grain sheaves.⁵⁷

Two final examples occur in the Writings. Psalm 102:17 (102:18 MT) states, “[The Lord] regards the prayer of the destitute [stripped] and does not despise their prayer.” ערער is a *hapax legomenon*, derived from either ערה, עור, or ערר, and though the precise meaning or etymology is unclear, the context of the psalm corresponds to the discussion of Job above.⁵⁸ YHWH hears the cry of the afflicted and will act on their behalf. In fact, he guarantees his response by attaching his glory to the promise, “Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD” (Ps 102:18). Lastly, in 2 Chronicles 28, Israel’s prophets warned against bringing captives from Judah as slaves, for “you plan to bring guilt on us from the Lord to add to our sins and our guilt” (2 Chr 28:13). So, they “provided clothes for their naked ones from the plunder . . . gave them sandals, food and drink, dressed their wounds, and provided donkeys for all the feeble” (2 Chr 28:15). Whether or not these prisoners of war were technically naked is beyond the point of the text. Like the naked poor mentioned above, these captives did not possess adequate clothing and were in a position of extreme vulnerability. Thus, the prophets in Israel warned that to continue to exploit them would lead to severe judgment from YHWH (2 Chr 28:9-11).

Because the concept of nakedness points to privation, i.e., the lack of that

nakedness as a metaphor in Job 24 with Job’s in Job 1:21, namely that Job’s use was neutral (mere absence of possessions) and Bildad’s was negative (weak and vulnerable).

⁵⁷Alden, *Job*, 245, notes poignantly that YHWH had commanded that even the Israelites’ *animals* be permitted to eat from the grain while they were treading it (Deut 25:4).

⁵⁸See BDB, 792; *DCH*, 6:568; *HALOT*, 2:887; Boyd V. Seevers, “ערה,” in *NIDOTTE*, 3:530; and Ronald B. Allen, “ערר,” in *TWOT*, 2:700. Technically, ערער also occurs in Jer 17:6, but that use appears to be a different root, referring to a kind of juniper plant. Many English translations use the word “destitute,” which captures the idea of nakedness. However, “naked” conjures a starker image than “destitute.” See John Goldingay, *Psalms*, vol. 3, *Psalms 90-150*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 156-57; and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150*, Hermeneia, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 25.

which should be there, nakedness is a particularly apt image to communicate the seriousness of need, much like the language of “hungry” or “thirsty.” The poor do not simply lack abundance; they lack even the basic necessities of life. Each of these texts above emphasize that YHWH provides clothing, grain, oil, and wine, his ear tuned particularly to those who are in need, and they emphasize the simple but obvious point: humans should imitate their God.⁵⁹

Exposure to Danger and Shame

Much like the texts above use nakedness imagery to communicate poverty, i.e., nakedness equals extreme need, the following texts convey the deprivation or danger that may befall those who are not otherwise at risk. Lamentations uses the same nakedness imagery of stripping discussed in the Prophets. In Lamentations 1:8, the author bewails the devastation that befell Jerusalem. He laments, “Jerusalem sinned grievously; therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness [ערוותה]; she herself groans and turns her face away.” While actual stripping of captives took place in ANE warfare, this use of nakedness is primarily metaphorical, focusing on the humiliation of the city. Once beautiful and strong, the city is now left naked, and she is ashamed because her nakedness reveals that she has been promiscuous in her covenant with YHWH.⁶⁰ Yes, her enemies abused and mistreated her, but she knows she is not merely a victim. Like Adam and Eve, the gravity of her sinfulness manifests itself in her shame before the eyes of the

⁵⁹This message persists in the NT, e.g., Matt 25:31-46; Jas 2:14-17. Both Jesus and James insist that the one who fails to provide for the poor does not demonstrate genuine faith and will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

⁶⁰See the discussion of “woman as city” in Adele Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 47-49; and F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1989), 63-67. For the role of mourning and shame in Lamentations, see Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East*, 15-25; and Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 49-53, 84-87.

nations, “Jerusalem sinned grievously; therefore she became filthy” (Lam 1:8). Much like Babylon in Isaiah 47:3, however, Edom too will endure this shameful “nakedness” for her own sinfulness in desiring Judah’s demise (Lam 4:21).⁶¹ Psalm 137:7 captures Edom’s disposition, “Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, ‘Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!’”⁶² Edom’s war cry called for Babylon to make Jerusalem naked, even down to its foundations (ערו ערו עד היסוד בה).⁶³ Here in Lamentations 4:21, Edom’s desire for Judah’s humiliation is brought upon her own head.⁶⁴

Closely related to the humiliation and shame of defeat, nakedness imagery also expresses the danger of vulnerability that comes without proper defenses. This use of nakedness imagery corresponds to Joseph’s accusations that his brothers were spies who had come to see the “nakedness” of the land (Gen 42:9, 12). In Ezra 4, Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel, representatives for the people inhabiting the land during Judah’s exile, wrote to Artaxerxes to warn him not to permit the Jewish exiles to rebuild Jerusalem since they were known for their frequent rebellion against past suzerains (Ezra 4:6-16). They explain their motive for informing him, “Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king’s dishonor

⁶¹See the discussion in Berlin, *Lamentations*, 113-14; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations*, 137-39; Delbert R. Hillers, *Lamentations: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 7A, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 152-53; and Robin A. Parry, *Lamentations*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 142-44

⁶²Obadiah 12-13 describes Edom’s complicity in Jerusalem’s downfall, rejoicing in the destruction of the city and then taking plunder.

⁶³ערו is the Piel imperative plural of ערה (“make naked”). See chap. 2 for further lexical information.

⁶⁴Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 94; and Berlin, *Lamentations*, 113, argue that Edom’s crime was not only gloating or approving Judah’s demise, but also failing to mourn properly for her. This failure was particularly grievous given that they were “brothers.”

