CHRISTIAN SALVATION: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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[To provide order to the welter of metaphors employed in Christian soteriology, the authors study them within their underlying systems or "models." The "prophetic" model, in which salvation is effected within history through human instruments, appears in Isaiah and Luke as well as in Irenaeus. In the "liturgical" model, the divine presence is safeguarded by sacrifices; it is found in Leviticus, the Letter to the Hebrews, and also in Athanasius. In the "sapiential" model, sin is willful ignorance and salvation illumination; it is found in Proverbs and John, and echoed in Augustine's soteriology.]

CONTEMPORARY TREATMENTS OF trinitarian theology and Christology routinely make the point that these central doctrines of Christian faith are ultimately anchored in a soteriological vision.[1] Yet, contemporary articulations of Christian salvation tend to be less inclusive of traditional motifs than analogous reflections on the mysteries of Trinity and Christ.[2]

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[1] For seminal examples, see Karl Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise 'De Trinitate'," in *Theological Investigations* 4 (New York: Seabury, 1966) 77–102; "Jesus Christ" in *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Crossroad, 1978) 176–321. On Hans Urs von Balthasar's approach to doctrine as rooted in the "theodrama" of redemption, see Edward T. Oakes, *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Continuum, 1994).

[2] This is particularly the case with regard to motifs associated with the salvific value of Christ's death as sacrifice, expiation, etc. For a survey of the disavowal of

Undoubtedly, part of the reason for this is that the tradition has not authoritatively sanctioned a particular version of conceiving Christian salvation. Colin Gunton suggests that another reason is the post-Enlightenment disdain of imagery, metaphor, and symbol on behalf of a "conceptual rationalism" that gives exclusive honor to the propositional expression of truth.[3] On the other hand, the revalorization of metaphor as rendering valid epistemic access to reality is a feature of contemporary hermeneutics that provides new opportunities for the contemporary appropriation of traditional representations of Christian salvation.[4] Such appropriation can find resources in various modern taxonomies of this tradition that seek to identify the key metaphors for articulating Christian salvation such as victory, atonement, and illumination.[5] But as valuable as this approach is, it tends to overprivelege the pertinent metaphor (e.g. "atonement") and lose sight of the underlying systems or "models," the complex of experiences, concepts, images, and patterns of divine-human interaction that gives meaning to the metaphor. The project of this article is to suggest three such models for conceiving Christian salvation. We have chosen to designate these models as "prophetic," "liturgical," and "sapiential."[6] In each case, we aim to show a biblical pattern for conceiving God's salvific work, the

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these themes in modern theology, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *TheoDrama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Volume 4: *The Action*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991) 268–73.

[3] See Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 1–25.

[4] Ibid. 27–52; see Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and Symbol," in *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1976) 45–69.

[5] Thus, Gunton (*Actuality of Atonement*) focuses on the metaphors of victory, justification, and sacrifice. The modern tradition of representing classical soteriology in terms of key motifs or metaphors is classically represented by H. E. W. Turner, *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption: A Study of the Development of Doctrine during the First Five Centuries* (London: Mowbray, 1952). Turner identifies four such themes: Christ as Illuminator, Victor, Giver of Incorruption and Deification, and Victim. Gustaf Aulén in *Christus Victor. An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (New York: Macmillan, 1956) contrasts the "classical" patristic conception of salvation as a "victory" over evil wholly effected by divine agency with both the Anselmian model that sees salvation as "satisfaction" achieved by human agency (i.e., the humanity of Christ) and the modern "psychological" model. More recently, Michael Slusser has proposed five themes constitutive of the range of patristic soteriology: victory, atonement, revelation, eschatological judgment, and exemplar ("Primitive Christian Soteriological Themes," *Theological Studies* 44 [1983] 555–69).

[6] Our use of the term "model" is here analogous to that of Avery Dulles in his *Models of the Church* (rev. ed., Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987) see esp. 23–33; "A model is accepted if it accounts for a large number of biblical and traditional data and accords with what history and experience teach us about the

concrete referent in human experience to which this pattern referred, and a theological appropriation of this pattern in the theology of the early Church. Our goal is not to provide yet another taxonomy of soteriological metaphors, though readers will note that each of the models lends itself most naturally to a particular set of traditional soteriological metaphors. Rather, our aim is to demonstrate the value of looking at the biblical and patristic tradition through a larger lens than that provided by the category of metaphor. Our hope is that such an approach will render this tradition more intelligible and susceptible to appropriation in our own time.

In the first of our biblical models, the "prophetic," salvation is effected in a lengthy process within history by means of human instruments; we call it "prophetic" because it is clearest in the Old Testament prophets especially Isaiah; in the New Testament it is well represented in the Gospel of Luke. In the "liturgical" model, atonement is a part of a system where the divine suzerain dwells in the midst of his people, the relationship being maintained and safeguarded through gifts and sacrifices; the system underlies Leviticus, which in turn has influenced the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament. In the "sapiential" model, sin is viewed as ignorance and disregard of divine instruction, and salvation as willing reception of divine wisdom; the system is clear in Proverbs 1–9, when Wisdom, personified as an attractive woman, invites "simple" youths to become her disciples and to live with her. This concept of Woman Wisdom shaped the portrait of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.

THE PROPHETIC MODEL OF SIN AND SALVATION

The Prophetic Model in Isaiah

In the "prophetic" model of salvation in the Old Testament, God initiates a process within history to rectify an unjust situation and employs human instruments to do so. Without atonement rituals, the effects of sin are undone and divine justice restored. A small-scale (and non-prophetic) example of such rectification is found in Genesis 37–50 where the brothers' sale of Joseph into Egyptian slavery is healed through a process that is recognized only retrospectively as divinely led (Genesis 38:26; 45:1–15; 50:15–21). The Genesis story concludes with Jacob's family in Egypt, rec-

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Christian life" (24–25); and Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis: 2002) 75–89. Particularly pertinent to our approach is Dupuis's characterization that: "'models' are descriptive; they call attention to aspects of some reality without claiming to define it adequately or distinctly. Consequently, the various models do not exclude one another; rather, they must be viewed as complementing each other and need to be combined in order to yield a comprehensive view of the reality concerned" (75).

onciled and complete, ready for the next stage of God's work.[7] This process
of healing took 93 years.[8] The rectification process with which this article
is concerned took a far longer time—the two-and-half centuries (ca. 750–
500 B.C.) that elapsed between the first writing prophets' announcement
that Yahweh had severed his relationship to sinful Israel and the exiles'
return to Zion and rebuilding of the Temple. As in the fraternal reconcili-
ation in Genesis, divine leadership was recognized post factum.

In interpreting the history of their people, the writing prophets' perspec-
tive was that of Ancient Near Eastern royal scribes. They viewed world
history as a succession of empires (or great kings), took divine causality
seriously,[9] and correlated important events with signs and omens that made
possible prediction and human response. Modern historians, differently,
have an inner-worldly perspective and concern themselves instead with
measurable factors such as dominant ideas, natural resources, population
levels, human leadership, government systems, technology, and industrial-
ization. But Israelite prophets took a scribal view of world history. In the
latter half of the eighth century B.C., the writing prophets Amos, Hosea,
Isaiah, and Micah announced that Yahweh had ended his special relation-
ship with Israel, and they attempted to correlate the divine decision with
Israel's conduct. Though convinced that God had terminated the relation-
ship, they felt authorized to invite the people to repentance. In their view,
the future was not so determined that God could not adjust that future if
humans repented. As things turned out, Israel did not repent and conse-
quently underwent divine punishment. Again in accord with scribal think-
ing, punishment was carried out through the great kingdoms of the time. In
722 B.C. Assyria destroyed Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom,
exiled a large part of its population, and turned the land into Assyrian
provinces. In 586 B.C. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem with its Temple and
exiled its king and leading citizens. Destruction was not, however, the last
word. Restoration began in the mid-sixth century B.C. when Persia de-
feated Babylon and permitted the exiles to return. Persia's policy toward its
subjects was more benign than that of Assyria and Babylon. Nearly all the

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[7] The title "The Joseph Story" is somewhat misleading. Genesis 37:2 introduces
the chapters as "The Story of Jacob's Line" since all the brothers, not just Joseph,
are involved, and the conclusion is reached when the entire family dwells peacefully
in Egypt (chap. 50). Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers in chap. 45 is a means
to the end, not the end.

[8] Joseph was 17 when his brothers sold him (37:2) and 110 when they were
reconciled definitively and he died (50:22, 26).

