

SERVING THE SANCTUARY, SUBDUING THE EARTH: HUMAN MEDIATION OF DIVINE JUDGMENT IN BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE

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INTRODUCTION

The violence contained in the pages of Scripture presents one of the perennially perplexing challenges for confessional interpreters. And of all the various iterations of and responses to violence in the Bible, instances of divinely commanded and commended human participation in violence raise perhaps the most tangled questions of all.

It is one thing for a text to depict God as directly administering his just wrath—either temporally or eschatologically—upon the unrepentant wicked (e.g., Gen. 19:24–25; Rev. 20:11–15), but quite another for a text to record divine speech explicitly directing human beings to mediate that wrath upon fellow human beings and threatening that failure to execute his commands will itself be met with punishment (e.g., Num. 33:50–56).¹ Divine judgment is a thorny issue for Bible readers in its own right. But when finite, fallible, fleshly creatures are called upon by God to participate in the exercise of that judgment, the problems—hermeneutical,

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¹ Scholars of biblical violence regularly identify God's commands for and Israel's participation in the conquest of Canaan as uniquely vexing among the Old Testament's theological and ethical conundrums. E.g., Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 158; Eric A. Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behavior: Troubling Old Testament Images of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 24; Helen Paynter, *God of Violence Yesterday, God of Love Today? Wrestling Honestly with the Old Testament* (Abingdon, UK: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2019), 125; L. Daniel Hawk, *The Violence of the Biblical God: Canonical Narrative and Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 140. But while the scope of humanly enacted violence in Israel's dispossession of the Canaanites is indeed extensive, it should be recognized that the conquest is but one instance of the much wider scriptural phenomenon of human participation in divinely sanctioned violence. Though other expressions of this type of action may receive comparably less attention, they raise many of the same questions, and some even rival the conquest narratives in terms of the severity and comprehensiveness of judgment envisioned.

theological, ethical, apologetic, existential—only multiply. How ought one responsibly to interpret an account that straightforwardly appears to describe “God behaving badly”² and demanding that his followers do so as well? Can these texts really be the inspired word of the Lord? What gives certain people the right to enact God’s vengeance against others? How can the same God authorize such practices and also speak in Jesus of Nazareth about the ethics of his peaceable kingdom? What conceivable moral rationale could legitimate human involvement in divinely prescribed judgment, especially when said judgment manifests as physical violence? And what prevents religious communities from engaging in similar actions today? Are such portraits of God insurmountable obstacles to faith for modern skeptics? Are they insurmountable obstacles to faith *for me*? Can I worship without reserve a deity who has asked his worshipers before to take up the sword in his name? If it comes down to it, will I be ready to lay down my life in fidelity to a God who has commanded his people to take the lives of others? The questions stimulated by the Bible’s testimony regarding human participation in the outworking of God’s just vengeance are no mere philosophical curiosity. They bear upon the goodness of God, the trustworthiness of Scripture, the beauty of the Christian faith, and, for some, even the viability of love for and trust in a Lord who could ask such things of his creatures.

Examples of human beings functioning as agents of divine judgment—acting with the approval and sanction of God—abound in the Scriptures and span both the Old and New Testaments. Levites slay their brethren at Sinai and are rewarded by God (Exod. 32:27–29). The Lord commands the Israelite community to corporately exercise capital punishment (Lev. 24:13–16). Yahweh instructs Abraham’s children to drive out the Canaanites from the land (Exod. 23:20–33). The Psalter envisions king (Ps. 101) and community (Ps. 149) executing the vengeance of God, and the prophets anticipate a return from exile that involves the covenant people’s victorious battle against wicked nations (e.g., Micah 5:5–9). In the New Testament, the man Jesus overturns moneychangers’ tables in the temple, drives out demons, and triumphs over powers. The church bears witness with a gospel ministry that Paul describes in the language of Israel’s conquest (2 Cor. 10:3–5) and engages in a kind of warfare (Eph. 6:12) until she crushes Satan underfoot (Rom. 16:20). John sees Jesus astride a white horse, accompanied by a disciple army, riding to strike down nations and rule them with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:11–16). And history culminates with Christ’s revelation from heaven and recompense to the wicked (2 Thess. 1:6–10), even as his *ἐκκλησία* takes part in judging the angels and the world (1 Cor. 6:2–3). Is there a compelling biblical theological vision capable of uniting and clarifying the theological, redemptive-historical, and moral logic of these elements? With this brief article, I hope to take an initial step toward such a framework, situating the human mediation of divine judgment within the canonical narrative of *sacred space*.

² Cf. David T. Lamb, *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist and Racist?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

Building on the cultically inflected work of, among others, Meredith Kline, G. K. Beale, L. Michael Morales, Stephen Dempster, Peter Leithart, and William Webb and Gordon Oeste,³ I propose that Scripture presents image-bearers as royal priests and sons of God commissioned to tend and extend God's sanctuary, possessed of a divinely granted vocation that authorizes human agents to exercise God's judgment in order to guard sacred space and subdue creation as the consummated cosmic temple of the Lord. This is not a comprehensive examination; my far more modest aim is simply to develop an opening outline of possible contours for a biblical theology of human participation in divine judgment. Toward that end, what follows is intended to be a swift but evocative survey across the scriptural narrative, exploring along the way how the royal-priestly office of the sons of God illuminates the rationale for their variegated participation in God's juridical action and how the seemingly disparate data fit together coherently under the rubric of the creation and protection of sacred space.

A CULTIC READING OF GENESIS 1–3

The opening chapters of Genesis exhibit a decidedly cultic orientation,⁴ which in turn establishes the trajectory for the remainder of the scriptural narrative. In the initial creation account, the cosmos at large is constructed as a holy house for the Lord⁵—built across seven days like Yahweh's seven tabernacle speeches to Moses (Exodus 25–31),⁶ divided into a tripartite structure typical of sacred space,⁷ and furnished with décor analogously repeated in later sanctuaries: from a sky-hued

³ See, e.g., Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006); G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004); L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, NSBT 37 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015); Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003); Peter Leithart, *A House for My Name: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2000); William J. Webb and Gordon K. Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric? Wrestling with Troubling War Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).

⁴ *Contra* Daniel I. Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 3–29.

⁵ L. Michael Morales, "The Tabernacle Pre-Figured: Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus" (PhD diss., University of Bristol/Trinity College, 2011), 97–111.

⁶ Cf. Peter J. Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40," *ZAW* 89, no. 3 (1977): 375–87; Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 403; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 41–42.

⁷ So Gregory K. Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *JETS* 48, no. 1 (2005): 16–18.

firmament curtain separating (בדל, Gen. 1:6–7; cf. Exod. 26:33) God’s enthroned presence, to waters gathered like the “sea” of cast metal in Solomon’s temple (cf. 1 Kings 7:23), to lamp-lights (מאור, Gen. 1:14–16) shining in the heavens like lamps (מאור, Exod. 35:14)⁸ on the stand in the Lord’s tent.⁹ When Psalm 104, so intertextually dependent upon Genesis 1–2, rehearses Yahweh’s creative work in architectural metaphor as stretching out the heavens like a tent (v. 2), laying the beams of his chambers on the waters above the firmament (v. 3), and establishing the earth upon foundations (v. 5), the house-building hymn simply develops the cosmic temple conceptualization already present in the Genesis text (cf. Ps. 78:69).¹⁰

In a universe constructed to be a house for Yahweh’s glory-presence, the Lord plants a garden in Eden’s east as his primal sanctuary upon the earth—the first in-breaking of heavenly sacred space onto the soil of creation.¹¹ With arboreal abundance (Gen. 2:9), the presence of precious stones (Gen. 2:11–12), an eastern gate (Gen. 3:24), and elevated ground from which a river flows (Gen. 2:10)—all features reiterated in subsequent temple imagery—the cultic character of Eden’s garden as God’s incipient dwelling place is apparent.¹² But a priestless sanctuary is

⁸ The same term recurs in Exod. 25:6; 27:20; 35:8, 28; 39:37; Lev. 24:2; Num. 4:9, 16. Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 41, notes that, outside of Genesis 1, מאור in the Pentateuch refers exclusively to the lamp-lights of the tabernacle. The lamp of the tabernacle shines symbolically with the light of God, which is how the heavenly lights function within the creational temple. Intriguingly, Rev. 21:23; 22:5 pick up on these cultic interconnections: the new Jerusalem has no need for the light of lamp or sun—symbolic lights in the microcosmic and macrocosmic temples, respectively—because the glory of God to which each מאור pointed is present in light within the consummated sanctuary-city.

⁹ See esp. Richard Davidson, “Earth’s First Sanctuary: Genesis 1–3 and Parallel Creation Accounts,” *AUSS* 53, no. 1 (2015): 83–84.

¹⁰ For a detailed examination of the cultic, cosmic architecture of Psalm 104 and its intertextual relation to the early chapters of Genesis, see my “‘Let Sinners Be Consumed’: The Curious Conclusion of Psalm 104,” in *Violent Biblical Texts: New Approaches*, Bible in the Modern World 80, Sheffield Centre for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies Monographs 4, ed. Trevor Laurence and Helen Paynter (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2022), 144–56.

¹¹ Cf., e.g., Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 61; John H. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 182; J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *God’s Relational Presence: The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 16–17; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 47–49; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 51; Davidson, “Earth’s First Sanctuary,” 88–89; as well as the more tentative consideration of Andrew S. Malone, *God’s Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood*, NSBT 43 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017), 49–51.

