A BETTER HERMENEUTIC?: A COMPARISON

OF TIS AND LGH APPROACHES TO JUSTIFICATION IN JOB

Theological Interpretation of Scripture[1] is a somewhat new development in hermeneutics,

and it is likely many pastors have never heard of it. However, it has grown in both its influence

and its adherents, and today, TIS is arguably behind some of the most debated topics in

theological circles: The nature of inspiration, how to find meaning in the Scriptures, the New

Testament use of the Old, the role of historical theology and tradition in exegesis, theology

proper, and more. As such, dispensationalists need to consider this approach to Scripture and its

compatibility with biblical hermeneutics.

One paper cannot examine all the relevant aspects of TIS, and dispensationalists need to

test it through Literal-Grammatical-Historical[2] hermeneutics. So, this paper will test TIS in one

way, by examining its fruits—i.e., by what kind of conclusions its methodological and

theological approaches result in. This paper will examine the fruits of TIS by comparing TIS and

LGH approaches to the book of Job, and in particular, the concept of justification in the book.

The objective is to show that—while TIS claims to have a more God-centered and spiritual

hermeneutic that produces better theology—the straightforward LGH approach to Job both

reflects the reality of the text of Scripture better and produces more profound theological

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[1] Hereafter referred to as TIS. Tim Meadowcroft notes that the terms TIS and "Theological Interpretation" (TI) are interchangeable. See Tim Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," in *Ears That Hear: Explorations in Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Joel B. Green and Tim Meadowcroft (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 1n1. Craig Carter appears to use the terms TIS, TI, and "Classical Theological Interpretation" (CTI) interchangeably in Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 15, 248. Similarly, he appears to use the term "Trinitarian Classical Theism" not just as a definition but as hermeneutical model with some similar characteristics to TIS. See Craig A. Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition: Recovering Trinitarian Classical Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 41, 44–45, 51, 54, 82.

[2] Hereafter referred to as LGH.

conclusions, while remaining sensitive to its history of interpretation. Thus, dispensationalism ought to remain steadfast in its commitment to LGH hermeneutics and should not be swayed by this new approach to Scripture.

A Brief Overview of TIS

TIS formally began to appear on the scene and become popular in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries,[3] with some of its main proponents now being Francis Watson, Stephen Fowl, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Daniel Treier.[4] TIS adherents claim that LGH hermeneutics within Protestantism is the result of the influences of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment on the Church,[5] and that its objective is to, "…reverse the dominance of historical criticism and "redefine the role of hermeneutics in theology."[6]

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[3] Vanhoozer noted in 2008 that TIS had become much more popular in recent years (Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 15).

[4] Cf. Daniel J. Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?: An Ecclesiological Reduction," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12, no. 2 (April 2010): 146; and Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 11.

[5] Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 12–13. He later implies that modern American Evangelicalism is either a) fundamentalist and not interested in academic engagement or b) compromised by historical criticism (ibid., 22–24). See also Stephen E. Fowl, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Its Future," *Anglican Theological Review* 99, no. 4 (2017): 671–73; and Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 20–26.

[6] Ibid., 14. Tyra notes that TIS proponents unite around a positive view of Christian Platonism and a negative view of the grammatical aspects of the Renaissance and Reformation. See Steven W Tyra, "'Christ Has Come to Gather Together All the Creatures': What a Sixteenth-Century Debate Teaches about the Theological Interpretation of Scripture," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (2019): 55. Fowl notes that the rise of TIS in the last twenty years is due to, in large part, a reaction to the failings of historical criticism and the fragmentation of biblical scholars. See Fowl, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Its Future," 674.

What is TIS?

TIS is difficult to formally define, which is partly intentional.[7] It has common practices[8]

but its adherents claim no consensus on a definition[9] or methodology.[10] Even today, TIS can at

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[7] Daniel Treier notes that "These conversational projects [TIS] need no creed other than the Nicene, certainly not one that imposes methodological or doctrinal uniformity to interest their participants as possible movements of God." See Daniel J Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?: An Ecclesiological Reduction," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12, no. 2 (April 2010): 159. He then concludes: "some of the vagueness and variety associated with 'theological interpretation of Scripture' is inevitable and legitimate even necessary" (ibid.).

[8] See Treier's overview of practices common to TIS in ibid., 149. John Poirier states that TIS proponents, "All view the 'true' meaning of Scripture as derivative of its active role within the Church today. In other words, these approaches locate meaning in some (supposed) aspect of Scripture that transcends its (human) authors" (John C. Poirier, "'Theological Interpretation' and Its Contradistinctions," *Tyndale Bulletin* 61, no. 1 [2010]: 106). And: "Viewed positively, 'theological interpretation' denotes a number of approaches for reading Scripture within the shadow of the Church" (ibid., 106).

[9] Meadowcroft noted in 2013 that no clear consensus had emerged on the characteristics of TIS and that there is no methodology for it—it is rather a "perspective or approach to Scripture." See Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 1–2. Grant Taylor notes that the main writers on TIS still disagree on its fundamental characteristics. See Grant D Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange': Theological Interpretation of Scripture in Retrospect and Prospect," *Southeastern Theological Review* 4, no. 2 (2013): 129. In 2017, Eric Vanden Eykel surveyed the different definitions of TIS and concluded that the most that can be said is that matters of faith and doctrine do not impede exegesis. See Eric M. Vanden Eykel, "Beyond Historical Criticism?: Avery Dulles's Model for the Theological Interpretation of Scripture," *Heythrop Journal* 58, no. 2 (March 2017): 201.

[10] Kevin Vanhoozer states that TIS is, "Not an imposition of a theological system or confessional grid onto the biblical text" (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Introduction," in *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Craig G Bartholomew, and Daniel J. Treier [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 16). He also claims that and that TIS does not impose a general hermeneutic onto the biblical text (ibid., 17). See also Brad East, "The Hermeneutics of Theological Interpretation: Holy Scripture, Biblical Scholarship and Historical Criticism," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 19, no. 1 (January 2017): 30. East concludes: "[TIS] lacks a common method. It is more a posture, a set of shared judgements about how to approach the Bible, prior to details of exegetical procedure" (ibid., 32). Taylor notes that: "Theological interpretation of Scripture, therefore, is not a specific method for exegesis but rather a discussion and encouragement of a Christian practice of interpreting Scripture that can be characterized as ancient *and* modern" (Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange,'" 129). Italics original.
Nevertheless, TIS proponents are aware that one always brings a metaphysical system or worldview with them when interpreting Scripture. Craig Carter, for example, states that Evangelicals have adopted Enlightenment metaphysics and opts for a Christian Platonic one. See Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 9–14. See also J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 9. Carter states in another work: "Like all the previous readers of the Bible, we read it from within the limitations of our own historical situation, using our best metaphysical presuppositions—that is, the ones we think correspond as closely as possible to reality." See Craig A. Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition: Recovering Trinitarian Classical Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 91.

best only be defined as a connection between exegesis and metaphysics,[11] and some proponents

champion its opacity.[12] Still, a good representative definition of TIS is given by Vanhoozer:

"The theological interpretation of the Bible is characterized by a governing interest in God, the

word and works of God, and by a governing intention to engage in what we might call

"theological criticism."[13] In addition, TIS is characterized by a dual-emphasis on the saving acts

of the Triune God in history and viewing the Church as, in some sense, having at least an equal

authority as Scripture.[14]

However, Meadowcroft observes that simply calling TIS God-focused or just defining

TIS as theological interpretation is not helpful, since any faith-based reading and theological

method would affirm the same.[15] One of the most robust definitions of TIS comes from J. Todd

Billings, but even his definition is not clearly distinct from something an LGH proponent could

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[11] See Steven W. Tyra, "'Christ Has Come to Gather Together All the Creatures': What a Sixteenth-Century Debate Teaches about the Theological Interpretation of Scripture," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (2019): 54; and the discussion in Elizabeth Mehlman and Russell Meek, "Sputtering at the Start Line?: Examining Trends in Theological Interpretation of Scripture through Three Theological Commentaries on Ecclesiastes," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 31, no. 1 (2021): 19.

[12] See Ephraim Radner, "'I Contain Multitudes': The Divine Basis for the Theological Interpretation of Scripture," *Pro Ecclesia* 31, no. 2 (May 2022): 142–59.

[13] Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 21. Vanhoozer defines theological criticism as something that is God-focused and ensures the reader does not make an idol that is manufactured from interpretive communities (ibid., 21–22).

[14] E.g., Mark Alan Bowald, "The Character of Theological Interpretation of Scripture," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12, no. 2 (April 2010): 167; and Brad East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 14, no. 2 (2020): 157.

[15] Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 2–3. Poirier argues that TIS proponents illegitimately imply that anyone who does not buy into their definition of terms is not using a theological method. See Poirier, "'Theological Interpretation' and Its Contradistinctions," 3. He later notes that TIS proponents often give generous, somewhat vague definitions of TIS that do not describe what TIS actually practices (ibid., 109).
    Daniel Treier notes that pre-critical exegesis was not monolithic, but he believes it inevitably led towards an allegorical hermeneutic. He notes 6 convictions of Patristic exegesis: 1) Conviction of the present reality of God; 2) Presumption of a unified narrative; 3) the Rule of Faith; 4) Scripture treated as diverse yet a unified whole; 5) Scriptural texts as having their own historical meaning yet meant for us; 6) the Scriptural text as mystery. See Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice*, 42. However, depending on the precise definition of the terms, Evangelical and LGH proponents would be able to affirm all of these points without adopting an allegorical hermeneutic or TIS.

affirm.[16] It seems as if TIS is designed to be somewhat subjective while remaining within the theological and interpretative framework set for it by the Church.

