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BIBLICAL STUDIES

ILLUMINATION AND INVESTITURE: THE ROYAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TREE OF WISDOM IN GENESIS 3

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According to Gen 1–2 Adam and Eve were created to be rulers—under God, over the world, and with each other. It also seems best to understand their obligations before God within a covenantal framework, one that anticipates the coming covenant with Israel in both its structure and its sad outcome.[1] As we shall see, the covenant with Adam and Eve is concerned with much more than retaining whatever rulership they already enjoyed; it offers in addition the prospect of a full accession to the viceregal throne of which God has made

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[1] According to Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 171, "The predominant sense of ברית in Biblical Hebrew is an elected, as opposed to natural, relationship of obligation established under divine sanction." The particular obligation and sanction in Gen 2:17, along with the potential blessings further discussed in this article, seem to have the nature of a special, covenantal arrangement within the web of natural obligations and blessings inhering in creation. The correspondence between Adam and Israel is recognized and traced in numerous places in the Bible as well as in noncanonical Jewish and Christian writings. See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 266, for example, who notes that "the Israel-Adam link, which simply focuses the meaning of the covenant, seems to have been woven so thoroughly into Jewish thought and writing that it emerges in one form or another practically everywhere we look." Jacob Neusner, *What is Midrash?* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 84, also notes the correspondence, though he is much more positive about the role of Israel vis-à-vis Adam: "Israel's history forms the counterpart to Adam's. Israel then is humanity incarnate. . . . So Israel's history serves as a paradigm for human history, and vice versa. But there is a difference between Israel and Adam. Israel obeys God's Word, and Adam did not, so Israel will be saved, as Adam fell." See also William J. Dumbrell's comments in "Genesis 1:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (ed. Scott J. Hafemann; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 61-62; and Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-3: Biblical Theology of Creation Covenant," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 25 (2001): 225-28. Furthermore, verbal clues establish a connection with the coming Mosaic covenant. As Dexter E. Callender, Jr., *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 72, notes with respect to Gen 2:17, "The use of the verb *ṣwh* 'to command' appears to be significant and conscious. The command is both to eat and not to eat, and the phrase *lō' tō'kal* recalls the apodictic legal formulae found elsewhere in the Pentateuch, such as in the Decalogue."

Adam and Eve (and their descendants) the heirs apparent.[2] It is not uncommon to suggest that the sabbath-rest of God and his good gift of the tree of life point to the possibility of a greater blessing, still outstanding, that Adam and Eve were to receive after a predetermined period of obedience.[3] In addition to these pointers to further blessing, there are two others that are generally neglected.

The first is that other tree in the middle of the garden: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Every reader of Gen 1–3 knows that this tree is closely connected with a transformation of Adam and Eve, tragic transformation though it is. It is a change from innocence to sin, from life to death, from blessing to curse. However, there is reason to believe that this tree might have played a role in a very different sort of transformation, had Adam and Eve only obeyed their sovereign lord. In this case the opening of their eyes and acquisition of wisdom—their *illumination*—would have led to a very different outcome. Rather than serving as the means of their downfall, it would have served as the means of their exaltation—to the righteousness, power, and glory God intended them to enjoy on their viceregal thrones.[4]

[2] The notion of a probation for Adam and Eve, which upon the completion of their obedience would have led to further blessing, is an ancient one. Sebastian Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," in *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den Östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Eichstätter Beiträge 4; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1981), 13, notes that in the ancient Syriac tradition "the final stage of mankind is seen as far more glorious than that in the primordial paradise, for God will finally grant to mankind the divinity which Adam and Eve had previously tried to snatch, in disobedience to the divine command." The idea of a probation is also emphasized in Reformed theology, as, for example, in John Calvin, *Genesis* (ed. and trans. John King; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 180: "Truly the first man would have passed to a better life, had he remained upright; but there would have been no separation of the soul from the body, no corruption, no kind of destruction, and, in short, no violent change."

[3] See Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (privately published, 1989), 13: "By the Sabbath ordinance God made covenantal commitment to man that his God-like endowment would move on in the way of obedience to a consummation of rest, indeed, to the glory of God's own Sabbath." With respect to Israel, William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 35, puts it this way: "On the sabbath, therefore, Israel is to reflect upon the question of ultimate purposes for herself as a nation, and for the world over which she is set. For in pointing back to creation, the sabbath points also to what is yet to be, to the final destiny to which all creation is moving." Dumbrell also cites Claus Westermann, *Creation* (trans. John J. Scullion; London: SPCK, 1974), 65, in this regard.

With respect to the tree of life, a clearly figurative usage is frequently found in the book of Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4). See Ralph Marcus, "The Tree of Life in Proverbs," *JBL* 62 (1943): 117-20. The book of Revelation repeatedly refers to the tree of life as one of the benefits enjoyed by the redeemed in paradise regained (2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). While the tree of life is not explicitly prohibited, Adam and Eve seem to have been prevented from the enjoyment of its benefits until they had eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This led some ancient interpreters (e.g., St. Ephrem of Syria) to conclude that, until its own fruit had been eaten, the tree of knowledge of good and evil blocked access to that higher, inner sanctum of the garden in which the tree of life grew. See Sebastian Brock, introduction to *Hymns on Paradise*, by St. Ephrem the Syrian (trans. Sebastian Brock; Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1998), 57-58.

[4] That Adam and Eve would have been allowed to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in God's good time, had they only waited, is not a new idea. Brock, "Introduction," 57-58, notes that St. Ephrem of Syria, "in common with a number of other early Christian writers, held the view that God created Adam and Eve in an intermediate state: if they kept the commandment

The second is the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Within the ancient Near Eastern (and particularly the biblical) context, nakedness was an undesirable condition for human beings. As we shall see, the nakedness of Adam and Eve at the end of Gen 2 poses a strong, if implied, question for the ancient reader: not whether, but when and how will Adam and Eve be clothed? The significance of clothing—that is to say, *investiture*—in the Bible and its ancient context will thus also need to be addressed. To establish this conception of clothing, we will need to take a brief look at the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden and then, in more detail, its relation to the nakedness—and clothing—of Adam and Eve.

I. *The Tree, Wisdom, and Illumination*

Ironically, the most important clues to the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil come from the mouth of the serpent. The serpent's response to Eve is a combative attempt to turn the covenant on its head. He begins with an outright denial of the curse ("you will not die," he says, contradicting God's word in Gen 2:17) and proceeds to enumerate blessings that will come from eating of the tree ("your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil") (Gen 3:5; **ידעי טוב ורע**).[5] Strangely, his account of the potential blessings is an accurate prediction of what actually happens.[6] As a result of eating from the tree, their eyes are indeed opened (Gen 3:7) and they do indeed come to know good and evil (Gen 3:22).

