THEOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN *IMAGO DEI* AND THE TABERNACLE ASSOCIATED WITH AND REFLECTED IN JESUS CHRIST

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Philosophy

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BIOSKETCH

Gysbert responded to God's call during his conscripted service in the South African Air Force that completely changed the direction of his life. He completed his ministerial training in 1997 and worked for the Seventh-day Adventist Church for nearly twenty-five years in various roles and capacities. Whether pastoring smaller country or larger city churches, serving as youth director, heading up a media and communications department, planting new churches or engaging in school chaplaincy, he always approached ministry with an adventurous, entrepreneurial spirit and can-do attitude. His involvement since 2012 with The Crucible Project, an international men and women's organisation, taught him how to harness vulnerability and brokenness as powerful connecting tools in building compassion and unity in a world where mental, spiritual, and emotional growth and wellbeing are increasingly challenging.

In 2020 he was endorsed and commissioned as a Chaplain to the Australian Defence Force and served in this role since 2022 in a full-time capacity. Being a military chaplain placed him in a ministry of presence among serving members to live out the Great Commission in relevant and practical ways. He hopes that his exposure to spiritual and moral injury and repair will in due time open new ways of ministry and support to the church.

Gysbert's motivation for life stems from his adventurous nature and his love to build and facilitate connections in meaningful relationships. His personal mission in life is to extend God's grace to others in a growing and meaningful relational journey with Jesus. He sees the presence of God abiding with all humankind as one of the amazing bridges that can assist the church in its mission to connect humanity with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

More than ever, he values the sacrifice of so many, who, in the likeness of Jesus Christ who gave his life as a gift to ultimately free humankind from sin and death, have laid down their lives for the freedom of others—lest we forget!

He hopes this research will contribute toward a more inclusive theology to support the church it its mission to connect our communities in a meaningful and saving relationship with God.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the theological connections between the concepts of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as representational of God in the way they are associated with and reflected in Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God who came to tabernacle with humankind. The indwelling presence of the divine within the constraints of human temporality and sin underpins God's connection with the *Imago Dei* via the tabernacle and Jesus Christ, and in turn, humankind's connection with God. However, the problem is that historical interpretations have influenced scholars to question a literal reading of the biblical narrative. This has resulted in a plethora of historical views that have depersonalised the *Imago Dei* and allegorised the tabernacle instead of validating the biblical position that God's presence can and indeed does, dwell with fallen humankind.

Despite scholars pondering over the *Imago Dei* for more than two centuries, extrapolating a clear anthropology from a handful of direct biblical references remains elusive. It appears that a predisposition to long-held Greek philosophical first principles placing divine transcendence in juxtaposition with divine immanence, the lack of a broader understanding of being human, the absence of a more inclusive approach of existing views, and the allegorizing of the biblical record have obscured the biblical veracity of God's presence with humankind.

A plain reading of biblical record actually validates the view of the *Imago Dei* as representational of God, particularly in its association with Jesus Christ, and provides a broader and more inclusive systematic approach that can be corroborated by other representations like the tabernacle. Backed by biblical and scholarly support, this thesis then applies and compares the same representational approach to the tabernacle in its shared association with Jesus Christ. As a result, this thesis demonstrates how applying a representational methodology to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle corroborates their

theological connections in Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God who came to tabernacle with humankind. Further, it shows that such an approach will provide a broader scope toward a biblically faithful anthropology as well as a wider lens to a view of God that is consistent with the biblical narrative.

This thesis also uncovers several characteristics that the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and Jesus Christ share as being representational of God. As images and copies of heavenly originals, the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle serve as representations of God's priestly intent to tabernacle with and indwell humankind thereby making God's holiness present and accessible to fallen humankind. They are also representational of God's glory-Spirit at work in humankind to reconcile humankind to himself and ultimately restore them to their designated authority of servant-rulership.

Thus, instead of depersonalizing the *Imago Dei* or allegorizing the tabernacle, viewing them as representational of God, they validate the biblical position that God's presence, can and does dwell with fallen humankind, which, in turn, is vividly demonstrated by Jesus Christ, the image of God who came to tabernacle with us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply thankful to my parents and siblings for instilling a simple faith in Scripture and God's presence in our broken world and to my family who have been by my side on our journey of faith.

Great mentors and friends, too many to mention, have loved and supported me along the way. It is with honour that I acknowledge Professor John Webster (who inspired me at Helderberg College during my initial ministerial training), Judson Poling, Bob Locascio, Athol Prior and Shannon Rose (men from The Crucible Project in my development and journey as a man, father, and husband). Dr. Wendy Jackson and Professor Ray Roennfeldt, thank you so much for your guidance and patient mentoring whilst preparing and writing this thesis. I want to also acknowledge the financial support from the Western Australian Conference, the Australian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists in Australia as well as Avondale University. Without your support, none of this would be here today.

To my children, Jesse, Jaime, Jundro, Jeanae, Janko, and my loving wife, Wendy, who have challenged and lovingly accepted my learnings and failings. You have demonstrated the beauty and blessing of "family" and "home" as a place of belonging with God's presence in our broken world. I love you, thank you so much!

Lastly, my give my devotion and honour to Jesus who embodied, and demonstrated, the reality of God with us. In faith, hope, and love, I will continue to be still in his presence, and know that he is Immanuel.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The *Imago Dei* in Gen 1:26-28 is fundamental to biblical anthropology and sets humankind apart from the rest of creation in a special relationship with God. Despite many varying interpretations, both Scripture and a vast amount of literature over two centuries on this topic provide no clear consensus on its nature or why it exists. Nevertheless, the incarnation and revelation of Jesus Christ as the image of God help clarify the handful of direct Old Testament references to the *Imago Dei*.[1] The tabernacle on the other hand is central to the understanding of God's reconciling presence in Scripture, particularly within the context of the cultic sacrificial system in the Old Testament where it facilitates reconciliation and a restored relationship with God. However, Christ does not typify the tabernacle. Christ is the reality. The tabernacle is a type. For the purpose of this thesis, the focus of the biblical narrative is therefore on the reality of God's reconciling presence through Christ, and as such, fundamentally links the restoration of the *Imago Dei* with the ministry of the tabernacle. This thesis thus investigates the connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as representations of God, particularly because they are independently connected with Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God who came to tabernacle with humankind.[2]

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[1] Heb 1:3, 2 Cor 4:4, Col 1:15.

[2] Col 1:15, John 1:14.

To unpack the theological connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle with Jesus, this thesis will employ a comparative methodology. Consequently, the first section in Chapter One will acknowledge and summarise the many variant historical views of the *Imago Dei* and, for the sake of brevity, review them utilising Erickson's three major classifications,[3] though some scholars like Towner identify ten categories.[4] Both single- and combined-view interpretations of the *Imago Dei* will be considered, and special emphasis will be placed on the representational view of the *Imago Dei* and its connections to Jesus Christ.

The second section in Chapter One will review the historical views on the tabernacle and unpack the four Hebrew words usually related to the tabernacle.[5] It

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[3] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2013), 460-76. The first category Erickson identifies is the substantive view that emphasises a physical or bodily aspect of the image because of the concrete interpretation of צלם (*tselem*) as *form*, or to *look like* God. The second category he identifies is the relational view that emphasises a universal, dynamic relationship experience as a response to God. The third category he identifies is the Functional view that focuses on the human function derived from the biblical context itself to rule and have dominion.

[4] W Sibley Towner, "Clones of God Genesis 1: 26–28 and the Image of God in the Hebrew Bible," *Interpretation* 59, no. 4 (2005): 343. Towner identifies ten categories of interpreting the *Imago Dei*: 1) it is only fully seen in Jesus; 2) image and likeness respectively corresponds with divine qualities and human qualities; 3) it is basically extra spiritual gifts from God like intelligence, conscientiousness, and memory; 4) it consists of moral capacity and free will to make good choices; 5) it includes core human emotions like love 6) it manifests in appreciation for transcendence and beauty; 7) it can be seen in humankind's physical form; 8) it is demonstrated through service on behalf of God; 9) it is reflected in a reciprocal relationship with God; and 10) it is displayed via the completeness of being created male and female.

[5] *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. All Hebrew and Greek words used in this thesis are taken from NAS dictionary. The four words are *mishkan*, *miqdash* or *ko'-desh*, *ohel mo'ed* and *hekal* translated respectively as "a dwelling-place" in

will focus on the establishment of the tabernacle in Exod 25:8 as one of the most significant representational establishments of God's covenantal presence in the Old Testament. This chapter will also briefly introduce the understanding of divine temporality which is an attempt to explain how God's holy transcendence can dwell or tabernacle in immanence in relationship with humankind within the limitations of human space and time. As with the *Imago Dei*, the incarnation and revelation of Jesus Christ as God tabernacling among us helps to clarify the representational meaning and connections of the tabernacle.[6]

Chapter Two will consequently investigate and propose a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* in the way it is substantiated by the literature and Scripture. This chapter will then present several characteristics of the *Imago Dei* as representational of God that will be utilised in chapter five to compare it with the findings on the tabernacle.

Similarly, Chapter Three will investigate and propose a representational approach to the tabernacle in the way it is substantiated by the literature and Scripture. It too will present several characteristics of the tabernacle as representational of God to be compared with the findings on the *Imago Dei* in the following chapter.

Chapter Four will demonstrate how the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as representational of God's presence are connected and reflected in Jesus Christ and

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Exod 25:9, "a holy place" in Exod 25:8 and "tent of meeting" in Exod 40:2 and "palace" or "temple" in Ps 11:4, which will be dealt with in in full under the tabernacle in Chapter One.

[6] John 1:14, Heb 8:1-6, John 2:21, Cor 6:9.

will present eight shared representational connections between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and Jesus Christ that this research has uncovered.

Finally, Chapter Five will offer a concluding summary, implications for the church and suggestions for further academic exploration.

Thesis Question

In the light of the biblical references to Jesus Christ who tabernacled among us (John 1:14) as the image of God (Col 1:15), this research will specifically ask: Can theological connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle be found as representations of God, and in what ways they are associated with and reflected in Jesus Christ?

Thesis Statement

There are representational connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle which are highlighted by their shared association with Jesus Christ.

Justification

While clear biblical evidence exists on Christ as both the image of God and as God tabernacling with his people, theological and particularly, representational connections between these concepts of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle have not yet been investigated.

This research will attempt to fill this gap in the literature and contribute to a wider understanding of God's representational presence via *Imago Dei* and his tabernacling presence with fallen humankind. It will support the biblical narrative

that a holy God can indeed be present within the temporal constraints of humankind's fallen world. It is my hope that this thesis will assist the church in recognising the fundamental centrality of God's transcending, indwelling presence with humankind to inform both our ecclesiology and missiology.

Scope and Delimitations

Due to the availability of extensive primary and secondary sources on both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle, this dissertation will not provide a theology of either anthropology or the sanctuary. Instead, by adopting a representational approach, it will utilise a systematic methodology to uncover and compare the theological connections between the concepts of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as representational of God, particularly in the way they are associated with and reflected in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Imago Dei

Introduction

Interpretation of the *Imago Dei* has proven to be quite problematic over the last two centuries, mainly because there are only five direct references to it in the entire Bible.[7] Consequently, our understanding of the nature and meaning of the *Imago Dei* is thus heavily reliant on related biblical texts and human interpretation, which in turn is influenced by secondary interpretations and the worldview or culture of its interpreter.[8] As a result, a review of the extensive literature on this concept reveals that a consensus amongst scholars on a clear and unified interpretation of the *Imago Dei* remains elusive.[9] Traces of its theological and anthropological importance can be seen in the historical controversies surrounding the differing views on the *Imago Dei* which has often led to deep divisions that at times, have been referred to

[7] Three in the Old Testament (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6) and two in the New Testament (1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9).

[8] David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (Cleveland: Collins, 1973). http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000271623&scope=site. Cairns highlights the corresponding link between the focus on rationality in society and theological thinking during the Enlightenment.

[9] See footnotes 1 and 2.

as a “slippery slope”[10] or “the great cleavage in Christian thought”, particularly when it came to the Reformation.[11]

Interpreting Gen 1:26-28 has proven challenging for scholars without either consulting other biblical passages, approaching it from the New Testament[12] or filling the gaps with extra-biblical and philosophical ideas.[13] This inevitably led to a wide diversity of interpretations which Erickson concludes can only be viewed as “reasonable inferences” taken from unclear Scriptural references.[14]

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[10] Agneta Sutton, "Revisiting Reproductive Technology's Slippery Slope in the Light of the Concepts of *Imago Dei*, Co-Creation, and Stewardship," *Ethics & Medicine* 18, no. 3 (2002): 145, http://search.proquest.com/docview/220161491?accountid=26359. The debate around the ethics of modern reproductive technologies is for many a controversial issue that stems from convictions on the *Imago Dei*.

[11] Cairns, 127-8. Cairns points out that differing and opposing ideas on the pre-fall and post-fall views of human nature have left deep divisions in the history of Christianity. He demonstrates that Luther’s view on the nature of humankind was naturally bent toward evil and that it placed him in direct conflict with the generally accepted Augustinian two-story view of nature and super-nature that argued for the *Imago Dei* as a humanly inherent good power.

[12] 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15 and 3:10 all support the view of Christ being the expressed image of God.

[13] J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 9. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001480961&scope=site. Middleton faults G.C. Berkhouwer, for example, assuming a likeness between humans and God without clarification of what exactly the likeness consists of or implies. Another example, though the logic of “like father, like son” between Adam and Seth makes sense in the light of Gen 5:3, superimposing that on “like Father, like son” in Gen 1:26 between God and Adam does not make for good hermeneutics.

[14] Erickson, 469.

Historical Views

The literature on the *Imago Dei* wrestles with the problem of identifying something uniquely "human" that would either resemble a divine attribute of God (like a character trait, a function, or something physical), or differs with the rest of creation.[15] Consequently, single- and multi-faceted solutions, concepts or combinations of ideas on the *Imago Dei* have been offered since the first century in an attempt to identify and categorise aspects of human nature that correspond with the perceived nature of God. For example, Moltmann[16] identifies four, Erickson three and Towner ten categories of possible interpretations.[17] Categorizations like these have led scholars like Lidums to postulate that nearly all interpretations of the *Imago Dei* are nothing but a reconfiguration of some basic views and categories.[18] Each

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[15] Ryan S Peterson, *The Imago Dei as Human Identity: A Theological Interpretation*, vol. 14 (Penn State Press, 2016), 1-2. Simplifying historical strategic approaches to either a human-God or human-animal comparison.

[16] Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 220. Moltmann argues, "The answers which theological tradition has given to this question may be briefly summed up as follows. 1. According to the analogy of substance, the soul (which is the human being's reasonable and volitional nature) is the seat of human likeness to God, for it is immortal and similar to the divine nature. 2. According to the analogy of form, it is in the human being's upright walk and his upward glance. 3. According to the analogy of proportionality, the likeness is to be found in man's lordship over the earth, since this corresponds to God's general lordship over the world. 4. According to the analogy of relation, finally, it consists in the community of man and wife, which corresponds to the fellowship of God within the Trinity."

[17] See Footnote 3 and 4.

[18] Gatis Lidums, "The Doctrine of Imago Dei and Its Relation to Self-Transcendence in the Context of Practical Theology" (DMin diss, University of Helsinki, 2004), 7. "Virtually every systematic theology text that offers insights into *Imago Dei* scholarship features some kind of a list of the views on the image of God theology that have been formulated over the last two millennia."

category in some way wrestles with the question whether or not, and to what degree, the *Imago Dei* is conferred universally on humankind, and in what ways it has been affected by the Fall. Generally, all historical contributions can be simplified into either the substantive, relational or functional view. The next three sections will briefly explain these views.

Substantive View

This understanding of the *Imago Dei* seeks to ascribe resident mental or physical godlike attributes (reason, morality, personality, or freedom) to humankind that distinguish them from other created forms of life including humankind's distinctive upright form and communicative ability as symbolic of their superiority over the rest of creation.[19] Scholars like Cairns have argued that humankind's shared physicality with Christ inevitably points to the inclusion of the human body as part of the *Imago Dei* created by the Logos Incarnate after God's image and likeness.[20]

Church Fathers like Origin and Irenaeus promulgated this view of the *Imago Dei*, supported by medieval scholastics and Catholic theologians as well as Reformers like Luther and Calvin who all—despite varying and often contradicting theologies—held to the idea that the image of God must be connected to a substantive human attribute.[21] The literature thus demonstrates how the substantive

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[19] David J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 58, http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/index.php.

[20] Cairns, 86.

[21] Erickson, 463.

view of Irenaeus has influenced Christian thought since the 2nd century and still is, the most widely accepted view of the *Imago Dei*.[22]

The impact of the Fall notably fuelled further contentions amongst scholars who attempted to distinguish between image and likeness. For example, Irenaeus defined *image* as original righteousness that remains intact despite sin, and likeness as a super-added endowment given by God after sin toward holiness, while on the other hand, the Reformers held to a total corruption of man's righteousness after the Fall.[23] Further divisions within this category reveal arguments in favour of a universal, supernaturally-bestowed image in the Old Testament but limited to believers only in the New Testament.[24] Despite its historical dominance as the preferred interpretation, Cortez aptly points out that the most significant problem with the substantive view is its "lack of exegetical support".[25] That said, and despite all the variant views, it is still credited with being the best and most satisfactory theological and satisfactorily explanation of the *Imago Dei* with the majority of scholars.[26]

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[22] Cairns, 116.

[23] Cairns, 142-3. It is these kinds of contradictions that have made the historical interpretation both hard and confusing.

[24] Cairns, 126. His criticism of a universally conferred image is the possible negation of salvation in Christ alone.

[25] Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 19. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001892558&scope=site.

[26] Christopher Lilley, "Essentially Human: A Defense of the Substantive *Imago Dei*", 3, https://www.academia.edu/3591810/Essentially_Human_A_Defense_of_the_Substantive_Imago_Dei. Despite claiming that there is no clear or implicit biblical link between the *Imago Dei* and any human

Relational View

This category of interpretation essentially describes the *Imago Dei* as experiencing a relationship. It focuses and expands on relational dynamics found within God, between God and humankind, within humankind, and between humankind and nature. [27] Both Brunner and Barth, credited as the founders of New Orthodoxy and originators of the relational view, approached the *Imago Dei* from a Christological-ontological perspective as something that the human dynamically experiences in relationship.[28]

Brunner, in contrast to and in criticism of the substantive deification of reason, which he postulates led to the destruction of theology during the Enlightenment,[29] based his understanding of the *Imago Dei* on humankind's

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attribute he still defends the Aristotelian-Thomistic version of the substantive view as the most acceptable historical interpretation.

[27] Lidums, 106.

[28] Erickson, 465. In reaction to existentialism with its focus on structure and function, the essence of being human is rather the creation of an experience (good or bad) and best understood in the person of Jesus.

[29] Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), 85; 93. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001262613&scope=site. If reason is to be considered as the *Imago Dei* and retained after sin, even if only as a relic as Luther argued, then it stands to reason that theology and revelation would rank second to it and thus renders the Bible at most a stepping stone to possible self-deification.

existential relationship to Christ as Creator and to creation as a created being.[30] He argues that "man's relation to God is not to be understood from the point of view of reason, but reason is to be understood from the point of view of man's relation to God."[31] He concludes that it is within this context only that the *Imago Dei* can be properly viewed as a relationship standing "over-against" God in a responsive existence with the living Word.[32]

On the other hand, Barth's rejection of the long-held structural or substantive view is clear when he argues that the *Imago Dei* "is not a quality of man. Hence there is no point in asking which of man's peculiar attributes and attitudes it consists of. It does not consist in anything that man is or does."[33] Instead, he sees the *Imago Dei* as a partnership within the context of an "I-Thou" dynamic relationship when he concludes,

> He willed the existence of a being which in all its non-deity and therefore its differentiation can be a real partner; which is capable of action and responsibility in relation to Him; to which His own divine form of life is not alien; which in a creaturely repetition, as a copy and imitation, can be a bearer of this form of life.[34]

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[30] Brunner, 83. He argues that man can only properly know himself in knowing Christ who is objectively removed from mankind's limitations, which as a result, places him first and foremost in relationship with Christ and His Word.

[31] Brunner, 102-3. In this context, he describes reason only as a serving attribute in man's relational responsibility to answer God's call.

[32] Brunner, 102. He too rejected reason when he wrote, "he is not to be understood in himself, nor from that reason which is in him. He can be understood only in the light of that which stands 'over against' him, the Word of his Creator".

[33] Karl Barth, G. W. Bromiley, and Thomas F. Torrance, *Church Dogmatics*, *Doctrine of the Word of God* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 184.

[34] Barth, Bromiley, and Torrance, 184-5. He sees humankind (male and female) as the *Imago Dei* reflection of God's own being ("Let us").

Barth extends this partnership-image to include humankind's counter-partnership between male and female as the only distinguishable difference between humans and the rest of the created order. Though he argues that the singularity of man reflects the oneness of God, it is the duality of humankind's male-female relationship that reflects God's own plurality and is in this way "the special creature of God's special grace."[35] It is evident that Barth draws a comparison of the "over-against" and "I-Thou" reciprocal relationship between the Triunity of God, the male-female relational creation of humankind in Gen 1:27, as well as the dynamic, responsible Creator-creature relationship that exists between God and humankind.[36]

Along with Trinitarian theologians like Moltmann[37] and Grenz[38] who projected a relational view of the Trinity on the *Imago Dei*, modern theologians like Carnley propose that gender differentiation can be seen as anthropomorphic images

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[35] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, V 3 Pts 1-4: The Doctrine of Creation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 186. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000247932&scope=site.

[36] Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 49. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000103869&scope=site. Barth saw that reason and intellect could not be the *Imago Dei* and neither any kind of anthropological description of the being of man, its structure, disposition, or capacities but instead the confrontational relationship between man and woman.

[37] Isaiah G. Nengean, "The Imago Dei as the Imago Trinitatis: An Analysis of Jurgen Moltmann's Doctrine of the Image of God" (PhDdiss, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2009), 146, http://search.proquest.com/docview/305032275?accountid=26359. Nengean demonstrates that Moltmann's view of the *Imago Dei* is influenced by the relational reciprocation he sees in the Trinity.

[38] Stanley J. Grenz, "The Social God and the Relational Self: Toward a Theology of the *Imago Dei* in the Postmodern Context," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24, no. 1 (2002): 34, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001412967&site=ehost-live. Grenz sees the "relational self" reflected in the relation Triune God.

of God. Carnley argues that the relationship between God and humankind reveals an "interpersonal capacity to address another and to expect a similar response in return" and therefore indicative that humans are "partakers of the Divine nature" in a relationship experience that they can concretely participate in.[39]

Functional View

Scholars like Hoekema[40], Clines[41] and Pannenberg[42] interpret the *Imago Dei* primarily as a calling to exercise dominion granted to humankind in Gen 1:26-28 in

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[39] Peter F. Abp Carnley, "The Image of God and the Idea of a Person," *The Living Pulpit* 22, no. 1 (2013): 36-40, accessed October 20, 2017, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001981649&site=ehost-live. Carnley builds his argument from the debate on the doctrine of the Trinity: the Western idea based on Three Persons, One Substance that led to the heresy of modalism (one God acting in three different modes) and, the Eastern idea based on the Person of the Father that led to the heresy of "Tri-theism" (eternal relational equality). He argues that the former gave rise to the understanding of the term persona (playing a role) and the latter to individual (having a legal status) leading to the difference between a human person (in relation to others) and a human individual (separate from and unrelated to others). He concludes that the image relates to the capacity of an interpersonal give-and take relationship.

[40] Hoekema, 73. He concluded that the main focus of the *Imago Dei* is the endowment of gifts and qualities God has given humanity to function in relationship.

[41] Clines 56-7. By dividing the historical approaches of the *Imago Dei* in two distinct categories as either some faculty of the human person or a physical interpretation, he sets the groundwork to argue for the *Imago Dei* primarily as a functional implication of the physical man.

