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From the forward by Dr. Jim Anderson

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Front Cover: Jakob fighting against the angel of the Lord

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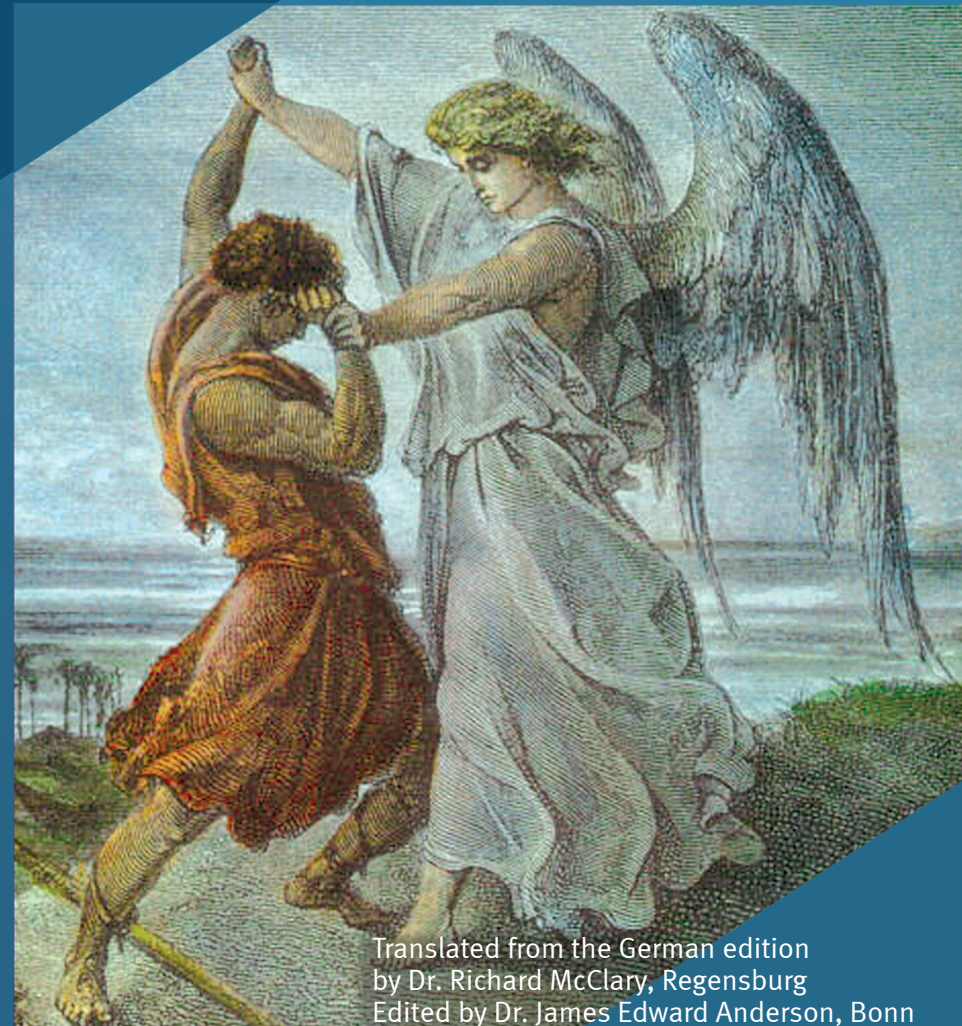
Thomas Schirrmacher

Christ and the Trinity in the Old Testament

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Translated from the German edition
by Dr. Richard McClary, Regensburg
Edited by Dr. James Edward Anderson, Bonn

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- 22 Thomas Schirmmacher: Christ and the Trinity in the Old Testament

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Forward by Jim Anderson

Thomas Schirrmacher addresses in this small book one of the most significant, critical and neglected aspects of Old Testament biblical theology and exposition: the revelation of Jesus' actual presence with, and ministry to, His people, which began in Genesis, continued through the history of the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, and will continue forever. It might be expected that liberal theologians would fail to see the wealth of teaching about Jesus in the Old Testament, but it is tragic when evangelicals overlook the presence of Jesus with His people in the Old Testament.

Twenty centuries ago, after His resurrection, Jesus rebuked and corrected the Emmaus disciples with the words: “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” [Luke 24:25-27]

Not only the Emmaus disciples, but even the apostles chosen by our Lord had overlooked the teachings concerning Him so richly revealed in all three Hebrew divisions¹ of the Old Testament: “He [Jesus] said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.’ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.” [Luke 24:44-45]

Because the prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament are abundantly developed in other good works, Schirrmacher concentrates on the many² appearances of the Angel of the LORD, which can only be adequately explained as appearances of our Lord Jesus Christ in pre-incarnate Form. The Angel of the LORD is clearly identified as God, but since God the Father has never been seen by men, the appearances of God as the Angel of the LORD must be appearances of Christ. This conclusion accords with John 1:18: “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in

¹ The three divisions of the Old Testament are (1) the Law, (2) the Prophets and (3) the “Writings”, with the Psalms representing the other books in the third division.

² “Angel of the LORD” appears 58 times in the Old Testament; “Angel of God” appears 11 times. See p. 16, Fn. 22, from Ernst Jenni & Claus Westermann (eds.). *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. Chr. Kaiser: München & Theologischer Verlag: Zürich, 1978, Page 901.

the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*. [“reveal, make fully known”³]

Thus Schirmacher can conclude:

“There is every reason to assume that Jesus is not only the head and Saviour of the New Testament church, but that he is also the Saviour and leader of the people of God in the Old Testament. When Israel rejected Jesus Christ the Messiah, in my opinion Israel rejected the one who had also called, led, protected, delivered, and judged it.” (p. 13)

The volume also includes a second valuable emphasis, demonstrating, with many examples, how the ceremonial law in the Old Testament pointed to Christ.

It is hoped that Schirmacher’s work will be read widely to promote a deeper love for Jesus, Who, from the beginning of history, has always been with His people, and Who gives His people the assurance that He will never leave or forsake them (Heb. 13:5.8).

Jim Anderson

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³ Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*.

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Chapter I: Jesus as God in the Old Testament

I. The Influence of Biblical Criticism

The question regarding Jesus in the Old Testament can be classified in three categories:

1. the prophecies regarding his coming,
2. the question of whether or not Jesus is found to be acting as God in Old Testament times and if so, how the actions of Jesus are described in the Old Testament
3. the foreshadowing of Jesus in the ceremonial law.

In this volume we are not going to address the first item, about which many studies exist.⁴ Rather, the second issue will be addressed initially and then the third item.⁵

⁴ Franz Delitzsch. *Messianische Weissagungen in geschichtlicher Folge*. TVG. Brunnen: Gießen, 1992 (1890 reprint); Paul Schenk. *Bist du, der da kommen soll? Christuszeugnisse im Alten Testament*. Brunnen: Gießen, 1991 and from a Catholic point of view Paul Heinisch. *Christus, der Erlöser der Welt*. Styria: Graz, 1955; John Meldau. *Der Messias in beiden Testamenten*. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1971; F. F. Bruce. *Zwei Testamente – eine Offenbarung*. R. Brockhaus: Wuppertal, 1972. pp. 79-139; Edmund P. Clowney. *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament*. Navpress: Colorado Springs (CO), 1988; Risto Santala. *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*. Keren Ahvah Meshihit: Jerusalem, 1992 (Hebrew original 1980 and Finnish 1992); Walter C. Kaiser. *The Messiah in the Old Testament*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1995 – also Paternoster Press: Carlisle (GB), 1995; Wilhelm Busch. *Spuren zum Kreuz*. Schriftenmissions-Verlag: Gladbeck, 1977; A. M. Hodkin. *Christ in all the Scriptures*. Pickering & Inglis: London, 1973 pb. ed. (Original 1907); F. F. Bruce. *The Time is Fullfilled*. Paternoster Press: Exeter (GB), 1978; Robert L. Reymond. *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The Old Testament Witness*. Christian Focus Publications: Fearn (GB), 1990; Noam Hendren. “Der Messias Gottes im Tanach, im Alten Testament”. pp. 35-45 in: Kai Kjaer-Hansen. *Tod eines Messias: Messiasgestalten und Messiaserwartungen im Judentum*. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1996; Bill Myers. *Christ B. C. Becoming Closer Friends with the Hidden Christ of the Old Testa-*

The influence of historico-critical exegesis and the increasing impoverished state of fundamentalist exegesis is found no more clearly than with respect to the question of the Trinity in the Old Testament. It would be interesting to collect records about adoptionistic Christology from the writings of critical theologians, who assume, for the most part, that Jesus did

ment: 78 Daily Readings. Regal Books: Ventura (CA), 1990; Robert L. Reymond. *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The Old Testament Witness.* Christian Focus Publ.: Fearn (GB), 1990; Benjamin B. Warfield. "The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament." pp. 78-128 in: Benjamin B. Warfield. *Biblical Doctrines.* The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1988 (1929 reprint); as well as older authors: Johannes Bade. *Christologie des Alten Testamentes.* 3 in 2 vols. Deiters: Münster, 1850-1852 1st ed.; 1858 2nd ed.; Eduard Böhl. *Christologie des Alten Testamentes oder Auslegung der wichtigsten Messianischen Weissagungen.* Wilhelm Braumüller: Wien, 1882; Niederländische Ausgabe: Eduard Böhl. *Christologie des Ouden Verbonds of verklaring der meest gewichtige Messiaansche profetien.* Scheffer: Amsterdam, 1885; also see Eduard Böhl. *Zwölf Messianische Psalmen erklärt: Nebst einer grundlegenden christologischen Einleitung.* Bahnmaier's Verlag: Basel, 1862 and Eduard Böhl. *Die Alttestamentlichen Zitate im Neuen Testament.* Wilhelm Braumüller: Wien, 1878; Joseph Adam Stephenson. *The Christology of the Old and New Testament: An Historical Development of the Predicted Occurrences of Holy Scripture.* 2 vols. J. G. & F. Rivington: London, 1838.

- ⁵ Regarding Christ as an active Person of the Trinity in the Old Testament compare above all: Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. *Christologie des Alten Testamentes und Commentar über die Messianischen Weissagungen der Propheten.* 3 parts in 4 vols. L. Oelmigke: Berlin, 1829-1832 [Engl. edition: E. W. Hengstenberg. *The Christology of the Old Testament.* Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids (MI), 1970 (1847 abridged version) – The sections regarding the Trinity in the Old Testament have been largely removed in in the abridged version, in contrast to the full English edition. 3 vols. W. M. Morrison: Washington et al., 1836-1839] Gerard Van Groningen. *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament.* Baker: Grand Rapids (USA), 1990; Eduard Böhl. *Christologie des Alten Testamentes.* op. cit.; Wilhelm Vischer. *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments.* 3 vols. Evangelischer Verlag: Zollikon/Zürich, 1946 2nd ed.; J. Barton Payne. *The Theology of the Older Testament.* Zondervan: Grand Rapids (USA), 1962. pp. 167-170; only addressed briefly in; John Meldau. *Der Messias in beiden Testamenten.* Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1971; Paul Schenk. *Bist du, der da kommen soll? Christuszeugnisse im Alten Testament.* Brunnen: Gießen, 1991 and from a Catholic point of view Paul Heinisch. *Christus, der Erlöser der Welt.* Styria: Graz, 1955. An important work is also George A. F. Knight. *A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of Trinity.* Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers 1. Oliver and Boyd: Edinburgh/London, 1957 (1953 reprint). From his moderately critical position on the Old Testament, Knight rejects the Trinity as such as a binding concept in the Old Testament; however, at the same time he provides an enormous amount of evidence for the idea that as early as the Old Testament there is teaching that God is one person and yet, at the same time, consists of several persons. Further titles are used below.

not become the Son of God until the time of his baptism. This standpoint was condemned by the ancient church and Reformation theologians as a heresy. More astounding has been the occasional speechlessness of those who principally deny adoptionism. What do conservative theologians have to say against the accusation that while it is correct to say that the Trinity reaches back into eternity, no Old Testament references are offered for this position and no explanation for their absence is given? Helpful and explanatory concepts such as ‘progressive revelation’ are most often employed merely as theological formulas and are not exegetically corroborated and expounded in a sound and understandable manner.

The teaching of the Trinity and of the divinity of Jesus are so closely tied to each other (e.g., compare Romans 1:1-4) that, for all practical purposes, looking for the Trinity in the Old Testament means to look for Jesus in the Old Testament.

The view of many an exegete that all New Testament allusions to Old Testament prophecies regarding Jesus are constructed, and that Jesus for that reason does not appear in the Old Testament, is something that is denied by most committed Christians across all denominations. Still, most Evangelical books on the Topic of ‘Jesus in the Old Testament’ only have to do with prophecies about him. The questions of (1) whether Jesus acted and spoke at the time of the Old Testament, and (2) how the corresponding New Testament statements are to be understood, are seldom addressed.

These questions are, however, of great significance. From Jewish and Islamic points of view, the Trinity is a teaching which Christianity subsequently, and belatedly, added to the belief in God. Historical-critical research largely assumed this point of view, whereby New Testament exegesis of the Old Testament is not understood as credible exegesis but rather as subsequent interpretations or reinterpretations of Old Testament texts that originally meant something else. Historical-critical exegesis largely decided for Jewish-Talmudic⁶ exegesis and against Christian exegesis of the Old Testament. Emil Brunner writes:

⁶ In view here is post-Christian Judaism. In pre-Christian Judaism what came to be the later Christian method of exegesis was at least possible, if not even rather often the predominant type of exegesis. ‘This is also clear in the Gospels, where the exegesis of the Jews regarding important passages with respect to the Messiah is most conspicuously in agreement with Jesus’ viewpoint. Thus in John 12:34, for instance, one hears out of the mouth of Jews the following: “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever” (compare in this regard in particular Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge. *Das Alte Testament nach seinem wahren Sinne gewürdigt aus den Schriften der Evangelisten und Apostel. Wozu das Alte Testament* vol. 1. W. Hassel: Elberfeld, 1855. p. 28 (Section 12).

“The *unity of the Word of God* in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is one thing: the *unity that is maintained in the teaching* of the apostles in the New Testament and by the men of God in the Old Testament is another thing. The first concept has been destroyed for us by critical research once and for all; that is, it has been shown to be nonexistent. The other concept at, however, has become more than ever a rather grand and wonderful thing as a result of critical work.”⁷

If this is true, there remains little room for tracing the Trinity from before the incarnation back in the Old Testament to the time of the creation.⁸

“In the Enlightenment one can see a victory of the synagogue over the church, if one reflects upon the critique – partly based on the Scriptures and partly based on human reasoning – of specifically Christian dogma that found its way into the church. This approach was anticipated and practiced in the works of Jewish scholars over 1500 years earlier. As this rationalistic critique of the Bible and dogma was undertaken without restraint, the difference between ‘enlightened,’ ‘liberal’ Christians and Reformed Jews was eliminated. The best expression of this was the faith that had for a long time been the ‘secret religion’ of the well-educated in Lessing’s Nathan.”⁹

2. What does the New Testament say about Jesus as God?

In the New Testament God is revealed to us as the triune God (compare 2. Corinthians 13:14; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; and Revelation 1:4-6; Matthew 28:19). The 1647 Westminster Confession summarizes well the classic definition of the Trinity. In Article 2.3 we read:

“In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost (1 John 5:7; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the

⁷ Emil Brunner. *Offenbarung und Vernunft: Die Lehre von der christlichen Gotteserkenntnis*. Zwingli-Verlag: Zürich 1950. p. 289 (translated from the German).

⁸ Compare the examples in Benjamin B. Warfield. “The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament.” pp. 78-128 in: Benjamin B. Warfield. *Biblical Doctrines*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1988 (1929 reprint).

⁹ E. Küppers. “Kirche und Judentum.” cols. 639-645 in: Heinz Brunotte, Otto Weber. *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*. vol. 2. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1958, col. 644.

Father (John 1:14, 18); the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Galatians 4:6).”¹⁰

The texts cited in this definition read as follows: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement” (**1 John 5:7** – this is the reading of the text as it is found in the so-called *textus receptus* Greek manuscripts); “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’” (**Matthew 3: 16-17**); “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (**Matthew 28:19**); “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (**2 Corinthians 13:14**).

According to the New Testament, most emphatically in the Gospel of John, no one has ever seen God the Father (**John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; Matthew 11:27; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12**). However, in all of these passages what is said at the same time is that (1) Jesus is the revelation of the Father and that (2) whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father. Whoever sees Jesus, Who is “the glory of the One and Only” (**John 1:14**), sees the Father (**John 1:14, 18; 12:45; 14:9**). Thus people in the Old Testament could not have seen the Father, but rather only the Son. It is no wonder that John assumes that Isaiah, in the revelation of the glory of God on the throne (**Isaiah 6: 1-7**), did not see God the Father but rather Jesus (**John 12:41**; compare “him” = Jesus in John 12:37). In the New Testament Jesus is also the Word of God, who speaks in the place of God, who executes judgment, and who also brings salvation in the name of the Father.

If no one has seen God the Father, whom or what did the men and women of the Old Testament see? For the New Testament authors the answer is, in my opinion, clear: they saw Jesus Christ prior to his incarnation.¹¹ Several examples will serve to illustrate:

¹⁰ Translated out of E. F. K. Müller. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*. Theologische Buchhandlung: Zürich, 1987 (1903 reprint by A. Deichert: Leipzig). p. 248.