Even before the serpent's predictions come to their sad fulfillment, Eve understands in them a promise of *wisdom*. In addition to its lovely, edible

not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they would be rewarded by being allowed to eat it and would thereby be enabled to progress to the Tree of Life, thus acquiring divinity (as we shall see)." See St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, 214: "For had the serpent been rejected, along with the sin, they would have eaten of the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge would not have been withheld from them any longer." A modern representative of the notion that Adam and Eve were always intended to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is John Walton, *Genesis* (The NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 205, who concludes that "the prohibition concerned timing" in much the same way as driving a car and the enjoyment of sex are forbidden to those not yet ready for them. Walton goes on to compare the prohibition in the garden to the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, in which Jesus was tempted to seize his proper human kingship in a way which "involved bypassing appropriate timing, seizing [the kingdoms] through deviant means" (200-206). James B. Jordan, "Merit Versus Maturity: What Did Jesus Do for Us?," in *The Federal Vision* (ed. Steve Wilkins and Duane Garner; Monroe, La.: Athanasius Press, 2004), 158, argues along similar lines, claiming that the sin of Adam "was not a failure to do a good work and earn a merit, but was a rejection of the whole God-given process of maturation, because Adam prematurely seized the privilege that God had held out as the end of that process of maturation." Jordan's work parallels my own, independently conceived argument at numerous points, though he goes beyond this article in using his conclusions to argue against a prelapsarian covenant of works.

[5] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the NRSV.

[6] As R. W. L. Moberly, "Did the Serpent Get It Right?" *JTS* 39 (1988): 7, says, "The serpent is offering a prospect that is in principle entirely good and desirable." "Everything happens exactly as the serpent had said" (8). However, Moberly stops short of claiming that the opening of the eyes and the knowledge of good and evil were a part of God's original intention for Adam and Eve, as we claim here.

fruit, Eve saw "that the tree was to be desired to make one *wise*" (Gen 3:6; ונחמד העץ להשכיל; my emphasis). After all, the notion of eyes being opened conveys the sense of secret knowledge obtained by the wise. In Hebrew as well as in English, to *see* something is to *understand* it.[7] Thus, for Eve the prospect of having their eyes opened by eating from the tree is the prospect of gaining wisdom.

More basic to Eve's (and our) understanding of the tree is its connection—one made both by God (Gen 2:17) and the serpent (Gen 3:5)—with *the knowledge of good and evil*. As such, the tree is a tree of *wisdom*, because in the Bible "knowing good and evil" (or some approximation of that phrase) refers to the kind of wise discernment and discrimination exercised by mature and capable adults.[8] A number of biblical passages illustrate this understanding of the phrase. In Deut 1:39, for example, Moses specifically exempts from punishment the children who were not yet old enough to know his commands and (as a result) to be held responsible for them: "your children who today do not know good and evil" (my translation; לא־ידעו היום טוב ורע). In Isa 7:16 Isaiah tells King Ahaz his enemies will be defeated before the prophesied "child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good" (ידע הנער מאס ברע ובחר בטוב). Here we find an elaboration of what "knowing good and evil" means: it entails an active determination of what is good and what is bad. The author of Hebrews appears to bring out this meaning when, in a NT echo of this phrase, he speaks of "the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb 5:14; πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ).

The same idea, applied a bit more generally, also occurs in the elderly Barzillai's words to King David. Refusing David's efforts to honor him after the king's return from exile, Barzillai appeals to his own inability to "discern what is pleasant and what is not" (lit., "distinguish between good and evil") as a result of his advanced age (2 Sam 19:35 [MT 19:36]; האדע בין־טוב לרע). For Barzillai the problem is not that he is too young to discern between right and wrong, as in the case of the wilderness children or the son of Isaiah's prophecy; indeed, his loyalty to his king indicates that his moral sensibilities are fully intact. It is that he is too old to appreciate properly the advantages of living at court. Knowing good and evil in this case is a matter of aesthetic appreciation and sensual discernment.

[7] See Isa 41:20 and 44:18 for two examples in which the Hebrew word for "see" (ראה) is used in parallel with the same Hebrew verbal root as the word for "wisdom" in Gen 3:6 (שכל translated as "understand" in these passages).

[8] We may make two observations in this connection. First, the fact that Adam and Eve become "like God" in their knowledge of good and evil rules out the possibility that this knowledge is inherently sinful. Whatever it represents, God can describe both himself and his heavenly host in these terms. Second, since Adam and Eve can and do share in this knowledge of good and evil, it is also clear that this knowledge must be something of which humans in general—and Adam and Eve in particular—are capable, even after the fall. This appears to rule out that interpretation which sees the "knowledge of good and evil" as a merismus indicating a knowledge which is godlike in its comprehensiveness.

What does it mean to know good and evil, then? Based on the examples so far, it has to do with discernment and decision making of various kinds (moral, aesthetic, sensual). As such, it applies in a special way to the situation of kings who, by virtue of their office, are continually called upon to make such decisions. A particularly revealing example may be found in 2 Sam 14. There the wise woman from Tekoa flatters David, claiming that "my lord the king is like the angel of God, discerning good and evil" (2 Sam 14:17; לשמע הטוב והרע). Here she uses language similar to the phrase "knowing good and evil" in a way which clearly refers to the king's coming decision in her case. The king, as a king and as one therefore empowered to pronounce judgment, should above all be one who can "discern good and evil."

Furthermore, her description of David as "*like* the angel of God" reminds us of God's words to his angelic host at the end of Gen 3: "See, the man has now become *like* one of us, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:22; לדעת טוב ורע; my emphasis). Thus, the wise woman sees an analogy between David's ability to rule in her case and the judicial authority and wisdom exercised by the angels in heaven. She could say here, as she does a few verses later in a slightly different context, "my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God" (2 Sam 14:20).

Finally, the connection between wisdom (specifically, kingly wisdom) and "knowing good and evil" is found in King Solomon's prayer in 1 Kgs 3:9: "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil [להבין בין־טוב לרע]; for who can govern this your great people?"[9] Here we find an explicit link between the royal responsibility to rule (or govern) and the discernment of good and evil.

To sum up, Eve desired the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because through it her "eyes would be opened" and she would be "like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5). In other words, the tree was "to be desired to make one *wise*" (Gen 3:6; my emphasis). Eve hoped that by eating the fruit of this "tree of wisdom," as we might call it, she and Adam would attain the kind of *savoir-faire* which the rest of the OT associates with adults and kings and which she simply (and simplistically) associated with God. Eve understood enough of the serpent's predictions to see in the tree a promise of *wisdom* which would make her and Adam *like God*.[10] So she took the fruit and ate it and gave some to Adam, who was with her.

[9] Note too the way in which Solomon's wisdom is from the LORD, a fact which the people later recognize after his judgment of the two prostitutes: "All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice" (1 Kgs 3:28). See Malcolm Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwist's Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2–3," *JBL* 88 (1969): 268. The king properly exercises judgment on behalf of the LORD with wisdom from the LORD.

[10] It is not necessary to assume that Eve fully understood the significance of this "tree of wisdom." In fact, there is evidence that she did not (see 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14). However, Eve understood God's command well enough to be held accountable for it.