[42] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 203. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000037042&site=ehost-live. Pannenberg proposes that mankind's ruling position over other creatures is what constitutes his closeness to God and lines up with God's own ruling. He also suggests "likeness" is better interpreted in terms of mankind's rule over creation that is like that of the Creator.

order to fulfil a God-given mission.[43] According to this view and as the most direct biblical association to the *Imago Dei*, the centrality of humankind's task as a gift from God is descriptive of their ontological nature to have dominion. Verduin confirms humankind's appointment to dominion as the central point of the creation account when he postulates that "the idea of dominion-having stands out as the central feature." He concludes that "man is a creature meant for dominion-having and that as such he is in the image of his Maker—this is the burden of the creation account given in the book of Genesis, the Book of Origins."[44]

Though the Fall affected the *Imago Dei*, Hoekema argues that humankind's dominion nonetheless remains, because included in this God-given task is also the sanctifying work of God's Spirit that re-enables humankind to use their God-imaging gifts to rule the earth for God in God-glorifying ways. Hoekema concludes that "the progressive renewal of man in the image of God" will enable them to function properly in this threefold relationship again as a cultural mandate.[45] As such, he proposes a participatory element (a function) in the sanctifying or restoration process of the human nature through the Holy Spirit.[46] Worth noting is Summerscales's caution that though the functional view contends for a quest for meaning and purpose

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[43] The connection of humankind's dominion and subjection over creation is repeated twice in Gen 1:26-28, and also in Ps 8:6, 1 Cor 15:27-8 and Heb 2:7-8.

[44] Leonard Verduin, *Somewhat Less Than God: The Biblical View of Man* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 27. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000251067&scope=site.

[45] Hoekema, 14, 86. He sees the cultural mandate as a command from God to rule the earth for God.

[46] Hoekema. His reading of 2 Cor 3:18 in the present tense is indicative of a continuing work "from one degree of glory to another".

as a sanctifying, God-discovering experience and self-understanding, it can lead to an integration of deification.[47] Nonetheless, Clines supports the idea of the believer experiencing a sanctifying obedience in becoming like the image of Christ.[48]

Thus, the three main historical classifications of the *Imago Dei*, though clear, biblically referenced, and longstanding, are nonetheless conflict-ridden hypotheses. This is mainly due to limited biblical references and an unclear definition of what it exactly entails. That the *Imago Dei* consists of both God's image and likeness as already alluded to has only convoluted the concept even more as the next section will demonstrate.

Image and Likeness

For the sake of brevity, I will provide a concise summary of the discussion whether or not image and likeness actually refer to the same thing. Irenaeus, in his battle against Valentinian Gnosticism where he attempts to separate creature from Creator, was the first to distinguish between image (human reason, free will, speech and dominion that humankind retained) and likeness (a super spiritual endowment in a potential form that humankind lost). He argued that humankind's restored *Imago Dei* can only properly be understood in the light of the Incarnate Word since

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[47] Ian Summerscales, "Charles Raven on Transcendence, Immanence and Christ," *Modern Churchman* 27, no. 1 (1984): 26, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000928172&site=ehost-live.

[48] Clines 103. He writes, "In the Old Testament all men are the image of God; in the New, where Christ is the one true image, men are the image of God in so far as they are like Christ. The image is fully realized only through obedience to Christ; this is how man, the image of God, who is already man, already the image of God, can become fully man, fully the image of God".

humankind's image and likeness was formed after the Son who alone is the *image* and *likeness* of God.[49] This distinction held its ground for eighteen hundred years until Luther questioned its implications and contended that image and likeness both refer interchangeably to the *Imago Dei* which he interpreted as the original righteousness that humankind lost after the Fall.[50]

Consequently, the literature reveals a spectrum of interpretations that ranges from a dualistic approach,[51] differentiating between viewing image from a naturalistic perspective and likeness as a supernatural endowment conferred by God at a later stage to a unitary view,[52] which proposes that the words image and likeness be used synonymously as a form of Hebrew parallelism.[53] Attempts to explain the consequences of the Fall by differentiating between the concepts of image (צלם *tselem*) and likeness (דמות *demuth*) in Gen 1:26-27 have only added to the complexity of interpreting the *Imago Dei*. A further difficulty is added with the exclusion of

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[49] Albert B. Collver, "Who Is Man? Image and Likeness in Irenaeus.," Concordia Student Journal 22, no. 1 (1999): 27, accessed 4 October 2019, https://www.academia.edu/33020890/Who_Is_Man_Image_and_Likeness_in_Irenaeus. Valentinian dualism taught that spiritual men had divine substance in them, while those without would simply perish.

[50] Brunner, 508.

[51] Clines 90-1. Clines, for example, argues against the notion that the strong physical upright connotations to *image,* should be construed as an exact copy that necessitated the use of likeness as a softening and instead proposes that likeness amplifies and specifies the meaning of *image*.

[52] Phyllis A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation," *Harvard Theological Review* 74, no. 2 (1981): 135, http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayBackIssues?jid=HTR. Bird interprets "image" and "likeness" as synonyms of resembling God in a way that Adam is modelled on Him and of Him with a specific purpose or goal of dominion over other creatures.

[53] Erickson, 462.

either *tselem* or *demuth* in key biblical texts regarded as important parallel texts to Gen 1:26-27.[54]

Bray, for example, differentiates them this way: “The semantic range of the main terms, *tselem* and *d'muth* is now broadly agreed. The former refers primarily to a concrete image, a definite shape; the latter is more abstract like a resemblance, or a likeness.”[55] Despite what was lost or retained of the *Imago Dei* at the Fall, evidently, God’s image in humankind is not completely obliterated, thus still resembling, reflecting, or representational of God, even if Collver surmises that “man is less than God intended him to be.”[56] It appears that any consensus on the *Imago Dei*, including a clear definition of image and likeness, remain shrouded in mystery.

Combined-View Interpretations

Conflicting assumptions and conclusions within the three major historical views seem to have bottlenecked as “it appears that scholarship has reached an impasse over the problem of the image” which confirms why, after two centuries, it still remains a mystery.[57] In the absence of clear biblical evidence, the existence of

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[54] See Gen 5:1, 9:6, 1 Cor 11:7, James 3:9, Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18, Eph 4:23-4, Col 3:10 and Ps 8:3-8.

[55] Gerald L. Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (1991): 196, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000845830&scope=site.

[56] Collver 32.

[57] Clines 53-103. Clines writes, “different starting-points, all of which seem to be legitimate, lead to different conclusions. If one begins from philosophical evidence, the image is defined in physical terms. If we begin from the incorporeality of God, the image cannot include the body of man. If we begin with the Hebrew conception of man’s nature as a unity, we cannot separate, in such a

many varied interpretations, a lack of scholarly consensus, and a plethora of criticisms, the rich literature on the *Imago Dei* has rendered simplified, single-view interpretations problematic and enigmatic, presenting an opportunity for scholars to look at combinative alternatives that are quite common.

For example, Gunton faults both the substantive and relational view as elevating a part of being human in favour of or at the expense of others. Instead he argues for a combinative ontological approach that "is to be found in the human stewardship" of a person that is "constituted in particularity and freedom—to be given space to be—by others in community."[58] Wernow does caution that the elevation of any one view at the expense of others may leave the fullness of humankind wanting and asserts that human substance without the relational connection to both God and others would be incomplete as would be emphasising human relationships over actions.[59]Another combinative example to interpreting the *Imago Dei* can be seen in Cairns, who postulates that reason (substantive view) only

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fundamental sentence about man, the spiritual part of man from the physical. If we begin with "male and female" as a definitive explanation of the image, the image can only be understood in terms of personal relationships, and the image of God must be located in mankind (or married couples!) rather than the individual man."

[58] Colin E. Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the Imago Dei," in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Edinburgh: 1991), 59-61. He argues for a "particular kind of being – a person – and be called to realise a certain destiny."

[59] Jerome R. Wernow, "Saying the Unsaid: Voicing Quality-of-Life Criteria in an Evangelical Sanctity-of-Life Principle," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 39, no. 1 (1996): 118, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001246662&site=ehost-live. Wernow admits that corporeality is the most tangible material medium for the re-presentation of God in relation to others through his being and actions in the presence of God.

exists to serve humankind in their relationship (relational view) with God.[60] A final example of such combinative approaches can be deduced from Erickson's four elements to support his conclusion that the image of God must be viewed as substantive or structural.[61] However, elsewhere he argues that any functional or relational ability is an outflowing of being that,

> refers to something a human is rather than something a human has or does. By virtue of being human, one is in the image of God; being so is not dependent upon the presence of anything else. By contrast, the focus of the relational and functional views is actually on consequences or applications of the image rather than on the image itself.[62]

Consequently, he proposes that human personality [i.e., intelligence], will and emotions not only reflects the communicable attributes of God but constitutes the image of God, thus enabling humans to be in relationship with God and others while exercising dominion.[63]

As a result, scholars like McDonald have come to view the three historical categories rather as consequential evidence of the *Imago Dei* and not the *Imago Dei* itself. He therefore attempts to locate the core of humankind's identity and consequently introduces the concept of Sonship as an alternative approach.[64]

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[60] Cairns, 119. Cairns refers to reason as a universal gift or endowment which God then confronts by his Word.

[61] Erickson, 469. The image is universal; retained despite the fall; equally present in all humans; and results in relation and function.

[62] Erickson, 470.

[63] Erickson, 471. He thus intimately connects the three main historical views with each other.

[64] H. D. McDonald, The Christian View of Man (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981), 34. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000085752&scope=site. He wrote, "Man was created for sonship; such was his original status before God."

Peterson supports the notion that humankind's identity is bound to God's identity and character which in turn, demands a knowledge of God in order to properly know the *Imago Dei*.[65] Other scholars like Hall and Sands have also attempted to uncover human identity and subsequently propose Stewardship[66] or Vocation as possible alternative views of the *Imago Dei*.[67] However valuable in diversity, these combinative views have added to the complexity of interpreting the *Imago Dei*. Nevertheless, there is broad scholarly consensus that humankind's basic anthropology stems from the *Imago Dei* and is therefore not a peripheral matter of faith and theology, hence the focus on the *Imago Dei* again.

But how do scholars construct a biblically faithful anthropology if the *Imago Dei* remains unclear without extra biblical assumptions? The next section will briefly

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[65] Peterson, 1-2. Peterson explains, "The general strategy has been to look for some particular human attribute that matches analogously a divine attribute", and then lists seven scholarly models that correspond to God's identity, 1) human soul with God is spiritual, 2) human mind with God is rational, 3) human body with ancient Near Eastern concepts of physical God-forms, 4) human dominion with God ruling over everything, 5) human relations with the eternal-triunity of God, 6) human virtue with the goodness of God and, 7) human existence with God that is.

[66] Douglas John Hall, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 200-1. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000106710&scope=site. Hall argues for the appointment of humankind to "hold their dominion over all nature as stewards and trustees for God", thus "made participants" as "we are incorporated through grace and faith into the preservational dominion of God in the world."

[67] Paul Sands, "The *Imago Dei* as Vocation," Article, *Evangelical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2010), http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=47409506&site=ehost-live. Sands prioritises the ethical implications of being appointed by God as vice-regents with a God-given responsibility to ensure dignity, value and protect human life, resist ideologies of power, and care for our created world.

unpack some of the philosophical origins underlying the theological assumptions in interpreting the *Imago Dei*.

Philosophical Origins of Interpreting the *Imago Dei*

The dominant philosophical framework available to the Early Church Fathers essentially comprised of the Greek notion that temporality is time-bound while eternity equalled timelessness. These two ideas are so irreconcilably distinct from each other that it renders human limitations incompatible with and "alien to the absolute, the infinite, the incorporeal".[68] However, these Greek notions of temporality and eternity pose a major challenge to theologians who, consequently, could not reconcile the concept of eternal divinity being present within the confines of human time and space.[69] This philosophical presupposition resulted in impassable theological interpretations overlaying concepts like the *Imago Dei*. For example, Williams points out that patristic theologians projected intellectual reasoning into their theology because, "they expect in what they write to reflect the divinely

[68] Matthew Levering, "God and Greek Philosophy in Contemporary Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4, no. 2 (2010): 170, https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/jtheointe.4.2.0169.

[69] Fernando Canale, "The Quest for the Biblical Ontological Ground of Christian Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 16, no. 1 (2005): 9. Matter was equated with human temporality and form with timeless, eternal divinity – two realities which scientifically and philosophically were irreconcilably at odds with each other.

ordained order of the cosmos".[70] Yet, this is indeed what theology and philosophy appears to have done with the concept of time and divinity when Canale argues,

> We should not start by assuming we know what time is and then proceed to apply our understanding to God by making him fit in the box we have prepared for him. Rather, we should focus on the way Scripture reveals his being and actions and from this starting point attempt to partially understand his being, his temporality, and his relation to our time.[71]

The philosophical understanding of "time" is thus important to this thesis because the Fall transmuted divinely reliant creaturely eternity into temporality which appeared all the more incompatible with Creator-timelessness. As a result, much of theology that followed in the last two centuries were devoted to ascertaining in what way and to what extent this change impacted God's interactions with humankind and *visa-versa*, though rarely questioning the underlying and assumed philosophical origins.

Can an eternal God be present in temporality? Peters argues that "reality is temporal. And, if God is engaged in an active relationship with the world, then God must both affect and be affected by the world's temporality." Hence, he argues that a timeless God must be present in human time.[72]

Much of the literature assumes that the *Imago Dei*, prior to the Fall, was created after a timeless divine. This, however, presented an apparent, irreconcilable philosophical conundrum to be questioned: How can a timeless being be present in

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[70] Anna Ngaire Williams, *The Divine Sense: The Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

[71] Canale.

[72] Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 150. https://www.google.com.au/books/edition/God_as_Trinity/nFnkEaOwEKUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=divine+temporality&pg=PA7&printsec=frontcover.

the confines of temporal, sinful human beings? The only conceivable philosophical response available to scholars was to superimpose an unbiblical understanding of transcendence upon God which altered the ontological understanding of God's being and humankind's unique Creator-creature relationship with him. This in turn affected the interpretation of the *Imago Dei*, anthropology, theology as well as the subsequent understanding of God's tabernacling presence with his people. However, Canale points out that the biblical narrative suggests that irrespective of humankind's temporality, God remains present when he writes,

> While not limited to our time and space, God's being experiences in itself the flow of past, present, and future, and, therefore, is able to experience the limited way in which we experience this flow of life as creatures created in the image of his being.[73]

Perhaps Geisler is right to ask if perhaps we have created God in the image of man to try and make sense of God's transcendence and immanence.[74] It is thus possible to conceive how theologians have approached the limited biblical references to the *Imago Dei* with an assumed notion that eternal divinity is and remains completely separated from humankind and therefore looked elsewhere to identify god-like qualities that relates to the *Imago Dei*. Canale claims that the philosophical reasoning of a timeless God that cannot be present in humankind's timebound world, originated from a Neoplatonist paradigm of ultimate reality that was not primarily informed by Scripture, but by Greek scientific philosophy. Further, that these foundational philosophic assumptions have never been interrogated but rather have been carelessly adopted by Roman Catholics, Reformers and Evangelical scholars

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[73] Canale 18.

[74] Norman L Geisler, *Creating God in the Image of Man? : The New "Open" View of God-Neotheism's Dangerous Drift* (Bethany House, 1997).

alike.[75] Bray too stands critical of the "exegetically unacceptable" ways Philo and the Reformers have adopted this ideology and superimposed this on interpreting the *Imago Dei*.[76] Canale argues that evangelical theologians, regrettably, also adopted a philosophy "tied to the notion that ultimate reality (godly) is timeless."[77]

Postmodernity finally challenged the inherited classical foundational philosophy of Christian theology and instead presented a viable alternative notion "based on the radical idea that reality is not timeless but temporal."[78] Using this presupposition, it is argued that God can be present in instances of time without ceasing to be eternal which is what makes God divine. Consequently, Canale states, "I cannot imagine a more radical or deeper paradigm shift in philosophical and theological thinking."[79]

There is no scope in this thesis to do a full review on the origins of philosophical first principles, but we must acknowledge the challenges it poses to the history of interpreting the *Imago Dei*. It is evident that a biblically faithful interpretation of the *Imago Dei* must reflect the biblical idea that God can indeed be present with humankind. In this thesis I will reject these Greek presuppositions. Proceeding from the insights of single and combinative views and the philosophical

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[75] Canale 3-5. Canale refers to Parmenides' timeless notion of ultimate reality that was simply adopted.

[76] Bray 207.

[77] Canale 13.

[78] Canale 15.

[79] Canale 15.

origins of the *Imago Dei*, the next section will explore the notion of a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* in the literature as a possible alternative.

Representational Approach

Though a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* has not previously been fully explored, this section will briefly demonstrate the existence and use of representational language in the literature about the *Imago Dei*. Representational language is important to the methodology of interpreting the *Imago Dei* in this thesis.

Scholars across the spectrum of interpretations directly refer or allude to a representational view of the *Imago Dei*. For example, despite Hoekema's support for a functional approach to the *Imago Dei*, he points out that "human beings both mirror and represent God" and conclude that they will return to such a destiny after the resurrection.[80] Though he sees *image* and *likeness* synonymously interchangeable, he ascribes a deeper meaning to *tselem* because "it indicates that man images God, that is, a representation of God."[81] Clines prefers the rendering of *tselem* (Gen 1:26) to be "as God's image" over "in God's image", because he argues that it "specifies the kind of image, namely a representational image".[82] By God extending rulership over all creation to humankind, Clines sees the whole personhood, instead of a composition of various parts or aspects of being human, as being representational of

[80] Hoekema, 95.

[81] Hoekema, 11.

[82] Clines 92. "The representational image in the Ancient Near East is intended to portray the character of the god whose image it is; thus, for example, a fertility god may be represented by a bull."

God's rule, and therefore argues that God's image remains unaffected by the Fall.[83] Bird, on the other hand, prefers "according to our likeness" as a better translation than "after our likeness" and asserts that Adam, neither is the image of God nor possesses it, but is simply, according to the likeness of God, representational of God.[84] Pannenberg also describes mankind's ruling over creation as representational of God's reign and likens humankind's appointment to have dominion to that of a vicar preparing the way for God.[85] Wernow criticises the elevation of one aspect of the *Imago Dei* over another and opts for a broader approach in which a "representation of God in man is part of every aspect of man's being". He argues that "God created man in his image to re-present him, both in relation to the material creation and in relationship to himself."[86] He further asserts that material corporeality serves as a medium for relational functionality, arguing that "man uses his body as a reflection of God's presence" and therefore, "in a sense, signifying a re-presentation of God."[87] These are examples of varied scholarly contributions that either directly or indirectly allude to a representational approach to the *Imago Dei*.

However diverse, the literature reveals a general consensus when it comes to Jesus Christ and the *Imago Dei*. Primarily, the most significant revelation of the *Imago Dei* in Scripture is to be found in Jesus Christ, both as "the express image of

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[83] Clines 101.

[84] Bird 138.

[85] Pannenberg, 203.

[86] Wernow 118. Note the confluence of the three main classifications into a representational approach.

[87] Wernow 117.

His person" and the One in whom "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily".[88] There is little doubt in the literature that Jesus represents the fullness of God and the fullness of being human. For example, it is in the bodily personhood of Christ that Hoekema sees God's shared nature with humankind when he concludes,

> That God could become flesh is the greatest of all mysteries, which will always transcend our finite human understanding. But, presumably, it was only because man had been created in the image of God that the Second Person of the Trinity could assume human nature. That Second Person, it would seem, could not have assumed a nature that had no resemblance whatever to God. In other words, the Incarnation confirms the doctrine of the image of God.[89]

With the view of the incarnation as being representative of the fullness of God's presence through Christ who is the image of the invisible God, the idea of the *Imago Dei* being representational of God comes into view.

The literature also shows that scholars like Cortez connect the concept of divine presence with humankind with the *Imago Dei* when he states,

> The image of God can be understood as God manifesting his personal presence in creation through his covenantal relationships with human persons, whom he has constituted as personal beings to serve as his representatives in creation and to whom he remains faithful despite their sinful rejection of him.[90]

Hence, we find the literature references both the linguistic and conceptual employment of representation to describe or interpret the *Imago Dei*, or aspects thereof, in connection with God and his presence with humankind.

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[88] Heb 1:3, Col 1:19, Col 2:9.

[89] Hoekema, 21-2.

[90] Cortez, 37.

Interim Concluding Comments on the *Imago Dei*

Despite two centuries of analyses a clear and unified scholarly or biblical view of the *Imago Dei* remains elusive and divisive, mainly due to limited direct biblical references, the absence of a biblical definition, and the influence of philosophical assumptions in hypothesising explanations. However, scholars have significantly explored several interpretations that offer helpful classifications of both single and combined approaches in conceptualising the complexity of the *Imago Dei*. It is evident, in the light of Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God, that the concept of the *Imago Dei* is far more than the substantive, functional, or relational views (independently or combined) can encompass. No doubt, the *Imago Dei*, revealed via the fullness of Christ's humanity, extends beyond concepts like identity, stewardship, vocation, or sonship, and must therefore be true of God's image and likeness too. Approaching the *Imago Dei* accordingly, one must therefore avoid the pitfalls of a narrowing methodology or combinative solutions that emphasise one view at the expense of others. Instead, a broader approach to include the wholeness of beings made in the image and likeness of an unfathomable Being and his divine presence, should be considered. A representational view of the *Imago Dei* and Jesus Christ, broad enough to include more characteristics of God than traditionally held, and specific enough to investigate possible corresponding representations with the tabernacle for instance, must be considered. Consequently, chapters two and three shall thus take these learnings into consideration in exploring, proposing, and adopting a comparative and representational approach to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle.

However, comparing similar biblical concepts (as this thesis and the next section are proposing with the tabernacle) will provide more corresponding

characteristics for consideration in order to validate any approach. Thus, in order to corroborate such a representational approach, the next section shall explore the historical interpretations associated with Israel's wilderness tabernacle.

Tabernacle

Introduction

Though concepts of non-Mosaic tabernacles are found throughout Scripture and contribute to the rich understanding of Israel's tabernacle, the focus of this chapter will specifically be on Israel's wilderness tabernacle. The establishment of the wilderness tabernacle in Exod 25 stands as one of the most significant representations of God's covenantal presence with Israel in the Old Testament.[91] Nonetheless, the earliest references to the idea of God dwelling with humankind via the concept of a tabernacle is found in the creation account. Sommer alludes to this Edenic temple as a "world-creation and tabernacle-construction" belonging to a "single narrative that culminates in the latter".[92] Beale lists several comparative substantiations in support of this notion[93] when he argues that the temple decorations

[91] Non-Mosaic tabernacles include the cosmos, the Garden of Eden, the Jewish temple, the church, the believer, and the heavenly sanctuary be they portrayed as a type, or anti-type, in a metaphoric or symbolic sense or not.

[92] Benjamin D. Sommer, "Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in the Priestly Tabernacle," Article, *Biblical Interpretation* 9, no. 1 (2001): 43, https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/156851501300112353. Sommer points out that ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies of the story of creation and the building of a sanctuary go hand in hand, but that this has been deferred to Exod 39-40 by the Priestly author.

[93] G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, *Vol. 17 (New Studies in Biblical Theology)* (Intervarsity Press, 2004), 66-74.

of garden imagery (like pomegranates and lilies) in ancient near eastern religions were often intentional reflections of the first basic Garden of Eden temple. He argues that Israel's earthly tabernacle and temple can thus be seen as reflections and recapitulations of that first idyllic temple.[94] Wenham too lists five reasons why he sees the Garden of Eden as the ideal sanctuary.[95] Bakon's comparison between the first cosmic Sabbath and the tabernacle affirms the idea of a holy primordial temple, particularly seen in the divine sanctification of the creation Sabbath.[96] In view of the wilderness tabernacle, Beale proposes that "patriarchal sacred spaces can be considered 'sanctuaries' comparable to the first non-architectural sanctuary in the Garden of Eden" but that they were foreshadowing Israel's tabernacle at the Sinai

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http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001456060&site=ehost-live. Beale contends that the Garden can convincingly be viewed as the first archetypal temple as a place of (1) God's presence, (2) the first priest, (3) the first guarding cherubim, (4) the first arboreal lampstand, (5) the first source of water, (6) precious stones, (7) the first mountain, (8) wisdom, (9) an eastern facing entrance, (10) a sacred structure.