¹² On these and other parallels between Eden and later sanctuaries, see, e.g., Lifsa Schachter, “The Garden of Eden as God’s First Sanctuary,” *JBQ* 41, no. 2 (2013):73–77; Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: HarperOne, 1985), 129; William J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 57–61; T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land: An Introduction to the*

incomplete and vulnerable to encroaching corruption, so the Lord forms Adam as a son of God who bears the image (צֶלֶם, Gen. 1:26–27) and likeness (דְּמוּת, Gen. 1:26; 5:1) of his divine Father and installs him in the garden to function as a royal priest.¹³ As a priest, Adam is a servant and guardian of sacred space, and Yahweh’s dual commission in Genesis 2:15 to עבד and שמר (“serve” and “guard”)¹⁴ the garden is the precise task repeatedly given to the Levites and priests responsible for ministering before God’s face, caring for his holy dwelling, and protecting sacred space from unholy intrusion (e.g., Num. 3:7–10, 31–32; 8:25–26; 18:5–7).¹⁵ As a king, Adam, with his image-bearing wife, is to multiply over and fill the world, to exercise royal dominion (רדה, Gen. 1:26, 28) reflective of the divine kingship, and to subdue (כבש, Gen. 1:28) the earth—that is, to make the whole earth hospitable for God’s glory-presence by progressively extending the borders of the garden sanctuary and consummating creation as the holy house of the Lord.¹⁶ Humanity is deputized to participate in the work of bringing Yahweh’s cosmic temple to completion, and the original Adamic vocation is to live as a royal-priestly, image-bearing son of God by serving sacred space and subduing the earth as sacred space, by tending and extending

Pentateuch, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 131–32; Kevin S. Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2019), 36–37; Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–75; Davidson, “Earth’s First Sanctuary,” 67–80; Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 400–403; Morales, “Tabernacle Pre-Figured,” 111–14.

¹³ Chen, *Messianic Vision*, 37–38 contends that “when Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are read together (as they should be), the combined effect is that Adam is presented as a sort of priest-king, ministering and reigning in [a] prototypical garden-like temple.” That Adam’s creation after God’s likeness communicates his status as a son of God is confirmed by the association of likeness and sonship in Gen. 5:1–3 and further corroborated by the explicit statement of Luke 3:38. See Catherine L. McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of mis pî pîr pî and wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt*, Siphut 15 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 131–41; Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 6; Matthew Habib Emadi, “The Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical-Theological Perspective” (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 33–47; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 45–46; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 401–6; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 194–5, 201.

¹⁴ So U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part One, From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Skokie, IL: Varda Books, 2005), 122–23.

¹⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 67; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 53; “Tabernacle Pre-Figured,” 123–28; Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–70; Walton, *Genesis*, 172–74; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 85–86.

¹⁶ Emadi, “Royal Priest,” 33: “God created Adam, the ideal man, to function as a king over the earth and a priest before God. His calling was to establish God’s kingdom by making God’s garden sanctuary into a global reality.” See Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17,” 62; Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 81–87; Walton, *Genesis*, 186.

the sanctuary of God's glory.¹⁷ In the Bible and the wider ancient world, kings build temples (cf. 2 Sam. 7:1–5; 1 Kings 5:5); priests serve in and guard them.¹⁸ In Adam, these sacral tasks coalesce.

There is a juridical element to the royal-priestly vocation,¹⁹ a responsibility to mediate God's judgment as a son of God against everything unfit for Yahweh's holy presence. Cultic guardianship within Israel included the explicit obligation to put to death any unauthorized outsider who came near, illicitly entering sacred space (Num. 3:10; 18:7), an administration of judgment in service of the sanctuary that is implicit in the original Adamic commission as servant-guardian of the garden.²⁰ Any unclean intrusion to the sanctuary must be expelled in judgment to preserve the sanctity—and, concomitantly, the joy, peace, and continued existence—of God's dwelling among his people. Everything despoiling of sacred space and antagonistic to the quality of life that God's creatures are to enjoy in the place of his abiding presence is actively to be guarded against and driven away. Beyond the sanctuary, every wild, untamed, and inhospitable facet of creation must be steadily subdued, cultivated, adorned, and consecrated as a glorious house fit for a glorious king, which at least theoretically entails the obligation to drive away any creature that might rise in opposition to the sacralization of the earth or desecrate its holiness as the temple of God.²¹ God's endowment of his image-bearer with the office of priest and king confers the authority to judge uncleanness as a divine representative, and the jurisdiction of the son of God includes not only the sacred space of the garden but the entire earth whose *telos* it is to be subdued as a temple.

Had the serpent never actively crossed the threshold into the garden, presumably Adam (or his earth-filling offspring) nevertheless eventually would have had to confront the diabolical creature in judgment in exercise of his commission to prepare the earth as God's holy dwelling. But when in Genesis 3 the unholy tempter trespasses into the sanctuary, the guardian of sacred space immediately should have neutralized the threat by driving him away or passing a sentence of death.²² Adam's

¹⁷ Cf. James Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *TynBul* 58, no. 2 (2007): 254–55, who suggests that Adam's obedient exercise of his royal and priestly task would result in God's glory filling the earth in accord with the vision of Num. 14:21.

¹⁸ See esp. Arvid S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for God and Kings," *Orientalia* n.s. 32, no. 1 (1963): 56–62; Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 65, 69; Emadi, "Royal Priest," 45.

¹⁹ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 86: "The conclusion appears warranted, therefore, that Genesis 2:15 contains an explicit reference to the entrusting of man in his priestly office with the task of defending the Edenic sanctuary against the intrusion of anything that would be alien to the holiness of the God of the garden or hostile to his name."

²⁰ Cf. Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 69.

²¹ Cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 69.

²² Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 33 argues that Adam's role as priest-king enjoins his response to the serpent: "Adam should have slain and thus judged the serpent in carrying out the mandate of Gen. 1:28 to 'rule and subdue.' Thus, he was to rule over and

response instead exhibits a failure of judgment in two related senses: he fails to judge rightly when he incorrectly evaluates the serpentine offer as worthy of acceptance and when he neglects to clear the garden of the creature who comes bearing God-defying words and wicked intentions. Instead, the son of God tasked with preserving holiness becomes unholy himself, and Yahweh passes the judgment upon him that he should have passed upon the serpent—pronouncing death, expelling him (שִׁלַח, Gen. 3:23), driving him out (גָּרַשׁ, Gen. 3:24)—and “angelic sentries” (Gen. 3:24, NET) are stationed at the east gate to guard (שָׁמַר) the sanctuary from the sanctuary’s rebellious guardians.²³ The ironic reversal of Adamic exile from sacred space may have yet another layer:²⁴ the Bible at times refers to angelic beings as sons of God (cf. Deut. 32:8; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 82:6), and at Eden’s eastern entrance, one son of God is replaced by another as the task appointed to image-bearing humanity is assumed by angelic counterparts.

Despite the Adamic abdication, God’s address to the serpent signals hope for his royal priesthood, a hope that is best understood in the vocational terms already established within the first chapters of Genesis. The guarantee of enmity between the serpent and the woman, his seed and hers, is an affirmation that a line from the woman will embrace their commission to oppose the defiling serpent and his seed as image-bearing sons of God,²⁵ and the promise of the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 is a confirmation that a premier seed-son from the woman will decisively answer the initial Adamic calling by striking the enemy’s head (רָאשׁוֹ) in judgment, driving away serpentine corruption, and thus bringing to fruition the work of subduing creation as a holy temple of Yahweh’s glory.²⁶ Dempster helpfully captures the consummative implications of this word from the Lord: “The seed of the woman will restore the lost glory. Human—and therefore divine—dominion will be established over the world. The realization of the kingdom of God is linked to the future of the human race.”²⁷ There is, then, a significant continuity of purpose between pre- and post-fall humanity, and the pronouncement of Genesis 3:15 is not so much the introduction

subdue the serpent, which was to be reflective of God’s own activity in Gen. 1 of subduing the chaotic waters and ruling over it by his word.” Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 86, reasons from Adam’s office as well: “Back at the beginning, the challenge of Satan’s unholy trespass was to precipitate the critical hour of probation when man, under the priestly charge to guard God’s courts, was faced with the duty of pronouncing the holy judgment of God’s house against the preternatural intruder.”

²³ Walton, *Genesis*, 230; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 136–37; Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 70.

²⁴ On Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Edenic sacred space as an exile that employs the language and logic of holy war, see Webb and Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?*, 60–62.

²⁵ Cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 132–33.

²⁶ Cf. Emadi, “Royal Priest,” 48–49, as well as the thematically rich formulation of Chen, *Messianic Vision*, 56–58, who likewise interprets the promise of Gen. 3:15 through the lens of Adamic vocation.

²⁷ Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 69.

of novelty into the narrative as it is the declaration that the Adamic task will be completed in spite of the profanation of God's primal sanctuary. That Adam and Eve graciously retain their office is confirmed with their investiture by God, a clothing in garments that carries royal connotations (cf. Gen. 41:42) and finds close lexical parallel in the robing of Aaron and his sons in priestly coats.²⁸ The remainder of the biblical story develops along this trajectory:²⁹ tracing the line of the royal-priestly sons of God as they mediate judgment against the polluting serpent and his seed to protect and extend sacred space throughout the earth.

NOAHIC CONFIRMATION

As Scripture's plot moves east of Eden,³⁰ sin and violence fill the earth, and the created world is marred, corrupted, ruined by the corruption of its inhabitants (Gen.