This understanding of wisdom should make it clear that there is no reason to think that the knowledge of good and evil was wrong in and of itself.[11] On the contrary, wisdom belongs to kings, not least to those intended from the moment of their creation to be "images of God," ruling as God's vice regents over the earth. Thus, there is every reason to believe that the enjoyment of both trees was part of God's intended destiny for man as it relates to creation, for everything in earth was made for man.[12] Indeed, the "tree of wisdom" belonged with the tree of life in the center of the garden precisely because, in line with numerous passages in Scripture, wisdom and life belong together.[13] Wisdom, if exercised properly and in accordance with God's commands, leads to life: "she is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her" (Prov 3:18). Unfortunately, Adam and Eve anticipated the example of Solomon rather than his proverb. They acquired royal wisdom and authority—of a sort, but failed in their most basic obligation to honor God as their liege lord and king.

II. *Nakedness and Investiture*

This brings us then to the theme of investiture in Gen 2–3. In addition to the notion of the wisdom associated with the tree is the immediate consequence of their eye-opening: "they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves" (Gen 3:7). Put otherwise, illumination (the opening of their eyes) leads to investiture (being clothed).[14] An accession of royal wisdom is followed by an accession to royal majesty.

The inherent legitimacy of this progression is of course obscured by the disobedience of Adam and Eve. It is clear from the text that their attempt to clothe themselves was as sinful as it was inadequate. Taking matters into their own hands from beginning to end, they eat from the tree of their own accord, clothe themselves of their own accord, and end by hiding behind a tree feeling more naked than ever when God makes his appearance in the garden. However, to

[11] Sirach also evidences a more positive appraisal of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which in 17:6-10 "is freed of pejorative connotations," according to John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSup 1; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 41. Immediately after linking the creation of humankind in the image of God with their dominion over the earth, Ben Sira highlights the role of wisdom in their kingship, linking it to the knowledge of good and evil: "He filled them with knowledge and understanding, and showed them good and evil" (Sir 17:7). Levison, *Portraits*, 37, comments that this "evaluation contrasts sharply with the negative evaluation of the tree in Gen 2–3." But where is the negative evaluation of the tree in Gen 2–3? It is Adam and Eve's disobedience (not the tree per se) that is judged by their fall. However, it is true that Ben Sira's position in this regard, as in others, is not exegetically based, on which see Levison, *Portraits*, 48.

[12] This way of putting it was suggested to me by one of my students, Ebony Walden.

[13] Esp. in the Wisdom literature, as might be expected: Prov 3:1-2, 16, 18, 21-22; 4:10; 8:35; 9:11; 13:14; 15:24; 16:22; Eccl 7:12; (Bar 3:14).

[14] This pattern of illumination and investiture is also found in Luke 24:45-49, where in language reminiscent of the Septuagintal version of Genesis, Jesus *opens* the disciples' *eyes* so that they may understand Scripture immediately prior to his promise that they will be *clothed* with power from on high.

admit that it was wrong for Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit and to clothe *themselves* is not necessarily to conclude that it was wrong for Adam and Eve to be clothed under any other circumstances. Indeed, one must raise the question whether God's tender clothing of Adam and Eve in Gen 3:21 is merely a concession to their fallen state, which he never otherwise would have had reason to undertake, or whether it represents instead an action that God had intended to perform for Adam and Eve even before their fall, now sadly altered in light of their disobedience.

The latter possibility is almost never considered. Typically, interpreters of Gen 3 have let the indications of shame in that chapter—the quick response to the awareness of their nakedness by clothing themselves with fig leaves, the hiding among the trees to escape detection by God, and then the apparent contrast between this attitude and the condition of being "naked and not ashamed" at the end of ch. 2—dictate their overall understanding of nakedness and clothing in the larger context. As a result, the theme of shame has tended to distort interpretations of Gen 3 in various ways over the years. In particular, while ancient interpreters often misconstrued the relation of shame to nakedness, modern interpreters have generally misunderstood the relation of shame to clothing.

For most ancient interpreters, shame and nakedness belonged together—even before the fall. Despite Gen 2:25 (where Adam and Eve are clearly described as naked), early interpreters of Genesis (Jewish and Christian alike) understood Adam and Eve to have been clothed with the glory of God right up until the moment of their sin.[15] The assumption is that prelapsarian Adam and Eve could not *really* have been naked—shameful condition that it is—and so must have been clothed with the divine glory.[16]

[15] Brock, "Clothing Metaphors," 14, traces this understanding back to an interpretation of Gen 3:21 ("And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them") in which "the verbs are taken as pluperfects, referring to the status of Adam and Eve at their creation, *before* the Fall." This requires reading "garments of skin" as "garments of light" or the like (אור, "light" instead of עור, "skin"). Ultimately, such a reading of Gen 3:21 seems a desperate attempt to support by exegetical means conclusions reached on other grounds—such as the assumption that nakedness is inherently shameful and thus impossible to attribute to the first couple before the fall.

[16] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis, 1–17* (trans. Robert C. Hill; FC 74; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 220, for example, noted with respect to the forbidden fruit, that "after eating it [Adam and Eve] were divested of the glory from above and also had experience of their obvious nakedness." A few sentences later he marvels at "the depths of indignity into which they fell from a condition of such great glory." Another example may be found in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* (20:1-2) when Eve recalls the moment of her fall and her words to the serpent: "And in that very hour my eyes were opened, and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness with which I had been clothed, and I wept and said to him: 'Why have you done this that I have been deprived of the glory [with which I was clothed]?' "(in *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* [ed. Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone; 2d rev. ed.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999], 58E). A notable exception may be found in the Slavonic *Life of Adam and Eve,* in which the glory seems to be prospective and contingent on their eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent says to Eve, "If you taste from that tree, you would become like gods and radiant like the angels" (18-20.11; *Synopsis,* 54E). When Eve eats of the fruit in the Slavonic version, she sees that she is naked, but there is no reference to a previous investiture with glory, as in the Greek and Armenian versions: ". . .

Modern interpreters avoid this false assumption about shame and *nakedness*, but fall into their own false assumption about shame and *clothing*, namely, that the only function of clothing is to avert or cover one's shame. The clothing of Adam and Eve in Gen 3:7 has thus been variously described as "hypocrisy" and a "fraudulent [pretense]," a "sign of shame" and reminder of their sin, a "self-atoning, self-protecting procedure," and, at best, a cover for "sin and its degradation," for "sin's proper fruit is shame."[17] The possibility of a more positive function of clothing in the purposes of God, apart from the needy nakedness of humans as a result of the fall, is almost completely overlooked.[18]

Again, my objection to the modern presumption is not to deny that shame is important in Gen 3 or that one of the functions of clothing after the fall is to cover Adam and Eve's shame. It is to indicate, rather, that modern interpreters have so focused on the shame-covering function of clothing that they generally miss what ancient interpreters took for granted: the use of clothing as a means of beauty, glory, even royal majesty. It is true that the unashamed nakedness of Adam and Eve in Gen 2:25 cannot itself be seen as an investiture (clothing) with God's glory, as most ancient interpreters believed. On the other hand, it is important not to neglect the way in which nakedness without shame (Gen 2:25) still points to the need for clothing—if not as an antidote to shame, then as a means to royal honor.[19]

Indeed, there is good reason to believe that God intended to clothe Adam and Eve in his own time and in his own way, had they simply waited upon him

immediately my eyes were opened and I saw that I was naked, and I cried bitterly about what I had done" (18-20.12b; cf 21-22.7b, where Adam's eyes are opened; *Synopsis,* 58E, 61E).

