



Endnotes for *Wild West Evangelical Hermeneutics, Part One: The Failure of the Comparative Archaeological Method*

Summer 2021 *Bible and Spade*

Notes

¹ Vern S. Poythress, “Biblical Hermeneutics,” in *Seeing Christ in All of Scripture: Hermeneutics at Westminster Theological Seminary*, ed. Peter A. Lillback (Philadelphia: Westminster Seminary Press, 2016), 10; emphasis added. Also Vern S. Poythress, “God’s Lordship in Interpretation,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 50/1 (1988): 27–64; Vern S. Poythress, *God-Centered Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1999), <https://frame-poythress.org/ebooks/god-centered-biblical-interpretation/>.

² Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 21.

³ Don Collett, “Hermeneutics in Context: Comparative Method and Contemporary Evangelical Scholarship,” *Trinity School for Ministry: An Evangelical Seminary in the Anglican Tradition*, October 29, 2010, <http://www.tsm.edu/2010/10/29/hermeneutics-in-context-comparative-method-and-contemporary-evangelical-scholarship/>. I urge readers to carefully study Collett’s incisive article.

⁴ Albright built his approach on Herman Gunkel’s liberal-critical methodology (*Ibid.*, 2–10).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6; emphasis added.

⁶ This phrase need not be limited to denominations, though such is probably what Albright largely had in mind. It can refer to any professing-Christian commitment to the divine origin of Scripture.

⁷ John M. Frame, “Scripture Speaks for Itself,” in *God’s Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Newburgh, IN: Trinity, 1974), 178–200.

⁸ Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982): 26–27; emphasis added.

⁹ V. Philips Long, “History and Hermeneutics: *How Then Should We Read the Bible ‘Historically’?*,” in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation: Six Volumes in One*, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 401.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the effect of unbelief on human reason, see Richard B. Gaffin Jr., “Epistemological Reflections on 1 Corinthians 2:6–16,” in *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics*, eds. K. Scott Oliphint and Lane G. Tipton (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 13–40.

¹¹ Todd Beall has documented how modern evangelicals have embraced several liberal-critical theories about the OT that were strongly repudiated by conservative scholars just a generation or two ago (“Evangelicalism, Inerrancy, and Current OT Scholarship,” *Bible and Spade* 28/1 [Winter 2015]: 18–24).

¹² Collett, “Hermeneutics in Context,” 17.

¹³ For a refreshing rebuttal of this response and similar ones, see D. A. Carson, “But That’s Just Your Interpretation!” *Themelios* 44/3 (2019): 425–32.

¹⁴ Brevard S. Childs, “The Old Testament as Scripture of the Church,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 43/11 (December 1972): 721. While I am citing Childs here and using the term “canonical hermeneutic,” I am not endorsing his (or anyone else’s) adoption of Karl Barth’s neo-orthodoxy. In the Barthian construct, Scripture “becomes” the Word of God upon human encounter, and is a “witness” to revelation, not revelation itself. Neo-orthodoxy employs a faulty ontology of Scripture, is built on a Kantian theory of knowledge, and allows for limitless historical errors in Scripture’s propositional content. Thus, while I am using the term “canonical hermeneutic,” which Collett and Childs also employ, I am certainly not endorsing any sort of Barthian neo-orthodoxy or allowing for errors in sacred Scripture. For more, see Cornelius Van Til, *Christianity and Barthianism* (Philadelphia: P&R Publishing, 1962); David Gibson, “The Answering Speech of Men: Karl Barth on Holy

Scripture,” in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 266–91.

¹⁵ William F. Albright, “A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology,” *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 1 (1921): 64, n. 1.

¹⁶ Rodger C. Young, “When Did Solomon Die?,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46/4 (December 2003): 589–603.

¹⁷ Bryant G. Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48/3 (September 2005): 484. Indeed, “[n]owhere in the Bible is it hinted that a ‘full’ or ideal generation was 40 years in length.”