[9] Scribes sometimes explained the rise and fall of empires as the rise and fall in
heaven of the patron deity of a particular dynasty on earth. Such is one of the
purposes of the ancient genre of the combat myth, well attested in Mesopotamia
and in Canaan. It explains the rise of a new god to supremacy in the divine pan-
theon.

prophetic books addressed some phase of the situation of Israel from the mid-eighth to the late-sixth (or early-fifth) centuries. But only the Book of Isaiah recorded and interpreted the entire two-and-a-half century process of exile and restoration.[10]

The Book of Isaiah contains three authorial voices in the view of most scholars. Much of chaps. 1–39 is attributed to "First Isaiah" (Isaiah of Jerusalem, ca. 738–700 B.C.), chaps. 40–55 to "Second Isaiah" (mid-sixth century B.C.) and chaps. 56–66 to "Third Isaiah" (late-sixth century B.C.). Though no scholarly consensus has emerged on the exact reasons why the chronologically and thematically distinct sections were combined, there is little doubt about the unity of the book.[11] Only a few indicators of planned unity can be mentioned here: (1) the book begins and ends with a pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (2:1–4 and 66:18–24); (2) Zion is a persistent theme, from the denunciation of its corruption (e.g., 1:18–27) to the divine visitation that transforms it into the city of God (e.g., 33:20–24; 45:14–25; 54; especially 65); (3) the artful use of key word pairs (indicated by their verbal roots): *špṭ* // *ṣdq* ("judge, judgment" // "righteousness") occur only in chaps. 1–39 and 56–66, and *yšʿ*// *ṣdq* ("save," "salvation" // "righteousness") only in chaps. 40–55 and 56–66;[12] (4) the Davidic king, an important theme in chaps. 1–39, is transformed into the royal people in 55:4–5.

Another important principle of unity in Isaiah is the divine plan by which Yahweh guides Israel and the nations. The book has various terms for the

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[10] Gerhard von Rad expressed the radical prophetic judgment thus: "The old traditions said that Jahweh led Israel into her land, founded Zion, and established the throne of David, and this was sufficient. No prophet could any longer believe this; for between [the prophet] and those founding acts hung a fiery curtain of dire judgments upon Israel, judgments which, in the prophets' opinion, had already begun; and this message of judgment had no basis in the old Jahwist tradition. [The prophets] believed, therefore, that salvation could only come if Jahweh arose to perform new acts upon Israel, an event which they looked on as certain–and they entreated those who were still able to hear not to put their trust in illusory safeguards (Mic 3:11), but to 'look to' what was to come, and to take refuge in Jahweh's saving act, which was near at hand" (*Old Testament Theology* [New York: Harper & Row, 1965] 2.185).

[11] Among the first modern scholars to postulate the editorial unity of chaps. 1–39 and 40–55 were P. Ackroyd, "Isaiah I–XII: Presentation of a Prophet," *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 29 (1978) 16–48, and R. Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja," *Vetus Testamentum* 34 (1984) 295–320. For a judicious survey of opinions on the composition of the book of Isaiah and the case that Second Isaiah is the final editor, see H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (New York: Oxford University, 1994).

[12] Gregory Polin, "Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 36 (1997) 224–33.

plan: "work" (singular; Isa 41:4; 45:11); "intentions; thoughts" ("my inten-
tions are not your intentions" in 55:8–9); "deed" (singular; 12:19; 28:21);
and "word" (e.g., 2:3; 5:24; 30:12; 44:26). Most revealing is "plan" (y's) in
its verbal and nominal forms, especially in Isa 5:19: "'Let [the Lord] make
haste and speed his work, that we may see it; on with *the plan* of the Holy
One of Israel! Let it come to pass, that we may know it!'" The divine plan
is paramount in Isaiah. Israel must accept it by welcoming the Assyrian (or
Babylonian or Persian) king as the agent of divine rule or judgment. But if
Judah rebels against Assyria by entering into alliances with neighboring
states, Zion will be destroyed and the king cast aside, and salvation, if it
comes at all, will be deferred to the far future. Israel's refusal to accept the
Lord's plan is tantamount to political rebellion and idolatry (28:14–22).
The ultimate goal of the divine plan, however, is positive—to purify Zion
and the Davidic kingship so that the Lord can again dwell in Zion and bless
the city.

Though employing different traditions and style, Second Isaiah held the
same view and regarded his commission as continuing the one given earlier
to First Isaiah as is shown by the analogous commissions in chaps. 6 and 40.
To Second Isaiah, however, the phase of punishment and destruction was
over and a new phase had begun—return to Zion and rebuilding of city and
Temple. But the revelation demanded a response by the people. They must
do what Israel had once done to become a people—take part in an exodus
from the land of bondage to the land of promise. In the large-scale typology
that the prophet used, exiled Israel was far from their homeland like the
Hebrews in Egypt in olden times; the wilderness was like the Red Sea, and
the servant who will lead them was like Moses (49:1–6).

Third Isaiah monitored the judgment process in his own day. To the
returnees, worried about their claim on the land and unsure of their status
as the holy community in a still devastated city, the prophet announced that
Yahweh was about to rebuild the community in Zion. Israel must commit
itself anew to right worship and social justice (chaps. 57–58) and await the
visitation of God that would transform the city (e.g., 59:15–21; 65; 66). That
visitation would separate true Israel from those within the community who
oppressed their neighbor and closed themselves to the coming renewal.
Third Isaiah spoke of *direct* divine action, for there was no Assyrian, Baby-
lonian, or Persian king to implement the divine will as in chaps. 1–39 and
40–55: "I looked about, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that
there was no one to lend support; So my own arm brought about the victory
and my own wrath lent me its support (63:4–5)."[13]

The Isaian "plan" can be called divine "judgment" in biblical idiom,

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[13] Determining the exact meaning of biblical words for justice is notoriously
difficult. James P. M. Walsh, S.J., gives a helpful rule of thumb in *The Mighty from*

though "judgment" must be distinguished from modern English usage. First, Hebrew "to judge" (*šāpaṭ*) and the related noun "judgment" (*mišpāṭ*) are not limited to mental activity or to the legal sphere. The primary meaning of the biblical verb is "to rule, govern"; the judicial function is subordinate to ruling. Second, biblical "judging" (i.e., ruling) is concerned with implementing justice, i.e., establishing the justice that God intends the world to have. In the Bible, justice is defined by the divine will, not by a standard external to God. Third, biblical judgment is not a theoretical pronouncement or impartial evaluation of a situation, but quite often an act of intervention into the unjust situation. In the Bible, to judge a situation was to rectify it, i.e., to bring it (back) into conformity to the divine will, "to punish the wicked and uphold the aggrieved righteous." Fourthly, though moderns more often imagine divine judgment as taking place at the end of history than in its midst, divine ruling or "judging" might take place within history and employ human means. (Judgment at the end of history definitively established divine justice that unfolded in the course of human history.) To the prophets, the kings of the great empires were Yahweh's instruments. For First Isaiah, the human instrument of judgment was Assyria ("Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger," Isaiah 10:5), for Jeremiah, Babylon (Jeremiah 20:4; 28:14), and for Second Isaiah, Cyrus of Persia (44:28–45:13). In short, judgment could take place within history, not at its end, and could involve human agency in its unfolding, pagan kings or native Israelites, conscious or not of their role.

In the prophetic model of sin and salvation, then, God "judges" Israel by restoring justice. Judgment takes place within history by means of human instruments in a long process. The process can involve considerable destruction and suffering. Even the sacred institutions of Temple and Davidic kingship can be destroyed before renewal takes place. God's salvation is recognized only in the long run; in the short run human beings struggle without knowledge and their lives are rich in ironies. It requires a long and anthological book like Isaiah to record a long-term process of judgment.

The Prophetic Model in the Gospel of Luke

The prophetic (and later apocalyptic) view of the course of history as succession of empires is reflected in the Synoptic Gospels' announcement

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Their Thrones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 2–7: words from the root *ṣdq* generally mean "what seems right; consensus," and those from the root *špṭ* mean "having the say." For a recent treatment of the topic, see Enrique Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World*, translated by Séan Charles Martin (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004).

that the kingdom of God has come into a world ruled by the Roman Empire. Luke in particular seems to reflect Isaiah's interpretation of Israel's history from ca. 750–500 B.C. as a coherent "judgment" comprising sin, chastisement, and restoration. The Isaian scenario involved the loss or destruction of some of the main institutions of preexilic Israel—the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, Jerusalem and its Temple, and the Davidic dynasty—and the formation of a new Israel with the old institutions renewed or reinterpreted. The scenario of destruction and renewal seems to have caught Luke's attention.

Only a hint of Luke's adaptation of the Isaian judgment scenario can be given here. We single out two distinctive Lukan features—the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry in the Nazareth synagogue in 4:16–30, and his journey and entry into Jerusalem as an eschatological prophet. Of the programmatic scene in the Nazareth synagogue (4:16–30), Joseph Fitzmyer writes: "Luke has deliberately put this story at the beginning of the public ministry to encapsulate the entire ministry of Jesus and the reaction to it. The fulfillment story stresses the success of his teaching under the guidance of the Spirit, but the rejection story symbolizes the opposition that his ministry will evoke among his own."[14] Strikingly, Jesus speaks no word of his own, proclaiming instead a lengthy passage from Isaiah 61:1–2 (LXX), and declaring, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> because he has anointed me
>   to bring glad tidings to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
>   and recovery of sight to the blind,
>   to let the oppressed go free,
> and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

In Isaiah 61, the servant announced renewal to Zion, a renewal that is elaborated in chaps. 60–62 and 65–66. Making his own the Isaian proclamation, Jesus states his resolve to visit and renew Zion. Visitation and renewal are major themes in Luke, and they are especially clear in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, "When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem" (9:51). The journey

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[14] *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX*, Anchor Bible 28 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981) 529. Brendan Byrne echoes Fitzmyer's judgment: "It is hard to overstress the importance of this scene in Luke's Gospel. In modern political terms this is where Jesus launches his campaign, announces his manifesto. The way he inaugurates his mission here in Nazareth and the response he receives set a pattern that will run throughout the Gospel" (*The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* [Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000] 45).

gives point to all the material from 9:51 to 19:45. As N. T. Wright has argued, Jesus' journey to Jerusalem constituted the visitation that will renew Zion (see Isaiah 65) and make it worthy of being the goal of the nations' pilgrimage (Isaiah 1:21–27; 2:1–4; 66:18–24). In this process, the Temple and traditions will be "destroyed" in that the presence of God and the authoritative word will move from the Temple and Torah to Jesus himself.[15] One can conjecture that the bloody and destruction-filled judgment scenario in Isaiah enabled Luke to explain Jesus' visitation to Jerusalem that ended in violence.

