

Copyrighted material

# Reinforcing the Foundations

*Expositions on God, Sin, Salvation, and Service*



David Anguish

CarChlex Books  
Searcy, Arkansas

## Copyrighted material

Copyright © 2025 by David Anguish.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the publisher.

David Anguish/CarChlex Books  
304 Craig Drive  
Searcy, AR 72143  
[www.davidanguish.com](http://www.davidanguish.com)

Book Layout ©2017 BookDesignTemplates.com

Cover Background Image by Nathan Anguish

Reasonable care has been taken to trace original sources for any excerpts and quotations appearing in this book and to document such information. For material not in public domain, fair-use standards and practices were followed. Should any attribution be found to be incorrect or incomplete, the publisher welcomes written documentation supporting correction for subsequent printings.

Quantity sales. Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations, and others. For details, consult the CarChlex Bookshelf page at [www.davidanguish.com](http://www.davidanguish.com).

Reinforcing the Foundations/David Anguish. —1st ed.

## Copyrighted material

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV), Text Edition 2016. Copyright © 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (KJV) taken from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible. Public Domain.

Scripture quotations marked (ASV) taken from the American Standard Version, published in 1901 by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Public Domain.

Scripture quotations marked (NEB) are taken from the New English Bible, copyright © Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press 1961, 1970. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NAB) are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Scriptures Quotations marked “GNB” or “GNT” are from the Good News Bible © 1994 published by the Bible Societies/HarperCollins Publishers Ltd UK, Good News Bible © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992. Used with permission.

Scripture quotations marked “NASB” are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Quotations designated (NIV) are from THE HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NRSV) are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2019 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (CJB) are taken taken from the Complete Jewish Bible by David H. Stern. Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. [www.messianicjewish.net](http://www.messianicjewish.net).

## Copyrighted material

Scripture quotations marked (CEB) are from the COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE. © Copyright 2011 COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE. All rights reserved. Used by permission. ([www.CommonEnglishBible.com](http://www.CommonEnglishBible.com)).

Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

# Contents

Introduction.....	1
Part 1: Clarity — “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne” .....	9
What We Must See Before We Serve .....	11
God Is the Point .....	23
The Day God Appeared Larger .....	41
Part 2: Cleansing — “Your sin is atoned for” .....	55
“Woe Is Me, for I Am Lost!” .....	57
Where It All Went Wrong.....	65
Sin <i>Is</i> a Big Deal.....	79
Just What We Need .....	89
He Came! .....	101
The Gospel of God .....	113
Fantastic News from Jerusalem.....	127
Part 3: Commitment — “Here I am! Send me” .....	141
Called to Active Duty.....	143
Living to God in Christ Jesus.....	153
Appendix.....	163
Making Sense of Jesus .....	165
Works Cited.....	177



# Introduction

AROUND THE TIME I was finalizing some editing details for this volume, work on another project led me to look back through passages I had highlighted two decades before in Raymond Ortlund's *When God Comes to Church: A Biblical Model for Revival Today*. Among them is the second paragraph of his introduction where he writes,

We live in strange times. While the Bible-believing church is polarized on a wide range of hot-button “issues,” it neglects the powerful truths lying at the center of our faith. The atmosphere of contemporary evangelicalism too often is over-reaction and misplaced enthusiasm. We are not as biblical as we think we are (Ortlund 2000, 15).

That Ortlund would write those words in an introduction to a book on church revival is noteworthy, but we need to be sure we correctly understand the point he is making. He is not suggesting that churches should “retreat into a merely cerebral religion” (Ortlund 2000, 16), a course that will result in sterile churches who, in their concern to be true to biblical doctrine, will be rigid, unresponsive, and grim. While rightly concerned

about the overemphasis on enthusiasm that is evident in what he calls the “eccentricities” of many contemporary churches, Ortlund is also correct that “‘doctrine only’ is not itself a biblical doctrine” (Ortlund 2000, 16). The churches who will best honor God and be most effective as salt and light will be those who trust God implicitly and refuse to be timid in their engagement with the world. They will embrace a vibrant spirit that enlivens them to “*demonstrate in real life that the biblical view satisfies human needs and desires in a way that the error does not*” (Ortlund 2000, 17; his emphasis).

I commend Ortlund’s appeals for revival and balance but urge us to not lose sight of the importance of the fundamental idea he expresses in the paragraph cited above. In our determination to be vibrant, we must not “neglect the powerful truths lying at the center of our faith.” Those truths are the doctrines that provide the reason for the confidence and vitality we can show to the world, the foundational beliefs that provide the fuel God’s people need to sustain the enthusiasm and activism we should demonstrate.

Scripture itself confirms this. Think, for example, of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. Chapters 1–3 include some of his most profound statements of doctrine. In chapter 1, he emphasizes the majesty of God the Father and the blessings believers have because of what God has done in Christ. In chapter 2, he affirms the seriousness of sin but also stresses the reconciliation to God and others that Jesus makes possible. In chapter 3, he explains that this was all part of God’s eternal purpose (Eph 3.1–19, 21) and then appeals to them to trust God to help them “do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (v. 20).

Those are powerful truths, worth repeating in their own right. But in Ephesians, they are the foundations for the practical exhortations to the church that comprise chapters 4–6. There, Paul calls for them to demonstrate unity in active service that helps grow the body of Christ (4.1–16); think and live in ways that are radically different from the cultural decadence

around them (4.17–5.21); nurture faithful families in the pagan environment of ancient Ephesus (5.22–6.9); and remain strong in the Lord as they participate in the cosmic war between God and “the spiritual forces of evil” (6.10–20; esp. v. 12).

Our challenges are no less daunting than theirs. Many still resist the faith we affirm, pressuring us through various means to conform to ways of life that promise great things but are really just fool’s gold. We must be as decisive in our response as Paul wanted them to be. But we will do so only if we are firmly grounded on the central truths of the faith.