[17] Respectively, Augustine, *On Genesis: Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees and on the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book* (trans. Roland J. Teske, S. J.; FC 84; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 118-19; Calvin, *Genesis,* 182; Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 191; Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (trans. David G. Preston; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 191; Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 69.

[18] A number of scholars do point to the way in which God uses "clothing" to accomplish his purposes in redemption. However, this redemptive fulfillment of the clothing theme is invariably seen as a testament to God's sovereign ability to "do a new thing" (Blocher, *Beginning,* 192) within redemptive history, because "God's way is forward" (Kidner, *Genesis,* 69). Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (trans. John H. Marks; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 94, quotes Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1–3* (London: SCM, 1959), 90: "[God] accepts men as those who are fallen. He does not compromise them in their nakedness before each other, but he himself covers them. God's activity keeps pace with man." The possibility that God intended to "clothe" his people even apart from the fall is otherwise suggested only by Jordan, "Merit versus Maturity," as far as I can find.

[19] See, for example, Exod 28:2, 40, where God commands Moses to make priestly garments for Aaron (and his sons) "for glory and for beauty" (NAS; לכבוד ולתפארת). Ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters took this aspect for granted, even if they mistakenly took Adam's "robe of glory" to be something he lost upon his disobedience rather than something he was to have acquired upon his obedience. According to Brock, "Clothing Metaphors," 15, it was a commonplace in Jewish tradition "that Adam's 'robe of glory' (to use the Targum's rendering) was a priestly robe, to be handed down over the generations . . . and the term has preserved this priestly aspect in Syriac tradition as well."

and trusted him to do so. The fact that Adam and Eve felt no shame at their nakedness before the fall (Gen 2:25) is generally taken as an indication that this condition was a part of their perfect state. Yet this conclusion does not follow, either within experience or within Scripture. Young children feel no shame at their nakedness and yet this is not taken as an indication that they should never be clothed.[20] Instead, it is taken as an indication that their eyes have not yet been opened, as it were, to their own nakedness and the need for clothing.

Furthermore, the association of clothing with a position of honor and inheritance is constantly found in Scripture.[21] Jesus refers to this aspect of clothing in his comparison of Solomon and the lilies, in which "even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these" (Luke 12:27). Joseph's status as his father's favorite—and heir—was conspicuously announced by his robe of many colors. Later, when he became vice regent in Egypt, Pharaoh "arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck" (Gen 41:42). Mordecai too was honored by being adorned with "a royal robe which the king has worn" (Esth 6:8 NAS; cf. v. 11). Daniel "was clothed in purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made concerning him that he should rank third in the kingdom" (Dan 5:29). In the NT, the prodigal son is restored to sonship and, so it seems to the older brother, to inheritance when his father commands the servants to "bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him" (Luke 15:22). The examples could be multiplied,[22] but the point has been made. When a king becomes a king, he is clothed as a king. In Scripture, as in the ancient Near East

[20] Walton, *Genesis,* 203-4, is right that their nakedness is also "an indication of a level of naivete," as may be seen in the wordplay between the Hebrew words for their nakedness (**ערומים**) and the serpent's craftiness (**ערום**). Indeed, Walton sees Adam and Eve in a kind of adolescent state, pending their maturation and readiness for the responsibility represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Jordan, "Merit Versus Maturity," 169-70, is even more explicit along these lines, though he uses their immaturity to mitigate their responsibility (and, ultimately, to argue against any notion of a covenant of works in the garden): "Adam was naked because he was a newborn babe. As we have seen, the concept of the 'knowledge of good and evil' is associated with the robe of office, of rule and authority. Adam did not yet have the capacity for this. He was a newborn babe, partaking only of milk, as Paul writes in Heb 5:13-14. The fact that Adam sinned as a baby, and not as a mature adult having full knowledge of the truth, is what made it possible for God to redeem him (Gen 3:22; Heb 6:4-6)." Jordan begins his essay by stating its thesis: "that maturation rather than meriting is the proper way of understanding the two phases of human life," i.e., the movement from the "natural body" to the "Spiritual body" (152).

[21] There is, of course, the use of clothing to cover the shameful condition of nakedness after the fall. The story of Noah is an obvious example (Gen 9:20-27).

[22] Samson the judge (Judg 14:12-19), Jonathan the son of Saul (1 Sam 18:4), and Joshua the high priest (Zech 3:3-7) are other examples. One might also mention 2 Kgs 25:29, where Jehoiachin's exaltation in the court of Evil-Merodach is marked by a donning of new clothes. Other passages, mentioned by Scott J. Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001), 228 n. 3, by way of reference to Hugenberger's unpublished lecture notes at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, include Exod 22:26 and Ezek 16:8-16. Hafemann also mentions Rev 16:15. For more on clothes and throne rights, see Hugenberger, *Marriage,* 199 n. 130, where he notes that "other texts likewise suggest an association between the donning of clothes and the acquisition of throne rights (or inheritance rights) or, alternatively, between the removal of clothes and the loss of throne rights (or inheritance rights). Cf. *RSP*

generally, fine clothing accompanies rulership and inheritance;[23] nakedness is always an undesirable state.

That Adam and Eve, as God's proper images in his cosmic temple, were meant to be clothed is also suggested by the investiture of divine images in other contexts.[24] In the ancient Near East a god was commonly understood to be represented by its "image," whether in the form of the reigning king or a statue

2:122-215, where 1 Kgs 11:30-31; Gen 37 (the special garment of Joseph); Isa 22:21; Num 20:24-28; and 1 Kgs 19:19-21 are discussed." In the same place Hugenberger also cites Meir Malul, *Studies in Mesopotamian Legal Symbolism* (AOAT 221; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1988), 93-97, 105, "who discusses cuneiform texts which require the removal/leaving of one's garment as an expression of disinherison." Likewise, see the Gilgamesh Epic, where, as Speiser, *Genesis* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 26-27, points out, Enkidu's "temptress goes on [after seducing him] to tell him, 'You are wise, Enkidu, you are like a god' ([col. ii, line] 34, [ANET, 75]); and she marks his new status by improvising some new clothes for him (col. ii, lines 27f., ANET, 77)." Cf. col. ii, lines 35-39, ANET, 86: "Why, O Enkidu, cursest thou the harlot-lass, Who made thee eat food fit for divinity, And gave thee to drink wine fit for royalty, Who clothed thee with noble garments, And made thee have fair Gilgamesh for a comrade?" Cf. also the story of Adapa whose mourning garb is replaced by a fresh garment (along with the offer of the bread and water of life) after his successful interview with the gods; see James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3d ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 101-3. For references from Akkadian literature, see M. E. Vogelzang and W. J. van Bekkum, "Meaning and Symbolism of Clothing in Ancient Near Eastern Texts," in *Scripta Signa Vocis: Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East, presented to J. H. Hospers by His Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (ed. H. L. J. Vanstiphout et al.; Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1986), 266-72.

