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HOW PENAL SUBSTITUTION ADDRESSES OUR SHAME: THE BIBLE'S SHAME DYNAMICS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE

A Dissertation
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David Edward Rennalls
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APPROVAL SHEET

HOW PENAL SUBSTITUTION ADDRESSES OUR SHAME:
THE BIBLE'S SHAME DYNAMICS
AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE

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Dedicated to Jennifer

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDB — Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907

EDT — Treier, Daniel J., and Walter A. Elwell, eds. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017

NAC — New American Commentary

NBD — Wiseman, Donald J., I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, and J. I. Packer, eds. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996

NICNT — New International Commentary on the New Testament

NICOT — New International Commentary on the Old Testament

NSBT — New Studies in Biblical Theology

OED — Simpson, J. A., and E. S. C. Weiner, eds. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 20 vols. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. Continuously updated online at https://www.oed.com/?tl=true

UBD — Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1960

WBC — Word Biblical Commentary

WDTT — McKim, Donald K. *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014

PREFACE

I would not have considered shame as the topic of my dissertation apart from the wise counsel of my supervisor, Dr. Stephen J. Wellum, who encouraged me to pursue the project after reading the paper I prepared for his Atonement seminar. I am thankful that he did. This is for many reasons, not least of which is the fact that it has provided the opportunity to complete my PhD without the academic pressure to be novel being applied in a direction that can lead beyond the bounds of orthodoxy. Writing these pages has been an exercise in defending and expounding the old doctrine of the cross in response to new forms of old criticisms. I have appreciated Dr. Wellum’s steering advice throughout the process; it has always been theologically insightful and practically helpful.

Thanks are due as well to the faculty at SBTS more broadly, the administrators through whom this institution exists, and to all those who have supported it through the years. It has been a privilege to study here and to be shaped by godly influences. In this regard, I specifically want to thank Dr. Peter J. Gentry and Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin whose Canadian friendship and mentoring have been particularly formative. I must also express appreciation to Dr. Jonathan T. Pennington, who is responsible for initiatives that helped draw me to the PhD program and which supported the presentation of some of these ideas at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in 2017. Thanks, too, to all the mentors, pastors, professors, family, and friends who have supported me through this process and in the years leading up to it, but especially to my parents, Paul and Valerie Rennalls, who taught me the Scriptures and prayed that God would break my stony heart. Also to my children, Annabelle, Caleb, Timothy, and Samuel whose playful joy, burgeoning character, and growing faith make my heart swell with pride and thankfulness

Lastly, I reserve my most heartfelt thanks to my wife. Jen, your steadfast support for me in this process has been an expression of the love and self-sacrifice which have characterized your care and concern for me since that day in April some 15 years ago. You know more than anyone else that any fruit this dissertation bears in the Kingdom of God should be understood as evidence of the grace, mercy, and power of God, which he is pleased to display by using weak servants for his glorious purposes. Thank you for pursuing with me this calling God has placed on our lives.

Dave Rennalls

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

May 2024

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult not to notice how the notion of shame surfaces in the first chapters of Genesis[1] and how the need for men and women to cover themselves from "the shame of their nakedness"[2] remains in focus even as the canon comes to a close in Revelation.[3] The dynamics of shame are intricately woven through the biblical storyline. A significant thrust of scholarship has argued, however, that the language of shame has been largely overlooked by Western culture at large and in the Western theological tradition in particular, and that an exclusive emphasis on guilt has resulted in distortions. An early voice in the current discussion was anthropologist Ruth Benedict, who argued in 1946 that Japan and other Eastern civilizations were characterized by concepts of shame and honor which were foreign to the guilt-based cultures of the West.[4] Scholars since Benedict have shown that a hard distinction between "shame cultures" and "guilt cultures" cannot be maintained,[5] but shame itself has drawn increasing levels of attention

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[1] "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25). "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). "And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them" (Gen 3:21).

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the English Standard Version.

[3] Revelation 3:18 makes this point explicitly: Jesus says "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." For additional insight on the nakedness theme, see Ryan C. Hanley, "The Use of Nakedness Imagery as Theological Language in the Old Testament" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

[4] Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

[5] Donald Capps made this argument as early as 1993. See Donald Capps, *The Depleted Self: Sin in a Narcissistic Age* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 73. For an overview of Christian treatments, see Mark T. McConnell, "From 'I Have Done Wrong' to 'I Am Wrong': (Re)Constructing Atonement as a Response to Shame," in *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver Crisp

in Western scholarship.[6] Psychologists have sought to understand and describe the phenomenon of shame, its roots in the individual psyche, and its wider cultural underpinnings. They have defined shame using the categories of their discipline and sought to provide clinical solutions.[7] Christians have sought solutions as well. Evangelists and missionaries have struggled to share the gospel among people who seem to have no category for guilt, and pastors have struggled to help those who are burdened by an overwhelming sense of disgrace, dishonor, and humiliation.[8] They have searched the Scriptures and rediscovered its rich shame and honor themes, but some have looked to the Western theological tradition and found it wanting for doctrinal resources which are able to deal with the presenting problem. More specifically, a number of scholars and practitioners have studied the doctrine of penal substitution and been unable to reconcile its categories of sin and guilt with the communal and interpersonal notions of shame with

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and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 171–76.

[6] John A. Forrester argues that "shame is indeed a force to be reckoned with in our Western contexts," but he points out that we westerners have "within ourselves a resistance to admitting cultural currents of shame and its travelling companion honor." See John A. Forrester, *Grace for Shame: The Forgotten Gospel* (Toronto: Pastor's Attic Press, 2010), 63–80.

[7] See, for instance, Paul Gilbert and Bernice Andrews, eds., *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology, and Culture*, Series in Affective Science (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, Emotions and Social Behavior (New York: Guilford Press, 2002); and Günter H. Seidler, *In Others' Eyes: An Analysis of Shame*, trans. Andrew Jenkins (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 2000).

[8] For examples from missions and evangelism see: Herbert E. Hoefer, "Gospel Proclamation of the Ascended Lord," *Missiology* 33, no. 4 (October 2005): 435–49; C. Norman Kraus, "The Cross of Christ: Dealing with Shame and Guilt," *Japan Christian Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (September 1987): 221–27; and Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011). Each of these scholars maintains some form of Benedict's original distinction in their theological reformulations. For examples of pastoral and counseling treatments see Paul W. Pruyser, "Anxiety, Guilt, and Shame in the Atonement," *Theology Today* 21, no. 1 (April 1964): 15–33; Mark E. Biddle, "Genesis 3: Sin, Shame and Self-Esteem," *Review & Expositor* 103, no. 2 (2006): 359–70; Niels Henrik Gregersen, "Guilt, Shame, and Rehabilitation: The Pedagogy of Divine Judgment," *Dialog* 39, no. 2 (January 2000): 105–18; John Piper, "Gutsy Guilt: Don't Let Shame over Sexual Sin Destroy You," *Christianity Today* 51, no. 10 (October 2007): 72–76; David Edwin Eagle, "Shame and the Cross: Learning from the Disgrace of the Crucifixion," *Regeneration Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (2001): 6–7; Rebecca Thomas and Stephen Parker, "Toward a Theological Understanding of Shame," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 23, no. 2 (2004): 176–82; Edward T. Welch, "When God Touches the Untouchables," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 26, no. 3 (January 2012); Brad A. Binau, "When Shame is the Question, How Does the Atonement Answer?," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 12, no. 1 (January 2002): 89–113. Mark McConnell lists further sources in McConnell, "From 'I Have Done Wrong' to 'I Am Wrong,'" 170–71.

which they are confronted. They have therefore abandoned penal substitution in favor of other conceptions of the atonement.[9]

Into this category fall Mark Green and Joel Baker who argue in *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* that a penal satisfaction model of atonement is dependent on Western categories of thought rather than biblical exegesis,[10] and contend that, biblically, the significance of Jesus's crucifixion "is variously parsed, depending on the narrative within which it is located."[11] This conviction leads them to conclude that "the models championed in the New Testament for expounding the meaning of Jesus's suffering may not (all) be suited to our day,"[12] and that the Western guilt-based penal satisfaction model of atonement has little significance in shame-based cultures such as Japan.[13]

Alan Mann argued in a similar fashion in his book *Atonement for a Sinless Society*. In his view, "The working vocabulary of our culture has either dropped sin altogether as a description of our actions, or it has shifted its semantic domain."[14] Further, he explains, "one of the key factors" behind that problem "is the increasing absence of the divine Other."[15] Since the language of sin no longer carries any substantial meaning

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[9] Baker and Green, for instance, tell the story of how Norman Kraus found the penal substitution account of the atonement unsatisfactory in the Japanese culture he served as a missionary. Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 192–93. From a pastoral perspective, Capps noted in 1993 that "No one has addressed in a systematic way the specific problem of how to reflect on sin within a cultural milieu in which shame, not guilt, is the predominant experience." Capps, *The Depleted Self*, 3. A decade later, Rebecca Thomas and Stephen Parker were still arguing that "Christian caregivers have not developed theologies of shame that might balance the current preoccupation with theologies of guilt. Thomas and Parker, "Toward a Theological Understanding of Shame," 176.

[10] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 200. Further, on p. 42, Green and Baker state the following: "We want to suggest that, whatever its etiology, the popularity of the penal-satisfaction model of the atonement has less to do with exegesis and historical theology and more to do with the cultural narrative in the West, with its emphases on individualism and mechanism."

[11] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 31. See, chapters 2 and 3 where this point is developed.

[12] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 137.

[13] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 200.

[14] Alan Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 13.

[15] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 16.

and people have no conception of a transcendent God, the message of Jesus Christ saving people from God's wrath and judgment by dying for their sins is incomprehensible to them. Many people are, however, suffering from a debilitating sense of chronic shame,[16] so Mann reasons that the penal substitutionary doctrine of the atonement should be replaced with "narrations of the biblical story that help people deal with their shame."[17]

More recently, from the perspective of analytic theology, Eleonore Stump has also criticized penal substitution as an inadequate solution to shame.[18] Stump classifies penal substitution as a variation of "The Anselmian Kind of Interpretation of the Doctrine of the Atonement" and reasons that "neither the Anselmian or the Thomistic kind of interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement includes any explicit remedy for shame, or at least for the kind of shame that is not a consequence of a person's own past sins."[19] In Stump's view, this inadequacy in the penal substitutionary interpretation is one of the many reasons why it should be abandoned for the interpretation she proposes.

Thesis

The question at hand in this dissertation is whether a move away from penal substitutionary atonement (PSA) is a necessary or appropriate response when presented with the problem of shame. I will argue that Mann, Stump, and Baker and Green have not paid sufficient attention either to the Bible's own presentation of shame problems and their scriptural solution, or to the exegetical grounding and theological framework of evangelical doctrine. By providing careful analysis of the use of shame categories within the text of Scripture, this dissertation will show that those categories are integrally related

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[16] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 24–25.

[17] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 23.

[18] Eleonore Stump, *Atonement*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 25–26.

[19] Stump, *Atonement*, 52.

to the classic orthodox and evangelical doctrines of God, man, sin, propitiation, expiation, redemption, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification, all within the framework of union with Christ in the new covenant inaugurated by Christ's penal substitutionary work on the cross.[20] I am not presenting a comprehensive defense of every aspect of the doctrine of PSA. The scope of this dissertation is more narrow. I am responding to one specific critique of the doctrine: The critique that it is necessary and appropriate to abandon PSA because it does not address the problem of shame. The exegetical and theological evidence leads to the conclusion that this critique is unfounded. Christ's penal substitutionary atonement does address shame, when shame is understood on the Bible's own terms, and that the key to communicating the gospel to people who are sensitive to shame dynamics[21] is becoming fluent with Scripture's own presentation of shame dynamics and with the biblical connections which relate those dynamics to other doctrines. A move away from penal substitutionary atonement is not a necessary or appropriate response to the presenting problem of Shame.

Methodology

This dissertation will begin by providing the historical background of the

[20] I am intentionally distinguishing between "orthodox" and "evangelical" doctrines. I use the word "orthodox," in line with Donald K. McKim's definition of "Orthodoxy," in *WBTT*, 223, to refer to adherence to the "teachings of early ecumenical church councils from Nicaea (325) to Chalcedon (451)." What I mean by the term "evangelical" is well summarized by Elizabeth Mason Currier and Douglas Sweeney who describe evangelicalism as "a largely modern, interdenominational movement with roots in both early Christianity and the Protestant Reformation. Evangelicals and their theologies are diverse, but virtually all of them adhere to the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, the centrality of the cross, the imperative of transdenominational gospel promotion . . . and the necessity of spiritual rebirth." Elizabeth Mason Currier and Douglas Sweeney, "Evangelicals/Evangelicalism: Introductory Entry," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, ed. Daniel Patte (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 393. Evangelical theology is rooted in orthodox theology and evangelical theologians have expounded the doctrines which will be examined in this dissertation.

[21] I use the terms "shame dynamics" and "shame categories" to refer to the various ways shame is described, presented, understood and experienced. See Robert H. Albers, *Shame: A Faith Perspective* (New York: Haworth Press, 1995), 4; Werner Mischke, *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World* (Scottsdale, AZ: Mission ONE, 2015); and John A. Forrester, *Grace for Shame: The Forgotten Gospel* (Toronto: Pastor's Attic Press, 2010), 15.

current discussion on shame and an outline of the issues in play. Since each of these authors is presenting his/her work as a faithful representation of the Bible's teaching, analysis will necessarily begin with a discussion of what it means to be "biblical" and the assumptions and methodology that will underlie my own approach.

Once this groundwork is established, the dissertation will proceed with an exegetical and biblical-theological analysis of the scriptural presentation of shame dynamics, leading to an articulation of biblical categories for shame, which will be compared and contrasted with contemporary proposals. The argument will then move to present an exposition of evangelical doctrine in view of the biblical analysis of shame, with focus on correcting misrepresentations and highlighting doctrinal links with shame themes in the definition of the human problem and in the articulation of the divine solution. This section will make use of historic confessions and build on the work of others who have established exegetical grounding for various doctrines.

The final section will draw from this analysis to appraise the competing proposals in light of the biblical and theological evidence, and to argue for an approach to communicating the good news for shame in terms which sets the problem of shame and its solution within the broader context of orthodox and evangelical theology.

Historical Summary of the Research

Though the claim that the Western theological tradition has not paid sufficient attention to biblical shame (and honor) dynamics could be debated,[22] it is certainly true

[22] Consider, for instance, Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo*, published at the end of the eleventh century in which themes of honor, shame, and satisfaction are at the forefront. Anselm of Canterbury, "Why God Became Man," in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans, trans. Janet Fairweather (New York: Oxford University Press 1998), 260–356. John Calvin shows an acute sensitivity to shame dynamics as well. Throughout his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, for instance, he makes reference to prospective and retrospective shame regularly, referring to what is shameful, those who are shameless, and various circumstances where someone or other is or ought to be ashamed. A simple digital search for "shame" in Battles's English translation of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* shows 111 instances in volume 1 and 108 references in volume 2. See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960). For a demonstration that "theologians throughout church history have explained biblical truth in honor-shame terms," see Jayson Georges, "Honor and Shame in Historical Theology: Listening to Eight Voices," in *Honor, Shame, and the Gospel:*

that the current attention devoted to the topic has been prompted largely by twentieth-century developments and discussion in the fields of psychology, anthropology, and other social sciences. One early work was published by Max Scheler in 1913,[23] but more earnest and sustained discussion began with the publication of Margaret Mead's *Growing up in New Guinea* and *Coming of Age in Samoa* in 1928 and 1930,[24] respectively, and Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* in 1946.[25] These studies were anthropological in nature and framed cultural observations in terms of a distinction between "shame cultures" and "guilt cultures" that could be differentiated by the presence (in guilt cultures) or lack (in shame cultures) of internalized ethical norms.[26] Another influential anthropological work appeared in 1965 in a collection of essays edited by J. G. Peristiany and well-summarized by the title: *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*.[27] Peristany's volume presented various case studies of specific Mediterranean societies, and such anthropological analyses have continued to multiply.[28]

Reframing Our Message and Ministry, ed. Werner Mischke and Christopher L. Flanders (Littleton, CO: William Carey Library, 2020), 21–36.

[23] Max Scheler, "Zur Funktion Des Geschlechtlichen Schamgefühls," in *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft*, vol. 8 (Berlin, Germany: Verlag der Schönheit, 1913), 177–90. Also available in English translation: Max Scheler, "Shame and Feelings of Modesty," in *Person and Self-Value: Three Essays*, ed. and trans. M. S. Frings (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 1–86. The essay was originally published in a controversial German periodical which sought to "push the boundaries of sexual discourse within a framework of bourgeois respectability." See also Birgit Lang and Katie Sutton, abstract, "The Aesthetics of Sexual Ethics: Geschlecht und Gesellschaft and Middle-Class Sexual Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Germany," *Oxford German Studies* 44, no. 2 (June 2015): 177–98.

[24] Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization.* (New York: W. Morrow, 1928); Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education* (New York: W. Morrow, 1930).

[25] Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*.

[26] On Mead, cf. Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 346 (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 14–15. On Benedict, see Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 222–23.

[27] John G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, Nature of Human Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[28] Cf. David G. Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, Special Publication of the American Anthropological Association 22 (Washington, D. C.: American

The fields of psychology, counselling, and psychiatry took an increasing interest in the theme of shame in parallel with the growth in anthropological investigations. In 1953, Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer published *Shame and Guilt: A psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study* as the first psychiatric monograph in the American Lecture Series.[29] In their work, Piers and Singer refer to the anthropological studies of Mead and Benedict as well as to the literature of Sigmund Freud,[30] Norman Reider,[31] and Franz Alexander[32] (among others). Close analysis of the phenomenon of shame from a psychological perspective has been driven by a desire to provide effective clinical care for those experiencing its effects. Other important works appeared in Carl Goldberg's *Understanding Shame*,[33] June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing's *Shame and Guilt*,[34] and Paul Gilbert and Bernice Andrews's *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior, Psychopathology, and Culture*.[35]

Anthropological Association, 1987); J. K. Chance, "The Anthropology of Honor and Shame: Culture, Values, and Practice," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 139–51; John G. Peristiany and Julian Alfred Pitt-Rivers, eds., *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 76 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[29] Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer, *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study*, American Lecture Series 171 (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1953).

[30] Sigmund Freud, *Drei Abhandlungen Zur Sexualtheorie* (Leipzig, Germany: Franz Deuticke, 1905); Sigmund Freud, *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. A. A. Brill. (New York: Modern Library, 1938).

[31] Norman Reider, "The Sense of Shame," *Samiska: Journal of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society* 3, no. 3 (1949): 146–61.

[32] F. Alexander, "Remarks about the Relation of Inferiority Feelings to Guilt Feelings," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 19 (1938): 41–49.

[33] Carl Goldberg, *Understanding Shame* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1991).

[34] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*.

[35] Gilbert and Andrews, *Shame: Interpersonal Behavior*. See also Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes*, 2nd ed. (New York: Springer, 1996); Agnes Heller, *The Power of Shame: A Rational Perspective*, Routledge Revivals (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1985); Gershen Kaufman, *Shame: The Power of Caring* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1980); Helen Merrell Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958).

Given the growth in attention and academic literature, it is not surprising that Christian scholars began to consider how the topic of shame should be addressed within their own disciplines. In 1964, Paul W. Pruyser made a contribution as a "psychologist of religion" in his article "Anxiety, Guilt, and Shame in the Atonement" which appeared in *Theology Today*.[36] From a biblical studies perspective, Martin Klopfenstein produced his *Shame and Disgrace According to the Old Testament: A Conceptual Historical Study of the Hebrew Roots bôš, klm and ḥpr* in 1972,[37] and Lowell Nobel was a pioneer in seeking to apply anthropological shame culture insights to missiology in 1975. Nobel presented a paper on *Preparing Christian Missionaries to Work in Shame Oriented Cultures* as part of his Specialist in Arts degree and self-published *Naked and not Ashamed: An Anthropological, Biblical, and Psychological Study of Shame*.[38]

Academic study of shame continued to increase in depth and quantity in biblical studies, missiology, and Christian/pastoral counselling and psychology, with substantial works emerging as influential both within each field and across the varied disciplines. Into this category of broadly influential contributions falls Bruce Malina's *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, which was published in 1981 and applied anthropological insights to hermeneutics.[39] In it, Malina argued that American readers of the Bible must differentiate their own "cultural experiences and perceptions from those in the New Testament,"[40] and presented five cultural

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[36] Pruyser, "Anxiety, Guilt, and Shame," 16.

[37] Martin A. Klopfenstein, *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament: Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu den hebräischen Wurzeln bôš, klm und ḥpr* (Zürich, Switzerland: Theologischer Verlag, 1972).

[38] Lowell Lappin Noble, "Preparing Christian Missionaries to Work in Shame Oriented Cultures" (MA thesis, Western Michigan University, 1975); Lowell Lappin Noble, *Naked and Not Ashamed: An Anthropological, Biblical, and Psychological Study of Shame* (Jackson, MI: Jackson Printing, 1975).

[39] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

[40] Malina, *The New Testament World*, 153.

anthropological models (including chapter 2: "Honor and Shame: Pivotal Values of the First-Century Mediterranean World") which, he suggested, could aid American readers of the Bible toward this end. Much of the ongoing research on shame continues Malina's project of applying shame insights from disciplines outside biblical studies to the task of interpreting the Scriptures.[41]

Of specific interest for the current question, however, are three strains of contemporary shame scholarship. The first strain concerns those projects in Biblical Studies which have sought, in various ways, to study and describe the Scripture's own use of shame categories. Along with Martin Klopfenstein's work, mentioned above, this strain includes Daniel Wu's *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*,[42] which, despite its title, is largely an exegetical work. Other substantial academic works include Barth L. Campbell's *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*,[43] Sarah J. Dille's "Honor Restored: Honor, Shame and God as Redeeming Kinsman in Second Isaiah,"[44] Timothy S. Laniak's *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*,[45] the essays of Jacqueline E. Lapsley and John T. Strong in *The Book of Ezekiel:*

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[41] This includes influential works by Jerome Neyrey and David deSilva. See Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998); Jerome H. Neyrey, "Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 113–37; David Arthur deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., Studies in Biblical Literature (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); David Arthur deSilva, *The Letter to the Hebrews: In Social-Scientific Perspective*, Cascade Companions (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012); David Arthur deSilva, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009). See also Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996).

[42] Daniel Y. Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 14 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016).

[43] Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, SBL Dissertation Series 160 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

[44] Sarah J. Dille, "Honor Restored: Honor, Shame and God as Redeeming Kinsman in Second Isaiah," in *Relating to the Text: Interdisciplinary and Form-Critical Insights on the Bible*, ed. Timothy J. Sandoval and Carleen Mandolfo, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 384 (New York: T & T Clark, 2003).

[45] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*, SBL Dissertation Series 165 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

Theological and Anthropological Perspectives,[46] and Te-Li Lau's *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters*.[47]

The second strain is related to the first, and concerns critique of biblical scholars' employment of anthropological and psychological insights. While paying attention to the types of biblical studies emphasized in the first strain, this category also includes comparison and contrast of biblical shame categories with those drawn from other disciplines, and critiques biblical scholars for failing to account for further development within those other fields. The critique of Johnanna Stiebert in *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible*[48] is especially insightful in this regard, demonstrating that biblical scholars have continued to employ dated anthropological perspectives which anthropologists themselves have largely discarded. She specifically draws attention to Cairns's work showing the similarities and interrelatedness of experiencing shame and guilt (negative self-evaluation based on an internalized standard) and the resulting instability of the traditional distinction between shame-based and guilt-based cultures (since *both* involve internalized standards).[49] She also questions the

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[46] Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Shame and Self-Knowledge: The Postivie Role of Shame in Ezekiel's View of the Moral Self," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, SBL Symposium Series 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 69–96; John T. Strong, "God's Kābôd: The Presence of Yahweh in the Book of Ezekiel," in Odell and Strong, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 69–96.

[47] Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020). See also Yael Avrahami, "בוש in the Psalms: Shame or Disappointment?," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34, no. 3 (March 2010): 295–313; Ronald A. Simkins, "'Return to Yahweh': Honor and Shame in Joel," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 41–54; Lodewyk Sutton, "'A Footstool of War, Honour and Shame?' Perspectives Induced by Psalm 110:1," *Journal for Semitics* 25, no. 1 (2016): 51–71; Balu Savarikannu, "Expressions of Honor and Shame in Lamentations 1," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 21, no. 1 (February 2018): 81–94; Gary Stansell, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 55–79; James Nicholas Jumper, "Honor and Shame in the Deuteronomic Covenant and the Deuteronomistic Presentation of the Davidic Covenant" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013); Eric N. Ortlund, "Shame And Restoration: An Exegetical Exploration Of Shame in Ezekiel's Restoration Prophecies" (MA thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2003); Margaret S. Odell, "The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59–63," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17, no. 56 (December 1992): 101–12.

[48] Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 346 (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002)

[49] Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible*, 6–8. Referencing Douglas L. Cairns, *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (New York:

premise that shame must be considered in binary relationship with honor, pointing to anthropological studies of cultures in which emphasis on the former was not accompanied by emphasis on the latter. Louise Joy Lawrence makes a major contribution in this field as well, with her monograph *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew*.[50]

The third strain of research includes those who have attempted to move beyond analysis and interpretation of specific texts to theological synthesis and articulation of the biblical theme of shame, its relationship to other doctrines, and/or its implications and applications for life and ministry. An early voice in this strain was Paul Pruyser, mentioned above, who published "Anxiety, Guilt, and Shame in the Atonement" in 1964.[51] In addition to Mann's *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, Green and Baker's *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, and Stump's *Atonement* (whose arguments are the primary subject of this dissertation), this category has seen book-length contributions from Robin Stockitt in *Restoring the Shamed: Towards a Theology of Shame*,[52] Brad Vaughn (who formally used the pseudonym "Jackson Wu") in *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of the Gospel through Honor and Shame* and *The Cross in Context: Reconsidering Biblical Metaphors for Atonement*,[53] Jayson Georges (with Mark Baker) in *Ministering in Honor Shame Contexts: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials* and at a popular level in *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Fear*

Clarendon Press, 1993).

[50] Louise Joy Lawrence, *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model in New Testament Studies* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

[51] Pruyser, "Anxiety, Guilt, and Shame," 15–33.

[52] Robin Stockitt, *Restoring the Shamed: Towards a Theology of Shame* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

[53] Brad Vaughn, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*, EMS Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2013). Brad Vaughn, *The Cross in Context: Reconsidering Biblical Metaphors for Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022). Note: I will use Brad Vaughn's legal name throughout this dissertation, but his books were published using the pseudonym Jackson Wu.

Cultures,[54] Werner Mischke in *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World*,[55] and Norman Kraus in *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective* (which inspired Green and Baker).[56] Each of these authors seeks to draw insights from Scripture (to a greater or lesser extent) and each argues for the reconsideration, rearticulation, and/or reformulation of various aspects of theology and especially of the atonement. Some of the reformulations are more radical than others and each work reflects the broader doctrinal convictions of its author. Another contribution comes from Robert H. Albers, who, in *Shame: A Faith Perspective*,[57] does not aim for reformulation of traditional doctrine as much as explication of how the perspective offered by the theological tradition provides a biblical basis for addressing the issue of shame. Similarly, Thomas Schirrmacher has done valuable work in his *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt: Applying the Word of God in Different Situations*,[58] in which he provides a helpful analysis of the discussion by pointing out important distinctions which must be made and questions which must be asked if the issue is to be resolved in faithfulness to God's Word.[59]

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[54] Jayson Georges and Mark D. Baker, *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016); Jayson Georges, *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Fear Cultures* (n.p.: Timē Press, 2014).

[55] Mischke, *The Global Gospel*.

[56] C. Norman Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987). Kraus addresses shame in his chapters 12 and 13. Green and Baker cite Kraus extensively in their chapter 7. Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 192–209. See also Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Stephen Pattison, *Saving Face: Enfacement, Shame, Theology*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology (New York: Routledge, 2016). Pattison includes chapters entitled "Shame in Christianity," "Towards More Adequate Approaches to Shame," "Modern Theological Resources for the Saving of Face," and "Shining Up the Face of God: Practical Theological Horizons for Enfacement" in which he suggests areas of theological reform in light of his conclusion that a number of traditional doctrines inherently result in undesirable dysfunctional shame, etc.

[57] Albers, *Shame: A Faith Perspective*.

[58] Thomas Schirrmacher, *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt: Applying the Word of God in Different Situations* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018). See also Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*; Pattison, *Saving Face*; Capps, *The Depleted Self*.

[59] Other authors seeking to apply honor-shame considerations in Christian evangelism, discipleship, and counselling include Ajith Fernando, *Discipling in a Multicultural World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019); Forrester, *Grace for Shame*; and Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts*

Significance of Thesis

In addition to Mann, Stump, Baker and Green, many of the other authors in the third strain described above believe that an awareness of shame as a human problem and biblical theme necessitates a degree of reformulation of the doctrine of atonement. However, these advocates of reformulation generally have failed to interact with the arguments of Schirrmacher and Albers, have not taken into account various findings of exegetically-driven studies of biblical shame categories, and/or have not addressed the various critiques of biblical studies use of anthropology and psychology. Further, even the best and most helpful of the proposed theological reformulations are shaped by convictions that depart from or misrepresent the orthodox and evangelical theological tradition.

Shame is a real human problem and a real biblical theme. Those who hold evangelical convictions and aim to obey and declare the whole counsel of God in contexts where shame dynamics are prominent must be willing to consider how the Bible's teaching on this subject should inform classic orthodox and evangelical doctrines. However, before departing from those classic doctrines, evangelical Christians (scholars or otherwise) will want to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the exegetical grounding and theological connections that undergird them, and will similarly want to approach theological answers to questions of shame beginning with the Bible's testimony on the subject and moving systematically to theological synthesis. Unfortunately for those who embrace the evangelical perspective, a theological study of shame with these characteristics has not yet been completed. This dissertation will take such an approach, in conversation with the best current scholarship and three proponents of radical doctrinal reformulation,[60] with the aim of showing that the evangelical doctrine of penal

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the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012).

[60] The choice of Green and Baker and Stump as interlocutors for this project was driven by two factors: The first factor, as suggested above, is their advocacy for the most radical doctrinal reformulation (a complete abandonment of the penal substitutionary view of the atonement). The second factor is their

substitution is essential in the Bible's solution to all facets of shame, as well as sin, and should therefore be held dear rather than discarded.

Dissertation Argument

Having presented my thesis and set it in context of the broader history of shame-related research, it is necessary to highlight the following issues as having bearing on the question at hand and therefore as driving the outline of the dissertation: First is the observation (familiar in our post-modern context) that underlying assumptions about the task of theology, the nature and role of Scripture, and the purpose of contextualization shape the evaluation of arguments on all sides. Second is the observation that, despite recognition of the Bible's own shame themes, the discussion of shame in the critiques under consideration has, in a number of ways, been driven by anthropological, sociological, psychological, and philosophical study, rather than by an investigation into the biblical use of honor-shame language and imagery. The same is true of the definition of guilt with which shame is generally contrasted. The third observation is that the arguments against penal substitution misrepresent it and demonstrate a failure to understand several important foundations of classic orthodox and evangelical theology with which penal substitution and soteriology are integrally related, namely, the doctrines of God, man, sin, regeneration, and union with Christ through the new covenant.

In chapter 2, I will outline the theological assumptions I bring to the study and my position on the underlying questions of theological method and contextualization, and I will point out where my assumptions differ from those of Mann, Baker, Green, and Stump. I will provide a brief justification for the approach I will take in subsequent

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influence. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* continues in print some 20 years after its initial publication and is widely referenced in contemporary works addressing shame. Stump's *Atonement* is likely to receive widespread academic attention which will influence future thinking on the topic because of her reputation, position, and status at the University of Notre Dame.

chapters and will comment on how these foundational items inform the evaluation of arguments.

Chapter 3 will turn to the argument itself and will present an exegetical and biblical-theological overview of shame as presented in the scriptural testimony, comparing and contrasting the biblical categories with definitions and descriptions at play in current scholarship. This will involve building on the work of biblical scholars to delineate the following aspects of the biblical presentation of shame: (1) Shame involves a sense of deficiency and a fear of exposure; (2) shame can be considered both objectively and subjectively, and both prospectively and retrospectively; (3) shame is oriented toward a court of opinion or court of reputation and involves the application of a moral standard; (4) an accurate personal understanding of what is shameful is considered a virtue; (5) shame is often depicted instrumentally—as a way to induce repentance and motivate positive obedience, people can be mistaken about what is shameful and what is honorable; (6) God's standard is determinative in evaluating what is shameful; (7) shame in God's sight is tied to sin and guilt; (8) the subjective experience of all kinds of shame is acknowledged and set within this broader framework; and (9) shame and shaming is a component of God's judgement and punishment.

Chapter 3's overview of the biblical testimony on the topic of shame will suggest many points of contact with classic orthodox and evangelical theology. The concern of chapters 4 and 5 will be to present an exposition of evangelical doctrine that corrects misrepresentations and highlights those points of contact in the definition of the human problem and in the articulation of the divine solution. Chapter 4 will focus on a theological articulation of the problem. This will include discussion of (1) the preeminence of God's standard of honor and shame, grounded in his identity as creator and judge; (2) the Bible's teaching that God's relations to created human beings are manifestations of the internal righteousness and holiness which are attributes of the very essence of his being, and therefore unalterable; (3) the two primary problems of shame as

depicted in the Bible, namely, (a) the human problem presented by Scripture's insistence that sinful human beings will be put to shame on the day of judgment, in vindication of God's righteous character, and (b) the godward problem presented by God's promise to save a group of sinful human beings despite their unrighteous character; (4) the doctrine of man and of sin as demonstrating the depth of the primary shame problems; and (5) the secondary problems of sin as reflective of various states which resulted from the fall of Adam and Eve.

Chapter 5 will trace the development of God's solution to the human problem through the Old Testament and present the evangelical teaching on propitiation, expiation, redemption, regeneration, justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification as the multifaceted solution to the multifaceted problem of shame in God's sight. This will be accompanied by a discussion demonstrating that each of these facets of salvation is biblically grounded in union with Christ through the new covenant that God has established as the basis of relating to his people. Throughout, the discussion will highlight connections to the atonement by demonstrating that Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice is what inaugurates the new covenant, and that, in the biblical narrative, apart from penal substitutionary atonement the benefits of salvation do not obtain.

Having established a biblically and theologically grounded articulation of the problem of shame and its solution in Christ's work, chapter 6 will return to the arguments of Mann, Green, Baker, and Stump to compare and contrast their proposals with the findings of chapters 3, 4, and 5. Discussion of each author's work will conclude by presenting an approach to communicating the good news, centered on the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ, for those sensitive to shame in the contexts presented by those authors. This addresses the specific examples put forward by the authors and shows that the message of Christ's work is not inherently incomprehensible, even in

circumstances where explaining the penal substitutionary nature of Christ’s death is depicted as most difficult.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL METHOD FOR HONOR SHAME DISCUSSIONS

Te-Li Lau opens his recent book by noting that "we live in a world with a fractured understanding of shame."[1] This is true, as Lau demonstrates, even as we also live in a world where discussion of shame is on the rise, especially in the West. And our understanding of shame remains fractured, even in the world of Christian scholarship. Consensus has emerged in some areas, but, as outlined above, broad disagreements and conceptual differences remain about the role of honor-shame dynamics in interpretation, their impact on theological formulation, and the resulting application in missions, evangelism, and pastoral care. But we should not be surprised if scholars reach different conclusions on these matters when they begin with different premises.

Meaningful consensus on how honor-shame dynamics should inform our understanding and communication of the gospel, and the atonement, more specifically, cannot be reached without consensus on the nature of our theological task and our responsibility in proclamation. Unfortunately, such issues as the role and nature of Scripture, the principles of exegesis and hermeneutics, assumptions about language and meaning, the place of biblical theology, systematic theology, and historical theology in interpretation, and the biblical pattern of gospel ministry are left unaddressed in many contributions to the honor-shame discussion. Convictions on these foundational matters impact our conclusions, however, even when not explicitly defined, and critical points of disagreement are obscured when authors turn to theological construction (or

[1] Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 1.

reconstruction) without addressing them.[2] As long as contradictory convictions are embraced in these matters of prolegomena, contradictory conclusions should not surprise us in matters of honor-shame application. But as we set faithfulness to Scripture as our goal even in formulating our presuppositions and method, we hold out hope that constructive debate and increasing consensus in matters of honor-shame prolegomena will result in increasing consensus in matters of honor-shame application.

In what follows I take for granted David Bebbington's classic argument that part of evangelical identity is a desire to submit to the Bible's teaching,[3] and I argue that a number of contemporary theological and missiological proposals arising from the honor-shame discussion are driven by assumptions and approaches that are unbiblical. This chapter will set out an evangelical understanding of what it means to be biblical in those areas, but I begin with an overview of relevant issues prompted by revealing statements from the three proposals for theological reformulation that we are considering. I follow this overview with a positive presentation of evangelical assumptions and a discussion of how these assumptions should govern an evangelical approach to the question at hand. Others have treated these matters of prolegomena in great depth; my aim will be to outline basic exegetical and theological grounding that provides biblical perspective at points of disagreement in the honor-shame discussion. I then bring these principles to bear in evaluating competing proposals.

Foundational Issues in Honor-Shame Discussions

Mark D. Baker, Joel B. Green, Alan Mann, and Eleonore Stump each give attention to shame dynamics for similar reasons: Recognizing that the atonement is

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[2] As Carl Henry has argued, "A theological methodology is not merely to be presupposed, but is consciously set in juxtaposition to rival theories of life and reality, or else those who affirm God's reality will otherwise frequently buttress their belief with unpersuasive arguments." Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 1:214.

[3] See chapter 1 in David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

central to the gospel, they believe Christians must conceive of the atonement and communicate the atonement in a way that is meaningful to the people around them. Shame dynamics come into play because many people are said to be more conscious of the experience of shame than the experience of guilt. Various reasons are given for this state of affairs, but the situation is pressing theologians, missiologists, evangelists, and pastors to demonstrate how the message of the cross is good news for people afflicted with shame. The shared assumption is that the church is called to communicate the good news, but closer investigation shows quite contrasting conceptions of this basic church mandate.

Issue 1: The Task of Missions and Evangelism

For Alan Mann, the responsibility of the church is "to discern the overarching predicament of our time, to understand *the* question behind the questions of our cultural and philosophical context, and to engage them with a meaningful and sufficient story of the atonement."[4] As evangelicals, there is much here with which we agree. Discerning our culture's conception of its predicament is a basic step toward communicating the gospel effectively. Understanding the root question behind the questions of our time is critical if we are to engage with people in a meaningful way and demonstrate the sufficiency of Christ's atonement. As the book progresses, Mann suggests reasons why individuals in our "sinless society" no longer conceive of themselves as sinful and explains his understanding of a meaningful and significant story of the atonement: "A meaningful, and appropriate story of atonement must be one that speaks dynamically and specifically to the plight of the sinless self as he perceives it, and not as we would wish to

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[4] Alan Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 4 (emphasis original).

describe it."[5]

Noting Mann's assertion that a Christian presentation of the atonement must be framed in terms of an unbeliever's own conception of his problem, we see more clearly why Mann describes our task as engaging our culture with "a" meaningful and sufficient story rather than with "the" meaningful and sufficient story. Thoughtful evangelicals will want to consider whether this is how the Scriptures present the task of the church in missions and evangelism. Mann argues that we must speak in terms of a person's own perception of their predicament rather than our own preferred way of describing it, but he makes no reference to the Bible's description and diagnosis. We must ask if this is biblical. To what degree do the Scriptures suggest that our description of the work of Christ can and should be adjusted to align to a person's own perception of their plight?

We come to a more fundamental question, however, when we encounter comments such as the following. Concerning the task of engaging people with a meaningful and significant story of the atonement, Mann writes,

> Again, the concern here is not to speak of truth, if by that we mean the proving of something to be an undeniable fact or space/time event. What is far more important to our concern, and our plight, is whether we are encountering a story that is meaningful and sufficient. Therefore, we should feel comfortable with using terms such as myth and story when communicating soteriology, for by such means human beings express the meaning and significance of life, the mundane and the profound, the immanent and the transcendent.[6]

To be clear, Mann seems to acknowledge at some points that "the Christian (meta)narrative makes unique claims upon truth and history, humanity and life," but he insists that "in its *initial* encounter with the self it [the Christian metanarrative] should assert nothing more than the right to be heard, to be considered along with the polyphony of other narratives that we encounter."[7] In other words, the task of engaging people with

[5] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 40.

[6] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 68.

[7] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 67 (emphasis original).

the story of the atonement is emphatically not to be perceived as the proclamation of objective truth. Once again, we must ask whether this conception of the Church's task is biblical.

Issue 2: The Concept of Truth

Mann's conception of the task of missions and evangelism leads to a second foundational issue when we trace the reasons for his wariness of speaking about "facts." His statement above about Christianity making unique claims upon truth and history must be read in light of his understanding of truth. In his initial chapter on narrative, after declaring that the stories people embrace for meaning and significance do not have to be objectively true, he recognizes that "there will be for some (perhaps many in the church) a question that rings in the void that is perceived to exist between the objective certainties of truth and the more subjective, relativistic understanding that story is believed to give." His response displays his concept of truth: "Unfortunately, there is no reassurance that can be given to those who desire to make statements of fact derived from a particular metanarrative. *There is 'truth' for the self*: 'this is my truth; now tell me yours.' Relativism reigns."[8] He concludes the section with a few sentences that summarize his whole approach:

> All stories have equal and potential worth, bringing meaning and illumination to the life being lived. Therefore, our own story, told through our own words and experiences does not have to plead its case before all other narratives, since this is our truth. A story is, therefore, legitimized by its usefulness—or, to speak negatively, a story is de-legitimized if it proves meaningless to us. The only way to legitimately question this storied reality, relative as it may seem, is to offer an alternative story: "This is my story, now tell me yours."[9]

According to Mann, "truth" is relative. Each self has his own story which he counts as his

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[8] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 54 (Emphasis added).

[9] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 55. In another place he makes a similar statement: "It must be made clear that our goal in the first instance is not the construction of doctrinal or propositional 'truths' about Jesus and the atonement. This is an unnecessary distraction for these are of no concern to the sinless self on her search for salvation. We are merely seeking a narrative possibility that is bearable and conceivable, and one that is meaningful and sufficient." Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 79.

"truth," and which is legitimized by its usefulness as a means of providing coherence to his existence in the world, and this apart from any notion of correspondence to reality. Again, we must ask whether Mann's conception of truth is biblical.

Issue 3: The Principles of Interpretation

In order to answer such questions, however, we must have a clear sense of what it means to "be biblical." How do we go about determining whether a certain conception is biblical or not? Notably, Mann does not attempt to provide exegetical grounding for his understanding of truth or his conception of the task of missions and evangelism. His position on these matters is assumed and not argued, and his book, as a whole, makes very little engagement with Scripture. In this, Mann is simply being consistent. Given his emphasis on usefulness and coherence as the criteria for legitimization, one would not expect him to seek legitimization for his work by demonstrating its alignment with the teaching of the Bible.

The same is not true for Baker and Green. Presenting themselves as evangelicals writing for evangelicals, Baker and Green aim to legitimize their proposal over and against other proposals by arguing that it more closely aligns with the teaching of the Scriptures. With Mann, they agree that "today we must grapple with appropriating language suitable to communicating the profundity of Jesus's salvific work to people outside the Christian faith as well as those inside the church." But, compared to Mann, they take much more seriously the fact that "we must do [this appropriating and communicating] in ways that do justice to the biblical presentation of the work of Jesus."[10] The structure of their book bears this out: After the introduction, they begin with three chapters examining the biblical materials before moving on to evaluate historical and theological materials in light of the biblical evidence, and concluding with four

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[10] Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 134.

chapters considering how Christians can apply the results of their study and appropriate language suitable to communicating the profundity of Christ's work to people in various contexts. The question "What does it mean to be biblical?" becomes much more acute when competing proposals are both making claims to biblical fidelity. This is a question of hermeneutics and interpretation, and to evaluate arguments effectively we must have a clear conception of how to assess faithfulness in theological formulation.

Issue 4: The Role of Confessions and Historical Theology

Related to the discussion of interpretation is the question of how historic Christian confessions and historic Christian theological reflection contribute to the theological task. On aspects of this point, Mann, Baker and Green, and Stump share wide agreement. Writing from a Roman Catholic perspective, Stump states explicitly the working assumption: "Although creedal or conciliar statements rule out some interpretations as unorthodox, for the doctrine of the *at onement* [sic] there is no analogue to the Chalcedonian formula for the incarnation. For this reason, it is possible for there to be highly divergent interpretations, all of which count as orthodox."[11]

Baker and Green, in a very similar argument, note that "whereas the great creeds of the ecumenical church from which the church gains its doctrinal identity clarify the twofold nature of the Son of God, for example, they do not identify as singularly orthodox any doctrine of the atonement." They go on to insist that "those same creeds provide a certain latitude in the various ways in which we might understand the atonement."[12]

And with that shared perspective, Baker and Green and Stump tend to agree in

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[11] Eleonore Stump, *Atonement*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 14. Stump uses the notation *at onement* in her first chapter to highlight that the atonement is "a making one of things that were previously not at one." Stump, *Atonement*, 15.

[12] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 260.

approach with Mann, who argues that the challenge of theology is "to think creatively, laterally, tangentially, even abstractly, within the confines placed upon us, and to (re)tell our story with fresh and contemporary insight, while maintaining sufficient 'family resemblance' to claim a heritage within the boundaries of the Christian faith."[13]

Each of these authors interprets the absence of historic creedal specificity on the atonement as evidence that the doctrine is open to a multiplicity of interpretations. More specifically, and most importantly, they argue that the creedal silence on this doctrine means that multiple ways of interpreting the atonement have equal right to claim Christian orthodoxy and legitimacy. The assumption seems to be twofold: (1) That the core and central doctrines of the Christian faith, those which define "its doctrinal identity," were formulated in the ecumenical councils, and (2) that doctrines which were not so formulated do not contribute to the church's fundamental doctrinal identity and particular interpretations should not be elevated as genuinely Christian to the exclusion of all others.

As heirs of the Protestant Reformers, who argued for the necessity of a distinct interpretation of the doctrine of justification which had not been formulated in an ecumenical council, evangelicals must question whether these authors' understanding of the role of creeds and confessions is adequate. The Reformers certainly did not agree that the doctrine of "justification by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ's imputed righteousness alone,"[14] should be conceived as merely one of perhaps many "highly divergent interpretations, all of which count as orthodox,"[15] merely because "there is no analogue [for justification] to the Chalcedonian formula for the

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[13] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 37. Though Mann is the least diligent of these three in defining for his readers what those "boundaries" are and what confines are placed upon us by Scripture and tradition.

[14] Korey D. Maas, "Justification by Faith Alone," in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary*, ed. Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 511.

[15] Stump, *Atonement*, 14.

incarnation."[16] Furthermore, in AD 325, the church fathers did not agree that the doctrine of the incarnation should be conceived as having "highly divergent interpretations, all of which count as orthodox,"[17] merely because there was, as yet no formula for its interpretation.

Issue 5: The Nature and Authority of Scripture

Also tied to the issue of interpretation is the question of the nature and authority of Scripture. This question comes to particular prominence when interacting with works by professing evangelicals whose convictions on these issues are simply assumed to be aligned with the historic evangelical Protestantism, as will be outlined below. The Roman Catholic Stump, with commendable clarity,[18] explicitly sidesteps the issue of Scripture and its authority and frames her book as a work of philosophical theology. Her aim, in that regard, is to test the coherence of doctrinal claims, attempt explanations of them, and uncover their logical connections with other doctrinal propositions.[19] Her concern, she explains, is not with "claims about the relation of the doctrine to the New Testament texts," but "with the doctrine itself."[20]

In contrast, Baker and Green's aim to ground their doctrinal formulation in the text of Scripture brings their doctrine of Scripture much more to the fore. Their entire approach assumes the authority of the Bible by operating with the conviction that if they can demonstrate alignment with Scripture, their readers will be compelled to embrace

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[16] Stump, *Atonement*, 14.

[17] Stump, *Atonement*, 14.

[18] In the introduction, I made reference to those scholars who do not discuss or make explicit their assumptions regarding prolegomena. Stump, however, very helpfully outlines her approach in a full chapter entitled "Methodology, Problems, and Desiderata." Stating these matters explicitly allows the discussion to move forward much more productively, since points of disagreement can more easily be identified and directly addressed.

[19] Stump, *Atonement*, 3–4.

[20] Stump, *Atonement*, 8.

their proposal. However, in the course of their arguments, they make statements about Scripture which must be examined more closely, again raising the question of what it means, exactly, to be "biblical" in our theology.

Most strikingly, in an apparent denial of the dual authorship of Scripture, Baker and Green leave open the possibility that the testimony of the biblical text is at variance with Jesus's own self-understanding. They make the assertion that "Since we have nothing actually written by Jesus, we have no direct access to his thoughts about his own death."[21] Despite this conviction, they do go on to argue for the legitimacy of their "attempt to hear in the Gospels evidence of Jesus's creative interpretation of his impending death,"[22] because they believe that their "ruminations on how Jesus might have understood his death rest on a broadly defensible foundation."[23] The defense of that foundation is not grounded in the Bible's own doctrine of Scripture and presentation of the atonement, however. As evidence of the defensibleness of their ruminations, they cite recent historical Jesus research which has reached the modest conclusion that knowing something of Jesus's life must reveal something of the nature of his death. Evangelicals evaluating their work will want to ask whether this is the proper foundation on which we ought to begin the task of theological study and articulation.

More important, still, is the claim, fundamental to the argument of their book, that the "writers of the books of the New Testament were not concerned to set forth the content of the faith for all time,"[24] but were rather providing examples of creative interpretation and articulation of the gospel message that the people of their day would

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[21] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 53.

[22] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 53–54.

[23] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 54.

[24] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 113.

find meaningful and significant.[25] According to Baker and Green, Jesus was pioneering a new combination of images,[26] the New Testament authors "struggled to make sense of Jesus's crucifixion,"[27] and "we, following in the footsteps of Peter or Paul," should "cast about for metaphors and models that speak of this mystery to the people around us."[28] Once again, evangelical engagement will demand asking whether this understanding of the nature of Scripture matches its testimony about itself.