For Luke, Isaiah was a "co-evangelist" because he first discerned the divine judgment (sin-punishment-restoration) that, in the Lukan view, was brought to its full completion by the death and Resurrection of Jesus.[16] Through these events, Israel was "judged," i.e., rectified by God and brought to righteousness. The Book of Isaiah ends with Zion awaiting rather than actually undergoing its transformative visitation. In Luke, Jesus is the one who will complete the plan of God proclaimed by Isaiah.

Irenaeus as an Exponent of the Prophetic Model of Salvation

The prophetic model of salvation can thus be characterized by four distinctive features. First, the divine saving presence is enacted through God's surprising and unpredictable intervention in human history and through human instrumentality. Secondly, such intervention constitutes a "plan": God coopts the plot of human history to enact his own ends. Such a plan, however, is interactive; it solicits and requires appropriate human response and this response, in turn, depends on human readiness to discern God's work in the midst of human history. Thirdly, this plan is typically understood to be composed of stages. Human cooperation with God's plan requires a readiness to be alert to the movement of God's plan from one stage to the next. The divine will is here conceived not as immutable judgments but as an agency that creatively interacts with human history and demands different responses in different times: there is a time to

[15] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) *passim*, esp. 651–53. Wright provides a helpful synthesis of his interpretation of Jesus in "How Jesus Saw Himself," *Bible Review* 12 (1996) 21–29.

[16] Even James D. G. Dunn, who has criticized N. T. Wright on important points, comes to similar conclusions regarding Jesus and the Temple. Asking why Jesus was killed, Dunn answers that it was largely because he moved the location of God's saving activity from the Temple to himself, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), especially chap. 17. As regards Paul and Isaiah, J. Ross Wagner memorably writes: "Nowhere is this complex and dynamic interrelationship of scripture, theology, and mission more apparent than in Paul's consistent representation of Isaiah as a fellow preacher of the good news" (*Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* [Boston: Brill, 2003] 1).

acquiesce to exile and a time to return to Zion. Fourthly, both Isaiah and Luke, as "co-evangelists," see the distinctive characteristic of the fulfillment stage of the divine plan to be a direct and immediate divine presence: "I looked about, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that there was no one to lend support; so my own arm brought about the victory . . . ." (Isaiah 63:5). For Luke, this victory wrought by direct divine agency finds its fulfillment in Christ.

When we turn to the second-century theologian and bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus (ca. 115–202),[17] we should not expect to find a modern critical reading of Isaiah. Irenaeus was not aware that the Isaian project of announcing the divine "plan" reflected the world of a royal scribe outlining the plot of history as a succession of empires. And he certainly did not conceive of "three Isaiahs" behind the biblical book. But this does not mean that he was not an attentive and careful reader of Scripture. Indeed, his theological vision represents a comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the scriptural world-view and proclamation of Christian salvation. While Irenaeus's account of Christian salvation exhibits a variety of themes and images, we can focus on his central notion of "recapitulation (anakephaliōsis)," as a creative theological synthesis of the characteristic features of what we are calling the "prophetic" model of salvation. The biblical background of this notion is most immediately Ephesians 1:9–10: "He has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan (oikonomian) for the fullness of time to sum up (anakephaliōsasthai) all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth." This verse becomes a key for Irenaeus's interpretation of the biblical account of Christian salvation. While it is beyond the scope of this article to offer a comprehensive analysis of this notion, we can note its affinities with the "prophetic" model of salvation by showing how it deals with the characteristic features of that model.

Firstly, Irenaeus's theology is one that places a premium on God's saving

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[17] For helpful introductions to the theology of Irenaeus, one may usefully consult Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, The Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 1997); Mary Ann Donovan, *One Right Reading? A Guide to Irenaeus* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1997). Among the classic readings of patristic soteriology by Aulén and Turner, the former sees Irenaeus's soteriology as exemplary of the "classic type" of divine victory (*Christus Victor* 16–35) while Turner (*Patristic Doctrine*, 74–77) sees him especially as representative of the motif of Christ as granter of incorruption and deification. Neither places the central stress on the aspect of salvation as historical process that is embedded in Irenaeus's doctrine of "recapitulation." The acknowledgment of this aspect, albeit without further elaboration, is found in Basil Studer and Brian Daley, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*. Band III, Faszikel 2a: *Soteriologie in der Schrift und Patristik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978): "Erst im weiteren kann sie erörtern, wie Gott diesen Menschen durch die Geschichte, und zwar durch eine von der Sünde gestörte Geschichte, zum Heil führen will" (76).

involvement in human history. While this might seem to be a non-remarkable fact in the context of the modern stress on salvation history, it was revolutionary from the point of view of Irenaeus's own context.

This context was determined in large part by his polemical engagement with various "gnostic" sects, primarily the Valentinians. While these sects differed from one another, they agreed that the creation of this world was the aberration of a delinquent member of the *plērōma*, rather than the work of the true God, and that salvation was escape from this world. In positing this radical distance between the present world and the true God, these "gnostic" systems represented a perspective that can be well understood as the polar opposite of the prophetic model, where salvation is wrought "in the midst of the earth" (Psalm 74:12) and within the tumultuous matrix of human history. In pitting himself against such a world-view, which he believed to be radically inimical to the Christian *kerygma*, Irenaeus found himself also waging a rear guard action against the Platonic notion of transcendence as inversely proportional to involvement with the world. In response, Irenaeus insisted on the biblical view of a God who is intimately present and involved in the world which he created.

Secondly, the Isaian notion of a divine "plan" for interacting with human history is taken over by Irenaeus through the Greek term, *oikonomia*. This is the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew term, *'ēsāh*, in Isaiah 5:19 and it recurs in the text from Ephesians 1:9–10, which was key to Irenaeus's interpretation of the biblical message. The contents, structure, intent, and outcome of this plan are precisely what are delineated by the term, "recapitulation, *anakephaliōsis*." Aside from the immediate biblical background, there is also a literary background to this term, which could justify our calling Irenaeus's soteriology a "narrative theology." In Hellenistic literary theory, *anakephaliōsis* is the concluding summary of a story.[18] Putting the two meanings together, we can say that, in Irenaeus's soteriology, God saves by taking over the human story and appropriating it to himself. In Irenaeus's telling, there are two features that characterize the divine salvific appropriation of the human story: reversals of points of derailment and the fulfillment of promises. With regard to the first feature, Irenaeus sets up a series of correspondences centered on the Pauline "Second Adam" Christology. If Christ is the Second Adam, then Mary is the Second Eve, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is replaced by the tree of the cross.[19] The overall movement and transformation indicated by these correspondences is that of disobedience reversed by obedience. In

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[18] This is the sense of the term in Dionysius of Halicarnassus; see Robert Grant, *Irenaeus* 50.

[19] *Against Heresies* (= *Adv. haer.*) 3.21.1–10; *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (= *Demo.*) 32–34.

Irenaeus's reading, the divine injunction of Genesis 2:16–17 is significant not so much as signifying the objective content of a certain action as in itself objectionable or "evil" but rather as safeguarding the terms by which the proper structure of the relationship between God and humanity can be maintained. Primarily, this structure requires an attitude of obedience on the human side. What is at stake in breaking the commandment, therefore, is the assertion of a stance of disobedience that violates the proper structure of the divine-human relationship. For Irenaeus, however, much more is at play here than a merely human obedience. Rather, it is the human obedience of Jesus that is nevertheless the work of divine agency, for the Law has been fulfilled by Christ, who is "the Lord of the Law."[20]

The second relevant feature in Irenaeus's model of recapitulation is that the promises of God throughout the history of Israel come to fulfillment in the Christ event. In this context, Irenaeus is attentive not only to the promises of a Messiah, as would be expected, but also to what he interprets to be foreshadowings of the extension of the election of Israel to the Gentiles. This theme of the extension of the covenant is an important, though insufficiently noted, soteriological motif in Irenaeus.[21]

The third feature of the "prophetic" model of salvation is the notion of distinct stages in God's salvific intervention in human history. Irenaeus adopts this notion in his account of the divine *oikonomia* as comprised of four stages or "covenants": the covenant with Adam, the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Moses, and the definitive fulfillment—the summing up or "recapitulation" of God's salvific engagement with humanity in Christ.[22] A final stage of human history will be that of eschatological judgment in which the Antichrist, who recapitulates in himself the history of sin will be thrown into the "lake of fire,"[23] the wicked will be destroyed, and the just vindicated and "crowned with incorruption."[24] Irenaeus maintains his emphasis on the historicity of salvation even in an eschatological context by insisting, on the basis of Isaian and other biblical passages, on a millennial kingdom in which the righteous will enjoy a paradisaical restoration of justice and material prosperity.[25]

Fourthly and finally, nothing is more characteristic of Irenaeus's theology than his constant emphasis that the immediacy of God's presence to creation finds its fulfillment in the salvific work of Christ. Indeed, the unity of God and creation that achieves its climax in the Incarnation is typically read back into the original act of creation by Irenaeus. Over against the

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[20] *Demo.* 89, 95.   [21] *Demo.* 93–95.
[22] *Adv. haer. 3.11.*8.   [23] *Adv. haer.* 5.29.2.
[24] *Adv. haer.* 5.29.1.
[25] *Adv. haer.* 5.33–35; for an excellent summary of Irenaeus's eschatology, see Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church* (New York: Cambridge University, 1991) 28–32.

