Royal Runaways: A Theological Analysis of Love's Kenotic Power

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Royal Runaways:
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A dissertation presented

by

Ryan Gregg

to

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Abstract

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This study in biblical theology proceeds from a basic curiosity: why do the foundational literature of many religions, Jewish and Christian ones in particular, enshrine stories of highborn individuals who (for one reason or another) are alienated from their inherited context of privilege, endure prolonged seasons of suffering and obscurity, and eventually return to assume a mantle of leadership equal to or greater than the one to which they were entitled by birth? I think of these figures as "Royal Runaways," and in this dissertation ask what wisdom is conveyed through variations on their similarly-shaped biographies, and specifically, what such narratives communicate about the nature of (royal) power, self-sacrifice, and love. While such questions may be approached through a variety of disciplines and literatures—and this project is indeed interdisciplinary—I focus primarily on biblical and theological materials.

After an introductory chapter dealing with theoretical issues (narrative theory, myths and heroes, problematics of "authority," comparative and canonical reading, etc.), "Chapter 2: Mosaics of Israel" begins the exegetical core of the project by studying the biblical account of Moses' early life as an Egyptian prince and an exile in Midian, comparing it with a handful of ancient Near Eastern (Sargon) and Israelite (Adam, Joseph, David, etc.) parallels, as well as several Second Temple portraits of Moses (Philo, Josephus, the New Testament, Midrashim, etc.). The Royal Runaway pattern is observed of a privileged upbringing, subsequent rejection, prolonged exile, and eventual exaltation, leading to the conclusion that obedience and suffering are not at odds with the biblical model of royalty, but intrinsic to it.

"Chapter 3: A Runaway God? Christian Kenotic Theology and Its Narrative Sources in the Hebrew Bible" brings the foregoing exegesis into dialogue with the Carmen Christi of Philippians 2:6–11. This poetic account of Jesus emptying himself (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, the origin of the term *kenosis*), becoming obedient unto death, and eventually being exalted by God is shown to correspond typologically with several Royal Runaway narratives in the Hebrew Bible. While study of the Carmen typically focuses on its Adamic and Isaianic imagery, I argue that this is only the beginning of its intertextual matrix since the Hebrew Bible regularly showcases the humble, self-denying nature of royalty. The New Testament takes the innovative yet relatively simple step of transposing this insight into the identity of Israel's divine King.

"Chapter 4: From the Love of Power to the Power of Love" discusses the transition in the chapter's title, which on a Christian reading I take to be central to the narrative and theological appeal of the Royal Runaway paradigm. "Love" and "power" being huge and contested topics, I locate my discussion in the work of three thinkers, two Jewish and one Christian, exploring various ways that Royal Runaway stories frame love, power, and even God in terms of willing self-gift.

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Acknowledgments

A theological meditation on (self-)gifts and giving has made me keenly aware of how many gifts I have received—gifts of friendship and mentorship, resources and time. A few brief words here cannot begin to express my thanks.

Friends along the way have made learning a blast. At Northwest University, I think in particular of Burk Schaible, Garrick Allen, and Jonathan Yorkowitz, all now accomplished doctors in their own right (Medicine, Bible, Education). During years in Israel at Jerusalem University College and The Hebrew University, Jordan Brensinger, Bryan McInnis, Danny Povolotski, and Pavel Postovoit stand out in memory as compatriots in hiking, poetry, and all-things-curiosity. In masters work at Harvard Divinity School, after-hours conversations with Erez DeGolan, Joseph Porter, Allen Wilson, Jahdiel Perez, and Aditya Pai were alone worth the price of admission. And in doctoral work in the Committee on the Study of Religion, Joe Kimmel, Norbert Litoing, Scott Rice, Michael Ennis, Will Tamplin, Kathryn Mogk, Monica Farid, David Wozniak, Jackson Bednar, four Daniels (Ang, Haehn, Sutton, Sobelman), and the whole crew in the Harvard Graduate Christian Community, were cherished friends. The word "school" derives from the Greek term for "luxury," and having such companions along the way has certainly made learning that.

Each phase also included important teachers and mentors who steered the learning process and spared me from careening off more than one cliff. At Northwest University I think in particular of Ron Herms and Joseph Castleberry, both of whom continue to be good friends. In Jerusalem, I cannot express enough thanks to Jonathan Miles at Shevet Achim, whose mode of life remains a compass for me. Also Yousif Shami, my older brother. During masters work I learned much from Michael Himes (of Boston College), David Lamberth, Michelle Sanchez, and Charles Stang, while during the PhD, Eric Leibowitz prevented me from contracting Permanent Head Damage, an independent study with N. T. Wright helped me appreciate early Christianity's creative hermeneutical dialogue with the Hebrew Bible as well as the sinuous history of modern New Testament interpretation, and Brent Sockness was a welcoming faculty sponsor during my dissertation year at Stanford. That such people have taken time to invest in me is really an embarrassment of riches.

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Miroslav Volf wrote a recommendation on my behalf to Yale, then was kind enough to make space in his schedule for a student who stayed at a rival school. During several bus trips to New Haven and back, new theological horizons opened up for me, as well as ways of marrying complex ideas with language that is accessible, persuasive, and even sings—within and beyond the church. At many points along the way I appeared in Prof. Volf's inbox asking for help, and he was always kind to give it. In my general examinations, he was the one examiner joining by Zoom, and in my dissertation defense, the one faculty outside Harvard. For such generous encouragement and engagement from afar I am very grateful.

From the first time I spoke with Andy Teeter (at the urging of Charlie Stang), I knew this was someone who didn't just know the Hebrew Bible, but *felt* the language and literature of ancient Israel in a way I also wanted to learn. I'm sure I have not accomplished that, but through several years of Prof. Teeter's lecture courses, seminars, then working alongside him as a teaching fellow, I experienced something of a hermeneutical revolution. In particular, his work in the aspectival and analogical nature of Israel's literary art not only showed a way through many historical-critical quandaries, but also the broader impasse between modern and post-modern ways of knowing. Many insights in this project, and the way of reading animating the whole, I owe to Prof. Teeter.

For my Abba and Imma,
Who taught me to love the Bible
And its self-giving God.

Abbreviations

HALOT – The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament

HOLLIS – Harvard Online Library Information System

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

וְאַתֶּ֕ם חֲשַׁבְתֶּ֥ם עָלַ֖י רָעָ֑ה אֱלֹהִים֙ חֲשָׁבָ֣הּ לְטֹבָ֔ה לְמַ֗עַן עֲשֹׂ֛ה כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּ֖ה לְהַחֲיֹ֥ת עַם־רָֽב

Genesis 50:20

Chapter One – Introduction to Royal Runaways

1. Introductory Matters

Definition of the Problem: "Royal Runaways" and Questions of Authority, Suffering, and Love

This dissertation proceeds from a basic curiosity: why do the foundational literatures of many religions, and of the Jewish and Christian ones in particular, enshrine stories of highborn individuals who for one reason or another are alienated from their inherited context of privilege, endure prolonged seasons of suffering and obscurity, and eventually return (either geographically or metaphorically) to assume a mantle of leadership equal to or greater than the one to which they were entitled by birth? I call these individuals "Royal Runaways," and wish to ask what wisdom—theological, sociological, psychological, or otherwise—might be conveyed via the manifold and culturally particular variations of their biographical trajectory.[1] Given that such narratives almost uniformly date to eras preceding the dissolution of monarchical governments in recent centuries,[2] what sorts of assumptions might these revered stories be making (or rejecting) in their historical

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[1] "Running away," in the common use of the phrase, may suggest a willful departure, but not necessarily. The distinction between voluntary—even determined—departure and forcible expulsion is important, often coloring the atmosphere of a hero or heroine's journey and influencing the meaning it carries. However, although the term "runaway" may imply the willing sort of departure, I use the term more broadly, inclusive of both. The basic movement I wish to highlight is: for some reason or another, a prince or princess leaves their privileged "palace" and becomes submerged in the hardships of ordinary people, even leading the life of an outlaw. Without generalizing so widely that the category loses all meaning, an elaborate taxonomy of Royal Runaways, with multiple sub-types within the wider type, is also not my aim (see discussion on Comparative Analysis below for why I regard typological analysis, out of favor in some circles, as legitimate and necessary; see also Dale Alison's nuanced position on typology vis-à-vis historicity, reviewed in the conclusion of Chapter 2). Close attention to differences, however, will figure strongly in my assessment of biblical characters, which constitutes the core of the project. Regarding such characters, the "royalty" of people like Jacob and Joseph is related to the (failed) royal identity and mission of Adam as construed in Genesis 2–3, upon which most scholars agree, and also anticipates the royal identity of the covenant people Israel, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph (Exodus 19:6, etc.). All this will be developed at much length in Chapters 2 and 3.

[2] See "The Fading Nimbus: Modern Kingship and Its Fate in a Disenchanted World." In Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 132–57.

contexts about the nature, legitimacy, and desirability of royalty as a concept and/or an institution? Why is solidarity with the travails of commoners often part of the story, and why does the protagonist's suffering—often right up to the verge of death, saved at the last possible moment—regularly rebound to a subsequent role of authority?

A complex set of issues is at work here, feasibly approached by a variety of disciplines such as philosophy, literary criticism, anthropology, sociology, or multiple streams of psychology. Drawing on insights from these and other methods—with the attendant risks of interdisciplinary study[3]—the inquiry will be rendered manageable through focus on primarily biblical[4] and theological materials, combining textual exegesis (of texts which are often already exegetical in nature) with consideration of subsequent contexts of reflection. "Scripture and Tradition," in other words, will broadly constitute the analytical parameters of this dissertation, although the boundary between the two—not to say their respective definitions—is manifestly porous and blurred.[5] In dialogue with these materials I wish to ask (deepening the questions of the prior paragraph): what is the role of such a recurrent narrative pattern in the self-conception of the ancient Israelites who

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[3] I.e. too broad; too many notes; multi-modal argument and style; etc. Being a dissertation, though, and not exactly a "book" for an audience, I hope a) to engage thoughtfully with potential disconfirmations to my thesis, many of which are not properly theological or biblical; and b) to acknowledge the many scholars whose work contributes to the thesis, allowing my own work in the future to select from a range of helpful existing assessments.

[4] The canonical Hebrew Bible and Christian New Testament, with forays into their contemporaneous literatures for comparative purposes. Brevard Childs' theory of canon informs this decision; Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 46–106. See discussion of Childs below, pp. 35–8.

[5] See the discussion in Jon D. Levenson, "The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism," in *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 1–32. "At the point when scripture is shown to be the product of tradition, it surely becomes more difficult to assert the sovereignty of the scripture *over* the tradition, as the Reformation generally sought to do," 24. Still, while recognizing the traditionary nature of biblical literature, the relationship between scripture and tradition must be one of dialectic rather than identity, since traditions seem to retain sacred texts precisely in order to disagree with and refine the tradition itself. This theoretical matter, which in fact drives at the heart of the difference in historical hermeneutics between Catholic and Protestant traditions (cf. the analogy of Rabbinic and Karaite Judaism), will not figure strongly in this project.

told stories like those of Joseph, Moses, and David, along with those groups in Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism who wrote and expanded on them in multiple ways? And how does such biographically-inflected theology in the Hebrew Bible illuminate the New Testament's claim (most famously in Philippians 2 and its imagery of Jesus' kenosis, or self-emptying) that such a story of alienation is, in fact, central to the identity of Israel's covenant God? Does this imply that for the Bible's divine and loving King,[6] releasing power is somehow an embodiment or redefinition of power?

These and related questions will be developed in a four chapter study. The second and third chapters (the core of the project) will be largely exegetical, leading to a fourth chapter that seeks to provide theological perspective on the above questions. The present, introductory chapter, however, will offer a methodological overview of various issues in the background of the entire study: vexed debates about the nature of authority, suffering, and love; the medium of narrative and how it influences moral reasoning; the complex relation between comparative analysis in general and Christian theology in particular; examples of extra-biblical Royal Runaways, and how these and other "mythic heroes" have been understood by theorists. Necessarily brief and often pointing schematically in footnotes to more developed conversations, the purpose of this chapter is to show how these issues bear on a study of Royal Runaways, biblical or otherwise, and to give a sense of the scholars and paradigms on which I will be leaning (often implicitly). I will not be forwarding here any theories of my own, nor is my intention to gloss over complex issues and thinkers. Rather, the goal of this first chapter is to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that has already been done on the issues this study raises, and to situate the indebtedness of my own targeted thesis. At

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[6] See Jon D. Levenson, *The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

the end of this chapter is a more detailed outline of the argument as it will develop in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Authority – The first consideration is the matter of authority. *Royal* Runaways, regardless of the cultural context in which their lives transpired and are still rehearsed, tend to be individuals of privilege and power; i.e., of authority. Unmasking authoritarian[7] figures is often *de rigueur* in a study like this, and, attempting to give a synoptic sense of where such a convention comes from, Norwegian anthropologists Thomas Eriksen and Finn Nielsen chronicle the momentous changes in the academy of the 1970s thematizing around a comprehensive rejection of traditional authority structures: male authority rejected by multiple streams of feminist scholarship and activism; family authority by the sexual revolution; capitalist authority by Marxist analyses; colonial authority by ethnic studies and reflexive fieldwork; religious and theological authority by practice theory and various ethnographic methods; sociobiological and evolutionary modes of thought by research on ways the body is a locus of discursive power, culturally constructed gender codes, and a transgressive imperative.[8] These are enormously complex matters, and developments vary on a case by case

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[7] According to Frank Furedi, a sociologist with the curious reputation of being an authority on authority (Frank Furedi, *Authority: A Sociological History* [Cambridge University Press, 2013]), since the 1940s and 1950s the terms *authority* and *authoritarian* have been used interchangeably, reflecting a consensus of distrust in authority as such. "One influential text published in 1941 by psychologist Erich Fromm—*Escape from Freedom*—was devoted to the study of this malaise [of obeying authority]. Fromm asserted that acceptance of moral authority was the result of a 'psychological mechanism of escape' based on a 'simultaneous love for authority and the hatred against those who are powerless.' Such attitudes were supposedly typical traits of the 'authoritarian character.'" Frank Furedi, "The Diseasing of Judgment: Frank Furedi chronicles the unraveling of moral authority," *First Things*, no. 309 (January 2021): 32. See further note 9 below.

[8] Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Finn Sievert Nielsen, "Questioning Authority," in *A History of Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 138–165. Cf. Tom Wolfe's, "The Great Relearning," which, among other social transformations of the twentieth century, assesses the modernist architectural movements Bauhaus and Brutalism, with their iconoclastic, eclectically defiant stance toward architectural tradition. Tom Wolfe, "The Great Relearning." *The American Spectator*, vol. 20, no. 12, December 1987, 14–15.

basis. On Ericksen and Nielsen's telling, however, such changes are broadly traceable to the ten years following 1968; what unites them is the shared concern to question authority as an intellectually and ethically responsible act.[9] "Power," according to one influential exponent, is simply the "central problem."[10]

Yet if these developments signal a new direction in academic research, they are also in step with earlier impulses of the Enlightenment. Immanuel Kant, for example, in his well-known 1784 essay "What is Enlightenment?", locates his answer to the title's question within the determination to resist infantilizing guidance from others. His argument begins: "*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity* is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of others. This immaturity is *self-incurred* if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* [Dare to be wise!] Have courage to use your *own* understanding!"[11] External influence, then (which Kant elsewhere terms heteronomy, literally "the law of the other," as opposed to autonomy[12]), ought to be resisted. Later in the essay, along with

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[9] Other ways of narrating this transition abound, and will be encountered below. Regarding dates, Furedi argues for an origin of antiauthoritarian trends between the World Wars, and also chronicles the concomitant disfavor into which the notion of *obedience* fell: "Between the years 1924 and 1978, polling revealed a marked decline in the valuation of obedience to family and church and an increase in the affirmation of individual independence […] By the time Stanley Milgram published his classic polemic against authority, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* in 1974, the idea that obedience was a dangerous and dysfunctional form of behavior enjoyed considerable cultural support." (Furedi, "The Diseasing of Judgment," 34.) Obedience qua obedience, a topic that will be important for this study, is thus viewed by many as retrograde at best and pathologically dangerous at worst. Yet Furedi's account offers a caution to a project of this nature about the dangers of implicit and anachronistic biases in the study of bygone worlds.

[10] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, (New York: Vintage, 1980), 113.

[11] Immanuel Kant, *Kant: Political Writings* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 54. Italics original.

[12] See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:440–4:445; in *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 89–93.

identifying religion as a particular threat to enlightenment,[13] Kant takes the step of identifying the "progress" of dislodging prior understanding with the "destiny" of humanity: "One age cannot enter into an alliance on oath to put the next age in a position where it would be impossible for it to extend and correct its knowledge […] or to make any progress whatsoever in enlightenment. This would be a crime against human nature, whose original destiny lies precisely in such progress."[14]

Discounting, then, neither the intellectual revolutions of some fifty years ago, nor momentous developments since, the roots of these changes are seen to reach back nearly two centuries prior into the soil of the Enlightenment, and even earlier.[15] Relevant for the present study is simply noting at the outset a widespread, historic discomfort in scholarship with claims of authority, and hence acknowledgement that this aspect of the dissertation touches on a matter about which dissent has become something of its own tradition. Indeed, Royal Runaways typology might be read prima facie as corroborating suspicion of claims of inherited authority (these figures do, after all, reject the palace), or conversely as propaganda designed precisely to legitimate such claims (individuals of power advertising their pseudo-solidarity with the marginalized). Either way, troubling notions of power and authority is assumed to be central, and there is something important to this reading.[16]

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[13] "[R]eligious immaturity is the most pernicious and dishonourable variety of all"; Kant, *Political Writings*, 59. Note that Kant's stance toward religion and divinity is complex as it unfolds across his three critiques (Pure Reason, 1781, 1787; Practical Reason, 1788; Power of Judgment, 1790) and in particular his 1793 title *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason*.

[14] Ibid, 57.

[15] Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Ma., Harvard University Press, 1989) traces the legacy of "inwardness" from Augustine of Hippo forward, a line that runs to and through Kant. The history of ideas here, to say the least, is complex and contestable.

[16] The Bible itself makes a contribution here, as is well known. Addressing the fate of monarchies in the modern world, Francis Oakley writes: "To recognize in the ancient and ubiquitous pattern of sacral kingship a politics of enchantment is, I believe, unexceptionable enough. Nor, at lease since Max Weber's great studies in comparative, historical sociology, should the identification of a *religious* source – Old Testament Yahwism and New Testament Christianity,

Yet any uniform rejection of authority is complicated by Hans-Georg Gadamer in his hermeneutical study *Truth and Method*. For Gadamer, whose larger project is to rehabilitate the legitimacy of tradition by calling into question the Enlightenment's prejudice against prejudice itself[17] as well as Romanticism's reactionary valorization of all things old, the exercise of authority need not imply the cancelling out of someone else's autonomous rationality, but perhaps just the opposite. He writes:

> The authority of persons is ultimately not based on the subjection and abdication of reason but on an act of acknowledgment and knowledge—the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment takes precedence—i.e., it has priority over one's own. This is connected with the fact that authority cannot actually be bestowed but is earned, and must be earned if someone is to lay claim to it. It rests on acknowledgement and hence on an act of reason itself which, aware of its own limitations, trusts to the better insight of others. Authority in this sense, properly understood, has nothing to do with blind obedience to commands. Indeed, authority has to do not with obedience but rather with knowledge.[18]

While thus arguing that authority and free rationality need not be opposed, but are linked together by trust, Gadamer significantly observes that authority "cannot actually be bestowed but is earned, and must be earned…" In this way he both condones the Enlightenment's suspicion of claims to

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perhaps especially in its Calvinist variant – as the wellspring of the 'disenchantment of the world' be the occasion of much surprise. [… W]e must probe deeper and seek the ultimate wellsprings of change in the complex intersection in the late medieval and early modern world of an array of long-term developments, the most fundamental among them stemming from the destabilizing novelty of the Hebraic religious vision itself." Francis Oakley, *Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 132–33. Cf. Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Yoram Hazony, "The Jewish Origins of the Western Disobedience Tradition," *Azure: Ideas for the Jewish Nation*, no. 4 (1998): 17–74.

[17] He uses the term in its technical sense of pre-judgment, that is, operative understanding of the way the world works. See the exchange between Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas: Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*," in Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 213–44; Gadamer, "Reply to My Critics," ibid, 273–297. The concern over power latent within tradition as expressed by Habermas and other members of the Frankfurt School is generally thought to have won the day, hence the relative obscurity of Gadamer today.

[18] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2004), 281.

inherited authority, while also gesturing toward the feature of Royal Runaways that intrigues me most: the *hard-earned* wisdom of these figures. Later in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer comments on the theme of "learning through suffering" as developed by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus:

> This phrase does not mean only that we become wise through suffering and that our knowledge of things must first be corrected through deception and undeception. Understood in this way, the formula is probably as old as human experience itself. But Aeschylus means more than this. He refers to the reason why this is so. What a man has to learn through suffering is not this or that particular thing, but insight into the limitations of humanity, into the absoluteness of the barrier that separates man from the divine. It is ultimately a religious insight—the kind of insight that gave birth to Greek tragedy.[19]

This "religious insight" learned along the hard road of suffering is among the reasons that theology (in both descriptive and prescriptive mode, both of which will be used in this study) is an appropriate tool for studying Royal Runaway stories; finitude as such comes under scrutiny, and solutions relying exclusively on finite points of reference only beg the question afresh. Yet at a more general level, the contribution of Hans-Georg Gadamer to this project is an alternative paradigm in which authority qua authority is not inherently suspect. Rather, it is earned through testing, and retained through trust. On this view, a Royal Runaway's departure from the palace is neither a straightforward rejection of privilege nor a subterfuge of phony alienation, but a stage on the road circling through a wilderness latent with wisdom and eventually returning to the acceptance of legitimate authority. The person, therefore, viewed as a touchstone of human knowledge is paradoxically the one most deeply aware of the limitations of the human situation.

Biblical literature, for its part, certainly takes a nuanced, even ambiguous view to the matter of human authority (see n. 15 above). For example, in *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible*, Jon D. Levenson contrasts the biblical institutions of suzerainty and sovereignty, the former

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[19] Gadamer, 351.

anchoring the covenant between God (the suzerain, or high king) and Israel (the vassal king), while the latter is construed in some "anti-monarchical" biblical texts as a concession in the wake of covenant failure. Levenson writes: "[…] the covenantal institution undermines the basis for politics. Hence, in some biblical texts, the institution of human kingship, which lay at the very center of the religions of many other ancient peoples, was denounced as an act of treachery against God."[20] More particularly, in coordinating his study around the two mountains looming high above the theological geography of the Hebrew Bible, Levenson sees Sinai as a fundamental critique of governmental authority: "Sinai serves as an eternal rebuke to man's arrogant belief that he can govern himself. The state is not coeval with God. Rather, it was born at a particular moment in history and under the judgment of a disappointed God. In a better world, one in which man turns to God with all his heart, it would not exist. […] It is of the utmost significance that the Torah, the law of the theo-polity, was, for all its diversity, always ascribed to Moses and not to David, to the humble mediator of covenant and not to the regal founder of the dynastic state."[21] Whereas, then, in contemporary study the Bible is often viewed as an instrument of empire and violence,[22] as it surely was in certain historical contexts after the biblical era, the biblical material itself is far more textured in its attitude toward human authority, regarding it as something of a necessary evil, neither fully good nor bad.[23] This is yet another reason, then, that grounding an inquiry into Royal

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[20] Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 73.

[21] Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 74–75.

[22] Many scholars who view the Bible through this lens, however, are also keen to point out its originally anti-imperial dimensions. For what strikes me as a balanced view, see: *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica (Downers Grove, IL., InterVarsity Press, 2013).

[23] The historically influential political philosophy of St. Augustine takes its departure from precisely this ambiguity, the Earthly City simultaneously authorized and relativized by the Heavenly City. See Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Runaways within biblical literature suggests itself as a fruitful enterprise, since figures such as Moses and David (both of whom underwent prolonged seasons of suffering prior to investiture with authority) are neither sanitized hagiographies nor pure critiques. The reality seems to occupy a more opaque middle, and this dissertation will thus proceed along loosely Gadamerian lines, attuned to the multiform distortions of authority and power while also refraining from a straight-forward hermeneutic of suspicion.[24]

Suffering – Hard luck is an inevitable feature of Royal Runaway stories.[25] To cite just one example: William Propp, following 20th century Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp (no relation), identifies multiple heroic typologies in the biblical story of Moses, including one he calls "The Disillusioned Prince." Moses, who escapes Pharaoh's decree of infanticide only to be raised in the palace of his would-be murderer, eventually leaves the palace to witness the suffering of his en-slaved Hebrew relations, thus setting in motion a journey that will lead him to the burning bush in the desert, the ten plagues on Egypt, the parting of the sea, and the revelation of God at Mount Sinai. The personal cost for Moses through this story is high. Yet the cost has a reward. Propp

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[24] Cf. the perceptive study of Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015). "[W]e think of critique as emanating from below, as a blow against authority rather than the exercise of authority. In his essay 'What Is Critique?" Foucault draws out this association of critique with the struggle against subjugation. The critical attitude, he argues, arises as a response to new forms of regulation that emerge in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while also connecting back to the religious attitudes and spiritual struggles of the Middle Ages. It is an expression of the desire not to be governed, or at least not to be governed quite so much. Critique is iconoclastic in spirit; it rails against authority; it seeks to lay bare the injustices of the law. It assumes an emphatically political as well as moral weight. It is the 'art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability.'" Felski, 140. Yet the assumptions of such reflexive suspicions are themselves suspect: "There is a political epistemology built into the idea of critique: a conviction that those at odds with the status quo see better and farther than others. [...] Why, in short, are we so sure that we know more than the texts that precede us? [... A] prevailing ethos encourages scholars to impute hidden causes and unconscious motives to the arguments of others while exempting themselves from the same charge: 'I speak truth to power, while you are a pawn of neoliberal interests!' [...] The elaboration of an alternative framework will take its inspiration from Latour's observation that 'emancipation does not mean 'freed from bonds,' but *well-*attached.'" Felski, 141, 159, 186, 146. Italics original.

[25] Really, of most stories. For a story to be a story, some problem must be solved, some risk overcome, etc.

observes that it "seems to adapt a common folkloric pattern: a naïve prince ventures outside the palace to witness the common life and is permanently transformed."[26] Through great struggle and hardship, Moses becomes a new man. Moreover, according to rabbinic midrashim (to be studied in Chapter 2), Moses does more than merely *witness* the common life; he *participates* in the suffering of his brethren. The prince endures the agony of brickwork in the mud, exposed to the savagery of an Egyptian lash, before undergoing the more radical displacement of exile in Midian. Such *passio*, it seems to me, is of the essence of Royal Runaway narratives: naïveté, and often arrogance too, must be remedied and transposed into wisdom via the unprivileged crucible of pain.

Providing theoretical footing to this template of maturation, Propp identifies its source in historical rites of passage: "In the archetypical (male) initiation, the candidate withdraws from society to undergo a harrowing, transforming experience. His near-death and quasi-rebirth bind him to the gods, on the one hand, and to society, on the other, both vertically (to the ancestors) and horizontally (to adult contemporaries)."[27] In the case of Moses, about whom there will be much more to say in the coming pages, withdrawal from one society entails the joining of another. In fact, in the narrative of Exodus 2–3 Moses traverses several echelons of society, first leaving his Hebrew kindred to join the Egyptian elite; then leaving the elite to rejoin his enslaved relations; then fleeing those relations to join a tribe in the desert; and finally, Moses finds himself alone tending borrowed sheep in the desert, a personal nadir where God commissions him to a special mission. The withdrawal and transformation paradigm is easily discernible here.

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[26] William H. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York. NY.: Doubleday, 1999), 165. Immediately he notes a famous parallel: "We especially recall Siddhartha, who like Moses leaves his royal estate to view human misery and subsequently undergoes a spiritual transformation." Ibid.

[27] Propp, 35.

Significantly, Propp notes that the Exodus of the Israelites as a nation also follows the rigorous arc of a rite of passage: near-death in the waters of the Red Sea, intensive testing in the desert, and a rebirth into the Promised Land, again through waters.[28] This typological mapping of an individual (Moses) with a society (Israel) is an important analytical connection, as it suggests that a people whose sacred literature tells and retells stories in the general shape of Royal Runaways perhaps sees itself in the collective as having undergone a similar itinerary, and hence as bearing the same identity. Levenson draws this conclusion explicitly in *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*: "The story of the humiliation and exaltation of the beloved son reverberates throughout the Bible because it is the story of the people about whom and to whom it is told."[29] Such a comment is not to be read as undermining any claim to historicity behind the lives of biblical Royal Runaways, but as noting how the pattern scales both up to the aggregate and down to the monad, and hence functions as a powerful vehicle for shaping and expressing collective and personal identity. Arguably a primary impetus behind the composition, collection, and preservation of such stories is the need to perceive sense and purpose within the experience of suffering. The national literature of a much-oppressed people such as the ancient Israelites, holding tenuously to a narrow strip of land chronically lusted after by riverine empires on both their flanks, is a natural place to encounter well-curated and foundational stories of ancestors whose abuse, failures, and suffering served a purpose within a larger plan. Said simply, *suffering does work* in biblical Royal Runaway stories, and I am interested to understand what that work is.

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 67.

Love – Perhaps even more than *authority* and *suffering*, the concept of *love* is so notoriously diffuse and embattled, so multiform and variously construed, that avoidance of the topic altogether suggests itself as the prudent course of action. And that is precisely what this dissertation will more or less do for three chapters of theoretical and exegetical groundwork. Yet sidestepping love altogether would be strange for a dissertation in biblical theology, since the love of the God of Israel is a—arguably even *the*—weight-bearing beam in the Bible's theological superstructure. Hence, in this dissertation's conclusion I will briefly argue that love is not peripheral but central to what transpires in biblical Royal Runaway stories, an achievement of self-actualization *as* self-forgetfulness and *as* self-gift that enables creative, dedicated service to humanity and God.

Without getting ahead of the analysis and argument, however, while still giving some sense of the direction of the study, it is worth bearing in mind from the outset that the Christian theological tradition has often linked love with authority. In *The City of God*, Augustine's discussion of responsible government includes the counter-intuitive insight that "those who give orders are the servants of those whom they appear to command. For they do not give orders because of a lust for domination, but from a dutiful concern for the interest of others, not with pride in taking precedence over others, but with compassion in taking care of others."[30] While the word "love" does not appear in this passage, the concept is clearly activated, and underpins the concept of authority. The interaction between love and authority, then, is simply that love is the basis of authority. Although things frequently materialize otherwise, a complication to which the North African bishop with a background in the Roman imperial court is by no means blind, the motivational structure of genuine authority is not to harm but to help. The one who loves is at liberty to lead.

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[30] Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, XIX.14, trans. Henry Bettenson, (London; New York: Penguin Classics, 2004), 874.

In more recent theology, Oxford ethicist Oliver O'Donovan develops this Augustinian insight in his *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*. In the following passage, O'Donovan locates the dependence of authority on love within an ontological frame:

> Love is the overall shape of Christian ethics, the form of the human participation in created order. It is itself ordered and shaped in accordance with the order that it discovers in its object, and this ordering of love is the task of substantive Christian ethics to trace. [… Christ's] authority over nature and his salvific concern for the true being of nature go together inseparably. And so it is that as man is given by the Spirit to share Christ's authority, he cannot do so without love, both for the created order in general and for the particular beings, human and other, which stand within it in various problematic relationships. Love does not bear the dominating and manipulative traits that have been given to it in some attempts to characterize the Christian ethic. It achieves its creativity by being perceptive. It attempt to act *for* any being only on the basis of an appreciation *of* that being. Thus classical Christian descriptions of love are often found invoking two other terms which expound its sense: the first is 'wisdom', which is the intellectual apprehension of the order of things which discloses how each being stands in relation to each other; the second is 'delight', which is affective attention to something simply for *what* it is and the fact *that* it is.[31]

As with Augustine's statements some sixteen centuries prior, O'Donovan argues that the warrant of authority is love, and accordingly that its aim is to help beings more fully be what they already are. This authority-love nexus, however, is not itself generative but responsive to a deeper ontological reality,[32] and such an intimately mimetic relationship between love and reality itself will hardly strike a reader of the Bible as overblown, especially if the concept of love is grounded in its covenantal origins in the Hebrew Bible. Hence, the final chapter of this project will query the role of YHWH's death-inverting love and power within the form and function of Royal Runaway stories, be they about a person, a people, or even a god.

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[31] Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 25–26.

[32] Which, for O'Donovan, ultimately hinges on resurrection; cf. Augustine's robust ontology of love in *De Trinitate*.

The Medium of Narrative and the Transitional Structure of Moral Reasoning

Authority, suffering, and love, freighted concepts though they are, in an important sense remain second-order abstractions from first-order, lived realities, and this is why the primary object of analysis in this dissertation will be narrative: the *stories* of Royal Runaways. Such a methodological orientation has become standard in recent decades, as scholars across a range of fields have keyed in on narrative as a primary datum in human experience—that is, as the framework organizing and rendering intelligible all other data. A vast literature exists on the topic, and in this section I will briefly highlight a handful of influential contributions to narrative theory, mindful that one major attraction of the turn to narrative is precisely its potential to transcend disciplinary boundaries. Afterwards, I will linger a moment longer with one scholar whose insights into the moral potential of narrative are particularly relevant to the interests of this dissertation, Charles Taylor.

Social Sciences – The 2011 publication of Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*[33] brought together the findings of a long career that merited a 2002 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. The paradigm shift, to use a Kuhnian phrase, brought about by Kahneman's psychological work (often classed as behavioral economics) was to undermine a long held assumption in economic theory that humans are rational creatures who make reliably self-interested choices. As it turns out, we humans—even, and sometimes especially, highly-educated humans—are less rational than we wish to think. On Kahneman's telling, the brain operates via two interlinked systems, which he calls System 1 and System 2: the former is fast and instinctive, yet uses unreliable

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[33] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

heuristics, while the latter is slow and calculating, but often lazy.[34] Both systems continuously generate narrative (i.e., causally sequential) explanations of problems and situations, a reality Kahneman exploits by introducing these systems to the reader as "The Characters of the Story"; apparently the storytelling mind sees itself most lucidly in a mirror of story.[35] Importantly, this narratival lens of human rationality is not limited to quotidian operations, but scales all the way up to the global evaluation of one's life. In the chapters "Two Selves" and "Life as a Story," Kahneman distinguishes between what he calls the *experiencing self* and the *remembering self*, drawing out the narrative implications of this interior bifurcation:

> …a conflict of interest between two selves (which do *not* correspond to the two familiar systems [System 1 and System 2]). The *experiencing self* is the one that answers the question: "Does it hurt now?" The *remembering self* is the one that answers the question: "How was it, on the whole?" Memories are all we get to keep from our experience of living […] We cannot fully trust our preferences to reflect our interests, even if they are based on personal experience, and even if the memory of that experience was laid down within the last quarter of an hour! Tastes and decisions are shaped by memories, and the memories can be wrong. […] A story is about significant events and memorable moments, not about time passing. Duration neglect is normal in a story,[36] and the ending often defines its character. The same core features appear in the rules of narratives and in the memories of colonoscopies, vacations, and films. This is how the remembering self works: it composes stories and keeps them for future reference. […] Odd as it may seem, I am my remembering self, and the experiencing self, who does my living, is like a stranger to me.[37]

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[34] Note that these two "systems" do not correlate with physical regions of the brain; in more disciplinary nomenclature, Kahneman's work is not in neural but cognitive psychology, this latter subfield often employing computational metaphors such as "indices," "labels," "calculation," etc.

[35] "You may well ask: What is the point of introducing fictitious characters with ugly names into a serious book? The answer is that the characters are useful because of some quirks of our minds, yours and mine. A sentence is understood more easily if it describes what an agent (System 2) does than if it describes what something is, what properties it has. In other words, 'System 2' is a better subject for a sentence than 'mental arithmetic.' The mind—especially System 1—appears to have a special aptitude for the construction and interpretation of stories about active agents, who have personalities, habits, and abilities." Kahneman, 29.

[36] Cf. the tendency of biblical narrative to bypass without comment large segments of time.

[37] Kahneman, 381–390.

The claims made here by Kahneman are, of course, substantiated by rigorously empirical experimentation,[38] and their significance for a dissertation such as this is the confirmation they provide of how fundamentally "storied" human consciousness is.[39] The findings that revolutionized economic sciences with a different model of human knowing and deciding have implications well beyond mere dollars and cents.

And this is only the beginning of narrative's influence in the social sciences. For example, a great deal of interdisciplinary research is gathered in the edited volume *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, in which Kahneman is often cited (along with his late collaborator Amos Tversky). One essay in particular, "The Pervasive Role of Stories in Knowledge and Action," outlines the purposive, didactic, selective nature of human storytelling, and develops the notion that "the strongest stories are those in which listeners can see themselves as the hero."[40]

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[38] Much of which I encountered in coursework, along with other psychological paradigms: PSY 1575 How Hidden Incentives Shape the Mind: The Origins of Our Beliefs and Ideologies. Fall 2017, Bethany Burum instructing.

[39] This should be balanced, however, with appreciation of the intrinsically associative, analogical features of consciousness, the dynamics of apperception, etc.; or to use an analogy, pattern recognition and (often biased) confirmation are also at psychological "bedrock," as will be seen below in the section on comparative analysis. Thus, literature such as the Hebrew Bible that invests enormous compositional and exegetical attention in *comparing stories* effectively engages both the narrative and associative dimensions of human psychology. See D. Andrew Teeter, "Biblical Symmetry and its Modern Detractors," in C. Maier, G. Macaskill, J. Schaper (eds.), *IOSOT Congress Volume: Aberdeen* (VTSup; Leiden: Brill, 2020). For a phenomenological account of what it means to read such texts, see Alexander Samely's discussion on reading and consciousness in "Jewish Studies and Reading," in Constanza Cordoni and Gerhard Langer, *Let the Wise Listen and Add to Their Learning: Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016], 771–775. Contra constructivist accounts of human consciousness, Samely argues that the reading subject can and often does precede society in the production of meaning, an argument dovetailing with hesitations expressed above regarding the explanatory adequacy of power relations.

[40] Roger C. Shank and Tamara R. Berman, "The Pervasive Role of Stories in Knowledge and Action," in Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock, *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations* (Mahwah, NJ.: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), 287–313; quote on 308. This connection between the medium of narrative as such and empathic identification with a story's hero is suggestive of the historical tenacity of Royal Runaways typology; these are not generic stories, but something like "hero" stories (a concept to be assessed in the next section).

Also of interest in this article is a section under the heading "How We Learn From Stories," which responds to the more fundamental question "What Is Learning?" Shank and Berman write: "As we experience life, we form increasingly complex memory structures that explain how the world works. […] Our memory structures are experience-based, or 'case-based' which means, in essence, that they are story-based. We may modify the structures because of our own new experiences or because of stories we are told. In either case, we make modifications to our memory structures when we have expectation failures, and the modifications are related to our accepted explanations for the

Relatedly, in the arena of moral psychology, Jonathan Haidt's *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided By Politics and Religion* relies heavily on narrative explanations for the fiercely tribal behavior of contemporary society, recasting Kahneman's System 1 and System 2 in the metaphors of "the intuitive dog and the rational tail" and "the elephant and its rider" in order emphatically to drive home just how little the conscious mind contributes to stated beliefs, both for individuals and also for groups.[41] Leveraging such social realities, narrative is heavily emphasized in the education of future policy leaders, as in the writing and teaching of Harvard Kennedy School's Marshall Ganz: "Why Stories Matter: The Art and Craft of Social Change,"[42] "Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power,"[43] etc. Narrative is also retrospectively determinative for cultural memory, spanning a political spectrum of history-telling.[44] In sum: a broad consensus of

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failures. It is the modification of our memory structures, our mental representations, that constitutes learning." *Narrative Impact*, 301–302. Germane to the theoretical interest of this project is the suggestion that learning itself requires some sort of failure—in this case, an "expectation failure." As the brain habitually modifies and clarifies its inner map of an endlessly complex external world, some small humiliation is required, a frustration of assumptions or perception of lacunae. Not to overstate the matter, the inner logic of learning itself seems to be kenotic, in the sense of a willing recognition of the "emptiness" or inadequacy of one's present conceptions. Compare, by way of corroboration, Meir Sternberg's discussion of strategic literary "gaps" in the Hebrew Bible that elicit future-oriented suspense and past-oriented curiosity (Meir Sternberg, "Temporal Discontinuity, Narrative Interest, and the Emergence of Meaning," in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1987], 264–320), as well as Gadamer's philosophical reflections on the ontological fissure involved in the arts of questioning and conversation ("The Model of Platonic Dialogue" and "The Logic of Question and Answer," *Truth and Method*, 356–71.) Indeed, perhaps biblical literature itself is not unaware of this constitutive epistemological drama when it figures the first humans as assuming risk and absorbing disappointment in the pursuit of greater knowledge (Genesis 3).

[41] Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York, NY.: Pantheon Books, 2012). See especially 330–335, "The Grand Narratives of Liberalism and Conservatism." As with Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Haidt's *The Righteous Mind* is grounded in rigorous academic psychology; both scholars are regular fixtures in academic psychology curricula.

[42] Marshall Ganz, "Why Stories Matter," *Sojourners Magazine* 38, no. 3 (2009): 16–21.

[43] Marshall Ganz, "Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power," in Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee, eds., *Accountability through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action* (Washington, D.C: World Bank Publications, 2011), 273–90. For application of narrative to legal matters, warning in particular of the seductive power of facile stories, see Jerome Bruner, *Making Stories: Law, Literature, and Life* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[44] The introduction of a historical work is often telling. Howard Zinn, for example, in the first chapter of his influential *A People's History of the United States,* writes: "[I]n that inevitable taking of sides which comes from selection and emphasis in history, I prefer to try to tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of

social scientists maintain that stories have power,[45] and regular, deliberate, high stakes narrative maneuvering is perhaps as characteristic of secular discourse as it is of religious discourse.[46]

Philosophy, Theology, Hermeneutics – The genealogical method, initiated perhaps formally by Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*,[47] deployed and developed by later thinkers such as Michel Foucault,[48] and still the animating logic of much work in the humanities, operates essentially by telling an alternative narrative that exposes seeming necessities of history as mere contingencies, thereby destabilizing specious moral claims that prop up unjust networks of control. While recognizing ample complexities here (the contributions of critical and

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the Constitution from the standpoint of slaves […] That, being as blunt as I can, is my approach to the history of the United States. The reader may as well know that before going on." (Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* [New York, NY.: HarperCollins, 2005], 10–1. From a different political viewpoint is Wilfred M. McClay's *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story* (New York, NY.: Encounter Books, 2019): "Let me emphasize the term *story*. Professional historical writing has, for a great many years now, been resistant to the idea of history as narrative. Some historians have even hoped that history could be made into a science. But this approach seems unlikely ever to succeed, if for no other reason than that it fails to take into account the ways we need stories to speak to the fullness of our humanity and help us orient ourselves in the world. […] We are, at our core, remembering and story-making creatures, and stories are one of the chief ways we find meaning in the flow of events. […] The stakes were beautifully expressed in the words of the great Jewish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer: 'When a day passes it is no longer there. What remains of it? Nothing more than a story. If stories weren't told or books weren't written, man would live like the beasts, only for the day. The whole world, all human life, is one long story.'" McClay, XI–XII; italics original.

[45] A qualification is in order, however: in the main, methodology in the social sciences is attuned to the multifactorial and overdetermined nature of the realities under analysis; the determinative role of narrative is therefore *not* taken as axiomatic across the board, but rather seen as one of many vectors contributing to a complex whole. I do not wish my narrative about the influence of narrative to obscure other factors from view.

[46] For this dynamic in monotheistic faiths, see Robert C. Gregg, *Shared Stories, Rival Tellings: Early Encounters of Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015). To be sure, contemporary interest in stories as power presumes the eroded credibility of so-called "master narratives," regarding which see the perceptive discussion "Deception and Truth" in Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 233–73. Cf. John Milbank: "This is why it is so important to reassert theology as a master discourse; theology, alone, remains the discourse of non-mastery." John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford UK.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 6.

[47] I say "formally" because the antecedents of the method seem perceptible in the evolutionary models of history and biology prevalent in wider 19th century thought; that is to say, even genealogy has a genealogy.

[48] The distinction in Foucault's historical works, for example, between "genealogy" and "archaeology" is a feature of this development.

performative theories, etc.) the persuasive power of this power-confuting method seems in large part to be narratival: tell a better, more truthful story.[49] Psychoanalysis as well, if having moved largely away from the explicit theories of Freud, still operates on the assumption that the way to psychic and emotional integration passes through the storied territory of one's early life, family of origin, etc. And outside the broad wake of Nietzsche and Freud,[50] other trends rely on story as well. Paul Ricoeur, for example, regards a phenomenology of time as eventuating in aporias resolvable through narrative; stories provide a transition between description and prescription, leading ultimately to ethics.[51] The ethical role of narrative is also important for Alasdair MacIntyre, whose *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* identifies narrative as the vehicle maintaining identity over time, a stability essential to a lifetime's cultivation of virtue.[52] Building upon such landmark thinkers, narrative has theoretical currency in disciplines as far afield as medical anthropology, trauma studies, qualitative public health research, educational policy, and religious fieldwork. Often these inquiries employ ethnographic modes of knowing that attempt to view the world

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[49] Cf. Nietzsche's gospel-imitating *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which seems to rely on the rhetorical assumption that an old gospel is best undermined by a new and better gospel. Pertaining to the study of religion, see David Chidester's *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014) regarding the Eurocentric racial interests at work within variously (and dubiously) mediated narratives about colonial subjects. Chidester's method is genealogical in that he seeks to tell a different story about a constellation of imperial stories within the academic study of religion.

[50] Often classed as "masters of suspicion" (along with Marx), the concern of Nietzsche and Freud seems really to be with *hidden* stories. For Nietzsche, the question is: what or whose story are you envying, avenging, subverting, covering up? For Freud: what or whose story are you repressing, projecting, conflating, sublimating? At risk of oversimplifying, as their respective theories and legacies are multifaceted and nuanced, both attempt to sweep aside accepted narratives in order to get to the bedrock of the *real* story—even if the real story is that there is no such thing. See Charles Taylor's discussion of modernity's "Cross Pressures," in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 594–617.

[51] See Ricoeur's collection of essays, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

[52] Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007). See especially the chapter "The Virtues, the Unity of a Human Life, and the Concept of a Tradition," 204–225.

sympathetically from within diverse cultural narratives, thereby complicating dominant external narratives.

In theological circles, the turn to narrative is by now almost classical in status, as volumes such as *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* date to the 1980s,[53] and scholars across a range of interests and commitments continue to find the category useful. For example, a hard-hitting theologian like John Milbank, readily conceding "the (absolute) degree to which [theology] is a contingent historical construct," attempts an end-run anyways around sociological models of knowing by outlining "a single mode of narrative knowledge."[54] More accessible theology, by contrast, such as Alister McGrath's recent *Narrative Apologetics*, casts narrative as "an epistemic device which explains events by imposing an explanatory framework on what might otherwise seem to be an accumulation of disconnected events or experiences…"[55] From introductory to

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[53] Stanley Hauerwas, L. Gregory Jones, and Ronald F. Thiemann, eds., *Why Narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1989). The opening essay, "The Story of Our Lives," is from H. Richard Niebuhr's 1941 book, *The Meaning of Revelation*. More recently, see Miroslav Volf, *Captive to the Word of God: Engaging the Scriptures for Contemporary Theological Reflection* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2010). "[T]he more I profit from the sacred text that tells my story within the story of God's dealings with the world, the more I will truly be myself." Volf, 36.

[54] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 1–2, 263. See especially the chapters "Policing the Sublime: A Critique of the Sociology of Religion," 101–144, and "Ontological Violence or the Postmodern Problematic," 278–326. The argument of this large and important book does not lend itself to easy summary.

[55] Alister McGrath, *Narrative Apologetics: Sharing the Relevance, Joy, and Wonder of The Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 2019), 27. Compare the contributions of McGrath's predecessors at Oxford, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, both of whose interest in the imaginative—as opposed to the merely imaginary—force of narrative led them not only to theory (see Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" and "Mythopoeia" in J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf: Including 'Mythopoeia* [London: HarperCollins Pub Ltd, 2001], 3–81, 85–90; and Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?" and "Myth Became Fact" in *C. S. Lewis Essay Collection: Faith, Christianity and the Church* [London: HarperCollins Pub Ltd, 2002], 10–21, 138–142), but also to praxis (most notably *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* for Tolkien, *The Ransom Trilogy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Till We Have Faces* for Lewis). Unfortunately, popular appeal tends to discredit academic legitimacy. Were it appropriate, in this project I would lean in places on Lewis' *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*; a few excerpts must suffice as acknowledgement of Lewis' imaginative influence on my thesis: "We catch sight of a new key principle—the power of the Higher, just in so far as it is truly Higher, to come down, the power of the greater to include the less. Everywhere the great enters the little—its power to do so is almost the test of its greatness. […] In this descent and reascent everyone will recognize a familiar pattern: a thing written all over the world. It is the pattern of all vegetable life. It must belittle itself into something hard, small and deathlike, it must fall into the ground: thence the new life reascends. It is the pattern of all animal generation too. There is descent from the full and perfect organisms into the spermatozoon and ovum […] So it is also in our moral and emotional life. The

advanced, then, and apologetic to polemic, theologies of various sorts are given to viewing narrative as a fundamental mode of meaning.

In related quarters, hermeneutical works such as Hans Frei's *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* carefully chronicle how a realistic narrative reading of the Bible was rendered otiose by intellectual movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[56] while Kevin Vanhoozer (an admirer of Frei) argues in books like *The Drama of Doctrine* and *Remythologizing Theology* for something of a narrational baptism of systematic theology.[57] Relatedly, Hebrew Bible scholarship in dialogue with aspects of literary theory[58] such as Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative*

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first and spontaneous desires have to submit to the deathlike process of control or total denial: but from that there is a reascent to fully formed character in which the strength of the original material all operates but in a new way. Death and Rebirth—go down to go up—it is a key principle. Through this bottleneck, this belittlement, the highroad nearly always lies. […] To be high or central means to abdicate continually: to be low means to be raised: all good masters are servants: God washes the feet of men. The concepts we usually bring to consideration of such matters are miserably political and prosaic. We think of flat repetitive equality and arbitrary privilege as the only two alternatives—thus missing all the overtones, the counterpoint, the vibrant sensitiveness, the inter-animations of reality." C. S. Lewis, "Chapter 14: The Grand Miracle," in *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York, NY.: HarperOne Kindle Edition, 2009).

[56] Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). "It is no exaggeration to say that all across the theological spectrum the great reversal had taken place; interpretation was a matter of fitting the biblical story into another world with another story rather than incorporating that world into the biblical story," Frei, 130. Frei contrasts this with a precritical realistic reading: "Far from being in conflict with the literal sense of biblical stories, figuration or typology was a natural extension of literal interpretation. It was literalism at the level of the whole biblical story and thus of the depiction of the whole of historical reality. Figuration was at once a literary and a historical procedure, an interpretation of stories and their meanings by weaving them together into a common narrative referring to a single history and its pattern of meaning. [… The reader] was to see his disposition, his actions and passions, the shape of his own life as well as that of his era's events as figures of that storied world." 2–3.

[57] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); ibid, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Vanhoozer's work engages hermeneutical theorists like Ricoeur and postmodern understandings of language.

[58] For a sense of the issues surrounding "the Bible as (merely?) literature," see the debate between James Kugel and Adele Berlin. J. L. Kugel, "Controversy: On the Bible and Literary Criticism." *Prooftexts* 1 (1981): 217–36; "Controversy: James Kugel Responds." *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 328–32. Berlin, A. "Controversy: On the Bible as Literature." *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 323–27. See also the dialogue between Hillel Halkin and Jon Levenson regarding Robert Alter's translation of the Hebrew Bible: https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/history-ideas/2019/02/how-to-judge-robert-alters-landmark-translation-of-the-hebrew-bible/. Accessed 5 October 2020.

and Meir Sternberg's *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* demonstrates the sophisticated narratology

of biblical literature while also alive to the ambitious knowledge claims this medium makes.[59] In

New Testament studies, scholars like N. T. Wright are invested in a version of critical realism that

leans on a narrative understanding of the form and function of worldviews.[60] Indeed, biblical

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[59] "Nowhere in antiquity does the theme of mortality receive so little attention as in biblical narrative; nowhere does the variable of knowledge assume such a cutting edge and such a dominant role. God is omniscient, man limited, and the boundary impassable. [...] The only knowledge perfectly acquired is the knowledge of our limitations. [... T]o make sense of the discourse is to gain a sense of being human." Sternberg, *Poetics*, 46–47. "Habitants of a tiny and often imperfectly monotheistic island in a vast and alluring sea of paganism, [ancient Hebrew writers] wrote with an intent, frequently urgent awareness of fulfilling or perpetuating through the act of writing a momentous revolution in consciousness. [...] The biblical narrator, quite unlike the Prophet, divests himself [note the kenotic suggestion here] of a personal history and the marks of individual identity in order to assume for the scope of his narrative a godlike comprehensiveness of knowledge that can encompass even God himself. It is a dizzying epistemological trick done with narrative mirrors." Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 193, 196. Compare also the chapter "Odysseus' Scar" in Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 3–23. "The Scripture stories do not, like Homer's, court our favor, they do not flatter us that they may please us and enchant us—they seek to subject us, and if we refuse to be subjected we are rebels. Let no one object that this goes too far, that not the stories, but the religious doctrine, raises the claim to absolute authority [...] Doctrine and promise are incarnate in them and inseparable from them; for this very reason they are fraught with 'background' and mysterious, containing a second, concealed meaning." Auerbach, 15. Notably, this chapter on the Bible's representation of reality also identifies the basic movement of Royal Runaways typology: "...the stern hand of God is ever upon the Old Testament figures [...] And how much wider is the pendulum swing of their lives than that of the Homeric heroes! [...] There is hardly one of them who does not, like Adam, undergo the deepest humiliation—and hardly one who is not deemed worthy of God's personal intervention and personal inspiration. Humiliation and elevation go far deep and far higher than in Homer, and they basically belong together." Auerbach, 18. This pattern is observed by another noted literary critic, Northrop Frye, who makes the significant step of applying the pattern to Israel itself, and even the biblical story as a whole: "We referred earlier to the structure of the Book of Judges [...and its] narrative structure that is roughly U-shaped, the apostasy being followed by a descent into disaster and bondage [...] This U-shaped pattern, approximate as it is, recurs in literature as the standard shape of comedy [...] The entire Bible, viewed as a 'divine comedy,' is contained within a U-shaped story of this sort, one in which man, as explained, loses the tree and water of life at the beginning of Genesis and gets them back at the end of Revelation." Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt, 1982), 169; cf. 171. What Auerbach sees more clearly than Frye, although he does not say so explicitly, is that the 'descent' within the pendulum or U-shaped story can be the result not only of apostasy, foolishness, or humiliation, but also of obedience.

[60] See the chapters "Knowledge: Problems and Varieties" and "Literature, Story and the Articulation of Worldviews" in N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 31–80. Also see N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), 123: "[I]t is vital that we understand scripture, and our relation to it, in terms of some kind of overarching narrative which makes sense of the texts. We cannot reduce scripture to a set of 'timeless truths' on the one hand, or to mere fuel for devotion on the other, without begin deeply disloyal, at a structural level, to scripture itself." For the genre of historical narrative appearing in the New Testament, see Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2019); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2017).

scholarship that is indebted to anything like "Covenant Theology" is narratival in structure, given the relational story of God and Israel undergirding the framework.[61]

To reprise, then: the purpose of the previous paragraphs has been to give a general sense of how narrative is employed as an intellectual tool, a development reflective of the widely-held assumption that humans are "essentially a story-telling animal."[62] Given such diverse and potentially competing utilizations of the category, it is essential to discern the subtly different stories being told about the nature and function of stories themselves, and to assess their relative merits.[63] Narrative theories, however, will reside largely in the background of this study, since the desideratum is not theory itself but what theory makes visible (as the etymology of the term "theory" suggests: from θεωρέω, 'to look at, observe, see'). In this regard, one of the features of Royal Runaway stories I wish to see more clearly is the pivotal *action* that occurs, both in the story itself and also in that story's encounter with the reading community. In every story something *happens* (multiple somethings, in fact), and I wish to understand the connection, if there be any, between what happens in the story and what happens in or to the reader, and why it matters.[64] Offering an account of this connection is the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, whose insights will be useful to consider before moving on from narrative theory.

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[61] A movement given much impetus by the intellectual grandfather of this project, Frank Moore Cross.

[62] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216. This statement is qualified and deepened in the next sentences: "[Man] is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key question for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'" Ibid.

[63] An exercise liable to circularity, no doubt. Adjacent to this whole matter are the many senses of the term "history"; for a thoughtful discussion, see N. T. Wright, "The Shifting Sands: The Meanings of 'History,'" in *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (La Vergne: SPCK Publishing, 2019), 73–128.

[64] Gadamer, for one, regards such interaction between the historically-situated story of the text and the historically-situated story of the reader's life as a "fusion of horizons"; the transformations thereby engendered are among the principle reasons to restore the legitimacy of tradition.

"[O]ur lives move," Taylor writes in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. "The issue of our condition can never be exhausted for us by what we *are*, because we are always also changing and *becoming*."[65] Extending this line of thinking, Taylor offers an argument similar to MacIntyre's about the stable identity provided by narrative across the fluidities of time. "[M]aking sense of one's life as a story is also, like orientation to the good, not an optional extra; […] our lives exist in this space of questions, which only a coherent narrative can answer."[66] The mention here of "orientation to the good" is crucial in Taylor's analysis. For him, stories not only provide an important coherence for humans, but also become key lenses through which "the good" (however it may be defined[67]) is discerned and adopted as a reference point for pragmatic decisions. In a sensitive treatment of modern morality titled the "Ethics of Inarticulacy," Taylor describes how the *movement* inherent within stories is essential for moral reasoning and growth:

> Practical reasoning, as I have argued elsewhere, is a reasoning in transitions. It aims to establish, not that some position is correct absolutely, but rather that some position is superior to some other. It is concerned, covertly or openly, implicitly or explicitly, with comparative propositions. We show one of these comparative claims to be well founded when we can show that the *move* from A to B constitutes a gain epistemically. This is something we do when we show, for instance, that we get from A to B by identifying and resolving a contradiction in A or a confusion which A relied on, or by acknowledging the importance of some factor which A screened out, or something of the sort. The nerve of the rational proof consists in showing that this transition is an error-reducing one. The argument turns on rival interpretations of possible transitions from A to B or B to A.
>   This form of argument has its source in biographical narrative. We are convinced that a certain view is superior because we have lived a transition which we understand as error-reducing and hence as epistemic gain. […Taylor discusses the "devastating" nature of the genealogical method, precisely because its narrative form undermines accepted interpretations of certain transitions…] You will only convince me by changing my reading

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[65] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 46–47.

[66] Ibid.

[67] In regards to this question, Taylor develops the notion of what he calls "hypergoods," being "goods which not only are incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these [other goods] must be weighed, judged, decided about." Taylor, *Sources*, 63.

of my moral experience, and in particular my reading of my life story, of the transitions I have lived through—or perhaps refused to live through.[68]

Biographical narrative is thus the context, on Taylor's account, for morally persuasive transitions. The *movement* in a life story (either my own or someone else's) between one status quo and another, and the attendant epistemological gains, is the hidden mechanism and force within ethical arguments.

Take, for example, the biblical story of Joseph, who very much fits the mold of a Royal Runaway. The reader's introduction to him as a brash and socially unaware teen in Genesis 37[69] is an excellent portrait of "one chosen [who] is sorely tempted to interpret his special status as a mandate for domination."[70] Yet in the ensuing chapters of betrayal, temptation, and servitude, "Joseph [undergoes] a process of transformation, one so massive that one may wonder whether the man to whom the brothers bow is still the same person as the boy with great dreams."[71] What *happened*? Using Taylor's theory, a movement is visible here from A = arrogant youth to B = chastened and humble ruler, a transition providing an improved understanding of the nature of election and authority. Joseph the child interprets these things as a warrant to assert himself at the expense of others. Joseph the adult has learned that election and authority do not mean self-assertion but deferential and self-effacing service to others.[72] Meanwhile the reader of Genesis 37–50,

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[68] Taylor, *Sources*, 72–73.

[69] Discounting Genesis 30:23–24, where Joseph's given name at birth is a tally mark on a scoreboard of sibling rivalry, a theme that will be central in his own story as well.

[70] Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1993), 154.

[71] Ibid, 164.

[72] Quite literally self-effacing in Joseph's case, disguising himself from his brothers even as he supplies them with free grain during a famine.

sensing this movement and perhaps even perceiving traces of his or her own story in it,[73] may be persuaded to update their understanding as well: "Status A was naïve and narcissistic. The long path of isolation and suffering between A and B was needful, not just for Joseph, but for those over whom he exercised authority. B is superior to A, and I should thus orient my own story toward B, interpreting whatever challenges may lie on the way accordingly," etc.

Taylor thus offers traction on what can otherwise be the slippery surface of Royal Runaway stories. What *happens* in the story—for both protagonist and reader—amounts to an epistemological gain with application to pragmatic decisions. It is not just a change in theory, but in a way of life. Rather, therefore, than adopting reader-centric models like "the death of the author,"[74] reader response theories, or hermeneutical strictures surrounding the "intentional fallacy," etc., this study will simultaneously acknowledge the fluidity of texts and the multiplicity of layered interpretations while also seeking to identify key "movements" or "transitions" in Royal Runaway stories that may be there by design[75] and that exercise the moral effect Taylor describes.

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[73] Regarding reading oneself into the biblical story, see Levenson's essay "The Contrast Between the Bible's Idea of History and the Modern Idea" https://mosaicmagazine.com/response/history-ideas/2018/08/the-contrast-between-the-bibles-idea-of-history-and-the-modern-idea/; accessed 5 October 2020: "[T]he past is not simply something recorded; it is also, and more importantly, something to be internalized. The person [in the case under discussion, a farmer in biblical times] making the profession places himself and his bounty into the story of the people Israel. […] Here, and generally in biblical historiography, there is no hard differentiation of history from story, no search for objective controls on the traditional narrative and the rituals that it authorizes." Importantly, Levenson is describing the internalization of Israel's history as it appears within the Bible itself, yet it would seem such internalization continues in post-biblical eras—precisely on the warrant and model of such internal precedents.

[74] Note the relationship between "authorship" and "authority" (cf. discussion above), prompting Roland Barthes to use the neologism "scriptor" to designate someone producing a text.

[75] The perception of design will not hinge on the psychology, historical context, or social location of the author(s), but on the regularity and precision within the text itself of the trope's appearance. There is necessarily a circle here, since texts do inevitably reflect particular psychologies, contexts, and socioeconomic interests, etc., but a "hermeneutic of respect" (Volf, *Captive*, 34) as opposed to a hermeneutic of suspicion can render the circle virtuous instead of vicious. See further the brief discussion of critical realism, with bibliography, at Chapter 4, n. 98.

Comparative Analysis and Christian Theology

In general, the problem this dissertation seeks to resolve is not in relation to any particular Royal Runaway story, but the phenomenon of its frequent recurrence (particularly in the Bible), and what it might mean. This will require a comparative literary and theological lens, and such a lens is no exogenous interpretive method, but is in keeping, rather, with the Bible's own reliance on comparative techniques. The principle holds, in fact, at multiple levels of biblical composition. For example, and starting with the microcosm, the poetic and wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible is widely acknowledged to rely on phonological, morphological, syntactical, thematic, lexical, and propositional comparisons.[76] Like nuclear fusion, the theological energy of this literature is released upon the hermeneutical eruption resulting from the interaction of paired yet discrete units.[77] Similar comparative phenomena are operative in the Bible's narrative material. To cite just one influential study, Michael Fishbane's *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* shows how a composition like the Jacob cycle assumes readerly competence to compare and contrast elements across the whole story, a procedure that is bound up with its overall meaning.[78] And widening the aperture beyond a single character, the many studies of Yair Zakovitch

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[76] Standard here are studies from the 1980s by James Kugel (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 1981), Adele Berlin (*The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 1985), and Robert Alter (*The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 1985).

[77] Each of which bears theological import on its own terms. I use the analogy cautiously, given the tendency of scholars in the humanities to misapply scientific concepts. See Alan D. Sokal, *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science* (New York: Picador USA, 1999).

[78] Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 40–62. The whole volume demonstrates the method, and its interpretative utility. See further Sternberg, *Poetics*; David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999); Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001); D. Andrew Teeter, "Biblical Symmetry and its Modern Detractors," in C. Maier, G. Macaskill, J. Schaper (eds.), *IOSOT Congress Volume: Aberdeen* (Leiden: Brill, 2020). Teeter summarizes well: "These concepts are, in operation, as flexible as they are foundational, and all are structurally extensible, scaling from the line to the macrocompositional whole. Comparison facilitated through the analogical mapping of pairs plays a central role in the predication and discovery of higher-order relations, and is determinative for the understanding of symmetry in the corpus."

demonstrate that biblical narrative presumes analogies across the whole cast of characters, and again that this is not an eccentric or extracurricular interpretative technique, but intrinsic to how biblical texts craft arguments and make meaning.[79] (Moreover, beyond considerations of art and theology, in an era when the logistics of writing were expensive and the expertise of literacy hard to come by, such strategies of composition were also economically efficient: less vellum.[80])

From a still wider angle, although the retrospective notion of canon is often understood as delimiting the scope of comparisons precisely in order to create a richer semantic chamber,[81] no less a biblical theologian than Brevard Childs observes about the book of Proverbs: "It is highly significant that in both […] titles (30.1; 31.1) as well as in I Kings 3 the connection of proverbs with international wisdom was maintained. The titles thus offer a canonical warrant for comparison with extra-biblical material which is unusual for the biblical tradition."[82] An ancient, intermingled social reality spawned cosmopolitan genres like Israelite wisdom literature, and about such contexts comparative theologian Francis X. Clooney rightly points out that "[i]nterreligious and comparative learning has always been an inescapable dimension in the life of every religious community. Early Christianity, arising in the context of Judaism, was no exception; interreligious

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[79] Yair Zakovitch, "Assimilation in biblical narratives," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 175–196; ibid, *Miḳra'ot be-erets ha-mar'ot*, (Tel Aviv: ha-Ḳibuts ha-me'uḥad, 1995); ibid; *And You Shall Tell Your Son: The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1991).

[80] See Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

[81] "The whole dimension of resonance within the Bible which issues from a collection with fixed parameters and which affects both the language and its imagery is lost by disregarding the peculiar function of canonical literature." Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1979), 40.

[82] Ibid, 552.

exchange is basic to Christianity, in its biblical roots and early growth."[83] Although this way of framing the matter might be euphemistic for what the Church often did to outsiders, the same principle holds, mutatis mutandis, for Israel's developing faith within its ancient Near Eastern context.

What these scholars collectively identify are various manifestations of the comparative impulse and necessity, within and beyond biblical literature. Yet the basic maneuver of comparison, in which there is much current interest, raises important questions the answers to which must not be simply assumed. Needless to say, this is not the place for a full discussion of, for example, Derrida's concepts of *différance* and deconstruction, and indebted techniques of troubling binaries in current practice, although fallacies of false equivalence and the elision of difference are clearly important to perceive and avoid.[84] What I am concerned with here, rather, is ascertaining the stakes within various sorts of biblical and theological comparisons. For example, it is important to bear in mind that unlike comparative arguments in the New Testament (Jesus is like Adam, etc.), "the Talmud and Midrash do not present themselves as the teleological consummation of the Tanakh but only as the rightful continuation and implementation of biblical teaching. [… R]abbinic Judaism lacks the apocalyptic urgency of apostolic Christianity […and the rabbis'] attitude toward the Hebrew Bible and theology in general was more relaxed and more pluriform."[85] Relatedly,

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[83] Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 24. Clooney helpfully distinguishes comparative theology from other disciplines such as comparative religion, theology of religion, interreligious dialogue, and dialogical theology. Ibid, 9–12.

[84] For an assessment of the widening gap between Derrida's theories and their contemporary utilization, see Mark Beuerlein, "Vulgar Deconstruction: How High Theory Became a Political Weapon," *First Things*, no. 268 (2016): 39–44.

[85] Jon D. Levenson, "Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology," in *The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 39. Implicit within this observation is the often overlooked fact that "it would be more accurate to say that rabbinic Judaism and Christianity are not parent and child but siblings, sister religions whose parent was Second Temple Judaism and whose more distant ancestors

William Tooman's analysis of inner-biblical comparison leads him to conclude that "the categories of exegesis and revision in the Hebrew Bible have very different heirs in post-biblical literature. Exegesis leads to pesher, to midrash, to rabbinic Judaism; the tradition of revision continues in Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran texts such as the Temple Scroll, the New Testament, and medieval Hebrew poetry (even though these texts also contain exegetical elements)."[86] What these observations indicate is that biblical texts and the various literatures following in their interpretative wake do not all have the same ontological self-understanding, let alone make recourse to identical comparative techniques. Thus, while this study will include consideration of, e.g., the respective accounts of Moses' early life in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Josephus, and Philo, and how this matches up with the narrative of Exodus 2, I will not presume that these texts operate in the same way; the similar biographical shape of Royal Runaway stories should not be forced into a single interpretative model since early readers of these stories understood and built upon them in profoundly different ways.

Yet an opposite and equal error is also risked here, namely, presuming that the phenomenon of various ancient interpretations correlates to late modern concepts of diversity. Appeals to the many "Judaisms" of antiquity, for example, can have the effect of ignoring the substantial common

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were still earlier phases of the religion of Israel." (Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* [New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2009], 235.)

[86] The Targumim, however, suggest that revision also is found in the wide stream that becomes rabbinic Judaism. William A. Tooman, *Gog of Magog: Reuse of Scripture and Compositional Technique in Ezekiel 38-39* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 27–28. (For reflection on the epistemological ramifications of these literary techniques, see D. Andrew Teeter and William A. Tooman, "Standards of (In)Coherence in Ancient Jewish Literature," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 9, no. 2 (2020): 94–129.) Tooman also makes a perceptive remark about why such elaborately suggestive literature exists at all: "While many literary critics focus on more hermeneutically oriented aspects of allusion, [the] element of play, of sensual enjoyment, in allusion should not be overlooked. I think it often is one of the most important reasons for allusion; at times it may be the only one. We ought not forget that luxuriating in "the pleasure of the text" [the phrase is Roland Barthes'] is perhaps the most crucial aspect of reading literature, and the element of play in allusions encourages just this. The element of play helps explain why allusion usually is covert: it is more challenging, and more fun, for the reader to have to produce the identification." Tooman, *Gog of Magog*, 19.

core of agreement that was found among the variegated expressions of Jewish faith. D. Andrew Teeter, by contrast, contests the assumption that the presence of textual and even theological pluriformity within Jewish antiquity undermines any shared sense of authoritative scripture, an argument that is often invoked out of concern to avoid anachronistic notions of canon.

> It is indeed critical from the standpoint of method to reexamine and continually to rethink scholarly categories in order to maximize understanding and to minimize distortion of the material described. But in this effort to rethink categories, it would be a major mistake, in my view, to disregard or understate the robust role of scripture and exegesis in the constitution of this literature on the grounds that it necessarily presumes or valorizes an anachronistic conception of canon. Doing so would only replace one anachronism (assuming the existence of "canon" in the sense of fixed, exclusive, immutable list during this period, or "Bible" as the physical manifestation of such a list) with another, potentially more misleading anachronism ("religious literature," "cultural literature," "national literature," "literature in general") leading to a grave misunderstanding of these texts and the forces generating them. The traditional literature of Second Temple Judaism—in both its formal and functional characteristics—is incomprehensible and unthinkable apart from a pervasive notion of scripture at its core, its demands for interpretation, and the immense formative pressure that such a collective whole exerted upon texts and communities alike.[87]

Building on Teeter's suggestions here, which in context relate to the necessity for Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship to proceed with deep awareness of biblical literature and vice versa,[88] the mistake is to presume that the phenomena of "scripture" or "canon" in Jewish antiquity are accurately placed along contemporary spectra of inclusion and exclusion, which prefer categories such as "cultural literature" in order to render less abrasive any intrinsic claims to textual authority; this is to misrepresent the literature in view, which is concerned with quite different spectra, such as a broadly conceived in/fidelity to tradition. Said another way, it is not a matter of what did and did not make

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[87] Andrew Teeter, "The Hebrew Bible and/as Second Temple Literature: Methodological Reflections," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 20, no. 3 (2013): 376–377. See the comprehensive empirical support for this position in David Andrew Teeter, *Scribal Laws: Exegetical Variation in the Textual Transmission of Biblical Law in the Late Second Temple Period*, Forschungen Zum Alten Testament 92 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

[88] This is another important angle of comparative analysis, vital for developing a responsible intrafaith historical method, as opposed to interfaith comparisons.

it into the Bible, as some current scholarship frames the matter,[89] but that the substantive core of what would later be called "the Bible" made its way into and made sense of nearly all literary and cultural products of the Second Temple period.[90] The significance of Teeter's argument lies in the extensive evidence he provides that this is not a retrojected theological claim, but a matter of empirical literary history.[91]

Yet it is clear that theological judgments cannot be far from the surface here, navigating somehow between a Scylla of anachronistic relativism and Charybdis of ahistorical dogmatism. To that end, I wish to make some comments on the sense in which this biblically-oriented dissertation will be *theological*, and then specifically, a work of *Christian* theology. On this latter point, and to anticipate further discussion below, it perhaps goes without saying that overly or overtly to Christianize a reading of Royal Runaways typology would be a double methodological irony, given love's penchant to see and cherish alterity, and the self-effacing choice of kenosis. Ironically heavy-handed critiques of power are what this dissertation seeks to challenge, not perform. Among the problems of such critiques is the belief that either a neutral "view from nowhere," to borrow

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[89] For example, Stanford University's current undergraduate introduction to biblical studies is a course called, "What Didn't Make It Into The Bible." This is only representative of a wider trend. To be sure, a distinction must be made between inquiries into the Bible's early composition and reception history (deeply entangled processes, these), and later developments in church politics. "Canon" itself is a Greek word, suggestive of the historical and conceptual transition precipitating the conditions of the possibility of even asking the question about biblical boundaries. The Bible of Jesus and Paul was demonstrably pluriform and fluid, and they did not seem to find this a problem. Such norms (or lack thereof) also continued in early Christian literary culture, as Wright notes: "The early church had more than two categories of writings. It was never a matter of seeing everything as *either* 'inspired' *or* 'heretical'. Christian teachers recognized that there was a larger body of works that were, at least, para-canonical, useful to be read alongside the authorized body of normative texts. When the church produced lists of books, the point was not so much to ban everything else, but to identify the central core of works that were to be seen as 'true, genuine, and recognized' [quoting Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.25.6]." N. T. Wright, *The New Testament In Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 873. Italics original.

[90] Cf. Frei's "great reversal," as well as Auerbach's biblical narratives that seek to "subject" the reader.

[91] See "Exegetical Variation in the Text of Biblical Law," *Scribal Laws*, 34–174.

Thomas Nagel's phrase, or an ethical "view from below," are viable. Neither standpoint, I find, is able adequately to represent a multi-aspectual reality, nor to maintain its own positionality. Rather, in a deliberate attempt not to overstep with my claims—neither in what is said nor in how it is said—it is imperative to be clear about the theological and Christian commitments in the background (and sometimes foreground) of this dissertation. Because although the lack of such stated commitments may be an academic norm, this does not mean no commitments are therefore in play. Better to be clear that this dissertation is a view from somewhere, a theological somewhere that dramatically traverses and therefore calls into question what is meant by "above" and "below."

Theology – The statement of Karl Barth that "one can *not* speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice"[92] has become a ritualized trope in some circles, invoked to ward off theologies perceived to be overly anthropocentric in their methods and deliverances. While the statement itself and subsequent rehearsals of it may oversimplify the issue,[93] the underlying matter to which Barth is responding arguably marks the parting of ways between religious studies and theology. For even if a narrow view of religion as merely a projection of psycho-political dynamics is replaced with a more generous inquiry into the positive function of religious symbols, rituals, and language, the referent of such work remains immanent.[94] Religion is fundamentally a human

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[92] Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (New York: Harper, 1957), 196. Emphasis original.

[93] In context Barth is writing against Schleiermacher, whose epistemology is grounded in dialectics clearly affirming the reality of God, if with apophatic (read: Kantian) hesitations about the possibilities of religious language. Recent work by Schubert M. Ogden continues in the legacy of Schleiermacher, with careful attention to the nature of religious language and its referent that calls into question Barth's wholesale denunciation. See Schubert M. Ogden, *The Understanding of Christian Faith* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010). See also R. R. Reno, "Karl Barth," *First Things*, May 2021, 62: "Karl Barth said of his liberal nemesis, Friedrich Schleiermacher, that he talked about God by talking about man in a loud voice, but one cannot but wonder if Barth was guilty of a similar self-deception, talking about God by talking about theology in a loud voice." Many thanks to Professor Brent Sockness for helping me think through these issues.

[94] See Taylor, "The Immanent Frame," in *A Secular Age*, 539–593.

phenomenon. And while theology is doubtless a human production as well, Barth's contention is

that the main task of the theologian is to reflect responsibly on the word of God. By taking revela-

tion with absolute seriousness, that is, not as the only factor but as one factor among many, the

discipline of theology locates its ultimate substance, referent, warrant, and authority elsewhere.[95]

In another context, Barth writes:

> …if I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between time and eternity, and to my regarding this as possessing negative as well as positive significance: 'God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.' The relation between such a God and such a man, and the relation between such a man and such a God, is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy.[96]

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[95] For an assessment of the shifting cognitive modes and epistemic criteria operative in such a theological approach, see Eli Gottlieb and Sam Wineburg, "Between *Veritas* and *Communitas*: Epistemic Switching in the Reading of Academic and Sacred History," *The Journal of the Learning Sciences* 21, no. 1 (2012): 84–129. Utilizing methods from the learning sciences, the authors study the reading and reasoning techniques of believers (including rabbis) and scientists (some religious, some not) in relation to a variety of religious and secular literature. Their findings have far-reaching implications, beyond theological method: "[…] challenges us to reexamine the aims of history education. Are any of the strategies our readers used to coordinate epistemologies ones that we would like to see emulated by students of history in our high schools and colleges? If not, what alternative strategies for addressing the unavoidable multidimensionality of historical consciousness do we want to promote in their place? If epistemic switching and navigation between multiple commitments are indeed features of real-life engagement with a history that matters, what are the responsibilities of history educators in preparing students to think critically on the one hand without frustrating possibilities of belonging and participation on the other? Although our study focused on history that matters religiously, there are good reasons to expect analogous patterns of epistemic switching for history that matters in other ways: nationally, ethnically, politically, and so on. If a goal of history education is to produce a citizenry that is neither hopelessly gullible nor irredeemably cynical, history educators cannot afford to focus only on the honing of critical thinking. They must also take seriously other aspects of historical consciousness with which these critical aspects interact. […] Third, our findings challenge us to review our theoretical assumptions about the relations between epistemology and identity more generally. […] The idea that epistemology and identity can affect each other not only vertically (by providing the cognitive conditions for holding particular beliefs about knowledge or the self) but also horizontally (by triggering different kinds of identification and belonging as the context shifts) has potentially radical implications for theories of both identity and epistemology. […] Each of these challenges is of crucial importance to anyone whose interest in theories of learning extends beyond the 'merely' academic to touch on practical concerns about how to educate real people about things that matter. For as Professor C noted at the end of his interview, 'People don't live and die as historians. They live and die as people.'" 116–118. I quote at length from Gottlieb and Wineburg because the empirical data they present regarding the trans-empirical (which is not to say *anti*-empirical) rationality that most humans adopt when negotiating different contexts is shown not at all to be peculiar to theology.

[96] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 10. Kierkegaard's 1847 essay "The Difference between a Genius and an Apostle," makes the same essential point. Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Writings, XVIII, Volume 18: Without Authority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 112–29.

Barth thus insists on the transcendent referent of theological language, with attendant relativization of other modes of knowing and speaking, and insofar as he intends to preserve the possibility that theology really can do and be what it claims to do and be, I follow along. But I do so cautiously, since the stringency of Barth's position in places (his rejection of all natural theology,[97] for example, and his highhanded approach to modern historical criticism[98]) needs some moderating.[99]

Such moderation is achieved, and even targeted in ways to the needs of this dissertation, by Barth's former student, Brevard Childs, who speaks to the form of anthropological reduction that might be natural in a study of this sort: the hypothesis that biblical portraits of Royal Runaways function merely as a vehicle for communal identity. On this reading, Israel views itself as exiled royalty, and the hermeneutical key is simply to acknowledge that Israel's "canon served to identify the community's self-understanding and to reinforce group consciousness."[100] Something rings true here, no doubt, and explanations of this sort will be explored; yet the theological character of this project means that it must find more to Royal Runaways than Israel gazing in a mirror, or speaking of itself in a loud voice. Childs, whose theory of canon emphasizes the community's role in creating and preserving scripture, even as scripture creates and preserves community, is well-

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[97] See Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth* (Eugene, OR.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002).