## Expository Studies of Central Truths

The central truths we are considering in these studies can be summarized as follows: *At its most basic level, the Bible is about God taking the initiative through the work of Jesus Christ to rescue humanity from the sin that separates us from him and then teaching us how to live faithfully in our restored relationship with him.*

We will look at representative biblical texts that highlight various aspects of the teachings mentioned in that summary. Notice that I said, “biblical texts.” These are not systematic studies of the doctrines of God, sin, salvation, and service, but *expository studies* that focus on specific Bible passages. Exposition is a method of study and presentation in which the thought of the biblical writer determines the sermon’s substance based on a study of a passage in its historical, grammatical, and literary context (Robinson 1980, 20). As a preacher, I prefer expository studies because they encourage me to exercise the discipline to first hear what the text says and let it determine the points to be made in the sermon. This helps me stay focused on speaking “with God’s words” (1 Pet 4.8 NET). I also like expository studies for developing series on different subjects. Looking at multiple passages that are all concerned with a subject allows us to look at that subject from different angles. It’s like looking at the different facets of a diamond: each passage reveals an important

aspect of the teaching and enhances our appreciation of the subject in its entirety.

Some diamonds are more complex than others, of course, and the topical diamonds in this series are among the most multifaceted we can ever examine. So, these are not exhaustive treatments but are representative studies that can whet our appetites to probe more deeply. They can be utilized to point us to other passages that will further help us deepen our understanding of God, sin, separation, salvation, and service.

### **Origins, Purpose, and Structure**

These studies originated as a series of sermons presented to enhance one church's awareness of these foundational beliefs. I didn't preach them because the church had never heard anything about the subjects, though it's possible some newer Christians among us had not heard them discussed together. My intent was to review these important themes so that all of us would be more conscious of and reliant on them in our walks with God.

This book aims to share those studies with a wider audience. Since they were originally presented to a general church audience, I'm convinced they will benefit similar audiences in other churches. But given the overwhelming amount of information all of us are asked to evaluate today, I know it is unlikely many churchgoers will read them unless someone brings them to their attention. So, my hope is that this book will find an audience among preachers, elders, adult class teachers, and those who train them and that those leaders will use it as an aid to lead the churches they serve to think more deeply about these foundational ideas.

As previously noted, structurally, the chapters are expositions of Bible texts that highlight different facets of each of the book's three major topics. Three chapters focus on *seeing the Lord*; seven look at *sin, separation, and salvation*; and two

elaborate on broad principles of *committed service*. An appendix surveys *the character and role of Jesus* in making reconciliation with God possible. To facilitate additional reflection and discussion, a series of questions appears at the end of each chapter.

You may wonder why three chapters are devoted to studies of just one text, Isaiah 6. Beginning in the late 1980s, when I studied it for a course I was preparing to teach on the Old Testament prophets, I have sought out opportunities to teach and write on this text. Every time I've returned to it, I've encountered something in the text or others' treatment of it that deepens my appreciation for its ideas and usefulness for strong faith. It is a gold mine of theological riches, conveniently presented in just thirteen verses.

As I began to chart the direction for the sermon series mentioned above, the inclusion of some study of Isaiah 6 was axiomatic. And since the text speaks to all three of the major ideas I intended to address, I decided to include a sermon on each of its sections to introduce the major topics in the series.

When I decided to convert the sermons to a book, I had to decide whether to include the Isaiah 6 studies and, if so, how to do so. The decision to include them was settled quickly; the chapter's teaching is simply too rich to omit. How to include them took longer to work out. I considered two options. One was to place all three Isaiah chapters at the beginning as an overview designed to introduce the book's major themes. But as I thought about it more and received input from others whom I asked to evaluate an initial draft of the book, I decided that the Isaiah chapters are best utilized in the same way I used them in the sermon series: as introductions to each of the book's three major sections.

One evaluator did agree with my concern that three chapters on a single Bible text just thirteen verses long might strike some as excessive or overwhelming, but he recommended including them nevertheless, precisely because Isaiah 6 is such a profound statement of the central truths. He also suggested the

following as a way to satisfy the concerns mentioned above: If it fits your situation or class schedule better, you may choose to survey the Isaiah 6 chapters in one session or simply omit them and focus on the other ten texts. I think his suggestion has merit, but I hope you'll make the effort to study and use all three chapters as the introductions to the book's big ideas they are intended to be. The spiritual riches you uncover will reward your effort.

### **Revisiting Ephesians 1–3**

Earlier, I called attention to the depth of Paul's teaching in Ephesians 1–3. He begins by declaring the blessedness of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1.3–4). He refers to our "redemption through [Christ's] blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace," which was carried out "according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (vv. 7, 9–10). The rest of chapters 1–3 tease out the implications of those ideas, providing yet another reservoir of theological riches worthy of extended study.

What I want to stress here, however, is that the teachings Paul expounds in chapters 1–3 are rooted in the foundational truths with which this book is concerned. In his effort to give the Ephesians what they needed to navigate the challenges created by the futile thinking and resulting spiritual and moral darkness of first century western Asia Minor (cf. Eph 4.17–24), he first reinforced the foundation they needed to sustain their faith and energize their service. So, in chapters 1–3, he gave them a vision of God, reminded them that their sin had once separated them from his glory, and invited them to celebrate

the fact that, in Jesus, they had been reconciled to him and prepared for meaningful lives of service.

The specific circumstances of our world differ from theirs, but the cultural outlook is essentially the same. How important, then, is it for us to reinforce our knowledge of and commitment to the foundational teachings he gave them?

To God be the glory.



Part 1: Clarity — “I  
saw the Lord sitting  
upon a throne”





# What We Must See Before We Serve

AT 5:47 PM EASTERN STANDARD time on April 12, 1945, an official news bulletin was released to inform the American public that Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the nation's 32nd president, had died two hours earlier in Warm Springs, Georgia, the victim of a stroke.