[94] Beale, 56. He argues that these garden and other cosmic decorations point toward an end-time goal of God's presence throughout creation, thus referring back to the original presence of God in the Garden of Eden.

[95] Gordon J. Wenham, *Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story*, *Proc, 9th World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, Aug 1985: div A - period of the Bible* (1986), 19-24. Wenham's five main comparisons between the sanctuary and Garden of Eden are, (1) the use of the phrase "to walk to and fro" (2) the guarding presence of "cherubim" (3) the tree of life whose fruit gives eternal life (4) the Levitical-like description of Adam's job, and (5) the description between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the law of God as "making wise".

[96] Shimon Bakon, "Creation, Tabernacle and Sabbath," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1997): 81-2, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001021653&site=ehost-live. Bakon identifies seven *Leitworte* (repeated words or phrases) comparisons between creation, Sabbath and the sanctuary. These include six days followed by the Sabbath; the idea of seeing, shown or saw; completing the work as "finished"; God and Moses's blessing; and God's presence.

sanctuary.[97] The literature thus points to several interrelated forms of sanctuaries connected to the idea of a tabernacle.

Though some authors like Chilton have been criticised for their inconsistent hermeneutics to superimpose the idea of a sanctuary on to the creation account[98] Beale asserts that the links between the tabernacle, creation, patriarchal sanctuaries, and even a cosmic temple, confirm the notion that the tabernacle can be seen as representational of God's presence among his people.[99] Notably, Dozeman points out that the revelation of God on Mount Sinai advances an established theme of divine residency where the heavenly vision becomes an earthly reality "allowing God to dwell on earth in the midst of the people of God".[100] Fretheim reiterates the idea of God's actual presence associated with the tabernacle when he postulates, "The

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[97] Beale, 105-6. Beale refers to places like Bethel and Moriah. Other comparisons Beale lists are (1) Sinai as the mountain of God with Mount Zion, (2) the tripartite division of the mountain with the three compartments of the temple, (3) the position of the altar located in the lowest, least sacred part of the Sinai and outside of the temple, (4) the limitation of Sinai and the temple which was limited to the 'high priest' while shrouded in a theophanic cloud, and (5) the proleptic equivalent of the burning bush and its surrounding 'holy ground' to the lampstand in the holy place.

[98] David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: An Eschatology of Dominion* (Tyler, Texas: Reconstruction Pr, 1985). http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000099468&scope=site. For instance, words and concepts like *wilderness*, *cloud*, *garden,* and *mountain* are sometimes used symbolically and other times literally in order to fit the author's theological agenda.

[99] Beale, 33. Beale sees in the gradually increased holiness of the patterned tabernacle a clear reflection of the heavenly temple with the cosmos (as the humanly habitable world) corresponding to the outer court, the visible heavens corresponding to the holy place, and the invisible spiritual world of God's presence and the angels corresponding to the holy of holies.

[100] Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, *Eerdmans Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 582-3. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001921255&site=ehost-live.

sanctuary is not simply a symbol of the divine presence, it is an actual vehicle for divine immanence, in and through which the transcendent God dwells."[101] However significant the concept of God's presence with Israel's tabernacle, Beale argues that such divine presence is not to be related to Israel only but points to "a huge worldwide sanctuary in which God's presence would dwell in every part of the cosmos", thus to all humankind.[102] A proper understanding of the tabernacle thus needs to incorporate the idea of God's tabernacling presence with humankind as a crucial aspect which a later section of this chapter will address.

A careful consideration of the semantic use of the four words usually associated with the tabernacle will help set the scope and limitations of its use within the biblical record and our understanding of the notion of God's tabernacling presence.

Understanding the Tabernacle

To unpack the theological connections of the tabernacle and God's presence, this section will consider the context and meaning of the four Hebrew words usually associated with the tabernacle in the Old Testament.[103] They are *mishkan*, *miqdash* or *ko'-desh*, *ohel mo'ed* and *hekal*, translated respectively as "a dwelling-place" (Exod

[101] Terence E Fretheim, *Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 233.

[102] Beale, 48.

[103] *Mishkan*, *miqdash* or *ko'-desh*, *ohel mo'ed* and *hekal* are all associated with the tabernacle.

25:9), “a holy place” or “sanctuary” (25:8), “tent of meeting” (40:2), and “palace” or “temple” (Ps 11:4) for example.[104]

Campbell contends that *mishkan* is specifically used to communicate the explicit purpose of the tabernacle stated in Exod 25:8, “that I may dwell in their midst”[105] while Kelly points out that the concept of *mishkan* מִשְׁכָּן as a dwelling place was used in the context of an earthly nomadic community in which the author chose to incorporate *mishkan* as a genuinely archaic desert term to convey the meaning of tenting or tabernacling.[106] Stanley agrees that the idea of community was central to God’s divine purpose and concludes that it is rather intricately connected to the historical presence of God.[107]

The word *miqdash* מקדש and *ko’-desh* can be translated as a holy or sacred place and refers to something that is “filled with holiness” and “which has been removed from common use”.[108] These ideas correspond to the two

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[104] Iain D. Campbell, Opening up Exodus. Opening up Commentary (Leonminster, England: Day One, 2006), 102.Other expressions like “house of the Lord”, “My house”, “Zion” and “holy hill” all add meaning to tabernacle but are omitted for the sake of brevity in this thesis.

[105] Campbell, 102.

[106] Page H. Kelley, "Israel's Tabernacling God," *Review & Expositor* 67, no. 4 (1970): 491, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000722491&scope=site. Kelley asserts that the author never uses mishkan with reference to his dwelling on earth of his self-manifestation to Israel.

[107] Stanley J. Grenz, "Salvation and God's Program in Establishing Community," *Review & Expositor* 91, no. 4 (1994): 506, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000887887&site=ehost-live.

[108] Walter Baumgartner, and Ludwig Köhler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Vol. 4: Šin-Tav* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1999), 1073.

compartments of the tabernacle known as the “Holy Place” and “Most Holy Place”. However, Campbell points out that the tabernacle is a place God claimed for himself, like a sanctuary and a place to “be sanctified by my glory”, indicative of the presence of the holy God.[109]

The use of the word *ohel mo’ed* אהל מ עד as a tent of meeting was seen as (1) the meeting place between God and Moses, (2) a place where the congregation would assemble at its entrance and (3) as the tent of the testimony.[110] Campbell maintains that the idea of the tabernacle as a tent firstly highlights its portable and temporal nature, and secondly, it serves as more than just a symbol of God’s presence. Instead, he argues, it “reflected [God’s] complete sympathy with them, and his identification with them.”[111]

Cassuto argues that *mishkan* and *ohel mo’ed* are employed as being synonymous and indicative of the nomadic shepherds who moved about in tents and that the sanctuary of the wilderness was intended to accompany them in their wanderings.[112] Dozeman, however, identifies *mishkan* משכן as a tabernacle when God

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http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000012437&site=ehost-live.

[109] Campbell, 102. Also see Exod 29:43.

[110] Lev 1:1, Exod 29: 42-3, and Num 9:19 respectively.

[111] Campbell, 103.

[112] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1968), 346-8. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000233179&scope=site. Cassuto states that these terms were used up to the time of Solomon even after the Israelites have settled in Canaan. He does, however, acknowledge that *mishkan* referred more to the sanctuary proper

enters it and, *ohel mo'ed* אהל מ עד as a tent of meeting when humans would enter it, whilst proposing that *hekal* refers to the combined meeting place of the divine and humane.[113] He insists that,

> The two names, tabernacle and tent of meeting, indicate the meeting of God and humans in the sanctuary. The descent of God into the tabernacle and the approach of priestly representatives into the tent of meeting bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane, which was not possible during the original theophany on Mount Sinai.[114]

Hendrix concludes that it is quite clear from the author's "expression of choice" in Exodus 25-40 that "the literary context of miškān was about construction" whereas "the literary context of *ōhel môēd* appears to involve the function of the cult of YHWH."[115]

Finally, the use of *hekal* , translated as a palace or temple, is associated with the permanent resting place of the tabernacle in Solomon's temple.[116] Though *hekal* is described as worshipping at God's footstool, with the heavens as His throne, it connects the idea of God's tabernacling presence to a cosmic level.[117]

It is evident that the varied meanings of tabernacle are symbolic of something significantly more than just a physical place, which in turn, contributes to the richness found in the historical views. These views, as the next section will point out,

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as a whole with the splendid inner curtains and sacred furniture and *ohel mo'ed* specifically to the simple tent that spread over the inner curtains.

[113] Dozeman, 598.

[114] Dozeman, 599.

[115] Ralph E Hendrix, "The Use of Miskān and Ohel Môed in Exodus 25-40," *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 30, no. 1 (1992): 4, 9.

[116] Campbell, 103-5.

[117] Ps 99:5, Isa 66:1.

wrestle with the theological interpretation and understanding of God's presence with humankind.

Historical Views

This section will briefly discuss the main historical views of the tabernacle and then introduce recent research that has questioned the philosophical assumptions that have influenced these views.

Two basic approaches have influenced scholars in the study of the tabernacle. The first, widely accepted and based on the JEDP documentary hypothesis, became known as the Wellhausen school of thought. Wellhausen postulated that the tabernacle, established from the many altars in the early, cultic history of Israel, developed into the idea of an official and central sanctuary by 621 B.C., and was nothing more than fraudulent dogma consolidated by post-exilic priests.[118] This theory, however, stands in sharp contrast to the biblio-historical and political theocracy established by Moses, which, fuelled by the archaeological revolution, marked a return to the biblical narrative and became known as the historical view. That said, recent scholarly reviews have questioned the theological and philosophical origins of interpreting the tabernacle and consequently presented a third alternative– an analogical approach. It will suffice here to briefly expound on them all.

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[118] Frank Moore Cross, "The Tabernacle: A Study from an Archaeological and Historical Approach," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 10, no. 3 (1947): 47, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001366175&scope=site.

Wellhausen's View

Julius Wellhausen (1844-1980) argued that systematic and complex religious concepts like the law codes and the tabernacle had, in fact, no divine connections, but originated centuries after Moses from Canaanite forms of polytheism, animism, and ancestor worship and were compiled by various unknown and hypothetical authors.[119] Wellhausen's evolutionary view of Israel's development and subsequent historic reconstruction led him to conclude that its early monotheistic and theocratic depictions could only have come from the pious, idealised projections and anachronisms of post-exilic priestly writers, thus casting doubts on the biblical narrative, origins and traditions of the Jewish tabernacle.[120] The century-long consensus on the composition of distinct sources that made up the Pentateuch displaced an understanding of Genesis as "a coherent unity" by the early twentieth century.[121] To summarise, the Wellhausen school of thought presents the Priestly tabernacle as a pious fraud and part of a projected temple in a desert disguise[122] or at

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[119] Ernest W. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the 20th Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon Pr, 1998), 3-5. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000019925&scope=site.

[120] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel, with a Reprint of the Article Israel from the Encylopaedia Britannica*, *Scholars Press Reprints and Translations* (Atlanta: Scholars Pr, 1994), 34. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000050259&scope=site.

[121] Gordon John Wenham, *Genesis 1-15, Volume 1* (Zondervan Academic, 2017), 26-8. Wenham demonstrates how Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis (separate sources from different centuries), the supplementary hypothesis (expanded material over centuries from one source), and the fragmentary hypothesis (composition of many sources) often referred to as JDEP sources, was displaced by the contributions of scholars like Cassuto.

[122] Cross 47.

best, reflections of "idealized versions of the later tent shrines at Shiloh or the tent of David",[123] or as "the copy, not the prototype, of the temple in Jerusalem."[124] However, later scholars like Rabe support the idea that a central sanctuary, an elaborate sacrificial system, clerical orders, and Israel's political and ideological history are all seen through the lens of indiscriminate borrowing from Canaanite forms of worship.[125]

This view, of course, renders the concept of *God* tabernacling with this people implausible in its entirety. For the sake of brevity, it is prudent to note that twentieth-century archaeological and philological advancement has profoundly confronted the widely accepted nineteenth-century Wellhausen reconstruction theory on the history of Israel.[126]

Historical View

Contrary to Wellhausen, the historical view accepts the historical, biblical position that Israel's religious unity around a central tabernacle "was based on a

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[123] Ralph W. Klein, "Back to the Future: The Tabernacle in the Book of Exodus," *Interpretation* 50, no. 3 (1996): 264, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000908053&site=ehost-live.

[124] Hendrix 5.

[125] Virgil W. Rabe, "The Identity of the Priestly Tabernacle," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 25, no. 2 (1966): 132, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000695487&scope=site.

[126] Cross 46-8. Cross lists several Ancient Near Eastern documentary and non-documentary excavation sources to substantiate his position that although the broad outlines of the JEDP Documentary Hypothesis remain intact, it can no longer be accepted in full.

common cult at a common sanctuary… led by a revolutionary religious spirit who could be none other than Moses" as part of their creative and normative history. [127] Scholars like Spitzer, Zehr and Cassuto substantiate the view that there is enough evidence to place the origins of the tabernacle in the second year after the exodus during the Israelite wanderings.[128] They suggest it coexisted with similar contemporary ideas in Mesopotamia, Syria and Phoenicia[129] and is rather indicative of deliberate borrowing[130] as opposed to the Priestly hypothesis that claims the tabernacle was merely a reminiscent invention by the priests around the time of the second temple.[131] Cross lists several archaeological sources that validate the biblical and historical origins of Israel and the patriarchs during the time of the Judges, and argues that it "was organised in a twelve-tribe amphictyony (religious confederation) around a central Yahweh sanctuary".[132]

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[127] Cross 48-50. Cross draws on contemporary Amorite, Babylonian, Assyrian, Phoenician, and Semitic sources as evidence of the validity of Yahwinistic concepts like the covenant, higher ethos, God as righteous Judge, and a cosmic Lord of nature and history.

[128] Toba Spitzer, "'And I Shall Dwell among Them'," *The Reconstructionist* 69, no. 1 (2004): 19-20, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001466874&site=ehost-live.

[129] Paul M. Zehr, *God Dwells with His People: A Study of Israel's Ancient Tabernacle* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981), 175-6. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000078824&site=ehost-live.

[130] Zehr, 172-3.

[131] Cassuto, 320.

[132] Cross 47. "The Cappadocian Tablets (19th century), Babylonian documents from the First Dynasty of Babylon (The Age of Hammurabi cir. 1830 to the fall of Babylon, cir. 1550), and especially the Nuzu Tablets (15th century) and the archives of Mari (18th century) have given

Though this view aligns with the biblical record, its philosophical assumptions did not support the biblical idea of God's actual presence tabernacling with humankind as the next few sections will point out.

Analogical View

This view approaches the tabernacle from a literal and historical reading of Scripture in which God's being is infinite and unrestricted by human time yet can be present within the sinful confines of humankind's world. Therefore, divine temporality can be seen as analogical with human finite time. In other words, instead of superimposing a philosophical definition of human temporality on God's presence, an analogical view proposes to construct a notion of divine temporal presence from the biblical narrative whilst affirming divine infinity.[133]

Importantly, proponents of this view have questioned the classical and philosophical understanding of the sanctuary simply because they were assumed. Canale postulates that because "Scripture does not explicitly address the interpretation of Being, God, human nature, and nature principles, theologians have consistently drawn their understanding of them from philosophy."[134] Kaiser, too,

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remarkable parallels to the mores, the religious practices and background, and the names of the Patriarchs."

[133] Canale 17-9. God's being is infinite and unrestricted by human time, yet God's temporal presence in the tabernacle is based on a revelation of his being and actions in Scripture.

[134] Fernando Luis Canale, "Philosophical Foundations and the Biblical Sanctuary," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 36, no. 2 (Aut 1998): 201, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/auss/;

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001002788&scope=site.

suggests that the historical interpretations of the tabernacle emanated from the Platonic-Aristotelian premise, and consequently were viewed as either a celestial universe, humankind's inner world of reason, or the spiritual church which simply did not line up with the biblical narrative.[135]

This has led scholars like Canale to interrogate the theological interpretation of the sanctuary to rather view the sanctuary as a "God-building-human-beings structure" instead of just a building, hence questioning the philosophical Being-principle from which, for example, the ontological foundations of God, human beings, and the world are formed.[136] In essence, Canale claims that "the Platonic-Aristotelian understanding of the first philosophical principles has played a foundational hermeneutical role in the theological interpretation of the biblical sanctuary" which resulted in a classical philosophical God-principle that is depersonalised and timeless.[137] Consequently, most historical interpretations of the sanctuary were based on this timeless and spaceless notion of God, to such an extent that "the idea of a tangible sanctuary in a temporal-spatial heaven was almost absent

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[135] Denis Kaiser, "The Biblical Sanctuary Motif in Historical Perspective," *Scripture and Philosophy: Essays Honoring the Work and Vision of Fernando Luis Canale* (2016): 164. Kaiser demonstrates how the Holy Place of the tabernacle came to be associated with a representation of the visible and invisible, celestial world and the veil as the starry sky, as well as natural, human (lower) reason, while the Most Holy Place was associated with the intellect or (higher) reason, the church militant and the church triumphant.

[136] Fernando L Canale, "Philosophical Foundations and the Biblical Sanctuary," *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 36, no. 2 (1998): 184.

[137] Canale 187. Canale claims that the scientific first principles of Being resulted in an ontology that shaped foundational Christian theology by assuming the timelessness (and space-lessness) of Being as opposed to the possibility of a temporal understanding of reality.

throughout the Christian era"[138] Hence, Canale proposes that, "the temporal understanding of Being calls for a deconstruction of Christian theology and its timeless conception of Being and God".[139]

It is thus evident that such a deconstruction should allow for a God-principle that can directly and personally relate to humankind's space and time, thus aligning with the biblical idea that God indeed came to tabernacle in Israel's midst.[140] Hence, the need for an analogical review of the historical tabernacle. Fretheim acknowledges the analogical tabernacling of God's presence when he concludes, "Israel's God now dwells, with intensity and at close range, in Israel's very midst. God actually takes up space in Israel's world."[141]

The next section shall thus briefly explore the philosophical origins of interpreting the tabernacle in order to understand the concept of God's tabernacling presence with humankind.

Philosophical Origins of Interpreting the Tabernacle

Canale thus argues that the philosophical principle of being from which the understanding of God and human beings arises is key to interpreting the tabernacle and claims that "the Platonic-Aristotelian understanding of the first philosophical principles has played a foundational hermeneutical role in the theological

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[138] Kaiser 157-8.

[139] Canale 188.

[140] Canale 199.

[141] Fretheim.

interpretation of the biblical sanctuary."[142] Denis Kaiser points out how the Church Fathers (Origin, Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine) and Medieval writers (Thomas Aquinas, Oecumenius, Bede, John Cassian and Arethas of Caesarea) and even Reformers (Luther, Calvin) were strongly influenced by a Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy that adopted a classical view and "continued to assume a timeless interpretation of the divine realm."[143] According to the Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy, the perfect, immaterial notion of God negated divine involvement in time and space, and consequently rendered the concept of God tabernacling in a tangible earthy sanctuary incompatible. Thus, Denis Kaiser concludes that the combination of the Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy along with the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture resulted in theologians nullifying the concept of God's actual presence tabernacling with his people.[144]

How this has influenced the interpretation of the tabernacle, Denis Kaiser postulates, can be seen in the way Classical philosophy has rendered the God-principle as depersonalised and timeless, resulting in a metaphorical hermeneutic upon which most historical interpretations of the sanctuary have been built.[145]

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[142] Canale 187. He claims that the scientific first principles of Being resulted in an ontology that shaped foundational Christian theology by assuming the timelessness (and space-lessness) of Being as opposed to the possibility of a temporal understanding of reality.

[143] Kaiser 161-4.

[144] Kaiser 158, 64. Allegorical interpretations include viewing believers as the sanctuary and the soul as the ark of the covenant or even the Holy of Holies; sacraments and rites as heavenly connections; the golden urn holding the manna as purity; and Aaron's rod as Christ's saving standard.

[145] Kaiser 164. Metaphorical views of the tabernacle include (1) the Holy Place representing the visible world, the most Holy Place as the invisible and celestial world with the veil the starry sky, (2) the Holy Place as natural, human (lower) reason and the Most Holy Place as the intellect (higher

Instead, Canale argues, "the temporal understanding of Being calls for a deconstruction of Christian theology and its timeless conception of Being and God" to consider the biblical evidence that God indeed came to tabernacle with humankind.[146] This deconstruction will allow for a God-principle that can directly and personally relate to time, history, and space and thus supports the biblical view that God's actual presence was indeed tabernacling in Israel's midst, as Walter Kaiser attests to when he writes,

> Even more specifically, the meaning of the tabernacle is that God has come 'to dwell,' 'to tabernacle' in the midst of Israel, as he would one day come in the Incarnation (John 1:14) and will come in the Second Advent (Rev. 21:3). The Lord who dwelt in his visible glory in his sanctuary among his people (Exod 25:8) will one day come and dwell in all his glory among his saints forever.[147]

This constitutes a radical alternative to the metaphorical interpretation of some Old and New Testament allegorised sanctuary texts. Kelly's portrayal of YHWH's covenantal presence affirms the analogical interpretation when he states, "Prophets, priests, and poets alike affirm that the peculiar thing vouchsafed to the covenant people was the real indwelling and gracious presence of Yahweh in their midst."[148]

Thus, a literal reading of a historical tabernacle in which God came to tabernacle with his people becomes philosophically and theologically tenable and

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reason), and (3) the Holy Place as the church militant and the Most Holy Place as the church triumphant.

[146] Canale 188.

[147] Walter C. Kaiser Jr, *"Exodus," Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1973), 208, accessed 10 September 2022, https://www.perlego.com/book/558358/exodus-pdf.

[148] Kelley 486.

gives impetus to interpreting *miškān* with the connotation of God's tabernacling presence with his people.[149] The notion of divinity sharing time and space with humankind is supported by the biblical record in a literal reading of a passage like Ps 90:1-2, for example, that affirms God's "dwelling place" among humankind whilst acknowledging his existence "from everlasting to everlasting".

The literature thus demonstrates that applying biblical philosophy of first principles supports a literal interpretation of the tabernacle and God's presence. The next section will consequently explore the biblical notion of God's tabernacling presence with humankind in the literature.

Divine Tabernacling Presence

The notion of divine tabernacling presence, God sharing space and time with humankind, constitutes a radical alternative to the metaphorical reading of Old and New Testament sanctuary texts.

Sommer suggests that the Mosaic tabernacle was, in fact, the replacement of Sinai as the place of God's manifestation.[150] This is not an uncommon concept as Beale points out that the similarities between ancient Near Eastern temples and that of Israel is a common desire to represent their gods as well as their presences.[151] Clements insist that God's presence in the Mosaic tabernacle can only be described

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[149] Ralph E. Hendrix, ""Miškān" and "'Ōhel Mô'ēd": Etymology, Lexical Definitions, and Extra-Biblical Usage," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 30, no. 3 (Spring 1992: 3, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000848207&scope=site.

[150] Sommer 47.