[98] See Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 51–52.

[99] As at many junctures in this introductory chapter, the discussion here of the relationship between religious studies and theology is all too brief. For a more thoughtful assessment that sees the two disciplines in productive interaction, see Christine Helmer, "Theology and the Study of Religion: A Relationship," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 230–254. "For creative and accurate production of knowledge to take place, however, historical and conceptual blindspots must be clarified vis-à-vis the other discipline. Theology must seek to understand religion in the empirical terms of living relationships, while religious studies must seek to understand the conceptual as a crucial dimension to understanding the reality that it studies," 253.

[100] Brevard S. Childs, "The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies: Reflections on an Era," *Pro Ecclesia* 14, no. 1 (2005): 32. Relatedly: "The formation of a canon is an exercise of power by a privileged class, defining class values by controlling the politics of reading [… Canon represents] the resolution of ideological conflicts, the imposition of an ideology or orthodoxy by force or compromise." Ibid, 31–32.

positioned to "argue that this anthropocentric, sociological interpretation of canon for a community is a modern, oblique history-of-religions reading of its role. In contrast, according to the Old Testament pattern (cf. Deut. 31.9–13), the formation of a written authoritative corpus was theocentric in orientation. […] One can only wonder whether such history-of-religions categories will prove more objective and unbiased than the theological ones being replaced. Can such an approach generate enough empathy for interpreting religious texts whose perspective is often radically alien to the entire Western mentality?"[101] Gently pointing out, then, that present concerns over marginalization (whose canon? whose truth? etc.) can have the ironic consequence of marginalizing historical communities themselves along with their sacred texts, Childs finds a middle ground that acknowledges the communal dimension of Israel's scriptures without regarding this dimension as exhausting their significance.

Childs also is helpful in delineating what I will mean by theology, noting the necessity for both Jews and Christians of approaching the Hebrew Bible[102] through an external and normative theological context:

> [N]either of the two communities shares the original historical context of Israel. Both faiths set the Old Testament within another normative tradition, the oral tradition of Judaism, the New Testament tradition for Christianity. Conversely, the Biblical text serves as a determinative force in forming the normative traditions of both communities. Both arose as responses to the text and cannot be divorced from it. This means that both faiths relate themselves in a dialectical movement to the text on the basis of a context of faith. It involves coming to the Biblical text from tradition, and going to the tradition from the text.[103]

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[101] Ibid, 31.

[102] Unless quoting a scholar (such as Childs) who chooses otherwise, I will use the term Hebrew Bible in this project. See the discussion by Childs' student Christopher Seitz: "Old Testament or Hebrew Bible? Some Theological Considerations," in *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1998), 61–74.

[103] Childs, *Crisis*, 121.

Bearing in mind differences mentioned above in the self-understanding of the Jewish and Christian theological contexts, Childs here argues that, so far from theological commitments being a liability for the biblical interpreter, they can be (although not always) good and proper for the task. The attempt in Chapter 3 of this study, for example, to reflect on the Royal Runaways of the Hebrew Bible through the prism of the Carmen Christi in Philippians 2, is not the indefensible imposition of an alien paradigm, but a legitimate and necessary theological enterprise.

Yet immediately complicating this point for the Christian interpreter, Childs also insists that familiarity with the classical exegesis of Judaism is imperative for Christian biblical theology, because "the Old Testament does not 'naturally' unfold into the New Testament. It does not lean toward the New Testament, but the Christian interpretation within its new context is fully dependent on the radical new element in Jesus Christ."[104] The Jewish exegesis of Moses' early life that I will study in chapter 2, then, is also vital, in no way threatening to a Christian reading but clarifying and enriching.

Finally, Childs invokes a theological category to bring into clarity the vexed question about the nature of biblical literature itself, straddling as it does anthropological and theological domains. He writes: "[T]he divine and human dimension remains inseparably intertwined, but in a highly profound, theological manner. Its ontological relation finds its closest analogy in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, truly man and truly God."[105] The ontological mystery at the center of Christianity is thus perceived within biblical literature as well, suggesting that from the vantage of Christian theology, not only is there no contradiction in perceiving the presence of divine involvement in

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[104] Ibid, 122.

[105] Childs, *The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies*, 45.

the production of what is also manifestly a historical artifact, but discerning both immanent and

transcendent significance in biblical texts is quite legitimate; Royal Runaways can speak *both* to

Israel's developing historical sense of self *and* to something deeper about the nature of Israel's

God and the world en toto, without any methodological conflict. Neither reduces to the other. For

if, as many in the Christian tradition have maintained, the essence of theology is the study of the

sacra pagina, then Childs' view simply extends the point by observing that the ontological status

of that *pagina* is identical with its central proposition; the meaning and its mode share a vanishing

point on a theological horizon where immanence and transcendence collapse into one another.[106]

Christian Theology – Many of the specifically Christian aspects of this project have already

been touched on, and here I wish simply to mention three additional scholars who help orient my

approach. One I have already mentioned: Francis X. Clooney, whose alignment with the impulses

of the Second Vatican's pronouncement *Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church*

to Non-Christian Religions I generally share:

> The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards
> with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings
> which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless
> often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. […] The Church, therefore, ex-
> horts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions,
> carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they

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[106] One point at which I differ with Childs, or at least would like to understand his position more clearly, is his discus-
sion of "the stabilization point" of the canonical text, which is not to be confused with the Masoretic text. (Childs,
Introduction, 84–106.) Perhaps in an effort to distinguish his position from Catholic theology, Childs seems to accord
integrity to the process of literary and textual development *up to* the stabilization point (with the divine imprimatur),
after which it is withdrawn. He might be seen here to espouse a sort of untenable "canon mysticism" (the phrase is
James Barr's, from *The Concept of Biblical Theology*), although to be fair, Childs is clear at many points about the
fundamentally *theological* judgements upon which his whole approach depends. In effect, Childs seems to be saying:
"Every methodology presupposes a nonfalsifiable first principle, and this is mine. It is a theological, not an empirical,
judgment." If Childs' theory works, it has the benefit (especially, and no doubt intentionally, for Protestants) of hon-
oring without canonizing the post-biblical theological tradition. Yet everything hinges on a mysterious and irretriev-
able textual moment sometime in the Roman period, distinct from the discredited Council of Jamnia… and apparently
the just must still live by faith.

recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.[107]

Clooney's approach is also useful because he does not marginalize a scholar's religious commitments ("Comparative theology must not be confused with comparative religion, since faith is a necessary and explicit factor in the former and not in the latter, where its influence might even be ruled out"[108]) and practices what he preaches, having produced many thoughtful models of comparative theology in action.[109] All of these factors relate to what I hope to do here.

Second, Walter Moberly, and for several reasons. The first is his insistence, in a moving chapter on the encounter between the risen Christ and the disciples on the way to Emmaus in Luke 24, that "[t]o suppose that there must be something somewhere which would somehow make true life easier than the demanding, transformative, moral and spiritual categories of Israel's scriptures is, according to Luke's gospel, a delusion. […] A permanent hermeneutical dialectic between Israel's scripture and Jesus is established."[110] I endorse this wholeheartedly, and will situate my New Testament exegesis squarely within such a dialectic. The second reason is that, like Clooney, Moberly acknowledges that approaching the Bible with neutrality is both unfeasible and undesirable.[111] Third, his remark is well taken that "no glib answers are possible" to objections about the

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[107] *Nostra Aetate*, Paragraph 2. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html. Accessed 8 October 2020. The Protestant doctrine of "common grace" strikes a similar chord; cf. Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 17.

[108] Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 12.

[109] See, for example, Francis X. Clooney, *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother: Hindu Goddesses and the Virgin Mary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); ibid, *Reading the Hindu and Christian Classics: Why and How Deep Learning Still Matters*, Richard Lectures (Charlottesville, VA.: University of Virginia Press, 2019).

[110] R. W. L. Moberly, "Christ as the Key to Scripture: the Journey to Emmaus," in *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 68, 61.

[111] "Thus we return to the thesis that the understanding of scripture is inseparable from appropriate contexts of faith and life as a whole. This does not mean that the Bible cannot be studied from perspectives other than those of Christian faith. Quite the contrary: one can study questions of language, poetics, history, ideology, and so on, with little or no reference to the question of God. But in so far as people try to engage with the bigger questions of what it is that the

Church's "delusive and dehumanizing claims of privileged understanding" of the Bible.[112] Fourth, and still reflecting on the appearance and disappearance of the risen Christ to the disciples in the context of breaking bread, Moberly observes that "[t]he language [in Luke 24] may be designed to suggest not that the risen Christ goes away, but that the spiritual reality to which the disciples' eyes were opened is such that full seeing can only be momentary."[113] The type of seeing the Bible inculcates is not something *fixed*, but something that *flashes*, a point relevant to the type of "knowledge" this project seeks to pursue—not a knowledge coextensive with and indistinguishable from power, as perhaps is the case in some domains, but a sort that is paradoxically coextensive with powerlessness; a knowing that is also a being known, a grasping that is first and primarily a being grasped.[114] Still, as Moberly continues, "the text clearly implies that the momentariness of the vision does not matter, since the grasp of its content may be enduring."[115] The mode of theological seeing must therefore strive to be commensurate with its momentary-yet-enduring object of analysis.[116]

Bible as a whole, or at least significant parts of it, says and means, what they make of it will always relate to their wider understanding of what life is about. […F]or the Christian, good interpretation will be indebted not only to the mastery of the necessary intellectual disciplines and to continuing dialogue with other interpreters but also to a 'eucharistic' practice of life (whose implications can be as broad as eucharistic theologies usually are) which continues the way of Jesus." Ibid, 66.

[112] Ibid, 65.

[113] Ibid, 62.

[114] Compare Levenson's statement, in a discussion about the love of God and human suffering: "Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? The answer lies in recognizing the infinite gap between divine 'knowledge' and what people designate by the same term." Jon D. Levenson, *The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2016), 171. Cf. I Corinthians 8:2–3, 13:12, etc.

[115] Moberly, 62.

[116] Cf. T. F. Torrance's contention that "for a discipline to be 'scientific' our methods must be in accord with the nature of the object being studied: the object of study influences, if not determines, the methods used in the study of it." Quoted in Mark S. Gignilliat, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs*

Finally, Gary Anderson's *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament: Theology in the Service of Biblical Exegesis*[117] provides helpful theory and implementation of a non-systematic, *ad hoc* interaction between biblical exegesis and the doctrinal formulations of the church. On the magisterial side, the essence of his method is to scrutinize the internal logic of a doctrine, seeking to understand what was at stake for the historical theologians who first taught it. For example, in a chapter querying the potential biblical origins of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, Anderson recalls that the matter purgatory originally addressed was not metaphysical speculation about post-mortem sojournings, but rather pastoral questions about sanctification—a matter on which the Hebrew Bible has things to say. For Anderson, an informed understanding of both doctrinal theology and biblical exegesis is requisite for their productive interaction, although he notes that many of his colleagues are trained in only one of these disciplines, at the cost of misconstruing and marginalizing the other. Continuing the legacy of Brevard Childs, Anderson seeks creatively to mend this disciplinary fissure, a model that will be helpful as I attempt in Chapters 3 and 4 to correlate Christian theological doctrines of kenosis with sensitive biblical exegesis; it may turn out that later metaphysical accretions to kenotic theology belie its original meaning.

(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 174. Cf. also, in ways, Mayra Rivera's *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

[117] Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

2. Prior Research into the Motif of Royal Runaways

Extra-Biblical Royal Runaways

As the first pages of this chapter mentioned, what I have been referring to as Royal Runaways is a trope whose widespread literary and cultural representation intrigues me.[118] Repeated exposure to it outside biblical literature, in fact, sensitized me to its presence and role within the Bible. The motif is necessarily elastic, its boundaries porous; yet feasible variations appear in classics such as Homer's *Odyssey* (c. 8th century BCE) and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869); children's books like George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* (1943); adventure stories such as Samuel Johnson's *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (1759)*,* Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880), Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), and T. H. White's Arthurian update, *The Sword in the Stone* (1938); Disney animations frequently adapted to live-action blockbusters such as *The Jungle Book* (1967, 2016[119]), *The Little Mermaid* (1989[120]), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991, 2017[121]),

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[118] Compare Clooney's experience of comparative theology's origin: "It ordinary starts with the intuition of an intriguing resemblance that prompts us to place two realities—texts, images, practices, doctrines, persons—near one another, so that they may be seen over and again, side by side. In this necessarily arbitrary and intuitive practice we understand each differently because the other is near, and by cumulative insight also begin to comprehend related matters differently too." Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 11. In some sense, it is the nature of the enterprise that there are no clear cut rules; interpreting from one framework to another implies the breaking of frameworks. This is not to say, irresponsibly, that "anything goes," but to acknowledge that comparative work is every bit as much art as science.

[119] Inspired by Rudyard Kipling's 1894 collection of stories by the same title. Information for notes 117–123 is drawn from Wikipedia, accessed 14 October 2020.

[120] Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 story by the same title.

[121] Inspired by a variety of sources, most directly the 1740 fairy tale by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve.

Aladdin (1992, 2019[122]), *The Lion King* (1994, 2019[123]) and *Mulan* (1998, 2020[124]).[125] These are

iterations of the trope of which I am personally aware, having bumped into them quite by accident;

when one consciously begins "researching," many others appear.[126]

      Several historical exemplars of religious significance also suggest themselves as applicable

to the Royal Runaways paradigm. Three in particular interest me, briefly to be sketched in the next

three paragraphs: the 5th century BCE Indian sage Siddhartha Gautama, the 13th century Catholic

friar Francis of Assisi, and, less well-known in the west, the 16th century Hindu mystic and poetess

Mirabai. In their respective traditions each of these figures is highly influential, and the Royal

Runaway characteristics of their story figure prominently in the mythos and message of their life.

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[122] A folktale of disputed origin, often associated with the famous collection *The Arabian Nights*.

[123] An original script. It also, in my view, is the story most closely following the Royal Runaway trajectory.

[124] Inspired by a legendary female warrior in Chinese history, Hua Mulan.

[125] Four of these Royal Runaway-shaped stories have also been developed as successful Broadway musicals: *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Aladdin*. Also, in three of the six mentioned films—*The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, and *Mulan*—it is a princess who leaves the palace; recall here Disney's knack for other princess-themed hits like *Snow White* (1937), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Tangled* (2010), *Frozen* (2013; also now on Broadway), and *Zootopia* (2016). There are, in fact, twelve "Disney Princesses" in the Disney Princess franchise and toy-line, exercising no small influence in childhood cultural imagination; in various ways, they each correspond with the Royal Runaways typology. In my view, Disney's repurposing of older stories allows it to be regarded as a contemporary medium of folklore, in which "the prince/ss leaves the palace" trope has proven a highly profitable (and subtly malleable) plotline—even if many of its "horrifying" origin stories are currently coming under censure. While the interest of this dissertation is not contemporary cultural phenomena, and I will generally avoid such forays, this brief sampling of one company's utilization of Royal Runaways typology is testament to its perennial cultural power. The question this dissertation cares about, rather, is: *why* are such stories powerful at all?

[126] See, for example, extensive catalogue in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, motifs P0–P20. (Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature; a Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, Revised and Enlarged Edition [Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1955].) Of interpretative interest is a treatise by Erasmus of Rotterdam, *The Education of a Christian Prince*: "No other time is so suitable for moulding and improving the prince," Erasmus writes in 1516, "as when he does not yet understand that he is the prince. This time will therefore have to be carefully employed…" (Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019], 6.) This educational notion of "molding the self-understanding of a prince or princess" is an excellent insight into what these stories collectively portray, particularly if Taylor's argument about the transitional structure of moral argument is taken into account. (Compare Leon Kass' thesis about "Educating the Fathers," in *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* [New York: Free Press, 2003].) Erasmus' treatise is rich with relevance for this project, but there will not be space for a thorough interaction.

The biography of the Indian noble Siddhartha Gautama, in a manner similar to that of Jesus of Nazareth, is by turns revered, legendized, transposed, and demythologized.[127] Traditional hagiographies composed centuries after the Buddha's death are of debatable empirical accuracy, as are western impressionistic renderings of a benignly gentle being whose liberation from delusions of guilt-ridden selfhood corresponds delightfully with French psychoanalytics; that is to say, "*which* Buddha?" is as complex a provocation as "*which* Christ?" Complexities notwithstanding, the main lines of Siddhartha Gautama's life are generally agreed upon. Wellborn into the Indian aristocracy of the 5th century BCE (in the heart of what Karl Jaspers termed the Axial Age), the precocious and restless prince was vaulted by a chance encounter with human misery into the life of a mendicant philosopher, living in forests and cowsheds, interacting with the high and low of the Ganges River basin: brahmans and prostitutes, merchants and peasants, and a great many yogis. Searching for liberation from suffering, Siddhartha was heavily engaged in the philosophical discussions of his time; his masterstroke seems to have been departing from a yogic model of self-knowledge in which knower and known are the same. Siddhartha, rather—by all accounts a gifted debater and possessing a charisma that attracted a following—argued for the non-existence of the self, which in time would be clarified in the classic Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*. After his breakthrough under the bodhi tree, the newly awakened one ("buddha") dedicated himself to teaching others, which he did for several decades before his death. Devotional and scholarly literature on

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[127] The following sources were consulted for this paragraph on the direction of Professor Janet Gyatso: Asvaghosa, *Buddhacarita or Acts of the Buddha by Asvaghosa*, trans. E. H. Johnston, Bilingual edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2015); Donald S. Lopez, *From Stone to Flesh: A Short History of the Buddha* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History* (London, New York: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, Ltd, A.A. Knopf, 1927); A. Foucher, *The Life of the Buddha: According to the Ancient Texts and Monuments of India* (Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 1963); Donald S. Lopez, *The Scientific Buddha: His Short and Happy Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Michael Carrithers, *The Buddha: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

the life and teaching of Siddhartha Gautama is enormously developed, and I make no claim to understand it with any depth—particularly in regards to the Buddha's divinity or lack thereof as conceived in different streams of Buddhism. What intrigues me is simply the phenomenon of a major world religion growing up around a high born prince who left his palatial privilege behind, endured a season of suffering and anonymity among *hoi polloi*, and finally assumed a mantle of leadership far in excess of his birthright. Something about this biographical trajectory seems to exercise a cross-cultural, longitudinal appeal, and I am curious what it might be.[128]

Nearly two millennia later, a similar figure in the postbiblical Christian tradition is Francis of Assisi, whose career (in tandem with other 13th century European movements) would signal a move away from the stable life of monks in monasteries toward the ambulating and activist evangelism of a new type of fraternity.[129] As with Siddhartha, renditions of Francis' life fall along a spectrum from, on the one hand, pious 13th century *vitae* of christoform doings and sayings penned by partisan monks, to, on the other hand, equally hagiographic scholarly portraits seeking to recruit Francis as a saintly forerunner of secular humanitarianism and tolerance. Without wading into

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[128] This general narrative shape, we must remember, does not warrant an easy elision with other prototypes. William Propp, for example, notes important divergences between Siddhartha Gautama and the Royal Runaway *par excellence* of the Hebrew Bible, Moses: "The differences between the two stories are telling. Siddhartha's tale is always recounted dramatically, with emphasis on his soft life prior to enlightenment. The Yahwist, however, scarcely hints at this, and spares barely a dozen sentences for the entire incident. Unlike Siddhartha, Moses does not meet misery by accident but seeks it from the start. Moreover, the suffering that moves him is not the unfairness and pain of the entire human condition, but a specific situation of social injustice. He is therefore initially drawn to violence, not escape, as a remedy. Like Siddhartha, Moses forsakes luxury and attains illumination (at a sacred shrub, no less!). But the source of his wisdom is revelation, not introspection. Both men return to their societies to share their experiences. Yet the Israelite solution—Law—differs radically from the Buddha's. There are also fundamental differences between the functions of these stories within Yahwism and Buddhism. The Buddha's enlightenment is a model for the adept. Nowhere, however, does the Torah enjoin imitation of Moses as a religious exercise." Propp, *Exodus*, 165–166.

[129] Sources for this paragraph, compiled with the assistance of Professor Kevin Madigan, include: André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Joseph H. Lynch, *The Medieval Church: A Brief History* (London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2014); Kevin Madigan, *Medieval Christianity: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). I have also consulted the 13th century biographies, available in many editions: *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, *The Legend of Saint Francis by the Three Companions*, both version of Francis' life by Thomas of Celano, and the version of St. Bonaventure.

historiographical matters, it is again the generally accepted shape of his life that is relevant to a study of Royal Runaways. The son of an upwardly mobile, Francophile cloth merchant, Francis (hence the name) was by all accounts an ambitious and popular youth in the Italian mountain town of Assisi whose life was radically altered by injury in battle at the age of twenty, leading to confinement as a prisoner of war. The following years were both spiritually intense and retrospectively obscure, the young man undergoing an extended conversion that involved increasing time alone in the hills, along the pattern of medieval eremitical practice. Rejection of and by his family led to the formation of a loose brotherhood of likeminded men (mirrored by the sororal gathering around Clare, another Assisi aristocrat-turned-mendicant) that over the course of Francis' short but influential career would exponentially grow into a papally-sanctioned order of the Catholic church. After his death, many Franciscans were to reflect on their founder through the periodizing eschatological lens of the 12th century mystic Joachim of Fiore, concluding that Francis' life had been quite literally of epochal significance. Such transcendent claims were likewise made of Siddhartha, and the typological resemblance between the two men's lives is not hard to discern. Is it mere coincidence?

Three centuries later and back on the subcontinent of Siddhartha's achievements, the life of an influential Rajasthani mystic and songwriter in the 16th century followed a similar Royal Runaways path, rendered unique however because the one treading it was a woman.[130] Mirabai, according to legend, was born royal and/or married into royalty, but refused the caste and gender

[130] Prof. Francis X. Clooney helped me locate the following sources on Mirabai: Anath Nath Basu, *Mirabai: Saint and Singer of India, Her Life and Writings*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1934); Robert Bly and Jane Hirshfield, *Mirabai: Ecstatic Poems* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); John Stratton Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices: Mirabai, Surdas, and Kabir in Their Time and Ours* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–180; Nancy M Martin, "Mirabai," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism, Volume IV*. Edited by Knut A. Jacobsen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 288–295; Parita Mukta, *Upholding the Common Life: The Community of Mirabai* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

expectations placed on her, determining instead that her intense loyalty to the god Krishna over-rode those expectations. Ultimately abandoning her regal family to follow a spiritual path, the life of Mirabai is remembered by the bhakti tradition of which she is part as having been characterized by open affiliation with low caste members, miraculous stories of devotion to Krishna, and the only form of spiritual leadership available to her: poetry of exquisite longing and love. Unlike Buddha and Francis, Mirabai apparently did not die, but simply fused with the image of Krishna (although recall the Buddha's nirvana and Francis' stigmata). Following the end of her career, and apart from the volumes of poetry bearing her name,[131] her cultural afterlife is diversely felt: Mira-bai is revered today by the lower caste communities of Saurashtra in western India, and a regular figure in Indian mass media; Gandhi invoked her as the embodiment of *satyagraha* (nonviolent "truth force"), while postcolonial scholarship sees emancipatory potential in Mirabai's example of resistance, compromised only perhaps by her extravagant submission to Krishna. Across such cultural and intellectual demographics her appeal is strong, and again, I simply register my intrigue at the ways her story fits into the Royal Runaway motif.

What is it, exactly, about turning one's back resolutely on the norms of privilege (or being shoved out) that rebounds in these case studies into a nova of spiritual influence? The paradoxical movement here seems not to signify the cancellation so much as the transformation of power, and the answer to the question itself must be couched in the language and concerns of particular traditions. Yet while configurations of question and answer vary, that something analogous is present in stories such as those of Siddhartha Gautama, Francis of Assisi, and Mirabai, and that their lives perform real theological, literary, and devotional work in their respective contexts, seems difficult

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[131] Not all of which may actually come from her. Bhakti authorial conventions are similar in ways to those of ancient Israel, wherein wisdom is affiliated with Solomon, poetry with David, law with Moses, prophecy with Isaiah, etc.

to deny. Moreover, the typological similarity between these historical (if mythically gilded) lives and the works of popular literature and film mentioned at the beginning of this section is likewise hard to gainsay.[132] Without even making recourse, then, to biblical use of the motif, the foregoing evidence alone would merit further inquiry into its deeper mechanism. And the biblical evidence will be considered soon enough. First, though, another theoretical conversation needs to be considered, one that more precisely locates our earlier interaction with narrative theory. For there is a particular type of narrative and a certain sort of character within narrative that have been heavily theorized, and they both bear directly on a study of Royal Runaways: myths and heroes.

Theories of Myths and Heroes

The uncanny mythological landscape into which heroes and heroines traditionally venture is mirrored by a shifting and highly-complex theoretical landscape about the origin, persistence, and function of myths and heroes. This is unsurprising, given the influence such stories have exercised in personal and social self-understanding across many historical contexts; theorists from a range of fields are naturally curious to understand how mythological hero tales refract through their own disciplinary prism. The modern dominance of science (particularly a certain 19th century understanding of the term) has raised the general interpretative question of the domain to which

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[132] Cf. Charles Taylor's insight about "the American tradition of leaving home: the young person has to go out, to leave the parental background, to make his or her own way in the world. In contemporary conditions, this can transpose even into abandoning the political or religions convictions of the parents. And yet we can talk without paradox of an American 'tradition' of leaving home. The young person learns the independent stance, but this stance is also something expected of him or her. Moreover, what an independent stance involves is defined by the culture, in a continuing conversation into which that young person is inducted (and in which the meaning of independence can also alter with time). […] Each young person may take up a stance which is authentically his or her own; but the very possibility of this is enframed in a social understanding of great temporal depth, in fact, in a 'tradition.'" *Sources of the Self*, 39. Such anti-traditional traditions plausibly interact with forces in American culture like Disney Princesses, both reflecting and generating such Royal Runaway figurines.

these stories refer in code.[133] Are the hero's trials, for example, a cipher for pre-scientific conceptualization and manipulation of the natural world as Lord Raglan, a follower of the myth-ritualist James Frazer, argued in his 1936 study *The Hero*?[134] Or perhaps the referent is located somewhere in the hidden dramas of the mind, whether 1) the contradiction-mediating structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss;[135] 2) psychosexual family dynamics, as Freudian disciple Otto Rank concluded in *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, 1909;[136] or 3) the alienation and reintegration of the unconscious mind, as the quasi-Jungian Joseph Campbell sets out in his 1949 study *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*?[137] Or again, perhaps the hagiographic aspect of hero myths is reflective of Paul Ricoeur's distinction between truth as empirical verification and truth as poetic manifestation, with the latter primarily in view?[138] Alternatively, it could be that a fundamentally political reality is at stake, especially when hero myths eventuate in the achievements of a legendary king,[139] or function as a

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[133] See Robert A. Segal's systematic discussion of myth vis-à-vis science, philosophy, religion, ritual, literature, psychology, structure, and politics, in Robert Alan Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[134] Lord Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*, reprint edition (Mineola, N.Y: Dover Publications, 2011). The relation of myth to ritual is, of course, a complex matter that also comes to bear on the study of the Bible. Frank Moore Cross' work classically engages with this question, although he focuses on the contrast of (Canaanite) myth and (Israelite) epic. For a recent multidisciplinary assessment of ritual see Adam B. Seligman, Robert P. Weller, Michael J. Puett, and Bennett Simon, *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[135] See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).

[136] Otto Rank, Lord Raglan, Alan Dundes, *In Quest of the Hero*, ed. Robert A. Segal (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 1–86. Cf. Freud's 1939 hypothesis about *Moses and Monotheism*, which builds on his prior *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930).

[137] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, third edition (Novato, Calif: New World Library, 2008).

[138] Ricoeur's insight is interestingly developed and applied in Rico G. Monge, *Hagiography and Religious Truth: Case Studies in the Abrahamic and Dharmic Traditions* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016).

[139] See Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays In Interpretive Anthropology* (NY: Basic Books, 2008), 122–146; contrast with Foucault's insights regarding the diffuse nature of discursive control in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980); esp. "Truth and Power," 109–133. Regarding the political consequences of

script for socially important rites of passage.[140] But then again, and deliberately inverting all of the above, perhaps all this hero business is simply a foil for the advent of the late modern anti-hero who, in the truly daring move, unmasks the illusory and meaningless triumphs of classical heroes; here is the dystopian hero of malaise, inaction, introspection, subversion.[141] Yet such a disruptive figure stands in tension with—if not ironic commentary on—the recent explosion in the film

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exceptional heroes, see the influential 1922 work of German jurist Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 36–52.

[140] See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977); Caroline Bynum, "Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality," in Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (Cambridge, MA.: Zone Books, 1991), 27–51. Cf. Taylor: "[I]n the enthroning ritual of the king in various African societies, the candidate must pass through an ordeal, in which he is reviled, hectored, and even kicked and shoved by his subjects to be." *Secular Age*, 48. "There is a parallel […] between the demands of discipline and those of warrior training, in the distance they demand from certain intimate relations." Ibid, 249. "Breaking out of the confines of the all-too-human order can be a condition of finding God; but the very same act exposes one to all the destructive forces which that order binds. The struggle with demons in lonely places is repeated again and again in the lives of the saints." Ibid, 336. Cf. Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder* (New York: Random House, 2014), a statistician and risk analyst who regards misfortune as benefitting a wide variety of economic and biological systems, and even love: "Logically, the exact opposite of a 'fragile' parcel would be a package on which one has written 'please mishandle' or 'please handle carelessly.' Its contents would not just be unbreakable, but would benefit from shocks and a wide array of trauma. The fragile is the package that would be *at best* unharmed, the robust [or resilient] would be *at best* and *at worst* unharmed. And the opposite of fragile is therefore what is *at worst* unharmed. […] Crucially, if antifragility is the property of all those natural (and complex) systems that have survived, depriving these systems of volatility, randomness, and stressors will harm them. They will weaken, die, or blow up. We have been fragilizing the economy, our health, political life, education, almost everything…by suppressing randomness and volatility […] While in the past people of rank or status were those and only those who took risks, who had the downside for their actions, and heroes were those who did so for the sake of others, today the exact reverse is taking place. We are witnessing the rise of a new class of inverse heroes, that is, bureaucrats, bankers […] To counter success, you need a high offsetting dose of robustness, even high doses of antifragility. You want to be Phoenix, or possibly Hydra. Otherwise the sword of Damocles will get you. […] It is quite perplexing that those from whom we have benefited the most aren't those who have tried to help us (say with 'advice') but rather those who have actively tried—but eventually failed—to harm us. […] What a tourist is in relation to an adventurer, or a flâneur, touristification is to life; it consists in converting activities, and not just travel, into the equivalent of a script like those followed by actors. We will see how touristification castrates systems and organisms that like uncertainty by sucking randomness out of them to the last drop—while providing them with the illusion of benefit. […] If antifragility is what wakes up and overreacts and overcompensates to stressors and damage, then one of the most antifragile things you will find outside economic life is a certain brand of refractory love (or hate), one that seems to overreact and overcompensate for impediments such as distance, family incompatibilities, and every conscious attempt to kill it. Taleb, *Antifragile*, 31, 5–6, 34, 53, 63, 48–9.

[141] See Murat Kadiroğlu, "A Genealogy of Antihero," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 52, no. 2 (2012): 1–18. Cf. the discussion of Humean (≈ utilitarian) vs. Nietzschean (≈ romantic) heroes in Taylor's *A Secular Age*, 600–604.

industry's use of straightforward heroic storylines, a phenomenon whose enormous success is sug-

gestive of Durkheim's "collective effervescence."[142] In brief, from whatever angle the theoretical

landscape of myths and heroes is approached, an ordeal of dragon-guarded riddles and alternative

enchantments is immediately at hand.[143] In fact, a helpful way to come to grips with the sheer

profusion of interpretative possibilities here may be to recall the sinuous history of interpretation

regarding the heroic act to be considered in Chapter 3 of this project.[144]

Fortunately, there is no need to choose. Each of these theories sheds light on aspects of the

myth-hero complex, and the aim of this chapter is neither to contest nor endorse any particular

theory, only to give a sense of various approaches; I will pull freely on them in coming chapters.

Yet taken as a whole, what stands out about the above hypotheses is that they tend to fall within

the ambit of what Charles Taylor calls an "immanent frame,"[145] or Karl Barth's perception of an

anthropocentric turn in theology: the reality model of these theories marginalizes referential po-

tential or causal space for transcendence, for God. This dissertation, being theological, retains the

possibility of such mysterious causality and reference[146]—but not in an exclusive, delimiting way;

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[142] See the proliferation of comic-book superhero themes among highest-grossing film franchises, listed at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_series. Cultural critic Ross Douthat sees in this repetitive (if variously construed) hero plotline "a strange multi-layered exercise in recursion." Ross Douthat, *The Decadent Society: How We Became the Victims of Our Own Success* (New York: Avid Reader Press, 2020), 94.

[143] Although some carefully differentiate between, e.g., folklore, mythology, legend, epic, fairy tale, narrative, etc., this project will not depend on any such taxonomy. With Robert Segal, I am inclined to see (in his case) "myth as simply a story about something significant […] that accomplishes something significant for adherents." Robert Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4–5.

[144] See Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019). In the thread of this present conversation, cf. Alan Dundes "The Hero Pattern and the Life of Jesus" (found at *In Quest of the Hero*, 179–223), which offers a psychoanalytic spin on the crucifixion: Jesus finally undergoing the symbolic castration foisted upon him by his dominant Mediterranean father and smothering mother.

[145] *A Secular Age*, 539–593.

[146] For a Heideggerian hesitation about the capacity of language to disclose anything at all in relation to transcendence, a thoughtful critique which on balance I find unpersuasive, see Peter E. Gordon, "Must the Sacred Be Transcendent?" *Inquiry (Oslo)* 54, no. 2 (2011): 126–139. What I find more compelling is Michael Wyschogrod's argument (*The Body*

recall Brevard Child's textual model outlined above. There is no reason, say, why Paul Ricoeur and Paul of Tarsus cannot both be on to something; the multi-aspectival reality model this dissertation presumes not only accommodates but anticipates such overlay.[147] Movement in the other direction, however, toward various implicit reductions, will be avoided. That would be to saw off theology's proverbial branch for sitting.

On another note, before concluding this section I should be a bit more specific about how I intend to approach the issue of heroic typology—the lumping together of multiple figures into a single type—which figures prominently in some of the above discussions. *The Golden Bough*, for example, James Frazer's massive twelve-volume "study in magic and religion" from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, makes much of recurrent dying and rising gods in global folklore, a trope Frazer saw as indexing to the earth's seasonal cycles. Uncomfortable with the synthetic enthusiasm of Frazer, however—his lack of contextual nuance and the colonial classifications his project enabled—subsequent generations of scholars have sat loose to his work. Contesting the Frazerian category in religious studies, for example, were J. Z. Smith in *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* and Mark S. Smith, "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods' in the Biblical World."[148] Scholarly concern to foreground difference,

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of Faith: God and the People of Israel [Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1996], 125–172) contra Heidegger that situates ontology (and by extension, language and transcendence) within the theology of creation, arguing that "Hashem is not the foundation of being: he is the creator of being," 167.

[147] Gottlieb and Wineburg (cf. note 93 above) observe that regarding "Causal explanation," academic history proceeds on the assumption of "Everything but God" whereas sacred history assumes "God and everything else," ("Between *Veritas* and *Communitas*," 112). Regarding "Time," academic history assumes "Ontological singularity" whereas sacred history assumes "Ontological multiplicity"; regarding "Reason," academic history assumes "Unlimited" reason, whereas sacred history assumes "Constrained" reason; regarding the "Stance of knower," academic history assumes an "Objective" knower, whereas sacred history relies on an "Engaged" knower. Ibid. These are all dimensions of what I mean above by a "multi-aspectival reality"; sacred history, while keen to weigh the explanatory variables of academic history, regards them as necessary but insufficient for coming to terms with our uncanny world.

[148] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Mark S. Smith, "The Death of 'Dying and Rising Gods' in the Biblical

part of larger post-structuralist and post-colonial movements in the second half of the 20th century, rendered Frazer-style typology unwelcome. A new century, however, has witnessed a moderating approach, seeking to strike a balance that retains both the kernel of Frazer's insight and the concerns of later scholars. In *The Riddle of Resurrection: "Dying and Rising Gods" in the Ancient Near East*,[149] Swedish scholar Tryggve Mettinger appeals to Weberian ideal types (*Idealtypus*) to discern a family resemblance between certain divine figures in Northwest Semitic cults, without necessarily assuming a genetic relationship between them. "Structural analogies may, however, occur," Mettinger cautiously argues, "and these may be of the kind to indicate that we are, in specific cases, confronted with the results of contact and influence."[150] Within the literary world of the Bible such contact and influence between characters is not disputed; what is helpful in Mettinger's position, rather, is his nuanced middle ground that neither overextends the method of comparison as does Frazier, nor calls it fundamentally into question. This project will seek to follow such a careful, balanced approach in regards to heroic typology.[151]

World: An Update, with Special Reference to Baal in the Baal Cycle," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament : SJOT* 12, no. 2 (1998): 257–313. These works from the 1990s argue that the historical picture was actually less cohesive than Frazer's typology suggested, with gods who return without ever really dying, and gods who die without ever really rising, etc. The nature of the cults surrounding these gods was also quite diverse.

[149] Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001.

[150] Mettinger, 41.

[151] Concerning the analogue between dying and rising gods and Jesus of Nazareth, often appealed to for different purposes, a nuanced theological approach is necessary. On the one hand, cross-cultural evidence of the trope can be seen as affirming a central dynamic of revelation, and to be "good dreams" (G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis) or reflections of that reality. In this sense, the comparison of Jesus to dying and rising gods is merited and welcomed. (Often there are platonic correspondence models at play here, shadowy iterations of an ideal reality, although the matter-dignifying doctrines of incarnation, resurrection, and new creation are starkly non-platonic.) On the other hand, while such dying and rising gods usually traversed the cycle every year with the seasonal changes—and, as the Smiths pointed out in the 1990s, may not really have been thought to die at all in the process—the Christ event is held to be irreducibly historical. The point at which "the Christ myth" is interpreted as another instance of dying and rising gods is the point at which the sheer facticity of the Christian claim is tested—a facticity that, in contrast with myths occurring primarily in mythological time and heavenly realms, turns on brutal facts of historical life such as forced migration, diseases associated with poverty, state execution, etc. Moreover, the interpretation of dying and rising gods as cultic embodiments of nature's rhythms only begs the ontological question: Why should nature be such that it includes an annual eruption of new vitality and beauty (i.e. spring)? Why should reality be *this* way as opposed to some other

3. Preview of Chapters and Argument

To conclude this introductory chapter it will be helpful to see how the larger argument will develop in remaining chapters.

"Chapter 2: Mosaics of Israel" – This chapter will discuss Exodus 2 in its Ancient Near Eastern context (i.e., the Sargon story), broadening from there to consider parallels within the Hebrew Bible. Among exegetes I will engage are Yair Zakovitch and Dale C. Allison Jr., both of whom argue from granular textual details that many biblical figures are modeled on the pattern of Moses, the hero of the Exodus.[152] This connection between Moses and the Exodus is an important indication that the theological argument made by such recurring literary "Mosaics" is not necessarily in service to the glorification of any particular Israelite leader, but testifies rather to the centrality of the Exodus in biblical imagination, the national salvation that demonstrates the covenantal faithfulness of Israel's God. Because, however, Moses and the Exodus cast such a wide shadow across Israel's scriptures, this chapter will be circumscribed to textual and theological dynamics bearing on the Royal Runaways theme; in particular, because Chapter 3 focuses on Christian kenotic theology, my engagements here will focus on literary moments when the protagonist "leaves the palace." Such a delimitation will prevent the exegesis from sprawling over much.

After analyzing the biblical material, I will turn to select Second Temple and early Rabbinic expansions on the story of Moses' early life—e.g. Philo, Josephus, the New Testament, *Exodus*

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way? From a theological perspective, the metaphysical assumptions of naturalism are by no means self-evident. In sum, then, while there are indeed parallels between Christ and the historical motif of dying and rising gods, the similarity can only be pressed so far before falsifying both sides of the comparison. Perhaps within the ambit of this vexed issue the force of Tolkien's saying is felt, that Christianity is a "true myth."

[152] Yair Zakovitch, "The Many Covert Faces of the Exodus Pattern," in *"And You Shall Tell Your Son…" The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of Hebrew University, 1991) 46–98. Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

Rabbah, Jubilees—paying attention both to notable changes in the persona of Moses at and around the moment when he leaves the palace, and also asking how such construals may have contributed to the self-conception of post-biblical tradents. These works, in turn, will provide an external vantage from which to look back on the biblical text and ask how its portrait of Moses the Royal Runaway is distinctive. The direction of this inquiry is here: the future leader of an exiled people is first a deeply exiled prince.

"Chapter 3: A Runaway God? Christian Kenotic Theology and its Narrative Sources in the Hebrew Bible" – Chapter 3 will move forward from a curious fact: while the category of Christian theology seemingly most well-equipped to make sense of Royal Runaway stories is kenosis, the voluntary self-emptying of God in Jesus Christ, the preponderance of theological reflection in this area has made little use of the pervasive narrative typology in the Hebrew Bible that seems to have made kenosis a viable Christian theme in the first place.[153] Instead, kenotic theology has regularly invested in metaphysical questions about the nature of Christ (e.g., is it the human Jesus or the eternally preexistent Son who self-empties, and in what manner are these "two natures" connected?) while neglecting literary techniques typical of the Second Temple period and their attendant strategies of generating theological meaning; this is particularly the case in the "Christ

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[153] Especially in this chapter will I need to be mindful of the pitfalls of an overly-circular Christian hermeneutic. Yet I take as axiomatic that the New Testament, as Second Temple Jewish literature, is (among other things) a collection of writings deeply infused with the sensibilities, expectations, and communicative techniques of Israel's scriptures. Hence, among the goals of Chapter 3 will be to argue that what comes to be called "kenosis" in Christian thought is a direct, if perhaps strangely mutant, outgrowth of the Hebrew Bible. Although an overly-strained contrast between "Hebrew thought" and "Greek thought" was well-contested decades ago by James Barr et al, sourced as it was in shaky linguistic and historical arguments, it remains the case that something fundamental was lost when the church forgot Hebrew—not just the linguistic forms, but the paratactic poeticism of the Hebrew Bible's theological vision (cf. the still relevant work by Edwin Hatch, the Oxford Hibbert Lectures of 1889: *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* [London: Williams and Norgate, 1890]). Kenosis, after all, is a Greek word, and although its New Testament usage may come from the pen of a Jewish writer (Philippians 2:7; cf. I Corinthians 1:17, 9:15; II Corinthians 9:3), it was soon taken in characteristically hellenistic philosophical directions. A nuanced stance is necessary here, analogous to Mettinger vis-à-vis Frazer and the Smiths. Much more on these and related issues in Chapter 3.

Hymn" or "Carmen Christi" of Philippians 2:6–11, the *locus classicus* of kenotic theory. Grounded in the exegetical work of the previous chapter, and interacting with recent work in New Testament studies also alive to this strange lacuna, this chapter will make a case for the indebtedness of Christian kenotic theology (and theological exegesis of Philippians 2:6–11 in particular) to the Royal Runaways theme of the Hebrew Bible.

"Chapter 4: From The Love of Power to The Power of Love" – Drawing together the foregoing chapters and seeking to reflect theologically on their deeper dynamics, this final chapter will argue that one transformation undergone by Royal Runaways in their long wanderings and struggles, and a prerequisite to their eventual exaltation, is a spiritual inversion perhaps expressed this way: from the love of power to the power of love.[154] Kenosis, I will argue, does important work within what is in fact a twofold transformation at the dynamic core of the Royal Runaways theme: a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between power and love and a transvaluation of what power and love actually mean—their origin, nature, scope, modes, and purpose. A disciplined theological reflection in dialogue with thinkers in the Jewish and Christian traditions, the concluding chapter will thus aim to respond to the curiosity with which I began: why do humans repeatedly tell variations of *this* story and, what is more, incorporate it into their scriptural or foundational literatures?

To be clear, I do not understand this project as discerning a fundamentally new pattern in the Bible or human culture, as if thousands of years of thoughtful study has been blind to what I am calling Royal Runaways. Rather, I consider this project to be in conversation with traditions

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[154] Inspiration for this phrase comes from Prof. Volf. In *Exclusion and Embrace*, Volf writes of the confrontation between Jesus and Pontius Pilate: "In the exchange with Pilate, Jesus argues against 'the truth of power' and for 'the power of truth.'" Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 266. In the same passage, Volf makes a statement also influential on the trajectory of my concluding chapter: "Jesus does not refuse the title 'king' but alters its content." Ibid.

that have long noted themes of self-sacrifice, loving obedience, and faith in the presence of the impossible. "Royal Runaways" is just a particular way of talking about these themes, of seeing them in a certain angle of light. The contribution to "research" of this project, then, should there be any, falls within the ambit of a comment by Charles Taylor that captures the spirit of the present exercise in biblical theology: "We have to fight uphill to rediscover the obvious, to counteract the layers of suppression of modern moral consciousness. It's a difficult thing to do. But what is the point of doing it?"[155]

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[155] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 90.

Chapter Two – Mosaics of Israel

1. Introduction: Why Moses?

> The Holy One (blessed be He![1]) said to Israel: I set My heart on you because even when I bestow greatness on you, you make yourselves small before Me. I bestowed greatness on Abraham, and he said, "I am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27); on Moses and Aaron, and he [Moses] said, "We are nothing" (Exodus 16:8); on David, and he said, "But I am a worm, less than human" (Psalm 22:7).[2]

This rabbinic teaching is a good place to begin a discussion of Royal Runaways in the Bible, because it contains two important insights. The first is the basic interpretative maneuver of identifying a single theme playing out across multiple biblical biographies, a mode of reading central to my exegetical and theological argument.[3] The second pertains to the subject matter of the argument itself, namely, that there exists a pervasive and theologically-rich dialectic in the canonical account of Israel's ancestors between greatness and smallness, highness and lowness, exaltation and humiliation. According to this Talmudic passage, the justification of God's special love for Israel is precisely the ancestors' realization that no amount of worldly status or power could alter their fundamental insignificance before YHWH. The counterintuitive insight is that, for the patriarchs, avowal of their own nothingness became the foundation of the gracious something-ness God chose to create in and through them.

This paradoxical yet constitutive servitude of exalted biblical figures such as Abraham, Moses, and David is directed not only toward YHWH, but toward the people of YHWH as well, and

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[1] Out of deference to historical sources referring to God as grammatically masculine, I will observe the same.

[2] Babylonian Talmud, *Hullin* 89b; reproduced from handout at Jon Levenson's 24 March 2015 presentation at Harvard Hillel. Regarding this text, Levenson writes in an endnote: "I have changed the wording in some of the biblical citations in order to bring out the meaning the rabbinic texts see in them."

[3] See Chapter 1's discussion of comparative analysis.

this is of central importance. For example, in "The King as the Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea," Moshe Weinfeld makes the historical case that the concept of monarchy as a "noble servitude," often credited to the Greek statesman Antigonos Gonatas (320–239 BCE), is actually present in earlier biblical passages such as I Kings 12.[4] The context of this story from the deuteronomic history is the royal succession following the death of Solomon. Rehoboam, the new king, is petitioned by his subjects to lighten the forced labor placed on them by his father. Requesting time to ponder a decision, Rehoboam consults two groups of advisors: the old men (זקנים) who had counselled Solomon, and the young men (ילדים, literally "children") who had been his playmates. The greybeards advise the king according to the rabbis' inverting logic of exaltation and humiliation: "If you will be a servant (עבד) to this people today and serve them (ועבדתם), and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants (עבדים) forever" (I Kings 12:7).[5] The envisaged reciprocity of service is to be initiated by the king himself; the qualification for holding such high office is to make himself low and humble before the people, who will in turn be loyal subjects.[6]

This model of rulership has precedent in the Torah, as Weinfeld points out: "The association of monarchy with servitude in Israel was not an abstract idea. In Deuteronomy 17:23, the king is required 'not to act haughtily toward his fellows [לבלתי רום-לבבו מאחיו]."[7] Tragically, Rehoboam follows the advice of his callow friends, and not only refuses to relax conscription but pledges to

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[4] Moshe Weinfeld, "The King as the Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, no. 1–2 (1982): 189–194.

[5] Biblical translations, unless otherwise noted, are from the English Standard Version.

[6] The advice of the elders simply restates the bargain proposed by the people and Jeroboam in 12:4, "Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father (עבודת אביך) and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you (ונעבדך)."

[7] Weinfeld, 192. The "association of monarchy with servitude in Israel" is a theme the New Testament will push to its extreme limit, as Chapter 3 will analyze: the ultimate King, YHWH, becomes the ultimate servant.

intensify it: "My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions" (12:14).[8] Outraged by this harsh reply, the people rebel against the Davidic scion, and thus the failure of a king to follow the paradigm of servitude becomes the wedge cleaving Israel into northern and southern kingdoms, a schism that will endure until their respective exiles.[9]

Instructive as it is, Weinfeld's article may focus on the origins of humble political leadership[10] at the expense of overlooking the more basic biblical notion of servitude to YHWH. For if

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[8] This outcome is anticipated in the MT by a subtle shift in the question Rehoboam poses to the two groups of advisors. To the elders, Rehoboam asks simply how to answer (להשיב, 12:6), whereas to his peers Rehoboam asks inclusively "how shall *we* respond (נשיב, 12:9). His loyalties are already clear from the primed question. (The Septuagint, Peshitta, and Vulgate do not include this nuance, rendering perhaps אשיב from their *Vorlage*.) This, in turn, suggests a deeper irony and theological message of the passage. From the perspective of the Hebrew Bible's final form, the irony is that Rehoboam, as Solomon's son, is quite literally the ideal reader of the book of Proverbs, yet he has failed to abide the repeated warnings of that book to resist the influence of violent and wrongheaded gangs (e.g., Proverbs 1:10–19; 2:12–15; 3:28–35; 4:14–17). The theological lesson is in keeping with the rabbinic insight about the attitude of Abraham, Moses, and David, whose response to greatness was humility: the little children in the passage want to assert themselves as large and important (the tone of ילדים, repeated in vv. 8, 10, and 14, is mocking), whereas the truly important ones (having counselled the legendary Solomon) suggest the low road of humble service.

[9] In the biblical account, the reasoning for the schism goes beyond Rehoboam's arrogance. I Kings 12:15 indicates that it was a "turn of affairs" (סבה) brought about by the LORD in order to confirm an earlier prophetic word. The failures of Solomon himself (amassing horses, women, etc., in violation of Deuteronomy 17:16–17) also contribute to the rationale of the kingdom's split. And from a still wider angle, themes of sibling rivalry and fractured families have their source in the foundational narratives of Genesis. So while it is perhaps of theological significance that Israel's formal split is traced to the moment when a king chooses arrogance over humility, the importance of that exact moment should not be overstated.

On a related matter, this is as good a place as any to mention several important studies on monarchy as an institution in ancient Israel, attuned to the conditions and critiques under which it existed: Reinhard Müller, "Righteous Kings, Evil Kings, and Israel's Non-Monarchic Identity: Different Voices on the Failure of Israelite Kingship in the Book of Kings," in *History, Memory, Hebrew Scriptures: A Festschrift for Ehud Ben Zvi*, eds. Ian Douglas Wilson and Diana V. Edelman (Winona Lake: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 77–89; idem, "Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik," Forschungen zum Alten Testament. 2. Reihe 3 (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Frank H. Polak, "Speaking of Kingship: The Institution of the Monarchy in Israel—Negotiations, Historical Memory and Social Drama," in *Religious Responses to Political Crises in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, eds. H. Graf Reventlow and Y. Hoffman (London: T&T Clark International: 2008), 3–17; Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 49 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978); Frank Moore Cross, "The Ideologies of Kingship in the Era of the Empire: Conditional Covenant and Eternal Decree," in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 219–73. These are largely historical assessments of how pro- and anti-monarchical factions from pre- and post-exilic Israel are represented in the biblical text; the present study, by contrast, is more interested in how kingship is regarded theologically in the Hebrew Bible, a question first raised in Genesis 1–3. The studies mentioned here do not generally consider the matter from this angle.

[10] The aim of his argument is to disprove the claim that the concept of monarchy as "noble servitude" began in ancient Greece. Were the discussion expanded, however, to the history of noble servitude in general, of interest might be the later French notion of *noblesse oblige*, meaning that "privilege entails responsibility" (*Oxford English Dictionary*,

reciprocity obtains in the political realm between ruler and subjects, as Weinfeld notes,[11] it is even more active in the covenantal relationship between God and Israel: Israel *serves* YHWH, and YHWH *saves* Israel. Mutual faithfulness is the structure of the relationship,[12] and in the Hebrew Bible the foundational moment of YHWH's faithfulness to Israel is the Exodus. Why, we may ask, did God determine to free Israel from bondage in Egypt? Among the places an answer to this question is found is the end of Moses' first commissioning, in Exodus 4: "[Y]ou shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me [ויעבדני]'" (Exod. 4:22–23). Israel is thus saved by YHWH *in order that* YHWH may be served by Israel.[13] When this reasoning is coupled with the rabbinic explanation of why God loves Israel ("I set My heart on you *because* even when I bestow greatness on you, you make yourselves small before Me"), a dialectic emerges whereby Israel's humble service to God is both cause and

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retrieved via HOLLIS), or even the Latin origin of the term *generous*: "Of noble or aristocratic lineage; high-born. […] Now in weakened sense: unselfish, magnanimous, kind" (*OED*). The basic idea is that "generosity" is the essential disposition of the upper class; the well-born know how to give, to serve others. Or consider the English "lead," related to the German *leiten*, "to lead" and *leiden*, "to suffer"; the Indo-European root behind these terms, *leit-*, includes the meaning "to go forth, die," suggesting a connection between leadership, suffering, and death (W.W. Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959; 2006], 333; American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots, https://ahdictionary.com/word/indoeurop.html, accessed 28 September 2020). Compare the biblical נְדָבָה, "free motivation […] voluntary offering" and נָדִיב, "one who distributes according to his own will, the nobleman" (Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Leiden; Brill, 1994–2000], digital; from here on, HALOT). To be sure, etymology only goes so far, and can be abused. Yet Emerson was not entirely off the mark when he said that "though the origin of most of our words is forgotten, each word was at first a stroke of genius […] The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry." Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and English Traits*, The Harvard Classics (New York: P. F. Collier, 1909), 171.

[11] "The ideology of reciprocal devotion between king and people underlies the counsel of the Judaean elders to King Ptolemy in the symposia in the letter of Aristeas." Weinfeld, 191.

[12] A central argument of Levenson's *The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[13] The covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is also of determinative importance (Exodus 2:24, etc.). For development of the often-overlooked theme of Israel's servitude to God, and how it contrasts with certain contemporary readings of the biblical Exodus, see Jon D. Levenson, "Exodus and Liberation," in *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 127–59.

consequence of God's salvation of Israel—a dialectic that applies not only to kings, but to all Israel.

Be that as it may, the Hebrew Bible does regularly telescope the identity of corporate Israel into a single individual, and in this regard, if the foundational event in Israel's history is the Exodus, then the hero of the Exodus is also a foundational figure: Moses, servant of YHWH.[14] This project's study of biblical Royal Runaways will therefore be oriented toward the person of Moses, as he is nearly synonymous with God's saving act on behalf of Israel—and not just in the past, but in the future as well. Michael Fishbane, for example, discussing the multiple ways in which the Exodus functions as the Hebrew Bible's "paradigm of historical renewal," concludes here:

> The simultaneous capacity of the exodus paradigm to elicit memory and expectation, recollection and anticipation, discloses once again its deep embeddedness as a fundamental structure of the biblical historical imagination. But it further discloses just what is so variously and diffusely indicated elsewhere in the Bible; namely, that the events of history are prismatic openings to the transhistorical. Indeed, the very capacity of a historical event to generate future expectation is dependent on the transfiguration of that event by the theological intuition that in it and through it the once and future power of the Lord of history is revealed. Without such a symbolic transformation, the exodus would never have given birth to hope.[15]

The Exodus, then, is an event that is more than an event, but also a promise. Retrospectively anchored to the imagery of creation,[16] it prospectively anticipates messianic salvation as well.[17] Time

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[14] Although it will be revisited later, I make no assertion here about Moses as *the* servant of YHWH, or as a *suffering* servant; Moses' servitude matters here because of the way it agrees with the rabbinic paradigm regarding the meritorious response to divine exaltation of self-abasement. Moses is referred to by the full title "servant of YHWH," עבד יהוה (as opposed to forms like עבדי, "my servant"), in Exodus 14:31; Deuteronomy 34:5; Joshua 1:1, 13, 15; 8:31, 33; 11:12; 12:6; 13:8; 14:7; 18:7; 22:2, 4–5; II Kings 18:12; II Chronicles 1:3; 24:6; as "servant of God," עבד אלהים, in Daniel 9:11; Nehemiah 10:13, 30; I Chronicles 6:34; II Chronicles 24:9. In Chapter 3 it will be argued that Christian reflection on the mysterious Isaianic servant(s) has insufficiently considered this figure's strong evocations of Moses.

[15] Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 140.

[16] Fishbane, 127.

[17] Fishbane, 129.

itself (along with who- or whatever is beyond time) is in its theological purview—"the events of history are prismatic openings to the transhistorical." Hence, if the recurring Royal Runaways motif has anything fundamental to communicate within the Bible, it would likely be a Royal Runaway figure in close proximity to this foundational moment of Israel's past salvation and future hope.[18] No one, of course, is more affiliated with the Exodus than Moses.

Thus, and secondly, this study will focus on Moses because many other characters in the Hebrew Bible are presented as bearing strong resemblances to him. Given that Moses has the longest biography[19] in the Hebrew Bible—encompassing four-fifths of the Pentateuch, from the first pages of Exodus to the final pages of Deuteronomy—there is much material to work with. Among those who have paid attention to the many Moses lookalikes in the Bible is New Testament scholar Dale Allison Jr.; in a monograph addressing the issue, he writes:

> Moses served as a well-used type because he was many things, an occupier of several offices. Joshua and Josiah were likened to Moses because they, like he, were leaders or kings. Gideon and the Messiah became Mosaic because of their character as saviors or deliverers. Ezra, Ezekiel, and Hillel had the lawgiver as their type because they were teachers or revealers. And Jeremiah and the servant of Deutero-Isaiah naturally came to be stamped with Mosaic features because they were intercessors and suffering prophets.[20]

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[18] Recall the typological connection made by William Propp (mentioned above) between Moses' near-death in the Nile and Israel's near-death in the Red Sea. The people and its leader share a watery death-and-resurrection, drawing their respective identities into close alignment. In relation to the larger matter addressed by Fishbane of theologized history, compare Karl Barth's similar "distinction between historicity and historicality. The former has to do with the factuality of the events attested; the latter has to do with the substance or significance of the event. The Bible, for Barth, assumes historicity but emphasizes historicality." Gignilliat, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism*, 174. One of Barth's lodestars makes a similar distinction: "I saw he was a poet when I first laid eyes on him, if for no other reason than an event which, had it happened to a more superficial person, would in time have become nothing, but for him expanded into an earth-shaking event." Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, trans. M. G. Piety (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 81.

[19] Whether the genre of "biography" existed in ancient Near Eastern literature such as the Hebrew Bible is unclear. I use the term loosely, in the sense of "the story of a life."

[20] Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1993), 91.

Grounded in Moses, then, this chapter's objective will be to observe Royal Runaway figures who are also "Mosaics of Israel"—in both the theological and artistic sense of the term: step away from literary minutia in the presentation of figures like Joseph or David, and the broader image that emerges looks not a little like Moses. Because, however, a global evaluation of Moses' influence in the Bible is obviously impossible here (or anywhere, for that matter[21]), and also because the third and fourth chapters of this project will focus specifically on Christian kenotic theology, this chapter's assessment of Mosaics in the Hebrew Bible will be delimited to figures exhibiting the characteristic Royal Runaway trope of "leaving the palace." That is, I wish to study those moments of transition (recall the insight of Charles Taylor regarding the epistemic and moral utility of transitions) when exile begins for an individual, when privilege is renounced and commoners encountered; the downward slope of the U-shaped saga. Later I will argue that this recurrent narrative motif constitutes the imaginative bedrock of the doctrine of kenosis.

The first task, then, will be a close study of the biblical and ancient Near Eastern context of Exodus 2, the chapter of Torah that tells of Moses' birth, upbringing, encounter with enslaved relations, and flight to Midian. I will show how the narrative design of the passage carefully highlights Moses' courage and compassion in leaving Pharaoh's palace and witnessing the harsh conditions of the Hebrew slaves, while he himself is depicted as a "saved savior." Next, I will turn to a handful of Mosaic figures in the Hebrew Bible, comparing their experiences of abnegation with

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[21] Scholarship on Moses is enormous, and I make no pretense of having encountered, or even of being aware of, it all. For example, regarding just one aspect of Moses' biblical portrayal (the prophetic and teleological), see the extensive bibliography in D. Andrew Teeter and Michael A. Lyons, "The One and the Many, the Past and the Future, and the Dynamics of Prospective Analogy: The Servant(s) as the Vindication of Moses and the Prophets," in *Isaiah's Servant(s) and the Exegetical Origins of Early Jewish and Christian Identity,* edited by Michael A. Lyons and Jacob Stromberg (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming 2021). The argument of this article by Teeter and Lyons will contribute to the present study, and interactions with such discrete aspects of scholarship on Moses are what I have in mind here.

Moses' and reflecting on the theological meaning produced by such analogical stories. Last, I will look at several Second Temple sources that address Moses' radical departure from royal life, inquiring if and how such extrabiblical portrayals contribute to theological understanding of the Royal Runaways motif.

2. Exodus 2 in its Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Context

Assessment of Sargon Parallel: Another Floating Foundling

In his commentary on Exodus 2, William Propp observes that Moses' early life exhibits features of two heroic typologies that appear elsewhere in global folklore: the "Floating Foundling" (abandoned to the water as a child, but eventually returning from obscurity to assume the throne) and the "Disillusioned Prince" (the disaffected royal who ventures into the wider world).[22] Rarely are the two combined: most mythic foundlings return as conquering king, rather than leaving or even fleeing the palace as adults; conversely, most disillusioned princes become so because they have been pampered in the palace all their life, rather than growing up in obscurity. The commonality between the typologies, however, is that each involves a dramatic reversal of fortune, and the Exodus narrative of Moses' early life creatively combines aspects of both. An orientation toward Royal Runaways, of course, means that the "Disillusioned Prince" motif of Moses' early life maps more closely with the interests of this project than the "Floating Foundling" motif; be that as it may, before becoming a rebellious royal, Moses is indeed abandoned as a baby to the waters of the Nile, and the resemblance between this episode in Moses' life and the birth legend

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[22] Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 155–158; 165–166.

of an ancient Near Eastern monarch named Sargon has long been noted.[23] This comparison is important to consider, especially in regards to any influence it may have had on the biblical depiction of Moses. As will be seen, the similarities belie not only differences, but direct opposition.

Sargon was a Mesopotamian monarch in the 23rd century BCE. The legend in question, however, dates from much later, unearthed from the royal library in the ruins of Nineveh. The consensus[24] seems to be that Sargon II, a neo-Assyrian monarch of the 8th century BCE, was motivated to valorize his namesake, the original Sargon. The basic elements of the legend are these: Sargon is the son of a high-ranking priestess and an unnamed father (hence, presumed to be either illegitimate or the son of a god), is abandoned to the river in a basket, retrieved and raised by a man named Aqqi (meaning "water bearer"), grows up as a gardener, finds favor with the goddess Ishtar, and returns eventually to his home city of Akkad to rule. Perhaps the most salient parallel with Moses is abandonment to and retrieval from the water,[25] yet Christopher Hays notes how the two stories in fact can be viewed as inverse trajectories: "Moses begins life as a slave, is found and raised by a princess, and then returns to his common roots; Sargon is born to a high priestess, saved

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[23] The text of the Sargon legend is available at W. W. Hallo, K. L. Younger, and William Hallo, *Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions, Monumental Inscriptions and Archival Documents from the Biblical World* (Leiden: BRILL, 2003), 461.

[24] See the state-of-the-question monograph: Brian Lewis, *The Sargon Legend: A Study of the Akkadian Text and the Tale of the Hero Who Was Exposed at Birth* (Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1980). Lewis argues that the Sargon legend was likely the prologue to a law code, although no such adjoining legal text has been recovered. If true, the parallel function of Moses' biography in relation to the Torah is striking.

[25] Propp lists these parallels: "Moses' anonymous parents are identified only by tribal affiliation; Sargon's anonymous parents are identified only by occupation and region. Moses' mother is a Levite, later the priestly class of Israel; Sargon's mother is a priestess. Moses' mother may not keep her child; Sargon's mother may not bear a child at all. Moses' father is inactive; Sargon's father is absent and unknown. Moses and Sargon are both set in or by a periodically inundating river in a reed vessel coated with bitumen. Both accounts resonate with the Flood traditions of their respective civilizations. Both are rescued and adopted by strangers, and come under female protection. Both men are divinely elected to lead their people. Each story has a character whose name or title associates him with drawing from water. As Sargon becomes an apprentice gardener until his election by Ishtar, so Moses becomes an indentured shepherd until called by Yahweh." Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 155–156.

by a workman, and then elevated again by a goddess. The patterns of their ascents and descents are thus mirror images of each other."[26] What we have in Moses is thus not a heartwarming saga of rags-to-riches, but a far stranger tale of riches-to-rags[27]; such contrasts, nearly like photographic negatives in their simultaneous alignment and opposition, suggest that the biblical depiction of power and leadership may in context have been a radical challenge to other contemporary models, a possibility to which we will shortly return.

But first, the main question: was the biblical story of Moses influenced by the Sargon legend? There can be no conclusive answer here, I take it. Theories range along the usual spectrum from a *Religionsgeschichtliche* perception of straightforward Israelite borrowing from regional legends, to traditionalist claims of the Bible's complete unawareness of and disregard for such parallels. Neither extreme is persuasive; a nexus, rather, of cultural diffusion and transformation is a more appropriate model.[28] What is suggestive, however, of a strong differentiation between

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[26] Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 117. Compare Propp, 158: "Whereas the typical hero eventually leaves his lowly environment to assume his rightful glory, Moses flees the Pharaonic court to discover his path first among desert nomads and later among slaves." For someone like Sigmund Freud, whose *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) concludes that Moses was not a Hebrew but an Egyptian renegade murdered by his followers, such a willing rejection of privilege is hard to conceive, and likely fiction; the whole Royal Runaway motif, in fact, is likely suspect on its own terms, and attributable to other psychanalytic factors such as guilt-embellished "memories." It seems to me, however, that such an interpretation is rather like a modern midrash in service to a version of humanism that assumes political power and stifled libido to have the clearest angle on reality.

[27] "[T]he common motif of the exposed child, who is rescued to become king, has been seriously altered. The simple 'rags-to-riches' motif is no longer applicable to Moses. He is not an unknown child who becomes king; rather the whole weight of the story has been shifted. Moses is first 'exalted' and later returns to a position of humility by identifying with his people." Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA.: Westminster Press, 1974), 12.

[28] "[D]irect influence is not impossible. We know that Sargon's fame had spread eastward to Elam, westward to Egypt and northward to Anatolia, so why not to Canaan? Propp, *Exodus*, 158; depending on Lewis, 109–47. It is also possible Sargon is biblically represented in the figure of Nimrod, Genesis 10:8–12 (Peter Machinist, "Nimrod [Person]," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman [New York, NY.: Doubleday, 1992].) Propp continues, 160: "The real explanation for the similarity of the Mesopotamian and biblical traditions is probably more complicated. […] In short, Exodus 1:1–2:10 is related to, but not directly dependent upon, the Babylonian *Epic of Atra-hasis*." In a similar way that the biblical story of Moses' birth, via the ark / basket (תבה), connects with the biblical Flood account, so the legend of Sargon bears textual and thematic connections to the Babylonian deluge story. Cf. the resonances of *Atra-hasis* with Exodus 1: as human overpopulation compelled the gods to wipe out humanity with a flood, so Hebrew

the two stories is the contrast noted by Joshua Berman between the first person narrative of Sargon

and the third person story of Moses. On Berman's telling, the former is the product of an ancient

Near Eastern royal theology that requires "the construction of an authoritarian personality,"[29] while

the latter showcases the nuances and rigors of the Bible's covenant theology:

> [T]he Bible—in nearly universal fashion—depicts its narratives in the third person, as in the Moses rescue narrative. […N]arrative in the Bible serves to articulate the subtleties of the demands of covenantal behavior in their fullest complexity, by illuminating the social imperatives and psychological forces at play in a given circumstance. Biblical narrative essentially sets forward a series of situations and scenarios that allows the reader or listener to fully empathize with the characters and, as it were, endure the experience, the challenges, and the dilemmas together with the protagonists.[30]

The respective rescue stories of Sargon and Moses, then, so similar in content, may serve very

different purposes. Whereas the Sargon story exalts the prestigious "authoritarian personality" of

the monarch in contrast to the lowly status of its readers, the biblical story is more sobering in its

presentation of Moses' trials—trials with which the reader may empathize.[31] Moreover, as an ex-

tension of this contrast Berman discerns a latent biblical polemic against monarchy:

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overpopulation compelled Pharaoh's riparian pogrom. (Propp, 159–160.) The story in Exodus 2 also has analogues beyond Sargon, such as the "Egyptian story, [in which] the god Horus was endangered as an infant by the god Seth and was hidden (but not abandoned) in a papyrus thicket of the Nile delta by his mother Isis to save him." (Jeffrey Tigay, commentary on Exodus 2:1–10, in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], retrieved digitally.) See further the discussion of Nahum M. Sarna about other "abandoned heroes" in Mediterranean and Near Eastern antiquity: Oedipus, Heracles (Hercules), Romulus and Remus, and most interestingly, Cyrus. (Nahum M. Sarna, *Shemot: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS Torah Commentary [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991], 267–268.) Regarding Cyrus, and his clear conformity to the motif of the abandoned child, one wonders: would Second Temple Jews have known the exposure story of this foreign king who ended Israel's Babylonian exile, and perhaps made a connection with Moses at the other end of their national history, the figure who ended Israel's Egyptian exile? This is speculation, but not impossible to conceive. At any rate, such structural similarities in Near Eastern mythology are well documented; see the discussion in Chapter 1 regarding dying and rising gods, and the balanced approach of Tryggve Mettinger.

[29] Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 147.

[30] Berman, 148.

[31] Compare the observations of Edward Greenstein (to whom Berman's book is dedicated) in "Moses and the Fugitive Hero Pattern," TheTorah.com, accessed 18 January 2019, https://thetorah.com/moses-and-the-fugitive-hero-pattern/: "The Torah is not interested in Moses per se, but in the release of the Hebrews and their induction into a covenant

The account of the rescue of Moses, in contrast with the Sargon legend, demonstrates that the narrative portions of the Pentateuch may be construed as a polemic against the hagiography of royal inscriptions and royal theology. […] The actions of Pharaoh's daughter represent an act of disobedience against monarchic rule, such as the midwives of Exodus 1 (Exod 1:15–21) also perform. These stories are harbingers of the tradition in which prophets challenge royal authority, as in Moses' stand before Pharaoh, Nathan's castigation of David (2 Sam 12:1–14), Elijah's censure of Ahab (I Kgs 18) and Jeremiah's call to disobey the order of King Zedekiah (Jer 38:2; 37:13).[32]

If Berman is right, then whatever parallels may exist between the accounts of Moses and Sargon in fact conceal deeper and fundamental differences regarding not only their paradigms of rulership, but given the interlocking identity and function in ancient Near Eastern cultures between royalty and divinity, contrasting visions of reality itself.[33] Shedding light on the nature of the Bible's

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with God […] The Torah is interested not in Moses' personal quest but in Israel's covenantal destiny. […] The story of the person is subordinated to the story of the people." Such biblical "disinterest" in and "subordination" of Moses surely has theological implications.

[32] Berman, 165–166.

[33] Regarding divine kingship in the ancient Near East, classic is Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). See also Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967); Nicole Maria Brisch, *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008). Interacting with scholarship in this field, Berman argues that the Bible marks an ideological transition away from a hierarchical society with gods and kings occupying the privileged center, and toward an egalitarian society. While I am wary of the anachronistic liabilities of reading "egalitarianism" back into the Bible, Berman's thesis is compelling: "If much of biblical writing reveals an ambivalent attitude toward the notion of monarchy, I would suggest it is not because of a fear of the Almighty being marginalized. Rather, these texts reflect a fear that a strong monarchy would result in the marginalizing of the common man. By articulating the metaphysical paradigms of the God-human encounter in terms of a suzerainty treaty or marriage, the biblical texts portray a relationship in which honor can be reciprocally bestowed between God and Israel; indeed, between God and the common man in Israel. Only through the sublimation of the metaphysical standing of the monarchy in Israel could the biblical texts, particularly the Pentateuch, achieve a reformulation of social and political thought along egalitarian lines—a reformulation whereby the common man was transformed from a mere servant of kings into one who stands in honor before the Almighty as nothing less than a servant king. Thus, the theology of covenant in the Pentateuch sets the stage, metaphysically speaking, for Israel to conceive of itself as a society devoid of the inherent and cosmically legitimated hierarchy found elsewhere." Berman, 48–49. Compare J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), who similarly argues that whereas being regarded as "the divine image" was the exclusive prerogative of ancient kings, the Bible's revolutionary anthropology assigned this identity to all humans, of all classes, male and female. (Contrast, however, with Thomas Joseph White, *Exodus*, [Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016], 34: "The Torah underscores incessantly the fundamental responsibility of moral life in a political community, as well as the hierarchical nature of that community. It give warrant to legitimate authority…") So far, then, from being a dehumanizing and authoritarian document, on this view the Bible is seen as ennobling to humans. The weakness of this general line of thought, however, is its tendency to overlook or downgrade the other side of the biblical dialectic: the covenantal demand that confronts the royal human for unqualified obedience. It precisely

covenantal vision of reality through a study of its Royal Runaway figures is an essential aspect of what this study hopes to accomplish in the remaining three chapters.

Exegesis: The Diptych of Exodus 2 and Salvation Between Waters

Considered in itself, Exodus 2 is a dramatic coming-of-age story. In twenty-five brief verses, a passionate and privileged young man is confronted with a host of identity[34] issues: he does not know his birth father, while his adopted father tries to kill him not once but twice; his birth mother is forced to abandon him to the Nile, while his foster mother must keep silent about his illicit origins; our doubly-disguised "prince" thus finds himself alienated from both commoners and the royal family. Presuming to wield authority, an impulsive streak renders him first a vigilante, then an outlaw,[35] then a marriageable bachelor; he weds a foreign woman, and, summing up

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constitutes the royalty of biblical exemplars, for all their flaws, *not* to be Runaways from this demand, even if it leads to death.

[34] "Identity" is one of the most used and abused terms in present discourse. What does it *mean*? Hard to say, precisely because it calls the nature of meaning itself into question. Political scientist Francis Fukuyama traces the popular usage of the term to the psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s, while he himself uses "identity" in its current political sense of denoting the adversarial stance of the modern self to society: "Identity grows, in the first place, out of a distinction between one's true inner self and an outer world of social rules and norms that does not adequately recognize that inner self's worth or dignity. Individuals throughout human history have found themselves at odds with their societies. But only in modern times has the view taken hold that the authentic inner self is intrinsically valuable, and the outer society systematically wrong and unfair in its valuation of the former. It is not the inner self that has to be made to conform to society's rules, but society itself that needs to change." Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 9–10. As Moses develops, he will indeed find himself at variance with both Egyptian and Hebrew society, although Fukuyama's account should put us on guard against anachronism; whatever else it may be, Exodus 2 cannot be a parable of the quest for authenticity and expressive individualism. I use the term "identity" loosely here, in the sense of one's self-understanding.

[35] It is possible, of course, to see this aspect of Moses' character profile in a different light. As the saintly and self-effacing genius Jon Levenson reminded me in a correspondence, "It seems to me that the text paints Egypt at that time as something like a proto-Stalinist or Nazi regime, where there is nothing remotely like just order and a fair legal system to which to appeal or even an ideal of such a system. That being the case, the portrayal of Moses as impulsive, a vigilante, etc., which many promote, strikes me as off-base. What should he have done? Asked the guy to stop? Threatened to report him to the authorities? Riot?" The point is well taken, and quite possibly the better reading. On balance, though, the narrative tendency of the Hebrew Bible to portray well-intentioned mistakes and immaturities in the early life of its central figures (and thus giving them room to grow up, mend their ways, etc.) persuades me that the narrator's implicit valuation of this incident is indeed negative. Perhaps this is an instance of the moral ambiguity

these identity-shattering misadventures, names their son, basically, "Exiled." Exodus 2 thus presents the future leader of an exiled and wandering people as himself an exiled, adrift prince; the ultimate insider of the Hebrew Bible—the liberator from Egypt, mediator of the covenant, leader in the wilderness, intercessor for the people, archetype of a prophet, giver of Torah—first becomes an ultimate outsider, an ex-royal in the backwaters of Midian. Why?

This section will begin to answer that question by closely considering the literary features of Exodus 2 itself and the theological arguments they might make. As a first step—and a last gasp of methodological throat-clearing!—it is necessary to bear in mind the tentative nature of the enterprise itself, since the perceived meaning of any biblical text is contingent upon how that text is being viewed. Levenson offers instructive comments in this regard:

> The context in terms of which a unit of literature is to be interpreted is never self-evident. In the case of the Hebrew Bible, the candidates are legion. They include the work of the author who composed the unit, the redacted pericope in which it is now embedded, the biblical book in which it appears, the subsection of the Jewish canon that contains this book (Pentateuch, Prophets, or Writings), the entire Hebrew Bible treated as a synchronic reality, the Christian Bible (Old Testament and New Testament), and the exegetical traditions of the church or the rabbis. Each of these locations—and there are more—defines a context; it is disingenuous and shortsighted to accuse proponents of any one of them of "taking the passage out of context." Rather, the success of an interpretation is relative to the declared objectives of the interpreter. The great flaws of the biblical theologians are their lack of self-awareness on the issue of context and their habit, in the main, of acting as though the change of context makes no hermeneutical difference. In point of fact, it makes all the difference in the world.[36]

In view here are the multiple historical and hermeneutical axes exercising determinative influence on the way biblical texts are read, none of which can lay claim to pure objectivity, and all of which

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in which the biblical text seems at times to revel, with both readings striking against something solid. At any rate, I will continue to develop the negative interpretation, aware that it sits in tension with another way of reading the matter.

[36] Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism*, 56–57.

can make a case for plausibility. Likewise, viewing the same interpretative reality from the standpoint of cognitive psychology and textual strategy, D. Andrew Teeter writes:

> For the human mind, what is perceptible, what is salient, is always frame-dependent. Given the overwhelming complexity of all stimuli, what we notice depends on where we are looking and what we are comparing. This selectivity is a basic feature (sometimes liability) of human cognition that is determinative for pattern recognition in all of its applications. Just so, what is perceptible as structurally relevant in any text within the Hebrew Bible is contingent on the frame (and thus the projected part-whole relationship). In a text-model predicated on ever widening recursive frames, there will always be multiple aspects of structural pattern operative in a given text. What elements are activated for structural purposes in the reading process will depend on the applied frame […] The frame operates as a principle of selection or selectivity. This is not arbitrary, but a disciplined structural tool for perception that seems to be integral to the process of reading and the implicit system of biblical compositional work.[37]

The principles elucidated here are relevant to an assessment of Exodus 2, since the commentarial literature discerns multiple structural patterns and theological arguments at work in this single text. Many of the hypotheses are compelling. The reading I will develop (expanding basically on that of Umberto Cassuto) is therefore not to be understood as perforce canceling out any of these other con/textual or theological dynamics, only as viewing them in a particular way.[38]

The plan I will follow in this section has two parts. First, reviewing prior interpretations of Exodus 2's structure. My interest here will be to understand how this biblical passage interacts with larger textual arguments and designs, since a close study of the passage itself should not

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[37] Teeter, "Biblical Symmetry and Its Modern Detractors," forthcoming in C. Maier, G. Macaskill, J. Schaper (eds.), *IOSOT Congress Volume: Aberdeen (*VTSup; Leiden: Brill, 2020), page numbers unavailable. Italics mine.

[38] Ibid: "…structural concurrence, i.e. the possibility that more than one pattern may be active simultaneously within a unit. This alternate pattern may either be *embedded* (operative on a lower level of hierarchy, a subunit), or *concurrent* (a coextensive organizational principle). For example, a passage may be arranged as a linear-progressive 3+1 climactic moment with respect to certain features and also as an inversion symmetry with respect to other features. Such alternate structures do now work at cross-purposes (contradicting or canceling each other out), but co-operate." Italics original.

obscure these other contexts. Second, my own analysis of the passage, in which I will collate textual data and comment theologically, pulling on insights from additional scholars.[39]

i. Review of Scholarship

A) Richard Eliott Friedman's source critical reading assigns 2:1–23a to the Yahwist source J, and the coda 2:23b–25 to Priestly source P; the former is thus more narratival, the latter more explicitly theological. The anonymity of Moses' sister and the name of Moses' father-in-law contribute to his reasoning. According to Friedman, Miriam is not identified as Moses' sister in J (nor in E or D), only in P; and the identification of Moses' father-in-law as Reuel (2:18; cf. Numbers 10:27) is at odds with his name Jethro in E (Exodus 3:1, 18; 18:1–27).[40] While illuminating aspects of textual development and reception, and thus a certain historical structure embedded in the final form of the passage, diachronic analyses of this sort will not figure strongly here.