The Interpretive Method of TIS

The unique characteristics of TIS can be better discerned by noting its influences and methodology—which it does indeed have, despite some TIS proponent's bristling at the term. TIS appears to be reliant on a Neo-Orthodox[17] approach to Scripture. Murray Rae references

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[16] Billings: "The theological interpretation of Scripture is a multifaceted practice of a community of faith in reading the Bible as God's instrument of self-revelation and saving fellowship…It also involves patient attention to the biblical text, various forms of biblical criticism, and a critical engagement with the Christian tradition through history—in a variety of cultural contexts." (J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], xii). Billings later argues for interpreting Scripture in the context of the Triune God and the Spirit (ibid., xiii), which any faithful Evangelical would already affirm. East defines TIS in a similar way, such that LGH proponents, with qualification and proper definition of terms, could affirm. See East, "The Hermeneutics of Theological Interpretation," 31. He later gives theological presuppositions to TIS, the first two an LGH proponent could easily affirm (ibid., 33–35).

Carter defines TIS as, "The method of interpretation is faith seeking understanding by means of philosophical meditation on special revelation, which corrects and supplements natural revelation" (Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 15). Carter's statement could be affirmed by an LGH proponent except for the phrase "philosophical meditation," which Carter does not clearly define. In a later work, Carter defines theological interpretation as, "primarily a matter of two issues: determining the proper context in which the text should be read and understanding the nature of the text as revelation," which again, a Christian LGH proponent could affirm. See Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 85–86.

Treier asks questions that he believe TIS uniquely answers—but which any fair-minded LGH proponent could also affirm: "What would it take for the church to be a community welcoming creative, scholarly engagement with the Bible and for the academy to foster or at least tolerate biblically informed theology along with faithful interpretation of biblical texts as Scripture? That is the question many are asking" (Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 159). Fowl believes theological interpretation is best defined as a pre-modern use of theology in scriptural interpretation for the Christian life and argues that methodological considerations are not as important. See Stephen E. Fowl, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Its Future," *Anglican Theological Review* 99, no. 4 (2017): 675–76.

[17] To be sure, TIS proponents would claim that their hermeneutic was held by most of the Church before the Enlightenment. However, later sections will show most TIS scholars trace the origins of their modern movement to Karl Barth and his popularization of Neo-Orthodoxy. A helpful definition of Neo-Orthodoxy is: "A Protestant Christian reaction against 19th-cent. liberalism in theology. The reaction was not organized, and is particularly associated with K. Barth. Quintessentially, Neo-Orthodoxy rejected the liberal belief that it is possible to argue from experience to God, or, more extremely, that theology is disguised anthropology. For Neo-Orthodoxy, the word and revelation of God constitute a disjunctive act which cannot be subordinated to human judgement: this self-revelation is uniquely embodied in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh." See John Bowker, "Neo-Orthodoxy," The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions (Oxford University Press, 2003), Date Accessed 25th Aug. 2023, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-5154>.

Barth as a guiding influence in proper spiritual exegesis.[18] Other TIS adherents openly speak of Barth's seminal influence in providing the foundation of TIS,[19] and that "Barth serves as the 'motivation and model' for TIS."[20]

TIS's Neo-Orthodox roots helps explains why Vanhoozer can speak of "hearing" God's word in interpretation.[21] Similarly, Meadowcroft argues for hearing the voice of God through TIS and implies that TIS should lead to an "encountering" of God in Scripture that, in some way, impacts hermeneutics.[22] Rae speaks of God communicating "through" Scripture as the defining mark of TIS.[23]

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[18] Murray Rae, "Theological Interpretation and the Problem of Method," in *Ears That Hear: Explorations in Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Joel B. Green and Tim Meadowcroft (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 19. See also Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 40. There are times when Carter disagrees with Barth, though (e.g., Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 65).

[19] Treier notes Barth as being a forerunner to TIS and provides an extended, positive overview of Barth's life and theology, and his prime influence on TIS (Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, 11, 14–20. In another work he states that Barth is a "first starting point" of TIS (Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 149). Treier later attempts to minimize Barth's influence on modern proponents of TIS (ibid., 152). Grant Taylor states that "TIS represents what Karl Barth (1886–1968) believed was one of the primary goals of his Church Dogmatics: "... the initiation of a new exchange of views about the question of proper theology, the established knowledge of God, and the obedient service of God among men." See Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange,'" 117. Citing Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, trans. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), xi–xii.

[20] Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange,'" 122.

[21] Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 22.

[22] Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 3, 3n9, 6. Similarly, Billings: "The word of God in Scripture is something that encounters us again and again; it surprises, confuses, and enlightens us because through Scripture we encounter the triune God Himself" (Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God*, 8). Carter includes "philosophical meditation" upon special revelation as part of TIS. See Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 15.

[23] Rae, "Theological Interpretation and the Problem of Method," 12.

Given that TIS appears to be a modern version of Neo-Orthodoxy, its proponents also argue against "propositionalism"[24] as a way to read Scripture,[25] and instead opt for more spiritual, experiential interpretive methods.[26] TIS does not totally deny that meaning exists within the Scriptures—nor that the grammar and context of a passage are unimportant[27]—but they plainly state that meaning is indeterminate,[28] and that one most go beyond the words of

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[24] This paper uses the following functional definition for propositionalism: "Though a debated term, a proposition is a basic verbal unit of shareable information at the level of a word, phrase, or sentence. Propositionalism captures the overall ethos and range of activities whereby the biblically faithful expositor delivers verbal assertions of the truth to target audiences, with the conviction that transcendent truth is based on non-experiential, a priori knowledge. Propositional theology thus refers to an exegetically based methodology for organizing the biblical propositions into a theological system that is universal in its evangelistic and pedagogical application." See Christopher Burnett, "Defining Biblical Missions Through 'Missiological Propositional Assertion'" (PhD diss., The Master's Seminary, 2022), 36.

[25] Billings argues against translating Scripture "into propositional building blocks to fit into a blueprint" (Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God*, xiv). He makes a similar argument regarding interpretation of Scripture in ibid., 5. And later: "To put it differently, Scripture passages are not wholly determinative on their own, fitting seamlessly as propositions into a preestablished system of theology" (ibid., 8). Billings later admits, though, that one cannot leave their theological presuppositions or "maps" behind even if such maps do not tell us everything" (ibid., 9). Similarly, Treier casts Carl Henry's defense of propositionalism in a negative light. See Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 152n31. However, D. A. Carson notes that TIS proponents swipe at the concept of propositions when no one disagrees that the Bible is more than just propositions. See D. A. Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But...," in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 206.

[26] Meadowcroft: "From a methodological perspective, notable within the 'rule of faith' is the notion of 'spiritual exegesis,' which contributes to the presupposition with which this volume is working: that the Bible is read in order that the voice of God may be heard" (Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 6).

[27] Carter has a helpful overview of the process of interpretation of Scripture, most of which a Christian LGH proponent could agree with, until he comes to the section on the canonical context of a book and the New Testament's use of the Old, where he departs into using TIS language. See Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 91–102. Rae provides an example of TIS exegesis on the Parable of the Sower in Mark, and while at times he remarks upon the grammar and context of the passage in helpful ways, at other times he admits that a point he is arguing, "Is undoubtedly an extrapolation beyond the text of Mark 4:17" (Rae, "Theological Interpretation and the Problem of Method," 21).

[28] Brad East argues for, in principle, an infinite number of readings within the framework of one's ecclesiology and faith. He notes that there are some things the Scripture does not mean, but he does not explain how to discover such things, besides anything that goes beyond tradition. He then concludes: "The task of reading Scripture is therefore at once urgent, in the face of the community's business, and joyful, unburdened by the need to excavate "the right" meaning of the text and instead compelled in gladness and delight to descend ever deeper into the inexhaustible depths of God's word. Repurposing St. Augustine's remark about love, we might sum up the church's premodern hermeneutics as: Believe, and read as you please" (Brad East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 14, no. [2020]: 158). In a separate article East similarly states: "[TIS] is, second, a hermeneutic that, for theological and not only hermeneutical reasons, understands that the 'meaning' of scriptural texts is not and cannot be limited, much less identical, to the texts' 'original' meaning or to the human authors' intent" (East, "The Hermeneutics of Theological

Scripture and into an encounter with God to achieve the true goal of God's Word, spiritual

exegesis.[29] They often opt for a Christological/Christocentric hermeneutic[30] to accomplish such

Interpretation," 38). East is aware that his view undermines authorial intent but argues that the Scriptures, being inspired by the Spirit, are a unique hermeneutical case (ibid., 39). See also Bowald, "The Character of Theological Interpretation of Scripture," 168. Fowl seems to approve of any theological interpretation sees scripture as aiding humanity, "In their progress toward their ultimate end in God." See Fowl, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Its Future," 677. See also again East, "The Hermeneutics of Theological Interpretation," 36.