[151] Beale, 51.

in terms of a "cloud theophany" that would appear to Israel's chosen representatives.[152] That said, Dozeman argues for a middle-ground meeting place between future and present, the divine and human when he writes,

> The descent of God into the tabernacle and the approach of priestly representatives into the tent of meeting bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane, which was not possible during the original theophany on Mount Sinai.[153]

The tabernacle thus initiated a new awareness of God's presence tabernacling with Israel. Hoskins agrees that the holy and powerful appearances of God on Mount Sinai further establish the reality of God's actual presence.[154] Durham concurs and states that at the centre of the sanctuary was the acceptance of Israel's transcendent God, none other "but Yahweh alone, present as a gift."[155] Though in opposition to the concept of Yahweh's actual presence, Von Rad refers to two Old Testament phrases "the place that the Lord your God will choose" and, "to make his name dwell there", to introduce the concept of a "name theology" in order to protect the idea of God's

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[152] Ronald Ernest Clements, God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel (Oxford Basil Blackwell, 1965), 38. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000233218&site=ehost-live.

[153] Dozeman, 599.

[154] Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 41-2. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001662621&site=ehost-live.

[155] John I. Durham, *Exodus*, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 355. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000109422&site=ehost-live.

transcendence.[156] Hoskins, however, disagrees with Von Rad's concept of God's *permanent* (connected with the ark) and *temporal* (connected with the tent of meeting) presence[157] and contends that these phrases represent a Hebraic equivalent of an idiomatic expression of exclusive ownership also found in other Ancient Near Eastern documents and concludes, ". . . in order for God to meet with his people at the tabernacle, the Lord's presence must be localized there in a special way."[158] With reference to the Hebraic words connected to the Mosaic tabernacle, Hendrix suggests that *mishkan* מִשְׁכָּן (as the dwelling place) and *ohel mo'ed* אהל מ עד (tent of assembly in a cultic context) are used discretely, specifically, and not interchangeably but rather "masterfully controlled" to depict the dualistic nature of YHWH's transient dwelling place in order to foster a cultic relationship.[159]

Finally, Kelly points out that although God did appear to the patriarchs at various times and shrines, they did not perceive of God as tabernacling with them.

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[156] Gerhard Von Rad, "Deuteronomy's 'Name' Theology and the Priestly Document's 'Kabod' Theology," *Studies in Deuteronomy. Translated by D. Stalker* (1953): 38-9.

[157] Ronald E. Clements, *God and Temple: The Presence of God in Israel's Worship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 37. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000233218&site=ehost-live. Clements refers to the come-and-go appearance of God in Num 10:35-6 and argues that Yahweh's presence over the ark is more consistent with a theophany.

[158] Hoskins, 39-40. Hoskins based this on the two Hebrew names used for the tabernacle as 'dwelling place' and 'tent of meeting'.

[159] Ralph E. Hendrix, "MišKāN and 'ŌHel Mô'ēD: Etymology, Lexical Definitions, and Extra-Biblical Usage," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 30, no. 1 (Spr 1992): 12-3, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/auss/;

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000848207&scope=site.

However, he argues that it is clear that the concept of God's travelling presence with his people became a contentious issue after the setting up of the tabernacle followed by their golden calf apostasy in Exod 32.[160] Thus, the biblical record affirms God's decision that his presence will go with them in Exod 33:14.

Thus, there is overwhelming support for the biblical evidence that God indeed tabernacled with his presence in Israel's midst. Viewing the tabernacle as the confluence or the mid-point with humankind between divine transcendence and immanence, and therefore underscores the biblical idea of divine tabernacling presence with humankind despite the limitations of human space and time.

An analogical view of the tabernacle that supports the biblical notion of God's tabernacling presence opens the possibility of representational methodology to the tabernacle that the next section will explore.

Representational Approach

This section will briefly review scholarly references to a representational approach to interpreting the tabernacle and God's presence that we will return to for a full appraisal in chapter three as a way of comparing it with the *Imago Dei*.

Scholarly references to the notion of representation in interpreting God's presence are quite common. For example, Beale poignantly overlays a bigger picture over the temple, alluding to the idea of representation to God's dwelling presence when he argues that,

> the understanding of the temple as a small model of the entire cosmos is part of a larger perspective in which the temple pointed forward to a huge

[160] Kelley 486-7. Kelley refers to shrines like Bethal, Shechem, Hebron and Beersheba where God appeared to the patriarchs.

> worldwide sanctuary in which God's presence would dwell in every part of the cosmos.[161]

Though Stuart cautions against the notion of viewing the tabernacle as an exact copy of the heavenly, he claims that it was "a symbolic representation of the realities of heaven" and "a relatively simple earthly reflection of God's actual dwelling place".[162] Hamilton agrees when he contends that Moses in his vision saw in the tabernacle "a reflection of God Himself."[163] Clements too supports this view and—in pointing out the difference between the ark and the mercy seat—he contends that though the ark cannot be equated to the throne of God it certainly "was intended as miniature representation".[164] Zehr projects the idea of the tabernacle as being representational of Christ when he writes, "the *mishkan* serves as the symbolic representation of this communal structure" and, "the impression of Christ".[165] Thus,

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[161] G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 48. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001456060&site=ehost-live. (Italics provided) Beale describes the new heavens and earth as a giant temple in which God dwells in the same way He did in the Most Holy Place.

[162] Stuart, D. K. (2006). Exodus (Vol. 2, pp. 565–566). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

[163] James M. Hamilton, Jr., "God with Men in the Torah," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 65, no. 1 (2003): 114, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001379433&site=ehost-live.

[164] Clements, 35-6, 66. Clements rather views the ark as a shrine for receiving God's oracles but not as a permanent resting place of the divine.

[165] Zehr, 175-80. Zehr sees the tabernacle as a type that serves as an impression of Christ, the real tabernacle.

the use of linguistic and conceptual references to the tabernacle as representational of God and his presence warrants further investigation.

Interim Concluding Comments on the Tabernacle

This section has identified problematic ideas within the historical models of interpreting the tabernacle, resulting in either spiritualising or allegorising the biblical notion of the tabernacle. Basically, this has led scholars to question the notion of God's presence with his people to ask how an eternal God can be present within the confined existence of temporal human beings. This section has therefore briefly reviewed the philosophical assumptions that have dominated the interpretation of divine transcendence and immanence that repudiated the biblical idea of God's tabernacling presence with Israel. It has also presented scholarly contributions which have instead affirmed the biblical view of God's actual presence in and through the tabernacle, that in turn, opened the possibility of considering the tabernacle as a representation of God. This, along with a preliminary exploration of the use of representational language of and references to the tabernacle in the literature, has revealed that the notion of representation is rather commonly used by scholars. The use of this representative language supports the idea of God's tabernacling presence as claimed in the biblical record.

Interim Chapter Concluding Comments

The literature review of the *Imago Dei* and tabernacle have shown significant divisions among scholars over a long period of time. In the case of the *Imago Dei*, limited biblical references and the absence of a clear definition have contributed to

the complexity of finding a unified interpretation. Preconceived philosophical notions have placed the relationship between infinite divinity and the finite humans at juxta positions in terms of eternity and temporality. However, the biblical narrative reveals an intertwining relational existence between God and humankind—albeit restricted by the Fall—that is sufficiently supported by numerous scholarly contributions. The understanding of the *Imago Dei* underscores basic human anthropology and humankind's relationship with God and therefore remains a vitally important topic for scholarly engagement. In the case of the tabernacle, though abundantly referenced in terms of its establishment and ministry in the biblical record, historical views were likewise heavily influenced by philosophical paradigms to circumvent the biblical notion of God's tabernacling presence with his people. However, scholarly contributions confirm the biblical view that the eternal God physically appeared in a theophany to take up temporary residence in humankind's temporary world in order to repair and maintain a relationship with his people.

Emerging from the literature review, is thus the likelihood that a representational approach to both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle could provide us with enough scholarly evidence to confront unbiblical philosophical assumptions and explore an interpretational approach that supports the biblical record and God's relational involvement with humankind. But what constitutes a representational approach, and can it be biblically sustained? This will be the focus of the next three chapters. Chapters two and three will explore the context and meaning of a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle, and chapter four will compare these representational findings with each other and with Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2: REPRESENTATIONAL *IMAGO DEI*

Introduction

This chapter will explore the notion and characteristics of a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* as a broader and more inclusive representation of God, supported by literary contributions and the biblical record. Essentially, this thesis will define a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* as an anthropological methodology that is based on the whole of being human, which exhibits, portrays, or resembles the fullness of God's being more uniquely than the rest of creation, and therefore places humankind in a special relationship with God.

Though the heavenly, earthly, or inanimate created order may declare and proclaim the glory and handiwork of God in some way, only humankind is said to be created in the image and likeness of God.[166] Humankind is thus uniquely representational of God and uniquely created to be in relationship with God. Hoekema's summary of the special relationship between God and humankind is concisely expressed when he contends, "If you wish to see what I am like, God is saying, look at my most distinguished creature: man."[167] A biblical view of the *Imago Dei* must therefore be considered as essentially a matter of being, because humankind was created in the image and likeness of the divine Being. Humankind, made in God's image and likeness, is created as the only other being in the created order to illuminate, demonstrate or reciprocate the being of God. We must therefore consider what it is that constitutes the nature of being. Kim argues that only a

[166] Psa. 19:1.

[167] Hoekema, 67.

"shared nature" between two beings can allow for their "essences" to relate to each other.[168] It is precisely this being-relatedness that Barth addresses when he writes,

> In God's own being and sphere there is a counterpart: a genuine but harmonious self-encounter and self-discovery; a free co-existence and co-operation; an open confrontation and reciprocity. Man is the repetition of this divine form of life; its copy and reflection.[169]

Evidently, such reciprocal shared essences would inform on and be representational of, each other to some degree. The *Imago Dei* must, therefore, be more than substantive, functional or relational models can define. More than a role or specific quality "and not just a formal similarity of capacity", the *Imago Dei* is to be considered as essentially a being-connection in such a representational way that, "in man God is to become visible on earth".[170] Ultimately the *Imago Dei* is revealed by the fullness of the being of Jesus Christ—who as the image of the invisible God—represents both the fullness of God and fullness of being human.

Other than Jesus Christ (the incarnational second Adam or man of heaven) the *Imago Dei* is the only representational being of God's image and likeness on earth.[171] Hence, the next few sections will be investigating linguistic references in Scripture and the literature in order to identify key characteristics in which the *Imago Dei* can be viewed as representational God.

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[168] Chin-tai Kim, "Transcendence and Immanence," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55, no. 3 (1987): 539, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000980111&site=ehost-live. Both ideas and knowledge shared by God posteriori with humanity.

[169] Barth, Bromiley, and Torrance, 184-5.

[170] Hoekema, 52, 62. An "inner disposition of the heart" that "reveals itself in a new outward walk" thereby mirroring God.

[171] 1 Cor 15:22-49.

Representational Imago Dei in Scripture

Though there are no direct references in either the Old or New Testament to substantiate a representational interpretation of the *Imago Dei*, the biblical record provides enough evidence to support such an approach. Semantically, *tselem* and *d'muth* in Gen 1:26-28 refer to a concrete image and abstract resemblance respectively and remain unaffected by the Fall and integral to all humankind.[172] Middleton however, contends that "any Old Testament scholar worth her salt" would agree that the semantic range of *tselem* as an *idol* is precisely what is included in "a localised, visible, corporeal representation of the divine" as a minimum necessity of the *Imago Dei*.[173]

Fundamental to our understanding of how to approach the concept of God creating humankind in his image and likeness, it would suffice to clarify what the handful of direct biblical references to the *Imago Dei* do not specify. First and foremost, they do not provide enough evidence to support a clear systematic theological anthropology.[174] These texts also do not define the characteristics or identity of the *Imago Dei* as much as they expand on the consequential appointment and function of humankind's multifaceted dominion and relationships.[175] Neither do

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[172] Bray 196-7.

[173] Middleton, 11.

[174] K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 168.

[175] Erickson, 470. Substantively speaking, humankind is the image of God by virtue of being human, displayed in actions via relationships.

they support the idea of a diminished or deprived image as later developed by Christian theologians.[176] Nor do they provide any clear links to the prohibition of worshipping images in Exod 20:4 as a countermeasure against Ancient Near Eastern idolatrous influences.[177] Middleton does, however, focus on the *Imago Dei* as being a copy or idol, and as such representational of the divine in such a way that he concludes, "In the theology of both Psalm 8 and Genesis 1, humans (like the angelic heavenly court) have been given royal, and thus god-like, status in the world."[178] Hence, the concept of humankind as holistic beings being representational of God is captured within the *Imago Dei*.

The only other Old Testament passage with direct links to the *Imago Dei*, as the crowning act of creation, is Psalm 8:6-8 which confirms humankind's appointment to dominion over God's creation. Though both *tselem* and *d'muth* are omitted, humankind's dominion does not relate to functionality only, as Erickson would argue, but also to humans as representatives.[179] Instead, here the psalmist is overwhelmed by the paradoxical idea "that God consigns jurisdiction to one of his creatures" amid his own supreme, creative sovereignty.[180] Fretheim views God's entrusted dominion to humankind—as appointed and chosen agents—as an honoured

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[176] Cairns, 142-3. See footnote 29 for more detail.

[177] Mathews, 169.

[178] Middleton, 12.

[179] Erickson, 468.

[180] Mathews, 168.

preciousness (Isa 43:4). This highlights humankind's value as crowned creatures and therefore also as being representational of God.[181]

This passage, viewed as a commentary on Gen 1:26-28, thus expands on humankind's authorised and representational dominion over all the earth, similar to God's dominion over the entire universe. It also introduces two new concepts—being *crowned*, and being crowned with *glory and honour*, being repeated in the New Testament.[182] Paul connects the *Imago Dei* with the idea of "being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."[183] However, the notion of a developing, moral *Imago Dei*, introduced by Intertestamental Judaism, is foreign to the Old Testament and influenced the early Fathers to adopt the idea of a progressive sanctifying moral image to form a closer connection with God.[184] We will return to the notion of *being crowned with glory and honour* as a Messianic reference, but it suffices for now to acknowledge the representational status God bestows on humankind.

What is clear from Genesis 1 is that the creation of humankind is different from the rest of the created order as it is the only creative act where the plurality of "Let us", instead of "Let there", is utilised. Whether the plural here refers to the

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[181] Terence E Fretheim, "Preaching Creation: Genesis 1-2," *Word & World* 29, no. 1 (2009): 80.

[182] Heb 2:7-9.

[183] 2 Cor 3:18.

[184] Bray 203-5. Bray states that "almost all the ideas about the image which were later to be developed by the Christian Church appeared during this period" because they clung to the idea of a morally responsible image.

engagement of the Spirit of God in (Gen 1:2)[185], a conversation with the angelic host[186], or as a reference to the Trinity[187], the context of humankind's relationality is to be considered fundamentally representational of God.[188] Moreover, the plurality of the "male and female" (verse 27) relationship of the *Imago Dei* in becoming "one flesh" (Gen 2:24) may represent the oneness of divine Triunity.[189] The creation of the independent and interdependent, male-and-female, one-flesh relationships captured in the *Imago Dei* can thus be viewed as being uniquely representational of God. Fretheim further argues that the creation of such independent, yet interdependent and united relationships to have dominion and procreate is indicative of God's representational empowerment as a "power-sharing move" instead of doing everything on earth "all by himself".[190] Worth mentioning here is the ceasing of God's creative work on the Sabbath to rest and his commandment to humankind to also rest.[191] By suspending divine activity, God makes allowance for creaturely freedom and independence from "tight divine control" and his "ongoing divine

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[185] Nengean, 146-7.

[186] Bray 198.

[187] Colin E Gunton, *Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the Persons, Divine and Human*, *Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Kings College, 1991), 61.

[188] Gunton, 49.

[189] We will return to the concept of "one flesh" in Gen 2:24, which is repeated in Matt 19:4-6 and Eph 5:31.

[190] Fretheim, "Preaching Creation: Genesis 1-2," 78.

[191] Gen 2:2-3, Exod 20:8-11.

constraint and restraint in the exercise of power", and transfers both dominion and rest to humankind as representational of himself.[192]

Passages like Gen 5:3 and 9:6 demonstrate the inherent universal nature of the *Imago Dei* to the essence of being human,[193] because it includes the whole person as a being, thus representational of God's being.[194] Humankind's posterity can thus be seen as representational of God in the way "the human family perpetuates the *Imago Dei*".[195] To what degree humankind can be seen as being representational of God after the Fall, does not negate their ordained representational appointment, rather, humankind is held responsible and accountable as demonstrated by Adam and Cain's punishments in Gen 3-4, precisely because they are representational of God.

The three New Testament passages (1 Cor 11:7, James 3:9, Col 1:15) with direct links to the *Imago Dei* and creation do not offers any further clarity on what it is that constitutes being human; however, they contribute toward a representational understanding of the *Imago Dei*.[196] 1 Cor 11:1-16 is a challenging passage encased in a specific cultural context and addressing women's "common token of subjection to their husbands in that part of the world".[197] One way to view Paul's reprehension in 1

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[192] Fretheim, "Preaching Creation: Genesis 1-2," 81.

[193] Erickson, 469.

[194] Bray 196, 203. He contends that Gen 1:26-28 "precludes worship of the human being as God's representative on earth."

[195] Mathews, 169.

[196] 1 Cor 11:7, James 3:9, Col 1:15. In the former, *image* as εἰκών is referenced in terms of head coverings and in the latter, *likeness* as ὁμοίωσις is used to condemn cursing other humans.

[197] Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2263. "And as God is the head of Christ, and Christ the head of the whole human kind, so the man is the head of the two sexes: not indeed with

Cor 11:7 is to consider that the main issue he wishes to address is not gender differentiation *per se* but "honouring the head", highlighting how men, being representational of Christ is comparable to women being representational of men.[198] Ultimately, both are representational of Christ in what Allen describes as the "paradox of representation".[199] Christ as head of the man, similar to the husband as head of the wife, can be dishonoured respectively either by shaven or long hair as a symbolic representational of respecting authority[200] because "head coverings were [considered to be] a culturally specific symbol" of authority.[201] The similarities pertain to an understanding of authority expressed via a cultural perception represented by long or short hair. A man, whose head is shaven when he "prays and prophesies" symbolises honour to his head, Christ. This kind of honour is comparable to a woman whose hair is long when she "prays and prophesies" to honour her head, the husband. As such, representation is extended, though not explained, to Christ and his head, God the Father.[202] Thus semantically, authority and

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such dominion as Christ has over the kind or God has over the man Christ Jesus; but a superiority and headship he has, and the woman should be in subjection and not assume or usurp the man's place."

[198] Erickson, 459-60. Erickson points out that woman "is the glory of man as man is the glory of God" and can therefore be seen as being representational of man, and as *Imago Dei*, of God.

[199] Edgar Leonard Allen, "Representative-Christology in the New Testament," *Harvard Theological Review* 46, no. 3 (1953): 169, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000663702&site=ehost-live.

[200] 1 Cor 11:4-5, 10.

[201] Richard L Pratt Jr, *1 & 2 Corinthians, Ed*, vol. 7, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 185.

[202] 1 Cor 11:3.

honour are demonstrated, not by the symbolism of men's and women's short and long hair respectively but in the way they demonstrate honour and submission in a simple observable and generally accepted cultural difference between men and women by the way they either shave or keep their hair long.[203] Correspondingly, in another reference to the *Imago Dei*, Paul explicitly initiates the importance of "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ".[204] He then promptly describes how both husbands and wives (not men and women) can display their submission (husbands to Christ as head; women to husbands as head) to represent how the church should submit to Christ. Therefore, a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* contributes to the symbolism of authority and submission and in turn sheds light on two representational characteristics—being under the authority of a head and submitting to such authority in order to demonstrate honour. These characteristics of the *Imago Dei* thus fundamentally correspond to humankind's representational status of submission to God as a way of "exercising delegated authority" on his behalf.[205]

Similarly, but instead of submitting to authority to be representational of God, James 3:9 addresses the use of the tongue to bless (and not curse) people as representational of God.[206] James refers to the creation account when humankind was

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[203] Richard L. Pratt, Jr., *I & Ii Corinthians*, vol. 7 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 183-5. Pratt refers to a Mediterranean culture in Paul's day when adulterous women were punished and had their heads shaved, hence Paul's desire to avoid this association of disgrace.

[204] Eph 5:21-7.

[205] Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 284.

[206] James 3:9.

made in God's likeness and blessed by him.[207] Thus, as representational of God, James is admonishing his brothers to use their tongue to bless others in the likeness of how God has blessed humankind when He created them.

Finally, Col 1:15 equates the image with Christ, as "the firstborn of all creation", portrayed as both the *Imago Dei* and the "fullness of God". The term firstborn is used again by the Apostle Paul, but this time to compare the image of Adam (the first Adam of earth/dust) with the image of Christ (the second Adam of heaven) in a representational way.[208] Here is what we can ascertain from these two passages: Christ, the firstborn of creation is God's invisible image; Adam (the first Adam of earth) was made in God's image; Adam sinned and his image was broken and marked by dishonour and weakness; Christ, the firstborn became the Second Adam (second Adam from heaven); the Second Adam died and was resurrected; the Second Adam's image became imperishable with glory and power; all humankind has borne the image of the first Adam; all those belonging to Christ shall bear the image of the Second Adam.

In conclusion, the *Imago Dei* as representational of God is affirmed, albeit that it is a "paradox of representation" through Christ as the firstborn, who took over from Adam, and as the image of the invisible God, He became the new representative of both humankind and God.

This thesis thus proposes that the best possible approach to the *Imago Dei* must recognise that the task at hand is to define a being created in the image and

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[207] Gen 1:28. To *bless* (praise or speak well of), translated from εὐλογέω is from the same the root as λόγος, the *Word* in the beginning (Joh. 1:1) who was with God.

[208] 1 Cor 15:45-9.

likeness of God's own Being; therefore, the *Imago Dei* must be considered as representational of God.

Notwithstanding the absence of representational language in Scripture, we have demonstrated that the concept of the *Imago Dei* as representational of God is corroborated in the biblical record. We now ask if such a position can be sustained despite humankind falling into sin.

Representational Imago Dei after the Fall

When Hoekema contends that, "In fact, we ought to say not only that man has the image of God but that man is the image of God", his answer does not determine if humankind images God well or not, whether pre- or post-fall, but simply does.[209] This leads us to the question if, and how the Fall has impacted humankind's *Imago Dei*. Genesis 5:1 reiterates the prelapsarian fact that "when God made man, he made him in the likeness of God." This would be an ideal place for the author to demonstrate any conflicting impact of the Fall in chapter 3 and the murder of Abel in chapter 4, yet in verse 3, the author chooses to incorporate the same pre-Fall language of Gen 1:27-28 for his posterity when he writes that Adam "fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image". There is no mention whatsoever that humankind's sin has impacted what God has done by creating humankind in his image and likeness. The same is verified in Gen 9:6 when the author establishes the value of human life by the prohibition of murder for no other reason than "for God made man in his own image". Since these two references to the *Imago Dei* in

[209] Hoekema, 18.

Genesis after Creation and the Fall do not support a total destruction of God's image and likeness in any way, we must therefore accept that it remains intact, though broken or marred, as we continue our investigation.

With regards to the Fall, it is prudent to consider Bray's arguments that it was humankind's God-glorifying obedience that was affected, and not the image.[210] Fundamentally, Bray draws attention to the contribution of Intertestamental Judaism which speculated on the concept of a gradually diminished image, "not by the inheritance of Adam's guilt, but because of the sins of individual men", and conversely the idea of an increased image by virtue of being "able to distinguish between good and evil". He thus identifies the introduction of a moral component to the understanding of the *Imago Dei*. This, he writes, influenced the early Church Fathers to conceive of the possibility of attaining to the divine likeness and shifted the concept of viewing the image as an established relationship to "a gift enabling man to achieve a closer union with God". Inevitably, he argues, the idea of a lost image after the Fall thus became more favourable and resulted in the concept of a "two-part image" i.e., body and soul. It is thus evident why Bray claims that traditional Christian and Reformational theologies were based on biblically unsupported concepts. To conclude he demonstrates why the idea that the *Imago Dei* possesses something divine, like the immortality of the soul to transfer moral awareness, underscores the urgency around separating *d'muth* and *tselem* and locating a god-like aspect of humankind in the *Imago Dei*.[211]

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[210] Bray 220. Tselem (Image) here translated as eikôn (LXX) being used here for Image in Greek

[211] Bray 203-6.