[nakedness], therefore we send and inform the king” (Ezra 4:14).⁶⁵ In other words, because they are recipients of the king’s provision, they do not wish to see injury or dishonor come upon his kingdom.⁶⁶

In the Old Testament, YHWH is the ultimate provider, but he is also the greatest threat to one’s security. The Prophets made this abundantly clear, and both traits of YHWH occur also in the Writings. In Psalm 141, David cries out for YHWH’s protection, asking God not to leave him defenseless, or more literally, not to lay bare his soul or life (אֶל־תִּעַר נַפְשִׁי). David recognizes that YHWH is the one who preserves his life (Ps 141:8-10) and his righteousness (Ps 141:3-5). The Writings also make clear that YHWH is the greatest threat against one’s security. The warning texts against the disobedient emphasize the severity of his judgment (e.g., the curses of Deuteronomy 28), but Job also states “Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering” (Job 26:6).⁶⁷ Proverbs 15:11 expresses a similar idea without using nakedness imagery, “Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man!”⁶⁸ The author of Hebrews communicates the same idea, “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Heb 4:13). Thus, not even the grave can conceal one from YHWH’s presence.

⁶⁵“Nakedness” is spelled the same in Aramaic and in Hebrew: ערוה.

⁶⁶See Philip A. Noss and Kenneth J. Thomas, *A Handbook on Ezra and Nehemiah* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2005), 102-03; and Andrew E. Steinmann, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, ConC (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010), 242.

⁶⁷Clines, *Job 21-37*, 634-35, purports that the text has been corrupted and these saying belong to Bildad rather than Job. This study maintains the integrity of the MT, LXX, and Targum Job, which attribute the sayings to Job.

⁶⁸Sheol refers generally to the realm of the dead, and Abaddon seems to be a synonym (cf. Prov 15:11). Hartley, *Job*, 365, offers a brief discussion on Sheol and Abaddon. For a more thorough treatment of Sheol and the afterlife, see Philip Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and the Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2002).

Conclusion: Nakedness Imagery in the Writings

Much of the Writings' use of nakedness imagery corresponds to the imagery in the Pentateuch and Prophets. Nakedness is a shameful state and communicates extreme poverty, helplessness, vulnerability, and danger. To be naked is to be without something needed. Yet, Job introduces the concept of contingency, which highlights that humans come into the world naked and take nothing with them when they leave it. Genesis 2:25 showed that nakedness was the original state of mankind, but there, nakedness did not represent need. Rather, the connotations of shame and vulnerability attached themselves to nakedness after Genesis 3:6 as a perpetual and unavoidable reminder of human sin.

This backdrop of nakedness as shame contrasts starkly with the remarkable picture of intimacy and openness in the depictions of nudity in Proverbs 5 and throughout Song of Songs. There, the husband and wife experience a temporary reprieve from the weight of sin's burden on humanity. Whether or not Song of Songs alludes to Genesis 2, the book expresses the same idyllic setting with whole and unblemished relationships. They fear no danger and experience no shame, but instead they look upon and enjoy the nakedness of one another.

CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE WORK

Summary and Conclusions

This dissertation claims that nakedness language in the Old Testament is a powerful means to communicate theological information to the reader. Its inherent association with shame at the level of basic human instinct permits nakedness language to appeal universally even without a precise understanding of every detail of these passages. While some have addressed the use of nakedness imagery in reference media and specific treatments of OT texts, providing ample information for the interpreter willing to conduct an expansive search, a monograph did not exist which studied extensively the use of nakedness imagery throughout the OT. Therefore, this dissertation conducted a survey of the texts using nakedness language in the OT, explaining the function and meaning of nakedness imagery, and addressing any issues pertinent to the study.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the thesis and methodology of this dissertation and briefly surveys the history of how these texts were understood in early Jewish and Christian interpretation. These early interpretations corroborate the statement that nakedness is associated inherently with shame, and they also reveal that interpreters have recognized the power of nakedness imagery to communicate theological information. As such, the method and aims of this dissertation are on solid footing in terms of seeking to understand the theological value of nakedness imagery in the OT.

Chapter 2 specifies the terms used in the OT to indicate nakedness,

referring fundamentally to the exposure of the sexual organs. The biblical text uses euphemistic language to refer to the sexual organs, including the word “nakedness,” which implies privatively what one exposes when his or her coverings are removed. This chapter surveys the primary verbs and their adjectival and nominal derivatives the OT uses to communicate the fundamental concept of nakedness. Additionally, this chapter considers whether an inherent distinction exists between the adjectives ערום and עירם in Genesis 2:25 as argued by John Sailhamer and others, concluding that the evidence does not favor an inherent distinction. Rather, the terms’ semantic overlap is nearly identical, though the juxtaposition of the terms is intentional and likely communicates the change in state after Adam and Eve ate the prohibited fruit. Lastly, this chapter examines several nouns which the OT uses as euphemisms to describe primary or secondary sexual organs, words which convey nakedness, particularly in the Writings.

Chapter 3 provides a brief survey of the ancient Near Eastern context and shows that Israel’s neighbors held a similar perspective of nudity, namely that it was culturally taboo to expose one’s sexual organs in a public setting. Since stripping functioned to shame criminals or prisoners of war, the chapter concludes that the taboo was not simply aesthetic or functional. Rather, the shame associated with nakedness was the crucial element in the effectiveness of stripping as a deterrent to future crime, whether for the criminal or any would-be criminal viewing the public spectacle. The same could be said for those inside a city watching an invading army parading captives as a deterrent to rebellion. Nakedness existed functionally in work situations where clothing impeded effectiveness, but workers donned appropriate attire outside the work environment. Similarly, the Greek culture exalted nudity in art and sport, a situational exposure that functioned aesthetically only because these

situations idealized nudity apart from its shameful connotation.¹ While the specific expectations for clothing and levels of modesty differed between ANE cultures, the standard across the region was that people covered their sexual organs in public settings.