[23] The connection between investiture and rulership finds a parallel in the ANE understanding of the king's signet or seal, which (like clothing) could be transferred to another as a sign that the ruler's authority now resided with his representative. In addition to ANE examples, Dexter E. Callender, "The Primal Man in Ezekiel and the Image of God," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (SBLSymS 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 5-6, 13, mentions several illustrative figures from the Bible, including Joseph (Gen 42:39-45), Jehoiachin (Jer 22:24), Zerubbabel (Hab 2:23), and Mordecai (Esth 8:2, 8). Mordecai is an especially apt example, since at various points he is both clothed with the king's robes (Esth 7:6-11) and given the king's signet ring (Esth 8:2, 8). The same is true of the prodigal son in the parable (Luke 15). If Callender is right, then Ezek 28:12 actually portrays the primal human as "the seal, the likeness" of God in a way similar to the portrayal of Adam and Eve as the "image" of God in Gen 2. This suggests a rich web of ANE royal associations between the metaphors of image (statue), seal, and investiture.

[24] On the evidence for understanding Adam and Eve as priests within God's cosmic temple, see Walton, *Genesis*, 147-52, who also cites Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19-25. See also G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 17; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 81-121. In addition to the description of Eden as a place abounding with the very gold and gems used in the tabernacle and priestly vestments, Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism," 22, notes that "the law is very insistent that priests approaching the altar must have their privy parts decently covered (Exod 20:23; 28:42)." That this requirement for priestly vestments need not imply a covering for sin or shame is suggested by Moberly, "Serpent," 8, when he says in another context, "It is notable that even Yahweh's heavenly attendants, the seraphim, cover their private parts (Isa 6:2—following the customary interpretation of 'feet' as a euphemism for genitals, cf. Exod 4:25; Judg 3:24; 1 Sam 24:3 [Heb. 4]). Their action is part of a natural and proper reverence in the presence of God, without the slightest implication of guilt or fear." In any case, it is important to realize—though we cannot develop the point here—that Adam and Eve's kingship cannot be divorced from their priesthood: they are *priestly* kings.

in a temple. Given the fact that clothing or investiture accompanies the rulership of a king or prince, it should not be surprising that the cultic images of the gods were clothed as well. This clothing of statues was quite common in the ancient world, as several passages in the OT show.[25]

Jeremiah 10:3-15 is notable for the way in which it actually enumerates (as it ridicules) the various steps in making an image of a god. One begins with the wooden core of the statue (v. 3), plates it then with gold or silver (vv. 4a, 9a, 14), attaches it to its base (v. 4b), and then, finally, clothes the image in fine garments: "What the craftsman and goldsmith have made is then dressed in blue and purple—all made by skilled workers" (Jer 10:9b NIV).[26] Of course, from the devoted Israelite's perspective, this was all nonsense. What sense did it make to worship a lame and mute god whose inert and impotent presence should inspire neither fear nor hope? Or, as another prophetic parody (Isa 44:9-22) put it, what sense did it make to take from a single piece of wood one part to worship and another part to cook your food with?[27]

Indeed, this parody in Isa 44 takes the prophetic critique of idol worship even further. Part of the biblical point in identifying humans as the "image of God" is to criticize paganism by pointing to the *real* representatives of God on earth—human beings, not dolled-up sticks of wood in a fancy hut. This seems to be what Isaiah is getting at in his own sarcastic send-up of idols and idolatry.

The legitimacy of reading Gen 2–3 in light of Gen 1 despite the putative source critical division between the two is defended, with the full acceptance of source critical assumptions, by J. F. A. Sawyer, "The Image of God, the Wisdom of Serpents and the Knowledge of Good and Evil," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical, and Literary Images of Eden* (JSOTSup 136; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 64-65, who mentions several structural and thematic links between these sections. See too Flemming Hvidberg, "The Canaanite Background of Gen. 1–3," *VT* 10 (1960): 286-87, who argues for the unifying function of the serpent (representing Baal) in these chapters. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism," 24, concludes that the common use of sanctuary symbolism in the two sections "suggests that ideologically the J and P sources are much closer to each other than is usually held."

[25] For most of the information (if not my conclusions) on the clothing of statues, including the prophetic parodies, I am dependent on Michael B. Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1-53. I am also indebted to Catherine Beckerleg, "The Creation, Animation, and Enthronement of *hāʾādām* in Genesis 2:7-25" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Boston, Mass., Nov. 1999), for pointing me in this direction. More recently, she alerted me to a recent article by Andreas Schüle, "Made in the 'Image of God': The Concepts of Divine Images in Gen 1–3," *ZAW* 117 (2005): 1-20. For more on the clothing of images, Dick cites Eiko Matsushima, "Divine Statues in Ancient Mesopotamia: Their Fashioning and Clothing and Their Interaction with the Society," in *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1993), 209-19.

[26] Dick, "Prophetic Parodies," 18-20. Though the LXX version of Jer 10:3-15 differs in many details from the MT, it too includes the act of investiture: "Blue and royal purple clothes they put on them" (Jer 10:9), for which see Dick, "Prophetic Parodies," 20. On the clothing of idols, see also Ezek 16:18: "and you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them."

[27] This is not to say that the ancient pagans understood their idols in this way. They believed that though the image began as a "simple object, it had to be transformed into a living god through a purifying ceremony" (Matsushima, "Divine Statues," 210). The Jews, of course, utterly rejected this conviction.

At the beginning of his parody, Isaiah dismisses the idol-makers as nonentities, like their idols: "All who *craft* idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless" (Isa 44:9 NIV).[28] At the end of his satire, however, Isaiah comes full circle in a fascinating book-end to this passage. In a clear allusion to the idol-maker who *crafts* his idols at the beginning of the passage, Isaiah concludes with a direct quote from the LORD:

> Remember these things, O Jacob, for you are my servant, O Israel. I have *crafted* you, you are my servant, O Israel. I will not forget you. (Isa 44:21 NIV; my emphasis)

The parallel is jarring. The idol-maker *crafts* his worthless idols; the LORD *crafts* his own image, Israel—far from worthless, but, rather, precious in his sight and not to be forgotten.[29]

All too often, though, Israel forgets both her maker and herself. Another prophetic passage pictures God's tender clothing of his bride, Israel. In Ezek 16, all the joys and prerogatives of covenantal commitment with God belong to her. She is, in a very real sense, the crowned queen of the earth, as the word of the LORD through Ezekiel makes clear:

> I clothed you with embroidered cloth and with sandals of fine leather. I bound you in fine linen and covered you with rich fabric. I adorned you with ornaments: I put bracelets on your arms, and a chain on your neck, and a ring on your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. (Ezek 16:10-12)[30]

Despite all this, Israel turns to other gods, pictured as an appalling act of self-disinheritance in which Israel strips herself of her royal garments and places them instead on idolatrous pseudo-images of God: "and you took your embroidered garments to cover *them* . . . !" (Ezek 16:18; my emphasis). Rejecting her own investiture as the "image of God," Israel insists on debasing herself in order to clothe and exalt false images. The irony is poignant.