Undoubtedly, the Fall has impacted humankind in unfathomable ways. Tozer reiterates the Reformation theology of humankind's deep "inner depravity" because of the Fall and, he argues to not admit so, is to subscribe to a "superficial creed", leading to a "poor quality of Christian".[212] If the impact of the Fall is not focused per se on the degree to which humankind can be seen as being representational of God, then we must question if the Fall actually negated God's image or not. Undoubtedly, Gen 9:6[213] as one of the handful of direct Scriptural references, unambiguously affirms the retention of the *Imago Dei* after the Fall, as Hoekema attests,

> Man is the highest creature God has made, an image-bearer of God, who is only a little lower than God, and under whose feet all of creation has been placed. All this is true despite man's fall into sin. Thus, according to the Old Testament fallen man still bears the image of God.[214]

Commenting on Gen 9:6 Peterson agrees when he writes, "God is the one imaged, and is, therefore, the one represented by humanity. So, ultimately, violence is done against God when humans are murdered."[215] Neither does Elmer's composite synthesis of the historical views negate the *Imago Dei* in humankind despite the impact of the Fall, nor his representational interpretation when he proposes, "I want to suggest that the image retained post-fall is an irrevocable mission to serve as God's personal embodied representatives."[216]

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[212] A.W. Tozer, *Man: The Dwelling Place of God* (General Press, 2020), 8-9.

[213] Corresponding to James 3:9 (in the context of Matt 5:21-2 and 1 John 3:15) confirms the New Testament's affirmation that fallen man still bears God's image.

[214] Hoekema, 19. Based on his understanding of Gen 9:6 and James 3:9 that the Fall has not obliterated the image of God in all human beings whether they believe or not.

[215] Peterson, 211.

[216] Elmer Chen, "The Imago Dei, Embodied Mediation and the Church's Mission" (paper presented at the SST Postgraduate Conference, Oxford, January, 2014), 3.

Thus, it is evident that despite historical evidence and theological debates on the severity of the impact of the Fall on humankind, scholarly reviews have come full circle to acknowledge that somehow and, in some way, though impacted, the Fall of humankind into sin does not negate the *Imago Dei*. Hoekema clarifies,

> So, to be faithful to the biblical evidence, our understanding of the image of God must include these senses: (1) The image of God as such is an unlosable aspect of man, a part of his essence and existence, something that man cannot lose without ceasing to be man. (2) The image of God, however, must also be understood as that likeness to God which was perverted when man fell into sin, and is being restored and renewed in the process of sanctification.[217]

Bray contends that it is reprehensible that Philo and Intertestamental Judaism set the Fathers and the early Church up for the concept of Pelagianism, which compelled them to equate *eikôn* with a postlapsarian depraved morality. Instead, he argues that the use of *eikôn* in 2 Cor 3:18 better expresses the connotation of "reflecting" the glory of God.[218]

Hence, with the post-Fall moral imperative component removed, and not putting humankind's qualitative imaging-ability/capacity on trial, it becomes clear that a representational view of the *Imago Dei* can be justified; therefore, we shall proceed to explore some key characteristics of a representational approach.

Key Representational Characteristics of the Imago Dei

This section will aim to demonstrate that viewing the *Imago Dei* as representational of God emanates from key anthropological characteristics:

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[217] Hoekema, 32.

[218] Bray 208-9. He argues that retaining the concept of Pelagianism, "a morally responsible image" resulted in the Reformers being obliged to argue in favour of total depravity of the image after the Fall, whereas he argues that the Fall in fact brought about a moral awareness of "knowing good and evil".

humankind's temporality, the human being as a temple, their delegated authority and imbued glory, and lastly, humanity's God-ordained purposes.

Representational of God's Temporality

This section will attempt to define how the limitations of being human not only exemplify the contrasting differences between a holy God and sinful humankind but how they are related and connected to each other within the confines of time and space.

There is no scope in this thesis for an in-depth look at the philosophical arguments between the views of the temporalist (rejecting timelessness) and atemporalist (accepting timelessness) views of God other than brief understanding of divine temporality. However, of note is Senor's conclusion that the theistic temporalist "can very reasonably accept creation *ex nihilo*", whereas the atemporalist view would require God to remain outside of time.[219] This is important because it validates the assumption that creating humankind in time is by definition temporal, but by the same token, humans must therefore also be representational of the Creator who was present at the time of creating them, particularly if they are to be in relationship with each other. So, when David in Ps 19:1 writes, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork", it follows that creation must therefore be able to reveal or be representative of God in some way.

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[219] Thomas D Senor, "Divine Temporality and Creation Ex Nihilo," *Faith and Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (1993): 90. Creating something out of nothing doesn't necessarily demand that the Creator must remain outside of time and space.

If humankind is to be considered endlessly temporal (a creature, having a beginning and logically therefore an end) but living eternally (thus dependant on life not ending) and can only be present in the present, and God is considered to be temporally eternal (having no beginning or end yet present at any time, past or future), humanity and God would inevitably be connected in their moments of temporality. After the Fall, God's temporality becomes even more visible in his relationship with humankind's temporal existence. Peters confirms both God's temporality and eternity by arguing that "If God's creating and redeeming action is to be effective in this world, then there must be some fashion in which God can be affected by the temporal process" yet "As Trinity, God is both eternal and temporal."[220] These ideas may appear to be contradictory but are nonetheless biblical. Similarly, Barth's concept of eternity is not timeless, but may be seen as "the simultaneity and coinherence of past, present and future".[221] It is in this sense, Peters argues, that God's eternal life can be seen as being "dynamized" in the world of humankind's temporal activity.[222] Barth puts it this way,

> Even the eternal God does not live without time. He is supremely temporal. For His eternity is authentic temporality, and therefore the source of all time. But in His eternity, in the uncreated self-subsistent time which is one of the perfections of His divine nature, present, past and future, yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, are not successive, but simultaneous.[223]

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[220] Peters, 171.

[221] Peters, 149.

[222] Peters, 171. Peters refers to the notion of timelessness as "a platonic tradition bequeathed to Christianity".

[223] Barth, 437.

To simplify, Barth accepts the notion of God's temporality and involvement within time, but he only goes as far as stating that "God is eminently timely" (always on time) whereas Peters argues in favour of "temporal succession" (God is always present in time) as part of God's ontological and eternal substance.[224] It suggests that the temporality of humankind can be seen as representational of God's divine temporality. Basically, humans are temporal, and God (though eternal) is also authentically and presently temporal, although not limited by time.

Peters argues that Christianity over the last two centuries, has defined eternity as timelessness.[225] Thus intelligibly, theologians like Canale, Kaiser, Peckham and Peters have questioned the Christian views based on inherited Greek philosophical, first principles that superimposed the notion of a timeless, eternal God (one that is unchangeable and therefore impassable) on biblical theology.[226] Logically, it would make sense that fallen humankind's temporality is even further removed from God's presence and less *like* God; however, Ps 34:18 affirms that "the Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit".

Platonic-Thomistic philosophy has thus made the construct of the actual presence of God within the confines and limitations of human temporality untenable, and has consequently only allowed for allegorical, symbolical, or metaphorical interpretations of God's interactions with humankind.[227] Levering points out that though typical Greek Philosophical attributes assigned to their gods appear to be

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[224] Peters, 149.

[225] Peters, 148.

[226] John C Peckham, "Toward a Systematic Theology of the Sanctuary: Part 2," (2020): 27-8.

[227] Canale 200-5.

Christian they are not. Biblically speaking, God's attributes "are never separated from God's acts in history."[228] He points to Luther's interpretation of righteousness as "an attribute of God" to be imputed to sinful humans because of their "lack of holiness".[229] This sounds biblical, but the underlying philosophical theologies on "holiness" are derived from "Plato's god of ideal form and perfect moral goodness"; Aristotle's concept of the "unmoved mover"; and Augustine's "unchangeable" view of God's "being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth", and not the biblical record.[230] Peters' challenge to such Greco-Roman philosophical thinking is that,

> the message of twentieth century science is clear: time is as real for the natural world as it is for human consciousness. Reality is temporal. And, if God is engaged in an active relationship with the world, then God must both affect and be affected by the world's temporality.[231]

Not surprisingly, we find ample support in the literature. For example, Craig bases his conclusion that "God is temporal" on two arguments: the impossibility of atemporal personhood and divine action in the world.[232] Fretheim's conclusion also

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[228] Levering 174. These would include biblical notions of immortality, invisibility, and moral goodness.

[229] Rom 1:17.

[230] Levering 173. We can thus see why the reformers theologised the unbiblical notion of total *Imago Dei* depravity.

[231] Peters, 150.

[232] William Lane Craig, *Divine Eternity* (na, 2009), 9-12. Craig explains that the impossibility of atemporal personhood is because God is essentially personal; therefore, he cannot be timeless since only a person-being can have temporal personhood forms of consciousness (like remembering, anticipating, reflecting, deliberating, deciding, intending, and acting intentionally). God's timelessness in relation to his actions in a temporal world has a first moment of time in which He now stands in a new relation to which He did not stand before; hence, He now exists temporally in

affirms the ontological temporality of God when he writes, "The God who is present is both immanent and transcendent; both are appropriate words for a constant divine state of affairs."[233] Retrospectively, Hoekema's view of the *Imago Dei* as a dynamic and progressive re-imaging process in cooperation with Scripture and God's Spirit, affirms the ontological temporality of humankind as well as divine temporality in the way God affects, and is affected by, the redemption of humankind.[234]

With such considerations, we must therefore approach the biblical narrative with openness and caution, accepting that it reveals the interactions of an eternal, immanent God present with fallen humankind within their spatial-temporal confines. Instead of superimposing secular and unbiblical views on God, borrowing from extra-biblical literature, extrapolating the impossible from the mere five direct biblical references to the *Imago Dei*, apportioning different meanings to *image* and *likeness*, or simply metaphorising any apparent correlations, it will be sensible to adopt a biblical and representational philosophical stance. Such an approach will convey a more biblically accurate kind of divinity and God-like connection between a transcendent eternal God and the temporal *Imago Dei*.

God's being therefore remains representationally embedded within the *Imago Dei* despite sin and death, simply because God's being allows his presence within the confines of human temporality. As such, the Psalmist describes that there is no place

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real relations with his new temporal creation. Because God is omniscient and knows what's happening in a constant fluctuating world (tensed truths), He therefore must be considered temporal.

[233] Terence E Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Abingdon Press, 2010).

[234] Hoekema. Hoekema quotes James 3:9 as evidence that the image has not been obliterated but is in need of transformation through the process of sanctification.

to hide or flee from God's presence, even less *through* the valley of the shadow of death.[235] This will become even more evident when we relate God's localised dwelling presence to another representational aspect: humankind as a holy temple.

Representational of the Temple

If, as the biblical record demonstrates, God can both be transcendent and immanently present within the fallen, temporal-and spatial limitations of humankind, then the concept of God's presence in human temples (to affect and be affected) becomes more tenable than it does with the assumption of philosophical first principles. Instead, God's hallowing presence in temporality becomes a literal reality of absolute truth. For example, the New Testament refers to human body-temples with God's presence abiding "in us", or Christ "in you", or His Spirit dwelling "in you".[236] These references can and should be seen as evidence of God's actual presence with humankind despite the limitations of their temporality, even after the Fall. In other words, the *Imago Dei* (more than our substance, function, or relationality) can receive God's presence similarly to how God's presence or Spirit filled the tabernacle and the prophets.[237]

The biblical narrative records God's "fillings" in different ways and to seemingly varying degrees, such as the Spirit of the Lord rushing upon Samson, Saul and David; filling the goldsmith Bezalel with his Spirit to make the Temple

[235] Ps 139:7, Ps 23:4.

[236] 1 Cor 6:19, 1 John 4:12, Col 1:27, Rom 8:9.

[237] God's filling is not pantheistical, but rather typological or allegorical.

furnishings; the filling of the tabernacle; the new believers filled with God's Pentecost Spirit in the upper room; and Ananias praying for Saul to be "filled with the Holy Spirit".[238] It also records Christ being filled with "the fullness of God" is as one would expect; however, it is also applied to believers.[239] Paul desires that believers "may be filled with all the fullness of God" until one day they are filled with the "the fullness of Christ".[240]

Allen rightfully cautions that being thus filled by God aligns with the idea that the original is as the copy, only greater; yet simultaneously, "the delegate is as his master yet is other than his master".[241] There is no scope here to distinguish between *being filled* with the Spirit (in people) and the indwelling "fullness of God" (in Jesus) other than simply acknowledging that the presence of God can in some way fill human temples. By acknowledging the ontological truth that "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you", the reality of a holy God's presence dwelling in humans becomes tenable. In this way, the *Imago Dei*, seen as a frail human temple, is representational of God's desire to dwell with humankind.[242]

The creation account of Genesis leaves no doubt that of all the created order, only humankind was endowed with such an ontological indwelling capability and capacity to be, and to function, in a reciprocal relationship with God. Note the

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[238] Jud. 14:6, 19, 1 Sam 10:10, 11:6, 1 Sam 16:13, Exod 31:3, Exod 40:34-5, Acts 2:4, Acts 9:17.

[239] Col 1:19.

[240] Eph 3:19, Eph 4:13.

[241] Allen 166-8.

[242] 1 Cor 6:16.

difference between God's direct communication with humankind "And God said *to them*", and "God said" to the rest of creation.[243] Thus, the being "over against" God's Being is more than Barth's understanding of relationality because God's presence can transcend the philosophical barrier of human time and space and fill it with his presence to an extent of his choosing. Tozer refers to this as the "mysterious essence" of humankind's being that is "man's 'I AM' gift from the I AM who created him".[244]

Genesis 1 also notes that humankind alone is appointed as caretakers over the earth with the ability to assist in the procreation of those bearing the *Imago Dei* and is in this sense a representation of God who *creates* and *rules* over the entire universe. Hoekema proposes that when consideration is given to the *Imago Dei*, "We should think of the image of God in this sense, not as a noun but as a verb". Hence, his suggestion of *imaging God*, is something which only beings, made in the image and likeness of God's Being can do.[245]

Consequently, we must view humankind's representational suitability to be like that of the tabernacle; to be *filled* by, and thus hosting, the presence of God which was intentionally so designed and created by God.[246] Because this thesis focuses on representational connections, the reader's attention must be drawn to the

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[243] Gen 1:28. Italics provided.

[244] Tozer, 4.

[245] Hoekema, 28.

[246] "And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Gen 1:28; "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst." Exod 25:8

concept of representational-ability, not only in the way in which God's presence dwells in humankind (and the tabernacle), but also the recognition that they were designed for the indwelling of his presence.

Humankind, like other representational bodies such as the tabernacle or the church, is limited and therefore cannot contain "the fullness of God" and the Fall has added another dimension to these limitations. This corresponds with the impossibility of the first temple to contain the fullness of God when the "highest heaven" could not even do so.[247] However, it does shed light on its "partial" representational indwelling ability and capacity when the glory of the LORD did fill the house of the LORD.[248]

Consequently, it should not surprise the reader to find direct and indirect references to representational concepts in the biblical record that demonstrate intentional representational-ability such as the "temple" referring to both the believer's human body and the church as a structure, translated in Greek as ναός.[249] Both references identify humankind individually and corporately as a potential indwelling, sacred temple for the Holy Spirit. This affirms the concept of God tabernacling with the *Imago Dei* as He chooses. Paul not only states that believers "are the temple (ναός) of the living God" but in doing so, he references the Old Testament covenantal language in the context of the tabernacle where God is

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[247] 1 Kings 8:27.

[248] "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" 1Ki. 8:27

[249] 1 Cor 6:19-20, Eph 2:21.

dwelling among his people.[250] That humankind can indeed receive the indwelling presence of God is further established in/by a number of texts in the Old Testament.[251] The ability and capacity of the *Imago Dei* to receive the *indwelling* presence of God affirms the concept and connection of humankind as being a representational temple for God. Humans are also unable to house the fullness of God. Hence, this is not a contrast. Isaiah points out that a *broken*, *lowly*, *humble,* and *contrite* person can be chosen for God's indwelling presence, which conclusively disputes the philosophical notion of total depravity of the soul after the Fall.

It must therefore be noticed that the indwelling-representation of humans is dynamic, particularly in the way God's indwelling Spirit can fill and withdraw. The biblical record rather affirms an ebb and flow of God's Spirit with humankind (and the tabernacle);[252] for example, God's withdrawal from Jerusalem; the Spirit's departure from an individual; the capture of the Ark and subsequent departure of God's glory, and Jesus' statement of Israel's "house" that is *forsaken*.[253] Thus, although the Fall signifies God's partial withdrawal from his indwelling presence, it still dynamically remains until death.[254]

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[250] 2 Cor 6:16, Lev 26:11-2.

[251] Is. 57:15, Isa 66:1-2.

[252] "The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon" Samson in Jdg. 14 to empower him for his mission. On the other hand, "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul" in 1 Sam 16:14 in his disobedience.

[253] Ezek 5:11, 1 Sa. 16:14, 1 Sa. 4:22, Luke 13:35.

[254] Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." Gen 6:3

In summary, despite the Fall, God still chooses to abide and dwell in human temples as a representation of his willingness to dwell in *broken lowly*, *humble,* and *contrite* human beings, consequently imbuing them with a God-like authority.

Representational of God's Authority

Humans are imbued with authority to act merely by having the *Imago Dei* regardless of divine presence. However, this section will examine how the biblical record demonstrates how humankind's authority can also be viewed as representational of God's own authority.

Though Erickson argues that substantively only humankind has been given the necessary capacities and faculties to rule functionally and relationally over the earth, both the OT and NT are clear that dominion is a prerogative that belongs only to God.[255] It is thus noteworthy when Gen 1:26-28 reveals that God has *given* a share of his divine entitlement to humankind to "have dominion". Psalm 8:5-6 as the only other direct link to the *Imago Dei* and creation, also confirms "dominion" as something that God "has given" (verse 6) to humankind. Hence, dominion is to be seen as an appointment of entrusted authority and as such can be given and taken away. There are many biblical instances of God appointing and removing representational appointees from the office of authority. One example is the removal and restoration of Nebuchadnezzar's kingship.[256] Hence, it suffices to assume that

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[255] Job 5:25, Ps 145:13, Dan 4:3, 1 Pet 4:11, 5:11, Jud. 1:25, Rev. 1:6. Dan 7:14 reference God's dominion as "an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away".

[256] Dan 4:22-5, 7:14. After being warned by Daniel that though he has a "dominion to the ends of the earth" his pride and arrogance will result in "a decree of the Most High" that will drive him from his throne "till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom

God created humankind with all the substantive qualities needed but his appointment of humankind to rule and have dominion is a vicarious one. Thus, reflectively, and representational of God's authority over the entire universe, humankind now exerts a delegated authority over a limited and temporal world. Henry summarises that humankind's "*image* and *likeness* denote the likeliest image, the nearest resemblance" to God "in his place and authority" as "God's representative, or viceroy upon earth".[257]

Genesis 2:19 verifies the exercise of Adam's delegated authority when God "brought" all the animals and birds "to the man to see what he would call them", and "whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name". Compare this to God exercising dominion himself and naming all the stars.[258] Another way Scripture describes the exercise of humankind's vicarious and representational dominion (ultimately fulfilled in Christ) is when both Ps 8:6 and Heb 2:8 use the phrase "you have put all things (in subjection) under his feet". Though neither of these verses has direct links to our key passage in Genesis, the repeat of this phrase by the Apostle Paul in the comparison between Adam and Christ significantly connects the New Testament concept of "dominion" or "subjection under his feet" to the *Imago Dei*.[259] Paul's conclusion in bearing "the image of the man of heaven" as opposed to "the image of the man of dust" is a realignment towards a Christ-like delegated authority

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he will. After completing his seven-year punishment and with his kingdom re-established, Nebuchadnezzar in humility acknowledged that God's "dominion is an everlasting dominion".

[257] Henry, 6.

[258] Ps 147:4.

[259] 1 Cor 15:49.

as God intended in the Garden when he brought all creatures in subjection to Adam when he named them.

In a similar way to *having dominion*, Scripture declares God to be the sole Creator who made heaven and earth.[260] Genesis 1:26-8 reveals a delegated authority *given* to humankind by God to "multiply and fill the earth" within the relational context of "male and female".[261] Though it appears that human procreation is a natural ability to multiply like the rest of creation, having children gifted with the *Imago Dei* is "a heritage from the Lord, a fruit of the womb a reward" bestowed to humankind only.[262] The fact that God can give and withhold having children is indicative that it too, like dominion, is a delegated privilege.[263] This is well illustrated by God granting Sarah a child beyond her age of bearing children.[264]

Thus, the commissioning of humankind with delegated authority to "fill" (procreate) and "have dominion" or "subdue" (rule) on earth is representational of the ultimate prerogatives of God, who alone is Creator and Ruler over the universe. Notably, both aspects (procreating and ruling) are not assigned to angels, thus crowning humankind (who were made lower than the angels) with a glory and honour as representational of God–the Creator and Ruler of everything.[265] Psalm 8:5

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[260] See Exod 20:11, Ps 121:2, Acts 17:24, Rev. 14:7.

[261] Deut 32:6, Isa 40:28, Isa 43:1, 1 Pet 4:19.

[262] Ps 127:3. Humankind can exercise control over the multiplication and breeding of nature, but not *vice versa*.

[263] Gen 25-30 reveals the closing and opening of Rachel and Leah's wombs respectively.

[264] Gen 17:17-9.

[265] "For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that

alludes to the formation of such delegated authority on behalf of God as an endowment linked to God who "crowned him (humankind collectively) with glory and honour". This crowning act of God's creation is repeated in Hebrews 2:7; only here it emphasises the appointment of the *son of man* in reference to Christ as humankind's new representative—to which we shall return later in the thesis.

Unfortunately, the Fall has resulted in a kind of *authority* that is hardly representational of God's "glory and honour" that is to be "very good" (Gen 1:31) and rather more reflective of evil (Matt 4:9).[266] Though humankind was meant to usher in the presence of God on earth, Beale acknowledges that "we do not represent God's authority and glory as we should."[267] However, the point is "that the *Imago Dei* is not about making humanity distinct (in a disconnected sense) from the rest of creation" by putting them on a universal "pedestal", but rather "grounds human beings to an existential reality".[268] The reality of humankind as "embodied beings", Bentley argues, is their interconnection with creation, reflecting and "personifying the nature of God's being through the broad strokes of *love*" that are defined by the

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you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honour, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Heb 2:5-8; "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." Mat 22:30

[266] Wessel Bentley, "Are We Special? A Critique of *Imago Dei*," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 73 (06/26 2017): 2, https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4524. He points out that the evidence rather indicates an image in the likeness of the "gods of hedonism, self-focussed power and exploitative wealth".

[267] G. K. Beale, and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us* (La Vergne, United: IVP, 2015), 22. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/morling/detail.action?docID=4781101.

[268] Bentley 4.

Law of love.[269] Love and representational authority are thus more closely related than fallen humankind has demonstrated. We would agree with Clines' caution that though the image elevates humankind "to the highest status conceivable, short of complete divinisation", creaturely godlikeness at its best only represents the Creator.[270]

Hence, the reality is that the biblical narrative defines delegated authority, whether it aligns with or against God's way of authority. For example, Jesus demonstrates what *subdue* and having *dominion* should look like. Matthew references a God-like "authority on earth to forgive sins" while also contrasting a gentile authority lording over subjects with the authority of the Son of Man who "came not to be served but to serve."[271] In both instances, Jesus, to whom all authority has been given, defines the kind of authority He represents, that is, a willing, freely forgiving, and serving kind of authority.[272]

Vickers summarises it this way, "God is our ultimate cause. He is the ultimate environment in which we live and have our being. He is our ultimate authority."[273] We must consider that humankind's representational authority is grounded in God's ontological authority and the unfolding of his Being as Creator and Ruler of the universe. Consequently, the *Imago Dei* helps to enlighten and inform what it means

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[269] Bentley 5.