²⁸ On the royal associations of this investiture, see Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 41, 228–29. In Gen. 3:21, the Lord makes (עשה) tunics (כתנות) for Adam and Eve and clothes (לבש) them, which closely parallels God's instructions to Moses concerning the consecration of priests in Exod. 28:40–41 (cf. Exod. 29:5, 8; 40:14; Lev. 8:13). See Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 53; Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism," 401–2; *Genesis 1–15*, 84; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 213.

²⁹ Cf. James Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30–54; "Seed of the Woman," 253–73, for helpful explorations of the significance of the *protoevangelium* through the wider progressing narrative of Scripture.

³⁰ Though space does not permit a thorough examination here, it should be noted that cultic themes persist in Genesis 4. Cain and Abel, sons of the Adamic royal-priest, present offerings (מנחה, vv. 3–5) to the Lord, and Cain in particular is characterized as a servant (עבד, cf. Gen. 2:15) of the ground. When, to Cain's chagrin, the Lord deems the younger brother's tribute more pleasing, he instructs Cain that, in the event that Cain does not do well, a תאטף is lying down (רבע) at the פתח (v. 7). Typically translated to mean that sin is crouching at the door, the key terms can also refer to a sin offering lying at the entrance of the sanctuary. In Lev. 4:4, the פתח of the tent of meeting is the specified site where sin offerings are to be slain, and given the concluding focus of Genesis 3 on the cherubim-guarded eastern entrance to the sanctuarial garden, this would appear to be in view in Gen. 4:7. See L. Michael Morales, "Crouching Demon, Hidden Lamb: Resurrecting an Exegetical Fossil in Genesis 4.7," *Bible Translator* 63, no. 4 (2012):185–91 on the plausibility of such a reading; cf. Joaquim Azevedo, "At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen. 4:7," in *Cult and Cosmos: Tilting toward a Temple-Centered Theology*, ed. L. Michael Morales, Biblical Tools and Studies 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 167–81. From this interpretation, the conclusion may be drawn that Cain's murder of Abel is not merely mimetic rivalry or fratricide but an episode in which the firstborn heir to the Adamic priest-king is exposed as a wicked priest who renders a displeasing offering and subsequently slaughters the younger brother who acts as a faithful priest to the Lord. Rather than guarding his holiness and subduing his sin by offering a תאטף to the Lord at the פתח, Cain guards his position and lethally subdues his brother. Like his father before him, Cain the wicked priest is exiled further to the east, away from the presence of the Lord (Gen. 4:16). Of course, this will not be the last time in the Scriptures' story of

6:11–13). The ecological ramifications of humanity’s increasing wickedness—so impenetrably foreign to readers conditioned to conceive of violence as a merely anthropological phenomenon³¹—are in fact thoroughly consistent with a cultic conception of creation. In the Israelite imaginary unfolded in the Hebrew Scriptures, sin attaches to the tabernacle (Lev. 16:16–19);³² idolatry and violence pollute the land (Num. 35:33–34; Ps. 106:38; Jer. 3:1–2, 9).³³ In each case, human transgression infects the place where God dwells—his tent and his soil, respectively—and the accretion of cultic corruption requires cleansing, either through the ritual redress of atonement or the house-cleaning expulsion of exile, which is not infrequently envisioned in liquid metaphor as the sea of the nations sweeping over the land of Israel (e.g., Pss. 65:7; 124:1–5).

Approached through this lens, the ecological impetus for the flood comes into focus. Violence and bloodshed have defiled the earth and rendered it unfit for God’s holy presence: “my Spirit will not abide with humanity forever” (Gen. 6:3).³⁴ Tikva Frymer-Kensky maintains that the deluge is not chiefly a response of punishment against moral wrongdoing but rather “a means of getting rid of a thoroughly polluted world and starting again with a clean, well-washed one,”³⁵ an earth no longer contaminated by the תְּמִיטָה (Gen. 6:11) of humanity. Indeed, the whole earth is constructed to be the house of God and the global land of his dwelling, a cosmos-encompassing reality to which the תְּבִינִית (“pattern,” Exod. 25:9) of the tabernacle bears witness. And like the tabernacle, if the earth is to persist as the place where God intends to reside, it must be purified from pollution.³⁶ Consonant with this under-

Israel that wicked priests act unfaithfully, prey upon the innocent, or conspire against a faithful priest who threatens to displace them. Indeed, Jesus’s murder will parallel Abel’s, though his blood will speak a better word (Heb.12:24).

³¹ Matthew Lynch, “An Old Testament Critique of Modern Violence,” in Laurence and Paynter, *Violent Biblical Texts*, 34–47, discusses what he terms the “ecology of violence” (37) in Genesis 4–6 and notes that the author(s) of that text “might want to highlight the ways that our view of the problem’s scope is too limited if relegated solely to the personal or social spheres. We fail to see the profound interconnectedness between human-to-human violence and the suffering of creation itself. Violence, in Genesis 4–6, is an ecocidal phenomenon because creation is, by design, a deeply interconnected and interdependent system” (45).

³² See Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 444–47.

³³ Cf. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1–9,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 40, no. 4 (1977): 154.

³⁴ Cf. the renderings of NASB, CSB, HCSB. The interpretation of this verse is notoriously controversial. My only intention in including it here is to observe that the plain sense of a plausible translation resonates with a cultic framework for understanding the wider flood account.

³⁵ Frymer-Kensky, “Atrahasis Epic,” 153.

³⁶ Morales, “Tabernacle Pre-Figured,” 158, rightly contends that “the ultimate purpose of the deluge is to purify.”

standing, Robert Kawashima draws attention to syntactical structures occurring exclusively in Genesis 1:31; 6:12; Exodus 39:43 that link the goodness of the original creation (God's cosmic house), the corrupted state of the earth prior to the flood (God's corrupted house), and the purity of the tabernacle's sacred space (God's microcosmic house) before suggesting that the flood "provides a quasi-mythic paradigm for the Day of Atonement—and, more generally, for the sacrificial cult as a whole."³⁷ The deluge is, if you will, a Day of Atonement before the Day of Atonement, a cosmic purgation that cleanses the dwelling place of Yahweh from accumulated uncleanness so that the Spirit of God may indeed continue his program of building an abode with humanity upon the soil of the earth.³⁸

Significantly, this premier episode of divine judgment indicates that said judgment is ordered toward the *telos* of cultic presence, an orientation which— together with the abundant indications of Genesis 1–3—ought to factor into attempts to discern the logic of human-mediated divine judgment as well. The flood in Noah's day is a baptism (1 Pet. 3:20–21), a ritual washing of the corrupted world, a de-creation and resurrection through water of the created order in which God wills to reside, recapitulating the emergence of land through the waters on Genesis 1's third day (vv. 9–10).³⁹ The three-tiered ark that preserves Noah and his family through the waters is a microcosmic model of God's three-tiered cosmic house,⁴⁰ a floating temple that comes to rest on a mountain where Noah makes priestly offerings on an altar (Gen. 8:20) and is royally commissioned as a second Adam (Gen. 9:1–7; cf. 1:26–30).⁴¹ Ararat is an Eden-esque temple mount from which the task of

³⁷ Robert S. Kawashima, "The Jubilee Year and the Return of Cosmic Purity," *CBQ* 65, no. 3 (2003): 375. The syntactical parallelism of the specified verses is evident in English translation. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). "And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt" (Gen. 6:12). "And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it" (Exod. 39:43). Kawashima credits this observation to Ronald Hendel, "The Poetics of Myth in Genesis," in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response?*, ed. S. Daniel Breslauer (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 163.

³⁸ So Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 66–67.

³⁹ Cf. Kawashima, "Jubilee Year," 374; Morales, "Tabernacle Pre-Figured," 173–75. Interestingly, Jesus's comparison of the coming judgment upon Jerusalem and its temple with the flood in Noah's day (Matt. 24:37–39) maps onto this presentation of the flood as cultic cleansing. In both instances, the event in question is a judgment upon a house rendered unfit for divine dwelling by human corruption.

⁴⁰ See the extended discussion of numerous lines of evidence in favor of an ark-temple association by Morales, "Tabernacle Pre-Figured," 178–95.

⁴¹ Christopher A. Beetham, "From Creation to New Creation: The Biblical Epic of King, Human Vicegerency, and Kingdom," in Gurtner and Gladd, *From Creation to New Creation*, 243; Morales, "Tabernacle Pre-Figured," 172, 203–28; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 46–48; cf. Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament*, 6–7.

preparing creation for glory is to begin anew.⁴²

Tucked within the *inclusio* of Adamic commissions to “be fruitful and multiply” in Genesis 9:1, 7, is a divinely appointed juridical task. Intriguingly, God’s post-diluvian command in verse 6 supplies not a naked prohibition of illicit bloodshed but a provision for dealing with the pollution of illicit bloodshed and the reemergence of violence upon the earth, and in so doing, the command introduces a mechanism for addressing the cultic corruption that instigated the cleansing deluge in the first place:⁴³

“Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.”

There is a meaningful ambiguity here. Humanity’s status as the image of God explains the preciousness of human life and the necessity of proportionate justice when human blood is shed. Simultaneously, humanity’s status as the image of God explains why human beings are the authorized mediators of just judgment against those who shed blood.⁴⁴ Because humanity bears the divine image as Yahweh’s royal-priestly representative on the earth, humanity is to administer Yahweh’s justice against the violently wicked. As the Lord will later tell Moses, “Blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell” (Num. 35:33–34).⁴⁵ If Noah and his family are to participate in the progress of the post-diluvian earth toward becoming the holy house of a holy God—ideally extending from Ararat’s sanctuarial mount—then as they fill the earth, Yahweh’s image-bearing royal priesthood must be prepared also to cleanse the pollution that will inevitably desecrate the ground upon which Yahweh wills to abide. In a world where the intention of the heart of אָדָם is evil from youth

⁴² See Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 60; “Tabernacle Pre-Figured,” 176–78. Cf. Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 104.