Valentinian separation of God and world, Irenaeus typically uses the language of "mingling," "presence," and "communion" to characterize God's relation to the world.[26] This "mingling" comes to full realization through the Incarnation of the Word, his reversal of human disobedience, and his pouring out of the Spirit "in a new manner"[27] upon humanity. He thereby "united man with God and brought about a communion of God and man . . . ."[28] This immediacy of presence is performatively realized in Christian baptism: "For those who are bearers of the Spirit of God are led to the Word, that is, to the Son; but the Son takes them and presents them to the Father; and the Father confers incorruptibility."[29]

Irenaeus synthesized key elements of the biblical prophetic model through his theology of "recapitulation." God saves by engaging, indeed fully appropriating, human history. This appropriation constitutes a divine "plan" (*oikonomia*) for human history that dramatically unfolds in distinct stages, culminating in the Incarnation of the Word. In Christ's corrective summing up of the story of humanity's relationship with God, derailments are reversed by Christ's obedience and God's promises climax in the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's plan. The union of God and humanity in Christ brings about an immediacy of presence in the relationship between God and humanity. As exemplified by Irenaeus, the prophetic model encompasses themes that have been identified in previous classifications of patristic soteriological motifs, such as divine victory,[30] Christ as giver of incorruption and deification,[31] the enactment of eschatological judgment,[32] and Christ as exemplar of obedience.[33] The identification of Irenaeus with a "prophetic model" of salvation brings these themes into synthesis, emphasizes Irenaeus's conception of the *process* of God's saving work rather than merely the outcome, and distinguishes the most distinctive feature of Irenaeus's soteriology, which is his stress on God's direct and immediate engagement with and appropriation of human history.[34]

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[26] See, as a typical instance, *Adv. haer.* 4.20.4.

[27] *Demo.* 6.   [28] *Demo.* 31.

[29] *Demo.* 7.

[30] Aulén, *Christus Victor* 16–35; Turner, *Patristic Doctrine* 52.

[31] Turner, *Patristic Doctrine* 73–77.

[32] This is one of the themes identified by Slusser but not explicitly identified with any particular patristic authors ("Soteriological Themes" 564–65).

[33] Aulén, *Christus Victor* 29–30.

[34] Turner's compact description of Irenaeus's theology of recapitulation is apt: "Christ, the victorious recapitulator of humanity, embodies in Himself the long course of human history as purposed by God in His original Creation" (*Patristic Doctrine* 64). With a somewhat anachronistic modern flavor, but fundamentally in keeping with Irenaeus's vision, he translates Irenaeus's description of the work of Christ in *Adv. haer.* 3.19.1: *longam hominum expositionem in seipso recapitulans*" as "He recapitulated in Himself the long evolution of human history" (64).

THE LITURGICAL MODEL

The Liturgical Model in Leviticus

The liturgical system with which this section is concerned is outlined in the great block of material from Exodus 19 to Numbers 10, "the Sinai pericope." Though the material might seem abstruse to modern readers, it is rooted in a genuine community experience—the holy people honoring the divine king in their midst through gifts (sacrifice) and taking steps to avoid offending him. Nearly all the liturgical material is attributed to the Priestly School (abbreviated P). (P is a broad term that can refer both to ancient archival material and to editors who incorporated it into the Pentateuch.) In the P perspective, Israel's twelve-month stay at Mount Sinai was a privileged time when Yahweh, who had established himself as king over Israel by conquering Pharaoh, established a special relationship with Israel and, through the mediation of Moses, determined the public ceremonies by which he would be honored, beseeched, and appeased.[35] The wilderness Tent prefigured the Jerusalem Temple. The luminous cloud amid the twelve-tribe encampment expressed the ideal of Yahweh present among his people as a sovereign. Though this article focuses on sin and atonement, one should not lose sight of the positive aim of the liturgical system–honoring the God who graciously dwells in the midst of the people.

Rituals presuppose an underlying theory. As Jacob Milgrom, a pioneer in the recent reappraisal of Leviticus, puts it, "rituals are symbolic acts"

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[35] There were several systems of purity and impurity in the Old Testament. The system of moral impurity was concerned with the dangers of defilement from serious sins such as idolatry, incest, and murder. Ritual impurity was concerned with contact with various natural substances relating to birth, death, and genital discharges that rendered a person temporarily unfit to come into contact with holy space and objects. See Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University, 2000). The chart below is taken from the essay by Klawans in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University, 2004) 2047.

Type	Source	Effect	Resolution
Ritual	Bodily flows, corpses, etc.	Temporary; contagious defilement of persons and objects	Bathing, waiting
Moral	Sins: idolatry, sexual transgression; bloodshed	Long-lasting defilement of sinners, land, and sanctuary	Atonement or punishment and ultimately, exile

Klawans suggests that the ritual purity system was intended to remove vestiges of sex and death (genital discharges and diseased skin symbolizing sex and death). One could not come into the presence of the all-holy and eternal God with the marks of death, disease, or sex.

that express "an intricate web of values that purport to model how we should relate to God and to one another."[36] Concern that God remain permanently with the people accounts for P's attention to sin and its removal, for sins threatened to drive out the God upon whom Israel's very existence depended. Removal of the sin was therefore necessary if the people were to live with God's blessing and protection. P's rituals of sin and atonement reflected a theology of divine holiness and presence.

The sacrifice concerning sin most relevant for this article is the "purification offering" (ḥaṭṭā't traditionally translated "sin offering") in Leviticus 4 and 16 (in chap.16 it is part of the Day of Atonement ritual). The biblical notion of "sacrifice" differs from common English usage, for its primary meaning is to "make sacred" by transferring a human gift to the divine realm; the offerer's gift is removed from this world, usually through destruction, e.g., killing (animals) or burning (grain offerings). It needs to be said that not all sacrifices were for sin. Some were for praise and thanksgiving, e.g., "burnt offerings" ('ōlōt) fed the deity, and "sacrifices of well-being" (šĕlāmîm) fed the worshiper.[37]

According to an emerging consensus among biblical scholars, the ḥaṭṭā't sacrifice should be understood as "purification offering" rather than "sin offering," for it purged the sanctuary of sin (kippēr 'al) rather than forgave an individual sinner. In Leviticus 4, the ḥaṭṭā't sacrifice is concerned with inadvertent sins, but in the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), the ḥaṭṭā't sacrifice purged the sanctuary of advertent sins. In the concrete thinking of the P school, the peoples' sins constituted a miasma (stain) that was attracted, magnet-like, to the most sacred place in the Tent, the Holy of Holies. There the miasma accumulated, in the very place where Yahweh was believed to be enthroned invisibly, on the golden cover of the Ark. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest offered a bull and one of two goats as a ḥaṭṭā't sacrifice and then entered the Holy of Holies. Smearing the animal blood on the cover of the Ark, he went outside to transfer the sanctuary pollution onto the second of the two goats, which was given the name Azazel. Confessing the people's sins and pressing his hands on the

[36] Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004) 1.30. This book summarizes many of Milgrom's articles and his multivolume Anchor Bible commentary. See, further, Gary Anderson, "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5.870–86, and Baruch Schwartz, "The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. D. P. Wright and A. Hurwitz (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 3–21. On a more popular level, see Baruch J. Schwartz's annotations to Leviticus in *The Jewish Study Bible*.

[37] Feeding the deity need not be taken with crude literalism. By their burnt offerings and offerings of well-being, worshipers wanted to share the precious gift of food with the deity.

goat's head to transfer the sins to the goat, the priest then sent the goat into the wilderness to die. Impurities were eradicated by the blood of the offering. Deliberate sins, however, could not be eradicated, but only carried to the wilderness whence, it was hoped, they would never return. Thus was the Sanctuary purged of the sins, which, if not purged, would have provoked Yahweh's "wrath" and caused his withdrawal from the camp.