[29] Rae speaks of a "spiritual meaning" of the text and defines it as follows: "A meaning that is not divorced from the literal and historical meaning, but that, instead, properly illuminates the literal sense and historical reference of the text" (ibid., 19). Treier connects an objective reading of Scripture to historical criticism. See Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, 14. He later claims that "The evangelical embrace of modernity runs deeper, in the distinction between a text's 'meaning' as single and determinate and its 'significance' or 'application' as multiple and context-sensitive" (ibid., 24). He then criticizes Evangelicals for adopting observations made by E. D. Hirsch in his work, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967) and notes Hirsch's later change in views (Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, 24n34). Treier then claims that Evangelicals who believe in single-meaning multiple-application are getting their presuppositions from the academy (ibid., 24). He does not explain how it is "plundering the Egyptians" when Origen and Augustine imbibe Greek philosophy (cf. ibid., 13), but an "embrace of modernity" when Evangelicals affirm linguistic observations made by a secularist.

Similarly, Carter admits that the church fathers used reading techniques originally meant for Roman and Greek classics, but argues that they focused, "…on the question of what God means to say through the text." See Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 247. Carter also connects single-meaning hermeneutics to historical criticism and speaks of "ways" of reading Scripture as a spiritual discipline in which dogma and metaphysics impacts exegesis (ibid., 10, 13). He as well casts the quest for authorial intent as largely a product of E. D. Hirsh (ibid., 278) and implies that the meaning of Scripture for the original audience and the meaning for the present Christian audience are different (Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition,* 103). Earlier, Carter summarizes his point: "Trinitarian classical theism is a restatement of the plain sense of the text, that is, of what the text explicitly says plus what can be deduced from its explicit meaning. And second...trinitarian classical theism not only arises out of the text but also enables us to penetrate more deeply into the *res* of the text, that is, the subject matter of the text, which is God" (ibid., 86).

Vanhoozer makes the argument that spiritual exegesis is actually an extension of the literal meaning of the text, not a different meaning altogether. See Kevin J Vanhoozer, "'Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock: Biblical Interpretation Earthed, Typed, and Transfigured,'" *Modern Theology* 28, no. 4 (October 2012): 792. What Vanhoozer is arguing for appears to be similar to the *sensus plenior* hermeneutical model, which argues in part that the New Testament expands upon the original meaning of the Old Testament (cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The "Sensus Plenior" of Sacred Scripture* [Baltimore, MD: St. Mary's University Press, 1955], 92. Cited in Kit Barker, "Speech Act Theory, Dual Authorship, and Canonical Hermeneutics: Making Sense of *Sensus Plenior*," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3, no. 2 [2009]: 229). Vanhoozer's definition of the literal meaning of a text does not allow the term "literal" to have a unique meaning in hermeneutics. Allowing the term "literal" to have a unique definition focuses hermeneutics on a quest for authorial intent and single-meaning, which are at odds with most TIS proponents. Carter argues that TIS produces a more faithful reading to the literal sense of the biblical text, although he states that without a metaphysical framework to bring to the text, its literal meaning is obscure (Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 86).

[30] A Christocentric hermeneutic seeks to connect every biblical text's meaning directly to Christ in some way, usually by reading the New Testament backwards into the Old. See the discussions in J. Anthony Dupree, "A Case for a Christocentric Hermeneutic of the Old Testament" (M.A. Thesis, David Lipscomb University, 1995), 5–6; Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 150; Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ From the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 52; Alan G. Padgett, "The Canonical Sense of Scripture: Trinitarian or Christocentric?," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 45, no. 1 (2006): 37; and David Murray,

goals,[31] which itself often sees the literal meaning or authorial intent of an Old Testament text as insufficient for Christian exegesis.[32]

Given the vague definitions of TIS and its undermining of determinate meaning and authorial intent in Scripture, its adherents appear to lean towards an odd combination to guide their interpretation of Scripture—a combination of Neo-Orthodoxy and Postmodernism,[33] the latter term having an expanded meaning: that TIS relies on a broadly ecumenical[34] community

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Jesus On Every Page: 10 Simple Ways to Seek and Find Christ in the Old Testament (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 15.

[31] Carter, quoting Vanhoozer, defines Theological Interpretation Christologically: "It is not that a new meaning has been added, but rather that the original meaning has finally achieved its Christological *telos*…The typological meaning *is* the literal meaning of the discourse when viewed in canonical, which is to say redemptive-historical context." See Vanhoozer, "'Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock," 792/ Cited in Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 248. See also Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 5–6. East argues that "Christ remains the terminus—the heart, the *res*, the voice—of Scripture, in its totality and in all of its parts" (East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," 162). See also East, "The Hermeneutics of Theological Interpretation," 41.

[32] Dupree, "A Case for a Christocentric Hermeneutic of the Old Testament," 5; Padgett, "The Canonical Sense of Scripture," 37; Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 85.

[33] East admits that TIS entails that meaning of a text is dependent on the context of its reception and that TIS is a form of reader response theory. The questions a Christian are allowed to ask are then restricted to what the interpretive tradition of the church community allows. See ibid., 35. F. David Farnell defines Postmodernism as follows: "It rejects modernism and its confidence in 'knowing,' and embraces a relativistic view that truth varies depending upon bias, culture, and personal experience. Simply put, postmodernism claims that individuals or groups discover truth through their own subjective perceptions." See F. David Farnell, "Postmodernism and the Gospels: Dancing on the Edge of Disaster," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 31, no. 2 (2020): 305. For a discussion on the history of Postmodernism and its impact on Christian scholarship, along with its denial of LGH hermeneutics and propositional revelation, see ibid., 305–18; see also Craig Bartholomew, "Post/Late? Modernity as the Context for Christian Scholarship Today," *Themelios* 22, no. 2 (January 1997): 25–39.

[34] Vanhoozer simply states that we must, "learn from the whole Body of Christ" (Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 26). Treier defines all of pre-Reformation exegesis as Catholic and uses Catholic and Roman Catholic interchangeably (Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice*, 13, 25n37). Carter denies that the magisterium of Roman Catholicism is heresy and says that "There is room for discussion about what the proper role of the bishop of Rome might be" (Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 254). Treier acknowledges the Catholic claim to the Church being central to hermeneutics, but does not deny that claim, only ambiguously saying: "Yet Protestants such as myself must use different descriptions as well" (Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, 25). In another place, Treier lumps Catholic and Protestants together as fighting the same battle against historical criticism, and that Catholics are more open to TIS (ibid., 20–21, 30–31). In an article on TIS, Treier seems to push for an ecumenical partnership with all of Christendom as they practice TIS: "Its [TIS] coherence rests not on easily identifiable points of uniformity but instead on an opportune form of scholarly ecumenism." See Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 160. And later: "Whatever its inevitable blind spots, then, theological interpretation of Scripture has great potential to

based hermeneutic rooted in traditionalism.[35] Treier concludes, after a section on the necessity of

an ecclesial center of interpretation, that TIS is, "…a series of loosely 'postmodern' riffs on

Barth-inspired themes."[36]

Inspiration and TIS

TIS also implications for the classic Protestant doctrine of inspiration that seem to

minimize the influence of the human author of Scripture in interpretation and give the divine

author a separate role in giving meaning—and these implications still need to be spelled out by

the proponents of TIS.[37] For example, Vanhoozer states that, "Theological assumptions about

God's involvement with the production of Scripture play an important role in how interpreters

galvanize fresh energy among the church's teachers for contemplating the Triune God of the Scriptures, thereby contributing with verve to the renewal of intellectual life—and lively ecumenical relationships!—in the West and beyond" (ibid., 161). East seems to affirm a Roman Catholic view of Scripture when he states, "One cannot know what Scripture is without inquiring into what the church is, and vice versa. Nor can an adequate theology of Scripture be set forth without a reciprocally related, mutually determining theology of the church" (East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," 152).

[35] A version of TIS which emphasizes tradition and Christian Platonism is the so-called "Great Tradition," which emphasizes reading Scripture in line with how its adherents perceive certain theological doctrines have developed in Church history. For definition and discussion see Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 37. Meadowcroft challenges the "Western Epistemology of doubt" by arguing both for a Christological and "Rule of Faith" reading of Scripture and for a reading. Meadowcroft defines "Rule of Faith" as, "The guiding truths for which the early church fathers and the councils struggled over the first five to eight centuries of our era." See Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 6.

[36] Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 152. Later Treier states that TIS is a, "…mix of 'evangelical' and 'catholic' elements tamed by Barthian and postmodern whips" (ibid., 156). These statements are in addition to the Yale school of Post-liberalism mentioned by Treier as being a key influence on TIS (ibid., 156–58). In yet another place Treier states that, "We enact our forms of interpretative self-offering as members of an inescapable variety of communal traditions, which are Scripture-shaped lenses through which we again examine the texts" (ibid., 160).