⁴³ Frymer-Kensky, “Atrahasis Epic,” 150: “In Genesis, as in Atrahasis, the flood came in response to a serious problem in creation, a problem which was rectified immediately after the flood. A study of the changes that God made in the world after the flood gives a clearer picture of the conditions prevailing in the world before the flood, of the ultimate reason that necessitated the flood which almost caused the destruction of man, of the essential differences between the world before the flood and the world after it, and thus of the essential prerequisites for the continued existence of man on the earth.”

⁴⁴ See Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 253; cf. Walton, *Genesis*, 354–55. It is not necessary to decide upon one reading over against another. The ambiguity of the verse appears to be an intentional feature, one that amplifies the communicative and theological richness of the command.

⁴⁵ Referring to the concerns over bloodguilt pollution in Numbers 35, Frymer-Kensky, “Atrahasis Epic,” 154, contends, “The composer of Genesis 1–9 had reinterpreted the cosmology and the early history of Man in the light of these very strong concepts.”

(Gen. 8:21)—and continued violence is thus lamentably predictable—the purgative mediation of judgment in response to innocent bloodshed emerges as a significant element in the divine design to persevere in presence with human beings and in the maintenance of the cultic fitness of God’s terrestrial territory, a point that only becomes clearer as the history of Israel develops. Of course, the Adamic Noah swiftly recapitulates Adam’s fall (Gen. 9:20–29),⁴⁶ so the Lord’s purpose to finish creation as sacred space through his son focuses upon the family of Abraham.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the various features of Yahweh’s covenant with the patriarch incorporate reiterations of the Adamic task and the expectations of the *protoevangelium*:⁴⁸ this family will be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 17:6; 35:11), give rise to kings (Gen. 17:6; 35:11), take possession of enemy gates (Gen. 22:17) and a promised land (Gen. 13:14–15) when the iniquity of the Amorites is complete (Gen. 15:16), enjoy life as the people of Yahweh’s presence (Gen. 17:8; 28:22),⁴⁹ and so serve as a conduit of blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:3).⁵⁰

EXODUS, SINAI, AND INTO THE LAND

When Abraham’s seed is captive to Egypt’s Pharaoh, the Lord calls Israel his “first-born son” (Exod. 4:22; cf. Deut. 14:1) and demands that Pharaoh free God’s son that he may serve (עבד, Exod. 4:23; cf. Gen. 2:15) in God’s presence—a mandate replete with Adamic associations.⁵¹ But before Israel the firstborn son experiences the exodus, an Israelite firstborn son is rescued through water and escapes to the

⁴⁶ Cf. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 73–74.

⁴⁷ Space does not permit me to explore the further cultic resonances in the intervening episodes. It is intriguing, however, that priestly Noah’s failure involves drunkenness in his tent, exposed nakedness, and a wicked intruder, features that find analogues in priestly regulations concerning drinking wine when going into the tent of meeting (Lev. 10:9), undergarments to cover naked flesh while serving in the tent (Exod. 28:42–43), and the prevention of illicit entry into the tent (Num. 3:7–10, 38). The ensuing curse on Canaan (Gen. 9:25–27) builds on the seed-enmity of Gen. 3:15 and forecasts Israel’s possession of Canaan as sacred space, even as wicked Ham’s offspring will go on to build an idolatrous tower-temple—pseudo-sacred space—at Babel (Gen. 10:10; 11:1–9).

⁴⁸ See T. Desmond Alexander, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings: Their Importance for Biblical Theology,” *TynBul* 49, no. 2 (1998): 203–5; Hamilton, “Seed of the Woman,” 254–61.

⁴⁹ Cf. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 336–38; Duvall and Hays, *God’s Relational Presence*, 21–23; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 67–74.

⁵⁰ Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 93–104 observes that the substance of Adam’s royal-priestly commission is reiterated multiple times throughout Genesis to Abraham and his descendants and, significantly, “that the Adamic commission is repeated in direct connection with what looks to be the building of small sanctuaries” (96). Before they finally enter Canaan to take possession of the land as sacred space, the patriarchs construct little sanctuaries across the face of their future home with God.

⁵¹ Cf. Malone, *God’s Mediators*, 132; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 234–35.

wilderness to meet God at his mountain.⁵² Moses is Israel,⁵³ a representative son of God who previews Israel's future in his body and who will be God's human agent of deliverance.⁵⁴ Accordingly, Moses mediates Yahweh's judgment upon the serpent that is Egypt (cf. Exod. 4:3–4),⁵⁵ a judgment which Moses interprets in song as a shattering of the enemy (Exod. 15:6; cf. Gen. 3:15)⁵⁶ whose purpose is to plant a people on the Lord's sanctuary mountain (Exod. 15:17). The end of the exodus—and the serpent-subduing judgments wrought through Moses—is the rebirth of an Edenic temple-kingdom,⁵⁷ the liberation of a community to serve in the sacred space of Yahweh's holy mount, where his glory will dwell upon the earth.

At Sinai, God makes explicit what was implicit in his identification of Israel as his son: this people shall be to him “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod. 19:6). Israel is an Adamic community,⁵⁸ a royal priesthood in whose midst Yahweh pitches his tabernacular Eden, replete as it is with structural echoes of the original garden sanctuary.⁵⁹ This Israelite Adam is to guard the holiness of God's dwelling by

⁵² The Noachic associations in Moses's salvation through water are confirmed by his preservation in a pitch-sealed תַּבָּחַת (Exod. 2:3), the only other occurrence of this term in the Old Testament outside of its use in reference to the ark in Genesis 6–9. Moses's recapitulation of Israel's imminent exodus simultaneously reveals him as a new Noah who will deliver a people through the waters of judgment to safety at God's mountain.

⁵³ Cf. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 94.

⁵⁴ In fact, Stephen in Acts 7:23–29 interprets Moses's striking down of the abusive Egyptian in Exod. 2:11–12 positively as God's means of giving Israel salvation through Moses's hand, framing the human act of judgment as a mediation of divine deliverance for the covenant people. In Stephen's narration, the only indictment is of the Israelites who failed to discern the salvation being wrought among them and rejected the human agent of delivering judgment (a scenario that is repeated in the life of Jesus, Israel's new Moses). Even so, many commentators evaluate Moses's actions negatively, failing to note that in this event, as in the later showdown with Pharaoh, Moses acts as the human mediator of Yahweh's saving justice: e.g., J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 39; T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, AOTC 2 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017), 66–67; Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 94–96, esp. 96n135.

⁵⁵ Contra Stuart, *Exodus*, 129, who sees no connection to the Genesis 3 episode in Moses's seizing of the serpent in Exodus 4. Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 77, associates Pharaoh's serpentine headdress and attempt to slaughter Israelite sons with the conflict of Gen. 3:15. Cf. also L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, ESBT (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 62–63.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hamilton, “Skull Crushing Seed,” 38. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 94, evocatively states, “The oppression of Egypt strikes Israel's heel, but Israel's God strikes Egypt's head.”

⁵⁷ Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 100; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 82–85.

⁵⁸ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 322; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 36.

⁵⁹ So, e.g., Dumbrell, “Genesis 2:1–17,” 61–62; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 103;

guarding (שמר, Exod. 19:5)⁶⁰ the covenant—a comprehensive injunction that includes diligently obeying God’s commands, practicing the prescribed rituals for cleansing sin and maintaining holiness, as well as corporately cutting off those whose rebellion threatens the sanctity of Yahweh’s residence among his people.⁶¹ Capital punishment in Israel is a cultic exercise.⁶² God’s command to “purge the evil from your midst” (e.g., Deut. 13:5) is a call for a priestly people to judge those who show themselves to be serpent seed among the Abrahamic seed by removing the agents of corruption from the garden-people God has planted in his presence.⁶³ The gravity of Israel’s priestly calling is underscored by the divine threat that failure to guard all of God’s statutes will infect the land in which Yahweh will dwell among his people, render it unclean, and cause it to vomit them out of his holy presence in exile (e.g., Lev. 18:24–30; 20:22–26) as Adam was cast out of Eden. Delinquency in Israel’s calling that pollutes God’s house and ground will be met with the flood of the nations sweeping Israel from the land,⁶⁴ a purging deluge as in the days of Noah.

As Israel is corporately tasked with guarding the holiness of the temple-kingdom and putting to death the defiantly defiling among them, the priests and Levites are particularly tasked with guarding the sacred tent and putting to death any outsider who dares come near (e.g., Num. 3:10; 18:7).⁶⁵ Indeed, the preservation of holiness through the mediation of judgment features at the genesis of the Levites’ service in Exodus 32. When the Israelites construct a golden calf and corrupt (שחט, Exod. 32:7; cf. Gen. 6:11–12)⁶⁶ themselves at Sinai’s base, the sons of Levi answer Moses’s call to put to the sword 3,000 men, sweeping through the camp like a cleansing

Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 100–3. Many of the works cited above regarding Eden’s tabernacular correspondences are likewise relevant to the tabernacle’s Edenic parallels.

⁶⁰ See Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–69 on the priestly connotations associated with שמר.

⁶¹ Note the variety of offenses for which capital punishment is mandated in the Pentateuch: e.g., Sabbath-breaking, idolatry, murder, sexual immorality, cursing one’s father or mother. In each case, an argument can be made that the severity of the judgment is related to the way that the offense compromises the cultic holiness of the community and, left unaddressed, would endanger Israel’s persistence in God’s presence.