¹⁸ For more on Albright and the date of the Exodus and Conquest, see Wood, “Rise and Fall,” 475–89; Bryant G. Wood, “The Biblical Date for the Exodus Is 1446 BC: A Response to James Hoffmeier,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50/2 (June 2007): 249–58; Rodger C. Young, “The Talmud’s Two Jubilees and Their Relevance to the Date of the Exodus,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 68/1 (Spring 2006): 71–83; Douglas Petrovich, “The Dating of Hazor’s Destruction in Joshua 11 by Way of Biblical, Archaeological, and Epigraphical Evidence,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51/3 (September 2008): 489–512; Rodger C. Young and Bryant G. Wood, “A Critical Analysis of the Evidence from Ralph Hawkins for a Late-Date Exodus-Conquest,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51/2 (June 2008): 225–43; Cambria Jones, “Contested Conflagration: Joshua and the Conquest of Hazor,” *Bible and Spade*, 24/3 (Summer 2011): 79–84.

¹⁹ Young, “When Did Solomon Die?,” 601–603.

²⁰ Watch the ABR staff discuss the date of the Exodus and Conquest in episodes 41 and 42 of *Digging for Truth* TV, available on ABR’s website at www.biblearchaeology.org.

²¹ From Heman the musician, who lived in the days of David, back to Korah, who lived in the days of Moses, there were 18 generations. One additional generation takes us to Solomon, or 19 generations.

²² Ironically, when the dubious idealized interpretation is applied to this text, it yields a result of 475 years (19 times 25).

²³ Egyptologist James Hoffmeier argues that the meaning of 1 Kings 6:1 is not ultimately determined by a careful exegesis of all relevant sacred texts in canonical context. Instead, its true meaning is to be found in Assyrian or Egyptian practices that employ time spans as “an approximation relating to the distant past” (Scott Stripling et al., *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology, and Theological Implications*, ed. Mark D. Janzen, Counterpoints: Bible & Theology, ed. Stanley N. Gundry [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021], 57–58; see Stripling’s response in the same volume). 1 Kings 6:1 is not “an approximation relating to the distant past.” No, it is specifying with great precision and with inclusive ordinal numbering the length of the time between the Exodus and the start of the Temple’s construction—479 years. The 480th year from the Exodus equates to the 4th year and 2nd month of Solomon’s reign. There is no evidence of an approximation in the text, nor is there evidence that the biblical author knew of such an ANE practice. Hoffmeier’s interpretation renders 1 Kings 6:1 incoherent: “In an approximate date related to the distant past after the people of Israel came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the second month, which is the month of Ziv, he began to build the house of the Lord.” “In the 80th and 400th year” cannot be read as 300 years or some other time approximation. Moreover, 1 and 2 Kings are replete with precise chronological markers, which serve as internal indicators that 1 Kings 6:1 is to be understood in the same manner. Hoffmeier does not apply the same hermeneutical rationale to Exodus 12:40, which he treats as a genuine span of time. To undercut the force of 1 Kings 6:1, Hoffmeier also argues that 15th-century BC advocates should read the Judges era as chronologically consecutive, which would push the Exodus back into the 16th century BC. But if so, how can the Exodus be in the 13th century? To get a 13th-century Exodus, the Judges era must be collapsed to a length it cannot bear. Moreover, no mention is made of the scholarship making the careful exegetical case for overlapping reigns in Judges that result in correlation between the length of the Judges era and the 479 years of 1 Kings 6:1 (see David L. Washburn, “The Chronology of Judges: Another Look,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147/588 (October–December 1990): 414–25; Andrew Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 87–109; Sean M. Warner, “The Dating of the Period of the Judges,” *Vetus Testamentum* 28/4 (October 1978): 455–63). Beyond resulting in incoherent exegesis, these interpretive gymnastics hermeneutically ground divine revelation in an outside authority structure. The Church could not and did not know the true meaning of 1 Kings 6:1 until ANE scholars came along to enlighten us. Like Scott Stripling, I highly commend Dr. Hoffmeier for his arguments for a historical Exodus and his grasp of the archaeological and literary evidence. In this regard, he is brilliant. And he is well respected here at ABR. But his hermeneutical method is fatally flawed and should be rejected by anyone who holds to the primacy of divine revelation. Other evangelical 13th-century advocates include Steven Ortiz, Ralph Hawkins, and Kenneth Kitchen. They employ similarly flawed hermeneutical and exegetical methods.