¹¹ Compare my article regarding the question of the Trinity in the Old Testament and regarding representatives of the viewpoint mentioned. “Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims.” *Calvinism Today* (Whitby, GB) 1 (1991) 1: 24-25+21+27 and the convincing explanations (book 1, chapter 13, section 9-10: ‘Die Gottheit Christi im Alten Testament’) in the ‘Institutio’ by Johannes Calvin from the year 1559 (Johannes Calvin. *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion: Institutio Religionis Christianae*. Neukirchener Verlag: Neukirchen,

Paul assumes in **1 Corinthians 10:4** that it was Christ who accompanied Israel throughout the entire time of wandering in the wilderness from Egypt and Sinai to the promised land. **For ethics it is of particular importance that the New Testament assumes it was Jesus himself who conveyed the law to Moses on Sinai.** Following the church fathers,¹² Herman Witsius cites as Old Testament support that apparently in **Psalm 68:18** Jesus' ascension is meant, as **Ephesians 4:8** documents. The context shows that the divine person mentioned in **Psalm 68,17-18** is the one in **Psalm 68,7-8** who went before Israel in the desert and at the same time is the "God of Sinai" (**Psalm 68:8**). That is to say He is the God who revealed the law on Sinai.¹³ Witsius also refers to Stephen's speech. In that speech Stephen assumes that the angel of the Lord, who appeared to Moses in the thorn bush (**Acts 7:30**) and who, as we will see below, is to be equated with Jesus, is also the angel who delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, brought them through the Red Sea and the desert (**Acts 7:35-36**), and indeed conveyed the law to Moses (**Acts 7:38**).¹⁴

John assumes in **John 12:41**, as we have seen before, that in **Isaiah 6:1-7** Isaiah saw Jesus on the throne: "Isaiah said this because he saw Je-

1988 5th ed. pp. 60-62), which contains the continuation of the section on the Trinity (ibid. pp. 54-60). Additional good literature: Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. *Christologie des Alten Testamentes*. op. cit.; Francis Turretin. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. ed. by James T. Dennison. vol. 1. Presbyterian & Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1992. pp. 272-277 (chapter 3, question 26); Gerard Van Groningen. *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*. op. cit.; J. Barton Payne. *The Theology of the Older Testament*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1962. pp. 167-170; Arnold Fruchtenbaum. "Die Dreieinigkeit im Alten Testament". *Factum* 10/1998: 40-44. An important work is also George A. F. Knight. *A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of Trinity*. *Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers 1*. Oliver and Boyd: Edinburgh/London, 1957 (1953 reprint). From his moderate critical position on the Old Testament, Knight rejects the Trinity as such as a binding concept in the Old Testament; however, at the same time he provides an enormous amount of evidence for the idea that as early as the Old Testament there is teaching that God is one person and yet at the same time several persons.

¹² Compare Brice L. Martin. *Christ and the Law in Paul*. *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* 62. E. J. Brill: Leiden, 1989. p. 35.

¹³ Herman Witsius. *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Men: Comprehending A Complete Body of Divinity*. 2 vols. The den Dulk Christian Foundation: Escondido (CA) and Presbyterian and Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1990 (1677 original), here vol. 2. p. 163.

¹⁴ Ibid. Carl F. Keil. *Genesis und Exodus*. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1983 4th ed. (1878 3rd ed. reprint). pp. 503-504, Note 2 quotes and affirms Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg's *Christologie des Alten Testamentes* with the explanation that the law was indeed conveyed by angels but in the final event by Christ and God.

Jesus' glory and spoke about him." (That Jesus is spoken of here is demonstrated by John 12:36-42, because "him" is referring to Jesus in John 12:37, 41-42. Isaiah saw the "glory of the Lord," which, looking back from the NT, where Jesus is seen as the glory of his father, we understand, that Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, leaving open, whether Lord here means the on God, or specifically the father or Jesus.

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament was any one able to see the glory of the Lord. Nevertheless we read in John 1:14: "We have seen his [Jesus'] glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father ..." because Jesus is the glory of God.¹⁵

Jesus himself assumes that the entire Old Testament witnesses about him (**John 5:39, 46-47; Luke 24:44-47**; compare **Acts 10:42-43**). Is he applying this only to the prophecies that refer to his coming, or is he also applying this to his actions prior to his incarnation in the salvation history of the world and of Israel?

In order to substantiate that Jesus is God, New Testament authors also like to refer to Old Testament texts in which God speaks about the coming Messiah and at the same time identifies and treats him as God. This is how Peter uses **Psalm 110:1** ("The Lord said to my Lord ...") in his sermon on Pentecost and expressly establishes why this passage has to do with Jesus and not with David (**Acts 2:34-35**). When David wrote in Psalm 110:1: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool'", He was referring to God the Father speaking to His Son Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus uses the same text to demonstrate to the Pharisees that the Messiah is God. David was Jesus' forefather, but he refers to Jesus as his Lord! (**Matthew 22:41-46, Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44**).

¹⁵ Compare the Old Testament passages regarding the names, glory, word and wisdom of Yahweh as ways and persons who mediate God to mankind in: Franz Courth. *Trinität: In der Schrift und Patristik. Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte II 1a*. Herder: Freiburg, 1988. pp. 11-12. All these designations could be titles of the second person of the Trinity.

Important Old Testament Texts regarding the Divinity of the Messiah and their Use in the New Testament

Psalm 2:7: “I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten You’”

Compare v. 8-9 and the mention of the son in v. 12. Psalm 2:7 is quoted and used with reference to Jesus in Acts 13:33 & Hebrews 1:5. The “Lord” and the son speak with each other (compare with Jesus as son in Mark 5:7, Luke 1:32; John 1:49).

Psalm 45:6-7: “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

Quoted and used with reference to Jesus in **Hebrews 1:8-9:** God the Son and God the Father are differentiated.

Psalm 110:1-2a: “The Lord says to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion ...,”

Quoted and used with reference to Jesus in Matthew 22:44. Here one sees that the “Lord” authorizes the “Lord” Jesus.

Psalm 110:4 “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’”

Quoted and used with reference to Jesus in **Hebrews 5:5-6**, where the “Lord” institutes his son as a priest, and this son is said to be eternal.

Micah 5:2,4: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times ... He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.”

Partially quoted and used with reference to Jesus in **Matthew 2:6** and alluded to in **John 7:42**. Jesus had an earthly origin, but at the same time an eternal origin.

Malachi 3:1: “‘See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

The “messenger,” who “prepare[s] the way” for the Messiah is clearly John the Baptist, as also seen in Malachi 4:5 (compare Matthew 11:14; 17:11-13). The Lord makes it known that this one prepares the way for “me” (Malachi 3:1). Only after that does the Lord come to “his” temple. Note that the Lord is identified as the “messenger” or “angel of the Covenant”. See more on this under “angel of the Lord.”

Isaiah 40:3-5: “A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”

This is also a reference to John the Baptist, who prepares the way for Jesus Matthew 3:1-3. Jesus who is designated in Isaiah 40:3 as “the LORD”, that is, “Yahweh”.

Daniel 7:13-14: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Here the son, who is at the same time man and yet eternal, appears before the father. The expression “Son of Man” is used with reference to Jesus in **Matthew 24:30, 26:64; John 5:27; Revelation 1,13-18.**

Zechariah 12:10: “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”

This passage is quoted and used with reference to Jesus in **John 19:37** and **Revelation 1:7.**

Isaiah 9:6: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

The Messiah is called ‘Mighty God’ and ‘Everlasting Father.’

3. What does the Old Testament say about Jesus as God?

Old Testament texts concerning Jesus as God are quite numerous. The following passages are only a sampling of the considerable amount of literature on the topic.¹⁶ (For the moment I am leaving aside all examples in which the ‘angel of the Lord’ appears, since they are treated more extensively in the next chapter.

God announces to his people in **Hosea 1:7**: “... I will save them ... by the LORD their God.” The Messiah Jesus Christ is the LORD (“Jahweh”) and is the “God” of Israel.

There is every reason to assume that Jesus is not only the head and savior of the New Testament church, but that he is also the savior and leader of the people of God in the Old Testament. When Israel rejected Jesus Christ the Messiah, in my opinion Israel rejected the one who had also called, led, protected, delivered, and judged it.¹⁷

Against this background, it becomes clear that many designations and titles which Jesus has in the New Testament are, in many cases (though not all), referred to in the Old Testament as belonging to the second person of the Trinity. Examples of such designations are “the word of God,” “the voice of God,” and “the glory of the Lord,” who walked and lived among the people.¹⁸

¹⁶ Compare with the exegesis of the church fathers Jules Lebreton. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité des origines au concile de Niceé*. Beauchesne: Paris. ol. 1: 1927 6th ed.; vol. 2: 1928 2nd ed., in part. vol. 1. pp. 552-558, regarding the Old Testament itself vol. 1. pp. 100-141 and regarding the Jewish interpretation vol. 1. pp. 142-177. The primary subjects of discussion are the expressions “the glory of God,” “The Word of the Lord,” and the “Messiah” as the second person of the Godhead.

¹⁷ Compare the good compilation in Paul Schenk. *Bist du, der da kommen soll?* op.cit.

¹⁸ In my opinion the best examination of this issue is found in John Owen (1616-1683): John Owen. *Hebrews*. vol. 1. (at the same time *The Works of John Owen*. vol. 17). Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1991 (1854-1855/16th century). pp. 215-233; also compare Francis Turretin. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. ed. by James T. Dennison. vol. 1. Presbyterian & Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1992 (Latin original from the 17th century). pp. 272-277.

The Old Testament often mentions the ‘Spirit of God,’¹⁹ who creates life, inspires the word of God and attests to the divine Messiah. Why should this not be the third person of the Trinity? The same arguments which are used to identify the Spirit of God as one of the persons of the Trinity in the New Testament can be used to identify the Spirit of God in the Old Testament. However, the possibility that the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament could be identified with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is seldom discussed in works about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.²⁰ The same phenomenon is found among Evangelicals, where the differences, rather than the similarities, largely define the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

The Spirit of God occasionally makes an appearance with Jahweh (the LORD) and the divine Savior, Jesus.

In Isaiah 61:1 the **Spirit of God** rests upon **the divine Messiah**, “because **the Lord** has anointed” him. In this verse all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned and are distinguished from one another. Jesus used this verse with reference to himself (Luke 4:18).

That the Messiah is himself God is made clear on numerous occasions in Isaiah. In Isaiah 9:6 he is called “Mighty God” and “Everlasting Father.”

In **Isaiah 48:16** the divine Messiah says (see Isaiah 48:12): “And now the **Sovereign Lord** has sent **me**, with **his Spirit**”.

At this point one finds the Father (“Sovereign Lord”), the Son (“me”), and the Holy Spirit (“his Spirit”), and it is the Father and the Spirit who send the Son, even so other translations are possible.

Also in connection with the angel of the Lord, next to the appearance of two divine individuals one finds the appearance of three divine persons. Thus it is that below we will refer to the Trinity as a result of Genesis 18:1-19, 29, where three men appear and there is mention of ‘God,’ ‘God,’ and

¹⁹ Compare the excellent presentation by Benjamin B. Warfield. “The Spirit of God in the Old Testament”. pp. 101-129 in: Benjamin B. Warfield. *Biblical Doctrines*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1988 (1929 reprint).

²⁰ Manfred Dreytza. *Der theologische Gebrauch von Ruah im Alten Testament*. Brunnen Verlag: Giessen, 1990. pp. 230-231 Dreytza acknowledges only Isaiah 40:13 as an example to substantiate the fact that the ‘Spirit’ is not only “an aspect of his personality” but is rather “completely coreferent” with Yahweh (both *ibid.*, p. 230). In other respects he does not deal negatively with the question of the Trinity, the interpretation of the New Testament, and the literature having to do with the history of interpretation and dogma from the 2nd until the 19th century. The short sections on “Hypostatization or Personification” of the *ruah* (*ibid.*, pp. 116-119, 229-233) do not allow the question to be raised, whether or not we are dealing with a person rather than a personification.

‘the Angel’ in Genesis 48:15-16. But any explanation of this passage is surely vague.

In this connection I would like to stress the importance of Israel’s central confession of faith in Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” The Hebrew word for “one” (Hebrew *echad*) often means not only simply ‘one,’ ‘unique,’ or ‘sole,’ but rather the unity and the oneness of something, that is composed of several entities or that have united with each other (compare day and night = ‘one’ day in Genesis 1:5; Man and wife = ‘one’ flesh in Genesis 2:24; grapes of a ‘single’ cluster of grapes in Numbers 13:23; a people with a ‘singleness’ of heart and action in Jeremiah 32:38-39; becoming ‘one’ in Ezekiel 37:17). Herbert Wolf assumes that *echad* highlights “uniqueness”, but writes that above all: “It emphasizes unity, while it recognizes the diversity within this unity.”²¹ Could it be that the biblical confession of faith in Deuteronomy 6:4 not only indicates that the God of Israel alone is God, but that it also intends to make clear that God is a God of unity? Could it be that there is a desire to defend against a possible polytheism that falsely makes reference to the idea that in addition to God there are also *other* distinct divine entities such as the Messiah, the angel of the Lord, or the Spirit of God who are active?²²

At any rate, Jewish sources have also detected three divine Spirits in the One True God in Deuteronomy 6:4.²³ If this Jewish interpretation were accurate, *Israel’s central confession of faith would not only be a rejection of polytheism, but also a rejection of monistic monotheism.*

²¹ Herbert Wolf. “61: echad”. p. 30 in: R. Laird Harris (ed.). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. vol. 1. Moody: Chicago, 1980; so also: Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1990 (1983-1985 reprint in one volume). p. 329; compare also George A. F. Knight. *A Biblical Approach to the Doctrine of Trinity*. op. cit. pp. 17+47-49.

²² So, for instance, Stanley Rosenthal. *The Tri-Unity of God in the Old Testament*. The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry: Collingswood (USA), 1978. pp. 4-6.

²³ Quoted in Herman Witsius. *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Men*. op. cit. vol. 2, pp. 163-164.

Chapter 2: The Angel of the Lord: Christ in the Old Testament

I. Introduction

Basic to a concrete treatment of Christ in the Old Testament is a discussion of the angel of the Lord. When conducting missions work among Jews, in particular Jewish Christians have expressed their belief that the angel of the Lord was Christ appearing in the Old Testament acting prior to his incarnation. The subject matter should make it clear there is a significant amount of catch-up work to do with respect to discussions with other monotheistic religions when it comes to dogmatics. Furthermore, the exegetical foundation of central Christian dogmas should again be tackled.

Preview: Important Old Testament Events, in which Jesus is involved as the Angel of the Lord²⁴

Genesis 16:7-14: Hagar flees

Genesis 21:14-21: Hagar and her son

Genesis 22:9-19: Abraham's intention to sacrifice Isaac

Genesis 32:25-31 and Hosea 12:4-5: Jacob wrestles with God

Genesis 48:14-16: Jacob's blesses Joseph's sons

Exodus 3:1-15: Moses and the burning bush

Exodus 14:18-21: Israel is protected from the pursuing Egyptians

Exodus 14:19; Exodus 23:20,23; 32:34; 33:2: The angel of the Lord leads, safeguards and saves Israel in its wanderings

Exodus 23:20,23; 32:34; 33:2: Request that Canaan be taken

Numbers 22:22-35: Balaam and the donkey

Joshua 5:13-15: Joshua's meeting near Jericho

Judges 2:1-5: Rebuke after the partial conquest of Canaan

Judges 5:23: The Song of Debora

Judges 6:11-24: Gideon's call

²⁴ Passages and discussions are found below in detail.

Judges 13:1-15: Announcement of Samson's birth

2 Samuel 24:16-17; 1 Chronicles 21:12,15; Exodus 23:20-21: The angel of the Lord executes God's judgment on Israel

1 Kings 19:1-9: Elijah flees because Jezebel has threatened his life

2 Kings 1:3,15: Elijah is given commands

2 Kings 19:35 and Isaiah 37:36: Judgment on the Assyrians

1 Chronicles 21:1-30 And 2 Samuel 24:10-25: David counts the number of fighting men

2 Chronicles 32:21: Judgment on the Assyrians

Daniel 3:28 and 6:23: Deliverance in the fiery furnace and in the den of lions

Malachi 3:1-5,22-24: Announcement of John the Baptist and Jesus

The Old Testament mentions the "angel of the LORD" 58 times and the "angel of God" 11 times.²⁵ The Church Fathers²⁶ and the Reformers assumed that the "angel of Yahweh," a name for the second person of the Trinity, was Jesus Christ.²⁷ Up until the present, there have been many ex-

²⁵ Numbers according to R. Ficker. "mal'ak Bote". cols. 900-908 in: Ernst Jenni, Claus Westermann (eds.). *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. Chr. Kaiser: München & Theologischer Verlag: Zürich, 1978, here col. 901. A good overview regarding all occurrences of the word angel and angel of the Lord is provided by George Wigram. *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1970⁵. pp. 704-705.

²⁶ Compare Jules Lebreton. *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité des origines au concile de Nicée*. op. cit. vol. 1. pp. 552-558 (compare with the Old Testament itself pp. 100-141, regarding the Jewish interpretation pp. 142-177); Franz Courth. *Trinität: In der Schrift und Patristik*. op. cit. p. 9; compare pp. 11-12; Joseph Barbel. *Christos Angelos*. Theophaneia 3. Peter Hanstein: Bonn, 1941 (complete), in particular pp. 34-35. Barbel lectures thoroughly on pp. 163-174 on the concerns of St. Augustine that the principally justified identification of the angel of the Lord with Jesus could substantiate teaching a Trinity where Jesus is not truly God and consubstantial with the Father, Barbel provides many examples for this feared misuse by adherents of Arianism, in which Jesus is not viewed as being truly God.