Chapter 4 is an examination of the use of nakedness imagery in the Pentateuch. Moses used nakedness imagery in a variety of ways, but the effectiveness of nakedness imagery depends on nudity being a shameful state in the presence of others. Thus, nakedness language in Genesis 2:25 is effective because it forces the reader to imagine a situation in which a person could be unashamed of his nakedness in a public setting, most notably in the presence of YHWH. After Adam and Eve sinned against YHWH's command in Genesis 3, nakedness imagery matches the reader's experience, namely that nakedness is shameful. While etiological for why humans wear clothes, the story functions primarily as a lesson in contrasts. Humans feel shame and fear, which are symptoms of disordered relationships with their creator and the world around them. Whereas, before their sin, Adam and Eve did not even feel shame in their nude state, they were ashamed of their nakedness after they ate the fruit. The basis of this disorder was their disobedience to God's command. Graciously, but perpetually emphasizing what could no longer be, YHWH clothed the shamed couple, preserving their lives and their honor (Gen 3:21).

The story of Noah's nakedness in Genesis 9 showed that human sinfulness endured the destruction of the flood waters. Whether or not Noah technically sinned, either by drinking to drunkenness or uncovering his nakedness in his tent, Ham's actions against Noah demonstrated that human relationships were still

¹This idealization of nudity is similar to the expression of nakedness in Proverbs 5 and Song of Songs, though one should make a distinction between *overlooking* the association of nakedness and shame, as in the Greek use, and *overcoming* the association, as in a wholesome marriage situation. In the latter, the couple works to know and be known, and they also work to "love their neighbor as themselves," thus minimizing the shameful and vulnerability of nakedness.

disordered by sin. Yet, in spite of Ham's dishonor of Noah, Shem and Japheth gave hope that righteousness could also prevail. This section concludes that nakedness imagery in Genesis 2-3 and 9 serves powerfully to emphasize what was lost, i.e., harmonious relationships amongst YHWH and humans, but also to emphasize how the righteous can cover shame to restore the broken relationship.

Numerous uses of nakedness imagery occur in the legal sections of the Pentateuch, and they likely serve to emphasize the need for holiness at all moments in life. Because nakedness is inherently shameful, both in the ANE mind and in Israel's origin story, it is a powerful image to stress the importance of holiness, even when one is alone. Whether bringing a sacrifice as a layperson or priest or managing one's household relationships to avoid sexual intercourse in illicit relationships (incestuous), or a licit relationship (spouse) during a prohibited time, a follower of YHWH must always be mindful of his duty to be holy as YHWH is holy (Lev 19:2).

The final occurrence of nakedness imagery in the Pentateuch is in Deuteronomy 28:48, and chapter four concludes that YHWH's threat of nakedness further intensified the warning against apostasy and disobedience. YHWH's promise to remove his provision did not stop with food, water, shelter, and offspring. He would even see that they were lacking proper clothing, a state which would further their humiliation in the land of their enemies. This threat was particularly grave considering YHWH's usual role in the Pentateuchal narrative was to *cover* nakedness, and he expected his people to cover nakedness as well. That he would be willing to remove all his provision and expose nakedness indicates that the relationship would pass a point of no return whereby only complete devastation could prepare the way for rebuilding a relationship. As the post-flood narrative showed that simply destroying sinful people would not restore humanity, so too a covenant with Israel containing specific instructions for holiness would prove to be incapable of restoring humans to YHWH. Yet, like in the Garden, YHWH would

have the final word, and he declares that after the devastation promised in Deuteronomy 28, he would circumcise the hearts of his people and restore them to himself (Deut 30).²

Chapter 5 is a study of the use of nakedness imagery in the Prophets. The Pentateuch established the connection between nakedness and shame as well as the expectations for how God and humans ought to relate to nakedness. The Prophets not only affirm the Pentateuchal perspective of nudity but wield the imagery in a manner which transgresses the boundaries of cultural propriety. The chapter first looks at the use of nakedness language in Samuel, however. Particularly in the story of Saul and David, this imagery serves to emphasize YHWH's suppression of Saul and his elevation of David. Saul attempted to subvert God's choice of David and was utterly humiliated and symbolically dethroned (1 Sam 19:24). Saul's attempt to shame Jonathan with nakedness language ultimately shamed Saul instead as Jonathan's virtue unmasked Saul's lust for power and position (1 Sam 20:30). Michal maintained her father's errant view of honor and humiliated herself when she rebuked David for positioning himself as a worshiper before YHWH instead of as a king (2 Sam 6). Ultimately, these stories use nakedness imagery, not to honor David himself, but to honor David's humility before YHWH.

Chapter 5 also discusses the role of stripping as humiliation, a theme that occurs extensively in the Prophets. Second Samuel 10 and Isaiah 20 are two passages that show the shocking nature of stripping in historical situations, undergirding the claims of chapter 3 that stripping was a practice in the ANE. Moreover, Isaiah 20 corroborates the practice of stripping as humiliation in warfare, a reality that

²See Deut 10:16, where Moses rehearses the faithlessness of the exodus generation and exhorts the wilderness generation to circumcise the foreskin of their hearts and turn away from their stubbornness. By the end of Deuteronomy, it becomes clear that YHWH must be the one to circumcise their hearts (Deut 30:6).

provides a basis for the threat in YHWH's judgment against his own people. Ezekiel and Hosea incorporate nakedness language profusely in their warnings against God's adulterous people, namely, the God who covers nakedness is prepared to strip them as enemies. Nakedness imagery serves in those texts not only to terrorize would-be apostates, but it also shocks the dull senses of the complacent, unmasking the true and obscene nature of those who would use YHWH's provision to devote themselves to another. The chapter then explores the stripping threat in other prophetic texts that addressed Israel and Judah but also her enemies. Finally, the chapter concludes by addressing the use of nakedness language to describe the poor, primarily a depiction which emphasizes the qualities of a righteous person.