[37] Treier notes that differing views of the doctrine of Scripture is arguably the root cause of the debates between TIS and non-TIS proponents and opts for understanding Scripture through an ecclesial lense. See Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 153–54. Taylor observes: "A diverse range of views on the nature of Scripture and its sufficiency for theology exists in TIS" (Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange,'" 131). Carter implies that John Calvin overemphasized human authorial intent, and that seeking human authorial intent is for secularism. He concludes: "That does not mean his [E. D. Hirsch's] concern for respecting authorial intention cannot be shared by Calvin or us, but it does mean that theological hermeneutics must give careful consideration to the question of who the author is whose intention must be respected." See Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 246. See a similar discussion in Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 90–91.

take or construe the text and in how they deal with thematic developments as well as apparent historical inconsistencies."[38] What those assumptions are, and what role they take in interpretation, is not explained.[39] Meadowcroft appears to imply that hearing the voice of God is in some way more authoritative than the Scriptures themselves.[40] Treier appears to opt for a Barthian-like separation of the biblical text from the Divine Word,[41] and casts the biblical doctrine of inerrancy, as formulated in the Chicago Statement of 1978, as a negative reaction to Barth.[42] Taylor concludes that TIS proponents do not agree on whether the Scripture is sufficient within itself to do theology.[43] By doing the above, TIS does not always engage directly with the text and exegesis of Scripture.[44]

Conclusions on TIS

TIS proponents have not provided clear guidelines for what parts of pagan worldviews to adopt, besides, apparently, being biased towards the more spiritual aspects of them. It is also not clear on how to relate to other branches of Christendom that teach a false gospel or have

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[38] Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 23.

[39] Vanhoozer later states: "No one denomination, school of interpretation, or hermeneutical approach has a monopoly on reading the Bible for the word of God" (ibid., 26). However, Vanhoozer's statement carries assumptions about the nature of inspiration and doctrine that are also not explained. Why does no hermeneutical approach have a monopoly on reading the Bible? Are approaches, even contradictory ones, equally right, and if so, what does that imply about how God produced the Scriptures?

[40] He states that TIS, "takes into account the self-perception of Scripture that it conveys and signposts the living voice of God, and attempts to read and interpret in those terms" (Meadowcroft, "Introduction: An Interpretive Conversation," 4).

[41] Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 154.

[42] Ibid, 152n31.

[43] Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange," 133.

[44] Rae, "Theological Interpretation and the Problem of Method," 11–12. Carson notes that TIS often goes far beyond anything that the Scripture hints at. See Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But...," 205.

differing views of the Church.[45] Moreover, it is not clear that TIS accomplishes arguably its main

stated goal: To retrieve biblical interpretation from historical criticism.[46] Along these lines, TIS

proponents need to answer to what extent they see the historical factoring into exegesis and

theology. If the goal of TIS is having a spiritual encounter with God, is it necessary for the

historical events in the Scriptures to even be literal?[47]

Another question regards the relationship between Scripture and the Church. Many TIS

writers are ambiguous about the ability of Christians to interpret the Scriptures apart from the

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[45] For example, Carter states that the early community of readers (the Church) is what canonized Scripture, raising questions regarding the relationship of the Church to Scripture. See Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 87. Treier seems to plainly state that a professing Christina can practice TIS regardless of the denomination or group they are a part of: "All they need are enough others who are recognizably like-minded about sustaining a 'generous orthodoxy' in the post-Christian West which does not require giving up primary ecclesiastical identities, denominational or otherwise" (Treier, "What Is Theological Interpretation?," 159). He earlier states that TIS is indebted to Roman Catholic Scholarship (ibid., 150).

[46] Carter notes that an unresolved issue within TIS is its relationship to historical criticism (Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 41–42). Poirier argues that "The term 'theological interpretation' is problematic because it implies that historical criticism is not 'theological interpretation', even when the latter is aimed at elucidating a clearly theological passage (e.g., in Paul), and when it is undertaken specifically for theological purposes (See Poirier, "'Theological Interpretation' and Its Contradistinctions," 110). Taylor notes Barth's seminal influence on TIS (as noted above) and admits that he held to most of the historical-critical conclusions of his day. See Taylor, "The Continuation of 'a New Exchange,'" 117. See also the example of TIS and historical-criticism in Cory Barnes, "Ancient Near Eastern Context and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: An Exploration in Daniel 7:1–14," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 65, no. 2 (June 2022): 307–17.
      Eric Vanden Eykel positively references Catholic scholar Avery Dulles' use TIS and historical criticism together. Dulles argues that historical criticism still has a place in biblical studies, as a historical discipline that can aid theology but is not itself theological (Vanden Eykel, "Beyond Historical Criticism?," 196, 198). Eykel later notes that the historical-critical method can be used as a "neutral" tool alongside all the presuppositions of a TIS proponent (ibid., 200). Dulles then argues that exegesis uses historical criticism, while the fuller meaning (*sensus plenior*) of the text can only be found through what is essentially TIS (ibid., 202). Fowl states that historical criticism is not opposed to TIS and concludes: "Theological interpreters can and should make use of historical, literary, social scientific, and all other types of biblical interpretation as long as they understand that such work needs to be subsidiary to the task of keeping theological concerns primary." See Fowl, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Its Future," 678–79. In this way, interpreters "plunder the Egyptians" (ibid., 679).

[47] Brad East seems to assume that the Scriptures are the product of a long history of editing, redactions, compositions, etc. as it formed into its current state, and then concludes: "…these innumerable distributed actions of the one people of God are, at one and the same time, the work of the Holy Spirit to confect the jots and tittles of the prophets and apostles to be, for us, the word of the Lord." See East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," 152. To an extent, it appears as if TIS and historical criticism share the belief that the writers of Scripture were largely influenced by the culture around them and that one must look behind the propositions of Scripture to find the true meaning of the text.

guiding traditions and teachings of the Church.[48] And some are more straightforward in that they believe the Church and its teachings have a greater authority than the Scriptures.[49]

As seen above, there are many aspects of TIS that need examining from a dispensational perspective. But once again, defining TIS as a God-centered and Christian hermeneutic that submits to Scripture and honors tradition is not helpful, since almost all faithful Christians who are non-TIS would make the same claims about their own hermeneutic.[50] In fact, LGH proponents need to push back against that narrative that TIS advocates portray about their position, and ask for more clarity,[51] while affirming that LGH hermeneutics is actually more Christ-centered while still interacting with Church history.[52]

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[48] Rae argues that Scripture must be read in the context of the community of the Church as the primary locus of interpretation, but then backtracks some and argues that one should still allow the Spirit to blow where it wills. See Rae, "Theological Interpretation and the Problem of Method," 20. East notes that one's standard of excellent in TIS depends on one's community of interpretation, and that the fundamental presupposition one should have is the community of the church (East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," 154). The question of the relationship between TIS and the Church raises the related issue of TIS proponents' interpretation of Church history through a singular lense—that all pre-Reformation, pre-Enlightenment Christians practiced a form of TIS and were not concerned with the human authorship of the Scriptures or its literal meaning (cf. Poirier, "'Theological Interpretation' and Its Contradistinctions," 111).

[49] So East, who concludes: "The Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, for example, is prone to mischaracterizing this priority, given the (rightful) primacy it accords Scripture via the (misleading) solitariness or self-sufficiency it invariably implies" (ibid., 156). He later argues: "High doctrines of Scripture, funded by overweening emphasis on Scripture's authority, have a tendency to mask or occlude this fact [Scripture's secondary status to the Church]… the church, by Christ's efficacious word, is both destined to become, and called to be, *teleios*" (ibid., 157). In another article, East appears to describe a Roman Catholic understanding of how the Canon of Scripture developed. See East, "The Hermeneutics of Theological Interpretation," 36.

[50] For example, Abner Chou argues for a hermeneutic of obedience in an article critiquing a Christological hermeneutic. See Abner Chou, "A Hermeneutical Evaluation of the Christocentric Hermeneutic," *Master's Seminary Journal* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 138. Fowl claims the dominance of historical criticism meant that one could not be both a biblical scholar and a theologian—but LGH proponents would argue one can indeed be both without resorting to theological interpretation. See Fowl, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture and Its Future," 673.

[51] Carson concludes: "At this moment, however, I am inclined to think that what is most valuable in TIS (and much is), is not new; what is new in TIS varies from ambiguous to mistaken, depending on the theological location of the interpreter." See Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But...," 207.

[52] Tyra notes about the Reformer Martin Bucer: "Far from divorcing history from theology, Bucer saw rigorous attention to languages and context as the way to the Bibles center, Jesus Christ. He sharply "limited the use of allegory" precisely because it diverted interpreters all too often from this christological path" (Tyra, "'Christ Has Come to Gather Together All the Creatures,'" 56). See also ibid., 57. Tyra then surveys major interpreters such as

So, what is one way to test the differences between TIS and LGH? Vanhoozer concludes about TIS: "The strongest claim to be made for theological interpretation is that only such reading ultimately does justice to the subject matter of the text itself."[53] Similarly, John Webster argues that "The most fruitful way of engaging in Theological Interpretation of Scripture is to do it."[54] TIS claims to produce more faithful and richer theology by minimizing grammatical, historical, and literary contexts, and focusing on a Christian's spiritual experience in reading the text. The fruits of TIS and LGH approaches to Job can be compared then, to reveal which hermeneutic or methodology is both more faithful to Scripture and produces richer, more Christ-centered theology.