²⁷ The main passages therefore were, on the one hand, Malachi 3:1, because the angel of the covenant named there is identified with Jesus in the New Testament, and Isaiah 9:5, because in Isaiah 9:5 the Septuagint gives the Messiah the honorable title of angel (Greek *angelos*) – albeit in the absence of anything in the Hebrew text that would be grounds for doing so.

positors who have held to the view that the angel of the Lord is God²⁸ or even that this godlike angel denotes Jesus in the Old Testament.²⁹ Is this point of view justified? I believe so, and I would like to substantiate it on the basis of all of the passages in which this angel of the Lord is mentioned. Occupying ourselves with this topic brings us into the focal point of the great theme of the acts of the triune God in the Old Testament. Therefore, it cannot be unimportant to us.

Now there are, however, also other positions.³⁰ Catholic Theology generally holds to the position that the angel of the Lord is an angel who represents God. Many Evangelical commentators simply leave the question open. Historical-critical theologians have difficulties with the angel of the Lord. This is why innumerable theories have arisen.³¹

²⁸ For example, Karl Barth. *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Study edition vol. 2. (I, 1 §§ 8-12 “Der dreieinige Gott”). Theol. Verlag: Zürich, 1987 (1932). pp. 314-315+340 and often; Robert L. Reymond. *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The Old Testament Witness*. Christian Focus Publications: Fearn (GB), 1990. pp. 1-7; Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. *Christologie des Alten Testaments und Commentar über die Messianischen Weissagungen der Propheten*. 3 Teile in 4 Bänden. op. cit. Ersten Theiles erste Abtheilung ... pp. 219-249; Gleason L. Archer. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1982. pp. 359-361; Gerard Van Groningen. *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1990. pp. 212-218; John Owen. *Hebrews*. vol. 1. op. cit. pp. 219-228 (compare pp. 215-233); J. Barton Payne. *The Theology of the Older Testament*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1962. pp. 167-170; H. C. Leopold. *Exposition of Genesis*. vol. 1. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1942. pp. 500-501; Walter C. Kaiser; Peter H. Davids; F. F. Bruce; Manfred T. Brauch. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. IVP: Downers Grove (IL), 1996. pp. 191-192; Gustav Friedrich Oehler. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. J. F. Steinkopf; Stuttgart, 1891³. pp. 202-211 does not want to carry New Testament dogma into the Old Testament (in part. *ibid.*, p. 209), yet holds from the New Testament that it doubtless has to do with Jesus (*ibid.*, p. 211).

²⁹ So, for example, with Geerhardus Vos. *Biblical Theology*. Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, 1985 (1948 reprint). pp. 72-76; Meredith G. Kline. *Images of the Spirit*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1980. pp. 70-81; Morton H. Smith. *Systematic Theology*. 2 vols. Greenville Seminary Press: Greenville (SC), 1994. vol. 1. pp. 48-49; J. Stuart Russell. *The Parousia: A Study of the New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1983 (1887 reprint). p. 418; Herman Bavinck. *The Doctrine of God*. Wm. B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids (MI). p. 256 et. Seq.; David Chilton. *Days of Vengeance*. Dominion Press: Ft. Worth (TX), 1987. pp. 311-312.

³⁰ Compare Gustav Friedrich Oehler. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. op. cit., pp. 202-211.

³¹ Compare R. Ficker. “mal’ak Bote”. op. cit., vol. 907.

For the historical-critical Old Testament scholar Gerhard von Rad, the belief in an angel of the Lord was a popular folk concept.³² He assumes that “the form of the angel of Yahweh was apparently derived from several examples of former sacred lore.”³³ Originally there had been reports dating from pre-Israelite times which described the appearance of a Canaanite “numen.”³⁴ The existing notion of an angel of the Lord was then understood as this divine being, placed in the position of this numen. Naturally such theories cannot be documented, but can be arbitrarily replaced by other constructions.

Yet even Gerhard von Rad, who is far removed from identifying the angel of the Lord as Jesus, writes about this angel: “he is Yahweh’s help for Israel who has become a person”³⁵ and draws attention to the central position of the angel of the Lord in the salvation history of Israel as well as to the fact that the name “angel of the Lord” and “Lord” can be exchanged with each other. Bernhard Stein writes:

“The angel of the exodus is thus no created angel but rather the invisible omnipresent one himself ...”³⁶

J. Ficker, despite his critical approach, describes the angel of the Lord (Hebrew *mal’ak Jahwe*) most appropriately:

“The *m.J.* is, on the account of his special functions, to be strictly distinguished from other celestial beings. Like no other heavenly being, he directly intervenes in the lives of people.”³⁷

“So it is that *mal’ak Jhwh* embodies the action of God as it comes in contact with the earth.”³⁸

Gustav Friedrich Oehler adds:

³² Gerhard von Rad. “*mal’ak* im AT”. pp. 75-79 in: Gerhard Kittel (ed.). *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1990 (1939 reprint), here p. 75.

³³ Gerhard von Rad. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. vol. 1. Chr. Kaiser: München, 1987⁹. p. 299; compare all pp. 298-300.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

³⁵ Gerhard von Rad. “*mal’ak* im AT”. *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

³⁶ Bernhard Stein. “Der Engel des Auszugs”. *Biblica* 19 (1938): 286-307, here p. 307 (with the use of a quote from ‘Hitzig’). Stein does not address the question of whether the angel could be the second person of the Trinity.

³⁷ R. Ficker. “*mal’ak* Bote”. *op. cit.*, col. 907.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, col. 904.

“This *mal’ach* is sometimes identified with Jehovah, and at other times a distinction is made.”³⁹

On the one hand, the following research demonstrates that the angel of the Lord is Yahweh (the Lord). On the other hand, the angel of the Lord is to be distinguished from him, because he acts on Yahweh’s behalf and confers with him. Both of these criteria are only fulfilled by the second person of the triune God.

This is confirmed in the New Testament, since Malachi 3:1 is clearly used with reference to John the Baptist in **Matthew 11:10**; **Mark 1:2**; **Luke 7:27** (compare Matthew 11:3; Luke 1:17), who prepares the way for Jesus as the “messenger of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1).

In the New Testament the angel of the Lord no longer appears. After all, Jesus, in taking on human form, has now become flesh. Wherever German translations render “the angel of the Lord,” – since there is actually no definite article – the translation should be “an angel of the Lord” (Matthew 1:20; 2:13,19; 28:2; Luke 1:11; 2:9; John 5:4; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:7,23). The same applies for the expression “[an] angel of God (Acts 27:23; Galatians 4:14). The definite article only appears in Matthew 1:24 (“the angel of the Lord”), whereby, however, only *the* angel who has just been introduced in Matthew 1:20 (with the indefinite article) is meant. Even if only one angel (without any supplement) is mentioned in the singular, when first mentioned it is always indefinite in the sense of “[one] angel” and only when cross referencing to the first time it was mentioned is the expression “the [or this] angel” then used. An exception is, in my opinion, the text treated above, which is Revelation 20:1-3.

Herman Witsius makes reference to Stephen’s speech, wherein he assumes that the angel of the Lord, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush (**Acts 7:35**) is also the angel who led Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea and the desert (**Acts 7:36**) and indeed gave Moses the law (**Acts 7:38**).⁴⁰ In the New Testament there is no other passage where *the* angel of

³⁹ Gustav Friedrich Oehler. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. op. cit., p. 203.

⁴⁰ Herman Witsius. *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Men: Comprehending A Complete Body of Divinity*. 2 vols. The den Dulk Christian Foundation: Escondido (CA) and Presbyterian and Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1990 (original 1677), here vol. 2. p. 163. Carl F. Keil. *Genesis und Exodus*. Brunnen Verlag: Gießen, 1983⁴ (1878³ reprint). pp. 503-504, Note 2 quotes and affirms Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg’s *Christologie des Alten Testamentes* with the statement that the law was indeed conveyed by angels but in the final analysis the law was given by Christ and God.

the Lord is named. When “the angel” appears, it is always an ordinary angel, who had been previously mentioned. Otherwise what is mentioned is “[an] angel.”

A section from John Calvin’s 1559 *Institutes* can serve as a summary. Calvin begins by speaking principally about “the divinity of Jesus in the Old Testament,”⁴¹ and then he elaborates on the angel of the Lord:

“But if this does not satisfy the Jews, I know not what cavils will enable them to evade the numerous passages in which Jehovah is said to have appeared in the form of an Angel (Judges Vi. Vii. Xiii. 16-23, etc.). This angel claims for himself the name of the Eternal God. Should it be alleged that this is done in respect of the office which he bears, the difficulty is by no means solved. No servant would rob God of his honour, by allowing sacrifice to be offered to himself. But the Angel, by refusing to eat bread, orders the sacrifice due to Jehovah to be offered to him. Thus the fact itself proves that he was truly Jehovah. Accordingly, Manoah and his wife infer from the sign, that they had seen not only an angel, but God. Hence Manoah’s exclamation, ‘We shall die; for we have seen the Lord.’ When the woman replies, ‘If Jehovah had wished to slay us, he would not have received the sacrifice at our hand,’ she acknowledges that he who is previously called an angel was certainly God. We may add, that the angel’s own reply removes all doubt, ‘Why do ye ask my name, which is wonderful?’

Hence the impiety of Servetus⁴² was the more detestable, when he maintained that God was never manifested to Abraham and the Patriarchs, but that an angel was worshipped in his stead. The orthodox doctors of the Church have correctly and wisely expounded, that the Word of God was the supreme angel, who then began, as it were by anticipation, to perform the office of Mediator. For though he were not clothed with flesh, yet he descended as in an intermediate form, that he might have more familiar access to the faithful. This close intercourse procured for him the name of the Angel; still, however, he retained the character which justly belonged to him – that of the God of ineffable glory. The same is intimated by Hosea, who, after mentioning the wrestling of Jacob with the angel, says, ‘Even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial’ (Hosea 12:5).”⁴³

Excursis: It is often overlooked that the first signs of the Reformation are found in Martin Luther’s first lecture on the Psalms (1513-1515): “From a hermeneutical perspective, what is new regards the fact that a Christologi-

⁴¹ Section heading of Book 1, Chapter 13, 9-10 in John Calvin’s. *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion*. op. cit., pp. 60-62.

⁴² Contemporary opponent of the Trinity.

⁴³ Calvin. *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion*, pp. 61-62.

cal interpretation of the Psalms is consistently practiced.”⁴⁴ At this time Luther had not yet broken away from the fourfold understanding of Scripture, that is to say, the allegorical interpretation of Scripture. The extent to which he ever completely gave up allegorical interpretation is also a matter of dispute. However, Calvin at the latest is the first modern exegete, and his statements about Jesus in the Old Testament can no longer be dismissed as allegorical.

2. Overview of the references to the Angel of the LORD

2.1. Names for the Angel of the LORD

First of all, it has to be established that the angel of the Lord LORD, the angel of God, and other references to this angel refer to the same person:

The “angel of the LORD” is identical with the “angel of God”: compare Judges 6:20 with 6:21, 12; Judges 13:3, 13 etc. with 13:6; Genesis 16:7 with 21:17.

The “angel of the LORD” is identical with “the angel”: compare 2 Samuel 14:17 with 24:16a, 16b,17; 1 Kings 19:5 with 19:7; 1 Chronicles 21:12,15,16,18,30 with 21:15a,15b,20,27.

“An angel” can be another expression for “my angel”: compare Exodus 23:20 with 23:23; Exodus 32:34 with 33:2.

That additional designations such as “messenger of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1), “angel of his presence” (Isaiah 63:9; compare Hosea 12:5 with Genesis 32:30,31), or “archangel” (Jude 9) may refer to the same angel of the LORD will become clear in the commentary to the respective pieces of evidence below.

⁴⁴ Bernhard Lohse. “Dogma und Bekenntnis in der Reformation: Von Luther bis zum Konkordienbuch.” in: id. et al. (ed.). *Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Konfessionalität. Handbuch der Dogmen- und Kirchengeschichte 2*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1989 (1980 reprint). p. 5. A balanced interpretation and discussion of the messianic Psalms is found in Eduard Böhl. *Christologie des Alten Testaments oder Auslegung der wichtigsten messianischen Weissagungen*. Wilhelm Braumüller. Wien, 1882. pp. 123-181 and Eduard Böhl. *Zwölf messianische Psalmen*. Detloff: Basel, 1862.

2.2. The Angel of the LORD and the Angels

The word for “angel” in most cases is used for people serving as a ‘messenger’ or ‘envoy’ for other people.

People are only referred to twice as a “messenger of the LORD”: Haggai 1:13 (Haggai); Malachi 2:7 (all priests).

Besides these instances and the instances for the “angel of the LORD” discussed below, actual angels are almost always denoted in the plural with this expression: Genesis 28:12; Job 4:18; Psalm 91:11; 103:20; 104:4; 148:2 (compare “destroying angels” in Psalm 78:49).

The word “angel” occurs in regard to normal angels only one time in the singular form, in 1 Kings 13,18, where an old prophet lies, saying that an angel has spoken, and in Zechariah (see below): Zechariah 1:9,13,14; 2:2, 7; 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; 6:4,5.

These references in Zechariah are primarily of interest because this individual angel is clearly distinguished from the angel of the LORD. The angel of the LORD (Zechariah 1:11,12; 3:1,2,5,6), only once called simply “the angel” (Zechariah 3:3-4) is clearly distinguished here from the “angel who was talking with me” (Zechariah 1:9,13,14; 2:2,7; 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; 6:4,5; in 2:7 a second angel). The angel of the LORD gives orders to angels and receives reports (Zechariah 1:11).

A parallel is found in Daniel 8 and 10, where the angel “Gabriel” (Dan 8) and the same or another angel (Dan 10) (without use of the word for ‘angel’) receives orders from a divine “man,” who many identify with the archangel “Michael” in Daniel 10:21 (compare the discussion under 3.4.).

“An angel” and “the angel,” respectively, often denote the angel of the LORD, in particular when the angel of the LORD has just been introduced and when in the following narrative the angel is only briefly referred to. For example, the “angel of the LORD” (1 Chronicles 21:12,15,16,18,30 and 2 Samuel 24:16) is simply called “angel” in 1 Chronicles 21:20, 27 and in 2 Samuel 24:16a, 16b,17. What according to 2 Kings 19:35 and Isaiah 37:36 was done by “the angel of the LORD,” was done simply by an “angel” according to 2 Chronicles 32:21.

It is also the case that in texts in which only an “angel” in the singular form is addressed, without the designation “angel of the LORD,” etc. being found in the context, there are often references to the angel of the LORD. The angel in Exodus 23:20 and Exodus 33:2 is called “an angel,” and in Exodus 23:23 and Exodus 32:34 the angel is called “my angel” and is obviously the angel of the LORD.

2.3. The Angel of the LORD is God

(All of the passages mentioned here are discussed more fully under 3.1. – 3.4.)

The angel of the LORD says, “I am the God of ...”: Exodus 3:2-14.

The angel of the LORD says, “I am the God of ...”: Genesis 31:13.

The angel of the LORD is addressed as “God”: Genesis 16:13; Judges 13:22.

An individual falls face down before the angel of the LORD and worships him: Numbers 22:31 (compare also the sacrifices in Judges 2:4-5; Judges 6:23-24).

The text changes back and forth between the angel of the LORD and the LORD: Exodus 3:2 with Exodus 3:4-14; Judges 6:11,12,21,22 with 6:14,15,23.

The angel of the LORD serves as the face of God: compare Hosea 12:5 with Genesis 32:31, Judges 6:22 (possibly also Genesis 16:13).

The angel of the LORD makes a covenant with Israel: Judges 2:1-2, Malachi 3:1.

Accordingly, the angel of the LORD swears by his own name: Genesis 22:16; Judges 2:1. He is the recipient of vows (Genesis 31:13) and covenants (Judges 2:2). (Only God was, however, allowed to swear.⁴⁵ For that reason he is the only one who elsewhere swears by his own name,⁴⁶ in particular in Hebrews 6:13).

Actually the angel of the LORD speaks “by myself”: Genesis 22:16; Numbers 22:32

The angel of the LORD speaks as if he were God (see below for almost all passages). He gives orders as God: Numbers 22:35.

The angel of the LORD often claims acts which according to other passages have clearly been done by God. It is said that He delivered Israel out of Egypt (Judges 2:1).

The angel of the LORD does things which are reserved for God alone. He forgives sins or refuses to grant forgiveness: Zechariah 3:3-5; Exodus 23:21 (additional examples are shown in the next section 2.4.).

⁴⁵ Compare Section 37 on oaths in Thomas Schirmacher. *Ethik*. 3 vols., 2nd ed. RVB: Hamburg, 2001².

⁴⁶ Compare Section 37.2 in *ibid*.

2.4. The Angel of the LORD is, like Jesus, the Mediator of Judgment, Grace, and Redemption and is executing God's Plan on Earth.

The angel of the LORD carries out God's judgment on Israel: 2 Samuel 24:16-17; 1 Chronicles 21:12,15; Exodus 23:21.

The angel of the LORD enforces judgment on God's enemies; he sometimes carries out this judgment himself: Exodus 23:23; 2 Kings 19:35 = Isaiah 37:36 = 2 Chronicles 32:21; Psalm 35:5,6; possibly also Malachi 3:1-5; Joshua 5:13 etc.

The angel of the LORD appears with a drawn sword of judgment: Numbers 22:31; 1 Chronicles 21:16,27,30; compare Joshua 5:13.

The angel of the LORD is also the redeemer of Israel: Genesis 48:16; Psalm 34:8; Isaiah 63:9; Daniel 3:28; 6:23.

The angel of the LORD leads, protects and delivers Israel in its wanderings: Exodus 14:19; Exodus 23:20,23; 32:34; 33:2.

The angel of the LORD curses the enemies of God: Judges 5:23.

The angel of the LORD blesses Israel; Genesis 48:16.