Chapter 6 is a study of the use of nakedness imagery in the Writings. Job and Ecclesiastes express the proverb, "Naked I came into the world, and naked I will depart" (Job 1:21; Eccl 5:15). The chapter argues that the proverb conveys the philosophical concept of contingency, namely that one is entirely dependent on God for any provision in life. In Ecclesiastes, this concept exhorts a person to order one's steps in such a way that he does not exert undue energy toward ephemeral goals. Job demonstrated piety which was undergirded by the concept of contingency, enduring virtuously the loss of everything but his wife and his life.

This chapter also considers the use of nakedness language which identifies the poorly clothed as "naked." Like its use in the prophets, these texts highlight what constitutes righteous behavior in a person, namely that he or she covers the naked. Additionally, the Writings use nakedness imagery to emphasize one's vulnerability. Similar in concept to contingency, this aspect of nakedness language references the vulnerability of an entity before an enemy, e.g., Jerusalem or Edom when overrun by Babylon (Lam 1:8; 4:21). One's ultimate vulnerability is YHWH, before whom even

Sheol is naked.³

Most unique in the Writings is the use of nakedness imagery which serves as the only explicit comparative to Genesis 2:25. In Proverbs 5 and Song of Songs, nakedness language expresses the unhindered and unashamed intimacy that exists between a husband and wife. In those texts, lovers uncover their own nakedness and gaze upon the bodies of the other without shame and without fear. Indeed, they find great delight in the relationship that is bounded within marriage; their commitment is to one another exclusively and without reservation.

Thus, this dissertation concludes that nakedness imagery addresses numerous facets of human existence in the OT, primarily due to the nature of nakedness emphasizing humans at their most vulnerable. This vulnerability often exposes the darker side of human nature: fear, shame, unfaithfulness, and selfishness, but in the proper context, it may also expose the ideal: unity, love, openness, and trust. One's consciousness of his or her own nakedness is innate and nearly omnipresent, and thus all but the most shameless will recognize the powerful role that nakedness imagery serves in these OT passages.

Proposed Future Study and a Survey of the New Testament Trajectory of Nakedness Imagery

This dissertation was limited to surveying nakedness imagery in the OT but establishes the need for a similar study of the NT texts, as well as a study which traces the use of nakedness imagery across both testaments, i.e., a biblical theology. The section below introduces the NT texts and offer some preliminary considerations, but one intriguing concept would be to research the role of

³Compare Heb 4:13, "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of whom we must give an account."

nakedness in covenantally significant texts.⁴ The texts containing the Adamic, Noahic, and Mosaic covenants contain nakedness imagery, with all but the beginning of Adam’s story using nakedness as a negative image. The presence of nakedness imagery in the Abrahamic covenant seems tenuous, though circumcision clearly implies nakedness and signifies YHWH’s covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Similarly, any connection of nakedness to the Davidic covenant seems strained, though the literary proximity of the covenant (2 Sam 7) to David’s “exhibitionism” as he leads the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem is promising (2 Sam 6). Finally, the New Covenant eliminates the threat of shameful nakedness entirely.⁵ Perhaps the ubiquity of nakedness imagery accounts for its presence in the covenantally significant texts, but this proposed study could help determine the reason such imagery occurs in the covenant texts.

Such biblical studies of nakedness imagery have important dogmatic and ethical ramifications as well, including how Christians should understand matters of nakedness and modesty in their cultural context. For example, does the Bible speak to the legitimacy of nudism, art, or modesty? Does the theological concept of nakedness explain certain cultures’ normalization of nudity, e.g., minimal clothing among “primitive” people groups, or the tendency in an increasingly secular western society toward immodest clothing? Even if some of the conclusions of this dissertation are proven incorrect, perhaps its mere existence may serve as a catalyst for some of these moral or ethical discussions in the future.

⁴One would have to determine what constitutes a covenantally significant text and which texts comprise covenant themes.

⁵See the discussion of Revelation below.

Nakedness in the New Testament: Considerations for Future Study

This dissertation does not address nakedness language in the New Testament in detail, but this section identifies some passages which merit consideration for future study. Jesus tells that those who inherit his coming kingdom (the sheep) gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, welcomed strangers, *clothed the naked*, and visited the sick and imprisoned (Matt 25:31-40). In contrast, those who will be condemned (the goats) did not do those things (Matt 25:41-46).⁶ This example corresponds to the use of nakedness language in 2 Chronicles 28:15; Isaiah 58:7; Ezekiel 18:7, 16; and Job 22:6 24:7, 10. The naked are those who are poor or destitute, lacking sufficient clothing for warmth or modesty. Revelation 3:17 likely corresponds to these other texts also, stating,

For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

Of course, this text does not describe actual nakedness but uses the imagery of physical nudity to describe the spiritual destitution of the Laodicean church.⁷

Another significant use of nakedness imagery to evaluate would be Jesus' nakedness when he was crucified on the cross. Every Gospel attests to the soldiers taking Jesus' garments and dividing them among themselves (Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23-24). Indeed, the practice of stripping the victims of crucifixion is well-known and serves to heighten the humiliation for which

⁶Note that Jesus' description of "the naked" also focuses primarily on what constitutes righteousness in the Kingdom of God, namely caring for the vulnerable among God's people.