Philosophical Undercurrents of Honor-Shame Discussions

Having outlined this sample of foundational issues, the pump is primed for a positive presentation of relevant evangelical assumptions and the features of evangelical answers to the questions at hand. Again making reference to Bebbington's quadrilateral to define evangelicalism,[29] I have assumed that evangelicals desire to be biblical in their thinking, in their teaching, and in their practice, and this section, accordingly, will address the issues outlined above by bringing the teaching of Scripture to bear. My approach will be to outline the arguments many evangelicals have treated in great depth,

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[25] Cf. Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 138–41.

[26] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 61.

[27] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 113.

[28] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 140.

[29] Bebbington's quadrilateral is a widely recognized historical definition of evangelicalism based on historical evangelical convictions. Bebbington traces the evangelical movement from its history in the reformation to its expression in the twentieth-century. The quadrilateral refers to the four qualities which have identified the movement: "*Conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis for Evangelicalism." Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 2–3. As part of his more specific discussion of Baptist identity, Tom Nettles traces evangelical identity from even further back, setting it in continuity with the orthodoxy expressed in the ecumenical councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon, and then with the doctrines of the Reformation. See Tom Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*, vol. 1, *Beginnings in Britain* (Geanies House, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005), 37–44. I use the historical definition with the assumption that the term is only useful insofar as it maintains its emphasis on describing what people believe, and that, accordingly, when people cease to align with the historical definition of evangelical, they should stop identifying themselves as evangelical, rather than distorting the meaning of the term.

and the following foundational points will be defended: (1) That, according to the Bible, truth exists and can be known, grounded in the two principia—God (*principia essendi*) and his self revelation (*principia cognescendi*). (2) That the Bible presents itself as the supernaturally inspired Word of God, objectively true in its claims and therefore corresponding to reality in all it affirms. (3) That the Bible's testimony about itself provides principles for its own interpretation and that its own categories and context are determinative in the interpretive process. (4) That while historic creeds and confessions represent consensus in interpretation on specific doctrines, we have no biblical reason to suppose that they form a short list of the only core tenets of the faith. And, (5) that the Bible presents the task of missions and evangelism as the proclamation of its message, and that it assumes the reason why its message should be accepted over and against competing stories and conceptions of the world is because it is objectively true and corresponds to reality.

As I have emphasized, however, none of the arguments I will put forward are new. Christians have been making these points for centuries, evangelicals continue to demonstrate that Scripture is clear regarding them, and the arguments are widely accessible.[30] And this raises an important question: Why have these arguments not been received as compelling by the authors we have been investigating, or why are they not even brought to the table in their discussion? If the Bible everywhere differentiates between what is objectively true and what is objectively false, as I will argue, what compels Alan Mann to make the (objective, absolute, and therefore self-refuting) claim that "relativism reigns"?[31] Why does he believe "All stories have equal and potential worth"?[32] What drives Eleonore Stump to insist that "It does not matter for philosophical

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[30] I will defend this assertion, as well, in the following section.

[31] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 54. If relativism really reigns, Mann has no basis to make this non-relative, absolute statement.

[32] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 55.

theology if the data drawn from theology are true" and that "what matters is . . . whether they are in fact accepted as true and mandatory for belief within a particular religious community"?[33] Why this aversion to any declaration of objective truth?

Similar questions can be raised about Baker and Green. I will show that evangelicals have consistently defended an understanding of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures on the one hand and Jesus's divinity on the other, such that all the words of Scripture are recognized as Christ's words. But for Baker and Green, the fact that "we have nothing actually written by Jesus" leads them to conclude that "we have no direct access to his thoughts about his own death."[34] What understanding of Scripture undergirds such conclusions? Why does their defense of the possibility of at least closely approximating something of Jesus's self-understanding (to state the possibility as tentatively as they do) rest on historical Jesus research rather than on the basic evangelical conviction that Jesus's own Spirit inspired the authors of the New Testament to record his own self-understanding and interpretation of his life, death, and resurrection?

The main point of these rhetorical questions is to highlight the fact that neither Mann, Stump, nor Baker and Green give any indication of having engaged with the biblical evidence and concluded that the Bible does not actually teach the perspective of truth and divine authorship I outlined in the five points above. Factors other than evangelical considerations seem to be driving their respective approaches. Naturally, the fact that Stump is a Roman Catholic and is simply writing in accord with Roman Catholic convictions has bearing on analysis of her position. Baker, Green, and Mann also are shaped by their own traditions. Since this is so, a meaningful engagement with their arguments requires investigating and articulating the underlying and unstated

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[33] Stump, *Atonement*, 4.

[34] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 53.

assumptions and convictions. How can we make sense of these authors' approach? What intellectual forces are at work?

Before moving to a full defense of the five evangelical foundations which I have briefly outlined, we will consider the broader context that provides a background to these issues raised in the method of Baker, Green, Mann, and Stump. I will argue here that aspects of the theological methods on display in these works reflect a rejection of the epistemic role and necessity of biblical revelation as understood in an evangelical view of Scripture, and, for that reason, fit squarely within the philosophical currents of modernism and postmodernism that have been influencing Western thought since the Enlightenment. That rejection, or at least different understanding, of what we have called *revelational epistemology* leads their honor-shame discussions and theological formulations away from biblical fidelity as understood by historic evangelical theology.[35] Thus, in our contemporary context, an evangelical theological method must be set in conscious and explicit juxtaposition to these rival theories.[36] This will require providing an outline of modern and postmodern views of revelation, and to that undertaking I now turn.

Modernism

Francis Schaeffer made famous the expression "Ideas have consequences" by tracing the development of Western thought to demonstrate how contemporary convictions and controversies are rooted in broader intellectual movements.[37] Such

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[35] Stephen J. Wellum has made this point for Christology in *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 79–85. Broader arguments for the epistemic role and necessity of biblical revelation have been made by many evangelical theologians, but in comprehensiveness perhaps none have eclipsed the six volumes of Carl Henry's *God, Revelation, and Authority*.

[36] For an elaboration of this theme, see Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 1:214–15.

[37] For an overview, see Stephen J. Wellum, "Francis A. Schaeffer (1912–1984): Lessons from His Thought and Life," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6, no. 2 (2002): 4–32.

treatments provide perspective on the issues at hand and are often necessary to pinpoint the core points of disagreement and facilitate constructive debate. Baker and Green, for their part, attempt to follow Schaeffer in this regard, suggesting that "the popularity of the penal-satisfaction model of the atonement has less to do with exegesis and historical theology and more to do with the cultural narrative in the West, with its emphases on individualism and mechanism."[38] They believe the doctrine of penal-substitution is largely a product of cultural influences of the modern era, and, throughout the book, they refer to impulses of this modernism which they believe have shaped theological formulation in non-biblical ways which make it unsuitable for addressing the problem of shame.[39]

It is not clear, however, that Baker and Green have fully escaped, themselves, the effects of modernism (or postmodernism) on their thinking, and those influences seem to be affecting how they draw their theological conclusions. This ground has been covered by various competent authors,[40] and cannot be developed in detail here, but a brief treatment is necessary to address explicitly what has been assumed. Baker and Green discuss "modernism" primarily in terms of "individualism" and "mechanism," but they fail to locate these emphases in the broader themes of the Enlightenment era that brought about modernity. Most significantly, they do not reckon with the

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[38] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 42.

[39] These impulses include the emphases on individualism and mechanism as well as, "modern Western concepts of law and justice," Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 191, and "the modern drive to explain comprehensively in a way that ties up all the loose ends and produces a list of clear propositions," Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 188. "The theory of penal satisfaction allows a cultural norm particular to modern Western society, rather than the biblical narrative, to determine God's nature and actions." Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 207.

[40] See C. Stephen Evans, *A History of Western Philosophy: From the Pre-Socratics to Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018), chaps. 12–24; John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2015), chaps. 5–13; W. Andrew Hoffecker, "Enlightenments and Awakenings: The Beginnings of Modern Culture Wars," in *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought*, ed. W. Andrew Hoffecker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 240–80; Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 1:31–43. For a helpful overview, see Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

Enlightenment's elevation of reason over revelation in epistemology.

Stanley Grenz has described the Enlightenment's impact on theological method as a shift from Anselm's "I believe in order that I may understand," to modernity's "I believe what I can understand."[41] Central to this shift was an effectual downgrade and rejection of special revelation's definitive role in theological method. Historians of philosophy trace the beginning of the Age of Reason differently, but most agree on the significance of René Descartes's *Discourse on Method*. In the face of skepticism and doubt, Descartes argued that a firm foundation for truth could be found by turning inward to the self.[42] The seed of the Western individualism Baker and Green describe is found not merely in this turn to the self, but in the fact that the turn to the self was also a turn away from God's unique self-disclosure in the Christian Scriptures as the necessary grounding for knowledge. As Kevin Vanhoozer has noted, "Recent studies of the rise of modernity suggest that the famous 'turn to the subject,' and the individualism that accompanied it, were actually theological, or counter-theological moves, in which powers and prerogatives formerly reserved to God were reassigned to human beings."[43] Many have described this aspect of the Enlightenment. Broadly speaking, the rejection of special revelation and revealed religion has been traced in places such as Louis Dupré's *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture*[44] and Mario Sina's well-documented article on "Revealed Religion" in the *Encyclopedia of the*

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[41] Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 62.

[42] In Descartes's words, "While . . . I wished to think everything false, it was necessarily truth that I who thought so was something. Since this truth, *I think, therefore I am*, was so firm and assured that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were unable to shake it, I judged that I could safely accept it as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking." René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 24, quoted in Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 65.

[43] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*, Landmarks of Christian Scholarship (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 45.

[44] Louis K. Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004). See chap. 8, "The Religious Crisis," 229–68.

Enlightenment.[45] Notably, for our purposes, Sina's work outlines how the Enlightenment deists'[46] complete rejection of revealed religion as contrary to reason was countered by philosophers and theologians who sought to maintain a place for biblical revelation which was acceptable to reason. These thinkers criticized the radical conclusions of the deists while continuing to embrace the fundamental Enlightenment assumption: That the results of human rational and experimental investigation should sit in judgment of the assertions of Scripture. As described by Gerald Bray, "The eighteenth century witnessed a great debate between rationalists who denied the validity of a supernatural revelation, and rationalists who maintained that the divine revelation of Scripture was entirely reasonable."[47]

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[45] Mario Sina, "Revealed Religion," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, trans. Maria Rosa Antognazza (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Anthony Kenny notes the skepticism of Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) as outlined in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* and makes the assessment that this "negative attitude to religious authority set the tone for Enlightenment thinkers in Germany as well as in France." See Anthony A. Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy: In Four Parts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 570.

[46] Louis K. Dupré outlines the perspective of the Diests who gained traction in the Enlightenment: "*Either* revelation is intrinsically universal *or* it lacks universal authority. These ancient texts [the books of the Bible], written at different epochs, and referring to historical events of their own time, could not be read as if they were pointing forward to Jesus of Nazareth without granting a religious authority to their later interpretation. To these textual problems eighteenth-century deists added the overriding objection that the miracles alleged to support the message were themselves to be excluded a priori as conflicting with the natural laws of the universe. At this point biblical interpretation turns into *critique* of the Bible." See Dupré, *The Enlightenment*, 236.

[47] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996), 228. Bruce Demarest in his essay, "The Bible in the Enlightenment Era," has helpfully sketched an outline of how this elevation of reason manifested itself in the arguments of such thinkers as John Locke (d. 1704), Thomas Woolston (d. 1733), and Getthold Lessing (d. 1781): "With respect to the reason-revelation tension, Locke insisted that alleged truths of revelation must accord with the judgments of reason. 'Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything.' Again, 'if anything shall be thought revelation which is contrary to the plain principles of reason and the evident knowledge the mind has of its own clear and distinct ideas, there reason must be hearkened to as a matter within its provence.' In sum, 'revelation must be judged by reason.'" Bruce A. Demarest "The Bible in the Enlightenment Era," in *Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response*, ed. Gordon Russell Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 17, citing John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: New American Library, 1974), 432. In the course of his discussion, Demarest highlights how Woolston's elevation of reason over revelation worked out in practice. Only what is reasonable in Scripture can be accepted, so the miracles of Jesus raising Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus are rejected, since the literal stories consist of "absurdities, improbabilities, and incredibilities." Thomas Woolston, *Discourses on the Miracles of Our Savior* (London: Thomas Woolston, 1727–29), 57. Demarest's discussion is in "The Bible in the Enlightenment Era," 22. According to Lessing, "'That which education is to the individual, revelation is to the race. Education is revelation coming to the individual man; and revelation is education which has come, and is yet coming, to the human race.' Revelation, like education, gives man what he could have acquired on his own, only more quickly and easily. As Lessing put it: 'Education gives man nothing which he might not educe out of himself: it gives him that which he might educe out of himself, only quicker and more easily. In the same way too, revelation gives nothing to

The outworking of this principle in biblical and theological studies resulted in the rise of biblical criticism. Where common assent to the Bible's own testimony of its inspiration and infallibility had once focused debate on clarifying what the Bible teaches on a given subject, a second area of inquiry now gained prominence. The question was no longer merely, "what does the Bible teach?" but also, "is this teaching sufficiently reasonable and rational that we should accept it as true?" The Bible became subject to critique. And the historical-critical method, developed through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, found eventual expression in the historical Jesus project, as exemplified in the research cited by Baker and Green.[48] What Stephen Wellum has demonstrated with respect to Christology has import for the broader discussion: "Specific attempts within a paradigm of historical Jesus research may differ in emphases, but they all fail to find the *real Jesus* for the same reason: they reject the *revealed Jesus* because they are beholden to Enlightenment principles that are alien to the Bible and its authoritative presentation of Jesus's identity."[49] As with Christology, so with other theological loci. When the truthfulness of the biblical testimony is doubted in the name of rationality, the question, "What does the Bible teach?" is no longer authoritative and sufficient. Instead, a theological method must be developed that sets *other* ultimate criteria for establishing answers to theological questions. For Enlightenment modernism,

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the human species, which the human reason left to itself might not attain; only it has given, and still gives to it, the most important of these things earlier.'" Demarest, "The Bible in the Enlightenment Era," 27, citing Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *The Education of the Human Race* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1858), 1–3. And also: "Whether there can and must be a revelation and which one among the many that claim to be so is probably the true one, only reason can discern." Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker, 23 vols (Stuttgart, Leipzig and Berlin: Göschen, 1886–1924), 12:432, quoted and translated in Louis K. Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 236.

[48] Baker and Green cite John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical* Jesus, vol. 1, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991). For a summary of Meier's approach, see Robert H. Stein, "Review: A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol. 1, the Roots of the Problem and the Person," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 2 (June 1997): 308–12.

[49] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 66 (emphasis original).

the criteria are rational coherence, consistency with the current consensus of various sciences, and/or consistency with human experience and observation. Postmodernism, for its part, carries on the Enlightenment project, but sets the criteria in terms of pragmatism[50] or relative coherence within a community or system.[51]

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is notoriously difficult to define, but its core tenets simply bring the rejection of special revelation to its logical conclusions. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant had defended the Enlightenment project and its elevation of reason, but had emphasized an important nuance. In reaction to the skepticism of David Hume, Kant had proposed the distinction "between phenomena (things as they appear) and noumena (things as they are in themselves), claiming that we can only know about the former."[52] According to Kant, we do not have access to things as they are in themselves, things as they actually are in the world. We only have access to things as they appear to us.

> Kant saw space and time not as fundamental features of a reality that exists independently of human knowledge, but as the forms of intuition that the mind provides to organize its experience. It follows that the spatiotemporal world we come to know through experience is not the world as it is in itself; it is the world as it appears to us.[53]

In Kant's reasoning, this still allowed for "objective" knowledge of the real world in the sense that the knowledge we obtain of reality as it appears to us "is the same

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[50] Where interpretations or "beliefs are tools for dealing with reality" and are evaluated based on "what works rather than what is theoretically correct." Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 153–54.

[51] Where interpretations or beliefs "are 'true' insofar as they cohere with the entire system of beliefs," and where "one cannot go beyond one's own society's procedures of justification," because "everything one can say about truth or rationality is embedded in the understanding and concepts unique to the society in which one lives." Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 153, 156.

[52] Joel Smith, "Phenomenology," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: A Peer-Reviewed Academic Resource, accessed January 30, 2024, https://iep.utm.edu/phenom/. Referencing Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A30, B45.

[53] Evans, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 415.

for all of us, since we all have the same a priori intuition and the ‘forms’ of experience are universal,”[54] and “human reason in all times and places is the same.”[55] But later thinkers criticized Kant on this front as they considered further penetrating questions: On what basis can we know that the categories of human rationality are universal or reliable? And if we are convinced that reality (things in themselves) is inaccessible to us, on what basis can we make any assertion of universal truth? As Evans summarizes, “on Kant’s view, we can know a priori that the world will appear to us in certain ways, because that is the only way our minds can represent that world. But how do we know that the actual world is the way it appears to us?”[56] And how do we know that this unknowable world actually exists?

Postmodern criticism of the Enlightenment project is leveled primarily on these fronts. The critics agree with Kant that we have access only to things as they appear to us, but they reject any claim to objective knowledge of things-in-themselves. As Grenz has helpfully articulated, “The modern worldview assumes that reality is ordered and that human reason is capable of discerning this order as it is manifested in the laws of nature.” By contrast, postmodern thinkers argue that “we do not simply encounter a world that is ‘out there’ but rather that we construct the world using concepts we bring to it. They contend that we have no fixed vantage point beyond our own structuring of the world from which to gain a purely objective view of whatever reality may be out there.”[57]

These philosophical convictions have continued to work themselves out in the realm of biblical studies and theology and especially with regard to the doctrine of revelation. The historical position of the church is reflected in the words of Alexander of

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[54] Evans, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 415.

[55] Evans, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 418.

[56] Evans, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 408.

[57] Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 40–41.

Hales and Thomas Aquinas. Alexander of Hales argued in the thirteenth-century that "what is known by divine inspiration is recognized as more true (*veritas*) than what is known by human reason, inasmuch as it is impossible for falsehood to be in inspiration while reason is infected with many."[58] As summarized by Callan, Aquinas insisted that "theology argues from Scripture as its proper and sure source, from the authority of theologians as a probable source, and from reason as an extraneous source for arguments of suitability."[59] But where the church has historically believed what the Bible teaches is necessarily true because it is the infallible revealed Word of God,[60] modernism turned to the subject and asserted that the Bible's teaching must be evaluated by the rational minds of men. Muller provides a detailed summary of the progression,

> The rational reading of Scripture and highly rationalistic development of philosophical theology pioneered in the circle of Meijer and Spinoza and echoed in the exegetical efforts of the Grotius and the Socinians continued to have enormous influence in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries despite the mass of polemical literature aimed against them. Among the exegetes and theologians most responsible for the positive development of rationalist hermeneutics in this era was the Arminian Jean Le Clerc . . . . Although he strenuously opposed Spinoza's approach to Scripture and affirmed the authority, clarity, and normativity of the text in all "essential" matters of religion, Le Clerc also held to the use of reason to determine truth and falsehood, indeed, to sift through the materials of Scripture and determine what was in fact essential . . . in effect, reducing the sphere of miracle, removing the need for inspiration as an explanation of the text, and placing authority in reason rather [than] in Scripture itself.[61]

Postmodernism, in turn, notes that the evaluations of the rational minds of men are necessarily informed by the convictions and constructions each interpreter brings to the task. It is proponents claim "that philosophers [or theologians] are never able, either

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[58] Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica*, II, q. 1, n. 1, cited in Mangenot, "Inspiration de l'Écriture," col. 2219, cited in Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 2:43.

[59] Charles Jerome Callan, "The Bible in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (January 1947): 37.

[60] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:43.

[61] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:140. For an account of the influence of Meijer and Spinoza to which Muller alludes, see Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 197–217.

by reflection nor by self-reflection, to rise above their limited points of view to see the world, or even themselves, as God might."[62] Accordingly, they consider it impossible for anyone to mediate between competing and contradictory interpretations. If the Bible's teaching must be evaluated by the minds of men (they reason), and if the minds of men come to different conclusions, what basis is there for adjudicating between them?

The answer, according to postmodernism, is that we cannot adjudicate between them and therefore cannot speak of "truth" in any absolute, objective, and universal sense. Instead, truth must be defined in terms of logical coherence or pragmatic usefulness. Where modernism's criteria for answering theological questions were conceived in terms of correspondence with objective reality as judged by the (assumed uniform) perspective of rational man, postmodernism's criteria for answering theological questions are conceived merely in terms of coherence within the unique perspective of an individual or particular community, or in terms of pragmatic considerations as defined by an individual or particular community. Thus, for postmodernism, relativism reigns. As Wellum has well described it, "Postmodernity merely takes the Enlightenment turn to its logical conclusions: Starting with an independent and limited human subject leads to only a local and subjective knowledge. A postmodern epistemology provides no rational way of achieving a God's-eye viewpoint of the world and history."[63]

Evangelicals have consistently argued, however, that there is another way. In what has been referred to as a *revelational epistemology*,[64] Scripture itself provides the God's-eye viewpoint and chastens both modernism and postmodernism by teaching us to properly integrate natural and special revelation and give priority to special revelation where Scripture addresses issues directly.

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[62] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, 20. Vanhoozer is referring to Jacques Derrida, in particular.

[63] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 68.

[64] Wellum uses the term in *God the Son Incarnate*, 89.

Evangelical Foundations for the Honor Shame Discussion

While postmodernity is right to recognize that we each bring our own presuppositions to the theological task, it goes wrong whenever it suggests those presuppositions cannot themselves be evaluated in light of the claims of Scripture. The Bible presents its own perspective on truth, on the question of how we know what is true, and on the nature of the Bible itself. Insofar as modernity claimed to approach its investigation from a position of objective neutrality, postmodern critiques hit the mark. But a biblically faithful theological method makes no claims of objective neutrality. Rather, it seeks to approach theological questions with assumptions and presuppositions which are themselves consistent with the Bible's teaching, and recognizes that giving attention to the Bible's teaching on these matters is the means by which those assumptions and presuppositions are refined or reinforced.[65] The next section sets out biblical testimony on these matters and presents the presuppositions of an evangelical theological method over and against the perspectives of modern and postmodern philosophy.

Truth Exists and Can Be Known

The first line of scriptural teaching that presses itself against the postmodern objection is the Bible's insistence on universal, objective truth. The theological development of this doctrine will be outlined below, but a cursory examination begins to establish the point. Jesus tells the truth (John 8:45), he is the truth (John 14:6), and he sends the Spirit of truth who will guide the disciples into all the truth (John 16:13). In addition, Jesus's followers will be sanctified in the truth (John 17:17, 19), and Jesus

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[65] Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton provide helpful insight: "Although it is an exceedingly difficult process, the attempt to recognize one's presuppositions and evaluate whether and to what degree they are in harmony with those of the Bible, must continually be undertaken throughout life. In fact, we could say that *the key to interpreting the Bible is to allow it to change and mold our presuppositions* into an interpretive framework compatible with the Bible." See Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 9 (emphasis original). McCartney and Clayton's entire first chapter is helpful on this point.

summarizes the purpose of the incarnation in terms of the truth, “For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). The apostles and other biblical authors also insist that they are telling the truth (John 19:35; 2 Cor 4:2) and refer to the gospel message as the truth (Heb 10:26; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:22). The postmodern relativistic conception does not fit within the lexical glosses of ἀλήθεια and ἀληθής.[66] “Truth” as a noun is “the quality of being in accord with what is true” or “the content of what is true” or “an actual event or state, *reality*.” The adjective “true” pertains “to being truthful and honest,” or “to being in accordance with fact,” or “to being real, *real*, *genuine*, *not imaginary*.” Though postmodern critics may respond to the Bible’s teaching about objective truth with the skepticism of Pilate (John 18:38), we will be hard pressed to find scholars who argue exegetically that this is not what the Bible actually teaches.[67]

Further, the Bible asserts that the truth which exists can actually be known. Jesus himself declares that his disciples “will know the truth,” and the truth will set them free (John 8:31). Both Paul and John refer to those who “know” the truth (1 Tim 4:3; 1 John 2:21), and in the biblical testimony this knowing the truth is part and parcel with being a Christian.

The Bible’s overwhelming testimony on this point provides the basis for the evangelical conviction. Our task, however, is not only to assert this biblical teaching, but also to explain how the Bible’s account of truth answers the postmodern concerns. To this end, Wellum articulates the evangelical position quite succinctly: “Truth is universal and objective because it is grounded in the triune God who is the source and standard of all knowledge and whose plan encompasses all things because he is the sovereign Creator

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[66] BDAG, Ἀλήθεια, Ας, ἡ; BDAG, Ἀληθής, Ές.

[67] Within the inerrancy debate, evangelical scholars do argue that ancient conceptions of truth and error allow for phenomenological language, contextually appropriate degrees of precision, and the like, but these arguments still define truth in terms of correspondence to reality. They assume a metaphysical realism and logocentrism that evaluates truth-claims against objective reality.

and Lord of his universe."[68] Historical evangelical teaching on this point has referred to the concept of *principia* or "first principles" of theology. "By *principia* in general is usually meant the basic cause and ground of reality as well as the means by which we come to know them."[69] Using this language to restate the point made by Wellum, the church has affirmed that God is "the essential foundation (*principium essendi*) or the principle of existence (*principium existendi*) of all that has been created," and "it was always expressly repeated that God was the essential foundation of theology."[70] Truth exists, everything exists, because God exists and has created. In the biblical paradigm, a statement is true when it corresponds to reality as God knows it to be, because God is the one who defines reality.

Further, and "distinct, now, from this essential foundation (*principium essendi*) is the principle by which we know (*principium cognoscendi*)."[71] That principle by which we know, "the principle of theology, is the self-revelation or self-communication of God to his creatures."[72] Mark Thompson develops the biblical insistence that knowledge of God is grounded in God's prior decision to make himself known and in his creative and communicative action in keeping with that purpose.[73] He relates this to God's gift of

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[68] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 69. Just as God's special revelation in the Scriptures confirms the existence of truth and the ability to know the truth, so also it confirms the ability of texts to convey determinate meaning, the ability of interpreters to identify determinate meaning, and the ability of God to communicate effectively with the people he has created, and the ability of people to communicate with one another. The postmodern perspectives related to these latter issues have not surfaced in the works studied in this paper, but those criticisms have been addressed in such places as Mark D. Thompson's, *A Clear and Present Word: The Clarity of Scripture*, NSBT 21 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*; and D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 15th anniv. ed., Landmarks in Christian Scholarship (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

[69] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 1:207.

[70] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:211–12.

[71] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:212.

[72] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:213.

[73] Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word*, 51–68.

language:

> The first words spoken in Genesis are spoken by God and the narrative proceeds on the basis that these words can be—and are—understood by those God has so recently created. Human language should be viewed as a gift of God rather than as a human achievement. God is the first to speak in what would later be considered human words and by this first use he fashions those words as a fit instrument for his relationship with humanity. . . . By creating men and women in his image he has made us fit speech partners for himself.[74]

Thompson's observations of language and speech here have bearing on the more basic consideration of knowledge. In the same way that God has made us "fit speech partners for himself," he has also made us fit to receive knowledge of him and of creation through the mind and body he has given us.[75] This is the basis for the contention that "the starting point of the theory of knowledge ought to be ordinary daily experience, the universal and natural certainty of human beings concerning the objectivity and truth of their knowledge."[76] We have been designed with senses which receive stimuli immediately from the world outside of us, "hence the starting point of all human knowledge is sense perception. . . . In sense perception every one of the senses has its own nature and task; each seeks in the phenomena that which relates to it."[77] While our senses and faculties have been impacted by sin and the fall, our confidence in our ability to obtain knowledge lies in the fact that God's design remains fit for his purposes.[78] This pertains both to knowledge in general and knowledge of the transcendent God specifically. As McCartney and Clayton have helpfully expressed: "Humans can know an absolute, transcendent truth if that truth is known by an absolute Person whose

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[74] Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word*, 66, 68.

[75] God has "constituted our reason as an effective tool to comprehend language and everything else in the created world." McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 8.

[76] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:223.

[77] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:226–27.

[78] For a discussion on overcoming presuppositional barriers in biblical interpretation, see McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 1–10.

knowledge does not depend on experience, and if that absolute Person shares his knowledge with humans."[79] Postmodernism is correct whenever it asserts that beginning with the autonomous subject can yield no viable conception of truth, but the Bible does not begin there. It begins with the triune God who has revealed himself both in nature and, uniquely, in the Christian Scriptures.

Postmodern critics have provided a "stinging critique of the Enlightenment project on the basis of its own underlying principles,"[80] namely, the rejection of revelational epistemology which was traced above. In doing so, they have shown us that apart from revelation, we are unable to account for truth, language, and interpretation. But on the basis of evangelical theology's *principium essendi* and *principium cognoscendi*, we *are* able to account for all those things. This is why these two foundations are central to Christianity, and it is another example of what C. S. Lewis has said: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else."[81]

The Bible Is Infallible, Inerrant Revelation from God

This leads to a second line of scriptural teaching: The Bible not only insists that truth exists and can be known by persons, it also insists that its own testimony is true in all that it affirms. The doctrine of biblical inerrancy has been carefully articulated in the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*,[82] and evangelical scholars continue to

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[79] McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 14. They go on, "we may know absolute truth, albeit not absolutely; we may know it truly, even though only partially and imperfectly."

[80] Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 163.

[81] C. S. Lewis, *They Asked for a Paper: Papers and Addresses* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), 165.

[82] International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 4 (December 1978): 289–96.

defend it against attacks.[83] For this discussion, it is important to note that the denial of inerrancy is an expression of the same turn to the subject that began the Enlightenment project and has culminated in postmodern relativism. As reflected in the example of Le Clerc cited above, limiting the truthfulness and normativity of the Scriptures merely to "'essential' matters of religion" requires interpreters to "sift through the materials of Scripture and determine what was in fact essential."[84] Those who limit the authority and truthfulness of Scripture to matters of faith and practice must claim competency and prerogative to determine which assertions of Scripture are matters of faith and practice and which are not. As G. K. Beale maintains, this "inevitably means that the interpreter is the one who decides which parts of the Bible are mistaken and which are correct, which are not theological and which are."[85] Once again, the question moves from, "What does the Bible teach?" to "Is what the Bible teaches true?" And, most critically in our discussion of refining presuppositions, Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton highlight the grave problem that results when "modern students of the Bible evaluate whether biblical statements are true on the basis of criteria that are external to the Bible itself." It "cuts them off from having their own thinking critiqued by God's Word." [86]

This is the case even for specific questions about how we should conceive of honor and shame dynamics and their relationships to evangelical doctrines. The conviction that the Scriptures are inerrant in all that they affirm will lead evangelical theologians to evaluate sociological, psychological, and theological proposals against the

[83] Cf. International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, 1987* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987); D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983); Gordon Russell Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, eds., *Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984); G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008); John MacArthur, ed., *The Scripture Cannot Be Broken: Twentieth Century Writings on the Doctrine of Inerrancy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

[84] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:140.

[85] Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism*, 220.

[86] McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 8.

authoritative testimony of the Scriptures.

But other aspects of the doctrine of Scripture have bearing on theological method as well. That the Bible speaks with inerrant authority is foundational, but the reason why it speaks inerrantly is equally critical. Evangelical theologians have consistently argued that both the authority and inerrancy of Scripture stem from its nature as the inspired Word of God. God's action in producing the Scriptures is described explicitly in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21,[87] but the principle is affirmed by the way the biblical authors refer to Scripture.[88] Not only does Scripture record words God has spoken to various people through history, but the later authors of Scripture make clear that even words not directly attributed to God in their original context are to be recognized as divine speech. So, for example, in Hebrews 3:7, the author describes the words of the Psalmist as the speech of the Holy Spirit, and in Acts 4:25 the believers understand the words of David to have been spoken by God through the Holy Spirit. An evangelical theological method recognizes all the speech acts of Scripture, in all their literary forms, as originating in the triune God himself.[89]

This point is quite critical for the honor-shame discussion, and therefore bears elaboration. In recognizing all speech acts of Scripture as performed by God, evangelical theologians have insisted that whenever Scripture makes a truth-claim about anything it addresses, it is providing the God's-eye view on that issue. Scripture's assertions[90] are

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[87] Bruce Corley, "Biblical Teaching on Inspiration and Inerrancy," in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, 1987*, by International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 449–58; Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, vol. 1, *Revelation and Inspiration*, ed. Ethelbert D. Warfield, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 77–114; M. Vernon Davis, "The Place of the Bible in the Biblical Pattern of Authority," in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, 1987*, by International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 459–66.

[88] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, "It Says:, Scripture Says:, God Says:," in *Revelation and Inspiration*, 283–334.

[89] For an overview of speech act theory and its application in the interpretation of Scripture, see Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, 209–14, 226–27.

[90] Of course, the Scriptures include communicative acts other than assertions, and they also record instances of people making assertions which are not true. Cf. Vanhoozer's discussion of speech-act

necessarily true, they correspond to reality, because God's perspective on every issue corresponds to reality.[91] This is conceptually straightforward when considering a record of historical events. When the Bible declares that a certain event occurred in some particular place at some particular time, we can know that the event did, in fact, occur in that particular place at that particular time. But the Scriptures do more than record events. They also predict events that have not yet occurred. They make moral assessments of actions. They define virtues and vices. They interpret events by making assertions about motives, purpose, cause, and effect. They also communicate a vision of beauty, they express emotions.

Evangelicals affirm that when the Bible makes pronouncements of these kinds, too, it is still presenting God's perspective. What God says will happen in the future will certainly happen because God knows the future and is sovereign over all history.[92] When God makes moral assessments, his judgments are right and true because he not only knows but defines right and wrong for his creatures. When God interprets events, his interpretation corresponds to reality because he knows the motivations of all human hearts and the subtleties of every contributing cause.

In the same way, and more to the point in the current discussion, the Bible also speaks definitively wherever it speaks of honor and shame dynamics. Its descriptions of honorable behavior inform our understanding of true honor. Its descriptions of shameful behavior inform our understanding of true shame. When it describes challenges or consequences of shame, its description reflects reality. It is possible and beneficial to study honor and shame using the tools of psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology,

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theory in *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, 208–14.

[91] And, in fact, defines reality.

[92] The Bible also gives us the category of conditional declarations of future events, as outlined in Jeremiah 18:7–10, but this does not negate the point. Cf. John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, A Theology of Lordship 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 274–88.

and other disciplines, but evangelical convictions about the nature and authority of the Bible will lead evangelicals to submit findings from those disciplines to the critique of Scripture. To do otherwise is to fall back into the pattern of the Enlightenment project. Accordingly, in seeking to understand how the doctrine of the atonement addresses the problem of shame, evangelical theologians will want to pay close attention to how the biblical authors diagnose the human problem and to how they describe the actions taken by God to address the human problem.

The Doctrine of Scripture Informs Hermeneutics

If the various critiques of postmodernism have taught evangelicals anything, it is that convictions about the inerrancy and authority of the Bible do not remove the challenge of interpreting the Bible. Nevertheless, the Bible's testimony about its own nature as God's Word shapes our conception of the hermeneutical task in a number of ways that depart from postmodern assumptions. For starters, recognizing Scripture as God's communication to human beings gives us confidence that it can be interpreted, because it teaches us to locate the ultimate explanation for successful interpretation in the purposes and attributes of God. The opening chapters of the Scriptures maintain that God was the first communicator, that he is the one who established language as the means of communication, and that as all-powerful, all-knowing creator of all things, he is able to communicate effectively with his creatures and has purposed to do so.[93] Evangelicals have, accordingly, consistently maintained the Protestant Reformers' insistence that the perspicuity of Scripture is grounded in its identity as God's Word.[94] Thus, while the

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[93] Mark D. Thompson's summary is helpful: "Theological assertions are possible because God has effectively communicated his truth in the Scriptures." Mark D. Thompson, "Sola Scriptura," in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary*, ed. Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 160. For a more thorough treatment of this point see Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word*.

[94] With respect to the Reformers, consider, for example, Luther's assertion in his debate with Erasmus: "I would say of the whole of Scripture that I do not allow any part of it to be called obscure. . . . When he enlightened us, Christ did not intend that part of the Word should be left obscure to us, for the commands us to mark the Word; and this command is pointless if the Word is not clear." Martin Luther,

Scriptures acknowledge that people misunderstand God's Word for a variety of reasons,[95] an accurate understanding what God says to us in his Word is not inherently out of reach.[96]

Second, this conviction about the nature of Scripture as God's inerrant, inspired, and authoritative Word establishes the basic aim of evangelical interpretation. Graeme Goldsworthy explains the goal succinctly: "From an evangelical point of view, the goal of hermeneutics is, or should be, a right understanding of what God says to us in his Word."[97] Because the Bible is God's Word to us and because it is possible for us to understand it, our goal in interpretation is to understand it rightly in all its depth and relevance for our lives.

Third, while evangelicals have consistently maintained that the Bible is God's Word to mankind, they have also affirmed and carefully articulated an understanding of the dual authorship of Scripture.[98] Though the Bible's words are God's words, the Bible itself testifies that its words were written by men. Sometimes the human author is identified, sometimes not, but the doctrine of verbal plenary divine inspiration does not

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The Bondage of the Will, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1957), 129. For a brief, well documented outline of other historic and contemporary evangelical examples, see Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 128–41.

[95] Cf. 1 Cor 2:12–14; Matt 11:25; 13:13–14, 19; Luke 8:10; 24:45; John 8:43; Acts 8:30–35; Eph 4:18; 2 Tim 2:7.

[96] The biblical testimony *that* this is so is straightforward (on the ability to convey understanding through texts, cf. Luke 1:3–4; 1 Cor 11:3; 12:3; 2 Cor 1:13; John 20:31; 1 John 5:13), but the question of *how* this can be so has been subject much theological and philosophical discussion and debate. For treatments which address difficult questions which have been posed along these lines, see Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*; Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 2010); McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*.

[97] Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 16.

[98] Cf. Warfield, "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration;" Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993), 1:72–76; John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, A Theology of Lordship 4 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 140–44; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:428-448; Henri A. G. Blocher, "God and the Scripture Writers: The Question of Double Authorship," in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2016), 497–541.

smother the distinctive marks of each human author's vocabulary, genre, historical context, and style. This has bearing on interpretation, because the way evangelicals have sought to understand what God says in his Word is through understanding what the human author is saying.

Finally, however, the Bible's insistence that God is the ultimate author of Scripture grounds a foundational evangelical premise of biblical and systematic theology: that the teaching of the biblical corpus is internally consistent across the varied human authors, genres, dates of composition, and locations of provenance.[99] This conviction has at least two significant hermeneutical implications. First, it is because the Bible's teaching is internally consistent that those passages which are less clear must be interpreted in light of those passages which are more clear.[100] Since the Bible testifies that its message is primarily centered on God's redemptive purposes in Jesus Christ,[101] all of its parts must be interpreted in light of that message. Second, it is because the Bible's teaching is internally consistent that we must consider the testimony of the entire canon in the process of theological formulation and application.

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[99] For one helpful discussion, see D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 65–95. See also Geerhardus Vos's guiding principles for Biblical Theology in *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 11–14.

[100] The basic assertion that those biblical passages which are less clear must be interpreted in light of those passages which are more clear has been made by Christians throughout the entire history of the church. Cf. Gerald Bray, in describing Augustine's conviction on this point: "The obscurities in Scripture have been put there by God, and may be interpreted on the basis of the many plain passages. This doctrine, which repeats the view of Origen in a non-allegorical context, has continued to function as a main principle of biblical exegesis up to the present time." And further, "When Scripture is ambiguous, the rule of faith can be used to interpret it." See Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 109. On page 192, Bray also describes how the Protestant Reformers worked out this principle in term of the analogy of faith: "Those parts of the Bible which were not clear were to be interpreted according to what was called the analogy of faith. This meant that whatever was said about them should be in agreement with what the clearer parts of Scripture already made plain, and that nothing should be inferred from an unclear passage which could not be proved from another, more obvious, text."

[101] For extended treatments of this point, cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012); Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament, With Study and Application Questions*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013).

This last point has critical importance for the question of what it means to be biblical, because it forces us to acknowledge that evaluation of the biblical fidelity of interpretations and theological formulations is dependent on our understanding of the overall purpose and teaching of the Bible. In contrast to the postmodern "incredulity toward metanarratives" and its rejection of any all-encompassing objective description of reality, evangelicals have recognized that, in the Scriptures, the God who exists and who created everything that exists has revealed to mankind an objectively true account of himself, of the nature of the universe and the creatures who live in it, of the fundamental problem of mankind, of the solution that has been and is being wrought in Christ, and of how the story will culminate at the end of this age.[102] In other words, the Bible *does* present an all-encompassing metanarrative that objectively describes reality, and the more accurately interpreters understand that overarching metanarrative, the more accurately they will be able to interpret all the varied portions of Scripture which contribute to it. Further to this, evangelicals have consistently agreed that the broad outline of this metanarrative is redemptive-historical in character and purpose.[103] The Bible explains the historical reason for mankind's need of redemption, it testifies to the acts of God which have accomplished the redemption of his people in history, and it

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[102] The exegetical, biblical theological, and systematic theological case for this position as been developed by theologians across the entire history of the church (again, cf. Allison, *Historical Theology*, for an overview with well documented primary and secondary sources), but evangelical theologians have also provided rigorous defenses of this claim against the arguments of modern and postmodern skepticism. See Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1; Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002); Carson, *The Gagging of God*; Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*; Vos, *Biblical Theology*; David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth, or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993).

[103] This agreement is demonstrated both in general systematic arguments concerning the nature of Scripture (*that* it is redemptive-historical in character and purpose), and in particular exegetical and biblical-theological investigations of specific themes (*how* the Bible develops its redemptive-historical themes). On the former, cf. Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*; Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 157–58; Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 1:115. On the latter, cf. Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery*.

foretells the coming historic consummation of that redemption at the end of the age.

The crucial implication of this truth for the honor-shame discussion is that, in the Scriptures, God describes mankind's actual, objective problem, and any interpretation or theological formulation of the shame-portion of this problem must do justice to the fullness of God's testimony. As we will see, the Bible does present various aspects of shame as part of the problem, and in considering these shame components of the problem, the Bible's definition is definitive regardless of a person's perception or conception of it. The same is true for the solution. Evangelicals have maintained that, in the Scriptures, God describes the actual, objective acts by which he has accomplished the redemption of his people, and, in the Scriptures, God himself interprets those acts and explicitly describes how his acts provide the solution to the actual, objective problem of mankind, including the aspects of the problem related to shame. The exercise of studying how the Bible describes the shame aspects of the human problem and how that part of the problem is resolved in God's acts of redemption is valuable because it helps Christians understand the good news (the gospel) of God's objective acts of redemption in greater fullness. This fuller understanding then leads to greater fullness and clarity in proclamation of the gospel as the Church fulfills its mission.

Creeds, Confessions, and Historical Theology

These convictions about the nature and authority of Scripture and the missional desire to faithfully testify to the Bible's teaching inform an evangelical understanding of creeds, confessions, and historical theology. As heirs of the Protestant Reformation, evangelicals have consistently upheld the principle that Scripture alone is the final authority of Christian faith, proclamation, and practice. They have rejected the attempt to elevate magisterial authority over biblical authority just as they have rejected the attempt to elevate reason over biblical authority. I have already made reference to Bebbington's inclusion of *Biblicism* as one of the four defining features of evangelicalism. However,

evangelicals have also argued that aim of understanding and faithfully testifying to the fullness of the Bible's teaching is not to be conceived as an objective pursued in isolated individualism.[104] Rather, each generation of Christian witnesses stands on the shoulders of those who have come before, learning from them where to turn in the Scriptures to find teaching on specific questions and following their guidance as they point out how types and themes are woven through the biblical storyline and how they have bearing on Christian proclamation. Just as a budding physicist learns in a few years from teachers what was learned through centuries of observation and investigation in the broader scientific community, so Christians and theologians in every generation learn from the observations and investigations of faithful witnesses who have studied the Scriptures since the founding of the church.[105] Scripture remains normative, and creeds, confessions, and historical theology serve a ministerial rather than magisterial role.

Describing the role of tradition in this broader way also brings attention to the narrower question of the authority of creeds and confessions. Many scholars have reminded us that each of the historic creeds and confessions of the church arose in a specific missional context and for specific reasons, and was composed to answer to specific questions confronting the church.[106] The decrees of the four ecumenical councils,

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[104] Bavinck states the matter succinctly: "So much study and reflection on the subject [of the Bible's message] is bound up with it that no person can possibly do it alone. That takes centuries. To that end the church has been appointed and given the promise of the Spirit's guidance into all truth. Whoever isolates himself from the church, i.e.,,, from Christianity as a whole, from the history of dogma in its entirety, loses the truth of the Christian faith." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:83. Cf. Daniel J. Treier and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture: A Mere Evangelical Account*, Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015); Keith A. Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001), 267–81; Scott R. Swain, "A Ruled Reading Reformed: The Role of the Church's Confession in Biblical Interpretation," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 14, no. 2 (April 2012): 177–93.

[105] It is worth noting that a good teacher will encourage the student to observe and investigate the phenomenon for themselves and that once students have understood the arguments and explanations passed down to them, they can go on to point out inconsistencies and even correct their teachers at points where they find evidence that has not been accounted for.

[106] Cf. Donald Fairbairn and Ryan M. Reeves, *The Story of Creeds and Confessions: Tracing the Development of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019); William Latane Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, ed. Bill Leonard, 2nd rev. ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2011).

along with some of the later councils,[107] addressed the Trinitarian and Christological debates that developed in those early centuries of the church. They were concerned to demonstrate the good news that God himself is the one who wrought salvation by sending his Son and his Spirit. As the debates unfolded, the fathers of the church were able to propound exegetical arguments for the orthodox position so convincingly that their conclusions on those questions became accepted by the whole church throughout the whole world. As Keith A. Mathison reminds us, "councils were never accepted as valid in advance in spite of the appearance of formal regularity. That this is true is clearly observed when we realize that many councils were disavowed."[108] But the arguments of the four ecumenical councils prevailed, and, as J. N. D. Kelly maintains, "the authority of the fathers consisted precisely in the fact that they had so faithfully and fully expounded the real intention of the Bible writers."[109] This is an evangelical understanding of the authority which attaches to creeds and confessions and the benefit they provide to the mission of the church. Their authority consists in the comprehensiveness and soundness of the exegetical arguments which demonstrate that their statements reflect the biblical teaching on the questions under consideration, and they benefit the church by giving its witnesses confidence in their proclamation.

Two points are especially relevant for the current discussion. First, the actual historical process by which the creeds were formed is consistent with the Bible's own emphasis on its priority and authority. The question at hand when evaluating theological claims was always the same: what does the Bible teach about this issue? It was to answer this question that the councils were convened. Second, when we recognize that creeds

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[107] In addition to Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, Constantinople 2 and 3 are also important for orthodoxy.

[108] Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*, 46.

[109] J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1978), 49, quoted in Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*, 46.

and confessions are drawn up to address specific issues, we must acknowledge that individual creeds do not necessarily address all possible departures from biblical teaching or even all possible departures which undermine the proclamation of the gospel. Agreement with Nicaea on the divine nature of Jesus does not necessarily entail agreement with Chalcedon on the human nature of Jesus and the relationship between the two natures. Likewise, agreement with Nicaea and Chalcedon does not entail agreement with the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Reformers contended, as evangelicals still contend, that justification by faith alone is part and parcel with the gospel, and that denial of that doctrine is a denial of the gospel even if assent is given to the decrees of the ecumenical councils. In other words, the fact that the creeds of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon must be regarded as definitive answers to specific important questions facing the church does not entail that no other questions can be answered definitively or that no other issues undermine the church's task of gospel proclamation. When new questions arise in the life of the church and new teaching presents itself, the *primary* question is not "Can this doctrine be reconciled with existing creeds and confessions?" but "What does the Bible say about this issue?" Tradition provides a helpful starting place, but every generation must bring the full weight of Scripture to bear on the questions of its day and formulate answers in its own statements of faith which set forth the biblical teaching and reject proposals which contradict the biblical testimony.[110] The point has application for the current debate where all parties agree that the doctrine of the atonement is central to gospel proclamation despite the fact that it is not addressed in the ecumenical creeds.

Furthermore, the evangelical understanding of the increased confessional definition that arose in the reformation also asserts that the reason no confessional

[110] Herman Bavinck, for example, refers to "truth concealed in Scripture that has not yet been assimilated by the church . . . and still awaits its future development." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:83.

statement existed on some points of doctrine was because of existing unanimous agreement. As Maas argues regarding the doctrine of Scripture, “None, for example, questioned the central importance of Holy Scripture, and yet throughout the Middle Ages the precise contents of the biblical canon were never enshrined in an official decree of the church. The reason in this instance is simply that an implicit consensus on the canon rendered any dogmatic definition unnecessary.”[111] A similar case has been argued by Benjamin Wheaton regarding the penal substitutionary nature of the atonement. As demonstrated in his work, the reformation insistence on penal substitutionary atonement does not represent a break from the Middle Ages, since the atonement was already broadly conceived as “a sacrifice of expiation and propitiation made by God to God.”[112]

So, while the atonement was not addressed in the ecumenical councils of the early centuries, it was consistently addressed in the Protestant creeds by the heirs of the reformation because of increasing departure from the biblical teaching on the part of the Socinians and other Enlightenment-influenced thinkers. And the resulting consensus was remarkably broad. Between them, the Belgic Confession,[113] the Thirty-nine Articles,[114]

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[111] Maas, “Justification by Faith Alone,” 513.

[112] Benjamin Wheaton, *Suffering, Not Power: Atonement in the Middle Ages* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), 241.

[113] In Article XX: “We believe that God—who is perfectly merciful and also very just—sent the Son to assume the nature in which the disobedience had been committed, in order to bear in it the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death. So God made known his justice toward his Son, who was charged with our sin, and he poured out his goodness and mercy on us, who are guilty and worthy of damnation” In Article XXI: “We believe that Jesus Christ is a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek—made such by an oath—and that he presented himself in our name before his Father, to appease his Father’s wrath with full satisfaction by offering himself on the tree of the cross and pouring out his precious blood for the cleansing of our sins, as the prophets had predicted.”

[114] Article II states that Christ, “truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.” The Methodist Articles of Religion (1784) adopt Article II verbatim from the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

the Westminster Confession of Faith,[115] and the 1689 London Baptist Confession,[116] represent the settled convictions of Dutch Reformed, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches who have sought to interpret the Bible's teaching on the Atonement in accordance with the doctrine of Scripture and the principles of hermeneutics we have been outlining.[117] This uniform consensus on the penal substitutionary nature of the atonement is the reason Bebbington identified it alongside "biblicism" as a defining mark of evangelicalism. The doctrine has gained such wide traction among those who seek to ground their doctrine in the teaching of the Bible because of the comprehensiveness and soundness of the exegetical arguments made in support of it and because of the central place it plays in the presentation of the gospel.