²⁴ Joseph A. Callaway, “New Evidence on the Conquest of Ai,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87/3 (September 1968): 312.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 314.

²⁶ “I believe there is a viable option to Albright's view, namely, that Josh 8 1–29 reflects a conquest of Ai in Iron Age I, or in the twelfth century B.C.” (*Ibid.*, 316). Callaway also asserted that the Israelite Conquest was “less glorious than the enterprise the traditioners have made it,” and that Canaan was infiltrated by other people groups around the same time (320).

²⁷ Scott Stripling and Mark Hassler, “The ‘Problem’ of Ai Solved after Nearly Forty Years of Excavation in the West Bank of Israel,” *Bible and Spade* 31/2 (Spring 2018): 40–44; Bryant G. Wood, “The Search for Joshua’s Ai,” in *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History*, eds. Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Paul J. Ray Jr., *Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement* 3 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 205; Peter Briggs, “Testing the Factuality of the Conquest of Ai Narrative in the Book of Joshua” in *Beyond the Jordan: Studies in Honor of W. Harold Mare*, ed. Glenn A. Carnagey, Sr. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 157–96.

²⁸ 1 Chronicles 6:33–37 only supports a 15th-century BC Exodus/Conquest. Rendsburg’s arguments appear in Scott Stripling et al., *Five Views on the Exodus*.

²⁹ Stripling makes this same basic point in *Ibid.*, 210–15.

³⁰ For more, see Jonathan J. Routley, “Does the Merneptah Stela Allow for a 12th Century Exodus?” *Bible and Spade* 33/1 (Winter 2020): 4–8.

³¹ A scribal gloss most likely occurred in the Hebrew *Vorlage* prior to the Greek translation. “In the fourth year” (בשנה הרביעית) appears in the same verse. “Fourth” could easily have been substituted for 80th (בשמונים שנה) because of mental and visual error. This is the best explanation for the LXX’s faulty reading. Alternatively, at the Greek level, “40th” (τεσσαρακοστῆ) in the LXX could be the result of parablepsis. The original of “8” in “80th” (ὀκτακοστῆ) could have been replaced by the “4” in “40th” (τεσσαρακοστῆ), the “4” being found in the next verse (6:2) of the LXX in “τεσσαράκοντα πήχεων” (forty cubits). The 40–year difference might also be the result of an exegetical/interpretive decision made by the original translator or an early transcriber of LXX 1 Kings. In any case, there is not enough evidence presently available to demonstrate that the LXX reading is superior to the MT’s.

³² Steve Collins, *Let My People Go! Using Historical Synchronisms to Identify the Pharaoh of the Exodus* (Albuquerque, NM: Trinity Southwest University Press, 2012).

³³ A clear and concise sketch of Collins’s method can be found in Michael A. Grisanti, *Recent Developments in Patriarchal Chronology: Key Issues and Overview of the Big Picture* (paper, 71st Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, November 2019).

³⁴ Richard B. Gaffin Jr., “Contemporary Hermeneutics and the Study of the New Testament,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 31/2 (May 1969): 133.

³⁵ Collett, “Hermeneutics in Context,” 15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5; emphases added.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁹ D. A. Carson, “Is the Doctrine of *Claritas Scripturae* Still Relevant Today?,” in *Collected Writings on Scripture*, comp. Andrew David Naselli (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 179.

⁴⁰ J. I. Packer, “‘Sola Scriptura’ in History and Today,” in Montgomery, *God’s Inerrant Word*, 49.

⁴¹ Refreshing remedies for this troubling trend within the Church can be found in D. A. Carson, *The Gaggling of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); Mark D. Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word: The Clarity of Scripture*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 21 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 30–45; Moisés Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible? The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues*, in Silva, *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, 17–90; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*; David B. Garner, “Did God Really Say?,” in *Did God Really Say? Affirming the Truthfulness and Trustworthiness of Scripture*, ed. David B. Garner (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 129–61.

⁴² Michael J. Ovey, “The Art of Imperious Ignorance,” *Themelios* 41/1 (2016): 5–7.

⁴³ Thompson, *Clear and Present Word*, 110, 137; Carson, “*Claritas Scripturae*,” 180–86; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 1: Prolegomena*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, from Dutch (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 478, 489.