TIS in Job

This paper will test the above claims by Vanhoozer and others regarding the pragmatical superiority of TIS. Even if there is much within TIS that needs to be further defined and explained, setting side-by-side the conclusion of TIS and LGH approaches to Job is one way to see the differences between the approaches. Regarding an explicitly TIS approach to Job, Wilson argues that "The intellectual or ideological setting of the book is more significant than its historical setting."[55] Nevertheless, Wilson makes some helpful observations, noting that the book

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Origen, Augustine, and Aquinas on Romans 8:19–22 and concludes that they sorely misread the text and lowered creation to merely an instrument for humans (ibid., 72–75).

[53] Vanhoozer, "Introduction," 22. Other authors imply that the practical heart of TIS is the New Testament's use of the Old, as they argue that the New Testament authors change or expand the original meaning of the Old Testament passages, and that such an interpretation is exegetically justified. See Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God*, 19; and Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 4–5, 14.

[54] John Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 30. Cited in Brad East, "What Are the Standards of Excellence for Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 14, no. 2 (2020): 150.

[55] Lindsay Wilson, "Job," in *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Craig G Bartholomew, and Daniel J. Treier (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 152.

posits that retribution is not the only system of justice God uses, and that Job connects to other passages in the Old Testament.[56] Wilson notes the contentious issues in the book of Job and asks if and how it points to Christ, which are all valid questions.[57] In relationship to the New Testament, Wilson mostly argues that it either affirms or expands upon what Job says.[58]

As shown above, the parameters of TIS are broad and allow for virtually any interpretation that accords with pre-Enlightenment historical theology. Post-Apostolic and Patristic fathers (granting, for the sake of argument, that pre-Reformation theologians held to a form of TIS) generally viewed Job as a model of righteous, patient suffering[59] and interpreted the book allegorically.[60] Passages in Job were used by the early church to develop a doctrine of original sin.[61] However, there were also some pre-Reformation

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[56] Ibid., 153.

[57] Ibid., 150.

[58] Ibid., 154–55.

[59] These fathers include: Clement of Rome (A. D. 35–99), Cyprian (A. D. 200–58), Chrysostom (A. D. 347–407), Ambrose (A. D. 337/339–397), and Pope Gregory (A. D. 540–604), whose *Moralia in Iob* was the most used commentary on Job for the next 1000 years. See Tremper Longman III, *Job*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 41–42. See also Donald K. Berry, *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament* [Nashville: B & H, 1995], 68–69. Jerome (A. D. 347– 420) had a positive but more complex view of Job because of his work with the MT (ibid., 42). See also Vicchio, *The Image of the Biblical Job*, 1:152, 159; and Vicchio., *The Book of Job: A History of Interpretation and a Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 4. However, Theodore of Mopsuestia thought Job was written late and was not an overall pious person (cf. Berry, *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament*, 70). Berry also argues that Augustine referred to Job to indicate the pervasiveness of sin even in the most righteous people (ibid.).

[60] The term "allegory" is difficult to define precisely (cf. Jon Whitman, *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period* [Boston: Brill, 2003], 5–6). A basic definition would be: "an interpretive method that goes beyond the normal sense of the text." See Leroy Andrew Huizenga, "The Old Testament in the New, Intertextuality and Allegory," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38, no. 1 (September 2015): 18.

[61] See Kenneth B. Steinhauser, "Job in Patristic Commentaries and Theological Works," in *A Companion to Job in the Middle Ages*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins and Aaron Canty, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 73 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 62–63. Job 14:1–3 in particular was often used by the early church to argue for a doctrine of original sin. See David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), 326; and C. L. Seow, *Job 1–21: Interpretation and Commentary*, vol. 1, Illuminations (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 670.

theologians who interpreted Job literally.[62] In addition, Luther and Calvin interpreted Job

literally and did not employ a Christological hermeneutic often.[63] Calvin saw Job as a

patient sufferer, whereas Luther thought that Job suffered because he would sin later on.[64]

A Note on the Historical-Critical Method on Job

Despite all that has been said about TIS, before moving to the next sections of this

paper it is important to affirm that TIS proponents are not wrong to argue that historical

criticism has, at its heart, a non-biblical view of Scripture and is more concerned with

answering hypothetical questions behind the Scriptures than what the actual biblical text

contains.[65] Moreover, the rise of historical criticism did indeed prevent further

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[62] E g., Ambrose (cf. Judith R. Baskin, "Job as Moral Exemplar in Ambrose," *Vigiliae Christianae* 35, no. 3 [September 1981]: 223). For a Medieval example of a non-typological approach to Job, Aaron Canty, "Nicholas of Lyra's Literal Commentary on Job," in *A Companion to Job in the Middle Ages*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins and Aaron Canty, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 73 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 229. See also Lindsay Wilson's discussion on Thomas Aquinas and Maimonides on Job in Lindsay Wilson, *Job*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 11–12.

[63] Stephen Vicchio, *Job in the Medieval World*, The Image of the Biblical Job: A History 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 182. See also Susan E. Schreiner, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?: Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 91.

[64] Wilson, *Job*, 2015, 12.

[65] This is not to say that a Christian cannot, rightly or wrongly, believe in some aspect of historical development of Scripture into its final, canonical form, all the while believing he can still gain rich, God-centered theology from it. In this paper and evidently in most TIS usages, the terms "historical criticism" and the "historical-critical method" refer to a whole way of approaching the Scriptures that takes a skeptical view towards the claims of Scripture—especially the historical ones—and seeks to find answers "behind the text" for questions regarding date of composition, authorship and text transmission. See Eugene H. Merrill's discussion in Eugene H. Merrill, "The Development of the Historical Critical Method," in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament*, by Eugene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 158–79. For further discussion see Vicchio, *The Image of the Biblical Job*, 3:153.

theological inquiry into the book of Job,[66] and any conclusions they did provide were

often contradictory in nature.[67]

The modern approaches to Job are mostly fall into these two camps:

Conservative,[68] and Historical-critical.[69] However, Historical-critical Joban scholars are

beginning to give up on the quest for what lays behind the text of Scripture and are

beginning to exegete the text in its current form.[70] Nevertheless, it is rare that these

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[66] For a list of German historical-critical scholars who have written on Job, see Vicchio, *The Image of the Biblical Job*, 3:154–57. See ibid., 159–63 for discussion on nineteenth century French and English historical-critical views on Job. Markus Witte, *Hiobs viele Gesichter: Studien zur Komposition, Tradition und frühen Rezeption des Hiobbuches*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 267 (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 13–36 for a list of modern critical sources on the book of Job.

[67] Vicchio, *The Image of the Biblical Job* 3:155. Vicchio notes that one benefit of the rise of historical criticism was that conservatives were forced to deal with issues like authorship, composition, and date in ways that they had not before (ibid., 153). The self-contradictions in historical-critical observations on Job is, ironically, similar to what TIS would logically lead to. As seen in the above discussions, within TIS the text can mean whatever a Christian wants it to mean, as long as it generally falls within the shadow of the Church's historic teaching on Job. For historical-critical scholars, the text can mean almost anything, as long as such conclusions are not based upon a conservative doctrine of verbal-plenary inspiration and inerrancy (which doctrine TIS would similarly have issues with, given their explicit denials of authorial intent and the doctrine of inerrancy as found in the Chicago Statement).

[68] Conservative Joban scholars usually hold to similar opinions as past interpretations of Job: Its date of authorship is either early or not important, Job is a model of righteous suffering, and the book's theme is about trusting God in unexplained suffering. See for example, Elmer A. Martens, *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*, 3rd ed. (N. Richland Hills, TX: D. and F. Scott Publishing, 1998), 209; Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (B&H, 1993), 28; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 424; and Christopher Ash, *Job: The Wisdom of the Cross*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 30.

[69] For contemporary and extensive literature reviews of Job see Vicchio, *The Book of Job*, 1–45; and Sean P. Kealy, *The Wisdom Books of the Bible: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon: A Survey of the History of Their Interpretation* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012), 77–144. See in addition, Lindsay Wilson, "Job as a Problematic Book," in *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature*, ed. David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 61.

[70] See Christopher R. Seitz, "Job: Full-Structure, Movement, and Interpretation," *Interpretation* 43, no. 1 (January 1989): 10; and David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), lvii. Clines admits that the historical-critical method requires "intelligent speculation" in order to ascertain the historical date and authorship of Job (ibid.). Although Eduard Dhorme leaves open the possibility that Job was edited over time, he argues that Job is best approached as a literary unity: "We must retain as a basis for our investigation the fact that each part possesses an apparent unity, a unity which, apart from certain inevitable and very minimal adventitious elements, implies a single author" (Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, lxii). C. L. Seow approaches Job as a unified whole, even if he assumes that the book has been edited over time to be a caricature of the wisdom genre (Seow, *Job 1-21*, 108. Wilson argues that the exegetical difficulties in Job actually serve important literary and theological functions. He says, "My growing conviction from studying Job is that, many

scholars produce rich theological commentaries on Job or approach the Joban text as Christians who believe the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God.