This brings us to a key point: fruitful evangelical study of the relationships between biblical honor-shame categories and the doctrine of the atonement cannot discard the historic evangelical consensus on the Bible's atonement teaching. The question at hand is, "What does the Bible say about this issue?" but many aspects of the Bible's atonement teaching have already been established. Proposals to overturn established doctrines bear a heavy burden of exegetical proof, and those who evaluate such proposals must be sufficiently familiar with the biblical arguments for the doctrines in question to assess whether they have been defeated.

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[115] "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace might be glorified in the justification of sinners." See Westminster Confession, 13.1.

[116] "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners." See 1689 London Baptist Confession 13.1.

[117] For an even fuller list of creeds affirming penal substitution, see Robert L. Dabney's chapter, "The Testimony of Christendom" in Robert L. Dabney, *Christ Our Penal Substitute* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1898), 99–105.

The Bible Defines the Task of Mission

Each of the components of Scripture's testimony considered thus far is related to Scripture's testimony about the task of Christian mission, and thus must shape an evangelical approach to that task. In contrast with postmodern objections to the contrary, universal, objective truth exists and it can be known, the Bible is God's infallible, and therefore inerrant, revelation of himself and his purposes in the world, and the Bible presents the central, objectively true metanarrative of all created reality, which centers on God's redemptive actions as they culminate in the person and work of Jesus Christ and will be consummated in the new heavens and the new earth. These aspects of the Bible's teaching are related to the task of Christian mission because the Bible defines the mission of the church as the proclamation of that objectively true metanarrative with demonstration of its relevance to all hearers and exhortation to an appropriate response.

The case for this understanding of the task of Christian mission has been traced in numerous comprehensive studies,[118] but a few crucial points are sufficient for the present purpose. In the first place, Jesus's command to make disciples (Matt 28:19) must be viewed alongside the fact that he commissioned his disciples as witnesses (Acts 1:8). This commission as witnesses defined the disciples' self-conception of their purpose and task in the world (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39–41; 13:31), and their activity in bearing witness was the means by which they made disciples. The function of witnesses is to testify to what they have seen and heard. This is what the believers of the New Testament understood themselves to be doing, and, as they bore witness, they were asserting (1) that their testimony was objectively true (John 19:35) and (2) that if their testimony was not objectively true, then there was no reason to accept it (1 Cor 15:12–

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[118] Cf. George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Dowers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018); Andreas J. Köstenberger and T. Desmond Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 2nd ed., NSBT 53 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020); Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

19). As they bore their truthful witness, however, many people did accept their testimony and the words from Acts 6:2 reflect the entire account of the book of Acts: "And the Word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly."

The second crucial point for this overview of the task of Christian mission is the fact that the New Testament describes the preaching and proclamation of testimony, or of the Word, as the stewardship of an objective message. Paul delivered to the Corinthians as of first importance what he had received (1 Cor 15:3). Likewise, the things Timothy had heard from Paul in the presence of many witnesses he was to entrust to faithful men, who would be able to teach others also (2 Tim 2:2). What Paul delivered, and what Timothy and all subsequent faithful believers are entrusted with, is the message of how the Bible's entire redemptive metanarrative centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is seen by observing the context in which Paul sets his testimony of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection. Paul delivered to the Corinthians as of *first importance* what he also received: "that Christ died for our sins *in accordance with the Scriptures*" (1 Cor 15:3). Only when understood in accordance with the Scriptures can Jesus's death on the cross be correctly interpreted, and Jesus himself pointed to the Scriptures as bearing witness about him (John 5:39) and providing the definitive interpretation of his death and exultation (Luke 24:25–27).

This point is important: The disciples on the Emmaus Road were aware of the events that had happened in their midst (Luke 24:14, 18–24). They had understood Jesus to be the one who would redeem Israel (v. 21), they knew that he had died on a cross (v. 20), and they had heard the report that he was alive (v. 22). These are the objective, historical events which are the basis of the good news, but Jesus rebuked them (v. 25) because of their failure to understand the significance of these events about which the prophets had spoken. Jesus's rebuke is based on the fact that the *significance* of his death was, and is, as objective as the *fact* of his death. The prophets had made clear that it was necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory (v. 26) and the

disciples should have believed their testimony. Instead, the disciples had failed to rightly interpret the events which had transpired and so Jesus himself corrected them and explained from the Scriptures the objectively true interpretation of his own death and resurrection. This is one small example of the fact that the Bible provides not only a record of God's acts of redemption but also the interpretation of those acts.[119] The pattern of the Scriptures interpreting God's acts is found throughout the canon, but the New Testament, in particular, provides the full interpretation of what God was doing in sending the Son and the Spirit and why it was and is necessary. The Bible's objective, overarching metanarrative includes this interpretation of what God accomplished and how the mission of God affected our redemption. Thus, the task of Christian mission is not merely to testify to the bare facts of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, but to also proclaim the Bible's interpretation of those events as sovereign acts of God which were necessary for us to be reconciled to him.

This leads to a final point. Since God's purpose for the church is to make disciples by bearing witness to the objective significance of God's objective saving acts, we must understand the objective significance of those acts in all the fullness the Bible attributes to them. The Scriptures describe how the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit address various aspects of our need, including our corruption, alienation, guilt, spiritual deadness, uncleanliness, weakness, and shame (the focus of this discussion), and each of the authors considered in this study have rightly recognized that people are conscious of their need in some areas more than others. Accordingly, discussions of how to communicate the gospel message in a particular culture and what aspects of the message would be most comprehensible in a particular culture are valid and strategic.

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[119] See, for example, Peter Gentry's article on Isaiah 53, the fourth servant song. He demonstrates convincingly that "the second and fourth stanzas describe the sufferings of the servant and the third and fifth stanzas interpret the events described in the first and third stanzas respectively." Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13−53:12)," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11, no. 2 (2007): 20–47.

However, evangelicals are constrained by their commitment to faithful stewardship of truth to frame the discussion in terms of these various aspects of the good news *as the Bible describes them* in its single, unified, and comprehensible metanarrative.[120] There are different points at which to begin telling the story, but the central plot and overarching themes will eventually come to the fore in every faithful account. Christians can become more faithful witnesses and more effective disciple-makers when they are able to speak more clearly about all the varied aspects of the Bible's metanarrative.

Core Elements of an Evangelical Theological Method

All this paves the way for the articulation of an evangelical theological method for investigating the Bible's honor-shame dynamics. Recognizing proclamation of truth as the central task of the church's mission allows for a conception of the task of theology which is aligned with that mission. The task of theology is to comprehend and articulate what God has revealed to us about himself and his works, and especially that which pertains to his work of redemption.[121] In other words, theology seeks to comprehend and articulate the true message of the Scriptures. Missions, in turn, proclaims the Bible's true message to an unbelieving world.

In summary, we can say that the theological method by which evangelicals set about this task is guided by the teaching of Scripture to embrace at least three foundational convictions and five principles of interpretation. An evangelical theological method is undergirded by the convictions (1) that God *wants* his people to understand

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[120] Considering the assumptions and presuppositions of other cultures can be helpful in bringing attention to biblical themes that individuals, generations, or even entire traditions in the church have not considered in depth. Evangelicals should welcome studies which add to their understanding of the richness of the gospel in this way. Allowing cultural engagement to prompt further study of the Scriptures must be distinguished, however, from uncritical adoption of unscriptural cultural assumptions in our doctrinal formulation.

[121] A focus on redemption is appropriate since God has revealed himself most fully in his act of redemption.

what he has communicated in his Word; (2) that they *can* understand it, because he is able to communicate effectively; (3) that what he communicates in the Bible is *true*, *relevant*, and *authoritative*, such that the appropriate response is to submit to it in thought, word, and deed.

These three convictions are accompanied by five principles of interpretation. (1) Because the teaching of the Scriptures is internally consistent and self-referential, the message of specific passages must be understood within the context of the whole canon and the teaching of the entire canon must be brought to bear in answering specific theological questions. (2) Because God used human authors to write the Scriptures and ordained that they would use language and literary conventions in specific historical contexts, interpretation of specific passages must take those language and literary conventions into account in the process of interpretation. (3) Because all interpreters come to the text of Scripture with presuppositions and assumptions, interpreters must make a conscious effort to examine their presuppositions and assumptions and submit them to the critique of Scripture. (4) Because the task of Christian proclamation is ultimately fulfilled by the church across space and time, interpreters will be spurred toward greater fullness and faithfulness by considering the testimony of other witnesses and benefiting from their engagement with the Scriptures. And, (5) because the primary obstacle to understanding the Bible is the sinful disposition of the human heart and mind, which desires to suppress the truth, interpreters must actively cultivate the interpretive virtues of acknowledging dependence on the Holy Spirit's help in interpretation, asking for that help, and resolving to believe and obey in accordance with the understanding given.[122]

The core elements of an evangelical theological method, therefore, are, first,

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[122] For a discussion of the interpretive virtues, see Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, 376–77.

the commitment to developing theological conclusions on any issue by asking the question, "What does the Bible say about this?" and, second, the commitment to take seriously what the Bible says about itself, about language, about understanding, and about interpretation in the process of answering that question. Accordingly, evangelicals will advance and evaluate theological arguments and proposals based on rigorous exegetical, biblical theological, and systematic theological analysis, all grounded in the authority of the Scriptures.

Evaluating Arguments

The theological proposals considered in this study aim to reformulate the doctrine of the atonement in order to establish more clearly a relationship between the work of Christ and honor and shame dynamics. Having established some evangelical foundations for this task, we are in a position to evaluate how departures at the level of these prolegomena impact their arguments and conclusions.

Mann: *Atonement for a Sinless Society*

As we have seen, Alan Mann departs quite radically from the evangelical convictions that objective truth can be known, that the Scriptures testify to the truth authoritatively and inerrantly, and that the central task of Christian mission is to proclaim the truth to the world. He has rightly recognized that the Western world in which he writes is dominated by the postmodern assumption of unavoidable relativity, and he has helpfully characterized the experience of those who feel chronically shamed. But in embracing the postmodern perspective and failing to assert that everything is *not* relative, Mann allows the unbiblical assumptions of the unbeliever to define the human problem and the divine solution apart from serious consideration of the testimony of the Bible and deference to its authority.[123] When Mann rejects the goal of constructing "doctrinal or

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[123] Indeed, to cite David Wells, Mann begins "not with divine revelation but with human experience, not with God's interpretation of life but with the interpretation that in our self-asserted freedom

propositional 'truths' about Jesus and the atonement" because he believes "these are of no concern to the sinless self on her search for salvation,"[124] he is departing from the Bible's own depiction of the task of mission. There may be individuals with no biblical conception of sin who are searching for some sort of salvation in our society and are not concerned about doctrinal truths about Jesus and the atonement, but evangelical Christians must maintain that the objective, propositional, and doctrinal truth about who Jesus is and what he has accomplished for his people does concern those individuals. Proclaiming the good news of the gospel consists exactly in declaring that the Bible's testimony about these things is true and that they have meaning and significance for our lives because they are true.

Stump: *Atonement*

In a similar way, Eleonore Stump's approach to doctrinal formulation reflects a prioritization of reason over revelation. She fails to recognize the authority of the Scriptures in the task of doctrinal formulation and misunderstands the role and authority of creeds and the Christian tradition. Like Mann, Stump provides many perceptive insights regarding honor and shame dynamics, but in embracing a theological method that eschews rigorous exegetical and biblical theological investigation, Stump departs from the goal of strictly defining terms and concepts in their biblical sense. William Lane Craig notes that this is the case at the most basic level of Stump's work. He points out that the verb "to atone" in the biblical originals *kippēr* and *hilaskesthai* "takes as its object impurity or sin and has primarily the meaning 'to purify, to cleanse,'" whereas "Stump is very self-consciously using the word "atonement," not in its biblical sense, but

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we have devised or ourselves. [He has] rejected the idea that there is any center to the meaning that [he] sought, any normativity to any one proposal." Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 66.

[124] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 79.

in its broad, etymological sense" of *at onement*—being at one with God.[125] Thus, "Stump's book is not really about atonement in the biblical sense, but about our finding union with God."[126]

Stump's aim to test the coherence of doctrinal claims, attempt explanations of them, and uncover their logical connections with other doctrinal propositions is not inherently inconsistent with an evangelical regard for the authority of Scripture. Analytical thinking of that kind is a necessary component of the theological task. Stump's critical methodological error is in failing to evaluate those analytically derived explanations and logical connections against the teaching of Scripture. Her approach begins with existing doctrinal propositions as premises and attempts to draw logical conclusions without careful attention to whether those conclusions are themselves consistent with the Bible's teaching.[127] She recognizes that her "concern with the doctrine does lead naturally to consideration of New Testament texts,"[128] but in her decision to "simply take those texts to have the general meaning given them by those who are widely regarded as theologically authoritative figures," she fails to acknowledge or interact with the exegetical debates that have bearing on the issue. She insists that "it is possible for

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[125] William Lane Craig, "Eleonore Stump's Critique of Penal Substitutionary Atonement Theories," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 36, no. 4 (October 2019): 525. One may take exception to Lane Craig's definition as well, but his point about Stump's etymological approach is certainly valid.

[126] Craig, "Eleonore Stump's Critique of Penal Substitutionary Atonement Theories," 525–26. Per Stump, "'Atonement' is a word that was devised to express the idea that the *at onement* is a making one of things that were previously not at one, namely, God and human beings. So if the *at onement* is the solution to a problem, then, it seems, the problem should be thought of as the absence of unity or oneness between God and human beings." Stump, *Atonement*, 15 (emphasis original).

[127] The same prioritization of logical reasoning over exegetical analysis of conclusions factors large in Trinitarian and Christological controversies. The theological premises that (A) God is one, (B) the Father is God, and (C) Jesus is not the Father, could seem to lead to the theological conclusion that (D) Jesus is not God. That such a conclusion is false is demonstrated by presenting the exegetical evidence which contradicts it. The weakness of Stump's method is that it does not involve this engagement with the exegetical foundations for the doctrines she takes as premises, nor engagement with the exegetical arguments surrounding the doctrines she reaches as conclusions.

[128] Stump, *Atonement*, 8–9. Interestingly, Stump refers exclusively to consideration of New Testament texts in this section. She does not extend the same consideration to Old Testament texts.

there to be highly divergent interpretations [of the atonement], all of which count as orthodox,"[129] but after acknowledging that interpretations of the atonement must be "constrained by their fit with the biblical texts" she assumes that the (singular) "understanding of the biblical texts relevant for the project of this book is the understanding had by those who formulated the theological doctrine of the *at onement* in its orthodox version."[130] In other words, there may be highly divergent interpretations of the atonement, but the interpretation of the biblical texts is not what is in question. The fact that interpretation of the relevant biblical texts is taken for granted and is not determinative in formulating the doctrine shows that Stump's approach of philosophical theology is functionally detached from exegetical and biblical theological considerations.

In an evangelical approach, the interpretation of Scripture always remains determinative in doctrinal formulation and evaluation because Scripture is the only final authority for doctrine. An evangelical method must certainly apply the principles of coherence, explanatory power, and logical reasoning, but it must not detach exegetical and biblical theological considerations from the systematic theological enterprise. It brings resources from each of these disciplines to bear, because its aim is not merely to demonstrate intellectual coherence, but always to demonstrate faithfulness to the biblical testimony.

This contrast has bearing on the question of creeds, confessions and tradition as well. The classic Roman Catholic position locates interpretive authority in the actual pronouncements of the church and its historical councils rather than in the strength of the exegetical foundations of those pronouncements. Since Stump defines orthodoxy in terms of alignment with those pronouncements rather than with Scripture itself, close study of

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[129] Stump, *Atonement*, 14.

[130] Stump, *Atonement*, 9. There seems to be an inconsistency in referring to a (singular) "orthodox" version of the theological doctrine of the atonement and asserting that there are highly divergent interpretations which count as orthodox, but this does not have direct bearing on my point.

relevant biblical texts and interpretive questions is not deemed essential in doctrinal formulation.[131] On an evangelical view of creeds, confessions, and tradition, however, the exegetical grounding of those pronouncements never fades to the background, and the exegetical arguments that ground established doctrines are taken into account when the church faces new questions for consideration.

Baker and Green: *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*

Much of Stump's practice finds a parallel in Baker and Green, which is interesting, since their stated approaches differ. Stump explicitly sets out an approach driven primarily by philosophical reflections, and she delivers what she promised. Baker and Green, in contrast, set out an approach which affirms the priority of the Scriptures in interpretation and doctrinal formulation, but fail to deliver. In practice, Baker and Green give lip service to biblical authority while failing to interact in any meaningful way with the exegetical and biblical theological considerations which have bearing on the question at hand.[132] Like Stump, they formulate definitions and concepts without adequate care to align their formulations and definitions to the teaching of Scripture. To cite one example, Baker and Green are content to posit that Jesus saw merely that "his absolute commitment to the purpose of God *might* lead . . . to his death,"[133] given the hostile

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[131] Stump, *Atonement*, 9. She concedes that doctrinal positions must be constrained by their fit with the biblical texts, but fit with the biblical texts is not established on exegetical grounds, but on the authority of the Church's authorized interpreters.

[132] The comments of J. Scott Horrell are telling: "Major biblical-theological studies that affirm the major place of substitutionary atonement—such as Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965); H. D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985); John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 20th anniv. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1986); and Bruce A. Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997)—are almost entirely ignored. Historians will find it curious that Green and Baker single out Charles Hodge with hardly a word about Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, Owens, Edwards, and a host of reformed (and free church) theologians who in great part formed Hodge's theology." See John Scott Horrell, Review of *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, by Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159, no. 633 (January 2002): 120.

[133] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 60 (emphasis added).

Roman context in which he found himself. They assert that "attempts to find in Israel's history a 'suffering messiah' figure have thus far proven fruitless,"[134] and so they interpret Jesus's teaching that he is such an anticipated figure as an "innovation on his part."[135] The Scriptures, in contrast, present Jesus repeatedly affirming the necessity of his dying and the means by which he would die, always basing is statements in the prophecies of the Old Testament.[136]

It is true that a failure to bring the whole counsel of the Scriptures to bear on a theological question does not, in itself, constitute a failure in approach. We can distinguish between a poorly formulated theological method and a poorly executed theological method. Especially when new theological questions present themselves, it takes the combined efforts of careful exegetes to identify and articulate the strands of biblical teaching which have bearing on the issue. But the doctrine of the atonement is not a new doctrine. As highlighted above, the penal substitutionary view has been affirmed as basic to evangelical identity because the compelling exegetical and biblical theological arguments which support it have led to its near universal confessional acceptance among those with a high view of Scripture. Further, numerous rigorous studies have addressed and refuted the arguments Baker and Green are advancing. In this context, a failure in the theological method of Baker and Green does become clear. They have not given sufficient attention to the evangelical confessions and theological tradition in which they place themselves. To succeed in their argument that the evangelical consensus reflects a misunderstanding of the Scriptures, they must engage with the exegetical, biblical theological, and systematic theological arguments propounded by

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[134] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 61.

[135] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 61.

[136] The Scriptures assert, for example, that he knew why he came: "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28); that the Scriptures show that it was "necessary that the Christ should suffer these things" (Luke 24:26); and that Jesus knew and could show "what kind of death he was to die" (John 12:32–33).

those who hold to that consensus interpretation.

Furthermore, Baker and Green have departed from an evangelical conception of the task of Christian mission. The foundational assumption for their proposal is that the Bible does not provide a definitive interpretation of the work of Christ. According to their view, the main lesson to be drawn from Jesus's atonement teaching is that the "creativity and innovation"[137] they claim he exemplified as he "pioneered this combination of images"[138] is necessary when communicating the atonement. Rather than explaining "in completed form"[139] the interpretation of his accomplished work, Jesus was teaching his disciples how "to articulate meaningfully the significance of [his] suffering."[140] The "writers of the books of the New Testament were not concerned to set forth the content of the faith for all time,"[141] and "the models championed in the New Testament for expounding the meaning of Jesus's suffering may not (all) be suited to our day."[142] Rather, "the various New Testament writings are the product of mission mindedness, of working to articulate the nature of the faith in terms that made sense to persons seeking to live in missionary outposts in the ancient world,"[143] and our task as Christians is, "following in the footsteps of Peter or Paul, [to] cast about for metaphors and models that speak of this mystery to the people around us."[144]

Baker and Green attempt to define limits beyond which interpretations of the atonement would cease to be faithful to the biblical teaching, but in their view the

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[137] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 62.

[138] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 61.

[139] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 62.

[140] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 36.

[141] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 112.

[142] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 137.

[143] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 140.

[144] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 140.

message of the gospel is not identified by any specific content which must be passed on. As John Scott Horrell has rightly noted, Baker and Green present "a plurality of possibilities as to the meaning of the atonement, but it is an atonement that no longer has definition in either its center or parameters."[145] As we have seen, this conception of the task of missions runs in contradiction to the teaching of the Scriptures themselves. Christians may begin at different points in their gospel presentation as they seek common ground with those they are addressing. They may even grow in their understanding of the Bible's message as they give close attention to biblical themes to which the new culture is sensitive and to which their own culture tends to overlook. However, their goal will always be to proclaim a message with specific content, namely, the work of Christ and all its significance as it is interpreted in the Scriptures.

Conclusion

Evangelical discussion of shame dynamics and their relationship to the doctrine of atonement must begin with a thorough, exegetically grounded, understanding of evangelical prolegomena. Through the labors of the generations who have studied the Bible before us, evangelicals have rightly come to the settled conviction about the biblical teaching on these fundamental matters. Truth exists and can be known. The Bible is infallible, inerrant revelation from God and is our final authority for life and practice. The doctrine of Scripture itself informs our hermeneutics. The Bible defines the task of mission as proclamation. Creeds and tradition derive their authority from how they have been definitively shown to reflect the biblical teaching. The question at hand when pursuing this investigation into shame dynamics is the same that our forefathers asked when studying the prolegomena, "What does the Bible say?" The proposals considered in this study have asked different questions or have failed to answer this one because they

[145] Horrell, Review of *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 121.

have begun with assumptions and presuppositions which contradict the biblical testimony. Thankfully, some scholars in recent decades have begun approaching and answering specific aspects of that question with assumptions and presuppositions which are more closely aligned with evangelical convictions. Some of these studies have been framed as exegetical or biblical theological observations in a specific book or literary corpus.[146] Others have moved more toward theological construction and application.[147] Much room still remains, however, for the question of what the Bible says about shame to be answered in comprehensive investigations that consider the relationships between shame dynamics and other evangelical doctrines. As they build on evangelical assumptions and presuppositions, such treatments will be of great help to Christians ministering in contexts where those dynamics are dominant or ministering to persons who are experiencing various forms of shame. Establishing those doctrinal connections will allow Christians to identify points of common ground at which to begin an intelligible conversation, and to present the Bible's own perspective on the problems of shame and

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[146] Cf. David Arthur deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SBL Dissertation Series 152 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Daniel Y. Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 14 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016); Barth L. Campbell, *Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter*, SBL Dissertation Series 160 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Timothy S. Laniak, *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther*, SBL Dissertation Series 165 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Shame and Self-Knowledge: The Postivie Role of Shame in Ezekiel's View of the Moral Self," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, SBL Symposium Series 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); Balu Savarikannu, "Expressions of Honor and Shame in Lamentations 1," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 21, no. 1 (February 2018): 81–94; Gary Stansell, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 55–79; James Nicholas Jumper, "Honor and Shame in the Deuteronomic Covenant and the Deuteronomistic Presentation of the Davidic Covenant" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013); Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 346 (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Brad Vaughn, *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).

[147] Cf. Brad Vaughn, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*, EMS Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2013); Werner Mischke, *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World* (Scottsdale, AZ: Mission ONE, 2015); John A. Forrester, *Grace for Shame: The Forgotten Gospel* (Toronto: Pastor's Attic Press, 2010); Robert H. Albers, S*hame: A Faith Perspective* (New York: Haworth Press, 1995); Thomas Schirrmacher, *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt: Applying the Word of God in Different Situations*, ed. Thomas K. Johnson, trans. by Richard McClary, World of Theology 6 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018); Jason Borges, "'Dignified': An Exegetical Soteriology of Divine Honour," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 66, no. 1 (February 2013): 74–87.

show how the gospel addresses them.

CHAPTER 3

SHAME DYNAMICS IN THE BIBLICAL TESTIMONY

Having outlined the evangelical assumptions that will guide this study, we are ready to turn our attention to what the Scriptures have to say about shame in particular. This chapter will provide a definition of shame which accords with the scriptural presentation and will outline key categories for understanding biblical shame dynamics on the Bible's own terms. The phenomenon of shame can be complex and shame dynamics permit multiple angles of analysis, so contemporary discussion has yielded no shortage of debate, and the social sciences have offered both helpful and not-so-helpful proposals for understanding the phenomenon.[1] As we seek to appropriate the fruit of such efforts, we will be careful to evaluate proposals from psychology and cultural anthropology in light of the biblical testimony. Where necessary those proposals will be rejected, revised or nuanced to account for the biblical data. Since the theme of shame appears so regularly through the Bible's pages, we have ample resources for study, and the conceptual vocabulary established here in chapter 3 will afford us a greater degree of clarity and precision as we articulate the problem of shame and its solution in chapters 4 and 5.

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[1] Daniel Y. Wu provides a helpful summary of key developments and proposals in shame research since the 1980s in his chapter "Shame (and Guilt) in Recent Study." Daniel Y. Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 14 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 37–57. For earlier history, see Thomas Schirrmacher, *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt: Applying the Word of God in Different Situations*, ed. Thomas K. Johnson, trans. Richard McClary, World of Theology 6 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018).

Initial Definitions

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "shame," first, as "The painful emotion arising from the consciousness of something dishonouring, ridiculous, or indecorous in one's own conduct or circumstances (or in those of others whose honour or disgrace one regards as one's own), or of being in a situation which offends one's sense of modesty or decency." The second definition adds to the first, noting that shame can also be "modesty" or "fear of an offence against propriety or decency, operating as a restraint on behavior."[2] This is what comes to mind when people speak of shame, and voices in the discussion are in general agreement with much of that characterization. The two types of shame represented in the two *Oxford* definitions are regularly distinguished with terms such as "disgrace shame" on the one hand and "discretionary shame" on the other,[3] and, as will be argued below, the Bible supports that distinction. The key difference between the two is that discretionary shame operates prior to actions, restraining a person from behavior which undermines propriety or decency, whereas disgrace shame operates subsequent to actions and signals that propriety or decency has been undermined. Te-Li Lau uses the terms "prospective shame" and "retrospective shame" to draw out this distinction[4] and I will adopt his vocabulary because the precision of his terms is helpful.

Scholars have recognized, however, an additional key insight that is lacking in the *Oxford* definition, namely, that the word shame can operate in both a subjective and an objective sense.[5] As Stump asserts, "Shame and guilt are objective; but of course they

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[2] *OED*, s.v. "shame (n.)," February 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1015780933.

[3] Cf. Carl D. Schneider, *Shame, Exposure, and Privacy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977); Robert H. Albers, *Shame: A Faith Perspective* (New York: Haworth Press, 1995), 7–16; John A. Forrester, *Grace for Shame: The Forgotten Gospel* (Toronto: Pastor's Attic Press, 2010), 23.

[4] Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 62.

[5] Cf. Lau, *Defending Shame*, 61–62.

can also be felt in a subjective way, and the objective and subjective versions can be dissociated."[6] Brad Vaughn reflects that insight by offering the following definition: "Shame is the fear, pain, or state of being regarded unworthy of acceptance in social relationships."[7] The first two nouns in Vaughn's definition reflect the subjective dimension of shame both prospectively (*fear* of being regarded unworthy) and retrospectively (*pain* of being regarded unworthy), and the final noun reflects an objective reality (*state* of being regarded unworthy). Shame is not merely a feeling, then, it can also be a state of affairs.

One problem with Vaughn's definition, however, is the emphasis on "unworthy of acceptance" as the marker for the presence of shame. As the Oxford definition describes, it is the "consciousness of something dishonouring, ridiculous, or indecorous in one's own conduct or circumstances" that indicates the presence of shame, but such shortcomings do not necessarily preclude acceptance. In its strongest and ultimate form, shame may focus on the fear, pain or state of rejection, and we will have many occasions to consider this unworthiness of acceptance going forward, but I will submit a slightly modified version as a working definition: shame is the fear, pain, or state of being regarded deficient in social relationships.

The scholarly consensus regarding the distinctions this definition retains spans many disciplines, but this is not sufficient for the purposes at hand. Our goal is to ensure our definition of shame is consistent with the Bible's depiction of the phenomenon, so

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[6] Eleonore Stump, *Atonement*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 44. Others make similar distinctions: Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni, for instance, differentiate between the act of shaming and the resulting shame that a person has or feels. Julien A. Deonna, Raffaele Rodogno, and Fabrice Teroni, *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 155.

[7] Brad Vaughn, "Have Theologians No Sense of Shame? How the Bible Reconciles Objective and Subjective Shame," *Themelios* 43, no. 2 (August 2018): 206. Cf. David Arthur deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 25.

each of these insights must be defended from the Scriptures.[8] Beginning with the first distinction, we find that biblical examples of prospective and retrospective shame abound. Following Lau, we can note that prospective shame is in play in Ezra 8:22, for instance. Ezra says, “I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, ‘The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him.’” He had made a claim about the power of God and it would have offended the honor of God and undermined his claim if he had asked for help. The prospect of shame in the eyes of the king made him fear such an action. Prospective shame is also on display in the episode of Amnon and Tamar. As Amnon tries to seduce his sister, her protests are motivated by a fear of “being regarded unworthy of acceptance in social relationships” (to use the stronger terms from Vaughn’s definition): “No, my brother, do not violate me,” she answered him, “for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. As for me, where would I carry my shame? As for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel” (2 Sam 13:12–13). The concept of prospective shame is perhaps most clearly on display, however, in the rebukes that are issued to those who lack it. We see this in Job 19:3 where Job’s companions have had no concern about the social disgrace they would incur in wronging him: “These ten times you have cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me?” This is the concept of shamelessness. The shame lacking in a “shameless” person is the prospective shame that would keep him from shameful behavior.[9]

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[8] It’s worth noting at this juncture that the dynamics of shame can be present in passages of Scripture even where the word shame is absent. In fact, this is often the case, not only because there are multiple synonyms for shame, but also because the presence of shame can be indicated in narration or prophecy not only by explicit statement, but also by referring to body language, behavior, or circumstances where the association with shame is understood. Lexically, studies of the concept of shame in Hebrew have focused on bôš, klm and ḥpr or bôš, ḥrp, klm, and qûṭ or some combination thereof. Studies of the concept in Greek have examined on ἀιδώς, αἰσχρότης, αἰσχύνη, ἀσχημοσύνη, ἀτιμία, ἐντροπή, δειγματισμός, ὄνειδος, and ταπεινός. And, in English, shame can be indicated in references to disgrace, dishonor, contempt, modesty, humiliation, loss of face, denigration of one’s name, and others. In addition to this broad shame vocabulary, the presence of shame can be depicted with language which describes physical and physiological responses such as blushing, hanging of the head, falling of face, and others.

[9] Cf. 2 Samuel 6:20; Jeremiah 3:3; 6:15; 8:12; Zephaniah 2:1; 3:5; Romans 1:27.

Examples of retrospective shame can be multiplied as well. The prophets often speak of the shame that has come to God's people as a result of impropriety. Ezekiel speaks to Jerusalem saying, "Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have intervened on behalf of your sisters. Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. So be ashamed, you also, and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous" (Ezek 16:52). Similarly, Jeremiah laments, "Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonor cover us. For we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God" (Jer 3:25).

These examples which demonstrate prospective and retrospective shame highlight the validity of a distinction between the subjective and objective dimensions as well. The shame Jeremiah laments in Jeremiah 3:25, above, is an objective reality, and yet his words instruct God's people that it is something which they ought to experience subjectively. Ezekiel's language makes the point even more strongly. Jerusalem is (objectively) in a state of disgrace whether they (subjectively) sense their shame or not. Ezekiel commands the inhabitants of Jerusalem to subjectively embrace the objective reality. They are disgraced (objectively), and they are commanded to bear it (subjectively). They are to "be ashamed" because they are in a state of shame. Both the objective/subjective and prospective/retrospective distinctions are borne out by the testimony of Scripture.[10]

Our initial definition stands. Shame is the fear, pain, or state of being regarded deficient in social relationships, and we see that it includes prospective, retrospective, subjective, and objective dynamics. Building on these insights we consider an additional

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[10] Stump, also, recognizes the distinction between the subjective and objective dynamics of shame. Stump's discussion of shame helpfully recognizes that retrospective shame is always tied to sin, but her analysis does not acknowledge the formative role of shame when it functions prospectively. She does not address the "discretionary" or "prospective" category. Stump, *Atonement*, 18.

key facet of shame which is picked up in both the *Oxford* and the Vaughn definitions: shame's relationship to a sense of exposure.

Shame and Exposure

This insight, too, finds broad scholarly acceptance, and the consensus is summarized by Gershen Kaufman: "Phenomenologically, to feel shame is to feel seen in a painfully diminished sense. . . . No one else need be present in order for shame to be felt, but when others are present shame is an impediment to further communication."[11] Green and Banker state the same concept more succinctly: "Shame is experienced as exposure to others and to oneself."[12]

Again, the consensus is consistent with the teaching of the Scriptures. This sense of being "seen in a painfully diminished sense" is what David has in mind in Psalm 25 when he cries out, "O my God, in you I trust, let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me." By placing the idea of being exulted over by enemies in parallel with the idea of being put to shame, David associates being "put to shame" with being debased in the eyes of other men. Similar sentiments are expressed throughout the Psalms and the Prophets as, on the one hand, God's people plead with him that they *not* be put to shame, and, on the other hand, God warns his people that if they persist in sin and unbelief they *will* be put to shame.[13] In both cases the state of being put to shame is one of being publicly exposed to debasement.

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[11] Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes*, 2nd ed. (New York: Springer, 1996), 17.

[12] Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 196. See also June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, Emotions and Social Behavior (New York: Guilford Press, 2002), 18; Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 40–41. In this, they agree with Forrester: "The experience of shame, at heart, is the experience of exposure." Forrester, *Grace for Shame*, 20.

[13] See, for instance, Psalms 44, 69, 86; Jeremiah 20:11; 48:39; Daniel 12:2; Micah 7:10.

This sense of defiled exposure is evident perhaps most clearly, however, in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve had been described as naked and unashamed in 2:25, but in 3:7–8 “the eyes of both were opened,” they sought to cover themselves with fig leaves, and they hid from the Lord God to avoid his presence. As the episode concludes we read that a covering was provided: “The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (3:21). The summary from John Forrester is biblical: “The experience of shame, at heart, is the experience of exposure. This is why our reaction to shame is the desire to be covered or hidden.”[14]

The fact that shame is related to exposure in this way raises another important question: before whom are we exposed? Or more directly to the point: Before whom are we ashamed? Once again, a biblical answer to that question requires careful articulation, and scholars have referred to the concept of a “court of opinion” or “court of reputation” to clarify this dynamic of shame.

Shame and the Court of Reputation

A court of reputation or a court of opinion refers to an evaluative body that forms judgments on questions of honor or shame.[15] The concept is important because it considers the question of “before whom is this shame manifested?” when studying the dynamics of particular instances. Brad Vaughn proposes a taxonomy of types of shame that can be helpfully adapted for categorizing shame according to the type of court of reputation in play. Shame can be *sociocentric*, where shame is with reference to a

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[14] Forrester, *Grace for Shame*, 20. Forrester cites biblical examples of this phenomenon on page 102, referring to Jeremiah 13:25ff and Micah 1:11.

[15] For an introduction to the idea of a court of reputation see Julian Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. John G. Peristiany, Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 19–78; Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 130 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004). See also David Arthur deSilva, *The Letter to the Hebrews in Social-Scientific Perspective*, Cascade Companions (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 299–340.

particular external group; shame can be *psychocentric*, where shame is with reference to an individual's own personal convictions; and shame can be *theocentric*, where shame is in reference to God.[16]

Writers in the field of cultural anthropology have regularly highlighted the social aspect of shame. The fear or pain of exposure that characterizes shame is often manifested with respect to a particular group or community. Concerning retrospective shame, in particular, the social aspect of shame pertains both to the dynamic of shaming which objectively exists in the group and the subjective experience of that shaming dynamic by the shamed individual. Prospective shame, likewise, while experienced subjectively, anticipates objective shame in relationship to another. Thus, much literature is devoted to discussion of how shame dynamics function in the relationships of particular social groups. A social court of reputation can consist of any set of people: A nation, a community, a subculture within a community, a family or extended family, etc.[17] In the example we have been considering, Tamar's words to Amnon highlight that his proposal was shameful in this socially focused way. To lie with one's sister was shameful in the social community in which they lived: "No, my brother, do not violate me, *for such a thing is not done in Israel*; do not do this outrageous thing" (2 Sam 13:12, emphasis added). The court of reputation consisted of the people of Israel, and it was in this community that Amnon would be regarded as an "outrageous fool" and Tamar would have nowhere to carry her shame (v. 13). For this socio-centric shame, the court of reputation is a group of other people.

Alongside the social referent of shame, writers, especially in the fields of psychology and counselling, have noted that a person can experience a subjective sense

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[16] Vaughn, "Have Theologians No Sense of Shame?," 206–12.

[17] "There are as many 'courts of reputation' as there are subgroups within a society, the values and evaluations between which groups will vary, sometimes insignificantly, sometimes widely." David Arthur deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 299.

of shame even apart from an objective state of shame existing in any actual social community.[18] When standards of shamefulness are internalized, one can begin to feel a sense of diminished worth for having fallen short of that standard whether or not anyone else is aware of the shortcoming.[19] Furthermore, it is possible for a person to internalize a standard of shamefulness which is not shared by *any* broader community. When a unique standard of shame develops in this way, it is possible that no external objective state of shame exists even when something a person regards as shameful is public, because no one else regards the thing as shameful. In both these cases, the person is shamed primarily in his own eyes. The sense of exposure is introspective. The person may assume others hold to his standards of shamefulness and therefore feel ashamed before them, but the experience is entirely subjective.[20] Of course, as mentioned above, the subjective experience of shame often accompanies an objective state of shame as well, but acknowledging the psychological court of reputation brings to the fore the fact that people make their own judgments about their worth and standing. We see this in Scripture in cases like Saul, who was "little in [his] own eyes" (1 Sam 15:17), and the proverbial man who is "pure in his own eyes" (Prov 16:2). Psychocentric shame occurs when a person's own psyche serves as the court of reputation and a man judges himself to be shameful. It is shame in one's own eyes.

The third referent for shame, especially critical for this study, is the triune God of the Bible. Like sociocentric shame, theocentric shame pertains both to a state of shame

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[18] Along this line, Te-Li Lau notes that "one can feel shame or embarrassment before an other who displays a significantly less negative attitude." Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame*, 17.

[19] For an overview of how psychoanalytical understanding of shame has developed based on the work of Sigmund Freud, see Schirrmacher, *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt*, 17–18. Stump agrees: "A person who cares about some moral wrong he has done can be shamed just in his own eyes because of it" Stump, *Atonement*, 49.

[20] The projection of one's standards of shamefulness on others can be either due to a misconception of what others consider shameful or a judgment of what others *should* consider shameful. In the first case, a man could believe others regard him as shameful even though they do not. In the second case, the man knows others do not regard him as shameful, but believes they are mistaken. This anticipates the discussion of the standard of shame which is developed below.

which objectively exists retrospectively (before God, in this case) and the subjective experience of that shame by the shamed individual. Prospective theocentric shame, similarly, is experienced subjectively in anticipation of objective shame before God.[21] In the example from Ezekiel 16:52 above, Ezekiel is speaking on behalf of God and providing God's judgment. According to God, Judah is in a state of disgrace. The court of reputation for theocentric shame is the divine court of God in heaven.

Shame's Standard

What becomes immediately clear as we begin considering these varied types of courts of reputation is that each court of reputation renders its own judgments of honor and shame, and that those judgments can vary widely depending on the standards of the court of reputation which is doing the evaluating.[22] Another reason why this concept of court of reputation is critical is because it considers the question of "what, exactly, is considered shameful in this court of reputation?" when studying the dynamics of particular instances of shame. We are provided with additional insight about an instance of shame when we observe how different courts of reputation are evaluating the same event.

This idea of a varying standard for shamefulness is expressed biblically in Psalm 4:2 when David cries out, "O men, how long shall my honor be turned to shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?" The issue, here, is that what

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[21] Daniel Wu introduces the concept of the "Divine" court of reputation on page 59 and develops his exegetical demonstration of its centrality in Ezekiel and the OT throughout the chapters which follow. See Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt*. DeSilva provides examples ancient sources from outside the biblical canon set forth the concept of a divine court. For instance, "the verdict of a human court, whether the court of law or court of opinion, is not a matter of concern to Socrates, such that he should shape his life and mold his actions with a view to gaining its approval. Rather, he sets before Callicles a portrait of the court with a view to whose verdict and opinion he does live his life—the court of God." deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 91.

[22] Stump recognizes this point that various standards can be in play: "With regard to a person who is shamed, others would be warranted (on one scale of value or another) in rejecting not his good but *him*." And "the standards by which a person is and feels shamed are highly variable, and they range from trivial to deep." Stump, *Atonement*, 45–46 (emphasis original).

should be honored (according to David's standard) is being treated as shameful. David and his enemies were using different standards to judge between shameful and honorable behavior. The same phenomenon is on display in the New Testament when Jesus warns his followers in Mark 8:38: "For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." The moral standard of this adulterous and sinful generation has been so corrupted that Jesus's disciples are shamed for identifying with Jesus, even though he is the fullest expression of beauty, honor, and truth.

In fact, what Jesus describes in Mark 8:38 is an example of a dynamic that surfaces regularly in the Scriptures: because different courts of reputation have different standards for evaluating honor and shame, competing "courts of reputation" or "courts of opinion" vie for dominance at the points where their standards stand in contradiction.[23] Paul, therefore, instructs Timothy about what he should and should not consider shameful. Timothy should "not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of [Paul] his prisoner" (2 Tim 1:8a), even though the broader courts of opinion in society would be ashamed to associate with Paul or proclaim such a message. Different standards of shame are also on display as Peter teaches believers that if they suffer as Christians, they should not be ashamed, even though they have been subjected to public disgrace (1 Pet 4:16). Perhaps most strikingly, the apostles display the contrast between their own standards of honor and shame and that of the world in the account of their release from mistreatment at the hands of the Jewish council: "They left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted *worthy* to suffer dishonor for the name" (Acts 5:41, emphasis added). They counted the dishonorable treatment from those who oppose Christ as a badge of

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[23] Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 27; David Arthur deSilva, *Despising Shame*, 91; Barth L. Campbell, "Honor, Shame, and the Rhetoric of 1 Peter" (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1995), 29–30.

honor.

Shame as Virtue

This contrast between different standards of shame leads to an additional point: The Scriptures consider it virtuous when people have aligned their sense of shame to God's standard. We have noted that prospective shame is an appropriate "modesty" or "fear of an offence against propriety or decency, operating as a restraint on behavior."[24] When people act in ways that violate God's objective standards of propriety and decency without a sense of shame, it reveals a lack of understanding or a disregard of what God considers shameful. Thus, one way that the prophets rebuke people who have disregarded God's law is to reproach them for their lack of shame.

This comes out in Jeremiah, for instance, when God issues the following judgment against Judah: "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown" (6:15 and also 8:12).[25] The rebuke is built on the underlying principle that when a person's moral standard is calibrated correctly, a sense of shame (as evidenced by blushing in this case) should be present whenever God's standard is violated. This correct calibration is virtuous. It represents faith and alignment with what God has declared. In the case of Jeremiah 6:15, Judah had committed abominations that were horrendous in themselves, but God particularly rebukes their lack of shame because this evinced a deficiency of character even more than the actions. They lacked the virtue of shame.

Zephaniah speaks on the same note when he informs us that, "The unjust knows no shame" (Zeph 3:5). The comment comes as another rebuke, in context, because

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[24] *OED*, s.v. "shame (n.)," February 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1015780933.

[25] Jer 3:3; Zeph 2:1; 3:5; and Rom 1:27 echo the same theme.

he has just referred to Judah as a "shameless nation" (2:1). Like in Jeremiah, the rebuke has teeth because a proper sense of shame is a credit to a people—it is a virtue, whereas shamelessness is itself a fault. The critical insight here is that this virtue of a properly aligned sense of shame comes from a high regard for the law of God. The standard of righteousness, of sin, of clean and unclean is also the standard of honor and shame, and when the Scriptures trace the outcome of those who disregard the Word of God and the law of God the result is not only the forsaking of righteousness, but also the development of shamelessness before God. Rather than hiding and sewing fig leaves together, the children of Adam and Eve stride boldly around God's creation, unashamed of their (shameful) nakedness.

Shame as Instrumental

Another insight drawn from the biblical testimony is that shame is often depicted as functioning instrumentally. Lyn Bechtel has described this use of shame as a "sanction of social control"[26] and David deSilva has framed it in terms of "community maintenance,"[27] but both have shown that just as a proper sense of shame can restrain behavior, a proper sense of shame can also induce repentance and motivate positive obedience.[28] It is also the basis of Te-Li Lau's thesis in *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters*.[29]

Biblically, it is why the psalmist can say, "Fill their faces with shame, *that* they may seek your name, O LORD" (Ps 83:16, emphasis added). Though he goes on to pray

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[26] Lyn M. Bechtel, "Shame as a Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political, and Social Shaming," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16, no. 49 (February 1991): 47–76.

[27] deSilva, *Despising Shame*.

[28] As noted by John Calvin, "some are restrained by shame from breaking out into many kinds of foulness," *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:292.

[29] Lau, *Defending Shame*.

that his enemies would "perish in disgrace" (v. 17), the psalmist recognizes that shame can serve instrumentally to turn them toward God. The idea of shame's instrumentality is present in 2 Thessalonians 3:14, where the church is commanded to shame any man who will not obey the commands of the apostle. Shame, in this case, has an instrumental role in bringing about repentance and sanctification in the church. A similar example is found in Paul's instruction to Timothy. When he urges his protégé to do his best to present himself to God as one approved, "who has no need to be ashamed" (2 Tim 2:15), the prospect of being ashamed before God is meant to motivate Timothy's behavior. Shame is also instrumental in Christian witness. Both Peter and Paul urge believers to live virtuous lives so that unbelievers will be ashamed when they slander Christians (1 Pet 3:16; Titus 2:8). This shame opens the door for evangelism.[30] On the flip side, however, shame can be used by wicked men to pressure righteous men into embracing ungodliness (e.g., 1 Pet 4:4).

The Motivating Power of Shame

The key to understanding the instrumental aspect of shame is noting how the Scriptures present honor as something to be pursued and shame as something to be avoided. Scholars have shown how this love of honor and avoidance of shame functions as a key motivating factor of ancient Mediterranean and Ancient Near East society, and the work of biblical scholars such as Te-Li Lau and David deSilva has demonstrated how extensively the same dynamic is in play in the Scriptures.[31]

The Proverbs, for instance, bring this love of honor and aversion to shame clearly into view as the sanctions against various behaviors assume the threat of dishonor

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[30] Bradford A. Mullen, "Shame," in *EDT*, 735.

[31] Cf. Te-Li Lau, who shows the motivating role shame plays in Christian ethical formation in his study of Paul's use of shame in his letters in *Defending Shame*, and David deSilva, who, in *Despising Shame*, especially highlights how the love for honor with which all people have been imbued makes it necessary for minority cultures to cultivate an alternate court of reputation where their standards are used to honor behavior that the culture holds in contempt.

has motivating force. Wisdom is commended as the path to honor, whereas "fools get disgrace" (Prov 3:35). Adultery is set in contrast with theft because of the greater shame it brings on the perpetrator: "People do not *despise* a thief if he steals to satisfy his appetite when he is hungry" (Prov 6:30), but "He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away" (Prov 6. 32–33).[32] The Psalms, likewise, highlight the extent to which honor is to be desired and shame is to be avoided, particularly in the desperation with which they plead with the Lord that he not let them be put to shame. Typical is Psalm 25:19–20: "Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you." In the New Testament, this aversion to shame is assumed in the admonition to Timothy mentioned above. Shame is to be avoided, so Timothy is motivated "to present himself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be *ashamed*" (2 Tim 2:15). The same aversion to shame underlies John's instruction that believers abide in Jesus, "so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming" (1 John 2:28).

Also important to note, however, is the Bible's teaching that God himself is motivated to act for the preservation of his honor. This is the basis for Brad Vaughn's thesis.[33] The dynamic is played out, for example, in the way God describes his concern about the way the Israelites had dishonored him among the nations and his intention to vindicate his name. Representative in this regard is Ezekiel 36:19–23,

> I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, "These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land." But

[32] See also Prov 10:5; 11:2; 12:4; 13:5; 13:18; 18:3; 18:13; 19:26; 25:8–10; 28:7; 29:15.

[33] Brad Vaughn, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*, EMS Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2013).

> I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.
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> Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

As will become clear in the chapters which follow, the fact that God acts for the vindication and display of his own glory among the nations is intricately related with hopes of his people that they themselves will not be put to shame.

Causes of Shame

Throughout the discussion thus far we have noted that shame in God's sight is tied to a violation of God's standard, but we have not looked closely at the question of what, exactly, causes shame. The literature describes a multitude of causes of shame and the Scriptures depict a similar breadth of variety, but I contend in this section that the Bible presents a critical link between all the sources of shame which it portrays. In the Scriptures, shame is always related to sin. Stump's development of this general idea is one of her most helpful contributions to the shame discussion. She argues that "it is possible to classify shame into four major kinds: (1) shame resulting from one's own wrongdoing; (2) shame stemming from being wronged by others; (3) shame following on some defect of nature; and (4) shame attaching to being a member of the human race."[34] Close inspection shows that the first three of Stump's classifications delineate specific ways that shame can be associated with wrongdoing (sin), whereas the final classification relates to ways shame (ultimately related to sin) can be transferred among members of a group who are associated with one another. I will discuss this transfer of sin as a separate shame dynamic, but here I argue that the relationship between sin and shame always falls into one of three categories. The relationship can be (1) *direct* (when shame is caused by

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[34] Stump, *Atonement*, 347.

the subject's own sin and its temporal consequences); the relationship can be (2) *indirect* (when shame is caused directly by the sins of others); or the relationship can be (3) *remote* (when shame is caused by the brokenness which is in the world due to sin). This is true both for prospective shame (where a person anticipates shame from any of these three sources), as well as for retrospective shame. Contending for shame's relationship to sin in this way in no way undermines the truth that people experience objective shame through no fault of their own, but it does assert that, in the Bible, shame always finds sin at its *ultimate* root. The section proceeds by considering each of the three categories in turn (direct, indirect, and remote) and providing straightforward examples from the biblical testimony.