As reported by Scott Bomboy in a blog post on April 12, 2023, official Washington was stunned by the news. Within fifteen minutes of the press office's official announcement, all the major American radio networks had issued news bulletins and stopped regular programming. Reports were mixed with solemn music and interviews with citizens who expressed their shock (Bomboy 2023).

Their feelings were shared across the nation and around the world. As the train transporting the president's body proceeded from Georgia to Washington, D. C., thousands gathered along the route to pay their respects. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill later said that learning of Roosevelt's death was

comparable to being struck with a physical blow. Joseph Stalin, Premier of the Soviet Union, was also reportedly distraught at the news (Leuchtenburg, n.d.). And in a letter to his parents dated April 15, Robert Stone, an Army Air Force bombardier stationed in the Marianas, reported that, like others on base, he felt a definite sadness when he heard the news. He surmised—correctly—that the president’s sudden death had come as a real blow to the American people and then expressed concern for what the change in leadership would mean for members of the armed services. He wondered whether President Truman would be a decisive leader or “kicked around like a rubber ball.” If the latter, Stone was thankful for the capable military leaders he expected would fill the void (Gilder Lehrman Institute, n.d.).

Thousands of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen who served in World War II could scarcely remember a time when Roosevelt had not been their president. Elected to the first of four terms in 1932, at the time of his death he had held the office for twelve years—half the lifetimes of the oldest of the military rank-and-file. Their parents and grandparents had memories of previous leaders, but Roosevelt had occupied the office for so long and through so many momentous events that the actions of his predecessors often seemed like distant memories. FDR had become part of the national fabric. Furthermore, like Robert Stone, most Americans knew nothing about Harry Truman and could not imagine what their country would be like under his leadership or, for that matter, anyone who was not FDR.

### **Real Circumstances**

If Americans felt that way after twelve years under a democratically elected leader, what must it have been like for the people of ancient Judah circa 740–739 BC when they learned of the death of King Uzziah (also known as Azariah; 2 Kings 14.21; 2 Chron 26.1)? He had reigned for fifty-two years—more than four times longer than Franklin Roosevelt was president.

Throughout the five decades in which he had been either co-regent or ruler in his own right (cf. 2 Kings 15.1–2), the dominant world power was Assyria. But because the Assyrian rulers were occupied with domestic troubles around their capital city of Nineveh in the early 8th century BC, they had not been able to give as much attention to the oversight of their vassals, two of whom were Israel and Judah. Their relative inattention left Uzziah free to improve conditions in Judah. The country had experienced economic prosperity as he expanded its territory through successful wars against the Philistines, conquests that allowed him to gain control of the Edomite territory and consolidate southern trade routes. He had also completed large-scale projects that included rebuilding the port city of Ezion-Geber (Elath) (cf. 2 Kings 14.21–22; 2 Chron 26.6–15) (Marrs 2003, 67). In terms of peace, prosperity, and what most today would call success, life for the people of Judah under Uzziah had been generally good.

But in other, more important ways, things were not good in Judah when Uzziah died. Moral decadence, social fragmentation, and spiritual rot were prevalent. Isaiah 6 reports the prophet's call to be God's messenger who would confront the unfaithful people about their failings and appeal to them to return to God, but Isaiah 1–5 shows why he was needed. Three themes stand out in these chapters and provide the necessary context for appreciating Isaiah's call to and motivation for difficult service.

First, even though the people were active in public acts of religious devotion, including rites that God had commanded, he was rejecting their worship as if they were the people of the infamous Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaiah specifically called them to account for oppressing the nation's underclass who had not benefited from the prosperity of Uzziah's reign.

Hear the word of the LORD,  
you rulers of Sodom!

Give ear to the teaching of our God,  
you people of Gomorrah!  
“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?  
says the LORD;  
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams  
and the fat of well-fed beasts;  
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,  
or of lambs, or of goats.  
When you come to appear before me,  
who has required of you  
this trampling of my courts?  
Bring no more vain offerings;  
incense is an abomination to me.  
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—  
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.  
Your new moons and your appointed feasts  
my soul hates;  
they have become a burden to me;  
I am weary of bearing them.  
When you spread out your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
even though you make many prayers,  
I will not listen;  
your hands are full of blood.  
Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;  
cease to do evil,  
learn to do good;  
seek justice,  
correct oppression;  
bring justice to the fatherless,  
plead the widow’s cause” (Isa 1.10–17).

Second, because they were using their wealth to make the idols they were worshipping and practice oppression and injustice, Isaiah told them they would lose their finery and become destitute in the land in which God had promised they would prosper.

For you have rejected your people,  
the house of Jacob,  
because they are full of things from the east  
and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines,  
and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.  
Their land is filled with silver and gold,  
and there is no end to their treasures;  
their land is filled with horses,  
and there is no end to their chariots.  
Their land is filled with idols;  
they bow down to the work of their hands,  
to what their own fingers have made.  
So man is humbled,  
and each one is brought low—  
do not forgive them!  
Enter into the rock  
and hide in the dust  
from before the terror of the LORD,  
and from the splendor of his majesty.  
The haughty looks of man shall be brought low,  
and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled,  
and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day (Isa 2.6–11).

In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets,  
the headbands, and the crescents; the pendants, the brace-  
lets, and the scarves; the headdresses, the armllets, the  
sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings  
and nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and  
the handbags; the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans,  
and the veils (Isa 3.18–23).

Third, because they were participants in the breakdown of  
decency, integrity, law and order, and justice for the oppressed,  
the delight they were taking in their prosperity would turn to  
lament when they were forced to forfeit their wealth.

Woe to those who join house to house,  
who add field to field,  
until there is no more room,  
and you are made to dwell alone  
in the midst of the land.

The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing:  
“Surely many houses shall be desolate,  
    large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.  
For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath,  
    and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah” (Isa  
5.8–10)

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,  
    and shrewd in their own sight!  
Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,  
    and valiant men in mixing strong drink,  
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,  
    and deprive the innocent of his right!  
Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,  
    and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,  
so their root will be as rottenness,  
    and their blossom go up like dust;  
for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts,  
    and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.  
Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against his  
people,  
    and he stretched out his hand against them and struck  
them,  
    and the mountains quaked;  
and their corpses were as refuse  
    in the midst of the streets.  
For all this his anger has not turned away,  
    and his hand is stretched out still (Isa 5.21–25).