From his study of these and other rituals, Jacob Milgrom has formulated four important principles operative in P's ritual thinking: (1) "Blood is the ritual cleanser that purges the altar of impurities inflicted on it by the offerer"; (2) "A sin committed anywhere will generate impurity that, becoming airborne, penetrates the sanctuary in proportion to its magnitude"; (3) "God will not abide in a polluted sanctuary"; and (4) "Sinners may go about apparently unmarred by their evil, but the sanctuary bears the wounds, and with its destruction, all the sinners will meet their doom."[38]

The Priestly doctrine is found in the Pentateuch, a work in which traditional material was edited for an exilic audience some time in the period from the mid-sixth and mid-fifth centuries B.C. The priestly editors evidently understood the rituals and ceremonies of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers as ideal expressions of Israel's relationship to the Lord. Bernd Janowski puts the matter well: "Yet it was during this exilic night that Israel gained a fundamentally new perspective into her saving history and the God revealed in it. Reinterpreting the history of revelation and appreciating afresh the worship again being celebrated in Jerusalem, the Priestly school succeeded in assuring a hopeless Israel of the consoling nearness of their God. It made use of the Sinai narrative Exodus 24:15b-18a; 25:1–Num 10:10* (P Grundschrift), which was an integral part, indeed the high point, of the Priestly historical work."[39] In short, P sought to assure a dispersed and dispirited people that the ancient liturgy was still valid; the Lord would forgive their sins, even advertent sins, and dwell with them again. The Priestly school interpreted ancient liturgy for a new age. And so does the Epistle to the Hebrews, to which we now turn.

The Liturgical Model in the Letter to the Hebrews

Written sometime in the last third of the first century A.D. to encourage Christians to remain faithful to their original call, the Letter to the Hebrews takes Leviticus as representative of the rituals of Judaism and con-

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[38] Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* 31–32.

[39] Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Traditions- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift*, rev. ed., Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 55 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000) 354–62 (my translation). Though the Priestly material in its present form was edited for an exilic audience, much of the material is considerably earlier.

trasts it with the atonement effected by Jesus Christ. For the purposes of
this article, only a few elements of this rich and complex Letter will be
mentioned. To the author of Hebrews, the Leviticus system of priests
offering animal sacrifices for sins is redundant now that Jesus Christ, the
Son of God, has become simultaneously the Offerer and the Offered. His
one offering suffices; no more sacrifices are needed.[40]

Several assumptions and assertions of Hebrews require explanation. In
common with ancient liturgical thinking, the Letter assumes that a god's
temple on earth is a copy of the god's palace in heaven (Exodus 25:9),
reflecting albeit imperfectly the splendid building and ceremonies of the
heavenly palace.[41] Jesus enters the heavenly Holy of Holies in the same
way that a human high priest enters the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle
on the Day of Atonement. As Son of God, however, he enters in a deci-
sively different way, and it is his own blood that he offers. To make this
case, Hebrews must demonstrate two points: (1) Jesus is divine. The Letter
is at pains to make clear that "Son of God" as applied to Jesus means that
he is genuinely divine rather than an "angel," which was the more common
meaning of the phrase in Judaism; (2) Jesus, as a genuine priest, must be a
human being, since a priest makes an offering *to* God. The second point
raises a problem for the Letter, for Jesus is of the tribe of Judah, not of the
priestly tribe of Levi. To demonstrate Jesus' priesthood despite his non-
Levitical lineage, Hebrews cites the precedent of Melchizedek who was
both "*king* of Salem" and "*priest* of God Most High" (Genesis 14:18–20),
and was accepted as such by Abraham. Like Melchizedek, Jesus is priest
though he does not have the "proper" lineage. As an authentic priest, Jesus
is human and representative of Israel (and humanity) before God. As "Son
of God" in the sense of being divine, Jesus' offering is efficacious so that
one offering suffices.

Though its approach and argument are unique in New Testament writ-
ings, Hebrews attempts to interpret Christ's person and work in terms of
the Levitical system of gift-giving or sacrifice. What the theological tradi-
tion would later call "Incarnation" is expressed in Hebrews by the dual
affirmation "Son of God" and "high priest"; "Resurrection and Ascension"
is expressed as entry into the heavenly Holy of Holies. In articulating its

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[40] Only a few aspects of the book can be dealt with here. For recent commen-
taries, see Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and
Commentary*, Anchor Bible 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001); Thomas G. Long,
Hebrews (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997). For an accessible survey
of approaches and perspectives, see Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *What Are They
Saying about the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York: Paulist, 2005).
[41] Compare the petition in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:10: "Our Father in
heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, *on earth
as in heaven.*"

Christology, Hebrews draws on the Old Testament system of sacrifice, i.e., giving a gift to God repairs an insult to the divine honor. In this case, what is transferred into the sacred realm is the offerer himself. The blood, the medium by which sin is removed, is the offerer's own blood not that of an animal.

Athanasius as an Exponent of the Liturgical Model

A fourth-century theologian and bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, is one of the principal architects of christological and trinitarian doctrine.[42] His doctrinal elaborations were firmly anchored in a vision of Christ as Savior, and his understanding of Christian salvation was part of a coherent vision that encompassed views on creation, theological anthropology, and doctrine of God. His elaboration of these themes was tinged with the thought forms of his culture and show traces of Platonic and Stoic thought.[43] But, ultimately, his soteriological vision was centered on the notion of sacrifice and can thus be located as part of the "effective history" of the biblical-liturgical model.[44]

In order to see how Athanasius integrated key insights of the liturgical model into a coherent soteriological doctrine, we need to draw in broad strokes essential features of his theological vision, with particular emphasis on the connections that he explicitly draws between creation and salvation. Our remarks will focus on his classic treatise *On the Incarnation*, the most complete presentation by Athanasius of the salvific work of the Incarnate Word.[45] Athanasius's doctrine of creation is marked by an emphatic insis-

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[42] For a general introduction to the theology of Athanasius, see Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius*, Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 2004); Alvyn Pettersen, *Athanasius* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Morehouse, 1996).

[43] On this, see especially E. P. Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius: Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: Brill,1968)

[44] The thesis that Christ's sacrificial death is at the heart of Athanasius's soteriology parts ways with the standard interpretation which sees this theme to be secondary, if not nonexistent, in Athanasius's soteriology. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978) 377–80; Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1965) 308–28. Most extreme is R. P. C. Hanson, who claims that Athanasius's theology of the Incarnation "almost does away with a doctrine of the Atonement" (*The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988] 450). As against this prevalent interpretation are the texts of Athanasius: in *On the Incarnation = (Inc.)* 10, he insists that Christ's death is "the chief point of our death" and the main reason for the Incarnation. On the significance of Christ's death as sacrifice, see further, Anatolios, *Athanasius* 56–61.

[45] For a larger treatment of the following, see "The Theological Vision of Athanasius," in Anatolios, *Athanasius* 39–86.

tence on the doctrine of "creation from nothing" (*creatio ex nihilo*). "Nothing" denotes the ontological poverty of creation, its lack of an intrinsic hold on being and therefore its enduring propensity to lapse back into nonexistence. Human existence is thus vertiginously poised between the nothingness of its inherent lack of being and the grace (*charis*) of participation in divine life. The function of divine law is to orient the human-divine relationship in the right direction by summoning humanity toward participation in the divine. Just as divine law orients humanity toward the grace of participation in divine life, so sin orients humanity in the opposite direction, toward its innate nothingness. As such, sin can accurately be described in Athanasius's conception as "de-creation"; it brings about a state of death and corruption "*phthora*"—both physical and moral—which is really a decline from being toward nothingness.

How does God react to humanity's decline toward nothingness? *On the Incarnation* presents salvation principally in terms of the interaction between Christ and his body, conceived within the framework of "sacrifice," such as we have seen in the liturgical model, particularly in the Letter to the Hebrews.[46] The salvific value of Christ's bodiliness in *On the Incarnation* is expressed in three key motifs: (1) Christ makes use of his body to suffer and die on behalf of humanity; (2) Christ makes an offering of his body to the Father; and (3) Christ uses his body as a medium to reveal the invisible Father. The third element in Athanasius's soteriology, which could be assigned to the "sapiential" model, is explicitly evaluated by him to be secondary to that of the salvific efficacy of Christ's death.[47] The salvific death of Christ can be analyzed in terms of the two distinct aspects of Christ's dying on behalf of humanity and Christ's offering of himself to the Father. For Athanasius, the intelligibility of the first aspect is summed up in the notion that sin must of necessity lead to death. This necessity is understood both from the perspective of the ontological structure of the relation between God and creation and from that of divine law.[48] With regard to the first point of view, sin "naturally" leads to death because it is by definition a withdrawal from the participation in divine life by which

[46] Perceiving the centrality of this soteriological perspective in Athanasius's work prevents us from adhering to a standard mistaken interpretation which holds that Athanasius's pervasive manner of speaking of "Christ and his body" is evidence that he did not believe that Christ had a human soul. Aside from the fact that this is largely an argument from silence, such an interpretation completely misses the larger conceptual framework that is operative in this treatise. It imposes an anachronistic framework of analytical Christology, which is concerned with the "parts" of Christ and their mutual relations within a personal unity, on a work whose native framework is that of soteriology, concerned with an explication of what God does to save us in Christ: Christ's offering of his body as sacrifice. See Anatolios, *Coherence* 70–80; *Athansius* 56–61.