B) John H. Sailhamer's approach is of a more synchronic variety, invested in discerning broad pentateuchal patterns. On his account, Exodus 1–2 is paired in an inclusio structure with Numbers 22–24, bookending the story of the Exodus and wilderness wandering. Pharaoh's three

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[39] Among whom are Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2004); Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* (New York: Harper, 1958); Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974); William Henry Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1999); Gerhard von Rad, *Moses*, trans. Stephen Neill (Eugene, OR.: Cascade Books, 2011); Nahum M. Sarna, *Shemot: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, (Philadelphia, PA.: Jewish Publication Society, 1991); Jeffrey Tigay's commentary on Exodus (שמות) in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Thomas Joseph White, *Exodus*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016); Yair Zakovich, *...And You Shall Tell Your Son: The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1991); lectures from Zakovitch's Fall 2018 course in Harvard's NELC department, "Biographies in the Bible."

[40] Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2003), 120–21. Also bearing weight in source critical analysis is the apparent literary dependence of Exodus 1 on Exodus 2: the stage has to be set for the hero's miraculous birth. See Childs, 8.

attempts to suppress the Israelites (Exodus 1:11–14; 1:15–21; 1:22) correspond with Balak's three attempts to do the same (Numbers 23:1–12; 23:13–26; 23:27–24:9), although in both narratives the threats from foreign kings rebound to Israel's blessing. Further, "[a]s was the case with Pharaoh's three attempts, after Balak's third attempt the author turns to the question of the birth of God's chosen deliverer, the prophecy of the star that was to arise out of Jacob (Nu 24:12–25)."[41] Exodus 2 and the entrance of the deliverer Moses in the corresponding analogical position thus contribute to a symmetry signaling the opening and closing of a major textual unit. Such patterning, however, is more than mere ornamentation for Sailhamer; on the contrary, "[r]epeated patterns are often used in these narratives to stress the continuing work of God."[42]

Just so, the future work of God is hinted at in the more local context of Exodus 2 by the stories of Moses saving an abused Israelite (as he would later save all Israel) and watering flocks in the desert (as he would later provide water for thirsty Israelites). Nearly all scholars note these aspects of foreshadowing; yet Sailhamer's reading is helpful for my interests in that he observes how the agency of Moses here serves not to efface but to reinforce the power of God. "The first narrative (vv. 11–15) shows that without the specific call of God that Moses received in Exodus 3, he could not win the trust of the people. The guilty Israelite's question 'Who appointed you as leader and judge over us?' (2:14), anticipates Moses' own question of God in the next chapter: 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' (3:11). Only after God promises to be with him (3:12) can Moses win the trust of the people (3:16–18; 4:31)."[43] In

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[41] John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch As Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 43; cf. 242.

[42] Sailhamer, 244.

[43] Sailhamer, 243.

this way, Exodus 2 can be read alongside Exodus 3 as a theological argument about the unexpected powerlessness of Israel's human deliverer, Moses, whose future work will depend exclusively on the power of the divine deliverer, YHWH. This is not to say Moses does not possess any special qualifications for the role he will fill; he certainly does. Yet in contrast to typical folklores that broadcast the exploits of a hero, the Bible downplays Moses' personal prowess in order to make a larger argument about human nature, history, and God.[44]

C) David A. Dorsey[45] likewise regards Exodus 2 as situated within larger structures that convey to the reader a message similar to the one argued for by Sailhamer. He divides the story of the Exodus into two symmetrical halves, each of which bears its own internal symmetries. Within the larger chiasm of Exodus 1:1–13:16, the escape from death of the Israelite child Moses (b 2:1–10) corresponds with the death of the Egyptian firstborn (b' 11:1–10), while the threefold repetition of striking (נכ״ה) in 2:11–22 (c) is paired with the third cycle of plagues in which Egyptians are struck down (c' 9:13–10:29; נכ״ה appears in 9:13, 15, 25, 31–32). While the b and b' pairing seems clear, c and c' is perhaps less persuasive, glossing over textual elements.[46] At the center of this large schema for Dorsey is a twofold commissioning of Moses and Aaron in 5:6–6:13 and 6:14–7:7; likewise, in his analysis of the first half of this larger symmetry, the call of Moses in 3:1–4:17

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[44] Cf. von Rad: "Moses was a man, a human being. He was not a saint, an ascetic, one who had stripped himself of all ordinary human feelings. Neither was he a hero in the sense in which that word was ordinarily understood in ancient times. Certainly he was in no way a demi-god. He is indeed presented as a figure of incomparable greatness. But the neat and exact precision with which the dividing line between him and God is always made clear is one of the most admirable features of these narratives." von Rad, *Moses*, 5–6.

[45] David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 63–67.

[46] What of the well scene in Exodus 2? And why should the verbiage of the seventh plague (hail) be taken as determinative for the structural position of the eighth and ninth plagues (locusts and darkness)? In Dorsey's defense, however, the textual elements that do not appear in the large structure are accounted for in the smaller structures; this is to be expected in literature wherein a single unit is operative within multiple designs.

is the fulcrum of the pattern. Within this narrower frame of reference, Moses' arrival at Pharaoh's house as a child in 2:1–10 (b) pairs with his arrival to Pharaoh's house as an adult in 5:1–4 (b'); the flight from Egypt in 2:11–25 (c) couples with the return to Egypt in 4:18–31 (c').

Bearing more than simply thematic similarities, these structures for Dorsey are mediated and reinforced through lexical patterning. For example (still within the narrow frame of 1:1–6:13):

- In (c 2:11–25) Moses sees (רא״ה) a kinsmen (אח) being beaten, and in (c' 4:18–31) he wishes to return to Egypt in order to see (רא״ה) how his kinsmen (אח) are doing.

- In (c) Moses kills (הר״ג) an Egyptian, Pharaoh hears (שמ״ע) of it and seeks (בק״שׁ) to kill (הר״ג) Moses; in (c') Moses hears (שמ״ע) that the Pharaoh who seeks (בק״שׁ) to kill him is dead; the message for the new Pharaoh is that God will kill (הר״ג) his firstborn, while God also seeks (בק״שׁ) to kill Moses on the way.[47]

What is the communicative function of such careful patterning in the Exodus story, apparently coordinated across multiple chapters? For Dorsey, the meaning is here: "The section begins and ends with units highlighting Israel's dire circumstances; it closes with Israel worse off than ever, despite Yahweh's promise that he is going to deliver them. This structural design causes the audience to sense Israel's helplessness. The section goes full circle, from oppression, to hope and promise, to even worse oppression. This layout serves to highlight the theme that God sometimes makes his people wait."[48] While, then, Dorsey's structures employ frames of reference that diverge

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[47] Dorsey, 64.

[48] Ibid. Regarding Exodus 1:1–13:16 as the parameters of the Exodus story, Dorsey's reasons are these: "1. The story opens with a statement about the Israelites' arrival in Egypt (1:1–5) and closes with their departure (12:41, 51; 13:3–16) [he includes a footnote here: From 13:17 onward the Israelites have left Egypt and are in the 'wilderness'; cf. 13:18; 14:3, 11–12]. 2. The story begins with a statement of the Israelites' population when they arrived in Egypt (70 persons; 1:5) and ends with a statement of their population when they left (600,000 men; 12:37–38). 3. The story opens with the Egyptians' attempt to kill all the male Israelite babies ("lest they escape from the land"; 1:10) and concludes with Yahweh's killing all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians in order to enable the Israelites to escape from the land (12:1–13:16). 4. Joseph's request that the Israelites take his bones with them when they leave Egypt (Gen.

from Sailhamer's, the message conveyed by their respective suggestions is similar: Moses and Israel are utterly dependent on YHWH for help. If Moses finds himself marginalized and waiting in Midian, powerless to enact justice with his own activism, so the enslaved Israelite nation is also obliged to the discipline of waiting—that strenuous inaction often prerequisite to the decisive action of God.[49]

D) Umberto Cassuto, the Italian Jewish scholar whose Hebrew name was in fact Moshe, divides the account of his biblical namesake's youth into three distinct "paragraphs," with an epilogue that functions as an exordium to the call scene of Exodus 3: First Paragraph: The Birth and Rescue of Moses (2:1–10), Second Paragraph: Moses and His Brethren (2:11–15), Third Paragraph: Moses in Midian (2:16–22), The Exordium: "God's in His Heaven" (2:23–25).[50] This division is helpful for my purposes because it considers Exodus 2 as a self-contained unit, with the first and third paragraphs flanking and therefore (I will argue) emphasizing the moment when young Prince Moses "leaves the palace" in the second central paragraph. (The central paragraph also pairs in important ways with the epilogue, as will be seen below.) Summarizing this biblical chapter, Cassuto writes:

> The section is characterized by its harmonious and consummate structure. It begins and ends with a marriage and the birth of a son. At the conclusion of the first paragraph a son is named and the name is explained; this also happens at the end of the third paragraph. The first paragraph speaks of the daughter of Levi and the daughter of Pharaoh, and the

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50:24–25) immediately precedes the introduction to the exodus story; the fulfillment of his request immediately follows the account of their departures (Exod. 13:19)." Ibid.

[49] For an interesting proposal about *why* the Israelites had to suffer so long in Egypt, see Yair Zakovitch, "Why Were the Israelites Enslaved in Egypt? A Chapter in Inner-biblical Interpretation." In Yair Zakovitch, *...And You Shall Tell Your Son: The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1991), 15–45. Repayment for Abraham and Sarah's abuse of the Egyptian slave Hagar figures strongly in his argument.

[50] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of Hebrew University, 1967), 17–30. First published in 1951, the year of his death, as: מ.ד. קאסוטו: פירוש על ספר שמות The textual divisions of Sarna are the same (see Sarna, 8–13), although he does not make the exegetical connections between sections that Cassuto does.

third tells of the seven daughters of Reuel and, in particular, of his daughter Zipporah…
The three episodes narrated in this section serve as an introduction to Moses' mission to
redeem Israel. They prove that his qualities of character and his courage fitted him worthily
for this mission.[51]

The "harmonious and consummate structure" Cassuto observes, more than simply tracing the progression of the tale as it moves from one setting to the next (the river, the palace, the worksite, etc.), is based on a sensitive reading of verbal repetitions in the text, and what they might mean; for "[s]uch parallels are beloved of the writers of Israel and of the neighboring peoples."[52] He notes, for example, the threefold repetition of seeing רא״ה in paragraphs one and two (vv. 2, 5, 6; vv. 11 [2x], 12), a symmetry that likens the compassionate seeing of the mother and step-mother with the compassionate seeing of the son; "like mothers like son," in a twist on the old adage. Similarly, the threefold sequence of taking לק״ח in the first paragraph (vv. 3, 5, 9) resolves with emotional satisfaction, since "[n]ow the happy mother is able to take her son without anxiety for his life."[53]

Each of Cassuto's paragraphs has similar interior movement and drama, and (as with other scholars) I will reference his excellent insights in the commentary. What I wish to highlight here is the connection he makes between paragraphs one and three, which I reframe this way: At one level, Exodus 2 is a diptych with two groups of young women beside the waters, respectively, of יאר (the Nile) and באר (a well). In the first panel Moses is saved, and in the second he saves. Between these two watery panels of salvation—as will be the case for all Israel—the saved savior

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[51] Cassuto, 27.

[52] Cassuto, 19.

[53] Cassuto, 20. Italics original. If including ויקח from 2:1, the resolution falls on the fourth occurrence of the verb.

flees from Egypt into simultaneous freedom and the testing in exile. Exodus 2 thus prefigures, in miniature, the shape of the whole Exodus paradigm.

ii. Analysis of Exodus 2

In order to gain a sense of the textual rhythms and repetitions in Exodus 2, condensed data will be helpful. Afterwards I will study the passage verse by verse, only limiting comment on those features of Exodus 2 that bear directly on other Royal Runaway figures in the Hebrew Bible, which is the subject of the following section.

ii.a Textual Data

P1 = Panel 1, Exodus 2:1–10
C = Center Frame, Exodus 2:11–15a[54]
P2 = Panel 2, Exodus 2:15b–22
E = Epilogue, Exodus 2:23–25

Repeated words and themes in P1:
- רא״ה (*see*) – vv. 2, 5, 6 (also הנה in v. 6)
- לק״ח (*take*) – vv. 1, 3, 5, 9
- היאר (*Nile*) – vv. 3, 5 (2x)
- ינ״ק (*suckle*) – vv. 7 (2x), 9 (2x)
- ילד (*child*) – vv. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 [2x], 10
- קר״א (*call*) – vv. 7, 8, 10
- פרעה (*Pharaoh*) – vv. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10
- Women: mother, sister, Pharaoh's daughter, female attendants (נערותיה)[55]

Repeated words and themes in C:
- רא״ה (*see*) – vv. 11 (2x), 12 (relatedly: פנ״ה [*turn (to look)*] in v. 12, הנה (*behold*) in v. 13, and the morphologically similar ויירא [*and he feared*] in v. 14)

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[54] 2:15 marks the transition from Egypt to Midian, and my division here will differ from Cassuto's by half a verse. The term באר (*well*) occurs in 2:15b, signaling the beginning of the third paragraph.

[55] Note also the importance of the two midwives in Exodus 1. Further, בת (*daughter*) appears in both 1:22 and 2:1, smoothly linking the chapters together.

- נכ״ה (*strike*) – vv. 11, 12, 13[56]
- יצ״א (*exit*) – vv. 11, 13
- איש (*man*) – vv. 11 (2x), 12, 13 (אנשים, *men*), 14
- אח (*brother*) – vv. 11 (2x) (also רע, *companion* in v. 13)
- הר״ג (*kill*) – vv. 14 (2x), 15

Repeated words and themes in P2:
- בא״ה (*come*) – vv. 16, 17, 18
- דל״ה (*draw water*) – vv. 16, 19 (2x)
- שק״ה צאן (*water herds*) – vv. 16, 17, 19
- איש (*man*) – vv. 19, 20, 21
- קר״א (*call*) – vv. 20, 22
- רעה (*shepherd*) – vv. 17, 19[57]
- יש״ב (*sit, dwell*) – vv. 15b (2x), 21
- LXX brings out an implicit repetition in MT: יש״ע (v. 17, *save*) and נצ״ל (v. 19, *save*) are both translated as ἐρρύσατο.
- Women: seven sisters, Zipporah singled out

Repeated words and themes in E:
- אלהים (*God*) – vv. 23, 24 (2x), 25 (2x)
- בני ישראל (*children of Israel*) – vv. 23, 25
- מן-העבודה (*from the work*) – v. 23 (2x); parallelism of the phrase in v. 23 suggests a poetic epilogue to the narrative.[58]
- גר״ש (*drive away, banish*) – vv. 17, 22[59]
- Four actions of the children of Israel: אנ״ח (*groan*), זע״ק (*call for help*), שועה (noun: *scream*), נאקה (noun: *groan*)
- Four responses of God: שמ״ע (*hear*), זכ״ר (*remember*), רא״ה (*see*), יד״ע (*know*)

Connections between P1 and C:
- רא״ה (*see*) 3x + הנה (*behold*), each time in the fourth position.
- גד״ל (*grow*) in vv. 10 and 11, linking two scenes together.
- Hidden child (v. 2, ותצפנהו; v. 3 הצפינו), hidden corpse (v. 12, ויטמנהו)

Connections between P1 and P2:
- Thematic resemblance: helpless baby Moses saved at the water by a group of women in P1, adult Moses saves a group of helpless women at the water in P2.

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[56] LXX blurs this triplet slightly, translating נכ״ה in vv. 11, 13 from τύπτω, and in v. 12 from πατάσσω.

[57] LXX amplifies the shepherd language, including the detail lacking in MT that the girls were ποιμαίνουσαι, "shepherding" flocks. (Cf. Genesis 29:9, the description of Rachel at the well, although LXX here uses βόσκω.)

[58] Sailhamer, 35–37, demonstrates the regularity of poetic conclusions to narrative in the Pentateuch.

[59] The etymological issues surrounding the name גרשם will be discussed below.

- o In addition, recall the salvation of the shrewd midwives in Chapter 1, and the implicit salvation (עזר, *help*; Genesis 2:18) of marriage to Zipporah (cf. Exodus 4:24–26)
- o Note also the resemblance (when conjugated) of ינ״ק and שׁק״ה verbs in P1 and P2.[60] Bound up with the saving action, both verbs have to do with the transference of nurturing fluid to helpless individuals: a baby and sheep.
- ותלד בן (*and she gave birth to a son*) – vv. 2, 22
  - o Cf. the morphologically similar ותרד (*and she went down*) in v. 5, the first action accorded to Moses' future foster-mother; might this verb implicitly link her with the other mothers of the chapter? Or does ותרד subtly show another Royal Runaway, a princess descending from the palace who will rear her foster son in similar habits?
- קר״א שמו (*called his name*) – vv. 10, 22
- קר״א in context of girl(s) sent on an errand: retrieving Moses' mother (v. 7–8) and Moses himself (v. 20)
- Disguises and rewards: Moses' Hebrew mother brought in to nurse her own son (impersonally called ילד, *child*, seven times), and given payment; Moses recognized as an Egyptian, and given a wife. Cf. the subterfuge of the midwives in chapter 1, whom God rewards with בתים (*homes*, *families*; 1:21).
- Daughter of prominent leader intimately connected with Moses: daughter of Pharaoh becomes his foster-mother, daughter of the priest of Midian becomes his wife.

Connections between P1 and E:
- Contrast: marked absence of God in P1, and emphatic presence of God in E.
- Contrast: פרעה (*Pharaoh*, vv. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10) in P1, and מלך מצרים (*king of Egypt*, v. 23) in E.
  - o Given the pentateuchal theme of "Pharaoh vs. the God of Israel" (Exodus 4:22–23, etc.) the fivefold emphasis on Pharaoh in P1 (coupled with the absence of God) contrasted with the fivefold emphasis on God in E (coupled with the minimization of Pharaoh) is likely more than documentary happenstance, but part of a strategic polemic against (most) human monarchy. In the body of the story, as in the experience of history, a human king seems to be the dominant force; but in the narrative shape of the text, and the theology of history it portends, God has the final word.
- Contrast: specific actions of Israelite desperation in P1 (hiding the baby, daubing the basket, etc.), and generalized summary of Israelite desperation in E (groaning, crying for help).
- Contrast: covert action of God in P1, overt action of God in E.

Connections between C and P2:
- Thematic repetition: Moses intervenes in situations of injustice (2x in C, 1x in P2).
  - o Contrasting identities: the oppressor is Egyptian in C, whereas Moses "the Egyptian man" saves from oppressors in P2.
  - o Contrasting behavior: Moses kills the Egyptian in C, but exercises restraint in P2, (apparently) not killing the shepherds.

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[60] A similar wordplay exists in the well scene of Genesis 29 between שׁק״ה (*water flocks*) and נשׁ״ק (*kiss*).

- o Contrasting consequences: Moses is rejected by the Israelite in C, but accepted by foreigners in P2; hence in C Moses "flees from home," in P2 he "finds a home."[61]
    - o Contrasting fathers: Moses is pursued by one surrogate father in C, but welcomed by another surrogate father in P2.
- אִישׁ (*man*) 4x in C, 3x in P2

Connections between C and E:
- Both paragraphs begin with וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים (הָרַבִּים) הָהֵם (*and in those* [*many*] *days*) – vv. 11, 23
- Moses and God both *see* (רא״ה) the suffering of the Israelites, and show concern – vv. 11, 25.

Other Connections:
- יד״ע (*know*) – appears in P1 (v. 4), C (v. 14), and E (v. 25).

ii.b Theological Commentary

The foregoing lists make clear that Exodus 2 contains multiple interlocking symmetries and repetitions, a reality that qualifies my claim about an overarching diptych structure in the chapter. The passage is—and likely intended to be—fruitfully analyzed from numerous vantages. Nevertheless, from a thematically synoptic vantage I do believe the diptych holds.[62] That is, given the frame-dependent nature of perception, the frame of reference I choose to ponder here is the uncanny resemblance of two groups of women alongside water, יאר and באר, rescuing the protagonist in the former scene and being rescued by him in the latter. Why is it helpful to bracket off the passage in this way? Because directly between these inverted scenes of salvation occurs the narrative movement this project seeks to understand: the distinctive Royal Runaway motif of leaving the palace. For some reason that I wish to understand, the initial phase in Moses' looming

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[61] Childs, *Exodus*, 32.

[62] Cf Propp's discussion of "Exodus as Diptych" (37–38), in which he reviews proposals of how the book of Exodus as a whole is structured as a diptych (often with arrival at Sinai in 19:1 as the hinge), and also offers his own reading of how the Song at the Sea in chapter 15 is the middle point. Whatever the case may be, the recursive nature of the literature suggests that similar sorts of patterning should be discernible at the book-level and the chapter-level.

confrontation with the power of Egypt, after a brief and ill-fated experiment with activism, is re-nouncing affiliation with that power altogether, pushing off into the world beyond his inherited privilege. This is by no means the totality of the Royal Runaways paradigm, but it is its crucial beginning. Moses renounces royalty yet will be chosen to establish "a kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6). Is there any intrinsic connection between such renunciation and responsibility? The commentary below explores this question from multiple angles.

Exodus 2:1

וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֵוִי וַיִּקַּח אֶת־בַּת־לֵוִי׃

Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman.

Anonymity is common in biblical style,[63] but why here? Cassuto offers an insightful comment: "At this point Scripture's aim is to inform us that from an ordinary man, a member of the house of Levi, and from an ordinary woman, the daughter of Levi (that is, the only daughter of Levi the son of Jacob[64]), whose names there was no need to mention, God raised up a redeemer unto his people."[65] Yet if the keynote is God's faithfulness, and the redeemer is sired by some nameless פלוני אלמוני, *John Doe*, the violent trajectory of Moses is hinted at by the tribal affiliation, for the biblical Levites are men who often respond to provocation with decisive zeal: recall Levi

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[63] Other narratives commencing in this fashion include Judges 19:1 (also introducing a Levite man taking a woman), I Samuel 1:1, Ruth 1:1, etc.

[64] MT's singular בת־לוי is rendered by LXX in the plural: τῶν θυγατέρων Λευι. Cassuto closely follows MT here while translations such as ESV and JPS opt for the less specific and more idiomatic "a Levite woman."

[65] Cassuto, 17. Moses' lineage is a complex issue. Exodus 6:20 provides the names omitted at 2:1: his father is עמרם *Amram*, his mother is יוכבד *Yocheved*. According to Leviticus 18:12–13, the union producing Moses was illicit, his father having married his own father's sister, making Moses' mother also his great-aunt. Chronicles complicates the issue further in I Chronicles 4:17–18, 5:27–29 (English 6:1–3) with genealogical material the rabbis will later synthesize in a creative way (I will return to this in Ch. 3). Moses also has older siblings, Miriam and Aaron, in keeping with the biblical pattern of electing the younger son.

himself, who in Genesis 34 reacts (along with Simeon) to their sister's rape and apparent capture (34:26) by offing a whole city[66]; the Levite tribesmen who respond to Moses' direction after the Golden Calf affair by killing 3,000 offending Israelites (Exodus 32:26–29); the Levite Phinehas who rams a spear through an Israelite man and his Moabite dalliance, thus staving off a plague (Numbers 25:6–13); the Levite of Judges 19 who reacts to his consort's rape in gruesome fashion, dismembering her (perhaps dead, perhaps not) body and sending the pieces to the twelve tribes. Needless to say, when Exodus 2 shows our Levite young man inclined, as Propp delicately puts it, to "shoot first and ask questions later,"[67] the reader is hardly shocked.

Exodus 2:2
וַתַּהַר הָאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתֵּרֶא אֹתוֹ כִּי־טוֹב הוּא וַתִּצְפְּנֵהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יְרָחִים:

> *The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months.*

Any expectation of forceful confrontation is neutralized for the moment, however, by the arrival of a beautiful and vulnerable baby, who is himself the target of violence. Yet the simple presentation of the child may signify a more complex lesson: "The Bible does not want us to think that Moses was chosen before he was born (unlike, for example, Jeremiah). Moses will have to prove himself, that he deserves to become the leader of Israel."[68] Without any omens or angelic

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[66] Note also the similarity of Dina's story to Moses in Exodus 2:11: "Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land…" (ותצא דינה...לראות בבנות הארץ) Genesis 34:1.

[67] Propp, 167.

[68] Zakovitch lecture, 11 October 2018.

fanfare[69] the child of promise arrives, elements of the miraculous having been muted.[70] The narrator is not willing to obscure the character development of Moses as it will unfold in this and the next chapter, establishing for posterity his spiritual *bona fides* as a leader. Yet what is lacking in the verse should not distract from what is present, which is a continuation of the theme already initiated: the faithfulness of God through ordinary humans, in this case, women. Tigay notes that "[a]ll the actions to thwart Pharaoh's decree are taken by women—Moses' mother and sister, the midwives, and Pharaoh's daughter; the Hebrew men have been reduced to inactivity."[71] Moses' eventual revocation of elite culture is here foreshadowed by the surprising feminine undermining of Pharaoh's dominance. Long before Moses confronts Pharaoh with the demand to free the Hebrew slaves, the Hebrew story already defies his aura of absolute power. God, whose causality here is artfully shrouded,[72] is the real power broker in Egypt, and his influence is exercised through ostensible weakness.

Exodus 2:3

וְלֹא־יָכְלָה עוֹד הַצְּפִינוֹ וַתִּקַּח־לוֹ תֵּבַת גֹּמֶא וַתַּחְמְרָה בַחֵמָר וּבַזָּפֶת וַתָּשֶׂם בָּהּ אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַתָּשֶׂם בַּסּוּף עַל־שְׂפַת הַיְאֹר:

When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank.

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[69] Contrast Isaac (Genesis 17:16–21, 18:10–15); Jacob (Genesis 25:23); Samson (Judges 13:3–5); Samuel, (I Samuel 1:17); the child of Isaiah 9:6–7; Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5). In the New Testament, contrast John the Baptist (Luke 1:5–25); Jesus (Matthew 1:20–21, Luke 1:26–38).

[70] Or transferred: whereas many of the births in the prior note involve the miraculous opening of a barren womb, the providential dimension of Moses' birth is his narrow escape from Pharaoh's decree.

[71] Tigay, digital.

[72] Childs suggests this is owing to the conventions of a historicized wisdom tale, 13; in addition to the emphasis in wisdom literature on "natural" as opposed to divine causality, Childs cites the "typical" nature of Pharaoh the wicked fool and the clever midwives who "fear of God," along with the positive evaluation of Pharaoh's daughter, in keeping with the cosmopolitan ancient Near Eastern genre.

Sealed in the mud of slaves,[73] the baby's predicament points both backward to the salvation of Noah in the Flood[74] and forward to the salvation of Israel at the Red Sea.[75] The thematic of rescue through watery chaos is, of course, widespread in the Hebrew Bible,[76] and the savior of the Israelites goes before them in being himself saved in archetypal fashion. Cassuto writes of the "thematic analogy" between Noah in particular and Moses: "In both instances one worthy of being saved and destined to bring salvation to others is to be rescued from death by drowning. In the earlier section the salvation of humanity is involved, here it is the salvation of the chosen people; in the former passage, Scripture tells of the deliverance of the macrocosm, in the latter it speaks of the deliverance of the microcosm."[77] Moses would then be a microcosm of the microcosm, reflecting in himself the fate of the chosen people who in turn are implicated, on the Hebrew Bible's

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[73] Compare the consonantal text of חֵמָר (*bitumen*, 2:3) and חֹמֶר (*clay*, 1:14). Interestingly, both terms occur in Genesis 11:3, a verse that uses another word לבנה (*bricks*) also present in Exodus 1:14. On a midrashic logic, connections are suggested in this way between the hubris of Babel and Egypt, and between the plight of exiled Israelites and the primal scattering of nations. Such an analogue would throw into sharp relief the creativity of Yocheved's action: forced into the same doomed labor that made the calling of her ancestor Abraham necessary, she converts the mud of slavery into a means of her people's salvation.

[74] Commentators ancient and modern note the link between the תבה (*ark / basket*) of Noah and Moses, respectively; only in these two stories does the word appear in the Hebrew Bible. (LXX is unable to conserve this connection: Moses' basket is a θῖβις, Noah's ark a κιβωτός.) The גמא (*bulrushes* or *papyrus*) of Moses' basket may also recall the גפר (*gopher wood*) of Noah's ark, as well as the כפר (*pitch*) in which it was to be covered (Genesis 6:14; cf. the גפרית *brimstone* that God המטיר *rains down* on Sodom and Gomorrah, 19:24). And shifting from literary considerations to those of material culture, Sarna notes that the "Hebrew *gome'* is the papyrus plant, once abundant in the marshlands of the Nile Delta. Its huge stems, often more than ten feet high, were used by the Egyptians for a variety of purposes, especially for the construction of light boats." Sarna, 9.

[75] The connection between the סוף (*reeds*) of Moses' and Israel's salvation is also long noted; cf. Exod 10:19; 15:4, and על-שׂפת in 2:3 and 14:30. (LXX cannot preserve this link either; the term in Exodus 2 is ἕλος [*marsh-meadow*] whereas Israel is saved from the ἐρυθρὰν [*red*] sea.)

[76] Genesis 1:2; Joshua 3; 2 Kings 2:8; imagery in Psalms; etc. See discussions in Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3–99, passim, where chaotic waters often signal the "persistence of evil."

[77] Cassuto, 18–19.

telling, in the macrocosmic fate of the world. Saved saviors are thus pivotal in God's way of dealing with humanity. But why? Perhaps—as an early approximation to an answer—because the disposition of those so radically helped is loving obedience flowing from boundless gratitude.

Since Noah will not be a Royal Runaway exemplar below, it is helpful to notice as well a strong allusion to him at the end of Exodus 2, forming an inclusio structure. The epilogue tells the reader that "God remembered [ויזכר אלהים] his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Exodus 2:24), the same language found at the turning point in the Flood story: "But God remembered [ויזכר אלהים] Noah and all the beasts…" (Genesis 8:1).[78] Moreover, just as "God made a wind [רוח] blow over the earth, and the waters subsided" (Genesis 8:1), so God's wind is responsible for the salvation of Israel (רוח appears in Exodus 10:13, 19; 14:21; 15:8, 10). Then, after wind saves from water,[79] a renewed covenant awaits Noah and the animals on the heights of Ararat just as a renewed covenant awaits Moses and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai. Such typological parallels give a sense how the small details of a folkloric tale such as Exodus 2 are, in fact, strategically transposed via intertextual links into a larger biblical theology (i.e. the theology of the Hebrew Bible's final form) about YHWH's consistent dealings with humanity over time.

Exodus 2:4–10

4 וַתֵּתַצַּב אֲחֹתוֹ מֵרָחֹק לְדֵעָה מַה־יֵּעָשֶׂה לוֹ: 5 וַתֵּרֶד בַּת־פַּרְעֹה לִרְחֹץ עַל־הַיְאֹר וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ הֹלְכֹת עַל־יַד הַיְאֹר וַתֵּרֶא אֶת־הַתֵּבָה בְּתוֹךְ הַסּוּף וַתִּשְׁלַח אֶת־אֲמָתָהּ וַתִּקָּחֶהָ: 6 וַתִּפְתַּח וַתִּרְאֵהוּ אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וְהִנֵּה־נַעַר בֹּכֶה וַתַּחְמֹל עָלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר מִיַּלְדֵי הָעִבְרִים זֶה: 7 וַתֹּאמֶר אֲחֹתוֹ אֶל־בַּת־פַּרְעֹה הַאֵלֵךְ וְקָרָאתִי לָךְ אִשָּׁה מֵינֶקֶת מִן הָעִבְרִיֹּת וְתֵינִק לָךְ אֶת־הַיָּלֶד: 8 וַתֹּאמֶר־לָהּ בַּת־פַּרְעֹה לֵכִי וַתֵּלֶךְ הָעַלְמָה וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־אֵם הַיָּלֶד: 9 וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ בַּת־פַּרְעֹה הֵילִיכִי אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד הַזֶּה וְהֵינִקִהוּ לִי וַאֲנִי אֶתֵּן אֶת־שְׂכָרֵךְ וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּנִיקֵהוּ: 10 וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּבִאֵהוּ לְבַת־פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי־לָהּ לְבֵן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן־הַמַּיִם מְשִׁיתִהוּ:

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[78] The locution ויזכר אלהים also appears in connection with God's mercy toward Abraham and Lot, Genesis 19:29, and Rachel, Genesis 30:22.

[79] Recall Genesis 1:2, ורוח אלהים מרחפת על-פני המים (*And the Spirit [wind] of God was hovering over the face of the waters*). Later biblical narratives about wind and water would seem to disaggregate what is here combined.

4 And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. 5 Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you? 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

The drama here has many intricate and moving parts,[80] yet they coordinate to a single out-come: the future savior, in his helplessness, is saved. This dialectic is superbly captured in the naming ceremony of v. 10, on which I shall focus here. In Egyptian, and on analogy with well-known names like Rameses and Thutmose, the name means "son."[81] But in Hebrew the name is odd, since *Moshe* (מֹשֶׁה) actively means "draw out," whereas the context suggests the passive would be appropriate: *Mashui* (מָשׁוּי), "drawn out." With Cassuto, it is fair to assume that "[t]he author of the verse undoubtedly had a fine feeling for the Hebrew language, and he knew quite well the difference between מֹשֶׁה and מָשׁוּי. It is also difficult to suppose that Scripture attributed to the

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[80] Zakovitch offers an inner-biblical insight: "In contrast to Hagar's story, in which the Egyptian maidservant's son is adopted by the family of the Hebrew mistress, in the birth story of Moses it is the son of a slave, Moses the Hebrew, who is adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh." Zakovitch, *…And You Shall Tell Your Son*, 28. Sarna, with more prag-matic sensibilities, offers historical observations: "Placing the basket in the reeds prevented its being carried down-stream. […] An Egyptian princess would not bathe publicly in the mighty, crocodile-infested river itself. One of its innumerable rivulets, where privacy and safety could be enjoyed, is certainly intended. This suggests that the mother deliberately selected the spot after observing the character and habits of this particular princess. […] That the princess can personally execute such a [wet nurse] contract accords with the relatively high social and legal position of women in ancient Egypt. She possessed rights of inheritance and disposal of property, and she enjoyed a fair measure of economic independence" Sarna, 9–10.

[81] Rameses = son of Ra; Thutmose = son of Thoth. Some suggest the Egyptian root *ms(w)* more accurately means "to beget" or "is born" in which case Rameses = begotten of Ra or Ra is born, and Thutmose = begotten of Thoth or Thoth is born; this latter rendering would accord with ancient Near Eastern beliefs about divine kingship. See discussion and sources at Childs, 7.

Egyptian princess a knowledge of Hebrew and the choice of a Hebrew name. The naming is to be explained in a different way."[82] Cassuto then goes on to offer a solution that other Jewish readers (Sforno, Buber, Alter) also reach, which is that the text here is alive to the dialectic of being a saved savior.[83] The name *Moshe* is thus an etymological twist used to great theological effect, highlighting the child's future task of "drawing (his people) out" of the sea.

Such a point could have been made, though, without a remarkable plot development the biblical text simply glosses over: the future savior spends his formative years in the palace of his people's enemy, his erstwhile pursuer, heir to the very crown he will overthrow.[84] Is this incidental, or might there be a deeper logic at work here? Martin Buber thinks the latter:

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[82] Cassuto, 20. On the question of 'who speaks what language,' Alter makes an interesting suggestion: "*And the child grew*. The verb clearly indicates his reaching the age of weaning, which would have been about three. This might have been long enough for the child to have acquired Hebrew as his first language." Alter, 313. Cf. Sarna, 10: "In the case of Moses, one can be sure that the mother nurtured his mind and character and instilled in him the values and traditions cherished by his people."

[83] Cassuto, 21: "[T]he Bible possibly intends to indicate, by inference if not expressly, that this child was destined to be 'the deliverer [משה] of his people' (Isa lxiii 11) from the sea of servitude." Sforno: " ותאמר כי מן המים משיתיהו. הטעם שקראתיו משה להורות שימלט שימלט את אחרים הוא כי אמנם משיתיהו מן המים אחר שהיה מוטל בתוכם וזה לא היה כי אם בגזירת עירין כדי שימלט הוא את אחרים" *Shemot: Volume 1* (Judaica Press: New York, 1995), 21. Alter, 314: "Perhaps the active form of the verb used for the name *Mosheh*, 'he who draws out,' is meant to align the naming with Moses' future destiny of rescuing his people from the water of the Sea of Reeds." Buber, 36: "And as it seems to me, it was the covert purpose of the etymology to indicate this: the intention was to characterize Moses as the one who drew Israel forth from the flood." Sarna, 10: "…whereas it is actually an active participle, 'he who draws out,' and becomes an oblique reference to the future crossing of the Sea of Reeds. Isaiah 63:11 seems to reflect this inner biblical midrash: 'Then they remembered the ancient days, Him, who pulled his people out [*mosheh*] [of the water]: Where is He who brought them up from the Sea….'" The belief that both God and Moses drew the people forth from the water need not be seen as a theological innovation of Isaiah, however, since this duality is already latent in the transition between Exodus 14 and 15: in the former the hand of Moses is stretched over the water (14:16, 21, 26–27), and in the latter the delivering hand is God's (already 14:31, then 15:6, 12, 16–17); thanks to Zakovitch for this insight. Cf. Psalm 77:16, 21 (Eng. 77:15, 20). It is also possible to read the naming of Moses as a bilingual pun with similar theological foreshadowing: "Since Pharaoh's daughter clearly knows that Moses is a Hebrew child (vv. 6–9), it is possible that she chose the name for both its Hebrew ('drawn out of water') and Egyptian ('son') senses. The irony of such a dual reference would be that her action not only prefigures but is also a part of the means that God uses to 'draw' Israel as his 'son' out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1)." T. Desmond Alexander, *English Standard Version Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2008), 146.

[84] It is just this narrative lacuna that Second Temple sources will fill, and rather extravagantly. See below. Also, the placement of Moses in the royal court cannot be dismissed as mere folkloric convention: "Evidence from the period of the Ramesides for the presence of foreigners, especially of Semites, in the royal schools suggests that, like other privileged boys in court and bureaucratic circles in Egypt, Moses' formal education would have commenced at an

In the Biblical narrative of the saving of the boy Moses the meaning is obvious: in order that the one appointed to liberate his nation should grow up to be the liberator—and of all analogous legends this is the only one containing this historical element of liberating a nation—he has to be introduced into the stronghold of the aliens, into that royal court by which Israel has been enslaved: and he must grow up there. This is a kind of liberation which cannot be brought about by anyone who grew up as a slave, nor yet by anyone who is not connected with the slaves; but only by one of the latter who has been brought up in the midst of the aliens and has received an education equipping him with all their wisdom and powers, and thereafter "goes forth to his brethren and observes their burdens".[85]

The biblical polemic against empire thus presents itself as no ignorant and reactionary caricature; the youth of Moses—to say nothing of the court stories of figures such as Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, and Esther—testifies to the insider vantage the biblical narrative claims for its critique of foreign rulers.[86] Zakovitch quips: "Moses knows the ins-and-outs of the White House. The guards will let him in. Growing up in the house of a king: you can learn something there about leading."[87]

Perhaps even more important, however, than such tactical pragmatism is the spiritual perspective afforded someone growing up in the palace. For whereas those on the outside may look to royalty as some sort of ontological pinnacle and indisputable power (particularly in antiquity), only a *Royal* Runaway may realize the vacuum royalty is, painfully aware of the false infinities of the palace.[88] And taking a bold decision, some princes escape the palace in order to escape that falsity, abandoning themselves to startlingly *real* experiences beyond the walls of regal propriety.

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early age and lasted about twelve years. [..] Two papyri from the time of Ramses II mention officials named Mose." Sarna, 11, 10.

[85] Buber, 35.

[86] Whether this corresponds to the historical situation is another matter. The nature of the Hebrew Bible's "critique" of foreign rule is also complicated by the fact that in many of its court stories a foreign monarch is *helped* by a Hebrew advisor, perhaps as an instance of Abrahamic blessing among the nations. See the discussion in Jon D. Levenson, *Esther* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 15, regarding the transition from an exilic to a diasporic mindset, and the shift this may have produced in Jewish attitudes to foreign rule.

[87] Zakovitch lecture, 28 October 2018.

[88] Recall the origin of the term "prestige," from the French for "illusion, deceit." Also, if regarded as a receptacle of contemporary folklore, the 1998 DreamWorks film *The Prince of Egypt* may have something to contribute here. After killing the taskmaster, Moses' step-brother and the heir-apparent Rameses tries to soothe him, promising exoneration.

11 וַיְהִ֣י ׀ בַּיָּמִ֣ים הָהֵ֗ם וַיִּגְדַּ֤ל מֹשֶׁה֙ וַיֵּצֵ֣א אֶל־אֶחָ֔יו וַיַּ֖רְא בְּסִבְלֹתָ֑ם וַיַּרְא֙ אִ֣ישׁ מִצְרִ֔י מַכֶּ֥ה אִישׁ־עִבְרִ֖י מֵאֶחָֽיו׃ 12 וַיִּ֤פֶן כֹּה֙ וָכֹ֔ה וַיַּ֖רְא כִּ֣י אֵ֣ין אִ֑ישׁ וַיַּךְ֙ אֶת־הַמִּצְרִ֔י וַֽיִּטְמְנֵ֖הוּ בַּחֽוֹל׃

11 *One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his brothers and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brothers.*[89] **12** *He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.*

Regarding another verse in this passage, Robert Alter observes that "[t]he first dialogue assigned to a character in biblical narrative typically defines the character."[90] This principle, generalized as it is, perhaps also applies to the first *action* assigned to a character. And here the first action accorded to Moses in biblical narrative is not, as perhaps a superficial reading might conclude, decisive intervention in a situation of injustice. Rather, it is *seeing*. Immediately after leaving the palace, Moses *looked on their burdens*, וירא בסבלותם. Opposite the seeing of Moses' mother and step-mother earlier in the chapter, then, who look on the goodness of the child, Moses is God's special friend and servant in that he looks on suffering.[91] For the phrase וירא בסבלותם, *he looked on their burdens* (2:11), finds its correlate at the end of the chapter: וירא אלהים, *and God saw* (2:25).[92]

Moses retorts: "What you say does not matter! Nothing you can say can change what I have done!" This angry statement in an animated film in fact signals a profound development, Moses having realized the unreality of the officially sanctioned discourse. Such knowledge is only possible for someone with access to the authority structure, who knows it intimately enough and long enough to say with conclusiveness: *no*.

[89] ESV translates אחיו, appearing twice in this verse, as "his people." For intertextual reasons (see the below discussion of Genesis 4 and the notion of being שׁמר אחי, *my brother's keeper*), I have kept the literal "his brothers."

[90] Alter, 314. The statement is about the question of Moses to the Israelite in v. 13: *Why should you strike your fellow?* "Moses' first speech is a reproof to a fellow Hebrew and an attempt to impose a standard of justice (*rasha'*, 'the one in the wrong,' is a legal term)." Ibid.

[91] This may be too stark a contrast, in fact, since the princess sees the crying boy and takes pity (v. 6), and the action of Moses' mother is driven by her perception of the boy's plight.

[92] Cf. 4:31, the final verse in the desert pericope: ויאמן העם...כי ראה [יהוה] את ענים *And the people believed that YHWH had seen their affliction.* The climactic positioning of both verses suggests the connection is deliberate.

This connection is further strengthened in the call scene of Exodus 3, where the respective seeing of God and seeing of Moses are explicitly linked:

> **3:2** And the angel of the LORD **appeared** [וירא] to [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He **looked** [וירא], and **behold** [והנה], the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. **3** And Moses said, "I will turn aside **to see** [ואראה] this great **sight** [מראה], why the bush is not burned." **4** When the LORD **saw** [וירא] that he turned aside **to see** [לראות], God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "**Here I am** [הנני, lit. **behold me**]." **5** Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." **6** And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was **afraid to look** [ירא מהביט] at God. **7** Then the Lord said, "**I have surely seen** [ראה ראיתי] the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings […] **9** And now, **behold** [הנה], the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and **I have** also **seen** [ראיתי] the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

Clearly vision is heavily thematized in this theophanic passage,[93] and of particular importance for understanding Moses' action in chapter 2 is the dynamic in v. 4: "When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush…" YHWH sees Moses seeing, and this is the flashpoint of the burning bush encounter and the commissioning of Moses to return to Egypt. Such mutual seeing in Midian is anticipated by Exodus 2:11 in the initial, defining action of Moses after leaving the palace, paired as it is with the divine response in the epilogue.[94] Indeed, perhaps the traditional identification of Moses as a prophet, a "seer," begins right here—although it is not into

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[93] Cf. the nearly playful density of רא״ה in Genesis 22, the theology of which paronomasia is discussed in Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 111–24; ibid, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 66–112, esp. 80.

[94] Regarding the epilogue, and the four actions recorded there of God (שׁמע, זכר, ראה, ידע), Sarna glosses זכר *remembered* as "a sharp focusing of attention upon someone or something"; ראה as "to empathize"; and ידע as "to identify with" suffering (Sarna, 13). These translations deepen the resemblance I am suggesting between the way Moses and God respond to the Israelites; it is less a matter here of lexical parts and more of an emotive whole.

a heavenly realm that he first looks, but the all-too-human realm of men brutalizing one another.[95]

Like YHWH, Moses sharply perceives and is concerned with injustice and the distress of others.[96]

Insofar as Moses' career in and for Israel involves enormous struggle, then, it is essential to see how his whole movement "away from the palace" and into the painful realities of Israel's history is initiated by an empathetic encounter. At least at first, his suffering evolves out of the suffering of others, and Exodus 2:11 therefore offers the first glimpse of a leader who will repeatedly lay down his life for his beloved people.[97] Or as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has it, Moses is YHWH's special "associate in compassion"[98]—for YHWH himself is the one "who looked down from his holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die" (Psalm 102:19–20).

Commendable as all this is, however, Moses is not idealized; certainly not at this juncture. For immediately after his laudable survey of Israelite sorrow he precipitously kills a man. I am not much interested in parsing the degrees of Moses' justification for doing so—whether, for example,

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[95] LXX sharpens the point, translating ויּרא [בסבלתם] with κατανοήσας, from κατανοέω: "to look at in a reflective manner; to think about carefully" (BDAG). This is no passive observation, but active intellectual engagement. Sforno catches something of this as well: "ויּרא בסבלתם. נתן לבו לראות בעוני אחיו", *Shemot*, 21.

[96] In Exodus 2, Moses interjects himself into altercations involving a) an Israelite and a foreigner, vv. 11–12; b) two Israelites, 2:13–14; and c) two groups of foreigners, 2:17. Hence, and as many commentors note, Moses' advocacy for fairness is impartially applied to both Israelites and gentiles. The Israel-specific nature of the Exodus thus cannot be played off too strongly against a broader biblical concern for justice.

[97] Moses "is God's servant who is despised and rejected (Exod 15:24; 16:2–3; 17:1–4; Num 12:1; 14:1–10; 16; 20:2–5; 21:5), who suffers both at the hands of and for the sake of the people, even unto death. Not only is he threatened with death by the very people for whom he cares (Exod 17:3–4; Num 14:10; 17:6–7), but he places himself in the face of divine anger in order to prevent the people's destruction (Exod 32:9–11; Num 16:20–22) and even offers his own life in their place (Exod 32:32). Finally, Moses eventually is excluded from the land of promise because of the people (Deut 1:37; 3:26; 4:21)." D. Andrew Teeter and Michael A. Lyons, "The One and the Many, the Past and the Future, and the Dynamics of Prospective Analogy: The Servant(s) as the Vindication of Moses and the Prophets." Forthcoming in *Isaiah's Servant(s) and the Exegetical Origins of Early Jewish and Christian Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021); quoted excerpt from heading *2.3*.

[98] Article 2575 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Double Day, 2003), 678.

"looking this way and that" (2:12) indicates culpable secrecy (Childs) or a cool appraisal of the situation (Exodus Rabbah). With White, who reviews the various interpretative stances of Maimonides, Aquinas, Ambrose, and Augustine, I am of the opinion that Moses' "action prefigures the political liberation that ensues, and yet he remains morally imperfect, subject to a series of conversions that are to come."[99] This point, in fact, is a standard feature of Royal Runaways: these figures *develop*, changing and maturing over time, repeatedly crushed and purified into the usefulness for others to which they are called. They do not step forth from the palace as unimpeachable moral agents, but tend to be conceited adolescents in need of a long and often harrowing process of education. The presence of such a developmental process in the Hebrew Bible is central to the influential contrast Erich Auerbach draws between biblical narrative and Homeric legend. It will be helpful to quote here at length:

> God chose and formed these men to the end of embodying his essence and will—yet choice and formation do not coincide, for the latter proceeds gradually, historically, during the earthly life of him upon whom the choice has fallen. How the process is accomplished, what terrible trials such a formation inflicts, can be seen from our story of Abraham's sacrifice. Herein lies the reason why the great figures of the Old Testament are so much more fully developed, so much more fraught with their own biographical past, so much more distinct as individuals, than are the Homeric heroes. [… I]t is this history of a personality which the Old Testament presents to us as the formation undergone by those whom God has chosen to be examples. […T]he stern hand of God is ever upon the Old Testament figures; he has not only made them once and for all and chosen them, but he continues to work upon them, bends them and kneads them, and without destroying them in essence, produces from them forms which their youth gave no grounds for anticipating. […] For they are bearers of the divine will, and yet they are fallible, subject to misfortune and humiliation—and in the midst of misfortune and in their humiliation their acts and words reveal the transcendent majesty of God. There is hardly one of them who does not, like Adam, undergo the deepest humiliation—and hardly one who is not deemed worthy of God's personal intervention and personal inspiration. Humiliation and elevation go far deeper and far higher than in Homer, and they belong basically together. The poor beggar Odysseus is only masquerading, but Adam is really cast down, Jacob really a refugee, Joseph really in the pit and then a slave to be bought and sold. But their greatness, rising out of humiliation, is almost superhuman and an image of God's greatness. The reader clearly

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[99] White, 34.

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feels how the extent of the pendulum's swing is connected with the intensity of the personal history—precisely the most extreme circumstances, in which we are immeasurably forsaken and in despair, or immeasurably joyous and exalted, give us, if we survive them, a personal stamp which is recognized as the product of a rich existence, a rich development. And very often, indeed generally, this element of development gives the Old Testament stories a historical character, even when the subject is purely legendary and traditional.[100]

Moses does wrong in killing the Egyptian. His first step is a misstep, and it is no secret. The questionable nature of his act will be thrown in his face the following day by an Israelite slave; the tyrant himself, Pharaoh, will seek to punish Moses. Transitioning rapidly from concern to violence to secrecy demonstrates his immaturity at this stage, and does not bode well for the future either; burying corpses in unmarked graves is a standard device of warlords and dictators. The man who would be the solution to injustice has become part of the problem, getting off to a disastrous start! And yet—here is the important point for the present discussion—the calibrated personality development of the Hebrew Bible proceeds exactly on schedule.[101]

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[100] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 17–18.

[101] To be clear, I do not wish to suggest that there is no moral ambiguity here. I am trying to discern how this event in Moses' early life fits into his larger character development as a Royal Runaway, and within this frame of reference the killing strikes me as a setback, if also suggestive of certain admirable qualities. Regarding the ethical issue raised in Exodus 2, commentators through history have approached the issue differently; see survey in Childs, 40–42. For Childs himself, who directly approaches the text with the theological question of whether violence can ever be appropriate in a situation of injustice, the answer is ambiguous—but an ambiguity that is itself instructive. "In sum, the text does not provide one clear answer to the complex problem of using violence for the sake of justice. But it does raise a whole set of issues which are inherent in such action. By uncovering the ambiguities in the act of violence, the reader is forced to confront rather than evade those basic factors which constitute the moral decision" Childs, 45–46. The heart of the paradox for Childs (which comes into view by setting vv. 11–12 alongside vv. 13–14) is that Moses' well-intentioned action undercuts his moral authority. "To his chagrin Moses discovered that his altruism had made for him an enemy, not an ally. [… T]he incongruity of Moses' arguing for genuine reconciliation is pointed out by the impudent Hebrew. His act of killing had put him in a quite different position […] He was now unable to act as a reconciler. The prior action has robbed all his later words of significance," 45. Propp reaches similar conclusions: "It is not killing per se that disturbs the author; the Torah is no pacifist tract. […] There is, however, a world of difference between killing in obedience to Yahweh and killing to avenge a beating. And Moses does not even sin boldly. The Levites and Phinehas do not peer this way and that before striking. Thus, Moses' violence is not that of the macho soldier. Were he the typical hero, his youthful deed would start him on a life of conquests […] We are used to finding escapist entertainment in the lone hero, above any law, single-handedly righting society's wrongs. In five verses, the Yahwist presents a more realistic analysis of crime and punishment. He characteristically does justice to all sides of a moral dilemma. The author must sympathize with Moses' act (cf. Acts 7:25). Yet he acknowledges that homicide is sordid, difficult to conceal and liable to bring ill upon the perpetrator. I shall argue below that Yahweh in fact nearly executes Moses for this very crime (4:24–26)," 167–168.

Exodus 2:13–15a

וַיֵּצֵא בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וְהִנֵּה שְׁנֵי־אֲנָשִׁים עִבְרִים נִצִּים וַיֹּאמֶר לָרָשָׁע לָמָּה תַכֶּה רֵעֶךָ: 14 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שָׂמְךָ לְאִישׁ שַׂר וְשֹׁפֵט עָלֵינוּ הַלְהָרְגֵנִי אַתָּה אֹמֵר כַּאֲשֶׁר הָרַגְתָּ אֶת־הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּירָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמַר אָכֵן נוֹדַע הַדָּבָר: 15 וַיִּשְׁמַע פַּרְעֹה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיְבַקֵּשׁ לַהֲרֹג אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּבְרַח מֹשֶׁה מִפְּנֵי פַרְעֹה

13 *When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?"* **14** *He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known."* **15** *When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh...*

The "history of a personality" (Auerbach) continues here as Moses, true to his princely upbringing, "plays the royal role of defending his people and adjudicating among them."[102] Yet this is the moment when Moses actually becomes a Royal *Runaway* (ויברח *and he fled*), because the whole enterprise backfires. The accused Hebrew turns the tables on Moses and accuses him, signaling a new theme that will not be restricted to Moses' early life, but present throughout: the rejection and "grumbling" of his people. Yet neither is Moses' response particularly full of calm magnanimity, as might be hoped from a mature leader: "Instantly, he ceases to worry about the beaten slave and begins to think of his own safety. By breaking off, the text implies that Moses quits the scene at once, leaving matters unresolved."[103]

In defense of the sharp-tongued slave, there was precedent for his outburst. Exodus 1:11 records that the Egyptians "set taskmasters (שרי מסים) over them to afflict them (למען ענתו) with heavy burdens (בסבלתם)." (This last word appears in 2:11, when Moses "looks on their burdens"

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[102] Tigay, *Jewish Study Bible*, digital. Regarding the reply of the Hebrew, Cassuto notes that "'judge' is a synonym for 'prince', and both words express a single idea—a kind of hendiadys—sometimes forming a parallelism with each other, both in the Bible (cf. Prov. viii 16 'By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth') and in Ugaritic…" Cassuto, 23.

[103] Propp, 167. He suggests that "Who made you a prince and a judge over us?" is a cloaked accusation of Moses' illegitimacy as an Egyptian prince, and therefore that what Moses realizes "is known" is not the killing, but his slave birth. Perhaps this stretches the plain meaning of the biblical text, but the insight is valuable for its suggestion of how Moses' encounter with the enslaved Hebrew may have shaken him to a depth beyond the forensic matter at hand.

[ויךא בסבלתם].) The only experience an Israelite slave had of a שׂר (*prince*) was not positive; wounds of distrust and suspicion ran deep. And who knows (the text does not say) but that the Hebrew slaves themselves informed on Moses to Pharaoh.[104]

Foreshadowing, then, the exodus of the entire Israelite nation, Moses the Royal Runaway flees from an enraged Egyptian king,[105] immediately to face a test at the water (the well, the sea), and then God at the fiery mountain. Although the story of Exodus 2 is not yet over, the dynamics of personality are now primed for Moses' commissioning by YHWH in Exodus 3–4. For Exodus 2 demonstrates "the futility of attempting to rescue Israel without divine aid. […] Moses the vigilante, with his instinct for equity, must become Moses the prophetic Lawgiver. The impetuous youth will mature into the archetype of humility (Numbers 11–12), so popular an arbiter that he must delegate his judicial authority to other 'rulers' [שׂרים] and 'judges' [שפטים] (Exod 18:13–26)."[106] The note here of *becoming* and *maturing* should be clearly heard. Moses has to learn what does not work before he can learn what works. And what does not work is the arrogant self-reliance of princes. That identity must be stripped from Moses, humbled into that of an anonymous bedouin shepherd, before he can encounter the true power that human royalty, in the end, only adumbrates.

Exodus 2:15b–22

וַיֵּ֥שֶׁב בְּאֶֽרֶץ־מִדְיָ֖ן וַיֵּ֥שֶׁב עַֽל־הַבְּאֵֽר׃ 16 וּלְכֹהֵ֥ן מִדְיָ֖ן שֶׁ֣בַע בָּנ֑וֹת וַתָּבֹ֣אנָה וַתִּדְלֶ֗נָה וַתְּמַלֶּ֙אנָה֙ אֶת־הָ֣רְהָטִ֔ים לְהַשְׁק֖וֹת צֹ֥אן אֲבִיהֶֽן׃ 17 וַיָּבֹ֥אוּ הָרֹעִ֖ים וַיְגָרְשׁ֑וּם וַיָּ֤קָם מֹשֶׁה֙ וַיּ֣וֹשִׁעָ֔ן וַיַּ֖שְׁקְ אֶת־צֹאנָֽם׃ 18 וַתָּבֹ֕אנָה אֶל־רְעוּאֵ֖ל אֲבִיהֶ֑ן וַיֹּ֕אמֶר מַדּ֛וּעַ מִהַרְתֶּ֥ן בֹּ֖א הַיּֽוֹם׃ 19 וַתֹּאמַ֕רְןָ אִ֣ישׁ מִצְרִ֔י הִצִּילָ֖נוּ מִיַּ֣ד הָרֹעִ֑ים וְגַם־דָּלֹ֤ה דָלָה֙ לָ֔נוּ וַיַּ֖שְׁקְ אֶת־הַצֹּֽאן׃ 20 וַיֹּ֥אמֶר אֶל־בְּנֹתָ֖יו וְאַיּ֑וֹ לָ֤מָּה זֶּה֙ עֲזַבְתֶּ֣ן אֶת־הָאִ֔ישׁ קִרְאֶ֥ן ל֖וֹ וְיֹ֥אכַל לָֽחֶם׃ 21 וַיּ֥וֹאֶל מֹשֶׁ֖ה לָשֶׁ֣בֶת אֶת־הָאִ֑ישׁ וַיִּתֵּ֛ן אֶת־צִפֹּרָ֥ה בִתּ֖וֹ לְמֹשֶֽׁה׃ 22 וַתֵּ֣לֶד בֵּ֔ן וַיִּקְרָ֥א אֶת־שְׁמ֖וֹ גֵּרְשֹׁ֑ם כִּ֣י אָמַ֔ר גֵּ֣ר הָיִ֔יתִי בְּאֶ֖רֶץ נָכְרִיָּֽה׃ פ

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[104] Sarna, 11: "Moses discovers that some of his own people can act insidiously as informers to the oppressive authorities."

[105] Cf. Exodus 14:5, when Israel also ברח (*flees*).

[106] Propp, 168.

15 ...and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well. 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. 18 When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come home so soon today?" 19 They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock." 20 He said to his daughters, "Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. 22 She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

Moses begins to grow up in subtle ways. His passion for justice is no longer unleashed wildly, but coming under control. And outcomes improve accordingly: instead of a corpse and an alienated kinsman, he finds a wife and a welcoming father-in-law. Perhaps the movement here in his personality can be well-described as a transition between two rabbinic sayings. Pirkei Avot 2:6 counsels: במקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש (*In the place where there are no men, strive to be a man*). In Exodus 2:12 the fiery princeling looks this way and that, *and sees that there is no man* (וירא כי אין איש). So he tries to assert himself as "the man" and it does not go particularly well.[107] Later in Midian, however, Moses has advanced approximately two chapters in rabbinic wisdom, to Pirkei Avot 4:1: איזהו גיבור, הכובש את יצרו (*Who is mighty? He who subdues his* [*evil*] *inclination.*) He does not summarily execute the oppressors this time, but responds with proportional restraint, מידה כנגד מידה. Perhaps this is why here, instead of earlier in the chapter, the narrator first chooses to use the vibrant theological term ויושען (*and he saved them*, 2:17): for at the very point Moses

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[107] Cf. Alter on 2:12: "[T]here is a pointed echoing of "man" [*ish*]—an Egyptian man, a Hebrew man, and no man—that invites one to ponder the role and obligations of a man as one man victimizes another." Alter, 314.

first shows signs of making progress in the strenuous task of conquering himself (כובש את יצרו) the portrait of a savior for others begins hazily to emerge.[108]

Yet the paradox of a Royal Runaway is still keenly felt, for this newfound maturity coincides with a deepening sense of alienation. Having just come into his own as a benefactor of women instead of—as in the inverted earlier panel—needing their charity, Moses selects a name for his firstborn son that poignantly summarizes his life to this point: Gershom. "For I have been a sojourner in a foreign land," 2:22.[109] Recall here the prominent and fraught role of firstborn sons in the Exodus story: God's and Pharaoh's, notably (Exodus 4:22–23; 12:29–32), while even Passover-saved firstborn sons of Israel must be specially redeemed (13:2, 12–16). Moses' firstborn son thus enters this charged arena of primogeniture by reflecting in his name the disappointments of his exiled father. It would be underselling the situation to say with Tigay that "[s]ince Moses was raised as an Egyptian, it is only in Midian that he begins to feel the sense of alienness that his kinsfolk have experienced in Egypt."[110] For by the time Moses arrives in Midian he is already thrice estranged: from his birth family, from his Hebrew brethren, and from the royal family. This latest blow of being a former prince of a mighty empire who must now cast in his lot with semi-nomadic herdsmen is humiliating indeed.

Exodus 2:23–25
23 וַיְהִי֩ בַיָּמִ֨ים הָֽרַבִּ֜ים הָהֵ֗ם וַיָּ֙מָת֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ מִצְרַ֔יִם וַיֵּאָנְח֧וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֛ל מִן־הָעֲבֹדָ֖ה וַיִּזְעָ֑קוּ וַתַּ֧עַל שַׁוְעָתָ֛ם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִ֖ים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָֽה: 24 וַיִּשְׁמַ֥ע אֱלֹהִ֖ים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָ֑ם וַיִּזְכֹּ֤ר אֱלֹהִים֙ אֶת־בְּרִית֔וֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָ֖ם אֶת־יִצְחָ֥ק וְאֶֽת־יַעֲקֹֽב: 25 וַיַּ֥רְא אֱלֹהִ֖ים אֶת־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וַיֵּ֖דַע אֱלֹהִֽים: ס

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[108] Zakovitch: "משה becomes a מושיע." Lecture, 11 October 2018.

[109] The folk etymology combines גר *sojourner* and שם *there*, although the term derives from גרש, *to drive out*; the verb appears just prior in 2:17, when shepherds drive the girls away, ויגרשום. According to genealogies, Moses had an ancestor named Gershom or Gershon, listed as a son of Levi in Exodus 6:16–17 (גרשון), I Chronicles 6:1 (גרשם).

[110] Tigay, *Jewish Study Bible*, digital.

23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

The tide begins to turn, or so it seems, since the king who twice tried to kill Moses—once as a baby and again as an adult—dies first. But while this may change Moses' personal situation, the suffering of the Israelites continues;[111] their howls of anguish arouse God's covenantal love. This is vital to an understanding of Moses, since it situates his passion for justice within the wider framework of God's longstanding commitment to the people of Israel. For while a text like Exodus 2 ostensibly sidelines divine agency and showcases the actions of ordinary humans, the epilogue makes clear that what has already occurred in Moses' life and what will ensue in the continuation is ultimately propelled by the motive force of God's loyalty to his chosen people.

Still, that God often utilizes humans in the implementation of his care aligns with the deeper logic of the narrative, since the covenant with the patriarchs that he "remembers" in Exodus 2:24 is intent on blessing all nations in a way involving them.[112] Election means neither arbitrary favoritism (although God's love for Israel is never simply instrumentalized to global ends) nor robotic

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[111] "It was established practice in Egypt for a new king to celebrate his accession to the throne by granting amnesty to those guilty of crimes, by releasing prisoners, and by freeing slaves. An extant hymn composed in honor of the accession of Ramses IV illustrates the custom. It records 'a happy day' for Egypt when 'fugitives returned to their towns' and when 'those in hiding emerged' and 'those in prison were freed.' This being so, the Israelites had good reason to expect that the change in regime would bring with it some amelioration of their condition. But this was not to be. Hence the stress on the intensified misery of the enslaved Israelites. Moses, however, did benefit from the amnesty personally, as 4:19 confirms." Sarna, 13.

[112] Whether ונברכו בך of Genesis 12:3 and 28:14 is best understood as the reflexive "bless themselves" (JPS) or the passive "be blessed" (ESV) is a classic dilemma whose resolution tends to fall along Jewish–Christian lines (cf. 22:18, התברכו). The point I wish to highlight here is simply the coordination *in some way* between Abraham's family and blessing in or to the world. Such blurred agency appears in a passage like Numbers 21:16–18: "…the LORD said to Moses, 'Gather the people together, so that I may give them water.' Then Israel sang this song: 'Spring up, O well!—sing to it!—the well that the princes made, that the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter and with their staffs.'"

passivity (although grateful obedience is the basic covenantal attitude), but the sobering responsi-bility of participating in YHWH's intentions for the world.[113] In this sense Moses is *chosen*, and the responsibility which throughout Exodus 2 he is being prepared to carry is an announcement of the intervention into Israel's suffering of the God who hears, remembers, sees, and knows.

Conclusion to Commentary – In the account of the Israelites passing through the sea in Exodus 14, one sentence appears twice, nearly verbatim:

<div dir="rtl">

ויבאו בני-ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה והמים להם חמה מימינם ומשמאלם

</div>

And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground,
the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.
Exodus 14:22

<div dir="rtl">

ובני ישראל הלכו ביבשה בתוך הים והמים להם חמה מימינם ומשמאלם

</div>

But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea,
the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.
Exodus 14:29

If such doubling serves to emphasize a point, then in this paradigmatic biblical event of salvation a symbolic logic arguably emerges whereby rescue of God's people manifests as a narrow and pressurized experience between imposing objects on either side.[114] The account of Moses' early life in Exodus 2 loosely fits this paradigm, including even the watery elements: on one hand, the events at the Nile, on the other hand, events at the well, and between them Moses' first and solo exodus from Egypt. Transposed, the symbolic logic of Exodus 14 thus finds a narrative antecedent in Exodus 2. Moses and Israel are saved by YHWH in similar fashion, on the

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[113] Jewish mystical traditions about תיקון העולם (*fixing the world*), for example, capture the idea nicely. See the theo-logical dialectic of election outlined in Jon D. Levenson, "The Universal Horizons of Biblical Particularism," in *Eth-nicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 143–169.

[114] I am grateful to Prof. Teeter for helping me see this, and the many biblical scenarios to which it applies (e.g. Exodus 17:12; Numbers 22:24–26; Judges 16:25–30; I Samuel 14:4–5, 17:3; etc.).

principle that מעשׂה אבות סימן לבנים (the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children); not only do the narrative elements converge (extraction from סוף *reeds*, etc.), but the narrative shapes do as well: a path through waters. This is the basis of the diptych I was arguing for earlier.

Such panels sharpen the focus on the harried young prince fleeing between them: what is the rationale for all the hard luck that comes Moses' way, and his crises of identity? Above the idea was explored that such experiences serve to humble a person, since they eventuate in the recognition of fundamental dependence on God. Such a recognition does not happen all at once, but develops slowly, by stages; Moses *matures*. This much we have seen. What I wish to add here is simply another aspect of the general point made in the prior paragraph, namely: that God's manner of educating Moses in fact scales up to the whole, resonating with methods of divine pedagogy for all Israel.

> And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. […] Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you […] that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 5, 16

> My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11–12

Deuteronomy and Proverbs ring the same note: the trials of YHWH's beloved are not the result of a sadistic curiosity to know how humans might hold up under gratuitous stress tests, but rather an expression of parental love intent on developing the character necessary to safeguard the blessing YHWH wishes to entrust to his children. The goal of the discipline is the good of the beloved.[115]

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[115] This is not, of course, meant as a programmatic statement on theodicy, a difficult matter. The Hebrew Bible offers multiple explanations of "why bad things happen to good people," among which are the forces of chaos, sin, laziness, stupidity, bad luck, divine judgment, malign spirits, and yes, also: God's pedagogy. This last, which I am highlighting

Such education is personally costly, to be sure, but not without reward. Moses will undergo this curriculum, as will all Israel—a similarity that is not arbitrary, but an important aspect of the pedagogy of the Hebrew Bible itself. Moses and Israel both face humbling, purifying tests of faith/fulness, and come to know the faithfulness of YHWH through the process. On the principle, then, that there is a correspondence of some sort between the training of the one (Moses) and the many (Israel), the next section will attempt to discern analogues in the Hebrew Bible to the costly education of the saved savior, Moshe.

3. Exodus 2 Parallels in the Hebrew Bible

Given that the above treatment of Moses' upbringing is selective, focusing on dynamics relating to his character as a Royal Runaway, it goes without saying that a thoroughgoing study of parallels to Exodus 2 (much less to Moses in general) is beyond the scope of this study. What follows is necessarily impressionistic, keying in on what seem to me salient parallels in a handful of biblical biographies (Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Jacob, Joseph, and David). The success or failure of the analogues I suggest will depend less on specific exegetical decisions and more on the plausibility of the composite picture.

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here, is in step with Christian theodicies following the 2nd century church father Irenaeus, who viewed suffering as in many ways a purgative and pedagogical device that grows humans up (contrast Augustinian approaches that regard evil more philosophically, viz. as a sort of nihility that progressively negates the being of created good via misused freedom); see John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 38–200 for Augustinian theodicies, 201–242 for Irenaean varieties.

Adam and Eve

That similarities would manifest between narratives in early Genesis and early Exodus makes intuitive sense in light of larger compositional strategies to correlate the two books.[116] And sure enough, a clear allusion to Genesis 1–3 is discernable in the opening scene of Exodus 2: ותרא אתו כי טוב הוא (*…and when she saw that he was a fine child* [lit. 'good']). Sarna writes: "The entire clause stirs immediate association with a key phrase, seven times repeated in the Genesis Creation narrative, 'God saw that…was good' (*tov*). This parallel suggests that the birth of Moses is intended to be understood as the dawn of a new creative era."[117] Yet Sarna might also have noted that this phrase recurs at the moment when the first creative era is jeopardized by the seduction of Eve: ...ותרא האשה כי טוב העץ (*So when the woman saw that the tree was good…*), Genesis 3:6. Given the predominance of female characters in Exodus 2 who are such a help[118] to Moses, it would seem a comparison is being made: whereas Eve (and Adam) reach out to grasp what is not rightfully theirs, Yocheved releases what is rightfully hers: her son. Eve's choice not only fails in its objective, but results in the deprivation of what she already had (a home in Eden); Yocheved's choice, by contrast, results in receiving her son back from the princess.[119] Furthermore, given the biblical

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[116] Note the clear creation language in Exodus 1:7 (פר״ה, *be fruitful*, רב״ה, *multiply*, מל״א ארץ, *fill the earth*). See also discussion in Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1988), 78–99, regarding the mapping of creation in Genesis onto the tabernacle in Exodus. Levenson outlines a case for the "double directionality of the homology of Temple and world […	T]he point is not simply that the two projects, world building and temple building, are parallel. Rather, they implicate each other, and neither is complete alone." 86, 99. See further Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 108: "While Genesis 1 foreshadows the construction of the tabernacle [heptadic structure, liturgical building, etc.], Genesis 2–3 (Eden) anticipates the physical appearance of it [precious stones, water, rich foliage, etc.]."

[117] Sarna, 9. He draws the same conclusion from allusions in Exodus 2 to Noah: "Evocation of the flood narrative also suggests, once again, that the birth of Moses signals a new era in history." Ibid.

[118] Although the word עזר (*help*; Genesis 2:18) is not present in Exodus 2, the theme doubtless is.

[119] Compare Abraham's release of his beloved son Isaac, only to receive him back (Genesis 22), with David's unkingly attachment for his beloved son Absalom, only to lose him in tragic fashion (II Samuel 18).

trope of women who beguile and compromise men in some way,[120] the virtuous and salvific role of women in Exodus 2 contributes to a sense that this story overturns (or at least sits as an ironic counterbalance to) a troublesome theme begun in Eden.[121]

And if the beginning of Exodus 2 mirrors the drama of Eden, so does the end: a man marries a woman (Eve's name refers to her role as "mother of all living," whereas Zipporah has an animal name, meaning "bird"), followed immediately by the language of expulsion: גר״ש (Genesis 3:24, Exodus 2:22). Both stories thus conclude on a jarring note of exile, and this is no coincidence. The attentive reader of the Genesis narratives, beginning with Eden, encounters a character like Moses for the first time with the expectation that he too—if he really is part of this larger story—must be destined for some form of exile. The expectation is not disappointed. Gershom's name is not only reflective of one man's sense of alienation, but reinforces the larger biblical pattern begun in Eden.

At the same time, the end of Exodus 2 is not entirely shaded in postlapsarian gloom. For at the antipode of exile is a profound sense of *home*, and this also finds expression in both Genesis 1–3 and Exodus 2: as the chaotic waters of creation (Genesis 1:2) give way to the paradisical rivers (Genesis 2:10–14) where the lonely man receives a wife, so the threatening waters of the Nile in the first half of Exodus 2 debouch into the pastoral well of the second half of the chapter, where our lonely protagonist finds his mate. Before the woman becomes the occasion of a man's down-fall, then (if indeed she is at all[122]), she is first his resurrection, the beautiful חוה (*life*, Eve) to which he wakens.

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[120] Eve and Adam, Tamar and Judah, Yael and Sisera, the woman who crushes Abimelech's head, Delilah and Samson, Bathsheba and David, Esther and Haman, Judith and Holofernes.

[121] The density in Exodus 2 of רא״ה (*see*; vv. 2, 5, 6, 11 [2x], 12), יד״ע (*know*, vv. 4, 14, 25), and לק״ח (*take*; vv. 1, 3, 5, 9) further suggests the parallel to Eve, who "saw" the tree of "knowledge" and "took" of its fruit; Genesis 3:6.

[122] Adam does, after all, seem to be standing mutely by his wife during her casuistic dialogue with the snake (Genesis 3:6). Moreover, within the logic of the story, the subtle differences between God's original command to Adam

Finally, although there will be a good deal more to say about Adam in the next chapter, the larger parallel should be noted here between the first humans who bear a royal vocation and yet are expelled from their palace/temple, and Royal Runaway typology. As Moses arrogates to himself judicial authority in Exodus 2, only to find that it results in expulsion from his royal station, so Adam and Eve arrogate to themselves divine knowledge of good and evil, only to have their eyes opened to the road leading away from Eden.

Cain and Abel

Directly on the heels of Eden comes another story that superimposes in interesting ways on Exodus 2. The emphasis on Moses' brothers (אחיו, 2x in Exodus 2:11) recalls the first warring brothers of the Bible, Cain and Abel; and after the fratricide, Cain's reaction to his punishment shares language with Exodus 2 as well: "Behold, you have driven me today away [גרשת, cf. Exodus 2:17, 22] from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth [cf. Exodus 2:22, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"], and whoever finds me will kill me [יהרגני, cf. הר״ג 3x in Exodus 2:14–15, including the nearly identical להרגני in v. 14]," Genesis 4:14. Again, just as God informs Cain that "the voice of your brother's blood is crying [צע״ק] to me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10), so God hears the cry (זע״ק) of Moses' brethren in Egypt (Exodus 2:23; צע״ק in 3:7, 9). The dead brother himself in Genesis 4 is the first bearer of that vocation Moses will bear, that Joseph and David will bear, and that generally will be affiliated with kingship in the Hebrew Bible: a shepherd (Genesis 4:2, ויהי הבל רעה צאן [*Now Abel was a*

(Genesis 2:16–17) and Eve's imperfect recitation of it (Genesis 3:2–3) suggests a communication breakdown on his part. At any rate, and as a primer to the moral ambiguity of many stories in the Hebrew Bible, Adam and Eve are culpable in subtly different ways, making the blame shifting of 3:12–13 plausible from a human vantage—although not to God.

keeper of sheep]; Exodus 3:1, ומשֶׁה היה רעה את-צאן [*Now Moses was keeping the flock*]). Yet as Abel and Cain were different in their vocations, so Cain and Moses contrast in that Cain kills his brother, whereas Moses kills on behalf of his brother. The resemblance between the scenarios, in fact, highlights such marked differences: just as the belligerent Cain fires back a question to God's inquiry (Genesis 4:9), so Moses has a question thrown back in reply to his own inquest (Exodus 2:14); whereas Cain distances himself from responsibility to his brother, (השמר אחי אנכי [*Am I my brother's keeper?* Genesis 4:9]), Moses demonstrates a high sense of responsibility. Initially things may not turn out very well, but Moses certainly behaves as if he were his brother's keeper.

In these ways, then, Genesis 4 introduces themes that will figure in Exodus 2: disgruntled and violent brothers, a God who cares about injustice, and the question of responsibility to one's relations.

Jacob

Like Moses, Jacob must ברח (*flee*, Genesis 27:43) from a would-be murderer, and the terminus of their respective flights is with the man who will become their father-in-law: Jethro, Laban. Both have female benefactors (in fact, mothers) who are instrumental in their early trajectories, helping them secure privilege: Moses the prince is a slave in disguise, and Jacob finagles the blessing. Interestingly, although outside the bounds of Exodus 2, it is striking that after fleeing their privilege, both Jacob and Moses experience a luminous theophany that will propel them into their covenantal future: a ladder to heaven and a burning bush.[123] For all these similarities,

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[123] Compare Abraham, to whom YHWH appears in "a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch," (Genesis 15:17). In many ways Abraham also fits the paradigm of a Royal Runaway, given that his covenantal journey begins upon being summoned to leave behind the security of his father's family and home. More on Abraham in Chapter 3.

however, a strong contrast appears with Moses at the moment Jacob flees home, and like the contrast with Cain, it redounds to Moses' honor: whereas Moses' life is threatened for having gone to the defense of his brother, Jacob is threatened because he deceived and extorted his brother. Both men live in the violent world somewhere east of Eden, but their orientation to their brothers is quite different. Moral irony flourishes in such a world, and certainly here: while Moses' basically correct disposition will lead him to bloodshed, Jacob's goat-haired hands remain clean of blood.

None of this, however, has yet touched on the most obvious parallel between Exodus 2 and Jacob, which is the well scene, and which the Genesis end of the comparison seems to extend with a fascinating twist. The core elements of the analogue must first be seen, though, and here I will use information from a chart by Sailhamer that documents similarities between well scenes in the stories of Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and Moses.[124]

Table 1: Comparison of Jacob and Moses at the well

	Jacob	Moses
Outside the land	Genesis 29:1	Exodus 2:15
Father	Genesis 29:5	Exodus 2:16
Daughters	Genesis 29:16	Exodus 2:16
A well	Genesis 29:2	Exodus 2:15
Daughters water father's herd	Genesis 29:9	Exodus 2:16
Shepherds gather	Genesis 29:2	Exodus 2:17
Test	Genesis 29:8	Exodus 2:17
Saves daughters	Genesis 29:10	Exodus 2:17
Sheep watered	Genesis 29:11	Exodus 2:17

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[124] Sailhamer, 243. The chart is very helpful, but I do have trouble seeing with Sailhamer how "in each of these narratives one of the leading patriarchs of the Pentateuch takes a wife from a people and a land not already aligned with the chosen people" (244). Is not the reason Abraham's servant travels to Mesopotamia that the patriarch is loath to marry off his son to a foreign woman (Genesis 24:3–9)? And while Jacob travels to Mesopotamia for a variety of reasons, is not one of them so that he might marry a near relation (Genesis 26:34–35; 27:46)?