To summarize, from Isaiah 1–5 we learn how God saw the condition of Judah. The stability of Uzziah’s reign had allowed him to expand Judah’s territory and create prosperity for the nation but the cost had been high. Judah’s success had “led to decadence and social and spiritual decay” (Hill and Walton 2009, 195). They participated in the requisite rituals but did not practice the justice the law of the God they revered commanded. They used their wealth to make idols and feed their decadence instead of helping the poor and oppressed. Consequently, Isaiah was commissioned to announce God’s judgment.

His prophecies were not welcome. The people heard and grasped what he was saying but refused to see the reality he exposed, heed his warning, or change their course. His preaching did not lead to a national revival. Instead, the people continued in their ways until their cities were laid waste and their land became desolate. Isaiah's ministry was lonely and difficult and resulted in the survival of only a minority of Judah's population (Isa 6.9–13). In fact, according to a tradition preserved in Jewish and Christian writings from the centuries on either side of the time of Christ, Isaiah died a horrible death because he predicted Judah's apostasy and fall.<sup>1</sup>

### Clear Focus

Facing such challenging circumstances, where would Isaiah find the motivation necessary to persevere in faithful service? Isaiah 6, which records his call to prophesy, also gives us insight into what sustained him. Verses 1–4, our text for this chapter, show that what ultimately kept him going was his vision of the Lord he was called to serve. In particular, he experienced four things about God.

First, Isaiah saw the Lord's *majesty*. Isaiah 6.1 says, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple."

---

<sup>1</sup> According to later Jewish writings including the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, *The Lives of the Prophets*, and *The Martyrdom of Isaiah*, when Isaiah told King Hezekiah that his wicked son Manasseh would lead the nation into apostasy, he and some other prophets were forced to flee to a mountain where a false prophet betrayed him and he was arrested and later sawn in half by orders of Manasseh (Trafton 1992, 507).

Early Christian writers also referred to the story (e.g., Justin, *Dialogue* 120) and it may be alluded to in Hebrews 11.37 (Chapman 2008, 2382). For introductions and translations of *Lives* and *Martyrdom* (see above), see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2: M. A. Knibb, *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, pp. 143-176; and D. R. Hare, *The Lives of the Prophets*, pp. 379-399.

In addition to emphasizing the Lord's "exalted" (NIV) status, this verse also says that the Lord was in "the temple," the focal point of his presence (cf. 1 Kings 8.30). But perhaps the most significant figure in the verse is the reference to "the train of [the Lord's] robe [that] filled the temple." This emphasized the Lord's royal position and showed the extent of his kingship.

Second, Isaiah witnessed the *reverence* of God's heavenly servants. "Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew" (Isa 6.2).

The seraphim appear only here in the Old Testament. Isaiah's vision depicts them in positions of deference and service to the Lord's majestic glory. The fact that each of them had six wings adds to the sense of reverence associated with their service. Two wings were used to fly or, literally, to hover over the Lord's robe. Two covered their faces, indicating that they were in such awe of the Lord that they would not dare to look directly at him. The other two covered their feet, a Hebrew idiom used as a euphemism either to describe more delicate body parts or to refer to a custom in the ancient East that forbade showing the soles of the feet in polite company (Watts 1985, 74).

Third, Isaiah heard the *praise* of the seraphim as they called to each other,

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
The whole earth is full of his glory (Isa 6.3).

The structure of verse 3 is a poetic parallelism designed to emphasize the Lord's singular uniqueness. He is not just holy, but *Holy! Holy! Holy!* That is what marks him off as completely separate from anything else that exists. The threefold repetition is a common Hebrew method of emphasis; here it is used to stress the magnitude of God's different character. The last phrase in verse 3 underscores the extent of his holiness: "the whole earth is full of his glory" (cf. Ps 19.1–6). How much this emphasis on the Lord's holiness impressed the prophet is

evident from the fact that the phrase, *the Holy One of Israel* was his favorite way to refer to God throughout the book, appearing twelve times in chapters 1–39 and fourteen times in chapters 40–66.

Finally, Isaiah saw an astounding portrayal of the Lord's power. "And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke" (Isa 6.4).

The depiction of the shaking doorway foundations suggests something like an earthquake and the figure of smoke is often used in Scripture to refer to the Lord's presence (Isa 4.5; 30.27; cf. Exod 19.18; Ps 144.5; Rev 15.8). Isaiah's reference to this figure would have reminded the Israelites of the pillar of cloud and fire that showed God's leadership of the nation in the wilderness (see Exod 13.21, 22; 24.16; Num 9.15–23).

### **Motivated by God's Greatness**

We should pause to reflect on the sensory effect Isaiah's vision must have had on him. Modern movie-goers have come to expect action films to be characterized by special effects that are awe-inspiring in their visual, auditory, and emotional impact. But, as impressive as these effects are, I suspect that what Isaiah experienced in his vision would have made them seem amateurish by comparison. Read the account of his vision again and allow your imagination to help you see and feel what Isaiah experienced. He saw God's glorious presence in a massive temple that was filled by the hem of his robe. He saw and heard ethereal heavenly beings who hovered over the throne on which the Lord was sitting, calling out in constant praise that memorably called attention to his distinctive nature. Adding to his sensory overload, he saw the temple foundations shaking, no doubt heard an accompanying rumble, and then saw the temple filled with smoke. What an incredible scene!