Before launching into this aspect of the study, however, a definition of sin is required. True to her purpose, Stump presents her definition of sin in philosophical categories, deeming it sufficient "to take sin as something that is contrary to the will (or to the will and the nature) of a perfectly good God in virtue of being morally wrong—where by 'morally wrong' I mean something like undermining or destroying some goodness in the world without suitable justification for doing so, rather than something like the violation of a Kantian duty."[35] In my opinion, Stump's definition would eliminate ambiguity if it were amended to a more concise, "Something that is contrary to the will or nature of God," since "goodness" also needs moral definition. For this reason it will be helpful to use Mark Boda's definition of sin as "an offense against a divinely ordered norm."[36] In his thorough exegetical treatment of the Old Testament teaching on sin, Boda makes the "distinction between inadvertent, deliberate, and defiant violations and between moral and ritual violations," but ultimately shows that each of these distinctions

[35] Stump, *Atonement*, 15.

[36] Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament*, Siphrut 1: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 11.

are combined in a larger conceptual framework where even the "folly" of the wisdom tradition is not "amoral" but also falls within the definition as "a violation of a divinely ordered norm."[37]

Shame Caused Directly by Sin

The causal link that associates shame with intentional, personal, sin is consistently acknowledged by authors who write from a Christian perspective, despite the general (and appropriate) emphasis on the fact that personal sin is not the sole cause of shame. From the biblical perspective, this shame directly related to sin is the first type of shame presented in Scripture's storyline. Adam and Eve's transition from the state of unashamed nakedness in Genesis 2:25 to the state of ashamed hiding in Genesis 3:7–8 coincided with the willful violation of the standards and purposes God had set for them. God had created Adam and Eve to represent him and execute his purposes in creation, filling the earth and subduing it and having dominion over all that he made.[38] He had placed Adam in the garden to work it and keep it. They had been created in God's image and after his likeness and they bore the words of his favor and approval: God looked upon all he had made and judged, "it was very good" (Gen 1:31). This was their standing before him as they were naked and unashamed at the end of Genesis chapter 2. But God had commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it was the violation of this divinely ordered norm that brought about the state of shame and disgrace. More specifically, Romans 5:12 tells us that it was Adam's transgression, not Eve's, that was foundational. Unlike Eve, Adam was not deceived (1 Tim 2:14). His violation of God's command was therefore a conscious one, and it was this willful

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[37] Boda, *A Severe Mercy*, 11.

[38] For support of this understanding, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 66–70, 81–87; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 56–66; Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 96.

disregard and deviation from God's command which was the ultimate root of the shame that both of them experienced. According to the Bible, therefore, the first instance of human shame was caused by the willful sin of Adam.

Eve's shame was directly related to sin as well. Like Adam, she sinned and fell short of the glory of God. Like Adam, she was ashamed and she was conscious of being exposed in God's sight. But the Bible teaches that her sin differed from Adam's in that she had been deceived. Adam had fallen short of God's standard and purposes through an undeceived, deliberate deviation from God's command. Eve had fallen short of God's standard and purposes through the embrace of Satan's deception. Both experienced shame directly as a result. This relationship is established explicitly throughout the Scriptures. Daniel 9:8 makes the point quite clearly: "To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, *because* we have sinned against you" (emphasis added).

Shame Caused Indirectly by Sin

The Bible clearly establishes the direct relationship between sin and shame, but those writing from a Christian perspective have been at pains to emphasize that shame can accrue to a person even apart from his own personal sin. [39] Shame is objectively present and subjectively experienced by victims of sin. Scholarship highlights a number of dynamics where this occurs, but perhaps the most obvious of these indirect sources of shame are abandonment (or "desertion" or "neglect") and violation (or "defilement"). The shame associated with desertion or abandonment accrues in circumstances where a person upon whom one depends fails to supply (or is perceived to fail to supply) the assistance or care that is needed. As Albers asserts, desertion or abandonment can send a

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[39] Stump's analysis is helpful in this regard. She recognizes the critical link between shame and past moral wrongdoing while allowing that "there is a kind of shame that does not have its source in a person's own evil acts, but that is still a consequence of human evil, in one sense or another, because it stems directly or indirectly from the evil of people other than the shamed person." Stump, *Atonement*, 51.

clear and frightening message of rejection to a person or group: "You are not worth bothering about, you deserve nothing more than to be abandoned, deserted, and left desperately alone."[40] He cites examples of children experiencing this dynamic of shame, whether adopted children ashamed that their birth parents seemed not to want them, or children in the care of biological parents who fail to give them the love, attention, and protection that ought to characterize their relationship. He also cites peer groups who withdraw from their friends in time of need and husbands who fail to love, protect, and provide for their wives.[41] In each of these cases, the shame can accrue indirectly, without any sin on the part of the victim.

Biblically, there are numerous cases where shame is associated with abandonment in this way. In 2 Timothy, Paul's admonition that Timothy not be ashamed of the testimony about Christ or of Paul himself as a prisoner (1:8) comes in a context in which "all who are in Asia turned away from [Paul]" (1:15), and where at his "first defense no one came to stand by [him], but all deserted [him]" (4:16). These people had in some sense aligned themselves with Paul and ought to have supported him and stood with him through his trial, following the example of Onesiphorus's household (1:16–17). But the abandonment of Paul by the majority was an indication that they were ashamed of him, that they viewed him in a diminished way and wanted to distance themselves from him. Paul experienced objective shaming in this abandonment, but he had not sinned. The treatment by his former companions was inappropriate. *They* sinned in their evaluation of Paul and of his message and status, and Paul's experience of shame was a result of that sin. He wanted Timothy to avoid falling into the same trap of evaluating him or his message by the standards of the world.

Likewise, the prophet Ezekiel paints a picture of the devaluation represented

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[40] Albers, *Shame*, 44.

[41] Albers, *Shame*, 44–45.

by abandonment when he uses a metaphor to describe Jerusalem: “As for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, *for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born*” (Ezek 16:4–5). The desertion was a sign of abhorrence, and there is shame that accrues when people experience such treatment. Similar language is used in Job 19:13–19,

> He has put my brothers far from me, and those who knew me are wholly estranged from me. My relatives have failed me, my close friends have forgotten me. The guests in my house and my maidservants count me as a stranger; I have become a foreigner in their eyes. I call to my servant, but he gives me no answer; I must plead with him with my mouth for mercy. My breath is strange to my wife, and I am a stench to the children of my own mother. Even young children despise me; when I rise they talk against me. All my intimate friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me.

Job was abandoned by all those who stood in close relationship with him because he was considered a stench (v. 17), despised (v. 18), and abhorred (v. 19). It is because desertion is a reflection of this negative assessment that it is a cause of shame. The key points are (1) that this shame is objectively present even when the one being abandoned has not personally sinned (Job was innocent before God), and (2) that the ones doing the abandoning are sinning when their judgments do not align with God’s (see God’s rebuke of Job’s friends in Job 42:7–8). Job was not a stench in God’s sight, he was not despised by God, nor was he abhorred by God. Job’s brothers, relatives, intimate friends, and acquaintances were wrong in their evaluation of Job and they sinned in treating him the way they did. Job’s shame was a result of this sin. The relationship from sin to shame was indirect because Job was not the one sinning.

Another way shame is indirectly associated with sin is when a person is violated by the actions of another. The shame associated with violation or defilement accrues whenever people are sinned against in a way that violates their dignity. David and Sandra Rhodes discuss this dynamic and note, “there is an underlying shame for

those who have been sinned against because of the shame heaped on them by oppressors."[42] Robert Albers writes along these lines as well, describing the "unwelcome intrusion upon physical and/or emotionally private space" that constitutes sexual harassment as a "violation of personal boundaries."[43] He states that "respecting the privacy of others is integral to respecting their personhood."[44] The very act of sinning against someone in this way communicates that she is not worthy of honorable treatment, and, particularly in instances of sexual violation, having been sinned against in this way, a sense of defilement can cling to a person since the original state of purity cannot be recovered.

In the biblical witness, shame of this sort is evident in the account of Amnon's rape of his sister Tamar. In her protests against her brother's advances, Tamar uses the very words we have been discussing to describe Amnon's intended sin and the shame that would result: "No, my brother, do not *violate* me," she answered him, "for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. As for me, *where would I carry my shame*? As for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel" (2 Sam 13:12–13).[45] The narration which follows is also instructive. Verse 14 again testifies to the nature of Amnon's sin: "but he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he *violated* her and lay with her." And the record of her conduct after the violation shows that Tamar's fear of being shamed in Israel was realized: "Tamar put ashes on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went" (v. 19), and "Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in

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[42] David M. Rhoads and Sandra Rhoads, "Justification by Grace: Shame and Acceptance in a County Jail," in *The Shame Factor: How Shame Shapes Society*, ed. Robert Jewett, Wayne Alloway, and John G. Lacey (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 91.

[43] Albers, *Shame*, 10.

[44] Albers, *Shame*, 12.

[45] The verb עָנָה translated "violate" in verse 12 and verse 14 is more precisely rendered humiliate, which the ESV provides in a footnote. "Violate" is appropriate in the context because it carries both the sense of humiliation and the cause.

her brother Absalom's house" (v. 20). In keeping with the discussion thus far, we can acknowledge that the standards of what constitutes a violation of personal boundaries may vary across differing courts of reputation, but intentional violations of decency do accrue shame in the way this account illustrates.

Another example of the indirect shame dynamic is found in 2 Samuel 10. Upon hearing of the death of Nahash, king of the Ammonites, David had sent a message by his servants to console Nahash's son Hanun. Hanun, now reigning in his father's place, foolishly listened to the advice of his princes and "took David's servants and shaved off half the beard of each and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away" (v. 4). The verse says that this treatment caused the men to be "greatly ashamed." So much so, that David instructed them to "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return" (v. 5). Once again, there was no sin here on the part of David's servants. But sin was, nevertheless, the indirect cause of their shame. They experienced shame as victims of false accusation and mistreatment, the sins of others. This type of indirect shame is also present in Acts 5 where the apostles were arrested because of the jealousy of the Sadducees (v. 17). The apostles' lives were spared through the counsel of the Pharisee Gamaliel (v. 33–39), but in their rage (v. 33), the Sadducees still beat the apostles before letting them go (v. 40). The apostles' reaction is instructive: "Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (v. 41). Like David's servants, the apostles had experienced objective dishonoring at the hands of their opponents, even though they had done nothing wrong. The shame was still connected to sin, but the connection was indirect. Their shame was due to the sins of others.[46]

[46] Note that the shame they experienced was objective. They were publicly subjected to objectively shameful treatment. They experienced this shame subjectively as well, despite the fact that they knew their own conduct was not shameful in God's sight.

Shame Caused Remotely by Sin

Even when discussing dynamics where shame is in an indirect relationship to sin, the connection to sin is still readily apparent in examples such as those listed above. In some cases, however, the connection of shame to sin is more remote and less immediately evident. This is the case, for instance, when shame is associated with a personal physical defect. Regarding physical defectiveness of this kind, Robert Albers explains that "any kind of physical illness, anomaly may result in a person feeling 'abnormal' or 'different.'"[47] As examples, he cites shame associated with infertility, birth defects, the loss or impairment of basic senses, or physical injuries, mutilation, illnesses, or diseases.[48]

Turning to the Scriptures, we are regularly confronted with shame of this kind when we read about barrenness. This can be noted in Genesis 30 when Rachel, after years of being unable to bear children, finally conceived and bore a son. Her response expresses her relief at the removal of the shame associated with infertility: "She conceived and bore a son and said, 'God has taken away my reproach'" (v.23). Rachel's words are echoed by those of Elizabeth, another barren woman who was granted a child after years of infertility: "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among the people" (Luke 1:25). These passages do not link the shame of barrenness to sin.

But perhaps the most striking examples of exclusion and negative evaluation of associated with physical defects are found in the Levitical holiness laws. Leviticus 21:16–24, for example lists a whole host of blemishes which prohibit Aaron's sons from approaching God:

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[47] Albers, *Shame*, 49.

[48] Te-Li Lau comments on this phenomenon: "It is . . . misleading to limit shame to a breach of a moral norm. For one can experience shame as a result of one's dyslexia or stutter, but we would never assert that one is morally culpable for one's dyslexia." See Lau, *Defending Shame*, 17.

> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron, saying, None of your offspring throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback or a dwarf or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles. No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the Lord's food offerings; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, but he shall not go through the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries, for I am the Lord who sanctifies them." So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel.

According to this passage, a blind, lame, injured, diseased, or disfigured man who approached the altar of the Lord would profane it (v. 23). While the explicit language of shame is not present in these verses, we recall both (1) the definition of shame as the fear, pain, or *state of being regarded deficient in social relationships*, and (2) the Bible's insistence on the primacy of each person's relationship with God. With these points in view, shame comes to the forefront as it becomes clear that these physical defects result in a state of being regarded deficient in the presence of God. This is a state of shame. Additional examples could be provided, but these suffice to establish that the Bible at times associates shame with circumstances or characteristics in which a connection to sin may not seem immediately apparent.[49]

The broader testimony of the Bible, however, teaches us that a connection to sin is in the background, even in these instances, because it testifies that even the dysfunction of biological processes is due to sin and is, in fact (referring back to Boda's definition of sin), "an offence against a divinely ordered norm." Perhaps the single text which makes this point most explicitly is Romans 8:18–23, but the weight of the Bible's overall teaching on the subject accumulates through the unfolding of the Bible's entire narrative. Romans 8:18–23 reads as follows,

> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with

[49] For another example, see Daniel Wu's discussion of the defilement associated with menstruation where the "woman is not morally guilty by virtue of her menstruation." Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt*, 117.

the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Jonathan Moo describes the consensus on the reference to creation in these verses: "The majority of present-day interpreters rightly insist that Paul intends to refer to the entire creation or, more likely, specifically to non-human creation,"[50] and his own work in his article "Romans 7.19–22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant" summarizes the arguments that lead to that conclusion.[51] The natural world is in view. As Douglas Moo writes, "the subhuman creation itself is not what it should be, or what God intended it to be. It has been subjected to 'frustration.'"[52] However, Paul's words attest not only that creation is subject to futility and in bondage to corruption, but also that there is a specific cause for the state of affairs: "Because of him who subjected it" (v. 20). Interpreters rightly see here a reference to Genesis 3,[53] and Jonathan Moo helpfully notes how the curses of Genesis 3 involve biological processes of the natural world: "the pain of childbirth, the difficulty of toil, and the altered productivity of the earth."[54] Most important for the purpose at hand is the fact that the reason for this frustration and corruption of the natural world is sin. This is clear in Genesis 3:14–19, but, again quoting Douglas Moo, "The 'frustration' of creation . . . while rooted in the primeval Fall, is also the result of the failure of human beings to live as the careful and loving stewards of the

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[50] Jonathan Moo, "Romans 8.19–22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," *New Testament Studies* 54, no. 1 (January 2008): 75.

[51] Moo, "Romans 8.19–22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," 75–77.

[52] Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2018), 537.

[53] Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 537.

[54] Moo, "Romans 8.19–22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," 78.

created world that God originally meant them to be."[55] Moo's point is corroborated in texts such as Deuteronomy 28:15–68 where the curses of disobedience impact the fruit of the womb, the fruit of the ground, and the increase of herds and flocks (v. 18), as well as bring pestilences (v. 21), diseases, fever, inflammation, drought, blight, and mildew (v. 22), changes in the hydrological cycle (vv. 23–24), boils, tumors, scabs, and itch (v. 27), madness and blindness and confusion of mind (v. 28), and multiply crop-eating pests (vv. 38–39) and incurable sicknesses and diseases (vv. 59–61). Lest anyone believe these consequences apply only to the people of Israel, Leviticus 18:24–25 testifies alongside the curses of Genesis 3:16–19 that the relationship of human sin to the natural world holds for all people, not only those party to the covenant God was establishing in Deuteronomy. God's warning to the Israelites shows that the land was impacted by the behavior of the nations who lived there before them, "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants" (Lev 18:24–25). And even within Deuteronomy 28 itself, the curses to the natural order are described as those with which the Lord struck Egypt: "the boils of Egypt" (v.27) and "all the diseases of Egypt" (v.60). It was the sin of Egypt that resulted in this frustration and bondage of creation around them and had consequences for their very bodies, which became subject to diseases and boils.

Further corroboration is found in Isaiah 24:5–6, for instance, which anticipates the same impact on the creation order: "The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statues, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left." Jeremiah 14:1–6 is also worth quoting in full as it depicts the reaction of the people and even the reaction of the

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[55] Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 538–39.

broader creation to the judgment of the Lord that Jeremiah is announcing (emphasis added):

> The Word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:
>
> 'Judah mourns,
> and her gates languish;
> her people lament on the ground,
> and the cry of Jerusalem goes up.
> Her nobles send their servants for water;
> they come to the cisterns;
> they find no water;
> they return with their vessels empty;
> *they are ashamed and confounded*
> *and cover their heads.*
> *Because of the ground that is dismayed,*
> *since there is no rain on the land,*
> *the farmers are ashamed*;
> they cover their heads.
> Even the doe in the field forsakes her newborn fawn
> because there is no grass.
> The wild donkeys stand on the bare heights;
> they pant for air like jackals;
> their eyes fail
> because there is no vegetation.'

The striking feature of this passage is that the disruption of a natural process (the hydrological cycle no longer producing rain) is explicitly regarded as grounds for shame! Because of the drought, the cisterns of Jerusalem are empty, there is no rain for the crops in the farmer's fields, and even the wild grasses and vegetation have perished, and this is cause for all the people to be ashamed and cover their heads—from the nobles and city-dwellers of Jerusalem to the farmers in the countryside. In an arresting verbal image, Jeremiah depicts even the ground itself as "dismayed". This shame is understandable, however, when we take into account the Bible's link between human sin and the rest of his created world. The blessings described in the first part of Deuteronomy 28 represent God's purposes for his people and for creation. Their antitheses in the curses of that chapter are the result of the failure of God's people to maintain, in the words of Boda, "the divinely ordered norm." They are the result of sin. Further examples could be

multiplied,[56] but this suffices for the present purposes to show that shame due to even "natural" defects or deficiencies is ultimately, though remotely tied to sin.

Concurrent Shame Dynamics

Conceptually, these three categories of how shame can be related to sin are straightforward (direct, indirect, remote), and the passages listed above were chosen because of the simplicity with which they exemplify the categories listed. However, in practice and in the Scriptures other examples become more complicated because of the ways different shame dynamics concurrently impact the shame experience.

John chapter 9, for example, is a key text in relation to this topic. Here, the disciples assumed there was a link between a man's blindness and his sin, but Jesus corrected them. They asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind" (v. 2)? Jesus, however, rules out both of those two options: "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him" (v. 3). Some might argue that Jesus's words teach us that the man's blindness had no relation to sin at all, but that would be a wrong conclusion for three reasons.

First, as outlined above, the Bible's teaching about the effects of the fall and subsequent sin on the natural world is consistent and comprehensive, and interpreters go wrong if they do not account for the broad testimony of the Scriptures when interpreting a specific verse. Second, when looking more closely at John 9, it becomes clear that Jesus is not addressing the third category of shame's relationship to sin that I am contending for. In assuming that either the man or his parents must have sinned, the disciples were considering only *direct* and *indirect* relationships to sin. In ruling out those causes of the man's blindness and associated shame in this case, Jesus is not necessarily dismissing the blindness' *remote* relationship to sin. Third, when we do keep in mind the Bible's

[56] Cf. Num 35:33–34; Jer 3:1–3

teaching that all the brokenness in the natural world (including blindness and its accompanying shame) stems ultimately to that first sin in the Garden of Eden, we recognize more clearly the profundity of Jesus's words and their consistency with another key biblical theme. When the man's blindness—and all the brokenness and difficulty and shame associated with it—is considered in light of the fall, Jesus's answer is considered in light of the fall as well. Jesus's answer points us all that way back and informs us that the fall happened, "That the works of God might be displayed" (v. 3).

The complicated nature of the discussion can be further demonstrated with another example from the "physical" defectiveness category. The shame of the blind man in John 9 stemmed from a physical defect which was present at birth, and which bore no direct or indirect relationship to sin. Physical defects, however, are not always birth defects. How should we categorize circumstances where physical defectiveness is a direct consequence of a person's sin? A man may get drunk and permanently injure himself in his stupor, or he may fall into a pit he had made with the intent of harming his neighbor. In such cases, the shame of physical defectiveness is directly attributed to the sin which occasioned it. If the man had heeded God's commands and avoided drunkenness and violence, he would not have suffered the consequences. Further, we can also conceive of circumstances in which a physical defect results from the sins of another. An evil man may succeed in trapping his neighbor in a pit and the neighbor may become crippled in the process.

Consider again the account of Nahash the Ammonite besieging Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam 11). If the nation of Israel had failed to deliver their brothers from the Ammonites and Nahash had made good on his threat to gauge out the right eye of every man in the town, the men's disgrace could be related to both the sin of Nahash (in his pride and vindictiveness) and the sin of Israel (in their failure to defend their brothers). In-depth analysis of this type can quickly find itself in need of employing the concept of primary and secondary causes. When Israel, for instance, was conquered and put to shame by

Assyria, the primary cause was that God was punishing them for their sins. Thus the shame of Israel, in that primary sense, was directly related to Israel's own sin. But Isaiah 10:5–19 testifies that the secondary cause, which God used to bring about his ultimate purposes, was Assyria, acting in godless pride and wickedness. In this secondary sense, the shame of Israel was indirect, coming because of Assyria's sin.

Shame's relationship to sin, then, can fall into more than one category depending on the plane of reference. However, the ultimate root and cause of shame in every instance is always sin.

Achieved vs. Ascribed Shame

More insight on causes of shame can be gained by taking into account the distinction between *achieved* and *ascribed* shame regularly highlighted in the literature. This is related to Stump's category of shame transfer by association that was mentioned earlier. Different authors make this distinction in slightly different terms, but the essential factor is that *achieved* honor and shame are the result of a subject's activity—they accrue to people through their own words, actions, and demonstrated merits. In contrast, when a*scribed* honor and shame accrue to a person, the person is passive. Ascribed honor and shame may come from association with a person, a group, a place, or a community of some kind, or it may be conferred by a person in authority who has the power to define honor or shame within a particular group or community. Anthropological studies highlight how shame accrues in this way through communal dynamics as the reputation of an entire group is affected by its individual members and the reputation of individual members is affected by the reputation of the entire group. Scholars point to associations through which shame was thus transferred in the ancient near east, such as patron-client relationships, kinship or family ties, national or city connections, trade guilds and religious affiliations. Entire groups can also accrue shame or honor together as they conduct themselves collectively. Thus, the entire group can be shamed because of its

corporate actions or corporate failures to act.

We find a biblical example of this ascribed shame in Nathanael's initial doubting of Jesus based on the fact that he was from Nazareth: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" he asked Philip (John 1:46). The reputation of the community was ascribed to the people who were associated with it. Ascribed honor, similarly (but of course also in contrast), is evident when Paul indulges the Corinthians by demonstrating that he could boast of the same things the false apostles boasted about. Among the factors that would afford Paul honor alongside these men are the facts that he is a Hebrew, that he is an Israelite, and that he is descended from Abraham (2 Cor 11:22). These marks of honor in the Christian and Jewish court of reputation were bestowed to Paul by birth. As was the honor of being a Roman citizen, which secured him dignified treatment when held by the Roman tribune in Jerusalem (Acts 22:28–29).

Such communal dynamics are also on display in Ezra's prayer in Ezra 9:6–7. Here, the scribe articulates his personal sense of shame as he describes the sins of the people of which he is a part: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today." What occasioned Ezra's prayer was a report he received concerning the returned exiles in Jerusalem and Judah who had again disregarded God's commands and intermarried with the godless nations who were in the land. Ezra had not sinned personally, but his identity was bound up with the nation of Israel, and the shame the nation incurred accrued to him as part of the community.

Another biblical example is seen in the account of Nahash the Ammonite besieging Jabesh-gilead. As recounted in 1 Samuel 11:2, the terms of peace declared by Nahash were intended to bring shame on Israel by showing their collective powerlessness

in preventing him from defiling all the males: “On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus bring disgrace on all Israel” (1 Sam 11:2). The shame accruing to each individual in the nation would have stemmed from the fact that as a group they were unable or unwilling to defend the city and prevent the disfigurement.

We see this dynamic also in Acts 19, where Luke records the speech of Demetrius, “a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artimis” (v. 24). In his appeal to this fellow craftsmen, the thrust of his argument for opposing Paul and his message centers on the shame that would fall on their trade and their city’s famous temple and god: “You see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence” (vv. 26–27). The reputation of the individual craftsman would rise and fall in conjunction with the reputation of their trade.

Shame through association is also evident in Psalm 69. David finds himself in the midst of adversity, and as he looks at his situation, he declares: “More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause,” and “mighty are those who would destroy me” (v. 4). He seems to be in danger of being put to shame. Beyond considering merely his own personal circumstances, however, David is conscious that if his hope in God proves ill-founded, others who have similarly placed their hope in God will be put to shame as well, by association. He prays, “Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord God of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel” (v. 6). This case is especially important to note because David held a unique place among the people of Israel as their anointed representative.

We also see ascribed honor in the account of Mordecai recorded in the book of

Esther. Chapter 2 records how Mordecai foiled the plot of two of King Ahasuerus's eunuchs who had become angry "and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus" (v. 21). The event was "recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king" (v. 23), but there is no record of Mordecai's actions resulting in public honor in the city of Susa at large. In chapter 6, however, when the king was reminded of Mordecai's actions, he decided to use his power to confer honor on him in a way that would be publicly recognized throughout the city. Notably, the refrain proclaimed before Mordecai as he was led through the square did not refer to Mordecai's actions as the source of his honor, only that "thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor" (v. 11). While Mordecai's honor in the king's sight was achieved by his actions, the king's subjects were to honor Mordecai simply because the king delighted to honor him, not due to their own judgment of the worthiness of his actions. The high honors accorded to him in the city were ascribed to him by the king who had authority in the jurisdiction.

The dynamic of ascribed honor marks another way that shame can be connected to sin indirectly. It is evident in the phrase of Isaiah 22:18, where Isaiah warns Shebna about the judgment in store and describes him in cutting words, "you shame of your master's house." Shebna's conduct was such that he brought shame on those associated with him, in this case, his master and those of his house. It is also depicted in the Proverbs as accruing through family relationships. Wives can bring shame to their husbands, "an excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones" (Prov 12:4), and children can bring shame to their parents, "the one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father" (Prov 28:7).

Shame and Punishment

The next observation is stated succinctly by John Forrester: "Shame is not just our reaction to sin, it is also punishment for sin." [57] We see this demonstrated in passages like Isaiah 65:11–16 where God outlines the consequences for those who forsake him. "Behold," God says, "my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame" (v. 13). It is not simply that men and women ought to *be* ashamed on account of their iniquity; they will also be *put* to shame when God executes his judgment. Thus David can write of the enemies of God's people that they "shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment" (Ps 6:10).[58] On the one hand, God comforts his people, declaring that "all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish" (Isa 41:11), and on the other, God warns his people who have sinned against him saying, "I myself will lift up your skirts over your face, and your shame will be seen" (Jer 13:26).[59] As we read in Ezra 9, Israel saw its own shame as an outflow of God's punishment. At that point in their history, the faithful in Israel were ashamed of their sin, but they also understood that they had been put to shame *because of* their sin. Further, Daniel 12:2 shows that shame is a component of eternal punishment as well: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Shame and Guilt

Clarifying that the Bible relates shame with sin in the three ways described

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[57] Forrester, *Grace for Shame*, 102.

[58] Stockitt comments on Psalm 119:1–4, noting that "the psalmist's desire for justice to be meted out to his adversaries is articulated as a longing for divine shaming." Robin Stockitt, *Restoring the Shamed: Towards a Theology of Shame* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 66.

[59] Here, the English word "shame" is used to translate the Hebrew קָלוֹן.

above also contributes to the discussion of how shame is related to guilt. That discussion remains an area of significant controversy as the nature of the relationship between the two phenomena has proven to be quite difficult to define.[60] Models developed by anthropologists and psychologists in the twentieth-century have been subject to serious critique, and recent scholars in those fields have criticized biblical scholars for their continued use of models which have been discredited.[61]

Donald Nathanson's work in the psychological field introduced a distinction between *emotion* and *affect*, and classified shame as an affect ("a physiological response to various stimuli") and guilt as one emotion ("a combination of thoughts and *somatic feelings*") that can result from shame.[62] Nathanson was "sure that shame is involved in guilt," and proposed that "guilt involves, at the very least, shame about an action."[63] As mentioned briefly above, recognition of the physiological aspect of shame is consistent with the Bible's presentation[64] and we will touch on whether guilt is an emotion and whether it is a species of shame, but Nathanson's model has been criticized because it could not adequately account for the differences between guilt, embarrassment, shyness, and other inferiority feelings, which he classified as shame variants but which had been reliably established by clinical and empirical studies as separate emotions.[65]

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[60] Te-Li Lau comes to a similar conclusion after his review of the psychological literature: "Many consider shame and guilt to be different emotions, but the specific factors that differentiate them are strongly debated." See Lau, *Defending Shame*, 17.

[61] Douglas L. Cairns, *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1993); Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 346 (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

[62] Donald L. Nathanson, *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 37–38, 144–45.

[63] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 144.

[64] We have noted that shame is related to blushing (Ezra 9:6; Isa 1:29; Jer 6:15; 8:12). We can also read about downcast faces (Ezra 9:6), downcast eyes (Luke 18:13), etc.

[65] Neil Pembroke, *The Art of Listening: Dialogue, Shame, and Pastoral Care* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 150–51. See Daniel Wu's summary of key developments in psychological shame research on the guilt/shame distinction: Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt*, 37–46.

Te-Li Lau, for his part, is concerned to address only the subjective experience of shame in his work, and with respect to that aspect declares, "I take it to be uncontroversial that shame is an emotion," and refines his "understanding of shame by differentiating it from humiliation, embarrassment, and guilt" (also considered as emotions).[66] He provides an overview of relevant literature and notes that "attempts to distinguish between shame and guilt generally fall into three categories: (1) distinction based on the degree the person focuses either on the self or the behavior, (2) distinction based on the public and private nature of the transgression [expressed in terms of external vs. internal sanction], and (3) distinction based on the nature of the eliciting event [nonmoral vs. moral]."[67] As Lau correctly reports, however, each of these categories of distinction have been subject to critique.

Beginning chronologically, the second of Lau's categories stems from Ruth Benedict's classic anthropological work *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. In it, Benedict displays her understanding of guilt and shame as she asserts that "A society that inculcates absolute standards of morality and relies on men's developing a conscience is a guilt culture by definition," whereas "true shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behavior, not, as true guilt cultures do, on an internalized conviction of sin."[68] She goes on to explain that "Shame is a reaction to other people's criticism. A man is shamed either by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by fantasying to himself that he has been made ridiculous. . . . But it requires an audience or at least a man's fantasy of an audience. Guilt does not."[69] Lau helpfully summarizes the critique that has been levelled

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[66] Lau, *Defending Shame*, 13.

[67] Lau, *Defending Shame*, 17–18.

[68] Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), 222–23.

[69] Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 223.

against Benedict's distinction from multiple sources:[70] If we acknowledge that "shame only requires an imaginary audience to bring it about, we must then affirm that this kind of shame depends less on the expected judgments of the audience than on the discrepancy one sees between the self and some ideal standard. The fear of shame has then in effect been internalized, and the public-private distinction between shame and guilt falls apart."[71] Further, "if both shame and guilt share a certain degree of internalization, then the sharp antithesis between shame and guilt disappears, and with it the antithesis between shame and guilt cultures. [72] This is not to say that there is no such thing as a shame culture or a guilt culture. Rather, the difference between a shame culture and a guilt culture must be one of degree and emphasis rather than of kind."[73] Indeed, the anthropological consensus is that both shame and guilt exist in all cultures.[74]

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[70] Notably Cairns, *Aidos*, intro; Also, Millie R. Creighton, "Revisiting Shame and Guilt Cultures: A Forty-Year Pilgrimage," *Ethos* 18, no. 3 (September 1990): 279–307.

[71] Lau, *Defending Shame*, 21.

[72] Daniel Wu's analysis of the history of these ideas is helpful. He notes that the cultural anthropologists (Benedict, Margaret Mead, etc.) who had such influence in psychology, "themselves depend on psychoanalytical categories. In other words, the concepts seem to have gone through a sort of 'double refraction,' from the psychology of the individual (via Freud), through to the broad characterization of cultural sanctions of social anthropology, and back into clinical/therapeutic psychology. In so doing, the weaknesses noted by Lasch seem to have not only become part of the assumed edifice of shame scholarship, but also seem to have been magnified in the process, and made a slight distinction into an overblown dichotomy." Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt*.

[73] Lau, *Defending Shame*, 21. It is more prudent to follow Thomas Schirrmacher in designating guilt-oriented cultures and shame-oriented cultures to reflect the softer distinction. See Schirrmacher, *Culture of Shame/Culture of Guilt*, 11.

[74] The differences between cultures are helpfully analyzed by comparing the standards of what is deemed honorable or lawful and the nature and dominance of the various courts, both legal and reputational, which are in play. In God's judgment, both guilt and shame accrue with any violation of a divinely ordered norm. God's law extends from actions to words to even the motives and intentions of the heart, and accordingly, those who are mindful of God's law and have regard for his judgments are conscious of shame and guilt whenever they sin, regardless of how they are perceived in other courts of reputation. In other words, because all wrongdoing is regarded as a violation of the law of God, shame for wrongdoing is always accompanied by guilt in the heavenly court. No human system of law approaches the breadth and depth of the law of God, however, and absent a developed understanding of God's law and judgment, people adopt other standards of evaluation, and communities incorporate those standards into formal laws to various degrees. I cannot develop the point here, but I suggest that to the degree that a culture's moral convictions are broader and deeper than what is formally legislated, to that degree a sense of shame for wrongdoing can develop in a way which seems divorced from guilt. Conversely, to the degree that the people of a culture do not see a culture's formal laws as the expression of their own moral convictions they share, to that degree people in that culture can be guilty of breaking laws in a way that seems divorced from shame.

Guilt itself has been defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the fact of having committed, or of being guilty of, some specified or implied offence; guiltiness" (c1330) and "the state (meriting condemnation and reproach of conscience) of having willfully committed crime or heinous moral offence; criminality, great culpability" (c1510).[75] What is striking, as James Brown notes, is that "only in 1901 in the *New English Dictionary* (i.e., the first edition of the *OED*) is it acknowledged that 'guilt' might be used to signify the subjective experience of being guilty."[76] The previous definitions recognized guilt as an objective state. While the word guilt is increasingly used subjectively in English speech to refer to an emotion, we find in the Scriptures the concept of an objective responsibility for violations of a legal code and this has historically been referred to as guilt.[77] With regard to the heavenly court of reputation, to be guilty is to have sinned.[78] This being so, we can describe the relationship between theocentric shame and guilt using the vocabulary of the causes of shame I have outlined above: According to the Bible, objective guilt is the cause of that shame which is related

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[75] OED, s.v. "guilt (n.)," September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9889550771.

[76] James Brown, "Between Shame and Guilt: Lord Jim and the Confounding of Distinctions," in *Shame and Modern Writing*, ed. Barry Sheils and Julie Walsh (New York: Routledge, 2018), 95.

[77] Daniel Wu establishes this objective emphasis for עון in *Honor, Shame, and Guilt*, 148. Bobby Sloan has argued that "the Greek terms related to guilt describe an objective standing of the guilty person in relationship to God. Never is the term 'guilt' used to denote a feeling in the New Testament." Sloan does, however, discuss "the subjective experience of the guilty one." Bobby N. Sloan, "Guilt: A New Testament Exegesis with Implications for Psychotherapy" (EdD diss., Northern Illinois University, 1988), abstract. The words translated as guilt or guilty in the ESV are ἔνοχος, which carries the sense of being objectively liable in some jurisdiction (e.g.,, Matt 5:21,;Mark 3:29), αἴτιος, which refers to objective ground for legal action when used by Pilate at Jesus's trial (Luke 23:14; John 19:4, 6; Acts 13:28), and ἁμαρτία which is typically glossed "sin", but is translated "guilty" when taken as the grammatical object of ἔχω, the objective state of "having sin" (e.g.,, John 9:41; 15:22, 24).

[78] The definition of guilt is not so controversial as the definition of shame. Stump's view is aligned "Every person past the age of reason is in fact guilty, whether he feels it or not, because his life history includes his having done morally wrong actions of some sort." See Stump, *Atonement*, 18. Baker and Green do not explicitly define guilt, but they take for granted Mark Boda's use as they cite his work. See Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 69. Boda's use is also consistent with this definition. See Boda, *A Severe Mercy*, 62–64, 522–23. Mann also feels no need to explicitly define guilt, but his use is consistent as well, citing Pearse's analysis with approval: "If we have no obligations, then there are no duties that I have failed to fulfill, no forbidden acts that I should feel guilty about having done," Meic Pearse, *Why the Rest Hates the West: Understanding the Roots of Global Rage* (London: SPCK, 2003), 59, quoted in Alan Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 19.

to sin directly.[79] Sin results in objective guilt according to God's law, and this objective guilt results in objective shame in God's sight, which ought to (and will eventually) result in subjective shame experienced by the sinner.

If guilt is to be considered subjectively as an emotion, the subjective aspect of guilt arises from objective guilt alongside shame, and Lau's first category of distinguishing between it and subjective shame may prove helpful. We find it expressed succinctly by Tangney and Dearing: "The fundamental difference between shame and guilt centers on the role of the self. Shame involves fairly global negative evaluations of the self (i.e.,, 'Who *I* am'). Guilt involves a more articulated condemnation of a specific behavior (i.e.,, 'What I *did*')."[80] As Douglas Cairns has shown in a comprehensive analysis and critique of this position, however, "Who *I* am" and "What I *did*" come together very quickly when "*I* am a person who *did* this terrible thing." As he concludes: "Quite simply, self-image will constantly be called into question by specific acts, and in such situations the sharp distinction between shame and guilt will begin to disappear."[81]

This is consistent with the depiction of Genesis 3. Applying the pattern of emphasis from Tangney and Dearing, it was what Adam and Eve *did* that changed their conception of who *they* were before God. Recall that they had been described as "naked and unashamed" in 2:25, but by 3:7–8 "the eyes of both were opened," they sought to cover themselves with fig leaves, and they hid from the Lord God to avoid his presence. The cause of the change from unashamed in 2:25 to the state and experience of shame in 3:7–8 was the action of Adam and Eve in disobeying the command of God. They were

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[79] We note, of course, that guilt, like shame is evaluated by the standards of a particular court. Different courts have different laws which may or may not be closely aligned. Also worth noting is the fact that evaluations of shame and guilt are both ethical in nature. In each case, the standards in play cannot be developed without underlying convictions of what is good, right, acceptable, or commendable—matters which all pertain to ethics. Even when shame is only remotely connected to sin, the shame is reflective of a judgment that things are not as they *ought* to be. This ought is an ethical consideration.

[80] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 24 (emphasis original).

[81] Cairns, *Aidos*, 24.

still naked, but they were no longer unashamed; they were now painfully conscious that they stood before God no longer as his faithful, trusting representatives, but as guilty willful violators of his command.[82]

Returning also to Ezra 9:6 we see the same pattern: The shame of the people flows directly from sin, and, explicitly, from the guilt of the people: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens."[83] Ezra's prayer expresses his reflection on the "great guilt" of his people since the days of their fathers (9:5). Again referring to the "who *I* am" vs. "what I have *done*" distinction, we can paraphrase Ezra's assessment of the situation as follows, "*We* are a people who are guilty of *doing* terrible things in forsaking God's commandments." The focus on self vs. focus on action distinction is applicable when seeking to differentiate between a subjective experience of guilt and the subjective experience of shame which is directly related to sin, but the distinction is subtle and cannot be pushed too far.

But a more clear cut differentiation between subjective guilt and shame exists in an insight we glean from our study thus far: The nature of the events or circumstances which can elicit an experience of shame are much broader than those that can elicit guilt. While shame, like guilt, does accrue directly when a person sins, shame also accrues through connections to sin which are indirect and remote. In those cases guilt is not present. This takes us to Lau's third category of differentiation which focuses on the nature of the eliciting event. In describing this category, Lau refers to the fact that both moral and nonmoral failures can invoke shame whereas only moral transgressions can

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[82] As Calvin comments: "They are not yet summoned to the tribunal of God; there is none who accuses them; is not then the sense of shame, which rises spontaneously, a sure token of guilt?" John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 1, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 157.

[83] Examples of this connection can be multiplied. See also, for instance, Job 19:3; Jer 3:25; 22:22; Ezek 16:52, 61; 43:10; 44:13; Rom 6:21.

invoke guilt.[84] With our consideration of the biblical data, we can affirm this idea, but we have provided more nuance to the category he calls nonmoral. We can even adapt Lau's language by clarifying that it is the subject who is nonmoral when the events that elicit his shame are sins connected to him only indirectly and remotely. In summary, objective guilt is the state of having violated an ethical norm whereas objective shame is the state of being regarded as deficient in social relationships. Subjective shame can be experienced apart from objective guilt, but where objective guilt is present, the best differentiation between the subjective senses of shame and guilt is the greater focus on the assessment of the action (for guilt) versus the greater focus on the assessment of the self (for shame).[85]

Appropriate Shame

At this point, we are able to articulate one final distinction. We have already described prospective shame as an *appropriate* "modesty" or "fear of an offence against propriety or decency, operating as a restraint on behavior,"[86] but it will be helpful to define *Appropriate Shame* more formally. *Appropriate Shame* is that shame which (1)

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[84] Lau, *Defending Shame*, 22. Alan Mann distinguishes between (1) "guilt, and the type of shame generated within honor/shame societies" which are moral emotions since they tend to be concerned with "the other," and (2) "chronic shame found within our contemporary Westernized communities" which he regards as "an altogether different emotion" which "thrusts attention upon the self." Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26.

[85] Eleonore Stump develops the distinction between shame and guilt "in terms of the two desires of love, on a Thomistic account of love." These two desires of love having previously defined as (1) the desire for the good of the beloved, and (2) the desire for union with the beloved, Stump argues when a person is objectively guilty and shamed, "it would be appropriate for others to repudiate both the desires of love with regard to them. But the first desire of love, for the good of the beloved, is central in the case of guilt; and the second desire of love, for union with the beloved, is central in the case of shame." Not desiring the good of the beloved, is framed in terms of others believing that punishment is warranted based on actions, whereas not desiring union with the beloved is framed in terms of "rejecting not his good but *him*." Stump, *Atonement*, 45 (emphasis original). Stump's characterization is interesting, but it depends on adopting the Thomistic account of love and still resolves ultimately into a variation of the "what I've *done*" vs. "who *I* am" distinction. She comes to the same conclusion we have outlined: "The wrong a person has done may prompt in others a repudiation *of him* as well as a desire to punish him." Stump, *Atonement*, 48 (emphasis original). Alan Mann considers shame "a more complex, and highly misunderstood, emotion" than "the simpler one of guilt," and is concerned that shame not be "too easily absorbed into guilt-language." Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26. This is consistent with the distinction we have developed.

[86] *OED*, s.v. "shame (n.)," February 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1015780933.

exists objectively before God as a result and consequence of sin as measured by God's standard, and will be (2) recognized socially and (3) experienced personally by groups and individuals (respectively) whose standards align with God's. When sinners have rebelled against God and violated his righteous commands, it is right and appropriate to experience a sense of unworthiness or defilement before Him and before other people. This appropriate shame must, however, be distinguished from *Inappropriate Shame*.[87] Because the world's standard of righteousness has been skewed, people can be socially shamed and experience psychological shame for actions or circumstances which are not shameful in the eyes of God, and this shame is inappropriate. To return to Brad Vaughn's taxonomy, psychological and social shame are judged "appropriate" or "inappropriate" based on whether they align with theocentric shame.[88]

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to outline the categories in which the Bible speaks of shame so that those aspects of shame which the Bible includes in its description of the human problem can be understood on the Bible's own terms. Noting dynamics of objective shaming or an objective state of shame as well as the dynamics of subjective shame experience allows us to analyze the phenomena of shame in a more nuanced fashion. Incorporating the dynamic of exposure that is at the root of shame then makes clear the need for careful analysis of the court of reputations in play when shame is being evaluated. Further, recognizing that different moral standards are employed to make judgments about shameful behavior allows us to compare the standards used in social and

[87] John Piper makes a similar distinction between "misplaced shame" and "well-placed shame." John Piper, *Future Grace: The Purifying Power of the Promises of God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 1995), 132–34.

[88] In considering the case of victim shame and defect shame (discussed briefly in footnote earlier), there is a sense in which we can bear appropriate shame (tied to something that was actually sinful in God's sight) through association, even when we have not personally done anything wrong. Mariana Oshana has explored the concept under the rubric of "moral taint" in Marina A. L. Oshana, "Moral Taint," *Metaphilosophy* 37, no. 3–4 (July 2006): 353–75.

psychological courts of opinion against the standard of shame which God employs as he makes judgments in the courts of heaven. Applying the term *Appropriate Shame* to shame which is grounded in God's standard and *Inappropriate Shame* to shame which is not grounded in God's standard provides a vocabulary for referring to the shame that the Bible highlights as critically important.

We have also gained appreciation for the importance of shame as a motivating factor for behavior. Lau's work outlining the formative function of shame and deSilva's work showing its use in the letter to the Hebrews both reinforce the point that the phenomena of prospective and retrospective shame can be employed instrumentally to move people to various kind action, character, or belief. This is one of the reasons why an appropriate sense of shame is depicted in the Scriptures as a virtue. When standards of shamefulness are rightly aligned to God's law, the motivational power of shame and the instrumental use of shame by godly influencers move communities and individuals in the right direction.

Most significantly, we have seen from the Scriptures that shame in God's sight is always a result of sin. Using the categories we have drawn from the biblical testimony, we acknowledge that shame's relationship to sin may be indirect or remote, rather than direct, but establishing the connection between shame and sin paves the way for a robust discussion of how the Bible presents the shame problem and the shame solution.

CHAPTER 4

A THEOLOGICAL ARTICULATION OF THE SHAME PROBLEM

As discussed in chapter 2, believers in each generation inherit the wisdom of faithful Christian witnesses who have come before. Questions and controversies have prompted theological investigation in every age, and those who have searched for answers by asking the foundational question "What do the Scriptures say about this?" have been able to articulate the Bible's teaching in ways that do justice to the biblical presentation. Certainly, the answers articulated reflect the questions being asked, but when new questions arise, we do not discard the conclusions that have been established and defended based on the thorough consideration of the Scriptures over centuries of investigation and debate. This has relevance for the matter at hand. The new question we are asking is, "What do the Scriptures teach about shame and its relationship to the atonement?" In answering this question, however, we do not discard the insights that have been gleaned by considering the Bible's teaching on other aspects of the atonement. To reiterate what I have argued above, evangelicalism's uniform consensus on the penal substitutionary nature of the atonement is grounded in the comprehensiveness and soundness of the exegetical arguments made in support of it and because of its centrality to the gospel.

Despite the evangelical consensus, however, the doctrine of Penal Substituionary Atonement (PSA) has faced a steady stream of detractors, and evangelical pastors and scholars have continually been forced to defend the doctrine against criticism. As catalogued by Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, opponents of the doctrine have raised a myriad of objections that have been ably addressed, and many of

these varied objections have been put forward in the works we are considering by Alan Mann, Eleonore Stump, and Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green.[1] The specific arguments evaluated in this dissertation, however, insist that one of the reasons the evangelical doctrine of the atonement must be reformulated is because it fails to address the problem of shame. Having established vocabulary for describing the Bible's shame dynamics in chapter 3, we are now in a position to look more closely at how the Bible describes the problem of shame.

In fact, it is more accurate to say this chapter will consider how the Bible presents the problems (plural) of shame, and how those problems are related to other orthodox and evangelical doctrines. A closer look at the shame dynamics we have been discussing suggests many points of theological contact, and the concern of this chapter will be to articulate the scriptural teaching on the problems of shame in a way that highlights important theological connections with other doctrines and corrects relevant theological misrepresentations.

The Problems of Shame and the Doctrine of God

The Preeminence of God's Standards

The first points of contact relate to the classic orthodox and evangelical doctrine of God. We have noted that the Scriptures reflect the reality that different standards of shame can be adopted by different courts of reputation, and we have seen that the Scriptures point to God and his court as providing an objective standard of what is honorable and of what is shameful. The objective nature of God's standard is what Johanna Stiebert is getting at when she summarizes, "Moral competence belongs only to YHWH. Only his appraisal determines the significance of an action."[2] It is for this reason

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[1] Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 205–328.

[2] Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 346 (New York: Sheffield

that the Scriptures set God's standard and God's verdicts about honor and shame over and against every standard or verdict that stands in contradiction. According to the Bible, individuals and communities should have regard for God's judgments of honor and shame because of who God is.

Reasons Why God's Standards Are Preeminent

The preeminence of God's standards finds at least two roots of support in evangelical theology. In the first place, God's standards are preeminent because he is the creator of all things and all people and defines the purposes for everything he has created. Terry Johnson expands on the importance of this point and his words reflect the consensus of historic Christianity:

> The theme of God the Creator provides the content of the first verse of the Bible, the first article of the Apostles' Creed ("Maker of heaven and earth"), and the first question in the Catechism for Young Children ("Who made you?"); and it is foundational to all subsequent divine awareness and self-awareness. "Knowledge of the Creator," says Berkhof, "is the foundation of all ethical and religious life." The Creator's design for us as his creatures is the first principle of the life worth living and the first point of our evangelism.[3]

Herman Bavinck is just as direct, declaring, "The doctrine of creation, affirming the distinction between the Creator and his creature, is the starting point of true religion."[4] The reason for this is that "true religion distinguishes itself from all other religions by the fact that it construes the relation between God and the world, including man, as that between the Creator and his creature. The idea of an existence apart from

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Academic Press, 2002), 88.

[3] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, exp. ed. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2021), 126, quoted in Terry L. Johnson, *The Identity and Attributes of God* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2019), 87. Bavinck uses almost exactly the same phrase as Berkhof. Creation, he says, "is the foundation of all religious and ethical life," Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 2:407.