The angel of the LORD also protects others: Genesis 16:13; Genesis 21:17; Psalm 34:8.

2.5. At the same time the Angel of the LORD is identified as the LORD, he distinguishes himself from the LORD

The angel of the LORD and the LORD speak with each other: 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; compare also Judges 6:21-22 with 6:23.

Additionally he is expressly called the "angel of the LORD," so that the LORD faces him as the one who sends him. The expression "my angel" is also used.

3. All References to the Angel of the LORD

References will be discussed in the following order:

- 3.1. The Angel of the LORD
 - 3.1.1. Clear Evidence that the Angel of the LORD is God
 - 3.1.2. Additional References
- 3.2. The Angel of God

- 3.1.1. Clear Evidence that the Angel of God is God
- 3.1.2. Additional References
- 3.3. “Angel” without supplemental Terms or with other supplemental Terms
 - 3.3.1. Clear Evidence that this Angel is God
 - 3.3.2. Additional References
- 3.4. Additional important Passages (‘Archangel,’ etc.)

In the following accounts concerning the angel of the LORD all verses are listed in which the designations respectively appear. The context of the passage is mentioned and presented in note form to indicate which incident is being addressed. The respective comments are indented.

3.1. The Angel of the LORD

3.1.1. Clear Evidence that the Angel of the LORD is God

Genesis 16:7,9,10,11 (read 7-14): Hagar flees

After the conversation with the angel of the LORD, Hagar “gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: ‘You are the God who sees me,’ for she said, ‘I have now seen the One who sees me’” (16:13).

Genesis 22:11, 15 (see the context of verses 9-19): Isaac sacrificed by Abraham

The angel of the LORD says, among other things: “Now I know that ...” (22:12) and then “a second time”: “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this ... I will surely bless you ...” (22:15-17).

Exodus 3:2 (see the context of verses 1-15): Moses and the burning Bush

In the burning bush “the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire ...” (3:2). Beginning in 3:4 there is suddenly only talk of the “LORD,” who speaks out of the burning bush and in the end introduces himself in 3:14 with his name “I am who I am.”

Numbers 22:22,23,24,25,26,27,31,32,34,35 (see verses 22-35): Balaam and the Donkey

According to 22:23,31 the angel of the LORD has a drawn sword in his hand. According to 22:31 Balaam falls facedown adoringly before the angel, without the angel’s raising an objection. In 22:32 the angel says, “I have come here to oppose you ...,” whereby the “I” is a typical manner of speaking for God. In 22:34 Balaam speaks to the angel

as if to God: “Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, ‘I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back.’ The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, ‘Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you’” (22:35).

Judges 2:1 (see verses 1-5) – Tongue lashing after the partial Conquest of Canaan

Israel has a covenant with the angel of the LORD, who as God led the Israelites out of Egypt: “The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, ‘I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars. Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this?’” (2:1-2)

Judges 6,11,12,21a,21b,22a,22b (see verses 11-24): Gideon’s call

The speaker is called “angel of the LORD” and only “LORD” and ‘Lord,’ respectively, in alternating fashion (6:14,16). At the same time the Lord gives information about the “angel of God” (6:20). The angel of the LORD is thus the Lord himself and yet is to be distinguished from him.

Judges 13:3,13,15,16,17,18,20,21a,21b (see verses 1-15): Announcement of Samson’s birth

When Samson’s father asks the angel his name (13:17), the angel answers as follows: “Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding?” (13:18). At the time of the sacrifice the angel “ascended in the flame” of the altar (13:20). As a result the parents concluded: “We have seen God!” (13:22). – The angel of the LORD is simultaneously called the “angel of God” (13:6,9).

Zechariah 1:11,12 and 3:1,2,5,6 (see verses 1:7-2:2; 3:1-7): Zechariah’s Night Visions

The “angels” justify their activities before the “angel of the Lord LORD” in Zechariah 1:1. The angel of the LORD forgives the high priest Joshua (Zechariah 3:3-5), although God is directly behind him. In Zechariah 3:6-7 the angel of the LORD speaks the Word of God, although God is again standing directly next to him.

The angel of the LORD (Zechariah 1:11,12; 3:1,5,6), at one time simply called “the angel” (Zechariah 3:3-4), is clearly distinguished from the ‘normal’ “angel who was talking with me” (Zechariah 1:9,13,14; 2:2,7;4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; 6:4,5; in 2:7 distinguished from a second angel). (By the way, Zechariah contains practically the sole pas-

sages in the Old Testament where the word for “angel” in the singular does not refer to the angel of the LORD [compare above under 2:2], since otherwise it is always the case that angels are spoken of in the plural in the Old Testament.)

Zechariah 12:8 (see verses 6-8): The future of the House of David

“... The house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them” (12:8). At this point God and the angel of the LORD are seen as one and the same, and the angel is again characterized as the one who moves ahead of Israel (compare what was said under this heading regarding Exodus 3:2).

3.1.2. Additional References

Judges 5:23: The Song of Deborah

The angel of the LORD curses the inhabitants of Meroz, who do not want to help the Lord.

2 Samuel 14: 17: The people’s view of David

A wise woman (2 Samuel 14:17) and Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 19:28) compare David with the angel of the LORD and the angel of God, respectively (2 Samuel 14:20; 19:27).

1 Kings 19:7: (see verses 1-9): Elijah flees

The angel of the LORD, 19:5 first called “an angel” (compare 19:7: “... came back a second time”) and performs a wonder on Elijah.

2 Kings 1:3,15: Commands to Elijah

The angel of the LORD gives commands to Elijah regarding where he is to go.

2 Kings 19:35 and Isaiah 37:36: Judgment upon the Assyrians

The angel of the LORD judges 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. In 2 Chronicles 32:21 the same event is simply ascribed to an “angel.”

1 Chronicles 21:12,15,16,18,30 and 2 Samuel 24:16 (see 1 Chronicles 21:1-30; 2 Samuel 24:10-25): From David’s conducting a census to the purchase of a threshing floor from Araunah

The angel of the LORD makes an appearance here as the one who carries out judgment (above all 2 Chronicles 21:12,15-16,27,30). The place where he completes the judgment is determined by God to be the location for the temple. The angel of the LORD is simply called “angel” in 1 Chronicles 21:20,27 and in 2 Samuel 24:16a, 16b, 17.

Psalm 34:7: Psalm of David

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”

Psalm 35:5,6: Psalm of David

David prays that the angel of the LORD would be “driving ... away” and “pursuing” his enemies, who are also God’s enemies.

3.2. The Angel of God*3.2.1. Clear Evidence that the Angel of God is God***Genesis 31:11 (see verses 11-13): Jacob speaks with his wives about the situation with Laban.**

“I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me” (31:13; one can only swear by God himself!).⁴⁷

Judges 6:20: Gideon’s Call

see angel of the LORD on Judges 6 (under 3.1.1.)

Judges 13:6,9: Announcement of Samson’s Birth

see angel of the LORD on Judges 13 (under 3.1.1.)

*3.2.2. Additional References***Genesis 21:17 (see verses 14-21): Hagar and her son**

The angel of God protects Hagar and her son

Exodus 14:19 (see verses 18-21): Israel is protected from the Egyptians who were in pursuit

“Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them” (note the close connection with the pillar of a cloud, 14:19).

2 Samuel 14:20 and 19:27: see 2 Samuel 14:17 under the angel of the LORD (2.2.)

2 Samuel 14:20 and 19:28: see 2 Samuel 14:17 under the angel of the LORD (2.2.)

⁴⁷ Compare Section 37 in Thomas Schirrmacher. *Ethik.* op. cit., 2nd ed.

3.3. Angel without supplemental Terms or with other supplemental Terms: my Angel, his Angel, Angel of Presence, Angel of the Covenant

3.3.1. Clear Evidence for the Fact that this Angel is God

Genesis 48:16 (see verses 14-16): Jacob's blesses Joseph's Sons

“May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day. The Angel who has delivered me from all harm – may he bless these boys” (48: 15-16). At this point the angel is named as a coequal with God who has “delivered” Jacob.

Mention of “The God, ..., the God, ... the angel” could allude to the Trinity

Exodus 23:20, 23 and 32:34 and 33:2: Order to take Canaan

The angel mentioned in Exodus 23:20 and Exodus 33:2 is called “an angel” and in Exodus 23:23 and Exodus 32:34 “my angel.” In all four passages he goes before Israel in order to conquer the Canaanites. According to Exodus 23:21 the angel will not forgive Israel's obstreperousness, because God's “Name” is in him. In Exodus 23:20-23 one reads: “See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of ... and I will wipe them out.”

Isaiah 63:9 (see verses 7-19): The Lord, the Redeemer

“... and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old” (63:9). The Lord is the Savior and Redeemer of Israel (63:8). In 63:9-10 it is suddenly the angel of the LORD who redeems, loves, spares, lifts up, and carries Israel. In 63:16 the Lord is again the “Redeemer.” (In most translations the text is not rendered according to the original Hebrew text.)

Hosea 12:5 (see verses Hosea 12:3-5 and Genesis 32-24-31): Jacob wrestles with God

Jacob “struggled with God” (Hosea 12:3) is equivalent to “struggled with the angel (Hosea 12:5). Accordingly, the man who wrestled with

Jacob in Genesis 32:24-31 was indeed the angel of the LORD and at the same time God himself. This explains why in the text it remains open whether Jacob wrestled with God himself or not. The angel of the LORD would in such case be identical with the “face of God” (Genesis 32:31), which in my opinion is also a title for Jesus in the Old Testament:

Malachi 3:1 (see verses 1-5, 4:4-6): **Announcement of John the Baptist and Jesus**

The “angel” (equivalent to messenger), who “will prepare the way” (3:1) is clearly John the Baptist, as is the case in 3:23. The Lord comes first to “his” temple, then at the same time the “angel of the covenant” will come! “Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come” (3:1). This is clear evidence regarding this angel:

1. that this angel is God;
2. that this angel is Jesus and
3. that he is at the same time the angel of God’s covenant with Israel.

3.3.2. Additional References

1 Chronicles 21:15a, 15b, 20, 27 and 2 Samuel 25: 16a, 16b, 17 (see 1 Chronicles 21:1-30; 2 Samuel 24:10-25): **From David’s conducting a census to the purchase of a threshing floor from Araunah**

See the section on 1 Chronicles 21 and 2 Samuel 24 under Angel of the LORD (3.1.2.)

2 Chronicles 32:21: Judgment on the Assyrians

See then section on 2 Kings 19:35 under the angel of the LORD (3.1.2.)

Daniel 3:28 and 6:22: Protection in the fiery Furnace and in the Lions’ den

After Daniel’s three friends are saved from the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar praises God, “who has sent his angel and rescued his servants” (3:28). Daniel also calls out after being saved from the lions’ den: “My God sent his angel.” (both of these verses are written in Aramaic, whereby the word for “angel,” however, is the same as in Hebrew.).

3.4. Additional important Passages in this Context: Archangel, commander of the army of the Lord, etc.

Genesis 18:1-19, 29: Abraham, God, and the Destruction of Sodom

Abraham receives a visit from three men (18:2). On the one hand, they are referred to in the plural (e.g., 18:9) and, on the other hand, in the singular (e.g., 18:10,19). In 18:13 one suddenly sees: “Then the LORD said to Abraham ...” The passage 18:10,13-14 contains what God, who appears as three men, says. In 18:22 the men go to Sodom, while Abraham nevertheless “remained standing before the LORD ” (18:22; 19:27) and speaks with God about Sodom (18:22-32). It is not until 18:33 that the LORD leaves Abraham.

In the meantime the other “two angels” had come to Sodom, where they again appear as men (19:1-26). They say, “... the LORD ... he has sent us ...” (19:13). They are also mentioned in the singular and the plural (19:18-22). In 19:22 the men suddenly say: “But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it.” (The plural of men speak in the singular of ‘I’!)

Whether the Trinity is represented here, or whether the LORD who remained with Abraham, is the angel of the LORD with the other two angels being attendants, remains an open point.

Genesis 32: 25-31: Jacob wrestles with God

From Hosea 12:4-5 it becomes clear that the man in Genesis 32:25-30 is in reality the angel of the LORD and at the same time God. See section 3.3.1. on Hosea 12:5

Joshua 5:13-15: Joshua’s Meeting near Jericho

“A man” appears to Joshua before the taking of Jericho, who has “a drawn sword in his hand” (5:13), such as we know from the angel of the LORD (Numbers 22:31; 1 Chronicles 21:16,27,30). When Joshua hears that the man is “commander of the army of the Lord” (Joshua 5:14), he falls “facedown to the ground in reverence” (5:14). An angel would never have put up with this. Instead, he demands that Joshua take off his sandals, as the angel of the LORD demanded of Moses before the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-5).

There is, in my opinion, only one commander in chief of the army of God, who again takes the fate of Israel into his own hands. **At this point the question would be whether the name “Lord of Hosts” (*Yahweh Zebaoth*) is likewise a designation of the second person of the Trinity.**

Daniel 10:21 and 12:1 and Jude 9 and Revelation 12:7 (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:16): The Archangel Michael

In the Bible there is, in my opinion, only one “archangel” (Jude 9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16), namely “Michael” (Daniel 10:21; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7). “Archangel,” that is, “principal angel” or “ruler of the angels” could be put on equal terms with the “commander of the army of the Lord” in Joshua 5:13 (see above). The idea that there are several archangels is something that is only held by Jewish and Catholic extra-biblical tradition. The angel “Gabriel” (Daniel 8:16-17; 9:21; Luke 1:19,26), who could or could not be equated with the angel explaining the vision to Daniel in Daniel 10, is himself no archangel and is never so called. The angel points out that only “Michael, your prince” (Daniel 10:21), that is, the supreme angel, or archangel, supports him.

For this reason, numerous church fathers equated him with Jesus.⁴⁸ David Chilton supposes, in my opinion correctly, that the description of Daniel 10:5-6 describes the archangel Michael, that is, Jesus, who is Israel’s angel and without whom Gabriel would not be able to continue to fight.⁴⁹

The description is starkly reminiscent of the description of Jesus at the beginning of Revelation (Revelation 1:12-17). J. Barton Payne also assumes that the description of the “man” in Daniel 10:5-6 corresponds to the description in Revelation 1:13-15. He additionally sees the “man” described, who in Daniel 8:15-16 gives Gabriel orders.⁵⁰ He does not rule out that this “man” is to be equated with the “son of man” in Daniel 7:13.⁵¹ But the evidence is not too strong, thus we cannot be sure.

Revelation 20:1-3: The Angel binds the Dragon

As a general rule, postmillennialist and amillennialist commentators relate the “angel” named here (20:1), who comes from heaven, has the

⁴⁸ Documented in Joseph Barbel. *Christos Angelos*. op. cit., pp. 224-235.

⁴⁹ David Chilton. *Days of Vengeance*. op. cit., pp. 311-312. Others also assume that there is only one archangel and that this is a title of Jesus Christ, e.g., Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. *Christologie des Alten Testamentes und Commentar über die Messianischen Weissagungen der Propheten*. 3 parts in 4 vols. op. cit, here: Zweiten Theiles erste und zweite Abtheilung enthaltend Sacharjah und Daniel. L. Oelmigke: Berlin, 1832. z. St.; J. Stuart Russell. *The Parousia: A Study of the New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord’s Second Coming*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids (MI), 1983 (1887 reprint). pp 418-419.

⁵⁰ J. Barton Payne. *The Theology of the Older Testament*. op. cit., p. 169.

⁵¹ Ibid.

keys to the Abyss, and who disempowers the devil, to Jesus and his triumph on the cross over Satan. The same applies to “Michael and his angels” in Revelation 12:7 (see above). But premillennial commentators take this to refer to a normal angel and to an event in the future and this discussion cannot be solved on the base of the two verses in themselves. No other references to angels in the New Testament are taken by commentators to refer to Jesus.

Chapter 3: Christ as the fulfillment of the ceremonial law

I. The End of the external Enforcement of the Ceremonial Law

The New Testament assumes that the ceremonial law found its complete fulfillment in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross and, for that reason, all none of the provisions of the Old Testament ceremonial law must continue to be performed.

The End of the external Enforcement (Fulfillment) of the ceremonial Law in the New Testament (examples)

Hebrews 7:12,18-19: “For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a **change of the law**... The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.”

Hebrews 9:9-10: “This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.”

Colossians 2:16-17: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

Hebrews 7:16: speaks of “external regulations.”

However, as we treat this topic it should be borne in mind that the study of these commands continues to have an instructive purpose.

“The ceremonial law can be seen to have sub-divisions: (1) laws directing the redemptive process and therefore typifying Christ – for instance, regulations for sacrifice, the temple, the priesthood etc., and (2) law which taught the redemptive community its separation from the unbelieving nations – for instance, prohibitions on unclean meats (Lev. 20:22-26), on unequal yoking

of animals (Deut. 22:10), and on certain kinds of animals (Deut. 22:10), and on unequal kinds of mixing of seed or cloth (Deut. 22:9, 11). None of these laws is observed today in the manner of the Old Testament shadows, and yet they are confirmed for us. The *principle* they taught is still valid. For instance, the ceremonial law prescribed the necessity of shed blood for atonement (Lev. 17:11), and accordingly when Christ made atonement for our sins once for all, ‘it was therefore *necessary*’ that He shed His blood for us (Heb. 9:22-24); the Old Testament redemptive system called for a Passover lamb to be sacrificed, and Christ is that lamb for us (1Cor. 5:7, 1 Peter 1:19).”⁵²

Jesus Christ himself submitted to the ceremonial law (Romans 15:8-9) before he fulfilled it himself. In **Romans 15:8** we read: “For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews” [Greek: circumcision], and indeed “on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs.” Accordingly, the new age began with the priest Zechariah, who served God in the temple and received the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25). Zechariah and his wife were both “... upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly” (**Luke 1:6**). Jesus was himself circumcised on the eighth day and presented in the temple (**Luke 2:21-24, 27, 39**), whereby it is repeatedly mentioned that this happened in accordance with the customs of the law. Jesus had the required tassels on his clothing (**Matthew 9:20; 14:36**; in the law: Numbers 15:37-41; Deuteronomy 22:12) and commanded the healed leper to offer the gift Moses commanded and to show himself to the priest (**Matthew 8:4**). He paid the temple tax (**Matthew 17: 24-27**), cleansed the temple (**Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-17**), and participated in the Old Testament calendar of festivals in Jerusalem.