[47] *Inc.* 10.   [48] Ibid. 3–6.

creaturely being is sustained. Sin thus loosens the creature's hold on being and confirms its innate propensity toward nothingness; it is this general decline from being that is delineated by the Athanasian notion of "corruption" (*phthora*). But, true to the biblical perspective, Athanasius does not invoke "a law of nature" separable from "divine law." While the connection between sin and death can be rationally grasped to some extent by reference to the ontological structure of the relation between God and creation, it is also a law sanctioned and imposed by the personal agency of God. In the latter context, Athanasius refers to the divine warning against disobedience: "On the day you eat of it you shall die by death" (Genesis 2:16–17). Given this twofold necessity of the connection between sin and death, Athanasius speaks of death as "a debt owed by humanity."[49] Christ dies in order to realize in himself the death that must necessarily follow upon sin, a principle that Athanasius articulates with reference to such biblical texts as 2 Corinthians 5:14–15: "if one died for all, then all died" and Hebrews 2:9: "that he might taste death on behalf of all."[50] Underlying such texts is a Pauline atonement theology in which Christ takes upon himself God's judgment on human sinfulness.[51] But such an understanding seems more implicit than explicit in Athanasius's rendering. Without prominent recourse to the motif of divine "judgment," he is content to emphasize that sin must result in death and that this death was realized in Christ.

At this point, it is important to make a distinction: to say that death is necessarily consequent upon sin is not the same as saying that death, even the death of Christ, is salvific simply as such. Athanasius does say that "corruption could not be abolished except by everyone dying"[52] but that merely states a necessary and not a sufficient condition for the reversal of the state of "corruption." The automatic conflation of the notion of death as the consequence of sin and that of the death of Christ as salvific is the result of the application of the logic of a kind of "satisfaction" theory which, in this particular rendering, would place disproportionate emphasis on the notion of "debt." Death is the debt incurred by sin; once this debt is paid up, our corruption is replaced by "incorruptibility." But this is not how the question is settled by Athanasius. The motif that is most pervasive in his explication of the salvific efficacy of Christ's death is not so much that of repaying the debt, or withstanding the punishment for sin, but rather the more positive and active aspect of Christ's offering himself in death to the Father. It is precisely at this point that we encounter the liturgical model in

[49] Ibid. 9, 20.   [50] Ibid. 10.
[51] See Brendan Byrne, "Interpreting Romans Theologically in a Post 'New Perspective' Perspective," *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001) 227–41.
[52] *Inc.* 9.

Athanasius, with the biblical vocabulary that is proper to this model: Christ's body is a temple (*naos*);[53] Christ does not merely die, but "offers" his body to death (*prosagōn eis thanaton*;[54] *paradidous to sōma tō thanatō*[55]). In this way, his body becomes a sacrifice (*thusia*) and an offering (*prosphora*).[56] In offering his body to death, Christ is not thereby making a transaction with death itself but rather making an offering to the Father (*prosēge tō patri*).[57]

Athanasius does not make fully explicit the logic that underlies this vocabulary. But before we simply dismiss this logic as inexplicable in our contemporary context, we need to retrieve the context that rendered it so self-evidently intelligible for Athanasius as not to require explanation. Clearly, this context is the Scriptures and especially what we have identified as the "liturgical model" of salvation. Within this logic, "sacrifice" and "offering" are in the most primary sense simply the means by which one approaches the deity.[58] Just as one does not appear before an earthly suzerain empty handed, so a fortiori one does not show up in front of the Most Holy without offering a gift. For the author of Hebrews, Christ makes the perfect offering because it is not merely an extrinsic and perishable gift but the offering of his very self. Through his kinship with our common humanity, Christ's offering enables not only his own approach but that of everyone who believes in him. The same logic is presumed by Athanasius; through Christ's sacrifice and offering of his own body, he has "brought (*metēnegken*) all to himself and through himself to the Father."[59] Reinserting this presupposed biblical logic into Athanasius's theological categories, we can see that Christ's death is salvific not merely because it fulfills the *Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang* of sin and death but because it actually reverses the content of death. Apart from the particular *manner of Christ's death*, death is the natural consequence and manifestation of the withdrawal from divine "grace" that is sin. But Christ's death has the opposite momentum; it is not withdrawal but "offering." Death, considered merely as the consequence of sin, is an estrangement from the God of life, but Christ's death accepts the "debt" of this estrangement and then trades on this debt by rendering it as an offering, an approach to the Father, an entrance into the presence of the Father, in other words, a sacrifice.[60] Athanasius did not have a clear grasp of the concrete historical references underlying the "liturgical model," as uncovered by modern historical schol-

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[53] See ibid. 20, 21, 26.
[54] *Inc.* 9
[55] *Inc.* 16; see ibid. 20, 21, 26, 37.
[56] Ibid. 9, 10, 16, 20, 21, 31.
[57] Ibid. 8.
[58] See Gary Anderson, "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5.870–76.
[59] *Inc.* 37
[60] For a contemporary treatment of this trinitarian interchange, see Robert J.

arship. But he was intimately attuned to the resonances of biblical language and symbolism; he used the motif of Christ's sacrificial self-offering to articulate how God in Christ saves us from the decline into nothingness brought about by sin.

THE SAPIENTIAL MODEL

The Sapiential Model in the Old Testament

Wisdom in Ancient Near East literature had two facets: it was a gift of the gods and it was concerned with practice rather than theory.[61] It belonged to the gods and they communicated it to humans with the culture and crafts that formed civilization. It distinguished humans from other animals[62] and made them capable servants of the gods. A skilled jeweler was wise, so was a woman who could help fellow villagers solve a pressing problem. Wisdom enabled a king to organize the people for divine service and establish justice. Wisdom was communicated to humans through "heads of households," i.e., the king (with his scribes and sacred personnel) and fathers of families, as well as through exceptional individuals. It enabled one to be pleasing to God. Since it was a characteristic of the gods, having it could make one like the gods, as when, in the Bible, the first woman realized the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom and when the serpent promised the couple "your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5–6).

Though wisdom in the Bible is a complex phenomenon, the two facets named above are at play in biblical "Wisdom literature," appearing in such genres as the proverb, father-son instruction, debate on divine justice, and satire. As the distillation of generations of learned scribes, the Book of Proverbs is an excellent source for the sapiential tradition in the Old Testament. Its aphorisms (chaps. 10–31) remind people of the "wisdom," the far-from-obvious laws, by which God's world operates, so they might re-

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Daly, "Sacrifice Unveiled or Sacrifice Revisited: Trinitarian and Liturgical Perspectives," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003) 24–42.

[61] For elaboration of these remarks, see Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 8–28.

[62] The latter phrase is suggested by one tradition of creation in which the gods created the human race in two stages: In stage one, man was like the beasts, unorganized and barely surviving, and in stage two, man was civilized and humanized by the divine gifts of culture and crafts (including kingship and wisdom). See Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph 26 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1993) 32–49.

vere Yahweh and gain blessing and protection. The instructions contained in chaps. 1–9 urge hearers to refrain from foolish and self-destructive behavior and receive the wisdom that makes them "happy" and good servants of God. Readers should note a fundamental paradox in Proverbs' exhortations: Seek wisdom with all your heart, allow God to give it to you as a gift: "If you seek [wisdom] as you do silver . . . you will find knowledge of God, for the Lord gives wisdom . . ." (Proverbs 2:3–6; my translation).[63]

Several passages in Proverbs 1–9 explore the nature and relevance of wisdom using the literary device of personification: Wisdom is an attractive woman inviting the young man (the ideal reader in Proverbs) to live with her. In her three speeches (1:20–33; 8:1–36; 9:1–6, 11), Woman Wisdom invites the "simple" to receive her words and live, i.e., enhance their lives by enjoying God's blessing and protection. Proverbs 8 is Wisdom's most revealing speech. She existed prior to the created world and hence is the most honored being in creation.[64] She has an intimate relationship with Yahweh and desires to mediate that intimacy to those who court her. She will give life to those who finds her. In chaps. 1–8, Woman Wisdom has a rival who mimics her call to the youth; the other woman is portrayed as an adulteress (5:1–23; 6:20–35; 7:1–27) or a prostitute (9:13–18). Metaphorically, the other woman represents the seductions obstructing the search for wisdom, especially for a young man setting out on life's path. In Proverbs, the youth is shown leaving home (1:8–19), ready to marry a wife and found a household. In Proverbs 1–9, the "simple youth (i.e., untaught, inexperienced) meets two women, one wise, one foolish, and hears their invitations to follow her way. One of the ways leads to death and the other to life. The way to life and away from (premature) death is to live in Wisdom's house, dine at her table, and become her disciple.

The early-second century B.C. witnessed a development in the concept of wisdom. Sirach nationalized Woman Wisdom by associating her closely with the Temple in Jerusalem and with Torah (Sirach 24).[65] Earlier, wisdom had been more "international" in that its genres, styles, and themes

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[63] Michael Fox puts it well: ". . . [E]ducation has two phases. It commences with the father's teaching and its rote incorporation by the child, but this must be complemented by the learner's own thought and inquiry. *Then* God steps into the picture and grants wisdom . . . . Education is thus a cooperative effort of child, parents, and God" ("The Pedagogy of Proverbs," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 [1994] 242, Fox's italics).