<center>LGH Hermeneutics, Justification, and Job</center>

To be sure, there are many secular scholars who hold to the concept of authorial intent, single-meaning hermeneutics, and analyze the propositions of the biblical text. However, it is uncharitable and imprecise for TIS proponents to lump Christians who seek to understand the historical and grammatical context of God's inspired word with academics who believe in historical-criticism as a worldview. TIS has not considered Christians who believe LGH hermeneutics is how God has designed Scripture to be written, nor has it considered the possibility that LGH proponents could be "plundering the Egyptians" in their own way and seeking to be sensitive to the history of interpretation on Job. So, what would a Christian use of LGH hermeneutics be able to bring out of the book of Job, and is it capable of producing rich, Christ-centered theology that is sensitive to the history of its interpretation? The next few sections will answer those questions by focusing on one theme within Job—justification—and briefly showing both its importance within the book and its connections to Christ, all in ways that are consistent with LGH hermeneutics.

To begin, a few historical and human factors should be noted which, taken together, give reason to look more closely at the text of Job in regards to its contribution to a biblical doctrine of justification. For example, at least some early interpretations of Job were influenced by the LXX translation of the book. The LXX of Job is known for being one-sixth shorter than the Masoretic Text (MT) version, having a freer translation philosophy, and for rounding off much of

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of the supposed inconsistencies and contradictions can be resolved, and the book can be read as coherent whole." See Wilson, *Job*, 2015, 25–26.

Job's harsher language towards God.[71] The result is that for those Patristic fathers who did not know Hebrew, they had—in parts—a considerably different Scriptural text to work with than the earlier, proto-Masoretic version.

The human factor as well influences Job's interpretation. Many Christians are familiar with the first two and last few chapters of the book, since they relate an incredible story of faith in suffering (Job 1–2), a memorable lesson that Job ought to trust God even when he does not have all the answers in his suffering (38–42). In fact, not a few people's views of Job are largely based on these chapters of the book, even if such views do not always adequately cover the thirty-five or so chapters in between them. Yet, if one looks deeper into the middle and largest portion of the book, there are many difficult and profound sayings the book gives. For both historical and human reasons then, it is permissible and even necessary to re-examine the

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[71] The Original Greek (OG) of Job is known for taking a free interpretive stance in how it translated Job (the term "OG" refers to the oldest Greek translations of the Hebrew Old Testament. See Tim McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 7. Cited in Jeffrey E. Miller, "Imputation and Justification," in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. [Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016]). See also Juliane Eckstein's article on the idiolectic style of the OG Joban translator that supports the view that the OG of Job is a shorter version of a Hebrew *vorlage* (Juliane Eckstein, "The Idiolect Test and the Vorlage of Old Greek Job: A New Argument for an Old Debate," *Vetus Testamentum* 68 [2018]: 197–219). Vicchio concludes that the difference in length between the LXX of Job and the MT is for theological reasons (Vicchio, *The Image of the Biblical Job*, 1:105. The translators of the OG of Job had a tendency to eliminate parallel passages and explain texts to make them more understandable, in addition to often toning down the negative language Job uses against God (ibid.). See also Longman III, *Job*, 28–29.

Scholars also acknowledge that the translation of Job was a free translation, i.e., the translators opted to translate the ideas and meanings of Job rather than every word. See J. H. Gailey, "Jerome's Latin Version of Job from the Greek. Chapters 1-26, Its Text, Character and Provenance" (ThD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1945), 14; Edwin Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek: Studies on the Value and Use of the Septuagint, on the Meanings of Words and Psychological Terms in Biblical Greek, on Quotations from the Septuagint, on Origen's Revision of Job, and on the Text of Ecclesiasticus, with an Index of Biblical Passages* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 220; Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 3rd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 19; and Claude E. Cox, "The Nature of Lucian's Revision of the Text of Greek Job," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta, vol. 126, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2008), 425.

concept of justification in the book, even if it does not have a long history of interpretation in the book.

<p style="text-align:center">LGH Hermeneutics and Justification in Job</p>

This paper will briefly examine one verse—Job 9:2—and make some preliminary observations regarding justification in Job. The following sections will break the observations down according to the LGH categories and then synthesize the conclusions. Future sections will then connect the conclusions to Christ and Church history in responsible ways, to show that LGH hermeneutics produces a more Christ-centered theology from Job while still remaining sensitive to the interpretive tradition of the Church on the book.

The Literal

The term literal does not, of course, denote a "woodenly literal" approach to Scripture that does not believe in the existence of metaphors or figurative language. Rather, the term "literal" most accurately refers to the "literary style" of an author, i.e., what an author intends to say and how he says it, using normal, human language.[72] We can first note the context of Job 9:2

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[72] For the purposes of the argument of this paper, it will be assumed that the Scriptures were God-breathed (cf. 2 Tim 3:16), such that what the inspired human authors said in their own, plain, human language, is exactly what God intended to say (cf. 2 Pet 1:20–21). The literal sense of a text is, "Its most straightforward meaning" (Chris Baldwick, "Literal," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015], https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198715443.001.0001/acref-9780198715443-e-660). The accommodated nature of divine revelation and the reality of progressive revelation make a literal interpretation of an Old Testament text possible. On accommodated revelation, see Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 18, 25; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, vol. 15, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 16; and Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture From the Prophets and Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018), 14n10. Chou concludes: "In sum, God created language and its operation is embedded in the way we communicate. This is why we can understand texts and even pursue authorial intent. As we read the text of Scripture, the Bible explains *why* we could always do this" (ibid.; italics original).

Regarding progressive revelation, Brad Klassen summarizes: "Simply stated, progressive revelation refers to the manner by which God revealed his propositional, redemptive knowledge. God did not reveal this knowledge instantaneously, but progressively—through a process covering 1,500 years and including dozens of authors. It was a process which began with foundational truths and progressed to more specific details. But the later, more specific revelation never contradicts the earlier, more general revelation" (Brad Klassen, "Premillennialism and Hermeneutics," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 29, no. 2 [Fall 2018], 137).

then. Chapter nine comes in the first cycle of speeches in the dialogue portion of the book.[73] At

this point, Job has already passed the trials of Job 1–2 and is speaking out of the anguish of

prolonged (cf. 7:3), unanswered suffering.[74] His words in 9:2 are both a direct response to Bildad

(9:1–2a; cf. 8:3) and a use of Eliphaz's own words against him and his other friends (4:17).[75]

However, to Job, such a relationship with God—where nothing mankind does ultimately

matters, and they can be judged for their fallen natures at any time—is not one worth having (Job

7:17–19; 10:20–22; 14:1–6). But although Job comes close to total despair of being in a right

relationship with God (9:1–32), he has the faith in God to hope for a legal system in which man

and God would be brought together through a heavenly mediator (9:33–34; cf. 16:19–21; 19:25–

26). Job 9:2 then, is not simply Job's despair of being right with God—Job's question is itself a

desire for reconciliation to God and forgiveness of sins (cf. 7:21; 14:15–17; 19:26–27).

The Grammatical

Grammatically, the phrase "in the right"[76] translates the verb *tsadaq* (צדק). The verb

primarily means "to justify" and has forensic overtones—as in, a judge declares that the person

on trial has met the standards of the law and is righteous. *Tsadaq* has a place of prominence in

the book of Job that no other Old Testament book affords it,[77] demonstrating that the concept of

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[73] For a good overview of the structure and cycles of Job, see Ash, *Job*, 25.

[74] Job does not ask "what" but "why" in his lament (Job 3:11–12, 16, 20, 23). His despair came not from the fact of his suffering (in light of which he still blessed God, cf. 1:20–22) but from the possible implications that the unanswered suffering posed towards God.

[75] Eliphaz had stated that no one can be justified before God because of their sinful nature (4:17–21), and thus Job should expect to be judged, even if he lives an overall blameless life.

[76] Unless otherwise noted, all verse references are from *Legacy Standard Bible*. Three Sixteen Publishing, 2022.

[77] The verb צדק occurs 17 times in Job and 24 times in the rest of the Old Testament put together (cf. "צדק," *HALOT*, 1003). See also J. A. Ziesler, who provides a breakdown of where the various forms of the verb occur (J. A.

justification—as a part of an overarching legal metaphor[78]—has a central place in the argument

of the book. Syntactically, Job is speaking of being justified before God's presence and

despairing of such a possibility. The following is thus a probable translation of Job 9:2: "In truth,

I know that this is so.[79] How then[80] can a man be in the right with God?"[81]

Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 20 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972], 20–28). He further notes that 14 out of the 22 occurrences of the qal of צדק occur in Job and concludes that if one takes Job as a whole as forensic, then almost all occurrences of צדק in Job are forensic (ibid., 20).