Also in later times the ceremonial law was not discarded in the strictest sense, nor was its observance declared to be the result of false teaching. It was only wrong when one made the mistake of seeking salvation through the ceremonial law instead of through Christ.

As we will see, the background of Romans 14:1-15:13 concerning the weak and strong in faith has to do with the degree to which the ceremonial law can be observed with personal freedom.⁵³ As far as the weak are concerned, it surely does not have to do with Jewish Christians, who wanted to

⁵² Greg L. Bahnsen. *By this Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today*. Institute for Christian Economics: Tyler (TX), 1985. pp. 136-137.

⁵³ Compare in this regard the more comprehensive Section 30.1-2 in Thomas Schirmacher. *Ethik*. op. cit., 2nd ed.

be righteous by holding to the ceremonial provisions. Had that been the case, Paul would have directed the entire section towards the weak. In actual fact he admonishes the strong. **Paul himself was known to hold to Old Testament ceremonial laws on occasion, but not in order to achieve his righteousness, but rather as a matter of personal freedom.** Thus he had Timothy **circumcised** (Acts 16:3), took the Nazarene oath (Acts 18:18) and financed the Nazarene oath of other Jews (Acts 21:20-29; Acts 24:17-19), which even included sacrifices in the temple (Acts 21:26; Acts 24:17). The justification for this action is of importance here. According to **Acts 21:20**, there were many Jewish Christians who were “zealous for the law,” which is to say that they continued to hold to the ceremonial law. Among them there was the – apparently false – accusation against Paul, that he forbade Jews from being circumcised (Acts 21:21). In order to refute this, Paul supported the Nazarene oath. He fought for the freedom of Gentiles from circumcision and the ceremonial law, and not for a prohibition of circumcision and the ceremonial law for Jewish Christians.

For this reason St. Augustine (354-430 n. Chr.) wrote:

“I maintain that circumcision and the other regulations were given to the people in the Old Covenant as a prophecy of future things, which were to be fulfilled in Christ. Now that this has taken place, those who are Christians must read zealously, in order to understand the fulfillment of the prophecies given, not in order to observe these practices, as if that were necessary... However, although it is not necessary to impose these regulations as an obligation upon the Gentiles, the regulations should not be set aside for Jewish people in such measure, as if they were worthy of abhorrence and condemnation ...”⁵⁴

Jewish Christians could also practice individual Commands in the Ceremonial Law after the Resurrection of Jesus, as long as they were not observed for the purpose of gaining Salvation⁵⁵

Romans 14:1-15:13⁵⁶

Acts 18:18: Paul takes a Nazarene oath: “... he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken.”

⁵⁴ St. Augustine, ‘Brief an Hieronymus,’ quoted in: Alfons Heilmann (ed.). *Texte der Kirchenväter*. 5 vols., vol. 2. Kösel: München, 1963. p. 440. Augustine admittedly assumes a gradual dying out of the ceremonial law.

⁵⁵ Compare Section 19 in Thomas Schirmacher. *Ethik*. 3 vols., RVB: Hamburg, 2001 2nd ed.

⁵⁶ Compare in this regard comprehensive Section 30.1.-3 in *ibid*.

Acts 21:18-30: Paul finances a Nazarene oath in the temple in Jerusalem

Acts 16:1-3: Paul has Timothy circumcised “because of the Jews.”

After his departure from Corinth, Paul stopped first in the Corinthian suburb of Cenchrea and did not begin his voyage until “he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken” (**Acts 18:18**).⁵⁷ According to this he had taken a Nazarene oath while he had been in Corinth. Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem was also in connection with a Nazarene oath, because Paul had cleansed himself together with four Nazarenes and had assumed the costs for the subsequent haircutting (Acts 21:23-24). Jews, however, said that the four were Gentiles (Acts 21:27-29).

In contrast, Ellen G. White, the founder (prophetess) of the Seventh-day Adventists, sees Paul’s taking the requested Nazarene oath as “a fruit of cowardice,”⁵⁸ whereby she sees the error on the side of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem and not with Paul.⁵⁹ This is due to the fact that Paul makes this “concession” only because the Christians in Jerusalem could have otherwise been an obstacle to the success of his proclamation of the Gospel. “He was not, however, empowered by God to go as far as they had demanded of him.”⁶⁰ This criticism of the apostles is completely unjustified and without any basis in the biblical text. (This is all the more astonishing, given that the prophetess of the Seventh-day Adventists wants to make the very point of the significance of the law for the present day.)

2. The Future of the Ceremonial Law in the Old Testament and how it changed within the Old Testament

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews expends much effort pointing out **that the fulfillment of the ceremonial law and its individual parts through Jesus Christ had been announced or foreshadowed in the Old Testament.**⁶¹ According to **Hebrews 7:20,28**, the Old Testament priesthood did not rest upon an oath and was for that reason for a limited period

⁵⁷ Regarding the meaning of this text for the question of the length of hair and the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 compare Thomas Schirrmacher. *Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier: Eine alternative Sicht von 1. Korinther 11,2-16*. Biblia et symbiotica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993.

⁵⁸ Quoted in H. H. Schmitz. *Paulus schreibt an die Galater*. Advent-Verlag: Hamburg, o. J. p. 138.

⁵⁹ Compare *ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

⁶⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶¹ Compare in part. Francis Turretin. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. ed. by James T. Dennison. vol. 2. Presbyterian & Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1994. pp. 158-159.

of time. In contrast, the eternal priesthood of Jesus was according to the order of Melchizedek. It rested upon an oath from God and could not be retracted. In the Old Testament Abraham, and with him the Levitic-Jewish priesthood, served the eternal priest Melchizedek (**Hebrews 7:1-10**), and **Psalms 110:4** is an unmistakable announcement that the Levitical priesthood, unlike the priesthood of Melchizedek, would not have eternal duration.⁶²

As this theme is developed it is no accident that Melchizedek, as a “priest of God Most High” (Genesis 14:18), brought out “bread and wine” to Abraham, which are precisely the elements of the Lord’s Supper found in the New Testament. Melchizedek’s priesthood predates the Levitical priesthood and also follows it. For this reason Melchizedek will be treated below in more detail.

There are many other indications found in the Old Testament that the ceremonial law would one day find its fulfillment. It is, for instance, prophesied that a time would come in which the **ark of the covenant** would not be able to be found and would no longer play a role. This is an outrageous statement from the standpoint of an Old Testament believer: “In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,” declares the Lord, “men will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made” (**Jeremiah 3:16**). In the New Testament one finds the temple and the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord in the heavenly sanctuary: “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant” (**Revelation 11:19**).

Similarly, in the famous text **Isaiah 61:1-9** the fulfillment of the Year of Jubilee is signaled through the Servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus saw in himself the fulfillment of the passage. Isaiah 61:1-2 is quoted in **Luke 4:17-19**, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (**Luke 4:21**). The fulfillment of a part of the ceremonial law is clearly given here.

The prophet Daniel announced that “the Anointed One, [or the Messiah, the Christ] (**Daniel 9:25**) “will put an end to sacrifice and offering” (**Daniel 9:27**). The future of the city of Jerusalem is calculated up to the time that is “decreed,” in order to “put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy” (**Daniel 9:24**).

⁶² Compare to this the section on Melchizedek at the end of the chapter.

The interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 is disputed. In this text what is addressed – and I restrict myself to my view of the passage⁶³ – is the time between the rebuilding of Jerusalem and Jesus' crucifixion (“put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy,” Daniel 9:24; “the Anointed One will be cut off,” Daniel 9:26; an end to sacrifices in Daniel 9:27). The time between these two events is set at 490 years (70 weeks per year times 7 years), which is mathematically correct. It is only after the Messiah (the Anointed One) is cut off that a prince destroys the holy city (Daniel 9:26) and with it heralds the “end” (Daniel 9:26) of the Jewish era. This occurred in 70 A.D. when the Roman emperor destroyed Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:27 is a chronological repetition of 9:26. “He” [Daniel 9:27] would again be the Messiah, and the “abomination that causes desolation” is again the destruction of the temple and its history; compare **Matthew 24:15**).

It is announced in **Isaiah 56:4-5** that one day the “eunuchs” will be accepted into God’s “covenant,” although according to Deuteronomy 23:2 they would have been excluded from the “assembly.” The following verses, **Isaiah 56:6-8**, announce that “foreigners” (Isaiah 56:6) will be brought into the new “covenant.” This prophecy, involving the abolishment of a condition of the ceremonial law, was fulfilled in the conversion of the Ethiopian, that is to say, a Gentile. In addition, he was emasculated, a Gentile “eunuch” (or “official in charge of all the treasury”) in **Acts 8:26-40**.

Since this treasurer from the orient was reading Isaiah 53 from his scroll at the moment that Philip came up to him (Acts 8:32), he could have continued to read and to his great joy he could have come upon the prophecy found in Isaiah 56:4-8. Isaiah 56:5 prophesies that those who are emasculated will receive a “memorial” (an ‘everlasting name,’) “a name better than sons and daughters.” The final fulfillment of this passage of course refers to eternal salvation. However, many older interpreters see it fulfilled for the treasurer in that his history found its way into the New Testament and for that reason witness is given in all eternity to his conversion.

The Psalms also mention a “sacrifice” that is not a component of the actual ceremonial law, but that rather exclusively had to do with an internal attitude, namely **prayer** as “incense,” an “evening sacrifice” (**Psalms 141:2**), and “thank offerings (**Psalms 50;14,23**). This sacrifice of thanks (‘thank offering’) is not to be confused with the official type of sacrifice designated

⁶³ Some premillennial interpreters relate Daniel 9:27 to the anti-Christ and to a future time. In my opinion the context speaks of the ministry of the Messiah and of the destruction of Jerusalem – both at the time of the Romans.

as a “fellowship offering” (Leviticus 3:3), which is also rather imprecisely called a ‘thank offering.’ This has to do with a thankful attitude, also when it is difficult to be thankful.⁶⁴ In this connection Psalm **69:31-32** should especially be mentioned: “I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.” This type of sacrifice is also found in **Jonah 2:9**: “But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you.”

Hosea also speaks about an offering that goes beyond the ceremonial law: “... that we may offer the fruit of our lips.” (**Hosea 14:2**). And the letter to the Hebrews expressly takes up the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise with a formulation that comes from Hosea 14:2: “... let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name” (**Hebrews 13:15**).

The steps of fulfillment in God’s covenant throughout history also bring changes in the ceremonial law within the Old Testament itself. The most obvious example might well be the change from the tent of meeting to the temple and the accompanying changes that took place. This applies to changes within the Mosaic law itself.

James B. Jordan assumes that there were three stages or covenantal administrations within the Mosaic era: (1) Mosaic revelation, Exodus 19-31; (2) Mosaic revelation, Leviticus 34 – Numbers 17; (3) Mosaic revelation, Numbers 18 – Deuteronomy 34.⁶⁵ The first revelation ends with the breaking of the covenant by worshiping the golden calf, the second begins with the repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the third in Numbers 18. Each time the instructions for the priesthood change somewhat as do the statements regarding what precisely is desecration of the tent of meeting, etc. and how it is to be punished.⁶⁶

Significant for Jordan is the statement in Hebrews 7:12 that a change in the priesthood brings about a change in the law. This applies to the death of

⁶⁴ Compare Franz Delitzsch. *Biblischer Commentar über die Psalmen. Biblischer Commentar über das Alte Testament* 4/1. Dörffling und Franke: Leipzig, 1883 4th ed. pp. 396+398. In this context Delitzsch expressly refers to “reasonable worship,” according to Romans 12:1.

⁶⁵ James B. Jordan. “The Death Penalty in the Mosaic Law: Five Explanatory Essays.” *Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper 3*. Biblical Horizons: Tyler (TX), 1989 (duplicated). p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29.

every high priest, to a change in the family of the high priest, and all the more for the change to Jesus as the high priest of the new covenant.⁶⁷

There were changes in the age of Levites who were called to serve, for example. At first the Levites assumed 20 years of service, from age 30 until age 50 (Numbers 4:3,23; compare 1 Chronicles 23:3; Luke 3:23), shortly thereafter 25 years of service from age 25 to age 50, whereby the first five years may have been an internship before taking on full Levitical responsibilities (Numbers 8:23-26) and finally 30 years of service years, between the ages of 20 and 50, when according to David the tasks of the Levites were less physically demanding (1 Chronicles 23:24-27; Ezra 3:8).⁶⁸

The ceremonial law which could, therefore, be changed within the Old Testament, could all the more find this to be the case in the transition from the old to the New Covenant.

In the New Covenant there is, for example, no longer the sin of desecration with respect to places and objects. The sacraments, as Calvin correctly held, cannot be desecrated.⁶⁹ Desecration in the New Testament relates to the church as a whole, which can be betrayed, lied to, or abused.⁷⁰

The only true change in the moral law over the course of salvation history known to me (if one does not count the question of monogamy / polygamy),⁷¹ is the ban on marriage between siblings (sibling incest). In the early history of Israel siblings married (e. g. Abraham and his half-sister Sarah). However, this, with the exception of levirate marriage,⁷² was later strictly prohibited.⁷³

3. The Fulfillment of Old Testament Sacrifices and Ceremonies

Let us again repeat a part of what St. Augustine wrote:

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 28-29, note 3.

⁶⁸ The end of service was always at age 50.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

⁷⁰ As an additional example of the change in details of the law, Jordan points out in *ibid.*, p.48, that incest between generations (e.g., between parents and children) has been forbidden since creation, while incest between siblings was first forbidden when the law was given at Sinai. Compare to this, however, Section 21.5-9 in Thomas Schirrmacher. *Ethik*. op. cit., 2nd ed.

⁷¹ Compare Section 44 in *ibid.*

⁷² See Section 44.11 in *ibid.*

⁷³ See the entire Section 44 in *ibid.*

“I maintain that circumcision and the other regulations were given to the people in the Old Covenant as a prophecy of future things, which were to be fulfilled in Christ. Now that this has taken place, those who are Christians must read zealously, in order to understand the fulfillment of the prophecies given, not in order to observe these practices, as if that were necessary...”⁷⁴

The fulfillment of the ceremonial law, therefore, does not mean to disparage the Old Testament ceremonial law, since we as Christians also have a lot to learn from them. To this end we repeat the quote from Greg L. Bahnsen:

“*The ceremonial law* can be seen to have sub-divisions: (1) laws directing the redemptive process and therefore *typifying* Christ – for instance, regulations for sacrifice, the temple, the priesthood etc., and (2) law which taught the redemptive community its *separation from the unbelieving nations* – for instance, prohibitions on unclean meats (Lev. 20:22-26), on unequal yoking of animals (Deut. 22:10), and on certain kinds of animals (Deut. 22:10), and on unequal kinds of mixing of seed or cloth (Deut. 22:9, 11). None of these laws is observed today in the manner of the Old Testament shadows, and yet they are confirmed for us. The *principle* they taught is still valid. For instance, the ceremonial law prescribed the necessity of shed blood for atonement (Lev. 17:11), and accordingly when Christ made atonement for our sins once for all, ‘it was therefore *necessary*’ that He shed His blood for us (Heb. 9:22-24); the Old Testament redemptive system called for a Passover lamb to be sacrificed, and Christ is that lamb for us (1Cor. 5:7, 1 Peter 1:19).”⁷⁵

After the instruction that the church will be gathered together from all peoples, he continues:

“... however the basic requirement of a holy separation from the world of unbelief is still confirmed and in force (2 Corinethian 6:14-7:1). For this reason the ceremonial law has always been confirmed through Christ, even if it is held to by New Testament believers in its shadowed form.”⁷⁶

That the ceremonial law in the New Testament is not viewed as having little value, but rather that it plays an important role, is also made clear by the

⁷⁴ St. Augustine, ‘Brief an Hieronymus’, op. cit., p. 440.

⁷⁵ Greg L. Bahnsen. *By this Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today*. Institute for Christian Economics: Tyler (TX), 1985. pp. 136-137.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

fact that the New Testament often refers to the Old Testament sacrificial, priesthood, purity, and covenantal ordinances.

As an example let us look at Romans 3:23-25: "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished ..." We attain the "glory of God" (Romans 3:23), which the judgment is especially concerned about (Romans 2:10), only "by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). That redemption is inseparably tied to the Old Testament is not only shown in the use of the Old Testament concepts of "grace" and "redemption." Rather, this is shown in particular in Romans 3:25: "God presented him [Jesus Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." The two references to "blood" and "atonement" indicate how the ceremonial law was fulfilled in Christ.

In spite of all attempts to spiritualize the crucifixion, the Bible teaches that Jesus' "blood" flowed – also in a material sense – which is to say that Jesus lost his life. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews documents from the Old Testament ceremonial law that blood had to flow on the cross: "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (**Hebrews 9:22**; compare **Leviticus 17:11**).