Daughters tell of deed	Genesis 29:12	Exodus 2:18
Patriarch invited to stay	Genesis 29:13–14	Exodus 2:20–21
Married daughter	Genesis 29:23, 28	Exodus 2:21
Son(s) born	Genesis 29:31–30:23	Exodus 2:22

Clearly there is close patterning between the well scene of Genesis 29 and that of Exodus 2. In contrast to the absence of Isaac from the well scene in Genesis 24 and the disreputable behavior of Judah in Genesis 38, Jacob and Moses prove themselves manfully before their future brides, the former hefting a boulder away from the well, the latter asserting himself over the local thugs.

For all these similarities, there is nevertheless a curious element. Exodus 2:16 uses the rare word רהט (*trough*), which is only elsewhere present in the Hebrew Bible in the Jacob cycle: Genesis 30:38, 41. This is the story of Jacob's ruse with the flocks of Laban, breeding them in such a manner that his own holdings increase. Whereas רהט in Exodus 2, then, appears in the context of human mates finding one another near flocks, רהט in Genesis 30 appears in a context when flocks are simply mating. The effect in Genesis is to extend the scene of Jacob's fecundity beyond the standard wooing at the well, as his human and ovine dependents multiply apace. Jacob thus פרץ (*increases*; Genesis 30:43; cf. 28:14) and his possessions are רבות (*many*; 30:43), the same language used to describe the children of Israel just before the appearance of Moses (Exodus 1:12, וכאשר יענו אתו כן ירבה וכן יפרץ [*But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad*]). It would seem that even in exile blessing abounds for God's elect (cf. Genesis 12:16, Exodus 12:35–36).

Given such resemblances between Jacob and Moses as they transition from one early season of life to another when they establish families, it perhaps comes as no surprise that the ends of their lives also correlate. The concluding chapters of Genesis and Deuteronomy, respectively, concern themselves with the deaths of Jacob and Moses: both offering poetic blessings to the twelve

tribes (Genesis 49, Deuteronomy 33),[125] and both dying in exile. Interestingly, although Jacob is buried in the Machpelah cave purchased by Abraham, Genesis 50 twice includes the geographically incoherent detail of much weeping for him בעבר הירדן (*beyond the Jordan*, Genesis 50:10, 11[126]); Moses was also buried somewhere in this region. Thus the eponymous father of Israel and the dominant figure of the Torah share many experiences in life and in death, and whatever global "meaning" their respective lives may carry, a larger literary and theological strategy seems to want them coordinated.

Joseph

In many ways the book of Genesis ends where it began. Like the first humans who are "made in the image of God" but still grab after more godlikeness, Joseph is now "a father" to the man the Egyptians considered god on earth (Genesis 41:8), but instead of asserting himself still further like Adam and Eve, Joseph's peroration at the end of Genesis to his worried brothers denies his own divinity: "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?" (Genesis 50:19). Immediately the Edenic language of good and evil follows: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today," (Genesis 50:20). Among other things, this is an excellent summary of what Royal Runaway typology is all about: apparent evil that works for good, apparent disaster setting in motion a greater triumph—

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[125] The poems mirror one another in strong ways, not least in their orientation to אחרית הימים, *the end of days* (Genesis 49:1; Deuteronomy 31:29, which contextualizes the poetry of chapters 32–33; cf. Numbers 24:14.)

[126] Levenson writes: "It is unclear why the state procession approached Hebron by way of Transjordan. Perhaps vv. 10–11 derive from a lost tradition that did not locate Jacob's grave in the cave of Machpelah, as vv. 12–13 do, but spoke of an interment at the otherwise unattested site of Goren ha-Atad. Whether this is the case or not, the itinerary foreshadows the route Israel takes after their miraculous escape from Egypt, when they entered Canaan from Transjordan (Num. 33:1–49; Josh. ch 3). As God had promised (46:4), Jacob, in short, is given his own personal exodus." *Jewish Study Bible*, digital.

and crucially, not just for the sake of the individual involved, but *for the sake of* (למען) *many other people*. The rigorous path of abasement and exaltation a Royal Runaway is compelled to tread eventuates not only in the resurrection (להחית, lit. *the making alive*[127]) of themselves or their nearest of kin, but of a great many people besides (עם רב). Bringing closure to a promise made long before, Abraham's great-grandson has indeed become a blessing to the nations.[128]

The literature of Genesis has been slowly building toward this capstone moment for at least fourteen chapters, as the story of Joseph and his brothers begins in earnest in Genesis 37. The chapter bears not a few resemblances to Exodus 2, and is therefore where I will focus my comments. Like Moses, the youngster Joseph comes on the biblical stage as an enigma of special election and shame. After introducing the expected tropes of shepherds and brothers ("Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers"), Genesis 37:2 includes the seemingly banal detail that "[h]e was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives." This

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[127] Cf. Genesis 45:5, 7 where Joseph tells his brothers, למחיה שלחני אלהים (*God sent me to preserve life*) and וישלחני אלהים...להחיות לכם לפליטה גדלה (*And God sent me…to keep alive for you many survivors*). A comparison of these similar-sounding speeches of Genesis 45 and 50 suggests a development in Joseph's self-understanding. Whereas in chapter 45 Joseph's notion of his task is to keep his own family alive through his viziership of Egypt (or at least that is what he tells his shocked brothers), in chapter 50 his sense of mission has expanded beyond his family. This would make sense if indeed Genesis 50 parallels the global scope of Genesis 1; it would also make sense if part of the ethical attraction of Royal Runaway stories is the transcendence of mere kinship altruism.

A further grammatical note may be helpful, since it has theological implications: ESV understands the hiphil of חי״ה as it appears in Genesis 45:5 and 50:20 as *maintaining* life, which flattens the causative force of the hiphil stem. This is why in the paragraph above I rendered the term "resurrection": the giving of life to things that are (as good as) dead. In other Hebrew Bible contexts where YHWH's power to bring dead things to life is in view, even *less* grammatical force is used to express the idea via חי״ה. (E.g. piel אחיה in Deuteronomy 32:39 and מחיה in I Samuel 2:6, although piel can, of course, also have causative force; qal יחיו in Isaiah 26:19 and various qal conjugations in Ezekiel 37:3, 5, 6, 10, 14). The deeper issue here, however, is not grammatical but cultural translation. Levenson's *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) develops at length the implications of the basic historical fact that "the range of conditions that the Hebrew Bible groups under the rubric of 'death' includes many that we designate otherwise. […] Whereas we think of a person who is gravely ill, under lethal assault, or sentenced to capital punishment as still alive, the Israelites were quite capable of seeing such an individual as dead," 37–38. Among the experiences classified as a type of "death" for ancient Israelites was famine, and so within this cultural matrix Joseph is not merely keeping his family alive through seven years of famine, but actually yanking them back from the domain of death into life; i.e., resurrecting them.

[128] As might be anticipated from a compositional rhythm of three (in this case, generations) plus one, the fourth in a series being of decisive importance. Prof. Teeter made this observation about Joseph and Genesis in a lecture.

playground location is not trivial, as Levenson notes: "Although he is the firstborn son of Jacob's preferred wife, Rachel (30:22–24), his older brothers have stationed him with the sons of the slave women (30:3–13), the lowest ranking siblings."[129] In the smallest recursive frame at the beginning of Joseph's life, the first has become the last, the highest the lowest; a pattern is thus subtly established that will repeat itself in ever larger and more obvious ways throughout Joseph's life.

Apparently oblivious to these dynamics among his sons, however, or perhaps (given his penchant for *realpolitik*) deliberately exacerbating them, Jacob stokes the brothers' resentment by gifting Joseph with a special coat (Genesis 37:3). Hence, in the first verses of Genesis 37, and with a literary efficiency that recalls the first verses of Exodus 2, the reader is shown a boy running with slave children while wearing a marvelously embroidered tunic. The scenario is rather ludicrous, and also ominous: "[T]his contradiction may foreshadow the radical reversal of Joseph's status."[130] The Hebrew child Moses growing up in the palace of Pharaoh is likewise marked out for reversals.

But first, relations with their respective brothers deteriorate further. The reportage of grandiose dreams captures something of the exuberant and clueless teenager Joseph is at this point: the interjection הנה, here glossed technically as "Yo, check this out!", appears five times in a mere two verses (37:7, 9).[131] Outraged, the brothers retort with a double-barreled sarcasm that—like the riposte of Moses' Hebrew brother in Exodus 2:14—undermines the presumptive royal authority of the future savior: "Are you indeed to reign [המלך תמלך] over us? Or are you indeed to rule [-אם

מָשֹׁל תִּמְשֹׁל] over us?" (Genesis 37:8). Further, and recalling Moses' rejection by his surrogate father who would punish him for murder, Joseph's father also rebukes his grandiloquent son with a pair of questions: "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground [לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֺת לְךָ אַרְצָה] before you?" (Genesis 37:10). However, whereas Joseph's brothers only grow in their unmitigated hatred because of the dreams, "his father kept the saying in mind" (Genesis 37:11), likely because Joseph's imperial visions were in keeping with the promise to Jacob himself that "kings shall come from your own body" (Genesis 35:11). At any rate, the salient feature to notice about Joseph's early life is that, like Moses, his special status alienates him from his brothers, the very men whose lives he will one day save.

The real movement in Joseph's story begins, when, exactly like Moses, he leaves the security of home and goes out to his brothers: "Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.' And he said to him, 'Here I am.' So he said to him, 'Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word'" (Genesis 37:12–14a). The boy clad in garments suggestive of his future royal attire (Genesis 41:42) thus goes out to his working-class brothers, and as with Moses, meets directly with failure. "And a man found him wandering in the field [תֹּעֶה בַּשָּׂדֶה]" (Genesis 37:15). Evocative of later generations wandering in the wilderness and led by the mysterious angel of the LORD, the now-familiar paradox appears of an individual both chosen and lost, a savior in need of saving. And the mandate of Joseph's errand, expressed in his words to the mysterious man who intercepts him in the field, is essential to the meaning of his situation: אֶת-אַחַי אָנֹכִי מְבַקֵּשׁ (*I am seeking my brothers*, Genesis 37:16). Like Moses, and unlike Cain, Joseph is on a quest for his brothers. Applicable both in the immediate context of Genesis 37 and also in a more holistic evaluation of Joseph's life, with the words "I am seeking

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my brothers" the deeper mechanisms of Royal Runaway typology are set in motion, for the quest for their brothers will first drive Joseph and Moses far away, betrayed by those very brothers.

The abduction of Joseph in Genesis 37:18–28 reads like an inverted well scene: instead of a group of sisters around a באר (*well*), a group of brothers surrounds a בור (*pit*) in which there is no water (והבור רק אין בו מים, 32:25); instead of a stage for the exploits of the protagonist, it becomes a crime scene where he is exploited; instead of salvific water being pulled out of the earth, the savior himself is thrust into the earth; in lieu of the happy outcome of marriage and oneness is the severance of exile and slavery. Typologically, the abusive shepherds whom Moses drives away in Exodus 2:17 are in the position of the brothers themselves, while the double name of the traders who take Joseph to Egypt, instead of signaling a scribal blunder or documentary seam, may simultaneously recall prior deeds of brotherly expulsion involving a well (Ishmaelites, Genesis 37:25; cf. Genesis 16:1–16; 21:8–21) and the future locale of Moses' own well scene (Midianites, Genesis 37:28). In these ways the final scene before one savior, Joseph, arrives in Egypt reflects the first scene after another savior, Moses, flees from Egypt. And like Moses in Midian, in Egypt Joseph will be tested.

Meir Sternberg writes of Joseph's arduously-won maturity over the ensuing years of bondage, forced labor, managerial responsibility, sexual temptation, false accusation, and prison:

> The spoiled favorite had not only looked but been unlovely, before misfortune, the Bible's teacher and touchstone, made a man of him. [… F]avorable traits of character […] are not so much either created or unveiled as brought out by the pressure of events. Destabilizing routine and forcing clear-cut choices that the old balance of power within man cannot accommodate, the test *crystallizes* personality.[132]

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[132] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 289, 296. Italics original. In context, the second half of the quotation describes the change in Joseph's brothers, but it very much applies to his development as well.

In this way, then, a compressed bildungsroman like Genesis 37–50 records the tutelage in misfortune that Joseph, Moses, and other Royal Runaways undergo, the chrysalis of a leader emerging from the prolonged dormancy of alienation and struggle.[133] And as was noted at the beginning of this case study, Joseph voices in his autobiographical summary (Genesis 50:20) an understanding that his transformation was by no means simply for himself, but for the life of the many.[134] Nor was this outcome orchestrated by him, or solely the product of his own grit and mettle. Silently working in the background for most of Joseph's exilic life, in the finale the Hebrew Bible pulls back the curtain to pay homage to the stage director who has been there all along: אתם חשבתם עלי רעה אלהים חשבה לטבה (*You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.*)

David

Corresponding to the above words at the end of Book I of the five-book Torah, at the conclusion of Book I of the five-book Psalter are found nearly verbatim words: עלי יחשבו רעה לי (*they imagine the worst for me*, Psalm 41:8).[135] Yet the similarity of being credited with five-book compositions is only the beginning of the biblical resemblances between Moses and David, the Hebrew

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[133] Cf. Deuteronomy 33:15, where an implicit parallel is made between Joseph and Moses: Joseph is blessed with רצון שכני סנה, "*the favor of the Presence in the Bush*" (JPS). The bush, of course, coincided with Moses' exile. And a further link between Joseph and Moses (and one not altogether aloof from exile and transformation) is that whereas Joseph's story ends with inclusion into the family of an Egyptian noblewoman, Moses' story begins in just this way—a parallel all the more interesting for the role of Egypt as archetypal foe in the Hebrew Bible.

[134] Compare Psalm 105:16–24, which also reflects on the others-oriented telos of Joseph's testing. "When [YHWH] had summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him. The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free; he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom. Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And the LORD made his people very fruitful and made them stronger than their foes."

[135] English 41:7. Given the similarity of canonical placement, it may be significant that the next two verses use terms recalling the one who spoke the words in Genesis, Joseph (יוסיף, 41:9 [41:8]), and his father Jacob (עקב, 41:10 [41:9]). Or maybe not.

Bible's third great "shepherd king" figure (the other being Joseph). A thorough comparison of their canonical portraits is not possible here, but Exodus 2 provides plenty of material to work with. Take, for example, the threefold repetition of the rare verb דל״ה (*to draw water*, Exodus 2:16, 19 [2x]). Outside of Proverbs 20:5, the only other place the word occurs in the Hebrew Bible is Psalm 30:2, at the beginning of a poem in which David gives thanks to YHWH for salvation: ארוממך יהוה כי דליתני (*I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up*).[136] The theology of the psalter is, to be sure, a massive and complex affair, but a noncontroversial theme is the utter dependence upon the greater King that King David regularly expresses, and the specifically Mosaic overtones of that dependence are not hard to discern in the verse just quoted: as Moses is drawn forth, so David is drawn forth. The words are different, but the ideas rhyme (to use a classical description of biblical parallelism), and what is more, the word itself used to describe David's salvation is triply emphasized in the very passage where Moses is introduced as a saved savior, drawn forth from the water. It is as if the association *wants* to be made.[137]

Like Moses (and Joseph) before him, David's life begins in the awkward position of being simultaneously singled out from among his brothers for privilege (וימשח אתו בקרב אחיו, *and he [Samuel] anointed him [David] among his brothers*, I Samuel 16:13), and humiliated with the un-important task of tending sheep in the back forty. Also a younger brother, David's adventures begin just as we should by now expect: "Jesse said to David his son, 'Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your

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[136] English 30:1.

[137] Cf. the Davidic statement ימשני ממים רבים (*he drew me out* [*yamsheni*] *of many waters*) in Psalm 18:17 / II Samuel 22:17. That this transparent allusion to Moses occurs in the one psalm also appearing in the prose account of David's life (in the poetic conclusion of the Samuel literature) is significant; the canonical placement suggests a canon-wide comparison between the legendary leaders: as Israel's representative at Sinai had been drawn forth from the waters, so too Israel's representative at Zion.

brothers. […] See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them" (I Samuel 17:17–18). When he finds them, the response is also predictable: rejection (I Samuel 17:28–30).[138] His elder brother Eliab even includes the two perfunctory questions of dismissal: "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?" (17:28). Later in the story, when David has become Israel's *persona non grata* and a liability to his family, he will shelter these dismissive brothers in his wilderness stronghold (I Samuel 22:1).

The parallels between David and Moses deepen in the wake of this fraternal fallout. Like Moses, David's first public action is to slay an oppressor of his people.[139] In David's case, military prowess will first vault him into favor with the royal court only subsequently to create the invidious position that is his undoing. As Moses flees (ברח, Exodus 2:15) from an enraged king who is seeking (בקש, Exodus 2:15) his destruction, so David flees (ברח, I Samuel 19:12, 18; 20:1; 21:11; 22:17; 27:4; others flee *to* David at 22:20; 23:6) from a jealous king who is seeking (בקש, I Samuel 19:2, 10; 20:1; 22:23; 23:14–15, 25; 24:3; 25:29; 26:2, 20; 27:1, 4) his demise. Moses' time in Midian, then, out of reach of Pharaoh's death warrant, correlates with David's years in Philistia, where he is doing much the same. Like Moses' embrace of slaves outside the palace, when David flees from Saul's court he attracts a motley crew of miscreants and malcontents (I Samuel 22:2). And the charisma tugs on women too, apparently, as both outlaws acquire in-laws in the desert, marrying Zipporah and Abigail.

Interestingly, the canonical superscriptions of the psalter credit several of David's poems to these wilderness years (Psalms 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63, 142; cf. the exilic setting of his first

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[138] Cf. the Davidic plaint of Psalm 69:9, מוזר הייתי לאחי ונכרי לבני אמי (*I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons*).

[139] And as in the Egypt of Moses' day, the stake in the battle with Goliath was slavery for Israel (I Samuel 17:9).

canonical poem, Psalm 3[140]), reminiscent of Moses' encounter with YHWH at the bush. Finding themselves in a wasteland where memories of former years in the royal court grow increasingly thin, something *happens* to Moses and David: they find God, and God finds them. Their respective tasks will of course look quite different, but in the wilderness God prepares Moses and David to return to the brethren from whom they are estranged; exile from those they are called to serve forces the internalization of an identity that will equip them to lead a people themselves deeply scarred by exile. Simultaneously, years in the desert provides the distance from countervailing intellectual and spiritual influences that is necessary in order to achieve (or more properly, receive) a fresh perception of reality.[141] In this and other key ways the early biographical trajectories of the men who will, respectively, come to represent Sinai and Zion,[142] credited by posterity with

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[140] See Brevard S. Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16 (1971): 137–50. Child's argues that such superscriptions reflect a stage in the development of post-exilic exegesis, en route to midrash. He also poses an unanswered question that feeds directly into the present discussion: "Certain problems remain which have not been answered. Why in the present Psalter are the historical Psalm titles clustered so thickly among Pss. l–lx? Again, why, from within the rich biblical tradition, are so few incidents in the life of David chosen? Indeed, why is there even a duplicate usage made of some stories, such as that of David among the Philistines in Gath? It seems highly likely that there were other factors at work in the formation of the titles which can no longer be determined with certainty," 148. Perhaps one of these "other factors"—and this would accord with developments in the study of the Psalms achieved by Childs' students Gerald Wilson and Christopher Seitz—is an exegetical sensibility that regards David's years in the wilderness as of great spiritual importance. The marginal social location of certain Second Temple scribes may have predisposed them to develop the "thickly clustered" superscriptions between Psalm 50–60, nearly all of them identifying the desert hymns of an exiled future king.

[141] See Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend, IN.: Saint Augustine's Press, 1998); originally published in 1948 as *Musse und Kult* and *Was heist Philosophieren?* by Kösel-Verlag. Central to Pieper's argument is a distinction relevant to the present discussion, namely, the scholastic division between the active or discursive *ratio* and the passive or receptive *intellectus*; for some medievals and their ancient precursors, "*ratio* as the decisively human activity was contrasted with the *intellectus* which had to do with what surpasses human limits," (Pieper, 12); interestingly, the term "scholastic" itself (cf. English "school," German "Schule," Spanish "escuela," etc.) derives from the Greek term for leisure: σχολή. Coincident with the suffering of exile, then, within the biographical arc of figures like David and Moses the desert also provides something like an oasis of leisure, fostering an attitude of prolonged receptivity that will be a *sine qua non* for their future tasks of spiritual creativity and political leadership (cf. affiliation of the prophetic word, דבר, with the desert, מדבר, although the terms derive from different roots). The basic dynamic here is something of a domino effect, a spatial relocation enabling an even more profound intellectual and spiritual relocation.

[142] See the discussion "Moses and David" in Levenson's *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 209–217, which probes various construals of the relationship between the Davidic and Mosaic covenants in Jewish and Christian traditions.

architecting the palace of YHWH on earth,[143] rhyme indeed. Humiliation precedes exaltation, exile precedes entrustment,[144] and this basic narrative template provides a lattice, so to speak, for the luxurious exegetical growth of the post-exilic period.

4. Exodus 2 in Jewish Exegesis

If, as just demonstrated, the Hebrew Bible exhibits careful coordination of Moses' life with the presentation of other biblical figures,[145] that exegetical impulse to finesse the portrayal of the lawgiver did not end abruptly with the scrolls of the Tanakh. If anything, the trend was in the other direction, toward increasing exegetical creativity. The following pages, then, will study the young Moses under the aspect of four early Jewish portrayals that converge and diverge with the biblical account in Exodus 2 in ways that throw into sharper relief his developing character as a Royal Runaway. What was he like before he fled the palace? Why exactly did he leave? Who is Moses when he arrives to Midian, before the bush erupts in glory? The four sources to which I will bring such questions are, in order: *Exodus Rabbah*, *The New Testament* (Acts 7 and Hebrews 11), Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, and Philo's *The Life of Moses*.

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[143] תבנית, *blueprint*; Moses' tabernacle: Exodus 25:9, 40; David's temple: I Chronicles 28:11–12.

[144] Cf. Proverbs 15:33, לפני כבוד ענוה (lit. *before honor, humility*), etc.

[145] And to be clear: I do not assume Moses is the theological hub, and all other characters are simply hub-dependent spokes. While this project's focus may give that impression—and the affiliation of Moses with the Exodus is indeed a determinative factor—the literary and theological influences in the Hebrew Bible are irreducibly multilateral.

Exodus Rabbah's Moses: A Compatriot in the Mud[146]

The latest of the sources under review in this section,[147] the rabbinic work *Exodus Rabbah* applies midrashic imagination to a curiosity that the laconic biblical text of Exodus 2 fails to gratify: what was it like for Moses to grow up in the house of Pharaoh? In reply, the rabbis cast Moses' palatial upbringing as lavish and his development as preternatural, thereby raising his status to a height from which his subsequent fallout will seem even more drastic. More importantly, and to forecast where this case study is going, in the narrative transition between these two extremes the rabbis introduce a new feature into Moses' persona: deep solidarity with the Hebrew slaves.

Exodus 2:10 reads, "When the child grew older, she [Moses' mother] brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son," and the midrash quickly follows up with an alliterative string of piel participles: היתה בת פרעה מנשקת ומחבקת ומחבבת אותו (*Pharaoh's daughter was kissing and hugging and cuddling him*).[148] Moses was spoiled, that is, cuddled and adored not only by the princess, but ironically by Pharaoh himself, the very man who decreed the slaughter of Hebrew boys: "And Pharaoh was kissing him and hugging him."[149] These helicopter (grand)parents shelter their foundling inside the palace walls—"They were not allowing him to leave the palace of the king"[150]—which was natural enough, given the rare beauty of Moses—"Because he was beautiful,

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[146] The following paragraphs on *Exodus Rabbah*, with slight adjustments, are from Ryan Gregg, "The Prince Leaves the Palace: Kenosis as Ontic Fulfillment in Exodus 2 and Beyond," *The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School* 12 (2017): 1–18 (here 2–6).

[147] The dating of Exodus Rabbah is uncertain; the final form dates perhaps to sometime around the turn of the first millennium CE, although the traditions it contains are much earlier.

[148] Midrashic quotations are from Moshe Mirkin, *Midrash Rabbah* (Tel Aviv: Yavneh Publishing House, 1972), 32–54. The translations are my own.

[149] והיה פרעה מנשקו ומחבקו

[150] לא היתה מוציאתו מפלטרין של מלך

everyone was desiring to see him"[151]—and onlookers are mesmerized: "Whoever saw him was not able to pull himself away."[152] He grows abnormally fast—"He was not growing according to the way of all the earth"[153]—and the angel Gabriel often intervenes on behalf of the precocious child at critical moments, twice assaulting Moses' body in order to impact the direction of the story, once in verse 6—"Gabriel came and struck Moses so that he would cry and she would have compassion on him"[154]—and once in verse 10: "Gabriel came and thrust [Moses'] hand and he grabbed the burning coal."[155] Divine intervention occurs again in the midrash of verse 15, as an angelic doppelgänger stands in at the hour when Pharaoh's troops were to arrest Moses for murder: "An angel came down from heaven and appeared to them as Moses, so they seized the angel and Moses fled."[156] This prince has access not only to heavenly power, but also to the apex of earthly power and the object symbolizing it, Pharaoh and his crown (as explained in n. 155): "And he took the crown of Pharaoh and set it on his own head, as he would do in the future when he had grown."[157]

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[151] ולפי שהיה יפה הכל מתאוים לראותו

[152] מי שהיה רואהו לֹא היה מעביר את עצמו מעליו

[153] שהיה גדל שלא כדרך כל הארץ

[154] בא גבריאל והכה למשה כדי שיבכה ותתמלא עליו רחמים

[155] ובא גבריאל ודחה את ידו ותפש את הגחלת—The context of this statement is a test constructed by, of all people, Moses' future father-in-law Jethro, who makes a cameo appearance in Pharaoh's court. The tyke has snatched the crown from Pharaoh's head, an action that appalls and terrifies courtiers of things to come, so before baby Moses are set a nugget of gold and a burning coal: if Moses grabs the gold, it would mean the boy actually will usurp Pharaoh's throne, and should therefore be executed. But if the child grabs the coal, it would mean the child lacks sense, and grabbing the crown was childish play. Just as Moses is reaching for the gold, Gabriel saves Moses by thrusting his hand at the last second toward the coal, a narrow escape that the rabbis then convert into an etiology for Moses being "slow of speech and of tongue," (Exodus 4:10): the boy thrusts the coal into his own mouth and scalds his prophetic tongue.

[156] ירד מלאך מן השמים ונדמה להם כדמות משה, ותפשו את המלאך וברח משה. In the same passage Pharaoh tries to behead Moses, but ten blows of a sword are insufficient to wound a neck miraculously turned into an ivory pillar (interpreting Song of Songs 7:5; English 7:4).

[157] והוא נוטל כתרו של פרעה ומשימו על ראשו כמו שעתיד לעשות כשהיה גדול

Altogether then, these midrashic expansions of Moses' youth invest the reader with an impression of extraordinary *mazal*[158]—all the constellations of beauty, privilege, and power are aligned directly over this young man. Yet this glowing image also heightens the contrast with the next phase of the story: "When Moses had grown up, he went out to his people" (Exodus 2:11).

In the course of time, when Moses goes out to his brethren and witnesses their suffering, the midrash suddenly injects new qualities into Moses' character profile that had not appeared before: empathy, solidarity, and initiative. Immediately upon seeing the distress of the Israelites, the first verb in the midrash is בוכה,[159] followed by the lament: "Woe is me because of you! O, that I could die in your place!"[160] Rather than identifying with his own royal position Moses identifies with the slaves, and this is perhaps the first indication of the Royal Runaway itinerary he will ultimately follow for he does not merely empathize with the slaves, but wishes somehow to exchange his own life for theirs. That this is no capricious flourish of hyperbole is demonstrated by the next phrase of the midrash, wherein Moses invests himself personally in the slaves, lending his own shoulder to the task and laboring with them in the mud: "There is no work harder than mud work, and he was giving his shoulder and helping each one of them."[161] The empathy that produces solidarity soon gives way to activism, as Moses leverages his rank to rearrange the burdens of the slaves in a more equitable distribution. In order to do this, he importantly leaves his retinue behind, an action to which the Holy One responds in mirrored fashion: [God speaking to Moses] "You left

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[158] מזל, "luck," a word ultimately deriving from the idea of constellations.

[159] Moses again "weeps," as already in 2:6.

[160] חבל לי עליכם, מי יתן מותי עליכם

[161] שאין לך מלאכה קשה ממלאכת הטיט, והיה נותן כתפיו ומסיע לכל אחד ואחד מהן

your business and went to see the suffering of Israel, and acted toward them as a brother. Therefore I will leave the great ones and the small ones, and speak with you."[162] Such reciprocity of self-abasement here, however, is only a precursor to the coming episode at the bush, a connection to which the midrash is attuned: it is because Moses "turned from his business"[163] to care for the slaves and then "turned to see"[164] the strange flame in the desert that YHWH turned aside from his lofty affairs and condescended to identify with shrubbery.

Before the fully theophanic encounter can happen, however, Moses' rejection of the palace must be completed. First attempting administrative solutions (in addition to rearranging the burdens for the slaves, the midrash of verse 11 depicts Moses negotiating a weekly Sabbath), Moses soon resorts to violence, killing an Egyptian and fleeing the justice of Pharaoh. While the midrashic writers are careful to justify and idealize Moses at every turn (claiming, for example, that the Egyptian killed by Moses was cuckolding an Israelite and that Moses therefore is not given to assault and battery but is rather a prudent executor of God's law), the most significant contribution they make here to the character of Moses is highlighting his depth of identification and participation with the slaves. Reading the biblical text alone, which rushes directly from witnessing anguish to killing an oppressor, the reader may understanding something of Moses' empathy and his activism, but will completely miss this step of solidarity between. Yet this step is at the heart of the Royal Runaway movement, for by participating and identifying with the suffering of the slaves, the prince is undergoing a transference of identity, rejecting his inherited alignment with power in

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[162] אתה הנחת עסקיך והלכת לראות בצערן של ישראל ונהגת בהן מנהג אחים, אני מניח את העליונים ואת התחתונים ואדבר עמך

[163] סר מעסקיו

[164] סר לראות

favor of the powerless. *Exodus Rabbah* therefore help us to understand why Moses was considered worthy of the unique role he would come to occupy. Between problem and solution stood the extended nonlinearity of sorrowful companionship.

By walking (or running) away from his position of inherited leadership in Pharaoh's house, and falling far below it, Moses activated the possibility of rising far above it. The rabbis illumine this; the expanded depiction they offer of the internal character of Moses is of an individual defined by the existential inversion of a Royal Runaway, losing himself to become himself. All the prerogatives to which his royal upbringing gave him access were rejected, and as I will argue at more length in the final chapter, it is precisely at such a nadir that the bush can burn and God can speak—a speech investing the now-empty human with his own true voice.

The New Testament's Moses: A Rejected Savior

Moses is everywhere in the New Testament, an outcome of the typologically-oriented theology of the Second Temple period. Establishing the validity of a "new" covenant perforce required a great deal of interfacing with the "old" covenant, the one established by Moses.[165] And as Dale Allison has demonstrated, a robustly researched monograph is required to come to terms with the Mosaic imagery in even one New Testament book, in this case the Gospel of Matthew.[166] Contravening (characteristically modern) expectations that what is old must therefore be outdated and irrelevant, Allison shows how Matthew's use of Moses in fact burnishes the image and

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[165] And the new covenant asserted by early Christian writers is, at one level, simply an extension of a process already initiated in the Hebrew Bible, the new Davidic covenant having been set alongside the prior Mosaic covenant, etc. Coordinating multiple covenants is not a New Testament innovation, although the degree to which the messianic mission of Jesus was understood to abrogate (i.e. eschatologically fulfill) earlier covenants is surely novel.

[166] Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis MN.: Fortress Press, 1993; reprint: Eugene OR.: Wipf and Stock, 2013).

credibility of the lawgiver (unlike some passages in, say, Paul or John). Such valorization enters into a longstanding "paternity dispute" in pre-Christian Judaism, as multiple groups sought to establish "who had and who had not been fathered by Moses."[167] In the conclusion of this chapter I will return to Allison; for the moment I wish simply to flag (once again) that what follows is a narrow interaction with a large issue. Just two New Testament passages will be studied as reflections of early Christian exegesis of the moment prince Moses leaving the palace and becomes a Royal Runaway: the speech of Stephen in Acts 7, and the exhortation to faith in Hebrews 11.[168]

Acts 7 — The charge against the first martyr of the Christian movement forecasts the substance of his speech in self-defense: "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God. […] This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us" (Acts 6:11, 13–14). The sacrosanctity of Moses' legacy is at issue, yet that Stephen will prove unwilling to cede Mosaic precedent to his accusers, and seek rather to claim it for himself, is telegraphed in the next verse. Like the shining face of Moses (Exodus 34:29–35), "all who sat in the council saw that [Stephen's] face was like the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15).

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[167] Allison, 281–82.

[168] The birth of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 2 also bears marked resemblances with Exodus 2, particularly in its midrashic refiguration studied above. Since it does not bear on the Royal Runaway theme of "leaving the palace," however, I will not assess it here. Briefly, the following parallels stand out: in both passages the tyrant (Pharaoh/Herod) is threatened by a child (Moses/Jesus), and the child is in turn threatened by the tyrant. In both accounts the tyrant is duped by savvy counselors, Jethro on the one hand and the magi on the other. Interestingly, both Jethro and the wise men are aided with angelic intervention: in the test devised by Jethro, Gabriel swats Moses' hand toward the coals to save his life, just as an angel informs the magi to return to their homeland by a route not passing through Jerusalem. Jethro and the magi also represent non-Israelites who recognize and help Israel's savior, even as Israel resists the savior. Lastly, perhaps the most theologically significant parallel between Exodus 2 and Matthew 2 is the theme of kingship: as the toddler Moses takes the crown from Pharaoh in a symbolic foreshadowing of future events, so the whole framework of not only Matthew but arguably the entire New Testament is the advent of the Kingdom of God. (Cf. Luke 2's nativity in which, as with the destiny of Moses' life to be a redeemer of poor slaves, the presence of the poor is highlighted—shepherds, a stable, etc.)

The final verse in the pericope, then, recording the moment Stephen dies, rounds off the scene with a Mosaic touch: intercession for the people. "And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:60; in the joint work Luke-Acts, cf. the parallel at Luke 23:34). Without even considering the speech itself, then, the literary framing already offers an indication of the case Stephen will make: Jesus was not negating Moses, but doing Moses-like things.

These are the relevant verses of Stephen's speech, which on the whole is a rehearsal of Israel's covenantal history[169]:

> **22** And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds. **23** When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. **24** And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. **25** He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. **26** And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, "Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?" **27** But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, ""Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? **28** Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" **29** And at this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. **30** Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. […] **35** This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?"—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. […] **39** Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt.
> (Acts 7:22–30, 35, 39)

Several features mark this as a period piece, in step with contemporary exegetical engagements with Exodus 2. The reference to Moses' elite education in v. 22, for example, resembles Philo's interest in Moses' achievements in learning (see below), whereas the description of him in the same verse as a man "mighty in his words and deeds" recalls the narrative in Josephus about

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[169] Cf. Acts 1:16–20; 2:14–36; 3:11–26; 4:8–12, 24–28; 13:16–47; 15:13–21. Israel's history, rehearsed in a manner highlighting patterns of rejection and resurrection, is essentially the "theology" of the book of Acts.

Moses' military career as an Egyptian general (see also below). Likewise, the periodization of Moses' life into blocks of around forty years, a timeline only inferentially apparent in the Hebrew Bible,[170] accords with the calendrically-motivated *Jubilees*, which offers a similar account: [an angel speaking to Moses, informing him of his own early life]: "And after you had completed three weeks [of years; i.e. 21 years] they brought you into the royal court. And you were in the court three weeks of years until the day when you went out of the royal court. [… Y]ou went and dwelt in the land of Midian five weeks and one year [i.e. 36 years] and you returned to Egypt in the second week in the second year in the fiftieth jubilee" (Jubilees 47:9–10; 48:1).[171] Lastly, the detail in v. 29 of Moses fathering *two* sons in Midian "perhaps reflects the common midrashic harmonization of Exodus 4:20 and 18:3–4."[172] Given such parallels, it is clear that Acts has filtered its account of Moses' youth through the exegetical norms of the Second Temple period.

The core of Stephen's argument, however, which is characteristic of the New Testament's hermeneutical stance, is in verse 25: "He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand." A failure of perception (cf. the prophetic trope of Isaiah 1:3; 6:9–10, etc.) results in Moses' rejection, and Stephen expands on this singular incident from Exodus 2:14 to argue typologically for a larger pattern of rejection. Just as Moses' neighbor "thrust [ἀπώσατο] him aside" (v. 27), so "[o]ur fathers refused to obey him, but thrust [ἀπώσαντο] him aside" (v. 39).[173] Exodus 2 and the off-handed taunt of the Hebrew

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[170] "Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh" (Exodus 7:7). From this starting point, forty years in the wilderness leads to a death at 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7; cf. Genesis 6:3), and it may have been natural to retroject this forty year template into the two prior eras of Moses' life.

[171] Hence, according to Jubilees, Moses enters Pharaoh's court at 21, leaves at 42, and is in Midian until age 78. Note how the chronology is arranged for Moses' return to Egypt and the Exodus to coincide with the climactic 50th jubilee.

[172] Childs, *Exodus*, 35.

[173] Cf. Acts 13:46, where the term is used to make the same point: "And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, 'It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside [ἀπωθεῖσθε] and judge

slave "who made you prince and judge over us?" accordingly becomes a theological wedge Stephen drives between the people of Israel and its unrecognized saviors.[174] What is implicit in the text of Exodus 2 becomes explicit in Acts: the consequence of Moses' first encounter with the people whom he will deliver from exile is that the savior himself "became an exile" (v. 29). This is the precedent Stephen labors to establish in order, interestingly, to make the same rhetorical move as the Hebrew slave himself, turning the tables on his accusers with an accusation of his own: the crucifixion of Jesus was not a vindication of Moses—God smiting a messianic charlatan—but a repetition of the very rejection Moses experienced from "our fathers" (v. 39).[175] In this way the early life of Moses, particularly his cold welcome from fellow Israelites, came to function as a normative precedent for subsequent theological disputes.

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yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.'" The speech of Paul in Acts 13 uses the same argument as Stephen's speech in Acts 7: "For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him" (Acts 13:27).

[174] This is why, considering the structure of Stephen's Acts 7 speech, v. 35 returns to the theme first introduced in v. 25ff, reemphasizing Moses' rejection in Exodus 2:14.

[175] While "Stephen" is Greek name (perhaps significant for his assistance of Greek widows in Acts 6), here he confirms his Jewish identity by referring to "our fathers," and such a polemic against the failure of Israel was not uncommon in Second Temple Jewish discourse. In the New Testament, this trope is voiced in portrayals of, e.g., the sale of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver by the disciple (one of twelve) bearing the name of the brother (one of twelve) whose idea it was to sell Joseph for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:26–28; cf. Exodus 21:32; Zechariah 11:12), the eponymous patriarch of the Jewish people: Judah/s. Cf. stories of Jesus' exceptional rejection in Nazareth, for "a prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household" (Mark 6:4 and parallels). The exchange between Moses and the Hebrew slave in Exodus 2, then, figures in the backdrop of a larger exegetically-formed conviction that, as the Fourth Gospel puts it, the savior "came to his own, and his own did not receive him" (John 1:11). For the earliest Christians, most of whom were Second Temple Jews, the crux of the argument was that so far from dismissing Moses, it was precisely an intense fidelity to the books of Moses that informed expectations of misapprehension and rejection of the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15–19). At the same time, rather than resulting in a facile "supersessionism," as in many subsequently distorted Christian theologies, such fidelity to the writings of Moses also engendered convictions of God's unbreakable loyalty to Israel, since Jesus "was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 5:24) and "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26), etc. No doubt, this is such a charged, multi-faceted, and insoluble issue that addressing it only in a footnote would seem unwise were it not the case that failing to address it at all in a bi-testamental study would be to remain strangely silent regarding a theological elephant in the room. As a matter of the history of theological development, it seems that later concerns over supersessionism, absolutely justified as they are, retroactively blur the historical and theological situation of the Second Temple period, as multiple self-appointed "remnants" vied for the identity of being the true Israel.

Hebrews 11 — Less apologetically, Hebrews 11 holds up the early life of Moses as an example to be imitated in its panegyric on faith:

> **23** By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. **24** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **25** choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. **26** He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. **27** By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. **28** By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. (Hebrews 11:23–28)

Some textual witnesses (D* along with a few Vulgate manuscripts) include an additional sentence between vv. 23–24 that clarifies the motivation of Moses' violence in Exodus 2:12: Πίστει μέγας γενόμενος Μωϋσῆς ἀνεῖλεν τὸν Αἰγύπτιον κατανοῶν [176] τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ (*By great faith Moses destroyed the Egyptian, taking into consideration the humiliation of his brothers*; my translation).

Several features can be observed here. First, a typological absorption of Moses into Christ: "He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt" (v. 26). Second, a transposition of Exodus 2 into eschatological and dualistic mode: "…for he was looking to the reward" (v. 26); "…for he endured as seeing him who is invisible" (v. 27). Third, a historiography capable of compressing Moses' twofold exodus into a single event, apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical purposes (note the apparent absence of the Midian phase). Fourth, the realignment of Moses away from licentious royal prerogatives and toward the upright yet suffering people of God (vv. 24–25, as well as the textual variant). Fifth, the casting of this movement in terms of the characteristic hellenistic concern for virtue, which turns on the faculty of *choice*: "refused" (v. 24),

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[176] From κατανοέω, the term in LXX of Exodus 2:11.

"choosing" (v. 25), "considered" (v. 26), etc.[177] Sixth, the recruitment of Moses and also his parents into a polemic against (merely human) monarchy: "…they were not afraid of the king's edicts" (v. 23); "…not being afraid of the anger of the king" (v. 27).

Multiple dimensions of argumentation are active here, in service to the larger project of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Yet more than any specific claim being made, the simple fact *that* so many aspects of Exodus 2 are exploited for ethical and theological purposes testifies to the vitality of the story in Jewish exegetical imagination. For of all the episodes of Moses' life recorded in the Hebrew Bible, the Royal Runaway moment of a prince of Egypt casting in his lot with his enslaved Hebrew relations is identified as of particular importance, a phenomenon that in turn corroborates the guiding hunch of this project that some essential wisdom or feature of reality is being communicated through such narratives. And given my claim that Royal Runaway typology appears in various ways throughout the Hebrew Bible, it comes as no surprise that one of the few places in the New Testament where this typology is explicitly highlighted is the Epistle to the (biblically literate) Hebrews.[178]

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[177] Cf. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and its emphasis on choice, from προαιρέω: "[V]irtues are certain modes of choice [προαιρέσεις τινὲς], or at all events involve choice [προαιρέσεως]," 1106a; "Virtue then is a settled disposition of the mind determining the choice [προαιρετική] of actions and emotions, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us," 1107a; "…we next have to examine the nature of Choice [περὶ προαιρέσεως]. For this appears to be intimately connected with virtue, and to afford a surer test of character than do our actions," 1111b; "As then the object of choice [τοῦ προαιρετοῦ] is something within our power which after deliberation we desire, Choice [ἡ προαίρεσις] will be a deliberate desire of things in our power; for we first deliberate, then select, and finally fix our desire according to the result of our deliberation"; 1113a. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Loeb Classical Library 73, revised edition, translated by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014). Retrieved via HOLLIS.

[178] Allison points out, in regards to ancient Jewish and Christian literature, that "Jewish typologies tend to be more subtle, less explicit than those in the Christian tradition. […] What accounts for this fact?" After acknowledging several examples of Christian erudition that qualify his argument, Allison answers the puzzle by noting that "as the church entered the second century its Jewish population shrank [… T]he very success of Christianity as a missionary religion, which meant the constant swelling of ranks with the theretofore scripturally illiterate, made implicit literary allusions in works for general consumption less appropriate: considerate authors had to keep in mind the constant influx of neophytes. […] Matthew belonged to an earlier and very different world. And in that world literary subtlety directed at keen and informed imaginations was […] nothing out of the ordinary" 132–133. On the other hand, if a tradition like 4 Ezra 14:44–46 is taken seriously, wherein the famous scribe is directed to publish the twenty-four books (i.e., the Tanakh) for "the worthy and unworthy," but to reserve an additional seventy books for "the wise among thy

Josephus' Moses: A God-Touched General

The rendering of Moses by 1st century CE Jewish aristocrat, military commander, and historian Titus Flavius Josephus (born Joseph ben Mattathias) shares many elements with the midrash *Exodus Rabbah*. His *Antiquities of the Jews*, the second of his apologetic portrayals of Jewish history for a Roman audience, likewise presents Moses as an unusually gifted, handsome lad on whom the star of destiny has come to rest. Yet for all the embellishments of the midrash, Josephus also upshifts ontologically, writing this:

> Thermuthis [Pharaoh's daughter], therefore, perceiving him to be so remarkable a child, adopted him for her son, having no child of her own. And when one time she had carried Moses to her father, she showed him to him, and said she thought to make him her father's successor, if it should please God she should have no legitimate child of her own; and said to him, "I have brought up *a child who is of a divine form* and of a generous mind…" *Antiquities of the Jews*, 2:232[179]

Moses is a "child of divine form" (παῖδα μορφῇ θεῖον[180]), a description strikingly similar to that of Jesus, to be studied in Chapter 3, as "in the form of God" (μορφῇ θεοῦ, Philippians 2:6). And any suspicion that this is but a theologically-benign touch of local color, typical of an Egyptian court where Pharaoh is deferred to as a god, is refuted by Josephus' next verse: "Moses threw [Pharaoh's crown] down to the ground, and, in a puerile mood he wreathed it round, and trod upon it with his feet" (2:233). An incident also recounted in the midrash, to read only political subversion in this act is likely to obscure through a modernizing lens its provocation of deicide. For

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people," it may be the case that the sophistical typologies of the Hebrew Bible itself were regarded by some as entry-level! See Sternberg, "Between the Truth and the Whole Truth," in *Poetics*, 230–263.

[179] *The Complete Works of Josephus*, translated by William Whiston (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 80. Italics mine.

[180] Retrieved via Hollis from Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library 242 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 264. Thackeray translates "a boy of divine beauty" for the phrase in question.

Josephus, neither Pharaoh nor Moses are straightforwardly "God,"[181] of course, although this sequence of statements does put us in contact with what Allison calls the "high Mosesology" of the late Second Temple period, itself a development from biblical texts that seem to implicate belief in Moses with belief in YHWH (Exodus 4:1–9, 31; 14:31; 19:9).[182] Josephus, in *Antiquities of the Jews*, offers evidence of a Jewish culture that (like many other ancient peoples) could refer to its hallowed leaders with divine epithets.

Yet Josephus also tacks in the other direction, away from intimations of divinity, by providing a theological gloss on Moses' rescue from the Nile that chimes the note this chapter has heard several times now about a savior in need of saving: "…others are in a surprising manner preserved, and obtain a prosperous condition almost from the very midst of their calamities; those, I mean, whose dangers arise by the appointment of God. And, indeed, such a providence was exercised in the case of this child, as showed the power of God" (2:223). Saved from the river in miraculous fashion, this God-touched child will go on to perform feats of salvation completely unheard of in the Hebrew Bible.

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[181] Another enormously complex matter is in the background here regarding ancient Jewish conceptions of divinity, into which it would be foolhardy to wade casually. Treatments I have encountered, in dialogue with relevant scholarship, are: Peter Schäfer, *Two Gods in Heaven: Jewish Concepts of God in Antiquity* (Princeton: University Press, 2020); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel:* God Crucified *and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2008); I will engage Bauckham's figuration of Jewish "monotheism" at places in Chapter 3; more popularly, but grounded in rigorous Hebrew Bible scholarship, is Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015).

[182] Allison, 303. He further suggests that negative evidence of "high Mosesology" may be discerned in the reticence of the Pentateuch itself to elevate the figure of Moses, who only does and says what God commands him to do and say. Rejecting all legends to the contrary, *no one* in the Hebrew Bible upstages YHWH (although recall the position of Berman discussed above).

For example, Josephus reports of Ethiopians from the south invading Egypt and overrunning the country, all the way north to the Mediterranean sea.[183] With nowhere else to turn, the Egyptian priests consult their oracles, which indicate that Moses the Hebrew is the man to save the day. At this point fabulously educated yet not having proven his virtue (2:238), Moses is appointed general of the Egyptian forces. A surprise attack is drawn up: instead of approaching the enemy by water, as was anticipated, Moses leads an outflanking expedition by land. But the troops must pass through dangerous territory inhabited by flying, venomous serpents (suggestive of הנחשים השרפים, the fiery serpents, of Numbers 21:4–9), and this is when Moses' tactical genius comes into its own: he devises small arks made of sedge to carry ibises, a bird apparently terrifying to such serpents. Equipped with this apotropaic of Edenic and Noahic recollection (snakes, arks, birds portending salvation; again cf. Numbers 21, the bronze snake on a pole), the Egyptian army succeeds in startling the Ethiopians into a rapid retreat, pursuing them deep into their own country.

Upon arriving to the royal city of Ethiopia, perched impregnably on an island in the Nile, it seems the enemy has found safe harbor. But Prince Moses still has more tricks in his arsenal. For not only is he an inspiring leader of warriors; he is also, since infancy, a magnet for princesses. Tharbis, daughter of the king of Ethiopia, views the dashing Moses from her island sanctuary, and falls in love with him. Sending her most trusted messenger across no man's land, she proposes marriage, to which Moses agrees on the condition of immediate surrender of the citadel. The terms are agreeable to the damsel, the union is consummated, and peace is restored. All is well. But back in Egypt, Pharaoh is more alarmed than relieved. He and his advisors fear Moses will use his newfound popularity to kindle an insurrection, destabilizing society with newfangled religious

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[183] This story is found in *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, Chapter 10.

ideas. Afraid, and also jealous, Pharaoh thus drives Moses out of Egypt and into the land of Midian, where the story continues.

Notice the editorial decision Josephus has made: he has excised the restrained biblical account of Moses aiding his Hebrew relations, and inserted instead a far-flung international adventure that paints the virtues of Moses in heroic shades (and provided an etiological tale for Ethiopian Jewry to boot, chronologically prior to legends about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba). The rationale of Moses' exile thus becomes more like David's, whose rapport with the army and allure with the maidens drives the reigning king insane with jealousy and fear. According to Josephus, Moses is not fleeing the consequences of a one-off murder, but something for more grave: he is suspected of "sedition, and bring[ing] innovations into Egypt" (2:254).

What, then, does Josephus add to a study of Moses as a Royal Runaway? Beyond the sheer entertainment value of his writing, which speaks to the narrative fascination of a high-born individual falling from grace (easily twisted into tabloid schadenfreude), at least this: evidence of a tendency to magnify such figures to divine proportions. Like many heroes of Greco-Roman lore, Josephus' Moses is no ordinary mortal; perhaps this is to be attributed to his well-known strategy of dressing up Jewish concepts and groups in hellenistic guise for his readers.[184] Yet even if this rhetorical consideration were taken to undercut any seriousness to his claim that Moses is "of divine form," it is at least important to observe the ability and willingness in the late Second Temple period to speak this way.

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[184] E.g. describing Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes as "philosophical sects," *The Jewish War*, Book II, Chapter 8.

Philo's Moses: Humble Friend of God

When Josephus was still a youth in Jerusalem, the philosophically-inclined and deeply pious Philo was already an old man in Alexandria, a dignitary of the Egyptian Jewish diaspora. And in a manner similar to his younger contemporary, although operating under different constraints, Philo also applied himself to the work of cultural translation, recasting the figures and principles of the Hebrew Bible into palatable form for a hellenistic milieu. In his On the Life of Moses,[185] prince Moses is styled as an exemplar of virtue and self-mastery, absorbing all the philosophy of Greece, astronomy of Syria, and mathematics of Egypt, outstripping his teachers in the process.

> Very naturally, therefore, those who associated with him and everyone who was acquainted with him marveled at him, being astonished as at a novel spectacle, and inquiring what kind of mind it was that had its abode in his body, and that was set up in it like an image in a shrine; *whether it was a human mind or a divine intellect, or something combined of the two*; because he had nothing in him resembling the many, but had gone beyond them all and was elevated to a more sublime height. (§27. Italics mine.)

Like Josephus, Philo also raises the question of divinity in his account of Moses' "royal education" (§20) in Egypt. Yet unlike Josephus, Philo gives more than passing attention to the theme, anchoring it theologically in the signature Royal Runaway decision of leaving royalty behind. It will be helpful to quote several passages to give a sense of Philo's position.

> …God, who loves virtue, and piety, and excellence, gave [Moses] his authority as a well-deserved reward. For, *as he had abandoned the chief authority in Egypt*, which he might have had as the grandson of the reigning king, on account of the iniquities which were being perpetrated in that country, and by reason of his nobleness of soul and of the greatness of his spirit, and the natural detestation of wickedness, scorning and rejecting all the hopes which he might have conceived from those who had adopted him, *it seemed good to the Ruler and Governor of the universe to recompense him with the sovereign authority over a more populous and more powerful nation*, which he was about to take to himself out of all other nations and to consecrate to the priesthood, that it might for ever offer up prayers for the whole universal race of mankind, for the sake of averting evil from them and procuring them a participation in blessings. (§148–149. Italics mine.)

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[185] *On the Life of Moses, I (De Vita Mosis, I)*, in C. D. Yonge, trans., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 459–490.

The rationale of Moses' favor is visible in the italicized words above: on the merits of having "abandoned the chief authority in Egypt, which he might have had," God saw fit to "recompense him with the sovereign authority over a more populous and more powerful nation." Losing one type of power results in gaining another type of power: the Royal Runaway type in nuce.[186]

> And Philo soon returns to this dynamic, modulating the variable from authority to wealth:

> Therefore, as he had utterly discarded all desire of gain and of those riches which are held in the highest repute among men, God honoured him, and gave him instead the greatest and most perfect wealth; and this is the wealth of all the earth and sea, and of all the rivers, and of all the other elements, and all combinations whatever; for having judged him deserving of being made a partaker with himself in the portion which he had reserved for himself, he gave him the whole world as a possession suitable for his heir: therefore, every one of the elements obeyed him as its master, changing the power which it had by nature and submitting to his commands. (§155–156)

The transaction recorded here is steeply lopsided, as the lucre Moses surrenders is qualitatively inferior to the wealth God bestows on him. And this, too, contributes to Royal Runaways typology by underscoring the extravagant generosity of God: a self-denying royal (at least in the Hebrew Bible) is seldom recompensed in strict fairness, but wildly in excess to what they gave up in the first place. In the excerpt above, Moses' abstention from material greed results in his inheritance of the very materials of the world, which submit to him as to their master. (A parallel is clear here with New Testament portrayals of Christ's global dominion.) Interestingly, at just this point Philo engages the matter of Moses' divinity head-on, using a combination of secular proverb and biblical teaching to explain the matter.

> And perhaps there was nothing wonderful in this; for if it be true according to the proverb,—"That all the property of friends is common" [something Aristotle or Cicero might says]—and if the prophet was truly called the friend of God, then it follows that he would

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[186] The emphasis on humility in this theo-logic arguably applies to the nation of Israel as well, since, as Philo implies, what Moses does for Israel, Israel does of the world: "…that it [Israel] might for ever offer up prayers for the whole universal race of mankind, for the sake of averting evil from them and procuring them a participation in blessings."

naturally partake of God himself and of all his possessions as far as he had need; for God possesses everything and is in need of nothing; but the good man has nothing which is properly his own, no, not even himself, but he has a share granted to him of the treasures of God as far as he is able to partake of them. And this is natural enough; for he is a citizen of the world; on which account he is not spoken of as to be enrolled as a citizen of any particular city in the habitable world, since he very appropriately has for his inheritance not a portion of a district, but the whole world. (§156–157)

In a sense, Philo normalizes here the global dominion of Moses; nothing wonderful in this, apparently, for a friend of God (Exodus 33:11; cf., again, Christian teaching that ordinary believers are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" [Romans 8:17].) Although as a "good man" Moses "has nothing which is properly his own, no, not even himself," this lack is more than made up for by his friendship with the God who lacks nothing, through whom the whole world is his. It is important here to see the upshift in domain, from one sort of (human) possession to another sort of (divine) possession. And what activates this upshift for Philo, paradoxically, is the downshift of self-effacement.

> What more shall I say? *Has he* [*Moses*] *not also enjoyed an even greater communion with the Father and Creator of the universe*, *being thought unworthy of being called by the same appellation*? For he also was called the god and king of the whole nation, and he is said to have entered into the darkness where God was… (§158. Italics mine.)

This profound statement about Moses—especially in a zeitgeist wherein divinity and kingship were often thought to merge—clearly derives from the same Jewish counterculture in which it could be said that a savior, "though in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant…" (Philippians 2:6–7). I have intentionally ended this chapter's historical survey with Philo (c. 20 BCE – c. 50 CE) because as a contemporary of the New Testament's leading figure and the subject of the next chapter, he offers fascinating evidence of how some Jews at that time were thinking about their most revered

leaders: Moses of "divine intellect," the "god and king"[187] of his nation,[188] refuses the appellations of divinity, taking instead the low road of humility in regard to titles, wealth, and authority. For Philo such refusals (and not, we might add in a modernist caveat, as some disingenuous formalism to be explained away sociologically, but really and truly *refusing*) offered proof of being qualified for the privileges themselves. A key theological insight is made here; the truly royal figure is the one who refuses to snatch at the prerogatives of royalty. And it is not necessary to read Philo to arrive at this insight, for it is soundly biblical. Although, for example, YHWH becomes angry with Moses in Exodus 4 for his unwillingness to return to Egypt (and those loquacious excuses about a speech impediment), the contrast in the first pages of Exodus with the first pages of Genesis is of enormous theological importance: unlike Adam and Eve at the tree of godlike knowledge, Moses at the bush does not grasp at godlike power. Thus are Adam and Eve demoted and exiled, whereas Moses is empowered to set exiles free. From here it is a short step to the mystery of Christology.

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[187] Whether Moses was ever regarded in earlier, biblical times as a king is unclear. Deuteronomy 33:5 is a key text in the debate: ויהי בישרון מלך (*And he became king in Jeshurun*). Is the antecedent Moses or YHWH? Or neither? It is unclear. Readings (and approaches to the larger issue) vary. Some, like Zakovitch, who believe Moses had been a king regard this tradition as suppressed by a later scribal concern to brook no rival with YHWH.

[188] Allison positions such sentiments within their broader Jewish context: "Although what he meant is disputed, Philo called Moses *theos*; and *Deut. Rab*. 11:4, on the basis of the איש אלהים of Deut. 33:1, refers to Moses as half man, half divine being. In Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagoge* there is a scene in which God stands off his throne and hands his scepter to Moses, who takes the seat, as the stars bow down before him. Some Jews, according to *Sipre* §357 and other sources, believed that Moses never died. It has even been argued (although the evidence is inconclusive) that, during the Persian occupation of Egypt, there was a Moses cult with shrine, perhaps at Leontopolis," 304. What such evidence means, however is disputed. For example, regarding Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagogue*, Bauckham is of the view that "this passage has been widely misunderstood. Moses in a dream sees himself replacing God on the throne of the universe. Raguel's interpretation of the dream takes this to be a symbol of Moses' career as a king and prophet of Israel. What God is in relation to the cosmos, Moses will be in relation to Israel. Ezekiel is offering an interpretation of the statement in Exod. 7:1 that God will make Moses 'God'. The dream depicts this literally (God vacates his own cosmic throne and places Moses on it), but the *meaning* of the dream is its interpretation as a metaphor of Moses' earthly role. Cf. Gen. 37:9–10: in Joseph's dream, he receives the worship the heavenly bodies give to God, but the meaning of the dream is that his parents and brothers will serve him." Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 16.

שֹׁפֵךְ בּוּז עַל־נְדִיבִים   וַיַּתְעֵם בְּתֹהוּ לֹא־דָרֶךְ׃
וַיְשַׂגֵּב אֶבְיוֹן מֵעוֹנִי   וַיָּשֶׂם כַּצֹּאן מִשְׁפָּחוֹת׃
יִרְאוּ יְשָׁרִים וְיִשְׂמָחוּ   וְכָל־עַוְלָה קָפְצָה פִּיהָ׃
מִי־חָכָם וְיִשְׁמָר־אֵלֶּה   וְיִתְבּוֹנְנוּ חַסְדֵי יְהוָה׃

He pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes;
but he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks.
The upright see it and are glad, and all wickedness shuts its mouth.
Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things; let them consider the steadfast love of the LORD.
(Psalm 107:40–43)

These verses conclude the first poem in Book 5 of the Psalter, and at this canonical seam the reader is exhorted to ponder the bidirectional vectors this chapter has discerned in the early life of Moses and other biblical figures: YHWH humbles princes, expelling them from native luxury and influence to "wander in trackless wastes"[189]; upon finding themselves "needy" and in "affliction," YHWH restores them to honor and fruitfulness. While a straightforward reading of these verses would likely take the humbling and exalting actions as applying to different persons, YHWH condemning bad rulers while favoring those they have trampled, the biographies in question may stimulate wisdom seekers to "attend to" and "consider" the sophisticated and surprising ways both destinies can be interwoven throughout a single life.[190] Having encountered now a good sampling

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[189] Note the creation mythology language of תהו in the disempowered princes' fate (cf. Genesis 1:2, and Isaiah 40:23: הנותן רוזנים לאין שפטי ארץ כתהו עשה, ...*who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.*) Also note that the verb in Psalm 107:40, תעײה (*wander*) is the same found in Joseph's wandering in Genesis 37:15, discussed above. It elsewhere appears in Abraham's description of his departure from his father's house: "And when God caused me to wander [התעו; Samaritan Pentateuch התעה] from my father's house…" (Genesis 20:13). Again, and in the same narrative position, it describes the expulsion of Ishmael from Abraham's house (Genesis 21:14). It is interesting that the term appears just at the moment of Joseph's, Abraham's, and Ishmael's respective departures from home, suggesting that Psalm 107:40 may be reflecting on these and similar stories. Such a textual pattern may also shed light on the striking use of the term at the conclusion of another psalm in Book 5 of the Psalter, the paean to the commandments of YHWH that ends with an unexpected admission of still having wandered away: "I have gone astray [תעיתי] like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments" (Psalm 119:176).

[190] Such a bifocal hermeneutic is present, for example, in the adjacent pairing of Psalm 105 and 106, concluding Book 4 of the Psalter. Both poems are retrospectives on the events of the Exodus, the former with an eye toward YHWH's faithfulness and the latter with an eye toward Israel's unfaithfulness. Is either telling more accurate than the other?

of the biblical and extra-biblical literature that describes Moses the Royal Runaway and his spiritual confreres, it remains to take a step back and ponder, at Psalm 107's suggestion, the bigger picture of what these stories collectively mean, particularly to the ancient Israelites and early Jewish exegetes who told and retold them.

A couple qualifications. First, as I have tried to emphasize, I do not wish to imply that what I am calling a Royal Runaway typology, grounded in Moses, is anything like the "center" of the Hebrew Bible's theology; that it matters I am convinced, but many other things matter too, and the quest for an all-important center is appropriately passé.[191] The curtailed nature of the argument is further evident from three facts: 1) I have not considered all of Moses' life as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, only a tiny portion of it;[192] 2) the biblical parallels I have studied often relate to each other without referencing Moses at all;[193] and 3) all ancient sources about Moses have not

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No, they are aspects of the same story. It is this sort of multifocal richness I am trying to perceive in the presentation of biblical Royal Runaways.

[191] See discussion in Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 66–68, regarding the sea change in 20th century methodology between a) Walter Eichrodt's influential attempt to position covenant at the center of biblical theology in a manner that held scientific and redemptive history together, and b) Gerhard von Rad's subsequent rejection of a single center, instead interpreting the Hebrew Bible's unifying principle as "Israel's process of continual reinterpretation of sacred tradition that resulted from her sense of the great divine acts of redemption done on her behalf. The warrant for typological exegesis was found in the tradition-building process which continually projected the future hope in the form of analogies of the past," 67. Cf. Levenson: "I am […] skeptical of the entire pursuit of a center. […] It is difficult to resist the suggestion that the theologians' own personal faith is the determinative factor in their positing a center for the Old Testament. In fact, it is not unusual for the authors to claim that the New Testament, *mirabile dictu*, has the very same center." (*The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism*, 54–55.) One wonders, though, whether a centerless model might also imply something about the theologians' faith? At any rate, problematic as it is and hopefully avoided here, it remains the case that the impulse to distill and synthesize never really goes away; for a fairly recent and judiciously qualified attempt, see David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, second edition (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[192] Delimitation to Exodus 2 and Moses' early life, for example, rendered many compelling analogues with Moses discerned by Zakovitch (Joshua, Gideon, Elijah, Elisha, Jeroboam) and Allison (Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Elijah, Josiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Ezra, Baruch, The Suffering Servant, Hillel, The Prophet like Moses, The Messiah) irrelevant.

[193] Jacob and Joseph, for example, or Adam and David, have connections that do not bear on Moses at all. Excepting perhaps Adam and Eve, every figure can be both type and antitype. Such multidirectionality of biblical comparisons clearly raises methodological questions regarding the continuum of diachronic and synchronic analyses; helpful here is Jeffery M. Leonard ("Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 2 [2008]: 241–265), who, by outlining eight rules for identifying the direction of influence in the Hebrew

been consulted, an undertaking that would be anyway impossible.[194] So while it is the unenviable task of theology to labor at the boundary of the sayable, meaning the discipline is often guilty of the semantic overreach that a transcendent object of analysis can seem to require (a quaint fiction, this, that it is an "object" and we the researching "subject"), I wish to be clear about the circumscribed intention of the following comments.

That said, it will be good to return to the end of the commentary on Exodus 2, where the theme of God's pedagogy was discussed. It was argued there from passages in Deuteronomy 8 and Proverbs 3 that within YHWH's parental love, discipline and suffering are the means of developing character. Israel is YHWH's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22) and Moses is the leader of Israel; it thus stands to reason that in foundational stories about Israel and Moses, of all places, should these features of God's pedagogy be evident. Yet the simple fact that there is a correspondence between the experience of the one (Moses) and the many (Israel) further suggests that extrapolation into the self-understanding and personal experience of ancient tradents themselves is not hard to

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Bible, cautiously retains the possibility of speaking of inner-biblical "exegesis." Contrast with Lyle M. Eslinger, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category," in *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 1 (1992): 47–58, to whom Leonard is responding, and whose lack of confidence in exegetical categories (such as those of Fishbane, "aggadic," "mantological," etc.) compels him to abandon the diachronic enterprise altogether. "All notions about the literary history of the Bible depend on prior notions about Israel's national history, especially its social and cultural history. Literary history is written with a view to organizing the Bible's literature according to the known sequence of events in Israel's history. In turn, the latter has been based, in part, on the former. In consequence, history writing about the Bible and ancient Israel is often rife with circular reasoning," Eslinger, 52.

[194] Allison: "Much about and allegedly by Moses has irretrievably perished. The *Assumption of Moses* cited in Jude 9 and by several Church Fathers is no longer extant. The same is true of the *Apocryphon of Moses* named by Euthalius and Photius as well as of the *Book of Mystical Words of Moses* mentioned by Gelasius Cyzicenus. The *Testament of Moses* as it has come down to us, in one very poor Latin manuscript, ends in the middle of a sentence. The Moses apocryphon from Qumran (*1QDM = 1Q22*) is fragmentary, as is *2QapMoses* (= *2Q21*), which may be another apocryphon of Moses; so too the Moses pseudepigrapha published by John Strugnell […] In certain respects rabbinic literature displays a tendency to play down Moses rather than exalt him, from which it follows that the rabbis undoubtedly let much fall away." Allison, 17. Along with these many forgotten sources, there has been more than one Moses: "There has been the Moses of P, the Deuteronomic Moses, Moses the apocalyptic seer, Moses the Hellenistic sage and philosopher-king, Moses the magician, the Talmudic Moses, and Moses the Christian saint." Allison, 302. Hence, "Moses the Royal Runaway" is by no means the only way to understand him.

conceive. Without at all diminishing the unique role of Moses in the Hebrew Bible (indeed precisely because of it), it seems the literature takes so much care in presenting his life because it functions as a template of how God educates his servants. The Israelites composing and transmitting these narratives deployed literary and theological linkages that encouraged aspects of personal and collective identification with biblical accounts of Moses and all Israel,[195] and this is how the curriculum goes: testing before entrustment and humiliation before exaltation, both of which are small-scale iterations of a more comprehensive biblical lesson—death before resurrection. For an exilic community cherishing such narratives about Moses and the ancestors of Israel, that this pedagogical motion reliably comes full circle is grounds for hope.

It is also grounds for coming to terms with the acute loss and pain of exile, since according to narrative logic a denouement can only arrive (be it personal, communal, global, eschatological) after crisis. Moses faces many crises, the reader learns, and through them God transforms him from a self-reliant prince into a God-reliant sage and lawgiver. The *transition* between one status and the other is where the decisive action of Royal Runaway typology is located: Moses comes into his own only after a series of setbacks and personal choices propel him to turn his back on what

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[195] Pace James Kugel ("On the Bible and Literary Criticism." *Prooftexts* 1, no. 3 [1981]: 229–230): "At this point in the text [Exodus 20:18–21, at the foot of Mount Sinai], where is the ancient Israelite listener? No doubt a modern reader, here as elsewhere, is welded to the person of Moses; our modern hearts will then rise with him to face God. But the whole point of the passage […] is quite other: we are the *people*, that is, the people of Israel now listening are the people of Israel back then, and we are being told that yes, we did hear God's voice but it was too terrible to bear, and what a prophet can do (paradoxically, as the Rabbis note) is to bear a burden in his own ears which thousands of others together cannot bear. In the hero-reading, we are Moses, and the subject of the book is Moses' (i.e., our) adventures with God, in which the people function as a stiff-necked foil to ideal piety. But there is nothing *natural* in such a reading." Kugel's point, and his emphasis on the Hebrew Bible as scripture as opposed to (mere) literature, are well taken. Yet he seems to think there are only two hermeneutical options: the reader either *is* Moses, or the reader is *not* Moses. Rather, the "aspects of personal and collective identification" to which I am referring are somewhere in the middle, preserving the unique otherness of Moses while also feeling the mimetic pull of his personality on the reader. The distinction Kugel makes between ancient and modern readers is also too tidy, as if only moderns would make the unwarranted move of identifying with Moses. The presence of many Moses-like figures in the Hebrew Bible testifies to ancient readers who were quite capable of interpreting other lives in light of Moses. This is not to say other individuals simply *are* Moses, as Kugel fears, but are *like* Moses; there is a big difference between the two claims.

"coming into one's own" typically would mean: power, status, riches, harem, progeny, and all the rest. Such traditional forms of privilege are foresworn, to be replaced with something qualitatively different and (on a theological valuation) better.

Still—and this is absolutely crucial—such a happy outcome could not have been known from the beginning, since abrupt confrontations with risk, ignorance, and genuine abasement are intrinsic to the lesson the story teaches. An inflection point lies here, since the uncertainty of outcome in the biblical narratives supplies certainty for readers who are trying to interpret the outcome of their own lives; this is at the heart of what Childs and others have meant by the canonical function of *actualization*, the applicability of lessons from the past to contemporary situations. In the telling of the Hebrew Bible (as opposed, say, to its exegesis in a text like Hebrews 11), the movement Moses makes between the power of being an Egyptian prince, on the one hand, to becoming a servant of YHWH's greater power, on the other, cannot be construed as a transaction of enlightened self-interest. He *does not know* what lies before him when he leaves the palace, and that is the point (recall the three instances of יד״ע in Exodus 2, and how this interfaces with the problematic of Eden); from the vantage of Exodus 2, Moses is blind to anything in Exodus 3 or thereafter. Yet such ignorance functions hermeneutically as assurance to the reader that the utter disarray of present circumstances does not necessarily indicate the absence or disfavor of God. For Moses of blessed memory traversed similar unknowns, the great prophet who proclaimed the relativity of such suffering before the eternity of YHWH: "From everlasting to everlasting you are God […] For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. […] The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:2, 4, 10, the "Prayer of Moses, the Man

of God"). Such a message for an exiled community of uncertain future was surely welcome, sustaining a particular identity and piety.[196]

The very desirability of the message, however, raises a serious objection to any theological interpretation, and I will put it in sharpest terms: is it the case that Royal Runaway typology in the Hebrew Bible is merely an elaborate exercise in self-affirmation by maladjusted scribes refusing to accept their own political, military, and religious irrelevance in the wider world? For if, as is commonly assumed, theology at bottom is just another ideology, and ideology at bottom is an evolutionary adaptation facilitating prosocial behavior within the tribe, then such an explanation is not far off the mark. The psychology of religious illusion would have us believe—and this applies to ancient Israelites too—that belief itself is nothing more than what humans are socialized and incentivized to believe, while the genuine referent and function of these convictions are hidden elsewhere.[197] One does not have to go all the way with such obvious reductionisms, though, to appreciate social-scientific insights about what may be going on in recurrent biblical stories of Royal Runaways. In fact, before any reliable theological explanation can be offered—particularly if that theology is committed to the dimensions of immanent affirmation inherent in the doctrine

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[196] Regarding such epistemological dynamics in biblical narrative, see further Meir Sternberg, "Temporal Discontinuity, Narrative Interest, and the Emergence of Meaning," in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington IN.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 264–320. Regarding aspirations for the creation of a prophetic and intercessory community in post-exilic Judaism, wherein both the figure of Moses and dimensions of historical and theological knowledge are pivotal within individual and corporate identity, see D. Andrew Teeter and Michael A. Lyons, "The One and the Many, the Past and the Future, and the Dynamics of Prospective Analogy: The Servant(s) as the Vindication of Moses and the Prophets," in *Isaiah's Servant(s) and the Exegetical Origins of Early Jewish and Christian Identity,* edited by Michael A. Lyons and Jacob Stromberg (Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming 2021). In the same volume, see also Jacob Stromberg, "A Covenantal Community and a New Creation after the Flood: The Wise in Daniel 11–12 and the Servants of the Lord in Isaiah."

[197] This is clearly not the place to tease apart and make sense of the issues, although I have considered them a good deal. My essay "Whose Brain Misunderstands Itself, the Psychologist's or the Theologian's?: A Thomas-Style Ideological Turing Test in Conversation with Evolutionary Psychology" received second prize in the Harold O. J. Brown Scholarship for the Doctrine of Creation in 2018. Here it bears mentioning again that Freud himself, the godfather of the study of religious illusion, wrote a book about *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), wherein Moses is an Egyptian prince murdered in the desert by rebels whose guilty conscience later sublimates into neurotic veneration.

of incarnation—such explanations *must* be encountered, and gratefully so. Below, then, are several compelling insights of a sociological and historical variety from Yair Zakovitch, Peter Machinist, and Dale Allison that help illumine the multifaceted meaning of this chapter's title: "Mosaics of Israel."

For Zakovitch, "biblical historiography is really the biography of the nation,"[198] and such national biography is the product of an editorial strategy in which Moses is held up as a standard in comparison to which some figures who are usually taken to be exemplars are in fact blamed, while others assumed to be blameworthy are subtly praised:

> …manifestations of the Exodus will be exposed in life stories of figures resembling Moses. By presenting their lives as antithetical to Moses, the Bible criticizes some biblical characters, while we find hidden admiration for others that the Bible has tried to suppress, such as Jeroboam, son of Nebat.[199]

Such covert scribal valuations, for Zakovitch, are coordinated into an overt argument about the nature of human power. Moses is central to biblical historiography because of his association with the Exodus, the great act whereby the power of God overthrew the power of Pharaoh. The reason, therefore, that many ostensibly "powerful" biblical figures are criticized is that the Hebrew Bible is willing to accommodate only one truly powerful individual: God.

Moses himself is diminished by this editorial hand in places like Psalms 78 and 106, where the Exodus is narrated almost entirely without Moses.[200] Using a metaphor that agrees in ways with the thesis of this project, Zakovitch discerns a tendency here "opposite of a magnifying glass:

[198] Zakovitch lecture, 6 September 2018. Cf. Levenson's statement quoted earlier: "The story of the humiliation and exaltation of the beloved son reverberates throughout the Bible because it is the story of the people about whom and to whom it is told." *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, 67.

[199] Zakovitch, *…And You Shall Tell Your Son*, 12.

[200] Lecture, 11 October 2018. Moses does appear at Psalm 106:16, 32, while Psalm 78 is oriented toward the Davidic dynasty (i.e., is not averse to valorizing a human leader, even if it is not Moses). But the general point is taken.

a shrinking glass scribal rule."[201] The metaphor is striking, and the implications are significant. For if he is correct about this deliberate "shrinking" of Israel's greatest leaders before YHWH—and I believe, on balance, he is[202]—then a deep agreement emerges between the compositional process and the final product of the narratives under analysis: self-denial is not just a trope *within* Royal Runaway stories, but an axiom of these stories *as a medium*. For while in the world of the story Moses must learn the supremacy of YHWH, in the narrational presentation of that world the purpose is also not to showcase Moses, but again, YHWH. The *how* and the *what* of the tales thus converge, reflecting in the *who:* those telling it and those about whom it is told, figures of scribal and historical power, together make willing obeisance before the Almighty.[203]

Peter Machinist likewise offers a sociohistorical insight that helps us understand what may originally have been at stake in Israel's scriptural Royal Runaway stories. In his influential article, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel,"[204] Machinist makes a case that strategies of cultural and religious differentiation in the Hebrew Bible index to Israel's relative newness on the historical stage. Unlike, for example, neighboring Egyptian and Mesopotamian empires, whose historical presence recedes up to the vanishing point of pre-history, Israel was a latecomer on the

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[201] Ibid.

[202] Recall, again, the claim of Berman that the Bible's unwillingness to exalt human leaders is not owing to a fear of marginalizing God but a fear of marginalizing the common man. The result—and the goal—is therefore not theocentrism, but egalitarianism. But why should both fears not be valid to a degree?

[203] There is, in fact, a certain textual kenosis at work. Cf. Brevard Childs: "[T]he tradents of the tradition have sought to hide their own footprints in order to focus attention on the canonical text itself and not on the process. The content of the prophets' message is first and foremost a theocentric word. Concern with Israel own identity is always secondary and derivative from a prior understanding of God." Brevard S. Childs, "The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature," *Interpretation (Richmond)* 32, no. 1 (1978): 53. From the standpoint of concerns in modern authorial culture over plagiarism, proper attribution, etc., or even the performative playfulness of pseudonymity, the determined anonymity of much biblical literature amounts to a theologically-eloquent silence.

[204] Peter Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel." *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, no. 33 (1991): 196–212.

scene who was pressured to articulate a distinct identity over against such pedigreed behemoths. Machinist cites ancient witnesses such as the Roman historian Tacitus and Egyptian priest Manetho, both of whom were critical of the nonconformist ethical code of the Jews,[205] to establish the polemical context in which Israel's uniqueness was defensively asserted.

> It is the fact and problematic of Israel's newness, I would like to suggest, that lie at the heart of the Biblical distinctiveness passages [of which he identifies some 433], even as they were an important motivation in the canonization process in general. The problematic was simply, and yet most formidably, this: how to forge an identity for a people that began on the margins of history and thereafter was faced constantly with a return to marginality—whether cultural, political, military, or a combination of these—as against older societies like Egypt and Mesopotamia on its outside, and Canaanites and others within its midst. Paradoxically, it is this very status as newcomer and marginal, which at first sight looks so negative and culturally unstable, that is taken by our Biblical passages as the basis for a positive picture. In other words, if newcomer and marginal had meant, say, for the Egyptians, barbarian, immoral, and chaotic, in the Bible they become proof of the choice of the "almighty God"—of new freedom, purity, and power.

This explanation may help explain the recurrent feature in Royal Runaway stories of rejection by older brothers. Perhaps the alienation that Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David experience from their brethren channels something of the collective insecurity and ambition of "younger sibling" Israel, an upstart in a neighborhood of cultural powerhouses? It is plausible. Note in particular what Machinist identifies as "paradoxical" in Israel's theological coping mechanism: in a world operating on assumptions of primogeniture the Hebrew Bible converts a liability into an asset, alleging the kindly eye of God for the younger child, the Eternal One conceiving a special love for the newly arrived. There may well be something to this reading.[206]

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[205] "[F]or the Roman historian Tacitus, 'Moses…introduced new religious customs contrary to those of the rest of mankind. All that are sacred to us are profane to them; on the other hand, what are permitted by them are for us polluted.' And for the Hellenistic Egyptian priest Manetho, the Exodus was the expulsion of Egyptian lepers, led by a renegade Egyptian priest who changed his name from Osarsiph to Moses, and who gave the lepers a 'constitution' that was an inverted image of Egyptian practices" Machinist, 434.

[206] Although, again, I worry about anachronism: modern scholars may regard the self-assertion of marginalized identities as of great ethical value, but does that mean ancient Israelites had similar values?