As you visualize this picture of the LORD'S glory, keep in mind that Isaiah did not see his vision "because ... he was more

spiritually attuned than others,” but only because God revealed it to him (Young 1992, 237). Remember too that, because he saw the LORD this way, Isaiah came to clearly understand both his place before God and his mission. He knew he had fallen far short of God’s glory (cf. Rom 3.23) and so he confessed that he was “lost” (v. 5). Then, by grace, he was cleansed from his uncleanness with a coal taken directly from the temple’s altar (vv. 6–7). His vision made such an impact that he was compelled to step forward when the LORD called for someone to “go for us” (v. 8). He was convinced that God was bigger than any challenge he would ever face and would sustain him despite the rejection of his message by the people (vv. 9–13).

We must not miss the connection between Isaiah’s vision, cleansing, and mission. Service to God begins and is sustained by a view of God that prompts us to revere and praise him in light of his majesty and holiness. Paradoxically, it is when we see God this way that we become fully aware that only he can initiate the cleansing we need to restore our broken relationship with him. Seeing him in light of our cleansing then motivates us to step forward and volunteer for the often-hazardous circumstances involved in effective service to him.

## Conclusion

In his book, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, John Piper tells how he began a year of preaching with a sermon on Isaiah 6.1–4 in which he aimed to expose his hearers to God’s glory without “one word of application to the lives of the people.” His training and experience made him wary of his plan. Would his hearers not want something more practical and therefore more valuable to them as they faced the demands of day-to-day life? But despite his reservations, he proceeded with his plan.

His perseverance was validated a few weeks later by a conversation with a young father in a family who had recently discovered that their child had been sexually abused by a close relative. The father took Piper aside and said, “These have been

the hardest months of our lives. Do you know what has gotten me through? The vision of the greatness of God's holiness that you gave me [from Isaiah 6.1–4] the first week of January. It has been the rock we could stand on" (Piper 1990, 9-10).

As believers committed to serving God, we should give attention to finding the wisest ways to carry out our mission. But if we are not careful, we can focus so much on the urgency of service and methods that we lose sight of the importance of seeing and knowing God, the goal of faith that is vital for sustaining our service. We need to periodically pause, return to texts like Isaiah 6, strengthen our vision of God, deepen our appreciation of his cleansing, and reinforce our understanding that he will be with us in any challenge we face.

Then, in light of his glory, we too will declare, "Here I am! Send me" (Isa 6.8).

## Questions for Reflection

1. Isaiah 1–5 indicates that moral decadence, social fragmentation, and spiritual rot had become prevalent over the time of Uzziah’s lengthy reign. Why do you think that occurred? What could have been done to prevent it?
2. What similarities do you see between Judah’s culture as described in Isaiah 1–5 and our contemporary culture? What differences do you see?
3. What barriers between Isaiah’s God-given message and the people were created by the conditions described in Isaiah 1–5? What barriers between God’s message and its reception do we face today?
4. How important is the connection between our focus on God and our ability to effectively serve him? In your experience, has worship been an aid or hindrance to seeing God?
5. From reading only the first paragraph of the chapter’s concluding section, what did you think of John Piper’s plan to expose his hearers to the glory of God without one word of application? Did your opinion change when you read the second paragraph? Why or why not?

Pages 23–64 have been omitted



# Where It All Went Wrong

TAKE A GOOD LOOK at a favorite picture of a child—your son or daughter, grandson or granddaughter, a favorite niece or nephew, or even the child of a close friend. As you look at that picture, notice the innocence and purity in the child's face.

Now, take some time to look at some recent news headlines. If they are like those found in papers and news sites on most days, you'll see reports of murders, war atrocities, computer fraud, or a tragic traffic accident that claimed the lives of two or three teens, often because of irresponsible behavior by someone involved. You might also read a report of an adult abusing a child who looks much like the one in the picture you viewed a moment ago.

Think now about bad behavior you are aware of that didn't make the news. Maybe it is a fight between neighbors, or an argument between co-workers. Maybe you will remember a time you went to your car to go to work and discovered someone had broken into it and stolen something. Or maybe you heard a driver angrily blowing his horn—perhaps accompanied by heated words and graphic gestures—because another driver cut him off in traffic. Maybe one of those drivers was you!

Now, let's ask some questions. Why does the child who once appeared so innocent and pure soon catch on to the way of self and sin? Why do people act the way they do? Why do they treat others as badly as they do? Why do some people not only condone evil, but delight in it? At a personal level, why did the rude driver who provoked your anger act that way? Why did *you* act the way you did?

More broadly, why is the world filled with so many troubles? Why do people, some very young, have terrible diseases, some of which are considered rare? Why are some children born with defective organs or other debilitating maladies? Why must we deal with hurricanes, dangerous blizzards, earthquakes, and other natural disasters?

Speaking generally, the Bible's answer to questions like these is that we live in a fallen creation that "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" when it will "be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now" (Rom 8.19, 21–22). At the personal level, people act as they do because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

We must also contend with an adversary who desires to keep us separated from God and enslaved in sin. The devil has always been a murderer and liar who seeks to blind people to the right way (John 8.44; 2 Cor 4.4). He is so dedicated to our destruction that he "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet 5.8). Because of his diligence and humanity's inability to successfully resist him, the prophet said, "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear" (Isa 59.2).

It should be obvious from these passages that we must never minimize the problem of sin. To help us avoid that

temptation, we are wise to periodically review and meditate on Paul's analysis of the problem in Romans 1–3.

## The Scope of the Problem

Paul's affirmation that the gospel is the power of God to save (Rom 1.16) should lead us to ask, "save from what?" He doesn't leave us hanging, devoting the first sixty-four verses of the letter's body to giving an answer to that question; that's about fifteen percent of the total number of verses from Romans 1.18–15.14.