[78] The evidence for the presence of legal metaphor and legal language within Job is overwhelming .Vicchio observes that Job has more legal language than any other book of a comparable size (Vicchio, *The Book of Job*, 399–401). A select, not exhaustive, list of the works that discuss the legal metaphor in Job include: John Beresford Frye, "Legal Language in the Book of Job" (PhD diss., University of London, 1973); J. J. M. Roberts, "Job's Summons to Yahweh: The Exploitation of a Legal Metaphor," *Restoration Quarterly* 16 (1973): 159–65; Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama in the Book of Job" (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1976); Michael Brennan Dick, "The Legal Metaphor in Job 31," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1979): 37–50; Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "The Meaning of Mišpaṭ in the Book of Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101, no. 4 (December 1982): 521–29; Samuel Madavaraj, "Legal Metaphor in Job 31:35–37" (S.T.M., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1993); F. Rachel Magdalene, *On the Scales of Righteousness: Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job*, Brown Judaic Studies 348 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2007); Yair Hoffman, "The Book of Job as a Trial: A Perspective from a Comparison to Some Relevant Ancient Near Eastern Texts," in *Das Buch Hiob Und Seine Interpretationen: Beiträge Zum Hiob-Sympoisum Auf Dem Monte Veritá Vom 14.–19. August 2005*, ed. T. Krüger et al., Abhandlungen Zur Theologie Des Alten Und Neuen Testaments 88 (Zürich, Switzerland: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007), 21–31; Rachel F. Magdalene, "Through a Glass Lawyerly: Reading the Legal Metaphors of Job 1–31," in *Law and Narrative in the Bible and in Neighboring Ancient Cultures*, ed. Klaus-Peter Adam et al., Forschungen Zum Alten Testament. 2. 54 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 123–38; and Carol A. Newsom, "The Invention of the Divine Courtroom in the Book of Job," in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ari Mermelstein and Shalom E. Holtz, Biblical Interpretation Series 132 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 246–59.

[79] "That this is so" translates כִּי־כֵן, which is usually anaphoric (cf. Gen 50:3; Lev 8:35; 10:13; Judg 14:10).

[80] Most translations take the *vav* as adversative (but) but taking it as connective/resultative (then) fits just as well. Bildad's verbatim reference in 25:4 to Job's words here also employ the *vav* in a connective/resultative sense, which most English translations bring out. For translations and commentators that interpret the *vav* in Job 9:2a in a connective/resultative sense, see: The Schlachter 2000; Geneva Bible; LXX; Vulgate; Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 178; John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 166; Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job: Together with a New Translation*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921), 83–84.

[81] Author's translation. Translating the *vav* in Job 9:2b as "how then" also helps explain why Job changes Eliphaz's syntax from מֵאֱלוֹהַ in Job 4:17 to עִם־אֵל here (cf. similar constructions to עִם־אֵל in 1 Sam 2:26 and 2 Sam 6:22). Job is saying that because no one can be justified before God, even winning a legal dispute with God is impossible (cf. לָרִיב עִמּוֹ in 9:3). The use of the preposition עִם with רִיב (*rîb*; a technical term for a legal dispute) is common, since one party is disputing "with" another party. See James Limburg, "Root Rîb and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 3 (September 1969): 296. For further discussion on the term *rîb* denoting legal disputes in Israel, see B. Gemser, "The Rib- or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, 2nd ed., Supplements to Vetus

The Historical

The historical setting of the book of Job answers why Job asks the question of justification in the first place. While theologically minded Evangelicals have disagreed on the historical date of the composition of the book of Job, there is broad consensus across the spectrum of biblical studies that the book's literary setting is the Patriarchal Period,[82] outside of Israel.[83] Job's historical setting makes it one of the earliest books of the Bible—if not the earliest—and places the book outside of the historical context of other biblical covenants or revelation. Such a setting allows Job to speak with a purity regarding justification and the relationship between man and God that sets trajectories for how later biblical authors developed the doctrine.

Job's historical setting also explains why Job despairs of justification—he did not have access to the answers that the rest of Scripture gives regarding mankind's predicament before

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Testamentum 3 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1969), 122.. Bovati notes that the *rîb* was a well-known legal concept in the ANE and references Julian Harvey as giving a survey of other ANE cultures who use the *rîb* as a legal institution. See Julien S. J. Harvey, *Le plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'alliance: étude d'une formule littéraire de l'Ancien Testament*, Studia 22 (Paris: Bruges, 1967), 119–43. As cited in Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*, 182n192.

[82] The Patriarchal Period is the period during which the biblical fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) lived (ca. early second millennium B. C.). See Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Patriarchs, Period of the," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 2:1620; John D. Barry et al., eds., "Patriarchs," *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016); and R. K. Harrison, "Patriarchs," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 2003), 1252.

[83] This paper assumes that the events of Job occurred sometime in the Patriarchal period, with the events being written down by an inspired author shortly thereafter. For Evangelical/Reformed scholars who argue for an early setting of Job, see John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *Job*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 24; Robert L. Alden, *Job*, New American Commentary 11 (Nashville: B&H, 1993), 27; Ash, *Job*, 443–44; and R. Laird Harris, "The Book of Job and Its Doctrine of God," *Presbyterion* 7, no. 1–2 (1981): 8–9. Even historical-critical scholars admit at least parts of the book go back to the Patriarchal Period, and that it was made to look like was written during that period. For further discussions, see Clines, *Job 1-20*, 1989; Seow, *Job 1-21*, 44; Edward L. Greenstein, *Job: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), xvii; Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, vol. 15, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1973), xxxiv; and Jan Joosten, "Linguistic Clues as the Date of the Book of Job: A Mediating Position," in *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J. A. Clines*, ed. James K. Aitken, Jeremy M. S. Clines, and Christl M. Maier (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 356.

God.[84] From a canonical perspective, God thus ordained Job's suffering to cause him to ask the

questions about man and God's relationship that the rest of the Scriptures answer. Job and his

friends all try to understand how God works in the world—but ultimately true wisdom must be

revealed by God (Job 28).

Justification, Job, and Christ

A Christian approach to LGH hermeneutics assumes the unity and divine authorship of

the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16), as well as the progress of revelation.[85] Thus, textual and thematic

connections can be made to Christ and the gospel in responsible ways. In fact, it is probably

accurate to say that Job provides a theological framework for the biblical doctrine of

justification, while the rest of the Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, fill in that

framework.

Textually, Paul directly quotes the book of Job at least three times (Rom 11:35; 1 Cor

3:19; Phil 1:19). Each time, Paul is contextually commenting on some implication or truth of the

gospel. There has been some work done in these areas,[86] but—both where Paul directly quotes

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[84] See for example, the contrast between David's language in Psalm 8 and Job's language in Job 7:17–21, or Job's questions in Job 9:2, 33–35, and Paul's answers in Romans 3:23–24; 8:1, 33–34; and 1 Timothy 2:5–6.

[85] For further discussion see footnote 72.

[86] For discussions on connections between Job and Romans, see J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "In Concert" in the Letter to the Romans*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 101 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 301; and J. Gerald Janzen, "He Makes Peace in His High Heaven: Job and Paul in Resonance," in *Reading Job Intertextually*, ed. Katharine J Dell and William L. Kynes, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2013), 248. The most complete work on Paul's use of Job in Romans 11:35 is from Andrew David Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology: Paul's Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34-35* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012). However, Naselli's typological hermeneutic arguably limits him from fully exploring how Paul drew upon Job in Romans 11:35.

For discussions on 1 Corinthians 3:19 and Job, see David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters, and Theology*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 186n6; Colin Eckstein, "The Death of God and the 'Foolishness of the Cross' in 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5," *Modern Believing* 60, no. 4 (January 2019): 352; Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 56; Victor Paul Furnish, "Theology in 1 Corinthians: Initial Soundings," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1989 Seminar Papers*, ed. David J. Lull, vol. 28 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 354–55; Sang Meyng Lee, *The Cosmic Drama of Salvation: A Study of Paul's Undisputed Writings From Anthropological and Cosmological Perspectives*,

Job and in other places—possible connections between Job and Paul need further study.[87] There

could be a rich textual well in Job that Paul drew upon to develop his understanding of

justification.[88] Such work could all be done consistently within LGH framework, without

resorting to spiritualizing or typologizing Job to come up with connections to Christ that, even if

accurate at times, are imprecise and do not honor the connections between Job and Christ that

God intended Christians to make.

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament. Reihe 2. 276 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 39–46; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 103; C. Clifton Black, "Christ Crucified in Paul and Mark: Reflections on an Intracanonical Conversation," in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters: Essays in Honor of Victor Paul Furnish*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering Jr. and Jerry L. Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 194.

For connections between Philippians 1:19 and Job, see Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 737–78; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 22); Janzen, "He Makes Peace in His High Heaven," 249; Walter G. Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Eerdmans, 2009), 77; Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 44–45; Heinz Giesen, "Eschatology in Philippians," in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies 3 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006), 241; Stephen Voorwinde, "More of Paul's Emotions in Philippians," *The Reformed Theological Review* 77, no. 1 (April 2018): 53–54); and G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 282.

[87] See for example the discussion on the background of righteousness language in Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of 2nd Temple Judaism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, vol. 1 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 415–42; and James B. Prothro, "The Strange Case of Δικαιόω in the Septuagint and Paul: The Oddity and Origins of Paul's Talk of 'Justification,'" *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 107, no. 1 (2016): 60–66. Paul expected his audience to know what δικαιόω meant before he connected it to Abraham (ibid., 62). At one point Prothro notes Job 9:2 and 20 as one of the places Paul might have drawn upon to develop his doctrine that no one will be justified before God by their works (cf. Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16; see ibid., 67). Examining the relationship between δικαιόω and צדק in the book of Job, along with Seifrid and Prothro's lines of argumentation, would be a fruitful avenue of further research.