⁷The charge to spiritual alertness in Revelation 16:15 is similar, "Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!" This text also occurs below with Hebrews 4:13 where naked refers to one's exposure to God's judgment.

crucifixion was practiced. Do these texts imply whether or not Jesus was naked by their description of which garments were removed? Additionally, is the inclusion of this detail intended only to convey an historical event or corroborate Scripture (Ps 22:18), or does this detail also carry theological importance in terms of the covenant curses of nakedness and threats of Israel's exposure in the Prophets?

Mark 14:51-52 describes an unnamed young man who was following behind Jesus wearing only a linen cloth. The guards seized him, and he left the garment in their hands and ran away naked. Opinions differ as to who the young man was and why the story was included in Mark.⁸ Lane argues that one should see an allusion to Amos 2, which states, "He who is stout of heart among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, declares the LORD" (Amos 2:16). Lane suggests, "The arrest of Jesus invites the crushing judgment announced by Amos, and not even the valiant shall be able to withstand that day."⁹

Another NT example which would benefit from a study of nakedness imagery is 2 Corinthians 5:1-4. There, Paul teaches,

We know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Paul clearly intends a symbolic interpretation of nakedness in this text, and a study of nakedness imagery should consider whether or not Paul suggests an advanced theology which develops the nakedness imagery in Job 1 and Ecclesiastes 5, i.e., one

⁸Only Mark includes this account.

⁹William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 527. Lane notes that the term for "young man," *νεανίσκος*, refers to strong and valiant young men in the LXX, Josephus, and Jewish apocryphal texts.

leaves the world naked of possessions, but in Christ, he is further clothed in immortality.

Hebrews 4:13 and Revelation 16:15 are similar to Job 26:6, namely that nakedness refers to one's vulnerable exposure and inability to hide from the gaze of others, especially YHWH. Hebrews 4 warns, "No creature is hidden from [God's] sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Heb 4:13). Similarly, Revelation 16 exhorts, "Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!" (Rev 16:15). In both of these texts, the reader is reminded that the Lord sees all, and one ought to prioritize faithful holiness at all times and in all areas of life.

Revelation 17:16 uses the language of nakedness similarly to the many judgment texts in the OT. There, the prostitute, Babylon, is judged by God through the mediated actions of others,

The ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

Like YHWH's threats in Deuteronomy 28:48; Hosea 2:3; Ezekiel 16:39; but most poignantly in Nahum 3:5 (because it refers to judgment on a foreign nation), nakedness describes a judgment that humiliates the sinner through total deprivation and shameful exposure before the eyes of all.

Finally, the book of Revelation merits theological consideration with regard to the concept of nakedness given its Eden-like final scene where God again dwells with mankind in a garden setting.¹⁰ Revelation uses nakedness imagery

¹⁰See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004),

numerous times with several of the same nuances occurring in the OT, e.g., judgment, spiritual exposure, etc. If this dissertation is correct that Genesis 2:25 represents an idyllic setting in which humans dwell with one another and YHWH in whole, unblemished relationships, does the book of Revelation indicate a return to that state? Indeed, Revelation 21:3 states, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.” Only the faithful will inherit this kingdom (Rev 21:7, 27; 22:3), and any human who might disrupt this idyllic setting will be in the lake of fire (Rev 21:8).

Revelation 21-22 does not state specifically nor allude to humans returning to a “naked and not ashamed” state, though the texts above clearly portray a situation of whole and unblemished relationships between humans and God. Yet the book speaks regularly of clothing which represents Christ-enabled faithfulness and righteousness, both before and after the kingdom is consummated. Sardis and Laodicea are commended and condemned, respectively, with clothing imagery. Sardis had some who had not soiled their garments and would walk with Christ in white (Rev 3:4). The next verse clarifies that those who remain faithful will be clothed in white, their names retained forever in the book of life (Rev 3:5). Laodicea thinks incorrectly that she needs nothing, and Jesus counsels her to buy white garments from him to hide the shame of her nakedness (Rev 3:17-18). As the demonically influenced kings gather for battle, the Lord calls the faithful to stay awake, keeping their garments on so their nakedness is not exposed (Rev 16:14-16).

While the timing of these events throughout Revelation are debatable, Revelation 19 describes the marriage of Christ and the church and still uses clothing imagery. “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the

for a discussion of theological parallels between Eden and the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22.

Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints” (Rev 19:7-8). The bride acts righteously, but she does so because she is given the ability by God.¹¹ Nakedness or clothing is not mentioned again in the consummated kingdom (Rev 19-22), but Jesus exhorts the reader one final time in Revelation 22:14-15, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

More work is necessary before reaching any conclusions regarding nakedness in the Kingdom of God, but a cursory glance seems to indicate humans live unashamed in the presence of God and one another. Yet, they are not naked, as in Genesis 2:25. Rather, their attire seems to be fine linen robes which represent righteousness, a state prophesied by Isaiah and worth quoting at length.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God (Isa 61:10-62:3).

¹¹See Eph 2:10, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” The bride’s attire and righteousness are in stark contrast to the wicked prostitute (Babylon!) in the previous chapter who is left naked and destitute (Rev 17:16).

Whereas nakedness represented an idyllic setting in Eden, the relationships between humans and God unmarred by sinfulness, the eschatological idyllic state seems to be represented by righteous saints clothed in fine linen. This symbolism seems appropriate, not treating humans as if they never sinned (i.e., naked and unashamed), but escalating the symbolism of God clothing Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:21. Their clothing represented God's grace to cover their shame, but it also reminded them perpetually of their sinfulness. Further legislation in the Pentateuch put this reality before them, their nakedness reminding them that they were a shameful and sinful people. As Israel and Judah persisted in their apostasy, YHWH threatened them through the prophets to strip them naked as a devastating but gracious act to jar them from their blindness. In the consummated Kingdom of God, however, the saints are given clothing. This clothing is now the image of their righteousness, which the nations see, granted to them by the one who was stripped naked on their behalf.¹² They are again in whole, unblemished relationships with one another and with YHWH, clothed in righteousness, free of shame, their clothing a perpetual reminder of YHWH's costly and gracious work to resurrect this idyllic reality.