[4] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:406.

and independent of God occurs nowhere in the Scripture."[5] God's purpose in creation has been just as clear for theologians through the centuries: "Christian theology almost unanimously teaches that the glory of God is the final end of all God's works. Although in its early years theologians especially featured the goodness of God as the motive for creation, still the honor of God as the final end of all things is not lacking."[6] As the twenty-four elders in heaven proclaim, "our Lord and God" is worthy "to receive glory and honor and power *for* [he] *created* all things, and by [his] will they existed and were created" (Rev 4:11), and as Johnson summarizes the biblical teaching, "God has a particular design for us which we are to fulfil. God made us to know him, to love him, to serve him, to obey him, and to worship him. He made us for himself. We will never know peace, fulfilment, satisfaction, or joy until we begin to fulfil the design for which we were made; until we honor the divinely ordered purpose for our existence."[7] The point here is that the purposes for which God created us are the definitive standard against which our conduct is evaluated with regards to honor and shame. God determined those purposes as our creator, and he has revealed them to us and bid us to do his will. Courts of human reputation may maintain that people ought to conduct themselves in certain ways or that certain characteristics are honorable because of various criteria, but the divine court regards us as deficient in so far as we fail to fulfil God's declared will.[8]

Second, the Bible asserts that God's standards are preeminent because it is according to his standards that he will execute the final judgment which will determine the eternal fate of all people. The doctrine of the day of judgment has, of course, required

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[5] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:407.

[6] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:433.

[7] Johnson, *The Identity and Attributes of God*, 100–101.

[8] I refer here to God's preceptive (revealed) will as opposed to his decretive (secret) will. For a discussion of this distinction, see questions 69–80 in chapter 2 of Geerhardus J. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

defense in the past few centuries against the idea that God's judgment is simply the present outworking of the consequences of sin. Berkhof summarizes, "In modern liberal theology, with its emphasis on the fact that God is immanent in all the processes of history, there is a strong tendency to regard the judgment primarily, if not exclusively, as a present immanent process."[9] As he reiterates, however, "The final judgment of which the Bible speaks may not be regarded as a spiritual, invisible and endless process which is identical with God's providence in history. . . . The Bible clearly teaches us that God even in the present life visits evil with punishment and rewards the good with blessings, . . . but it is also manifest from Scripture that the judgments of God in the present are not final."[10] As Jesus warns, "the day of judgment" (Matt 10:15; 11:22; 11:24; 12:36) remains in the future, and evangelical theologians have emphasized that "The standard by which saints and sinners are judged will evidently be the revealed will of God."[11] The final judgment has bearing on the discussion of shame because of how passages like Daniel 12:2 describe the two fates that follow. There, the contrast drawn is between those who will receive "everlasting life" and those who will awake "to shame and everlasting contempt." In Jeremiah 23:40, God speaks in a similar vein in describing the judgment he will bring on those who pervert his words: "I will bring upon you everlasting reproach and perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten." Further, this everlasting shaming is set alongside banishment from God's presence (v. 39) as the punishment warned about in verse 34.

The Primary Problem of Shame for Humans

The way the state of perpetual shame is associated with the day of judgment

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[9] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 764.

[10] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 764.

[11] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 769.

and being eternally cast away from God's presence[12] brings us back to the definition of shame and allows us to identify the first and primary problem of shame for human beings. This primary shame problem becomes clear when we (1) recall that shame is the fear, pain, or state of being regarded deficient in social relationships, and (2) note that as defined by the Scriptures the most important relationship for any person is the relationship between that person and God. The primary shame problem for human beings focuses on the day of judgment and consists of the fear, pain, and/or state of being judged finally and eternally deficient and unworthy of acceptance by God.

The Primary Problem of Shame for God

But the Bible presents another primary problem of shame as well. It can be described as the problem of shame for God. This is shame that drives the biblical storyline as it threatens to accrue to God in the eyes of the nations because of his association with sinful people. The overarching plot of the Bible traces the unfolding of God's purposes to establish a covenant relationship with people created in his image in a way that brings glory to his name,[13] and the tension in the storyline comes from the fact that instead of being glorified, God is continually dishonored by the people with whom he enters into covenant. This begins at the dawn of history when, instead of honoring God, Adam and Eve showed disdain for him and "dealt faithlessly" as they "transgressed

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[12] "I will surely lift you up and cast you away from my presence" (Jer 23:39).

[13] The centrality of God's honor and glory in the storyline of Scripture has long been recognized by evangelical scholars. That the theme is so prevalent in Anselm's much maligned *Why God Became Man* suggests that his thinking is grounded more in biblical categories than in the feudal system which he is accused of imposing on the Scriptures. See Nicholas Cohen, "Feudal Imagery or Christian Tradition? A Defense of the Rationale for Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*," *Saint Anselm Journal* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 22–29 for an argument against that interpretation of Anselm. Many are also familiar with the first question Westminster Larger Catechism, which asks, "What is the chief and highest end of man?" and answers, "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." More recently, James Hamilton has traced the theme in James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010). Brad Vaughn, likewise, develops theme in Brad Vaughn, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*, EMS Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2013), 196–219.

the covenant" (Hos 6:7),[14] but the paradigmatic example of the Old Testament is the nation of Israel and its kings. God redeems them from their slavery in Egypt, according to his promise to Abraham, and he explains his purposes in words that are emphasized throughout the canon: "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God" (Exod 6:7). As he outlines the covenant he establishes with them, however, he introduces the law that defines the terms of their relationship. He makes clear that his people must conduct themselves in a manner that is clean, upright, righteous, and faithful, lest they profane the name of the Lord (Lev 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6; 22:2; 22:32). God declares repeatedly, "be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44; 11:45; 19:2; 20:7; 20:26; 21:8).

The tragedy of the old covenant nation of Israel is that they repeatedly fail in this regard. As Waldemar Janzen describes, the former prophets provide "a grand theological survey of Israel's approximately 650 years in her land, to show how God once gave the land as a tangible token of the covenant relationship, at the time of Joshua, and how a history of persistent covenant breaking made God take it away again through Nebuchadnezzar in the year 587 BC."[15] They conduct themselves in ways that even the surrounding nations recognize as immoral and degrading,[16] and the overall result is well-described in Romans 2:24: Rather than his people glorifying God by walking in accordance with the covenant they had entered with him, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of" them.[17] God is disrespected when his people

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[14] For a defense of this interpretation in light of the interpretive controversies surrounding it, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 254–57.

[15] Waldemar Janzen, "Geography of Faith: A Christian Perspective on the Meaning of Places," *Studies in Religion* 3, no. 2 (September 1973): 175.

[16] See, for example, the indictment in Ezekiel 16.

[17] A few other examples for immediate reference: 1 Corinthians 5:1, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife," and Amos 2:7, "A man and his father go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned."

show disdain for his commandments in their failure to heed them. The example of David's actions with Bathsheba is typical, and the prophet Nathan is clear about the significance: "by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD" (2 Sam 12:14). God's name is likewise "profaned" when his people break oaths that were taken in his name (Jer 34:15–16) and when they dismiss his instructions for sacrifices (Mal 1:12). As the story progresses, God's action of associating himself with a people through covenant seems to bring him shame, rather than glory. The sins of the people, which are violations of his own standards, are a source of legitimate disrepute.[18]

We see this developed in another way in the book of Ezekiel, where God explains that when his people "came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned [his] holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land'" (Ezek 36:20). As the international court of reputation watched Israel being deported from their land, they made judgments about Israel's God and concluded that he was not worthy of the honor he had claimed for his name. Where once the fear of the LORD had fallen on the surrounding nations because of how he had delivered his people from Egypt and brought them into the land of Caanan (cf. Josh 2:9–11), he was now apparently not sufficiently powerful to protect his people and was not worthy of worship, allegiance, or respect.[19]

Ezekiel clarifies, however, that the nations had misjudged, and that the reason they misinterpreted the events of Israel's defeat and exile is that they failed to factor for

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[18] For a more thorough discussion of the Old Testament presentation of Israel's failures, see Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), chaps. 5–6.

[19] "The giving up of His people was regarded by the heathen as a sign of the weakness of Jehovah. This blot through which His omnipotence and glory were dishonoured, God would remove by gathering Israel out of the heathen, and glorifying it." C. F. Keil, *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. 9, *Ezekiel-Daniel*, ed. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 2:110. "What Moses, according to Nu. 14:16, held up to Yahweh in prayer as a thing to be feared now became a reality. The nations are speaking of a powerless Yahweh." Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, trans. R. E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 247.

God's holiness. As C. F. Keil has rightly interpreted, it is "by means of the judgment He manifests himself as the holy God,"[20] but the nations interpreted the judgment of God on his sinful people as a sign of weakness on God's part. They did not know "that He gave Israel into their power, and thrust it out of its own land, not from weakness, but to punish it for its faithless apostasy."[21] They reasoned that God would have delivered his people if he was able and did not comprehend what David declares in Psalm 5:4, that God is "not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with [him]."

The Root of the Primary Problems of Shame

The tension in the biblical storyline comes from two truths about God which stand side by side. On the one hand, he is "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 on the other hand, he "will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation" (Exod 34:6–7). Having bound himself to Abraham and his seed through covenant, he is faced with the shame of associating with a sinful, wicked people who bring dishonor to his name, or the shame of failing to keep his own promises.[22] His holy character is such that "if for a single moment [he] should go up among" them, he would "consume them on the way, for [they] are a stiff-necked people" (Exod 33:5). And yet, if he were to let his wrath "burn hot against them . . . and consume them," (Exod 32:10), the nations would deride him for bringing them out of the land of Egypt only to destroy them in the wilderness (Exod 32:12).

What is especially instructive in Ezekiel 36 is the manner in which God views

[20] Keil, *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 2:178.

[21] Keil, *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 2:177–78.

[22] Vaughn describes this tension starkly: "Were he to reject the people whom he promised to save, God would deny himself, shamed for all eternity." Vaughn, *Saving God's Face*, 197.

his disrepute in the eyes of the nations as a problem. He explains that he "had concern for [his] *holy* name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came" (v 21, emphasis added), and that he is "about to act," not for the sake of Israel, "but for the sake of [his] *holy* name, which [they had] profaned among the nations to which [they] came" (v. 22, emphasis added). More specifically, God is concerned to "vindicate *the holiness* of [his] great name" (v. 23, emphasis added), and he declares that he will act accordingly. In this passage, it is the fact that the nations have no regard for his holiness that brings dishonor to his name.[23]

This bears further consideration. A biblical understanding of God's holiness has been central to evangelical understanding of the atonement, but our understanding of the holiness of God must be set in the broader context of the doctrine of God as the Bible's teaching about him has been carefully considered and articulated in the history of the church. Accordingly, at this point it is necessary to back up and recall a few other key facets of the doctrine of God that have bearing on the issue at hand. The starting place for such discussion must be the clear expression of Christ's divinity and the triunity of God which arose out of the early controversies surrounding Christian proclamation. This involves consideration of the scriptural arguments and conclusions which are traced back to the ecumenical councils and understanding of the key concepts which serve us in speaking accurately of the Bible's presentation of God.

Key Concepts in the Doctrine of God—
God's Simplicity

The first critical concept is the careful distinction between the teaching that God is one in essence or being and the teaching that he subsists eternally in three persons.

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[23] This is consistent with Christopher Wright's summary of the purpose for God's intended actions. The holiness of his name is associated with his reputation, and so "the reputation of God must be restored," and God's holiness is part of who God is, and "Yahweh must be known; he must be known for what he truly is; and he must be known universally" Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 291–92.

In defending this distinction, the church has historically[24] and confessionally[25] recognized the importance of affirming God's simplicity. God is "sublimely free from all composition" and "whatever God is, he is that completely and simultaneously."[26] This acknowledgement is emphasized in the discussion of the trinity because it grounds the assertion that Father, Son, and Spirit are equally divine. To use another phrase from Bavinck, simplicity guards against "a kind of gradation in the divine persons."[27] The persons do not possess divine attributes to varying degrees, nor do they possess any varying attributes, apart from the personal distinctions, because "in God, all his attributes are identical with his being." [28] Muller's summary of Lombard is representative,

> In the structure of Lombard's argument, moreover, the obvious purpose of this doctrine of simplicity is the affirmation of the full divinity of each of the persons of the Trinity, each of whom possess the divine essence indivisibly. The divine attributes, therefore, belong to the persons not in their distinction but in their unity, as God—the persons are distinct according to their personal properties and not on the ground that they have differing divine attributes or, indeed, the same divine attributes in differing measures.[29]

Along similar lines, the doctrine of divine simplicity also guards against the idea that God is a composition of the three persons. As Bavinck articulates it, "The divine

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[24] "The doctrine of divine simplicity is among the normative assumptions of theology from the time of the church fathers, to the age of the great medieval scholastic systems, to the era of Reformation and post-Reformation theology, and indeed, on into the succeeding era of late orthodoxy and rationalism." See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 3:39. See the references there compiled. Note also Muller's contention in the next sentence regarding Stump's work: "Recent studies of divine simplicity, notably those that have appeared since the major essay by Stump and Kretzman, have taken rather different directions." For further discussion on simplicity's place in trinitarian theological development, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 281–82. Both Muller (3:42) and Ayres (281) acknowledge the work of Christopher Stead in showing, in Ayres's words, that "'simplicity' in early Christian hands is a concept deployed rather loosely" (281), but both agree, also, that "although simplicity is not defined with great precision, it is used consistently" (281).

[25] Gallican Confession, I; Belgic Confession, I; Thirty-Nine Articles, I; Irish Articles, 8; Westminster Confession, II.1, 1689 London Baptist Confession, II.1.

[26] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:118.

[27] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:119.

[28] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:118.

[29] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:44.

being is not composed of three persons nor is each person composed of the being and personal attributes of that person, but the one uncompounded (simple) being exists in three persons."[30] All the persons possess all the attributes in all their fulness because this is what it means to be divine.

Further, divine simplicity insists that the attributes used to describe God "should not be considered parts of him, but rather are perspectives on his whole being, that is, his essence,"[31] and for this reason, the attributes are integrally related and inseparable. "There is an interpenetration of the attributes in God."[32] As John M. Frame describes, "God's mercy is eternal, and his creative power is wise."[33] Moving on to goodness he makes the point clear:

> What is God's "goodness"? Is it something *in* him? It would be more accurate, I think, to say that "divine goodness," though it sounds like an abstract property, is really just a way of referring to everything God is. For everything God does is good, and everything he is is good. All his attributes are good. All his decrees are good. All his actions are good. There is nothing in God that is not good. To praise God's goodness is not to praise something other than God himself. It is not to praise something less than him, or part of him, so to speak. It is to praise him. God's goodness is not something that is intelligible in itself, apart from everything else that God is.[34]

The same could be said of all God's attributes, but in the present debate God's

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[30] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:177.

[31] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, A Theology of Lordship 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 388. While evangelicals such as Frame, in this generation, and Charles Hodge, in his generation, warn against philosophical speculation not grounded in the Scriptures, and would likely take issue with many aspects of Burrell's work, they would likely affirm what he helpfully summarizes when he declares: "We do not include 'simpleness' in that list of terms we wish to attribute to God—classically, 'living,' 'wise,' 'willing.' It is rather that simpleness defines the manner in which such properties might be attributed to God . . . 'formal features' are not so much said of a subject, as they are reflected in a subject's very mode of existing, and govern the way in which anything whatsoever might be said of that subject." David B. Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 46–47.

[32] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 31.

[33] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 229.

[34] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 229. Here, Frame is following a similar pattern of argument as Gregory of Nyssa, as Khaled Anatolios notes in *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 185–86. "Such scriptural identifications of Christ as King, Judge, Creator, Life, Light, Power, and Wisdom reveal the Son as . . . 'the fullness of all good.'"

holiness and justice must be highlighted. God's holiness "is not something that is intelligible in itself, apart from everything else that God is."[35] Accordingly, we affirm that everything God does is holy and just, and everything God is holy and just. All his attributes are holy and just. All his decrees are holy and just. All his actions are holy and just, and there is nothing in God that is not holy and just. This understanding of the attributes likewise speaks to the relationship the attributes have to one another. It is the basis of the insistence by Jeffery and others, that "God's attributes cannot be pitted against one another, neither ought one to be elevated above the others to a 'primary' position."[36] The important point for the current discussion is that in relating God's attributes to his being, the doctrine of simplicity reflects the biblical teaching that with any detraction or distortion of his attributes, God would cease to be God. In other words, God's attributes, including his justice and holiness, reflect who God is in his very essence.

Key Concepts in the Doctrine of God—*ad intra* vs. *ad extra*

However, to demonstrate how this has bearing on the discussion of shame and atonement, we must also recall the classic distinction between God as considered within himself (*ad intra*), and God considered in relationship to creation (*ad extra*). In doing so, the theological development of God's attributes of justice (or righteousness) and holiness provides a fuller understanding of the two primary problems of shame we have begun to outline. Regarding our understanding of God's attributes, debate has raged as to the "interpretation of biblical predications, namely, whether they were descriptions of the way God in fact is, or merely descriptions of his relations *ad extra*."[37] In such contexts,

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[35] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 229.

[36] Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 293.

[37] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:136.

the critical insistence has been “to identify the foundation in God as the attribute *ad intra*, apart from any relation to the finite order. The outward exercise of the attributes is, therefore, not arbitrary nor is it so distanced from the divine identity that it does not serve to reveal God in truth.”[38] This is critical for the current discussion as well, because God’s disposition toward people, described in honor and shame categories, also falls within the *ad extra* relations which have their foundation in God’s *ad intra* identity. God’s holiness and righteousness, especially, have not been sufficiently taken into account in the definition of the shame problem, and so it is necessary to look closely at the way those attributes are ascribed to God in the biblical testimony.

Key Concepts in the Doctrine of God—
God’s Holiness

Thankfully, this is ground that has been thoroughly covered in the history of the church. Especially since the Reformation, the Bible’s teaching about these attributes has been investigated in depth, and so evangelicals are able to draw from the labors of previous generations. In consideration of God’s holiness, we can note what Bavinck shows in his survey of Old Testament examples, that when used to describe created things, “the term ‘holy’ does not . . . refer to an internal moral quality but only indicates that the person or objects so described have been consecrated to the Lord, have been placed in a special relation to his service, and are therefore set apart from the common domain.”[39] Turning attention to the holiness of God, he explains that “God’s holiness is revealed in all the relations that he has posited between himself and his people.”[40] Peter Gentry’s exegetical study highlights this relational aspect of the scriptural concept: “The basic meaning of the word is ‘consecrated’ or ‘devoted.’ In Scripture it operates within

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[38] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:136.

[39] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:218.

[40] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:220.

the context of covenant relationships and expresses commitment."[41] Accordingly, on the creation side, "priests are persons devoted solely to the service of the deity," and "a holy nation . . . is one prepared and consecrated for fellowship with God and one completely devoted to him."[42] On the divine side, the covenantal reference is demonstrated in Calvin's exegetical observations: summarized by Muller, "God is called 'the Holy One' because of the care that he bestows on 'his peculiar people.'"[43] In other words, we understand that, *ad extra*, God's holiness reflects his complete devotion to maintaining his purity, justice, righteousness, and faithfulness as outlined in the terms set out in the covenant, including "the retributive justice of the covenant/Torah."[44] This grounds the portion of Wayne A. Grudem's definition where he explains that part of God's holiness is that he "is devoted to seeking his own honor."[45]

Turning to the attribute of holiness *ad intra*, which lies behind in these *ad extra* descriptions, evangelical theologians have recognized that "God's holiness is in a sense the foundation of all his other virtues or 'excellencies' insofar as God must be characterized by this sacred self-regard or reflexive purity if he is to be perfect in wisdom, power, justice, and mercy and if he is to be properly regarded by his creation."[46] This sense of the foundational nature[47] of God's holiness is demonstrated exegetically by

[41] Peter J. Gentry, "Sizemore Lectures II : 'No One Holy like the Lord,'" *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (April 2013): 37.

[42] Gentry, "Sizemore Lectures II," 25.

[43] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:498; John Calvin, *Commentary on Isaiah*, trans. William Pringle, vol. 1, rep. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), Isa 43:14–15, 3:336, 338.

[44] Gentry, "Sizemore Lectures II," 8.

[45] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 202.

[46] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:500.

[47] The language here is meant to guard divine simplicity. Berkhof is perhaps appropriately more careful when he makes the same point: "It does not seem proper to speak of one attribute of God as being more central and fundamental than another; but if this were permissible, the scriptural emphasis on the holiness of God would seem to justify its selection." Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 60.

Motyer in his discussion of Isaiah 6:3, where God is declared to be "holy, holy, holy." "Hebrew uses repetition to express either a superlative, as when 'pure gold' in 2 Kings 25:15 translates 'gold gold', or a totality, as when 'full of tarpits' in Genesis 14:10 translates 'pits pits.' But here for the only time in the Hebrew Bible a quality is 'raised to the power of three,' as if to say that the divine holiness is so far beyond anything the human mind can grasp that a 'super-superlative' has to be invented to express it and, furthermore, this transcendent holiness is the total truth about God."[48] To this, Berkhof's comment certainly applies: "Holiness in this sense of the word is not really a *moral* attribute, which can be co-ordinated with the others . . . but is rather something that is co-extensive with, and applicable to, everything that can be predicated of God."[49] Most significant for the honor shame discussion are the moral or ethical dimensions brought out in Berkhof's final definition: God's holiness should be considered as "that perfection of God, in virtue of which He eternally wills and maintains His own moral excellence, abhors sin, and demands purity in his moral creatures."[50] The theme is brought out in a similar fashion when Motyer describes God's holiness as "his unapproachable and unique moral majesty before which sinful humankind instinctively quakes."[51] The seriousness of both primary shame problems is highlighted by the fact that the holiness which precludes unclean, defiled, or profane people from approaching God is characteristic of God's essential being. It does not change as God does not change.

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[48] J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 81.

[49] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 62.

[50] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 62.

[51] Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 81. Motyer is commenting on Isaiah 6:3, but his comment calls to mind Exodus 15:11, which declares God to be "majestic in holiness."

**Key Concepts in the Doctrine of God—
God's Righteousness**

Turning to the righteousness of God, we must begin by recognizing with the Reformers "that a suitable definition of the righteousness of God rests on a right understanding of God himself: unless we know that [*sic*? what] it means for God to be God and for God to be Lord and Judge, we cannot understand the justice or righteousness of God."[52] This is, again, an extension of the doctrine of simplicity outlined above. Like all God's attributes, the attribute of God's righteousness can only be correctly understood in light of all the rest. Moving on to the definition from Scripture, however, theologians have consistently affirmed that "the main idea of divine righteousness is that God acts according to a perfect internal standard of right and wrong."[53] *Ad intra*, this refers to the "law in the very nature of God, [which is] the highest possible standard, by which all other laws are judged. . . . The inherent righteousness of God is naturally basic to the righteousness which He reveals in dealing with His creatures."[54] *Ad extra*, this is refers to the justice that "manifests itself especially in giving every man his due, in treating him according to his deserts."[55] Muller's citation of Edward Leigh captures five strains of biblical argument for these conclusions:

> The Scripture proves the justice of God, (1) Affirmatively, when it calls him just, a revenger, holy, right, and extolls his justice, Exod. 9:27; Psalm 11:7; Jer. 12:1. (2) Negatively, when it removes from him injustice and iniquity, respect of persons, and receiving of gifts, and also all the causes and effects of injustice, *Deut*. 32:4; 10:17; Dan. 9:14; Job 8:3. (3) Affectively, when it attributes to him zeal, anger, fury, *Exod*. 20:5 & 32:10; Numb. 11:10, which are not in God such passions as they be in us, but an act of the immutable justice. (4) Symbolically, when it calls him a consuming fire, Deut. 4:24; compares him to an angry Lion, an armed Soldier, Is. 38:13;

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[52] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:477.

[53] Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 446. For similar treatments, see the rest of that chapter of Frame, the section in Berkhof cited below, and also Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:221–228; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:476–97; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2003), 1:416–26; Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993), 1:203–5.

[54] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 63.

[55] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 63.

> [42:13]. (5) Effectively, when it affirms that he renders to everyone according to his works, 1 Sam. 26:23.[56]

Of special significance for the current study are three emphases of this biblical teaching. First, that God's justice is being affirmed when he is said to be "a revenger"—that he is declared to be one who takes vengeance (e.g.,, Nahum 1:2: "The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies").[57] Second, that God's righteousness is revealed in the fact that he gives to each man what is his rightful due[58] (e.g.,, 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil," or Colossians 3:25 "For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality").[59] Third, that God's attribute of righteousness *ad intra* is recognized *ad extra* in the affects of anger and fury (and wrath) with respect to sinners and sin (e.g.,, Romans 2:5 "because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed").[60]

Together, these three themes of biblical teaching show that God's justice is retributive, and this retributive aspect of God's righteousness "relates to the infliction of penalties. It is an expression of the divine wrath. While in a sinless world there would be no place for its exercise, it necessarily holds a very prominent place in a world full of

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[56] Edward Leigh, *A Treatise of Divinity* (London: E. Griffin, 1646), II.xii, quoted in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:480.

[57] See also Lev 26:25; Num 31:3; Deut 32:35, 41, 43; Josh 22:23; Ps 94:1; Isa 34:8, 35:4; 47:3; Jer 51:36; Ezek 24:8; Rom 12:19; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 10:30.

[58] See multiple authors' use of this phrase catalogued in Johnson, *The Identity and Attributes of God*, 189.

[59] See also 1 Kgs 8:32, 39; Ps 62:12; Isa 3:10–11; 59:18; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:5–11; 1 Cor 4:5; Gal 6:7–8; Rev 2:23; 20:12–13; 22:12.

[60] See also Job 42:7; Jer 21:12; Ezek 7:8; Rev 14:9–10. Note that anger, fury, and wrath are not considered as attributes themselves, but rather as *ad extra* manifestations of God's attribute of righteousness.

sin."[61] Opponents of PSA have a long history of denying this point, as evidenced by the debates in the seventeenth-century. As summarized and documented by Richard Muller,

> The Socinians [of that century] denied an "avenging justice" (*justitia vindicatrice seu ultrice*) in God: this justice, they claimed, was in God, not by nature, but by exigency, for the purpose of punishing sin. By extension, if avenging justice were merely an exigency *ad extra* and not an attribute belonging to the essence or nature of God, then God would not necessarily have to exercise it. . . . By extension and intent, the argument undermined the satisfaction theory of atonement: if the Socinian view were correct, salvation could be grounded in something other than a satisfaction of the divine justice.[62]

Turretin's statement, quoted by Muller, describes the matter well:

> The question comes to this—whether the vindicatory justice of God is so natural to him that, the sinning creature being granted, he cannot but exercise it, and to leave sin would be repugnant to it; or whether it is so free in God that his exercise depends on his will and good pleasure along. They with whom we debate maintain the latter; we defend the former.[63]

A thorough exegetical and theological defense of God's punitive, avenging, and retributive justice was made in John Owen's *A Dissertation on Divine Justice* in 1653,[64] and this position was upheld by the orthodox protestant theologians against the Socinians. Again, summarized by Muller, "Against various objections, then, the Reformed insist that *justitia vindicatrice* is naturally and essentially in God, at least in the limited sense that God's righteousness cannot choose to allow sin to go unpunished."[65] The doctrine has more recently been defended at length by Charles Jackson in his own dissertation on "The Retributive Justice of God," engaging specifically with Baker,

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[61] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 64. Berkof, like others, sets retributive justice alongside remunerative justice (relating to the distribution of rewards) as the two aspects of God's distributive justice. See also Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:222; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:483–97; Johnson, *The Identity and Attributes of God*, 189–91.

[62] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:491.

[63] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1992), III.xix.10. Quoted in Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:491.

[64] John Owen, "A Dissertation on Divine Justice," in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 10 (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 481–624.

[65] Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:493.

Green, and Stump.[66]

Like God's holiness, the biblical teaching about God's righteousness has bearing for the current discussion. The seriousness of the human problem of shame is heightened by the retributive nature of the justice that is essential to God. Not only do our sins shame us by making us unacceptable in God's sight and result in our rejection and separation from him, but the nature of his justice entails that our shame-causing sins will be addressed by God executing the appropriate retributive sentence. As we have seen, the retributive penalty for sinners is that God will put them to shame. This is the repeated call of the psalmists (Ps 31:17; 35:4; 35:26; 40:14; 44:7; 53:5; 57:3; 70:2; 71:13; 71:24; 78:66; 83:17; 86:17; 97:7; 109:28; 119:78; 129:5) and the warning of the prophets (Isa 41:11; 42:17; 44:9; 44:11; 45:16; 65:13; 66:5; Jer 2:36; 8:9; 10:14; 17:13; 17:18; 46:24; 48:1; 48:20; 50:2; 51:17; 51:47; Hos 10:6; Mic 3:7). When the Bible describes the penalty of shameful behavior (sin) as death, it is not simply describing the termination of existence. It is referring to a state of eternal shame and disgrace. Likewise, when Paul explains that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Cor 5:10), the consequences or rewards are not disassociated from honor and shame (Rom 2:7–10; 1 Pet 1:7). The biblical teaching we have just considered ominously warns us that the shaming punishment from sin proceeds unalterably from the very essence and character of God.

Applying the Doctrine of God to the Current Discussion

The holiness and justice of God and the implications of those attributes on the way God interacts with his people in the biblical storyline pertain to the specific

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[66] Charles Gregory Jackson, "The Retributive Justice of God" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012). Jackson interacts with Baker and Green throughout (see page 1 for a start). He engages with Stump on pages 37–38 and 239.

arguments we are considering because Baker and Green, Stump, and Mann all overlook or reject these pivotal points of doctrine. Eleonore Stump distinguishes "The Anselmian Kind of Interpretation of the Doctrine of the Atonement" (of which PSA is a species)[67] as those views which "locate the main obstacle to a solution to the problem of human sinfulness in God's justice or God's honor or some similar divine attribute." She provides brief philosophical discussion of God's "goodness," "justice," and "honor" in her analysis of the Anselmian view (though she does not look to the Scriptures to inform her understanding of these terms), but she fails to consider the Bible's teaching on God's holiness and rejects retributive justice.[68] Instead, Stump grounds her theological reconstruction on her interpretation of "Thomas Aquinas's understanding of love and of the other standard divine attributes."[69] Notably, Aquinas does not discuss holiness as a distinct attribute,[70] and as Stump develops her own work she reasons that while Anselmian interpretations intend to highlight God's justice, "God's justice must be part of God's goodness, and God's goodness must find its ultimate or highest expression in love."[71] Since God is love, "God's forgiveness, and God's acceptance of reconciliation with wrongdoers are not dependent on satisfaction being made to God. They stem from the very nature of God."[72]

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[67] "In my view, the most disadvantaged of the variants on the Anselmian interpretation is the penal substitution theory of the atonement." Stump, *Atonement*, 76.

[68] Stump, *Atonement*, 24, 71.

[69] Stump, *Atonement*, 79.

[70] Christopher R. J. Holmes, "The Goodness, Holiness, and Love of God," St Andrews Encyclopedia of Theology, accessed November 3, 2023, https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/GoodnessHolinessandLoveofGod.

[71] Stump, *Atonement*, 79.

[72] Stump, *Atonement*, 110–11. Stump concurs with James Torrance who asserts that on the Anselmian interpretation of the atonement, "the justice of God *is* the essential attribute, and the love of God (or the mercy of God) is an arbitrary attribute." James B. Torrance, "Introduction by James B. Torrance," in *The Nature of the Atonement*, by John McLeod Campbell (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 8–9 cited in Stump, *Atonement*, 73 (emphasis original). It would be accurate to say, however, that for Stump, the love of God is the essential attribute, and the justice of God is the arbitrary attribute. Evangelical theologians have accounted for both the love and the justice of God and have recognized that the beauty

Thus, for Stump, the two primary biblical problems of shame—God accruing shame because of the sins of his people, and people accruing eternal shame before God—do not register. In fact, on her own account of the problems of shame, it is not clear on what basis she acknowledges shame before God at all. By her definition, when a person is shamed, "others would be warranted (on one scale of value or another) in rejecting not his good, but *him*, that is, in putting distance between themselves and him."[73] Stump declares that a desire for reconciliation "cannot be fulfilled when . . . wrongdoing has left [someone] in a morally deplorable condition,"[74] and that, "Grave moral evil can leave a wrongdoer in such a condition that without some remedy for a stain on his soul and some way of making sufficient amends, reconciliation with him is ruled out on moral grounds."[75] On her own terms these would seem to describe a state of rejection and shame before others, including God, as a result of sin. Persons are not worthy of acceptance when such stains on the soul remain, and she explicitly affirms that "one can have and feel guilt or shame before God,"[76] and, "When it is God's anger or rejection that is at issue and is anticipated with anxiety, the problems of guilt and shame are correspondingly greater."[77]

However, despite ceding that there are cases where rejection is called for on

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and glory of PSA is the way it sets both attributes on display.

[73] Stump, *Atonement*, 45 (emphasis original).

[74] Stump, *Atonement*, 97. More fully: "Although forgiveness, like love, is always obligatory, reconciliation does not immediately follow on forgiveness, even for repentant wrongdoers. It can be obligatory for a person to *desire* reconciliation with someone who has wronged her; but *reconciliation* itself is a matter of a mutual relationship between two people, and no one person can effect unilaterally, by herself alone, a mutual relationship. In this respect, forgiveness is like love itself. One can desire union with another person; but whether that desire can be fulfilled or not depends greatly on the other person. For perpetrators of grave evil, even their fervent repentance and the forgiveness of their victims may not be enough for morally permissible reconciliation, either because the psychic condition of the repentant wrongdoer stands in the way or because the effects of his wrongdoing constitute an obstacle, or both." Stump, *Atonement*, 100 (emphasis original).

[75] Stump, *Atonement*, 100.

[76] Stump, *Atonement*, 46.

[77] Stump, *Atonement*, 46.

moral grounds, Stump is nevertheless adamant that regardless of sinful and shameful behavior, God always forgives and maintains an attitude and disposition of acceptance and reconciliation. “God always loves every human being; and, for this reason, God also always forgives every wrongdoer. Since forgiveness carries with it the desire for union, nothing else on the part of the wrongdoer is needed for God’s forgiveness and acceptance of reconciliation with sinful human beings, including even with those who are unrepentant.”[78] Such unqualified acceptance does not seem to allow for shame in God’s sight, but she does not consider that implication. She focuses on God’s “acceptance of reconciliation” as a *willingness* to accept and be reconciled to a wrongdoer so long as the wrongdoer repents and expresses a desire for reconciliation, and so long as fitting satisfaction is made in cases of “grave moral evil” that require it,[79] but she does not consider two conclusions that the propositions she affirms entail: (1) That acceptance of grievous sinners is morally unacceptable (even for God) apart from satisfaction, and (2) that without satisfaction actually being made the wrongdoer is rejected. Though not explicitly developed and though she later contradicts it, Stump’s description of cases where rejection is called for on moral grounds points to the two primary biblical problems of shame we have been discussing. Understanding and incorporating the scriptural doctrine of God’s holiness corrects Stump’s inconsistency. God’s holiness requires that satisfaction be made, his love is displayed in his willingness to provide for it.

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[78] Stump, *Atonement*, 102.

[79] Stump describes a “Thomistic” approach to satisfaction which is able to make the required amends and make the life of a wrongdoer honorable” (107–108). This satisfaction consists of good works done by the repentant sinner in remediation of previous wrongs through the enabling grace of God. Referring to John Newton, the converted former slave trader, she declares, “Newton’s efforts at bringing about the abolition of the slave trade were his satisfaction” (105), and apart from such satisfaction, Stump finds it hard to see how his “shame over what he had done would not undermine his joy in heaven. By comparison with others in heaven, whose lives have included no horror such as Newton’s slave-trading, Newton looks ugly; and since the past is unchangeable, so apparently is Newton’s ugliness” (108). “When it comes to wrongdoing considered as sinning against God . . . when a wrongdoer such as Newton does what he can, God, who does not demand the impossible of human persons, takes what Newton can do by way of making amends as *enough* on Newton’s part.” Stump, *Atonement*, 106.

Factoring for God's holiness would correct Alan Mann's definition of the shame problem as well, but to account for God's holiness would require that that he account for God. This is something which he is unwilling to do because of his assessment that the broader culture does not account for God. He does recognize that sin is understood "as an offense against a divinely instituted law,"[80] but "such an understanding requires an acute sense of the divine Other, which is often lacking in the mindset of the vast majority."[81] He is convinced that any definition of the human problem that depends on a sense of "the divine Other" will be nonsensical in our culture because that sense of the divine other is lacking. Instead, he seeks to develop a definition of the human problem based on a sense of shame defined exclusively in terms of personal inconsistency and "incoherence."[82] He acknowledges that "the type of shame generated within honor/shame societies . . . tends to be concerned with the other" (which could include God), but he insists that the "chronic shame found within our contemporary Westernized communities" is something altogether different.[83] He regards this chronic problem of shame as the "existential" human problem in the West and describes it as a turning inward such that "the shamed person effectively ignores the other as the individual becomes acutely aware of his or her own internal struggles."[84] Mann also submits that in Western culture "thought of the afterlife gets pushed further and further from our minds,"[85] and he navigates this dynamic in a similar manner to how he handles the diminishing sense of the divine other. Since people "are far more concerned with this

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[80] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 14.

[81] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 15.

[82] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 28–29.

[83] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26.

[84] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 27.

[85] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 47.

life than with our fate in the next,"[86] considerations of final judgment and eternal state are simply eliminated from his analysis. Thus, for Mann, like Stump, the primary problems of shame do not register.

This is also true for Baker and Green. In their chapter "Removing Alienating Shame," they aim to articulate the saving significance of the cross in addressing the problem of shame,[87] but they do not consider the significance of shame before God as they develop their definition of the problem. Following Norman Kraus, they hint at the biblical truths which point to the two primary problems of shame we have been considering, but their failure to account for the Bible's teaching about the holiness and justice of God prevents them from coming to a more comprehensive understanding. This is seen when they cite Kraus's observation that Jesus "gave to shame an authentic moral content and internalized norm, namely, exposure to the eyes of the all-seeing, righteous, loving God."[88] They refer to this point in support of the assertion that there are things for which people "appropriately" feel shame, "that there are things for which humans should feel shame,"[89] but they do not recognize the fact that what makes it appropriate for people to feel shame in such cases is that it is God himself who looks upon them and considers them shameful. As they consider the divine self-revelation in Exodus 34:6–7, they insist on "both the priority and the primacy of God's love" in his dealings with mankind, but they completely fail to note what Stephen Dempster has described as "the almost unbearable tension at times between the exercise of divine justice and mercy in the Old Testament."[90] Instead of picking up on the contrast raised by Yahweh's own

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[86] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 47.

[87] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 192–209.

[88] C. Norman Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987), 221–22, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 205.

[89] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 205.

[90] Stephen G. Dempster, "Review of Boda, Mark J., A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in

insistence that despite his mercy, grace, steadfast love, and faithfulness he will "by no means clear the guilty" (Exod 34:7), they conclude only that "God is free to forgive people when they repent, to demonstrate grace to those who do not deserve it and otherwise to act on behalf of whomever he chooses even when they are in the wrong."[91] This is the same Socinian rejection of the essential nature of God's retributive justice that John Owen addressed Nearly 400 years ago. Baker and Green have no place for texts like Joshua 24:19, where "Joshua said to the people, 'You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins." Thus, while they speak of shame causing alienation and destroying relationships, the alienation is entirely one-sided because, in their view, Jesus demonstrates that God's only response to shameful behavior is forgiveness. In summarizing Kraus's approach of speaking "of the cross in terms of shame," they mention only two shame problems: A misinformed "concept of shameful behavior" and a misguided "practice of shaming." The primary biblical problems of God accruing shame and people accruing shame before God are not addressed.

The Problems of Shame and the Doctrine of Man

We have noted a few critical ways in which the primary biblical problems of shame relate to the doctrine of God, but to understand the problem of man's shame before God more fully, we must look more closely at what orthodox Christianity has historically described as the doctrine of original sin. While human beings were created in the image of God and therefore not inherently shameful, the evangelical tradition has recognized that all descendants of Adam have inherited a corrupt nature and stand under

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the Old Testament (Siphrut, 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009)," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10 (December 2010), 622. Gentry and Wellum comment similarly: "It is important to note that through the progression of the covenants a great *tension* results in how God will simultaneously demonstrate his holy justice and covenant love" Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 649–50.

[91] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 70.

condemnation and shame through their relationship with him, even apart from any wrongs they have done.[92] Adam's relationship with his descendants, as articulated in the doctrine of Adam's federal headship provides the ground for the evangelical doctrine of imputation. According to the biblical presentation, Adam's position as covenant head makes him the official (federal) representative of all his progeny.[93] He acted on behalf of all mankind and his sin is imputed to his descendants. His failure is counted as our failure, and the curse of death, shame, and separation from God falls on each of us because of the wages he earned. Again recalling our definition of shame as the fear, pain, or state of being regarded deficient in social relationships, we can see clearly the shame involved in being "by nature children of wrath" (Eph 2:3). To be worthy of wrath is certainly evidence of deficiency and indicates the even stronger assessment of being unworthy of acceptance.

Surprisingly, given his stated aversion to theological propositions, Alan Mann makes the following statement, which seems to deny the doctrine of depravity explicitly: "Contained within a biblical understanding of sin is the recognition that the vast majority of humanity have an innate desire to do right, to seek the goodness through which they express their true personhood, and reflect the image of their Creator."[94] He provides no evidence for this assertion, though he might be drawing it from Mark Biddle's argument that the essence of sin is "missing the mark." Conceptually, if one presses the image of sin as missing the mark, it makes sense to conclude that at least people are still aiming at the target. Such an inference runs counter to the biblical testimony, however. The Scriptures consistently testify about man that "every intention of the thoughts of his heart

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[92] See, for instance, Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:75–78; Westminster Confession, 6.1–6.6.

[93] See the exegetical and theological defenses in Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 236–37; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:75–125; Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:123–279.

[94] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 38.

was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5), and "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21). "They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one" (Ps 14:3; cf. Ps 53:3; Rom 3:10–18). Apart from Christ, we all accrue shame because of this condition of our hearts.

This state is further compounded by the biblical teaching that people are unable to change this condition or improve it. People who remain "slaves to sin" are like leopards who cannot change their spots (Jer 13:23). They are "dead" in their condition, unable to bring themselves to life (Eph 2:1), and therefore unclean and unable to cleanse themselves. An accurate conception of "who *I* am" apart from Christ results in confession that "I am a person who has sinned, who is prone to sin, who is corrupt in very nature, and who is identified with and represented by the first sinner, Adam, whose sin resulted in the corruption of the whole world." This is cause for deep-seated shame! Moreover, if we were able to change and serve God with purity of heart for the rest of our days, such faithful service would not warrant a reward. This is the teaching of Luke 17:7–10. "When you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"[95]

Summary: The Two Primary Problems of Shame

According to the biblical presentation, the most foundational shame problems are two: (1) the shame which would accrue to God if he were either to fail to appropriately address the shame-causing sins of his people or fail to save his people as he had promised. And (2) the shame which threatens to accrue eternally to all sinners who are cast out of God's presence to suffer everlasting disgrace. Of these two, it is undoubtedly the first that stands as prominent as the plotline of Scripture unfolds. As Brad Vaughn has rightly insisted, "God's glory is not the obstacle to his main goal, i.e.,

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[95] This is one of the foundational insights of Anselm's argument in *Why God Became Man*.

saving sinners [and, we might add, addressing their shame]. Saving sinners is a means to his main goal."[96] His main goal, the end toward which he created the world, is to bring glory to his name by revealing his character, power, and wisdom, and he has declared that he will do this by saving sinners to the uttermost. Evangelical theology recognizes that God addresses all the consequences of human sin through the work of Christ, so a discussion of the secondary problems of shame is necessary in order to faithfully articulate a full-orbed solution.

The Secondary Problems of Shame

We ended the discussion of the primary problems of shame with a consideration of the doctrine of depravity, but the doctrine of depravity makes further contact with shame because it is the root of several secondary human shame problems that are considered temporally rather than eternally. In the first place, the doctrine of depravity reminds us that no one perfectly possesses the *virtuous shame* which would restrain us from sin and help us to respond appropriately when shame is called for. Part of the corruption inherited from Adam is that our moral standard is skewed and our consciousness of God's ever watching eye is suppressed. As a result, we become shameless in various circumstances instead of having a proper, virtuous, sense of shame. Instead of being restrained by the prospect of shame, we plunge headlong into all sorts of sin, and having committed abominations and blasphemy we look back in retrospect without blushing. Such shamelessness is itself culpable and thus contributes to the primary, eternal, shame problem, but it can and should be considered from a temporal perspective. This lack of virtuous shame must be addressed if God's people are to live faithfully in the world.

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[96] Vaughn, *Saving God's Face*, 198–99.

Moreover, a properly aligned sense of shame is required for *instrumental shame* to be effective. While a lack of virtuous shame can lead to sin and the dishonoring of God, those who have regard for the judgments of the divine court of reputation are responsive to the shaming that is God's instrument for leading them to repentance and greater obedience. Any orientation toward courts of reputation that stand in opposition to God's judgments is therefore a more foundational problem than underdeveloped virtuous shame because the lack of regard for God's assessment prevents virtuous shame from developing.

Another consequence of human depravity is the experience of *inappropriate shame*. Because of our distorted moral standard, Adam's offspring regularly shame one another in circumstances where shame is not appropriate. People therefore find themselves humiliated and embarrassed for conduct that ought to be honored. Again, one aspect of this phenomenon is part of the primary human problem of shame: Those who are doing the shaming are themselves accruing shame before God. But those who are being shamed suffer a different problem in that they are being shamed unjustly. The righteous are maligned by the world when they do not join in the flood of debauchery (1 Pet 4:4) and are thereby put to shame when they ought to be most honored. This too must be put to right.

But also, there is the lingering problem of *appropriate shame* as experienced in human relationships. We have recognized the primary problem of shame as the appropriate shame that accrues in God's sight, but this can be differentiated from appropriate shame that accrues in the sight of men. There is overlap here with instrumental shame. When people are actively made to feel ashamed as a means to repentance, certainly the experience of that shame is appropriate (since whatever precipitated it is objectively shameful by God's standard). But with instrumental shame, the emphasis is on the end brought about by the shaming behavior, not on the objective shame that attaches to the initial precipitating event. How can that appropriate shame be

expunged so that it is no longer appropriate for the person to hang their head in disgrace? This is the secondary problem of shame related directly to sin.

In addition to this is the problem of shame indirectly related to sin. Recall that we used this category to refer to shame that accrues objectively and subjectively for those who are victims of sin—usually through abandonment or violation. In such cases, the deficiency which causes shame arises in the shamed person through no fault of their own. For women who have been raped, people whose spouses divorced them, and those who have been abused, exploited, neglected, and victimized in many other ways, the sins of others have resulted in shame that clings to them and painfully marks them as deficient though they have done nothing wrong. There is some overlap with inappropriate shame here as well, but where the emphasis for inappropriate shame is on the skewed standard that is judging behavior, the emphasis for indirect shame is on the victimization which occurs through subjection of behavior that is agreed to be shameful. This is an additional problem of shame which must be addressed.

Finally, there is the problem of shame only remotely connected to sin, the shame which accrues because of physical defects and other "natural" phenomena. Those without disabilities have difficulty conceptualizing this shame because of the fruitful labor in recent decades, to overcome the negative stigma of disabilities in Western culture and minimize barriers which prevent those with disabilities from participating in society. Such work should be applauded and continued, and persons with disabilities should be treated with dignity and value because of their intrinsic worth as people created in the image of God. Nonetheless, we are still bound to acknowledge the fact that disabilities describe an inability to function in a way that God intended. The Bible shows that disorders and diseases are set alongside death as consequences and reminders of the curse brought on by sin and thereby explains the very real sense of shame people experience as a result. Those who suffer with disabilities, chronic illness, or debilitating diseases—and people closely associated with them as well, know intuitively that things are not as they

should be, and they are all too familiar with a unique sense of shame which is not associated with guilt.[97] In various ways, their disabilities result in the pain and state of being regarded as deficient. This shame problem also calls out for resolution.

Considering Other Problems of Shame

The primary and secondary problems of shame listed above provide a basic articulation of how the Bible defines the shame problem. As we have noticed already in the comments of other authors, however, many scholars describe problems of shame in different terms. Some of these descriptions are quite perceptive and they certainly shed light on how people in our world conceive of their own problems of shame. Most relevant for this study, however, are those problems that penal substitution is said to be unable to address. By considering these alternate accounts of the shame problem carefully, we can see where they are aligned and where they depart from the biblical framework and we will be prepared to show how they are addressed by the biblical solution.

First, in this regard, we can consider the analysis of Alan Mann. Recall that for Mann, the "existential" human problem in the West is the problem of chronic shame where "the shamed person effectively ignores the other as the individual becomes acutely aware of his or her own internal struggles."[98] Mann goes on to describe this condition

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[97] See for instance Ásta Jóhannsdóttir, Snaefríður Thóra Egilson, and Barbara E. Gibson, "What's Shame Got to Do with It? The Importance of Affect in Critical Disability Studies," *Disability & Society* 36, no. 3 (March 2021): 342–57. Their paper considers "the role of shame in the lives of young disabled people who are often judged by non-disabled people." Among their findings is the conclusion that the shame of these people "is often invisible to non-disabled people but affects disabled people in a way that can decrease their life quality and participation." See also Eliza Chandler, "Interactions of Disability Pride and Shame," in *The Female Face of Shame*, ed. Erica L. Johnson and Patricia Moran (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 74–88. Chandler reviews literature which argues "embracing disability with pride requires a turn away from shame" (74), and discusses the difficulty this approach creates for those "whose satisfaction with [their] bodies wavers—a wavering bodily relation that [her] experiences of cerebral palsy tell [her] is often a reality" (74). The following quote is also insightful. Describing the experience of mothering with a spinal cord injury, the subject said, "Because you use a [wheel]chair . . . there is no doubt about it but you do feel . . . not on par." Anne-Marie Casey, Maeve Nolan, and Elizabeth Nixon, "'You Lose Confidence in Being a Human Being, Never Mind Being a Parent': The Lived Experience of Mothers With Spinal Cord Injury," Qualitative Health Research 32, no. 11 (September 2022): 1657–71.

[98] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 27.

where "the shamed person keeps interrelating and intimacy to a minimum to restrict the possibility of being exposed for who he or she really is. This fear of exposure, coupled with a general sense of being bad or non-specific sense of wrong, conspires to paralyze the self in relation to the other."[99] Mann links this chronic shame to the concept of a personal narrative and describes it as an inconsistency between the stories people tell about themselves and the way they actually live. When people are conscious of such inconsistencies, the stories they tell become "incoherent," and shame is generated as "an emotional experience of self-deficiency."[100] A failure to live up to a personal ideal turns people inward, "shoring up the self" becomes the all-consuming aim, and, "the self-centeredness that permeates so much of our relating prevents the satisfaction from real intimacy that each of us desire."[101]

Though I am not a clinical psychologist, Mann's assessment (which leans heavily on Stephen Pattison),[102] seems to be a plausible description of motivations, evaluations, and mental reasoning that could be common in Western culture and result in the type of experience that he outlines. I do not object, necessarily, to the assertion that people, perhaps many people, think this way and respond to life accordingly. But such thinking can be informed by the biblical categories we have described.