We can picture the way he develops his argument with four concentric circles, each representing a group of people Paul says are guilty of sin (Moo 1996, 92–93). Moving from the general to specific, he includes all humanity (Rom 1.18); all humanity not given a special revelation (1.19–32); the good moral person, but mainly the Jew (2.1–16); and the Jew explicitly (2.17–3.8).<sup>1</sup> Citing multiple Old Testament texts to prove his point, he concludes with a summary describing the sinful state of all people (3.9–20). The famous statement in 3.23 looks back to and summarizes 1.18–3.20: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

## Sin: a Problem for Everyone

### *Gentile Failure*

Paul's assessment of the Gentiles' failure underscores the fact that people have consistently used the freedom God gave us to choose sin. That choice is preceded by the willful decision to pursue our own thinking that, despite ample evidence of God's

---

<sup>1</sup> Commentators are divided over whether 2.1–16 is concerned with Gentiles who are comparatively more moral than those described in 1.24–32 or is the first part of Paul's discussion of Jewish sin. It is clear that, beginning in 2.17, he was specifically addressing the Jews.

existence and glory, either rejects God or attempts to replace him with substitute gods, priorities, or self-exaltation. Paul begins his analysis by showing a progression that has been repeated over and over.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things (Rom 1.18–23).

Having established the root cause of the problem, Paul shows that their behaviors follow naturally from their self-centered decisions. As one of my teachers used to say, people act the way they do because they think the way they do (cf. Eph 4.17–24). And because we were given freedom to choose whether or not we will serve God, he allows us to do as we please. Paul elaborates that point as follows:

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were

consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them (Rom 1.24–32).

The fact that God allows us to do as we please does not mean there are no consequences for our choices, however, a point Paul makes in different ways in verses 18–32. First, in verse 18, he says “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” Notice the present tense of the verb, *is revealed* (*apokalyptō*). Paul is not saying here that sinners will face future punishment because they continue in sin; he's saying the consequences of the sins they are committing now are themselves evidence of God's wrath already present in their lives. He then continues to say three times that “God gave them up” to the consequences of their behaviors (vv. 24, 26, 28). As James Dunn comments,

The miserable list of antisocial behavior (vv 29–31) illustrates just what human wisdom in its vaunted independence from God ends up justifying to itself (it would not be difficult to extend the list with [twenty first] century examples). It is such self-delusion which lies at the heart of so much human conduct. And precisely because it is self-delusion, a self-destructive and society-destructive delusion, Paul attacks it so fiercely as the opening argument of his broader indictment (Dunn 1988, 76).

*Failure of Good Moral People and the Jews*

Not everyone practiced the lifestyle Paul described in 1.18–32. The Jews believed in God’s law and its commands, but even many non-Jews who did not follow that law had higher moral standards. This group included, but was not limited to, people like Cornelius who worshiped God but did not formally convert to Judaism (Acts 10). But as Paul shows from Romans 2.1–3.8, following the commands in God’s special revelation and living a good moral life does not eliminate the problem of sin.

A particular problem among those with moral conviction is the ease with which we can develop an attitude of self-confidence about our convictions and even our standing before God which fails to account for the extent and depth of the problems sin causes. We see this in the New Testament in the lives of some who esteemed the law, as demonstrated in Jesus’s parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18.9–14). Elsewhere, Paul said that he himself had once been guilty of placing his “confidence in the flesh” because of the blessings he had received as an Israelite. His confidence rested on the fact that, with regard “to righteousness under the law,” he was “blameless” (Phil 3.4–6). But even when people in comparable situations acknowledge they have sinned, their expectation, as was true of many in Israel, is that their sins will be treated differently from the sins committed by people like those described in Romans 1.18–32 (see Dunn 1988, 91; Moo 1996, 126).

In contrast to such self-reliance, Paul argues in Romans that even those who think themselves justified in “passing judgment” on the people they condemn for the behaviors described in 1.28–32 are “without excuse,” in part because they “practice the very same things” (2.1; note the so-called lesser sins like envy, gossip, etc., that are also included in 1.29–32). At the fundamental level, the moralists are like the Gentiles described in 1.24–32: self-seeking people who obey unrighteousness instead

of the truth (2.8). For them, too, there will be “wrath and fury” (2.8).

This is so because “it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified” (2.13). Paul says that the Gentiles who had not received the law and yet were doing what the law taught would fare better in the judgment than Jews who had the law but did not obey it (vv. 14–16). Those who see themselves as morally superior and sit in judgment of others are not above sin but are “storing up wrath for [themselves] on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (v. 5). They will face that judgment because “God shows no partiality” (v. 11).

Having established this point, Paul narrows his focus and directly calls the Jews (2.17) to account for being so certain they can guide the blind and shine light in sin’s darkness (v. 19). In fact, he says that, because they were guilty of violating the very law they used to judge others, “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (v. 24). Paul exposes their inconsistency with a series of probing questions:

You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law (Rom 2.21–23).

Even circumcision, the distinguishing rite in which the Jews took such pride, could not eradicate the problem of sin: “For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision” (2.25). To drive home his point, Paul asks, “So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?” (v. 26). What would allow the Jews to stand confidently in judgment before God was not following the letter of the law in being circumcised, but

letting the law have such an impact on their lives that it changed their hearts.

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God (Rom 2.28–29).

In referring to the circumcision of the heart, Paul was not introducing a new idea. More than 600 years before, the prophet Jeremiah indicted the people of Judah for the same failure Paul said characterized the Jews of his day. He wrote:

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD;  
remove the foreskin of your hearts,  
O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem;  
lest my wrath go forth like fire,  
and burn with none to quench it,  
because of the evil of your deeds (Jer 4.4).

Paul anticipates what the faithful Jew would ask next. If keeping the law, and especially the rite of circumcision, did not make them guiltless in comparison to the Gentile, “then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?” Paul answers that the advantage was found in the fact that they had been “entrusted with the oracles of God” (Rom 3.1–2). Being recipients of God’s revelation was a special blessing for the Jews, but merely possessing the law did not mean they were without sin.

In fact, had they possessed the knowledge they claimed, they would have known that, for the law itself teaches that “both Jews and Greeks are under sin” (Rom 3.9). No one was really righteous or seeking God. Instead, everyone wanted to go their own way and practice all kinds of evil deeds. They used their tongues for deception, cursing, and bitterness. They killed innocent people and left behind paths of destruction and misery. They demonstrated no true fear of God (Rom 3.10–18;

citing, in order, Pss 14.1–3; 53.1–3; 5.9; 140.3; 10.7; Prov 1.16; Ps 36.1). The sins mentioned in the Old Testament passages Paul cites are just like the most serious offenses he said had been committed by the Gentiles (1.28–32). The Jews were just as guilty.