Dale Allison as well, whose approach is confessedly historical and not theological,[207] offers helpful insights. In order to articulate what Moses typology is doing in the Gospel of Matthew—a work clearly in the exegetical streams of the Second Temple period —he first establishes the widespread nature of typological thinking in the ancient world,[208] and offers a sensitive account of several additional phenomena: 1) the psychological attraction of typology; 2) the influence of typology in the construction of identity; and 3) the theology of history that biblical typology implies. Briefly returning to such methodological matters, let us take these in turn, as they each have something important to contribute to an understanding of Royal Runaways.

Regarding the psychology of typological argument, Allison argues that for human beings it is both highly efficient, and exciting:

> "[T]he biographical analogy is a relatively easy way of saying much—which is why it has been and remains so prevalent a device of public discourse. To praise the genius of a young scientist one speaks of another Einstein. To condemn a national leader any insinuation of a likeness to Hitler will do. [...] Famous (and infamous) people become types and as such the standards for other people. In other words, they are turned into adjectives.[209]

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[207] "I shall muster my arguments as an historian, and that is as far as the present investigation dares to go: I shall not be doing theology," 7. He does seem to be doing a version of "historical theology," however, in the sense of assessing theologies that prevailed at certain moments in history; he only eschews the shift from descriptive to prescriptive.

[208] Alexander the Great emulated Achilles, Julius Caesar in turn emulated Alexander, and so on, in a common use of "biographical comparison, for which the Greek rhetoricians had a technical term, *synkrisis*," 12. On the side of biblical religions, "[j]ust as Christian tradition has constantly sought and found and created parallels between Jesus Christ and the saints, so too has Judaism assimilated many of its heroes to Moses. Examples are interminable." 91. Yet these typological paradigms are nimble and multidirectional: "Clearly the assimilation of saints to Jesus, that is, the use of Jesus as a type, was common in early Christianity. No less common, however, was the custom of comparing or assimilating Jesus (as an antitype) to ancient Jewish worthies (his types)" 96. For Allison, "typology" is a technical term that "involves either a retrospective or a presaging story, and requires knowledge of two different people or series of events as well as their juxtaposition. But parallelism, even extensive parallelism which is not coincidental, may exist without such knowledge of juxtaposition" 13. Speaking of Royal Runaway typology within the Bible makes sense, on this definition, because knowledge of compared stories can be assumed; but Allison would demur, I take it, from speaking of Royal Runaway typology outside the Bible, because such knowledge cannot be assumed. For this project's rather loose use of the term "typology," interchangeably with terms like "trope," "theme," "motif," etc., refer to the discussion of Comparative Analysis in Chapter 1.

[209] Allison, 12.

Yet if typology is a good way to reveal something important, the art and joy of the technique is in the concealing. Quoting literary artists Stéphane Mallarmé and Arthur Koestler, Allison writes:

> [T]hose "who make a complete demonstration of the object thereby lack mystery; they deprive the mind of that delicious joy of imagining that it creates. To name the thing means forsaking three quarters of a poem's enjoyment" [Mallarmé].[210]

> [M]any of the words, phrases, pictures, and patterns of Matthew were designed to trigger "the eureka of bisociative experience" [Koestler], that is, they were intended to foster the discovery of analogies between the stories of Jesus and Moses—analogies which can only be formed in a mind with the proper prerequisite knowledge of Moses. […] We have all had the experience of hearing and understanding the words of a joke without getting the joke: we can fail to make implied connections: it is up to us. Likewise can we follow the surface of Matthew, by which I mean the plain meaning of the words, and miss all the depths.[211]

What all this means for Royal Runaways is that in the Hebrew Bible and the literatures it spawned, the slightest insinuation of a likeness to the personal and spiritual drama of Moses in Exodus 2 was likely to have loosed a cascade of associations for literate readers—which perhaps accounts for the multiple points of similarity that Exodus 2 parallels generally have in the Hebrew Bible. Such a model of reading no doubt engenders concerns about nonfalsifiability, compelling Allison (along with many likeminded scholars) to insist that "only a delicate and mature judgment bred of familiarity with a tradition will be able to feel whether a suggested allusion or typology is solid or insubstantial."[212] Whether or not the allusions I have suggested in this chapter are solid or insubstantial is for others to decide; to me they are persuasive, but I accept that they might not be so to others. The framework that legitimates the possibility of such claims, however, is solid.

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[210] Allison, 16.

[211] Allison, 270.

[212] Allison, 21.

Regarding the connection between typology and identity, the key link here is *memory*. Recollection of what happened in the past orients humans to the present and future. Allison writes: "Religious typology […] has often helped to create and sustain a symbolic universe. This is because typology, which puts its perceivers *in two stories at once*, can provide an instant history for a community."[213] In Chapter 1 the fundamental role of narrative was discussed, and in particular the ethical utility of narrative transitions. Typology is the mechanism that magnifies the influence of narrative since it coordinates the story unfolding in the present with a story that happened in the past, a temporal interaction that realizes itself in the identity of the individual or group making the association.[214] By studying the formative transitions that occurred in a past life, and closely observing the epistemological and ethical gains resulting from a movement between A and B, I am given tools for navigating my own challenging transitions; by discerning the successive generations of Israel, with all their successes and failures, the biblical reader is given a vantage from which to evaluate their own generation. Memory, architected typologically, nearly *is* identity.[215]

The persuasiveness of such instructive associations between present and past is heightened if the referent in the past has itself already been multiply reinforced by analogues within that storied world. This is just the way the world works, apparently, moving forward if not by a sheer repetition of events then by uncanny resemblances.[216] Plausibility structures are thus established to facilitate interpretation not only of what happened *then* to *them*, but of what is happening *now*

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[213] Allison, 277. Italics mine.

[214] This, recall, is what Gadamer means by a "fusion of horizons."

[215] Hence the acute personality changes attending Alzheimer's Disease. Cf. Allison, 277: "I am informed that the Welsh word for 'madness' (*gwallgofvwydd*) means a failure in the memory."

[216] Allison, 15: "There is of course in the Bible itself no cloning of old events, and the mythological identification of beginning and end is foreign to Scripture: there is no cyclical return to what once was. In the Bible history moves forward. But if there is not repetition, there is resemblance."

to *us*. Looking forward from any fixed point within the narrative past, and having access to what happens next with the turn of a page or twist of the scroll, *their* future is judged likely to be similar to *our* future as well.

Why, then, to return to the central question, does Royal Runaway typology recur in the Hebrew Bible? What was the likely effect on ancient Israelites of liturgical recitations of highborn individuals in their national past who were thrust low in times of struggle and sorrow, yet who were eventually restored by YHWH to positions even higher than the ones where they began, from which they could be a blessing to many? For the enslaved Joseph is not just restored to his family, but empowered to supply his own father's lack during the famine, and all Egypt's besides. David is not merely allowed to return to the royal court, but becomes the archetype of a messiah and the sweet singer of Israel's psalms. Moses, after his exile, is not reinstated as a representative of Egyptian law, but of something immeasurably greater: the divine law of Torah. What patterns of expectation are hereby embedded? What forms of identity cultivated? And even more importantly: what is the ultimate ground of this phenomenon, the explanatory domain that contains and illumines all other legitimate explanations? Is this a matter of sociological "function"? Or the charismatic personality of a figure like Moses? Or do the explanations reach even further and deeper, into the very heart of YHWH?

It is at this point that Allison the historian is most helpful, because he is not shy about the manner in which such typological habits of self-understanding in ancient Israel relied on a theological understanding of the way the world is, and particularly the way history unfolds.

> One God stands behind history in the monotheistic tradition, and because like events hint at like causes, the mysterious homology of events or persons can be taken as testimony to divine activity within history. [… R]esonances in scripture are there neither for erudite display nor for the playing of sophisticated hide and seek. Inexplicit biblical parallelism is

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instead a natural, if eloquent, method of communication: "this is like that" means, if the latter is sacred, that so is the former: both belong to holy history.[217]

"Fair enough," the sociologist might say; "but such convenient symmetries undermine any claim to historicity; this is a fantasy world." To which Allison the historian replies: "Not necessarily."

> The presence of typology does not, despite widespread presumption to the contrary, settle, without further ado, the historical question. Typology did often contribute to fictional narratives (as in *4 Ezra*). But it also sometimes *interpreted* historical facts. Notwithstanding Eusebius' Moses typology, Constantine did win a dramatic victory at the Milvian bridge; and Gregory of Nyssa's eulogy of his brother Basil, full of *synkrisis*, is an eye-witness account.[218]

Deep epistemological questions lie just here, and I have addressed those as best I can in Chapter 1; Allison does us the favor, however, of again bringing us to the epistemological precipice, to the necessity of theology and faith as ways of knowing. For whether or not typology constitutes "evidence" is contingent on the prior question of one's overall stance to reality. That stance, no doubt, will likely be influenced by prior exposures to typology of one sort or another, bringing to closure the classically inescapable hermeneutical circle. That circle cannot just be imploded, though, because empirical evidence is not forthcoming at its every curvature, since one of the primary epistemic matters in need of establishing is the nature and value of empirical evidence as such. Faith continually revolves within such a circle, and the evidence that faith discerns, however cautiously, within biblical typology will inform the remainder of this concluding discussion about the "Mosaics of Israel."

In order to come to grips theologically with what Moses meant for Israel, then, Exodus 32:32 is a key text. The verse comes in the dramatic context of the Golden Calf affair, after the

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[217] Allison, 14, 16.

[218] Allison, 267. Italics original.

shattering of the first tablets, YHWH now poising to annihilate Israel. But Moses intervenes: "But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written." The radical gesture recalls the midrash of Exodus 2:11, which expands on Moses' first moment of seeing (like God) the suffering of the Hebrews. Weeping (בוכה), Moses exclaims: מי יתן מותי עליהם! (Would that I could die for you!). It is the same reaction he has now on Mount Sinai: the plight of the people compels Moses to offer his own life.[219] This connection between Moses' disposition in early life and his character years later as the mature leader of Israel suggests that the privilege-renouncing decision to "leave the palace" is not a one-off extravagance for a Royal Runaway, but establishes larger biographical patterns of self-sacrifice. Moses (as Philo and others discerned) will continually take the humble path of self-renunciation, and this downward trajectory is not limited to Moses alone. According to the *Mekilta*, "Exod. 32:32 is cited as proof that 'the patriarchs and the prophets offered themselves on behalf of Israel (נתנו נפשם על ישראל)."[220]

Such a typological assertion holds true in the continuation of other Royal Runaway stories, beyond any initial moments of "leaving the palace." For example, the literature of Samuel climaxes in II Samuel 24 with the interposition of David before the angel of YHWH: "Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, 'Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house" (II Samuel 24:17; cf. I Chronicles 21 and its subtle theological adjustment to the scenario). Likewise, in the literature of Genesis, Abraham, Jacob, and Judah each

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[219] Cf. Romans 9:1–3, Paul's introduction to the lengthy treatment of the question of Israel in Romans 9–11: "I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

[220] Allison, 235. He cites comparisons at *Sipre Deut.* § 355; *b. Ber.* 32a; *b Sota* 14a.

lay down their own lives or its equivalent: Abraham is willing to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22, Jacob to sacrifice Benjamin in Genesis 43, and Judah—from whom "the scepter shall not depart," 49:10—lays down his own life in Genesis 44. Joseph, of course, enduring betrayals, pits, and dungeons, also suffers personally for the good of others. Such a typology of radical self-denial and "running away" from the trappings of power is not at cross-purposes with the "royalty" of these figures, as the Hebrew Bible construes royalty. On the contrary, it is the *essence* of their royalty.[221]

This royal nation, many of whose fathers conformed in their own way to the Mosaic pattern of offering one's own life for the people, is well named "Israel." Twice the name is given to Jacob, in Genesis 32 and Genesis 35, although it is in the former that an explanation is explicitly offered. After wrestling through the dark hours with a mysterious celestial patron, a hip cruelly thrown out of joint on his long walking trip, Jacob's demand for a blessing is satisfied in the giving of a name: "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed" (Genesis 32:29; English 32:28). Here the name is indexed to the verb שׂר״ה, meaning "strive, contend," a gloss Hosea 12:4–5 (English 12:3–4) affirms: "In the womb he

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[221] Nor, we should remind ourselves, is this insight restricted in antiquity to the Hebrew Bible; cf. the classical sources in connection with Moshe Weinfeld's article, discussed above, "The King as Servant of the People." Relatedly, Francis Fukuyama writes of the world that produced Socrates' political philosophy in the *Republic*: "…most civilizations around the world […] possessed an aristocratic class whose claim to high social status lay in the fact that they, or their ancestors, were warriors. The Greek word for 'gentleman' was *kaloskagathos*, or 'beautiful and good,' while the very word *aristocracy* derives from the Greek term 'rule by the best.' These warriors were seen as morally different from shopkeepers because of their virtue: they were willing to risk their lives for the public good. Honor accrued only to people who deliberately rejected rational utility maximization—our modern economic model—in favor of those who were willing to risk the most important utility of all, their lives." Fukuyama, *Identity*, 20. Interestingly, Fukuyama next notes the modern mistrust of authority and inherited privilege which the present project is also trying in some small measure to address: "Today, we tend to look back on aristocrats with a great deal of cynicism, regarding them at best as self-important parasites, and at worst as violent predators on the rest of their society. Their descendants are even worse, since they did not themselves earn the status that their families receive, but got it as an accident of birth. We have to recognize, however, that in aristocratic societies there was a deeply rooted belief that honor or esteem was not due to everyone, but only to the class of people who risked their lives." Fukuyama, 20–21. The Bible's logic is quite similar: Abraham, Jacob, Judah, Joseph, Moses, and David are worthy of honor because of their willingness to risk their lives. Yet in contrast to a warrior culture in which risk to life is assumed in the context of seeking to take the lives of others, the radical aspect of the Hebrew Bible's honor code is the forfeiture of one's own life without harming anyone. (In the surrender of Benjamin by Jacob, the former is like a wordless prop; the real sacrifice is Jacob's.)

took his brother by the heel [עקב את אחיו], and in his manhood he strove with God [שׂרה את-אלהים].

He strove with the angel [וישׂר את-מלאך] and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor." An identity

of *wrestling*, of strenuous exertion horizontally with humans and vertically with God, is thus as-

serted for the royal people Israel, and such majestic spiritual exertion is on full display in the lives

of the Mosaics of Israel. For Israel becomes "Israel" in the crushing of the fords of Jabbok, and if

the typology-identity nexus analyzed above holds any truth, then this mandate of royal wrestling

is by no means constricted within the Hebrew Bible.

The above, however, is not the only biblically-endorsed gloss of the name Israel.[222] Con-

trasting with the "crooked" connotations of "Jacob," and reading שׂ instead of שׁ, other texts seem

to discern the meaning "God is honest" in the word. For example, while excoriating the duplicity

of his people the prophet Micah twice (2:7; 3:9) trades on the opposition between עקב (*crooked*,

"Jacob") and ישׁר (*straight, honest*); the alternative name for Israel, ישׁרון, also suggests this reading

(Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26; cf. Isaiah 44:2, contrasting עקב with ישׁר).[223] For Zakovitch this

wordplay evinces scribal discomfort with a "crooked" patriarch, and an attempt at a facelift.[224]

From a theological angle, however, the meaning goes deeper: *sub specie aeternitatis*, the apparent

crookedness and exilic nonlinearity in the life of Jacob and his descendants is in fact a deeper form

of straightness and linearity, a theo-logic transcending human experience. If the question, then, is

what "Mosaics of *Israel*" may have meant to ancient Jews, one answer is found in the

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[222] I am grateful to Yair Zakovitch for pointing out to me these alternative explanations of the name Israel in the seminar of 4 October 2018.

[223] In the New Testament: Ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν (*Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!*), John 1:47.

[224] Alternatively, within the narrative logic of Genesis Zakovitch sees the giving of the name "Israel" as the moment when crooked Jacob, now returning to the Promised Land, must reform his ways and become honest.

counterintuitive assertion that this hard and twisting life is graced with the straightness and honesty of God. That is, the paronomasia is something of a manifesto.

There remains, however, still a third gloss for the name "Israel," and it is the lynchpin of my argument. When the name is given to Jacob for the second time in Genesis 35 (an emphatic doubling important in itself), the context is the creational mandate of flourishing and the promise of royal descendants:

> God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply [פרה ורבה]. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body [ומלכים מחלציך יצאו]. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring [ולזרעך] after you." (Genesis 35:9–11)

In this way Jacob is christened, so to speak, in a line of kings that will inherit the land. Since the word ישׂראל is given no gloss here, the context suggests שׂר״ה, hypothetical by-form of שׂר״ר, "to rule, reign" (HALOT). In other words, שׂר, *prince*. It is a royal name, a royal identity. Moreover, the language "be fruitful and multiply" recalls the Genesis context where the giving of a name is a royal prerogative: God assigns names in Genesis 1 to the heavens, the earth, the seas, and so forth. In Genesis 2 this authority is delegated to the human, tasked with naming the creatures. Finally, the man names the woman.[225] The scene in Genesis 35, then, depicts the heavenly suzerain YHWH naming a vassal king, Israel, who is not only a man who wrestles, and not only (if paradoxically) honest, but truly royal. These multiple identities are compressed into the name Israel as into a diamond formed through eons of immense heat and pressure; light gleams off in iridescent colors from this single stone.

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[225] Twice, in fact: Genesis 2:23; 3:20.

Or to return to the chapter's preferred metaphor: in small and large narrative designs, Mosaics appear in the Hebrew Bible as multiform arrangements of the Moses-like path of privilege declined (or stripped away) and covenantal obedience accepted.[226] Such self-incurred demotions, from a theological viewpoint, are more like promotions, because relationship with the heavenly King is often established in the deprivations of exile and informed by humbling experiences with the non-elect. Hence, Israel's identities of royalty and wrestling are not in conflict, but intrinsic to one another: to be a monarch, on this biblical paradigm, is not to be serenely detached from the troubles of the world, but precisely to enter those troubles and lay down one's life in order to secure blessing for others. And the question to which the next chapter will turn is: might the heavenly King, too, in covenant with whom the many Mosaics of Israel develop, exhibit any of the same traits? For if the paradoxical model of royalty articulated in the Hebrew Bible is correct, would it not stand to reason that its primary Royal figure, YHWH the suzerain King, is something like a Runaway God?

Such language, of course, like much language for God, comes with liabilities of anthropomorphism, and can only go so far in signifying what is fundamentally ineffable. What I mean here is perhaps best approached via analogy with the Talmudic statement with which this chapter began:

> The Holy One (blessed be He!) said to Israel: I set My heart on you because even when I bestow greatness on you, you make yourselves small before Me. I bestowed greatness on Abraham, and he said, "I am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27); on Moses and Aaron,

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[226] Given how discredited the concept of obedience generally is today (see the discussion on Authority in Chapter 1), it is important to remember that in the context of ancient Israel it was not seen as demeaning, but dignifying: "Since covenant in the ancient Near East is usually a relationship between kings, Israel's status is best seen not as that of a slave but more like that of a regal figure." (Jon D. Levenson, *The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016], 6.) Moreover, obedience was never a matter of *earning* divine favor, as feared in some (mostly Protestant) theologies, but an expression of loyalty and gratitude for favor already given. Establishing this point was one of the main contribution of E.P. Sanders' thesis about "covenantal nomism." E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

and he [Moses] said, "We are nothing" (Exodus 16:8); on David, and he said, "But I am a worm, less than human" (Psalm 22:7). (Babylonian Talmud, *Hullin* 89b.)

YHWH fell in love with such people, electing them out of all the nations to be in relationship with and represent the heavenly King. The argument of the next chapter, *en nuce*, is that such a paradox of greatness and smallness, exaltation and humility, embodied by the elected and beloved Royal Runaways of Israel, is a drama also—and principally—alive within the heart of Israel's God.

Chapter Three – A Runaway God?

Christian Kenotic Theology and its Narrative Sources in the Hebrew Bible

The preceding chapter dealt with narratives in the Hebrew Bible that, in various ways and moments in Israel's history, depict individuals descending from positions of influence, enduring rejection, temptation, and exile, and eventually being restored to influence in a manner both continuous and discontinuous with their early life—continuous because of the basic symmetry of such U-shaped stories, discontinuous because the final position generally exceeds the original one. These individuals have been referred to as Royal Runaways, and the ancient Jewish literature in which their stories are found also, interestingly, are punctuated at junctures by poems that do what poems typically do: artfully compress much into little, viewing the whole through a particular.[1] The canonical Hebrew Bible (particularly the Torah and Former Prophets) often embeds poetry within prose, and early Jewish Christians immersed in Israel's Scriptures seem on occasion to have picked up this literary and theological habit.[2] One such poetic passage from the New Testament, located within the prose of the Epistle to the Philippians, depicts the career of Jesus Christ according to the high-low-high(er) template of Royal Runaways: native privilege refused and suffering

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[1] E.g., Genesis 49; Exodus 15; Numbers 23–24; Deuteronomy 32–33; Judges 5; I Samuel 2; II Samuel 22–23. These are major poems, while smaller poetic passages appear much more frequently. Just what constitutes biblical "poetry" and "prose" as literary forms is not self-evident, but such distinctions are not particularly important to my argument.

[2] Matthew 5:3–11; Luke 1:46–55, 68–79, 2:29–32; Romans 11:33–36; Philippians 2:6–11; Colossians 1:15–20; etc. Such passages are patently intertextual with the Hebrew Bible, while extensive and straightforward quotation from the poetry and prophecies of the Hebrew Bible (often from the Greek translation, the Septuagint) is basic to the fabric of much early Christian literature.

accepted (unto death), followed by exaltation. Here are those famous verses from Philippians 2:5–

11, often called the Christ Hymn or Carmen Christi:[3]

> **5** τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
> **6** ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
> οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο
> τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,
> **7** ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν
> μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,
> ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·
> καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
> **8** ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
> γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,
> θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.
> **9** διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν
> καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
> τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,
> **10** ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
> πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ
> ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων
> **11** καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται ὅτι
> κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
> εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός.[4]

> **5** *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,*
> **6** *who, though he was in the form of God,*
> *did not count equality with God*
> *a thing to be grasped,*
> **7** *but emptied himself,*
> *by taking the form of a servant,*
> *being born in the likeness of men.*
> *And being found in human form,*
> **8** *he humbled himself*
> *by becoming obedient to the point of death,*
> *even death on a cross.*

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[3] This Latin title originates in an early 2nd century letter by the Roman diplomat Pliny, who describes the Christian sect to the emperor Trajan: "…*stato die ante lucem…carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum inuicem*" (…meeting "before dawn on a stated day and singing alternately a hymn to Christ as to a god.") Translation of J. B. Lightfoot, quoted at Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians 2:5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 1.

[4] Among disputed issues in this poem is where line breaks are to be made, as well as determining which statements are headings and which are subsidiary; in both I follow here Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27 revidierte Auflage (Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 517–518.

9 *Therefore God has highly exalted him*
   and bestowed on him the
   name that is above every name,
10 *so that at the name of Jesus*
   every knee should bow,
   in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 *and every tongue confess that*
   Jesus Christ is Lord,
   to the glory of God the Father.[5]

This narrative poem follows the now-familiar contours of a Royal Runaway story, and the moment within this drama that historically has attracted most attention is the phrase in verse 7a, ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (*heauton ekenosen*, "*he emptied himself*"). Stark yet obscure, this description of Israel's royal Messiah[6] (Christ) "emptying himself of divine equality," whatever that may mean, corresponds typologically I wish to argue with the Royal Runaway motif of "leaving the palace." These are moments of decision, of climactic separation from inherited prestige, and this is why I

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[5] I continue to follow the English Standard Version in biblical translations; many of the translated terms are, of course, subjects of heated debate. Because ESV renders the passage as prose (!), I have followed here the lineation of N. T. Wright, who places the phrase θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (*even death on a cross*) as the climactic fourth line in the third stanza of the six stanza poem, each of the other stanzas having only three lines. The words θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ are thus the stylistic and theological fulcrum of the poem. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1992), 56. Some take the whole Carmen to be a pre-Pauline hymn, and argue that θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ, as it breaks the three-line rhythm of the poem, is Paul's asymmetrical addition. It is arguable, however, that this interpretation fails to see how such a fourth line may not be an aberration in the textual design, but on the contrary, its strategic apex. More on the Carmen's authorship below.

[6] We are brushing up here against another complex topic. "Messiah" (מָשִׁיחַ) and messianism meant all sorts of things in the 1st century world of early Christianity, from eschatological savior, to inspired teacher, to Maccabean-style warrior king, while in the Hebrew Bible itself the concept is relatively rare and hard to pin down (acknowledged even in a theologically conservative study like Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* [Princeton, N.J.: Zondervan Academic, 1995]; see further John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Second Edition [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010]). Although some view the term Χριστός in the New Testament as a proper name or a divine title, devoid of any particularly Jewish significance, this is hard to fathom given the saturation of New Testament documents in the literary forms and theological aspirations of the Hebrew Bible. Still, I am not equipped to make sharply delineated assertions about what Paul or anyone else in the New Testament means by Χριστός (a term I will continue to render on occasion as "Messiah"), and I take it that part of the value of Royal Runaway typology is the posing afresh of just this fundamental question, which the gospels themselves also raise in their Second Temple milieu: what exactly *is* a Christ? (Thanks to Professor Teeter for putting the question in these terms during a conversation. I am also grateful to N.T. Wright, who was willing to interact at length during a semester-long independent study of his series *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, which raises the question of messiahship numerous times and from many different angles.)

have tried to highlight instances when possible self-assertion is replaced by self-divestment. For at the level of narrative interest—and here I am thinking of stories in general, not just biblical ones[7]—things get *interesting* when a sheltered blue blood first encounters the real world of commoners, either by her own brave choice or a twist of fate. Perhaps unconsciously reflecting this interest, in the history of Christian theology the terms "kenosis" and "kenotic" have become touchstones for reflection on the self-emptying, self-giving nature of God in the drama of Incarnation, and this third chapter aims to bring together such Christian reflection, rooted in the Carmen of Philippians 2, with the Royal Runaway typology of the Hebrew Bible. For while the Adamic and Isaianic allusions of the Carmen Christi are often studied (and are vital to the poem), there seems to be a lacuna in scholarship regarding other portions of the Hebrew Bible that, if not exhibiting direct literary dependence or "intertextuality" with the Carmen Christi, then at least have a thematic overlap.[8] Those other portions of the Hebrew Bible are often Royal Runaway stories, and I will attempt to show that in regards to the Carmen Christi and the self-effacing Messiah it eulogizes, Adam and Isaiah are not end-points for exegesis and theology, but beginning-points.

The lacuna just mentioned is understandable, however, since while there is arguably a similar narrative shape between the Carmen Christi and other Royal Runaway stories such as those of Joseph, Moses, or David, there do not seem to be any verbal pointers within the Carmen that would

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[7] See the discussion in Chapter 1 of Extra-Biblical Royal Runaways.

[8] Just here lies a difference of learned opinions regarding the role of Genesis 1–3 in the Hebrew Bible, combining the P and J accounts of creation. Some regard the passage as receiving scant attention in the Hebrew Bible after Genesis 3, and a distinctive preoccupation of later Christian readers, whereas others regard Genesis 1–3 as containing tropes and locutions regularly revisited in pre-Christian Jewish literature. My own sense of the issue leans (clearly) toward the latter position, although I will try to remain mostly neutral in my presentation of Hebrew Bible texts; the larger argument I am trying to make does not suffer much if the relationship between the Carmen Christi and what I perceive to be its Hebrew Bible antecedents is framed in terms of broad thematic overlap rather than conscious borrowing. For surely the liturgical culture of the Second Temple period, with its literary heritage far in excess of subsequent canonical delimitations, could give rise to similarly phrased texts with no conscious connection.

suggest explicit connections. Paul has ways of clearly alluding to, e.g., David, when he wishes, and they do not seem to be present here. The type of argument I will be making, then, depends on the sort of canonical reading outlined in Chapter 1, wherein analogues are not only lexically but conceptually and circumstantially activated; similar scenarios and dilemmas in some sense "speak to each other" across the corpus of the Hebrew Bible, and verbal linkages are only part of how this works.[9] Dale Allison presumes a model like this in his study of Moses imagery within Matthew: in order to understand what Matthew is doing with Moses, it is first essential to see the multiple and subtle ways Moses typology is used to great theological effect throughout the Hebrew Bible. The character and influence of Moses is not restricted to those passages where the lawgiver is explicitly present, and hence, a Second Temple author like Matthew had a broad and variegated palette from which to make his portrait. Mutatis mutandis, such second-order exegesis is necessary in order to appreciate what the Carmen Christi is doing with allusions to Adam's choice and Isaiah's monotheistic affirmations and "servant" language.[10]

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[9] Cf. discussions of Comparative Analysis in Chapter 1 and Dale Allison's approach to biblical typology in Chapter 2. Cf. especially, and not for the first time, D. Andrew Teeter: "The Hebrew Bible and/as Second Temple Literature: Methodological Reflections," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 20, no. 3 (2013): 349–77; ibid, with William A. Tooman, "Standards of (In)Coherence in Ancient Jewish Literature," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 9, no. 2 (2020): 94–129. Also relevant here is Jeffery M. Leonard ("Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 2 [2008]: 241–265), mentioned above in n. 188 of Chapter 3.

[10] In principle, this is no new claim. For example, in the introduction to their *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2007), editors G .K. Beale and D. A. Carson broadly observe: "What is the OT context from which the quotation or allusion is drawn? Even at its simplest, this question demands as much care with respect to the OT as [… to] the study of the NT. […] Under the assumption that Mark's Gospel picks up exodus themes (itself a disputed point), is it enough to go to the book of Exodus to examine those themes as they first unfold? Or are such OT exodus themes, as picked up by Mark, filtered through Isaiah? In that case, surely it is important to include reflection not only on the use of the OT in the NT but also on the use of the OT within the OT. […] Sometimes a NT author may have in mind the earlier OT reference but may be interpreting it through the later OT development of that earlier text, and if the lens of that later text is not analyzed, then the NT use may seem strange or may not properly be understood." Beale and Carson, xxiv.

"New Adam" typology, for example, is no Christian innovation, but a feature of the narrative theology of the Hebrew Bible's final form.[11] Ten generations after Adam, Noah is commissioned in language that first appears in the priestly creation account (Genesis 1:28–30, 9:1–10), while ten generations after Noah, Abraham's interactions with God are also colored with creation language of blessing (Genesis 12:2–3), seed (15:5), and multiplied progeny (17:2). Those inclined to see New Adam typology in the Hebrew Bible's canonical form (as opposed to assuming it as a feature in stages of prior development) might also find of interest the presentation of David as אדמוני (*admoni*, I Samuel 16:12; *ruddy*); for a literature reticent to offer physical descriptions of its characters, the detail otherwise seems stylistically unusual.[12] Overt language of "Second Adam" or "Last Adam," such as the New Testament employs on occasion, is on a canonical reading unnecessary for the category to be active and meaningful.[13] Hence, and without engaging in the sort

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[11] See extensive demonstration of such typology in Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), esp. 75–168. Bear in mind that עדן (Eden) is not mentioned in Genesis 1, and also that אדם (Adam) seems to refer just as much to the human species (Genesis 1:27; 5:2) as to any single individual. This latter point is central to "New Adam" typology, as its importance resides not in any one person's chance at redemption so much as in the larger character and fate of the human species. The idea of a New Adam, therefore—and particularly in its explicit New Testament usage—seems to be a way of speaking of a renewed humanity.

[12] In the context of I Samuel 16, the description of David as עם-יפה עינים וטוב ראי (*bright-eyed, and handsome*, JPS) would seem to correspond with God's reminder to Samuel earlier in the chapter (16:7) that while humans look at outward appearance, God looks on the heart. David's good looks immediately complicate this principle by suggesting that while good looks are not proof of God's favor (as Samuel seems to have thought of Eliab, 16:6; cf. Absalom in II Samuel 14:25–26), they are also not a disproof. David is attractive internally and externally. Fine, but still: why the detail that the future king is earthy, ruddy? (Presumably the description of Esau as אדמוני in Genesis 25:25 is a straightforward etiology for the neighboring land of Edom, whose reddish hills bordered biblical Israel on the southeast; hence Esau is also שער, *hairy*, recalling the other name for Edom, שעיר, *Seir*.)

[13] In I Corinthians 15:47 Jesus is ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος (*the second man*, assuming the generic meaning of Adam; cf. LXX of Genesis 1:26, translating ἄνθρωπον for MT's אדם), while two verses earlier, in I Corinthians 15:45 he is ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ (*the last Adam*), suggesting the final position in a longer series of "Adams." Cf. Romans 5:12–21, where Jesus and Adam are explicitly compared, and also the running allusions to creation and Adam in Romans 1:18–32. Clearly, texts in Romans and I Corinthians are only marginally helpful for interpreting the Carmen in Philippians, since Adam's presence in one place does not indicate his presence in the other; yet these texts do show that it was a category on which Paul was able and willing to draw. Moreover, theological interest in Adam / Genesis 1–3 is not limited in the New Testament to Paul. This is not the place for a developed argument, but it seems three of the four evangelists begin their works with allusions to early Genesis: Matthew's "Βίβλος γενέσεως" (Matthew 1:1), Mark's Ἀρχὴ (Mark 1:1; cf. Genesis 1:1, LXX: Ἐν ἀρχῇ), and John's famous Ἐν ἀρχῇ (John 1:1). Such first words in

of free-wheeling associations that have brought similar ways of reading into disrepute,[14] this chapter will assume that fulsome interpretation of the Carmen Christi requires careful attention to ways in which its Hebrew Bible antecedents are already energized intertextual elements within a complex Scriptural world. This is what I mean by saying that Adam and Isaiah are not end-points, but beginning-points.[15]

The plan for Chapter 3, then, is as follows. First, a survey of historical exegeses of the Carmen Christi along with an overview of Christian kenotic theology, sampling the various angles from which the critical issues are approached. This will be rather cursory since, on the one hand, these are immense topics to which whole monographs are dedicated, and on the other hand, because the contribution I hope to make here does not interact with technical issues, per se, but seeks

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midrashically stylized accounts of Jesus' life and ministry are only the faint beginning of what seem to me a routine and sophisticated comparison of Jesus to Adam / times of beginning. (For parallel developments in post-biblical Jewish exegesis, cf. Susan Niditch, "The Cosmic Adam: Man as Mediator in Rabbinic Literature," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 34, no. 2 [1983]: 137–146. "The enormous, world-filling Adam, sometimes called a *golem*, is a motif frequently found in Rabbinic speculation on the creation of the first man." Niditch, 137. Also Jon D. Levenson, "Did God Forgive Adam? An Exercise in Comparative Midrash," in *Jews and Christians: People of God*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2003), 148–70.)

[14] D. Andrew Teeter deals extensively with such modes of reading in "Biblical Symmetry and Its Modern Detractors," forthcoming in C. Maier, G. Macaskill, J. Schaper (eds.), *IOSOT Congress Volume: Aberdeen* (VTSup; Leiden: Brill, 2020). There must be controls, or biblical hermeneutics devolves into uncontrolled subjectivity.

[15] I hasten to emphasize, again, that what I am proposing here is not novel, but in keeping with developments in some quarters of New Testament studies. Post-Holocaust scholarship in general, acknowledging the sordid legacy of Christian anti-Semitism while also attuned to archaeological and textual advances in the latter half of the twentieth century, witnessed a resurgence of commitment to reading the early Christian documents sympathetically with the grain of the Jewish literary culture in which they participated. E. P. Sanders is often pointed to as a watershed figure here (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977]). Among many scholars who have since contributed to this historically-sensitive way of reading are Richard Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1989]; ibid, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* [Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans, 2005]); N. T. Wright (*The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, Volume 1 [Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1992]); and works by Martin Hengel and Richard Bauckham. A New Testament scholar, which I am not, could surely list many other contributors. And this development is not limited to Christian scholarship. Yair Zakovitch, for example, so helpful in the previous chapter, took the unusual move in his career of offering New Testament courses in the Jewish Studies Department at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Previously the New Testament had been taught only in the Comparative Literature Department, but Zakovitch insisted that early Christian writings are an integral link in the tradition of Jewish biblical interpretation. See further James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

to look in a direction rarely considered. In the remainder of the chapter, then, and presuming the groundwork laid in Chapters 1 and 2, I will analyze a handful of Royal Runaway narratives in the Hebrew Bible that may have figured into the conceptual and textual background of the Carmen Christi, and hence may also have factored into early christological reflection.

I write this mindful of being outside the formal discipline of New Testament scholarship, which, like every field, has its own complex landscape. I do, however, try to keep abreast of developments in the study of early Christian literature, and will interact where appropriate with the scholarship of which I am aware, while also sticking to the primary and secondary sources I know better: those of the Hebrew Bible. Given the deeply Jewish matrix of early Christian thought, and the commitment to Israel's Scriptures of Jesus himself, hopefully an approach to the christological poem in Philippians from this disciplinary vantage will have something to offer. In particular, as the discussion outlined above proceeds I hope to demonstrate two things: first, how the Royal Runaway motif of the Hebrew Bible is implicitly or explicitly (it is difficult to establish which) distilled by the Carmen Christi and transposed into a theological norm; and second, how the Carmen thus offers an unexpected yet robustly affirmative reply to the question posed at the end of Chapter 2 regarding Israel's Royal Runaways' being in formative covenant relationship with a divine monarch who is something like a "Runaway God."

1. The Carmen Christi and Kenotic Theology

The dynamic narrative within Philippians 2:6–11[16] is mirrored in ways by its history of interpretation. Generalizing only a bit, the high Christology assumed by much of church history to be reflected in the Carmen Christi[17] was sharply chastened by historical-critical developments in

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[16] Omitting the introductory remark of 2:5 ("Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus") which is, nevertheless, pivotal for understanding how 2:6–11 operates within the letter to the Philippians. This "ethical reading" of the Carmen, geared toward the New Testament theme of a transformed mind, will be addressed below.

[17] In her article "Does Kenosis Rest on a Mistake? Three Kenotic Models in Patristic Exegesis" (in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, ed. C. Stephen Evans [New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], 246–64), Sarah Coakley writes: "A quick perusal of the relevant section in the first seven volumes of the *Biblia Patristica* should be enough to convince the patristic neophyte of the immense significance for patristic exegesis of Philippians 2. The material is of overwhelming complexity and density; in Origen alone, for instance (to whom a whole volume of *Biblia Patristica* is devoted) there are 219 discussions of the 'hymn' (Phil. 2:5–11), or verses within it. Any pert generalizations about patristic interpretation of this matter would therefore be foolhardy […] Note, however […] that in *all* this patristic material, and for all its extraordinary variety and ingenuity, there is rarely a whiff of actual modification of divine characteristics: 'The truth is,' remarks [Friedrich] Loofs, 'that no theologian of any standing in the early Church ever adopted such a theory of *kenosis* of the Logos as would involve an actual supersession of His divine form of existence by the human—a real '*becoming*-man', i.e., a transformation on the part of the Logos.'" Coakley, *Exploring Kenotic Christology*, 249–250. Italics original. Notwithstanding her own warning against generalization, and also presuming a certain definition of what counts as "patristic," Coakley remarks that "*all* this patristic material" assumes the divinity of Christ; it is not a matter of *if* but *how*. Indeed, the twin "heresies" of Docetism (Jesus is not fully man) and Arianism (Jesus is not fully God) attest to a consensus that whatever else he may have been, Jesus was no mere mortal. For Coakley, who uses the metaphor of "assumption" to describe Cyril of Alexandria's christological reading of Philippians 2, and "conjunction" for the reading of Nestorius, the "progressive transfusion" model of Gregory of Nyssa is an underappreciated alternative to later kenotic formulations. Gregory—who also wrote a book about Moses, we should mention, in which the *ascent* of Sinai eventuates in the role of *servant* of God—"memorably insists that the *kenosis* of the Incarnation is the sign *of* supreme divine power, not of the loss of it." (Coakley, 264. Italics original.) It is an insight apropos Royal Runaways.

A brief, framing comment is also necessary here. As Coakley's work makes clear, most "kenotic theology" developed against the backdrop of christological and trinitarian controversies in the early centuries of the church; later it would be taken up (at least in the west; with the eastern church I am regrettably less familiar) via scholastic categories in medieval universities and monasteries. Given the philosophical orientation of such debates, the questions took a certain shape: Who emptied what of what, exactly? Are we speaking of the persons or the essence of the Godhead? The substance or accidents? The immanent (*ad intra*) or economic (*ad extra*) Trinity? Can the *communicatio idiomatum*, the "communication of (human and divine) properties" within Christ, be construed in such a way that does not compromise divine impassability? Etc. Such questions I take to be meaningful and productive. On analogy with Israelite literature interacting, say, with the Sargon legend for its own creative purposes, I see no reason that biblical reflection should (or even could) be sanitized of the thought forms of any given milieu. This is a theological judgment about God's communicative generosity within the contingencies of history. Yet if the matter is reframed as a question about the history of theological development, it is clear that such questions are at home in a very different world from the one we encounter in the Hebrew Bible—i.e., the Scripture of the earliest church. We may be confident, for example, that whatever the Carmen Christi originally meant, what it could not have meant is something like Augustine of Hippo's exegetical heuristics "the form of God" and "the form of a slave" in his justly famous work *De Trinitate*; those phrases simply had a different set of associations in Second Temple Jewish literature. Without needing to appeal, then, to outmoded categories of "Greek Thinking" and "Hebrew Thinking," it should not be controversial to point out that the Greek phrase ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν was utilized in a Christian exegetical tradition primarily reflecting the plausibility structures of Plato and Aristotle and their many followers, rather than those of Deutero-Isaiah and a mysterious

the 19th and 20th centuries,[18] while in recent decades the parabola seems to have curved upwards again toward seeing the Carmen Christi as evincing a high Christology within the Jewish

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servant who הערה למוות נפשו (*poured out his soul to death*, Isaiah 53:12). So to be clear, while from the vantage of a theology of history I regard all of the above-mentioned developments as having great value, my interest here is geared toward the history of theology—particularly Second Temple Jewish theology and those historically-contingent modes of reading and writing in which subsequent generations of Jews and Christians were to discern the uncanny sparkle of Revelation.

[18] Broadly speaking, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* saw "high" conciliar Christologies as reflecting late and foreign importations to the Christian message, since within the monotheistic framework of the earliest church a divine messiah was assumed to be both conceptually impossible and religiously offensive. Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet misunderstood by his followers, posthumously elevated to godhood in the syncretic cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean along the model of Persian and/or Greco-Roman mythology. Such an understanding of Jesus and early Christianity goes well beyond exegesis of the Carmen Christi, of course (regarding the multiple "quests" for the historical Jesus, through the mid-1990s at least, see N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, v. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], 3–124), although the poem is generally cited as evidence in support of whichever paradigms are being advanced. Specifically addressing interpretations of the Carmen informed by historical-critical methods, a standard monograph at an earlier phase of the debate is Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians 2:5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967; Revised Edition, Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1983); cf. also Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd, *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998). The range of issues and scholarship reviewed by Martin is immense, and impossible to summarize. A few highlights stand out, and bear mentioning for the present study. First is the basic historical question of what the Carmen Christi even *is*: A eucharistic liturgy of the Jerusalem church (Lohmeyer)? A soteriological (i.e. not ontological) account of Christ within a framework of *Heilsgeschichte* and gnostic *Urmensch* mythology (Käsemann)? The hymn of a community worshipping Jesus as a cult-deity, along the lines of well-documented worship of Isis or Serapis (Bousset)? In the background here is the larger question of whether the Carmen (and New Testament literature more broadly) is to be read as Rome-facing or Hebrew Bible-facing. Regarding this question, Martin offers the sound judgement that "it may be that we are not, in fact, faced with an 'either-or'" (Martin, 83). That is, situated historically, the Carmen may simultaneously be a locally-discernible rebuke of the man who named Philippi after himself (Philip II of Macedon, 382–336 BCE, father of Alexander the Great; see further n. 41 below) and similar models of imperial hubris and divine pretension, *as well as* a strategic interaction with Hebrew Bible typologies of Adam, the Servant, and Satan (see Martin, 157–164). As Allison notes in another context, for Second Temple writers "it was the most natural thing in the world to construct a sentence pointing in two or more directions at once" (Allison, 285). Other issues reviewed by Martin are vexed questions about the thing (*res*) Christ chose not to "grasp" (the *res rapta* of divine status, already in Christ's possession? the *res rapienda* of further advancement to be snatched at? the *res retinenda* of divine equality that Christ refuses to retain and exploit? These are just the beginnings of the options; cf. Wright's updated survey with eighteen developed options: *Climax of the Covenant*, 81); the background of the Carmen in Jewish martyr theology, particularly addressed in the work of Eduard Schweizer (Martin, 191–194; 223–226); and the Hebrew Bible background of the Carmen, with the usual foci of Adam and Isaiah (Martin, 51–52; 74–75; 78; 167–168; 182–190; 195–196; 211–213; 222 [re: Deuteronomy 21:23]). Particularly relevant to the argument of the present study are 1) Lohmeyer's formula "per aspera ad astra; oder jüdisch gesprochen: durch menschliche Niedrigkeit zur göttlichen Hoheit" […] "To be chosen by God means to suffer upon earth" (quoted at Martin, 233); 2) Schweizer's claim that "the concept that the righteous individual man must pass through the suffering, humiliation, and shame imposed by God in order, finally, to be exalted by him, is widespread in the Judaism of the time" (quoted at Martin, 191); and 3) Martin's own conclusion that the figure described in the Carmen Christi inhabits "*a role that will blend together* the pictures of the obedient last Adam and the suffering servant" (Martin, 196; italics mine).

framework of the early church[19] (at least in some quarters[20]). At any point along this post-biblical

interpretative itinerary, the strange sort of power attested to *within* this six-verse poem turning on

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[19] Again, it is important to differentiate carefully between general trends in christological scholarship and readings of the Carmen Christi in particular, although the latter is basically a subset of the former. Regarding Christology writ large, a helpful survey is Andrew Chester, "High Christology – Whence, When and Why?," *Early Christianity* 2, no. 1 (2011): 22–50. Chester distinguishes scholars who hold to a high and *late* Christology, either in a non-Jewish (Bousset, Vermes) or Jewish (Dunn) context, from a growing chorus of scholars who, for various reasons, affirm a high and *early* Christology, squarely within a Jewish context. Martin Hengel, for instance, views high Christology as an "explosive" development in the earliest years of the church, such that "more happened christologically in less than two decades at the very start of the Christian movement that in the whole of the next seven centuries" (Chester, 25). Other scholars in this group are Larry Hurtado, John and Adela (Yarbro) Collins, C. F. D. Moule, Timo Eskola, Gordon Fee, and Chester himself. Each comes at the issue from a particular angle (e.g. early Christian worship, Second Temple messianism, Merkabah mysticism, Jewish categories of Wisdom, Logos, so-called "intermediary figures," etc.), and each sees early and high Christology as a surprising "development" of Jewish beliefs in the early Church. (Also contributing to this research, beyond Chester's presentation, is Peter Schäfer, *Two Gods in Heaven: Jewish Concepts of God in Antiquity* [Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2020]; ibid, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014].) Richard Bauckham, by contrast, stands apart in arguing that the highest Christology was nearly instantaneous because latent within the Hebrew Bible itself, and his argument depends heavily on the Carmen Christi. In *God Crucified* (Didsbury Lectures of 1996, then a 1998 monograph by Eerdmans, and finally reprinted in *Jesus and the God of Israel:* God Crucified *and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* [Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2008], 1–59), Bauckham offers an integrated reading of Isaiah 40–55 on its own terms in order to make the case that the Carmen Christi's allusions to Isaiah amount to the unambiguous inclusion of Jesus in the identity of the God of Israel (for Bauckham, "divine identity" is not a matter of *what* God is, as in subsequent metaphysical debates over the divine nature, but *who* God is, expressed in name, actions, and character). This is the sort of second-order exegesis that is essential for understanding the Carmen. Finally, although less stringent on the matter of timing than Bauckham, in this group is also N. T. Wright, for whom the Carmen Christi informs wider christological conclusions. In regards to the Carmen, Wright argues that intertextual cues of *Adam* Christology and *Servant* Christology are in the end aspects of an *Israel* Christology encompassing patterns of Israel's humiliation and exaltation as articulated in Isaiah 40–55 (N. T. Wright, "Jesus Christ is Lord: Philippians 2:5–11," in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993], 56–98). Wright focuses especially on the meaning of ἁρπαγμὸν, the graspable *res* of Philippians 2:6: "…the refusal described by the phrase was a refusal to use for his own advantage the glory which he had from the beginning. The all-important difference in meaning between this view and the standard *retinenda* approaches is that *nothing described by either* ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων *or by* τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ *is given up*; rather, it is reinterpreted, understood in a manner in striking contrast to what one might have expected. Over against the standard picture of oriental despots, who understood their position as something to be used for their own advantage, Jesus understood his position to *mean* self-negation, the vocation described in vv. 7–8. In Moule's phrase, divine equality does not mean 'getting' but 'giving'" (Wright, 83; italics original). That, on this reading, divine equality is "not given up" but "reinterpreted," causes Wright to be wary of standard kenotic views in which divine equality is abandoned in the incarnation and crucifixion.

[20] There remain dissenters, of course, who, without rejecting early and high Christology as a historical phenomenon, prefer to foreground a broad spectrum of christological positions from the 1st–3rd centuries CE. Notable here are Elaine Pagels (*The Gnostic Gospels* [New York: Vintage Books, 1989]); Paula Fredriksen (*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* [New York: Knopf, 1999]); and Bart Ehrman (*How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* [New York, NY: HarperOne, 2014]); these are popular works synthesizing technical scholarship. From the disciplinary vantage of Hebrew Bible, it is difficult to avoid the impression that underlying much of the debate is an issue of historical and literary method, namely, how Second Temple Jewish texts work. Ehrman's denial, for example, of any allusion to Adam in the Carmen (*How Jesus Became God*, 259–262) suggests he is either unaware or dismissive of the enormous amount of scholarship on the nature and function of intertextuality in such literature. For Ehrman, the pre-Pauline author of the Carmen would have been more

the cross[21] has been paralleled *externally* by its powerful attraction as a mysterious and highly-

contested theological crux. Incidentally, this history of reflection on the Carmen is itself something

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explicit about Adam had such a connection been intended, and Jesus cannot be contrasted with Adam anyway, since Eve was the one who took the fruit. Such wooden literalism interacts awkwardly with the subtle artistry of Second Temple texts. See Gary A. Anderson, Michael E. Stone, and Johannes Tromp, *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[21] Although geared toward literary matters, it is important for this project to bear in mind the empirical history from which biblical literature emerged, and in this regard, recent archaeological and literary evidence has deepened understanding of crucifixion. For example, Joseph Fitzmyer ("Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 40, no. 4 (1978): 493–513) reviews various assessments of the nail-pierced heel bone of a crucified man, one יהוחנן בן הגקול according to the ossuary inscription, initially uncovered by construction workers in the גבעת המבתר neighborhood of Jerusalem and excavated by Vassilios Tzaferis. The bones in the ossuary belonged to a 5'5" male, 24–28 years old, whose shins were intentionally broken and whose foot amputated after death (apparently because the nail, bent over, became stuck in a knot of the wood). Israeli renaissance man Yigael Yadin, reading the unusual term on the ossuary הגקול as העקעל, "the one hanged with his knees apart," argued that the victim had been crucified upside down, his legs hung over the transverse beam. Fitzmyer finds this linguistic argument implausible, but does recall the claim of Josephus that Roman soldiers amused themselves by crucifying people in various postures. He also surveys two Qumran texts, 4QpNah (4Q169) and 11QTemple, that seem to refer to crucifixion. The former may be interpreting Nahum 2:12–14 with reference to Alexander Jannaeus crucifying 800 Jews in 88 BCE while lounging with his concubines, and the latter offering halakhah on Deuteronomy 21:22–23, the text in Torah describing the curse upon a man hung in a tree: two crimes require hanging in a tree (i.e. crucifixion) according to this text from Qumran: betraying the nation and evading due process.

Looking to evidence further afield, Martin Hengel ("Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross," in *The Cross of the Son of God, Containing:* The Son of God, Crucifixion, The Atonement [London: SCM Press Ltd., 1986], 91–185) records references to crucifixion in the wider sweep of Graeco-Roman literature. He writes: "[C]rucifixion was a form of punishment in which the caprice and sadism of the executioners were given full reign. All attempts to give a perfect description of *the* crucifixion in archaeological terms are therefore vain; there were too many possibilities for the executioner. Seneca's testimony speaks for itself: 'I see crosses there, not just of one kind but made in many different ways: some have their victims with head down to the ground; some impale their private parts; others stretch out their arms on the gibbet" (Hengel, 117). *Crux* and σταυρός, according to Hengel, were taunts among the lower classes—prostitutes and robbers—terms not to be used in polite company; hence, they appear infrequently in the literature. Such a death was generally reserved for political rebels, slaves, or enemies of the public order, such as Haman and his sons in Esther; the most notorious example is perhaps the 6,000 crucifixions along the Via Appia near Rome after the failed slave revolt of Spartacus in the 1st century BCE; before the final battle Spartacus crucified a man in full view of his own soldiers, reminding them of their fate should they lose. And this was no novel tactic: crucified corpses were frequently displayed as a public warning and deterrent, left to rot until vultures peeled away the carrion for their young (contrast with Jewish abhorrence of such practices, magnifying the shamefulness of such a death: Deuteronomy 21:23, Joshua 8:29, I Samuel 31:8–13). The punishment could also be an expedient for disposing of unwanted bodies (Alexander the Great and Caesar Augustus orchestrated mass crucifixions in the thousands), as well as a symbol of anti-Semitism: the insulting meme of Jews worshipping an ass in the Temple (already in 200 BC by Mnaseas of Patara) was conflated with a cross "in the well-known caricature of a crucified figure with an ass's head from the Palatine with the inscription 'Alexamenos worships god'" (Hengel, 111). Processing such horrific evidence, Hengel turns to the Carmen Christi, writing: "the θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ is the last bitter consequence of the μορφὴν δούλου λαβών and stands in the most abrupt contrast possible with the beginning of the hymn with its description of the divine essence of the pre-existence of the crucified figure, as with the exaltation surpassing anything that might be conceived (ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν)" (Hengel, 154). "This radical kenosis of God was the revolutionary new element in the preaching of the gospel. It caused offense, but in this very offense it revealed itself as the center of the gospel. [… T]o assert that God himself accepted death in the form of a crucified Jewish manual worker from Galilee in order to break the power of death and bring salvation to all men could only seem folly and madness to men of ancient times. [… It is] a scandal which people would like to blunt, remove or domesticate in any

of a counterfactual to overly-tidy distinctions between biblical studies and theology (to say nothing of the division between Hebrew Bible and New Testament scholarship[22]) since exegetical conclusions about the poem cannot avoid theological implications, just as kenotic theologies must implicitly endorse one reading or another of the Carmen's much-debated text and historical context. Given the sheer enormity of study invested in these few verses from Paul's occasional letter to the Philippians,[23] however, barely adumbrated here, it is doubtless the part of wisdom to exercise a certain intellectual kenosis in any analysis of the Carmen, observing clearly delimited methods and goals. This is what I shall try to do, returning shortly to Royal Runaway typology in the Hebrew Bible.[24] What remains in this introduction are two things. First, a brief encounter with

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way possible. We shall have to guarantee the truth of our theological thinking at this point. Reflection on the harsh reality of crucifixion in antiquity may help us to overcome the acute loss of reality which is to be found so often in present theology and preaching" (Hengel, 181–82).

Particularly in a project like this is such an "acute loss of reality" a danger, absorbed instead in literary and theological patterns of meaning. Yet it was precisely the worship of a "crucified God" that made onlookers of the Christian sect conclude that its practitioners had lost all touch with reality, and were quite literally insane (μωρία, "folly," from I Corinthians 1:18; Hengel, 93–102). I include this long note, therefore, as a reminder that in regards to Royal Runaways, and particularly its audacious New Testament variation, what is in view is not some serendipitous lark outside the padded walls of privilege, a folksy rubbing-of-the-shoulders with hoi polloi. Far from it. The reality under discussion, in fact, is orders of magnitude more bizarre, perilous, and obscene—a form of apparent psychosis claiming for itself a deeper form of sanity.

[22] Wherein there are many mutually-estranged subfields. Resisting such methodological trends, Meir Sternberg speaks of keeping ideology, historiography, and aesthetics together (*Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 44; "the choice lies between easy specialization and demanding coordination"), which is materially the same as N. T. Wright's attempt to keep theology, history, and literature together (*New Testament and the People of God*, 29–144).

[23] In conversation with a distinguished New Testament professor I was apprised that "occasional letter" is the preferred description for such writings as are still credited to Paul. While the designation, I assume, is meant to ward off anachronistic portraits of Paul as what later generations would call a "systematic theologian," it seems also to risk another anachronism: the assumption that the absence of one sort of coherence implies the lack of any coherence at all, namely, the sort to be found in the conceptual background of sophisticated Second Temple Jewish writing. Philippians may be "occasional," yes, but viewed as an instantiation of a particular cultural code, it is also a literary masterpiece. I understand that this valuation is not shared by all in New Testament studies, since in the same conversation I was enlightened to discover that "the real point of Philippians is that Paul needs cash, but he's embarrassed to be *that guy*."

[24] Similar typological comparisons have been made between the Carmen and Graeco-Roman literary conventions of the 1st century. In "The Odyssey of Christ: A Novel Context for Philippians 2:6–11" (in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, ed. C. Stephen Evans [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 45–73), Bruce N. Fisk queries the sorts of moral and literary parallels the Philippians poem would have had for its original hellenistic readers, concluding that there was indeed significant overlap with literature in the wider culture, along with sharp differences. Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Xenophon's *An Ephesian Tale*, and Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Kleitophon*

kenoticism as a concept in modern Protestant theology, and second, a look at the ethical aspects

of the Carmen within the wider context of the letter to the Philippians.

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are compared by Fisk to the Carmen, and the global similarity is a shared V-shaped story, from glory to abasement and back again to glory: "the hero belongs, and begins, at the top" (58); the hero experiences suffering and humiliation; divine intervention saves and restores the hero. "The heroic tale Paul tells, with its lofty beginnings and triumphant ending, would have met (we imagine) with broad approval among those who knew how these sorts of stories were supposed to work. Divine-like beings are *supposed* to fall headlong from the heights. Heroes are *expected* to suffer hardship and humiliation. And the gods *must* respond with deliverance and vindication." Yet there are also "ways in which Paul's narrative *doesn't* fit the paradigm. Two deviations stand out among the rest. The first is the counter-intuitive role Christ plays in his own descent. Very little in the Hellenistic popular culture could have prepared Paul's readers for the self-humiliation of Christ depicted in Philippians 2:6–8. Too much value was attached to honour and status […] If the *cross itself* was 'foolishness' to Greeks (1 Cor. 1:18–25), Christ's *willful embrace* of that cross would have been virtually incomprehensible." The second deviation is "the limited role of Paul's god who is active in Philippians 2:9–11 but essentially absent from 2:6–8. The god of Paul's hymn is neither frustrated nor duplicitous. Ironically, the whirling machinations and interventions of the Roman gods serve only to advertise their imperfections and moral weakness, while the more restrained response of Paul's god signals only moral perfection, unrestricted power, and universal sovereignty" (Fisk, 72–73; italics original). Such overlaps and differences, I take it, are on analogy with Moses and Sargon: narrative templates with cultural currency that the Bible utilizes to make strong theological claims. See the discussion of narratives in Chapter 1, especially the view of thinkers like Tolkien and Lewis that pagan myths are not to be rejected, but fulfilled. Other myths in Graeco-Roman culture are arguably christoform as well, such as the self-effacement of Odysseus in the cave battle with the Cyclops, sensitively discussed by Gregory Nagy, *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 2013), 304–5. Or who is Theseus, a divine son leaving the kingdom to slay the minotaur and save the people? Or again, who is Hector, prince of Troy, going forth from the city to die for his people? Homer's *Iliad* arguably chronicles a transition between two types of hero, two types of κλέος (glory): from the wrath of Achilles to the self-gift of Hector's death. (Thanks to Cameron Jones for this great insight.) Indeed, and with the Carmen's claim about the universal significance of Christ's death in mind, consider: "The verb *semainein* ['to mean or indicate something'] is a derivative of the noun *sema* ['sign, tomb of a hero']." Hence, "the very idea of 'meaning' in the ancient Greek language is tied to the idea of the hero—in particular, to the idea of the cult hero's death and tomb. It is as if 'meaning' could not be 'meaning' without the hero's death and tomb. And such heroic 'meaning' is tied to the further concept of the hero's consciousness after death—a consciousness that communicates with the living" (Nagy, 415). Such hero figures were also often kings (Nagy, 347, 364), and the rescue or healing of the hero/king from their tribulation was thought to have the affect of rescuing or healing society as a whole (Nagy, 162–168; 664–667). Closer to the Carmen Christi, a hellenistic culture valuing the ἇθλοι (*struggles, ordeals*; Nagy 39–46) of figures like Herakles is perhaps acknowledged just before the Carmen, in Philippians 1:27: "…μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου…" (*…with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel…*) For like the Carmen's subject, "[a]t the final moment of Herakles' heroic lifespan, he experiences the most painful death imaginable, climaxed by burning to death […] At the precise moment of agonizing death, a flaming thunderbolt from his father Zeus strikes him. He goes up in flames, in a spectacular explosion of fire. In the aftermath, those who attended the primal scene find no physical trace of Herakles, not even bones" (Nagy, 42–43, summarizing the account of Greek historian Diodorus). Early Roman Philippi had many hero shrines (ἡρῷα), including worship of Hercules (the Roman adaptation of Herakles). The acropolis of Philippi also has Latin inscriptions attesting to the worship of Silvanus, god of wood and forests, perhaps significant given the centrality of a notorious wooden instrument in the Carmen's account of the divine. (Holland L Hendrix, "Philippi [Place]," *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman [New York: Doubleday, 1992], digital.) While, then, the concern of this study is with typological foundations of the Carmen Christi in the Hebrew Bible, which I do take to be of determinative importance for its interpretation, such aspects of the hellenistic social imaginary throw us back on Martin's balanced conclusion that in regards to whether the Carmen Christi's conceptual matrix is basically Hellenistic or Jewish, "we are not, in fact, faced with an 'either-or'" (Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 83).

In "Kenoticism in Modern Christology,"[25] Bruce McCormack assesses and seeks in some sense to revive "kenoticism," which in its narrow sense was a Lutheran theological movement between around 1850–1950. With roots in early figures such as Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, and in particular the λόγος ἄσαρκος (unincarnate Word) whom they took to be the subject of the self-emptying in the Carmen Christi, modern kenoticism traced its lineage forward through the 1577 Formula of Concord and a Protestant Christology reflecting sacramental transformations of the Reformation,[26] and was developed in earnest by theological conservatives in the 19th century in response to new historical-critical methods and, in particular, "Life of Jesus" research spearheaded by David Friedrich Strauss (with antecedents in figures such as Reimarus). The movement proceeded with different emphases in Germany (Thomasius, Dorner, Gess, Ritschl) and Britain (Forsyth, Mackintosh), the former focusing on the problem of Christ's self-conscious-ness and the later on what it means to speak of the "becoming" of Christ. In relation to the Carmen, this difference maps loosely onto what are often called "the ontological view," reading the poem as concerning the eternal son of God, and "the ethical view," reading the poem as concerning the man Jesus. McCormack makes his own contribution by proposing a reversal of influence between the divine Logos and human Jesus: whereas the Logos is traditionally viewed as initiating the actions and suffering of Jesus, McCormack argues that Jesus should be seen as initiating and the

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[25] Bruce McCormack, "Kenoticism in Modern Christology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Troy A. Stefano (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 444–460.

[26] How, Luther wondered when faced with Zwingli's "memorial" understanding of the Eucharist, could Christ be truly and locally present at simultaneous and geographically distant celebrations? This led to fresh consideration of the relationship between Christ's two natures (the *communicato idiomatum* encountered above in the Coakley article). Luther reflected on the Carmen Christi in influential early works such as the 1519 sermon *Two Kinds of Righteousness* and the 1520 treatise *The Freedom of a Christian* (*Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger [New York, N.Y: Anchor Books, 1962], 53, 86, passim.), arguing *in nuce* that because God uses unlimited freedom to give himself in service to the weak, sinful, and unimportant, Christian behavior amounts to an obedient mimesis of such a generous God. See further discussion of Luther in Chapter 4.

Logos as receiving, such that "[t]he receptivity of the Logos simply *is* his 'self-emptying' […] not exploiting 'the form of God' refers to willed non-use of the powers shared with the Father and the Spirit."[27] At stake here is the relationship between Trinity and *time*, which is no small matter.[28] Yet what is most relevant about McCormack's condensed presentation of this complex body of theology is the basic phenomenon to which it attests of deep theoretical resources being drawn from the story concisely set forth in the Carmen Christi of power released and suffering embraced, and these amplified to infinite dimensions. The template of Royal Runaways—not in name, to be sure, but in substance—is thus regarded by the New Testament and Christian theologians of many stripes as somehow a key granting access to the mysterious inner-life of Israel's God.[29]

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[27] McCormack, digital. Italics original.

[28] McCormack's proposal is geared toward "(a) making kenosis *original* to the being of God so that its concretization in time involves no change in God and, therefore, no split between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity, and (b) understanding kenosis in such a way that no divestment of anything proper to God is entailed and no departure from the dyothelitism [the doctrine of 'two wills' in Christ, divine and human] of the ancient Church is required." McCormack, digital. Italics original.

[29] That kenoticism, in the sense of the movement traced by McCormack, has fallen out of fashion, does not necessarily mean that its basic impulses have become irrelevant. They seem rather to have been redirected, at least in quarters, to the dramatic narrative interest of recent dogmatic theology. McCormack, for example, is often dubbed a "neo-Barthian," and Barth himself surveys 19th century kenoticism and exegesis of Philippians 2 at length (Karl Barth, "The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country," in *Church Dogmatics IV.1 The Doctrine of Reconciliation* [Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010], 180–83, 188–92), while remaining reticent to locate his own position somewhere within that matrix. Instead, Barth regards the condescension of the incarnation as the primal and mysterious moment within the divine identity of Christ, such that "He went into a strange land, but even there, and especially there, He never became a stranger to Himself." Ibid, 180. Not lacking for creative ways of approaching Christology, Barth here opts for a *narrative* précis: "the Son of God went into the far country." Cf. parallel developments in the "theodrama" of Barth's Roman Catholic contemporary Hans Urs von Balthasar, who also continues to have many adherents. "If we look back from the mature Christology of Ephesus and Chalcedon to the hymn of Philippians 2, and do so with the intention of not exaggerating its capacity for 'dogmatic' assertiveness, we can hardly help registering a 'plus factor' in its archaic language—stammering out the mystery as this does—to which the established formulae of the unchangeability of God do not really do justice. One senses here a further residue of meaning, with which the German, English and Russian kenoticists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sought to come to terms." "[T]he dreadful testings, *peirasmoi*, in God-abandonment in both Old and New Testaments are not at all, in the first place, tests of a pedagogic kind, or (certainly not!) stages in a Neo-platonic schema of ascent, but must be interpreted, rather in christological fashion." Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (San Francisco, CA.: Ignatius Press, 2000), 26, 125. And in addition to such theo-dramatic kenosis of dogmaticians, the theme has garnered new interest at intersections of science, the arts, and theology: J. C. Polkinghorne, ed., *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001); Martin A. Nowak and Sarah Coakley, eds., *Evolution, Games, and God: The Principle of Cooperation* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Desiring access to mysteries, however, is no theological distinctive. The culture into which Christianity was born swirled with ambitions of secret knowledge, whether in the Jewish world of Enochic literature and its fault line of godly (pure, licit) vs. ungodly (impure, illicit) knowledge, interfacing with the realm of heavenly beings[30]; or the various forms of liberation on offer through esoteric teachings in gnostic texts and so-called mystery religions[31]; or hero cult worship aimed at establishing connection with the mythic νοῦς.[32] When, therefore, the Carmen Christi is prefaced by these words, "Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5), we find ourselves in touch not only with a regular Pauline theme,[33] but with wider cultural aspirations for knowledge beyond the mundane. Contra Martin, who finds it "of the utmost importance to isolate the meaning of the terms in the hymn from the use which is made of them by Paul in the verses which precede and follow,"[34] it seems to me that the Carmen intrinsically interacts with a broader exhortation to *think properly*, and particularly in regards to matters of status and glory. By way of transition, then, to the exegetical body of this chapter, I will first present

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[30] See extensive survey of Second Temple literature vis-à-vis the question of knowledge in Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1997). Regarding Enochic literature in particular, the matter is often seen as reflecting anxieties surrounding the influence of hellenistic education in Jewish communities circa 3rd century BCE – 1st century CE.

[31] A wide variety of phenomena fall into these categories, with variations on a case-by-case basis. For the general lay of the land, see Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003). Many thanks to Joe Kimmel, New Testament PhD candidate in the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard, for helping me sort through gnostic and apocalyptic approaches to knowledge.

[32] "In making physical contact with a cult hero by way of worshipping that hero, the worshipper hopes to get in touch with a mind that knows everything." Nagy, *Ancient Greek Hero*, 454. See further 280–84, and especially 296–313, "The Mind of Odysseus in the Homeric *Odyssey*."

[33] See Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), especially Chapter 7, "A Christlike Mind (Phil. 2:1–5; 3:19–21; 4:6–8)," 217–236.

[34] Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 215. Martin's legitimate concern is twofold: first, to acknowledge the possible pre-Pauline origin of the Carmen, a prior context in which it may have meant something quite different; and second, he also seems eager to avoid the reduction of the hymn to an ethical meaning derived from the surrounding context. Regarding this latter, to quote Martin to himself (repeated now for the third time in this chapter): "it may be that we are not, in fact, faced with an 'either-or'" (Martin, 83).

textual evidence for this ethical or paraenetic function of the Carmen in Philippians, and then offer

a few observations of how it relates to Royal Runaways.

Repeated words and themes in Philippians (Carmen Christi verses in **bold**):
- φρονέω (*to think, judge*) – 1:7, 2:2 (2x), **2:5**, 3:15, 3:19, 4:2, 4:10
- ἡγέομαι (*to lead*; *to think, consider*) – 2:3, **2:6**, 2:25, 3:7, 3:8 (2x)
- κενόω (*to empty*)[35] – **2:7**; related: κενοδοξία (*vanity*), 2:3; κενός (*empty*), 2:16 (2x)[36]; σπένδω (*to pour a drink offering*), 2:17
- δοῦλος (*slave*) – 1:1, **2:7**
- ταπεινόω (*to humble, humiliate, abase*) – **2:8**; related: ταπεινοφροσύνη (*humility*), 2:3, 4:12
- ὑπήκοος (*obedient*) – **2:8**; related: ὑπακούω (*to obey*), 2:12
- ὄνομα (*name*) – **2:9** (2x), **2:10**, 4:3
- κύριος (*lord, master*) – 1:2, 1:14, **2:11**, 2:19, 2:24, 2:29, 3:1, 3:8, 3:20, 4:1, 4:2, 4:4, 4:5, 4:10, 4:23
- δόξα (*fame, prestige*) – 1:11, **2:11**, 3:19, 3:21, 4:19, 4:20; related: κενοδοξία (*vanity*), 2:3

Many other textual rhythms and repetitions exist in the Carmen and its surrounding context, and

those noted here are not new observations.[37] Moreover, it would require more space than presently

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[35] This momentous verb occurs elsewhere in Paul at Romans 4:4; I Corinthians 1:17, 9:15; II Corinthians 9:3. In LXX it appears only at Jeremiah 14:2, 15:9. Outside biblical usage, the verb is well attested in Plato, Euripides, Nicander, Empedocles, Thucydides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Philo, Josephus. In the Hebrew Bible, concepts of pouring out and leadership are interestingly combined in נס״ך (to pour out; consecrate as leader) and נסיך (I.1, libation, drink offering; I.2, cast statue, image of a god; II. leader, chief of a tribe, prince); e.g. Psalm 2:6, ואני נסכתי מלכי על-ציון הר-קדשי (*As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill*). Cf. the textually difficult statement of primordial wisdom at Proverbs 8:23: מעולם נסכתי; usually translated from II נסך, by-form of סכך, which makes sense as a parallel of vv. 22 and 24, the consonantal text could feasibly have been read by Second Temple Jews like Paul as hinting at something like "I have poured out from eternity." I am not claiming this is what the text *does* say, only trying to discern possible conceptual and linguistic antecedents in the Hebrew Bible of the Carmen's Christi's ostensibly novel claim of an eternally self-emptying messiah.

[36] Paul may here be describing his own work in terms of the vocation of the Isaianic servant (Isaiah 49:4 and 65:23, LXX, with κενῶς / κενός translating ריק, and much עבד / δοῦλος language in both passages), suggesting that in nearly the same breath he can refer to Jesus and himself as in some sense the Servant. Cf. Romans 10:14–16; 15:21; II Corinthians 6:2; Galatians 1:15–16; 2:2; I Thessalonians 3:5; relatedly, Acts 13:47. (N. T. Wright, *The New Testament In Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* [Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Academic, 2019], 62; cf. Mark S. Gignilliat, *Paul and Isaiah's Servants: Paul's Theological Reading of Isaiah 40–66 in 2 Corinthians 5:14–6:10* [London: T&T Clark, 2007].) Overlapping with "Servant" imagery, Paul refers to his task with κενός language in I Corinthians 15:10, 14, 58; II Corinthians 6:1; Galatians 2:2; I Thessalonians 2:1; 3:5. See further n. 43 below.

[37] E.g., Keener (229–232) makes many of the same observations. As an aside, such dense connections between the poem and the surrounding material make Pauline authorship seem credible. Martin takes this view: "It is safer to

available to tease apart the significance of each of the connections I have mentioned. In the aggregate, however, I believe what we are witnessing in the dense connections between the Carmen Christi and the letter to the Philippians as a whole is a rhetorical and theological integration akin to the one noted in the previous chapter between Moses and all Israel: just as YHWH's testing and humbling of Moses is a microcosm of his manner of dealing with all Israel, so the "radical downward trend" (Barth) of Christ in the Carmen is a microcosm of God's intention for the church. The parallel is not exact, no doubt, since while the "greatness" of the patriarchs consisted in making themselves of no account before the LORD, the one whom the Carmen calls LORD[38] himself follows a voluntary path of humility unto death, thereby redefining what the term κύριος even means.[39] Perhaps correlating with this relocation of humility from the human to the divine plane,

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maintain with E. Stauffer that Paul here is incorporating his own hymn which he composed at an earlier time. It is the text of the hymn which explains the remarkable correspondence between the words in the hymn and the surrounding verses" (Martin, 59). And anyways, against the assumption that Paul could not possibly have written the Carmen: why should theologians not also write poetry and hymns for public worship? Who were the Cappadocian Fathers, Ambrose of Milan, Thomas Aquinas, Hadewijch of Antwerp, Martin Luther, John of the Cross, Teilhard de Chardin, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to say nothing of the Psalmists, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophets? Martin again: "Paul is capable of an exalted and poetic style when the occasion serves. […] There are many places in his authentic corpus where he scales the heights of sublime poetry and composes in a literary genre which is as far removed from that of epistolary prose as is Philippians ii. […] The conclusion is that we should hesitate before saying confidently that Paul was not capable of producing such a composition as Philippians ii." Martin, 57. In the end, however, and notwithstanding such arguments for Pauline authorship, I take the issue to be insoluble one way or the other. Just because Paul may have been capable of composing the Carmen Christi does not mean he did, and if he did not, then this limits our own ability to read it as straightforward evidence of Paul's theology. My interest, anyway, is in the Carmen as an instance of Second Temple exegesis, and the author of the poem—Paul or someone else, it does not matter—was surely influenced by that scriptural world. In the continuation, then, I will refer to the author as "Paul" simply for the sake of convenience.

[38] Given the clear allusion in Philippians 2:10 to Isaiah 45:23 (especially clear in the wording of LXX; Paul quotes the verse also at Romans 14:11), most scholars conclude the tetragrammaton is indicated by the thrice-emphasized ὄνομα (*name*) of Philippians 2:9–10.

[39] Following N. T. Wright here. Cf. Fee: "The divine weakness (death at the hands of his creatures, his enemies) is the divine scandal (the cross was reserved for slaves and insurrectionists). […] Likewise, this is the scandal of Pauline ethics: that the God who did it this way 'gifts' us to 'suffer for his sake' as well [see Philippians 1:29]," Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1995), 217–18.

any implicit pedagogy in the lives of the patriarchs is rendered explicit in the New Testament, for the Philippians are to "have this mind […] which was also in Christ Jesus."

Interacting with contemporary concerns about knowledge, Paul specifically couches this exhortation to mimesis[40] in terms of intellectual verbs like φρονέω and ἡγέομαι: in order to act accordingly, what the Philippians will need is a new way of thinking about what status and glory are, mediated by and impinging on Israel's Messiah. In stark contrast to self-aggrandizing figures affiliated with Philippi and the general cognitive pressures of Roman military culture and emperor worship,[41] adherents of Jesus were to embrace the path of self-denial and humility that Israel's

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[40] This is a nuanced theme in Philippians, and in Paul generally. In Philippians, Paul presents his own biography in a manner modeled on the Carmen (3:4–11; cf. 1:29–30; 2:17; also Timothy in 2:19–22, and Epaphroditus in 2:25–30), and calls on the Philippians to imitate him (3:17; 4:9). As he summarily says elsewhere: μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς κἀγὼ Χριστοῦ (I Corinthians 11:1; *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ*). Interestingly, in the first account of Paul's conversion at Acts 9, Paul flees Damascus by escaping through an opening in the city wall (Acts 9:23–25; cf. Paul's ironic curriculum vitae at II Corinthians 11:32–33), meaning the canonical narrative of his life begins similar to that of a Royal Runaway: like David fleeing through a window from Saul (I Samuel 19:12), or the spies of Jericho escaping through Rahab's window (Joshua 2:15). Paul's own self-knowledge seems to accord in ways with the Royal Runaway paradigm, as he writes of the aid to humility of a "thorn in the flesh" that will keep him "from becoming conceited" (II Corinthians 12:7; contrast with the destructive hubris of, e.g., Herod Agrippa, Acts 12:21–23 [cf. Josephus' *Antiquities* 19.8.2]; Babylonian monarchs in Daniel 4–5; the figures of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28; Abimelech, Adonijah, Rehoboam; etc. Paul inverts this model in Acts 14:8–18). As he goes on in the same passage, reporting the words of Jesus to him: δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται (II Corinthians 12:9; *power is perfected in weakness*).

[41] Shortly after the founding of Krenides ("Springs") in 360–359 BCE, Philip II of Macedon renamed the city after himself—Philippi; gold and silver mines in the vicinity were likely instrumental in funding his Macedonian-led consolidation of greater Greece during his lifetime, which in turn would enable the conquest of the Fertile Crescent under Philip's son Alexander the Great. Centuries later, the plain of Philippi would host two battles between contenders for Roman hegemony, Octavian and Antony defeating Crassus and Brutus. Octavian (Augustus) would later rename Philippi after his daughter: Colonia Julia Augusta Philippensis. The new name indicates the city's distinction in that era of being a Roman colony, where former Roman soldiers were rewarded for their service with land and honors. The colony was also a center for emperor worship, as Augustus famously styled himself *divi filius*, "son of god" (referring to the apotheosis of his great-uncle Julius Caesar), a practice later emperors would follow, if not always in title than in substance. (Holland L Hendrix, "Philippi [Place]," *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman [New York: Doubleday, 1992], digital; cf. the divine pretensions so offensive to Jews in the 2nd century BCE of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, "god manifest.") Reflecting on this history of ancient notables affiliated with Philippi, Joseph H. Hellerman argues that the Carmen Christi can be read as a *cursus pudorum* (way of shame) deliberately subverting an established *cursus honorum* (way of honor) that was the usual pathway to civic honor. In Christ, upwardly-mobile Roman veterans, oriented toward Caesar-style honor, would have been confronted with an altogether different paradigm: both of what honor is, and how one achieves it (Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005]). The active variable here is *status*, and Bruce Longenecker emphasizes its centrality in the value system of Roman society: "[T]he world of the first urban Jesus-followers was a world enmeshed in the quest for status. It is only the slightest exaggeration to say that no matter what ancient stone you uncover, no matter what ancient inscription you decipher, no matter what ancient

God not only honors, but somehow mysteriously embodies. Truly grasping what this non-grasping

means would require conscious mental effort, and Paul thus coordinates several terms and concepts

within the Carmen to his instruction surrounding it; the obedient self-emptying and cosmic exal-

tation of Christ are not detached, abstract propositions for Paul, but realities interwoven through

the letter to and life of the Philippians. Connections between *that* life and *their own* lives had to be

worked out, both in the epistle itself and even more in the extra-textual praxis it aimed to energize.