The first thing to consider is the standard used to determine the "ideal self" and assess deficiency. Though Mann protests against reference to divine standards, the Bible describes the ideal person and shows that each actual person is set within the true story of God's world in a way that grounds objective moral assessment. Where the conception of ideal self is aligned with God's, real deficiency is ground for legitimate shame. This is the

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[99] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 27.

[100] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 29.

[101] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 27.

[102] Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

primary problem of shame that accrues when we have fallen short of the glory of God. But where the deficiency is merely perceived, or when the standards do not align with God's the shame is illegitimate and the problem of shame is different: A distorted standard. The actions which are occasioned by shame must be similarly assessed. While we can understand the motivation to turn inward in the face of perceived deficiency, we do not lose sight of the standard of God which consistently calls us to love our neighbors and take responsibility in the families and communities in which we find ourselves. In such light, it is clear that turning inward to the neglect of others is actually sinful, shameful, behavior in itself. The action of turning inward reflects attitudes of the heart and conceptions of the mind which are in themselves sinful and shameful, and are evidence of the depravity that results in eternal shame. What Mann describes as the inability to do what is right reflects what the Bible describes as slavery to sin.[103] Again, this is evidence of a shameful condition that leads to eternal shame unless a solution is found. Even within his own framework Mann allows for presentation of alternative narratives, so there is no reason why the narrative framework of the Bible should not be brought to bear in reinterpreting the definition of the shame problem.

Similar analysis can be directed to the problems of shame described by Baker and Green. In their presentation of Norman Kraus's portrayal of shame in Japanese society they quote his diagnosis of "the debilitating stigma of shame" associated with "existential circumstances in which they were trapped."[104] Like Mann with the chronically shamed in the west, Kraus maintains that people need to be enabled to "emerge from our self-isolation and confess our failure, feelings of unworthiness, and despair." [105] People need to be freed "of the burden of exclusion they have already

[103] Cf. John 8:34, Romans 6:15–20.

[104] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 218, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 202.

[105] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 220, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of*

experienced and free from the fear of shameful exclusion."[106] Baker and Green also cite the problem that "Many social expressions of shame have been ethically misplaced and perverted" and see the need for "false shame" to be exposed for what it is so that its power to instill fear is broken.[107] They see a "stigma and hostility that alienates us from each other and God."[108]

The alienation from God that is mentioned in this last quote is understood biblically as the primary human problem of shame, and we have recognized the alienation from one another that is set alongside it as consistent with the biblical depiction as well. Yet, more can be said when we consider the further question of what causes alienation among people. Baker and Green do not consider the issue this closely, but we can assess the situation more precisely when we add further distinctions. If the alienation is caused by appropriate shame—someone has done something reprehensible that results in appropriate stigma and hostility, the problem is different than if the alienation is caused by inappropriate shame. Again, if the cause of alienation is inappropriate shame, the problem is different based on whose standard of shame has been skewed. If a person's own standard is out of alignment, it is a lack of virtuous shame that must be addressed. If it is the standards of others that are out of alignment and a person is being shamed unjustly, the problem looks different again. In each of these cases, evaluating the circumstances based on the biblical categories allows for a more exact diagnosis of the problem. The other problems mentioned by Baker and Green fall into these categories as well. False shame is another word for inappropriate shame and in the analysis of Mann's work we have considered the questions that must be asked to gain insight into the

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the Cross, 203.

[106] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 204.

[107] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 221, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 204.

[108] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 205.

dynamics involved in shame which causes self-isolation in the face of failure, unworthiness, and despair.

Eleonor Stump provides the most thorough analysis of the problems of shame of the three authors we are considering. She recognizes and considers the question of which standards are in play when shame occurs, noting cases where "the standard by which a person is shamed is itself worthy of rejection," and where "a person can be shamed by one . . . standard and honored by another deeper standard which trumps the first one."[109] She also acknowledges that "the guilt and shame consequent on moral wrongdoing constitute the canonical problem to which the atonement is the solution," but she asserts "that there is a corollary problem of shame which springs from sources other than a person's own past sinful acts and which is also in need of remedy."[110] In this latter category she lists (1) shame that accrues "in consequence of the depredations of other human beings" [111] from violation at the hands of others; (2) shame that arises "because of defects of nature, as when a person is shamed because of bodily deformity;"[112] and (3) shame associated with "weakness or powerlessness," as "those who lack power or are fallen from it . . . are diminished somehow in social standing or cultural stature."[113] Stump observes that "this type of shame, for which the shamed person bears no blame whatsoever, is also a route to a person's alienation from himself and others"[114] and requires resolution.

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[109] Stump, *Atonement*, 46.

[110] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[111] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[112] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[113] Stump, *Atonement*, 51.

[114] Stump, *Atonement*, 51.

The strength of Stump's analysis is in the close alignment it shows to the biblical categories. Though, as we have seen, she does not account for the primary problems of shame or consider the formative use of instrumental shame, she recognizes most of the secondary problems we have identified: Inappropriate shaming based on skewed standards, the appropriate shame stemming from moral wrongdoing, shame from violation at the hands of others, and shame from physical defects and disabilities. Stump is right that all this shame "needs a cure if a person suffering from it is not to be at a distance from others, including God."[115]

[115] Stump, *Atonement*, 52.

CHAPTER 5

A THEOLOGICAL ARTICULATION OF THE SHAME SOLUTION

Roger Nicole has argued in his "Postscript on Penal Substitution" that substitution functions as "the major linchpin of the doctrine of the atonement," such that "if the linchpin is removed, the other parts no longer perform their own functions but float away in futility."[1] His argument is consistent with the biblical testimony. Nicole points out how competing views of the atonement focus on the benefits procured through penal substitution without acknowledging that without penal substitution those benefits could not obtain. He did not discuss shame in the essay, but the relief and reversal of shame fits squarely alongside the other benefits which turn on the fulcrum of this "major linchpin."

As alluded to above, since the reformation, scores of major works have presented thorough expositions of the doctrine of penal substitution.[2] These treatments set the work of Christ within its biblical context by drawing out the features we have already

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[1] Roger R. Nicole, "Postscript on Penal Substitution," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives, Essays in Honor of Roger Nicole*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 45–47. A similar argument is found in Robert A. Peterson, "Penal Substitution is Foundational to the Atonement," *Presbyterion* 37, no. 2 (September 2011): 101–9.

[2] See, for example, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960); John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1959); James Petigru Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Louisville: SBTSPress, 2013), 265–305; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965); John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 20th anniv. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006); Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007); Hill and James, *The Glory of the Atonement*. Ligon Duncan has also compiled a thorough annotated bibliography in J. I. Packer and Mark Dever, eds., *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 153–88. See also Benjamin Wheaton, *Suffering, Not Power: Atonement in the Middle Ages* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), where Wheaton demonstrates that language of sacrifice and substitution in the sense of PSA was common long before the reformation as well.

highlighted about (1) the Bible's teaching on the doctrine of God and the significance of his holiness and justice, and (2) the doctrine of sin and the reach of its impact on the world and the human race. When this biblical context is firmly established, the beauty of God's penal substitutionary plan of salvation begins to shine with its full force, because it is only through Christ's atoning work as a voluntary substitute, enduring judgment, death, and separation from God on behalf of God's people, that God's mercy, love, justice, and holiness are set forth in their fulness. We have already considered how God's holiness and justice and the problem of sin relate to the problems of shame, what remains in this chapter is twofold: (1) To show how the new covenant work of Christ addresses the problems of shame, even as it addresses the problems of sin, and (2) to demonstrate how all those new covenant benefits are dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary atonement.

The Solution to Shame's Primary Problems

While the problems of shame do register in the biblical storyline, as we have seen, it is the problem of sin that looms large in the Bible's emphasis of the solution. This is stressed even in the first chapter of the New Testament where the very name of Jesus highlights the problem he came to solve. Joseph is told, "You shall call his name Jesus, *for* he will save his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21, emphasis added). Similarly, in the beginning of John's gospel the saving significance of Jesus is also found in the solution he provides, and he is presented as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The preaching of the New Testament, likewise, holds out the hope of forgiveness for sins as the motivating concern. People are exhorted to "Repent and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38), and urged to "repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). God exalted Jesus to his right hand, "to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31), and "all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins

through his name" (Acts 10:43).[3] Indeed, the fact that sin is the problem which needs addressing is set forth to the very end of the New Testament as Jesus is presented in Revelation 1 as the one "who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev 1:5). Donald Macleod summarizes the biblical teaching as he comments on Romans 1, "Paul set out to prove that the human race, Jew and Gentile, was universally 'under the power of sin' (Rom. 3:9), and because it was under sin it was also under the wrath of God. This, for Paul's purpose, is the most fundamental and most solemn problem facing the human race."[4]

But, as we have discussed briefly, the foundations for understanding why sin is the key problem are found in the unfolding narrative of the Old Testament. Paul's assertion that "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), is grounded in God's warning to Adam in Genesis 2:17 about the consequences of breaking his command and eating of the tree which was forbidden: "In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." As the story progresses, the Scriptures make clear that this death is manifested as exclusion from the tree of life (Gen 3:22), separation from God (Gen 3:24), and physical death (Gen 5:5, and the repeated refrain throughout the Genesis genealogies: "and he died"). Further, the relational nature of sin becomes increasingly evident as God introduces the framework of covenant, showing that sin is a matter of violating the covenant relationship and the result of sin is that relationship with the one true life-giving God is severed. Even Adam is understood as having "transgressed the covenant" and dealt faithlessly with the Lord (Hos 6:7), and as summarized by Mark Boda, "This betrayal of the relationship between God and humans in the garden foreshadows the understanding of sin in the covenants established between God and Israel at Sinai (Exodus–Numbers) and on the plains of

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[3] Examples could be multiplied. See also Acts 13:38; 22:16; 26:18 for New Testament preaching that places forgiveness of sins as the central hope held out in Christ.

[4] Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 147.

Moab (Deuteronomy)."[5] Ultimately, "the canonical shape of the Old Testament reveals that sin introduces the fundamental narrative tension into the canon as a collection."[6]

But in this truth that "sin is identified as something that threatens the covenant relationship"[7] we find the link to shame. If sin and its effects are what cause people to be deficient in God's sight, and, consequently, subject to legitimate shame, then addressing the problem of sin addresses the primary human problem of shame as well. More specifically, and as we have already discussed in chapter 4, the New Testament locates the primary problem of sin and shame in the eschaton. According to Scripture, the day of judgment is coming when the final and ultimate consequences for sin will be imposed, and those who remain guilty, defiled, and depraved will be finally and eternally cast out of God's presence and subject to everlasting shame and disgrace. In other words, the primary problem of shame for humans is not merely that sin and its effects lead to shame and disgrace in general, but that they will ultimately lead to shame and disgrace that are eternal. Since sin and its effects are the cause of eternal shame, the solution to sin and its effects proves to be a solution to eternal shame as well.

The Bible actually puts the solution positively: Those for whom the problem of sin has been addressed will ultimately be welcomed into eternal fellowship with God with praise, glory, and honor in his presence. If shame is the fear, pain, or state of being regarded deficient in social relationships, the opposite and the antidote to shame is welcome and honor in social relationships.[8] The descriptions of Scripture communicate

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[5] Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament*, Siphrut 1: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 517.

[6] Boda, *A Severe Mercy*, 515. This is not inconsistent with my assertion above that the narrative tension in Scripture is tied to God's promise to establish an enduring covenant relationship with his people. The sin of the people introduces the tension, but only when God's declared intent to dwell with mankind is accounted for.

[7] Boda, *A Severe Mercy*, 515.

[8] Neyrey describes the honor bestowed on the disciples through the makarisms of the Sermon on the Mount: "Because they are 'blessings,' all of the makarisms basically bestow a grant of honor or social worth on someone, first from Jesus and then from his Patron, God. The grant is not simply future (hence, 'eschatological'), but present. There may be a divine vindication ultimately for these suffering

the warmth of the Bible's description of the eternal reception of those who are saved from their sins. God's attitude in this regard is reflected in David's words from Psalm 16:3: "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my *delight*" (emphasis added). All of the redeemed will be able to say with David, "He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me *because he delighted in me*" (Ps 18:19, emphasis added). Those who will dwell with him forever are those who have "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen 6:8). The Bible is full of similar descriptions of the honor conferred upon those who are ultimately accepted by God, and, in the New Testament, the ways in which God bestows honor are described in terms which are familiar points of theological study: God's people receive justification as they are declared righteous in God's court, they receive adoption as they are given status in his family, they receive sanctification as they are set apart and increasingly devoted to the holy God and his holy purposes, they receive glorification as they are fully and finally made like Christ in the eschaton, and the images culminate with God lavishing his people with food and wine and clothing as he rejoices to take them to himself at the marriage supper of the lamb.[9]

My argument is that this solution to the threat of eternal shame is conceived in Scripture as a benefit and product of Christ's penal substitutionary atonement. This is grounded in four key points of biblical teaching: (1) that eschatological honor and glory

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righteous disciples, but Jesus honors them now before family, village, and town. They have worth now in his eyes; their shame is now offset by his praise and evaluation of them." Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 188.

[9] This solution to the reproach of God's people is prophesied in Isaiah 25:6–8:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

are found only in God’s presence, whereas eschatological shame and disgrace come from being rejected and cast away from him. (2) that because of God’s holiness and justice, the presence of sin and its effects prevent men from being welcomed into God’s presence. (3) that God’s provision of Christ as a penal substitute is the means by which God brings sinful men into his presence. And (4) that providing penal substitutionary atonement through the sacrifice of the Son is, negatively, the means by which God avoids the shame of denying his character or breaking his Word, and is, positively, the means by which he displays his holiness, mercy, justice, and love, bringing glory and honor to himself in a supreme demonstration of his wisdom.

Points 1 and 2 have been covered. In what follows, I aim to develop point 3 and show that atonement through penal substitution is introduced in the Scriptures as God’s provision to allow sinful men access to his presence, and that as the problem of sin before God is addressed through PSA, the problem of shame before God, point 4 is addressed as well.

The Solution to Sin and Shame Developed in the Old Testament

Penal Substitution in Genesis

The hints of the penal substitutionary nature of God’s salvation plan begin immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:21. The text declares that “the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them,” and commentators rightly note how this episode foreshadows the explicit atonement teaching which is revealed later in the canon.[10] In order to make garments of skins, a creature was

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[10] Cf. especially Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredericks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 95; C. F Keil and F. Delitzsch, “The First Book of Moses (Genesis),” in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, trans. James Martin, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 106; Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (InterVarsity Press, 2009), 105–6. Also, Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 102; James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis 1:1–11:32* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 191. Though some do not consider the significance of the death of the creature: Russell R. Reno, *Genesis*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 95–96. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*,

put to death, but according to the decree of God, it was Adam and Eve who ought to have been to be put to death and cut off eternally from the life of God.[11] Though not stated, this implies a penal substitution.[12] The connection to shame is readily apparent as well: It was shame that was particularly in view when "they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths," but their actual need was for, as Francis Schaffer has emphasized, "a covering that required sacrifice and death, a covering not provided by man but by God."[13]

That reading of Genesis 3:21 comes to full light only when the rest of Scripture is brought to bear. More clear is the episode of Genesis 22, where God commands Abraham to take his only, beloved, son and offer him as a burnt offering (v. 2). Here, Abraham expressed his confidence that "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (v. 8),[14] and the LORD did, in fact provide, an offering that was

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WBC 1 (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 84–85.

[11] Though on the strength of canonical teaching we can affirm that Adam and Eve did die spiritually on the day they sinned, they did not die physically. Something else died instead.

[12] Consider Austin Gage's reflections: "It is fitting that the Lord God, who was to make the last sacrifice (Heb 9:26), should make the first; to furnish the first Adam with robes of righteousness, the last Adam would suffer nakedness and shame (Ps 22:18; Matt 27:35). This slaughter is the first sermon, and there is much Gospel in it. Here the Lord provides the skins of the innocent to 'cover' the shame of the guilty. In this offering of the animals, the earth first tastes innocent blood and Adam first savors unmerited favor." Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis*, 102.

[13] Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time*, 105. James Montgomery Boice expands on this verse in his chapter "Skin or Fig Leaves (Genesis 3:21)" in Boice, *Genesis*, 189–93. As he summarizes, "They had been warned that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon penalty of death. . . . Yet up to this point no one had died. Adam and Eve had sinned. They must have expected death as the immediate penalty for their sin. . . . But they did not die. . . . And now, the death that occurs is not their death, though they richly deserved it, but the death of innocent animals. . . . And the One who killed those animals was God" (192). Hamilton argues similarly: "This verse . . . serves as a contrast with v. 7, the covering of fig leaves versus the covering with tunics of animal skins. The first is an attempt to cover oneself, the second is accepting a covering from another. The first is manmade and the second is God made. Adam and Eve are in need of a salvation that comes from without. God needs to do for them what they are unable to do for themselves." Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 1:207.

[14] Hamilton highlights the striking observation that the words "my son" at the end of the verse, "may be understood as a vocative (the way Abraham wished Isaac to hear it) or in apposition to 'a burnt offering,' 'God will provide . . . for a burnt offering, i.e.,,, you, my son' (the way Abraham would not want Isaac to hear it)." Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 2:110. He further notes, "the reading 'my son' in apposition to 'burnt offering' has a long history and is not a discovery of modern exegetes" (49).

substituted for Isaac (v. 13).[15] In this account, there is no mistaking the fact that the substitute dies in place of the elect (Isaac, the chosen son), "so that the elect might live."[16] Furthermore, verse 14 describes the theological import of Abraham's naming of the mountain "The LORD will provide" in the commentary that follows: "as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.'" What is notable here is that the name points forward and anticipates a greater provision from the Lord. The Scriptures develop the theme as the temple, the location of sacrifice, is eventually built on the very same mountain (2 Chron 3:1), but the full implications of this pericope are revealed only when considered from the perspective of the entire canon: The sacrifice offered in substitution for Isaac died on the very mount where Jesus would later die "to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17).[17] God does not state explicitly why he called for the death of the firstborn son in Genesis 22, but the consequence of sin from Genesis 2:17 remains in the foreground as he demonstrates the principle of substitution.

Penal Substitution in Exodus

Moving on to Exodus, the theme of substitution is picked up in the Passover narrative in chapters 11–13 as God makes provision for his people to escape the judgment falling on the land of Egypt through a substitute which is sacrificed in place of the firstborn.[18] Here, the penal nature of the substitutionary sacrifice begins to be more

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[15] "The death of the discovered ram 'instead of [Abraham's] son' (v. 13) epitomizes the idea of substitutionary atonement, which characterized the Levitical system." Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, NAC 1B (Nashville: B & H, 2005), 297.

[16] "The Lamb of God dies instead of the elect so that the elect might live," Waltke and Fredericks, *Genesis*, 310. Similarly, "the sacrifice functions as a substitute for the child of promise," Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 85. So also Hamilton, "In a providential way God does provide a surrogate for Isaac—*another ram*. . . . For all practical purposes Isaac was to be the first ram. Now here is *another* one." Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 2:113.

[17] On the identification of the mountain see Keil and Delitzsch, "The First Book of Moses (Genesis)," 249, and Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 84–85. In Genesis 22:2, God instructs Abraham to go to one of the mountains in the "land of Moriah," and 2 Chronicles 3:1 refers to "Mount Moriah" as the location of the temple constructed by Solomon.

[18] "Though the text of Exodus itself does not explicitly mention ransoming from death by

visible, since the account leaves no doubt that the danger for Israel is the judgment of God that is about to fall (12:12).[19] Genesis has given the overall background of the story, including its insistence that death is the consequence of sin[20] and the introduction of a substitutionary sacrifice which dies instead of a firstborn son. Now, all the firstborn sons of Israel face the threat of death along with the Egyptians unless they and their families appropriate the substitutionary sacrifice which would die in their place (12:12–13).[21] Furthermore, the Scriptures confirm that the people of Israel served the same gods as the Egyptians and were therefore explicitly liable to the same punishment.[22] "The blood of the lamb, the blood of propitiation, was the just 'settlement' of the wrath of God."[23]

Equally important, however, is the fact that "the original Passover marked the beginning of Israel's national life."[24] It was the beginning for two reasons. First, it

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substitutionary death of a sheep or goat, this seems to be implied by what is said in 13:11–16." T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 107. "Just as a principle of substitution was set forth in the provision of a ram in place of Isaac in Genesis 22, the blood on the doorposts at Passover teaches an important lesson. Judgment falls on the Passover lamb, and thereby the firstborn of Israel are saved." James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 95.

[19] "The elect people receive mercy and not legitimate punishment because they exist under the protection of the blood of the Passover Lamb." Thomas Joseph White, *Exodus*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016), 89.

[20] Cf. Paul R. Thorsell, "Genesis 3 and Original Sin," in *What Happened in the Garden: The Reality and Ramifications of the Creation and Fall of Man*, ed. Abner Chou (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2016), 141–42. Indeed, as John Stott has argued, "The Bible everywhere views human death not as a *natural* but as a *penal* event." Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 67.

[21] In their discussion of the Passover narrative, Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach highlight the fact that in the tenth plague, the "distinction between Israel and Egypt is *conditional*. The firstborn of the Israelites are not automatically spared from death; a lamb must be slaughtered, and its blood applied to the door frame of the house," and the "one-to-one correspondence between the life of the son and the life of a lamb is re-emphasized in the ceremony of the consecration of the firstborn, which is presented alongside the Passover in the book of Exodus and is intended explicitly to evoke its memory." Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 37 (emphasis original). So also John Stott: "In the original Passover in Egypt each paschal lamb died instead of the family's firstborn son, and the firstborn was spared only if a lamb was slain in his place," Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 74. In the same paragraph, Stott notes the necessity of appropriation.

[22] "Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD" (Josh 24:14).

[23] J. Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, The Bible Speaks Today 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 249.

[24] Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 139.

marked their redemption from slavery and bondage in Egypt and, second, it led to the establishment of God's covenant with them according to which he would dwell with them and they would serve him as his people.[25] God's message from the beginning of his interaction with Pharaoh was the command, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness" (Exod 5:1), which is interpreted in 7:16 in terms of serving the LORD: "The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you saying, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.' But so far, you have not obeyed." God's purpose in delivering them from bondage was to enable them to serve him.[26] But as Exodus unfolds, it becomes clear that the way God intended for them to serve him is within the framework of a covenant relationship.[27] The people of Israel are led to Mount Sinai, where God declares the purposes for which he brought them to himself (Exod 19:4–6):

> "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed *obey my voice and keep my covenant*, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel [emphasis added].

He brought them out of bondage so that they would obey his voice and keep his covenant as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,[28] and thus the substitutionary sacrifice that redeemed them from judgment was the deciding factor in bringing them out

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[25] Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 139.

[26] The message is repeated in 8:1, 8:20, 9:1, 9:13, and 10:3: "Let my people go, that they may serve me." For further discussion, see Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 96–97.

[27] Commentators rightly note that the establishment of the covenant with Israel at Sinai is one of a sequence of covenants by which God was progressively revealing what would be required for his initial purposes for mankind to be fulfilled. The re-set and re-start of the covenant with Noah was insufficient—the world quickly returned to the chaos and rebellion before the flood. So God introduces the covenant with Abraham that spells out hope for a solution. The covenant with Israel at Sinai is set in this context. Cf. Peter J. Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 340–41; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 103.

[28] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 341. See Gentry's full discussion of the covenant at Sinai in pages 330–396.

of the shame of their subjugation into an honorable state. They "had been brought out of Egypt, protected from his judgmental wrath by the blood of the lamb, and . . . were now immoveably established around him."[29] Again, the significance of these passages becomes clear when we view them from the canonical perspective, taking into account the way Jesus points to the Passover as the means for understanding his own death.[30] Redemption from bondage must be accomplished for God's people to serve him in the new covenant, just like the old, and "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7) as the archetype of the lambs in Exodus 12. The penal substitutionary sacrifice which was required to effect redemption for the old covenant is meant to provide the categories to understand the penal substitutionary sacrifice which was required to effect redemption for the new covenant. The type of bondage has changed, but the principle remains the same, and the outcome for God's people is a transition from the shame and disgrace of bondage to the honor of being God's treasured possession.

Exodus continues to develop this theme in its account of the covenant ratification ceremony in chapter 24.[31] When the people and their leaders initially approached Mount Sinai, they were prohibited from ascending the mountain to the presence of the LORD. This implication of God's holiness is set out in chapter 19, where God sets limits at the base of the mountain and warns the people, saying, "do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them" (v. 24). In chapter 24, however, the covenant is inaugurated through the slaughter

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[29] Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, 249.

[30] See Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1990); Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 107–9.

[31] For discussions of the covenant at Sinai and its ratification see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 339–95; L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, NSBT 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 86–93; Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 110–26; Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*, NSBT 23 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 94–100; Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 97–101.

of oxen, the recitation of the law, the vows of obedience, and the tossing of blood, and the leaders and representatives of Israel are then invited to ascend the mountain. The text highlights the change in their relationship, emphasizing the fact that the LORD "did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel" (v. 11). Before the inauguration of the covenant, the LORD would have broken out against them (19:24). Now, "they beheld God, and ate and drank" (v. 11). While scholars debate the exact meaning of the sacrificial rite in this chapter, the New Testament leaves no doubt about the essential function performed.[32] Hebrews 9:18–22 refers to the covenant inauguration of Exodus 24 explicitly, citing verse 8, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words," and proceeds to explain the reason for the blood:

> Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, *under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins* [emphasis added].

What Bruce Waltke and Charles Yu say about the blood sprinkled to

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[32] See the evaluation of various proposals in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 388–93. Referring to the description of offerings in Leviticus 1–7, Gentry notes that "The purification or sin offering is notably absent at the covenant-ratification ceremony in Exodus 24" (390). Nevertheless, as discussed below, the author of Hebrews includes this rite in his description of the entire Levitical system and asserts that this blood is provided for purification and forgiveness of sin. Two observations suggest a solution: (1) The fact that, in Gentry's words, "Naturally, *all* the sacrifices have to do with humans, who are defiled and sinful, approaching God and being accepted by him" (390), and (2) the fact that the covenant ratification sacrifice was unique, marking once-for-all the occasion when Israel entered into covenant with their God. The latter point is supported by Merrill Unger's comment that this was the "one sacrifice which even under the Old Testament required no renewal." *UBD*, 943. And by Keil and Delitzsch's comments noting that the rite "was performed in a peculiar manner, to suit the unique design of this sacrificial ceremony," C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "The Second Book of Moses (Exodus)," in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, trans. James Martin, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 157. Indeed, there is no other rite which involves the division of the blood, the use basins to hold the blood, and the particular details of tossing. For this reason, the sacrificial rite of Exodus 24 cannot be interpreted strictly according to the rites of Leviticus 1–7. This does not undermine Gentry's overall point that the ratification ceremony highlights wedding imagery, but it perhaps focuses attention on the fact that the bride must be presented pure and blameless to the groom (cf. Eph 5:25–27). For a thoughtful analysis of the covenant inauguration rite in Exodus 24, see Andrew J. Gehrig, *The Passover: A Literary and Theological Analysis of Exodus 12:1–13:16*, Studies in Biblical Literature 185 (New York: Peter Lang, 2024), 121–34.

inaugurate the old covenant applies also to the blood which inaugurates the new covenant: It "is called the 'blood of the covenant' because it effects the covenant relationship by cleansing the recipients from sin."[33] Like the Passover of Exodus 12, the covenant ceremony of Exodus 24 is set in the context of Genesis's teaching about the consequences of sin (death: Gen 2:17, shame before God: Gen 3:7–8, separation from God: Gen 3:24) and the pervasiveness of sin (Gen 6:5; Gen 8:21). Exodus 19:24 reveals the personal reaction of God to the presence of sinful people, namely separation under threat of death. Notably, this remained God's disposition even after they had committed to following his statutes in 19:8. "All the people answered and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do,'" yet still they had to "take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death" (19:12). Like in the Passover account, the definitive factor in enabling people to approach God without danger of God's judgment (19:24) is the death of a sacrifice which is interposed where the death of the people was called for. This time, the sacrifice is accompanied by the establishment of a covenant through the evidently purifying death (Heb 9:22) which finally allows the people to approach God in peace (24:11). As Motyer summarizes the theological significance of the ceremony, "the primary need is that God should be satisfied, for it is his justly due wrath that constitutes our danger and, in mercy, he has appointed that by substitutionary death—encapsulated in and symbolized by the shed blood—those endangered by his wrath are accepted into his presence and followship."[34] Both the penal and substitutionary themes are present, and the sacrifice of the penal

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[33] Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids.: Zondervan, 2007), 435. Morris reaches a similar conclusion: "We should regard the blood as both piacular and consecratory. It cleanses the people from their sin and it sanctifies them for their part in the covenant." Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 77.

[34] Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, 249. Hamilton concurs: "The covenant is inaugurated with blood. Judgment falls on the sacrificial animals in place of the people, and just as blood covered the doorposts on the night of the Passover, blood covers those entering into this covenant with Yahweh. Since the sacrificial victim is slain, their penalty is paid, and they are covered by the blood of the substitute. Through the judgment they are saved." Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 100.

substitute opens the way for God's people to be honored in God's presence. Indeed, the transition is significant. As Morris observes, "This ceremony was of the utmost importance for the later history of the people, for from this time the nation stood in a peculiar relationship to Yahweh, a relationship shared by no other."[35] Israel alone receives the blessing of entering into covenant and receiving the covenant law, and the Psalmist rejoices in his reflection on it: "He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD!" (Ps 147:20).

We have already noted that Jesus points to the Passover as part of the explanation for his own death. We now also note how Jesus points to the covenant ratification ceremony as providing additional insight into what he suffered. Having taken pains to portray his death in terms of a Passover sacrifice,[36] he then uses the words of Moses from Exodus 24:8 and declares that "this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin" (Matt 26:28). His death was a single sacrifice that accomplished both the redemption from bondage required for his people to serve the LORD and the purification and forgiveness of sin required for them to approach him and be united to him in the new covenant.[37] Again, the connection to shame is clear in that the honor of welcome into God's presence replaces the shame of being cast away

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[35] Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 73.

[36] Again, see Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 107–9. As Nolland comments, "The correlation of Passover and the Passion will have a sustained importance through the Passion Narrative." John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand RapidsWilliam B. Eerdmans, 2005), 1044.

[37] "The words by which Jesus explains this extraordinary idea combine three phrases which together draw out the redemptive significance of his death. (a) 'Blood of the covenant' directly echoes Exod 24:8 (and cf. Exod 24:6 for the 'pouring out' of that blood) and so recalls the original basis of Israel's life as the special people of God; mention of 'the covenant' also recalls Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer 31:31–34) that at the heart of God's restoration of his people there would be a 'new covenant,' grounded in a new relationship of 'knowing God' and in the forgiving and forgetting of their sins. (b) 'poured out for many' recalls the 'many' who are repeatedly referred to in Isa 53:11–12 as the beneficiaries of the suffering and death of the servant of God. . . . (c) The final phrase, 'for the forgiveness of sins,' not only recalls the servant's death for the sins of his people (Isa 53:5–6, 8, 10, 11, 12) but also further reinforces the allusion to Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy, where the basis of this new relationship is that 'I will forgive their wickedness, and will remember their sins no more'; it also recalls to the reader the original statement of Jesus's mission in 1:21, to 'save his people from their sins.'" R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 993–94.

from him.

Furthermore, the way in which the two sacrifices are united as one in Jesus's death is found in the Bible's teaching that the bondage from which God's people ultimately require freedom to serve him is bondage to sin (cf. Rom 6:15–23). More specifically, the Scriptures teach that it is "through fear of death" that people "were subject to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:15), and this death is regarded as the consequence of sin, as we have been highlighting.[38] Those who sin "know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die" (Rom 1:32). In this teaching, the need for release from bondage (which happens through the new Passover) and the need for purification (which happens upon entrance to the new covenant) are shown to be two sides of the same coin, and the penal substitutionary nature of the Exodus 12 and Exodus 24 sacrifices point to the penal substitutionary nature of Jesus's sacrifice in both senses. In both cases death is punishment due for sin, but a substitute suffers the death in place of the condemned. Jesus endured "the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Heb 2:9). The end result of this atoning work is that God's people are brought to glory (Heb 2:10).

Penal Substitution in Leviticus

This penal substitutionary solution to the problem of sin is further developed as God outlines the details of the sacrificial system in subsequent sections of the Pentateuch. William A. VanGemeren's observations provide initial insight regarding the overall pattern:

> Scripture suggests that there was a certain order in which offerings were presented. The sin or guilt offering had to be presented first as atonement for sin. The dedicatory offering, either a burnt or grain offering, could then be presented. In addition to the dedicatory offering, a fellowship offering was given to symbolize the

[38] But see also Romans 6:23.

people's gratitude and desire for fellowship with God.[39]

He notes that this was exemplified in "the account of the priests' consecration" in Exodus 29:10–34. Most importantly, "The association between sin and burnt offerings suggests that before worshipers can fully devote themselves to the Lord (symbolized by the burnt offering), they must know that their sins have been atoned for (symbolized by the sin offering)."[40] Again, the details of the sacrificial system must be read within their biblical context, where God has continually highlighted the consequences of sin, including his wrath toward sinners and the necessity of their separation from him. The point is not that all sacrifices are penal and substitutionary in nature, but that God is setting forward his intention to provide a penal and substitutionary sacrifice as the necessary requirement for forgiveness, devotion to him, and fellowship with him.

This is seen most clearly in God's instructions for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16. As L. Michael Morales has argued convincingly, the structure of the Pentateuch frames Leviticus as the central book, and the structure of the book itself sets "the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 as the book's literary centre."[41] Morales highlights the doctrine of sin and the holiness of God as set out in Genesis, the content of which serves as a prologue to the Pentateuch and the history of Israel,[42] and he cites

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[39] William A. VanGemeren, "Offerings and Sacrifices," in *EDT*, 610.

[40] VanGemeren, "Offerings and Sacrifices," 611. Similarly, see Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 123–24.

[41] Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 27. The full argument for these points, building on established scholarship, is found in pages 23–34. He concludes with the following statement: "While, certainly, not every detail of the Pentateuchal structures reviewed thus far is equally convincing, yet the structural centrality of the Sinai pericope (Schart's outline), the framing of Leviticus (with Exodus and Numbers mirroring each other) and the theological centrality of the Day of Atonement within Leviticus are firm and widely held positions" (34). Morales demonstrates that his analysis is supported by many others, including Arie C. Leder, *Waiting for the Land: The Story Line of the Pentateuch* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 34–35; Moshe Kline, "The Literary Structure of Leviticus," *Biblical Historian* 2, no. 1 (2006): 11–28; Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 18–20; Aaron Schart, *Mose und Israel im Konflikt: eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu den Wüstenerzählungen* (Freiburg, Switzerland: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers=[Ba-Midbar]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), xvi–xviii.

[42] Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 39–40, 233.

Psalm 24:3 as the fundamental question to which Leviticus begins to provide the Bible's ultimate answer: "Who may ascend the mountain of YHWH?"[43] That question is in the forefront at the beginning of Leviticus 16, where we are reminded of the problem of human beings approaching God in their sinful state.

> The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died, and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat." (Lev 16:1–2)

Death ensues if sinners draw near to the LORD because death is the consequence of sin.[44] But the aim of Leviticus 16 is to outline the central feature of the provision God set forth so that he *could* be approached: "But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place" (v. 3). Once again, a substitutionary sacrifice is offered which dies in the place of the one who stood under condemnation: "Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself" (v. 11). Aaron is then to present incense before the Lord and sprinkle blood from the sacrificed bull on the mercy seat. God makes clear that this portion of the rite is necessary for Aaron's own sin to be addressed so that he would be purified to stand before the Lord and offer the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people.

Once he makes atonement for himself, he is to follow the Lord's prescription regarding the combined rite of the two goats, which together point to the two emphases of (1) the atoning purification of the place where he dwells and meets with his people (which is defiled by his people's uncleanness, according to verses 16 and 19), and (2) the purification and forgiveness of his people themselves (vv. 21–22). The purpose of this

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[43] Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 20.

[44] Wenham marks the reference back to chapter 10 in verses 1–2 and notes the significance: "That chapter showed how priests who dared to approach God without due care and self-preparation might die suddenly in the fire of divine judgment." Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 227.

mediatorial work is made clear in verse 30: "For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins." Again, the holiness of God and the death sentence for sin remain the context for understanding the two-goat rite, and again the substitute suffers the consequence vicariously on behalf of the people.

Some have argued against this conclusion, especially when considering the live goat (the scapegoat), which is sent away from the camp into the wilderness.[45] These authors suggest that the emphasis for the live goat is not on its death on behalf of the people. But surely this interpretation fails to understand the typological significance of the goat's banishment. As Morales and Beale have argued in depth, the tabernacle represents the life-giving presence of God.[46] Just as the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden cut them off from the tree of life, so the banishment of every person from the presence of God is presented as the epitome of death. This is precisely what the scapegoat suffers. The consequence of sin is banishment from the life-giving presence of God, but the sins of Israel are transferred to the scapegoat who suffers the death of banishment on their behalf. Here in the central rite of the Sinai covenant, the penal substitutionary nature of the solution God provides is most clearly presented.

This is recognized by the New Testament authors who showed how the old covenant ritual was intended to provide the categories by which Christ's sacrifice is to be understood. Hebrews 9:8–14 comments specifically on the Day of Atonement rite and notes that the restriction on entering the presence of God in the most holy place is meant to teach God's people that actual reconciliation and fellowship with God was not possible

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[45] Vaughn, *The Cross in Context: Reconsidering Biblical Metaphors for Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022), 130; Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), 47–49.

[46] Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

through the old covenant, which prepared the way for understanding Jesus's accomplished work in the new covenant:

> By this [the restrictions on entry] the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.
>
> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Thus, the Day of Atonement pointed both to the problem (that because of God's holiness, sinful people could not approach him without being consumed), and to the solution (purification through a sacrificial penal substitute and a mediator who could present the atoning offering in the very presence of God). As Leviticus 16:5, makes clear, the two goats function together "for a [singular] sin offering" and the features of each goat are fulfilled in the work of Christ. "He himself bore our sins in his body" (1 Peter 2:24a), like the scapegoat, and "Christ has entered, not into holy places made by hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf . . . by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:24, 26), like the goat for the Lord. Again, the result has clear bearing on the problem of shame, because Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice is what fulfills the types of Leviticus 16 and allows believers to "enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19). PSA is what provides the honor of access to God's presence instead of the judgment and death and shame suffered by Nadab and Abihu, who, incidentally, remain disgraced to this day.

The Necessity of a New Covenant

Having introduced the human predicament and God's intention to save, the

Pentateuch provides the outline of both his means of salvation and the end goal of his saving work: A covenant relationship with the redeemed, where they will be his people and he will be their God, and where he will dwell in their midst forever. What becomes clear as the story of Israel unfolds, however, is that the problem of sin has not been sufficiently addressed in the Mosaic covenant, and as a result, true fellowship with God is still out of reach.[47] This is established at the very start, when, immediately upon entering into the covenant, the people of Israel turn aside, as recorded in Exodus 32, and break the first three commandments, forsaking the Lord and fashioning a golden calf to worship in his place.[48] Had they obeyed his voice and kept his covenant, they would have been his "treasured possession" (Exod 19:5), but in their sin they forsook their position of honor. Again they found themselves unfit for relationship with God, who threatened to let his wrath "burn hot against them" and "consume them" (Exod 32:10). Even in his mercy, he emphasized the relational consequences of their sin: "If for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you" (Exod 33:5). The episode became a paradigmatic example of Israel's unfaithfulness, but the rest of the Pentateuch is littered with further instances of infidelity. Moses himself, the mediator of the old covenant, was conscious that the fundamental problem had not yet been addressed and pointed forward to a greater solution. Standing on the border of the promised land, he recounted what the LORD had done before their eyes, "But," he declared, "to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear" (Deut 29:4). God himself declared what would come to pass: "This people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will

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[47] "Within the overall structure of the text there is thus a hermeneutic that points to the failure of Israel to keep the Sinai covenant and to the virtual inevitability of exile on those terms." Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 113.

[48] See the discussion of this episode in Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 104.

forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured" (Deut 31:16–17). The problem of sin, which leads to disaster and shame was deep. Even in giving the Torah, God was teaching his people that something more was needed to overcome sin so that they could dwell in the glorious presence of the Lord instead of being cast out in shame.

The subsequent history of Israel and Judah bore out the truth of God's diagnosis as the people continually turned away from the LORD. It is the story of "Israel entering the land, visiting Yahweh's justice on the wicked inhabitants of the land only to do evil themselves in the eyes of Yahweh, being judged and delivered through a series of chastisements, and ultimately suffering the climactic judgment of exile from the land."[49] As J. A. Thompson explains, "The history of Israel since the days of Moses was one of persistent failure to live according to the terms of the covenant. They had not merely refused to obey the law or to acknowledge Yahweh's complete and sole sovereignty, but were incapable of such obedience."[50] The prophets warned of the coming judgment by reminding the people of the curses that were incorporated into the covenant, but ultimately, the people continued in their sin and the pattern of Eden played out again: Because of sin, the people were driven out of the land where God dwelled with them and the glory of the Lord departed from their midst.[51]

The Announcement of the New Covenant

However, even in the midst of the impending and unfolding judgment, the

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[49] Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 141.

[50] J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 580.

[51] As Robin Routledge describes, the writers of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings answer the question of how disaster could have befallen the people whom God had chosen and called. "The answer was to be found in the people's continued disobedience. God was not unfaithful; rather, after years of bearing with the nation's sins, he was fulfilling his Word." Robin Routledge, *Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 262.

prophets also announced God's intention to establish a new covenant with his people which would finally address the problem of sin at its most fundamental level.[52] In Jeremiah 31:31–33, God makes the announcement:

> Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Under the old covenant, God had not yet given his people hearts to understand, eyes to see, and ears to her, but in the new covenant, God will put his law within his people, writing it on their hearts, rather than on tablets of stone. The message is that "Yahweh himself proposes to bring about the necessary change in the people's inner nature which will make them capable of obedience."[53] Ezekiel 36:24–28 refers to the covenant formula again and expands on the same theme:

> I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Here, the message is even more explicit. The people of the new covenant[54] will receive the new hearts that were lacking in Deuteronomy 29:4 and God himself will "cause" them to walk in his statues and be careful to obey his rules. The old covenant had been broken by Israel because they had not been cleansed at the heart level, but the cleansing accomplished in the new covenant will be so thorough that the people will be

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[52] For a full development, see Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 261–310.

[53] Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 581.

[54] For an exposition of Ezekiel 36:22–36 in its contributions to new covenant prophecy, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 590–91. The rest of chapter 14 on the new covenant in Ezekiel is instructive as well.

transformed.[55]

The Messiah and the New Covenant

We have already considered how a new and final penal substitutionary sacrifice is an essential element of the new covenant, but this doctrine is not introduced in the New Testament alone. The prophets not only testify about the deliverance of the new covenant, they also point forward to a deliverer who would usher it in.[56] God's original promise that the seed of Eve would one day crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15) is never lost from view, and God grants increasing specificity about the coming seed as the covenants unfold.[57] This theme is present when God declares to Abraham that "through Isaac shall your offspring be named" (Gen 21:12), and that "in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen 22:17). The focus is then narrowed as the promise to Abraham is transferred to Jacob in Genesis 28:14: "In you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The development continues when Judah is singled out by his father for particular blessing. Jacob's words allude to the nations but add more explicit emphasis on reign and rule: "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. . . . The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen 49:8, 10). More details, still, are revealed when God makes a covenant with David which recalls the

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[55] I have focused on the need for internal cleansing and renewal and the solution for that problem presented in these verses. Block presents the program more comprehensively: "First, Yahweh will purify Israel of its defilement. . . . Second, Yahweh will remove Israel's fossilized heart and replace it with a sensitive fleshly organ. . . . Concomitant with the heart transplant, Yahweh will infuse his people with a new spirit, his Spirit. . . . Third, Yahweh will cause his people to be obedient to himself. . . . Fourth, Yahweh will renew his covenant with his people." Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 2:354–56.

[56] See Routledge, *Old Testament Theology*, 280–98.

[57] For a full treatment of messianic prophecy in the Old Testament, see Andrew T. Abernethy and Gregory Goswell, *God's Messiah in the Old Testament: Expectations of a Coming King* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020).

offspring theme but adds further emphasis on kingship: “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. . . . And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Sam 7:12, 16).

The Messiah as a Substitute and Representative

However, even as God was revealing the line of ancestry through which the serpent-crusher of Genesis 3:15 would come, he was also revealing how the serpent’s head would ultimately be crushed. We have noted that Isaac was identified as the offspring of promise (Gen 21:12) calling to mind the promised offspring of Eve, [58] but we must also note that it was only after Abraham demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice this offspring of promise that God declared “In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen 22:18). Here we find a reason for God’s command to Abraham that is otherwise so difficult for us to explain: God was not only teaching that a substitute provided by God could die in the place of a sinful person, he was also providing the first hint that the offspring of promise would himself ultimately be offered as a sacrifice.[59]

This theme is continued as the biblical narrative turns to Judah as the line from which the offspring of promise would come. Again we note that the blessing bestowed on the progenitor of the line of promise (Gen 49:8–12) comes to one who has offered himself as a substitute in place of another. I am referring to Genesis 44:18–34 where

[58] For a consideration of the theme of the seed of the woman which includes the line of Seth and Noah, see Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis*, 12–13, 114–15.

[59] Herbert Lockyer draws this conclusion from Hebrews 11:19: “The word used for ‘figure’ is given as ‘parable’ in the R. V. and indicates that the laying of Isaac upon the altar was a parabolic representation of death—the parable being in action instead of words—and his deliverance from death was therefore a representation of resurrection. Thus, in Isaac, we have a conspicuous type of Him who was freely ‘delivered up for us all’ and who was received from the dead by His Father (Rom. 8:32, I Tim. 3:16).” Herbert Lockyer, *All the Messianic Prophecies of the Bible: A Compendium of All the Prophecies in Scripture Concerning the Promised Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 220–21.

Joseph's cup has been found in Benjamin's sack and Benjamin stands under penalty of bondage. It was Judah who pledged himself for the safety of Benjamin before they had left their home (Gen 43:9), and in line with his commitment to stand as a surety, Judah offered himself to endure the penalty in his place: "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers" (Gen 44:33). For the second time, the blessing of the offspring of promise comes to one offered as a substitute.[60]

The connection is present with David as well. Again, progenitor of the line of promise demonstrates a willingness to offer himself in the stead of others. For David, this is seen in 2 Samuel 24:17: "Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, 'Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house.'" It is true that in this incident David is guilty and the people are suffering in place of the king, but the fact that the king and the people are connected in this way is part of the Bible's teaching about federal headship.[61] Here, the people suffer in place of the king, but by the same principle the king can suffer in place of the people. This is David's desire and he pleads with the Lord that it would be so. Furthermore, the text indicates that it is in response to David's prayer that the Lord's hand would be against him rather than the people that the Lord sent the prophet Gad instructing David to "raise

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[60] Hamilton picks up on this dynamic, but does not consider typological implications. He notes that "Judah will become Benjamin's surrogate," having "not shared the possibility in as many words with his father that 'the man' in Egypt might exact a life for a life." Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 2:570.

[61] Earlier, David demonstrated the principle in his battle with Goliath. Immediately after being anointed king over Israel in 1 Samuel 16, David fought the battle of Israel on behalf of the people of Israel. The victory of the king was the victory of the people. In 2 Samuel 24, and through the rest of the Old Testament history of Israel, the failure of the king is the failure of the people. Peter Gentry highlights how Isaiah describes the hope of Israel in terms of a representative king. See Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11, no. 2 (2007): 23–4. For a book-length treatment of this theme, see Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite" (2 Sam 24:18).[62] David offered himself to bear the punishment instead of the people, God responded with instruction that a substitute would be provided instead of David. The repetition of the theme establishes a pattern and builds understanding that the promised offspring will be associated with offering himself as a substitute to face the penalty on behalf of others. Like Isaac and Judah before him, David was not actually given up as a substitute in the way he was willing to offer himself. Rather, like in the case of Isaac, God himself allowed for provision of a substitute which died in place of the person for whom death was due. Again, it is striking that the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite is identified in 2 Chronicles 3:1 as Mount Moriah where God had provided the substitute for Isaac. The place where the Lord appeared to David and instructed him to offer a penal substitutionary atoning sacrifice was none other than the mountain named by Abraham, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided" (Gen 22:14). With the full perspective of the New Testament we see that the promised offspring was different from Isaac, Judah, and David, who were types of the one who was to come. The difference is that, in addition to being willing to offer himself as a penal substitute, he did actually sacrifice himself as a penal substitute in the place of others who were under the wrath of God because of sin. He was not the beneficiary of God's provision like Isaac and David, he *was* God's provision. When he was sacrificed on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the full meaning of the name of the mountain was fulfilled: On the mountain of the Lord it *was* provided, God provided a lamb for the burnt offering in the promised offspring of the woman, the offspring of Abraham, the offspring of David.

The Messiah as a Penal Substitute and Representative

The testimony of Scripture to the end of 2nd Samuel had made clear that the

[62] 24:25 explains that "the LORD responded to the plea for the land."

serpent-crusher of Genesis 3:15 would come from the line of David and had introduced the concept of the offspring of promise offering himself as a penal substitute for others. Further revelation of these two purposes of God came through the Prophets and the Writings which followed,[63] but those later Scriptures not only outlined further characteristics of the coming anointed one and his substitutionary work, but also linked him to the establishment of the new covenant.[64] This is perhaps most evident in Isaiah, where all these strands come together. As Gentry and Wellum describe, "Isaiah presents us with a unified vision of a coming Davidic king who is identified as the 'servant of the Lord.'"[65] This is established early in the book when Isaiah refers to the coming king as a child (Isa 9:6) who will sit on the throne of David (Isa 9:7). This calls to mind the promised offspring who had been anticipated since Genesis 3:15. The offspring of David remains in view when he is described later as a servant whom God will give "as a covenant for the people" (Isa 42:6). While the exact meaning of this phrase is debated even by evangelical scholars, what is clear when the messianic identity of the servant is recognized[66] is that Isaiah establishes a link between the Davidic king and the new covenant.