All this is to say that both sorts of images in the ancient Near East—kings and idols alike insofar as they represented the gods—were expected to be clothed as a sign and mark of their royal authority. Of course, the Israelites emphatically rejected the way in which their contemporaries understood their images of the gods. For Israel, the image of God was neither restricted to the king nor did it in

[28] This is the NIV translation, with the exception of the word "craft," which (with Dick, "Prophetic Parodies," 26) replaces the NIV's "make." The same substitution is made in the following translation of Isa 44:21. This contrast between the craftsman and his image, on the one side, and Yahweh and Israel, on the other, is pervasive in Isa 40:18-20; 41:1–42:4; 44:9-22, as Dick, "Prophetic Parodies," 21, notes, citing Richard Clifford, "The Function of Idol Passages in Second Isaiah," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 454: "The powerless deities and the idols who image them on earth are vividly contrasted with the powerful Yahweh and his servant on earth, Israel."

[29] Dick, "Prophetic Parodies," 29 n. ac.

[30] For the relation of this symbolism to the historical creation of Israel in the exodus and at Sinai and to the creation of the world in Gen 1, see Kline, *Kingdom Prologue,* 12. In this context Kline, *Kingdom Prologue,* 11, notes that "one of the biblical figures for the bestowing of the divine image on man is that of covering him with a robe emblematic of God's Glory."

any way refer to an idol. In the most general sense, human beings are the intended images of God. Nevertheless, just as the image of God is applied to Adam and Eve (and later to Israel as a whole, as in Isa 44 and Ezek 16) in a way that shares in the larger cultural association of rulership, so the unashamed nakedness of Adam and Eve in Gen 2:25 shares in the larger cultural expectation of investiture. For the reader familiar with ancient Near Eastern conventions it sets up the expectation of coming clothing.

This understanding of the significance of clothing is not to be taken as a concession to paganism any more than the use of the term "image of God" should be. It is rather—like the use of the "image of God" language—a placement of these notions in their proper context. It is as if an Israelite were to say to one of his contemporaries, "There is indeed a ruling image of God and that image does need to be clothed, but it isn't at all that ridiculous idol that you just finished making. Rather, human beings are the proper images of God, and it is human beings who were intended to be clothed with the glory and majesty of God."

It seems reasonable to argue, then, that at the end of Gen 2 there is the sense that naked Adam and Eve must be clothed simply because the completion and fulfillment of their rulership demands such an investiture, as it would for any "image of god" in the ancient Near East. The only question is how and under what circumstances this investiture will be accomplished.

For the modern interpreter of the Bible this question leads to several others. What if Adam and Eve had not sinned? What if they had obeyed instead? What if they had passed their test and had been escorted into God's presence with honor instead of shame?[31] What sort of exaltation and investiture might they have enjoyed at that point? The ancient Near Eastern and biblical evidence points to a thoroughgoing transformation of Adam and Eve that would have enabled them to enjoy the complete and viceregal dominion over the earth for which they had been created. It is this transformation into a fuller, more complete likeness of God that the whole notion of investiture ultimately points. Adam and Eve were to have been clothed in the power and glory of God on the outside even as they were conformed to his holiness and righteousness on the inside.

The idea that investiture should be understood as transformation in the presence of God is agreeable to the ancient Near Eastern and biblical contexts. On the one hand, it was common in the ancient world to conceive of one's god or

[31] If Jeffrey Niehaus, "In the Wind of the Storm: Another Look at Genesis 3:8," *VT* 44 (1994): 263-66, is right to interpret Gen 3:8 as the windstorm appearance of God in judgment, then there is no reason to believe that God appeared on a daily basis in the garden. Since the windstorm presence of God functions elsewhere to transform humans into God's likeness (as the fulfillment of their creation as his images), it is likely that God reserved the full manifestation of his presence (in judgment or blessing) until Adam and Eve had passed or failed the crucial test at the tree.

goddess as crowned or clothed with radiance and power. The Mesopotamian *melammu* and *pulḫu* come to mind, along with numerous references in later classical texts.[32] On the other hand, the same ideas, applied in this case to the true God, may be found throughout the biblical texts. Apart from the many depictions of God where he is himself endued with power or glory, there are several passages in which one of his human representatives takes on the same divine attributes. Two examples may be cited. The first is Moses at Mount Sinai, who descends from the mountain quite literally glowing with the radiance of God.[33]

The second is the story of Gideon, which serves as an instructive parallel to the story of Adam and Eve. In Judg 6 Gideon is commissioned by God to cleanse God's sanctuary (the holy land) of the Midianites. Gideon begins with an initial act of obedience, in which he makes clear his intention to follow and obey the LORD rather than any other master. In the middle of the night Gideon destroys the altar to Baal in his village. After this initial victory, Gideon was then equipped by the LORD to execute final victory:

> But the Spirit of the LORD *clothed* Gideon (ורוח יהוה לבשה את־גדעון), and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. (Judg 6:34 ESV; my emphasis)

[32] According to Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 167-68, "The Mesopotamian concept of *melammu* . . . basically indicates the brilliant light that radiates from the gods." By extension and as a gift of the gods, the king was similarly attired: "The king, as representative of the gods, also 'bears *melammu*' (cf. what is said in Zech 6:13 concerning *hôd*), and when he assumes his throne the gods crown him with *melammu* as a token of their divine authorization of his kingship" (168). Likewise, gods or kings were supposed to be characterized by a related phenomenon, *pulḫu*. Whereas *melammu* referred to a kind of radiant crown worn by the god or king, *pulḫu* was "metaphorically depicted as a garment that clothes the figure" (172). Christians today will be most familiar with the *melammu* head-covering, at least in its late classical form: it is the aura or nimbus which surrounds the head of the emperor in artistic representations, on which see A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 98, cited in Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 352. Examples from the ancient world are not hard to find. For example, initiations into the mysteries also often involved some sort of investiture. Noting that the change of clothing in such initiations could symbolize "the assimilation of the power of the deity represented by the new garb," Wayne A. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *HR* 13 (1974): 184, cites as an example "Apuleius's account of the vesting of Lucius at the conclusion of his initiation into the mysteries of Isis, so that he was 'adorned like the sun' (*Metam.* 11.24)."

[33] On Moses as the mediator of God's glory, see especially Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995), 211-25. The way in which the divine radiance or glory could be transferred from human to human bears further exploration as well. See Haran, "Shining," 165, who points out the way in which the radiance is transferred from Moses to Joshua in Num 27:20. One might also point to 2 Kgs 2:15, in which the spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha, or 2 Cor 3, in which Christians enjoy the reflected glory of Christ in their interactions with each other; on this last, see N. T. Wright, "Reflected Glory: 2 Corinthians 3:18," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 139-50. Rom 8 suggests the way in which the glory of believers will be conveyed to the rest of creation. Finally, it is best to understand the communicable glory of Christ to his people as his eschatological human glory rather than his divine glory per se. Believers are called to share in the glory of this second Adam who fulfills the function originally assigned to the first Adam.