⁶² Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 127, likens Israel’s mandated response to idolatry in Deuteronomy 13 to Adam’s “priestly guardianship of the sanctuary,” observing that Israel too was given “the priestly task of resisting the encroachment of apostasy into the holy community.”

⁶³ Israel’s status as an Edenic people—a garden-community—is suggested by the ample garden-related and arboreal imagery applied to the covenant nation as well as the faithful individual Israelite; e.g., Exod. 15:17; Num. 24:5–6; Pss. 1:3; 52:8; 80:8–11; 92:12–15; 144:12.

⁶⁴ For flood imagery applied to invading nations, see, e.g., Pss. 65:7; 124:1–5; Isa. 8:5–8; 17:12–13; Ezek. 13:11–14, as well as the watery description of exile in Ps. 107:23–32 and the suggestive association of exile and flood in Yahweh’s promise in Isa. 54:9.

⁶⁵ See esp. Milgrom, *Numbers*, 342–43.

⁶⁶ Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 90, draws attention to several suggestive similarities between the flood account and the events of Exodus 32.

flood,⁶⁷ and their administration of judgment against unholiness in the camp precipitates the Mosaic declaration that they have been ordained to the Lord. The Levites do what sanctuary servants ought to do, therefore they are set apart for sanctuary service.⁶⁸ The Sinai scene is recapitulated in Numbers 25 in the plains of Moab: a prophet on a mountain, Israel beneath committing idolatry and sexual sin, a plague on the people.⁶⁹ An Israelite man brings in a Midianite woman within eyesight of the tent of meeting, and Phinehas's ensuing execution of the two with a spear receives Yahweh's commendation and covenant of a perpetual priesthood.⁷⁰ It may not be coincidental that the offenders are identified as the son of an Israelite chief and the daughter of a Midianite head (שׂרָא)—priestly Phinehas strikes heads after the *proto-evangelium* pattern to remove what is unfit for God's presence and to protect the sanctity of a community which Balaam described just one chapter earlier in Edenic terms as "like gardens beside a river" (Num. 24:6).⁷¹

As a corporate Adam, the royal priesthood of Israel is not only to guard sacred space but to actively subdue the land God has claimed for his dwelling. Canaan is a new Eden—Yahweh's "holy land" (Ps. 78:54)—which Israel enters from the east, met by a sword-bearing angel (Josh. 5:13–15; cf. Gen. 3:24),⁷² and Israel is to enact Adam's calling by driving out (שׂרָא, Exod. 23:31) the idolatrous nations and preparing the land as *terra sancta*,⁷³ the cleared ground where Yahweh's vine may

⁶⁷ The observed lexical parallel between the state of the world in Gen. 6:11–12 and the state of the Israelites in Exod. 32:7 suggests that the Levitical judgment at Sinai functions much like the Noahic deluge. The Levites are a human flood, cleansing corruption for the purpose of divine dwelling.

⁶⁸ Cf. Malone, *God's Mediators*, 72; Sarna, *Exodus*, 208–9.

⁶⁹ Cf. the observations of Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers*, TOTC 4 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1981), 207; Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 279; Eryl W. Davies, *Numbers*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 288; Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 78; Milgrom, *Numbers*, 211.

⁷⁰ See Milgrom, *Numbers*, 217; Wenham, *Numbers*, 210–11.

⁷¹ On the Edenic overtones of Num. 24:6, see John Sailhamer, "Creation, Genesis 1–11, and the Canon," *BBR* 10, no. 1 (2000): 97; Ronald B. Allen, "Numbers," in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 326; Milgrom, *Numbers*, 204; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 115–16; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 222–23; Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 78.

⁷² So Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 127–28. Dempster observes similarities in the descriptors of those judged in the flood and in Israel's conquest of Canaan (בְּלִי וְשִׁמְרָה) in Gen. 7:22; Josh. 10:40; 11:11, 14—to which also could be added Deut. 20:16. This lexical association provides further corroboration of the cultic understanding of the flood offered above. Israel's royal-priestly entry into the land is, like the Noahic deluge, a removal of cultic pollutants that cleanses the land for the presence of Yahweh.

⁷³ Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1–17," 58, contends, "Canaan is not only paralleled to Eden (Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35) but also fulsomely presented as an Israelite correspondence to Eden (cf. Deut. 8:7–10; 11:8–17), inasmuch as it too in its totality is a divine space (cf. Ex. 15:17;

grow up into his vineyard garden (cf. Ps. 80:8–11). Israel's enemies are conceptually framed as serpent seed—trespassers in Edenic land who must be expelled—and when Joshua commands his chiefs to put their feet on the necks of kings (Josh. 10:24), when Jael's tent peg crushes Sisera's head (Judg. 4:21; 5:26), when the Ephraimites relieve two heads of Midian of their heads (Judg. 7:25), when Gideon leads a victory over the royal heads of Midian such that the Midianites raise their heads no more (Judg. 8:28), Israel participates in the promise of the *protoevangelium* as a serpent-striking seed-son of God.⁷⁴ The Canaanite conquest is a royal-priestly exercise in Israelite sonship,⁷⁵ and as Numbers 32:20–22 makes clear, Israel's agency in battle is a means by which Yahweh “drives out his enemies from his presence” (v. 21, NET) so that the land may be subdued (כבש, v. 22). Echoing Genesis 1:28, Joshua 18:1 reports that ארץ־כנען (“the land”) was subdued (כבש) as an explanation for the establishment of the tent of meeting at Shiloh:⁷⁶ Adamic Israel's subduing of Canaan is ordered toward the creation of sacred space, the construction of a house for Yahweh's holy presence among his people.

The nation as a whole takes up this land-subduing task, but from early on in the Old Testament, the hope of a judgment-mediating, sanctuary-restoring son of God is channeled onto the representative figure of an Israelite king. Jacob's announcement in Genesis 49 of what will take place in “latter days” (v. 1) alludes to and clarifies the primal promise of Genesis 3: from Judah's line shall arise a scepter-bearing king who will administer head-oriented judgment (“your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies,” v. 8), receive the “obedience of the peoples” (v. 10), and preside over an Edenic kingdom so verdantly fruitful that vines and wines are used for the most mundane of purposes (v. 11).⁷⁷ Following Balaam's Eden-esque vision of Israel

Ps. 78:54.” Cf. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 64. See Webb and Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?*, 63, for a helpful survey of driving-out terminology utilized to describe the conquest of Canaan.

⁷⁴ Cf., e.g., Hamilton, “Skull-Crushing Seed,” 35; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 127; Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 121.

⁷⁵ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 86–87; G. K. Beale, *The Morality of God in the Old Testament*, Christian Answers to Hard Questions (Philadelphia: Westminster Seminary Press; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 10–11.

⁷⁶ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 141–42; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 127.

⁷⁷ T. Desmond Alexander, “From Adam to Judah: The Significance of the Family Tree in Genesis,” *EQ* 61, no. 1 (1989): 15–18, suggests that the genealogical focus of Genesis traces a familial line from the promise of Gen. 3:15 to Judah in Genesis 49, channeling royal expectations onto the ancestor of David. See also the discussions of Alexander, “Royal Expectations,” 205–6; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 94; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 91; Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 25; John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 36–37, 321–23; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 96n4.

(Num. 24:5–7), the prophet offers his own oracle about the “latter days” (v. 14). A star-king, a Judahite scepter, will “crush the forehead of Moab” (v. 17; cf. Gen. 3:15), dispossess Israel’s enemies, and have dominion (רדה, v. 19; cf. Gen. 1:28).⁷⁸ These interwoven allusions to Genesis 1; 3; 49 anticipate an heir of Judah who will shatter the heads of serpentine enemies and so fulfill the Adamic dominion mandate. Yahweh announced in Numbers 14:21 that “the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord,” and Balaam’s oracle identifies a coming king as the agent of the world’s sanctuarial consummation.

As the premier representative of the people who embodies their Adamic vocation in his own flesh, the Israelite king is likewise a son of God (e.g., 2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7).⁷⁹ Yahweh calls his king to guard (שמר, Deut. 17:19) his words by ruling in righteousness, leading in covenant fidelity, and executing justice against corrupting wickedness according to the law of the Lord, and as Israel’s later history shows, royal failure on this count results in expulsion from God’s land and presence. The king tasked with maintaining holiness within the community also guards from threats without. Israel’s first two monarchs protect God’s temple-kingdom by battling assaulting serpents—Saul defeats שָׁנָן, whose name is “serpent” (1 Sam. 11:1–11), and David delivers a mortal headwound to a scale-clad (1 Sam. 17:5) foe⁸⁰—and in so doing they act as priestly kings, guardians of Yahweh’s sanctuary-people who drive away serpentine antagonists. In Adamic fashion, David subdues (בבש, 2 Sam. 8:11; 1 Chron. 22:18) the land before Yahweh’s face as its inhabitants are delivered into his hand,⁸¹ and, according to 1 Chronicles 22:18–19, this makes possible Solomon’s construction of an Edenically ornamented house for God’s name.⁸² The administration of judgment upon the nations subdues the land for Yahweh’s templing presence in sacred space.

⁷⁸ Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 99–100; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 115–17; Sailhamer, “Creation, Genesis 1–11, and the Canon,” 97–99. Cf. Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, JSOTSup 270, ed. John Day (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 193–94, on the priestly character of the Israelite king as son of God.

⁷⁹ See Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 196–97; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 422. Cf. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 65–73, on the Adamic character of Saul, David, and Solomon.