But in addition to linking the coming Davidic servant to the new covenant,[67] Isaiah also links the servant to a substitutionary atoning sacrifice.[68] This is explicit in the

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[63] I am referring to the 2nd and 3rd divisions of the Hebrew Bible, respectively.

[64] For a full treatment of the seed theme traced through the Scriptures, see James M. Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30–54.

[65] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 704.

[66] For a discussion of the exegetical grounding for this conclusion despite the way Isaiah links the servant to Israel, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*. As summarized by Oswalt, "the evidence of Isaiah 49:5–6, 8 seems irrefutable that the Servant was conceived as having a mission to Israel. . . . In view of the explicit statements in ch. 49, one has every reason to take 42:6 in the same way, given the absence of any linguistic bars to doing so" John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 118. The mission to Israel continues on to the mission to the nations and in so doing leaves no doubt about the messianic reference.

[67] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 487–526.

[68] J. Alec Motyer, "'Stricken for the Transgression of My People': The Atoning Work of

familiar fourth servant song of Isaiah 52:13–53:12. The servant will suffer (52:14) and thereby "sprinkle many nations" (reminiscent of the sprinkled blood of the Levitical sacrifices). He is described as bearing the griefs and sorrows of others (53:4), being pierced for the transgressions of others, being crushed for the iniquities of others, enduring chastisement that brought others peace, and suffering wounds by which others were healed (53:5). Verses 6 and 8 are even more explicit about the penal substitutionary nature of his sacrifice: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all," yet, "who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?" Despite the fact that he was personally innocent (53:9), "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief," and "his soul makes an offering for guilt" (53:10).

To be sure, interpretation of this passage has spawned no shortage of debate, but the New Testament authors unambiguously testify that these verses refer to the suffering of Jesus, and evangelical theologians responding to critics have repeatedly demonstrated both the vicarious nature of that suffering and the way it provided for the promised new covenant benefits. Peter Gentry summarizes:

> The "atonement theory"—to employ an anachronistic term—provided by Isaiah's depiction of the work of the Servant in the Fourth Servant Song is multifaceted and variegated. The Servant is a figure both Davidic and royal. He is Israel and he restores Israel (Isa 49:5). He endures enormous suffering as evil is heaped upon him by his own people and by the world. But the description is more specific than this generality. He dies as a *restitution sacrifice* to pay the penalty for the offenses, sins, and transgressions of the many. This brings the forgiveness of sins and a right relationship to God. This brings reconciliation with God resulting in a new, everlasting covenant of peace where faithful loyal love and obedience are maintained in our relationship to God [emphasis original].[69]

Isaiah's Suffering Servant," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 248–66; J. Alan Groves, "Atonement in Isaiah 53," in Hill and James, *The Glory of the Atonement*, 61–89; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 52–67.

[69] Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13−53:12)," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11, no. 2 (2007): 43.

This is the culmination of Old Testament teaching and expectation. The other prophets and the writings add further clarifying detail,[70] but the outline of God's redemptive plan is now before us. The unfolding history of God's revelation has highlighted the problem of sin that demands judgment, the introduction of substitutionary sacrifices that provide atonement, the expectation of the promised offspring who would solve the problem, and then finally, this description of how the offspring of Eve would ultimately accomplish his work. It is by dying to make restitution, to pay the penalty of sin, that the son of David and son of Abraham will restore his people's relationship with God so that they will no longer suffer shame. His penal substitutionary death was anticipated as the final Passover sacrifice and the new covenant-inaugurating offering, which would take place on the true day of atonement, and would therefore the basis of the new covenant since it would affect the redemption, forgiveness, and purification that would allow his people to be united to him in all the fulness God has always intended. We have already considered many instances of how the New Testament interprets these prophetic expectations and proclaims their fulfillment in Christ, but the New Testament adds further perspective on the benefits of the new covenant procured through Christ's atoning work, and in these benefits the solution to shame finds its fullest expression.

The Solution to Sin and Shame Expounded in the New Testament

We have already made reference to some of the benefits of the new covenant expounded in the New Testament. It presents the concepts of redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification to describe the changes wrought by the work of Christ, and I will argue below that each of these benefits of the new covenant entails a

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[70] Cf. Bruce K. Waltke, "Atonement in Psalm 51," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives, Essays in Honor of Roger Nicole*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 51–60; David Peterson, ed., "Atonement in the Old Testament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today: Papers from the Fourth Oak Hill College Annual School of Theology*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 1–25.

transition from shame to honor. The following section will demonstrate how those transitions are dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary death and elaborate on how each is related to the honor and shame dynamics we have discussed.

Propitiation

Leon Morris describes propitiation succinctly as "Turning away of wrath by an offering."[71] Since the 1930s when C. H. Dodd published his arguments insisting that the concept of averting God's wrath through sacrifice was absent from the *hilaskomai* word group in the New Testament and the Septuagint,[72] others like Mark D. Baker, Joel B. Green, and Eleonore Stump have followed a similar pattern and omitted from their theological construction any notion of God's wrath needing appeasing.[73] But as we have seen, and as the work of Morris and others have demonstrated, the Scriptures do teach divine hostility to evil.[74] And "if there is such a divine hostility to evil it is obvious that something must be done about it if man, sinner as he is, is ever to be accepted before

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[71] Leon Morris, "Propitiation," in *EDT*, 703. For a full exposition of propitiation, see Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 144–213; Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 130–50.

[72] Cf. C. H. Dodd, "Ἱλάσκομαι, Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms, in the Septuagint," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32, no. 128 (July 1931): 352–60; C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 82–95; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932).

[73] Stump rejects out of hand any notion that God's disposition towards "even those who are unrepentant wrongdoers" includes anything other than one of "love and forgiveness" and "acceptance of reconciliation." Eleonore Stump, *Atonement*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 101. She does not use the word propitiation, but she argues that "To suppose that satisfaction is a prerequisite for God's forgiveness and acceptance of reconciliation . . . is to suppose that if a wrongdoer (or a suitable substitute for the wrongdoer) did not make satisfaction to God, God would not forgive the wrongdoer and would not accept reconciliation with him" (111). For Stump, this is to deny the very character of God. Baker and Green do seek to distinguish themselves from Dodd. See Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 77–78, but they reject the idea that wrath is "an affective response on the part of God" (121–122), insisting that it is "relationally based, not retributively motivated" (72). This is part of their argument that God is already "oriented toward the restoration or protection of God's people" (72), so that, in their view, "averting or assuaging God's wrath" is not required (72).

[74] See all of chapters 5 and 6 in Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*; Leon Morris, "Meaning of Hilastērion in Romans 3:25," *New Testament Studies* 2, no. 1 (September 1955): 33–43; Roger Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 17, no. 2 (May 1955): 117–57; and chapter 5 in Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified*.

God. Sometimes Scripture directs attention to the cause of the hostility and speaks of sin as remitted or purged. But sometimes also it points us to the hostility itself, and speaks of its removal in terms of propitiation."[75]

To demonstrate how propitiation relies on Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice is not difficult, because the role of the offering is reflected in its very definition. Propitiation happens when wrath is turned away *by* an offering, and the New Testament states explicitly that Christ Jesus was "put forward as a propitiation by his blood" (Rom 3:25). Further, as summarized by Morris, "the process of propitiation envisaged in the Bible is one which involves an element of substitution. In both Old and New Testaments the means of propitiation is the offering up of a gift, the gift of a life yielded up to death by God's own appointment. The Scripture is clear that the wrath of God is visited upon sinners or else that the Son of God dies for them."[76]

In propitiation, the relationship to shame is also clear because the turning away of God's wrath is a move from hostility to honor. God becomes propitious towards sinners because of Jesus's sacrifice. That is, he is now "disposed to be favorable"[77] toward his people where once he regarded them with displeasure and was opposed to them. Propitiation is, thus, a foundational doctrine for the discussion of shame. It describes the benefit of Christ's atoning work in terms of a resulting transition in the disposition of God which results in acceptance and welcome in his presence.[78] But propitiation is tied to expiation. While propitiation describes the impact of the atonement

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[75] Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 210.

[76] Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 213.

[77] *OED*, s.v. "propitious (adj.)," September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4425416264.

[78] When I refer to a transition in the disposition of God, this is to be conceived in light of orthodox evangelical doctrine of God's attributes. The transitions are not a change in the "inalterable dispositions of the divine will," but must be understood as "figurative attributions ased on *ad extra* manifestations" of it, accommodated to human understanding. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 3:552. Just as God's wrath represents "his constant purpose of punishing sin," so his acceptance represents his constant purpose once sin has been punished (3:585).

with respect to God, expiation describes the impact of the atonement with respect to sin. The two concepts are complementary. A. A. Hodge recognized this relationship in the nineteenth century, writing that "Expiation respects the bearing or effect which Satisfaction has upon the sinner. Propitiation has respect to the bearing or effect which Satisfaction has upon God. . . . Propitiation proceeds by means of expiation, or the vicarious suffering of the penalty by the substituted victim."[79] Macleod explains, "Sin is expiated, God is propitiated and . . . these cannot be separated. God can be propitiated only if sin is expiated; and sin is expiated only in order that God may be propitiated."[80] To speak "of an expiation which does not propitiate would be meaningless."[81] To see the implications more clearly, we must consider the meaning of expiation as well.

Expiation

The *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* provides a concise definition of the expiation. It refers to "Release from sin as well as the means by which this release is accomplished."[82] Graham Cole is more specific: "Expiation refers to a sacrifice that wipes away or covers from sight that which offends."[83] As alluded to above "the object of expiation is nonpersonal,"[84] so that it is "that which offends" which is in view, rather than the one who is offended. Like propitiation, the biblical concept of expiation has its roots in the Hebrew *kipper* (כִּפֶּר), "to cover," and even as the verb functions as a term of purification and compensation in legal rites, as argued by Emile Nicole, the sense of covering alluded to by Cole remains in play across the semantic

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[79] A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (1887; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 39–40.

[80] Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 110.

[81] Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 147–48.

[82] *WBTT*, 101–29.

[83] Graham A. Cole, "Expiation/Propitiation," in *T & T Clark Companion to Atonement*, ed. Adam J. Johnson, Bloomsbury Companions (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017), 489.

[84] Cole, "Expiation/Propitiation," 489.

range of its use in the Hebrew Scriptures.[85] Theologically, expiation refers to the fact that "the sacrifice of Christ has so covered our sins that they are operationally invisible. Our guilt is no longer a provocation to God."[86] More specifically, "Christ not only provides, but *is*, the 'atonement cover' which obscures our sins from the sight of God, expiating our guilt by his blood."[87]

The penal substitutionary nature of Christ's sacrifice is evident in expiation because, to use Cole's term, expiation and propitiation are corollaries of each other. He explains, "If a sacrifice expiates sin, why is such a sacrifice needed? It is needed because of divine wrath. And if the sacrifice is propitiatory, then how does it work? It is needed because the sacrifice expiates or wipes away the sin that offends."[88] The Bible's teaching on expiation is thus grounded in its teaching on the penalty of sin, and the principles of vicarious substitution that we have seen are active in the expiatory process.

But the connection to shame is also clear. God must be propitiated if sinners are to approach him, and expiation is the means of propitiation. The concept of covering, moreover, reaches back to the initial solution to the shame introduced in Genesis 3:21. God provided coverings for Adam and Eve through the death of a substitute. That theme is picked up in the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:11–13 when the king came in to look at the guests who had been assembled. "He saw there a man who had no

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[85] Emile Nicole, "Atonement in the Pentateuch: It is the Blood that Makes Atonement for One's Life," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives, Essays in Honor of Roger Nicole*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 47–50. See also BDB, כפר. Scholars continue to debate the meaning of *kipper* (כִּפֶּר). For a recent semantic treatment, see Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, "Propitiation in the Sacrificial Ritual," *Christ and the World 15 (2005)*: 35–60 (Inzai, Chiba: Tokyo Christian University) and Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007). The most up to date Hebrew lexicon has sifted through the arguments in the debate and concluded in line with the interpretation I have presented. See Wilhelm Gesenius and Johannes Renz, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament: Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Herbert Donner (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), s.v. "כִּפֶּר." They give the meaning "bedecken," in German, which is "to cover."

[86] Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 113.

[87] Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 113.

[88] Cole, "Expiation/Propitiation," 490.

wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" The meaning is brought out in Revelation as God's people are urged by the Lord to buy "white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen" (Rev 3:18). The white robes of the saints are the covering which afford them welcome at the marriage supper and allow them to stand "before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev 7:9). The warning of Revelation 16:15 reinforces the same message, "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." Again, the connection is made to the work of Christ which makes the coverings effective: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14). The imagery brings to mind Haman's answer to King Ahasuerus's question, "What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor" (Esth 6:6)? The answer involves clothing, and while Haman was not honorable, his answer reflects the Bible's teaching on the way God treats his own servants through the penal substitutionary work of Christ. "For the man whom the king delights to honor, let royal robes be brought. . . . Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor." In the cross, Jesus covers the sins of his people, and this is described in Scripture as dressing them in robes of righteousness. "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" (Isa 61:10).

Redemption

When we turn to the language of redemption, the image is no longer one of the appeasing of God's wrath or covering the offense of sin. Rather "With the concept of

redemption we move to consider the effect of the cross on sinners."[89] Most importantly, in redemption, "The payment of a price for deliverance is the basic and characteristic thing."[90] As Morris goes on to explain, the New Testament teaching sets redemption against the backdrop of slavery to sin. Jesus had taught his disciples that "everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34), and Paul asserts that all people are slaves, "either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness" (Rom 6:16). This brings to the fore the fact that "men were under sentence of death on account of their sin. 'For the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23). Sinners are slaves. Sinners are doomed to death," and so the situation is "crying out for redemption. Failing redemption, the slavery would continue, the sentence of death be carried out."[91] Morris's reference to the sentence of death is capturing an important theme of the biblical teaching. Macleod highlights it as well: "First of all, redemption means deliverance from liability to punishment."[92] As discussed above, the reason for bondage to sin is the looming liability of the sentence of death.[93]

The connection of redemption to penal substitution is in the fact that the price paid to effect redemption is the penalty of death suffered by Jesus Christ as a substitute for his people. We have noted how the idea of redemption was introduced at the Passover, where God delivered his people from the bondage of Egypt. There, God provided instructions for the substitutionary sacrifice. In the true and final Passover,

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[89] Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 220. For a full treatment of redemption, see Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 11–64; Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 220–37.

[90] Leon Morris, "Redeemer, Redemption," in *NBD*, 1003.

[91] Morris, "Redeemer, Redemption," 1003.

[92] Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 223.

[93] This is not to contradict John Murray's statement that our "bondage is, of course, multiform." He notes from the biblical testimony that people are in bondage ultimately through sin, but also through the law, including the curse of the law ("its penal sanction"), the ceremonial law ("the tutelary bondage of the Mosaic economy"), and the law of works. These latter categories of bondage are all related to the bondage of sin. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 40–46.

however, God not only specifies the sacrificial price required, but God himself pays the redemption price in the person of the Son. And, as demonstrated by Macleod, it is Jesus's life offered specifically as a sin offering that makes it "the redemption price of his people: the ransom which secures their deliverance."[94] It is important to see how these descriptions of the atonement fit together. It is because Christ made expiation for sin and propitiated God that the liability is removed and the bondage is thereby broken.

The idea of redemption also fits together with honor shame dynamics, and the price of the ransom is one factor that makes the connection. This is evident in the way the New Testament emphasizes the high cost of the ransom paid, as in 1 Peter 1:18–19: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Thomas Schreiner highlights the significance. These verses, he explains, "are written 'to increase the addressees' appreciation of their new relationship to God and their new status as Christians.'"[95] In other words, consciousness of the price paid leads to greater gratitude for the change in standing which it wrought. In being ransomed with the precious blood of Christ, the people of God were marked with special honor.

So the first connection to shame and honor dynamics is the honor bestowed in the very act of being redeemed. The second connection focuses on the new status enjoyed by God's people as a result of being redeemed. They are now "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession" (1 Pet 2:9). This recalls the language from mount Sinai where God revealed the purpose for which he had redeemed them from the bondage of Egypt, namely, to be his "treasured possession" and "a

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[94] Macleod, *Christ Crucified*, 230.

[95] Lauri Thurén, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 114 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1995), 115–16, quoted in Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 84.

kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:5–6). Redemption, as John Murray has rightly illustrated, "releases us unto a liberty that is nothing less than the liberty of the glory of the children of God."[96]

Regeneration

Moving on from redemption, it is fitting next to consider regeneration. In doing so, we come to the first benefit of the work of Christ that "occurs inside of us."[97] Theologically, the doctrine of regeneration is understood in reference to the biblical terms which "indicate a drastic and dramatic change which may be likened to birth, rebirth, re-creation or even resurrection."[98] This was anticipated in the new covenant prophecies across the Old Testament where God promised he would give his people new hearts (Jer 24:7; Ezek 11:19; 36:26), on which he would write his law and put the fear of him (Jer 31:33; 32:40), and would put his Spirit within his people (Ezek 11:19; 36:26) and cause them to walk in his statues and obey his rules (Ezek 36:27). Crucially, these prophecies associate the anticipated inward change with purification and atonement for sin. Jeremiah 31:31–34 outlines the benefits of the new covenant (God's law within his people, written on their hearts, he will be their God, they will be his people, they will all know the Lord), but verse 34b describes the basis by which the benefits obtain: "*For* I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (emphasis added). As Keil rightly describes, "the forgiveness of sin . . . is mentioned, ver. 34, at the latter part of the promise, as the basis of the new covenant."[99] Similarly, Ezekiel 36 declares God's

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[96] Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 40.

[97] John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013), 945.

[98] M. R. Gordon, "Regeneration," in *NBD* , 1005.

[99] C. F. Keil, "The Prophecies of Jeremiah," in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, trans. James Martin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 39.

intention to "sprinkle clean water" on his people so that they "shall be clean from all [their] uncleanliness," and will cleanse them "from all [their] idols" (36:25). Here, Murray's comments regarding the relationship between the cleansing, the heart change, and the internal dwelling of the Spirit are helpful:

> These elements, the purificatory and the renovatory, must not be regarded as separable events. They are simply the aspects which are constitutive of this total change by which the called of God are translated from death to life and from the kingdom of Satan into God's kingdom, a change which provides for all the exigencies of our past condition and the demands of the new life in Christ, a change which removes the contradiction of sin and fits for the fellowship of God's Son.[100]

The key observation, for our purposes, is the connection between the penal substitutionary death of Christ and the inward change described by the doctrine of regeneration. In some places, Scripture seems to relate regeneration more directly to the resurrection of Christ than his death. 1 Peter 1:3, for instance, teaches that God has "caused us to be born again to a living hope *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*" (emphasis added). However, the connection to the death of Christ becomes clear when Jesus's words add perspective: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:23–24). Jesus insists that his death is required in order for him to be glorified, and indeed, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead cannot be conceived without the death of Christ preceding it. When Peter goes on to describe the resurrection in chapter 3 of 1 Peter, the death of Christ is set forward in inseparable relationship to the new life in the Spirit: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit" (v. 18). Paul's discussion of baptism in Romans 6:4 further establishes the point since he explicitly sets death in Christ as the ground for the new life in Christ: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into

[100] Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 105.

death, *in order that*, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (emphasis added). On this theme, Paul recalls the need for heart change as well, when he describes the "circumcision made without hands" (circumcision of the heart[101]) in Colossians 2:11. This happens, he says, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Col 2:12),[102] and the whole process is described in terms which highlight the necessity of addressing the problem of sin as the means by which this new life is enacted: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, *having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.* This he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:13−15, emphasis added). Regeneration, or being "made alive" together with the Father and the Son, is thus dependent upon the substitutionary atonement of Christ canceling the record of debt which caused the state of being "dead in [our] trespasses and the uncircumcision of [our] flesh." The debt was canceled because the obligation was fulfilled in the person of Christ when he was nailed to the cross as our representative. This is how the Father "made [us] alive" (v. 13) together with himself and his son.[103]

That regeneration also has implications in honor and shame dynamics becomes

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[101] "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ" (Col 2:11). Paul "viewed circumcision in the flesh to be pointing to a coming spiritual 'circumcision' to be performed by the Mesiah on behalf of eschatological Israel. Paul seems to be developing the forward-looking, end-time meaning of circumcision that had been expressed already in Deuteronomy. The majority of Israel are said to be in need of 'circumcising' their spiritual 'heart,' though they are physically circumcised (Deut. 10:16; cf. Jer. 4:4; 9:25–26). However, at the time of the 'latter-day' restoration of Israel, Deuteronomy prophesies that God 'will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed to love the LORD . . . in order that you may live' (Deut. 30:6; for the explicit 'latter-day' time of this promise, see Deut. 4:27–31; 31:29; cf., possibly, 32:29; Lev. 26:41 . . .)." G. K. Beale, "Colossians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 863.

[102] "Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12).

[103] While not drawn out explicitly in Scripture, the purification of God's people prior to the Spirit taking up residence in them can be conceptually tied to their designation as the temple and dwelling place of God. Like the tabernacle, the people needed to be cleansed before God took up residence in them by the Spirit.

evident when we recall that the emphasis for shame is on "who I *am*," because through regeneration a believer becomes a changed person. Regeneration introduces a radical discontinuity so that, for believers, "Who I *am*" is different than "who I *was*." In the language of Scripture, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). Furthermore, the "new self" is glorious. It is "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness," and it displaces the "old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires" (Eph 4:22, 24). While the Bible teaches that this "old self" of believers remains active and present in the flesh while they continue in this life, it also leaves no doubt that their fundamental identity has changed by a creative act of God.[104] For those who have been "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24), "who I *am*" no longer holds any cause for shame.

Justification

In the second edition of his *Iustita Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, Alister McGrath asserts that Justification "constitutes the real centre of the theological system of the Christian church,"[105] and as he goes on to show in that work, the doctrine of justification has seen no shortage of discussion and debate. The protestant Reformers "relatively quickly reached consensus on the fundamental nature and means of justification,"[106] and as "justification by grace alone through faith alone on account of

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[104] For defense of the argument that new creation emphasizes the creative action of God see Steve Motyer, "New Creation, New Creature," in *EDT*, 586.

[105] Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2nd ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1. McGrath dropped this assertion from his third edition, but the Protestant Reformers, at least, considered Justification "the first and chief article" of Christian theology, Martin Luther, "The Smalcald Articles," in *The Book of Concrod: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles P. Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), pt. 2, art. 1 (pp. 295–328), and "the main hinge upon which religion turns," Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, 3.11.1.

[106] Korey D. Maas, "Justification by Faith Alone," in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary*, ed. Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 511.

Christ's imputed righteousness alone came to be embraced by and enshrined in the confessions of Lutheran and Reformed alike,"[107] so evangelical theologians have continued to recognize the importance of the protestant doctrine.[108] A full definition is provided by J. I. Packer and R. M. Allen in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*:

> The biblical meaning of "justify" (Heb. *ṣādēq*; Gk. *dikaioun* [LXX and NT]) is to pronounce, accept, and treat as just—that is, as, on one hand, not penally liable, and, on the other, entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law. Justification thus settles the legal status of the person justified and can be characterized as a forensic term (Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15; Rom. 8:33–34). The justifying action of the Creator, who is the royal judge of this world, has both a sentential and an executive, or declarative, aspect: God justifies first by reaching his verdict, and then by sovereign action God makes his verdict known and secures to the person justified the rights that are now due.[109]

Key to understanding justification's relationship to Christ's penal substitutionary atonement is the foundational notion of imputation. As mentioned by Maas, it was justification based on imputation that was embraced and defended in the reformed confessions,[110] and theologians have consistently recognized that justification involves both the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers and the sin of believers imputed to Christ.[111] Imputation thus articulates the nature of the substitution which is

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[107] Maas, "Justification by Faith Alone," 511.

[108] Matthew Barrett, ed., *The Doctrine on Which the Church Stands or Falls: Justification in Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Pastoral Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019); J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008); Gary L. W. Johnson and Guy Prentiss Waters, eds., *By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006); Michael S. Horton, *Justification*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2018); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Faith Alone—The Doctrine of Justification: What the Reformers Taught . . . and Why It Still Matters*, 5 Solas Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2015); R. C. Sproul, *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).

[109] J. I. Packer and R. M. Allen, "Justification," in *EDT*, 455.

[110] For the relevant citations from the Augsburg Confession, Second London Confession, Formula of Concord, French Confession of Faith, Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, Second Helvetic Confession, and Westminster Confession of Faith, see Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 37–40.

[111] John Owen, *Faith and Its Evidences*, vol. 5, *The Works of John Owen* (London: Banner of Truth, 1967). Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 968; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 573–74; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 3:583.; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 148.

central to the cross of Christ. As Stott explains, "what was transferred to Christ was . . . legal consequences: he voluntarily accepted liability for our sins."[112] This transfer of liability is appropriate because of the relationship established through union with him.[113] Further, while union with Christ is the means by which imputation is affected,[114] the penal substitutionary sacrifice is logically prior to the actual union, in Scripture, because, as we have seen, God cannot dwell with man when sin has not been addressed. Thus, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which also is affected by union with Christ is likewise dependent on the atoning sacrifice which enabled the union. This means that the entire verdict of justification, including its negative (denial of liability before the law) and the positive (affirmation of righteous standing) aspects, is dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice.[115]

But the legal declaration of righteousness also has bearing on the problem of shame since the transition from condemnation to justification is a transition from dishonor to honor. "Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1). The peace with God that allows access into his presence instead of rejection and exclusion is a product of justification, and righteousness is associated with a crown bestowed by the Lord conferring honor and esteem: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim 4:8). As William Mounce has observed, 2 Timothy 4:8, calls

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[112] Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 148.

[113] John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 51, 84.

[114] The doctrine of imputation describes the biblical teaching that the victory of the king is for his people, as outlined in note 61 in this chapter.

[115] See a summary of theologians who have affirmed the link between justification and substitution in Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 296–98.

up "images of Christ the judge and the appearing of Jesus at his return,"[116] which setting of judgment links the verse to the judicial verdict of justification, and ἀπόκειται (is laid up for me) links the verse as well, since the word "was almost 'technical in edicts of commendation, in which recognition was bestowed on someone by oriental kings.'"[117]

Reconciliation

Turning, next, to reconciliation, evangelicals have recognized that the biblical term *καταλλάσσειν* (to reconcile) and its cognates are not exactly equivalent to the term "reconcile" which frequently translates it in our English Bibles and theological discussion. As described by Denney as early as 1903,

> It is very unfortunate that the English word reconcile . . . [diverges] seriously, though in a way of which it is easy to be unconscious, from the Greek *καταλλάσσειν*. We cannot say in English, God reconciled us to Himself, without conceiving the persons referred to as being actually at peace with God, as having laid aside all fear, distrust, and love of evil, and entered, in point of fact, into relations of peace and friendship with God. But *καταλλάσσειν*, as describing the work of God, or *καταλλαγή*, as describing its immediate result, do not necessarily carry us so far. The work of reconciliation, in the sense of the New Testament, is a work which is *finished,* and which we must conceive to be finished, *before the gospel is preached* [emphasis original].[118]

While the idea of consummated relational reconciliation which dominates the English word is present in the biblical text as well, the Scriptures highlight a forensic

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[116] William L. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, World Biblical Commentary 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 580.

[117] Hans Conzelmann and Martin Dibelius, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Philip Buttolph, Helmut Koester, and Adela Yarbro, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 121, quoted in Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 582. Theologians have also linked justification to honor in a manner similar to expiation by describing the way Christ's righteousness imputed to us serves as a covering. "A man will be justified by faith when, excluded from the righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous." Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.11.2, and "Our faith depends solely on Christ, He alone is righteous, and I am not; for His righteousness stands for me before the judgment of God and against the wrath of God . . . for a foreign righteousness has been introduced as a covering." Martin Luther, *Lectures on Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews*, vol. 29 of *Luther's Works*, ed. and trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1968), 41.

[118] James Denney, *The Death of Christ: Its Place and Interpretation in the New Testament*, 4th ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903), 144–45. Stanley Porter's more recent work treats the subject exhaustively Stanley E. Porter, *Καταλλάσσω in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings*, Estudios de Filología Neotestamentaria 5 (Cordoba, Spain: Ediciones el Almendro, 1994).

aspect of reconciliation accomplished by God and distinguishable from its appropriation by faith in the life of the believer. In other words, the biblical conception of reconciliation is not simply a change in a person's attitude toward God; it also includes a change in God's attitude toward a person based on an objective change in the person's status. Morris refers to this objective aspect of reconciliation when he describes God as having "dealt with the obstacle to fellowship," so that "He now proffers reconciliation to man."[119]

Stump, Baker, and Green, we have noted, deny that such an obstacle to fellowship exists on the side of God, but evangelical scholars such as Morris, Murray, and Macleod[120] have demonstrated definitively (like Handley Moule, T. J. Crawford, and James Denney before them)[121] that sin does create an obstacle to reconciliation specifically, and that the obstacle is removed through the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. As 2 Corinthians 5:19 describes in its explanatory clause, "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Had he counted their trespasses against them, their sins would have proved an obstacle to reconciliation.

The relationship of reconciliation to shame dynamics is also clear in that the consummation of reconciliation entails a transition from relational enmity to fellowship and acceptance. Recalling our definition of shame we can say that the transition is from being regarded by God as unworthy of acceptance to being regarded as worthy of

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[119] Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 228.

[120] Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 214–50; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 29–39; Donald Macleod, "The Work of Christ," in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary*, ed. Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 151–70.

[121] Handley Carr Glyn Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), 75–81; Thomas Jackson Crawford, *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1871), 63–71; Denney, *The Death of Christ*, 143–47.

acceptance, and welcomed into a relationship which is closer and warmer friendship.

Adoption

This leads to the doctrine of adoption, which refers to the Bible's teaching that believers in Christ have become children of God.[122] This teaching is found in verses such as Ephesians 1:6,[123] where the connection to penal substitution is not clearly connected with the theme, but it is also found in passages where the connection is brought out explicitly. In Galatians 4:3–5, for instance, the Scriptures insist on the necessity of redemption in order for adoption to be received: "In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, *so that we might receive adoption as sons*" (emphasis added). We have already considered how redemption was based on and dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary atonement, here we see that adoption was dependent on that redemption. John 1:12–13 makes the connection from another direction by linking the right (or authority) "to become children of God" with the Spirit's work of regeneration: "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." We have seen that regeneration is dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary atonement, and John makes clear that regeneration is the basis for adoption, just as redemption is necessary for it.[124] Adoption is thus dependent on the

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[122] As stated succinctly by Wayne Grudem, "Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 736.

[123] "He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will."

[124] John Murray expands on the necessity of regeneration: "When God adopts men and women into his family he insures that not only may they have the rights and privileges of his sons and daughters, but also the nature or disposition consonant with such a status. This he does by regeneration—he renews them after his image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. God never has in his family those who are alien to its atmosphere and spirit and station. Regeneration is the prerequisite of adoption. . . . But adoption itself is not simply regeneration, nor is it the Spirit of adoption—the one is prerequisite, the other is

penal substitutionary atonement of Christ as well.

Furthermore, the doctrine of adoption especially highlights the change in status that occurs in redemption and regeneration, and thereby builds on the doctrine of reconciliation in the transition from shame to honor. This is brought out in the contrast drawn in Ephesians 2:11–19:

> Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. . . . So you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and *members of the household of God*.

The transition from dishonor to honor is rooted in the prestige associated with the household of the living God. The Westminster Larger Catechism's definition of adoption highlights these blessings: "Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory."[125] The Bible's teaching that believers are heirs with Christ highlights the heights of honor that will be bestowed on believers when the kingdom of Christ is consummated, and the Scriptures make clear that being a child of God is what entitles believers to their inheritance: "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:16–17).

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consequent." Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 141.

[125] "What is Adoption?," The Westminster Standards, accessed April 12, 2024, http://thewestminsterstandards.com/wlc-74-what-is-adoption/. Note also that the Westminster Divines linked adoption to justification.

Sanctification

Moving on to sanctification, we note that theologians distinguish between definitive sanctification and progressive sanctification.[126] Definitive sanctification refers to the instantaneous "once-for-all event, simultaneous with effectual calling and regeneration, that transfers us from the sphere of sin to the sphere of God's holiness, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God."[127] It is in this sense that "we *have been* sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10, emphasis added), and as this verse asserts, it is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ that affects this initial setting apart for God.[128] That the offering is conceived in penal substitutionary terms is evident in that it is a fulfillment of the sacrifices offered to make the tabernacle holy in the Old Testament, as previously discussed.

Progressive sanctification refers to "that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works."[129] That definition by Louis Berkhof rightly recognizes progressive sanctification as a work of God while also affirming the responsibility of the one being sanctified to "perform good works" which the Spirit enables him to do.[130] However, the way that believers are said to participate and cooperate in progressive sanctification shows the dependence on Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice as well. Romans 6:19 instructs them, "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to

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[126] Cf. John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976), 2:277–317.

[127] Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 986.

[128] Consider also Hebrews 13:12 "So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood."

[129] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, exp. ed. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2021), 554.

[130] For further discussion, see Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 554–58.

righteousness leading to sanctification." The basis for this command is the fact that they "have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God" (6:22). This is the reason they present their members as slaves to righteousness, and it is the reason why the fruit they get "leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life" (6:22). But we have already seen that redemption which frees from sin is dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary atonement. Romans 6 emphasizes that we are participants in the death he suffered on our behalf through our union with him (6:5), that this death was suffered to set us free from sin (6:6–7), and that freedom from sin is what animates sanctification. Again, the benefit cannot be separated from the penal and vicarious nature of Christ's sacrifice.

Again also, this benefit of Christ's work is shown to have bearing on honor and shame dynamics. In this case, the transition from shame to honor is engendered by the observable good works which sanctification produces. Recognizing that all good works stem ultimately from God through the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit, we recognize the impact of sanctification in verses like Romans 2:9–10 "There will be . . . glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek." 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 makes the connection between sanctification and glory as well: "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Where once bondage to sin prevented the sanctification which leads to glory and produced fruit leading only to death, redemption through the substitutionary death of Christ enables the sanctification which precipitates works which result in honor and glory on the day of Christ.

Glorification

Mention of the day of Christ is a fitting transition to discussion of glorification. While theologians have recognized a biblical sense in which believers already experience

a foretaste of glorification,[131] the theological emphasis of the doctrine is on the glory that will accrue to believers at the resurrection. As John Murray explains, glorification "is the completion of the whole process of redemption. For glorification means the attainment of the goal to which the elect of God were predestinated in the eternal purpose of the Father and it involves the consummation of the redemption secured and procured by the vicarious work of Christ."[132] Thus, despite the present consciousness of being entitled, in Christ, "to a share of the glory which Christ now enjoys in heaven,"[133] and "however glorious is the transformation of the people of God at death,"[134] still,

> this is not their glorification. It is not the goal of the believer's hope and expectation. The redemption which Christ has secured for his people is redemption not only from sin but also from all its consequences. Death is the wages of sin and the death of believers does not deliver them from death. . . . Hence glorification has in view the destruction of death itself. . . . It is the complete and final redemption of the whole person when in the integrity of body and spirit the people of God will be conformed to the image of the risen, exalted, and glorified Redeemer, when the very body of their humiliation will be conformed to the body of Christ's glory (cf. Phil 3:21). God is not the God of the dead but of the living and therefore nothing short of resurrection to the full enjoyment of God can constitute the glory to which the living God will lead his redeemed.[135]

The evidence that glorification is dependent on the penal substitutionary sacrifice of the Son is in the fact that it is the culmination of all the other benefits of salvation which have been outlined above. The victory over death which is finally and fully realized in the resurrection is the ultimate confirmation of the propitiation of God's

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[131] For demonstration of how this position is reflected in the Westminster Confession of Faith, see, B. E. Franks, "Full Redemption: The Puritan Doctrine of Glorification," *Confessional Presbyterian* 15 (2019): 110; for an exegetical argument for this teaching in Romans 8:30, see Dane C. Ortlund, "Inaugurated Glorification: Revisiting Romans 8:30," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 1 (March 2014): 111–33.

[132] Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 185.

[133] Johannes G. Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary*, ed. G. I. Williamson (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 194.

[134] Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 186.

[135] Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 186. Similarly, "the stage in the application of redemption when we receive resurrection bodies is called *glorification*." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 828.

wrath through the expiation of sin, the ante-typical redemption from sin's bondage, the fullness of regeneration come to fruition, the physical and visible expression of justification, the consummation of reconciliation and adoption, and the comprehensive completion of sanctification. Since all of its constituent parts are wrought through vicarious atonement, we recognize the whole as wrought through vicarious atonement as well.

And as glorification brings to culmination all God's purposes in salvation it fulfills all his designs for the transition from shame to honor for those who are saved. At the resurrection, Christ will "present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," and she will be "holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:27). That passage emphasizes the purity of God's people when they are received into glory. Colossians 1:21–22 marks the full transition from alienation to glory and highlights the death of Christ as instrumental to being presented with honor on that day: "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him." Perhaps most instructive, however, is 1 Corinthians 15, with its explicit teaching on the transitions that occur at the resurrection. Paul declares, "so it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (vv. 42–44). In glorification, the saints take on bodies which are imperishable. These bodies cannot decay, they have no defects or blemishes, there is no disease or deformity or even injury. They are full of health that goes beyond the fullness of the natural body, because they are spiritual bodies. In the same way that the soul (to which "natural body" refers)[136] goes beyond the physical with

[136] I am here building on Hodge's discussion of the natural and spiritual bodies in Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2003), 3:783–84.

its faculties of contemplation, deliberation, and volition, so the spiritual body of the resurrection will in some way go beyond these faculties with its capacity to observe (1 John 3:2)[137] and comprehend spiritual things (1 Cor 13:12)[138] because of the fulness of the Holy Spirit's animating presence.[139] There is no weakness in the resurrection body, whether mental or physical; it is characterized only and fully by power. The ultimate effect of all this is that what was sown in dishonor is raised in glory. In the resurrection, every source of shame is left behind. Only glory and honor remain.

The Solution to Shame's Primary Problems Summarized

At this point in my argument, we have seen that eschatological honor and glory are found only in God's presence, that the presence of sin and its effects result in eschatological shame because they prevent men from being welcomed into God's presence, and that God's provision of Christ as a penal substitute is the means by which God brings sinful men into his presence. We have also seen how the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice have resulted in transitions from shame to honor in propitiation, expiation, redemption, regeneration, justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. This has established the fact that man's primary shame problem has been addressed through the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ, and that the solution to this shame is intrinsic to the teaching of evangelical theology at each of these points.

We turn now to consider the solution to the primary problem of shame for God. This section will describe how providing penal substitutionary atonement through

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[137] "We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

[138] "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."

[139] Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 7 (Chicago, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 322–23.

the sacrifice of the Son is the means by which God demonstrates the superiority of his wisdom and brings glory to himself by vindicating in one act both his holiness and justice on one hand and his love and mercy on the other. Brad Vaughn has given significant exposition to this theme in his *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*. We have already developed the problem above, but tracing Vaughn's argument is helpful as we consider his framing of the solution. As Vaughn stresses, "Since God by grace first committed himself to mankind, his covenantal obligations are not externally 'binding' God. He freely initiates his covenant."[140] However, "when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath" (Heb 6:17), and in so doing God bound himself to fulfill his promise and declared intention. This is why "were he to reject the people whom he promised to save, God would deny himself, shamed for all eternity."[141] Referring to Romans 15:8–9, "For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy," Vaughn is correct that "this claim says *more* than just God wants to glorify himself. Rather, it states that if Christ did not die, God would not be righteous." He would have been untruthful, broken his promise, failed to uphold his covenant faithfulness, and "In that case, God lacks honor. God is shameful."[142]

> It is true that Christ's death vindicates God's justice so he is able to save his people. Yet, one must not get the order backwards. God's glory is not an obstacle to his main goal, i.e., saving sinners. Saving sinners is a *means* to his main goal. Therefore, atonement theology does not terminate simply on human salvation. That is not the end for which God does all things. . . . By Jesus's dying on the cross, the Father glorifies his own name [John 12:28]. The design of the cross reveals the

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[140] Brad Vaughn, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*, EMS Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2013), 197.

[141] Vaughn, *Saving God's Face*, 197.

[142] Vaughn, *Saving God's Face*, 197.

> purpose of atonement, namely, that people "boast in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:18–31; cf. Rom 3:24–28) [emphasis original].[143]

The glory of God in saving sinners through the cross of Christ is multi-faceted. As John Stott has written,

> when we look at the cross we see the justice, love, wisdom and power of God. It is not easy to decide which is the most luminously revealed, whether the justice of God in judging sin, or the love of God in bearing the judgment in our place, or the wisdom of God in perfectly combining the two, or the power of God in saving those who believe. For the cross is equally an act, and therefore a demonstration, of God's justice, love, wisdom, and power. The cross assures us that this God is the reality within, behind and beyond the universe.[144]

The thrust of Stott's statement finds a parallel in many evangelical works, but the key for our purposes is to recognize that it is the penal and substitutionary nature of Christ's sacrifice which reveals the glory of God in the ways Stott describes. It is because the sins of God's people were actually punished in Christ that the glorious justice of God in judgment of sin is revealed. If God has "cleared the guilty" in the end (contra Exod 34:7; Num 14:18; Nah 1:3) and has "left them unpunished" (contra Jer 30:11; 46:28), he cannot be said to be just. It is likewise the fact that God was himself, in the person of the Son, suffering the punishment for sin due to his people that makes his act a glorious demonstration of love. The vicarious suffering of Christ is set within the biblical framework of the righteousness and holiness of God, which explains why a substitute was necessary. When God's wrath and holiness are denied, the rationality of the sacrifice as an expression of love is lost as well. Similarly, when the holiness of God which necessitates penal substitution is denied, the wonder and awe which blossom from God's perfect combining of holiness and love are plucked from their beautiful setting and wilt away. If there is no tension developed in the history of redemption between the justice and the love of God, there is no beauty or wisdom in its resolution. And finally, penal substitution highlights the formidable weight of sin and its consequences and thereby

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[143] Vaughn, *Saving God's Face*, 198–99.

[144] Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 221.

highlights God's power in overcoming them. When God's forgiveness is considered a light thing, the glory of Christ's powerful victory over death is diminished.

That Christ's sacrifice *is* penal and substitutionary has been defended above. What we have seen in this section is that this penal and substitutionary sacrifice addresses the problem of shame which threatens the honor of God in the biblical storyline. In the vicarious suffering of Christ, God keeps his promises and upholds his character in a way that will cause all people to glorify him when he comes again to consummate his plan of redemption.

The Solution to the Secondary Problems of Shame

We have concluded discussion of the primary problems of shame, both (1) the shame that would accrue to God if he were either to fail to appropriately address the shame-causing sins of his people or fail to save his people as he had promised. And (2) the shame that threatens to accrue eternally to all sinners who are cast out of God's presence to suffer everlasting disgrace. In this section we will consider how the secondary problems of shame relate to the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. Recall the problems outlined in chapter 4, which will be treated here in turn. (1) The failure to use and to respond appropriately to *instrumental shame* which is intended by God and by his people to turn us from sin in repentance. (2) The lack of *virtuous shame* which is necessary to restrain us from sin and which causes us to respond appropriately when shame is called for. (3) The experience of *inappropriate shame* which is objectively heaped on people by those whose standards of honor and shame have been distorted from those which are upheld by God in the divine court of reputation. (4) The experience of *appropriate shame* which continues to be activated in human relationships whenever people sin. (5) The experience of shame indirectly related to sin, that is, shame which accrues objectively and subjectively for those who are victims of sin. And (6) The

experience of shame only remotely related to sin, which accrues because of physical defects and other "natural" phenomena.

The problems related to *instrumental shame* and inept *virtuous shame* find their solution in regeneration and sanctification. In regeneration, sinners are given hearts to understand, ears to hear, and eyes to see, such that they become oriented towards the divine court of reputation and are able to rightly discern their guilt and the accompanying sense of appropriate shame. In sanctification, the standard of *virtuous shame* grows increasingly aligned with the heavenly standard, which results in believers restraining thoughts, words, and deeds which would bring shame in the heavenly court. When believers do sin or show themselves ignorant of God's standards, their orientation toward his court of reputation makes them sensitive to *instrumental shame* when it is used by the Lord and by fellow believers to lead them to repentance and greater obedience. Since regeneration and sanctification are both dependent on the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, these solutions to shame's secondary problems are also benefits procured by his vicarious suffering.

The problem of *inappropriate shame* is addressed through the effects of regeneration and sanctification as well. In the first place, having been oriented to the divine court of reputation and God's standards of judgments, believers are increasingly able to identify when they are being shamed inappropriately, so that they become resistant to the shaming pressures of the world. Second, the increasing alignment with God's standards causes a reinterpretation of *inappropriate shame* associated with obedience to Christ. Believers receive and affirm the testimony of Jesus which insists, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt 5:11–12).[145]

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[145] See the discussion of the relationship between beatitudes and honor in David Arthur deSilva, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf &

This changes the experience of *inappropriate shame* so that believers are able to rejoice like the apostles when they are mistreated for Christ's sake (Acts 5:41). The final solution to *inappropriate shame*, however, is the day of judgment, where the righteous will be vindicated and the wicked will be put to the everlasting appropriate shame which is their rightful due. The believer's hope for this vindication is grounded in the penal substitutionary nature of the atonement, since it is that display of God's upheld justice which confirms that sin cannot, and will not, be ultimately overlooked.

The *appropriate shame* experienced in human relationships whenever people sin is also addressed through regeneration and sanctification. Because believers are attuned to God's standards, *appropriate shame* in human relationships is recognized as such and becomes *instrumental shame*. This is because the shaming leads believers to repentance toward God and toward those whom they've sinned against. In repentance toward God, they find and appropriate the forgiveness and reconciliation with God which was procured through the penal substitutionary sacrifice of the Son, and in repentance toward the offended party they seek forgiveness and reconciliation on the human plane as well, offering whatever restitution is appropriate. If forgiveness and reconciliation are refused in the human relationship and the offended party still subjects the believer to the shame of rejection, the shaming has become inappropriate. The solution and response to *inappropriate shame* was already outlined above.

The solution for shame which accrues objectively and subjectively for those who are victims of sin is also related to regeneration and sanctification, since the increasing alignment with God's standards and sensitivity to the divine court of reputation allow believers to see and understand how God regards them and their situation. The teaching of the Scriptures and the ministry of the Spirit help them to

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Stock, 2009), 60. "Makarisms . . . represent the public validation of an individual's or group's experience, behavior, or attitude as honorable." Kenneth C. Hanson, "How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis of Matthew's Makarisms and Reproaches," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 90.

recognize that the conduct perpetrated against them is shameful, and also that such conduct brings shame to all who are associated with it. However, regeneration is also in play in a different sense, alongside adoption, justification, and redemption, because in light of those benefits of Christ's atoning work the fundamental identity and primary relational association of believers has been changed. No longer is the believer identified primarily with Adam's corrupt and sinful race, nor is his primary relational association with his family or other social community. Rather, his new foundational identity is as a child of God, born of the Spirit. He is a new creation, purchased by God through the redemption of Calvary, and he stands justified before God enjoying the status of ascribed honor due to the righteousness of Christ regardless of how he is sinned against in this life. In this way, the experience of *indirect shame* which follows members of Adam's race in their associations with one another falls away as those associations fall away when a believer receives his new identity in Christ. While unbelievers may still link the believer to the shame of sin committed against him, such shaming is now inappropriate, and, again, the believer is able to work out the solution and response to *inappropriate shame* as already outlined.

The solution for shame which is only remotely related to sin is similar. Again, regeneration and sanctification result in increasing alignment with God's standards and sensitivity to his court of reputation. This allows believers to see and understand God's perspective on their disability, deformity, or defect. The Scriptures and the Spirit confirm that things are not as they should be and explain the sense of deficiency and disappointment that they experience in terms of the curse that came as a consequence of sin. In addition, like in the case of *indirect shame*, regeneration points to the believer's new identity in Christ alongside adoption, justification, and redemption. The sense of deficiency may remain objectively present in this life, and shame may still accrue in the courts of reputation of those who have eyes only for this life, but this shame is also rendered inappropriate by the believer's status as a redeemed and justified child of God.

Again, the solution to this *inappropriate shame* is as outlined above, but with one crucial addition to the change of perspective. A crucial part of overcoming this shame is in embracing the hope of glorification and the anticipation of a new resurrected body in which all will be made whole.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to show that the various benefits of the new covenant work of Christ all combine to addresses the problems of shame, even as they address the problems of sin, and to demonstrate how all those new covenant benefits are dependent on Christ's penal substitutionary atonement. To that end, we have considered how the work of Christ is set, by the Scriptures, in the context of Old Testament descriptions of the problem of sin and in the unfolding descriptions of the solution God was preparing. The substitutionary and penal nature of the atonement has been demonstrated, and the relationship to shame has been established in the benefits of propitiation, expiation, redemption, regeneration, justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. In short, we have seen how penal substitution addresses the problem of shame. In the final chapter, we will return again to the arguments of Green, Baker, Stump, and Mann to compare and contrast their proposals with these findings and argue for an approach to communicating the good news for those experiencing shame in terms which sets the problem of shame and its solution within the broader context of confessional orthodox and evangelical theology.

CHAPTER 6

AN ANALYSIS OF COMPETING PROPOSALS

Mark Baker, Joel Green, Alan Mann, and Eleonore Stump have all argued that the penal substitutionary doctrine of the atonement fails to address the problems of shame and therefore inhibits coherent proclamation of the gospel. They list its perceived insufficiency on this front as one of the reasons why it should be abandoned in favor of the reformulations they offer. The exegetical and theological evidence presented above, however, has shown that Christ's penal substitutionary atonement is conceptually inseparable from the gospel, and that it does address the problems of shame when shame is conceived in its biblical categories. That reason for abandoning penal substitution is therefore eliminated. Nevertheless, the concerns raised by these authors about effectively communicating the gospel to people who are oriented to shame dynamics is a valid one, so this final chapter will return to the biblical understanding of gospel proclamation defended in chapter 2 and build on the analysis of chapters 3 to 5 to present an approach to communicating the good news in the types of shame-sensitive contexts described by Baker and Green, Mann, and Stump.

Reviewing Chapter 2

In chapter 2 we examined four strains of evangelical theology which undergird an evangelical understanding of the task of mission. First, we considered the conviction that truth exists and can be known. Second, that the Bible is infallible, inerrant revelation from God. Third, that these convictions about Scripture inform the task of hermeneutics in a number of crucial ways, namely (1) By giving us confidence that Scripture can be interpreted (because God is not ineffective in his communication with us); (2) by

reminding us that the goal of interpretation is rightly understanding what God has said to us in his Word; and (3), by teaching us to recognize that the Scriptures are internally consistent, mutually interpreting, and focused on the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, such that the message of entire canon must be brought to bear in the interpretation of specific passages and in the process of theological formulation and application. Lastly, that these convictions undergird the evangelical understanding that creeds, confessions and historical theology serve a ministerial rather than a magisterial role in interpretation.