It is important to note the way in which Gideon's initial victory leads to divine investiture, a judicial empowerment for final victory. Unfortunately, unlike Gideon, Adam and Eve failed the first test and thus failed to receive the kind of divine investiture that would have been theirs otherwise.

This brings us then to the NT—specifically Pauline—witness to the importance of investiture. This evidence is particularly important, since it represents the fulfillment of God's creation purposes in the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. What Adam failed to win by his obedience, Jesus secures by his own. The destiny of believers in Christ is the surest indication of what God intended for his people in Adam, apart from the distortions of disobedience.[34]

The first passage is in 1 Cor 15, only a few lines away from an extended discussion of the way in which Christ fulfills all that began in Adam. Paul's description of the transformation that Christians undergo at the parousia is striking. The reception of the resurrection body is described as a clothing of the perishable (the old body) with the imperishable (the glorified resurrection body; vv. 53-54). Furthermore, when Paul says, twice, that "we will all be changed" (πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα; vv. 51-52), the word "change" (ἀλλάσσω) can refer to the changing of clothes in Greek just as it can in English.[35] Indeed, a few verses earlier Paul has described the transition from the first Adam's "living psyche" (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν) to the second Adam's "life-giving Spirit" (πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν) in investiture language: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (v. 49).[36]

The second passage is in 2 Cor 5, at which point Paul is again discussing the transformation which Christians undergo at the return of Christ. The meaning of this passage is hotly disputed. In an influential essay, E. Earle Ellis argued that the investiture in view is with the "righteous Body of Christ" while the nakedness in the passage represents the guilt and shame of divine judgment.[37]

[34] Note here the way in which Christ is seen—in his glorified state!—to assume the position humans were intended to occupy as a result of their creation in God's image. NT writers indicate this most frequently by applying the language of Ps 8 to the glorified Christ (Heb 2:6-10; 1 Cor 15:25-27; Phil 3:21; Eph 1:22).

[35] BDAG: "Of changing clothes (Appian, Bell. Civ. 5, 122 §504 τὴν ἐσθῆτα ἤλλαξεν; Gen 35:2; 2 Sam 12:20); Ox 840, 19 (ASyn. 150, 113)."

[36] καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου: For the use of φορέω to refer to the wearing of clothes, see BDAG: "to carry or bear habitually or for a considerable length of time, bear (in contrast to φέρω) constantly/regularly, hence wear clothing." This is clear evidence that Paul understood the body itself, both in its prelapsarian and eschatological states, to be an investiture—and should help to determine our interpretive approach to 2 Cor 5. It should be noted that viewing the prelapsarian body as an investiture (with Paul) is not the same as understanding Adam and Eve to have been clothed with God's glory before the fall. From a biblical theological perspective it seems that Adam and Eve's failure to be invested with the eschatological glory of God (of which they were originally naked) led ultimately to the even greater nakedness of complete disembodiment at death. Embodied glorification (in a new heavens and earth) is then, as the proper answer to the fall, the royal dimension of the Christian hope (corresponding to the even more fundamental priestly dimension).

[37] E. Earle Ellis, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963; repr., Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 45: "The opposite of being clothed upon by the house from heaven, i.e., the righteous Body of Christ, is not to be disembodied but to stand in the judgment ἐν Ἀδάμ, i.e., in the Body that is naked in guilt and shame."

However, as others have noted,[38] it seems better—in the light of Paul's usage of investiture imagery in 1 Cor 15—to understand the investiture as a reference to the resurrection body and the nakedness as a reference to the disembodied interim state.[39] Ultimately Paul affirms that he would "rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8), if it comes to that. For Paul, though, the ideal condition is to be in God's presence, fully clothed in the royal garments God always intended his priestly kings to wear. This is not so much "the restoration of Adam's glory," as one otherwise very helpful interpretation would have it.[40] It is the final attainment by Christ of God's original eschatological goal for human beings in creation.[41]

We mention these passages in the Old and New Testaments because they indicate that the biblical ideal—throughout the history of Israel and, indeed, through the fulfillment of all God's creation purposes in Christ at his second coming—is for humans to be *clothed*, not naked. Indeed, rulership is accompanied and signified by the proper sort of clothing in the Bible. All this suggests that the reason for mentioning Adam and Eve's nakedness at the end of Gen 2 is to arouse in the reader an expectation of royal investiture in keeping with man's Gen 1 status as the ruling "image of God" on earth.[42]

[38] See, e.g., F. J. Matera, "Apostolic Suffering and Resurrection Faith," in *Resurrection in the New Testament* (ed. R. Bieringer, V. Koperski, and B. Lataire; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 400-404; N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 364-69; W. L. Craig, "Paul's Dilemma in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10: A 'Catch-22'?," *NTS* 34 (1988): 145-47; John Gillman, "A Thematic Comparison: 1 Cor 15:50-57 and 2 Cor 5:1-5," *JBL* 107 (1988): 451-54; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 159-63; Joseph Osei-Bonsu, "Does 2 Cor 5:1-10 Teach the Reception of the Resurrection Body at the Moment of Death?," *JSNT* 28 (1986): 89-95; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 59-71.

[39] Note the way in which "the Semitic abhorrence for, and the Greek religious ideal of, nakedness" (Brock, "Clothing Metaphors," 22) comes into play here. In good Semitic fashion Paul rejects what Brock refers to as the Greek "ideal of *gymnotēs*," in which the disembodied nakedness of the soul was regarded as religiously and aesthetically desirable. Clothing or investiture is the ideal instead.

[40] C. Marvin Pate, *Adam Christology as the Exegetical and Theological Substructure of 2 Corinthians 4:7–5:21* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991); cf. Jung Hoon Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004).

[41] In this way, then, Paul would depart from the typical Jewish interpretation in which Adam and Eve lose their prelapsarian glory. Nevertheless, Paul was quite capable of an insistence on a redemptive-historical (diachronic) approach where his contemporaries' interpretation was almost entirely synchronic and harmonizing. One thinks, for example, of Paul's interpretation of justification by faith, where (as others have noted) it is important for him in Rom 4 that Gen 15 comes before Gen 17 and 21. In the case at hand, it was important for Paul that the natural body preceded the glorified body, as his discussion in 1 Cor 15 makes clear.

[42] Ancient readers made this connection between "image" and "clothing" much more readily than modern readers do. The Gnostic *Acts of Thomas* (lines 76-99) provides an example, as Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 187, notes: "Restoration of the Image could very readily be represented therefore by a change of clothing, most dramatically perhaps in the well-known scene in the Hymn of the Pearl, where the prince sees in the 'splendid robe' that comes to meet him the 'reflection' of his true self and at the same time 'the *eikōn* of the king of kings.'"

If this is the case, then Gen 3 is a sad caricature of what Adam and Eve might have expected had they been content to let God exalt them in his own time and in his own way.[43] Intent upon grasping the rulership which the tree of wisdom promised, Adam and Eve do indeed have their eyes opened and are indeed clothed in garments. What a poor image of kingship they are, though! Meant to be clothed in the glory and righteousness of God himself, Adam and Eve can only clothe themselves in vegetation.[44] Meant to resemble God, they resemble instead a tree or a bush. Having idolized themselves, they now resemble the wood from which such idols are carved.