For that reason "the blood of the covenant" equally identifies the Old Testament Passover (Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:20) as well as the shedding of Jesus' blood in the New Testament Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25). Here it is again made clear that in the gospel we are not dealing with philosophical flights of thought or trivial appeals (for instance, the power of positive thinking), but rather the hard reality that there is a question of power and justice to be resolved.

Paul places "blood" in connection with the "**atonement**" (Romans 3:25). The corresponding Greek word *hilasterion* designates the cover of the Old Testament ark of the covenant and is translated "atonement cover," "throne of grace," "mercy seat" "place of atonement" (Exodus 25,17-22; 26:34; 30:6; 31:7; 35:12; 37:6-9; 39:35; 40:20; Leviticus 16:2, 13-15; Numbers 7,89; 1 Chronicles 28:11) or something similar. The ark of the covenant contained the "words of the covenant," that is, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 40:20; Deuteronomy 10:5; 1 Kings 8:9; **Hebrews**

9:4)⁷⁷ and was in the “place of atonement” (**1 Chronicles 28:11**), the Most Holy Place. Above the ark “were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover” (**Hebrews 9:5**, compare Exodus 25:17-22). The cherubim and seraphim guard the throne of God (e.g., Isaiah 6:2-7), which shield his glory. The throne of God (“throne of grace”), was under the wings of these golden cherubim and directly on top of the cover (“atonement cover”) of the ark of the covenant. Here was the presence of God, the glory of the Lord. At the place of the atonement cover, God revealed himself. When the high priest obtained forgiveness once a year on the great Day of Atonement, he went into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled the blood of the sacrificed animals precisely against this place of the presence and the holiness of God, which for this reason is called the “place of atonement.”⁷⁸ With this the high priest confirmed the law which lay in the ark of the covenant, the sin of the people, and the grace of God.⁷⁹ In **Hebrews 4:16** the throne of grace is called the “royal judgment seat of grace”⁸⁰.

Peter J. Leithart has shown in detail that in the narrow sense the cover of the ark of the covenant is not the throne of God, but rather the “footstool” (Psalm 99:1,5; 132:7; 1 Chronicles 28:2; compare 1 Samuel 4:4) of the throne of God.⁸¹

Jesus fulfills the entire Old Testament ceremonial law. In particular, he fulfills all the parts of the sacrificial law, and that also in detail. **On the great Day of Atonement he was everything: from the people of God, on the one side, to the judging and reconciling God, on the other side, and everything in between.** He was, namely, the high priest, the mediator, the sacrifice, the ark of the covenant, etc. In the first overview of the next sec-

⁷⁷ Compare to the Ten Commandments and their covenantal character Section 15 in Thomas Schirrmacher. *Ethik*. op. cit., 2nd ed.

⁷⁸ This is held by R. Laird Harris. “kapporet.” p. 453 in: R. Laird Harris (ed.). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Bd. 1. Moody: Chicago, 1980, for the most reasonable translation.

⁷⁹ Compare to atonement cover in Gustav Friedrich Oehler. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. op. cit., pp. 414-415; Johannes Herrmann. “hilasterion.” pp. 319-320 in: Gerhard Kittel (ed.). *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. vol. IX. W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1990 2nd ed. and “Gnadensthron.” p. 476 in: Helmut Burkhardt et al. (ed.). *Das Große Bibellexikon*. vol. 1. Brockhaus: Wuppertal, 1987.

⁸⁰ So in *ibid.*

⁸¹ Peter J. Leithart. “The Footstool of His Feet.” *Biblical Horizons* No. 50 (June 1993): 3-4.

tion (4), a range of things will be covered, beginning with people and going all the way up to God.

Jesus is

God ⇔ Place of Atonement ⇔ Sacrifice ⇔ High Priest ⇔ People of God

What a glorious foreshadowing of the forgiveness that comes completely from grace and is described in Romans 3:21-31! Through the blood of Christ, the law is “confirmed (Romans 3:31) and “grace” is given precisely at the point where the holiness of God is least misunderstandably expressed: on the cross at Golgotha. Jesus completely fulfills the Old Testament ceremonial law, as the overview in the box above shows: he is the high priest, the sacrifice, the place of atonement, and the holy and forgiving God all in one. The letter to the Hebrews, in particular, makes this clear to us.⁸²

A further dimension of the “throne of grace” unfolds when one assumes that Jesus is already “the glory of the Lord” in the Old Testament,⁸³ which is to say that he already played the central role in the Old Testament in the Most Holy Place and on the great Day of Atonement.

The concrete fulfillment of the individual provisions of the ceremonial law could be extended to the differences among the individual sacrifices. To this end a presentation of the Old Testament meaning of the individual types of sacrifices (in particular Leviticus 1-7) would, first of all, be necessary. But at this point such an undertaking would take us too far afield.

A good overview of the different sacrifices are given in two texts found in the law of Moses and one found in the prophets:

“These are the Lord’s appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to the Lord by fire—the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for the Lord’s Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the Lord” (Leviticus 23:37-38);

⁸² Compare to this Paul Schenk. *Bist du, der da kommen soll? Christuszeugnisse im Alten Testament*. Brunnen: Gießen, 1991.

⁸³ Compare Gustav Friedrich Oehler. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. op. cit., p. 217.

“In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, prepare these for the Lord at your appointed feasts: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings” (Numbers 29:39);

“... bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings, incense and thank offerings to the house of the Lord” (Jeremiah 17:26). There were, then, the normal, daily sacrifices, sacrifices on the Sabbath, and offerings at feasts. These sacrifices were broken down into pre-determined and freewill sacrifices and vows. The ‘offerings made to the Lord by fire,’ the collective term, breaks down into the named types of sacrifices, which are described respectively in Leviticus 1-7.

The Old Testament ceremonial law is fulfilled and not abolished. The ordinances that sacrifices are only allowed in God’s temple and that it is only possible for people to meet God in God’s temple still apply. The visible temple was, however, an image of the eternal temple in heaven and a shadow of the coming, true temple, which has become a reality in Jesus Christ and in his body, the church.

John Calvin wrote in this connection:

As far as the ceremonies are concerned – several can truly be viewed as external – when their use was discontinued their meaning was demonstrated to be all the more correct. For that reason the coming of Christ did not for a moment detract from the ceremonies, yes, it is so that after the shadow image was shown to be real, we first see their true meaning and we recognize that they were neither in vain nor harmful.”⁸⁴

What is decisive is the plan and intention of the lawgiver, that God has ordered ceremonies so that they would be temporarily performed but have an eternal meaning. For that reason he did not abolish them; rather, what was shadow was removed and what was kept was the essence.”⁸⁵

4. Provisions of the Ceremonial Law and their Fulfillment in the New Testament

The intention of this section is to clarify that the ceremonial law has been fulfilled through Christ in the New Testament. A corresponding list is not

⁸⁴ Johannes Calvin. *Evangelien-Harmonie. 1. Teil.* Johannes Calvin – *Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift – Neue Reihe* Bd. 12. Neukirchener Verlag: Neukirchen, 1966. pp. 181-182.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 183.

possible for the moral law – for this, however, there is an overview of which provisions of the moral law are confirmed in terms of content.⁸⁶

In the following, initial overview⁸⁷ passages are provided which refer to Jesus as the fulfillment of the ceremonial law. In the second overview there are supplementary New Testament passages provided which make it clear which components of the New Testament law belong to the ceremonial law and which ones have been brought to an end by their being fulfilled externally.

**Christ is the Center of Old Testament ceremonial Law
and fulfills it perfectly
(passages serve only as examples)**

Instead of ‘is the fulfillment of,’ in the following it could almost always simply be ‘is’ (e.g. “Jesus is the temple”)

The reconciling God

Jesus is God: 1 Timothy 2:5; John 1:1-3

Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s judicial office: **James 4:11-12; Hebrews 4:12-14; Acts 17:31**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the reconciler: **Ephesians 2:14-16; Romans 5:11**

The Place of Reconciliation: the Temple

Jesus is the glory of God, who lives among men: **John 1:14; 14:23; Revelation 7:15; 21:3**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Temple: Revelation 21:22; John 2:19-21; Matthew 26:61; Ephesians 2:20-22

Jesus is the fulfillment of the ‘tent,’ that is to say, the tabernacle: John 1:14 (literally “he dwelled among us”); **Hebrews 9:11**

Jesus is the fulfilment of the (seven armed) lamp stand in the temple: Revelation 21:23; John 8:12

Jesus is the fulfilment of the showbread in the temple and of the bread of

⁸⁶ This overview is found in Section 28.8.-9. in Thomas Schirmacher. *Ethik*. op. cit., 2nd ed.

⁸⁷ A similar, detailed discussion from the 17th century is found in Francis Turretin. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. ed. by James T. Dennison. vol. 2. Presbyterian & Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1994. pp. 153-165 (Chapter 11, questions 24 and 25).

the Passover feast: **John 6:23-58; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-28**

Jesus the fulfillment of the cleansing water and the wash basin in the temple: **Hebrews 10:22; John 4:14; Ephesians 5:26; Revelation 21:6**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the curtain in front of the Most Holy Place: **Hebrews 10:20; Matthew 27:51**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the throne of God: Acts 2:30; Hebrews 4:16; 8:1; Revelation 5:13; 22:1, 3

Jesus is the fulfillment of the cover of atonement, that is, of the throne of grace on the ark of the covenant: **Romans 3:25; Hebrews 4:16**

The Mediator of the Covenant between God and Man

Jesus is the fulfillment of the office of high priest: **Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the office of mediator (e.g., of the office Moses had): **Hebrews 9:15; 12:24; 1 Timothy 2:5**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant of God: **2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 9:15; 12:24; 13:20**; all passages regarding the Lord's Supper, i.e., regarding the "new covenant," e.g., **Luke 22:20**; compare **1 Peter 2:10**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the office of the anointed one ('Messiah,' 'Christ'): **Matthew 16:16; John 4:25-26; Acts 2:36**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the law: **Romans 10:4**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the peace of God: **Ephesians 2:14-15; Romans 5:1**

Conducting Sacrifice

Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrifice: **Hebrews 9:26-28**

Jesus is the fulfillment of sacrificial blood: **Romans 3:25; 1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 9:12**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the blood used for sprinkling: **Revelation 7:14; Hebrews 9:14**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the fellowship meal after the sacrifices: **Revelation 19:7, 9; Revelation 3:20**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Passover Feast: all passages regarding the Lord's Supper, e.g., **John 13:1 et. seq.**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Passover Feast wine: all passages regarding the Lord's Supper; **John 15:1-8**

Jesus is the fulfillment of sacrificial fire and of the fire of judgment: **Luke 12:49; Matthew 3:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:8**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrificial lamb **John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6, 9** (In Revelation Jesus is called “Lamb” 26 times)

Jesus is the fulfillment of animal sacrifice: **Hebrews 10:12; Ephesians 5:2**

Additional Elements of the ceremonial Law

Jesus is the fulfillment of circumcision: **Colossians 2:11**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath: **Hebrews 4:9-10**

Jesus is the fulfillment of the people of God (equivalent of Israel): **Ephesians 2:11-22; John 11:50; 18:14**

What else does the New Testament count as ceremonial Law, and which instructions have been brought to an end by their being externally fulfilled?

Circumcision

1 Corinthians 7:19: “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts.”

Romans 2:26-29: “If those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.”

Galatians 5:6: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”

Ephesians 2:11 (see Ephesians 2:11-18 further below)

Baptism instead of circumcision

Colossians 2:11-12: “In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Excluding sterile People from the Community

In **Isaiah 56:4-5** it is announced that one day those who are “cut off” will be brought into God’s covenant (Isaiah 56:4), although according to Deuteronomy 23:2 they are excluded from the “assembly.” This prophecy is first fulfilled in the conversion of the Ethiopian or Gentile eunuch (or treasurer) in **Acts 8:26-40**, who was reading a scroll of Isaiah at the time.

Temple

See all passages in the previous overview “The Place of Reconciliation: The Temple”

When the Samaritan at the well asked about the proper place to worship – in Jerusalem (Jews) or the Mount of Garizim (Samaritans), Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem ... Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21, 23-24).

Hebrews 10:19-22: “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith ...”

Hebrews 4:16: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Ephesians 2:21: (about the church) “In him [Jesus] the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.”

Compare **Daniel 9:24-27**: The future of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple is calculated up to the time which is “decreed,” in order to “put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy” (**Daniel 9:24**).

Ark of the Covenant

Compare **Revelation 11:19**: “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant.” (The ark of the covenant or its spiritual counterpart now stands in the heavenly temple and in the church, respectively.)

Cover of Atonement

Romans 3:24-25: "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished ..."

Sacrifice

See all passages in the previous overview under "Conducting Sacrifice."

Hebrews 9:9-10: "This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings – external regulations applying until the time of the new order."

Romans 12:1: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

Hebrews 13:15: "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name."

Compare Mark 12:32-33

Comp **Daniel 9:24-27:** "the Anointed One [or Messiah, the Christ] (Daniel 9:25) will put an end to sacrifice and offering" (Daniel 9:27) The future of the city of Jerusalem is calculated up to the time which is "decreed," in order to "put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy" (**Daniel 9:24**).

Shedding of Blood

Hebrews 9:22: "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Hebrews 9:22-24

Passover Lamb

1 Corinthians 5:6-8: "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.”

The Lord’s Supper instead of the Passover Feast

“The blood of the covenant” designates in equal measure the Old Testament Passover (**Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:20**) as well as the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament (**Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25**).

Unleavened Bread

1 Corinthians 5:6-8: “Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.”

Priest

See all passages in the previous overview under “The Mediator of the Covenant ...”

Hebrews 7:12, 18-19: “For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law... The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.”

Hebrews 7:22-25: “Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. Now there have been many of those [Levite] priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

Hebrews 7:1-24 is printed below in its entirety in section 6.

List of Generations

Titus 3:9 und **1 Timothy 1:4** warn against occupying oneself with Jewish genealogies.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See something more comprehensive regarding this under Section 7.

Sabbath⁸⁹

Colossians 2:16-17: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

Hebrews 4:1-13**Religious Festivals**

Colossians 2:16-17: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

Galatians 4:9-10: “... how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!”

Romans 14:5-6: One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.”

Crucifixion of Jesus / Good Friday instead of the Passover in Egypt
Resurrection of Jesus / Easter instead of the Feast of Unleavened Bread
Pentecost instead of the Feast of Weeks

Gordon J. Wenham writes the following in reference to the festivals described in **Leviticus 23**: “Three of the basic Old Testament festivals were directly adopted by the Christian church: Passover as Good Friday, the Feast of Unleavened Bread as Easter, and the Feast of Seven Weeks as Pentecost. The three most important events in connection with Christ’s redemption activities coincide with these festivals.”⁹⁰

Jubilee Year

Luke 4:17-21: Quote from **Isaiah 61:1-9**, following which Jesus says: “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

⁸⁹ Compare to this Section 38 on the Sabbath and Sunday in Thomas Schirrmacher. *Ethik*. op. cit., 2nd ed, in part. on Colossians 2:16-17 Section 38.4.

⁹⁰ Gordon Wenham. *The Book of Leviticus. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. W. B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids (MI), 1979. p. 306.

Washings

Hebrews 9:9-10: “This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.”

Mark 7:1-23**Dietary Laws**

Hebrews 9:9-10: “This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.”

Colossians 2:16-17: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

Mark 7:18-23: “‘Are you so dull?’ he asked. ‘Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.’ (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods ‘clean.’) He went on: ‘What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

Acts 10:9-2: Peter’s vision: God makes it clear to Peter that by eating unclean animals, Gentiles are from now on accepted into God’s kingdom. In this the sense of the dietary laws are also made clear. Jesus’ death also applies to the Gentiles. “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean” (Acts 10:15).

Segregation and external Separation from Non-believers (dietary laws; laws against assimilation)

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1: “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For

we are the temple of the living God. As God has said [Leviticus 26:11,12; Ezekiel 37,27]: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,’ says the Lord Almighty. [Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:41; 2 Samuel 7:14]. Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”

Ephesians 2:11-19: “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ [the Jews] (that done in the body by the hands of men) – remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two [Jews and Gentiles] one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you [Gentiles] are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household ...”

The People of God

Matthew 28:19: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...”

5. Melchizedek

In a section above we went into brief detail with respect to Melchizedek. Now the question to be addressed is whether Melchizedek is Jesus himself or whether he only represents a type.

Melchizedek is mentioned in five Bible texts in a total of 35 verses, which are reproduced in their entirety in this section. The first time that we

meet Melchizedek as a historical person is in the story of Abraham: “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.’ Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything” (**Genesis 14: 18-20**).

At this point Melchizedek appears as a priest of God. According to this, prior to Israel’s being chosen, there was true worship of God that had been known since creation. Melchizedek is the “king of Salem” (Genesis 14:18), whereby Salem means peace, such that one could also say ‘king of peace.’ King of Salem, however, also denotes the kingship over city of Salem, namely *Jer-salem* (‘establishment of freedom’). His name ‘Melchizedek’ itself means ‘king of righteousness.’” At the same time he is God’s priest. He blesses, he prophesies, and he receives the tithe. What is important is that his priestly service is accepted as service of the true God and that he unites the three classic offices of the later people of Israel, prophet, priest, and king.

The second text which mentions Melchizedek is a prophecy regarding Jesus: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’” (**Psalms 110:4**).

Psalms 110 begins with the words of David “The Lord says to my Lord” (Psalm 110:1) and the announcement that the ‘Lord’ will make all enemies a footstool for the ‘Lord’s’ feet. Jesus attests before the Pharisees and scribes in **Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44** with this verse that the Messiah (the Christ) is not identical with the Father (“Lord”) and still is worshiped by David as “Lord.” Psalm 110 is very often used with reference to Jesus in the New Testament and so quoted (Matthew 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:34-35; Romans 2:5; 8:34; 11:28; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:3, 11, 15, 17, 21; 8:1; 10:12).