### Taking the Problem Seriously

In chapter 6, we will look more closely at the reasons sin is a problem none of us can overcome under our own power. Here, we will notice three reasons Paul gives to never treat sin lightly.

First, as already noted, sin will leave us in a state of death (Rom 6.23), separated from God (Isa 59.2) and objects of his wrath. It's important to notice that Romans, the letter rightly known for its emphasis on the gospel, faith, and grace, also uses the word *wrath* (*orgē*) twelve of the thirty-six times it appears in the New Testament (1.18; 2.5 [twice]; 2.8; 3.5; 4.15; 5.9; 9.22 [twice]; 12.19; 13.4, 5). Wrath is what awaits anyone who remains impenitent and does not obey God (2.5, 8) and since there is no transgression where there is no law, the Mosaic law did bring wrath (4.15). But God is not unrighteous in bringing his wrath on the disobedient (3.5; 9.22); rather he reserves his righteous judgment for those who do not do his will (2.5; 12.19). And, yes, his wrath is at times administered in the present age (1.18; 13.4-5) in the consequences of the behaviors of those who exchange God's glory for idols and self-exalting behavior (1.18-25).

It is not only judgment and separation that makes sin a problem, however. The second reason for not taking sin lightly that we learn from Paul is that sin that is not resolved leads to attitudes and behaviors that rob us of our freedom. At the beginning of 3.9–20, his summary of the discussion in 1.18–3.8, he says that “both Jews and Greeks are all *under* sin” (Rom 3.9). Other translations bring out the meaning of this prepositional phrase by translating it “under the *power* of sin” (NIV; NRSV). This agrees with later references in the letter. In 5.21, Paul says

that “sin *reigned* [*basileuō*] in death.” In 6.14, he says sin can “have dominion” [*kurieuō*] over a person. In 7.23, he says “the law of sin” was capable of “making me captive,” using a verb (*aichmalōtizō*) which referred to making someone “a prisoner of war” (Bauer 2000, 31).

At the time I’m writing this, news stories in the United States for the past several months have been reporting on an epidemic of fentanyl abuse, an addiction that has tragically led to many deaths. The widespread misuse of this drug is just the most recent example of drugs of choice that have been abused. Like other opioids, which doctors sometimes prescribe for pain control after surgeries, fentanyl has a useful purpose as an anesthetic. But also like those drugs, it can lead to an addiction where the drug controls the person instead of the person controlling the drug.

The notion of a controlling addiction is not new, however. In fact, as Paul shows in Romans, it is the common feature of sin: it gains power over us, enslaves us, reigns over us, becomes our master, and takes us prisoner. Based on the inclusion of the sins in Paul’s list in Romans 1 to emphasize this reality, this means that we can become addicted to greed, envy, murder, deceit, slander, and gossip (Rom 1.28–32). Since all sin has such power, we should never minimize it.

This leads us to the third reason we should not take sin lightly. Think again about the groups Paul mentioned in Romans 1–3. Are any or all of them like anything we see today, whether in society generally or among us who profess faith in Christ Jesus? Think specifically about what he says to the Jews in 2.17–29. No, most believers we know do not claim that reliance on works of the law will allow us to claim justification before God. We’ve learned well that we are saved by grace through faith (Rom 3.21–4.25; cf. Eph 2.8–9) and that “if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace” (Rom 11.6). But if we’re honest, we also know that we can begin to think that, because we are

Christians, own and regularly study the Bible, and are generally better morally than many around us, we have arrived and are no longer susceptible to the problem of sin. Perhaps, like some of the Romans were apparently doing, we even begin to think that sin does not really matter because we have grace available to us (Rom 6.1; cf. 1 John 1.8–2.2).

To counteract this danger, we must remember that even as believers we have freedom and can be lured to pursue priorities, exhibit attitudes, and engage in behaviors that allow sin to regain control over us (cf. Rom 2.24; Jas 1.13–15). So, we should pay attention to Paul's warning in Romans 6:

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness (Rom 6.12–16)?

But we should also take comfort in the fact that the wrath and death Paul refers to are not the end of the story, as he goes on to say in this passage:

But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness (Rom 6.17–18).

So, we praise God and live grateful lives in the knowledge that the same God who warns of wrath and judgment for those who remain impenitent and disobedient also tells us he has

provided us with a way to avoid those adverse consequences. As Paul declares in another text that refers to God's wrath,

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Rom 5.8–9).

## Conclusion

An often-repeated story tells that *The Times* in London once sent an inquiry to some famous authors, asking them, "What is wrong with the world?" G. K. Chesterton reportedly answered, "Dear Sir, I am. Yours, G. K. Chesterton." Although it sounds typical of Chesterton's humility and wit—not to mention being similar to the title of his book, *What's Wrong with the World?*—no one has ever been able to document that exchange in the pages of *The Times*. But it certainly rings true with our experience (Society 2012).

What's wrong with the world can be boiled down to the word *sin* and the fact that we are susceptible to it. It remains for us to see why we continue to struggle with it.

## Questions for Reflection

1. In a letter to Christians, Paul devoted about fifteen percent of the body of Romans to the subject of sin. How does his emphasis compare with ours? Why do you think he gave so much attention to the subject?
2. How does Romans 8.19–22 help us understand the sin and suffering we experience in the world?
3. What evidence does Romans give for the idea that all sin is addictive? What does this reality show about our ability to manage/overcome sin?
4. In what way can knowledge of and appreciation for grace add to our struggle with sin? What is the solution to this problem?
5. “What is wrong with the world?” G. K. Chesterton reportedly answered that question by saying, “I am.” Would you have answered it the same way? Why or why not?