[64] In that world, antiquity was enormously important: the older something was, the more important it was.

[65] Sirach 24, esp. v. 22: "All this [Wisdom] is the book of the Most High's covenant, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the community of Jacob."

were found broadly throughout the Ancient Near East. Wisdom of Solomon (first century B.C.) further reified Wisdom by making it the hidden guide of human history and special friend of Israel.[66]

The Sapiential Model in the New Testament

The Old Testament concept of wisdom had a major impact on New Testament writings. The influence of personified Wisdom is greatest in the Gospel of John as is clear from the following parallels.[67] As Wisdom was with God in the beginning (Proverbs 8:22–23; Sirach 24:9; Wisdom 6:22), Jesus is with God "in the beginning" (John 1:1) and with the Father before the world existed (John 17:5). Jesus searches for disciples (John 1:35–51; 21:15–23; Proverbs 8:1–36), hosts a banquet where life is offered (John 6:22–59; Proverbs 9:1–6 + 11), and offers life to disciples (John 6:51, 57; 11:25–26; 13:19; Proverbs 1:33; 7:2;[68] 8:4; 9:6). Jesus, as revealer of the divine glory, performs the roles of Wisdom: He speaks in long discourses, some of them beginning with "I am." Wisdom of Solomon has shaped the Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Just as Wisdom is a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty (Wisdom 7:25), a reflection of the everlasting light of God (Wisdom 7:26), and a light for humans to see the right path (Sirach 1:29), so Jesus as the manifestation of the Father's glory reveals God to humans and brings them out of darkness (John 1:4; 8:50; 11:4; 17:5, 22, 24).

Linked to the theme of wisdom is the intriguing motif of the tree of life, which occurs in only three places in the Christian Bible, Genesis 2–3; Proverbs 3;[69] and Revelation 2 and 22. In Genesis, the tree of life grows in the Garden of Eden and is in poetic parallelism with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9); only the fruit of the latter tree is forbidden to the first couple. After the sin, the tree of life is declared off limits to the couple (Genesis 3:22, 24). By declaring that "[Wisdom] is a tree of life," Proverbs 3:18 suggests that the life-giving wisdom lost by Adam and Eve can be found by pursuing wisdom. Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19 locates the tree of life in the midst of the heavenly city; its fruit is eaten

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[66] Other passages personifying Wisdom in the Old Testament are Job 28; Baruch 3:9–4:4; and Sirach 1:1–10; 4:11–19; 6:18–31; 14:20–15:20.

[67] Useful book for the development of wisdom motifs in the Old and New Testaments is Ben Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994). For John, see Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), I. cxxii–cxv; and "Appendix II: The Word."

[68] The speaker here is the teacher, not Woman Wisdom, yet their perspective is very similar.

[69] In Proverbs 11:20; 13:12; and 15:4, "tree of life" is applied to other things than wisdom.

by the inhabitants. The life lost by the first man and woman is made available again in the return of Eden represented by the heavenly city.

In summary, Wisdom made humans distinctive and turned them into good servants of God in many Old Testament texts. In Proverbs 1–9, and in the texts that elaborated those chapters, Wisdom is a Woman who reveals God and his invitation to humans, seeks disciples, teaches the right path, and gives them "the bread of life." Wisdom can, however, be rejected by humans. Such rejection leads to death. In the New Testament, in the Gospel of John, Jesus embodies Wisdom, inviting people to become his disciples, to dine at his table, to share the life he has from God. Revelation, the last book of the Christian Bible, completes the trajectory that rises from the opening chapters of Genesis: the life that was diminished by human sin is restored and perfected.

Augustine as an Exponent of the Sapiential Model (*De Trinitate*)

The "Wisdom" tradition represents a significant development and synthesis of the larger biblical theme of salvation as knowledge of God. This theme was found in various strands of biblical reflection: e.g, the election of Israel, covenant theology, exodus and Zion traditions. God sought out and chose Israel to know the one true God and to manifest that knowledge: "The Lord also proclaims his word to Jacob, decrees and laws to Israel. God has not done this for other nations; of such laws they know nothing" (Psalm 147:19–20). First Isaiah sees the fulfillment of Israel's election as the manifestation of this knowledge of God to the nations: "In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream toward it; many peoples shall come and say: Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths. For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2–3). The theological reflection of the early Church focused not so much on the specific terminology of the "Wisdom" tradition as it did on the wider theme of the personification of knowledge of God and its humanization in Jesus Christ, Wisdom Incarnate. Here also, the early Christian tradition found itself in direct conflict with a pervasive tenet of a Platonic strain in Late Antiquity, which held that knowledge of the divine is attained by a progressive abstraction from material and mundane reality.[70] Justin Martyr, who exerted much effort in trying to approximate Christian doctrine to Hellenistic culture, nevertheless was constrained to say: "Reason itself (logos) took form and became

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[70] See Robert J. Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003) 8–10.

a human being and was called Jesus Christ."[71] In determined refutation of the objections of their cultured despisers, Christian theologians insisted that it was a vital part of the salvific work of Christ to mediate knowledge of God in a human idiom through the Incarnation. This is a fairly pervasive theme in early Christian literature but it will suffice for our present purpose to present a brief summary of its expression in one of the classic works of early Christianity, Augustine's *The Trinity*.[72]

Augustine composed *The Trinity* over a period of several decades, from about 400 to 420. It is an attempt to provide some intelligible content to Christian faith in the Triune God, in the face of both Arian and Neoplatonist objections as well as the intrinsic difficulties of the subject matter. Beginning with a methodological reflection on the problem of the knowledge of God, Augustine points out that the claim to attain to knowledge of God is often accompanied by projections of human concepts and experience onto the divine.[73] The only way out of this dilemma is what he calls the *fidei initium*, the starting point of faith.[74] As used in this context, "faith" (*fides*) for Augustine is not merely a subjective disposition to believe or to trust in a supreme being. Rather, it is an assent to the ways in which the divine reveals itself through symbols (*similitudines*) that are adapted both to our sensible perceptions and to our overattachment to material reality. Since we are disposed through sin to privilege the material and sensible, God chooses to reveal himself to us through sensible and material means that will guide our ascent to his spiritual and immaterial being: "We were incapable of grasping eternal things, and weighed down by the accumulated dirt of our sins, which we had collected by our love of temporal things . . .

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[71] *1 Apology* 5.

[72] This theme is treated under the heading of "Christ the Illuminator" in Turner, *Patristic Doctrine* 29–46. Augustine does not figure significantly in Turner's account of this theme. Turner interprets this motif with an emphasis on Christ as teacher and moral exemplar, rather as revealing the invisible God through his humanity, an emphasis which veils the christological dialectic that is so pervasive in Augustine's approach and that of other early Christian literature. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, generally bypasses this theme, which is not easily accommodated within his dramatic conflictual model of "*Christus Victor*," as does Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*; Slusser includes it as one of his five themes in patristic soteriology, under the rubric of "revelation" ("Soteriological Themes" 562–64). Treatments of Augustine's soteriological doctrine tend not to focus on this aspect of his teaching, in favor of sacrificial and atonement themes. For a representative account, see Finbarr G. Clancy, "Redemption" in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 702–4.

[73] *The Trinity* (= *Trin.*) 1.1.1.

[74] Ibid. On Augustine's understanding of this notion and for a larger elaboration of the following, see Khaled Anatolios, "Divine Semiotics and the Way to the Triune God in Augustine's De Trinitate," in *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays on Historical Theology*, ed. A. McGowan (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

so we needed purifying. But we could only be purified for adaptation to eternal things by temporal means like those we were already bound to in a servile adaptation . . . Now just as the rational mind is meant, once purified, to contemplate eternal things, so it is meant while still needing purification to give faith to temporal things."[75] For Augustine, the high point of this economy of salvific revelation is the appearance of Jesus Christ as Incarnate Wisdom. Because Jesus Christ is the human embodiment of divine Wisdom, he presents us with a knowledge of God that is adapted to our temporal and sensible reality but which is also really a manifestation of God. Although God sent humanity many symbolic representations of his presence prior to the appearance of Incarnate Wisdom, these were not in themselves God but signaled or evoked or somehow mediated the divine presence, which was other than them. In Christ, however, there is no such otherness. The symbol of his humanity is immediately united to the reality of his divinity such that the human Jesus *is* God. Therefore, the knowledge of God attained through Jesus Christ will not clash with our vision of God in eternity.[76]

In Augustine's conception, the salvific knowledge provided by the Incarnation of Wisdom is not in the first place a matter of information or even teaching, so much as it is the divine self-presentation that gives form and direction to the personal encounter of faith. Because Jesus is the human manifestation of divine Wisdom, the faith which is directed to his historical manifestation is also directed at the eternal truth of divine Being. But Augustine does draw out some of the contents of the knowledge of God mediated by Christ, not only by his teachings but also by the whole narrative of his appearance, life, death, and Resurrection. The Christ event reveals to us in a saving way the truth about God's love and human sinfulness. Without knowledge of the state of human sinfulness, humanity would wallow in unrepentant pride; without knowledge of God's love, humanity would sink in the despair of unrelieved guilt. In Christ, however, we learn that God loves us even in our sinfulness (see Romans 8:31) and this knowledge provides us with a saving antidote to both pride and despair.[77]

Another reading of Christ's saving work in the key of knowledge is provided by Augustine when he meditates on the death and Resurrection of Christ, seeing each as both "sacrament" and "model."[78] By "model," he means a perceptible demonstration insofar as it provides an example for

[75] *Trin.* 4.18.24; English translation in Edmond Hill, *The Trinity. The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century* (Brooklyn: New City, 1990) 169.
[76] *Trin.* 4.18.24.   [77] *Trin.* 4.1.2.
[78] *Trin.* 4.2.4–4.3.6.

imitation; by "sacrament," he means a perceptible demonstration insofar as it mediates knowledge of interior spiritual realities. Christ's suffering and death is a model because it provides us with an exemplary martyrdom; it is a sacrament insofar it represents our spiritual sickness and forsakenness as well as the overcoming of these through repentance and a life of discipleship. On the other hand, Christ's Resurrection is a model of our future resurrection and a sacrament of the posture of "seeking the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father" (Colossians 3:1). Thus, Christ's death and Resurrection provide us with saving knowledge by manifesting the reality of our situation of death and the reality of God's victory over death but also by enabling and exemplifying the way to deal with this death and the way to attain to that victory.