Adam and Eve's self-investiture is not the last word, however. Though they have seized the emblems of royalty and exalted themselves, God now insists upon officiating at such a ceremony himself. At the end of ch. 3, therefore, God makes garments of animal skin for Adam and Eve and clothes them (Gen 3:21). The particular Hebrew words used in this passage—for "garments" (כתנות) and "to clothe" (לבש)—are most often found in contexts in which a subordinate is being honored in some way by his superior. The main emphasis of the passage, then, is not on God's response to Adam and Eve's physical needs; rather, it is on the new status which God confers on Adam and Eve by his act of investiture, despite their sin.[45]

The act is both gracious and poignant. It is gracious because God insists on clothing them himself, reclaiming his prerogative as their overlord and promoting them, as it were, from the level of plant life (fig leaves) to animal life (garments of skin). Though he might have sent them naked and destitute from

[43] An analogy to the kingship envisaged in Gen 1–3 may be found in the history of Israel, in which human kingship and viceregency were God's intention from the beginning. However, Israel failed to wait upon God to inaugurate that kingship in his time and in his way; instead, Israel demanded kingship in a way which denied God's own kingship (1 Sam 8), thus representing a betrayal (rather than a fulfillment) of God's plan for his people. Jordan, "Merit Versus Maturity," 169, mentions also the examples of David and Jesus, who, unlike Adam (and Israel), were willing to wait for their kingship: "We can contrast David, who refused steadfastly to seize the kingdom from Saul, and who repented when he cut off a corner of Saul's kingly robe. We can contrast Jesus, who refused any crown until the Father bestowed it upon Him at His ascension."

[44] It is important to grasp the symbolic nature of the eschatological investiture imagery here. It is pointless to ask what sort of clothes one can expect to have in the new creation apart from one's existence in a glorified body. Ancient interpreters recognized this, understanding Adam and Eve's clothing as the righteousness and glory of God (even if, unfortunately, they were also understood to be clothed in this manner before the fall). C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 107, perhaps imagines it best in his description of the glorified Sarah Smith of Golders Green: "I cannot now remember whether she was naked or clothed. If she were naked, then it must have been the almost visible penumbra of her courtesy and joy which produces in my memory the illusion of a great and shining train that followed her across the happy grass. If she were clothed, then the illusion of nakedness is doubtless due to the clarity with which her inmost spirit shone through the clothes. For clothes in that country are not a disguise: the spiritual body lives along each thread and turns them into living organs. A robe or a crown is there as much one of the wearer's features as a lip or an eye."

[45] As Robert A. Oden, Jr., "Grace or Status? Yahweh's Clothing of the First Humans," in *The Bible without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 101, concludes after a discussion of these words in this context: "In the Hebrew Bible, then, both the verb for the act of clothing and the garment mentioned in Gen 3:21 are words used in significant contexts. These contexts are those of status marking. The garment and the act of investiture are symbolic indications of the status both of the one presenting the clothing and of the one receiving it."

the garden, he chooses instead to grant them some token of their proper inheritance.[46] Nevertheless, his act is also deeply poignant, because the investiture is so much less than the royal and glorious event to which their obedience would have led.

Here a deeply ironic pun may come into play. The Hebrew word for *animal skins* (עור) is similar in sound to the Hebrew word for *light* (אור). Indeed, as several scholars have noted, the Targumic reading "garments of light" in Gen 3:21 may have been encouraged by the similarity in the pronunciation of these two words, perhaps even resulting in an alternative manuscript reading.[47] In any case, the Hebrew spoken word for animal skins may evoke, by way of a pun, the alternative image of light, such as that which God called into being on the first day of creation (Gen 1:3-5). If so, the contrast in meaning is tragic. Meant to be clothed in garments of *light* (אור), Adam and Eve are clothed instead in garments of *animal skin* (עור). Like Adam and Eve themselves, the spoken word for their garments (pronounced something like *ōr*) is stripped of its potential glory and invested with a very different—and much diminished—meaning.

By God's grace, however, he dispenses with Adam and Eve's inadequate fig leaves and clothes them with garments of *ōr*. It is a gracious act of investiture despite their sin as well as a troubling reminder of how short they have fallen of the glory of God. Though much diminished, the spoken word for their garments is a sound still signifying something and pointing beyond itself to that other more glorious investiture. Even if Adam and Eve are at the moment mere

[46] Malul, *Mesopotamian Legal Symbolism*, 122-38, argues that "the purport of the ceremony of stripping the mother naked by her children was to legally deprive her of everything, even her personal *qannu*(*m*). . . . [T]he focus of the legal mechanism of the symbolic act of nakedness was the forfeiture of property involved in such expulsion." If one may draw a parallel to Adam and Eve's situation, it is remarkable that God does not drive Adam and Eve from the Garden naked. He strips them of their self-investiture only to re-invest them with the continued hope of inheritance. The larger significance of this re-investiture may be illustrated from a more recent historical example. It is as if Napoleon, who eschewed the recognition of any higher authority at his coronation and crowned *himself* Emperor of the French in 1804, were nevertheless at the very moment of his final defeat and imminent exile in 1815 to be presented with a laurel wreath and promise of return. It is such grace in the midst of punishment that Adam and Eve experienced.

[47] See Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 187 n. 95: "In Hebrew sources a pun is involved: the *kot*^{e}*nôt* ʿ*ôr* take the place of *kot*^{e}*nôt* ʾ*ôr* (see *Gen. Rab.* 20:12 and cf. Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* [New York: Schocken Books, 1965], 175). The identification of the 'garments of skin' with the body is known already to Philo (*QG* 1.53)." Brock, "Clothing Metaphors," 14, notes that "although the Septuagint and Peshitta have literal translations here [in Gen 3:21], the Targum tradition (both Babylonian and Palestinian) provides *lbū* ʾ*sīn d-īqār,* 'garments of glory,' while Midrash *Gen. Rab.* 20:12 tells how Rabbi Meir was reputed to have had a manuscript in which, instead of ʿ*wr,* 'skin,' there stood the reading ʾ*wr,* 'light.'" Stephen N. Lambden, "From Fig Leaves to Fingernails: Some Notes on the Garments of Adam and Eve in the Hebrew Bible and Select Early Postbiblical Jewish Writings," in *A Walk in the Garden*, 87, suggests that the "reading 'garments of light' may . . . have been encouraged by the general weak pronunciation of Hebrew gutturals around the first century C.E. (pronouncing *aleph* for the ʿ*ayin* in the Hebrew for 'skins' as if the text read 'light')." In these cases, Gen 3:21 is taken as a backward reference to that with which Adam and Eve were clothed *before* the fall. It is better to take Gen 3:21 as a straightforward account of Adam and Eve's investiture in animal skins after the fall, even as the clever Hebrew pun can be taken as a pointer (at least by the first century) to what might have been.

walking shadows of what they might have been, there remains some hope of an illumination and investiture to come. It will come, however, in God's hidden wisdom, by means of a very different tree.