¹²See Ezek 16:37; 23:29; Hos 2:10, where God's faithless people are exposed naked, and the nations see their nakedness. In Isa 61:10-62:3, the nations see their righteousness, portrayed as a robe.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF OT TERMS FOR NAKEDNESS
AND THEIR REFERENCES

Table A1. OT terms sorted by words

Term Used (Lexical)	Text	Term Used (Passage)
עָרוֹם, עָרָם (adj.)		
	Gen 2:25	עָרוֹמִים
	1 Sam 19:24	עָרָם
	Isa 20:2, 3, 4	עָרוֹם
	Isa 58:7	עָרָם
	Hos 2:3 (2:5 MT)	עָרְמָה
	Amos 2:16	עָרוֹם
	Mic 1:8	עָרוֹם
	Job 1:21	עָרָם
	Job 22:6	עָרוֹמִים
	Job 24:7, 10	עָרָם
	Job 26:6	עָרוֹם
	Eccl 5:15 (5:14 MT)	עָרוֹם
עִירָם, עִירָם (adj.)		
	Gen 3: 7, 10, 11	עִירָמָם (v. 7) עִירָם (vv. 10-11)

Table A1—continued

Term Used (Lexical)	Text	Term Used (Passage)
עירם, עירם (adj.)—cont.		
	Deut 28:48	עירם
	Ezek 16:7, 22, 39	עירם (vv. 7 and 22) עירם (v. 39)
	Ezek 18:7, 16	עירם
	Ezek 23:29	עירם
ערוה (noun)		
	Gen 9:22, 23	עֲרוֹת אָבִיו (v. 22) עֲרוֹת אָבִיהֶם (v. 23)
	Gen 42:9, 12	עֲרוֹת הָאָרֶץ
	Exod 20:26	עֲרוֹתַי
	Exod 28:42	עֲרוֹה
	Lev 18:6-19 (24x)	עֲרוֹה (or const. or w/suff.)
	Lev 20:11-21 (8x)	עֲרוֹה (or const. or w/suff.)
	Deut 23:14 (23:15 MT); 24:1	עֲרוֹת דְבָר
	1 Sam 20:30	עֲרוֹת אִמָּד
	Isa 20:4	עֲרוֹה
	Isa 47:3	עֲרוֹתַי
	Ezek 16:8, 36, 37	עֲרוֹתַי
	Ezek 22:10	עֲרוֹת־אָב
	Ezek 23:10, 18, 29	עֲרוֹתָהּ (vv. 10, 18) עֲרוֹת זְנוּנַיִךְ (v. 29)

Table A1—continued

Term Used (Lexical)	Text	Term Used (Passage)
ערוה (noun)— <i>cont.</i>		
	Hos 2:11	עָרוֹתָהּ
	Lam 1:8	עָרוֹתָהּ
	Ezra 4:14	עָרוֹת מְלֻכָּא
עריה (noun)		
	Ezek 16:7, 22, 39	עָרִיָּה
	Ezek 23:29	עָרִיָּה
	Mic 1:11	עָרִיָּה־בַּשָּׁת
	Hab 3:9	עָרִיָּה
גלה (verb)		
	Gen 9:21	יִתְגַּל (Hith Imp 3ms)
	Exod 20:26	תִּגְלֶה (Niph Imp 3fs)
	Lev 18:6-19 (17x)	לְגַלוֹת עָרוֹה (v. 6, 18, 19) (Pi Inf Const) לֹא תִגְלֶה (vv. 7-17) (Pi Imp 2ms)
	Lev 20:11-21 (7x)	גָּלָה (vv. 11-21) (Pi Per 3ms) גִּלְתָּהּ (v. 18) (Pi Per 3fs)
	Deut 22:30 (23:1 MT)	לֹא יִגְלֶה (Pi Imp 3ms)
	Deut 27:20	גָּלָה (Pi Per 3ms)
	2 Sam 6:20 (3x)	נִגְלָה (Ni Per 3ms) כִּהְגִּלוֹת נִגְלוֹת (Niph Inf)

Table A1—continued

Term Used (Lexical)	Text	Term Used (Passage)
גלה (verb)— <i>cont.</i>		
	Isa 47:2, 3 (3x)	גָּלִי (v. 2) (Pi Impv fs) תִּגְלַל (v. 3) (Ni Imp 3fs)
	Isa 57:8	גְּלִית (Pi Per 2fs)
	Jer 13:22	נִגְלוּ (Ni Per 3cp)
	Jer 49:10	גְּלִיתִי (Pi Per 1cs)
	Ezek 16:36, 37	תִּגְלֶה (v. 36) (Ni Imp 3fs) גְּלִיתִי (v. 37) (Pi Per 1cs)
	Ezek 22:10	גְּלֶה (Pi Per 3ms)
	Ezek 23:10, 18, 29 (4x)	גָּלוּ (v. 23) (Pi Per 3cp) תִּגְלַל (v. 18 2x) (Pi Imp 3fs) נִגְלֶה (v. 29) (Ni Per 3ms)
	Hos 2:10 (2:12 MT)	אֶגְלֶה (Pi Imp 1cs)
	Nah 2:7 (2:8 MT)	גְּלֶתְהָ (Pu Per 3fs)
	Nah 3:5	גְּלִיתִי (Pi Per 1cs)
חסף (verb)		
	Isa 20:4	חֲשׂוּפִי (Qal Pass Part mpc)
	Isa 47:2	חֲשָׁפִי (Qal Impv fs)
	Jer 13:26	חֲשַׁפְתִּי (Qal Per 1cs)
עור (verb)		
	Hab 3:9	תִּעֹר (Niph Imp 3fs)