⁸⁰ See the comments of Peter J. Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 81, 106–9, on these two episodes.

⁸¹ Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 171–72.

⁸² See also 1 Kings 4–5, where Solomon’s exercise of dominion (רדה, 4:24 [MT 5:4]; cf. Gen. 1:28) is connected to Yahweh’s placing enemies under the soles of David’s feet (5:3; cf. Gen. 3:15) and results in the rest (5:4) that precedes Solomon’s construction of God’s house (5:5). Cf. Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, BTCB (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 48–52; Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 60–63.

THE PSALMS AND THE PROPHETS

The Psalter assumes, asks for, and hopes in the mediation of divine judgment by the sons of God—both the individual king and the communal kingdom—and this expectation of human participation in Yahweh’s justice features in no less than 16 of the 150 psalms.⁸³ David announces his agenda for guarding God’s dwelling place in Psalm 101:8:⁸⁴

Morning by morning I will destroy
all the wicked in the land,
cutting off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.

As Allen suggests, “It is only fitting that the God who has deigned to reveal his cultic presence in the capital should be served by a nation that is free from moral defilement, and to this end the king has devoted himself with enthusiasm.”⁸⁵ Elsewhere, the Psalter regularly prays of the king in discernible allusion to the key Adamic texts of Genesis 1 and 3. Psalm 2:8–9 anticipates an anointed son of God who will possess the ends of the earth and shatter rebellious nations with a scepter (cf. Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17), cracking foes and globalizing God’s holy domain.⁸⁶ Psalm 110 envisions a priestly king whose enemies are made a footstool as he exercises dominion (הָרָרָה, v. 2; cf. Gen. 1:28), executes judgment, and shatters “the head” (רָאֵשׁ, v. 6; cf. Gen. 3:15) over the wide earth.⁸⁷ And at the central hinge of the Psalter, Psalm 72 looks for a royal son from David’s line who will crush the oppressor (v. 4), make his enemies lick the dust (v. 9), receive tribute (v. 10), and have dominion (הָרָרָה, v. 8) from sea to sea that the whole earth may be filled with Yahweh’s glory (v. 19) just like the tabernacle and temple were filled up with his presence.⁸⁸ The Pentateuchal anticipations of an Adamic Judahite are developed by and given voice in the psalmic hope for a son of God who subdues the earth as sacred space, Yahweh’s creational

⁸³ E.g., Pss. 2:9; 18:31–42, 47; 41:10; 44:5; 58:10; 60:9–12; 68:22–23; 72:4; 75:10; 101:5, 8; 108:10–13; 110:5–6; 118:10–13; 137:8–9; 144:1–2; 149:6–9.

⁸⁴ James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, vol. 2, EBTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 214 concludes that the end of David’s royal judgment “will be a city purified for Yahweh.” Cf. W. Dennis Tucker Jr. and Jamie A. Grant, *Psalms*, vol. 2, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2018), 464–65.

⁸⁵ Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC 21 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 6.

⁸⁶ See esp. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 103–5. Cf. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 195; Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament*, 480–81.

⁸⁷ Emadi, “Royal Priest,” 128–29; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 200; Hamilton, *Psalms: Volume 2*, 292–96.

⁸⁸ מָלֵא recurs in Exod. 40:34–35; 1 Kings 8:10–11; Ps. 72:19 to describe Yahweh’s glory filling up tent, temple, and earth, respectively. On the various echoes in Psalm 72, cf. Sailhamer, *Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 501; Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 153–54; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 196; Hamilton, *Psalms*, 1:632–37.

house, by judging the wicked and driving away the unholy seed of the serpent. Several psalms present corporate Israel as a royal-priestly participant in judgment (e.g., Ps. 149:6–9)—sometimes of a foot-stomping variety (cf. Pss. 44:5; 58:10; 68:23)—upon the enemies of God’s temple-kingdom, a depiction consistent with Israel’s Adamic calling as Yahweh’s son. And the imprecatory psalms—supplications for justice against threats internal and external to God’s covenant community—are, as I have argued extensively elsewhere, most appropriately understood as a prayerful participation in serpent-striking, sanctuary-defending, world-subduing judgment by God’s royal-priestly sons.⁸⁹ That is, the act of prayer for God’s just judgment itself functions as a petitionary means of mediating judgment, expelling corruption, guarding sacred space, and preparing the earth as the holy house of Yahweh.

The failure of Israel and her kings to guard the sanctity of God’s dwelling results in the Adam-esque expulsion of Yahweh’s Adamic son from his sanctuary land: “For because of the anger of the LORD it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence” (2 Kings 24:20; cf. 17:7–23). Yet the prophets hold out hope that a Davidic son will lead Israel back into the land of God’s presence and that a reunified nation will, alongside him, administer the Lord’s judgment on the nations so that Yahweh’s glory may cover the earth. Intriguingly, many familiar messianic promises include comparably neglected elements of such judgment. Micah 5’s prophecy of a restoring ruler from Bethlehem who is great to the ends of the earth gives way to a vision of Jacob’s remnant treading down the nations like a lion: “Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off” (v. 9).⁹⁰ Zechariah 9’s donkey-mounted king who rules from sea to sea (v. 10; cf. Ps. 72:8) frees Israel from the pit of exile as Yahweh wields the sons of Zion like a warrior’s sword,⁹¹ leading in the prophet’s oracles to expanded and secure sacred space where every pot in Judah is holy to the Lord (14:20–21; cf. 2:4–5; 6:12–13).⁹² The shoot from Jesse’s stump in Isaiah 11 is the agent of new creation, striking the earth and killing the wicked with the rod (v. 4; cf. Ps. 2:9; Gen. 49:10)⁹³ from his

⁸⁹ See Laurence, “Let Sinners Be Consumed,” 159–62; Trevor Laurence, *Cursing with God: The Imprecatory Psalms and the Ethics of Christian Prayer* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2022), 117–95, esp. 171–81.

⁹⁰ Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, vol. 2, Berit Olam, ed. David W. Cotter (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 392, notes that “the remnant of Jacob will be the agent by which YHWH carries out the judgment against the oppressing nations so that peace may be achieved.” Cf. Delbert R. Hillers, *Micah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*, Hermeia, ed. Paul D. Hanson with Loren Fisher (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 70–71.

⁹¹ Mark J. Boda, *The Book of Zechariah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 528; cf. Ben C. Ollenburger, “Zechariah,” in vol. 7 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 807–11.

⁹² Cf. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 2:705–6; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 84.

⁹³ The term שֶׁטֶט recurs in Isa. 11:4; Ps. 2:9; Gen. 49:10, as well as in Num. 24:17—all

mouth and the breath of his lips and removing the serpent's threat for those who dwell on Yahweh's holy mountain (cf. 65:25).⁹⁴ Daniel sees one like a son of man—a simultaneously individual and corporate royal-priestly figure (cf. 7:13–14, 27)—drawing near to the Ancient of Days on clouds like incense to receive an all-encompassing, everlasting dominion, the comprehensive fulfillment of the Adamic commission to subdue and reign over the earth.⁹⁵ Elsewhere, Obadiah sees Israel as a flame consuming Edom (cf. Ezek. 25:14) as exiles possess the lands of the nations,⁹⁶ and “the kingdom shall be the Lord's” (v. 21), a realm of holy dominion centered on Mount Zion.⁹⁷ And Malachi announces the day of the Lord when Yahweh's people will “tread down the wicked” (4:3). God's eschatological promises of a new exodus restoration from exile include an element of new conquest by the individual and communal sons of God, an expulsive judgment upon the wicked that eradicates unholiness and prepares the earth as Yahweh's holy abode. Israel's historical return from Babylon, however, falls far short of that comprehensive vision.⁹⁸

JESUS AND HIS ECCLESIAL TEMPLE

Against this elaborate background of royal-priestly pattern and expectation, the Gospels introduce Jesus as the Son of God, narrating the story of Jesus in continuity with and as an extension of the story of Israel.⁹⁹ Indeed, one way of conceptualizing the entire career of the multidimensional Christ is as the Adamic priest-king who

texts that develop expectations of a reigning, judging Judahite.

⁹⁴ See Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 175–76; Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 335–36. Cf. the comments of Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 102–4; J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, Hermeneia, ed. Peter Machinist (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 180–82; Gene M. Tucker, “The Book of Isaiah 1–39,” in vol. 6 of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 140–42. Jeremiah 33:14–16 incorporates similar imagery and expectations of a Davidic branch who executes justice to deliver Judah such that Jerusalem may dwell securely.

⁹⁵ Cf. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 215–17; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 83–84.

⁹⁶ Samuel Pagán, “Obadiah,” in vol. 7 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 455, observes that “not only will the Israelites be allowed to respond to their enemies with the same treatment they had received, but also they will be instruments of God in executing judgment. . . . Edom will be destroyed, and Judah will actively participate in the process of destruction.” Cf. Daniel J. Simundson, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*, AOTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 248–49.

⁹⁷ See Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, 411–12.

⁹⁸ In Isa. 45:1 Cyrus is identified as the Lord's “anointed” who is God's means of subduing nations and releasing exiles that they may return to the land of God's presence and rebuild his house. Cyrus functions in the role of a messianic, Adamic son who administers judgment for the sake of sacred space.

⁹⁹ So Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 5.

drives out unholiness and subdues serpents to cleanse and extend sacred space for God's holy presence.