Both of these Old Testament texts are extensively seized upon in Hebrews 5-7. At first the promise made in Psalm 110:4 is used with reference to Jesus. Jesus’ priesthood is viewed in contradistinction to the temporary priesthood in Israel. Jesus is not only the high priest for Israel, but rather for the entire world and for all times according to the order of Melchizedek: “And he says in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Alt-

though he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek (**Hebrews 5:6-10**); “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek” (**Hebrews 6:19-20**).

Hebrews 7 goes into detail with respect to Melchizedek:

“This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means ‘king of righteousness’; then also, ‘king of Salem’ means ‘king of peace.’ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.

Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’

The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: ‘The Lord has

sworn and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever.’ Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.” (**Hebrews 7:1-24**).

It is not disputed that Melchizedek is a type of Christ. Melchizedek is “like the Son of God,” (Hebrews 7:3), and Jesus is a priest “like Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:15). Melchizedek even stands above Aaron, and his priesthood belongs to a life that never ends.⁹¹

The reason that Melchizedek is not only compared with Jesus but equated with him is given in the verses Hebrews 7:1-3, 16. The core sentence in Hebrews 7:1-3 reads: “Melchizedek ... remains a priest forever.” According to Hebrews 7:16, he received his priestly office through the strength of his indissoluble life. This agrees with the facts that he has neither ancestors nor a beginning of days nor an end of life (Hebrews 7:3). Of whom besides Jesus can all of this be said?

Whoever only wants to see a type of Christ at this point is referred to the fact that the writer took these statements from the Old Testament and for that reason does not say that Melchizedek had neither father nor mother. Rather, he only wants to say that they are not mentioned there, etc. In such case, the text would be directed polemically against those who wanted to maintain the Israelite Priesthood. The actual problem remains, however, because Melchizedek is still viewed as an eternal priest. One could then point to the fact that in Greek and Hebrew the concepts for ‘eternal’ only mean a very long time and one that cannot be measured. What is then meant with “without beginning of days or end of life?” And does the passage not emphasize that the ‘eternal’ priesthood of Jesus will always remain, that is to say, not only for a very long time?

⁹¹ Regarding the history of the interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-10 and the person of Melchizedek for Christian consideration there is Bruce Demarest. *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7,1-10 from the Reformation to the Present. Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese* 19. J. C. B. Mohr: Tübingen, 1976; on Christian and Jewish interpretation Gottfried Wudke. *Melchizedek, der Priesterkönig von Salem: Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Exegese*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft ... 5. A. Töpelmann: Gießen, 1927. According to Bruce Demarest. *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7,1-10* ... op. cit., p. 16 Martin Luther held the idea, as did the English Puritan scholars (ibid., p. 46) that Melchizedek was Shem. The Puritan John Owen (ibid. pp. 47-49), in contrast, held Melchizedek to be a descendent of Japheth, that is, a non-Semite. Both suggestions do not solve the problem that Melchizedek did not have a genealogy.

These considerations suggest strongly that Melchizedek was Jesus himself. Jesus is in any case priest, prophet, and king, the King of Peace and of Righteousness and the Lord of Jerusalem. Still, it cannot be said with complete certainty. Just as on the one side a purely role model function does not seem to do justice to the text, the problem arises on the other side as to why the writer 'compares' Melchizedek with Jesus and refers to their 'sameness.' Fully equating the two is a step that is never carried out. However, in my opinion there is enough that speaks for seeing Melchizedek as the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, acting and anticipating his future priesthood.

Books by Thomas Schirmmacher in chronological order

(With short commentaries)

As author:

Das Mißverständnis des Emil Brunner: Emil Brunners Bibliologie als Ursache für das Scheitern seiner Ekklesiologie. Theologische Untersuchungen zu Weltmission und Gemeindebau. ed. by Hans-Georg Wüch and Thomas Schirmmacher. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Weltmission und Gemeindebau: Lörrach, 1982. 54 pp.

[The misunderstanding of Emil Brunner] A study and critique of Emil Brunner's ecclesiology and of the bibliology and hermeneutics of dialectical theology.

Mohammed: Prophet aus der Wüste. Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1984¹, 1986², 1990³, 1996⁴. VTR: Nürnberg, 2006⁵. 120 pp.

[Muhammad] A short biography of the founder of Islam and an introduction into Islam.

Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie. Verlag der Evangelischen Gesellschaft für Deutschland: Wuppertal, 1985. 308 pp.

[Theodor Christlieb and his theology of mission] A study of the biography, theology and missiology of the leading German Pietist, professor of practical theology and international missions leader in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Thesis for Dr. theol. in missiology.)

Marxismus: Opium für das Volk? Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1990¹, 1997². 150 pp.

[Marxism: Opiate for the People?] Marxism is proven to be a religion and an opiate for the masses. Emphasizes the differences between Marxist and Biblical work ethics.

Zur marxistischen Sagen- und Märchenforschung und andere volkskundliche Beiträge. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1991¹, 2003². 227 pp.

[On the Marxist View of Sagas and Tales and other essays in folklore and cultural anthropology] 10 essays and articles on the science of folklore and cultural anthropology in Germany. Includes a critique of the Marxist interpretation of tales and sagas, and studies on the history of marriage and family in Europe from the 6th century onward.

„Der göttliche Volkstumsbegriff“ und der „Glaube an Deutschlands Größe und heilige Sendung“: Hans Naumann als Volkskundler und Germanist unter dem Nationalsozialismus. 2 volumes. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2 volumes, 1992¹, in one volume 2000². 606 pp.

- [Hans Naumann as Anthropologist and Germanist under National Socialism] *Discusses the history of German cultural anthropology and folklore under Hitler, especially the leading figure Naumann, professor of German language, whose scientific theory is shown to be very religious in tone. (Thesis for a PhD in Cultural Anthropology.)*
- War Paulus wirklich auf Malta? Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1992, VTR: Nürnberg, 2000² (together with Heinz Warnecke). 254 pp.
- [Was Paul Really on Malta?] The book shows that Paul was not shipwrecked on Malta but on another island, Kephallenia, and that the report in Acts is very accurate. The Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is defended with theological and linguistic arguments against higher criticism.
- Psychotherapie – der fatale Irrtum. Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1993¹, 1994²; 1997³; 2001⁴ (together with Rudolf Antholzer). 150 pp.
- [Psychotherapy – the Fatal Mistake] A critique of secular psychotherapy, showing that psychotherapy often is a religion, and that most psychotherapists call every school except their own to be unscientific.
- Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier: Eine alternative Sicht von 1. Korinther 11,2-16. Biblia et symbiotica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993¹, 1994², 1995³, 1997⁴ 168 pp. Revised: VTR: Nürnberg, 2002⁵
- [Paul in Conflict with the Veil?] *Exegetical examination of 1. Corinthians 11,2-16, following an alternative view of John Lightfoot, member of the Westminster assembly in the 16th century.*
- "Schirrmacher argues that from the biblical teaching that man is the head of woman (1 Cor 11:3) the Corinthians had drawn the false conclusions that in prayer a woman must be veiled (11:4-6) and a man is forbidden to be veiled (11:7), and that the wife exists for the husband but not the husband for the wife (11:8-9). Paul, however, rejected these conclusions and showed in 11:10-16 why the veiling of women did not belong to God's commandments binding upon all the Christian communities. After stating the thesis and presenting his alternative translation and exposition of 1 Cor 11:2-16, he considers the difficulties in the text, presents his alternative exposition in detail (in the form of thirteen theses), discusses quotations and irony in 1 Corinthians, and deals with other NT texts about women's clothing and prayer and about the subordination of wives." (New Testament Abstracts vol. 39 (1995) 1, p. 154).*
- Der Römerbrief. 2 vol. Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1994¹; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001². 331 + 323 pp.
- [The Letter to the Romans] *Commentary on Romans in form of major topics of Systematic Theology starting from the text of Romans, but then going on to the whole Bible.*
- Der Text des Römerbriefes: Für das Selbststudium gegliedert. Biblia et symbiotica 7. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1994. 68 pp.

[The Text of the Letters to the Romans] *The text of Romans newly translated and structured for self study.*

Ethik. Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1994¹. 2 vol. 883 & 889 pp.; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001². 3 vol. 2150 pp.; 2002³, 2009⁴; 2011⁵. 8 volumes. 2850 pp.

[Ethics] Major Evangelical ethics in German covering all aspects of general, special, persocial and public ethics.

Galilei-Legenden und andere Beiträge zu Schöpfungsforschung, Evolutionskritik und Chronologie der Kulturgeschichte 1979-1994. *Biblia et symbiotica* 12. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1996. 331 pp.

[Legends of Galileo and other Contributions to Creation Science, Criticism of Evolution and Chronology of the History of Culture 1979-1994].

Völker – Drogen – Kannibalismus: Ethnologische und länderkundliche Beiträge 1984 – 1994. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1997. 218 pp.

[Peoples – Drugs – Cannibalism] *A collection of articles on cultural anthropology, especially on Indians in South America, cannibalism and the religious use of drugs.*

Die Vielfalt biblischer Sprache: Über 100 alt- und neutestamentliche Stilarten, Ausdrucksweisen, Redeweisen und Gliederungsformen. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1997. 130 pp.

[The Diversity of Biblical Language] *A hermeneutical study, listing more than 100 specific language techniques in the Bible with several proof texts for each of them.*

Gottesdienst ist mehr: Plädyoer für einen liturgischen Gottesdienst. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. 130 pp.

[Church Service is More] *An investigation into biblical proof texts for liturgical elements in Christian Sunday service.*

Gesetz und Geist: Eine alternative Sicht des Galaterbriefes. Reformatorische Paperbacks. Reformatorischer Verlag: Hamburg, 1999. 160 pp.

[Law and Spirit] *This commentary emphasising the ethical aspects of Galatians wants to prove that Galatians is not only fighting legalists but also a second party of Paul's opponents, who were totally opposed to the Old Testament and the Law, and lived immorally in the name of Christian freedom, a view especially endorsed by Wilhelm Lütgert's commentary of 1919. Paul is fighting against the abrogation of the Old Testament Law as well as against using this Law as way of salvation instead of God's grace.*

Law or Spirit? An Alternative View of Galatians. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001¹; 2008.². 160 pp.

English version of the same book.

God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love. Reformation Books: Hamburg, 1999. 120 pp.

Four essays for Third World Christian Leaders on Learning with Jesus, Work Ethic, Love and Law and Social Involvement.

Dios Quiere que Tú Aprendas Trabajos y Ames. Funad: Managua (Nikaragua), 1999¹; 2000²; RVB International: Hamburg, 2003³. 70 pp.

[God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love] Spanish version of the same book.

37 Gründe, warum Christen sich für eine Erneuerung unserer Gesellschaft auf christlicher Grundlage einsetzen sollten. Die Wende, 1999. 40 pp.

[37 reasons for Christian involvement in society and politics].

Christenverfolgung geht uns alle an: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie des Martyriums. Idea-Dokumentation 15/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 1999¹; 2001². 64 pp. New edition 2011³: VKW

[The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom] *70 thesis on persecution and martyrdom, written for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on behalf of the German and European Evangelical Alliance*

World Mission – Heart of Christianity. RVB International: Hamburg, 1999¹; 2008.². 120 pp.

Articles on the Biblical and systematic fundament of World Mission, especially on mission as rooted in God's being, on 'Mission in the OT', and 'Romans as a Charter for World Mission.. Shorter version of German original 2001.

Eugen Drewermann und der Buddhismus. Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Nürnberg, 2000¹; 2001². 132 pp.

[Drewermann and Buddhism] *Deals with the German Catholic Author Drewermann and his propagating Buddhist thinking. Includes chapter on a Christian Ethics of Environment.*

Ausverkaufte Würde? Der Pornographie-Boom und seine psychischen Folgen. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2000. (with Christa Meves). 130 pp.

[The Selling Off of Dignity] *The psychological results of pornography.*

Eine Sekte wird evangelisch – Die Reformation der Weltweiten Kirche Gottes. Idea-Dokumentation 11/2000. Idea: Wetzlar, 2000. 56 pp.

[A Cult Becomes Protestant] *Detailed report on the reformation of the Worldwide Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong) from a sect to an evangelical church.*

Legends About the Galilei-Affair. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001¹; 2008.². 120 pp.

Shorter version of the German book 'Galilei-Legenden' mentioned above with essays on the Galilei-affair and creation science.

Human Rights Threatened in Europe: Euthanasia – Abortion – Bioethicconvention. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001¹; 2008.². 100 pp.

Updated Lectures on euthanasia and biomedicine at the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998, and articles on abortion.

Menschenrechte in Europa in Gefahr. RVB: Hamburg, 2001... 110 pp.

[Human Rights Threatened in Europe] *Updated Lectures on euthanasia and biomedicine at the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998, and articles on abortion. See slightly different English version above.*

Aufbruch zur modernen Weltmission: William Careys Theologie. RVB. 64 pp.

[Be Keen to Get Going: William Careys Theology] *First discussion of Carey's theology in length, explaining his Calvinistic and Postmillennial background.*

Be Keen to Get Going: William Careys Theology. RVB: Hamburg, 2001¹; 2008.². 64 pp.

Same book in English.

Darf ein Christ schwören? RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 140 pp.

[May Christians Take an Oath?] *On Swearing and on its meaning for covenant theology. Taken from 'Ethik', vol. 1.*

Christus im Alten Testament. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 84 pp.

[Christ in the Old Testament] *On Christ and the Trinity in the Old Testament and on 'the Angel of the Lord'. Taken from 'Ethik'.*

Wie erkenne ich den Willen Gottes? Führungsmystik auf dem Prüfstand. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 184 pp.

[How to know the will of God] – *Critiques the inner leading of the Spirit. Taken from 'Ethik'.*

Love is the Fulfillment of Love – Essays in Ethics. RVB: Hamburg, 2001¹; 2008.². 140 pp.

Essays on ethical topics, including role of the Law, work ethics, and europaen union.

Mission und der Kampf um die Menschenrechte. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 108 S.

[Mission and the Battle for Human Rights] *The relationship of world missions and the fight for human rights is discussed on an ethical level (theology of human rights) as well as on a practical level.*

The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom. zugleich Idea-Dokumentation 15/99 E. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 156 pp.

70 thesis on persecution and martyrdom, written for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on behalf of the German and European Evangelical Alliance

Irrtumslosigkeit der Schrift oder Hermeneutik der Demut? VTR: Nürnberg, 2001. 82 pp.

[Inerrancy of Scripture or 'Hermeneutics of Humility'] *Debate with Dr. Hempelmann on the inerrancy of scripture.*

Beiträge zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte: Heiligenverehrung — Universität Gießen — Reformation / Augustin – Böhl — Spurgeon — Brunner. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 200 pp.

[Essay on the History of church and Dogma] *Articles on topics from church history like 'The beginning of the veneration of saints' and on the named theologians.*

Weltmission — Das Herz des christlichen Glaubens: Beiträge aus 'Evangelikale Missiologie'. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 200 pp.

[World Mission – Heart of Christianity] *Articles on the Biblical and systematic fundament of World Mission, especially on mission as rooted in God's being, on 'Mission in the OT', and 'Romans as a Charter for World Mission.. Shorter version of German original 2001.*

Säkulare Religionen: Aufsätze zum religiösen Charakter von Nationalsozialismus und Kommunismus. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 140 pp.

[Secular Religions] *Articles on the religious nature of National Socialism and Communism. Includes texts of prayers to Hitler.*

Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002⁵. 130 pp.

Revised version. See commentary on first edition 1993¹.

Paul in Conflict with the Veil!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002¹; 2007². 130 pp.

Same book in English.

Hoffnung für Europa: 66 Thesen. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002

Official thesis and study of hope in the Old and New Testament for Hope for Europe of the European Ev. Alliance and Lausanne Europe.

Hope for Europe: 66 Theses. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002

Same book in English.

Also available in Czech, Dutch, Spanish, Rumanina, Portugese, French, Russian, Italian, Portugese, Hungarian, Lettish, Latvian.

ABC der Demut. RVB: Hamburg, 2002

[ABC of Humility] *Notes and bible studies on humility in alphabtical order.*

Führen in ethischer Verantwortung: Die drei Seiten jeder Verantwortung. Edition ACF. Brunnen: Gießen, 2002

[Leading in ethical responsibility] *An introduction into ethcis for economic and other leaders for the Academy of Christian Leaders.*

Der Papst und das Leiden: Warum der Papst nicht zurücktritt. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002. 64 pp.

[The Pope and Suffering] *A study of the writings of Pope John II. on suffering and an evaluation of their exegetical basis. Gives reasons why the pope does not resign.*

Erziehung, Bildung, Schule. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002. 88 pp.