	Lev 20:18, 19	הָעָרָה (Hiph Per 3ms)
	Isa 3:17	יַעְרָה (Pi Imp 3ms)

Table A1—continued

Term Used (Lexical)	Text	Term Used (Passage)
ערה (verb)		
	Hab 3:13	עָרוֹת (Pi Inf Abs)
	Psalms 137:7	עָרוּ (Pi Impv masc plu)
	Psalms 141:8	אֶל־תִּעַר (Pi Imp 2ms)
	Lam 4:21	תִּתְעָרִי (Hith Imp 2fs)
ערר (verb)		
	Isa 23:13	עָרְרוּ (Poel Per 3cp)
	Isa 32:11	וְעָרָה (Qal Impv fp)
	Jer 51:58	עָרַעַר (Pilpel Inf Abs)
	Jer 51:58	תִּתְעָרְעַר (Hith Imp 3fs)
פשט (verb)		
	1 Sam 19:24	יִפְשֵׁט (Qal Imp 3ms)
	Isa 32:11	פָּשְׁטָהּ (Qal Impv fp)
	Ezek 16:39	הִפְשִׁיטוּ (Hiph Per 3cp)
	Ezek 23:26	הִפְשִׁיטוּן (Hiph Per 3cp)
	Hos 2:3 (2:5 MT)	אֶפְשִׁיטְנָהּ (Hiph Imp 1cs)
	Job 22:6	תִּפְשִׁיט (Hiph Imp 2ms)
	Song 5:3 (Poss ?)	פָּשְׁטָתִי (Qal Per 1cs)
Miscellaneous		

מַעֲרָה (noun)	Nah 3:5	מַעֲרָד
מַעוֹר (noun)	Hab 2:15	מַעוֹרֵיהֶם

Table A1—continued

Term Used (Lexical)	Text	Term Used (Passage)
Miscellaneous— <i>cont.</i>		
יָד (noun)	Isa 57:8	יָד
בָּשָׂר (noun)	Ezek 16:26; 23:20	גְּדֵלֵי בָשָׂר (Ezek 16:26) בָּשָׂר חַמּוּרִים (Ezek 23:20)
שָׂד (noun)	Ezek 16:7; 23:3, 21, 34 Song 4:5; 7:3, 7, 8 (7:4, 8, 9 MT)	שָׂדִים (Ezek 16:7) שָׂדֵיהֶן (Ezek 23:3) שָׂדֵי (Ezek 23:21) שָׂדֵיךְ (Ezek 23:34) שָׂדֵיךְ (Song 4:5 and 7:3, 7, 8 imply intimacy)
דָּד (noun)	Prov 5:19 Ezek 23:3, 8, 21	דָּדִיָּה (implies intimacy) (describes fornication)
מַעֲרָם (noun)	2 Chr 28:15	כָּל-מַעֲרָמֵיהֶם
עֲרֵעַר	Ps 102:17 (102:18 MT)	הָעֲרֵעַר

APPENDIX 2

OT PASSAGES WITH NAKEDNESS IMAGERY

Table A2. OT terms sorted by passage

Text	Term Used (Lexical)	Term Used (Passage)
Torah		
Gen 2:25; Gen 3:7, 10, 11	ערום, ערם (adj.) עירם, ערם (adj.)	עָרוּמִים (2:25) עִירָמָם (3:7) עִירָם (3:10-11)
Gen 9:21-23	גלה (verb) ערוה (noun)	יִתְגַּל (v. 21) עָרוֹת אָבִיו (v. 22) עָרוֹת אָבִיהֶם (v. 23)
Gen 42:9, 12	ערוה (noun)	עָרוֹת הָאָרֶץ
Exod 20:26	ערוה (noun)	עָרוֹתָיִךְ
Exod 28:42	ערוה (noun)	בְּשַׁר עָרוֹהָ
Lev 18:6-19	ערוה (noun) גלה (verb)	עָרוֹהָ (or const. or w/suff.) לְגַלוֹת עָרוֹהָ (v. 6, 18-19) לֹא תִגְלֶה (vv. 7-17)
Lev 20:11-21	ערוה (noun) גלה (verb) ערה (verb)	עָרוֹהָ (or const. or w/suff.) גָּלָה (vv. 11-21) גָּלְתָהּ (v. 18) הִעָרָה (v. 18, 19)
Deut 22:30 (23:1 MT)	גלה (verb)	לֹא יִגְלֶה (Pi Imp 3ms)
Deut 23:14 (23:15 MT); 24:1	ערוה (noun)	עָרוֹת דְּבָר

Table A2—continued

Text	Term Used (Lexical)	Term Used (Passage)
Torah—cont.		
Deut 27:20	גלה (verb)	גָּלָה (Pi Per 3ms)
Deut 28:48	עירם, ערם (adj.)	עִירָם
Prophets		
1 Sam 19:24	ערום, ערם (adj.) פשט (verb)	עָרָם יִפְשֹׁט
1 Sam 20:30	ערוה (noun)	עָרוֹת אֶמְדָּד
2 Sam 6:20 (3x)	גלה (verb)	נִגְלָה כִּהְגִּלוֹת נִגְלוֹת
2 Sam 10:4	N/A	Robes cut off above waist
Isa 3:17	ערה (verb)	יִעָרָה
Isa 20:2, 3, 4	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרוֹם עָרוֹה
Isa 32:11	פשט (verb)	פִּשְׁטָהּ
Isa 47:2, 3	ערוה (noun) גלה (verb)	עָרוֹתֶיךָ (v. 3) גָּלִי (v. 2) תִּגְלִי (v. 3)
Isa 57:8	יד (noun) גלה (verb)	יָד גָּלִית
Isa 58:7	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרָם
Jer 13:22	גלה (verb)	נִגְלוֹ (Ni Per 3cp)
Jer 13:26	חסף (verb)	חִשַּׁפְתִּי (Qal Per 1cs)