A third emphasis by Augustine in his account of the salvific knowledge provided by the appearance and work of Christ is that of the revelation of the humility of God. Augustine takes over a rather mythologizing motif of the early Church which depicts the bondage of humanity to sin as a subjection to the devil. Christ offers his life as a ransom for sinful humanity and the devil unwittingly accepts the offer, thereby canceling whatever just authority he had over sinful humanity by the unjust power he wielded over the sinless Jesus by putting him to death. This whole scenario sounds quite bizarre, if not grotesque, to us today but it is important not to remain at an overliteral reading. Augustine does not present this scenario as a literal explanation of the "mechanism" of salvation but rather as a dramatization of the character of evil and the character of God. Evil, personified in the figure of the devil, despises justice and craves power, while God, as manifest in Jesus, shuns power and embraces justice: "The essential flaw of the devil's perversion made him a lover of power and a deserter and assailant of justice, which means that [human beings] imitate him all the more thoroughly the more they neglect or even detest justice and studiously devote themselves to power . . . . So it pleased God to deliver [humanity] from the devil's authority by beating him at the justice game, not the power game."[79] Augustine goes on to explain that the way Jesus beats the devil at the "justice game" is precisely by the humility which is manifest in Christ's sinless giving of himself to death on behalf of humanity. The power that derives from this "justice of humility" is manifest in the victory of the Resurrection: "So he overcame the devil with justice first and power second, with justice because *he had no sin* (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22) and was most unjustly killed by him; with power because . . . he came back to life never to die hereafter."[80] Augustine draws ethical implications from this revelation of the humility of God's justice in Christ; one should not

[79] 13.13.17; Hill, 536.   [80] 13.15.19; Hill, 358

seek primarily the power that conquers by force but justice and humility and "power against your own faults."[81]

We have seen that in the biblical literature, one can speak of a "sapiential" model of salvation, which focuses on the life-giving and redeeming efficacy of the knowledge of God. In the Old Testament, this trajectory finds its high point in the personification of Wisdom as a feminine presence that nurtures human thriving and unites humanity with God. In the New Testament, it finds focused expression especially in the Johannine literature where the gracious self-communication of divine Wisdom is seen to reach the point of setting up a "tabernacle" within human reality through the humanity of Jesus. Augustine takes up the theme of the salvific knowledge mediated by Incarnate Wisdom and contextualizes it in light of his anti-Neoplatonic polemic. Rejecting the Platonist paradigm of ascent to knowledge of the divine by abstraction from the material and sensible,[82] he presents the saving knowledge of God as available through the Incarnation of Divine Wisdom in Christ. In Christ, our life-giving and redeeming relation to the unknown and eternal God has a concrete intelligible and temporal orientation. In him, there is no discontinuity between the temporal orientation of our faith and the eternal destination to which this faith refers; he is the way but also the goal. Moreover, the whole drama of the Christ event presents us with saving knowledge of the truth of our relation to God: knowledge of our sinfulness combined with God's love; the way from the death of sin to the victory of God's love as manifested and exemplified through Christ's death and Resurrection; and the manifestation of the humility of God and the priority of justice over power.

CONCLUSION

A principal gain of using biblical models of salvation is that it allows us to go beyond an atomistic focus on isolated metaphors and to see these metaphors in the larger context of the semiotic and logical systems that inform them. In this article, we have located three such models: the prophetic, liturgical, and sapiential. Each of these represents a whole system of interlocking beliefs and symbols that express the reality of God's saving work and invite people to partake of that reality. It remains to be said that these are not utterly autonomous and mutually exclusive models either in the biblical literature or in the Christian tradition. Each represents a dis-

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[81] 13.13.17. For an excellent succinct treatment of the important theme of humility in Augustine and its christological structure, see Brian E. Daley, "A Humble Mediator: the Distinctive Elements in St. Augustine's Christology," *Word and Spirit* 9 (1987) 100–17.
   [82] 4.15.20–4.17.23.

tinct emphasis within the comprehensive experience of Israel and the Church in their encounter with the Saving Lord. The prophetic model emphasizes God's sovereign and saving involvement in human history; God is actively involved in human history in ways that constantly open up a future that leads to salvation. The liturgical model emphasizes the indwelling of God's life-giving and redeeming holiness and the acknowledgment and celebration of such indwelling through the cultic life of Israel and the Church. The sapiential model emphasizes divine self-revelation as a salvific category: God makes his ways known to humanity and the reception and enactment of this knowledge is salvation. The interrelation between the various models is both textual and logical. In the Old Testament, the prophetic model looks to a future in which the integrity of Israel's cultic life will be restored (see Isaiah 66:18–22); the liturgical model finds its foundations in the historical inbreaking of God's indwelling presence in the Exodus traditions; and the sapiential model incorporates both Exodus and Zion traditions, i.e., knowledge of God is mediated by divine intervention in human history and is maintained by authentic worship (Psalms 46–48). In the New Testament, these models find their unity in the person and work of Christ. He represents the climax of God's saving intervention in human history, the way in which humanity has full access to the heavenly throne, and the medium of God's self-disclosure in human form. When we turn to the early tradition of the Church, we find that each of the theologians we have looked at employed all three models, though one tends to dominate.[83] In the contemporary appropriation of the meaning of Christian salvation, the task is not simply to choose one of these models but to distinguish distinct emphases in order to unite them (distinguer pour unir). The work of appropriating these models in a contemporary context is a large and complex one that can only be broached here. We can conclude, however, by indicating briefly some lines such an inquiry might pursue. The prophetic model encourages us to see the process of salvation as taking place within the movement of history, by which our story and the continuing story of the world is taken up by Christ into a divine plan. Such a vision can be brought into creative dialogue with political and liberation theology and, on a personal level, can connect personal discernment (understood in the sense used by Ignatius Loyola), with the notion of salvation: i.e. we are saved through the events of our lives. The liturgical model provides the

[83] Thus, Irenaeus also depicted salvation in terms of the atoning death of Christ (see *Adv. haer.* 5.1.1; *Demo.* 34.72) and divine revelation (see *Adv. haer.* 4.20.1–12); Athanasius conceived of the salvific work of Christ as the culmination of a historical process (see *Inc.* 12) and as making accessible true knowledge of God (*Inc.* 15) and Augustine spoke of salvation in terms of Christ's sacrificial death (see *Trin.* 4.14.19; *City of God* 10.6.20) and as a historical process that is consummated in Christ (see *Trin.* Bks. 1–3; 4.19, 25–26).

resources for a reintegration of soteriology with sacramental theology, if the latter is conceived as our participation in the offering of Christ through which we gain entrance into divine life.[84] The sapiential model leads us to seek the saving knowledge of God in the face of Christ and finds support in the various trends of contemporary theology that seek knowledge of God through the "theodrama" of the Christ event.[85] Thus, the saving God is encountered in human history, in liturgy, and in contemplation of the Christ event. Finally, it must be conceded that not even the successful integration of these models provides us with an exhaustive inventory of all the contents of Christian salvation. They merely provide us with access to some of the central dimensions explored by Scripture and Christian tradition of the mystery of God's saving work that extends into the eschatological future that "eye has not seen nor ear heard nor human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

[84] Some indications of how such an approach might be developed are found in Robert J. Daly, "Sacrifice Unveiled"; Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001) esp. 136–38; Jean-Marie Tillard, *Flesh of the Church: Flesh of Christ* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992) esp. 83–133.

[85] One thinks immediately of the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Karl Barth. In his preface to Jean Luc Marion's *God without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991) x, David Tracy speaks of the "great divide" of modern theology as that between an approach that "wants to correlate the claims of reason and the disclosures of revelation" and an approach in which "reason functions best in theology by developing rigorous concepts and categories to clarify theology's sole foundation in revelation." The sapiential model of salvation, as exemplified in the theology of Augustine, emphasizes "theology's sole foundation in revelation" but there is also room for reflection on how this saving revelation can be received in a particular context and thus some aspect of "correlation" cannot be excluded a priori from such reflection.