As in the Hebrew Bible, which gentile believers in Philippi must have been coming to know for

the first time, the Royal Runaway model of humility and service preceding exaltation and rulership

is not reserved for the elite few, enshrined in inaccessible poetry, but incumbent on the many;[42]

not just for the unique Servant of the LORD, whether Moses or Jesus, but for all the LORD's

servants.[43]

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painting you interpret, status capture lies at the heart of it. The people of the Roman age saw status as the essential commodity of life. The more status someone could accumulate, the more power and security he or she would stockpile. Conversely, people with lesser status were usually more vulnerable to forces beyond their control." (Bruce W. Longenecker, *In Stone and Story: Early Christianity in the Roman World* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020], digital). Bauckham, accordingly, sees status as the theological center of the Carmen Christi: "[T]he central themes of the [Carmen Christi] are the relation between high and low status and between service and lordship. […] The question is not: how can the infinite God become a finite creature, how can the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God take on human limitations, how can the immortal God die? These questions arise when the contrast of divine and human natures come to the fore, as it did in the patristic period. Here in Philippians 2 the question is rather one of status. […] This is not the contrast of two natures, divine and human, but a contrast more powerful for first-century Jewish theology with its controlling image of God as the universal emperor, high on his heavenly throne, inconceivably exalted above all he has created and rules. Can the cross of Jesus Christ actually be included in the identity of this God? Can the Lord also be the Servant? The passage, inspired both by Deutero-Isaiah and by the Christ-event, answers: only the Servant can also be the Lord." Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 44–45. See, in this connection, Psalm 113 and Isaiah 66:1– 2; also cf. the discussion above in Chapter 2 about Weinfeld's article "The King as the Servant of the People," a concept that the New Testament seems to extend to divine proportions.

[42] Making sense of such a claim of future rule is only possible in light of the eschatological horizon of Christian ethics. Arguing persuasively for this framework are, e.g., Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1986); N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, v. 3 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003).

[43] Such a transition between the one and the many is implicit in Philippians: as Paul and Timothy are δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ in 1:1, so Christ μορφὴν δούλου λαβών in 2:7. (Cf. Acts 16:17, where a Philippian girl with a spirit of divination identifies Paul and his companions this way: Οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν). Paul is simultaneously the servant whom the Philippians are to imitate, and also one of the many servants of Christ. Further, as Paul

2. Hebrew Bible Royal Runaways and the Carmen Christi

This central, exegetical section will address seven Royal Runaway narratives in the Hebrew Bible that, while perhaps not explicit intertexts with the Carmen Christi, contributed to the scriptural heritage on which it draws: Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Israel (as a people), YHWH's Servant(s), and David. A few qualifications will be helpful. First, many of these figures—Adam, Joseph, Moses, and David—were studied in Chapter 2, and that prior material is assumed here. Second, because my thesis turns on narrative as such, precedents for the Carmen that appear in the Latter Prophets and Writings will not be addressed at any length (although the distinction is surely artificial, as narratives appear through these later compositions in multiple places and modes[44]); see the brief discussion of Isaiah in the chapter's conclusion.

Last, to avoid confusion, I presume throughout this section the historical and hermeneutical sea changes not only between the Hebrew Bible and New Testament eras (hard to determine with

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and Timothy's service is not an end in itself, but unto Christ, so Christ's service is not an end in itself, but εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός (2:11). From a Christian theological perspective, the multiform dynamic of "the one and the many" is ultimately authenticated in the trinitarian nature of God, since the Trinity is simultaneously *both*: many and one.

On another note, in order to round out our understanding of the ethical features of the Carmen Christi, the genre itself is important to consider. For Paul's pastoral savvy is on display in that such a revaluation of glory and honor (leading, in the context of Philippians, to unity in the church) is presented via *narrative hymn*. Both aspects are vital. Regarding the hymnic quality of the Carmen (advanced most notably by Lohmeyer, who posits a Semitic original behind the Greek; see Martin 38–41), the theological principle of *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*, *lex vivendi* comes to mind: those things prayed, believed, and lived are, in the end, indissociable; ritual, creed, and praxis mutually implicate one another, and are hard at times to separate. "Modern studies have shown that hymn and creed are not rigidly separated in the New Testament" (Martin, 22). Overlay this with contemporary findings about the reality-shaping, identity-shaping, and behavior-shaping power of stories (reviewed in Chapter 1) and the Carmen Christi comes into its own as the rhetorical tour de force it is.

[44] See R. E. Clements, "Patterns in the Prophetic Canon," in *Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 191–202, arguing that the destruction and restoration of Israel is the basic narrative with which the prophets are concerned. (This is analogous to tropes of "death and resurrection" in the biographies of Israel's Royal Runaway ancestors; Levenson's studies *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* [New Haven: Yale University Press: 2006], and *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993] discuss at length how such connections are established between patriarchal narratives and post-exilic Jewish thought). This thesis about Israel's national narrative being of central importance to the prophetic literature is further developed in a fascinating study by Donald E. Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

any precision, of course), but also in the intervening and following centuries. Protestant theologies in particular have been prone to flatten out differences between the former (i.e., the Hebrew Bible and New Testament), and simply to ignore the latter (i.e., "intertestamental" and post-biblical literature). This is a mistake I will try to avoid. At the same, while some biblical theology is justly critiqued as riding roughshod over important historical transitions, it also is the case that exegetical claims of teleology do not in themselves amount to anachronism or theological retrojection. For example, in the essay "Why Jews are Not Interested in Biblical Theology,"[45] Levenson notes that unlike the New Testament, "the Talmud and Midrash do not present themselves as the teleological consummation of the Tanakh but only as the rightful continuation and implementation of biblical teaching."[46] This is surely the case. But it also means that teleology—whether or not it is defensible on other grounds[47]—was indeed a feature of Jewish reading and writing at a particular time and place in history; Christian literature is an instantiation of such reading and writing.[48] It may well have been an anachronism *then*—Paul and other New Testament authors reading teleology (or, as later Christian thinkers would see it, a *sensus plenior*) back into literature for which, at prior stages, it was foreign. But from the present vantage of scholarship, such reading and writing is now a matter of empirical history. Hence, while cognizant of the sort of post-biblical damage Christian exegetical practices have caused and the facile manner in which teleology is sometimes invoked, as a matter of historical hermeneutics I take it as defensible to claim that Paul (or whoever wrote

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[45] *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism*, 33–61.

[46] Ibid, 39. I quoted this statement also in Chapter 1.

[47] MacIntyre's *After Virtue* chronicles the modern rejection of teleology in domains for which it was regularly assumed in antiquity: biological, anthropological, ethical, etc. Contemporary hesitations about teleology, then, can be another interpretative barrier between the modern reader and biblical literature.

[48] As are, for example, Qumran *pesharim*; this was not an exclusively Christian phenomenon.

the poem in Philippians 2) believed a providential and exegetically discernible relationship to exist between the figure in the Carmen Christi and important characters in the scriptural heritage of Israel. I will not make a strong case that this relationship had the character of either explicit inter-textuality or mere psycho-spiritual overlap; such a boundary is fraught, and perhaps artificial. Still, for the case studies below I wish to be clear that whatever suggestions of teleology may at points be discerned are not intended as a fundamentalistic (i.e. overly Protestant) Christianizing of Israel's scriptures, but as a historically conscientious presentation of how some Second Temple Jews believed God to be at work in their time.[49]

Adam

Within scholarship that perceives Adam typology in the Carmen Christi, one influential reading is that of James Dunn, coming within his larger project of differentiating between and tracing the origins of early christological categories: Son of God, Son of Man, Wisdom, Logos, Angel/Spirit, and Last Adam. Locating the emergence of belief in Jesus' (eternal?) preexistence elsewhere (e.g. in Paul's Wisdom language, and John's Logos), Dunn regards preexistence as a theological presupposition read into the Carmen rather than a conclusion drawn from it, and finds a more likely conceptual backdrop for the Philippians 2 poem in the Adam Christology of the 40s

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[49] Cf. Sternberg: "In communication, typology makes no sense unless controlled by teleology. And teleology is a matter of inference from cues planted in and around the writing, extending from title and statements of intent to conventions of representation that signal the appropriate narrative contract in the given milieu." *Poetics*, 30. Also, it should also be clarified (if only for the student's sake) that this chapter is concerned with the rather narrow concern of how narratives in the Hebrew Bible may have contributed to the Carmen's depiction of Jesus' self-emptying death on the cross (with θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ, recall, at the literary and theological center of the poem); were this study concerned with the overlapping yet much broader question of how the Hebrew Bible in general anticipates the *cross* as an appropriate manner for a messianic claimant to die, there would be a great deal more to say. This is a topic that I hope to pursue in a later project.

and 50s CE, common among the first generation of Christian reflection.[50] Assuming for the sake of argument that "the point of the parallel between Adam and Christ is not dependent on any particular time scale – pre-existence, pre-history or whatever,"[51] it will be helpful to see here in some detail how Dunn establishes the link between the Carmen and Adam.

> If we concentrate on vv. 6a–7c [of Philippians 2] initially, it quickly becomes evident that its development is determined by a double contrast: first between 'form of God' and 'form of a slave', the former in which he was (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων), the latter which he

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[50] James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 114–15.

[51] Dunn, 119. Further: "Paul's use of Adam speculation was oriented not according to mythicizing preoccupation with the world's beginnings [referring here, in part, to gnostic Primal Man myths emphasized by an earlier, Bultmannian generation of scholars], but according to the eschatologically new that had happened in Jesus' resurrection, and the world's ending which that foreshadowed," 124. Two things, however, are unclear to me about his argument. First, why should an eschatological aspect negate rather than offer balance to any protological interest in the Carmen? Would not such conceptual symmetry accord with the linguistic symmetries of the poem? (Although, on the other hand, if Jesus *is* regarded in the Carmen as simply a man, then his cosmic exaltation follows the pattern observed in the previous chapter of Hebrew Bible figures elevated after testing to a station higher than the one to which they were entitled by birth.) Secondly, I fail to understand why the presence in the Carmen of "Jesus as (in some sense) Adam" should *a priori* disqualify the presence of "Jesus as (in some sense) God." Bauckham accuses Wright of arguing for such a merger ("Wright is trying to have his cake and eat it in combining a divine incarnational and an Adam christological approach," Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 41), but it seems to me that what Levenson in another context describes as the "quantum leap" of Christian claims vis-à-vis the "Old Testament" (*Sinai and Zion*, 4; the church as New Israel, etc.) is precisely a matter of seeing many biblical themes converge simultaneously on Jesus and his followers. And if this is the case, why should it be inappropriate to discern more than one christological vector in the Carmen Christi? Why should a decision for humility not be habituated for the Carmen's subject, occurring in both heavenly and earthly planes? I see no reason why not. Still—and this is an important *still*!—none of this is obvious or a matter of early Christians arriving organically to exegetical conclusions, as this would screen out the other side of the dialectic, namely, the sheer revelatory quality they claim to have experienced in Jesus. New Testament exegesis is in some important senses a *post hoc* meditation on an unforeseen and overwhelming event with hard-to-fathom conceptual implications. In Levenson's terms, it is more "revolution" than "evolution" (ibid), and hence, it is not coincidental that at just those moments when the mystery grows thickest the language should modulate from prose into poetry. Recall here, for example, "Aristotle's dictum that poetry is more serious and philosophical than history," (Sternberg, *Poetics*, 36), or, as C.S. Lewis once observed: "Only poetry can speak low enough to catch the faint murmur of the mind, the 'litel winde, unethe hit might be lesse.'" C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 112. The Philippians hymn contains many such murmurs, and the medium is nearly as eloquent as the message, although much scholarship on the Carmen seems to be quite stiff precisely as a reading *of poetry*, as if the genre were beholden to propositional theology. Wright argues that the direction of influence is probably the other way around: "It isn't the case that first [the early Christians] sorted things out theologically and then turned them into poems […] but that from very early on some people—perhaps especially Paul—found themselves saying what needed to be said in the form of short poems." (Quoted in Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020], 6; compare text-critical arguments that many of the oldest portions of the Hebrew Bible are archaic poetry.) Dunn, for his part, denies neither the revelatory aspect of the New Testament nor divine Christology; yet as n. 19 above indicates, he views "high" Christology to be a gradual, evolutionary development in the 1st century church, with the following stages: eschatological resurrection as the first christological emphasis, followed later by assertions of divine incarnation, and lastly (still moving forward in historical time and backward in christological time) assertions of eternal pre-existence.

accepted (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών); the second between 'equality with God' and 'in likeness of men', the former which he did not consider a prize to be grasped (οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ), the latter which he became (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). The best way to understand this double contrast is as an allusion to Gen. 1–3, an allusion once again, to the creation and fall of man.[52]

Regarding the first contrast ("form of God" and "form of a slave"), Dunn notes the "near synonyms" of the Carmen's μορφή (*form*) and the LXX's εἰκών (*image*; Genesis 1:26–27), concluding that "μορφῇ θεοῦ probably refers to Adam having been made in the image (εἰκών) of God."[53] Regarding the second contrast ("equality with God" and "likeness of man"), "we are here in the contrast familiar to Greek thought between God / the gods as possessing incorruption, immortality, and man as corruptible, subject to death."[54] Whether or not these contrasts are persuasive in their stated terms, weightier questions emerge when they are, in turn, compared with one another:

> The problem of how the author intended the two contrasts to be related to each other has a long history: in particular, what can the distinction between 'form of God' and 'equality with God' amount to? and is 'equality with God' something that was not possessed and so grasped at, or something already possessed and so grasped retentively (the ambiguity of ἁρπαγμός). Moreover, what did he lose of that which he had previously possessed? What did he become that was different from what he was when he made his choice? *It is quite likely however that here too the Adam allusion both explains the presence of the ambiguity and resolves the puzzle.* For the same problems were in effect presented to the interpreter of Gen. 1–3: how should one relate the creation account in Gen. 1 to the account in Gen. 3? and what did Adam seek to grasp and what did he lose? Adam was already in the image of God (Gen. 1.26f.) and was created 'for immortality' (Wisd. 2.23 – he could have eaten

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[52] Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 115.

[53] Ibid. The LXX of Genesis 1:26–27 has εἰκών (2x) and ὁμοιόω, rendering MT's צלם and דמות. Fee regards the parallel Dunn makes on these grounds to be unpersuasive: "[W]hat is striking in Dunn's list [of the Carmen's intertexts] is the lack of a single *verbal* correspondence with the Genesis account. While it is true that μορφή ('form') has some verbal overlap with εἰκών ('image'), that is of almost no value here, since the overlap is so slight as to be negligible and especially since 'image' would be the *one essential* pickup word that would catch the reader's attention. Moreover, the Genesis account does not say that Adam and Eve tried to be 'equal with' God; the tempter offered simply that they would be like God in the sense of 'knowing (= determine for themselves?) good and evil'." (Fee, "The New Testament and Kenosis Christology," in *Exploring Kenotic Christology*, 31. Italics original.) The issue in the background here, once again, is whether biblical intertextuality relies exclusively on verbal linkages, or whether conceptual linkages can also activate comparisons; see discussion above for my reasons of opting for the latter position, and of thus agreeing in principle with Dunn's conclusion that the Carmen compares Adam with Christ.

[54] Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 116. Bauckham differs here, regarding the contrast to be one not of nature but of status. See n. 41 above.

freely of the tree of life and so lived for ever, Gen. 3.22). But he chose to grasp at the opportunity to be (completely) like God (knowing good and evil for himself – Gen. 3.5, 22). *Snatching at the opportunity to enhance the status he already had, he both lost the degree of equality with God which he already enjoyed and was corrupted by that which he coveted*. Not content with being like God, what God had intended, he became like men, what men now are. The contrast in other words is between what *Adam* was and what he became, and it is this Adam language which is used of Christ.[55]

The ambiguity in the Carmen thus interacts with and resolves, on Dunn's account, an interpretive difficulty latent within Genesis 1–3: why would a creature already "made in the image of God" be seduced into trying to become like God? This puzzle left unresolved in Genesis,[56] the practical result is the reverse of the one desired—exile and death—and Dunn reads the Carmen as replaying the story as it might have been. Significantly, as the saga of Eden turns on *knowledge*, and as the Carmen contributes to a pastoral exhortation to *think* in a certain way, so the screw on which the contrast between Adam and Jesus ultimately turns is the intellectual action of *choice*:

> [The Carmen] is best understood as a fuller description of what was involved in the divine programme for man being run through again with Jesus.[57] Christ faced the same archetypal choice that confronted Adam, but chose *not* as Adam had chosen (to grasp equality with God). *Instead* he chose to empty himself of Adam's glory and to embrace Adam's lot, the fate which Adam had suffered by way of punishment. That is, in the words of the hymn, 'he made himself powerless' (ἐκένωσεν)…[58]

This counterintuitive *decision* to make oneself powerless is fundamental to the meaning of Royal Runaway typology; rather than self-assertion for the sake of prestige, self-negation for the sake of others is chosen, yet God acknowledge this seemingly reckless move as the mark of true royalty,

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[55] Ibid. Italics mine.

[56] And it may be less of a puzzle than Dunn thinks. As this project's knowledgeable director reminds me, "'In the image and likeness of God' is not the same thing as being 'like God, knowing good and evil / good and bad [perhaps meaning, by merism, everything].' The former suggests more subordination. For one thing, it is a status conferred by God rather than independently claimed by man. Consider the difference between Charlemagne's being crowned by the pope and Napoleon's grabbing the crown out of the pope's hands."

[57] Cf. the discussion above of "New Adam" typology as a trope within the Hebrew Bible itself.

[58] Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 117. Italics original.

elevating the person who thus thinks, chooses, and acts. Furthermore, as we have noticed at various junctures throughout this study, the applicability of this paradigm in the Bible is restricted neither to putative mythological figures like Adam[59] nor to those bearing literal royal blood. Without collapsing the genuine uniqueness of figures such as Moses, David, and Jesus, the biblical literature seems to suggest, both in form and function, that its readers view themselves in ways as antitypes to the biblical types. In fact, on Dunn's telling, part of the uniqueness of Adam and Jesus is precisely in their representative capacity as "humanity" in a general way:

> Here [in the Carmen Christi] the language is used to describe the human character of Christ, but precisely of *Christ evaluated theologically as Adam*: his life proved him to be in form as man. Notice, *not* 'as *a* man', but *as man* – that is, as representative man, as one with fallen man, as Adam. […] It is presumably precisely because it is such a description of Christ as Adam and last Adam (and not simply a description of Christ's abasement and exaltation in itself) that Paul can use the hymn to strengthen his ethical exhortation to his converts at Philippi.[60]

Dunn thus reads the anarthrous ἄνθρωπος in the Carmen as the basis of a wider anthropological claim on the believers in Philippi: "Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus…" It is a call first and foremost to *think*—to perceive, choose, and then act in the quotidian world according to the power-surrendering, others-serving model of the Messiah, who, in pushing self-gift to the ultimate point of death, is both zenith and nadir (depending on how one looks at it) in a long biblical cycle of Royal Runaways.[61] And the outcome for the Philippians will be similar:

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[59] For thoughtful (evangelical) assessments of Adam, see Ardel B. Caneday, Matthew Barrett, and Stanley N. Gundry, eds., *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2013).

[60] Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 118–19. Italics original. One problem that this model of "Christ as Adam" encounters, however, is the question of precisely *when*, for Paul, Jesus chose not to grasp at divine prerogatives. One answer might be the Gospel accounts of the Temptation, wherein Satan dangles universal dominion before the famished and Deuteronomy-quoting Jesus. According to Martin (*Carmen Christi*, 63–64, 135) this option is rarely pursued, presumably because whether and to what extent Paul knew of or cared about the Gospel traditions is unclear. Steering clear of this insoluble issue for now, later in the chapter I shall briefly consider the Temptation stories as in dialogue not with the Carmen Christi, but the larger Royal Runaway motif of the Hebrew Bible.

[61] The reflexive notion of love as "self-giving" is suggested in 2:7–8 where Jesus ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (emptied *himself*) and ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν (humbled *himself*). This concept, however, is by no means limited to the Carmen Christi.

as the Carmen breaks neatly into two halves—Christ's agency in 2:6–8, and God's agency in 2:9–11—so the Philippians are to embrace such layered agency. "Therefore, my beloved […] work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (2:12–13). Moreover, as Christ receives adoration from the heavenly realms in 2:10–11, so the Philippians are to be "children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (2:15).[62]

From the limited New Testament scholarship I have encountered, Dunn's articulation of Adam typology in the Carmen seems to be the starting point for subsequent treatments of the theme, and understandably so. For while there may be quibbling about certain conclusions he draws (i.e. the pre-existence issue), the substance of his comparison is compelling: the archetypal choice made by a figure (unique in being both royal and an "everyman") either for self-aggrandizement or self-effacement, with each course of action resulting in a reversal: the self-aggrandizer is humiliated and banished, the self-effacer exalted and enthroned; the telos of self-assertion is

Elsewhere in the New Testament, often in contexts dealing with love, the notion of self-gift appears at Matthew 2:28; Mark 10:45; John 10:17–18; II Corinthians 8:8–9; Galatians 1:3–4; 2:20; Ephesians 5:1–2, 25 (contrast with 4:19); I Timothy 2:5–6. (Cf. John 3:16; Acts 20:35; Romans 8:32–39; Hebrews 11:17; I John 4:9.) Regarding humility and exaltation more broadly, see Luke 14:11; 18:14 (with synoptic parallels); James 4:10; I Peter 5:6–10. Recall, also, scenes of implicit self-gift in the Hebrew Bible, two of which are traditionally understood as occurring on Mount Zion: Abraham in Genesis 22, Judah in Genesis 44, David in II Samuel 24 / I Chronicles 21. For these principles dramatized in stories about and by Jesus (beyond, obviously, the cross—predictions by Jesus, the passion narratives, etc.), recall the Johannine sacrament of foot-washing, Jesus literally taking the form of a slave in John 13, as well as the famous story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, which seems to be a curious riff on the Royal Runaway paradigm of the Hebrew Bible: unlike other figures, the prodigal does not "leave the palace" in self-abnegation but in self-aggrandizement, and therefore does not return home in glory but humiliation. At his nadir he finds not God but pigs, the opposite of holiness for a faithful Jew; only when he returns home does he experience a positive transformation: twice in the story, the father describes his return in terms of death and resurrection (Luke 15:24, 32). In keeping with Royal Runaway stories that function in some sense as a cipher for Israel's self-understanding, Wright regards this parable as "an explosive narrative, designed to blow apart the normal first-century reading of Jewish history and to replace it with a different one" (Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 126, in his discussion of "Prodigals and Paradigms," 125–144). Also, thanks to Prof. Wright for helping me see how often the New Testament stresses a renewal of the mind as part and parcel of salvation.

[62] Cf. Daniel 12:3, Genesis 15:5, etc.

seen to be death, and the telos of obedience—all the way to an obscene death—is resurrection.[63] The overlap of this reading with Royal Runaways is evident, and following Dunn's lead, I will make here a few more observations about Genesis 1–3 (building on the assessment of Adam and Eve vis-à-vis Moses in Chapter 2) before moving on to other Hebrew Bible figures that suggest the Carmen's theological foundation is no idiosyncratic Christian prooftext of already opaque stories in Genesis 1–3, but a robustly developed theme of Israel's scripture and identity. This will not, I emphasize, remove the "quantum leap" from New Testament exegesis, even in the highly-imaginative scriptural world of Second Temple Judaism; but it will, I hope, indicate the sort of coherence that emerges if the hermeneutical point of reference is the enigma of a crucified and resurrected Messiah.

Of first importance, then, is returning to a shift in scholarship mentioned briefly in Chapter 2 (n. 32) regarding the "image of God" in Genesis 1. Collating and synthesizing an enormous body of research, J. Richard Middleton's *The Liberating Image: The* Imago Dei *In Genesis 1* outlines various reasons for understanding the imago Dei not in the metaphysical terms of much classical Christian theology (the possession of an eternal soul or a conscience, the capacity for language or love, etc.) but in the vocational sense of rulership: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion…'" (Genesis 1:26). Middleton writes: "a Hebrew jussive with unconverted *waw* (*weyirdu*, and let them rule) that follows a cohortative (*na'aseh*, let us make) always expresses the intention or aim of the first-person perspective (singular or plural)

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[63] Some argue resurrection is absent from the Carmen, and strictly speaking, this is correct. Yet the juxtaposition of ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν with the sheer empiricism of θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ is suggestive of the literal reversal of such death. Also, if the Semitic *Urtext* thesis has any merit, one wonders whether ὑπερύψωσεν translates הרים (*to exalt*, *lift*) or the morphologically similar הקים (*to raise*). At any rate, poetry signifies indirectly and symbolically, and the absence of terms from the usual ἐγείρω or ἀνίστημι roots is hardly evidence that the Carmen is unconcerned with resurrection.

represented by the cohortative. The syntax, in other words, points to 'rule' as the *purpose*, not simply the consequence or result, of the *imago Dei*."[64]

What I will focus on here is the verb Middleton mentions, רד״ה (*rada*, *rule*), which forms an inclusio of the important passage at Genesis 1:26–28: in 1:26 רד״ה is the divine council's only rationale for the creation of humans, while in 1:28, after four other verbs of commissioning (פר״ה, *be fruitful*; רב״ה, *multiply*; מל״א, *fill*; כב״שׁ, *subjugate*), the first divine address to humans concludes with the same verb, רד״ה.[65] Middleton's survey of the term's biblical usage is helpful:

> We should first note that the verb *rada* is often linked with kingship in the Old Testament (it is used along with *malak* [to reign] and *mašal* [to govern] to describe characteristically royal activity). Although it does not always have a royal sense (it is used of authority over slaves in Leviticus 25:43, 46, 53 and over laborers in 1 Kings 5:15 [MT 5:30]; 9:23; and 2 Chronicles 8:10; and possibly for the treading of a wine press in Joel 3:13 [MT 4:13—though this may well be a different verb, *yarad* [to go down]), *rada* is used of the rule of a king or other political leaders in 1 Kings 4:24 (MT 5:4); Psalm 72:8; 110:2; Isaiah 14:6; and Ezekiel 34:4. Significantly, this last reference, Ezekiel 24:4, draws on the metaphor of shepherding, which was a standard image for a king in the ancient Near East. This intersection of royal and pastoral metaphors is particularly relevant for Genesis 1:26, 28, where *rada* occurs with various categories of animal livestock as its object […] The verb *kabaš*, which occurs in 1:28, is a broader term than *rada*, without specific royal connotations, and in many contexts it seems to have a harsh or violent meaning.[66]

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[64] Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 53.

[65] The subject(s) of Genesis 1:26–28 is much debated, a grammatically singular God seeming to create humans (ויברא אלהים את-האדם) after consultation with a heavenly council (נעשׂה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו).

[66] Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 51.

While I agree that the presence of רד״ה in Genesis 1 indicates human royalty,[67] I doubt the term is as benign as Middleton suggests (unlike the 'harsh or violent' כב״ש).[68] HALOT gives this definition of רד״ה: "to rule (with the associated meaning of oppression, in contrast with מָשַׁל)."[69] Yet this, in turn, raises a question: if we are not disposed, with Middleton, to soften the force of the verb, how is it to be reconciled with a passage in which God's own kingship is generally expressed in terms of compassionate governance and distribution of authority? Within the overall mood of Genesis 1, רד״ה has a rather heavy-handed, discordant tone, particularly given its repetition.

As a solution, and picking up on Middleton's aside regarding Joel 3:13 (MT 4:13) above, I suggest the verb may have been selected and underscored because of its similarity to the verb

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[67] Which indexes to God's royalty in Genesis 1, hence the connection between "the image of God" and human royalty. Aligning with the hermeneutical presupposition of this chapter, Middleton writes: "…the presence of the royal metaphor in Genesis 1 does not depend on its explicitness. Here we do well to heed the methodological caution of Marc Brettler in his important study *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*. Based on an investigation of the nature of metaphor indebted to Paul Ricoeur (among others), Brettler notes that the absence of the words for 'king' or 'rule' in a given text of the Hebrew Bible does not necessarily indicate that the metaphor of kingship is also absent, as long as the text ascribes to God typical royal actions or characteristics. […] Genesis 1 portrays God assigning spheres of authority or rule to creatures—not only the (obvious) commission to humanity to rule and subdue the earth and its creatures (1:26, 28), but also the delegation to the sun and moon of a 'governing' (*mašal*) function over day and night or light and darkness (1:16, 18). This delegation of power fits perfectly with the picture of God as king in the text and gives further confirmation to the presence of the royal metaphor in Genesis 1. It is even possible, as Steck suggests, that God's namings of the various temporal and spatial regions (day, night, sky, sea, earth) are royal acts, equivalent to the assertion of lordship over these cosmic realms, and that the provision of vegetation for the animals and humanity in 1:29–30 might well reflect the royal assignment of food at the king's table. […] Martin Buber, likewise, argues that divine kingship in ancient Israel is detectable in the Bible, even where God is not named king, by the pervasive notion of God as the one who *leads* the people (from bondage, through the wilderness, in battle, back from exile, etc.), modeled on the old Semitic notion of tribal leadership; see Buber's *Kingship of God*…" Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 71–2.

[68] Middleton seeks to distance כב״ש from this connotation: "Whereas in those texts that refer to the exercise of power over persons the actions involved certainly seem violent, in texts having to do with subduing land/earth (which are probably the most relevant to Genesis 1), there is no implication of a violent or adversarial relationship to the land/earth per se […] the word itself does not have an intrinsically violent meaning, but rather expresses the general idea of bringing something or someone under control by the exercise of power (whether by conquest, subjugation, or administration depends on the context) […] The use of the verbs *rada* and *kabaš* thus suggests that the characteristic human task or role vis-à-vis both the animal kingdom and the earth requires a significant exercise of communal power [he links these terms, respectively, to later communal practices of animal domestication and agricultural cultivation], and the primacy of *rada* paints the human vocation with a distinctly royal hue." Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 52.

[69] HALOT lists many instances where רד״ה indicates more than neutral governance, but carries a sense of oppression. Cf. the Modern Hebrew רוֹדָן (*rodan*), meaning "tyrant, dictator, bully."

יר״ד (*yarad*, *to go down*, *descend*).[70] Without Masoretic pointing, the consonants וירדו (1:26) and רדו (1:28) can indeed be read this way, and as Levenson notes regarding another biblical word play, "the difference between the two nearly homophonous roots [was] immaterial to the ancient author."[71] If this suggestion holds any water, however, it will be for its theological and not orthographic suitability. In keeping with the Royal Runaways theme of the Hebrew Bible, wherein God consistently elects those who humble themselves in service to others, the model of human over-lordship of the world is introduced by the רד״ה inclusio of Genesis 1:26–28 because it is to be characterized by a downward, serving motion. In the uniquely exalted vocation of humanity, the first and only repeated word sounds very much like a divine command to *descend*, immediately undercutting the potential for human arrogance. Rulership as initially conceived was not to be expressed in brute domination (as perhaps implied by רד״ה), but in compassionate, self-sacrificial governance.[72] Hence, if there is any exegetical case to be made for the traditional Christian descriptions of humanity's "fall" in early Genesis, it is not a fall pure and simple, but rather a distortion of the service-oriented, salubrious fall originally purposed for humanity—a falling *away* from a proper falling *toward* others.

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[70] Obviously this (and what follows) is not an argument of historical philology, but an attempt to read in a manner similar to the creative scribal hermeneutic encoded in late Second Temple texts.

[71] Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton University Press, 1868), 80; the context is analysis of the first angelic speech in the Aqedah (Genesis 22:12), wherein the presence of יר״א (*to fear*) recalls prior occurrences of רא״ה (*to see*) in the passage. I acknowledge that while Levenson is comparing two terms that appear in a single passage, what I am suggesting here is more linguistically tenuous since יר״ד (*to descend*) does not appear elsewhere in Genesis 1.

[72] Cf. artist Makoto Fujimura, who discerns a mandate to human creativity in the Genesis account: "The word 'dominion' (Hebrew *radah*) has been misused to mean 'practicing domination over' or ravaging creation for industrial purposes. But, as Lisa [Sharon Harper] notes and theologian Ellen Davis affirms, a more accurate understanding of *radah* is 'loving stewardship.' Proper stewardship is based on love of the land and its peoples. [… I]n the Industrial Revolution, a word such as *radah* is tainted with the notion of industrial utility […] but *radah* is a Making word, rather than a forceful domination." Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 11. I am unsure of the exegesis on which Harper, Davis, and Fujimura rely, but the point they make is similar to the one made here.

Admittedly, this may smuggle in a christological reading of Genesis, since the presence of

וירדו in 1:26 directly after the phrase נעשׂה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו ("*Let us make make man in our image,*

after our likeness…") suggests to me that what we have in Genesis 1 is not an arbitrary diktat to

rulership-as-service but rather the creation of earthly vice-monarchs on the descending model of

the heavenly Monarch.[73] God's non-grasping attitude toward power is already implicit in the or-

dination of sun, moon, and stars to govern the celestial spheres (Genesis 1:16–18), as well as in

the blessing of creatures to be abundant and multiply in their own domains (1:22). There is no

anxiety here about control, it seems, only unstinting delegation and endorsement of what is exter-

nal to God.[74] Yet the clearest hint of divine humility is reserved for the entrance of the most exalted

earthly creature: human. For as in the Carmen Christi's intrepidly blurred vision of what it means

to be God and also truly human, to be the highest means to stoop lower than all.

Consider how often the patriarchs, prophets, and other biblical notables "fall on their face"

or "bow to the ground" before God or God's representative.[75] Obviously there are many reasons

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[73] יר״ד is applied to YHWH in judgment stories such as the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:5, 7) and Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:21), and more positively in the salvation of Israel (Exodus 3:8) and the Sinai theophany (Exodus 19:11, 18, 20; see discussion below). The potency of YHWH's involvement in each of these stories conversely suggests something of the dominant force of רד״ה.

[74] Such divine self-limitation, with the objective of permitting other beings truly to be themselves, is the thread uniting the diverse set of essays in J. C. Polkinghorne, ed., *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2001). See especially the essay of Ian G. Barbour, "God's Power: A Process View" (1–20), in which the assumed "social character of all beings (including God) leads to an understanding of God's power as the empowerment of other beings rather than power over them. This provides an alternative to omnipotence or impotence by redefining the nature of divine power without denying its universal scope," 2. While I have questions and misgivings about process theology (*analogia entis*, anyone? modernity's "turn to the social" creating the universe in its own image? an incoherent relation between the "primordial" and "consequent" natures of God, between creative and juridical power?), it is certainly a thoughtful approach to Genesis 1. And the receptivity of God on this model to creaturely actions also leads to the correct conclusion that "God's love for Israel involves both giving and receiving, and not kenosis alone; it is compared to the love of a man for a woman or the mutuality of a covenant binding a community," 11.

[75] Examples include Abraham: Genesis 17:3, 17; 18:2; Lot: Genesis 19:1; Joseph's brothers: Genesis 37:7, 9–10; 42:6; 44:14; 50:18; People of Israel: Exodus 4:31; 12:27; 24:1; 32:8; 33:10; Leviticus 9:24; I Kings 18:39; II Chronicles 7:3; 20:18; 29:29–30; Nehemiah 8:6; 9:3, 6; Moses and Aaron: Numbers 14:5; 16:22; 17:10 (English 16:45); 20:6; Moses alone: Exodus 34:8; Numbers 16:4, Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; Joshua: Joshua 5:14; 7:6; Gideon: Judges 7:15; Samson's parents: Judges 13:20; Dagon: I Samuel 5:3–4; Samuel: I Samuel 1:28; Saul: I Samuel 15:25, 30–31; 19:24;

for such falling—customary obeisance, raw terror, a gesture of intercession or submission, etc. The latent contrast here, however, should not be missed, which is that the Hebrew Bible regularly elevates those who lower themselves before God (and conversely derides those who exalt themselves before God). The Carmen contributes to this theme by bringing it full circle: the cosmic descent of God in Christ precipitates another descent, namely, the *bowing of all knees* in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Divine humility clearly elicits human humility in the Carmen, and such mutual descent is already faintly hinted at in Genesis 1.

Because of the liability of this being misunderstood, however, as a wholesale (and conveniently *au courant*) denunciation of all strong forms of power, it is important to state clearly that what is in view here is not the *cancellation* of power, but the *transformation* of power. That is, whatever echo there may be of יר״ד (*to go down, descend*) within the twofold רד״ה (*to rule*) of Genesis 1, it is not about replacing rulership with something altogether different, but redefining what rulership means. I take the redefinition to be something like this: if humankind is made in the image of a God for whom power and rulership manifest *as* loving self-gift—a gift and love defining the generous lover no less than they transform the beloved to whom they are given—then such "eccentric" behavior is of the essence of rulership, in both senses of the term: a selfless turning *outward from center*, and also passing strange in a post-Eden world.

This divinely-defined rulership seeks the good of the beloved, yet is not unwilling to punish; love and obedience are not antithetical, and rebellion comes with nearly karmic repercussions. The curse of Adam in Genesis 3, in this regard, seems hauntingly to invert the mandate to servant

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28:14, 20; David: I Samuel 20:41; 24:9; II Samuel 12:20; 15:32; I Kings 1:47; I Chronicles 21:16; Psalm 5:8, passim; Abigail: I Samuel 25:23, 41; Mephibosheth: II Samuel 9:6, 8; Joab: II Samuel 14:22; Shimei: II Samuel 19:19; Obadiah: I Kings 18:7; Ezekiel: Ezekiel 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 11:3; 43:3; 44:4; Ruth: 2:10; Israel's enemies: Isaiah 45:14; 49:7, 23; 60:14; 66:23; Esther 6:13; Daniel: Daniel 8:17; Ezra: Ezra 10:1; Job: Job 1:20; Others: Genesis 24:26, 48, 52; Exodus 22:31; I Samuel 1:3, 19; II Samuel 1:2; 14:4, 33; 24:20; I Kings 1:16, 23, 31; II Kings 2:15; 4:37.

leadership in Genesis 1, and in order to see how, it is necessary to recall the sort of linguistic cues animating the theology of Genesis. Professor Teeter has argued (in lectures; I am unaware of any publications) that the appearance of cherubim (כרב) in Genesis 3:24 signals the overturning of the blessings (ברך) that attended the creation of the world (1:22, 28; 2:3),[76] and likewise that the name Eden (עדן), meaning "pleasure" or "delight," is reversed in the affair at the tree of knowledge: נדע, now "we know."[77] Within this linguistic-theological framework, the twofold presence in Genesis 1:26–28 of (וי)רדו (*rule*, with suggestions of *descend*) can be seen as mirrored and inverted in the rare term דרדר (*dardar*, thistle; Genesis 3:18).[78] דרדר ≠ רד״ה + רד״ה. A combination perhaps christologically rendered in a "crown of thorns,"[79] the human crown of Genesis 1 has morphed into its rhymed opposite—like a crown on a clown. As אדם (*adam*, man) asserted himself rebelliously against a power-sharing God,[80] so now the אדמה (*adamah*, earth) asserts itself rebelliously against אדם—a negative chain reaction undoing the harmonious relations within creation established in Genesis 1 by the heavenly Monarch's non-grasping approach to rulership.

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[76] Cf. Akkadian *karābu*, "to bless, to pray." Thanks to Prof. Levenson for pointing this out.

[77] Cf. Cain's lament in Genesis 4:14 (הייתי נע ונד – "I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer"), also playing on עדן (*Eden*).

[78] Only elsewhere in Hosea 10:8. Again, this is not a claim of historical lexicography—in which case it clearly would not pass muster!—but an attempt to read in a manner approximating late Second Temple scribal hermeneutics. Relatedly, then, in the curse of the ground, עץ (*etz*, tree; 20x in Genesis 1–3) seems to have become קוץ (*qotz*, thorn; Genesis 3:18); cf. the contrast in the Torah poem of Psalm 1 between עץ (tree; 1:3) and מץ (chaff; 1:4).

[79] Three of the evangelists find a prickly mock-coronation significant: Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5. The Edenic overtones are strong: "Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Behold the man!' [Ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος]," John 19:5.

[80] It may be reasonably asked: "Was the bite of fruit really all that 'rebellious' and 'self-assertive'? Is this not making something of a (Christian) mountain out of a molehill?" The question is legitimate, and brings to mind the still-controversial argument of Hannah Arendt's 1963 book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. For Arendt, contrary to expectations of a sociopath masterminding genocide, the Jerusalem trial of Adolf Eichmann revealed a rather boring bureaucrat, a self-interested pencil-pusher mindlessly complicit in evil. Arendt's thesis continues to be hotly disputed (see the recent series of essays in Mosaic, including "Where Arendt Was Right on Eichmann" by Yad Vashem's director of archives Yaacov Lozowick: https://mosaicmagazine.com/response/history-ideas/2020/06/where-arendt-was-right-on-eichmann/), but its basic insight about evil strikes me as accurate: as far as cosmic rebellions go, a bite of fruit *is* rather banal—but that does not therefore mean benign. On the contrary, perhaps.

These exegetical possibilities—and they can be no more than possibilities, I take it—only

support the basic comparison drawn by Dunn between Adam and Jesus in the Carmen Christi. The

downward mission of Christ,[81] turning on a choice at another death-dealing tree that blurs the lines

between good and evil, is the antithesis of humanity's self-ascendant "fall" in Genesis, and thus

understood as setting a new trajectory for followers of Jesus at Philippi. If the above adds anything

to our understanding of the Carmen's interaction with the story of Adam, it is simply that Adam's

story itself in the Hebrew Bible may be subtly and creatively making the same points as the Carmen

in regards both to what it means to be God, and what it means to be human.[82]

Abraham

Genesis 11–25 tells the story of a man who, like other Royal Runaways, leaves successive

family homes in Ur and Haran to follow a path of obedience into uncharted territory. For the Jewish

philosopher and exegete Philo, these departures come in the wake of Abraham's dim yet growing

awareness that the astrological sciences of the Chaldeans incorrectly merged the creation with the

Creator; therefore, Abraham is summoned to even greater knowledge:

> In order, therefore, that he may the more firmly establish the sight which has thus been
> presented to him in his mind, the sacred word says to him, My good friend, great things are
> often known by slight outlines, at which he who looks increases his imagination to an un-
> limited extent; therefore, having dismissed those who bend all their attention to the

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[81] New Testament authors also speak of Christ descending at, e.g., John 3:13; 6:38, 42; Ephesians 4:8–10.

[82] A further connection between the Philippians poem and Genesis involves *sight*. In the story of Genesis 3, sight is pivotal: a) the serpent claims "your eyes will be opened," 3:5; b) the woman sees the tree, 3:6; c) the man and woman's eyes are indeed opened, but to their own nakedness, 3:7; d) they triply hide, concealing their nudity from their own sight, from each other's sight, and also from God, 3:7–10. Interestingly, directly prior to the Carmen Paul writes: μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι ("Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others), Philippians 2:4. As an aspect of the more general theme of knowledge shared by Genesis and the Carmen, it is just possible that in Paul's bank of associations for a statement like Philippians 2:4 would be the role within the Edenic drama of fatal seeing, manifesting first as a tragic failure to see others. Recall here the discussion in Chapter 2 of the Hebrew Bible's first recorded deed of Moses: וירא בסבלותם (*he looked on their burdens*, Exodus 2:11).

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heavenly bodies, and discarding the Chaldaean science, rise up and depart for a short time from the greatest of cities, this world, to one which is smaller; for so you will be the better able to comprehend the nature of the Ruler of the universe. It is for this reason that Abraham is said to have made this first migration from the country of the Chaldaeans into the land of Charran [sic].[83]

In Platonic allegorical mode here, wherein "this world" is "the greatest of cities," Philo supplies something like a kenotic etiology for Abraham's departure from Ur: great things must be forsaken for smaller things, because in this way Abraham might learn the nature of the great Ruler. Not only does this overlap with themes traced in the prior section, but note especially the emphasis on a certain model of rationality: "great things are often known by slight outlines, at which he who looks increases his imagination [φαντασίαν, alt. "the scope of his vision," Loeb] to an unlimited extent." Both what is known (i.e. the nature of the heavenly Ruler) and the method of knowing (great things glimpsed via small things) resonate with the theological vision of the Carmen Christi. By leaving what he perceives to be great, Abraham discovers a second, higher greatness, apprehending the Ruler of the universe. Clearly this belongs to the same world of thought as the Carmen Christi—unsurprising given that Philo and Paul were both active in the 1st century CE.

The biblical account of Abraham's sojourn, however, which gives no hint at this early stage of Abraham's uniqueness, provides an even stronger point of comparison with the Carmen, and it comes into view when the subtle analogies embedded in Abraham's story are first appreciated. In this case, the contrast is with the quite literal upward-mobility of Babel in Genesis 11:4: "They they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the earth." This paradigm of "making a name for ourselves" contrasts with Abraham's call in Genesis 12, as Levenson notes:

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[83] Philo, *On Abraham*, 71–72. Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, 417.

"Whereas the builders of Babel sought 'to make a name for [them]selves' on their own, the LORD, in the next ch[apter], promises to make Abram's 'name great' Himself (12:2)."[84] Babel self-asserts, and the project not only fails, but backfires, as in Eden. If, then, the Abraham cycle has verbal links to Adam (see introduction of this chapter), Abraham is here presented as distinctly *unlike* Adam, yet unlike Adam in a way quite similar to the Carmen's narrative of Jesus. Just as, on the heels of Babel's self-assertion, God promises to make Abraham's name great in a promise of global scope (Genesis 12:2–3: "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great […] and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed") so in the Carmen God vindicates the humble Messiah by giving him the highest name of all, along with global dominion:

> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed in him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9–11)

In this way, if viewing biblical history from the canonical vantage of the New Testament, a concinnity emerges between the beginning of the story and the end—between YHWH's dealings with Israel's Patriarch at the moment when the covenant narrows from universal scope onto one Jewish man, and YHWH's dealings with Israel's Messiah at the moment when the covenant again hinges on one Jewish man, swinging back to all the nations. Was Paul explicitly channeling this, then, when writing the Carmen? In all likelihood not, although it is impossible to reconstruct. The more guarded claim I wish to make is simply that the Carmen's narrative of God bestowing a great name

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[84] Levenson, *Jewish Study Bible*, digital.

on Jesus[85] has resonances with the Genesis account of God bestowing a great name on Abraham—

a man whose story begins when, like other Royal Runaways, he leaves his father's house behind.[86]

Joseph

The second half of the Carmen Christi (just quoted) recalls not only a pan-biblical pattern

of humility before God, reviewed in the section on Adam, but also a pattern in Abraham's own

family wherein the older serves the younger and the great the small. Often voiced in poetic bless-

ings (Genesis 25:23; 27:29; 48:13–19), the theme is not at all marginal within Genesis, but part of

its telos: the older brothers make obeisance in Egypt before their little brother Joseph, whose own

catastrophic path had ingrained in him deep self-awareness, a season of humiliation maturing into

lifelong humility. In Chapter 2 we studied Joseph in parallel to Moses, noting many features of his

Royal Runaway story. Now, with an interest in parallels to the Philippians 2 poem, it makes sense

to turn to the poem of blessing in Genesis 49, considering its précis of Joseph's life:[87]

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[85] A claim not restricted to the Carmen; cf. Ephesians 1:20–21: "…[God] worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come." Another text that may have factored into such descriptions of Christ's exaltation is Daniel 7:13–14, an important passage in Paul's day: "Behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13–14). The identity of this one "like a son of man" [כבר אנש] entrusted by the Ancient of Days with an eternal kingdom is notoriously puzzling. Might it be Israel writ large (cf. Daniel 7:18, 22)? Or just someone who looks like a human being, as opposed to other beasts and creatures populating heaven? Or is something like Ezekiel as the "son of man" in view? Or perhaps it is another reference to Adam in Genesis, בר אנש being the Aramaic equivalent for the Hebrew בן אדם? For different readers at different periods in history, likely all of these answers are correct. On another Danielic note vis-à-vis the Carmen, recall the court stories in the first half of the book that follow a Royal Runaway template: four Hebrew lads of royal blood (מזרע המלוכה, lit. *of the seed of the kingdom*; 1:3) who are faithful in exile unto death and delivered by Y<small>HWH</small>, causing foreign kings to acknowledge Israel's God: the dietary test in Daniel 1; the high-stakes interpretation in Daniel 2 (also in chs. 4–5); the fiery furnace in Daniel 3; the lion's den in Daniel 6.

[86] Genesis 12:1. Might this too be an aspect of New Adam typology, recapitulating a primal departure from one's father: "For this reason a man shall leave his father…" Genesis 2:24?

[87] Cf. the parallel blessing at Deuteronomy 33:13–17, sharing much of the same language.

22 *Joseph is a fruitful bough,*
   a fruitful bough by a spring;
   his branches run over the wall.
23 *The archers bitterly attacked him,*
   shot at him, and harassed him severely,
24 *yet his bow remained unmoved;*
   his arms were made agile
   by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob
   (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
25 *by the God of your father who will help you,*
   by the Almighty who will bless you
   with blessings of heaven above,
   blessings of the deep that crouches beneath,
   blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
26 *The blessings of your father*
   are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents,
   up to the bounties of the everlasting hills.
May they be on the head of Joseph,
   and on the brow of him who was
   set apart from his brothers.

With several suggestions of Adam typology,[88] the overall narrative sequence here recalls the Carmen Christi: high position, humiliation, battle, divine aid, blessings, glory. Within this familiar U-shaped story, the three tiers of favor in v. 25—"blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb"—also seem to mirror the realms of Christ's acclaim: "…in heaven and on earth and under the earth…" (Philippians 2:10).

Bearing such structural and thematic similarities with the poem in Philippians (and recall, as well, the larger generic similarity of theologically-rich poetry embedded within works of mostly prose), the conclusion to draw here is not quite as simple as "Paul may have had Joseph in mind,

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[88] **1)** The repetition of פרת in 49:22 recalling repetition of פרו in 1:22, 28, as well as general garden imagery: פרי in 1:11, 12, 29; 3:2, 3, 6; **2)** description of assault in 49:23 in terms of שׂטמ, by-form of שׂטן (cf. Second Temple beliefs about Mastema, etc.); **3)** pointed חצים (*khitzim*, arrows; 49:23) recalling pointed קוצים (*kotzim*, thistles; 3:18); **4)** word-play on the roots זרע and עזר (49:24–5; זרע at 1:11–2, 29; 3:15; עזר at 2:18, 20); **5)** בר״ך, 6x in 49:25–26; 1:22, 28; 2:3; **6)** language of שמים and תהום, *heavens* and the *deep*: 49:25; 1:1–2; **7)** sensual pleasure, תאוה (49:26); עדן (2:8, 15); **8)** nakedness, שדים ורחם (49:25), ערום (2:25), עירם (3x in 3:7–11); **9)** morphological similarity of קדקד (49:27) and דרדר (3:18). Any of these on their own might be mere coincidence, a tendentious exegesis; together they articulate a dense pattern of allusion between Joseph and Adam/Eden.

too." Yes, that is part of it, but more: Paul (or whoever wrote the Carmen) is composing a New Adam song from within, and as a theological development of, a scriptural precedent of New Adam songs. For not only reflecting one another in content and form, the salvific role of Joseph in relation to the entirety of Genesis is picked up and transposed in a new poem about a "son of Joseph,"[89] namely Jesus, whose salvific role is conceived now as in relation to the entirety of Israel's history. Hence, as the blessings Jacob bestows on Joseph are "mighty beyond the blessings of my parents," so the blessings upon Jesus continue this trajectory of magnification, out to cosmic proportions.

However, these are admittedly *external* descriptions of a New Adam figure, rehearsals of destiny in the third person. It should also be asked: Is there any deeper alignment of the *inner* worlds of Joseph and the Carmen's Jesus, any corresponding logic in their triumphs and travails? I believe there is. The term describing Joseph at the climax of the poem, נזיר (*nazir*, "him who was set apart"), derives from a root (נז״ר) HALOT defines variously as: "to make an act of self-denial, consecrate oneself to a deity"; "to hold oneself back from"; "to proclaim a decree for abstinence"[90]

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[89] That Jesus is the son of a Joseph (and also the grandson of a Jacob; Matthew 1:15–16) is important to at least some of the early Christians; like the Joseph of Genesis, the New Testament's Joseph is given to dreams, known for chastity and integrity, forced to flee to Egypt, and affiliated with the salvation of Israel. Recall in this last connection the much-debated Joseph imagery of II Kings 25:27–30 and Jeremiah 52:31–34 (see argument and bibliography in Michael J. Chan, "Joseph and Jehoiachin: On the Edge of Exodus," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 125, no. 4 [2013]: 566–77), with its implications for the Hebrew Bible's governing theology of history and hope: "The threats and curses in Deuteronomy had been fulfilled in the catastrophes of the two kingdoms. This word of Jahweh, which, the Psalmist says, 'runs swiftly' (Ps. CXLVII. 15), had attained its goal. […] But the Deuteronomist saw yet another word as active in the history, namely, the promise of salvation in the Nathan prophecy, and it, as well as the threat of judgment, was effectual as it ran through the course of the history. Had it too creatively reached its goal in a fulfill-ment? The Deuteronomist's history leaves this question open. Yet, closing as it does with the note about the favor shown Jehoiachin (II Kings XXV. 27ff), it points to a possibility with which Jahweh can resume." Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Volume I* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 343; cf. *Volume II*, 320, where II Kings 25:27–30 is considered in the context of "writings which actually have no kind of eschatological expectations whatsoever, as for example the Deuteronomic history or the Book of Job, [that] nevertheless still have something that points mysteriously to the future." Some regard Joseph typology as the Hebrew Bible's communicative vehicle of such future hope.

[90] Perhaps a significant aspect of the root given the showcasing of Joseph's sexual virtue in Genesis 39 (contrast with Judah in Genesis 38), as well as the voluptuous imagery of the poem itself ("blessings of the breast and the womb," and a divine title sometimes affiliated with fertility, spelled the same as "breast," Shaddai [שַׁדִּי, 49:25]).

(cf. נד״ר, "to [perform a] vow"). Nominalized, נזיר is glossed "Nazirite"; "devotee; prince." The power of this "prince," then, manifests not as action but as inaction—or better, in power turned against *himself*, against his own desires and interests for the sake of something higher (hence the aspect of "consecrate oneself to a deity"). Described as נזיר אחיו, Joseph is "set apart from his brothers" by the sort of royal asceticism setting the Israelite king of Deuteronomy 17:14–21 apart from his brethren (אח, *brother*, appears twice in Deuteronomy 17:15, and again in 17:20). Rejected by his brothers, Joseph is also prince among them: they say *no* to him at the beginning of his life, but more importantly, in years ahead he will learn to say *no* to himself.[91] The Carmen's kenosis, likewise, and perhaps implicitly in dialogue with such Hebrew Bible narratives, is a similar *no* to self, yet intensified—a *no* rending the heavens with the revelation of God's eternal *yes*: "The suffering and death of Jesus Christ are the No of God in and with which He again takes up and asserts in man's space and time the Yes to man which He has determined and pronounced in eternity. […] Jesus Christ is the Yes of God spoken in world history."[92] Likewise, the kenotic *no* of Joseph earns him and his kindred the verdant, pulsating *yes* of blessing, blessing upon blessing, "up to the bounty of the everlasting hills."

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[91] Thus Jewish sages, both modern and ancient: "Self-respect is the fruit of discipline, the sense of dignity grows with the ability to say No to oneself." (Abraham J. Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966], 44.) "[W]hen the chief of a nation begins to indulge in luxury and to turn aside to a delicate and effeminate life, then the whole of his subjects, or very nearly the whole, carry their desire for indulging the appetites of the belly and the parts below the belly beyond all reasonable bounds […] If, on the other hand, the chief of a people adopts a more austere and dignified course of life, then even those of his subjects, who are inclined to be very incontinent, change and become temperate…" (Philo, *On The Life of Moses, I*, 160–161; in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. C. D. Yonge [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub, 1993], 474.)

[92] Karl Barth, "The Judge Judged in Our Place," in *Church Dogmatics IV.1 The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 257.

Moses

If, at the low point of Christ's kenosis in the Carmen, God reverses the situation by be-

stowing on him "the name that is above every name," it is in keeping with the low point of Moses'

exile in Midian, God reversing his situation as well by revealing to him that same name.[93] Although

an enormous amount of theological attention, mostly of the metaphysical variety, has been invested

in understanding the tautological phrase אהיה אשר אהיה (*I am what I am*, *I will be what I will be,*

etc.; Exodus 3:14), what is usually overlooked is that the same word appears just two verses prior

when God reassures Moses in Exodus 3:12, אהיה עמך (*I will be with you*). Taking this context into

account, it would seem the phrase of Exodus 3:14 is a *relational* אהיה before it is an *ontological*

אהיה,[94] of a piece with the regular Hebrew Bible theme that YHWH will be "with" his chosen

people, particularly their leaders.[95] Hence, the later prophetic concept of "Immanuel" (עמנו-אל, *God*

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[93] Levenson, *Jewish Study Bible*, commenting on Genesis 17:1: "In the Priestly conception, the four-letter name trans-lated as LORD was disclosed only in the time of Moses (Exod 6:2–3), and El Shaddai was the name by which God revealed Himself to the patriarchs." Such a notion held by some ancient Israelites that covenantal history includes new revelations of God's name is thus carried forward by the Carmen Christi, the new application of an existing principle. Here is an instance, then, of the sort of typological and teleological reading characteristic of some circles in the Second Temple period, and also an undergirding logic of subsequent literature indebted to the Bible such as the Quran, the Book of Mormon, etc.

[94] Jeffrey Tigay (*Jewish Study Bible*, digital) remarks on Exodus 3:12, yet with no further comment on the theological implication: "*I will be with you:* The verb *be* ("ʾehyeh") anticipates the etymology of the divine name in v. 14."

[95] E.g., Genesis 28:15, והנה אנכי עמך (*And behold, I am with you* [Jacob]); Genesis 39:2, 21, 23, ויהי יהוה את-יוסף (*And the LORD was with Joseph*); Exodus 17:7, היש יהוה בקרבנו אם-אין (*Is the LORD among us or not?*); cf. 33:14–16; Joshua 1:5, כי-היה יהוה עמו (*...for the LORD was with him* [David]); II Samuel 7:1, כי יהוה עמך (*for the LORD is with you*); 7:9, ואהיה עמך בכל אשר הלכת (*I have been with you wherever you went*); 7:14, אני אהיה-לו לאב (*I will be to him a father*); Isaiah 41:10, אל-תירא כי עמך אני (*Fear not, for I am with you*); etc. The Chronicler in particular regard's YHWH's being "with" Israel and its leaders as of great theological importance: I Chronicles 4:10; 9:20; 11:9; 17:2, 8; 22:11, 16, 18; 28:20; II Chronicles 1:1; 13:12; 15:2, 9; 19:6; 20:17; 25:7; 32:8; (35:21); 36:23. Note that in II Chronicles, the theme appears in the first and last verse of the book (1:1 and 36:23) and thus, in the Jewish ordering of the canon, in the final statement of the Hebrew Bible. This, in turn, may be seen as rounding off the theme introduced at the extreme other end of the canon, God with humanity in, e.g., Genesis 2:19, 3:8, to say nothing of the Temple imagery and theology uniting Genesis with Chronicles, and much literature between. Such climactic positioning of the theme appears in the New Testament as well, in the last passage of the last book: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (Revelation 21:3).

with us; Isaiah 7:14; 8:8, 10) is no innovation pure and simple, but an exegetical appropriation of a longstanding belief. Contextually, of course, the phrase in Isaiah likely refers to an individual (i.e. Hezekiah) during the time of the Syro-Ephraimite War,[96] but it is not fabricated de novo: the belief that "God is with us" is a weight-bearing theological beam of the Hebrew Bible, with foundations in the revelation of the divine name itself to Moses. This is who YHWH is: *our* God.[97]

Taking such precedents in Israel's Scripture with utmost seriousness, for early Christians such as Paul who apparently believed that in Jesus of Nazareth YHWH himself had come to be with his people, the assignation of the tetragrammaton to Jesus, for all its audacity and even blasphemy, made *de facto* theological sense. The Carmen, in fact, is just one New Testament text in which Jesus is arguably depicted as God's "being with" Israel and the world, in a manner both continuous and discontinuous with the testimony of the Hebrew Bible;[98] hence, and in a startling yet typical recursion, the one to whom the Name of divine accompaniment is revealed (Moses)

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[96] See summary of positions in Joseph Jensen, "Immanuel (Person)," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), digital.

[97] Cf. Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod (*The Body of Faith: God and the People of Israel* [Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1996], who argues incisively against the philosophical depersonalization of God: "Our first priority is to save the reality of the human relationship with Hashem. The reality of that relationship is seriously eroded by the transformation of the living God of Israel into an ineffable Absolute who cannot be with man when he is in need, when he turns to the living God" (125).

[98] Mark, for example, generally regarded as the earliest Gospel, begins by coordinating two prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible that refer to YHWH's return to Israel with the locution (יהוה דרך פנ״ה) – Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3, at Mark 1:2–3. The former text is the final passage of the prophetic corpus (which significantly mentions "my servant Moses," משה עבדי: Malachi 3:22, English 4:4), thus implying that Mark resumes where Malachi left off; the latter text comes at the fountainhead of Deutero-Isaiah's vision of post-exilic new creation. Beginning his Gospel with such an intertextual salvo, Mark orients the story of Jesus to the fulfillment of such prophecies. Still, neither he nor any other New Testament writer is ever so artless as bluntly to say "Jesus is YHWH"; the content and mode of their argument was simply far more sophisticated. Regarding, then, "the divinity of Jesus," it strikes me as entirely legitimate to argue that some early Christians regarded Jesus as identified with YHWH in some way, and were just dead wrong; it was (and is) sheer delusion. But to claim that no early Christians entertained such notions, and that subsequent developments of Christian theology are simply an egregious misunderstanding of an apocalyptic prophet—this is a different claim, and one that (to me, anyways) suggests an illiteracy in regards to how Second Temple texts *mean*. Significantly, the drift in quarters of the early church toward Docetism (Jesus only *appeared* human, from δοκέω) indicates that for many the divinity of Jesus was so compelling that his humanity was hard to fathom. The modern drift is the other way.

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anticipates the kenotic path of the one to whom the Name is given (Jesus). YHWH is "with" the self-emptying servant, Moses, and this is an attraction of compatibility, so to speak, for YHWH is "with" the world as the self-emptying God.[99]

If the revelation of YHWH to Moses thus foreshadows a central theme of the Carmen, the revelation of YHWH to the whole nation of Israel does as well. The God who appears at Horeb, the mountain of God, in Exodus 3, appears in the same location to all Israel in Exodus 19, and although there is ostensibly a stark difference between a single burning bush and a whole mountain aflame, the narrative dynamics of the latter passage suggest a deeper agreement. For if Moses, in his early life, has descended from his royal station and by Exodus 3 found himself at Horeb, in Exodus 19 Moses and YHWH are both engaged at Horeb in patterns of descent and ascent. יר״ד occurs seven times in Exodus 19, describing YHWH and Moses (YHWH: 19:11, 18, 20; Moses: 19:14, 21, 24, 25), while על״ה occurs eight times, of Moses, Aaron, the people Israel, and smoke (Moses: 19:3, 20; with Aaron: 19:24; Israel: 19:12, 13, 23, 24; smoke: 19:18).[100] Mirroring YHWH, and at his command, Moses emphatically *descends* to the chosen people in order to make a covenant with them, and if such mediatorial descent is in some sense "christoform," the typolog-ical and theological influence also flows the other way: the משיח (*meshiach,* Messiah) is a "prophet like משה" (*moshe*, Moses; Deuteronomy 18:15–19). Descent in the Carmen (qua descent) is there-fore no novelty, no new development of *Heilsgeschichte*, but simply what a mediator of YHWH's

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[99] Two wrinkles here, one theological, one exegetical: 1) Kenotic theologians are anxious to clarify that the giving of the tetragrammaton to Jesus (ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα, Philippians 2:9, with overtones of *grace*, χάρις) does not imply *change* within the Godhead, as this could result in something like an Arian adoption model of Christology, Jesus being a creature. 2) The initial appearance to Moses in Exodus 3:2 of the *angel* of the Lord, a figure appearing often in the Hebrew Bible and whose agency and identity seem often to blur into those of Yhwh himself, has suggested to some exegetes a christological presence at the bush—suitably, another marquee revelation at a humble tree. The framework for such a reading, in dialogue with current Hebrew Bible research, is found in Heiser, *The Unseen Realm*.

[100] Cf. the covenant ceremony on the mountain in Exodus 24, where (על״ה) also occurs eight times, and never of Yhwh: 24:1, 2, 5, 9, 12, 13, 15, 18.

people is supposed to do: come down from the heights with news of God's covenantal require-

ments and loving favor, himself a microcosm of YHWH's dealings with the chosen people.[101]

Interestingly, like Jesus in the Carmen, in Exodus 19 Moses both descends and ascends,

whereas YHWH only descends. Does this have any significance, beyond the obvious sense in

which the heavenly King must spatially accommodate earthlings[102]? Perhaps, since this also is the

passage in which Israel is marked off from other nations as ממלכת כהנים (a *kingdom* of priests;

Exodus 19:6), thereby bringing into focus the dynamic already observed in Genesis 1: the coinci-

dence of YHWH's "descent" (i.e. delegating, non-grasping approach to rulership) with the com-

missioning of a royal people. Like Adam, whose exalted vocation was to be expressed in the de-

centralized, empowering manner of the divine Monarch, so Israel's royal status, received in Exo-

dus 19 from the same gracious deity, is likewise to be interpreted in terms of humble service to

God and others. The two tablets of the decalogue[103] codify *in nuce* this bidirectional service, yet

the very context of their reception is illustrative of the sort of spirituality—the sort of "rulership"—

making their observance possible at all. By way of simplification and summary, we might even

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[101] Relatedly, the genealogy of I Chronicles suggested to the rabbis that Moses bore more than one name, amongst which was ירד (Jered, I Chronicles 4:18; cf. 5:29 [English 6:3]). "Jered is Moses. Why was he called Jered? Because manna descended for Israel in his time." "His sister called him Jered because for his sake, she went down (ירד) to the Nile to see what would happen to him." There seems to be an implicit contrast here between the *upward* name Moshe (drawn out, etc.) and the *downward* name Jered. *Shemoth, Volume I: Shemoth, Va'era, Bo, Beshallach, Yithro*, translation of text, Rashi, and other commentaries by Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg (New York: The Judaica Press: 1995), 21a–b.

[102] Cf. Levenson's comment on Genesis 11:5 and its Babylonian skyscraper: "A nice touch: Human beings erect the highest building they can, but even to see it, the LORD must descend from His heavenly dwelling." *Jewish Study Bible*, digital.

[103] Which, interestingly, contain a threefold designation of creation similar to Philippians 2:10c: "…in heaven and on earth and under the earth…" Cf. Exodus 20:4, "…anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth…"; 20:11, "…heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them…" Contrast with more common language of simply heaven and earth: Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 32:1; Isaiah 1:2; etc.

say: "Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Moshe Rabbeinu, who, though YHWH's unique friend and confidant, descended from Sinai and took the form of a servant…"

There is still, however, so much more to say about the resonances between Moses and the Carmen Christi that it would require a dedicated chapter to discuss them. Ergo: Chapter 2.

Israel

At the fulcrum of the Carmen Christi, between the kenotic abasement of Christ and the Father's subsequent exaltation of him, is the little word διὸ, *therefore*. This conjunction carries much theological force in the poem's brief story, and the source of such energy is in Hebrew Bible narratives of God's dealings with his royal people. To see the connection, we need to return to a passage discussed in Chapter 2, namely, Moses' retrospective account of why God led his people through the wilderness in the first place (Deuteronomy 8:2–19):

> **2** And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. **3** And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. **4** Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. **5** Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. **6** So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. **7** For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, **8** a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, **9** a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. **10** And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.
> **11** Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, **12** lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, **13** and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, **14** then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, **15** who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there

was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, **16** who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. **17** Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' **18** You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. **19** And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish.

According to this passage, one of the purposes of the long sojourn through the wilderness to the land flowing with all good things is a twofold production of knowledge: Israel's knowledge of YHWH's faithfulness, and YHWH's knowledge of Israel's faithfulness. In the first paragraph above (vv. 2–10), יד״ע occurs five times, whereas in the second paragraph (vv. 11–19), concerning Israel's comportment once in the land, the salient contrast becomes *remembering* and *forgetting* that prior knowledge, the hinge between the two being a matter of humility or pride (so important for Royal Runaways). But here I wish to focus on the first paragraph, which uses an important term in conjunction with יד״ע: נס״ה (*test*, v. 2). "…that he might humble you, testing you to know [לְנַסֹּתְךָ לָדַעַת] what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not."

What exactly is a test, in the general sense of the term? According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in its original English usage a test was "[t]he cupel used in treating gold or silver alloys or ore."[104] This process of precious metals "refined or assayed by melting with a blast of hot air"[105] was for ancient Israelites a favorite metaphor for YHWH's methods of producing wisdom and maturity in his people,[106] and it leads directly into the second and common use of the English term:

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[104] *Oxford English Dictionary*, retrieved via HOLLIS.

[105] "Cupel," in *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, eds. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), digital.

[106] Isaiah 1:25; 48:10; Jeremiah 6:29; 9:6; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:2–3; Psalm 17:3; 26:2; 66:10; 105:19; Proverbs 17:3; 25:4–5; 27:21; Daniel 11:35; 12:10.

"That by which the existence, quality, or genuineness of anything is or may be determined."[107] A test, then, in its most general sense, is about *producing knowledge* for the one giving the test, and in the present case, the one testing Israel in the wilderness is God. God wants to know something,[108] yet the object under examination is not inanimate ore but human beings, the content and quality of whose knowledge is itself of constitutive importance. Hence the twofold dimension of the test: God wants to *know* if Israel *knows* Him[109]—in the fulsome sense of יד״ע, including dimensions of loyalty, intimacy, and obedience as well as cerebral perception and affirmation. What often produces such knowledge on the human plane is abrupt confrontation with one's own limitations through experiences of hardship and pain. Wilderness, then, in the theological sense, is that place where illusions of self-sufficiency and independence are ruthlessly burned off like dross from the ore, and the knowledge thus forged takes the form of something like a Declaration of Dependence—i.e., a Covenant. Establishing such mutual relational *knowledge* is what it means for Israel— a Royal Runaway people enduring rigors at the furthest remove from palatial luxuries—to pass the test of YHWH.

It is therefore not at all arbitrary that in the Temptation stories of the Gospels, Jesus quotes repeatedly from Deuteronomy.[110] The setup, of course, mirrors Israel's sacred history:

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[107] *Oxford English Dictionary*, retrieved via HOLLIS.

[108] That God might desire to know something is obviously a problem for later doctrines of omniscience. See Levenson's discussion of Abraham's "test" in the Aqedah: Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 66–112. "However the formidable conundrum of divine learning is to be understood philosophically (if at all), the end of our narrative leaves no doubt that God has acquired knowledge he did not have at its outset," 80.

[109] Cf. the slithery yet perceptive words of Eden, God knowing what humans know: "For *God knows* that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, *knowing* good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Unlike Moses, who brokers covenantal knowledge, the serpent is like an anti-mediator, severing relationship between God and humanity.

[110] Deuteronomy 8:3 quoted in Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 6:16 in Matthew 4:7; Deuteronomy 6:13 in Matthew 4:10 (same passages quoted in the parallel account of Luke 4:1–13). Deuteronomy 6:16 is particularly important as it

immediately opposite the salvific waters (baptism, the Red Sea) lies a wilderness of prolonged

physical and spiritual testing.[111] And in fact, the term used to describe the Messiah's testing cap-

tures many of the associations from the Hebrew Bible, not least in Deuteronomy 8—πειράζω:

> 1) to make an effort to do someth., *try*, *attempt*; 2) to endeavor to discover the nature or
> character of someth. by testing, *try*, *make trial of*, *put to the test*; 3) to attempt to entrap
> through a process of inquiry, *test*; 4) to entice to improper behavior, *tempt*.[112]

To read the stories of Jesus, therefore, purely as a "temptation" as in sense 4), is to screen out other

(logically prior) aspects of the concept, and also to flatten out a fulsome theological appreciation

of what the Evangelists may mean in their insistence that it was the *Spirit* who led Jesus to be

tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–2); in many ways, the severe tests that

Royal Runaways endure are not indicative of divine punishment, but rather that they have come

up for promotion—for which the prerequisite is purification. And what, specifically, is the purify-

ing test Jesus must pass in the desert? The test some regard as the one faced by Adam, and by the

subject of the Carmen Christi: whether or not to grasp after greater glory and power: "Again, the

devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their

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forbids the reversal of testing, the assayed presuming to be the Assayer: לא תנסו את-יהוה אלהיכם כאשר נסיתם במסה ("You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah). Cf. discussion in the next section, "Yhwh's Servants," for further suggestions of why Jesus quoting from Deuteronomy would have been heard by some in the 1st century CE as indexing to a comprehensive theological argument about his own identity.

[111] Mark 1:12–13 and parallels, directly following the baptism of John: "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan."

[112] BDAG (William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000], digital). The term occurs some 38 times in the New Testament (Matthew 4:1, 3, etc.), being a common theme in the identity of the Messiah and the messianic community. The LXX of Deuteronomy 6:16 and 8:2 render נס״ה with ἐκπειράζω, the pre-fixed preposition intensifying the basic meaning. New Testament uses of πειράζω, such as in the Temptation stories themselves (ἐκπειράζω at Matthew 4:7 and Luke 4:12, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16) are doubtless aware of such allusions to the wilderness wanderings of Israel.

glory. And he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me'" (Matthew 4:7; cf. Luke 4:5–7). It is the test of a Royal Runaway.

More important for the present discussion, however, is to see how the Carmen's condensed description of Jesus' career can turn so powerfully on the theo-logical conjunction διὸ (Philippians 2:9), and the above-sketched complex of ideas from the biblical "wilderness" thus allows us to read the Carmen from yet another productive angle. For the Carmen arguably contains the twofold knowledge of a test: God (i.e., the Father, 2:11) learns that Jesus correctly *understands* (ἡγήσατο, 2:6) what it means to be God, demonstrated through self-giving obedience unto death (2:8). *On the basis of* (διὸ) this newly acquired knowledge, not only is Jesus recompensed with glory as Israel is recompensed with the Promised Land, but a third vector of knowledge comes surprisingly into view as well: humanity writ large receives a newfound knowledge of God through Jesus: "…every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (2:11).

Such a reading is plausible, I take it, because it accords with the ethical and epistemological program of Philippians (see discussions above) as well as with the deeper rhythms and impulses of Israel's story that Paul was at pains to teach his converts to read and internalize. This history is replete with tests, and tests by definition reveal knowledge, and are also *hard*. Of the many sorts of knowledge that humans can possess, in my view the two most arduous types are what Israel and the Messiah must learn and express in the wilderness—knowledge of self and knowledge of God. Such rare and invaluable knowing tends to be the product of an intense and relentless heat.

YHWH's Servants

Deuteronomy 32, the song at the end of Torah that far into the future will be "a witness for [YHWH] against the people of Israel" (Deuteronomy 31:19), has been called a "compendium of

prophetic theology, steeped from end to end in reminiscences of the older prophets."[113] In both its particular locutions and more importantly its narrative substructure of election ➡ rebellion ➡ YHWH's punishment of Israel by foreign nation ➡ punishment of that foreign nation for arrogance ➡ vindication of YHWH's servants, Deuteronomy 32 is paradigmatic for later prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible, as D. Andrew Teeter and Michael A. Lyons argue.[114] Of particular importance for this study is the rather obscure verse toward the end of the song: "For the LORD will vindicate his people / and have compassion on his servants / when he sees that their power is gone / and there is none remaining, bond or free" (32:36). What does this mean? Who are these "servants"? Teeter and Lyons, reading Deuteronomy 32 and influential prophetic works such as Isaiah 40–66 in light of one another,[115] conclude that the servants in question are members of a post-exilic prophetic community constructed on the pattern of Moses, "God's servant who is despised and rejected (Exod 15:24; 16:2–3; 17:1–4; Num 12:1; 14:1–10; 16; 20:2–5; 21:5), who suffers both at the hands of and for the sake of the people, even unto death."[116] The mysterious servants of Deuteronomy 32:36 thus find themselves at the end of their strength due to their role of mediatorial suffering between YHWH and Israel: advocating strenuously for the people before the wrath of YHWH, advocating strenuously for YHWH before the rebellious people. And at just the moment when such an impossible task annihilates the servants themselves, YHWH intervenes.

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[113] Carl Heinrich Cornill, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, trans. G. H. Box (England: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 123.

[114] D. Andrew Teeter and Michael A. Lyons, "The One and the Many, the Past and the Future, and the Dynamics of Prospective Analogy: The Servant(s) as the Vindication of Moses and the Prophets," in *Isaiah's Servant(s) and the Exegetical Origins of Early Jewish and Christian Identity,* ed. Michael A. Lyons and Jacob Stromberg (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming 2021).

[115] Reading similarly, that is, to the canonical method of the current project.

[116] Teeter and Lyon, p. 4 in the proof shared with me by Prof. Teeter.

The figure in the Carmen Christi follows this model. Already recalling Moses in so many other ways, the sudden transition at the center of the Carmen between suffering and exaltation, between crucifixion and enthronement, follows the template of Moses' song: "the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, *when he sees that their power is gone*" (32:36). For as the poem in Deuteronomy continues just verses later, YHWH speaking: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand" (32:39). Thus, as a narrative instantiation of this earlier Jewish concept, when the powerlessness of kenosis, Christ's mediatorial self-gift, reaches its telos by the midpoint of the Carmen, this is also the flashpoint: the God who makes alive and vindicates his suffering servants vindicates Jesus—right on script for one who "took the form of a δοῦλος," Philippians 2:7.[117]

Yet Jesus is not just *a* servant, nor is he mediator for Israel alone. Teeter and Lyons, tracing the ways in which the servants of Deuteronomy 32 interact with expectation of "a prophet like Moses" in Deuteronomy 18, and both in turn with larger analogical arguments of the Hebrew Bible (particularly in the prophetic corpus) about the relation between Israel and the nations, arrive to a much larger vision. It should be emphasized first, though, that their work is not at all geared toward Christian apologia, but rather to how some Second Temple Jews expected YHWH to act in the future according to patterns of the past. That is, it is an argument about historical poetics, not

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[117] LXX of Deuteronomy 32:36 translates עבדיו as δούλοις. Interestingly, the next instance of עבדיו in 32:43 is the site of a textual variant in LXX, "servants" being replaced with "sons of God": προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ… ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται. In light of the Carmen Christi as well as wider New Testament exegesis, this represents a significant elision of YHWH's servants and sons. Also, since the appearance of a δοῦλος in the Carmen Christi has traditionally prompted associations with Isaiah's servant, it is important to bear in mind that עבד (in connection with YHWH's servant[s]) is frequently translated in LXX's Isaiah with παῖς (Isaiah 20:3; 22:20; 24:2; 37:35; 41:8–9; 42:1, 19; 43:10; 44:1–2, 21; 44:26; 45:4; 49:6; 50:10; 52:13), although toward the end of the book a translation with δοῦλος and related terms becomes more common (48:20; 49:3, 5; 53:11; 56:6; 63:17; 65:8–9, 13; 65:14–15).

dogmatic theology. Without wishing to implicate Teeter and Lyons, then, my own claim is simply that the Carmen's Jesus slots quite naturally into their conclusions, not only in regards to broad patterns of expectation cultivated by the Hebrew Bible, but also in terms of the reality model such expectations require. They write:

> The compositional strategies described above combine to create a model of history (and therefore of reality) that is profoundly analogical, in which the patterns and rhythms of the past are determinative for the present and future. This is a model of reality in which the Servant of Yhwh, in a way that is predictable from the analogical contours of the past, becomes an essential figure within God's plan for history.[118]

This statement undergirds a major premise of my overall thesis, which is that closely studying how the many Royal Runaways of the Hebrew Bible converge on a single figure[119] in the post-exilic future is not to indulge in a fundamentally anachronistic hermeneutic, but rather a type of reading that responds appropriately to how the literature itself operates at the level of historical poetics. Moreover, to divorce that poetics from the reality model it both reflects and inculcates—as Teeter and Lyons argue—is to ignore one of its most comprehensive and urgent claims. So far as I can tell, if this analogical reality model and ancient Jewish literature are anything like what they describe, then it seems a community of 1st century CE Jews and Gentiles—those who cherished the Carmen Christi of Philippians 2—had become convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-awaited and unique Servant of the Lord, the Moses-like mediator of YHWH's renewed covenant to the nations, powerfully vindicated at the moment his own power was gone.

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[118] Teeter and Lyons, 25.

[119] Recall that in this literature a single figure often stands in for all Israel; this is not necessarily an atomized individual, but a member and perhaps personification of the larger group (cf. Qumran's Damascus Document VII 16–17: המלך הוא הקהל, *the king is the congregation*.) Such corporate aspects of the Servant are, in fact, central to what New Testament texts seem to mean by calling Jesus the Messiah or Christ: he is that figure whose life, death, and resurrection *represents* (in multiple senses of the term) Israel. Such a representative role is, of course, a mainstay of monarchical conceptions in general, and particularly Christian adaptations of it play an outsized role in subsequent political history; Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2016).