[88] Prothro draws upon Job 9:2 and 20 in another place to argue for the presence of a bilateral contention or *rîb* (ריב) in the book (cf. Job 9:3). He then argues that Paul used both a bilateral and a trilateral contention framework to expound his own doctrine of justification in Romans 3:21–5:11. See James B. Prothro, *Both Judge and Justifier: Biblical Legal Language and the Act of Justifying in Paul*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. 461 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 74, 140, 205, 208–9. Job grounds its discussion of justification in what could be termed "bilateral" (ריב) and "trilateral" (מִשְׁפָּט) legal frameworks (cf. Job 9:2, 32; 10:6; 40:6–8. Further study on Paul's use of the contention framework could produce rich theology related to Paul's use of the book of Job to develop his own doctrine of justification.

Theologically, the doctrine of justification and its function within soteriology is one of the richest areas of theological study. Assuming the above observations about justification in Job, even just comparing Job's theology of justification with Paul's (such as Job with Romans 3 and 8) would yield rich results. The key, though, is not simply to compare Job and Paul on justification, but to do the hard work of understanding justification in Job first. Then, Job's complex understanding of justification can produce greater comparisons and areas of theological continuity with Paul and how Christ accomplishes redemption. In this area, much more work needs to be done, as even if typological approaches accurately assess that Paul answers Job's hope, they lack the ability to give precise, biblical answers.[89] The following section will note some scholars who have observed connections between Job and justification, both in Church history in today.

Justification, Job, and Church History

TIS proponents claim to have an approach to Scripture that upholds historic, Christian teaching on Job. However, justification in Job, as understood through LGH hermeneutics, is not a novel concept—it is simply a more in-depth examination of the historic teaching on the theme of the book as trusting God in suffering. Job can trust in God in suffering not simply because God is wiser and greater than him, but because he trusts, in faith, that God will overcome the problem of sin in him and the world in the end (cf. Job 19:25–27).

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[89] For typological approaches see again Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology*; and Mike Mason, *The Gospel According to Job* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994).

Theologians as influential as John Calvin[90] and John Owen[91] have noted and implied that

Job is the biblical foundation of the doctrine of justification by faith. Overall, Calvin saw in Job

that due to an exalted description of God's righteousness and man's sinful nature, justification

before Him by works would be impossible.[92] There are also modern scholars from Historical-

critical, Evangelical, and Reformed camps that note the presence of justification language in

Job.[93]

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[90] In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin argues that the ultimate question in justification is not how righteous man can be but if his righteousness can match God's. Calvin also saw that Job clearly proves that man's righteousness is nothing before God, and thus the book lays a foundation for the biblical doctrine of justification by faith. Regarding Job 9:2–3 he says, "Here we are plainly told what the righteousness of God is, namely, a righteousness which no human works can satisfy, which charges us with a thousand sins, while not one sin can be excused" See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. III (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 494. See also an earlier discussion in ibid., 493.

[91] Owen believed that the person of Job exemplifies the book of James' doctrine of justification by works better than any other book, by showing when someone can plead for justification. See John Owen, *Justification by Faith* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace, 1971), 15–16. However, indirectly, Owen appears to make the same argument as Calvin regarding the book of Job and justification. He argues that when God responded to Job, Job realized that he cannot plead anything from his life to obtain justification and must only trust in God's grace to be right before Him: "Wherefore, in the deepest self-abasement and abhorrency, he [Job] betakes himself unto sovereign mercy" (ibid., 16). Owen's observations show that weven a person as upright and faithful as Job could not merit righteousness before God.

[92] Calvin references Job 4:17–20 and 15:14–15, both of which have a form of the "How can man be justified in God's sight?" question. He notes that "I confess, indeed, that in the book of Job reference is made to a righteousness of a more exalted description than the observance of the Law. It is of importance to attend to this distinction; for even could a man satisfy the Law, he could not stand the scrutiny of that righteousness which transcends all our thoughts. Hence, although Job was not conscious of offending, he is still dumb with astonishment, because he sees that God could not be appeased even by the sanctity of angels, were their works weight in that supreme balance" (Ibid., 493). See the additional discussions on Job 9:20 and 10:15, and man's depravity and inability to attain true righteousness in ibid., 496, 512).
Timothy Miller comments that Calvin believed in a "double-justice" of God whereby He could be just in punishing Job: God's revealed justice, which Job was faithful in; and His hidden justice, which not even the angels could stand before. See Timothy E. Miller, "Reformed Theodicy: Calvin's View of the Problem of Evil," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 10, no. 1 (January 2018): 128. Miller sees Calvin as grounding his theodicy in marveling at the mystery of God's providence yet submitting to revelation (ibid., 129–30).
Susan Schreiner makes the interesting argument that Calvin believed the concept of immortality resolved the meaning of the book of Job—that Job's friends did not have a concept of eschatological judgment and that Job believed God could judge in a time past this life, and that suffering is not always because of sin. See Susan E. Schreiner, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?: Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 91. Job arguably speaks to the concept of eschatological resurrection in Job 14:13–17 and 19:25–27.

[93] From a broadly Evangelical perspective, see Stephen G. Dempster, "'He Believed the Lord': The Pedigree of Justification in the Pentateuch," in *The Doctrine on Which the Church Stands or Falls: Justification in*

Charlies Ryrie has given one of the most insightful observations on justification in Job, observing that Job 9:2 stated the problem of mankind's justification before God correctly.[94] On the Reformed side, the defining question of Protestantism—noted by Matthew Barrett as "How can a person be right with God?"[95]—occurs in the Bible only in Job, where it is repeated three times.[96] And as argued above, the concept of a legal metaphor running through the book of Job, with justification-language as a forensic concept set within the metaphor, is observed even by Historical-critical scholars.[97]

Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Pastoral Perspective, ed. Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 55. Robert Yarbrough argues that Job 15:14–16 is arguably one of the passages Paul looked to, to form his convictions regarding the universality of human sinfulness. See Robert W. Yarbrough, "Paul and Salvation History," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, vol. 2 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 239, cf. 329n202.

Perhaps the most complete survey of righteousness and justification in the book of Job comes from a conference paper presented by William Barrick at the National ETS in 2010. See William D. Barrick, "Righteousness in Job: Concepts of Vindication and Justification" (ETS National Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 2010). Barrick argues that Job makes a significant contribution to the topics of righteousness, justice, and justification (ibid., 1). He then gives a chart that lists the occurrences of the verbal, noun, and substantival roots of צדק in the book of Job. From there, Barrick proceeds to survey where the צדק root occurs in the book of Job, where he, for the most part, summarizes what scholarship concludes on each occurrence (ibid.).

[94] See Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Moody Press, 1999), 344. Ryrie then frames the problem of mankind's justification before God resulting in three options for God: "He must condemn them, compromise His own righteousness to receive them as they are, or change them into righteous people. If He can exercise the third option, then He can announce them righteous, which is justification" (ibid.). *Biblical Doctrines* has a similar statement: "In justification, God provides the answer to mankind's most basic theological religious question: How can sinners come to be in a right relationship with the holy God of the universe?" See John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 609.

[95] See Matthew Barrett, ed., *The Doctrine on Which the Church Stands or Falls: Justification in Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Pastoral Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 20. For modern Reformed perspectives on justification in Job, see Michael Scott Horton, *Justification*, vol. 2, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 63; and J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 221. Thomas Schreiner approvingly cites Calvin's references to Job to argue that the book of Job teaches that mankind is inherently sinful and therefore cannot be justified by God (cf. Job 3:9; 4:18; 5:13; 9:5–6; and 25:5). See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification: What the Reformers Taught and Why It Still Matters*, 5 Solas Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 55. He discusses justification in Job further in ibid., 162–63.

[96] Job 4:17; 9:2; 25:4; cf. 15:14.

[97] See footnote 78 for further discussion on the legal metaphor in Job.

What this paper has done, then, merely builds upon the foundation of the interpretation of Job set by the early Church, Reformation-era theologians, and modern Evangelical and Reformed scholars, while "plundering the Egyptians" regarding the observations of Historical-critical scholars on the legal language in Job. Ironically, it is the man-made traditions of historical criticism and TIS (even if they are sometimes correct in certain observations) that have held back the book of Job from edifying the Church as much as it could.

Conclusion: LGH Hermeneutics and Faithfulness to God's Word

Regarding Job and justification, it is difficult to see if any theology of justification will ever come from a TIS approach to the book—because the Church has historically not often found a theology of justification within Job, and TIS proponents tend to go beyond the words of Scripture to draw their ultimate conclusions. However, God intended for a rich theology of justification to be read within Job's pages, and a LGH approach to Job is not only more faithful to God's Word, it draws the most profound theological conclusions by showing that a framework for the biblical doctrine of justification lies within the book. As Chou remarks, "…a grammatical-historical approach ensures that we have studied a text with the right emphasis, which in turn appropriately sets up for its connection with other texts and Christ."[98] While a TIS approach might make some correct observations of the Joban text, it is incapable of drawing the careful and precise conclusions that God intended for His Church to make. Moreover, because it creates pathways to Christ that do not exist, TIS actually limits the glory that Christ receives when His Word is properly interpreted.[99] By the merits of its fruits, TIS cannot honor Christ and His Word the way that LGH hermeneutics can, and thus, dispensationalists should reject TIS.

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[98] Chou, "A Hermeneutical Evaluation of the Christocentric Hermeneutic," 137.

[99] So also ibid., 113, 133–35.

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