⁴⁴ Martin Luther, “The Bondage of the Will,” in *Thy Word Is Still Truth: Essential Writings on the Doctrine of Scripture from the Reformation to Today*, eds. Peter A. Lillback and Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 3–9; Thompson, *Clear and Present Word*, 143–150. See also William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture: Against the Papists, Especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*, ed. and trans. William Fitzgerald, from Latin (Cambridge, 1588; Cambridge, 1849), 359–401 (citations refer to the 1849 edition); Matthias Flacius, *How to*

Understand the Sacred Scriptures: From Clavis Scripturae Sacrae, trans. Wade R. Johnston, from Latin (Saginaw, MI: Magdeburg, 2011); Wayne Grudem, “The Perspicuity of Scripture,” *Themelios* 34/3 (2009): 288–308; John S. Feinberg, *Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 621–79.

⁴⁵ Jeremiah Johnson, ed., *One Foundation: Essays on the Sufficiency of Scripture* (Valencia, CA: Grace to You, 2019).

⁴⁶ Mark D. Thompson, “The Generous Gift of a Gracious Father: Toward a Theological Account of the Clarity of Scripture,” in Carson, *Enduring Authority*, 618.

⁴⁷ Thompson, “Generous Gift,” 615–43.

⁴⁸ Thompson, *Clear and Present Word*, 68–69.

⁴⁹ Garner, “Did God Really Say?,” 146.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 148–59.

⁵¹ “To affirm the clarity of Scripture in this way need not compromise the genuine humanity of the biblical texts, since neither obscurity nor error is a necessary corollary of genuine humanity, even in a fallen world” (Thompson, “Generous Gift,” 618). Also Thompson, *Clear and Present Word*, 69; John M. Frame, “God and Biblical Language: Transcendence and Immanence,” in Montgomery, *God’s Inerrant Word*, 159–77.

⁵² “Contemporary Hermeneutics,” 139.

⁵³ Vern S. Poythress, “God and Language,” in Garner, *Affirming the Truthfulness*, 93–106.

⁵⁴ I am allowing here for the possibility that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew, as claimed by Irenaeus. It is beyond our purpose here to explore this issue.

⁵⁵ For an overview and supporting academic sources, see Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 200–27; R. Timothy McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁵⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 106; Kristian Brackett, “The Perspicuity of the Scriptures: Presupposition, Principle or Phantasm,” *KAIROS: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 4/1 (2010): 42–43.

⁵⁷ Carson, “*Claritas Scripturae*,” 180.

⁵⁸ The Westminster Confession of Faith 1:7 “presents biblical perspicuity in terms of its lucid central redemptive core and its resultant accessibility to its readers” (Garner, “Did God Really Say?,” 144). While the explicit emphasis of WCF 1:7 is on salvation, a closer look at the broader context of chapter one presupposes that the doctrine of clarity extends to all of Scripture.

⁵⁹ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger, from Latin, vol. 1: *First Through Tenth Topics* (Geneva: Tournes, 1679; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 144. Citations refer to the P&R edition.

⁶⁰ “The Perspicuity of Scripture,” 294.

⁶¹ John Webster, “On the Clarity of Holy Scripture,” in *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics II* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 40.

⁶² True knowledge of the text’s meaning does not necessitate having exhaustive knowledge of its meaning (Carson, “*Claritas Scripturae*,” 191).

⁶³ Westminster Divines, “The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647),” *Ligonier Ministries: The Teaching Fellowship of R.C. Sproul*, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/westminster-confession-faith/> (May 12, 2021).

⁶⁴ As Grudem notes, teaching in the Church can also be “informal.” This includes parents and others who are mature in the faith. In no case does the teacher possess secret knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible to the layperson (“The Perspicuity of Scripture,” 296, n. 20).

⁶⁵ Part of Westminster Confession 1:5 reads, “...our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts” [Westminster Divines, “The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)”].

⁶⁶ Grudem, “The Perspicuity of Scripture,” 303–304.

⁶⁷ Thompson, “Generous Gift,” 637.

⁶⁸ “The Perspicuity of Scripture,” 307.

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