David

That David, on a certain canonical reading, is subtly hinted at as an Adam figure was mentioned in the chapter's introduction (והוא אדמוני, I Samuel 16:12), with the implication that if the Carmen Christi is painting its bloodied Messiah in reddish Adam tones, David is also part of this typology (indirectly, more conceptually than lexically). Relatedly, in the verse where David is presented this way, we also find the charged verb משׁח (*mashach*, anoint; I Samuel 16:12–13), suggesting a thematic overlap between David and the Carmen *Christi* in the exegetical culture of the 1st century CE. Yet this anointing scene in I Samuel 16 of David the shepherd boy, who will in time become the prototype for Israelite kings, is rather slender evidence of any Davidic foreshadowing of the kenotic theology found in Philippians 2. Is there any stronger case to be made? David's life was already studied at some length in Chapter 2 vis-à-vis Moses: two Royal Runaways in Israel's sacred past whose royal and prophetic lives render the concepts of a self-emptying Messiah and Runaway God even thinkable. But now we shall consider David vis-à-vis the Carmen Christi, recalling four events in his life that, while apparently not sourcing the Carmen directly, may be regarded broadly as antecedents in its pointed theologization of the Runaway Prince motif.

1. Non-Grasping in I Samuel 24 and 26[120] – What qualifies anyone in the Hebrew Bible to be chosen by God? Answers to this question are found in texts like Genesis 22:15–18, the second angelic speech of the Aqedah: Abraham deserves blessing because he laid down his life, not withholding his only son from God. Apparently, YHWH affirms such radical trust and letting-go as grounds for election (without, to be sure, canceling dimensions of undeserved favor). David's

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[120] Many thanks to Prof. Teeter for the basic insight of this section.

selection as king, introduced with characteristic abruptness in I Samuel 16 (like Abraham's election in Genesis 12), seems to be justified with a similar logic, and it also comes into view long after the fact of his anointing: David is worthy of rule because of his radical letting-go of rulership. When does this happen? In the testing of David's "wilderness years," and it happens not once, but twice.

After Saul, attached to the spear with which he seems to have terrible aim anyway,[121] forces David out of the royal court, he pursues his former lieutenant into the surrounding wilderness in a multi-chapter episode of cat and mouse—or as David will refer to himself, a dead dog and a flea (I Samuel 24:15, English 24:14). During this season of exile (which, it will be remembered, is of the essence for his Royal Runaway character), David is twice given the chance to kill his oppressor at point-blank range, once when Saul is relieving himself in a cave, and once when he is fast asleep in the bivouac. David's men take this as a sign of God's favor: "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you'" (I Samuel 24:5 [24:4]; cf. 26:8). What these men had not counted on is that "what would seem good to David" would be something other than killing Saul and its desirable outcomes of halting the persecution and hastening his ascendancy to the throne.

David interprets the situation differently in I Samuel 24 and 26. YHWH may have placed Saul and the crown for which David is destined directly into David's hand, but that did not sanction David to *close* the hand thus entrusted. On the contrary, in the darkness of the cave and the camp,

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[121] Like a theological prop in the narrative, Saul's spear dramatizes attachment to traditional forms of military power on which Israelite kings were not to depend: I Samuel 13:22; 18:10–11; 19:9–10; 20:33; 22:16; 26:7, 11–12, 16, 22; II Samuel 1:6. Contrast with the many nontraditional weapons by which Israel is saved in the prior book of Judges: ox goads, tent pegs, bare hands, an ass' jawbone, torches and trumpets, homemade daggers, etc. Recall as well David's slingshot. (Thanks once again to Prof. Teeter for pointing out this theme.) The message seems to be that because Israel is tempted to be like other nations in relying on military power, Israel's victories must come through unusual means in order to educate them about YHWH's greater—qualitatively different—power.

two kings of Israel passing like ships in the night, a bright contrast appears regarding their respective attitudes to power: Saul will do anything to keep the crown, and David nothing to take it.[122]

For David, the most relevant and indeed sacrosanct fact is not that he himself has been anointed, and is therefore justified in taking what is rightfully his; rather, Saul's status as the currently anointed king is what renders his person inviolable: "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed [משיח יהוה], to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed [משיח יהוה]" (24:7 [24:6]; cf. 26:9, 11, with identical verbiage[123]). Saul is called "Messiah," although rarely in later Jewish or Christian thought is he affiliated with messianism.[124] David, on the other hand, commonly seen as a messianic prototype, demonstrates his worthiness for the role precisely in his unwillingness to seize it.[125] And that unwillingness is not ultimately a matter of respect for Saul, but for YHWH himself: Saul is not just any Messiah, but *YHWH's*

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[122] Which is not to suggest there was no political motive whatsoever in David's decisions of I Samuel 24 and 26. Starting a coup may have backfired, and undermined David's long-term political legitimacy. In this connection, recall his repeated assertions and symbolic actions in II Samuel to the effect that he had nothing to do with the demise of Saul's house (II Samuel 1:17–27; 2:5–7; 3:31–38; 4:5–12; 9:1–13).

[123] While 26:9, 11 clearly repeat 24:7, the verse between, 26:10, challenges the notion that what we have here is the crude repetition of the same story. For in 26:10, David seems to have a learned a lesson from the intervening Chapter 25, the incident with Nabal: "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish." In Chapter 25, in keeping with the larger theme of David being abused by a king, Nabal enjoys the "feast of a king" (25:36) while the true king and his men go hungry in the surrounding hills. And without David having to lift a finger—beautiful and shrewd Abigail calms David's wrath—YHWH himself strikes down Nabal (25:38, using the verb, נג״ף, commonly used in Exodus to describe YHWH smiting Pharaoh). Hence, whereas in Chapter 24 the rationale for not dispatching Saul is his status as the LORD's anointed, in Chapter 26 the rationale is different: the LORD himself will deal with Saul, as he had with Nabal. Far from some inelegant doubling, therefore, in comparing the chapters we observe the stepwise growth of David the leader, David the king who trusts God ever more deeply.

[124] The Hebrew Bible itself, of course, does not refer to a future king as a "messiah," with the possible exception of Daniel 9:24–6.

[125] Here I differ with Rolf Rendtorff (who follows in the form-critical and cultic-ritual wake of Gunkel and Mowinckel) in seeing psalmic superscriptions relating to David's time in the wilderness as concerned "not with the royal side of the image of David but with the difficulties and dangers which he personally had to withstand." (Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986], 249.) Such a false alternative marginalizes the theological insight that withstanding exilic difficulties while trusting in YHWH is not aloof from the royalty of David, but precisely what constitutes it.

Messiah. So opposed is David on principle to seizing the crown of YHWH's Messiah that the poor

fellow who later, out of fealty to David, does kill Saul and literally takes his crown (ואקח הנזר) is

summarily executed (II Samuel 1:10, 14–16; משיח יהוה is used twice more here of Saul[126]). The

real Messiah, משיח יהוה, will brook no rebellion, no self-assertion, against the LORD.

These two scenes from I Samuel foreground the constitutive paradox of Royal Runaways:

releasing the crown *is what it means* to grasp the promise of God. YHWH may have anointed

David, but either YHWH will enthrone him as well, or he will not be king. Seizing the crown is

simply not an option for David the Royal Runaway. Kingship is not ultimately his or Saul's, any-

ways, but YHWH's; only by acknowledging this does David come to inherit the kingdom.[127] And

a parallel with the Carmen Christi—Song of the Messiah—is thus suggested: so far from grasping

the divine crown, Jesus expresses his worthiness precisely in releasing his claim to it, taking the

form of a slave, and dying in exile. Like David, he must trust God in the face of the impossible,

unto death. Thus, when given an opportunity to force the issue and assert themselves as king,

David and Jesus are at their most kingly: "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take

him by force [ἁρπάζειν αὐτὸν; cf. ἁρπαγμὸν in Philippians 2:6] to make him king, Jesus withdrew

again to the mountain by himself" (John 6:15). This is not a rejection of kingship as such, but of a

particular way of defining and attaining it. Salient here is the curious fact that in both the canonical

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[126] The executed messenger is also an Amalekite, II Samuel 1:13, and his death finishes a task left undone by Saul in I Samuel 15:9ff.

[127] In the Psalter, for example, the kingdom of David seems in some sense to merge with and give way to the Kingdom of God. Gerald Wilson, James Nogalski, and Christopher Seitz have done important work on the historical production and theological narrative of the Psalter, addressing the relationship between the kingship of David and YHWH: Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA.: Scholars Press, 1985); James D. Nogalski, "From Psalm to Psalms to Psalter," in *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate*, eds. Harold Wayne Ballard, and W. Dennis Tucker (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 2000), 37–54; Christopher R. Seitz, "Royal Promises in the Canonical Books of Isaiah and the Psalms," in *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1998).

Hebrew Bible and New Testament, David has the unique honor of being called "a man after YHWH's heart" (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22, with echoes of Psalm 89:21–22 [English 89:20–21], Jeremiah 3:15), and surely this is because, at least in part, the non-grasping David is naturally and deeply beloved[128] of a non-grasping God.

2. Humility and Covenant in II Samuel 6–7 – After YHWH rewards David's faithfulness in exile with enthronement, David does not cease his self-effacing ways, or at least not immediately. The climax of YHWH's recompense to David is the covenant scene of II Samuel 7, and while the interplay in that chapter is often noted between David's determination to build God a house (i.e. a temple) and God's determination to build David a house (i.e. a dynasty), what is interesting for this study is the how this covenant-making scene sits alongside the prior narrative in II Samuel 6 telling of David's extravagant entrance into Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant. In that earlier story, everyone seems to be having a wonderful time, except a certain princess cloistered in her house who finds the whole show—and David's behavior in particular—appalling. The terse exchange in II Samuel 6:20–22 between David and the daughter[129] of the man who would do anything to secure his crown replays many of the themes noted in the prior section. And when those themes are set directly beside the eternal covenant of Chapter 7, a theological argument emerges that seems quite similar to the poetic stained glass of the Carmen Christi.

The first thing to notice is how the brief dialogue between David and Michal is really about two different paradigms of *glory*. Michal's first words are מה-נכבד היום מלך ישׂראל (*How the king of*

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[128] דוד; cf. Song of Solomon 6:3, II Samuel 12:25, etc. Jesus is referred to simply as "the beloved" in Ephesians 1:6.

[129] That Michal is בת-שׁאול is mentioned three times in the passage, at II Samuel 6:16, 20, 23.

Israel honored himself today, 6:20), whereas David's last words are עמם אכבדה (*by them* [the female servants] *I shall be held in honor*, 6:22).[130] The literary inclusio signals the theological parameters of the passage, and within this frame the dialogue turns on the question of before whom David had been dancing—slaves or YHWH. The Saulide focuses on the social situation: "…uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servant's female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" (6:20) Notice how attuned Michal is to social stratification: David had danced in a state of undress[131] not just before slaves, but the slaves of slaves!—clearly multiple steps removed from proper royal dignity, at least on a Saulide reckoning. David's rejoinder, however, refuses the premise. He takes a larger, theological view of the situation: "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I will celebrate[132] before the LORD" (6:21). Not only does David thus reframe his own actions *sub specie aeternitatis*, he tacitly reminds Michal that it was just such false notions of glory that removed her father from YHWH's good graces.

David is nothing if not a clever rhetorician, however, and he does not confine himself to rebutting Michal's reading of the situation. Ironically, he *affirms* the core of her argument—"you have made a fool of yourself!"—and pushes it even further: "I will make myself yet more contemptible than this [ונקלתי עוד מזאת], and I will be abased in my eyes [והייתי שפל בעיני]" (6:22). One

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[130] The same Hebrew root, כב״ד, is regularly translated as either "glory" or "honor."

[131] חגור אפוד בד (*wearing a linen ephod*, 26:14), David's attire also recalls that of the man who anointed him (Samuel is חגור אפוד בד in I Samuel 2:18), and contrasts sharply with someone like Gideon, who recuses himself and his family from kingship (Judges 8:23) while making a *golden* ephod for himself (8:27) and naming his son "my father is king" (אבימלך, Abimelech; Judges 9:1ff). David's (lack of) attire is thus threaded in with prior thematization of leadership in general, and kingship in particular. (A linen ephod is also, of course, priestly attire: I Samuel 22:18. The priestly aspect of David will be revisited briefly in the fourth case study.)

[132] שׂחקתי, lit. "play, laugh, joke," often with sensuous overtones (e.g. Genesis 26:8, where another window-looker spies Isaac מצחק with his wife [שׂחק being a by-form of צחק]).

of the terms here, קל״ל, has nuance. On the surface, David is inverting Michal's appeal to a king's

proper *weightiness* (כב״ד, *glory*, *honor*) by reveling in his own *lightness* (קל״ל, *insignificant*, *con-*

temptible). Yet the term has also associations of *curse*, and given the prevalence in the passage of

its opposite, *bless* (בר״ך, 6:11, 12, 18, 20), he seems also to be gesturing toward some more extreme

self-degradation. At any rate, he brings the irony home with this final statement: "But by the female

servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor [אכבדה]" (6:22). When Michal

thus accuses David of being אחד הרקים (*one of the* lit. "*empty-folk*," 6:20), he replies, "Yes! That is

precisely what I am, and will become even emptier!" But he has not thereby ceded the deeper point

about his so-called inglorious conduct. On the contrary, he has flipped it on its head: this *is* glory.

For her failure to recognize this, Michal will be cursed with her own terrible (and literal) emptiness:

"And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death" (6:23).

It is precisely after this episode that YHWH informs David through the prophet Nathan: "I

will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth" (7:9). Just as God had

informed Abraham that his name would be made great on the heels of the name-making ways of

Babel, now directly on the heels of Saulide aggrandizement God informs David that his name, too,

shall be made great; typologically, the transitions between Genesis 11–12 and II Samuel 6–7 are

making a similar point. And such a transition between II Samuel 6 and 7 is not only thematic, but

discernible on literary grounds: as David informs Michal that he has been chosen נגיד על-עם יהוה

על-ישׂראל (*prince over Israel, the people of the LORD*, 6:21), so God confirms to David that he is

indeed נגיד על-עמי על-ישׂראל (*prince over my people Israel*, 7:8). The locutions are nearly identical,

suggesting that comparison between the two stories is encouraged. At the same time, however, the

covenant scene of Chapter 7 looks well beyond David's most recent act of humility in Chapter 6,

and reflects on his larger life story: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture,

from following the sheep…" (7:8). In different language, this makes the point David had made so

trenchantly to his pedigreed bride in Chapter 6: the humble path is the one YHWH honors.

For anyone hearing such narratives with New Testament ears, echoes are obvious of another "King of the Jews" offering sacrifices on Mount Zion, shamefully disrobed,[133] honored by

peasants and despised by the Jerusalem elite.[134] Instead of David's שׂח״ק, *play*, however, the Passion recalls more the שׂח״ק, *mockery*, of a Jeremiah: הייתי לשׂחוק כל-היום (*I have become a laughingstock all the day*; Jeremiah 20:7). Jesus is not telling jokes, but has become a joke—the I.N.R.I.

placard posted above the cross by Roman soldiers,[135] etc.—although New Testament writers are

as capable of theological irony as David, turning a taunt on its head. For in the same way that a

marquee moment of David's career in Jerusalem was marred by disgrace, and yet with such a one

did YHWH choose to make his eternal covenant, so the marquee appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem

was marred with disgrace, and therefore not only does he find divine favor, but he is the one early

Christians saw as the culmination of the YHWH's eternal covenant with David. The joke is

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[133] Cf. the nudity of Eden (i.e. Adam typology), as well as Isaiah's haunting phrase, הערה למות נפשׂו (lit. *he exposed* [lit. *denuded*] *his soul unto death*, Isaiah 53:12). In her discussion of the "studious dethronement" and "inversion of kingship" in Jesus' death, Fleming Rutledge writes: "We need to exercise our imaginations to understand how nakedness, in particular, shamed the victim. Thomas Cahill, in his little book about Jesus, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*, makes the incontrovertible point that sexual humiliation and shaming would certainly have been part of the ritual leading up to the crucifixion, as surely as it was in the Abu Ghraib prison scandals of the Iraq War. […] Cahill's vivid descriptions of a crucified person are to the point: 'a pitiable, shuddering worm of a man,' a 'comic gargoyle.' He makes a particularly insight comment on Jesus' identity precisely *as a Jew* in his death. He evokes the specifically Jewish aspect of Jesus' shame, with his 'silly little circumcised penis' on show for mockery by the uncircumcised Roman soldiers and passersby. Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1999), 107–8." Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 96.

[134] Note as well the shared emphasis on women: handmaidens and Michal in II Samuel 6, and the exclusive presence of female disciples at the crucifixion (save the beloved disciple [John 19:26], who seems to have had connections with the Temple authorities [18:15–16], and therefore may not have feared for his safety like the other male disciples).

[135] Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, John 19:20 and parallels. An obvious mockery of Jews by their imperial overlords.

ultimately on those who posted the I.N.R.I. placard, and for the same theo-logic David had to teach

Saul's daughter: *this is* how a king of Israel acts, because *this is* YHWH's idea of glory.[136]

It is not insignificant, therefore, that glory is the punchline of the Carmen Christi as well,

the telos toward which the poem as a whole drives as it seeks to reeducate the Philippians about

their penchant for κενοδοξία, *empty glory* (Philippians 2:3): contrary to expectations, the kenotic

shamefulness of the Messiah's incarnation, crucifixion, and elevation are εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός,

to the glory of God the Father (2:11). This is not a denunciation of glory and kingship, per se, but

their redefinition: like David overturning Saulide expectations of how a dignified king ought to

behave, the antidote for the Philippians' empty glory is the true glory of a self-emptying King.

3. Solomon's Coronation in I Kings 1 – If the first Davidic episode was about a refusal to

crown oneself king, and the second about David's comportment at the "enthronement" of YHWH

(i.e. the ark of the covenant finally coming to rest in Zion), this third episode marks the other end

of the story, namely, David's involvement in the coronation of his son and successor. At the start

of a new scroll appropriately titled מלכים (*Kings*[137]), the baton is now passed between two legend-

ary kings of Israel—David and Solomon—and the symbolism of that passing is significant. As we

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[136] Cf. Bauckham: "…the degradation and the death of Jesus are not superseded by the resurrection. It is the degrada-tion and the death, in the light of the resurrection, that constitute the ultimate manifestation of God's glory to the world. They are that, of course, because they are the ultimate point to which the love of God—his *hesed*, his *charis*, his *agape*—can go for our sake. This is the character of God that Moses heard on Sinai now described in visible flesh on Golgotha. The paradox of the cross—honor in humiliation, visible splendor in disfigurement and death—exists to make us reckon with a love that is sufficient to resolve the paradox." Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2015), 60–1; in the chapter "Glory," 43–62.

[137] A theme of which Septuagint translators are even more enamored, titling I Samuel—II Kings as I—IV Kingdoms. For all the leadership handoffs in this literature between not only individuals like David and Solomon, but between the institutions of Judge, Priest, Prophet, and King, this masthead does make a statement about a certain theological center of gravity in Israelite historiography—even if that center is itself relativized through inclusion in a collection called the (Former) Prophets.

shall see, in this new context the same basic contrast is being drawn between humility and arrogance as the marks of true and false royalty in Israel,[138] suggesting I Kings 1 as yet another Hebrew Bible narrative in the conceptual background of the Carmen Christi and its Runaway God.[139]

The first thing to note, then, is the way a canonical reading brings the account into implicit dialogue with Edenic tropes: I Kings 1 emphasizes that Solomon is anointed at גחון (*Gihon*, I Kings 1:33, 38, 45), the name of a river with headwaters in Eden (Genesis 2:13).[140] Meanwhile, a rival coronation is underway at a place called אבן הזחלת, the Serpent's Stone (*Even HaZokhelet*, I Kings 1:9), near a spring called עין רגל (*Ein Rogel*), toponyms recalling the serpent (נחש) of Eden, as well as the stomping *foot* of its curse (Genesis 3:15). Thus, at the beginning of a new scroll are subtle verbal links to the beginning of the entire collection of biblical scrolls, which in turn is a reminder that when early Jewish Christians made reference to Adam, explicitly or (far more often)

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[138] Cf. the study of Gösta W. Ahlström on the ritual humiliation of Israelite kings at their coronation: Gösta W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs* (Lund: Gleerup, 1959). Interestingly, Alström argues that Psalm 89's superscription משׂכיל should not be read to mean "wisdom psalm," but rather as indicating the poem belongs to an annual renewal-of-life ritual. But perhaps these are two ways of saying the same thing.

[139] Like most texts in the Hebrew Bible, I Kings 1 simultaneously contributes to literary and theological patterns within multiple frames of reference. Jerome T. Walsh argues, for example, that viewed as a self-contained unit, I Kings 1:1–2:12a is either a concentric or chiastic reverse symmetry turning on several scenes in David's chamber at 1:15–37. (For Walsh, reverse symmetry proceeds ABA', whereas forward symmetry is ABA'B'; concentric indicates a single unit at the center of the pattern, ABCB'A', whereas chiastic means two units at the center, ABCC'B'A'). Within the wider frame of reference of I Kings 1–11, however, the same passage is now A. to the A'. of 11:26–43: in A. the prophet Nathan orchestrates the enthronement of Solomon, and David dies, whereas in A'. the prophet Ahijah predicts the enthronement of Jeroboam, and Solomon dies. And in the still wider parameters of I and II Kings taken altogether, the united monarchy in the opening scenes of I Kings contrasts with the exile at the end of II Kings: "[T]he whole story portrays the progressive disintegration and dissolution of Israel, from empire to two petty kingdoms to the eventual destruction of each."[139] All this goes to make the usual disclaimer about multiple good readings, etc. See Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001), 7–11, 25–6; ibid, *1 Kings*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 151. Within this widest frame of I–II Kings, Walsh identifies the pivotal scene as the transition of prophetic office between Elijah and Elisha in II Kings 2. He writes: "Note how 2 Kings 2 takes place *between* reigns, not *within* a specific regnal account. Just as crossing the Jordan removes the departure of Elijah from ordinary space (represented by the guild prophets who remain on the hither bank), so Elijah's departure takes place in a time outside of ordinary time. Hidden beneath an apparent historical account of kings and kingdoms lies the deeper story, the real story, of which political vicissitudes are merely epiphenomena; the story of the word of God and its bearers, around whom the true story turns." Ibid, 24–5.

[140] Sacred sites were often affiliated with springs, as in, e.g., Ezekiel 47.

implicitly, the analogy was likely not restricted to Genesis 1–3. Moreover, as will be seen, and beyond any of the linguistic markers noted here, the narrative of I Kings 1 suggest something of an Edenic ordeal.

The ordeal begins this way: "Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself [מתנשׂא], saying, 'I will be king' [אני אמלך]" (I Kings 1:5). The young man we thus meet is clearly ill-named, since אדניה (*Adoniyah*, "YH[WH] is my Lord") seems to have no idea what sort of Lord YHWH really is, or desires Israel's kings to be. Contrary, for example, to the sober and studious figure in Deuteronomy 17, whose heart is not lifted up above his brothers, Adonijah is politically ambitious on the pattern of Abimelech and Absalom before him (Judges 9, II Samuel 14–15), throwing a sacrifice-catered festival for Judean notables (including his brothers, sans Solomon) in order to announce his ambitions to the throne as a *fait accompli*. His father the king is not even dead yet, a detail generally considered relevant for successions; yet nothing will deter this princeling, and he has access to all the livestock, chariots, and political connections to put on a good show of legitimacy.

David, meanwhile, is an old man now and frail, lying in a virgin-warmed bed. Outside, rivalries and rumors stir around the pressing matter of who will sit next on David's throne, but the king himself seems unaware and unconcerned about any such machinations.[141] If he laudably took little initiative in his own enthronement, David now takes culpably little initiative in the enthronement of his successor. Or so it seems as the story begins. Even when Nathan puts Bathsheba up to informing David about the Adonijah problem, the reader is put on guard, since this is not the first

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[141] David's lack of knowledge is a theme of the story: he "does not know" (לֹא יד״ע) in 1:4, 11, 18, 27.

time David has been politically ambushed by a shrewd woman meddling in royal family affairs;[142] Joab had put the woman of Tekoa up to a similar task in II Samuel 14:1–20, and Absalom's rebellion ensued. Now Joab—who eventually opposed Absalom for burning down his field, and slew him in the oak—is backing Adonijah, and the old king may have recalled the drastic consequences of his former passivity. Although apparently permissive with Adonijah as he had been with Absalom ("His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, 'Why have you done thus and so?' He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom," 1:6), David now rouses himself to action—to one last demonstration of why he, David, although a lackluster father and now well beyond his prime, is still a man after YHWH's heart.

When David learns of Adonijah's disloyalty, and also is reminded of his oath to Solomon, his response begins by recalling why he himself had been able to become king in the first place, and was not destroyed by Saul: "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity…" (I Kings 1:29). Framing the present crisis within YHWH's past faithfulness, David thus proceeds to choreograph for Solomon a ceremony that in ways recapitulates his own unexpected selection as king. For the setup was already similar: as David was slighted by not being invited to Samuel's visit in I Samuel 16, so Solomon is now uninvited to Adonijah's event. And

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[142] Nor is this the only time Bathsheba herself is approached by a powerful man seeking a favor (and I am not speaking of the sexual favors of II Samuel 11). In the very next chapter, Bathsheba will be the courier of a request from Adonijah himself for the marital hand of Abishag—David's virgin caretaker whom Bathsheba herself karmically finds in David's inner chamber (1:15; cf. Absalom's appropriation of David's concubines in II Samuel 16:20–22). And the ironies surrounding Bathsheba are further thickened in that 1) whereas Nathan had formerly accused David about his actions with Bathsheba and notified David that their illicitly-conceived child would die, Nathan now teams up with Bathsheba to spur David into saving the life of their second child together, Solomon (1:21); 2) her name, the meaning of which is "daughter of the *oath* [שׁבע; alternatively "seven" as a lucky number]," seems to contrast with her matriarchal rival, Haggith [חגית] mother of Adonijah (1:5; 2:13), whose name means something more jovial like "[born on a] feast day." Given Bathsheba's reminder to David about his oath to Solomon (1:17) at the very moment the son of Haggith is throwing a party for himself, the contrast seems more than coincidental. (Perhaps the location of Solomon's anointing at גחון is also subtly overturning the rival ceremony of the son of חגית?) Wordplays aside, matriarchal maneuvering in the story recalls the kingmaking role of the mother's family in Abimelech's putsch (Judges 9:1–3), as well as Sarah's advocacy for Isaac (Genesis 21), Rebecca's for Jacob (Genesis 27), etc.

as David was anointed בקרב אחיו (*in the midst of his brothers*, I Samuel 16:13), so Solomon is to be anointed in a context of brotherly rivalry. Hence, if David's position at that early point had been markedly humble—an expendable shepherd—so Solomon's public career should begin in a similar spirit.

Consider David's פרדה (*pirdah*, female mule; I Kings 1:33, 38, 44) mentioned three times in the story. In keeping with the spirit of Deuteronomy 17—the letter of which Adonijah violates with his many horsemen—it seems important to the biblical narrator that Solomon rides this humble animal, for it makes a deeper statement about the king who sits not just on such an animal but on the throne of Israel: in contrast to monarchs who amass horses and depend on traditional military power (Deuteronomy 17:16), Israel's monarch is affiliated with less impressive beasts because he relies on a different sort of power. And not only do the many horses of Adonijah contrast with the single mule of Solomon, but the abundance of oxen, cattle, and sheep sacrificed by Adonijah (I Kings 1:19, 25) is all the more conspicuous for the lack of any sacrifices in Solomon's ceremony. Later on, of course, and like Adonijah, Solomon will show himself capable of sacrificing "so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered" (I Kings 8:5). Yet this was to commemorate the ark's entrance into the Temple, exactly on par with David's extravagant sacrifices in II Samuel 6 to honor the ark's entrance into Jerusalem. Adonijah's conduct, in this light, could not be more antithetical to that of David and Solomon: rather than making sacrifices in honor of the LORD, he is making sacrifices in honor of himself.

Such self-honoring ways are implicitly denounced by other contrasts in the story. For example, whereas Adonijah exalts himself (מתנשא) with the proclamation "I will be king" (אני אמלך, 1:5), Solomon remains wordless through the whole proceedings, a wise silence from one who will soon request from YHWH a לב שמע, a *listening heart* (I Kings 3:9). And while Adonijah and

Solomon both *descend* for their ceremonies, Adonijah is described with the active ירד (*he went down*, 1:25), whereas Solomon is passively brought down by others: והורדתם אתו (*bring him down*, 1:33). In a symbolic descent and ascent of anointing and enthronement, Solomon is passively brought down, then actively leads upward (ועליתם אחריו, *You shall then come up after him*; 1:35); first he is led, then he leads. Adonijah wants only to lead. Further, that Solomon must go *down* for the anointing at all before ascending to sit on David's throne seems to capture something of the Royal Runaway saga of David himself. For although many years transpired between David's anointing and enthronement—an interim of much suffering, uncertainty, and betrayal—the "down then up" ceremony that David designs for Solomon compresses the same symbolism: the occupant of David's throne must be a man who has been brought low. And at that low point the people are to proclaim: יחי המלך (literally, *May the king live!* 1:34, 39). The usual translation of this Hebrew phrase as "*long* live the king" has the tendency to obscure its more potent imagery of death and resurrection. The subjunctive desire that the king live a long time (as in 1:31, spoken to an elderly David: "May my lord King David live forever!" יחי...לעלם) is derivative of the more basic desire that the king live at all. For that desire to make any sense, the king's life must hang in the balance.[143]

Because Solomon is willing to undergo such symbolic peril, the very real peril to his life (cf. 1:21) at this point is reversed, and transferred to Adonijah: Solomon is anointed with oil from the קרן (*horn*, 1:39), and Adonijah is forced to cling to the קרנות (*horns*, 1:50–51) of the altar, begging for his very life; Joab will soon do the same (2:28). Whereas Adonijah had זב״ח (*sacrificed*, 1:9) to his own honor, such ambition is now humbled at the real מזבח (*altar*) of YHWH. And his

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[143] Note that I Kings 1 comes directly after II Samuel 24, when David actively puts his own life in the balance.

well-earned terror contrasts with the joy after Solomon's anointing: the humble ceremony of מש״ח (*anointing*, 1:34, 39, 45) leads to a people שׂמחים שׂמחה גדולה (*rejoicing with a great joy*, 1:40).

The theology of the scene goes deeper still. When Adonijah is informed by one Jonathan (who, like the Jonathan of Saul's family, is harbinger of Davidic triumph) that all the hooting and trumpets are from Solomon's coronation, we encounter an instance of the Hebrew Bible's "chronological twisting whereby the order of presentation does not conform to the order of occurrence."[144] For only now are we told a theologically important detail that has already transpired: "Moreover, the king's servants came to congratulate our lord King David, saying 'May your God make the name of Solomon more famous than yours [...את־שם שלמה משמך], and make his throne greater than your throne" (1:47). This new revelation[145] serves to connect the narrative of I Kings 1 to former accounts of YHWH making great the name of his elect: Abraham (Genesis 12:2) and David himself (II Samuel 7:9). Without promoting their own names, Abraham and David, and now Solomon too, find their names made great by YHWH. Different contexts, but the same Edenic conflict: to exalt oneself or not? New Adam figures choose *not*, and it goes well with them.

Regarding the Carmen Christi, then, and its *new* New Adam: while it is impossible to know how much Paul's readers knew of the Jesus traditions in the gospels, it is highly unlikely that their knowledge is summarized by the four epistolary chapters that can be read through in ten minutes. Rather, I find it quite plausible to assume that those who read of Christ's cosmic descent and ascent

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[144] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 235. Note the triple occurrence of וגם (*and also*, 1:46, 47, 48) in Jonathan's speech, as if breathlessly reporting additional, previously unheard-of happenings.

[145] In I Kings 1:37, Benaiah had said, "[May the Lord] make [Solomon's] throne greater than the throne of my lord King David"; but the new element in 1:47 is the *name*. Cf. the locution צו״ה נגיד על ישׂראל in 1:35, which was already seen to connect II Samuel 6:21 with 7:8 (this latter verse lacks צו״ה, but comes in the context of *command*); these passages seem to be in implicit dialogue with each other.

in Philippians 2:6–11 were also aware of Jesus' earthly descent and ascent in the Triumphal Entry, recorded by all four gospels (Matthew 21:1–9; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–38; John 12:12–15). Not provable in any way, to be sure, for the sake of a thought experiment let us just imagine that the Triumphal Entry was common knowledge. If so, then in striking ways the story resembles the coronation of the Davidic scion Solomon: Jesus 1) rides a donkey, 2) passes the Gihon Spring, 3) is greeted with cries of "Hosanna to the Son of David!", and 4) immediately throws people out of the Temple, an exercise of royal authority similar to Solomon's immediate elimination of rivals, including at the altar itself (I Kings 2).

Two of the gospels (Matthew and John) also quote in this context the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation [נושׁע, lit. *saved*] is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."[146] With the context of I Kings 1 in mind, this prophetic statement may be regarded not only as prospective of a future king, but retrospective as well, reflecting on the idyllic monarchical period under Solomon, the great king coming on a humble beast. Given that the Zechariah passage has the peace of the nations in view, and the worldwide rule of Israel's king, its portrait of a humble ruler suggests that global dominion is not achieved with the usual pomp and power of the successive empires ravaging Israel, but in a much stranger way. For example—and harkening back here to Chapter 2—the great empire of Egypt,

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[146] Matthew's midrashic portrait of this prophecy accounts for the *two* animals in Zechariah's prophecy, the donkey and the colt; Matthew 21:1–7. Regarding equine matters more broadly, I am not such an ass as to be unmindful of the difference between a mule (as in Solomon's coronation) and a donkey (Jesus' entry to Jerusalem), a mule being the offspring of a donkey and a horse. My understanding, though, is that horses were the gold standard for military purposes in biblical cultures, like tanks, and that donkeys and mules were thus united in being of lower usefulness, status, and economic value. Thus, the very next verse in the Zechariah passage (9:10) contrasts the king's donkey with horses of war: "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

with its formidable army of horses and chariots, met its match when a man humbled in the desert returned to the land of his birth by donkey (Exodus 4:20; cf. the demise of Egyptian horses at 15:1, 19, 21). Perhaps the coronation of Solomon, then, is itself in some sense a retrospective as well, modeled on the man to whose writings David urges his son to devote himself: "Be strong and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the LORD your God…as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn" (I Kings 2:2–3).

Such a connection between the Carmen Christi and I Kings 1, however, does not rely on assumed knowledge of Jesus' (un-)Triumphal Entry.[147] The comparison hinges, rather, on the Adam typology in both the Carmen and Kings, which itself is less a matter of verbal cues and more about thematic shape. The pastoral situation in Philippi to which Paul is responding has to do with the age-old temptation of exalting oneself (2:3, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves"), and the corrective story he tells of Jesus as New Adam captures the thematic more slowly developed in I Kings 1: assertive self-exaltation leads to death, and trusting humility to life. Paul stands in a long line of Jewish writers who find contextually-diverse ways to make this same basic point, although his innovation is to claim that these things are so because they flow from the mysterious internal life of Israel's God. The connection between humility and life goes all the way to the bedrock of reality for Paul, and is not ephemeral but eternal. For while Solomon's embodiment of the ideal was short lived—his

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[147] Genuine "Triumphs" in Mediterranean antiquity required parading captured enemy troops and much fanfare, as memorialized in monuments such as the Arch of Titus in the Roman Forum. That arch—as a convenient example—celebrates the deification of Titus and the Roman victory in the Jewish revolt of 66–73 CE with a massive frieze of Jewish prisoners carrying a menorah into captivity; it was likely built by Jewish slaves and funded by plundered Jewish gold. It is only with thick irony, then, that one can speak of the "Triumphal Entry" of Jesus, as it was anything but. If triumphal entries advertised completed acts of salvation, "Hosanna" (הושׁע-נא) was a plea for help, the cry not of a people saved but a people in need of saving (see Psalm 118:25). The common appellation thus makes the scene border on the farcical, although it does remain useful since—as with Royal Runaways typology in general—it begs the deeper question of what "triumph" really is, calling into doubt just those exploits and symbols reflexively regarded as royal.

heart turned aside after kingly temptations of flesh and power, and he failed to pass along proper humility to his son Rehoboam (see discussion of I Kings 12 in Chapter 2)—the figure in the poem of Philippians 2 is eternally long-lived, the "Son of David" through whom early Christians believed they could truly say of the legendary David, יחי לעלם.[148]

4. *The Chronicler's David* – A consideration of David vis-à-vis the Carmen Christi would be incomplete without consideration of his portrayal in the canonical capstone work of Chronicles (in the Hebrew ordering). In many ways this last snapshot of David is the most important, since it shifts our focus from *what* to *how*: from discrete elements of David's story that may foreshadow the kenotic theology of the Carmen Christi, to larger methodological issues of how Second Temple Jews constructed David literarily and theologically, and how this in turn was of vital importance to Israel's sense of identity, history, and destiny. For not only does history essentially begin with David in Chronicles (nine chapters of genealogy shifting into narrative in the final moments of Saul's life) and unfold in a Davidic paradigm (subsequent kings assessed according to their conformity or deviance from his model[149]); the person of David in Chronicles is also like some

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[148] The death and physical decay of David is emphasized in Paul's speech in Acts 13: "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption" (13:36–37). The death of David—not only physically, but also in the larger sense of the collapsed Davidic dynasty—thus becomes a theological problem that early Christians regarded as in need of solving, and achieved by the resurrection of Jesus. In this context of theological reflection on the fate of David, cf. von Rad's perceptive comment on Judges, with application (I take it) to the era of the monarchy as well: "The one who was a special instrument of Jahweh's will in history falls into sin, degradation, or some other disaster. […] Behind these narratives lies, it would seem, the unspoken question, where is the one who serves his people as deliverer not merely on one occasion alone?" Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Volume I: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 329.

[149] II Chronicles 17:3; 28:1; 29:2; 34:2–3; carrying forward a theme from earlier literature: I Kings 11:38; 14:8; 15:3, 11; II Kings 14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2.

glorified factotum of Israel, drawing into himself royal, prophetic, and priestly functions[150]: like

Moses the prophet he architects the Temple,[151] and like a priest he is involved with sacrifices and

liturgy (songs and instruments).[152] And of course he is that king whose reign overlaps in some

theologically-vital way with YHWH's own rule.[153]

Because, however, Chronicles is such a highly sophisticated (and much-debated) exegeti-

cal work, itself interacting with literature that is already deeply exegetical in nature, it is clearly

beyond the scope of this study to offer a thoughtful reading of "the Chronicler's David and the

Carmen Christi." Rather, what I simply want to note here is the more basic fact that the

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[150] Cf. I Kings 1:32–39, discussed above, where prophet, priest, and king (the *munus triplex* of later Christian theology) converge in the coronation ceremony.

[151] Further: as David is disallowed from building the Temple, so Moses is disallowed from entering the Promised Land (which in a sense is a huge geographical temple).

[152] I Chronicles 15:25–28; 16:7ff; II Chronicles 29:25ff; 35:15; etc.

[153] As one example of how this argument is made, compare I Chronicles 17:14 with its *Vorlage* at II Samuel 7:16, both addressing David's future dynasty. The Samuel text reads: ונאמן ביתך וממלכתך עד-עולם (*And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me*). Chronicles reads: והעמדתיהו [שלמה] בביתי ובמלכותי עד-העולם (*I will confirm him* [Solomon] *in my house and in my kingdom forever*). Whereas in Samuel the focus is on the longevity of *David's* house and kingdom, in Chronicles, via a slight shift in the pronominal suffix, the theology upshifts rather dramatically, and is now about *God's* house and kingdom. Hence, the reason the kingdom of David is so important in Chronicles (and in the Hebrew Bible more generally, although it would take a good deal more work to show exactly how) is precisely because it is implicated in some fashion with the YHWH's rule. Such an argument doubtless raises deeper questions about the nature of history and revelation, and here Chronicles has sometimes been regarded as little more than pious revisionism (the Greek title, ΠΑΡΑΛΕΙΠΟΜΕΝΩΝ, meaning "those things left out," expresses the sentiment well). It is increasingly common, however, to regard the genre of "Rewritten Scripture" as itself a sophisticated argument about historical existence *sub specie aeternitatis*, ushering readers into a way of perceiving the world through the prism of divine providence. Who is to say such an epistemological angle is less "real" than (modernist, empiricist) "facts"? Or why should historical reportage default to journalist modes of selection and arrangement (themselves reliant on subjective decisions) as opposed to liturgical modes? Considered generically, and not as a rival to Samuel and Kings but fully assuming and deepening them, Chronicles offers a theological statement that indirectly yet powerfully speaks to what kind of God YHWH is, and what kind of people Israel is. Still, the matter is enormously complex, and suffice it to say that Christian and Jewish beliefs about revelation, while fundamentally oriented toward extra-textual *events* in the "real world," hinge just as much on inspired reading (*within* the biblical text) as on inspired writing (*of* the biblical text). Cf. here the textual model of Brevard Childs, discussed in Chapter 1. See further Jon D. Levenson, "The Contrast Between the Bible's Idea of History and the Modern Idea," *Mosaic*, online, 13 August 2018; ibid, "The Sources of Torah: Psalm 119 and the Modes of Revelation in Second Temple Judaism," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 559–74; ibid, "Divine Revelation and Historical Criticism: A Review Essay," *Modern Judaism - A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 37, no. 3 (2017): 392–402. Many thanks also to Prof. Teeter for helping me think through these and related issues in many courses, assignments, articles, conversations, etc.

Chronicler—functioning by turns as what we might call an historian, exegete, compiler, midrash-ist, prophet, artist, and theologian—sees fit to transform and typologize David in multiple ways, the Davidic monarchy becoming central to the Chronicler's vision of YHWH's purposes in history. Why is this so important? Because by this point in the study it might naturally be asked whether I am not reading far too much into the six brief verses at Philippians 2:6–11. Surely there is not *that much* going on in the conceptual and exegetical background of the Carmen Christi, is there? Has this not become an exercise in Christian eisegesis (or "I see Jesus") rather than Second Temple exegesis? I have asked myself this question numerous times, honestly. Perhaps the argument has been pressed too far for a historically critical study? Fundamentalist and biblicist modes of reading, alas, are all too common, and ironically naïve—or defiantly dismissive—of the historical devel-opment of the very scriptures to which they are so committed. I wish to avoid all such readings. At the same time, as Alexander Samely points out, it remains the case that reading the Bible today (and related literature like Midrash) is a matter of reading a history of Jewish reading.[154] The ques-tion of how *we* read must be filtered through the historically prior question of the sorts of reading assumed and embodied in the texts under consideration. Reading the Carmen in a historically ap-propriate manner, therefore, requires perception of the sorts of reading it instantiates, and when the matter is framed like this, a work like Chronicles constitutes an apologia for my own method: I do not believe the argument has been pressed too far, because such profound compressions seem to be *of the essence* of certain modes of Second Temple exegesis (cf. also the above discussion of YHWH's Servant[s]). The Chronicler's David is like[155] Paul's Jesus, in that both are perceived

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[154] Alexander Samely, "Jewish Studies and Reading," in Constanza Cordoni and Gerhard Langer, *Let the Wise Listen and Add to Their Learning: Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 757–90.

[155] I.e. they are not identical. For all his importance, David is nowhere close to dominating Chronicles as Jesus does the New Testament. And the overall atmosphere is quite different: Chronicles finishes on a rather open-ended note of

and presented through similar literary and theological norms: he is that faithful Israelite on whom the many interlocking themes of the Hebrew Bible converge so completely that his destiny, Israel's destiny, the nations' destiny, and even YHWH's destiny become in some sense indistinguishable.[156]

This is an historical description, I emphasize, not theological prescription, although Paul and the Chronicler would likely have understood it in terms of the latter. The salient fact this study must reckon with is that these modes of reading and writing (not to say of praying and worshipping) were *internal* to the scriptures Paul inherited and revered, the scriptures he was at pains through letters like the Epistle to the Philippians to teach Gentiles to revere as well.[157] Influences in this cultural situation, of course, went far beyond the retrospectively canonical scriptures, but a great deal of its literary production (like the New Testament itself) was oriented to them.[158] Hence, what the Chronicler's exegetical David enables us to see is how the Carmen Christi represents one of those moments when Paul shows himself (among other things) a scribal artist in finest form.[159]

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exile overturned (linking directly into Ezra, etc.), whereas the New Testament, although not a purely "realized eschatology," certainly goes *much* further in its claims about Jesus. The point I wish to make here is simply that, while accounting for its internal diversity, the New Testament represents a continuation of exegetical and theological trends that are already perceptive in literature like Chronicles.

[156] Recall here Walter Moberly's discussion of Luke 24, reviewed in Chapter 1. In that New Testament passage Jesus explains his resurrection to the baffled disciples, and the synthetic nature of his own method of reading is emphasized, pulling on each section of the Hebrew Bible: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. […] Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled,'" Luke 24:27, 44.

[157] Just verses after the Carmen Christi he writes of "holding fast to the word of life," 2:16, and later offers a statement which no doubt implicates the Scriptures as well: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about [λογίζεσθε, lit. calculate, analyze, ponder] these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (4:8–9).

[158] Not a new suggestion on my part, of course; among other works see Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2005).

[159] Beyond such "meta"-exegetical consideration, there is one theme (or nexus of themes) in Chronicles that is particularly relevant to the Carmen: David-likeness. While David-likeness in Chronicles (and Kings) is essentially a litmus

3. Conclusion

The case studies in this chapter have attempted to show that the biblical background of the Carmen Christi—an enormously influential text in Christian theology—is not limited to a few passages in Genesis and Isaiah, vital as they are. Rather, in light of literary and theological dynamics of the Hebrew Bible, regarded canonically, those passages are seen as entryways into a robust set of themes spanning Israel's Scriptures, converging on what true and false royalty (i.e. humanity) look like. The Royal Runaway narratives of Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Israel, YHWH's Servant(s), and David were studied to suggest that the Hebrew Bible often mounts a narrative case for the humble and self-giving nature of royalty (implicating power, authority, etc.), thus providing an important conceptual antecedent for the kenotic theology of Philippians 2. Such stories render early Christian beliefs about YHWH's self-emptying in Christ if not logical—it is not "logical" and never will be—then not *a priori* impossible. The way I prefer to frame this is to say that, from the theological perspective of the New Testament, Israel's Royal Runaways developed as they did

test for good or bad rulers, it would be a bit simplistic to say that the monarchs of Israel and Judah either were or were not "like David." Eschewing such purely positive or negative characterizations, the Chronicler offers a more variegated portrait of rulers that hinges essentially on *choice*, and the question of whom the king will *rely* upon and *pursue* (e.g. "[Saul] did not seek guidance from [דר״ש] the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse" (I Chronicles 10:14; cf. 16:11; II Chronicles 12:14; 14:3, 6; 15:2; etc.) Kings often do both in the course of their reign, and are thus neither wholly good nor wholly bad, neither wholly like nor unlike David. Each king in the Davidic line must work out for themselves, regularly, the posture of their heart toward God. Such an active variable of choice (to choose or not to choose YHWH as David had chosen YHWH), through its regular thematization, allows the Chronicler to invite the reader themselves to enter into the Davidic covenant and be faithful to it (cf. Zechariah 12:8ff, Isaiah 55:3, where this sort of "democratizing" move is made). Such an invitation is doubly significant for the Carmen Christi. First, and as seen now several times, the context of the passage has to do with learning to think and choose as Israel's Messiah thought and chose (τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν… οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο… Philippians 2:5, 6) The pedagogy is thus similar to that of Chronicles, a king's example offering guidance on how to think and live. Second, just as readers of Chronicles are themselves invited in some sense into the Davidic covenant, so readers of the Carmen are invited to be part of God's covenant through Christ, in such a way that it makes sense for Paul to say, right after speaking of God as Christ's "Father" (2:11): "…that you may be blameless and innocent, *children of God* without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15; the theme comes through more strongly in other Pauline passages, such as Romans 8:14–17, with similar logic to Philippians 1:29–30). Thus—and to make the sort of claim which it has been the primary burden of this section to justify on historical and exegetical grounds—both the content and context of the Carmen are seen to be analogous in terms of compositional strategy with the capstone book of the Hebrew Bible.

because their point of reference was a Runaway God—a God for whom "being God" and "being King" was never a matter of titles grasped and privileges asserted. It was, rather, about the deeper royal wisdom of self-sacrifice and love given expression in Jesus the Christ.

Beyond Royal Runaway stories, other Hebrew Bible texts could profitably have been studied as background for the Carmen Christi's kenotic theology, particularly the Psalms,[160] as well as the negative evidence of ascendency and destruction rehearsed in texts like Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14.[161] This latter book—Isaiah—has been an exegetical mainstay of Carmen scholarship, and rightly so; its vision of post-exilic restoration, particularly in chapters 40–66, was enormously influential for early Christian reflection, including but well beyond Philippians 2. The Isaianic soil has been ploughed and re-ploughed countless times by Christian thinkers,[162] and still there seems more to unearth: exegetes are increasingly aware, for example, of ways in which the literature of Isaiah offers theological reflection on material in the Torah and Former Prophets (where most

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[160] Consider, for example, a statement like Psalm 118:22: אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פנה (*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone*). Themes of rejection, exile, and vindication pervade the Psalter. David's suffering "I" is also a kingly "I."

[161] The Vulgate famously translates Isaiah's 14:12's הלל ("the morning-star," HALOT) as *Lucifer*, indicative of the demonic interpretations this passage has garnered in much Christian tradition. Regarding the devil, and apropos the the themes of this study, Robert Jenson writes: "[I]f one were to speak more mythologically than even yet I am willing to do, and talk of Satan as a fallen angel, one could say that this is how he fell: he could not take God's big joke on him and the other great spirits. He refused to join Michael and the others in service to those mere animals, those humans down there, whom God impishly and foolhardily proposed to elevate into himself, and in service to whom God proposed to assign the great spirits. […] What ails the devil is that he will not give himself over to be anyone else's object. […] Above all, as God *gives* himself among us, Satan's difference from God is unambiguously exposed. God gives. Satan can only suck reality into the vacuum at his own heart. God plays the great joke of sin and redemption on himself. Satan only has witty defensiveness. It is the sovereign test: When the voice in the night tells me, 'You are hopeless,' is it said with a laugh or a snicker? [… T]he joke is so finally on Satan that he is, at the end, a sad figure. The gospel's laughter is our greatest defense against him." Robert Jenson, "Evil as Person," in *Theology as Revisionary Metaphysics: Essays on God and Creation*, ed. Stephen John Wright (Eugene, OR.: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 136–45. Italics original.

[162] See representative survey in Brevard S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2015).

Royal Runaway stories are found),[163] not to say the Psalms[164] or Daniel.[165] To draw a straight line, then, from Isaiah to Philippians (or to any New Testament text in which Isaiah figures) is to short circuit the theology of Isaiah itself.[166] So while the present study has been unable to dwell at any length with prophetic antecedents to the Carmen Christi, hopefully the foregoing material has not entirely missed what Deutero-Isaiah meant when he said that because of the Servant, "kings shall shut their mouths [עליו יקפצו מלכים פיהם] for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand" (Isaiah 52:15). What was it that these monarchs found so astounding in the Servant, who earns YHWH's favor on account of having "poured out his soul to death [תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו]" (53:12)?[167] I would venture it is something in the realm of the mouth-stopping royal humiliation in the stories of Joseph, Moses, Israel itself, and other Royal Runaways, concentrated in Isaiah's mysterious figure.[168]

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[163] See again D. Andrew Teeter and Michael A. Lyons, "The One and the Many, the Past and the Future, and the Dynamics of Prospective Analogy: The Servant(s) as the Vindication of Moses and the Prophets," in *Isaiah's Servant(s) and the Exegetical Origins of Early Jewish and Christian Identity,* ed. Michael A. Lyons and Jacob Stromberg (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming 2021). Also Jacob Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2011), 77–93 ("Reading Isaiah Holistically"), 107–27 ("Aspects of Isaiah's Theology"). It is not insignificant that stories like David's are found in the Former Prophets, as this canonical placement adds grist to the New Testament's basic prophetic orientation: "…everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished," Luke 18:31, etc.

[164] For the relation of Isaiah and Psalms and their mutual treatment of royalty, see Christopher R. Seitz, "Royal Promises in the Canonical Books of Isaiah and the Psalms," in *Word without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1998), 150–67.

[165] See Andrew Teeter, "Isaiah and the King of As/Syria in Daniel's Final Vision: On the Rhetoric of Inner-Scriptural Allusion and the Hermeneutics of 'Mantological Exegesis,'" in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, ed. Eric F. Mason (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012), 169–99.

[166] See the important study of Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[167] Structurally, Isaiah 52:13–15 is commonly thought to preface the famous passage in 53:1–12. The two texts mentioned here are thus not selected at random, but organically correlated within the biblical text.

[168] Which makes the Servant an example, mutatis mutandis, of the Second Temple exegetical continuum observed in the prior discussion of the Chronicler's David; the New Testament adopts and adapts key aspects of the Servant in the book of Isaiah just as its Servant adopts and adapts prior figures in the Hebrew Bible.

> The servant is a supreme exemplar of motifs associated with exaltation and with what is required for exaltation, motifs in Isaiah as a whole. Greatness […] is consistently construed by Isaiah in the moral and spiritual terms of faithfulness to God's revealed will and the rejection of self-aggrandizement. [… T]he idea of inverting usual priorities of exaltation and superiority lies at the very heart of Jesus' teaching, not least with regard to his own mission and practice.[169]

When, therefore, Paul elliptically asserts that Israel's Messiah had died, was buried, and raised "in accordance with the Scriptures [κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς]" (twice in I Corinthians 15:3–4), a prophetic voice such as Deutero-Isaiah, essential as it is, should not be regarded as a mine for prooftexts to confirm Paul's point, but rather as an exegetical stimulus for immersive and holistic engagement with the entirety of the (then fluidly-conceived) Hebrew Bible.

The one generally agreed upon biblical citation within the Carmen Christi is itself from Deutero-Isaiah, Christ's reception of the divine name in Philippians 2:10–11 couched in terms of the monotheistic affirmation of Isaiah 45:23: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance" (the broader monotheistic stringency of Isaiah 45 is key, not just this verse). In addition to confounding any glib charges that Paul and other early Christians rejected the Jewish belief in one God, what is important here for the theme of Royal Runaways, and especially for its exegetical transmutation in the New Testament, is that there is no easy equivalency to be made between a characteristically humble approach to power and a laissez-faire approach to faith. Just because YHWH may be a "Runaway God" does not therefore mean he is glad for Israel to worship whichever god they may please, as if unconcerned about idolatry. No, among the problems with idolatry is that, in orienting humans to self-aggrandizing deities who project the exact opposite of what it means to be God, it fosters dehumanization and eventual dethronement. Human beings,

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[169] R. W. L. Moberly, "Isaiah and Jesus," in *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2013), 145–179; here 175–6.

according to Genesis 1 and other texts like Psalm 8, are entrusted with responsible oversight of God's world, implementing divine wisdom and justice; when this vocation is distorted by a self-exalting modus operandi that fails to acknowledge human dependence on God, the created order begins to churn powerfully and tragically in reverse—an outcome to which God is opposed.[170] YHWH is not interested, therefore, in abdicating authority as such, but in redefining (better: restoring) the meaning and mechanisms of authority. For if we were to focus exclusively on the self-emptying, obedient Messiah of Philippians 2:6–8, along with precedents for such humbling in the Hebrew Bible, we would be reading only half the story; the other half of the story, Philippians 2:9–11, recounts the unambiguous investiture of authority in the one who thus empties and thus obeys. Kenotic forerunners like Moses and other biblical Royal Runways, we must remember, are revered as leaders and symbols of authority in Jewish and Christian memory, and this paradox forms the theological and imaginative basis for the Christian vision of God, the highest authority of all.

What remains to be discussed is a matter also inalienable from any consideration of YHWH, although since broached in the first chapter it has lingered mostly in the background: love. Returning finally to love—with plenty of exegesis now to prevent it from being a procrustean affair—is necessary because on any Christian theological calculus, matters like authority, obedience, and humility are at best only penultimate. Authority itself is under the authority of something higher, namely, the eternally creative and recreative love of YHWH. So then, and with not nearly as much space as might be desired for the task, the final chapter of this dissertation will now

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[170] Romans 8 is the classic New Testament development of the creation-sized stakes of proper human worship. "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (8:19–21).

attempt to square up to the questions posed at its outset, and latent within its title—Royal Runa-

ways: A Theological Analysis of Love's Kenotic Power.

Chapter Four – From the Love of Power to the Power of Love

1. Introduction

> In *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ*, Fleming Rutledge writes:
>
> The Old and New Testaments give us images—drawn from many sources—making a kaleidoscopic, inexhaustibly rich storehouse from which to draw meaning and sustenance for all times and all generations. No one image can do justice to the whole; all are part of the great drama of salvation. The Passover lamb, the goat driven into the wilderness, the ransom, the substitute, the victor on the field of battle, the representative man—each and all of these and more have their place, and the cross is diminished if any one of them is omitted. We need to make room for *all* the biblical images.[1]

In context, Rutledge is describing (and endorsing) the erosion of certitude in some Protestant circles about all-encompassing "theories of justification" such as penal substitutionary atonement. Biblical figurations of YHWH's faithful love are simply too profuse and variegated to accommodate any single model, she argues, and I agree with her. And the image by which Rutledge describes this abundance of images is itself suggestive: a kaleidoscope,[2] whose technicolored appeal turns

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[1] Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2015), 7. Italics original.

[2] Cf. Dunn: "Clearly here in this kaleidoscope of imagery we see earliest Christianity searching around for the most suitable way of understanding and describing Christ, ransacking the available categories and concepts to find language which would do justice to the reality of Christ. […W]e must avoid oversimplifying solutions. On the one hand a harmonizing synthesis will lose too much that is of distinctive value in the individual presentations. Certainly there is little evidence of such a harmonistic concern among the NT authors themselves […] On the other hand, an attempt to reduce the complexity of NT christology by focusing attention on only one of the formulations or by reducing the lot to some lowest common denominator would be equally misguided [… C]*hristology should not be narrowly confined to one particular assessment of Christ, nor should it play one off against another, nor should it insist on squeezing all the different NT conceptualizations into one particular 'shape', but it should recognize that from the first the significance of Christ could only be apprehended by a diversity of formulations which though not always strictly compatible with each other were not regarded as rendering each other invalid.* At the same time it would be unwise to attempt to hold all the diverse formulations in play at the same time. As Schillebeeckx rightly notes: 'A thoroughly scriptural orthodoxy does not entail conferring upon Jesus simultaneously all the images and titles available.'" Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 266–67. Italics original. Cf. Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 4: "[B]ecause Judaism lacks an overwhelming motivation to deny the pluriform character of the Hebrew Bible in behalf of a uniform reading—such as the christological reading—Jewish exegesis evidences a certain breadth and a certain relaxed posture, both of which are necessary if the Hebrew Bible is to receive a fair hearing." Although Rutledge and Dunn do subscribe to a

on a fractal principle whereby shapes are not haphazardly colliding, but coordinated in ascending and descending hierarchies of symmetry. The images synergize, although to see exactly why and how requires perception of the underlying rules.

This dissertation's study of biblical Royal Runaways has looked at one of the many images contributing kaleidoscopically to early Christian beliefs about Jesus, particularly in the Carmen Christi. A highborn prince divests himself of everything, thereby demonstrating a truly royal heart; YHWH honors such self-sacrifice and faithfulness in exile by exalting the prince beyond his former station. Broadly conceived, this pattern plays out in the lives of several Hebrew Bible notables, and I have tried to understand why it was historically and theologically meaningful for the ancient Israelites telling such stories, as well as for early Christians trying to make sense of Jesus. Yet if—continuing a moment longer with the kaleidoscope analogy—Royal Runaways is what comes into view upon one colorful twist of the tube, I wish in this final chapter to argue that it indexes, in turn, to an underlying reality coordinating Royal Runaway typology with other theologically-vibrant images of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament: *the underlying reality of YHWH's love*. For notwithstanding prudent cautions of exegetical harmonization, it would also distort the biblical witness (canonically regarded, as throughout this project) to maintain as a matter of principle that there are no central principles at all in the Bible. Somewhere between these extremes, a kaleidoscope is an apropos image for its combination of diversity and unity: shapes melting into one another through a riot of colors, and yet all is not chaotic. A fractal logic animates the whole. This

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christological reading, the mode of their reading is comfortable with imagistic pluriformity—indeed, demands it—which in turn does more justice to the Hebrew Bible than many historical Christologies.

last chapter, then, seeks to view Royal Runaways one last time through what I take to be its deeper, animating logic of love.[3]

But is such a connection even there? Humility may be emphasized in Royal Runaway stories; self-sacrifice too, perhaps; but *love*? Where is this found? Well, for a Christian reading of the typology (as opposed to, say, a Buddhist reading that might discern an organizing principle of compassion, or a Muslim reading that might underscore a theme of submission[4]), love is emphasized in the verses directly preceding the Carmen Christi, where it appears not once but twice: "**1**

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[3] To avoid pseudo-scientific vagaries here, we might refresh on what a fractal is: "a curve or geometric figure, each part of which has the same statistical character as the whole" (Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], digital). Self-replicating fractals appear in natural phenomena such as snowflakes, seashells, flowers, trees, river deltas, and spiral galaxies. But to use a more boring example: imagine a small square in the bottom left-hand corner of a larger square, which itself is in the bottom left-hand corner of an even larger square. Although different in size, each square has the statistical character of being comprised of four ninety degree angles. The macro and micro express the same basic pattern. This, then, is the sort of tentative claim I am making about the Bible, and it is certainly not new to me: through a bewildering array of images and genres, the faithful love of God is one consistent theme of biblical literature—leaking through all the cracks, so to speak. (Of course, without a functional definition of what love *is*, this claim is grandiose and nonfalsifiable; the first section of this chapter will therefore seek to develop such a definition, based in Scripture. As we will see, love based in a covenantal relationship is sufficiently complex to accommodate the hermeneutical pluralism discussed above in n. 2.) Cf. Meir Sternberg's concept of "Foolproof Composition" in *The Poetics of Biblical Literature*, 50–57. "[T]he Bible's thrust and forte […] lie in what I call foolproof composition, whereby the discourse strives to open and bring home its essentials to all readers so as to establish a common ground, a bond instead of a barrier of understanding. […] By foolproof composition I mean that the Bible is difficult to read, easy to underread and overread and even misread, but virtually impossible to, so to speak, counterread. [… T]he complexity of representation is inversely proportioned to that of evaluation: the more opaque (discordant, ambiguous) the plot, that is, the more transparent (concordant, straightforward) the judgment," 50, 54. For Sternberg the central message of the Hebrew Bible seems to be God's monopoly on knowledge and power, which he nevertheless shares with humans. In asserting that God's love is more basic still, I am saying such a monopoly eventuates for readers in *hope*, since in love God uses such knowledge and power to save humanity from itself. For Sternberg, the Bible offers something of an epistemic quest, with ordeals of interpretation within and beyond the Bible as the essence of being human: "God shapes the world plot with a view to getting his creatures to 'know' him. Biblical history therefore stretches as a long series of demonstrations of divine power followed by tests of memory, gratitude, inference from precept and precedent, or, in short, 'knowledge,' with further demonstrations staged in reward or punishment. God ultimately figures not only as the norm and source but also as the object and tester of knowledge. And by the narrator's art, the historical tests applied to the fathers in the world are perpetuated in the discourse addressed to the sons as a standing challenge to interpretation," 48.

[4] Frames are all-important, that is, even if always rationally underdetermined. I readily concede love does not naturally bubble up out of most Royal Runaway stories, and that to another reader of these tales it may seem a foreign paradigm. As I tried to say in Chapter 1 and wish to reemphasize here, my analysis is not a view from nowhere, but is self-consciously an exercise in Christian theology. Were this, in turn, set within a wider frame, it might be seen as an instance of what Prof. Volf calls C.P.U.'s – Contending Particular Universalisms (in a conversation about this project; see also his discussion "Religious Exclusivism and Political Pluralism" in *Flourishing*, 137–160.)

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love [εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης], any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind [τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε], having the same love [τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες], being in full accord and of one mind [τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες]" (Philippians 2:1–2). Notice in v. 2 how the paraenetic exhortation to think in a particular way is couched in terms of love, with φρονέω on either side of ἀγάπη. The shared outlook of the Philippians is to be oriented by love.[5] And while the term ἀγάπη may fall out of the picture in the Carmen, the concept does not. As N. T. Wright argues: "Although the word ἀγάπη is not used in the hymn itself (as it is in vv. 1–2), vv. 6–8 might almost serve as a definition of what it means in practice […] The implication is clear: as God endorsed Jesus' interpretation of what equality with God meant in practice, so he will recognize self-giving love in his people as the true mark of the life of the Spirit."[6] The poem in Philippians 2:6–11, with its Royal

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[5] Love and knowledge also intersect in Paul (or letters canonically ascribed to him) at, e.g., I Corinthians 8:1–3; 13:2, 8–10; Ephesians 3:17–19; Colossians 2:2–3.

[6] N. T. Wright, "Jesus Christ is Lord: Philippians 2.5–11," in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1993), 87. For more on gifts in Paul generally, viewed in terms of "grace," see the important recent study of John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2015). Situated within anthropological studies of gift-giving in antiquity, Barclay's thesis seeks to update E. P. Sanders' argument about Judaism as a religion of grace by differentiating between six different "perfections" of grace within Jewish antiquity (superabundance, singularity, priority, incongruity, efficacy, and non-circularity), and by thus disaggregating the various senses of "grace" to offer as well some sense of why Paul has been so variously interpreted on this point through history. An important aspect of Barclay's argument is to highlight the reciprocity inherent in ancient gift-giving, such that there is reason to be "suspicious of the modern (Western) ideal of the 'pure' gift, which is supposedly given without strings attached. We have been able to make sense of the fact that a gift can be *unconditioned* (free of prior conditions regarding the recipient) without also being *unconditional* (free of expectations that the recipient will offer some 'return'). Paul has provided a parade example of this phenomenon, since he simultaneously emphasizes the incongruity of grace and the expectation that those who are 'under grace' (and wholly refashioned by it) will be reoriented in the 'obedience of faith.' What has seemed in the modern world a paradoxical phenomenon— that a 'free' gift can also be obliging—is entirely comprehensible in ancient terms." Barclay, 562–3. Moreover, since language of reciprocity can sound like downgrading grace into mere payment, Barclay is also clear that "benefits, because they expected a return, were normally given discriminately (even if lavishly) to people considered on some grounds fitting or worthy recipients of the gift. […A]lthough gifts could be distinguished from calculable pay or legally actionable loans, there was no inherent conflict between gift and recompense, between the language of 'grace' and the language of worth. It was certainly possible for some gifts to be construed as 'unmerited' (as we have found both in Paul and in some other Jewish literature), but this was not a normal, and certainly not a necessary, connotation of the terms we generally translate as 'grace.' In fact, an unmerited gift from God was theologically problematic, and could threaten the justice and the rationality of the universe. Although Christian theologians (and modern dictionaries) regard it as self-evident that 'grace' means a benefit to the unworthy, in ancient terms this was a striking and

Runaway shape, is (among other things) a demonstration of the love mentioned in Philippians 2:1–2. The kenotic path of self-sacrifice trodden by the Christ, with antecedents and overlaps in the literature of ancient Israel, is not only reaffirming a biblical model of royalty, but also offering a narrative praxis in response to the abstract question "what is love?"

That question has been posed and answered in literally millions of ways,[7] and there is no coming to terms with even a tiny fraction of that material here. Rather, what I intend for this final

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theologically dangerous construal of the concept." 563. Perhaps Barclay presses too hard on the notion that unmerited gifts are problematic in the Bible (cf. Genesis 32:11; English 32:10), but the point is well taken that post-donation requirements and expectations were standard. For this study, the implication of Barclay's work is that the "self-gift" of biblical Royal Runaways, understood in their ancient context, is not disconnected from a social network of recognized worth and reciprocity.

[7] A HOLLIS bibliographic search for "love" in the title of English language publications yields over a million results, without considering literature in other languages or related topics such as caring, altruism, agape, intimate relations, etc. For a broad survey, see Irving Singer's trilogy: *The Nature of Love: Plato to Luther* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2009); ibid., *The Nature of Love: Courtly and Romantic* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2009); ibid., *The Nature of Love: The Modern World* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2009). As a small sample of (often Christian-oriented) scholarship, love is explored at junctures with SCIENCE: Timothy P. Jackson, "The Christian Love Ethic and Evolutionary 'Cooperation': The Lessons and Limits of Eudaimonism and Game Theory," in *Evolution, Games, and God: The Principle of Cooperation*, eds. Martin A. Nowak and Sarah Coakley (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 307–325; John Polkinghorne, ed., *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2001); Thomas Jay Oord, *Defining Love: A Philosophical, Scientific, and Theological Engagement* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Brazos Press, 2010); PUBLIC HEALTH: J. Levin, "A prolegomenon to an epidemiology of love: Theory, measurement, and health outcomes," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 19, no. 1 (2000): 117–136; B. Fehr, S. Sprecher, and L. G. Underwood, eds., *The science of compassionate love: Theory, research, and applications* (Malden, MA.: John Wiley & Sons, 2009); more generally, Harvard's Human Flourishing Program is currently pursuing better empirical measures of love, frequently using proxies such as forgiveness and parental warmth, and examining long-term effects on health and well-being (I have had the good fortune to be involved in this work, publishing a paper with the group on the role of religious traditions and institutions in public health measures); ETHICS: Gene Outka, *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); SOCIAL JUSTICE: Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1981; first published in 1963); Martha Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press: 2015); Jonathan Walton, *A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in Its World for Our World* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox, 2018); SEX: Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros: Part I, A Study of the Christian Idea of Love; Part II, The History of the Christian Idea of Love*, trans. Philip S. Watson (New York, NY.: Harper & Row, 1969; originally published in Swedish, 1930, 1936); Karol Wojtyla (later Pope John Paul II), *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco, CA.: Ignatius Press, 1993; originally published in 1960); more philosophically, Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago, IL.: The University of Chicago Press, 1997; originally published in French, 2003); VIRTUE THEORY: Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco, CA.: Ignatius Press, 2012; originally published in 1986); Jonathan R. Wilson, *Gospel Virtues: Practicing Faith, Hope & Love in Uncertain Times* (Eugene, OR.: Wipf and Stock, 1998). In Christian THEOLOGY, love obviously plays a central role. Beyond patristic classics like Augustine's *Confessions* and *De Trinitate*, scholastic landmarks like Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* (see discussion on love Part II, Questions 23–27), and classical mystical writings (for sampling, see Bernard McGinn, ed., "Section 8: Love and Knowledge," in *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* [New York, NY.: The Modern

chapter is listening closely to three theologians whose writing on love helps us perceive key aspects

of the Royal Runaway paradigm: Jon Levenson, Martin Buber, and Martin Luther. Their respective

arguments will not build upon one another sequentially, but simply highlight different aspects of

the connection between Royal Runaways and love. Before proceeding, it will be helpful to review

where we have been in the prior three chapters, refreshing points of contact for this final inquiry

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Library, 2006], 251–80, including entries from Bernard of Clairvaux, Nicholas of Cusa, and the anonymous work *The Cloud of Unknowing*), several modern analyses of love are profound: G. W. F. Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971; written in the 1790s), 205–308; see Alice Ormiston's argument that love remains central in Hegel's later work: Alice Ormiston, "'The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate': Towards a Reconsideration of the Role of Love in Hegel," in *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 35, no. 3 (2002): 499–525; Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong (New York, NY.: HarperCollins, 2009; originally published in 1847); see influential critiques such as T. W. Adorno, "On Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Love," in *Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung / Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 8, no. 3 (1939): 413–429, and defenses such as M. Jamie Ferreira, *Love's Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard's* Works of Love (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press, 2001), and C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love: Divine Commands and Moral Obligations* (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press, 2004); Reinhold Niebuhr, "Justitia Originalis," in *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996; originally published in 1943), 265–300; Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of God: Church Dogmatics Vol II, Part I.* §28, "The Being of God as the One who Loves in Freedom," trans. T. H. L Parker, W. B. Johnston, Harold Knight, and J. L. M. Haire (New York, NY.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 257–321; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone Is Credible*, trans. D. C. Schindler (San Francisco, CA.: Ignatius Press, 2004; originally published in 1963); cf. Balthasar's *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (San Francisco, CA.: Ignatius Press, 2005; originally published in 1970), wherein love and kenosis are developed at length, the Son's obedience of increasing economic distance depicted as coincident with increasing immanent intimacy; Benedict XVI, *God is Love: Deus Caritas Est* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006). Other lesser known works include: Emil Brunner, *Faith, Hope, and Love* (Philadelphia, PA.: Westminster Press, 1956); Werner G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love* (New York, NY.: T&T Clark International, 2010); Thomas Jay Oord, *The Nature of Love: A Theology* (St. Louis, MO.: Chalice Press, 2010). Love also figures into theological subfields such as THEODICY: John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (New York, NY.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; originally published in 1966); EPISTEMOLOGY: N. T. Wright, "Resurrection and the Epistemology of Love," "Knowing and Loving," in *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (London: SPCK, 2019), 205–214; Alan Jacobs, *A Theology Of Reading: The Hermeneutics of Love* (Boulder, CO.: Routledge, 2001); Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays On Philosophy and Literature* (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press, 1992). POPULAR interest in love is also apparent from pithily-titled works such as *New York Times* bestsellers: Bob Goff, *Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World* (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson, 2012); Francis Chan, *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed By a Relentless God* (Colorado Springs, CO.: David Cook, 2013); Rob Bell, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (New York, NY.: HarperOne, 2011); also always popular, although less recent, is C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves: An Exploration of the Nature of Love* (New York, NY.: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012; first published in 1960, and cf. Lewis' scholarly work *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* [Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 2013; originally published in 1936]). Such a profusion of definitions and applications of love—and the above, I emphasize again, is a small sample of much larger conversations—demonstrates three things: 1) the topic has huge appeal; 2) it is hugely complex; 3) the discussion of love in this chapter is narrow indeed.

into what Royal Runaways, as a multiform typology both inside and beyond the Bible, may teach about the transition identified in the chapter's title: from the love of power to the power of love.

"Chapter 1: Introduction to Royal Runaways" broached theoretical issues in the background of this project: the fundamentally narrative reality of human individuals and societies, as well as the particular narrative of Royal Runaways as it appears across time and culture: Siddhartha Gautama, Francis of Assisi, Mirabai, etc.; various theories about myths and heroes, along with misgivings regarding what often accrues to them, namely, authority; the necessity for comparative and theological analyses, together with the sort of comparative reading warranted by a canonical approach to biblical literature. (I forwarded no arguments of my own through these discussions, only reviewed important theoretical contributions.) Regarding love Chapter 1 mostly demurred, beyond a brief assessment of love and authority as correlated by Augustine of Hippo and Oliver O'Donovan, and also a forecast that "love […] is not peripheral but central to what transpires within Royal Runaway stories, an achievement of self-actualization *as* self-forgetfulness and *as* self-gift that enables creative, dedicated service to humanity and God." This final chapter will pick up on and develop that claim.

"Chapter 2: Mosaics of Israel" sharpened the question of Royal Runaways by studying the biblical account of Moses' early life as an Egyptian prince and then an exile in Midian, comparing it with a handful of ancient Near Eastern and Israelite parallels. In the Hebrew Bible, figures like Moses, Joseph, and David were seen to be favored early in life but rejected by their brothers, enduring a prolonged season of exile and testing before being entrusted with roles of leadership. This same pattern, refigured in various ways, was observed in later writings about Moses' youth, as in Philo, Josephus, and the New Testament. Several sociological explanations for this phenomenon were considered, as well as the paradox that self-denial and suffering are not at odds with the

biblical model of royalty, but intrinsic to it. "To be a monarch," I argued, "is not to be serenely detached from the troubles of the world, but precisely to enter those troubles and lay down one's life in order to secure blessing for others." Such a framework of self-sacrificial leadership will also be revisited in this final chapter.

"Chapter 3: A Runaway God? Christian Kenotic Theology and Its Narratives Sources in the Hebrew Bible" brought the foregoing exegesis into dialogue with one of the most discussed passages in the New Testament, the Carmen Christi of Philippians 2:6–11. That passage's account of Jesus emptying himself, becoming obedient unto death, and eventually being exalted by God, was argued to correspond typologically with several Royal Runaway narratives in the Hebrew Bible. Relations of conceptual foreshadowing and verbal linkages were explored to argue that this influential description of Jesus in Philippians 2 amounts to an early Christian theologization of a regular trope in the Hebrew Bible. Intertextual referents in Genesis and Isaiah are the beginning point for exegeting the Carmen, not the end point, since the scriptures of Israel frequently and creatively showcase the humble, self-denying nature of royalty. The New Testament transposes this insight into the identity of Israel's divine King.

So this is where we have been. Now in this final chapter I will reflect alongside three thinkers who can help us better see the wisdom of love[8] latent within Royal Runaway narratives.

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[8] The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas famously regarded philosophy, "the love of wisdom," as better interpreted "the wisdom of love."

2. Discussion

Jon D. Levenson

Precisely because love is such a slippery word, is it essential to ground our discussion in a solidly biblical sense of the term; and because love as it appears in the New Testament is fundamentally indebted to the Hebrew Bible and the wider literary milieu of Second Temple Judaism, this is where we must again begin. Levenson's *The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism*[9] develops such a biblical portrait of love, and the aspect of his presentation on which I shall focus is love's dynamism. Given the relational context of election and covenant,[10] love in the Bible is not static, but comprised of at least four mutually-informing dualities: it is subjective and objective, involves active and affective dimensions, is both unconditional and conditional, and also private and public. Let us take these dualities briefly in turn.

First, *subjective* and *objective*, and this gestures toward the nuance in the title of the book. Beginning with a discussion of the love that Israel has for God, Levenson soon turns to the love God has for Israel: "So far we have interpreted the phrase 'love of God' only as an objective genitive (the love God receives) and not as a subjective genitive (the love God gives). If true love is reciprocal, though, we should expect to find both types of love represented."[11] At stake here is something more momentous than grammar—namely, the basic mechanism of Israel's faith. Why, one wonders, can Israel be commanded to love God? Because God loved Israel first. The subjective love of God precedes and calls into being the objective love of God: in the biblical story, salvation

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[9] Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2016.

[10] See *Love of God*, 1–58.

[11] *Love of God*, 36.

from Egypt is the *a priori* of Sinai's law.[12] Yet if the love God gives is the miraculous impetus to the relationship, both types of love are requisite for it to thrive.

Second, *active* and *affective*. Because love is often (in common usage) synonymous with the feelings of romance, the side of this duality often neglected is the obligation to act in a particular way, regardless of feelings. Yet such duties are a core feature of covenant: without the duties, the benefits are null. Loving God involves both action and affection,[13] and Levenson draws on psychology to establish their bidirectional influence: "As is well known among social psychologists, behaviors can generate and define emotion […] the empty ritual turns out not to be so empty after all: the practice can regenerate the presence."[14] Moreover, this duality applies to both sides of the covenant relationship. Not only does Israel love God in action and affection, but God loves Israel in like manner: God expresses love in emotionally charged ways (voiced in, e.g., Deuteronomy 32:10–11), but also through instrumental provision (Deuteronomy 32:12–14). In other words, manna in the desert may not be emotionally (or gastronomically) thrilling, but it is an act of love.[15]

Third, and frustrating any rigid legal sensibility, love is both *unconditional* and *conditional*. The election of Abraham and his descendants is gratuitous, yet God's covenant with Israel assumes

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[12] In ancient Near Eastern terms, this *a priori* is the "historical prologue" of a covenant between suzerain and vassal: services rendered by the former in the past are the basis of the latter's fealty in the future. In the canonical Hebrew Bible, YWHW is first spoken of explicitly as a king in Exodus 15:18, יהוה ימלך לעלם ועד (*The LORD will reign forever and ever*), directly after the salvation at the sea.

[13] "It is manifestly artificial to sever the two dimensions, the active and the affective, in the Hebrew Bible." *Love of God*, 91.

[14] *Love of God*, 32, 34.

[15] Asking why God's instrumental love is often overlooked, Levenson considers the sociological findings of Francesca Cancian: in wealthy and western cultures, Cancian argues, love is increasingly identified with classically feminine virtues such as tenderness and emotional expressiveness, whereas in poorer and non-western cultures love tends to be understood in classically masculine virtues of providing practical and financial help. *Love of God*, 17–19. Whether or not Cancian is correct in assigning these virtues to particular genders, it seems to be the case that in popular usage love is affiliated with things like "tenderness and emotional expressiveness."

a structure of reward and punishment, or in the words of Deuteronomy, a choice between life and death.[16] Although this tension may be mitigated or resolved through study of the varying theologies of the antecedent biblical sources, later traditions in dialogue with the canonical text must reckon with a covenantal relationship that is both intrinsically fragile to human failures, yet also upheld by God's undeserved love. Levenson summarizes well: "Israel can violate the covenant; they cannot nullify it. They can divert it from its proper course and invert it against themselves; they cannot terminate it."[17] Or said another way: YHWH's love for Israel may be invariable, but the manifestations of his love are variable, contingent on Israel's love for God.[18]

Fourth, *private* and *public*. As seen several times in this project, in the Bible the identity of all Israel often telescopes into a single individual, while the choices and fate of one person may reverberate out to the whole. This fluidity tends to erode anachronistic distinctions between private and public life (often mapped, by extension, onto "religious" and "political" domains). Such dichotomies were largely false in ancient Israel, meaning the love of God required a duality of private and public dimensions: both a communal undertaking and a personal existential stance. "Not infrequently," Levenson writes, "one hears that attention to one's inner spiritual condition and personal relationship with God are non-Jewish, Judaism being allegedly communal, social, and activist rather than private, solitary, and contemplative. One of the extraordinary aspects of [medieval Jewish philosopher Bahya ibn Paquda's book *Duties of the Heart*] is precisely his concern for *both* dimensions and his keen sense that they are deeply interrelated."[19]

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[16] Deuteronomy 30:19–20.