[270] Clines 53-4.

[271] Matt 9:6, 20:25.

[272] Mat. 28:18.

[273] Douglas Vickers, "God in Eternity and Time," (25, https://www.affinity.org.uk/downloads/foundations/Foundations%20Archive/49_21.pdf.

to be truly a God-like human, delegated with a representational God-like authority on earth as beings crowned with glory and honour.

Representational of God's Glory

This section will explore how humankind being *crowned with glory and honour* contributes toward the understanding of the *Imago Dei* as a representation of God.

The mentioning of the glory of God is common and frequently mentioned in Scripture yet diverse in scope and application.[274] Nowhere is the glory of God more vividly displayed than in and through Jesus Christ as the glory of God.[275] However, the association of humankind with God's glory is indirectly, yet unambiguously connected to the *Imago Dei*. Humankind's functional dominion over the rest of creation in Gen 1:26-28 and Ps 8:5 is connected to the glory of God that was bestowed on the *Imago Dei*.[276] Klein argues that the "functional glory-likeness is man's likeness to God in the possession of official authority and in the exercise of

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[274] Exod 16:10, 24:16, Acts 7:2, Exod 40:34, 2 Chron 5:14, Isa 6:3, Exod 33:18-22, Ps 19:1, Isa 46:13, Ezek 3:23, Luke 21:27, 2:9, 1 Cor 2:8, Eph 1:17, Col 1:27, 2 Cor 3:8. For example, the glory of God appeared in a cloud, a tent and to people, dwelt on a mountain, filled the tabernacle, the temple, and the whole earth, was shown to Moses, declared by creation, associated with a nation and the second coming, visible to people, seen in the crucifixion and connected with the Father, Son and Spirit.

[275] 2 Cor 4:6, Titus 2:13, Heb 2:9, James 2:1.

[276] Mathews, 168. Matthews sees dominion as a consequential function of "royal administration".

dominion".[277] Being thus made in the image and likeness of God is like a crown of glory bestowed on humankind in the Garden of Eden.[278]

It is important to note that humankind retained the glory image of God despite the Fall as Matthews contends, "they did not lose the 'image' (Gen 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9); rather, the 'glory of sonship faded.'"[279] It is by the "common grace" of God, that a measure of "the glory-image was preserved in spite of the Fall."[280] If then the *Imago Dei* were not lost at the Fall, how in what way was the glory-image affected? Bray argues that the Rabbis of Intertestamental Judaism originally held to the idea of an unaffected image, but later introduced the concept of a "diminished divine image", not because of inherited guilt of the Fall, but because of the build-up of sins. As such they claim that the image completely disappeared after Enoch.[281] However, since the taking of life is based on Gen 9:6 and remains wrong throughout all Scripture, we need to look elsewhere for the effect sin had on humankind. It was also during this same period that Rabbis substituted "glory" for image, resulting in the concept of "an image deprived of God's glory."[282] Kline

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[277] Meredith G Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 31.

[278] As much as an excellent wife is the crown of her husband, wealth the crown of the wise and grandchildren the crown of the aged, so humankind is the crown of creation simple because of the *Imago Dei*. See Pro. 12:4, 14:24 and 17:6.

[279] Mathews, 169.

[280] Kline, 29-32. Glory-image as humankind's ethical glory.

[281] Bray 204.

[282] Bray 205. Bray points out that the concept "deprived of God's glory" came to be identified with "likeness" from which "the two-part image was born": humankind's *image* remained unchanged while *likeness* diminished.

argues that irrespective of the glory-image becoming destitute at the Fall, humankind faced a progressive glorification process.[283] Bray agrees that glorification is "the idea that the image was originally designed to progress from glory to glory, as man got progressively nearer to God."[284] Pointing to Christ in the New Testament, Hoekema reiterates the same notion when he writes, "As we continually reflect the glory of the Lord, we are continually being transformed into the image of the one whose glory we are reflecting."[285] Thus, the idea of a progressive and restorative glory image to transform humankind's broken image from one degree of glory to another, is indicative that the *Imago Dei* not only retained God's glory image to some degree but is representational of God's glory.[286]

Though the *Imago Dei* remained, the Fall diminished the glory of humankind to such an extent that it can only be transformed "from one degree of glory to another" back into the likeness of "the glory of Christ, who is the image of God".[287] An example of humankind's bestowed glory can be seen in how Moses' face shone after being in God's presence.[288] The Apostle Paul argues that this is similar to how "the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God", is to shine in believers'

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[283] Kline, 31. "Yet, the glory of man's royal functioning would be progressive as he increasingly fulfilled his historical task of subduing the earth, his ultimate attainment of functional glory awaiting the eschatological glorification of his whole nature after the image of the radiant Glory-Spirit."

[284] Bray 208.

[285] Hoekema, 23. Hoekema sees this as the work of the Holy Spirit.

[286] 2 Cor 3:18

[287] 2 Cor 3:18, 4:4.

[288] Exod 34:29-35.

hearts.[289] Because of the *Imago Dei*, humankind has the potential to exhibit the glory of God in varying degrees, thus pointing to a representation of God's glory. The concept of representation is repeated when Paul equates both man's shaven head and a woman's long hair as symbols of authority pointing to a man as "the image and glory of God" and a woman as "the glory of man".[290] Hence, though connected to the *Imago Dei*, the glory of God is not something humankind possesses. It can be lost or gained, and therefore better seen as representational of a divine glory that only God possesses.

Humankind's representational glory thus provides the theological impetus to explore other related representational purposes in the next four sections.

Representational Purposes

This section will explore how *having dominion* and *being fruitful* in Gen 1:26-28 can be seen as representational of God's prerogatives to rule and create. We will also briefly explore a few similar inferred purposes that emphasise the representational connections between humankind and God.

Being elevated to the highest creaturely status and imbued with a similar God-like authority and glory places humankind in a similar, but representational God-like responsible position. Bray argues that the *Imago Dei* uniquely allows humankind to engage God and others in moral, God-glorifying ways, when he writes, "To him alone is given the privilege of fulfilling his earthly existence in

[289] 2 Cor 4:3-6.

[290] 1 Cor 11:2-10.

relation to God, and this entails responsibility for his actions."[291] Note Chen's focus on vocation as the *Imago Dei* while arguing for a composite, representational purpose when he writes,

> Various elements of the Imago Dei – ontology, relation and function – coalesce to form a composite picture: the Imago Dei is the role of human persons living in covenant relation to God who consequently are being conformed to his character and are called to bodily represent God in the world through loving communion with other persons and by serving God's kingdom purposes.[292]

Though Chen favours vocation in viewing the *Imago Dei*, he underscores the importance of the calling and affirmation of "human beings as embodied persons, gifted with a vocation to manifest God's glory and represent him relationally and purposefully in his world."[293] Though "God has established a special relationship with each and every creature", Fretheim argues that the onus rests on humankind to "reflect that relationship in all that we do if we are to be and to act appropriately as the image of God in the world."[294] In this way, humankind reflects the moral goodness of God as a "divine intention" with "elements of beauty, purposefulness, and praiseworthiness".[295] Instead of "acts of terrorism in direct opposition to the

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[291] Bray 224.

[292] Elmer Chen, "The Imago Dei, Embodied Mediation and the Church's Mission" (paper presented at the SST Postgaduate Conference, Oxford, January, 2014), 2.

[293] Chen, "The Imago Dei, Embodied Mediation and the Church's Mission," 4.

[294] Fretheim, "Preaching Creation: Genesis 1-2," 76, 82-3.

[295] Fretheim, "Preaching Creation: Genesis 1-2," 79, 80. He interprets, "*And God saw that it was good*", as a self-evaluative reflection of God's own goodness.

intention of the creator"[296] humankind is to value what God values as good: "to care for such creatures for God's sake and not simply for our own sake"; demonstrating the representational purpose of the *Imago Dei*.[297]

Though a unified theological interpretation of the *Imago Dei* has not been achieved, approaching the *Imago Dei* from the perspective of God's being will help unravel the complexity of human beings as a representation of God. If the unresolved and drawn-out debate over a clear unified interpretation of humankind's *Imago Dei* has taught us anything over the last two centuries, a well-researched and wise answer would have to be a resounding "yes, but more". More than just a superior capability; more than just an accountable functionality; more than just a relational responsibility; even more than combined views like stewardship, sonship, identity, and vocation have uncovered and contributed; and hence indicatively more than theologians over the next two centuries might be able to deliver. Why? Because piercing through broken human lenses into the depths of the omniscient, omnipotent, and impassable transcendent being of God has proven to be a humbling journey of ontological and mysterious discovery. However, the *Imago Dei* emerges in Scripture for a reason. Literary contributions of the last two centuries have inevitably revealed one of the apparent purposes of humankind: a being on an existential and ontological quest for meaning and purpose. I will now briefly summarise four of the inferred and emerging purposes for later comparative purposes.

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[296] Francis Watson, "Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective," *Pro Ecclesia* 7, no. 3 (1998): 146-7.

[297] Fretheim, "Preaching Creation: Genesis 1-2," 82-3.

Representational of God as Ruler

Of all the purposes directly connected or deduced from the five *Imago Dei* references in Scripture, to have dominion has by far been most favourably received by scholars and critics alike over the span of more than two centuries. Mostly, humankind's distinct upright corporeality and rational superiority over the rest of creation are cited as evidence for scholars opting for either or both the substantive and functional interpretations.[298] Though Clines favours a functional approach, he alludes to it being humankind's purpose when he concludes that the function of the whole of humankind is "to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation" with the impetus that the "dominion of man over creation can hardly be excluded from the content of the image itself".[299] Matthews summarises the functional view as when "Mankind is appointed as God's royal representatives (i.e., sonship) to rule the earth in his place" in the sense of a "royal vice-regent".[300]

However, though scholars like Middleton[301] acknowledge the importance of humankind's dominion "over earth's resources and creatures" as a viable interpretation, Bray cautions that it is only to be seen as a part of the *Imago Dei* when he writes, "the concept of dominion, however important in itself, is merely an

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[298] The biblical notion of dominion is illustrated, for example, by Jesus in Mark 10:35-45 as servanthood instead of lording over others.

[299] Clines 101.

[300] Mathews, 166.

[301] Middleton, 27. He argues that the *Imago Dei* "designates the royal office or calling of human beings as God's representatives and agents in the world granted authorised power to share in God's rule or administration of the earth's resources and creatures."

attribute of the *tselem* and does not constitute part of its essence."[302] Limiting the complexity of human *dominion* to either a quality or function has not satisfied scrutiny of the biblical narrative, neither has it revealed the full ontological extent of what having and exercising dominion looks like. We must look to Jesus, the heavenly man whose "image we shall bear", to comprehend a whole-of-humankind ontological anthropology. We shall return to this in chapter five.[303]

For now, it suffices to note that to "have dominion" is clarified by the use of "subdue" and expounded on by "You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet".[304] Subduing all things to humankind is defined by Jesus, "the image of the invisible God" and "the man of heaven" whose image we shall bear.[305] Thus, in quoting Psalm 8:6, Paul connects the idea of humankind's dominion with a Christ-like subjection to the Father when "all things are subjected to Jesus as the man of heaven, after whom we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven".[306] Hence, incorporating the idea of *subjection* into *dominion*, it denotes a servant-rulership rather than a domineering-rulership which is modelled by Christ. As such, interpreters have viewed the *Imago Dei* as stewardship to represent God as Ruler, who in Christ came to serve and not be served.[307]

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[302] Bray 197.

[303] 1 Cor 15:49.

[304] Gen 1:26-28, Ps 8:6.

[305] Col 1:15, 1 Cor 15:49.

[306] 1 Cor 15:27-8.

[307] As discussed in chapter one.

Whether it be viewed as defining the image and likeness or seen as a consequence of the image, the notion of humankind's dominion, though it has sufficient Scriptural support and correlates with other similar-like representations, cannot stand or function in isolation or be conceived of as encompassing the fullness of the *Imago Dei*.[308]

Representational of God as Creator

A second functionality directly referenced in Gen 1:27-8, to *be fruitful and multiply*, is reiterated after the Fall and repeated to Noah when humankind's population had diminished due to the Flood.[309] The divine imperative for humankind-beings to procreate and *fill the earth* stands in an analogous, though contrasting representation of the Creator-Being who is filling the universe. Supporting this idea, Richardson comments, "In light of the Commandment against images it is an arresting thing to discover that the God who has prohibited their manufacture has himself fashioned an image of the divine in human beings."[310]

Thus, in similar-like ontological fashion, Adam and Noah are tasked with the responsibility and privilege to pass on the *Imago Dei* to all humankind. Matthews

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[308] Gen 1:26- 8; Ps 8:6. Other biblical correlating terms would include to subjugate, rule, conquer, subject, or overcome, represented (rightly or wrongly so) by kings, religious leaders, husbands, and parents.

[309] Gen 5:1-3, 9:1. This same phrase is repeated in Lev 26:9 in the context of the confirmation of the "covenant" with God declaring, "I will make my dwelling among you" (verse 11).

[310] Kurt A. Richardson, "Imago Dei: Anthropological and Christological Modes of Divine Self-Imaging," *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning* 4, no. 2 (2004), http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiA14190731002332&scope=site.

states, “Being human means being a sexual person.”[311] It follows that the next generations, regardless of the Fall, are thus passing on the fullness of being human and not just a relational, rational, or functional capacity or capability of some sort.

Richardson goes as far as approaching humankind’s *Imago Dei* procreational vocation as a prerogative when he writes, “the human being is, in fact, entitled to participate in the divine prerogative of fashioning an image of the divine through procreation.[312] This divinely sanctioned entitlement stems from the *Imago Dei* in Gen 1:27-8 in the relational creation of male and female, thus incorporating the concept of unified plurality into the notion of both God and humankind’s ontological image and likeness.[313] This unified plurality is reflected in divine Triunity and in marriage when they become one flesh. Such unified plurality is passed on to children and evident in the construct of family and community. Richardson supports this idea when he writes, “the 'imaged nature' of the human images itself through the engendering children after the human tselem and d'muth.”[314] Thus, we cannot confidently argue in favour of a whole-being *Imago Dei* transference from one generation to the next, without recognising that humankind has received their procreational prerogative from the divine Creator-Being of God.

There are only two blessed purposes directly stated, “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and

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[311] Mathews, 173.

[312] Richardson 5.

[313] Divine plurality and Barth’s “I-Thou” male/female plurality.

[314] Richardson 5-6.

have dominion…'".[315] However, the relationality of rulership and procreation connected to the *Imago Dei* also represent God being in relationship.

Representational of God in Relationship

The relational view of the *Imago Dei* in chapter one captures the fundamental relationality within the Triunity, between God and humankind, between male and female, within the family and wider communities as well as with creation. Humankind's relationality, however, represents God's whole-of-being relationality and aligns with the main identification of who the divine is. Rice summarises the substance of God's ontology when he writes, "Love is the essence of the divine reality, the basic source from which all of God's attributes arise. This means that the assertion that God is love incorporates all there is to say about God."[316] No legitimate interpretation of the *Imago Dei* can exclude the relationality of love because to do so would mean that "anyone who does not love does not know God".[317] Relational human love, more than denoting a mere capability or action, is to align with the whole-of-being, ontological statement in the NT when Paul states that without it, "I am nothing".[318] Hence, the ontological essence of humankind's Image-

[315] Gen 1:28.

[316] Richard Rice, *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will* (Review and Herald, 1980), 21.

[317] 1 Joh. 4:8.

[318] 1 Cor 13:2.

and Likeness-Maker is that "God is love", and this aligns with the fundamental love-relationality of humankind.[319]

Though not directly stated in Gen 1:26-28, the love between male and female is not only in the likeness of triune love but is further expressed in the concept of dominion and subjection between the Father and the Son. Such love, in "submitting to one another" is captured by Jesus in the intent of the law and is defined as service in the OT to obey, love and serve God "with all your heart and with all your soul".[320] Hence, the connection between the concepts of dominion and subdue in Genesis 1 is defined in chapter 2 in the task laid upon Adam to "work and keep" the garden of Eden because up and until the creation of Adam "there was no man to work the ground".[321] The notion of work is only connected to humankind, and the only demonstration of what work entails prior to the Fall is Adam naming all the living creatures.[322] The Hebraic use of עבד ʿâbad translated as work denotes the concept of service and includes the idea of an act of worship.[323] This contrasts with the kind of work God laid upon humankind after the Fall when God sent Adam "out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken". Now that the ground

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[319] 1 Joh. 4:8, 4:16, 1 Cor 13.

[320] Eph 5: 21, Matt 22: 37-40, Deut 11:13.

[321] Gen 2:5, 15.

[322] Gen 2:19-20.

[323] *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition.* A primitive root; to *work* (in any sense); by implication to *serve*, *till*, (causatively) *enslave*, etc.: - X be, keep in bondage, be bondmen, bond-service, compel, do, dress, ear, execute, + husbandman, keep, labour (-ing man), bring to pass, (cause to, make to) serve (-ing, self), (be, become) servant (-s), do (use) service, till (-er), transgress [from margin], (set a) work, be wrought, worshipper.

was cursed, the meaning of work necessitated it being done "by the sweat of your face".[324] Nevertheless, the NT connects work and service to an act of love, "but through love serve one another", and an act of worship, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God".[325]

Relational love, when "God so loved the world", represents how Jesus brought glory to the Father, by serving his will and giving his life. It requires his followers to do likewise: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.[326] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends; thus, humankind's relational and sacrificial love refers to the "whole person, even all human life collectively" representing God in relationship.[327]

Representational of God's Reconciliation

To act on earth as God's appointed delegate in line with the divine Ruler and Creator also includes the effective, whole-of-being authority to forgive "from your heart" in the likeness of Jesus and the Father.[328] It suffices to briefly note the centrality of forgiveness to the tabernacle and Jesus Christ who displayed God's being "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin".[329] In this way we should "think

[324] Gen 3:17, 19, 23.

[325] Gal 5:13, 1 Cor 10:31.

[326] John 3:16, Luke 22:42.

[327] Mathews, 173. Also, see John 15:13-4.

[328] Matt 18:35.

[329] Exod 34:7.

of God as rectifying in heaven what has been done by his representative on earth".[330] Hence, the demand by God on humankind to forgive as he forgives stems from the assumption that in this regard, humankind was not only made in his image and likeness, but capable to act and represent God on earth.[331] Paul's argument that we are "called according to his purpose" and thus "to be conformed to the image of his Son" connects humankind to the reconciliation of Christ as "the image of the invisible God" to the *Imago Dei*.[332] Though not directly connected to Gen 1:26-28, part of the responsibility of dominion as rulers in this world, is not to "lord it over them" or "exercise authority over them" as Gentile rulers would, but instead serve as the Son of Man who came "to give his life as a ransom for many".[333]

Interim Concluding Comments

This chapter has wrestled with historical silo and combined interpretations of the *Imago Dei* to consider the wider and more complex notion of humankind's representational nature as a whole being. Erickson correctly concludes that humankind is in the image of God "by virtue of being human", though we would argue, not just because of any substantive qualities or attributes *per se*, but representationally as a whole being created in the image and likeness of the divine

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[330] Allen 165.

[331] Matt 6:12.

[332] Rom 8:28, Rom 8:28, Col 1:15.

[333] Matt 20:25-28.

Being.[334] As Beale concludes, "we represent God so our presence ushers in the presence of the Almighty God wherever we go."[335] Hence, we are proposing that being human essentially represents God's divine Being in ways that likeness and image are best employed to describe both the similarities and differences between creature and Creator. This is primarily so because God's actual presence dwells within humankind, affected by but irrespective of, the Fall. Such an immanent dwelling presence of the transcendent God is biblically and philosophically tenable and confronts traditional assumptions and interpretations of the *Imago Dei*.

The *Imago Dei* is more than functionalities, attributes, or substances and more than an identity, stewardship, or vocation. If God is more than any interpretation can describe, then so too are humans within *Imago Dei* proportionality and limitations. Being created in the image and likeness of God imbued humankind with an indwelling capability to not only receive God's presence but also to represent him and his kingdom. Thus, we recognise that humankind was created in the image and likeness of God's own being to represent him. We have attempted to show that humankind and God share in key aspects of representational characteristics because of the shared nature of the *Imago Dei*. Both the concepts to "have dominion" and "be fruitful and multiply" denote the complexity of ruling and procreating after the values and principles of God's kingdom of love, bound up in multiple relationships similar to the divine. As much as the simple statement, "God is love", is all-encompassing of God's being, it simply cannot detail the full extent of God's actions as complete demonstrations of his character and being. Similarly, it is impossible to

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[334] Erickson, 470.

[335] Beale, and Kim, 22.

draw comprehensive conclusions about humankind from the handful of direct *Imago Dei* statements in Scripture. Perhaps it is precisely the intent of Scripture to not limit God or beings created in his image and likeness to any specific idea. However, the unfolding of God's presence, purpose, character and being throughout the biblical narrative keeps exposing and confronting our philosophical understanding and theological interpretation of God. The *Imago Dei* clearly indicates that our anthropology is linked to our theology. If the revelation of God continues to evolve throughout Scripture, then our understanding of the *Imago Dei* should follow accordingly. Because humankind is made in God's image and likeness, a representational approach to interpreting the *Imago Dei* is best employed as our understanding of God's being expands.

Therefore, due to the limited references to the *Imago Dei* in Scripture, our understanding and further clarification of the *Imago Dei* is heavily dependent on the unfolding biblical narrative and particularly better informed by similar representational concepts and identities like the tabernacle (to which we shall turn next) to inform, challenge, verify and legitimise our retrospective representational view of Gen 1:26-28.

CHAPTER 3: REPRESENTATIONAL TABERNACLE

Introduction

Having the validity of a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* established in both the literature and Scripture with specific representational characteristics identified, we will now demonstrate how a similar approach to the tabernacle is theologically and philosophically faithful to the biblical narrative. Despite the fading prominence of the tabernacle and temple in the New Testament as a "functioning institution" of the cultic lifestyle of the Jews in the Old Testament, we nonetheless, find direct references to the tabernacle in the New Testament that support its significance to theology, anthropology, Christology, and eschatology.[336] This section will focus on the dwelling presence of God with his people through the tabernacle; we will demonstrate the representational quintessence of the tabernacle.

Various historical interpretations as demonstrated in the literature review questioned how a holy transcendent God could possibly be immanently present with sinful human beings. Comparably to the *Imago Dei*, Greek philosophical first principles could not accommodate the notion of divine confinement within the realm of human limitations. Hence, following the destruction of the temple in 70AD, allegorical interpretations have dominated the way the Early Fathers have

[336] Luke references the "tent of witness" and a "dwelling" in Acts 7:44-9 and the rebuilding of the "tent of David" in Acts 15:16. John 1:14 as key text, references Jesus who tabernacled or "dwelt among us". Rev. 21:3 references the "dwelling place of God" with man on the new earth. Heb 8 extensively refers to the tabernacle and its Christological functions. And finally, 2 Cor 6:16 refers to believers as the temple of God where he will make his dwelling.

spiritualised the motif of the sanctuary and the presence of God.[337] Consequently, the literature shows how the Platonic-Aristotelian paradigm influenced early Christian scholars and resulted in a metaphorical view of the church as the temple or true tabernacle and their souls as the *Most Holy Place*. By the time of the Medieval Church, nearly every aspect of the Old Testament sanctuary service was interpreted as some sort of "a bridge between human activity and God" viewed through the lens of Christ and the sacraments.[338] There was no alternative until postmodernism presented and established the idea of temporal reality leading scholars to re-investigate the biblical presentation of God's actual presence within the time-and-space limitations of humankind's sinful world. This validated the biblical reality of God's dwelling presence and, in turn, re-ignited the notion that the vessels and conduits hosting the presence of God may be better viewed as representational of God's presence.