In Matthew 2:1–12, the star that rises (v. 2; cf. Num. 24:17) and leads foreign nobles to fall down and render tribute (v. 11; cf. Gen. 49:10; Ps. 72:10–11) to the infant Christ allusively signals that Jesus is God's answer to an entire chain of intertextually layered promises: the temple-consummating royal son of Psalm 72 is the head-crushing star-king of Numbers 24 is the Eden-renewing Judahite of Genesis 49 is the serpent-striking seed of Genesis 3 is the earth-subduing son of Genesis 1 is the child before whom the magi fall—and this wave of scriptural evocation announces Jesus as the royal-priestly son of God who will mediate judgment to fulfill creation as the sanctuary of God's glory with his people.¹⁰⁰ Jesus's deliverance from the son-slaughtering Pharaoh figure that is Herod (Matt. 2:16; cf. Exod. 1:16)¹⁰¹ positions him as a new Moses, the human agent of Yahweh's liberating judgments who will lead his people on an exodus to freedom so that God may make his dwelling among them. The Father's baptismal declaration, "You are my beloved Son" (Mark 1:11), names Jesus as the Davidic son of Psalm 2:7 who shall break nations with Judah's scepter and extend God's domain across the earth.¹⁰² In the same event, as a representative Israel who shares Joshua's name,¹⁰³ Jesus in his baptism crosses the Jordan River and enters the land, spearheading an exile-unwinding conquest by expelling unclean spirits who have encroached into an Israel in whom God intends

¹⁰⁰ As my above treatment indicates, the Old Testament itself exhibits an intertextual accumulation of expectation across this matrix of texts, each subsequent one building upon and developing prior texts. The result of this intertextual accumulation is that the imagery of Matthew 2—which taps into this network of imagery at multiple points—initiates a process of cascading association that draws the entire organically developed network onto the horizon of interpretation. This identification of Jesus as the anticipated human mediator of divine judgment is only confirmed by the quotation of Mic. 5:2 in Matt. 2:6. On the various scriptural echoes in Matt. 2:1–12, see Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 5–7; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 61–64. New Testament scholars frequently identify Matthew's allusions to Psalm 72 and Numbers 24, but when it is observed that those texts themselves evoke previous texts, the referential significance of Matthew's imagery expands even further.

¹⁰¹ Note also the allusion to Exod. 4:19 in Matt. 2:20. Cf. Blomberg, "Matthew," 8, 10; Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1993), 142–44; Peter J. Leithart, *The Gospel of Matthew through New Eyes*, vol. 1: *Jesus as Israel* (Monroe, LA: Athanasius Press, 2017), 69.

¹⁰² In comparison to the parallel account in Matt. 3:17 ("This is my beloved Son"), Mark's record of the divine voice exhibits an even stronger echo of Ps. 2:7. Cf. Rikk E. Watts, "Mark," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 122–29; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 48.

¹⁰³ Like the name Jesus in the New Testament, the LXX renders Joshua's name as Ἰησοῦς.

to reside by his Spirit.¹⁰⁴ Christ indicts religious leaders as seed of the Satanic serpent (e.g., Matt. 12:34; 23:33; John 8:44) and declares his purpose to remove them from God's vineyard-kingdom (Matt. 21:33–46). The Lord self-referentially cites Psalm 110 (e.g., Matt. 22:43–45), identifying himself as David's hoped-for priest-king who will shatter the head over the wide earth and have dominion as his enemies sink beneath his feet.¹⁰⁵ Entering Jerusalem on Zechariah's donkey (Matt. 21:1–7; cf. Zech. 9:9), the Messiah and his mount metaleptically conjure the wider web expectation in Zechariah 9 and announce the royal rider as the exile-ending, judgment-exercising ruler of the world,¹⁰⁶ and Jesus approaches the temple to drive out corruption from the Lord's house (Matt. 21:12) because the one rightly hailed as the son of David (Matt. 21:9, 15) is—in line with so much Old Testament anticipation—the Adamic son of God come to cleanse a holy sanctuary for the Lord.¹⁰⁷

And that is precisely what he does in his passion. On his antitypical Day of Atonement, Jesus cleanses a house for God by his blood.¹⁰⁸ After his debt-cancelling cross, Christ in his resurrection disempowers the serpent's kingdom and triumphs over rulers and authorities (Col. 2:15), guarding God's sanctuary-people and subduing the enemy that would destroy them. The resurrection that deals the serpent a deadly headwound is the Father's vindicating declaration that Jesus is indeed the son of God (cf. Rom. 1:4), the priestly king who, as Paul preaches in Acts 17, is the appointed man through whom God will judge the world in righteousness (v. 31)—the human mediator of divine judgment—and the echo of Psalm 72:2 (“May he

¹⁰⁴ The association between Jesus and Joshua is part of a larger typological complex connecting running from Moses and Joshua to Elijah and Elisha to John and Jesus (and even to Jesus and his church), on which see Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 171–72. Cf. Dean B. Deppe, *The Theological Intentions of Mark's Literary Devices: Markan Intercalations, Frames, Allusionary Repetitions, Narrative Surprises, and Three Types of Mirroring* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 364.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 468; Blomberg, “Matthew,” 82–84. Emadi, “Royal Priest,” 184–204 offers an insightful exploration of Mark's presentation of Jesus as the royal priest of Psalm 110.

¹⁰⁶ On metalepsis as the phenomenon by which a text alludes to a prior text in a manner that draws in to the alluding text the wider context and significance of the alluded text, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 11; cf. Jeanine K. Brown, “Metalepsis,” in *Exploring Intertextuality: Diverse Strategies for New Testament Interpretation of Texts*, ed. B. J. Oropeza and Steve Moyise (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016), 27–41, as well as the definition offered by Max J. Lee, “A Taxonomy of Intertextual Interactions Practiced by NT Authors: An Introduction,” in *Practicing Intertextuality: Ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman Exegetical Techniques in the New Testament*, ed. Max J. Lee and B. J. Oropeza (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. France, *Matthew*, 784–85; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 422.

¹⁰⁸ Peter J. Leithart, *The Gospel of Matthew through New Eyes*, vol. 2: *Jesus as Israel* (West Monroe, LA: Athanasius Press, 2018), 293, explores this typological association with reference to Matt. 27:15–18.

judge your people with righteousness”) only underscores Christ’s role as the royal son whose dominion will ready the earth to be filled with the glory of the Lord.¹⁰⁹ The culmination of Christ’s royal-priestly work is the Pentecostal creation of sacred space, and the church that is filled with Yahweh’s glory-Spirit like tabernacle and temple (Acts 2:1–4; cf. Exod. 40:34–38; Num. 9:15–18; 1 Kings 8:10–11) is an Edenic sanctuary-garden crafted in flesh and bone.¹¹⁰

Built into a temple by the Son, the church is simultaneously a royal priesthood *in* the Son, adopted sons and daughters of God restored to the Adamic vocation (1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6).¹¹¹ Matthew 28:16–20 follows the contours of Deuteronomy 31:1–8 (cf. Josh. 1:1–9): ending his earthly ministry on a mountaintop, the resurrected Christ sends his followers into the land of the nations to do everything he has commanded with the promise of persistent divine presence in a gospel-inflected recapitulation of Israel’s conquest commission.¹¹² If Jesus is Israel’s Mosaic leader of Yahweh’s new exodus through his death and resurrection, then the church is his Joshua-esque successor, recipients of a divine call to drive out unholiness from among the nations by word and sacrament so that the global land God has claimed for his residence may be filled with the sacred space of his ecclesial temple.¹¹³ Disciples have been granted authority to tread on serpents (Luke 10:19), and the evangelistic expansion of God’s sanctuary-people through the earth is a participation in Christ’s ongoing treading of the ancient serpent upon whom he decisively trod at Golgotha.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ As I. Howard Marshall, “Acts,” in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 595, observes, several psalms refer to God as the one who judges the world in righteousness (e.g., Pss. 9:8; 96:13; 98:9), and these undoubtedly inform Paul’s attribution of such judicial agency to God in Acts 17:31. Yet in addition to these, quite similar language is utilized in Ps. 72:2 with regard to the Davidic anointed. Psalm 72 presents the Israelite king as the executor of that righteous judgment which is the prerogative of the divine king. Given that Paul’s point in Acts 17:31 is that God’s righteous judgment will be enacted by a mediating human figure, it appears likely that Ps. 72:2 also figures into the background of psalmic expectation to which Paul appeals with his claim.

¹¹⁰ On Christ’s giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as an act of temple construction, see esp. G. K. Beale, “The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost, Part 1: The Clearest Evidence,” *TynBul* 56, no. 1 (2005): 73–102; G. K. Beale, “The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost, Part 2: Corroborating Evidence,” *TynBul* 56, no. 2 (2005): 63–90.

¹¹¹ Cf. Beetham, “From Creation to New Creation,” 252–53.

¹¹² See esp. the detailed examination of Kenton L. Sparks, “Gospel as Conquest: Mosaic Typology in Matthew 28:16–20,” *CBQ* 68 (2006): 651–63. Cf. Blomberg, “Matthew,” 100.