Pages 78–177 have been omitted

# Works Cited

- Alexander, T. Desmond. 2008. "Study Notes on Genesis." *The ESV Study Bible*. ed. Lane T. Dennis. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- Bailey, Kenneth E. 2008. *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Bauer, Walter. 2000. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. ed. Frederick W. Danker. 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Bertram, Georg. 1974. "ὠδίν." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. vol. 9. ed. Gerhard Friedrich. trans & ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 667–674. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Bomboy, Scott. 2023. "Looking Back at the Day FDR Died." Blog Post. National Constitution Center. [url: https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/looking-back-at-the-day-fdr-died](https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/looking-back-at-the-day-fdr-died). Retrieved May 17, 2023.
- Brown, Robert K., and Mark R. Norton, eds. 1995. *The One Year Book of Hymns*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
- Brueggemann, Walter. 1998. *Isaiah 1-39*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Burge, Gary M. 2000. *John*. The NIV Application Commentary. ed. Terry Muck. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

- Chapman, David W. 2008. "Study Notes on Hebrews." *The ESV Study Bible*. ed. Lane T. Dennis. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
- Charlesworth, James H. ed. 1985. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. vol. 2. New York, N Y: Doubleday.
- Danker, Frederick William, with Kathryn Krug. 2009. *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Douthat, Ross. 2012. *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1988. *Romans 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 38<sub>A</sub>. Dallas, TX: Word Books, Publishers.
- Dunn, James D. G. 1998. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Fernando, Ajith. 1998. *Acts*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Garland, David. 2011. *Luke*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. ed. Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- George, Timothy. 2014. "Bonhoeffer in Advent." *First Things* 12-15-14. <http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/12/bonhoeffer-in-advent>. Retrieved December 17, 2023.
- Gilder Lehrman Institute. n.d. "A soldier's reaction to the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1945." <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/soldier%E2%80%99s-reaction-death-franklin-delano-roosevelt-1945>. Retrieved June 1, 2023.
- Grayston, Kenneth. 1950. "Sin." *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*. ed. Alan Richardson, 226–229. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
- Green, Michael P. 1989. *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Harris, W. Hall. ed. 2019. *The NET Bible Notes*. 2nd ed. Biblical Studies Press. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

- Hauerwas, Stanley, and William H. Willimon. 2014. *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*. Expanded 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Hengel, Martin. 1977. *Crucifixion*. trans. John Bowden. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.
- Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. 2009. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Howard, Alton H., ed. 1994. *Songs of Faith and Praise*. West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., Inc.
- Johnson, S. Lewis, Jr. 1971. "The Jesus That Paul Preached." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 128, no. 510 (April–June): 120–134.
- Keener, C. S. 2013. "John, Gospel of." *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, 419–436. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Kohlenberger, John R. III., and William D. Mounce. 2012. *Kohlenberger/Mounce Concise Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Accordance electronic edition, version 3.4. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software.
- Laney, J. Carl. 1981. "The Role of the Prophets in God's Case Against Israel." *Bibliotheca Sacra*. vol. 138, no. 552 (October–December): 313–325.
- Leuchtenburg, William E. n.d. "Franklin D. Roosevelt: Death of the President." UVA Miller Center. <https://miller-center.org/president/fdroosevelt/death-of-the-president>. Retrieved June 1, 2023.
- Lewis, C. S. 1952 [1943]. *Mere Christianity*. paperback ed. New York, NY: Collier Books.
- Lewis, C. S. 1970. *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. ed. Walter Hooper. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Lincoln, A. T. 1997. "Pentecost." *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter Davids, 902–906. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- Luther, Martin. 1961. *Luther: Lectures on Romans*. trans. and ed. William Pauck. *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. XV. Philadelphia. As cited in Lewis S. Johnson, Jr. 1971.
- Marrs, Rick R. 2003. "The World of the Eighth Century Prophets." *Leaven*. vol 11: 64–68.
- Moo, Douglas J. 1996. *The Epistle to the Romans*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Ortlund, Raymond C., Jr. 2000. *When God Comes to Church: A Biblical Model for Revival Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Packer, James I. 1973. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Parton, Dolly. n.d. "Halos & Horns': Track-By-Track." Dollymania.net: The Online Dolly Parton Newsmagazine. <https://www.dollymania.net/halos2.html>. Retrieved January 19, 2024.
- Phillips, J. B. 1961. *Your God Is Too Small*. Paperback Edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
- Piper, John. 1990. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Robinson, Haddon W. 1980. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Shackelford, Don. 2005. *Isaiah*. Truth for Today Commentary. Searcy, AR: Resource Publications.
- Slate, C. Philip. 1989. "The Birth of the Church: Continuation and Beginning (Acts 2)." *Acts, the Spreading Flame: Harding University's 1989 Lectures*, 93–100. Searcy, AR: Harding University.
- Society of G. K. Chesterton. 2012. "What's Wrong with the World?" <https://www.chesterton.org/wrong-with-world>. Retrieved March 11, 2024.
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksander I. 1973. *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*. trans.

- Thomas P. Whitney. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- Strauss, Mark L. 2002. "Luke." *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. vol. 1. ed. Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Trafton, Joseph F. 1992. "Isaiah, Martyrdom and Ascension of." *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. vol. 3. ed. David Noel Freedman, 507–509. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Wallace, Daniel B. 1996. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Watts, John D. W. 1985. *Isaiah 1–33*. Word Biblical Commentary. vol. 24. Waco, TX: Word Books.
- White, John. 2007. *Daring to Draw Near: People in Prayer*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Willis, John D. 1980. *Isaiah*. Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Company.
- Wirt, Sherwood E. trans. 1977. *The Confessions of St. Augustine in Modern English*. Abridged. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. 2006. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Wright, R. B. trans. 1985. "Psalms of Solomon," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 639–670. ed. James H. Charlesworth. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Young, Edward J. 1992. *The Book of Isaiah*. repr. vol. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Zacharias, Ravi. 1990. *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.