The allegorising of the tabernacle in the literature with reference to God's presence is, however, not consistent with the biblical record. The philosophical assumption that the transcendent divine cannot be immanently present with humankind is challenged by three major incidents in the biblical narrative that connect the tabernacle with God's presence. Firstly, God's request to "let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" is followed by the theophanic

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[337] Craig R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989), ix. Clement of Alexandria, Jerome and Origin saw the tabernacle as the universe or virtues of being Christian.

[338] Kaiser 158, 61. Everything in the Most Holy was seen as symbolic of Christ. For example, the golden urn as Christ's soul or incarnation; Aaron's budding rod as Christ's priestly invincible power; the tablets of stone as Christ's mediation; even the tent as Christ's body.

confirmation of the covenant on Mount Sinai.[339] Secondly, despite Israel's golden calf apostasy, God still confirmed with Moses that his presence would go with him.[340] Thirdly, God's tabernacling presence is confirmed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ when he "became flesh and dwelt among us".[341] Hence, the possibility of a representational approach to the tabernacle that aligns with the biblical record comes into view and warrants further investigation that this thesis shall explore in chapter four.

Consequently, interpreting and re-interpreting the language used in Scripture and the literature is crucial in considering the validity of the tabernacle as representational of God.

Tabernacle and Representation in Scripture

Semantically, the Old Testament refers to the tabernacle as "a dwelling place", "a holy place", "tent of meeting", and "palace" or "temple.[342] Consistently, the NT translates σκηνή for the tabernacle as "a tent", "habitation" and "dwelling place", and the verb σκηνόω to "dwell" or "tabernacle". Generally, as demonstrated in the literature review, scholars have allegorically interpreted the tabernacle as referring to a cosmic and Edenic temple, the church or believer, the eschatological temple in the New Jerusalem and, ultimately, to Christ as its fulfilment. However, the

[339] Exod 25:8.

[340] Exod 33:14.

[341] John 1:14.

[342] Exod 25:8-9, 40:2, Ps 11:4.

biblical record also reveals the tabernacling presence of God localised in time and space and will be the focus of this section. Though there are no direct textual references to the tabernacle as a representation of God, the context of a few key texts will demonstrate that the concept of God tabernacling with humankind captures fundamental representational connections between God and the tabernacle.

It is important to note that the establishment of the first tabernacle was initiated by God himself with his express intent to "dwell in their midst".[343] Compare this divine-initiated request for a portable tabernacle with David's proposal to build a permanent house, noting in contrast that God has never requested a house of cedar nor to be confined to one location. Rather it states God's historical preference, "but I have gone from tent to tent and dwelling to dwelling" to be, as the portability of the tabernacle represents, a roaming presence amid my people.[344] The reality of and focus on such a divine roaming presence is vividly demonstrated in God's response after Israel's golden calf experience, "I will not go up among you". Moses' intercession, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here", was followed by God's affirmation, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest". Thus, more than symbolism, the portable tabernacle came to represent the actual tabernacling presence of God. Moses confirms that it is indeed God's effective, tabernacling presence "going with us" that makes us "distinct" from "every other people on the face of the earth".[345]

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[343] Exod 25:8-9.

[344] 1 Chron 17:1-6.

[345] Exod 33:3, 14-6.

The New Testament also affirms the notion of God's tabernacling or dwelling presence in many diverse ways. For example, the Apostle John refers to the incarnational Christ that "dwelt among us"; Stephen's defence refers to the wilderness tent as God's preferred "dwelling place" in contrast to the idea that "the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands"; Paul refers to the idea that as temples of the living God he will make his "dwelling among them"; Paul also refers to the oneness of believers in Christ that are "being built together into a dwelling place for God"; and lastly, John affirms that God's "dwelling place" will be with humankind in the new heavens and earth and that "He will dwell with them".[346]

Within the confines of a Greek philosophical paradigm, it may appear at first that the tabernacle itself is being allegorised here. However, from an analogical perspective of God's divine temporal being (as demonstrated in chapter two), the focus is God's dwelling presence made relevant in varying contexts as a continuation from the OT affirmation of God's tabernacling presence. Psalm 90:1-2 affirms that it is God himself and not the tabernacle per se, that is at the heart of God's perpetual dwelling presence. "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."[347]

The biblical record approaches the notion of God being a dwelling place from both a divine and human perspective. Deuteronomy 33:27 affirms that "the eternal God is your dwelling place", and Ps 91:9 coveys the idea that "you have made the Lord your dwelling place". Hence, it is the actual presence of the transcendent divine

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[346] 1 John 1:14, Acts 7:44-9, 2 Cor 6:16, Eph 2:19-22, Rev. 21:3.

[347] Ps 90:1-2

in a designated dwelling place that constitutes the notion of God tabernacling with. Such a dwelling place thus filled with God's presence becomes representational of God in some way, not of its own accord, but because God has chosen to take up residence there. This is evident in how the ark of the covenant was symbolic of God's presence when the Israelites went to war both in victory and defeat. God was with them in battle when they followed his will, but when they rebelled God would caution them "Do not go up or fight, for I am not in your midst, lest you be defeated before your enemies". It is important to note that though his divine presence would not accompany them into battle, He was still with them when they "returned and wept before the Lord".[348] Kim confirms this biblical position on the tabernacle when he writes,

> It is as the Holy One that God is present. God remains transcendent in immanence and related in transcendence. Israel's God now dwells, with intensity and at close range, in Israel's very midst. God actually takes up space in Israel's world.[349]

Through the act of anointment and consecration Moses was instructed to prepare the tabernacle "so that it may become holy" prior to the occasion when "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle".[350] We must therefore conclude that it is the glory of God present in the tabernacle that in turn renders it holy, thus representing God.

Though we will return in more detail to John 1:14 as a key text in a subsequent section and the next chapter, it suffices to briefly note that the incarnational Word that "became flesh and dwelt among us" is also connected to the

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[348] Deut 1:42-5, Joshua 3:6-7.

[349] Kim 540-1.

[350] Exod 40:9, 34-5.

idea of glory—"we have seen his glory". We find the same connection in Stephen's defence when he contrasted the tabernacle or tent of witness as a "dwelling" with Solomon's temple as a "house" that "saw the glory of God".[351] Again, this is an affirmation of the representational glory-presence of God connected to the tabernacle.

In a similar way, Paul's intent to convey to the Corinthian believers the concept that "we are the temple of the living God" is based on a covenantal quote of divine affirmation, "I will make my dwelling among them".[352] Contrasting righteousness with lawlessness, light with darkness, Christ with Belial, and believer with unbeliever sets the conditions for human tabernacles so be representational of God's holy presence.

In this section, we have demonstrated that the tabernacle can be seen as representational of the holiness of God's glory-presence both in Israel's obedience and rebellion. The next section will show that the *Imago Dei* as a representation of God is not diminished, nor nullified by the Fall.

Representation despite the Fall

Notwithstanding the absence of direct references in Scripture to the tabernacle as a representation, the tabernacle is central to the facilitation of forgiveness and reconciliation. Zehr addresses the pertinent lesson Israel was to learn from the Fall and their sin when he writes, "On the one hand, at the tabernacle Israel

[351] Acts 7:44-55.

[352] 2 Cor 6:16, Lev 26: 11-2.

learned that God desired to dwell among His people, but on the other hand Israel learned that, due to God's holiness and their sinfulness, God was separated from the people."[353]

Both the Edenic and eschatological tabernacles, as two bookends before and after sin, are indicative of God's intent to dwell with humankind, but it is in the Mosaic tabernacle that we specifically see God's determination to tabernacle among sinful and rebellious people.[354] Exodus 25:8 records a directive from the holy God, who came down in an unapproachable and terrifying theophany as a "devouring fire", to sinful human beings to make a sanctuary that he "may dwell in their midst".[355] In other words, the tabernacle represents a holy transcendent God making a way to be immanently present with sinful people—Yahweh desires to be present among his people.

This became even more evident when his presence filled the tabernacle after Israel's golden calf apostasy and inaugurated a reconciliatory system of sacrifice and worship. Kelly argues that the entire sacrificial system was "for the purpose of overcoming the distance between Yahweh and his people, to heal the breach created by their sin, and to bring them into the circle of his power and presence."[356] The tabernacle represents Yahweh's desire for his people to come to him. In a sense God's presence thus filled the tabernacle to effect a reconciliation, and as such the

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[353] Zehr, 142.

[354] Wenham, 23. The Sabbath is God's first Edenic tabernacling-or dwelling rest. Also see Gen 2:1-3, Rev. 21:3.

[355] Exod 19:16-24, 20:18-9, 24:17.

[356] Kelley 486.

tabernacle came to represent Israel's reconciling God. Dozeman points to this divine intent as a progression when he writes, "The descent of God into the tabernacle and the approach of priestly representatives into the tent of meeting bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane, which was not possible during the original theophany on Mount Sinai."[357]

When God's presence thus finally filled the tabernacle in a similar theophanic fashion as on Mount Sinai, the people understood that the tabernacle indeed became holy, filled with the presence of God and as such, representing the fullness of Yahweh now dwelling among them.[358]

Looking forward, McGee asserts that the culmination of God's reconciling presence is foreshadowed in the tabernacling-Christ when he concludes,

> There must be one who can represent man before God and one to represent God before man. He must have authority to rule. Christ fulfils all this, for He was God before man, and today He is man before God. He is both God and man. He is able to bring a holy God and sinner man together. And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us.[359]

Thus, though the Fall brought about a distance between God and humankind, the tabernacle stood and functioned as a reconciling representation of God's dwelling presence. Thus, approaching the tabernacle as a representation of God's actual tabernacling presence opens the way for the next section to explore key characteristics in which it represents God.

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[357] Dozeman, 599.

[358] Exod 40:34-8.

[359] J. Vernon McGee, "The Theology of the Tabernacle," *Bibliotheca sacra* 95, no. 377 (1938): 35, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001528244&site=ehost-live.

Key Representational Characteristics of the Tabernacle

This section will aim to demonstrate in what ways the tabernacle can be seen as representational of God by exploring the following key characteristics of the tabernacle: its temporality as a holy vessel, its authority and glory, and its God-ordained purposes. Fretheim's distinction of divine presences is helpful to identify our focus when he writes,

> It is important to distinguish among types of divine presence. At the two ends of a continuum are God's general presence in the world and God's intensified presence in theophany. Along that continuum are God's accompanying presence with the people and God's tabernacling presence.[360]

Thus, the scope of this section will specifically focus on key representational characteristics of God's tabernacling presence.

Representational of God's Temporality

Though the historical divine directive to build a tabernacle does not directly reference or imply a notion of divine temporality, this section will demonstrate how the temporal nature of the tabernacle can be seen as a representation of God.

Divine transcendence to be immanently present in humankind's temporal world does not contradict the biblical concept of God being eternal.[361] It is evident how God, in the fullness of the Sinaitic theophany marked by "thunders and

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[360] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 293.

[361] John S Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Crossway, 2006), 832. Feinberg points out that the tension between the temporal and atemporal views of God with regard to his timeless immutability and omniscience can be resolved by an understanding of omnitemporality in that God can be present in all time.

lightning and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast" accompanied by "fire", "smoke", and speaking in "thunder", simply wanted to "dwell in their midst".[362] Despite the philosophical criticism that "God cannot dwell in the space-temporal continuum of the OT tent" [363], Hamilton affirms the centrality of God's tabernacling presence in the temporal world of Israel when he concludes, "God's presence with his people is part of the fabric of the Old Testament".[364] Despite the allegorising of the tabernacle to dismiss a literal historical reading of Yahweh's presence with Israel, the biblical record frequently and in varying ways affirms how the tabernacle in its temporal status can be viewed as representational of divine temporality.

Primarily, the tabernacle's design of perishable materials such as the goat skin tent, wood and curtains are suggestive of its impermanence. Its portability and movement represented change and movement of the divine, too, as Fretheim suggests,

> The dwelling of God is not a static, immobile, unchanging presence. There is movement with this God, a movement that signals the comings and goings of Israel (on the continuing use of the verbal as well, see Num 9:18– 20). The people are now no longer subjected to a changeless system, to an increasingly dispiriting bondage. They are followers of a God who is on the move, in whose service true freedom and joy are to be found.[365]

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[362] Exod 19: 16-9.

[363] Canale 190.

[364] Hamilton 120.

[365] Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus : Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY, UNITED STATES: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2010), 234. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/morling/detail.action?docID=5974210.

Fundamental to its ministry, are elements such as oil, bread, water, and sacrifices, which further testify to a temporal nature and ministry. Westcott confirms that "the sanctuary of the old covenant, in its very furnishings and sacrificial arrangements, proclaimed is own temporal character".[366] Essentially, the tabernacle was viewed by Israel as facilitating a temporal exchange in divine forgiveness and reconciliation—either until the next sacrifice or on a yearly basis as with the Day of Atonement sacrifices. Thus, the tabernacle in its entirety, though under the covenant of the eternal God, stood and operated in humankind's temporal world whilst uniquely claiming the tabernacling residency of divine presence among them.[367] Peterson affirms the primacy of God's tabernacling presence when he writes, "the most important aspect of the tabernacle was not the value of the materials that were utilised, but that God Himself was dwelling in the tabernacle. His very presence is dwelling among His people."[368]

Canale makes the point that the sanctuary viewed as a "God-building-beings structure" recognises God's historical presence within humankind's temporal world as part of his Being, thus rendering a divine temporality "that is compatible with our space and time".[369] Consequently, this affirms that the temporality of the tabernacle does indeed reveal and represent the reality of God's divine Being dwelling within the confines of humankind's temporal world.

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[366] Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, Hbk ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 198.

[367] Exod 15:11-3.

[368] David Peterson, "The Tabernacle: The Dwelling Place of God" (MAdiss, Oral Roberts University, 2012), 21.

[369] Canale 206.

We must therefore ask if the fullness of God can be confined to, and contained within a place and time like the tabernacle? Solomon's unambiguous position during the inauguration of the temple is that "the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built!".[370] The question, however, is if the fullness of God can be present within humankind's confinement in time and space, further restricted by the Fall. Scripture indicates that God spoke "face to face" with Moses and his "face shone" as a result of God's glory-presence similar to the way Jesus "face shone" at his transfiguration.[371] God "appeared" numerous times in the biblical record. This is indicative of his fulfilment via the tabernacle to indeed "dwell in their midst".[372] Pobee's view of God's tabernacling presence with humankind stems from the concept that the temporality of tabernacle is represented as "a tent, something that is time-bound and place-bound".[373] Denis Kaiser argues in favour of the heavenly sanctuary as the original "spatio-temporal building in heaven" after which the earthly tabernacle were patterned although it could contain the fullness of God either.[374]

We must therefore recognise that the temporal nature of the tabernacle, does not have to lead to a "deconstructive dismissal of the literal historical sense of

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[370] 2 Chron 6:18.

[371] Exod 33:11, 34:29-35, Matt 17:2.

[372] God appeared to Abraham (Gen 12:7, 17:1, 26:24); to Jacob (Gen 35:1); to Moses (Exod 3:2); to Gideon (Judges 6:12); to Samuel (1 Sam 3:21); and to David (2 Chron 3:1).

[373] John S. Pobee, "Skenosis - the Tabernacling of the Word," *Mission Studies* 3, no. 2 (1986 1986): 11, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000968885&scope=site.

[374] Kaiser 192. Also see Exod 25:9, 40, Heb 8:5, 9:22-3.

sanctuary texts in favour of an imaginative speculative construction of an alleged 'deeper' intellectual nonhistorical allegorical meaning".[375] Rather, the temporal nature of the tabernacle provides more insight into the literal presence of divine temporality in the way that it represents God. For example, if God can indeed dwell in the OT tabernacle, then the notion of God's Spirit dwelling within the body-temples of believers in the NT (1 Cor 6:19) does not necessarily have to be spiritualised or viewed as a metaphor only. This is reflected in Paul's question and answer to the Corinthian believers in 1 Cor 3:16, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."

To summarise, the biblical narrative does indicate that the transcendent divine was literally and historically present in the tabernacle, not evading but purposely drawing near, to the fallen and confined temporality of humankind. God's reconciling presence with sinful humankind is thus vividly represented by the tabernacle in such a way that Fretheim proposes, "The tabernacle may thus be said to be a kind of material 'body' for God."[376] Thus, the eternal transcendent and holy God came down into humankind's temporal and fallen world to breach the gap and tabernacle with them as Fretheim confirms,

> The distance of the divine presence from the people will no longer be associated with the remote top of a mountain but with a dwelling place in the centre of the camp. God comes down to be with the people at close, even intimate, range; they no longer need to ascend to God.[377]

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[375] Canale 190.

[376] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 315.

[377] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 264.

It is via the representational temporality of tabernacle that Ps 90:1-2 affirms that the everlasting God has been "our dwelling place in all generations". We must therefore now look at the tabernacle as a vessel for hosting the presence of God.

Representational Vessel

Presuming that the notion of divine temporality makes allowance for both divine transcendence and immanence in humankind's world, this section will show that the OT tabernacle as a vessel for God's indwelling presence not only becomes tenable but revealing and representational of God's Being. Fretheim clearly confirms this duality of divine presence when he writes,

> At the same time, the God who 'fills' the tabernacle also 'fills' the cosmos. On the one hand, this makes it clear that Israel's place of worship is not the only place in the world where God's presence can be found. God cannot be so confined; God is both near and far.[378]

The original design and purpose of the tabernacle were to physically represent God's desire and intent to dwell in Israel's midst.[379] Though this marks a new theophanic development, it is better seen as a continuation of God's indwelling presence with humankind in the temporality of space and time. Prior to the filling of the tabernacle, God was present in the pillar of cloud and fire on Israel's exodus journey.[380] Preceding that even, God appeared to multiple biblical characters in varying ways—in human form, in a dream in the form of an angel, in a flaming bush

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[378] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 315.

[379] Exod 25:8.

[380] Exod 40:34-8, Exod 13:21.

in a cloud.[381] One could argue that God can be seen as revealing himself progressively over time in the way He spoke to Noah, appeared to Abraham, wrestled with Jacob and, revealed himself more fully to Moses by his Name.[382] Hence, by the time God's indwelling presence filled the tabernacle, the divine presence was already marked by altars, stones, pillars of fire and cloud, and the theophany at Mount Sinai.[383] God's presence would go on to fill Solomon's temple, and in the NT, the divine presence "filled the entire house" (Acts 2:2), the group of disciples (4:31), individuals (See Luke 1:41, 67, Acts 13:9), believers and Jesus Christ.[384] Thus, the idea of God's indwelling presence that appears and fills emerges frequently and in differing ways in both the Old and New Testaments.

Such appearances and fillings affected animate and inanimate objects with the result that they usually are described as "holy". Places, objects, people and even time became holy due to God's indwelling presence as Kaiser suggests. With the Advent of Yahweh, Mount Sinai would become holy by virtue of his special Presence there".[385] Such bestowed holiness is not holy in and of itself, neither does it remain infinitely holy. Rather, at times it would diminish or simply cease. At times this inexplainable fluctuation seems more connected to the ebb and flow of God's presence. For example, the first mention in Scripture of something becoming holy

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[381] Gen 18:1-2, Gen 28: 16, Judg 6:12, Exod 3:2, Deut 31:15.

[382] Gen 6:13, 12:1, 32: 24-8, Exod 6:3-4.

[383] Exod 40:34-8, Gen 8:20, 12:7, 28:18, 35:14-5, Exod 13:22, 19:18-20.

[384] 2 Chron 7:1, Eph 3:19, Col 1:19.

[385] Kaiser Jr, 218.

independent of the divine is the Sabbath.[386] Other examples worth mentioning include the ground Moses stood on before the burning bush, Mount Sinai, the ark, priestly garments, oil and offerings.[387] It is important to note here that both time and space within the limitations of humankind's fallenness are filled and affected by God's indwelling presence and in some way represent God. For example, the Sabbath's holiness represents divine rest, "because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation".[388] Similarly, the tabernacle-tent, as the most sacred and holy object of Israel, became holy because God filled it with glorious presence. In other words, it is reasonable to postulate that the tabernacle, filled with indwelling divine temporality, representationally took on the holiness of God, and subsequently, also the authority of God.

Representational of God's Authority

This section will wrestle with the notion that the holiness of God's tabernacling presence can also represent his divine authority. It is important to note that the authority of God's presence in the pillar of cloud and fire to direct Israel's movement was displayed in theophanic magnificence when the "Lord came down on Mount Sinai" and gave Israel the ten commandments.[389] This event marks the most authoritative and significant, divine covenantal affirmation, "I will take you to be my

[386] Gen 2:3.

[387] Exod 3:5, 26:34, 28:2, 30:25, Lev 2:3, 10.

[388] Gen 2:3.

[389] Exod 13:21-2, 19:16-8, 20, 19:16-8.

people and I will be your God".[390] The terms of obedience to the covenant for Israel to remain God's "treasured possession among all peoples" are repeated within the context of Sinai's cloud-theophany.[391] It is from the cloud-covering on the mountain that God proclaimed his Name to Moses and renewed the covenant.[392] The glory-filling of the tabernacle is again marked by the cloud that covered the tent and it is from the cloud that God gave all instructions to Moses. Divine authority was thus associated with the cloud when God would appear to Moses—speaking, instructing, and leading Israel.[393] Fretheim affirms the cultural importance of transference of divine authority to the tabernacle when writes,

> God leaves the mountain, the typical abode for gods in the ancient Near East, and comes to dwell among the people of God. God is not like the gods who remain at some remove from a messy world, enjoying their own life, often uncaring and oblivious to the troubles of the creatures. God leaves the mount of remoteness and ineffable majesty and tabernacles right in the centre of a human community. No longer are the people–or their mediator–asked to 'come up to God; God 'comes down' to them. No more trips up the mountain for Moses![394]

Though Sinai marked an escalating and authoritative theophany, it resulted in God's covenantal presence taking up residence within Israel's portable tabernacle as Fretheim confirms, "The command to build the tabernacle is, in effect, God's

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[390] Exod 6:7.

[391] Exod 19:5.

[392] Exod 34:5-7, 10-28.

[393] Exod 40:34, 33:9.

[394] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 273.

decision to move his dwelling from Sinai to a portable sanctuary that moves constantly among the people. The tabernacle was to become a 'portable Sinai.'"[395] Thus, the very nature of divine manoeuvrability present in the temporal tabernacle represented the divine intent "to dwell in their midst" with the full authority of God. Divine manoeuvrability was represented the dynamic, audible, and kinetic theophany at Sinai. God's presence that acted and spoke at Sinai now moved with his people via the tabernacle whenever the cloud "lifted" or "settled" over the tabernacle.[396]

An example of God's temporal tabernacling and authoritative presence can be seen in some of Israel's battles as Klein comments, "One function of the ark, as we have seen, was to represent Yahweh's presence in war". God's authority, however, is demonstrated by both his divine presence and absence.[397] The divine presence in the pillar of cloud prior to the establishment of the tabernacle against the Egyptians at the Red Sea crossing demonstrated to Israel that the Lord would fight for them whilst their enemies acknowledged that the Lord was fighting "against the Egyptians".[398] Once the tabernacle was filled by the Sinaitic theophanic cloud and settled above the ark, God's presence became associated with both the tabernacle and the ark. Thus, when the ark was brought into the march around Jericho it signified that God was, indeed, present via the ark to do as He said he would.[399] Yet, when Israel in desperation took the ark into battle against the Philistines, hoping that God's

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[395] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 294.

[396] Num 9:17.

[397] Klein 270.

[398] Exod 14:14-25.