These four points of theological emphasis were shown to be directly related to the task of Christian mission because of the Bible's insistence that the task of Christian mission is the proclamation of its own objectively true description of the human predicament and the divine solution in Christ. They ground the fact that God is correct in the diagnosis of the human problem which he gives in his Word, and that the medicine offered in the cross of Christ is designed to effect the needed cure. The challenge, therefore, in communicating the gospel is conceived in terms of the difficulty of helping people understand their actual problem and the actual solution in the work of Christ while avoiding the trap of reformulating Christ's work as a solution to an apparent problem which exists only in their own (mis)understanding. Thus, when we endeavor, as Mann urges us, "to discern the overarching predicament of our time, to understand *the* question behind the questions of our cultural and philosophical context,"[1] our goal is not merely to identify what people *think* their foundational problem is. Our goal is to identify the deepest aspects of their *actual* problem to which they are already sensitive. Since shame is a key aspect of the actual problem, and since many people are already highly sensitive to the dynamics of shame, becoming familiar with the Bible's shame categories and their connections to evangelical doctrine enables us to identify those points of sensitivity

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[1] Alan Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 4 (emphasis original).

which reflect the true problem and proclaim the gospel in a way that is coherent to our hearers.

The Japanese in Baker and Green

As an extension of their larger argument that biblical atonement theology must not be dominated by one central atonement model, Mark Baker and Joel Green apply their conclusions to the problem of sharing the gospel in Japan.[2] Interpreting the work of missionary Norman Kraus[3] within their kaleidoscopic framework of the atonement,[4] they describe the challenge Kraus encountered in trying to communicate the saving significance of the cross in that culture. They highlight an episode related by Kraus that revealed to him that the Japanese had a conception of justice which differed from that common in the West.

> When he asked them, what is justice? they discussed among themselves and answered, "Justice is what the judge says it is." Kraus observes that in the West the image of justice is of a blindfolded goddess impartially weighing someone's guilt or innocence based on the evidence and a set standard of law. In contrast, the Japanese image is of a male judge with his eyes wide open, observing the situation so that he can do whatever will best preserve human relationships.[5]

As Baker and Green relate the story, Kraus then "came to realize that Japan was a shame-based culture very much unlike the guilt-based culture in which most North Americans live."[6] Kraus's description of shame characteristics, picked up by Baker and Green, begins with the assertion that "shame is associated with such concepts of sin as

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[2] This is found in their chapter 7, titled, "Removing Alienating Shame: The Saving Significance of the Cross in Japan." Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 192–209.

[3] C. Norman Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987).

[4] I take the term Kaleidoscopic from Joel B. Green, "Kaleidoscopic View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, Spectrum Multiview Book Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 157.

[5] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 193.

[6] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 194.

defilement or uncleanness, whereas guilt is associated with specific acts and is experienced as a burden of responsibility that a person must bear for his or her acts."[7] Further, "shame is experienced as exposure to others and to oneself," and "'shame anxiety' occurs as a result of not living up to individual and group ideals. In contrast to 'guilt anxiety,' which is focused on punishment of transgression by superiors, it is God's all-seeing, all-knowing eye that is feared in the condition of shame."[8] Building on this last point, they go on to suggest that "shame can potentially disrupt relationships more than guilt," since "guilt results from an offense that is measurable and pardonable" and the offender, therefore, "remains relatively open to relationships with others."[9] In contrast, shame "is an isolating, alienating experience," and according to their understanding, "shame cannot be erased by punishment or expiated through substitutionary compensation or retaliation."[10] These points are central to their understanding of shame and its solution. Baker and Green cite Kraus to explain:

> This is an especially important insight for understanding the nature of human alienation from God . . . . Our shame of the weakness that led us to betray the trusting, loving Friend causes us to hide. . . . Fear of being discovered in our nakedness or exposed in our uncleanness makes us hide in resentful embarrassment. . . . Our rage against God is the projection of our self-loathing. We must be reconciled to ourselves as well as to God.[11]

This leads to a discussion of forgiveness and shame where Kraus is cited again to establish a further contrast between shame and guilt:

> Where sin is thought of as an act of transgression and the consequences are conceptualized as an objective debt (guilt), forgiveness is viewed as pardon or release from the debt. But where sin is conceived as an uncleanness, weakness, or blemish and its consequences devaluate the worth and self-esteem of the sinner

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[7] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 194.

[8] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 196–97.

[9] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 197.

[10] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 197.

[11] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 210–11, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 197.

> (shame), then how shall we understand the meaning of forgiveness? . . . When guilt is objectified, the offender can be pardoned. When shame is objectified, the offender can only be excluded. [12]

With this overview of the nature and problem of shame in view, the authors turn to examine how these characteristics are expressed in Japanese culture. In this regard, they note that "public exposure and exclusion are important means for regulating social behavior," for the Japanese, and that "these sanctions work effectively because social relationships and interpersonal dependencies are of paramount importance."[13] According to Kraus, in Japan, "A respectful relationship is more important than legalities or ideological truth," [14] but "when it becomes impossible to hide or ignore misdeeds, exclusion is the only recourse, with virtually no possibility of reconciliation."[15] In light of these shame dynamics, Baker and Green suggest that believers "might inquire into the ways in which the cross addresses the problems of sin and alienation self-evident in Japanese culture," but they describe this course of action as antithetical to the conviction that "a penal satisfaction model of atonement is the one correct way to understand the cross."[16]

At this point in our treatment, we are now in a position to evaluate this assertion. Having studied the Bible's own shame dynamics, we can see that Baker and Green's description of shame is out of alignment in a key area; having considered the Bible's own description of the problems of shame, we can mark the conspicuous omission in Baker and Green's analysis; and having established how penal substitution grounds all the facets of the Bible's solution to shame, we can recognize numerous points

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[12] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 210–11, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 197.

[13] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 198.

[14] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 213, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 198.

[15] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 199.

[16] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 200.

of contact with evangelical theology that allow Christ's penal substitutionary atonement to be coherently proclaimed in all its fulness.

Looking first at their conception of shame, they are correct that it is "experienced as exposure to others and to oneself,"[17] that shame is tied to a standard of evaluation,[18] and that the ultimate internalizing norm of shame is "exposure to the eyes of the all-seeing, righteous, loving God."[19] They rightly distinguish between "truly shameful acts" for which people "appropriately feel shame," and "false shame" which results in "inappropriate shaming."[20] They also rightly approve of Kraus's mention of shame which can be used instrumentally "as a sanction against undesirable conduct," and of an "internalized theological standard" which falls within the bounds of what I have called virtuous shame.[21]

However, when they assert that "shame is associated with such concepts of sin as defilement or uncleanness, whereas guilt is associated with specific acts and is experienced as a burden of responsibility that a person must bear for his or her acts,"[22] they drive a wedge between guilt and shame that is inconsistent with the biblical testimony. As we have seen, shame can be occasioned by things other than personal guilt, but guilt "associated with specific acts" does give rise to shame in the Bible, and the shame which stems from guilt is set forward in the Scriptures as the main concern in the divine court of reputation. Such shame may be experienced as a sense of defilement or

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[17] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 196.

[18] Specifically, they see that "'shame anxiety' occurs as a result of not living up to individual or and group ideals." Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 196.

[19] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 221–22, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 205.

[20] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 204–5.

[21] Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 221–22, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 205.

[22] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 194.

uncleanness, but the association with specific acts which caused the defilement or uncleanness is not severed. This conceptual dichotomy between shame and guilt spills over into their discussion of forgiveness as well. There, they relate guilt to sin conceived "as an act of transgression" and shame to sin "conceived as an uncleanness, weakness, or blemish,"[23] but in so doing they conflate shame which is directly related to sin with shame which is indirectly or remotely related to sin. Though sinful thoughts, words, and deeds which result in guilt may be conceived in terms of uncleanness, weakness, or blemish, the direct connection to guilt in the associated shame remains. Shame due to uncleanness, weakness, or blemish which is indirectly or remotely related to sin represents a different aspect of the problem.

In the definition of the shame problem, this division and separation of shame from guilt comes alongside their deficient understanding of God's holiness as the key weakness of Baker and Green's analysis. Despite recognizing "evil intentions, selfish desires, deceit, dishonoring parents, fornication, theft, adultery, coveting and the like" as "truly shameful acts,"[24] Baker and Green do not view the guilt associated with those acts as cause for any serious concern, and certainly not as calling forth God's wrath and retribution. They agree that only sinful attitudes and actions can lead to appropriate shame, but they do not agree that *appropriate shame* must be dealt with (or even *can* be dealt with) by addressing the underlying guilt and corrupted human nature. The problem, as they see it, is the alienation that results *from* shame, not the guilt which leads *to* shame and alienation in the first place.[25] Tellingly, they mention that Kraus "sees the cross addressing both shame and guilt," but explain that they will forego a discussion of guilt

[23] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 197.

[24] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 204.

[25] They again cite Kraus approvingly as he describes the problem in these terms. Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 212, quoted in Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 198.

and "focus specifically on the cross and shame in relation to the Japanese context."[26] Guilt, for Baker and Green, is inconsequential, and their analysis therefore omits completely any discussion of the eternal shame which is its consequence. This failure to recognize the primary human problem of shame marks their departure from the biblical testimony.

Referring once again to the categories of evangelical theology, the trajectory of their departure can be traced back to their formulation of the doctrine of God. As described above, the problem of guilt is rooted in the justice and holiness of God's character which keep him from justifying wicked men or welcoming them into his presence. Baker and Green, however, see nothing in God's nature which would prevent him from forgiving sin and withholding the retributive penalty. Because they take issue with the doctrine of God's own justice and holiness which undergirds penal substitution and evangelical theology as a whole, they view the evangelical emphasis on the necessity of substitutionary sacrifice as an imposition in which "an abstract concept of justice instructs God as to how God must behave." [27] It is, therefore, no surprise that they reject the substitutionary view.

However this may be, the assertion is that penal substitution cannot address the problem of shame on its own terms is unfounded, and can be demonstrated in the case of Japanese culture that they put forward. One key point of connection with the biblical presentation is the recognition that shameful behavior leads to exclusion. Baker and Green make reference to the Japanese conception of a prison term. "A prison term, commonly quite long, is not viewed as penal equivalency or rehabilitation, but as a way

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[26] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 196.

[27] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 174. This is in line with Kraus, who declares, "The cross involved no equivalent compensation or payment of penalty demanded by God's anger. God is justified in forgiving us on the basis of his own holy love and not on the basis of an equivalent penal satisfaction which has been paid to him through the death of Jesus." Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 225.

of excluding someone from society."[28] It is not clear that a long period of exclusion from society applied as the appropriate consequence of behavior stands in opposition to the idea of "penal equivalency"—the exclusion is penal, after all, and the duration of the penalty is set in measure to the crime—but nevertheless, this conception of punishment lines up with the biblical teaching. As we have seen, death itself is conceived in the Scriptures as eternal exclusion from God's presence, and by drawing the parallel from the Japanese understanding on this point, it seems no stretch to expect that the predicament of shameful sinners awaiting a sentence of eternal exclusion can be explained in terms that would be "self-evident" to them.[29] Further, Baker and Green narrate the account of a Japanese man who committed suicide when his son was indicted for a crime oversees. They note that his action "was interpreted as an act of atonement."[30] Evidently, the Japanese have some conception of the head of the family bearing shame from the actions of the family members and taking on what they deem to be the appropriate consequences. This provides a perfect segue for coherently explaining the role of Jesus as the firstborn of the household of God and the appropriateness of him bearing the sin and reproach of that family's members. Baker and Green emphasize that the consequence of the man's suicidal death "was not restored relationships but the most permanent self-exclusion possible,"[31] but the gospel is preached not only with comparison to familiar concepts, but also with contrast. Unlike this Japanese father, Jesus Christ is divine and is one with the heavenly Father. Because of his identity as the Son of God, Jesus was able to overcome death after submitting himself to it, and thereby was able to restore relationships ruptured by sin in ways which no mere man could do.

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[28] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 198.

[29] "Self-evident" is Baker and Green's term. Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 200.

[30] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 199.

[31] Baker and Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 199.

This simple example shows points of contact for coherently proclaiming Christ's penal substitutionary atonement in the specific circumstances described by Baker and Green. Turning now to the work of Alan Mann, we will come to a similar conclusion.

The Sinless Society in Mann

Mann's purpose in his book is to help the Christian community "surprise its contemporaries by telling the story of atonement in their own language and so captivate them with a meaningful and sufficient account of the Passion Narrative."[32] His observations of the Western world in which he lives has lead him to conclude that "the working vocabulary of our culture has either dropped sin altogether as a description of our actions, or it has shifted its semantic domain. That is, the force of its meaning has changed."[33] Meanwhile, as the language of sin has diminished in its use, the experience of shame has come to the fore. "While it is possible to push away the sins of moral misdemeanor, the intensity of the emphases placed upon the self has generated a chronic, internalized *dis-ease*, typically labelled 'shame.'"[34] Popular treatments "serve to emphasize the pervasiveness of this uniquely personal experience,"[35] the essence of which Mann describes as the "absence of self coherence."[36]

Mann's description of shame focuses on the contrast between the actual self and the ideal self. "Failure to live up to this ideal we hold for ourselves generates an emotional experience of self-deficiency. To put it simply, many of us are *incoherent* in the story we tell."[37] He explains, further, that people "live with a debilitating incoherence

[32] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 4.

[33] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 13.

[34] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 24.

[35] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 24.

[36] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 28.

[37] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 29.

of the self, a breakdown between who they would like to be and the reality of who they are."[38] Mann differentiates between "the type of shame generated within honor/shame societies" and "the issue of chronic shame found within our Westernized communities."[39] The former type of shame, like guilt, "is a moral emotion," in that "it tends to be concerned with the other, whether in the form of a neighbor, cultural expectation, or social law."[40] The latter type of shame, which is the focus of his book,

> thrusts attention upon the self. While social setting and cultural expectations can cause shame, and even perpetuate it, in its contemporary Westernized form, "there is no need for an audience or the presence of others to feel shame." . . . The shamed person effectively ignores the other as the individual becomes acutely aware of his or her own internal struggles. . . . [A] fear of exposure, coupled with a general sense of being bad or non-specific sense of wrong, conspires to paralyze the self in relation to the other.[41]

According to Mann, this shame and the "self-stories" which are its expression "effectively turn [a person] into an *a-moral* or; perhaps more accurately, a *pre-moral*, being. . . . Due to [such a person's] inability to live a life of mutual, intimate, undistorted relating she becomes trapped within herself, cut off from the moral community."[42]

This understanding of shame defines the problem for which Mann's formulation of the atonement is meant to provide a solution. In his view, "the chronically shamed, sinless self needs to be saved—not from divine wrath, but from self-judgment, which isolates and alienates the self from the Other/other. He is emotionally, socially, and spiritually paralyzed by an inability to trust, to commit, and to believe in himself or others."[43] Further, according to Mann,

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[38] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 29.

[39] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26.

[40] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26.

[41] Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 42, quoted in Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26–27.

[42] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 40.

[43] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 39–40.

> only those who have already been atoned for, and reconciled to the Other/other know what it is to have sinned, to feel guilt at the wrong they have done. . . . For until the chronically shamed self has been able to deal with their relational *dis-ease*, and has sufficiently re/joined society and/or the community of faith, that person will never be in a position to understand and take real responsibility for the relational dysfunction that categorizes his or her life as shame-filled.[44]

The "community of faith" must therefore establish a "shame-less community," where people can rejoin society in this way, "and that requires reconciliation and atonement prior to dealing with issues of moral sin and guilt. Only then can the chronically shamed make sense of the demand to '*Go, and sin no more*.' Until that time, they will remain *pre-social*, *pre-moral*, chronically shamed people."[45]

To establish such a shame-less community, Mann proposes following the ideal of Jesus in which "the central paradigm is the shame-destroying, person-affirming inclusion of [people] without condemnation or concern for the sin in which" they may have been involved.[46] Once the community has been established, Christians can offer a narration of Jesus's story that focuses on the consistency and coherence between his ideal self and his real self. Having made clear his intention to die on the cross, the agony of anticipation in the garden of Gethsemane and the taunts of passersby who called on him to bring himself down from the cross are seen as tests of whether Jesus had the ability "to hold together that intent with public action."[47] Because Jesus ultimately maintains coherence and consistency, his story "opens up the possibility of, and enacts the potential for, our own true self to appear."[48] To have avoided the cross would have been "to break

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[44] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 41.

[45] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 41.

[46] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 85–86. Mann takes this point from the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 and the account of the woman caught in adultery in John 8. He applies this conviction more specifically in his recommendations for the eucharist, citing Tim Gorringe who advises, "First table fellowship, then repentance and membership of the new community. This seems . . . a far mor beautiful and gracious practice than setting preconditions on coming to 'the Lord's table'—something the Lord never did." Timothy Gorringe, *The Sign of Love: Reflections on the Eucharist* (London: SPCK, 1997), 25.

[47] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 86–87, 100.

[48] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 105.

with his ideal self, to destroy the coherence of his personal story, and with it the possibility of *at-one-ment* for all."[49] The argument is that "in encountering the story of Jesus we become aware of the power of Other/other-focused living to bring about the *at-one-ment* craved by the self,"[50] but "if the cross is to be a dying for others, as [Jesus] intends it to be, then those who follow him there must also live by prioritizing the other, for in doing so we open our lives to that same at-one-ness: the presence of relational self-coherence."[51]

These comments suggest that Mann's understanding of the atonement falls within the purview of the moral influence theory[52] and others have addressed the weaknesses of that view more broadly.[53] Our concern, however, is to evaluate how Mann's presentation of shame compares to the biblical categories we have examined in this study, and how the penal substitutionary understanding of Christ's work relates to those in the types of circumstances Mann describes.

Considering first his treatment of shame, we gain biblical perspective on the issues he presents by applying the categories with which we are now familiar. In the first place, we must be clear about the standard being used to evaluate shameful behavior. The shame Mann is concerned to address is primarily psycho-centric—people's own evaluation of themselves falls short of their own standard. However, Mann does not ask

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[49] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 99.

[50] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 100.

[51] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 104.

[52] Louis Berkhof's definition is appropriate: "The fundamental idea is that there is no principle of the divine nature which necessarily calls for satisfaction on the part of the sinner; and that the death of Christ should not be regarded as an expiation for sin. It was merely a manifestation of the love of God, suffering in and with His sinful creatures, and taking upon Himself their woes and griefs. This suffering did not serve to satisfy the divine justice, but to reveal the divine love, so as to soften human hearts and to lead them to repentance." Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, exp. ed. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2021), 394.

[53] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2003), 566–73; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 394–95; John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 20th anniv. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 212–19.

the important question of whether the person's standard is aligned with God's. He does not ask what standards are being used in the social courts of evaluation either, though socio-centric shame fits into his analysis on two levels. First, he acknowledges that "social setting and cultural expectations can cause shame, and even perpetuate it."[54] Second, he presents the manifestation of the psycho-centric shame as oriented outwards as a fear of the incoherence of one's self being exposed to others.[55] This suggests that those struggling with the type of shame Mann describes believe others will assess them according to the same standards that they themselves have adopted, and that their negative assessment would be accurate. While he hesitates to use the word "God," Mann does make reference to the divine (capitalized) "Other," but, in his view, the definitive thing that "isolates and alienates the self from the Other/other" is "self-judgment."[56] The failure to evaluate the standard of this self-judgment is crucial, because recognition and evaluation of the standard is the means of showing that moral standards are already in use. Mann asserts that "to speak of guilt, to make moral judgments about the self in relation to a divine or indeed a communal law, is to tell a story that makes no sense."[57] But once it is established that the judgments people are already making about themselves are moral in nature (relating to good and bad, right and wrong), then discussion can proceed to the grounds for those moral judgments.

More importantly, however, Mann's conception of our alienation from God leaves no room for the possibility that God might agree with our negative self-assessment, that our standard has been, in some measure, aligned with his. In other words, Mann does not allow for *appropriate shame* which stems from a right

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[54] Pattison, *Shame*, 42, quoted in Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 26–27.

[55] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 27.

[56] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 40.

[57] Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 40.

comprehension of our standing before God when we have offended against a divinely ordered norm. This reflects the main weakness of Mann's proposal, which is that he fails to recognize how God's judgment is prior, in importance, to our own self-judgment in the shame that isolates and alienates us from God, and that, apart from a solution, God's judgment will result in eternal shame, which is of far greater import than the shame which Mann describes. In this, Mann is aligned with Baker and Green in ignoring the primary human problem of shame. And, also as in the case of Baker and Green, the trajectory of his departure can be traced back to his formulation of the doctrine of God.[58]

Laying aside critique of Mann's perspective and turning to positive consideration, how can the penal substitutionary death of Christ be brought to bear on those experiencing shame in the way Mann describes? What points of contact allow for the proclamation of the gospel in ways that will prove intelligible to people shaped by the ideas of the contemporary West? As alluded to above, one place to start is by asking people how they develop and adopt the standards of shameful behavior which they use in their debilitating self-assessments. This opens the door for discussion of God's standard and comparison and contrast of the various standards people encounter in communities of which they are a part. This, of course, can lead naturally to a discussion of God and what he has revealed about himself. Despite Mann's reticence to speak of the "divine Other," the Scriptures declare that God "has put eternity into man's heart" (Eccl 3:11), and that "what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly

[58] Mann does not develop his doctrine of God explicitly. Nevertheless, he reveals foundational aspects of his view of God in omitting to discuss or address the implications of divine holiness and justice in his assessment of the human problem and his description of the divine solution. In describing the cross, he states the following on page 102: "The cross, however, is not a place of judgment for the inadequacies and insufficiencies of human relating. Indeed, it is a place of acceptance, of embracing the human condition." Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 102. Here, he explicitly dismisses the idea that the cross is an expression of God's judgment, and this must inform his assertion that it constitutes a place of acceptance. In other words, for Mann, the cross is not the means by which God *comes* to accept us, but an expression of the fact that *he already does*. The story of Jesus in the gospels, he says, is a "narrative of non-judgmental welcome." Mann, *Atonement for a Sinless Society*, 102.

perceived, ever sins the creation of the world, in the things that have been made" (Rom 1:19–20). The truths of God about which we speak are therefore suppressed (Rom 1:18) rather than incomprehensible, and the truth of God's Word has explanatory power to help people understand their experience of life. When shame comes from offences against divinely ordered norms, that shame is appropriate. Recognizing it as such sets the context for receiving the message of Christ's penal substitutionary death as good news that addresses the problem at hand. When expectations contrary to God's Word are heaped upon people, we are able to explain how they experience inappropriate shame objectively through the shaming actions of a community and subjectively if they embrace those expectations for themselves. Likewise, when people experience shame that is indirectly or remotely connected to sin, we are able to give perspective to their plight, and for all these secondary problems of shame, the benefits of the work of Christ discussed in chapter 5 can be applied.

The Various Problems of Shame in Stump

In contrast to Baker, Green, and Mann, Eleonore Stump's discussion of shame dynamics and their relationships to other doctrines is much more thorough, and statements of her doctrinal positions and reasoning much more explicit. Her project is an attempt to provide an account of the atonement that delivers remedies to the multiple components of the human problem calling out for a solution.[59] She argues that remedies for the problems of shame are lacking in existing Thomistic and Anselmian models of the atonement,[60] and outlines the nature of those problems as part of her case. As argued in chapter 3, Stump's description of key shame phenomena is well aligned with the Bible's teaching. She recognizes that shame, like guilt, "are both concomitants of past moral

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[59] Stump, *Atonement*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 16.

[60] Stump, *Atonement*, 23–36.

wrongdoing," but that, "unlike guilt, shame can have more sources than a person's own wrongdoing."[61] She includes shame experienced "in consequence of the depredations of other human beings,"[62] and shame arising from "defects of nature"[63] as categories of such sources, which we have named *shame indirectly related to sin* and *shame remotely related to sin*, respectively. She also recognizes that shame is an "appropriate" response to sin and guilt,[64] that "a standard of value"[65] is in play when evaluations of shamefulness are made. She does not use the terms explicitly, but her discussion of the standards of shame leads her to recognize the reality of *inappropriate shame* and *virtuous shame* as well.[66] However, approaching her study from a Roman Catholic perspective, and being, therefore, unfamiliar with evangelical theology, Stump's analysis does not relate shame to key Protestant doctrines and thus distorts the biblical teaching.

Stump's first criticism of penal substitution,[67] as it relates to shame, frames the doctrine as adding to shame, rather than alleviating it. She argues,

> In addition to other sources of shame, past sin leaves a human person with shame over what he now is, namely, a person who has done such things. But having an innocent person suffer the penalty or pay the debt incurred by one's own sin does not take away that shame. If anything, it seems to add to it. There is something painfully shaming about being responsible for the serious suffering of an innocent person, even if that suffering was voluntarily undertaken on one's behalf.[68]

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[61] Stump, *Atonement*, 18–19.

[62] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[63] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[64] Stump, *Atonement*, 45.

[65] Stump, *Atonement*, 45–46.

[66] Stump, *Atonement*, 46.

[67] Stump applies her criticism more broadly, to "Interpretations of the Anselmian kind," of which she considers penal substitution a species. Stump, *Atonement*, 23. I will use the more specific designation since it is the subject of this work.

[68] Stump, *Atonement*, 25.

The primary objection to Stump's depiction of the penal substitutionary view is that her portrayal of the innocent person who suffers does not do justice to the Bible's description of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the people for whom he dies. He is not a third party who suffers collateral damage. In the first place, as the divine Son, the innocent person is already related to sinners as the One whom they have sinned against. More importantly, however, the doctrine of imputation is based on the union of Jesus Christ with his people. They are in him and in the Father just as the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son (John 17:21). This union with Christ is what makes it appropriate and just for the sins of his people to be imputed to him.

Further, the idea of "*being responsible* for the serious suffering" of Jesus requires biblical context as well. Certainly, there is a sense in which we are responsible for the suffering of Jesus. But our responsibility lies in the fact that our own sins led to the state of being subject to the penalty. Crucial to notice, here, is the fact that the shame is in the character and conduct which led to the sentence of judgment and condemnation, not in the mode in which (or the person on which) the sentence was carried out. The fact that Jesus endured the consequences does not entail that the consequences were increased. Those who themselves will endure the penalty of eternal shame and disgrace will not be enduring a lesser penalty than that decreed for those whose sentence was endured by Christ on their behalf.

Nevertheless, there is an element of truth in Stump's criticism, in that the suffering of the penalty by another does not detract from the fact that the sinner was in the state which occasioned the penalty. That there is a sense in which this state will be remembered is reflected in Ezekiel 16:62–63, where God insists, "I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD, that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, *when I atone for you* for all that you have done, declares the LORD God" (emphasis added). As Daniel Wu has argued, this passage is best interpreted as part of a recapitulation at the end of the

oracle which it concludes. Seen in such light, these verses emphasize "that the bringing down of Jerusalem's self-perception that occurred in v. 52 will not be forgotten," and "it is the proud and presumptuous speech of the wicked that is silenced."[69] Thus, in the very act of atoning for sin, the shame that accrues from "all that [they] have done" is brought to light in such a way that the people of God will be permanently humbled. Israel will no longer open its mouth in arrogant boasting, or "for the purpose of finding excuses for its previous fall, or to murmur against God and His judgments."[70] Rather, they will remember the state from which they were rescued and conduct themselves as the "meek and humble children of God, for whom the kingdom has been prepared from the beginning."[71]

Far from undermining penal substitution, therefore, Stump's observation proves to be aligned with the biblical teaching on this point. Penal substitutionary atonement does result in a chastened sense of shame, in the way just described. But, as we have seen, it also results in redemption, justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification, all of which reflect the bestowing of honor. This honor reflects the verdict of the divine court of reputation, and the result is the subjective experience of honor for God's meek and lowly people within the objective state of being honored by the king. The meekness and humility occasioned by the need for atonement and its provision is not a problem of shame that needs to be overcome.

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[69] Daniel Y. Wu, *Honor, Shame, and Guilt: Social-Scientific Approaches to the Book of Ezekiel*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements 14 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 114.

[70] C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. 9, *Ezekiel–Daniel*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 232.

[71] Keil, "The Prophecies of Ezekiel," 232. Sweeney speaks similarly: "The purpose of such shame is . . . to ensure that the people continue to make the right choices in the future" Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the Old Testament (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2013), 181. Thus, the shaming this passage describes cultivates a virtuous, prospective sense shame.

The final critique of Stump addressed here is the perceived inability of penal substitution to address the problems of shame which spring "from sources other than a person's own past sinful acts."[72] As she argues, "It is worth noticing in this connection that neither the Anselmian nor the Thomistic kind of interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement includes any explicit remedy for shame, or at least for the kind of shame that is not a consequence of a person's own past sins."[73] But we have seen that penal substitution does address that kind of shame because it is the basis for redemption, justification, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. Those connections have been outlined in chapter 5.

Again, we are now in a position to show how the Bible's shame categories and their connections to evangelical doctrine can be brought to bear in the circumstances Stump uses as examples. Stump sets forward several case studies of individuals to illustrate the problems of shame. The first are the stories of Lal Bibi and Joseph Merrick which Stump uses to illustrate the problems of shame "that does not have its source in a person's own evil acts."[74] Lal Bibi was "an 18-year old Afghani woman . . . who was gang-raped and beaten for days by men in a local militia as punishment for the actions of a cousin of hers who offended someone in the militia."[75] The shame she experienced was evidenced in her own words: "If the people in government fail to bring these people to justice, I am going to burn myself. I don't want to live with this stigma on my forehead."[76] More shocking to Western sensibilities was the shame described by her

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[72] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[73] Stump, *Atonement*, 52.

[74] Stump, *Atonement*, 51.

[75] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[76] Lal Bibi quoted in Alissa J. Rubin, "Rape Case, in Public, Cites Abuse by Armed Groups in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, June 2, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/02/world/asia/afghan-rape-case-is-a-challenge-for-the-government.html. See also Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

family. “Her relatives brought her, battered as she was, to a hospital and filed a complaint against her attackers; but the relatives explained that if the complaint was not acted on satisfactorily, they would have to kill her to remove the shame from the family.”[77] Joseph Merrick, “the so-called Elephant Man . . . suffered horribly from the disease that afflicted and deformed him. Outcast from society horrified at his condition, he was a half-feral, hunted, and hiding human being before he was finally found and helped by a compassionate doctor.”[78] This shame, she explains, “also needs a cure if a person suffering from it is not to be at a distance from others, including God,”[79] but she does not believe the “Anselmian” interpretation provides one.

We have seen however, that the biblical solution to these secondary problems of shame is grounded in Christ’s penal substitutionary atonement, and we can identify points of contact in the stories Stump presents. Lal Bibi was concerned that her perpetrators may not be brought to justice. Notably, Stump’s conception of God’s character does not demand that he execute the retributive penalty which the rapists’ actions call for. However, Christ’s penal substitutionary atonement highlights this aspect of God’s justice and this point of contact can be brought to bear to assure Bibi that God is unwilling to clear the guilty. The crimes of her perpetrators will be punished, justice will be done in the end, and her own statement shows she recognizes the impact this would have in removing the stigma she feels emblazoned on her forehead. Furthermore, the reaction of her family shows that she has an understanding of shame which is ascribed through association rather than achieved through personal wrongdoing. That point of contact can be leveraged to demonstrate the more significant problem of Bibi’s inseparable kinship with the rest of the race of Adam. She is part of the mass of humanity

[77] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[78] Stump, *Atonement*, 50.

[79] Stump, *Atonement*, 52.

that sins and is sinned against in the shameful way she has experienced.

In addition, the Bible's standards of shame and the divine court of reputation can be introduced to demonstrate that the proposed course of action will fail to restore honor in the only court of reputation that matters. In taking their relative's life, or in taking her own life, Bibi's family or Bibi herself would actually be heaping up more dishonor in God's sight because of their rejection of his commands. The honorable course is to entrust vengeance to the Lord—it is his to repay, and the ultimate solution to the shame Bibi faces and her family faces is achieved not through her death, but through the death of another, who died as the representative of a new family into which they are invited. This requires identification with Jesus not only as one who was sinned against, but as one who has sinned, is prone to sin, and is in need of a savior. By trusting in Christ's payment for her own sin on the cross, she would be able to remove the stigma from her forehead once and for all, because of her redemption, adoption into God's family, and regeneration into new life. As we have seen, all of these facets of salvation are dependent on the penal substitutionary death of Christ.

When she turns to the second illustration, Stump does not describe a concern for justice on Joseph Merric's part, but he might also be comforted by assurance that those who have mistreated him will stand before God and be held accountable for their actions. What Stump does describe is Merric's consciousness of his own physical deformity. This provides a point of contact for discussing the more serious point of deformity that plagues the entire human race, a deformity of character rather than of body. Such a discussion would place Merric's physical deformity in its proper perspective, showing that it is merely reflective of the fact that Merric, like Bibi, is part of a sinful race that is estranged from God and suffering in this world because of its collective rejection of him. As with Bibi, the ultimate solution to Merric's shame comes only through his own recognition of his sinful condition and trust in Christ's action of enduring the penalty on his behalf. Being united with Christ through faith, Merric would

treasure the regeneration, reconciliation, and adoption that grant him honored status even in this life, and he would look forward to the resurrection body and glorification that would await him in the life to come. Again, each of these benefits of Christ's suffering is grounded in the penal and substitutionary nature of his sacrifice.

To illustrate the purported inadequacies of the "Anselmian" interpretation of the atonement to address shame that is tied to moral wrongdoing, Stump uses the example of John Newton. As Stump recounts,

> When he was a young man, Newton was involved in the slave trade. On three different occasions, he was even the captain of a slave ship; and, on those three ships alone, he was responsible for transporting many Africans. The conditions on the ships were unspeakable. A large percentage of the Africans transported died during the voyage; the suffering of those who survived was heartbreaking. When he became a slave trader, Newton lost much of his honor and loveliness by comparison with decent people.[80]

According to Stump, Newton's guilt and shame are not addressed, if the cross of Christ is conceived as a penal substitutionary sacrifice.

> One can think of the issue this way. On orthodox Christian theology, the point of the atonement is to make it possible for a post-Fall human person such as Newton, guilty and shamed, to be united with God in everlasting joy. In heaven, Newton is united with God in a way that allows Newton to see, through his union with the omniscient, eternal mind of God, all that has transpired in time. But God can see all the heartbreaking, shaming cruelty of Newton's acts in the slave trade; and in heaven Newton sees it also. Not only that, but everyone else redeemed in heaven will be able to see it as well. Satisfaction on the Thomistic approach can provide something to make that vision tolerable, because such satisfaction can make the life of the wrongdoer such as Newton honorable. But satisfaction on the Anselmian approach has no such effects. On the Anselmian approach, Christ's satisfaction gives God what God needs to grant human beings pardon, but it does not change a wrongdoer such as Newton himself. And since this is so, on the Anselmian approach to satisfaction, contrary to what is commonly supposed, satisfaction cannot alter Newton's guilt; and it does not even address Newton's shame.[81]

In the Thomistic approach Stump refers to, God is conceived as offering grace to sinners that, if not resisted, bring about "the good states of will that [eventuates a] willingness to make satisfaction and . . . persistence in carrying that willingness through

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[80] Stump, *Atonement*, 44.

[81] Stump, *Atonement*, 108.

into action."[82] Thus, "Newton's efforts at bringing about the abolition of the slave trade were his satisfaction. And this satisfaction was his response to the amazing grace that he felt had already been given to him."[83] Further "Newton's satisfaction not only altered his relative standing with others in his community or in the whole human family, but it also altered his relationship with God. . . . What it altered was Newton himself, the deplorable *relicta* in his psyche and the damaged state of the world for which he was responsible."[84]

Stump is here building on the Roman Catholic understanding of justification in a way that makes clear its continued divergence from protestant evangelical doctrine. Her protest against the Anselmian doctrine of the atonement at this point is based on her conviction that the only ground for a sense of honor or a changed status before God is to have sufficient good works and good inclinations to justify that status. In Roman Catholic doctrine, these inclinations and works are regarded as fruits of God's grace and as dependent on it, but as Stump's account shows, the focus remains on the works of the reformed sinner rather than on the work of Christ. In the honor-shame terms we have considered, the honor Newton receives in heaven is the achieved honor of good works, though those works are fueled by the grace of God.

In contrast, the protestant evangelical view prioritizes the ascribed honor that accrues to redeemed sinners through the work of Christ. As we have seen, Christ's sacrifice provided propitiation through expiation so that God's wrath was appeased through the covering over of sin. Contra Stump, God does not now regard "all the heartbreaking, shaming cruelty of Newton's acts in the slave trade" in a way that is detrimental to Newton's honorable status before him. Even those types of sins are covered and exert no negative influence in God's regard for us. The psalmist declares,

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[82] Stump, *Atonement*, 105.

[83] Stump, *Atonement*, 105.

[84] Stump, *Atonement*, 107.

“As far as the east is from the West, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” (Ps 103:12). Nor does Newton regard his own acts in the light Stump describes. As alluded to above, his consciousness of his former status remains, in some sense, and he therefore manifests the humility and meekness of the children of God, but the reason his former sins no longer detract from his standing in heaven is found in the fact that God has been propitiated by the expiation of his sin through the penal substitutionary death of Christ. Christ’s penal substitutionary death also paid the price of his redemption and resulted in his regeneration, adoption, and sanctification. Moreover, Christ’s death on his behalf secured the glorification of his soul for which he now waits in anticipation. Again, the assertion that penal substitution cannot address the problem of shame on its own terms is shown to be unfounded.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The question we have addressed in this dissertation is whether a move away from penal substitutionary atonement is a necessary or appropriate response to the presenting problems of shame. As I have argued, the Bible's shame categories are integrally related to the classic orthodox and evangelical doctrines, and the exegetical and theological evidence leads to the conclusion that a move away from penal substitutionary atonement is not necessary or appropriate. The key to communicating the gospel to people who are sensitive to shame dynamics is becoming fluent with Scripture's own presentation of those dynamics and with the biblical connections which relate those dynamics to other doctrines. Bringing the argument full-circle, we are now in position to summarize those shame dynamics and theological connections to the shame problems and their solutions.

Chapter 3 Shame in the Scriptures

Shame, we recall, is the fear, pain, or state of being regarded deficient in social relationships. This definition aligns with the sense of exposure that describes the shame experience and reflects both its prospective (fear of being regarded as deficient), and retrospective (pain or state of being regarded as deficient) aspects. In a similar fashion, it also reflects the subjective personal experience of shame (fear and pain of being regarded as deficient) and also the objective dimension of shame which exists beyond the personal experience (state of being regarded as deficient). The definition also points to two important questions, namely, (1) before whom is a person regarded as deficient?, and (2) by what standard is a person regarded as deficient? The answers to these questions

provide insight into the court of reputation which is evaluating the presence of shame. Answers to first question will fall into one of three categories; the court of reputation will be theo-centric (representing the God's court in heaven), socio-centric (representing the court of some community of persons on earth), or psycho-centric (representing the person's own internal standards and judgments). Answers to the second question reveal the degree to which the standard used in the evaluation of shame is aligned to the standard of God.

This general overview of shame provides the basis for defining categories of thought which clarify our understanding of the Bible's shame dynamics. In the first place, we identified *virtuous shame* which is present when a person's standard of shame is aligned with God's. *Virtuous shame* is theo-centric in that it reflects an orientation to the divine court reputation, and such alignment results in the subjective, personal fear of being regarded as deficient in God's court, which operates to restrain sinful actions. It also results in the subjective, personal pain of *appropriate shame* when a person succumbs to temptation. This leads to the concept of *instrumental shame*, which captures the biblical teaching that shame is used instrumentally by God and in the Christian community to bring about repentance. The presence of *virtuous shame* allows instrumental shame to be effective, whereas a person who is *shameless* is insensitive to the objective shaming which would otherwise motivate them to recover a state of honor.

Moving on to the causes of shame, our analysis of the biblical data led to the conclusion that, in the divine court of reputation, all shame is ultimately occasioned by sin. In many cases, shame is caused directly by sinful thoughts, words, and actions. Sin is defined as a violation of a divinely ordered norm, and all sin results in the reality of deficiency in the most important interpersonal relationship, namely, the relationship between a person and the God who created him and to whom he owes complete allegiance and obedience. However, we also noted that the Bible depicts two categories of shame which accrues to individuals apart from personal transgression. The first of

these is shame we described as *indirectly related to sin*, which arises when a person is victimized by another. Treatment such as abuse, rape, and abandonment violate a person's dignity such that a state of deficiency is created. The second of these we described as shame only *remotely related to sin*, which arises from the defects or deformities of "nature." The Bible, we saw, traces the root of disrupted biological processes to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, and, accordingly, the deficiencies of physical and mental disabilities are related to sin as well.

Additional insights were gleaned by closely observing the biblical presentation. In this line is the observation that the Scriptures affirm a distinction between *achieved* and *ascribed* shame. The former is the result of a person's activity or demonstrated character, whereas the latter is the result of a person's associations with others. The principle applies as well to *achieved* and *ascribed* honor, and is closely related to the biblical principle of federal headship. On another note, shame was shown to be an aspect of God's punishment. It is not simply that men and women ought to be ashamed according to the standard of the divine court of reputation; they will also be put to shame. People will be subject to everlasting shame and disgrace as the penalty for their sins. Perhaps most strikingly, for those who have followed discussions in anthropology and psychology, close examination of the biblical presentation showed that the most definitive differentiation between the experience of shame and the experience of guilt is that the experience of shame is occasioned by a broader set of circumstances. As we noted, the causes of shame include more than the personal transgression which define the causes of guilt. The focus on the self (shame) versus the focus on action (guilt) distinction may have some validity when considering the subjective experiences which arise from sin, but the distinction is subtle and breaks down when pressed absolutely.

Chapter 4: Shame's Problems

The consideration of the Bible's shame dynamics in chapter 3 paved the way for definition of the shame problem in chapter 4. As argued there, the Scriptures actually present a number of shame problems, but the problems do not all rank at the same level of importance. The primary problems of shame, as presented in the unfolding narrative of Scripture, are twofold. From man's perspective, the primary problem of shame is the danger of eternal disgrace and separation from God which looms as the consequence of sin. From God's perspective, the primary problem of shame is introduced by his promise to save a people from those consequences and receive them into his presence in an eternal covenantal union.

In both cases, the primary problems of shame are rooted in the revealed character of God and the sinful state of man. From man's perspective, the looming consequence of death and its biblical associations with rejection and disgrace are grounded in the Bible's insistence that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23), and that God will "by no means clear the guilty" (Exod 34:7; Num 14:18; Nahum 1:3). The psalmist declares of him, "You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you" (Ps 5:4). As theologians have demonstrated through the centuries, the Scriptures testify that God's justice and holiness are integral to his very nature, and these attributes preclude divine union and fellowship with sinful, guilty, and, therefore, shameful human beings.

From God's perspective, the primary problem of shame comes from the seeming incongruity of his promise to do just that. Having declared his intention to establish such intimate union and fellowship with sinful men, his dealing with the nation of Israel suggests that he will be dishonored either by the depravity of his people or by his failure to realize his declared intent. To unite himself to them and show them his favor in the midst of their wickedness would violate his own justice and righteousness. On the other hand, to act justly and condemn their wickedness with the sentence of death,

disgrace, and separation would show him impotent to fulfill his stated purpose. In either case, God would accrue shame. He would be shown to be deficient when evaluated against his own standard.

The secondary problems of shame are those problems of shame which are described in Bible, but are temporal in nature, pertaining to experiences and states of shame in this life rather than on the day of judgment and in the life to come. Under this heading we considered the problem of deficient *virtuous shame*, which prevents people from restraining themselves when tempted to sin and which renders *instrumental shame* ineffective because people are not sensitive to *appropriate shame*. This results when people orient themselves to a court of reputation where God's standard of evaluation is abandoned.

Another secondary problem is the experience of *inappropriate shame*. When communities of various kinds establish courts of reputation based on ungodly standards of evaluation, they shame people in situations where shame is not appropriate. It is such occasions that cause righteous men to cry out with David, "O men, how long shall my honor be turned to shame" (Ps 4:2). In this life, people are regularly subjected to such inappropriate shaming.

A third problem is the lingering impact of *appropriate shame*, *shame indirectly related to sin*, and *shame remotely related to sin* which accrues due to the ongoing presence of sin and its effects. People who have sinned are rightly debased in the eyes of others, and those who have been violated or who suffer from physical deficiencies bear constant testimony to the corruption of the human race and its failure to maintain the world according to the perfections of God's original intent.

Chapter 5: Shame's Solution

In considering the solution to the human problem, we noted first of all that the Scriptures present the primary human problem in terms of sin. Because human sinfulness

is conceived relationally with respect to God and is presented as the ultimate cause of all human shame, addressing the problem of sin also addresses the human problems of shame. In a similar fashion, because man's sinfulness is what makes him offensive and repulsive to God's very essence, addressing the problem of sin also addresses the godward problem of shame.

The actual details of the solution God planned, implemented, and will ultimately bring to completion were traced along the lines of their progressive revelation in the Old Testament. The principle of substitution is introduced subtly in Genesis chapter 3:21 with the provision of animal skins and developed with increasing clarity through the provision of the ram in place of Isaac, the provision of the Passover lamb in place of the firstborn of Israel, and the provision of sacrificial offerings in the inauguration of the old covenant and as an ongoing practice under the old covenant law, culminating in the day of atonement. Likewise, the penal nature of the substitute is hinted at in Genesis 3, when read in light of the original warning in Genesis 2:17, and is developed with increasing clarity through the Passover lamb and the explicit teaching of the old covenant law.

Even as the principle of penal substitution is being developed through the Pentateuch, the covenantal nature of God's saving purposes is made clear through the progressive revelation of the successive covenants. The unsatisfactory nature of the Mosaic covenant is attested even in its inauguration, and the Scriptures point to a future hope. The covenantal theme is further advanced as God makes a covenant with David and focuses the covenantal hope on an individual, the seed who will come from David's line. This itself is a development of the theme introduced in Genesis, where the promise of the seed of the woman from 3:15 is picked up in the promise of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah.

By the end of the Old Testament period, we saw, the prophets pick up all these themes and draw them together with increasing clarity. The picture that emerges as the

Old Testament closes is that the promised seed will inaugurate a new covenant through a penal substitutionary sacrifice, and that in doing so this seed of Abraham and seed of David will provide the definitive solution to the problem of sin.

After tracing the development of the solution in the Old Testament, we turned to the New Testament to outline the links between the penal substitutionary sacrifice which inaugurated the new covenant and the benefits of the new covenant which the New Testament authors expound. Working through these benefits in turn, we considered how each contributed as part of the solution to the problems of shame. Propitiation, dependent on penal substitution, transforms God's attitude toward a sinner from wrath to benevolence. This does not represent a change in God's character, rather, the expiation of sin calls forth a different reaction from God's unchanging nature. Turning to redemption, we noted that the very act is conceived as a bestowing of honor, and that the result is a new elevated status and identity. Regeneration has a similar impact on identity, conceived, as it is, as a fundamental positive change in the person's nature. Justification, likewise, involves a transition from dishonor to honor. The declaration of God is not merely a verdict of "not guilty," but the pronouncement that the believer is righteous and just in God's sight. This is an honorable designation. The same is true for the designation "child of God" that is entailed in the doctrine of adoption. Reconciliation, similarly, is removal of the enmity that creates alienation from God, the result is favor and acceptance into an honorable status. Considering sanctification, we saw that the good works it produces are said to result in glory and honor at the day of Christ. Concluding with glorification, we saw that it fulfills all God's designs for the transition from shame to honor for those who are saved.

Completing the exposition on the primary problems of shame, penal substitution was shown to be central in the solution to the godward problem of shame as well, because it is only in penal substitution that the God's justice is displayed alongside the glory of his love. We saw, further, that the perfect demonstration of God's justice and

his love also highlight his wisdom and power. The final section of chapter 5 turned to the secondary problems of shame and showed that the penal substitutionary sacrifice of Christ also addresses those problems through the benefits of the new covenant.

Chapter 6: Evaluating Other Proposals

With the exegetical and theological work complete, chapter 6 returned to the arguments of Green, Baker, and Stump to compare and contrast their proposals with the findings of chapters 3, 4, and 5. The discussion focused on specific critiques of their work not addressed in previous chapters and demonstrated points of contact with the broader context of confessional evangelical theology that allow the gospel to be communicated coherently in the shame-sensitive contexts presented by these authors.

Final Note

As we have seen, evangelical soteriology centered on penal substitutionary atonement has sufficient theological resources to address the problem of shame and should not be abandoned on those grounds. Baker, Green, Mann, Stump, and those who share their theological presuppositions may believe that theological revision is necessary, but they have failed to define shame in a manner consistent with biblical categories or have rejected other aspects of the broader evangelical theological framework (or both). It may be true that the Bible's shame dynamics and their connections with evangelical doctrine have not been a central locus of theological discussion, but the remedy is not to abandon the penal substitutionary view. Instead, when pastors, missionaries, and theologians find themselves in cultures or around individuals who are highly sensitive to shame dynamics, they must take care to compare and contrast their conceptions of shame with the biblical categories and use those points of contact to proclaim the good news of how the shame problem was answered when Christ addressed the underlying sin on the cross.

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ABSTRACT

HOW PENAL SUBSTITUTION ADDRESSES OUR SHAME:
THE BIBLE'S SHAME DYNAMICS
AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE

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Growing awareness of shame's presence and problems in the West has drawn increasing levels of attention to the topic in Western scholarship. In the face of this attention on shame, theologians, missiologists, and counsellors of various stripes have been calling for a rearticulation or reformulation of the doctrine of atonement to address the presenting problem. Some have argued that the doctrine of penal substitution should be abandoned because of its inability to provide a solution. This dissertation argues that those advocating for such reformulation have not paid sufficient attention either to the Bible's own presentation of shame problems and their scriptural solution, or to the exegetical grounding and theological presentation of evangelical doctrine. By providing careful analysis of the use of shame categories within the text of Scripture, this dissertation shows that those categories are integrally related to the classic doctrine of salvation within the framework of the new covenant inaugurated by penal substitutionary atonement. The exegetical and theological evidence leads to the conclusion that a move away from penal substitutionary atonement is not necessary or appropriate, and that the key to communicating the gospel to people who are sensitive to shame dynamics is becoming fluent with Scripture's own presentation of those dynamics and with the biblical connections which relate those dynamics to other doctrines.

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