¹¹³ In addition to recalling Dan. 7:13–14, the Great Commission also echoes 2 Chron. 36:23, where a king (Cyrus) granted authority over the kingdoms of the earth by Yahweh sends the previously exiled covenant community back into the land with an invocation of God’s presence to build the house of the Lord. The conclusion of Matthew’s Gospel thus recalls multiple house-building commissions received by Israel throughout her history. Cf. Leithart, *Matthew*, 2:338–40.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Andrew David Naselli, *The Serpent and the Serpent Slayer*, SSBT (Wheaton, IL:

As citizens of an eschatologically inaugurated—not realized—temple-kingdom, Christ's royal priesthood mediates judgment in a manner consonant with the kingdom's current eschatological character, eschewing violence even as they expel unholiness from the sanctuary and expand sacred space through the earth.¹¹⁵ Christians mortify the sin that pollutes the temple-body of each individual disciple, and the believer's repentant cleansing of every defilement from the corporeal house in which Yahweh's glory-Spirit resides is at the same time an expulsion of unholiness from the temple that is the church community (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16–7:1). The corporate, collective body purges the evil from God's garden-community in ecclesial discipline (1 Cor. 5:1–13),¹¹⁶ every excommunication a Day of Atonement in miniature in which the impenitent is delivered to Satan just as the scapegoat was sent out to Azazel carrying iniquity from the community (1 Cor. 5:5; cf. Lev. 16:8–10, 20–22).¹¹⁷ The church drives out deceitful teachers who slither into the sanctuary as the serpent intruded with falsehoods into the garden (2 Cor. 11:1–15).¹¹⁸ Believers wield the Spirit's two-edged sword in gospel proclamation to combat the schemes of the devil and to make prisoners of Christ among the nations (Eph. 6:17; cf. Ps. 149:6–7; Isa. 11:4).¹¹⁹ Christ's kingdom of priests exposes the worldliness of the world through humble obedience (Eph. 5:11), reveals God's verdict upon unrighteousness by faithful witness (Phil. 1:28), conquers the dragon through steadfast suffering unto death (Rev. 12:11), and prays with the saints beneath the altar for God's creation-cleansing justice (Rev. 6:9–10).¹²⁰ In the faithful, sacrificial witness of his church,

Crossway, 2020), 128; Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 939.

¹¹⁵ For further elaboration on the relationship between the eschatological character of God's temple-kingdom at various points in redemptive history and the corresponding shape of judgment exercised by God's royal priesthood, see Laurence, *Cursing with God*, 280–84. On inaugurated eschatology more generally, see George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, ed. Raymond O. Zorn, trans. H. de Jongste (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962).

¹¹⁶ Note the explicit quotation of the repeated Deuteronomic command (e.g., 13:5) in 1 Cor. 5:13, which imports the cultic logic of capital punishment within Israel into the practice of discipline within the Spirit-inhabited church.

¹¹⁷ Fittingly, the scapegoat in Leviticus 16:10, 21 is "sent away" (piel of שלח) into the wilderness—exiled from the sanctuary-camp—just as Adam was sent away (piel of שלח) from the sanctuary-garden in Eden. The sending away of the scapegoat is a ritual expulsion that cleanses the camp so that the Adamic community as a whole is not expelled from the divine presence after the pattern of their first forebear.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Naselli, *Serpent and the Serpent Slayer*, 97–98.

¹¹⁹ Frank S. Thielman, "Ephesians," in Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 831, insightfully considers the conceptual and verbal similarities between Eph. 6:17 and LXX Isa. 11:4.

¹²⁰ On the martyrial imprecation of Rev. 6:10 as a royal-priestly prayer in which "all the saints" (Rev. 8:3) join, see Laurence, *Cursing with God*, 250–52. Note that the imprecatory

Jesus's royal priesthood permeates all the kingdoms of the earth with the message of the gospel, and through his body, the royal-priestly Christ strikes down nations with the word of his mouth and rules with his iron rod (Rev. 19:11–16; cf. Ps. 2:9; Isa. 11:4)—extending his temple-kingdom, establishing his dominion, welcoming sinners as citizens and servant-sons, uncovering and subverting every totalizing imperial pretension by their peaceful, courageous proclamation of his universal Lordship.¹²¹ In all these ways, Jesus's Adamic people guard the temple and subdue the earth. In all these ways, Jesus's new Israel protects the tabernacle of the Spirit and enters the land to make ready the world for the presence of God.

But there is coming a day when the sons and daughters of God will be revealed (Rom. 8:19) to finally and fully enact the prerogatives of their office. God will soon crush Satan beneath his people's feet (Rom. 16:20), and the groaning creation will be relieved of its bondage (Rom. 8:21) to achieve its *telos* as the holy house of God when his priest-kings participate in the comprehensive expulsion of corrupting unholiness. Even now, the dead in Christ to whom authority to judge has been committed sit upon heavenly thrones as priests of God and co-reigning kings (Rev. 20:4–6),¹²² and when Jesus at last returns to inflict vengeance upon those who do not know God and with perfect justice to drive them away “from the presence of the

prayers of God's people are presented in the book of Revelation as *effective* prayers. The ensuing judgments of God upon the earth are framed in the Apocalypse as the divine response to the prayers of God's people. Cf., e.g., Rev. 5:8; 8:3–5; 15:7–16:1; 16:5–6; 19:2; 20:4.

¹²¹ On the allusions to Isa. 11:4; Ps. 2:9 in Rev. 19:15, see Beale, “Revelation,” 1143–44. I have become increasingly persuaded that this simultaneously evangelistic and politically disruptive witness of the church in history is in view in the imagery of Rev. 19:11–16, where Jesus rides in judgment accompanied by his heavenly army—saints clad in priestly white linen. For a cogent defense of this type of reading, see Peter J. Leithart, *Revelation 12–22*, ITC (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 274–87. In Rev. 2:26–27, Jesus promises that those who conquer in faithful perseverance will share as sons in the Messianic authority of the Son, ruling “with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces” (cf. Ps. 2:8–9). And in Rev. 19:11–16, the saints who have conquered follow their king as vindicated participants in the Word's wielding of his iron rod. In the world-pervading ministry of Christ's royal priesthood, both the church on earth and the church in heaven are together involved in Jesus's work of judging every competing kingdom by claiming citizens in conversion and turning the world upside-down. Commentators more commonly read Rev. 19:11–16 as an allusive portrait of final eschatological judgment—e.g., G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 949–64—but it should be noted that, on either reading, Jesus and his army of saints are depicted as effecting judgment upon the nations. Whether one understands this text as narrating the impact and movement of ecclesial gospel witness through the world in history or the definitive eschatological overthrow of every opposing power at history's end, it is a royal-priestly exercise—a conquest—in which Jesus's people flank their priestly king.

¹²² Cf. Beale, *Revelation*, 996–97; Leithart, *Revelation 12–22*, 310–25. The echoes of the throne-laden scene of Daniel 7—which, as I suggested above, is rich with Adamic imagery and themes—ought not to be overlooked.

Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thess. 1:9), the sons of God who are united to the Son will also share in that climactic expression of royal-priestly juridical agency. “Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?” (1 Cor. 6:2). The Adamic Christ, joined by his redeemed royal priesthood, will drive out every uncleanness and subdue the earth so that the cosmos may be the temple it was always intended to be, the dwelling place of a holy God with humanity made holy (Rev. 21:1–22:5).¹²³ The consummation of creation as sacred space is achieved through the human mediation of divine judgment, just as Genesis 1 indicated it would be, and image-bearers’ service as priests and kings in the presence of God will continue through an eternity of unbroken peace, covenantal blessing, and invincible joy: “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:3–5).

CONCLUSION

If this sort of typologically and intertextually integrative reading proves compelling, then we find ourselves with warrant to suggest that within the Scriptures there exists an anthropological and vocational throughline that unites protological humanity with eschatological humanity and illumines the divine purpose for human agency in the intervening time. From Genesis to Revelation, Yahweh’s royal priesthood is tasked to preserve the sanctity of his dwelling place and to prepare the world as his holy house by subduing and expelling everything unfit for his presence, and this cultic conception of creation and the human calling provides a substantive theological category for understanding God’s variegated involvement of his people in the outworking of his judgment across redemptive history.

In addition to supplying an ethical rationale for the several iterations of divinely commanded and commended violence by the people of God in the Old Testament, this biblical theological narrative framing also clarifies the continuity between the life and ministry of Jesus and what preceded him in the history of Israel. Indeed, the categories that render morally intelligible Israel’s agency in Yahweh’s judgment are the very categories the New Testament repeatedly utilizes to tell the story of Jesus and his church. Jesus’s death in place of the wicked does not stand in irresolvable tension with Israelite expulsion of the wicked any more than it does with Christ’s own return in judgment upon the wicked. Though they do so by different means in the progression of redemptive history, each of these exercises is ordered toward the royal-priestly end of protecting and expanding the dwelling place of God. The

¹²³ On the generally recognized cultic presentation of the new heaven and new earth and the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21–22, see Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 132–36; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 298–304; Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 639–44; Duvall and Hays, *God’s Relational Presence*, 318–22.

peaceable march of the gospel through the world in the non-violent witness of Christ's *ekklesia* is not a radical divergence from, moral repudiation of, or theological contradiction to God's work within Israel or the eschatological expectations of the Old Testament. Rather, the New Testament's abundant intertextual overtures—only a sampling of which have been addressed in this brief treatment—provide textual evidence of, literary legitimation for, a theological conceptualization of the mission of Jesus through his church as a new conquest after exodus out of exile, the surprising recapitulation of Israel's career and the answer to prophetic anticipations, a royal-priestly entry into the land through which the nations are struck down, the powers of darkness dispossessed, and unholiness driven away with the word of Christ as the sacred space of Yahweh's ecclesial temple extends through the world, filling the earth with the glory of the Lord as the earth is filled with the sanctuary of the Spirit.

The cultic imagery that renders intelligible Israelite executions and Jesus's eschatological justice simultaneously offers a new lens for appreciating the very goal of the gospel, and it equips the church to understand her ordinary life of repentance, discipline, proclamation, and witness as a profound participation in God's grand purposes for history and the entire cosmos.