Table A2—continued

Text	Term Used (Lexical)	Term Used (Passage)
Prophets—cont.		
Jer 49:10	גלה (verb)	גְּלִיתִי (Pi Per 1cs)
Ezek 16:7, 8, 22, 36, 37, 39	עירם, ערם (adj.) ערוה (noun) שד (noun) גלה (verb) פשט (verb)	עָרָם (vv. 7 and 22) עִירָם (v. 39) עֲרוֹתַיָּךְ (vv. 8, 36, 37) שָׂדִים (v. 7) תִּגְלָה (v. 36) גְּלִיתִי (v. 37) הַפְּשִׁיטוּ (v. 39)
Ezek 18:7, 16	עירם, ערם (adj.)	עִירָם
Ezek 22:10	ערוה (noun) גלה (verb)	עֲרוֹת־אָב גְּלָה
Ezek 23:3, 10, 18, 26, 29	עירם, ערם (adj.) ערוה (noun) שד (noun) גלה (verb) פשט (verb)	עִירָם (v. 29) עֲרוֹתָהּ (vv. 10, 18) עֲרוֹת זְנוּנֶיךָ (v. 29) שְׂדֵיהֶן (v. 3) שָׂדֵי (v. 21) שְׂדֵיךָ (v. 34) גְּלוּ (v. 23) תִּגְלִי (v. 18 2x) נִגְלָה (v. 29) הַפְּשִׁיטוּךָ (v. 26)
Hos 2:5, 10, 11 (2:3, 12, 13 MT)	ערום, ערם (adj.) ערוה (noun) גלה (verb) פשט (verb)	עֲרַמָּה (v. 5) עֲרוֹתָהּ (v. 11) אֶגְלָה (v. 12) אֶפְשִׁיטְנָהּ

Table A2—continued

Text	Term Used (Lexical)	Term Used (Passage)
Prophets—cont.		
Amos 2:16	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרוֹם
Mic 1:8	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרוֹם
Nah 2:8	גלה (verb)	גָּלְתָהּ
Nah 3:5	מערה (noun) גלה (verb)	מַעְרֵד גְּלִיתִי
Hab 2:15	מעור (noun)	מְעוּרֵיהֶם
Writings		
Ps 102:17 (102:18 MT)	ערער (noun)	עֲרָעַר
Psalms 137:7	ערה (verb)	עָרוּ
Psalms 141:8	ערה (verb)	אֶל־תָּעַר
Prov 5:19	דד (noun)	דְּדִיָּה (implies intimacy)
Job 1:21	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרָם
Job 22:6	ערום, ערם (adj.) פשט (verb)	עָרוּמִים תִּפְשָׁט
Job 24:7, 10	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרָם
Job 26:6	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרוֹם
Song 4:5; 5:3; 7:3, 7, 8 (7:4, 8, 9 MT)	שד (noun) פשט (verb)	שָׁדִיד (4:5; 7:4 intimacy) פָּשַׁטִּי (5:3)
Lam 1:8	ערוה (noun)	עָרוּתָהּ
Lam 4:21	ערה (verb)	תִּתְעָרִי

Table A2—continued

Text	Term Used (Lexical)	Term Used (Passage)
Writings—cont.		
Eccl 5:15 (5:14 MT)	ערום, ערם (adj.)	עָרוֹם
Ezra 4:14	ערוה (noun)	עֲרוֹת מִלְכָּא
2 Chr 28:15	מערם (noun)	כָּל־מַעֲרָמֵיהֶם

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF NAKEDNESS IMAGERY AS THEOLOGICAL LANGUAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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This dissertation argues that nakedness language in the OT powerfully communicates theological information to the reader because of its inherent association with shame at the level of basic human experience. This dissertation surveys the texts using nakedness imagery in the OT, explaining its function and meaning, and addressing any pertinent issues.

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis and methodology of the project and surveys the history of interpretation. These interpretations corroborate the claims of the thesis.

Chapter 2 specifies the terms used for nakedness in the OT, concluding that nakedness refers fundamentally to the exposure of the sexual organs. This chapter surveys the primary verbs and their derivatives as well as nouns used euphemistically to describe the sexual organs.

Chapter 3 surveys the ANE context, examining the functional, aesthetic, penal, and military uses of nudity, and it demonstrates that these nations considered public nudity taboo.

Chapter 4 examines the use of nakedness imagery in the Pentateuch. Genesis uses nakedness imagery to depict the original idyllic state of creation, the disorder after humans sinned, and YHWH's grace to repentant people. Nakedness in

the legal texts expresses humans' need for holiness before God and one another. Deuteronomy announces YHWH's deprivation of his apostate people.

Chapter 5 studies the use of nakedness imagery in the Prophets. YHWH uses nakedness to undergird his rejection of Saul and affirmation of David. Samuel and Isaiah corroborate the ANE practice of stripping as humiliation. YHWH threatens judgment against his apostate people in Hosea and Ezekiel. Several texts use nakedness imagery to represent the endangered and poor.

Chapter 6 studies the use of nakedness imagery in the Writings, showing again the plight of the poor or endangered. Nakedness imagery in Job and Ecclesiastes conveys the concept of contingency, and in Proverbs and Song of Songs, recaptures the unity and intimacy in marriage that was lost in Eden.

This dissertation concludes that nakedness imagery addresses numerous facets of theology in the OT, primarily because nakedness emphasizes the vulnerability of humans. This vulnerability exposes the darker side of human nature, such as fear and shame, but it also exposes the ideal, such as unity and trust.

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