[17] *Love of God*, 121.

[18] See further n. 5, above, regarding Barclay's *Paul and the Gift.*

[19] *Love of God*, 164. Italics original.

I think of these four dualities of love like coins with a different color painted on each side. When any coin lies on the table, only one color is visible. It would be an error to think the whole coin is painted that single color, yet there would be no way of knowing otherwise. Only when the coin is spun on its end do both colors become visible, and in the balanced blur a new color is born. These four coins of love—subjective and objective, active and affective, unconditional and conditional, private and public—must not rest flat on the table. They must synergistically *spin*, and herein lies one of the values of Royal Runaway stories: presenting love's dualities in dynamic motion.[20] For the liability of invoking "love" is the tendency either for the term to shrink into a strict and idiosyncratic definition, or alternatively, for it to be magnified into an amorphous catch-all. What Levenson provides, by contrast, is a multifaceted definition grounded in scripture and avoiding both errors. If, then, as suggested earlier in this chapter, Jesus' self-gift on the cross is a definition of love—which I believe it is—such a definition will still be tested against and integrated within a Christian framework. Per the above discussion, the cross might then be seen as *active*, *public*, and—as Christology implicates both sides of the covenantal relationship—*subjective* as well as *objective* love. Such a framework must resort to multiple images in order to communicate aspects of love that are in tension with one another, and among the reasons I take Royal Runaway stories to be so prevalent in history and imagination is their knack, in a deft narrative conjury, to keep multiple coins spinning on the table at once, refusing a spiritual and moral vision of either/or and offering instead a more realistic and captivating both/and.

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[20] Cf. the six "moral foundations" developed by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt (*The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided By Politics And Religion* [New York, NY.: Pantheon Books, 2012], 150–179, 197–216), each of which is a binary: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, liberty/oppression. More classically, recall the sevenfold contrast of virtues (four cardinal, three theological) and vices. Framing moral questions in terms of pairs or alternatives is not novel, although for Haidt and virtue theory such binaries tend to be an either/or affair, whereas the colors of love's coins synergize.

Consider, once again, Moses: his encounter with Yʜᴡʜ at the bush is not restricted to a private emotional experience, but it also energizes public service; his subsequent career will have both active and affective dimensions. From his salvation in the river basket onward, Moses' path may be guided by Yʜᴡʜ's unconditional love, yet he is not beyond accountability, forbidden to enter the Promised Land for wrongdoing.[21] Moreover, Moses will continue to lead Israel after it has become profoundly disadvantageous to him personally; he thus both teaches the obligations of covenant, and more importantly, performs them. In this way Moses' story, seen in light of Levenson's book, reinserts values into love that are often screened out of contemporary accounts: the austere value of duty, for example, or the legitimacy of instrumental love. If love were a matter of good feelings alone, or a personal quest to thrive, Moses would have resigned long before arriving with the people at Sinai! Yet Moses remains resolute in his mission, and in my reading of the story, the capacity for such resolve, vital for any love that lasts, is forged during years of exile as a Royal Runaway. The mediator of the covenant, himself a recipient of Yʜᴡʜ's love, comes to embody a love that is anything but simple or sentimental, and therefore to say "love is on every page of the Bible" is to set aside external definitions of the term and let the Bible teach us what love is.

Martin Buber

Regarding Moses' years of exile, recall the insight of William Propp that his early life as presented in Exodus 2 "seems to adapt a common folkloric pattern: a naïve prince ventures outside the palace to witness the common life and is permanently transformed."[22] A part of Propp's thesis

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[21] Numbers 20:10–13. Cf. Exodus 17:1–7; Deuteronomy 3:25–26; 32:50–52; 34:4.

[22] William H. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, NY.: Doubleday, 1999), 165. Also quoted in Chapter 1, p. 10.

here that I have yet to consider is "witnessing the common life," and it is not an insignificant aspect of Moses' story. It was, after all, an encounter outside the walls of the palace that set in motion his first, solitary exodus from Egypt. In fact, although the impetus to (what we may by shorthand call) kenosis was different for each exemplar considered in this dissertation, the low point of the curve brings each former elite into contact with the down-and-out, the suffering, and the poor. In the following paragraphs,[23] then, I wish to consider the meaning of such contact by turning to the theology of encounter in Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. It should be clarified at the outset that my interest here is not specifically with the valences of rich and poor, "prince and pauper" (I will address this in the next section), but the overall significance of encounter as such. For Buber, as will be seen, any meeting of I and Thou may become an incendiary *moment*, a sort of becoming and/as self-forgetting that results not in annihilation but ontological fulfillment.

On the first page of his short treatise (or extended prose poem), Buber asserts two fundamental attitudes or "primary words" by which humanity approaches the world: I-It and I-Thou. The former signifies the axis of experience between human and object, whereas the latter indicates the axis of relation between human and being. The I interacting with these two axes is fundamentally different, and it is the relational axis of I-Thou that allows one to become fully human, to self-realize: "As I become *I*, I say *Thou*,"[24] writes Buber; "Through the *Thou* a man becomes *I*."[25] These statements function nearly as a précis of Buber's position, for while he develops them at

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[23] Adapted from Ryan Gregg, "The Prince Leaves the Palace: Kenosis as Ontic Fulfillment in Exodus 2 and Beyond," *The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School* 12 (2017): 1–18.

[24] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York, NY.: Scribner Classics, 2000), 2. Italics original.

[25] *I and Thou*, 39.

much length, the core insight is never amended: the I-Thou moment *transforms*. Encounter is the

sine qua non of becoming.[26]

Who exactly is "Thou" for Buber? Is it God? Humans? Someone else? A clue is here: "The

extended lines of relation meet in the eternal Thou. Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to

the eternal Thou."[27] "Thou," then, describes really any being capable of relation, and that the eter-

nal Thou is perceived via a human Thou is a paradigm at home in a Royal Runaway story like that

of Moses, for, circuitous as that story is, there is nevertheless a line to be drawn between Exodus

2:11[28] and Exodus 3:4,[29] between Moses' encounters with a human Thou and the eternal Thou.[30]

Encounter with a human Thou arouses awareness of and access to the eternal Thou; it initiates, but

does not consummate. "The inborn Thou is realized in each relation and consummated in none. It

is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It."[31]

Whereas, for Buber, humans modulate in the awareness of others between being Thou and It, the

eternal Thou is pure Thou, incapable of It-ification. Hence, continued feelings of incompleteness

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[26] I doubt Buber would have seen his position as extending to notions of self-love, self-forgiveness, self-empowerment, etc., as transformation, for Buber, fundamentally requires differentiation between the self and what is other than self. Every individual may simultaneously be I and Thou, yet the latter only as perceived in relation to another I; one cannot, solipsistically, be Thou in relation to oneself.

[27] *I and Thou*, 77.

[28] "One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his brothers and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brothers."

[29] "When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'"

[30] Cf. Benedict XVI: "…love of neighbor is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and […] closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God. […] Love is indeed 'ecstasy,' not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self toward its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God." Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est: God Is Love* (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2006), 20; 9–10. Benedict's overall framework is doubtless not the same as Buber's; I am simply trying to give a sense of how different treatments land in ways at similar conclusions, indebted as they both are to the Bible.

[31] *I and Thou*, 77.

are intrinsic to human relations, for only in relation with the eternal does one realize oneself without remainder. Moses becomes *Moses*, the great leader who brings mighty Egypt to its knees, when he removes his sandals on holy ground.

Notwithstanding such a climax of becoming, knowledge of Thou is, *sensu stricto*, impossible. "Only as It can it enter the structure of knowledge."[32] Here Buber seems almost to have an analogy of temperature in mind, as if only once the incandescence of existential presence has cooled to the empirical contours of an It may anything of that presence be known, and then only in a hardened, essentially modified form. Driving with every similar apophasis toward the humility of curtailed certainties, such an epistemic claim is matched with an assertion about the second-order activity of language. Buber writes about Thou: "You cannot make yourself understood with others concerning it, you are alone with it. But it teaches you to meet others, and to hold your ground when you meet them."[33] In this way relationship with Thou enables one to exist as an individual in community, simultaneously restricting and encouraging communion, separating and joining together. When considering someone like Moses, then, and inquiring into the sort of psychological or spiritual experiences that gave him confidence to stand alone before Egypt and Israel, immersed among them yet resisting their influence, it is possible that such energy is produced by a stabilizing-yet-mobilizing encounter with Thou.

Germane to an analysis of Royal Runaways are also Buber's observations that "the primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being" and "any action of the whole being […] is

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[32] *I and Thou*, 50.

[33] *I and Thou*, 43.

bound to resemble suffering."[34] Saying this primary word is a strenuous act, and such acts require

time to master. At the risk here of allegorizing from Buber to Royal Runaways,[35] I wonder whether

such rigor might account for the trope of an extended season of humiliation and struggle? For these

intrepid individuals—both inside and outside the Bible—undergo much suffering, and Buber in-

dicates a possible reason: in order to position oneself in direct relation to the eternal Thou, all

resistances must be removed, and such removal can only be painful. This costly divestment borders

on kenosis, and indeed, using different language, Buber seems to be approaching the idea with this

remark: "When Thou is spoken, the speaker has no *thing*; he has indeed nothing. But he takes his

stand in relation."[36] Hence, Royal Runaways seem to be nearest God when furthest from material

distractions: the bush erupts for Moses in exile; Abraham discerns the overseer of All while away

from the great city; Joseph interprets dreams in prison; David writes poems in the desert. The

painful years of struggle and solitude are spiritually productive. For while Thou may be encoun-

tered in many contexts, Buber seems to be saying, the definitive interaction occurs when the I has

finally released all things, internal and external, entering at last empty and naked before the Pres-

ence.[37]

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[34] *I and Thou*, 19, 26. The origin of the English term "passion" comes to mind, from the Latin for "suffer, be passive"; the connotation of pain comes through in the related terms "patience" and "(medical) patient." Moreover, activistic notions of finding and following one's passion may belie the passivity of the term's original sense.

[35] Recall from Chapter 2 that Buber wrote a book about Moses, in which he ponders at length the formative impact of Moses' education in the Egyptian courts. *Ich und Du* (1923) was published twenty-three years before *Moseh* (1946).

[36] *I and Thou*, 20. Italics original. Since Buber's "I" does not exist except in relation, the notion of "self-emptying" to achieve relation makes little sense; this is why Buber's framework only "borders on kenosis."

[37] Consider in this connection the much-beloved 23rd Psalm, so mellifluous in both Hebrew and King James English. 23:1–3 speaks of YHWH in the third person, whereas in vv. 4–5 a shift occurs to second person address, as if suffering were a catalyst and pedagogue for prayer: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for *thou* art with me." (Italics mine.) YHWH's presence thus intensifies into direct relation in the extreme context of death, interestingly mirroring the Carmen Christi: another six-verse poem in which God's activity commences at the very moment an Israelite royal figure dies. I am not suggesting direct dependence here, simply observing similar patterns of experience, thought, and language.

This encounter is not benign; it has a shattering effect: "Moments of the Thou appear as strange lyric and dramatic episodes, seductive and magical, but tearing us away to dangerous extremes, loosing the well-tried context, leaving more questions than satisfaction behind them, shattering security—in short, uncanny moments we can well dispense with."[38] This description, again, aligns with Moses' early life, for while it is possible to deconstruct the narrative of Exodus 2 into discrete strands of authorial calculation—a pretext was needed to relocate him from the palace to the desert, so fleeing a murder trial would do, etc.—it seems entirely plausible within the logic of the story that his encounter with the slaves powerfully dislocates Moses from himself, "tearing him away to the dangerous extreme" of Midian. Surfacing here is also a reason why this radical movement often involves a prince: in cultures founded on the principle of monarchic succession, he is the one with most to lose; if a *prince* loses all, the highest becoming the lowest, then other such experiences may be interpreted through it. Royal Runaways is thus, among other things, a narrative template containing and making sense of all-too-human stories of loss. Recursions of suffering find a hermeneutical key when the incarnation of power is shattered.

And yet—yet!—the eternal Thou does not abandon the shattered prince. Far from it: the eternal Thou reassembles and activates the prince in truth, and this truth is a praxis of *love.* For if the human Thou draws the prince towards the eternal Thou, this subsequent meeting is, in fact, a reversal, a commissioning to return to the human Thou in a life of total commitment and responsibility: "Thou appeared to the man out of deeper mystery, addressing him even out of the darkness, and he responded with his life,"[39] Buber writes. "Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou."[40]

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[38] *I and Thou*, 44.

[39] *I and Thou*, 51.

[40] *I and Thou*, 29.

Transcendent awe before that which is beyond language and knowledge is thus accompanied by a sense of ultimate obligation. And because of its grounding in the eternal, the response transcends (i.e. acknowledges but is not limited to) norms of morality, intelligence, and aesthetics: "In the eyes of him who takes his stand in love," Buber says, "and gazes out of it, men are cut free from their entanglement in bustling activity. Good people and evil, wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly, become successively real to him; that is, set free they step forth in their singleness, and confront him as Thou."[41]

Love manifests in an encompassing perception and acceptance of others, and this, I believe, is a spiritual reality behind the motif in Royal Runaway stories of beloved nobodies galvanizing around the kenotic hero, whether it be the slaves in Moses' story, the desert outlaws in David's, or the disciples in Jesus.' The exiled prince welcomes commoners, yet this welcome is sourced in something higher and deeper than politics or altruism: it is sourced in the covenantal God, to whom the Royal Runaway points his followers. In the end, then, Propp's insight is only partially correct, since transformation does not end with the prince, but begins with him. Selfless and contagious, the love to which he bears witness sweeps outward from the one to the many in limitless itera-tions.[42] And maybe this, too, is suggestive of the perennial appeal of Royal Runaway tales across

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[41] *I and Thou*, 29. Cf., again, Benedict XVI: "In the saints one thing becomes clear: those who draw near to God do not withdraw from men, but rather become truly close to them." And the same basic insight in sacramental mode: "The Eucharist draws us into Jesus' act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos*, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving." *Deus Caritas Est*, 51, 17.

[42] See Romans 15:7, "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." In the same passage, the Messiah's self-denying ways are to be imitated: "We who are strong [οἱ δυνατοὶ, from the word group commonly translated "power(ful)"] have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves [μὴ ἑαυτοῖς ἀρέσκειν]. Let each of us please his neighbor [τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω] for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself [ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν]…" 15:1–3. If it is unclear, then, whether the major char-acters of the Hebrew Bible are presented in some sense as models to be imitated, the New Testament leaves no doubt on this point. Moreover, earlier in Romans, the dynamic of "the one and the many" is put to theological use: "For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many" (Romans 5:15).

time and culture, among the reasons their stories are regarded as worthy of telling and retelling from generation to generation: such stories are not ultimately *about* Royal Runaways at all.[43] As Joseph says at the climax of the Bible's first book, insisting that his hellacious path through betrayal, slavery, libel, and prison had been about much more than him: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, *to bring it about* [למען] *that many people should be kept alive, as they are today*" (Genesis 50:20). To make an astronomical analogy, the Royal Runaway is like a black hole: an impenetrably mysterious locus of gravity that, drawing no attention to itself, and indeed difficult to detect at all, nevertheless coordinates a luminous galaxy of stars—rather like pilgrim candles dancing around an empty tomb.

Martin Luther

      "Those who are expert in spiritual things have gone through the valley of the shadow […] No one is taught through much reading and thinking. There is a much higher school where one learns God's word. One must go into the wilderness."[44] Thus wrote the man born Martin Luder, himself a graduate of this higher wilderness school. His story is well known and often rehearsed. When lightning struck the ground near him in July 1505 at the age of twenty-one, nearly killing him, the former law student from an upwardly mobile family of miners felt himself propelled on a new path that would lead to the triple vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Whatever social or financial demotions this may have entailed, the more momentous development was his entry into

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[43] Recall from Chapter 1's discussion of narrative that "the strongest stories are those in which listeners can see *themselves* as the hero." Roger C. Shank and Tamara R. Berman, "The Pervasive Role of Stories in Knowledge and Action," in Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock, *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations* (Mahwah, NJ.: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), 308. Italics mine.

[44] Quoted in Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 2016; originally published in 1950), 207, 224.

a sort of psycho-spiritual exile of years, seeking assurance for his guilt-racked conscience before the Almighty. "The great outward crises of his life," observes Roland Bainton, "which bedazzle the eyes of dramatic biographers were to Luther himself trivial in comparison with the inner up-heavals of his questing after God."[45] Perhaps exemplifying what William James would later describe as a "twice born, sick soul,"[46] he plunged into scripture, philology, philosophy, and theology, en route to becoming Professor of Bible at the newly-formed University of Wittenberg. Somewhere along the way his exiled conscience experienced a profound exodus, a transition he marked with the Renaissance trend of Hellenizing his name: Luder became Luther, from ἐλευθερία, "freedom, liberty" (Galatians 2:4, 5:1, etc.).[47] While this epiphany may have been based in exegetical conclusions disputed in recent scholarship,[48] it was nevertheless a vital episode in the loosely U-shaped trajectory of Luther's life.[49] Although in time he would become one of the most influential

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[45] *Here I Stand*, 6.

[46] See Lectures VI and VII, "The Sick Soul," Lecture VIII, "The Divided Self and the Process of Its Unification," and Lectures IX and X, "Conversion," in William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York, NY.: Library of America, 1988; originally published in 1902). See further Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Norton, 1958).

[47] Not an uncommon practice, historically, especially when society feels itself on the cusp of a new era, as if undergoing a collective rite-of-passage. Biblical history attests to this (Abram becoming Abraham, etc.), as well as church history (popes taking a new name upon election) and recent history: Zionists (David Ben Gurion born David Grün), hippies (Bob Dylan born Robert Zimmerman, John Denver born Henry Deutschendorf), and the like. Becoming "Luther," then, is not altogether surprising. New names often follow on and crystallize new identities.

[48] A wide variety of Pauline "New Perspectives" share the assumption that Reformation doctrines of grace, justice, righteousness, etc., do not reflect the historical and theological situation of Second Temple Judaism, retrofitting Paul instead to a medieval anti-Catholic framework. Be that as it may, in Luther's defense it should be said that had the Dead Sea Scrolls been available in the 16th century, along with the extensive literary remains of the ancient Near East to which scholars now have access, sensitive study of such materials would have meshed easily with Luther's method of returning to original sources, informed by the Renaissance credo "ad fontes." Discrediting Luther, then, on the grounds of his historical ignorance seems to uncover one anachronism by committing another; one may as well discount Galileo for not knowing in the 16th century what the Hubble Telescope has revealed today.

[49] Luther himself, of course, may have forcefully rejected his inclusion in any biblical paradigm! Still, for the general biographical shape, cf. Luther's 16th century contemporary St. Ignatius of Loyola, co-founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order), a group instrumental in the Catholic renewal of the sixteenth century. Similar to Luther's lightning strike at age 21, Ignatius was an ambitious soldier of 25 when a cannon ball shattered one of his legs and wounded the other. Convalescing from his near-death experience, Ignatius became enamored of the saints, and determined to follow their example. Like Luther, intensive soul searching and study formed the basis of his later influence, which was to

individuals of his day, the great reformer's assertion that in order to learn God's word "one must go into the wilderness" was sourced in the lived experience of a monk of no consequence. And interestingly, coincident with such a dramatic biography is a theology some see as fundamentally grounded in love.[50]

In the 1520 treatise "The Freedom of a Christian," Luther makes a programmatic statement: "[A Christian] lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor."[51] Love is fundamentally a descending kind of thing for Luther,[52] and in the same treatise, his exhortation to the properly downward use of "freedom" is modeled on the kenosis of the Carmen Christi: "Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon

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be pastoral (i.e. Ignatian Spirituality) as well as intellectual. See *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius*, ed. J. F. X. O'Conor (Delaware: Credo Four Publishing, 2016).

[50] So the Finnish theologian Tuomo Mannermaa (*Two Kinds of Love: Martin Luther's Religious World*, trans. Kirsi I. Stjerna [Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 2010), to whom we shall return shortly.

[51] John Dillenberger, ed., "The Freedom of a Christian," in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (New York, NY.: Anchor Books, 1962), 80. (Philippians 2, according to Prof. Volf [conversation], actually structures the entirety of this essay by Luther. "The Freedom of a Christian" is here reprinted from the standard *Luther's Works*, volume 31, *Career of the Reformer:* I, ed. Harold J. Grimm [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957], 333–377. All quotes from Dillenberger [which I will refer to as *Luther*] are reprinted from *LW*.) Luther asserts this same paradigm in his mature lectures on Galatians, commenting on Galatians 5:6: "Although it is true that only faith justifies, here he is speaking about faith in another respect—namely, that after it has justified, it is not idle but occupied and exercised, working **through love**. Paul therefore, in this verse, sets forth the whole life of a Christian—namely, that inwardly it consists in faith toward God, and outwardly in loving works to our neighbor." Martin Luther, *Galatians*, ed. Alister McGrath and J. I. Packer (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway Books, 1988), 254. Emphasis original.

[52] Cf. Benedict XVI, who, employing yet challenging the distinction of the Lutheran scholar Anders Nygren, writes: "[E]ros and agape—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized." *Deus Caritas Est*, 11. Perceptible here is an important issue in a Christian theology of love, namely, the matter of reciprocity. For Luther, as well as Lutherans like Kierkegaard and Nygren, the radicality of God's self-gift, beyond all stipulations of recompense, removes the necessity of "upward" benefits from the concept of love. Luther likens this to parental love: "We are not made to [love] because people deserve it, nor are we stopped by people not deserving it or by their ingratitude. A mother nourishes and cherishes her child because she loves him or her." Luther, *Galatians*, 265. Catholic theologians like Benedict XVI, along with secular theorists such as Theodor Adorno and Protestants like Oliver O'Donovan, reject this model for various reasons. Miroslav Volf, whose engagement with Luther will be revisited later in the discussion, also adjusts this aspect of Luther's theology while retaining his core insights.

himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in human form, and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him. […] I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me."[53] Reflecting here the sort of mimesis we have observed at many points in this study of Royal Runaways, at another point in the treatise Luther repeats the theme while keying in on the specifically royal overtones of Christ's suffering: "[T]he more Christian a man is, the more evils, sufferings, and death he must endure, as we see in Christ *the first-born prince himself*, and in all his brethren, the saints."[54] The sort of royal freedom Luther articulates, then, is not a sort of radical autonomy (although the influence of the Protestant Reformation in such modernist philosophical anthropology is routinely noted), but the royal freedom to self-empty and serve.

Far from being a passing prooftext for the young Luther, the Carmen Christi plays an important role in his theological development. A year earlier, his influential 1519 sermon "Two Kinds of Righteousness" begins with a quotation of Philippians 2:5–6,[55] and proceeds to exhort hearers to follow Christ's example: "The Apostle means that each individual Christian shall become the servant of another in accordance with the example of Christ. If one has wisdom, righteousness, or power with which one can excel others[56] and boast in the 'form of God,' so to speak, one should not keep all this to himself, but surrender it to God and become altogether as if he did not possess

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[53] *Luther*, "Freedom of a Christian," 75.

[54] *Luther*, "Freedom of a Christian," 63. Italics mine.

[55] *Luther*, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," 86.

[56] The trio of power, wisdom, and righteousness is revisited by Luther later in the sermon, channeling the paraenetic force of the Carmen Christi's pastoral context: "For you are powerful, not that you may make the weak weaker by oppression, but that you may make them powerful by raising them up and defending them. You are wise, not in order to laugh at the foolish and thereby make them more foolish, but that you may undertake to teach them as you yourself would wish to be taught. You are righteous that you may vindicate and pardon the unrighteous, not that you may only condemn, disparage, judge, and punish." *Luther*, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," 93.

it [II Cor. 6:10], as one of those who lack it. Paul's meaning is that when each person has forgotten himself and emptied himself…"[57] For a theologian like Luther, with his "proclivity to exclusive polarities,"[58] the Carmen's narrative of the Messiah taking on the role of a servant thus informs fundamental distinctions in ethical Christian living.

Still a year earlier, Luther also references the Carmen in his "Theses for the Heidelberg Disputation" of April 1518. In the course of outlining a "theology of the cross" over against a "theology of glory," his proof for Thesis 24[59] includes this: "[H]e who has not been brought low, reduced to nothing through the cross and suffering, takes credit for works and wisdom and does not give credit to God. He thus misuses and defiles the gifts of God. He, however, who has emptied himself (cf. Phil. 2:7) through suffering no longer does works but knows that God works and does all things in him."[60] Significantly, this allusion to Christ's self-emptying provides part of the theological foundation for Luther's climactic Thesis 28, which distinguishes between two kinds of love, human and divine: "The love of God does not find its object but rather creates it. Human love starts with the object."[61] In context, the statement challenges an Aristotelian-cum-Thomistic

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[57] *Luther*, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," 91.

[58] Miroslav Volf, "Humility and Joy: A Variation on Luther's Theology of Humility," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 92, no. 4 (2018): 588. Perhaps rendering Luther unpalatable to some, Tuomo Mannermaa explains Luther's sharp-edged writing as in part a rhetorical strategy, employing paradox and synecdoche in order to persuade. Luther, whose theology turns regularly on exegetical and philological nuance (in 16th century mode, of course), saw the Bible itself as using such rhetorical devices. Mannermaa, *Two Kinds of Love*, 5–6.

[59] "Nevertheless, this wisdom is not bad nor is the law to be fled. But without a theology of the cross, man misuses the best things in the worst way." *Luther*, "Theses for the Heidelberg Disputation," 503.

[60] Proofs retrieved from https://bookofconcord.org/sources-and-context/heidelberg-disputation/, 31 March 2021. I doubt the original Latin includes the parenthetical "(cf. Phil. 2:7)" but the allusion is clear all the same. Cf. Thesis 21: "The 'theologian of 'glory' calls the bad good and the good bad. The 'theologian of the cross' says what a thing is.' Proof: "It is impossible for a person not to be puffed up by his 'good works' unless he has first been deflated and destroyed by suffering and evil…"

[61] *Luther*, "Heidelberg Disputation," 503.

ontology wherein the good alone is substantial and produces desire; for Luther, God's love of evil sinners who (on this model) fundamentally *are not* confounds such an ontology.[62] Human love responds to what already exists, whereas God's love—ontologically prior to human love—is creative in that it calls into existence, and paradoxically does so through the loving annihilation of the cross: the crucified emptiness of God is the genesis of the world's ordered being.[63]

The relevance of this proposition to Royal Runaways—particularly the connection between the self-emptying of the Carmen and love—becomes clear in the analysis of Tuomo Mannermaa, who sees the "two kinds of love" briefly outlined in Thesis 28 of Luther's argument at the Heidelberg Disputation as "a most fruitful approach to the reformer's entire theology."[64] For Luther,

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[62] From the proof: "The second part is clear and is accepted by all philosophers and theologians, for the object of love is its cause, assuming, according to Aristotle, that all power of the soul is passive and material and active only in receiving something. Thus it is also demonstrated that Aristotle's philosophy is contrary to theology since in all things it seeks those things which are its own and receives rather than gives something good. The first part is clear because the love of God which lives in man loves sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings in order to make them righteous, good, wise, and strong."

[63] Cf. O'Donovan, who, it will be recalled from Chapter 1, implicates love with ontology (and authority): "It was the mark of love within Christ's Lordship that, so far from overthrowing the given order of things, he rescued it from the 'emptiness' into which it had fallen (Rom. 8:20–21). His redemptive love thus fulfilled the creative task of Adam, to call things by their proper name. His authority over nature and his salvific concern for the true being of nature go together inseparably." Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1994), 26.

It is important here to be clear how "emptiness" means something quite different from Buddhist usage of similar language, increasingly common in mainstream culture. For the Augustinian monk Luther the doctrine of *privatio boni*, owing more to Plato than Aristotle and regarding evil as leeching existence from the good, seems to leave intact the basic scholastic identification of emptiness with evil (see Mannermaa, 2–3; 9–25). In Buddhist teaching, by contrast, emptiness is not evil but good, attending liberation from illusions of selfhood, pain, and reality. I do not, of course, pretend to understand Buddhist ontology with any depth, but it would seem the respective horizons of Nirvana, being an ultimate release from this world, and Resurrection, a vindication and transformation of this world, are expressions of divergent ontological visions. God's emptiness, for Luther, is to be imitated by Christians not because emptiness is a good in itself, but because it calls the good into being. Good Friday, in other words, eventuates in Easter; the objective is not the annihilated self, but the resurrected self, the new self. As Luther writes in the proof for Thesis 28: "Rather than seeking its own good, the love of God flows forth and bestows good. Therefore sinners are 'attractive' because they are loved; they are not loved because they are 'attractive' […] This is the love of the cross, born of the cross, which turns in the direction where it does not find good which it may enjoy, but where it may confer good upon the bad and needy person. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35), says the Apostle."

[64] Mannermaa, *Two Kinds of Love*, 7. This claim is substantiated in *Two Kinds of Love* through extensive quotation of Luther's later writings. Particularly striking to me are certain statements in Luther's mature commentary on Galatians. "You must not think you know fully this commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. It is very short and easy as far as the words are concerned, but show me the teachers who teach it and put it into practice properly. […] When

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Mannermaa observes, Human Love and God's Love basically move in different directions: "The direction of Human Love is upwards, that is, it turns toward what is grand, wise, alive, beautiful, and good. God's love, in turn, turns itself or is oriented downward, that is, toward what is lowly, disgraceful, weak, foolish, wicked, and dead. Therefore, God's Love irresistibly involves emptying oneself, suffering, and loving the cross. […] Human beings look only upward and to the opposite of the abyss where poverty, anguish, and death prevail."[65]

Recall here an important feature of Exodus 2 and the Royal Runaway story of Moses. Upon leaving the palace, Moses' first action is to "look on the burdens" of his people (וירא בסבלתם, Exodus 2:11), a detail mirrored in God's own action at the end of the passage: "God saw [וירא אלהים] the people of Israel—and God knew" (Exodus 2:25). Unlike typical royals eager for things Mannermaa describes as "upward," Moses and YHWH both turn "downward." If Human love is concerned with getting, God's love—in which Moses and other Royal Runaways participate—is concerned with giving. Anticipating much of the Carmen scholarship encountered in Chapter 3, Luther writes: "This is what it means to be God: Not to receive but to give good."[66] If Royal Runaways,

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people imagine that they know the command of love well enough, they are utterly deceived. […] Anyone who could love God truly and perfectly would not last long in this life but would be swallowed up by this love. [… And regarding the nine fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22–23] "It would have been enough to have said **love** and no more, for love extends to all the fruit of the Spirit." Luther, *Galatians*, 264–5, 268, 280. Emphasis original.

[65] Mannermaa, *Two Kinds of Love*, 3–4. Mannermaa carefully describes the scholastic context in which Luther was making such claims, particularly the Thomistic doctrine of love that he understood himself to be resisting. Whether or not Luther was reading Thomas well is another question, but the larger issue is Luther's rejection of a philosophical basis for biblical theology (i.e., his doctrine of *sola scriptura*). Mannermaa writes: "What Luther is essentially criticizing is the use of metaphysics based on Greek philosophy as a central interpretative principle for Christian faith. Luther's battle against scholastic metaphysics involves at least two major points. The first deals with the actual scholastics' concept of love, and the second with the underlying particular interpretation of the nature of human beings' knowledge of God." Mannermaa, 22. Further, "What Luther sees as the fundamental deficiency in the Aristotelian concept of God is the fact that it does not present God as a God for human beings…" Instead, and evoking the Royal Runaway theme of leaving the palace: "In contrast to the theologians of glory, the theologians of the cross fix their gaze upon the God who has come to us…" Mannermaa, 30–1.

[66] "Hoc est esse deum: non accipere bona, sed dare." From Luther's *First Lectures on the Psalms* 2, LW 11:403, quoted at Mannermaa, 23.

then, are vested in God's mission of "giving good," perhaps part of their sway in religious and cultural history is to be credited to the type of potency found at the beginning of the Bible: the power of *creation*. These figures are fascinating because they do what God does: call something from nothing, order from chaos, beauty from ugliness, good from evil.[67] Moreover, from a biblical perspective, the Royal Runaway trope of death and resurrection makes good sense, since resurrection is itself an instance of *new* creation. Those who participate at great personal cost in God's downward love to what is in darkness are themselves raised into light, hearing the same word spoken into their nothingness—*Be!*—that they had spoken into the nothingness of others.[68]

This brings us, finally, to a question that has loomed in the background of our entire study, and for some it may have been annoyingly obvious all along: is not my thesis essentially a naïve endorsement of what Friedrich Nietzsche identified and denounced long ago as "slave morality"?[69]

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[67] Far from the singular axis of existence vs. non-existence, as may be inferred from the theological shorthand *creatio ex nihilo*, the doctrine of creation contains all these axes and more. See Gary A. Anderson and Markus N. A. Bockmuehl, eds., *Creation* ex nihilo*: Origins, Development, Contemporary Challenges* (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018). Also, given specifically Jungian interests in classical heroes traversing from order, through chaos, to greater order (for which, on this reckoning, death and resurrection are symbols), I wish to be clear that the theological doctrine of creation includes but transcends such a paradigm. For it begs the deeper ontological question: why should reality and consciousness be such that fluctuations of chaos and order obtain at all?

[68] Which is not to suggest that Royal Runaways have creative power in the strict sense of the term. O'Donovan soundly refutes this view: "[M]an does not encounter reality as an undifferentiated raw material upon which he may impose any shape that pleases him. In refusing to admit that human freedom is ordered by generic rules, 'normless' ethics has, in effect, refused to address man's freedom to the ordered reality of the world which confronts it, preferring to assume that the universe is still waste and void, awaiting the cry of the human voice, 'Let there be…' – and of course we can have no idea what is to follow! Such creativity is certainly not the creativity of human love. Only God expresses love by conferring order upon the absolutely orderless, and he has contented himself with doing it but once. We can detect behind this destructive train of thought the influence of Anders Nygren's famous characterization of Christian *agape* as an imitation of the divine, in effect a totalitarian exercise in *creatio ex nihilo*: 'Agape creates value in its object' (*Agape and Eros*, p. 210). But *agape* cannot exercise its own creativity independently of God's creativity, which has gone before it and given the universe the order to which it attends. To imagine otherwise would be a new form of delivery back to 'the flesh', no less imprisoning for the fact that the fetters of autonomous isolation were forged in the false confidence that they would be tools of freedom." O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 25.

[69] See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York, NY.: Random House, 1967). "All that has been done on earth against 'the noble,' 'the powerful,' 'the masters,' 'the rulers,' fades into nothing compared with what the *Jews* have done against them; the Jews, that priestly people, who in opposing their enemies and conquerors were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies' values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge* [… W]ith the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in*

That God took on the form of a slave, an ethic adumbrated in various ways by Royal Runaways and imitated by their devotees: does this not amount to a masochistic credo of suffering for suffering's sake, a glorification not of service but servility that is both repugnant and dangerous? Indeed, for a cultural environment in which traditional forms of authority have been supplanted by norms of authenticity (which is not the rejection of authority so much as its relocation), an encomium on kenosis and self-gift may seem at best a cloying and outdated piety, and more likely an affront to the enterprise of human flourishing itself.[70] What is urgently needed today is self-*affirmation*, not self-negation, either before God or anyone else. Or so says Nietzsche: "the noble mode of valuation […] acts and grows spontaneously, [and] seeks its opposite only so as *to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly…*"[71] The desideratum is not the abnegation of power or the self, but their strategic consolidation and assertion.[72] In a system of pervasive surveillance and disciplinary

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morality: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we no longer see because it—has been victorious. [… N]o wonder if the submerged, darkly glowering emotions of vengefulness and hatred […] maintain no belief more ardently that the belief that *the strong man is free* to be weak and the bird of prey to be a lamb—for thus they gain the right to make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey." Nietzsche, 33–4; 45. Emphases original.

[70] Such a position, however, must reckon with the growing body of research demonstrating how religious commitments and practices enhance well-being. See, for example, several religiously sensitive studies in Matthew T. Lee, Laura D. Kubzansky, and Tyler J. VanderWeele, eds., *Measuring Well-Being: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities* (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press, 2021). I participated in interdisciplinary research presented in Chapter 16: Tyler J. VanderWeele, Katelyn N. G. Long, and Michael J. Balboni, "Tradition-Specific Measures of Spiritual Well-Being," 482–98. What it means to "flourish" certainly differs by tradition, but as a matter of empirical fact it will not do simply to claim that the religious exemplars and behaviors studied in this dissertation are harmful. See further Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2015).

[71] Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, 37. Italics mine.

[72] See, for example, how such a first principle is developed in an influential political manual like Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York, NY.: Vintage Books, 1989). On the other hand, some theorists observe (and advocate) trends in the other direction, as in Adrian Vermeule, *Law's Abnegation: From Law's Empire to the Administrative State* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2016). In a manner similar to the subsidiarity principle of Catholic social teaching (i.e. decisions ought to be made at local levels), as well as the general movement of kenosis, Vermeule argues that "[t]he last and greatest triumph of legalism was that law deposed itself" (2); the "self-marginalization of law" constitutes its "integrity" (8).

control, Nietzsche is a priest of self-affirmation, and even assuming the discursive twist of neo-Nietzscheans, the will to power remains, for many, the fundamental reality behind various constructions of "reality." With nothing beyond power that might relativize or even redeem it, ethical living requires fighting fire with discursive fire, affirming the political and aesthetic project of resignifying bodily coercions in a performative regime, etc. (Recall here the brief assessment of the literary "anti-hero" in Chapter 1, the saint of subversion who sees through the arbitrary values for which classic heroes suffer and die.) This is only one way of framing the matter, of course, but the general complex of ideas here should be familiar. Power is *the* problem. And unless a study of Royal Runaways addresses this misgiving—which, to be clear, I regard as containing the germ of something important, in keeping with the Bible's own critique (even satire[73]) of human authority—then any "power" I claim for this typology will ring hollow.

Strange as it may seem, Martin Luther's theology of love can actually help us make sense of this fundamental problem, even in its Nietzschean form, and here I will turn to a theologian whose work is informed by both Nietzsche and Luther. In "Humility and Joy: A Variation on Luther's Theology of Humility," Miroslav Volf engages concerns about power and selfhood that not only sit at odds with biblical teaching, but unmask it for the sham it is: "As the great critic of Christian humility, Friedrich Nietzsche, puts it in a parody of Luke 18:14: 'He that humbleth

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[73] See Jon D. Levenson, *Esther*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 12: "One attitude that pervades the book of Esther [is] a deep skepticism about the whole Persian imperial regime. This is evident primarily in the portrayal of King Ahasuerus and the way his court functions. He is portrayed as a man of inordinate official power but no moral strength. His regime is enormously bureaucratized, yet he lacks all personal complexity. It is this disparity between the office and the man, between what he decrees and what actually happens, that imparts to the book many of its funniest scenes. But underneath the humor is a belief that the imperial administration is overblown, pompous, over-bureaucratized, and, for all its trappings of power, unable to control events. On its surface, the narrative of the book of Esther approaches the category of farce on occasion (especially in chap. 6), but the more serious category of satire always lurks behind the crude, visual humor to remind the attentive reader of the larger issues."

himself wants to be exalted.'"[74] The seductions of hypocrisy, of course, have been clear ever since

Glaucon tried to persuade Socrates that what is necessary is not being just but only seeming so,[75]

but Volf focuses on how the ideal of humility—the spiritual disposition of kenotic love, as we shall

see—grates against the aspirations of the specifically modern self. It will be helpful to quote his

argument at some length.

> Any plausible account of humility, and not just humility as self-abasement, seems at odds with the very shape of the modern self. Many of us moderns imagine ourselves as owners of ourselves and of our action, each engaged in the great endeavor of self-achievement. We walk through life as a pop-cultural incarnation of Nietzsche's "sovereign man"—sovereign man light [… Yet] in the business of self-achievement, the self we crave to be eludes us […] Modern individuals look less like Nietzsche's "sovereign men" than like his "*last* men"—people who have given up on all striving and, half-drugged, blink, satisfied that they have invented happiness—but mostly like some ill-starred cross between the two.[76]

It is curious that in the Nietzschean moniker for the liberated human, royalty is invoked: *sovereign*

man. As with the transmutation of authority into authenticity, the rejection of monarchy eventuates

in a Me-archy, the sole rule of a μόνος persisting.[77] And the "runaway" moment of this royal self

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[74] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 572; quoted from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* I.87, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[75] See the beginning of Book II of Plato's *Republic*. According to Glaucon, the fate awaiting the just man is crucifixion, or something very similar: "The just man […] will be scourged, racked, chained, have his eyes burnt out; at last, after every kind of misery, he will be set up on a pole [ἀνασχινδυλευθήσεται]; and he will know that one ought to wish not to be just but to seem just." Plato, *Republic*, II:362, in *The Great Dialogues of Plato*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (New York, NY.: Mentor Books, 1963), 159.

[76] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 572–4; interacting with Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Zarathustra's Prologue," §3. See further Volf's discussion of Nietzschean and religious nihilisms in *Flourishing*, 195–206. "The two nihilisms, the passive one of religious world-deniers and world-destroyers and the active one of a-religious inventors of arbitrary values, are opposed to each other. […] The recursive struggle between these two nihilisms is one of the great antagonisms of our time." 200–1.

[77] See the discussion "Authority vs. the Me-archy" in *The New York Times*' 2020 special issue: "Self-Care: Follow Your Passions, Build Healthy Habits and Embrace Optimism," 10–11. According to Kate Carraway of the *Times*, "self-help-styled wellness involved a top-down, rules-based wellness orthodoxy," whereas in "self-care-specific wellness," such distasteful authority is removed. The concept of self-*care*, of course, presumes an anthropology in which self-*cure* is possible, and such self-oriented modes of living are by no means a new phenomenon. As Judges repeatedly notifies the reader: בימים ההם אין מלך בישׂראל איש הישר בעיניו יעשׂה (*In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes*), Judges 17:6; 18:1; 21:25; cf. Samson in 14:3, 7. Much historical and philosophical complexity resides here, no doubt, regarding matters of identity and authority. In the work of an influential thinker like Foucault, for example, the self (or "soul") is usually presented as little more than a fiction imposed on the body

is like an interior drama, the self seeking escape from unrealistic demands of self-achievement.[78]

By contrast, Volf sees Luther as articulating a model of the self presciently accounting for the

anxieties of the modern self while also avoiding its pitfalls.

> Luther's Reformation discovery centers on the self freed from the compulsion to achieve itself, a self both humble and joyous at the same time. [This] alternative is compelling, I believe, but in societies of self-achieving, sovereign individuals its acceptance is likely to face resistance at least as serious as was resistance to humility in the honor societies in which it was first introduced.[79]

En route to a full discussion of Luther, however, Volf stops off briefly with Max Scheler,

the early 20th century philosopher whose influential essay on humility leans heavily on the Carmen

Christi.[80] Scheler makes an important distinction regarding *whom* humility is for: rather than

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by relations of power. As in some Buddhist teaching, the very idea of selfhood is often a category mistake for Foucault, fundamentally misapprehending the nature of (self-)knowledge. Curiously, however, in the latter part of his *History of Sexuality* (Volume 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, and Volume 3: *The Care of the Self*; perhaps also Volume 4*: Confessions of the Flesh*, released in 2021), he seems to reframe the self—or at least the body in Greco-Roman antiquity—as a genuine desiring subject unfettered by later ecclesiastical controls. It is challenging, then, to integrate what Foucault means by selfhood across his oeuvre; his genealogical counter-narrative has the poetic verve of a liturgy of transgression (see Mark Jordan, *Convulsing Bodies: Religion and Resistance in Foucault* [Palo Alto, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2014]), although in unguarded moments it seems his hero is simply the old rival of monotheism (another rule of the μόνος) dressed up in the latest philosophical attire: the self-curating self for whom (bodily) pleasure escapes (theological) power. There is no solving such issues here, to be sure, but it is at any rate important to see how philosophical conceptions of selfhood are deployed in grocery store checkout magazines like a *New York Times* special issue. See further the discussion of Foucault at Miroslav Volf, "Deception and Truth," in *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 233–73.

[78] "What troubles us most is not a gnawing guilt in the face of an unfillable moral law (as was the case only six or seven decades ago), even less it is a crushing fear of an overbearing and angry omnipotent lawgiver (as was the case a few centuries ago, and certainly at the time of the Reformation). Our problem is a self-undoing sense of inadequacy in the face of an impossible task. For the oppressed and marginalized, upon whom the dominant culture has projected its disrespect, the sense of inadequacy is often heightened by an internalized inferiority. […] The pervasive sense of personal inadequacy and social inferiority nudges us to look for alternatives to the modern self, the joyless owner of itself and its action and a troubled slave of its own impossible achievement." Volf, "Humility and Joy," 573, 575. See further Charles Taylor, "The Malaises of Modernity," in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 299–321. "[O]ntic doubt about meaning itself is integral to the modern malaise" (303).

[79] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 575. Recall Chapter 3's discussion of the importance of *status* in the Carmen Christi's cultural context, and how strange its self-emptying hero must have seemed. Volf notes the historical shift between ancient "honor" societies and modern "recognition" societies, developed in Ryan McAnnally-Linz, "An Unrecognizable Glory: Christian Humility in the Age of Authenticity" (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2016); Volf also notes that Thomist models of humility also offer a "compelling Christian alternative" to modern construals of selfhood.

[80] Max Scheler, "Humility," *Aletheia* 2 (1981): 209ff.

regarding it as the self-degradation of those who are already weak, Scheler sees humility as applicable to "born masters"; i.e. to those in power. It is "the 'inner replica' in the soul of 'the *one* great gesture of Christian divinity freely to abandon its grandeur and majesty, to come to man in order to become every man's and all creation's free and blessed servant' (210). The humble human is the image of the self-humbling God,"[81] whereas prideful humans are complicit in their own undoing, since "no matter how great we are, without humility we will experience ourselves as lacking and therefore continue to thirst."[82] Self-aggrandizement is thus a maladaption to the human situation; it is pride, paradoxically, and not kenosis, that leads to true emptiness, a vacuum of meaning and joy. And conversely, the satisfying experience attending humility is not sourced in humanity, but in God's love coming toward us, divine emptiness resulting in human fullness (which, for its part, entails its own subsequent recursions of emptiness and fullness).

> For a humble person, Scheler writes, "there is ever present the picture of his own individual self, which he constantly perceives as traced anew, as well as borne before him by the movement of God's love aimed at him" (213).[83] This kind of picture of the self involves a twofold movement of self-perceiving: as a person penetrates into the divine sketch of himself, he is "sinking down as far as his conscious experience of himself is concerned" and simultaneously "this beautiful picture actually draws him up to God and, in the substance of his being, he rises gently to heaven" (213–214). *Humility of being is the effacement of the self-standing self through its arrival to itself as always already constituted by God.* It may seem that an "effaced" self has lost everything, both herself and her world. The exact opposite is the case, argues Scheler: the only self who "can win *all*" is a self who, not owning herself, "assumes that *nothing* is deserved, and *everything* is gift and wonder," including her "own strength" and "the smallest worthiness" (214, 210). The humble receive themselves and the world with gratitude and "joyfully discover" ever anew those things— a foot, a hand, or eye, for instance—whose value we otherwise seem able to grasp "only when they are rare and others do not possess them" (214).[84]

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[81] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 576–7. Italics original.

[82] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 577.

[83] Volf notes in Scheler's development of love the same dialectic Levenson observes in the Hebrew Bible between "God's creative love for the self" and "the self's love for God" (Volf, "Humility and Joy," 578).

[84] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 577–8. Emphases original.

Transposing the cosmic itinerary of Christ into the self-perception of ordinary people, being is thus established through a humble dialectic of effacement and arrival constituted and made possible by God's love. The human need not strain to become, for they already are, a *datum* in the true sense of the word: given. *All is gift*—even the dispositions of trust, gratitude, and wonder realizing, however dimly, that all is gift.[85] This is doubtless a strong claim; in fact, it is nothing less than a claim about the nature of claim-making consciousness itself. And this brings us really to the nub of the issue, the revaluation of first principles inherent in the transition "from the love of power to the power of love" that I believe Royal Runaway stories portray. For the power of their self-gift is the unmasking of power itself, deposing it from its presumption to reside at the pinnacle of reality. The *norma normans et non normata* of the world is not *imperium*, with its multiplying profusion of apparatuses and disguises, but *amoris donum*—a baptism of power in the fecund powerlessness of a loving God. Leaving the palace is not a revocation but a reinterpretation of power, what it *is*.[86]

Such a reinterpretation of power in terms of love's gift does not come without a cost. Volf writes: "To realize that we are nothing on our own, we often need the jolt of personal and social

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[85] So Luther: "To counter the attempts to make something out of the nothingness of one's utter self-renunciation, [Luther] came to believe that one should see the humility-constituting trust as itself a gift of the very God in whom it is placed." Volf, "Humility and Joy," 578. That humility and trust are themselves consequences (and not conditions) of God's love is an important point for Luther, with the implication that ethics is motivated not by guilt but gratitude.

[86] Said another way, the kenotic act *does* result in the conferral of power, but it is prior to such conferral and therefore involves a reinterpretation of what power means and how it is acquired. The imagistic language of apocalyptic says all this more cleanly (and beautifully): "And one of the elders said to me, 'Weep no more; behold, *the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered* [ἐνίκησεν, aorist active indicative of νικάω], so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders *I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain* [ἐσφαγμένον, perfect passive participle of σφάζω] … Worthy is the Lamb who was slain [ἐσφαγμένον], to receive power [δύναμιν] and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." Revelation 5:5–6, 12. Italics mine. Regarding such throne-room imagery, it is interesting that the word "palace" itself has its origin in the Palatine Hill of Rome, the home of Caesars and the epicenter of power in the New Testament world. Scholars have long noted that Rome itself, with its famed seven hills, seems to be in view in the book of Revelation: "This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated" (17:9). See further Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

humbling—a pinch of sickness, poverty, or lowliness, a bout of despondency, or, at times, an av-

alanche of evil thundering down on us and taking us on a deadly ride (*LW* 21:346–7)."[87] A jolt of

humility certainly strikes Royal Runaways with terrible accuracy—exile, betrayal, injury, etc.—

and to understand just what sort of "nothingness" it produces, Volf turns to Luther.

> When Luther insists that the self must "consider himself to be nothing" (*LW* 10:351), the self's nothingness is *not social*. It does not mean: I am nobody compared to others ("I am of less account than anyone else," in the *Rule of St. Benedict*). Nothingness is also *not existential*. It does not mean: I am nothing comparted to what I should or could be (not: "I am a bad and worthless workman," in the *Rule of St. Benedict*). Nothingness of the self is ontological: along with other human beings and the rest of creation, *my own self is not the kind of thing that could be something on its own*.[88]

In other words, "I am nothing" is a conclusion reached not via a human point of reference (others

or myself), but a divine point of reference. Abrupt encounter with one's own weakness, particularly

if the individual in question was thought to be especially strong (i.e. a prince), compels the reali-

zation of how meaningless human standards of strength and weakness really are. This awareness

of ontological dependence, however, does not result in the devaluation of all things human, but the

opposite. For no longer beholden to human standards, the knowledge thereby enabled is of a Lord

not beholden to lordly standards either, and this strange freedom reacts back into the real world.

> According to Philippians 2, Christ is the Lord who, just because he is free from both the eager striving to become the Lord and from fearful clinging to be the Lord, can, in obedience to the law of love, reach down to those in need and humble himself to the point of self-sacrificial love. The gesture of giving rather than of grasping is characteristic of God. […] In union with Christ, a Christian is "Christ" to others: a lord who considers proud grasping for lordship as the lordship's loss and humble service to others in love as the lordship's enactment. […] The goal is not self-diminishment as if lowliness were inherently valuable. The goal is service to those who live in "the depths" and therefore identification with them. In contrast with the proud who strive after what is great for themselves and therefore flee the depths, like the humble God, God's humble servants go near to those in

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[87] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 580. Later on: "The feedback loop between pride and power suggests that the actual experience of lowliness—in Luther's phrase: lack 'of all temporal goods' (*LW* 21:349)—is almost indispensable if a person is to become and remain humble (see *LW* 21:347–48)," 590.

[88] Ibid. Italics original.

the depths, assume their clothing and language—dispense with outward marks of their own higher standing—so that, without the insult of condescension, they can help people "in poverty, disgrace, squalor, misery, and anguish" (*LW* 21:300). Humility in acting is fearlessness in self-identification and association with the lowly for the purpose of lifting them up, and that not as a false self-sacrifice for which one expects a reward of glory, but as the expression of one's being.[89]

In the disruptions of kenosis, personal worth is decoupled from relative standards of social status and personal achievement,[90] and Royal Runaways are thus able freely to identify with those deemed worthless precisely by these relative standards. Unthreatened by those at other rungs of the ladder of privilege, they thrive on hoisting others above themselves, and this according to the "dominical" formula that "whoever would be great among you must be your servant [διάκονος], and whoever would be first among you must be your slave [δοῦλος], even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26–8). The radicality of this statement, theologically regarded, is that it is not advocating a counterculture at all, but simply stating the way things are in the Trinitarian life of God. The aberration is a self-interested inversion of rulership-as-service: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them [κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν], and their great ones exercise authority over them [κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν]. It shall not be so among you…" (Matthew 20:25–6). To affirm, then, the Christian proclamation at the end of the Carmen Christi, κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς (*Jesus Christ is Lord*, Philippians 2:11), is to affirm an entirely different—yet fundamental—model of κυριότης, *lordship*.[91]

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[89] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 583–4.

[90] Bearing in mind, as well, that notions of "self-achievement" or "self-actualization" are largely modern notions that may not apply to biblical narratives anyways.

[91] That Jesus is proclaimed κύριος is a commonly regarded as a core feature of early Christian worship. For different accounts of this phenomenon, see Wilhelm Bousset, *Kurios Christos*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville, TN.: Abingdon Press, 1970), and Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2003). Biblical religion has usually failed to live up to these ideals, of course. The Church often behaves

Only two further points remain to be discussed, and the best has been saved for last. For if the taproot of reality is indeed love's gift and not power,[92] then its emotional and social fruits are bound to be healthy. In both of these respects, Volf updates Luther's theology slightly. Regarding emotions, Volf writes:

> Do the humble need to despise themselves, to consider themselves worthless? Not if we are talking about the true self, the new self. […] The proper affective relation to the new self as Luther saw it constituted should be gratitude and joy. But Luther resists saying so. That's perhaps because he cannot disassociate satisfaction with the self from glorying in the self and therefore from pride. But why could one not consider oneself to be nothing in oneself while at the same time being pride-lessly satisfied with oneself as God's creature indwelled by Christ? Might not despising oneself as the new self come close to inverted pride, a secret longing to be something in one's own right? Would it not bespeak of lack of faith, of clinging to the reality of one's false self in the act of despising oneself? […] Luther liked the adverb "alone"—God alone, grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone. But perhaps his proclivity to exclusive polarities led him to misconstrue an aspect of joy and of humility. What if we rejoiced in God's bare goodness *and* rejoiced in good things that we have and that we are—which is to say rejoiced in one and the same act in God as the giver of all good things and in good things as God's gift (rather than either in God apart from things or in things apart from God, this last stance being a form of falsehood as nothing good ever exists in itself without being God's gift)? To be truthful about our lives and counter pride, we don't need to rob ourselves of joy over the good things we are, have, and can do. […] What else would receiving oneself in faith result in at the emotional level if not in joy over the gift of one's true self?[93]

This, then, speaks to a concern with Royal Runaway typology, namely, that it champions a certain dour outlook, kenosis amounting to a form of self-hatred. Nothing could be further from the truth.

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more like Gentile lords than Christ, just as historical Israel was often more like the nations around them than like Moses—meaning that the prophets of the Hebrew Bible had something important to say, as do critics of Christianity. (Israel and the Church, it seems, are spared a self-refuting contradiction here only because its biblical mandate also insists on the deep-seated reality of sin.) However, in regards to scholars whose chief concern is with the use and abuse of power—who might, I do realize, find this all a rather bizarre performance of false-consciousness—it is striking that many of their advocated social inversions are adumbrated in the Bible, and are not presented as inversions at all, but the deeper structure of reality. For all their exegetical and philosophical excesses, this is what is fundamentally right about, e.g., Walter Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel of the early 20th century, or Gustavo Gutierrez's more recent Theology of Liberation, with its many offshoots.

[92] Or, as my doctoral friends in Chemistry or Philosophy of Mind might say, "energy."

[93] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 585–8. Italics original.

The sharp edge of kenosis is the eradication of self-worship, but so far from being a demeaning procedure, it is, in fact, profoundly dignifying, for to be a creature of God is far more glorious and satisfying than being a creature of one's own design. The herculean pressure of meaningless self-achievement is lifted, replaced by a meaningful achievement always already secured on our behalf. Following the kenotic credo "I am nothing," therefore, is the Earth-constituting cry "Hallelujah!"

But we musk ask: does this cry of worship come at the cost of ignoring the cry of suffering? For all its emotional upside, might not such an ontological revaluation also cause a sanctimonious apathy that is deaf to injustice in the world, making a butchery of human reality on the altar of putative theological reality? (This is the Nietzschean rejoinder, that religion is the real nihilism.) The answer is no, and Volf addresses this legitimate misgiving under two headings: struggling to improve the situation of others, and one's own situation as well. Regarding the former he writes:

> But is humility of the kind Luther and Scheler advocated—humility of the "lords" who don't strive to achieve themselves by ascending—compatible with the *struggle* that arises out of longing for the joy of the world become God's home among mortals? Can it even motivate such struggle? [… Scheler's aim] is to undermine the cultural prevalence of a bourgeois morality of self-creation along with its "pride before kings' thrones" (217). But underneath this personal and cultural concern likes an anti-egalitarian political vision. He has completely detached pride and humility from actual differentials of power, wealth, and social honor. A humble ruler, for instance, will manifest "a deeply secret readiness to serve him whom" she rules (218). But she will sit comfortably on the throne as an unself-conscious queen, born a mistress; it won't occur to her to share power with those she rules, or to seek legitimacy from and accept oversight by them. Humility here in no way unsettles her power and privilege. In the biblical traditions, by contrast, whatever else pride may be, it is a decidedly political and economic malady. The proud must be taken down from their thrones, as the Virgin pregnant with God's son sings, especially those among the proud whose realms and riches are vast. In their ultimately futile climbing, the proud do not just undermine themselves (as Scheler rightly insists); they also demean, oppress, and at times destroy those around them. Struggling to ascend, the proud don't just look down with contempt on what is beneath them; they pull down everything above them and push under everything around them. […] Luther knows, of course, that you don't have to be mighty to be proud and, inversely, that you don't need to be weak to be humble. He also knows that the mighty aren't the only ones who oppress and destroy; the weak and the impoverished who are proud oppress and destroy, too. The difference is that the pride of the lowly is more fragile and their injustice less consequential. [… C]an the humble take part in bringing down the powerful? Luther doesn't entertain the thought, at least he doesn't mention it

to the Prince.[94] But the answer must be positive: if Christ, the Lord-become-servant, can take down the mighty—for instance, overturn the tables of money-changers—so can his followers whose humility is an echo of his. Moreover, once we acknowledge that might generates, confirms, and increases pride—at least "while we live on earth" (*LW* 21:330)—the interest in the good of humility adds motivation to the struggle against unchecked power. The virtue of humility will also preclude the lowly from striving merely to *replace* the dethroned mighty. When God "lifts the lowly," Luther writes, God does not put the lowly "in the seat of those He has cast out" (*LW* 21:345). Envy and pride drive the struggle for reversal of positions of privilege. But the humble will embrace the struggle for *equality* in political, economic, and cultural power.[95]

Cautious, then, of inducements to pride inherent within a necessary struggle against the proud,[96] an attitude of kenotic humility-cum-joy not only is not a barrier to social efforts, but establishes such efforts on a right footing: equality, rather than a historical see-saw of one group after another seeking redress of wrongs through zero-sum seizures of power. Meek though they are,[97] Royal Runaways are not mystics detached from social struggle; on the contrary, they are usually found in the heart of struggle with positions of responsibility, and whatever detachment they exhibit in all the pressure and motion is like calm in the eye of a hurricane.

An eye, though, is still a perilous place to be; beyond any theological, emotional, or political reasons for being there, are there any practical benefits for the self? It would seem so.

> Luther's affirmation of humility as self-abnegation pushes against attempts to improve one's station. He believes that the positive affective relation to oneself as the bearer of particular gifts is contentment with one's lowly station (*LW* 21:315). […] But if one effect of humility is willingness to serve the despised and afflicted so as to, among other things, improve their lot, why would wishing and working for improvement of one's own lot be wrong? For no principled reason, it would seem, except one's own limited time and resources. Moreover, to serve others well, would one not need to cultivate many of one's capacities? If so, should we not, in contrast to Luther, insist that to the humble, contentment

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[94] John Frederick of Saxony, for whom Luther wrote a commentary on the Magnificat that Volf is here engaging. That Luther is writing these things to a prince only deepens their theological relevance to Royal Runaways.

[95] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 589–91. Italics original.

[96] An irony developed at much length in Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man*.

[97] "Now the man Moses was very meek [ענו מאד], more than all people who were on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3).

with their lowly station and diminished capacities is not essential but instrumental? It helps them in the task of lifting others into equality of honor and position.[98]

With another ironic danger looming here of justifying self-enhancement *ad infinitum* as a means of serving others (one thinks of selfies with African village children, international humanitarianism often a thin veil for jet-setting wanderlust), the larger point is clear that the kenotic path need not be absolutized into a delegitimization of any material blessing, earned or bestowed. Think of how God blessed Abraham in exile, or Jacob. Or returning again to the great statement in Genesis 50:20 ("You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today), Joseph could not possibly have said such words had he not himself been restored abundantly to life after his sufferings: "Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, 'Bow the knee!' Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:42–3). Joseph does not protest here to Pharoah: "No, sir. Gold chains are not for me, nor is authority. I prefer my prison clothes." On the contrary, in the narrative artistry of Genesis, such a reversal is depicted as the sovereign favor and faithfulness of God, and Joseph gratefully accepts this. To affirm, then, that an improvement in one's own situation is also warranted by the Royal Runaway paradigm is not to undermine its kenotic message, but simply to balance it out. Death is followed by resurrection, and this gracious renewal applies to physical, emotional, social, and material domains. Powerlessness and poverty are not the whole story. To be squeamish here would be to screen out the second half of the Carmen Christi, the outcome of the Messiah's obedience unto death: "Therefore God exalted him…" and, like Joseph, "every knee shall bow" to him. A first principle of God's loving

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[98] Volf, "Humility and Joy," 586.

generosity thus makes the grateful reception of blessing and the exercise of authority possible, for oneself and for others,[99] whereas a first principle of power tends to render such gains either a morally-conflicted complicity in violence or a raw and unapologetic quest for always more.

3. Conclusion

The first chapter of this project ended with a thought from Charles Taylor, and a question: "We have to fight uphill to rediscover the obvious, to counteract the layers of suppression of modern moral consciousness. It's a difficult thing to do. But what is the point of doing it?" We are now in a position to answer Taylor's lingering question: the point of this uphill fight has been to listen deeply to the wisdom of descent in biblical tradition. As the presence of many lengthy citations in this study suggest, I do not understand myself to have forwarded anything novel; certain exegetical connections, maybe, but a new angle on reality? Not at all. *Tradition*, rather than *research*, has been the model of knowledge presumed in this project,[100] and as the German composer Gustav Mahler is reported to have said, "Tradition ist die Weitergabe des Feuers und nicht die Anbetung

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[99] "Perhaps the most striking trait of the humble is that they 'rejoice with those who rejoice' (Romans 12:15–6). Unlike the proud who experience the good things over which others rejoice as their own diminishment, the humble experience these good things as their own good simply because they are good. The humble are in fact able to rejoice indiscriminately over any good they encounter, including their own capacities and achievements, because they see each good fundamentally as an undeserved divine gift." Volf, "Humility and Joy," 587.

[100] Perhaps "methodology of knowledge" would be more accurate here; epistemically, I have assumed a critical realism that stakes out a middle ground between modernist positivism and postmodern interpretative nihilism, seeking to keep analyses of literature, theology, and history simultaneously in play. Affiliated with philosopher Roy Bhaskar, critical realism is developed in numerous ways; see José Lopez and Garry Potter, eds., *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism* (London: Athlone, 2001). For application to biblical studies and theology, see Ben F. Meyer, *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Allison Park, PA.: Pickwick, 1989); idem, *Reality and Illusion in New Testament Scholarship: A Primer in Critical Realist Hermeneutics*; Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York, NY.: Herder & Herder, 1972); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1998); N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1992), 31–144.

der Asche" ("Tradition is the handing down of fire and not the veneration of ashes").[101] The edu-

cational value of suffering, the requirement of humility, and severe tests of trust and obedience—

wise people of all times have taught these vital, fiery truths, regarding them as essential to the

legitimation of authority. In order to rule justly, not only must the prince disinterestedly "descend,"

but he must thereby prove that there is more to him than his pre-assigned status as prince.[102] This

unbecoming is in reality a becoming, this pained invisibility the foundation of public honor, and

the result is the authentication of an "authority" that is trustworthy because it is not vested in get-

ting but giving. For all the historical abuses of authority, and the prevalence of monarchs whose

modus operandi is the antithesis of kenosis, Royal Runaway stories bear witness to a longing for—

and I would argue theologically, a deeper reality of—trustworthy, loving power.

Regarding the inner logic of trust and love, Robert Jenson highlights the certifying force

of the movement through the annihilation of death and out the other side to resurrection:

> Indeed, *fully* reliable love can *only* be the resurrected life of the one who has died for the
> beloved ones. Contemporary society speaks much of 'unconditional' love, and is always
> disappointed. If I commit myself in love, I may die of it. If I do not, my love remains
> uncertain; if I do, it is lost—unless I rise again. When the gospel proclaims actual uncon-
> ditional love, it proclaims a specific, individual love, the love that is the actuality of the
> risen Jesus. [… I]t is the very substance of love to be full of surprises for the loved one.
> For to love is fully to affirm the freedom of the loved one; it is to be committed to respond
> to this freedom with good, whatever the loved one does with it. […] That Jesus lives means
> that his love, perfected at the cross, is now active to surprise us. That Jesus lives means that
> there is a subject who has us as his objects, and who wills our good in a freedom beyond
> our predicting.[103]

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[101] Quoted by Prof. Teeter (in German, no less) in his lecture on 29 January 2019 for the course "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament 1: Pentateuch and Former Prophets."

[102] I am grateful to Prof. Levenson for helping me see clearly this aspect of the Royal Runaway typology.

[103] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The Triune God* (New York, NY.: Oxford University Press, 1997), 198–9. Italics original.

The reality of a freedom more powerful than our own, therefore, is not cause for an oppositional stance of revolt or cynicism, but for rejoicing.[104] Authority is a morally neutral force, inherently neither good nor evil,[105] and when its animating core is indeed love (as defined by the Scriptures), it is not the genesis of tyranny but of surprise, dignity, and all good things. This is the "rediscovery of the obvious" I hope my project has come into contact with, in whatever small way.[106]

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[104] See further John Milbank, "Ontological Violence or the Postmodern Problematic," in *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Malden MA.: Blackwell, 1990), 278–326. Because this assertion is counterintuitive for current academic practice, and because so much of my own argument hinges on it, it may be helpful here to give a sense of Milbank's argument: "Postmodernism, as represented by these texts [referring to works by Nietzsche, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, and Heidegger], articulates itself as, first, an absolute historicism, second as an ontology of difference, and third as ethical nihilism. The task of this chapter is to show how its historicist or genealogical aspect raises the spectre of a human world inevitably dominated by violence, without being able to make this fearful ghost more solid in historicist terms alone. To supplement this deficiency, it must ground violence in a new transcendental philosophy, or fundamental ontology. This knowledge alone it presents as more than perspectival, more than equivocal, more than mythical. But the question arises: can such a claim be really sustained without lapsing back into a metaphysics supposedly forsworn? It will be argued that differential ontology is but on more *mythos*, and that the postmodern realization that discourses of truth are so many incommensurable language games does not ineluctably impose upon us the conclusion that the ultimate, over-arching game is the play of force, fate and chance." Milbank, 178–9. Regarding "heroic" living in such a world, which is relevant for a study of Royal Runaways, we meet again the anti-hero who is loyal to self above all: "The 'heroic' ideals, celebrated by Nietzsche, because they are not truly a spontaneous expression of nature, must logically have involved a certain ascetic disciplining to model the self in a noble, military image [arguing here against the notion that Christianity and Platonism are 'uniquely perverse asceticisms']. Moreover, in the heroic ideal lies the seed of the idea that is celebrated by Nietzsche and Foucault, namely that self-control, consisting in adherence to a certain 'aesthetic' model of the self, is the only virtue to be recommended. It is Nietzsche and Foucault, not Christian tradition, who see ascetic self-discipline—a 'care of the self', as Foucault puts it—as an end in itself, and who elevate the cultivation of a singular individuality over self-forgetting, or the dissolution of the subject." 291. See further Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Political Theory* 12, no. 2 (1984): 152–83.

[105] Perhaps needless to say given the preceding note, I do not regard "good" and "evil" as arbitrary historical constructions. Anyways, the argument seems to be more a mechanism of academic policing (ironically) than of actual conviction, since scholars who adopt a Nietzschean stance show little hesitation in forwarding moral absolutes.

[106] One field sharing this core insight and developing it in practical ways is leadership studies, with application to the positive use of authority in business, the military, politics, religious organizations, etc. Regarding the fundamental connection, for example, between leadership and humility/service, see: Alexandre Havard, "Humility: The Ambition to Serve" in *Virtuous Leadership: An Agenda for Personal Excellence*, Second Edition (New Rochelle, NY.: Scepter Publishers, 2007), 29–46; Jim Collins, "Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve," in *HBR's 10 Must Reads On Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2011), 115–136; Brad Lomenick, *H3 Leadership: Be Humble, Stay Hungry, Always Hustle* (Nashville, TN.: Nelson Books, 2015); Simon Sinek, *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't* (New York, NY.: Penguin, 2017); John C. Maxwell, *What Successful People Know About Leadership* (New York, NY.: Center Street, 2016), see discussion of leadership as giving and servanthood at 9–31; Boyd Bailey, "Chapter 1: Learning to Lead like Jesus with Humility", "Chapter 2: Learning to Lead like Jesus with Love," in *Learning to Lead like Jesus: 11 Principles to Help You Serve, Inspire, and Equip Others* (Eugene, OR.: Harvest House Publishers, 2018), 25–58.

Regarding the thesis of this project about the formative struggles of Royal Runaways, see Warren G. Bennis and Robert J. Thomas, "Crucibles of Leadership," in *HBR's 10 Must Reads On Mental Toughness* (Boston: Harvard

Moreover, for all the recent "discoveries" about the social and psychological power of narrative, wise people have long known what the poet William Stafford knows: if you, as an author, "simply assert something you are likely to forget that a reader, a worthy reader, needs not just your random speaking out, but an experience of sharing the source of values, the evidence for values, the adventures inherent in the finding and maintaining of values."[107] The adventures of Royal Runaway tales are a communicative vehicle eminently suited to the transmission of traditional values. (Which is not to say that unstoried values—principles, ideals, whatever—are what is *real*, and the story is simply a mythic husk for an existential kernel; if we are to utilize such categories at all, risking post-Enlightenment anachronism, then it is better to say story and value share an irreducible interdependence). Whether it be stories of Prince Siddhartha's adventures in rural

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Business School Publishing Corporation [Kindle Edition], 2018). Bennis and Thomas write: "Why is it that certain people seem to naturally inspire confidence, loyalty, and hard work, while others (who may have just as much vision and smarts) stumble, again and again? It's a timeless question, and there's no simple answer. But we have come to believe it has something to do with the different ways that people deal with adversity. Indeed, our recent research has led us to conclude that one of the most reliable indicators and predictors of true leadership is an individual's ability to find meaning in negative events and to learn from even the most trying circumstances. Put another way, the skills required to conquer adversity and emerge stronger and more committed than ever are the same ones that make for extraordinary leaders" (Kindle). Thanks to Brigadier General Dana Born, Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, for pointing me to this literature, discussing it with me, and sharing her opinion that "the Bible is the best leadership book in the world" (conversation with student, 14 February 2017).

In a related genre, and suggestive of why the value of struggle for character formation is often overlooked, see the transition in American society from a "Culture of Character" to a "Culture of Personality" discussed by Susan Cain, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* (New York, NY.: Broadway Books, 2013), 21–4. Following cultural historian Warren Susman, Cain locates an important hinge moment one hundred years ago that effectively screens out the sort of values stressed in this project. "[B]y 1920, popular self-help guides had changed their focus from inner virtue to outer charm […] The earlier guides emphasized attributes that anyone could work on improving, described by words like Citizenship, Duty, Work, Golden deeds, Honor, Reputation, Morals, Manners, Integrity. But the new guides celebrated qualities that were—no matter how easy Dale Carnegie made it sound— tricker to acquire. Either you embodied these qualities or you didn't: Magnetic, Fascinating, Stunning, Attractive, Glowing, Dominant, Forceful, Energetic. It was no coincidence that in the 1920s and the 1930s, Americans became obsessed with movie stars." Later on, echoing Bennis and Thomas, Cain writes: "Those who live the most fully realized lives—giving back to their families, societies, and ultimately themselves—tend to find meaning in their obstacles. In a sense, [psychologist Dan] McAdams has breathed new life into one of the great insights of Western mythology: that where we stumble is where our treasure lies. […] Love is essential; gregariousness is optional." Cain, 263–4.

Such sources indicate that outside disciplines viewing authority as inherently violent and suffering as best avoided at all costs, the findings of this project are in no need of "rediscovery" at all.

[107] William Stafford, *You Must Revise Your Life* (Ann Arbor, MI.: The University of Michigan Press, 1986).

India, or Mirabai's courageous disregard for palatial luxuries, or Francis of Assisi's making common cause with outcast lepers, the multiform typology of Royal Runaways is powerful precisely as a *narrative*: the story is the hook, pulling the listener through a temporal sequence of challenges and tests, dramatizing a transformation of character. Stories do indeed shape our world, and Royal Runaways—particularly in its Christian variant, the pattern of a prince leaving the palace discerned within the heart of the Creator—is a world-shaped story. Not only have numerous cultures around the world cherished some variation of this story in their foundational literatures, but societies have grown up around them as well; Royal Runaways, and the listeners of their tales, come into contact with a strange new world. So far as I can tell, regarded through a social lens, this extra-narrative power to generate culture is owing not to assertions that overpower the mind but to a gentler narrative persuasion of the heart.[108]

For its part, the New Testament regularly drops into an assertive register, yet this is only possible because it assumes the comprehensive narrative formation of the Hebrew Bible; I have been at pains to show that Christian belief in Christ's kenosis—for all its revelatory newness—is deeply indebted to a prior theological pattern of exilic suffering in Israel's Scriptures. Or at least this is how the New Testament frames the matter. Beyond the antecedents of the Carmen Christi explored in Chapter 3, recall the post-resurrection hermeneutic of Jesus himself, still unrecognized and explaining his suffering to the baffled and disheartened disciples: "'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he

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[108] That is, and in keeping with much psychological research acknowledging that David Hume was more or less correct in his assertion that the passions usually rule the reason, emotions are more persuasive and generative of activity than are propositional arguments. See, for example, Antonio Damasio, *The Strange Order of Things: Life, Feeling, and the Making of Cultures* (New York, NY.: Vintage Books, 2018); Joseph LeDoux, *Anxious: Using the Brain to Understand and Treat Fear and Anxiety* (New York, NY.: Penguin, 2015). Cf. the discussion of narrative in Chapter 1.

interpreted [διερμήνευσεν] to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25–27).[109] This project also began with Moses, yet has tried *not* to lean overly hard on New Testament teleology, and rather to read the Hebrew Bible in a historically appropriate manner that helps us understand the existence of a collection like the New Testament at all. That is to say, even *without* the New Testament, Royal Runaway stories in the canonical Scriptures of Israel—in the lives of figures like Joseph, Moses, and David, not to say of Israel itself as a people—offer a coherent and powerful typology, containing many essential components of what Christians would later call kenosis.[110] The king must be a humble servant, the highest must be the lowest, seeking power leads to destruction; these things are all assumed, and the Christian innovation (as a feature of its incarnational logic) is only the application of this model of rulership to the divine King. Notwithstanding all the lexical and theological shades of meaning in the phrase "created in the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26–7), early Christians like the author of the Carmen Christi seem to have posited an audacious yet scripturally-based overlap between the true human,

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[109] Cf. the famous John 3:16, contextualized by the sentence in 3:14–15 beginning this way: καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς… (*And as Moses…*). "For" in "For God so love the world… [Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον…]" indicates the explanation for the preceding sentence that likens Moses' serpent to the Son of Man. The potency for early Christians of "like Moses" typology is again evident, in a passage that for many is seen as a slogan of the entire New Testament.

[110] For a Jewish parallel, consider Isaac Luria's kabbalistic teaching of צמצום (*tzimtzum*, literally "contraction, reduction"), itself an inversion of an earlier meaning of the term. Originally צמצום referred to the constriction of God's presence to the Holy of Holies, whereas for Luria, in order for God to create anything he first needed to withdraw the divine presence from a particular place in the universe, with the consequence that "the first act in the history of existence is God's exile" (Geoffrey Wigoder, "Jewish Mysticism," in *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism* [New York, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2002], 484.) Like kenotic theology, Luria's צמצום posits God's willing self-limitation as of cosmological first importance.

Israel's Messiah, and the true God, YHWH.[111] Self-emptying royals, and chiefly a self-emptying Messiah, are the image and likeness of a self-emptying God.[112]

Still, it is very hard to put any of this into words. Fundamentally mysterious, God's kenosis is nearly like what astronomers refer to as a white hole singularity: a theorized node in outer space where the laws of the universe bend past breaking, yet rather than cancelling everything out, a new reality-engendering law is somehow activated. What I alluded to earlier as the black hole of an empty tomb, then, is perhaps more like an accelerating explosion of light—not where everything ends, but where it begins.[113] The traditional metaphor, though, may be more illuminating: the enigma of God's self-gift is like the sun, blinding to look at directly, yet by whose light everything is seen. In Royal Runaway stories of radical generosity, human and divine, people across many

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[111] Such a theological move may seem like making God in the image of man (as in Feuerbachian projectionist models of religion), although Christian theologians such as Origen and Augustine, and later Calvin, would see the incarnation as divine "accommodation" to human limitations. At any rate, this is yet another point where we encounter the historically fuzzy overlap between humanity, royalty, and divinity. Wright puts a particularly tight spin on this: "God called Israel to be the means of rescuing the world, so that he might one day rescue the world *by becoming Israel in the person of its representative Messiah*." N. T. Wright, *The New Testament In Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 665. Italics original.

[112] The role of God the Spirit is important at this juncture for Christian theology, taking its cue from the affiliation of royalty with the spirit in passages like Isaiah 11:1–10. See discussion "The Spirit, Power, and Weakness," in Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 1994), 822–6: "Let us begin, then, with another look at the word 'power,' since part of the problem for us is again semantic. We cannot always be sure what 'power' might have meant for Paul. Frequently it refers to visible manifestations that evidence the Spirit's presence (e.g., 1 Cor 2:4–5; Gal 3:5; Rom 15:19). [… Paul] expects God's more visible demonstration of power, through the Spirit, to be manifested even in the midst of weakness, as God's 'proof' that his power resides in the message of a crucified Messiah." If all words, including δύναμις, have histories, this study has tried to ask what such a term meant for tradents of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. In ecclesiastical history, the term "minister" encodes something of the Royal Runaway revaluation of power: related to the Latin term *minus* (meaning "less," as in mathematical subtraction), it is formed after the correlative *magister* (meaning "master"; *OED*). Hence a church or governmental minister (cf. administrator) is someone in service to, e.g., God, a king, a bishop, etc. To be a minister is by definition to regard oneself as occupying not a high but a low position, not one of power but of service. Unfortunately, this notion has often been distorted into a crass form of privilege, a self-defeating irony indeed.

[113] I am cautious here about overreach, and venture these metaphors loosely (particularly the word "engendering"); I have written briefly on the science of such phenomena in "When Life Burst Out of Death: A Theological Imagining of how the Big Bang Echoes Easter," *Christianity Today*, 29 March 2018, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/march-web-only/when-life-burst-out-of-death.html.

times, cultures, and faiths have discerned light. I am not sure I have described this light very well, but I am sure what it allows us to see—and know ourselves seen by—is love.

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