[Instruction, Education, School] *The chapters on rising of children, example, education, and Christian school from 'Ethics'.*

- Thomas Schirmmacher, Christine Schirmmacher u. a. Harenberg Lexikon der Religionen. Harenberg Verlag: Düsseldorf, 2002. 1020 pp.
- [Harenberg Dictionary of World Religions] In a major secular dictionary on world religions, Thomas Schirmmacher wrote the section on Christianity ('Lexicon of Christianity', pp. 8-267) and Christine Schirmmacher the section on Islam ('Lexicon of Islam', pp. 428-549).
- Studies in Church Leadership: New Testament Church Structure – Paul and His Coworkers – An Alternative Theological Education – A Critique of Catholic Canon Law. VKW: Bonn, 2003¹; RVB: Hamburg, 2008.². 112 pp.
- Contains the named five essays. The first essay is translated from vol. 5 of 'Ethics'.*
- Im Gespräch mit dem Wanderprediger des New Age – und andere apologetische Beiträge. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 210 pp.
- [In Discussion with the Itinerant Preacher of the New Age] Essays and reports on non-Christian religions, New Age, reincarnation, manicheism from two decades of apologetic debates.
- Verborgene Zahlenwerte in der Bibel? – und andere Beiträge zur Bibel. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 200 pp.
- [Secret Numbers in the Bible?] Essays and articles on Bible Numerics, the importance of Hebrew studies, Obadiah, the Psalms and other Bible related topics from 2 decades of studies.
- Feindbild Islam. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 111 pp.
- [Bogeyman Islam] *May Arab Christians call God 'Allah'? Is Allah the Father of Jesus? How Political Parties in Germany misrepresent Islam.*
- Religijos mokslas. Prizmės knyga. Siaulai (Litauen): Campus Fidus, 2004. 106 pp.
- [Secular Religions] In Latvian: Essays on Religions, Marxism, National Socialism and the devil in Art and Literature.
- Bildungspflicht statt Schulzwang. VKW/VTR/idea: Bonn et. al., 2005. 90 pp.
- [Compulsary Education or Compulsary Schooling] *A scientific evaluation of home-schooling.*
- Der Ablass RVB/VTR: Hamburg, 2005. 144 pp.
- [The Indulgences] History and theology of the Catholic view on indulgences.
- Die Apokryphen RVB/VTR: Hamburg, 2005. 92 pp.
- [The Apocrypha] *History and theology of the Catholic view on the apocrypha and an apology of the Protestant position.*
- Scham- oder Schuldgefühl? Die christliche Botschaft angesichts von schuld- und schamorientierten Gewissen und Kulturen. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2005. 99 pp.
- [Shame- and Guiltfeeling] *This study explains the difference between shame- and guilt-oriented cultures and shows, that the 'Biblical' message emphasizes shame*

and guilt equally and thus can be applied to cultures in the West, the East, in modern and in Third World cultures.

Thomas Schirrmacher et al. *Christ und Politik: 50 Antworten auf Fragen und kritische Einwände*. VKW: Bonn, 2006. 125 pp.

[Christians and Politics] *Schirrmacher and three members of parliament from Switzerland answer questions around the relation of church and state and the political involvement of Evangelicals.*

Der Segen von Ehe und Familie: Interessante Erkenntnisse aus Forschung und Statistik. VKW: Bonn, 2006. 125 pp.

[The Blessing of Marriage and Family] Introduction to 200 scientific studies and statistics, that prove the blessing of longterm marriage and stable family.

Multikulturelle Gesellschaft: Chancen und Gefahren. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2006. 100 pp.

[Multicultural Society] A history of multiculturalism (especially Muslims and Russian-Germans) in Germany and its political, economic and religious implications for the future of Germany.

Die neue Unterschicht: Armut in Deutschland? Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2007. 120 pp.

[The New Low Cast] A sociology of low cast people in Germany, the differences in culture to low cast people one hundred years ago, tasks for churches and the State.

Hitlers Kriegsreligion: Die Verankerung der Weltanschauung Hitlers in seiner religiösen Begrifflichkeit und seinem Gottesbild. 2 vol. VKW: Bonn, 2007. 1220 pp.

[Hitlers Religion of War] *A research about the religious terms and thoughts in all texts and speeches of Hitler of Hitler, pleading for a new way of explaining Hitlers worldview, rise and breakdown.*

Moderne Väter: Weder Waschlappen, noch Despot. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2007. 96 pp.

[Modern Fathers] Presents the result of international father research, explains the necessity of the father's involvement for his children and gives practical guidelines.

Sheria au Roho? Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania, 2007.¹; 2008.²; 2010.³; 2011.⁴. 96 pp.

Kiswahili-Version of 'Law and Spirit' about Galatians.

Mateso ya Wakristo Yanatuhusu Sisi Sote: Kuelekea Theolojia ya Mashahidi wa Imani. Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania, 2008.¹; 2010.²; 2011.³

Kiswahili-Version of 'The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All'

Upendo ni Utimilifu wa Sheria: Insha juu ya Maadili. Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania, 2008.¹; 2010.²; 2011.³

Kiswahili-Version of 'Love is the Fulfillment of Law'.

Koran und Bibel: Die größten Religionen im Vergleich. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 96 pp.

[Quran and Bible] *Compares the differences between the Muslim of the Quran as the 'Word of God' and the Christian view of the Bible as the 'Word of God'. A classic on the inspiration of the Bible.*

Christenverfolgung heute. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 96 pp.

[The Persecution of Christians today] *Gives an overview over the persecution of Christians worldwide and presents a short theology of persecution as well political reasons for the fight for religious freedom.*

Internetpornografie. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 156 pp.

[Internet pornography] *Intense study of spread of pornography, its use amongst children and young people, its psychological results and dangers, including steps how to escape sex and pornography addiction.*

Prawda o pornografii. Translated by I. W. Proswirjakowoj. Moskau: Wjatka, 2009. 170 pp.

Prawda o pornografii. Bonn: VKW, 2010. 170 pp.

Russian Edition of 'Internet pornography'.

May a Christian Go to Court and other Essays on Persecution vs. Religious Freedom. WEA Global Issues Series. VKW: Bonn, 2008. 120 pp.

Essays: „Is Involvement in the Fight Against the Persecution of Christians Solely for the Benefit of Christians?“, „But with gentleness and respect: Why missions should be ruled by ethics“, „May a Christian Go to Court?“, „Putting Rumors to Rest“, „Human Rights and Christian Faith“, „There Has to Be a Social Ethic“.

Rassismus: Alte Vorurteile und neue Einsichten. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2009. 120 pp.

[Racism] *History and scientific errors of racism*

Fundamentalismus: Wenn Religion gefährlich wird. SCM Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2010. 120 pp.

[Fundamentalism] *History of term, definition, examples from all religions.*

Menschenhandel: Die Rückkehr der Sklaverei. SCM Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2011. 106 pp.

[Human Trafficking: The Return of Slavery] *History and present situation of human trafficking including Europe, discusses legal and other reasons that prevent the fight against modern slavery.*

Responsabilitatea etica in luarea deciziilor (2011) Scriptum, Oradea (Romania), 2011. 210 pp.

Rumanian version of 'Führen in ethischer Verantwortung' (2002).

Demnitate pierduta - Pornografia pe internet. Adevaruri, pericole, evolutie. Oradea (Romania): Scriptum, 2011. 208 pp.

Rumanian version of 'Internetpornography'.

Indulgences: A History of Theology and Reality of Indulgences and Purgatory. VKW: Bonn, 2011. 164 pp.

History and theology of the Catholic view on indulgences.

Thomas Schirmmacher, Richard Howell. Racism. With an essay on Caste in India. VKW: Bonn, 2011. 100 pp.

History and scientific errors of racism

Missio Dei: Mission aus dem Wesen Gottes. Komplementäre Dogmatik Reihe 2. Hamburg, Nürnberg, 2011. 100 pp.

[Missio Dei: Mission as an Attribute of God] *The trinitarian foundations of mission and missiology with three chapters: historical, exegetical and ecumenical studies (especially on the dividing 'filioque'-discussion).*

Mungu Akutaka Ujifunze, Ufanye Kazi na Upende. Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania & RVB International: Hamburg, 2011. 100 pp.

Kiswahili-Version of 'God wants you to learn ...'.

Tumaini Kwa Afrika: Hoja 66. Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania & RVB International: Hamburg, 2011. 100 pp.

"Hope for Africa: 66 Thesis".

Mafunzo Yabusuyo Ugozi wa Kanisa. Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania & RVB International: Hamburg, 2012. 120 pp.

Kiswahili-Version of 'Studies in Church Leadership'.

Menschenrechte: Anspruch und Wirklichkeit. Holzgerlingen: SCM Hänssler, 2012. 120 pp.

"Human Rights": Ethical arguments for human rights versus the present stage of the violation of human rights.

As editor (always with own contributions):

Patrick Johnstone. Handbuch für Weltmission: Gebet für die Welt. Hänssler: Neuhäusen, 1987², newest edition 1993⁶ (together with Christine Schirmmacher). 811 pp.

[Handbook on World Mission] *Adapted German version of 'Operation World', a handbook and lexicon on the situation of Christianity and missions in every country of the world.*

Gospel Recordings Language List: Liste der Sprachaufnahmen in 4.273 Sprachen. Missiologica Evangelica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1992. 120 pp.

List of 4273 languages in the world, in which evangelistic cassettes are available.

„Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif“: Rufus Anderson und die Selbständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission. Edition afem: mission scripts 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993. 134 pp.

[The Time of Conversion is Ripe: Rufus Anderson and The Independence of] *Articles by Schirrmacher and by theologians from the 19th century about Rufus Anderson, leading American missionary statesman, Reformed professor of missions and postmillennial theologian – together with the first translation of texts of Anderson into German.*

William Carey. Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen [1792]. Edition afem: mission classics 1. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993 (together with Klaus Fiedler). 100 pp.

[An Inquire into the Means ...] *First German translation of the book by the Calvinist Baptist William Carey of 1792, with which the age of modern Protestant world missions started.*

Bibeltreue in der Offensive: Die drei Chicagoerklärungen zur biblischen Unfehlbarkeit, Hermeneutik und Anwendung. Biblia et symbiotica 2. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993¹; 2005²; 2009³. 132 pp.

German translation of the three Chicago-Declarations on biblical inerrancy, hermeneutics and application.

Im Kampf um die Bibel – 100 Jahre Bibelbund. Biblia et symbiotica 6. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1994 (together with Stephan Holthaus). 168 pp.

[The Battle for the Bible] *'Festschrift' for 100 years of "Bibelbund". Articles on biblical inerrancy and on the history of the major German organization fighting higher criticism, the "Bibelbund" (Bible League), and its theological journal "Bibel und Gemeinde", edited by Schirrmacher 1988-1997.*

Eduard Böhl. Dogmatik. Hänssler Theologie. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1995; 2nd ed.: Hamburg: RVB & Bonn: VKW, 2004. 508 pp.

[Dogmatic Theology] *A Reformed Systematic Theology from the last century edited by Thomas Schirrmacher; with an lengthy introduction on Böhl's life and work.*

Der evangelische Glaube kompakt: Ein Arbeitsbuch. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1998; 2nd ed.: Hamburg: RVB & Bonn: VKW, 2004. 246 pp.

[The Protestant Faith in Nuce] *German translation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, adapted and with commentary and changes in Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Baptist versions.*

Werden alle gerettet? Referate der Jahrestagung 1998 des Afem (with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. 160 pp.

[Will All Be Saved?] *The proceedings of a missiological consultation on the relationship between Christianity's mission and other religions.*

The Right to Life for Every Person / Lebensrecht für jeden Menschen. Abortion – Euthanasia – Gen Technology: Proceedings of the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998. Abtreibung – Euthanasie – Gentechnik: Beiträge des 1. Euro-

päischen Forums Lebensrecht Berlin, 1999 (with Walter Schrader, Hartmut Steeb). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1999. 310 pp.

Basic articles on biomedical topics, includes reports on the prolife movements in most European countries.

Kein anderer Name: Die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi und das Gespräch mit nichtchristlichen Religionen. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Beyerhaus. Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Nürnberg, 1999. 470 pp.

[No Other Name: The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ ...] *Festschrift for Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, the leading evangelical authority on missions, ecumenical issues and on other religions and an evangelical elder statesmen. Covers all aspects of the relationship of Christian faith to other religions.*

Missionswissenschaft im Zeichen der Erneuerung: Ehrengabe zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Beyerhaus. Sonderausgabe = Evangelikale Missiologie 15 (1999) Heft 2 (together with Klaus W. Müller und Christof Sauer) (1999) afem

Shorter version of the former Festschrift for mass distribution

Ausbildung als missionarischer Auftrag: Referate der Jahrestagung 1999 des AfeM (with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2000. 210 pp.

[Theological education as World Mission] *Lectures on the relation of missions and theological education by leading representatives of theological schools, alternative programmes, missions and third world churches.*

Mission in der Spannung zwischen Hoffnung, Resignation und Endzeitenthusiasmus: Referate der Jahrestagung 2000 des AfeM (together with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2001. 240 pp.

Lectures on the relation of eschatology and missions in history and in present reality.

Märtyrer 2001 — Christenverfolgung vor allem in islamischen Ländern. (with Max Klingberg). VKW: Bonn, 2001. 140 pp.

[Martyrs 2001] *Documentation on the present status of persecution of Christians in Islamic countries.*

Anwalt der Liebe – Martin Bucer als Theologe und Seelsorger: Zum 450. Todestag des Reformators. Jahrbuch des Martin Bucer Seminars 1 (2001). VKW: Bonn, 2001. 160 pp.

[Advocate of Love: Martin Bucer as Theologian and Counselor] Yearbook of the Martin Bucer Seminary on Life and Theology of the reformer Martin Bucer.

Die vier Schöpfungsordnungen Gottes: Kirche, Staat, Wirtschaft und Familie bei Dietrich Bonhoeffer und Martin Luther. VTR: Nürnberg, 2001. 110 pp.

[The four Creation Orders] *Three lengthy essays discuss the importance of the four major creation orders family, church, work and state in the Bible, and in the work of Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.*

- Baumeister bleibt der Herr: Festgabe zum 80. Geburtstag von Prof. Bernd Schirmmacher (with Klaus Schirmmacher und Ingrid von Torklus). VKW: Bonn, 2001. 33300 pp.
- [God Stays the Master Builder] *Festschrift for Thomas Schirmmacher's father on his 80th birthday. Essays mainly concentrate on Christian education and Evangelical schools.*
- A Life of Transformation: Festschrift for Colonel V. Doner. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 350 pp.
- Festschrift for one of the giants of international Christian relief work and social involvement.*
- Märtyrer 2002 — Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute (with Max Klingberg). VKW: Bonn, 2002. 140 pp.
- [Martyrs 2002] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians with special emphasis on Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and Vietnam.*
- Patrick Johnstone. Gebet für die Welt. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2003. 1010 pp.
- [Prayer for the World] *Adapted German version of 'Operation World', a handbook and lexicon on the situation of Christianity and missions in every country of the world.*
- Märtyrer 2003 — Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute (with Max Klingberg). VKW: Bonn, 2003. 180 pp.
- [Martyrs 2003] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians, featuring Kuba, Japan, North Korea, Vietnam.*
- Wenn Kinder zu Hause zur Schule gehen (with Thomas Mayer). VTR: Nürnberg, 2004. 260 pp.
- [When Children Go to School at Home] *Documentation and scientific essays on homeschooling in Germany and Europe.*
- Menschenrechte für Minderheiten in Deutschland und Europa: Vom Einsatz für die Religionsfreiheit durch die Evangelische Allianz und die Freikirchen im 19. Jahrhundert (with Karl Heinz Voigt). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2004. 120 pp.
- [Human Rights for Minorities in Germany and Europe] *Research articles on the history of the defence of religious freedom by the Evangelical Alliance in Germany and Great Britain in the 19th century.*
- Herausforderung China: Ansichten, Einsichten, Aussichten: Eine Dokumentation von China und China Partner (with Konrad Brandt). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2004. 214 pp.
- [Challenge China] A collection of reports, lectures and opinion on the situation of religions and the Christian faith in China, combining reports on persecution and reports on huge progress for public Christianity.

- Europa Hoffnung geben: Dokumentation (with Thomas Mayer). VTR: Nürnberg, 2004. 197 pp.
- [To Give Hope to Europe] Lectures of a theological conference in Budapest by John-Warwick Montgomery, Thomas K. Johnstone, William Mikler, Bernhard Knieß on the future of Europe and how to defend the gospel of hope in Europe.
- Märtyrer 2004 – Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute. (with Max Klingberg). VKW: Bonn, 2004. 160 pp.
- [Martyrs 2004] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians, with two longer studies on the situation in Nigeria and Iran.*
- Tabuthema Tod? Vom Sterben in Würde. (with Roland Jung, Frank Koppelin). Jahrbuch des Martin Bucer Seminars 4 (2004). VKW: Bonn, 2004. 220 pp.
- [Death as Taboo?] 8 major Evangelical ethicists discuss topics around counseling serious ill and dying people, death, euthanasia, counseling to relatives.
- Mission verändert – Mission verändert sich / Mission Transformes – Mission is Transformed: Festschrift für Klaus Fiedler. (with Christof Sauer). Nürnberg: VTR & Bonn: VKW, 2005. 572 pp.
- Festschrift for African missionary and doyen of African and German mission history Klaus Fiedler.*
- Märtyrer 2005 – Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute. (mit Max Klingberg). VKW: Bonn, 2005. 170 pp.
- [Martyrs 2005] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians, featuring Nigeria, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey.*
- Ein Maulkorb für Christen? Juristen nehmen Stellung zum deutschen Antidiskriminierungsgesetz und ähnlichen Gesetzen in Europa und Australien. (with Thomas Zimmermanns). VKW: Bonn, 2005
- [A Muzzle for Christians?] *Studies in religious hate laws, andiscrimination laws and their influence on Christian communities.*
- Scham- und Schuldorientierung in der Diskussion: Kulturanthropologische, missiologische und theologische Einsichten (mit Klaus W. Müller). VTR: Nürnberg & VKW: Bonn, 2006
- [Shame- and Guiltorientation] *A selection of experts from all continents on the difference between shame- and gulitoriented cultures and its implications for world missions.*
- Familienplanung – eine Option für Christen? . Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2006. 170 pp.
- [Family Planing – An Option for Christians?] *A Protestant view of family planing.*
- Märtyrer 2006 – Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute. (with Max Klingberg und Ron Kubsch). VKW: Bonn, 2006. 170 pp.
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