[399] Exod 40:34, Jos. 6:2, 6-7.

presence would save them, it was captured without any theophanic display of divine presence.[400] The apparent divine absence and Israel's subsequent defeat, despite bringing out the ark into battle, authoritatively communicated God's rejection of Eli and his sons' evil conduct.[401] However, God's presence was still associated with the ark in the way it shattered the statue of Dagon and struck the Philistines with tumours.[402] Though "the ark was not primarily intended to assist in battle," Lewis concludes that "in these accounts the ark clearly represents the presence of Yahweh"—and it demonstrates the temporal flow-and-ebb of God's authority and presence as the tabernacle-cloud moved or settled.[403]

There is no doubt that the presence of the portable tabernacle in battle represented to Israel and her enemies that God's authority and power were present in their midst.[404] This connection between God's authority and the representational authority of the tabernacle was firmly established when the divine cloud on Sinai filled the tabernacle, as Fretheim confirms: "The divine dwelling will no longer be a fixed place. God's dwelling place will be portable, on the move with the people of God."[405] The same applies to the tabernacle representing the glory of God as the next section will highlight.

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[400] 1 Sam 4:3, 11.

[401] 1 Sam 2:30.

[402] 1 Sam 5:3-4, 9.

[403] Joe O. Lewis, "Ark and the Tent," *Review & Expositor* 74, no. 4 (1977): 542, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000762429&scope=site.

[404] Exod 14:25, 1 Sam 4:7.

[405] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 264.

Representational of God's Glory

This section will focus on the idea that God's glory can also be represented by the tabernacle. Stuart considers that Exod 25:8 "is the simplest and perhaps also the strongest statement in Exodus—a book often described as specially reflecting the theme of the presence of God."[406] God's tabernacling presence is affirmed by the manifestation of the divine glory-cloud as on Mount Sinai, in the tabernacle, above the mercy seat, at the inauguration of Solomon's temple, and in Ezekiel's vision.[407] Maier points out that these glory-cloud theophanies "were all connected to the divine presence" and confirms the concept of representing God's localised presence.[408] Most poignant to the idea of representing "the glory of the Lord [that] dwelt on Mount Sinai" is the notion of God's portable glory-presence via the tabernacle that connects to the idea of God dwelling among his people wherever they moved.[409] After "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" the glory-cloud governed Israel's movement "throughout all their journeys".[410] In this sense the tabernacle became for Israel a holy space filled with the glory of God "where the very intense presence of

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[406] Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 564-5. Also see Exod 25:8.

[407] Exod 24:15-7, 40:34-8, Lev 16:2, 1 Kings 8:10-1, Ezek 10:3-4.

[408] Walter A. Maier, III, "The Divine Presence within the Cloud," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 79, no. 1-2 (2015), http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLAn3816524&scope=site.

[409] Exod 24:16.

[410] Exod 40:3-38.

God resided."[411] Thus, for Israel, God's tabernacling glory-presence replaced God's glory-presence on Mount Sinai and now travelled with them as God's covenantal presence despite their golden calf apostasy.[412] God's glory-presence with Israel was real. Fretheim confirms that Moses' request, "Show me your glory" differentiated between symbolism and reality when he writes,

> This is a request to see God's very self. He wishes to be assured that God will dwell among the people in all his fullness without leading to their death. In effect, this is a request for a sign that God himself will truly dwell among them without judgment.[413]

Hence, this theophany established the immanent glory-presence of the transcendent divine in such a way that God's presence is compared to the glory of "the pillar and cloud which defended and enlightened Israel in the desert", and now dwelt in their midst.[414]

Though we will return in more detail to John 1:14 as a key text in the next chapter, in terms of NT references to God's tabernacling presence, it suffices to note that the incarnational Word that "became flesh and dwelt among us" is also, like the OT references above, connected to the idea of "glory". Not surprisingly, we find a similar connection when Stephen referenced the dwelling presence of God in the wilderness tabernacle and Solomon's temple that "the highest heaven cannot contain", yet "gazed into heaven" and "saw the glory of God" and "the Son of Man

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[411] J. Daniel Hays, *The Temple and the Tabernacle: A Study of God's Dwelling Places from Genesis to Revelation* (Baker Books, 2016), 23.

[412] Exod 40:34.

[413] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 299.

[414] Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 184. Also see Zec. 2: 5, 10.

standing at the right hand of God".[415] Keene makes the point that Stephen's criticism of the earthly temple and his reference to Isa 66:1, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool", indicates his awareness that the tabernacle represented a "greater dwelling [that] is divine in its construction and heavenly in its location."[416] Thus, more than a mere allegory, metaphor or symbol, the tabernacle represented the presence of divine temporality that bore with it both the authority and glory of God, and it does so for a reason which the next section will focus on.

Representational Purposes

It is important to include the connections between a representational approach and the original purpose of the tabernacle because "the Advent of Yahweh" on Mount Sinai is "the supreme event of Exodus" that "bends everything else to its purpose".[417]

If, as Pink states, "more space is devoted to an account of the tabernacle than to any other single object or subject treated of in Holy Writ,"[418] then it would be prudent to understand the reasons why God chose to "dwell in [Israel's] midst".[419]

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[415] Acts 7:44-49, 55, 1 Kings 8:27, Isa 66:1.

[416] Thomas Keene, "Heaven Is a Tent: The Tabernacle as an Eschatological Metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 72, no. 2 (2010): 29, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001813716&site=ehost-live. Keene thus points out Stephen's preference of the "Mosaic over the Solomonic" as a dwelling place for God.

[417] Kaiser Jr, 215.

[418] Arthur Walkington Pink, *Gleanings from the Scriptures* (Moody Pr, 1969), 224. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000257753&scope=site.

[419] Exod 25:8.

The clearest answer to the purpose of God's tabernacling presence is found in his self-revelation to Moses that stems from his "goodness" to "be gracious" and "show mercy".[420] Most poignantly, this theophanic self-revelation came after Israel's golden calf apostasy to affirm his "steadfast love and faithfulness". God's request to build a sanctuary demonstrates his pre-emptive purpose to facilitate his mercy and grace in "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" precisely because it will be much needed.[421]

Noting that Israel's golden calf rebellion happened between the glory-theophany of Sinai and the glory-filling of the tabernacle, demonstrates that God's purpose to dwell with his people is not subverted by sin. Hence, Kaiser remarks, the gift of "the Advent of Yahweh's Presence at Sinai is the formative event of OT faith".[422] God's stated purpose in his advent-gift via the tabernacle is to be immanently present despite his thoughts and ways being heavenly-higher than humankind's.[423] Bridging this gap, Klein states that "the theological goal of the entire book" of Exodus is for Israel to know that He is God.[424] It is in close proximity to God's indwelling presence and meeting Israel at the tabernacle that "they shall know that I am the LORD their God".[425] It is important to note that this consequential

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[420] Exod 33:18-9.

[421] Exod 34:6-7.

[422] Kaiser Jr, 214.

[423] Isa 55:8.

[424] Klein 271.

[425] Exod 29: 46.

statement of knowing God is preceded by, and connected to, the affirmation of God's indwelling covenantal and glory-presence,

> And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.[426]

If divine temporality allows for the notion of God's indwelling presence (marked by divine authority and glory) to tabernacle with Israel, it follows that his tabernacling presence and subsequent actions via the tabernacle will reveal more on his being and purposes—which will further demonstrate its representational connections to God. The next chapter will focus on four key purposes that will further illustrate the representational connections of the tabernacle and contribute towards the comparative scope of this thesis.

Representational of God's rule as King over a New Kingdom

It is important to note the following fundamental characteristics of God's covenant: taking Israel as his people and being their God, the giving of the Ten Commandments confirmed in a ceremony by both parties, the display of the divine glory-theophany that "dwelt on Mount Sinai", and the establishment of the tabernacle "that I may dwell in their midst".[427] Thus, we see the establishment of a covenant, a law, a ceremony, and finally, a special place (the tabernacle) from which God would rule as their new king. For the scope of this comparative study, it is

[426] Exod 29:43-6.

[427] Exod 6:7, 20: 2-17, 24:5-12, 16-7, 25:8.

essential to note that the intent of God's covenantal and tabernacling presence was to take Israel as his "treasured possession among all peoples" and, as their King, establish a rather different kind of kingdom: They would be to him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation".[428] As such the tabernacle could be seen as representing the indwelling presence of a spiritual King, introducing ten spiritual commandments, and ruling over a spiritual kingdom of priests within the context of a "treasured" relationship.

The transference of God's theophanic presence from Sinai to the tabernacle is to be seen as a transference of his rulership into the camp of Israel. It is from his tabernacling cloud-and glory-presence that God will be ruling over Israel; meeting with and speaking to them about all the commandments he gave them.[429] God came down from Mount Sinai with authority and glory to be and to act in Israel's camp as their King, "throughout all their journeys"[430] even their battles.[431] It is a common occurrence for Israel to seek (as well as neglect to seek) advice and guidance from God in their battle plans. The battles against their enemies are frequently portrayed in a way that that emphasises the Lord their God fighting for them—often with a direct message to an enemy king, for example, "I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you".[432]

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[428] Exod 19:5-6.

[429] Exod 25:22.

[430] Exod 40:38.

[431] Deut 2:33, 28:7,25, 1 Sam 7:10.

[432] Exod 14:14, Deut 3:22, Jos. 23:10, Exod 6:29.

The tabernacle pictured God enthroned above the ark as Israel's king, even after they demanded "a king to judge us like all the nations".[433] Though this marked a relenting of divine ruling kingship for Israel when God said to Samuel, "they have rejected me from being king over them", God remained faithful to his tabernacling covenant.[434] This is vividly demonstrated in Ezekiel's vision, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, when initially "the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD" but then left when "the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house".[435] In vision and reality this resulted in the destruction of the temple and Israel being "scattered" among the nations.[436] However, despite Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant and the absence of the visible tabernacle, the notion of God's tabernacling presence not only represents his faithfulness to be "a sanctuary to them",[437] but also his divine purpose to build a new kingdom:

> And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.[438]

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[433] Ps 9:7, Isa 37:16, 1 Sam 8:5-6.

[434] 1 Sam 8:7.

[435] Ezek 10:4, 18.

[436] Ezek 11:6.

[437] Ibid.

[438] Ezek 11:19-20

The tabernacle itself is thus representational of God's tabernacling purpose to establish his rule of a new kind of priestly kingdom to be present with humankind in a covenantal relationship.

Representational of God as Creator

The design and ministry of the tabernacle is by far the most iconic feature of Israel's cultic history and occupies more time and space in the Old Testament than any other topic.[439] It is duly credited for creating a culture and practice that facilitated the essence and centrality of worship between God and his people. Fretheim comments on its representational links when he writes:

> The worship of God at the tabernacle is a way for the community of faith to participate in the divine creational work. God's continuing work in and through the worship of Israel is creative of a new world for Israel; it is a means whereby the community itself can take on the characteristics of that new creation in every aspect of its life. If, as seems likely, Genesis 1 is a hymn to the Creator, the tabernacle becomes the liturgical context for that hymnic activity, which shows forth before the world the effects of God's re-creating deed.[440]

From the outset, the tabernacle itself and its rich symbolism embodied divine creativity in establishing a new nation and a kingdom of priests.[441] The wilderness tabernacle inaugurated not only a new way of life, but a new way of being for God's people. By its ministry of sacrificial forgiveness, the tabernacle symbolised the recreation of people into the image and likeness of God under divine rulership. Thus, the tabernacle sets forth the pathway for Israel's King, who rules with authority and

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[439] Pink, 224.

[440] Fretheim, 202, Fretheim, 233.

[441] Exod 25:8, 19:5-6.

glory from the tabernacle, to create and inaugurate his new "kingdom of priests", thereby recreating a new people along with "new heavens and a new earth".[442] Paul emphasises that it is "in Christ" that God acted to "create in himself one new man" (representing both Jews and Gentiles), thus fulfilling the ministry of the tabernacle "by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances" and reconciling a new humanity to God.[443]

Thus, the tabernacle is representational of the power and authority of God to create a new people for himself, particularly in the way Christ, as its fulfilment, created a new a reconciled humanity.

Representational of God "with us" in Closer Relationship

Conflicting ideas of divine nearness have plagued theologians and critics for many years and have often been manifested in commonly held opposing conundrums, like eternity versus temporality, holiness versus sinfulness, and law versus grace. Zehr comments on these apparent dichotomies when he argues, "This conflict between God's desire to be near His people and at the same time is removed from them due to their sin brings us to the heart of tabernacle theology."[444] Though the people "stood far off" at Mount Sinai, "Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was", thus demonstrating that the tabernacle is representational of God's

[442] Exod 19:5-6, Isa 65:17.

[443] Eph 2:13-5.

[444] Zehr, 144.

holy nearness to sinful people.[445] It is thus in the context of a covenantal "treasured possession" that we see God's desire to be present to "dwell in their midst", tabernacling "from tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling" and not separated and distant in a "house of cedar".[446] Instead, the divine design of the portable tabernacle resulted in God's nearness, as God said to David, "I have been with you wherever you have gone".[447] The tabernacle is thus representational of the very intent of the holy transcendent God to be immanently present in a closer and intimate relationship with his people.

Though interpreting such an ontological theology proved challenging under the limiting construct of Greek philosophical first principles, the notion of divine temporality (as we have shown) allows for the historical reality of divine transcending immanence that shows up quite consistently in the biblical record. Fretheim's criticism on the confinement of Greek dualism and his affirmation of the biblical position is clear when he writes, "God cannot be so confined; God is both near and far.[448] Thus, the tabernacle represents the middle-ground between God and fallen humankind where God's holiness and humankind's sinfulness are deliberately brought together in the ministry of the tabernacle. Peterson describes it this way: "The Tabernacle then reveals how God is able to manifest His mercy and grace to a sinful people, without violating His own righteousness."[449] In other words, the

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[445] Exod 20:21.

[446] Exod 19:5, 25:8, 1 Chron 17:5-6.

[447] 1 Chron 17:8.

[448] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 299.

[449] Peterson, 76.

tabernacle makes it possible for God to be "with us" in a close and intimate relationship.[450] It is also important to note that the tabernacle is representational of a relational response to God's tabernacling presence. Zehr confirms this when he argues that the tabernacle's connection with Christ is "more than type" and contends that "it is a symbol of man's relationship with God when seen in the entirety of the sacrifices".[451]

It is prudent to note that God was already in a covenantal relationship with humankind via the *Imago Dei* (as has been argued in chapter three) and was verified with Abram long before Sinai and the establishment of the tabernacle.[452] Moving his glory-presence from Sinai right into the centre of Israel's camp—particularly after their golden-calf rebellion when they didn't even want God to speak to them[453]—is indicative of God's resolve to breach the gap of sin and be "at close, even intimate, range".[454] This divine intimate closeness via God's tabernacling presence among Israel can also be seen as representational of the closeness of the Triune relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. Such a divine intentional nearness from the transcendent divine to be immanently near in his tabernacling presence is to effect yet another purpose—a reconciliation between God and humankind.

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[450] Peterson, 14, 75-6.

[451] Zehr, 180.

[452] Gen 12:1-2, Exod 6:7.

[453] Exod 40:34, 20:19.

[454] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 264.

Representational of God's Reconciliation

The purpose of the tabernacle as the sole facilitating entity for sacrifices is to reconcile God and humankind. Peterson confirms this when he writes, "The importance of the tabernacle is paramount to the understanding of God's plan of redemption and His purpose for reconciling humanity."[455] Following on from the establishment of God's tabernacling presence and God's affirmation that his presence shall indeed go with his people, is the significance of Moses' request, "Please show me your glory".[456] It is prudent to note that God's revealed glory is connected to the focus on "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" which is fundamentally facilitated in the tabernacle-ministry.[457] Such a reconciling purpose of God's tabernacling presence is confirmed at the dedication of Solomon's temple when the divine cloud and glory "filled the house of the Lord" and Solomon requested God to "hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel".[458]

Thus, beyond pointing to Christ, the purpose of the tabernacle was to establish a God-initiated, reconciling glory-presence among his people. This was even more apparent when Moses asked, "please let the Lord go in the midst of us" with the express purpose to "pardon our iniquity and our sin".[459] Zehr aptly describes

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[455] Peterson, 75.

[456] Exod 25:8, 33:14, 18.

[457] Exod 25: 34:5-7.

[458] 1 Kings 8:11, 36.

[459] 1 Kings 8:9.

its reconciling purpose when he concludes, “The tabernacle displays forthrightly the need for reconciliation between humankind and God.”[460]

Interim Concluding Comments

Rather than utilizing allegorical interpretational methodologies to interpret the tabernacle, this chapter has set out to demonstrate that a literal and historical approach to the tabernacle is affirmed by the biblical narrative, which can be viewed as representational of God.

The sanctuary, instituted and designed by God with the express to dwell with his people, was not only filled with the actual presence of God, but displayed characteristics representational of God. Though it was a stationary vessel needing to be transported, the biblical record presents the tabernacle as being made alive through the indwelling presence of God.

This chapter has focussed on the notion of divine temporality and demonstrated, along with literary support in chapter one, that Scripture indeed supports the idea of the eternal God being present in space and time, within the constraints of earthly and human temporality. God dwells in the temporality of the tabernacle without ceasing to be eternal. This chapter has also argued in favour of a historical biblical reading of God’s tabernacling, glory presence with his people, connecting it to the *Imago Dei*. This chapter has also shown that the tabernacle can be viewed as representational of God’s indwelling presence further unveiling his divine being, particularly in the way his presence is a filling and indwelling presence

[460] Zehr, 144.

imbued with delegated authority and bestowed glory. The tabernacle was so closely associated with the divine for Israel that it was generally accepted that God himself was with them in their travels and battles.

It is also evident that the tabernacle served and displayed the representational purposes of God. Being placed either at the centre of Israel's camp or leading out in front on their journeys, the tabernacle signified God's rule and kingship over a newly established kingdom. Through the tabernacle God created a new nation and kingdom of priests. Ultimately, as a representation of "God with us", the tabernacle, more than anything else, communicated to Israel that God wanted a closer relationship with his covenant people. Thus, the tabernacle became intimately associated with God's reconciliation in the facilitation of forgiveness via the entire sacrificial system.

Having explored a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle in both the literature and Scripture, and identifying key comparative characteristics in each, the next chapter will demonstrate how such a representational methodology to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle is connected to Jesus Christ, the visible image of the invisible God who came to tabernacle with humankind.

There are vast differences between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle. However, their comparative similarities are significant, particularly when viewed through a lens of representation. God's presence with humankind (by his Spirit in human temples) presents a remarkable comparison with his dwelling presence in the Old Testament tabernacle. That the eternal God can be present in the temporality of tabernacle and humankind's world, initiates a shared connection most vividly seen through Jesus Christ. He alone embodies both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle through the fullness of his humanity as the perfect representation of God. This will be the focus of the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4: SHARED REPRESENTATIONAL CONNECTIONS WITH JESUS CHRIST

Introduction

The scope of this chapter is limited to the representational connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle in the way they are associated with and reflected in Jesus Christ. The purpose of this chapter will be to highlight the importance of Jesus Christ as the image of God who came to tabernacle with humankind, thus grounding both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle in a representational Christology. The chapter will then briefly expand on their interrelated connectedness with Jesus Christ and identify areas of confluence with, or divergence from, each other. The chapter's conclusion will highlight the key findings that emerge in this representational comparison.

From the outset, it is important to note that there are representational connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle independently of their connection with Jesus Christ. However, though theological connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle exist and are alluded to, direct links are rarely found or expanded upon in Scripture and the literature. For example, though Psalm 90 connects the concept of creation with God's dwelling presence within the timeless scope of eternity, the concepts of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle remain hidden within the contrasting picture of setting God's eternal timelessness in juxtaposition with humankind's temporality.[461] Likewise in the literature, Matthews, for example,

[461] Ps 90:1-2 states that the Lord has "been our dwelling place in all generations" when He "had formed the earth and the world", in the context of eternal divine transcendence, "from everlasting to everlasting".

mentions that the notion of image and likeness suggests "that the presence of human life represented God, as did the tabernacle" but he does not elaborate any further on their connectedness.[462]

This chapter will thus initially establish the interrelated connections of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle with Jesus Christ in order to reevaluate and summarise their shared representational connections from chapters three and four. The chapter will also utilise and expand on biblical and literary references that demonstrate in what way they are representational of God.

Representational of the Imago Dei and Jesus Christ

Though the New Testament never uses "image" and "likeness" in combination as they appear in the original Genesis account, they are nonetheless independently employed in reference to Jesus Christ. Some passages refer directly to Christ as the image of the invisible God or to Jesus who came and was born in the likeness of sinful humankind.[463] Others verify a Christological view of the *Imago Dei*, painting Jesus as the exact image of the invisible divine, the fullness of divinity incarnated in his humanity.[464] Hoekema echoes a common scholarly conclusion when he writes, "There is no better way of seeing the image of God than to look at

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[462] Mathews, 168.

[463] Referring to Christ, "the image of the invisible God", "the image of God", "in the likeness of sinful flesh" and "being born in the likeness of men" found in Col 1:15, 2 Cor 4:4, Rom 8:3, and Phil 2:7 respectively.

[464] Christ is portrayed as "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint (image) of his nature", "the image of the invisible God", in whom "dwells all the fullness of God", or in whom "the fullness of deity dwells bodily" from Heb 1:3, Col 1:15, Col 1:19, and Col 2:9 respectively.

Jesus Christ, thus we see and hear in Christ what God intended for man."[465] Undoubtedly, these references represent the intimate relationship within the fully divine, fully human incarnational Christ, and also the relationship between God and humankind. Peterson affirms this when he writes: "God's interest in the realization of human identity culminates in the incarnation. Jesus Christ, being fully divine and fully human, is God's image in the world, revealing the identity and character of God."[466] Hebrews 1:3 translates χαρακτήρ as "exact imprint" or "exact representation" of the image of Christ.[467] Henry suggests that this reference to the person of Jesus Christ represents God in three uniquely significant ways which connect humankind, as a lesser representation, with God.[468] Thus, the incarnational embodiment of Jesus Christ as the *Imago Dei* serves as the midpoint or "mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ", thus representing God before humankind, and vice versa.[469] Hence I agree with Hoekema that "the Incarnation confirms the doctrine of the image of God."[470]

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[465] Hoekema, 22.

[466] Peterson, 1.

[467] *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition.* Thomas compares the image of Christ as a sharpened tool to engrave or impress, hence his preference for "exact representation".

[468] Henry, 2380. Jesus, as the only begotten Son of God must have the same nature. The person of Jesus as the Son is the glory of the Father manifested in the flesh, the true Shechinah. The person of Jesus is the true character of the person of the Father.

[469] 1 Tim 2:5.

[470] Hoekema, 21-2.

The Apostle Paul affirms the central representative role of Jesus Christ in his comparison of the first man Adam with Christ as the second Adam.[471] He proceeds to explain how, despite sin coming into the world bringing death to all humankind via the first Adam, life as a gift was brought to all by the second Adam. While the trespass of one representative condemned humankind, the righteous act of the second representative, Christ, brought grace and life to them all. It is via the incarnational likeness of Adam's posterity that Christ, as the second Adam representing all of humankind, took on the bodily fullness of humankind as the Son of Man.[472] As such Chen confirms that, "The image can be conceived as a role in the divine drama, played failingly by Adam, but recapitulatively by Christ the paradigmatic image of God", thus affirming the representational connection between the *Imago Dei* and Jesus Christ.[473]

God created humankind via the first Adam's *Imago Dei,* but Adam condemned them all to death as their representative. Contrariwise, God recreated humankind through Christ's *Imago Dei* as their new representative offering all of humankind reconciliation and life.[474] Consequently, humankind is to be patterned or imaged through faith and obedience after the likeness of Christ as their new heavenly representative to be completely transformed into the image of the heavenly *Imago Dei*.[475] This is affirmed by Gunton when he writes: "To be in the image of God is to

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[471] Rom 5:12-8.

[472] Gen 5:1-3, Rom 8:3, Phil 2:7.

[473] Chen, "The Imago Dei, Embodied Mediation and the Church's Mission," 3.

[474] Eph 2:8, 15.

[475] Rom 8:29, Eph 4:24, 1 Cor 15: 47-9, 2 Cor 3:18.

be created through the Son, who is the archetypal bearer of the image. To be in the image of God, therefore, means to be conformed on the person of Christ."[476] Thus, the transference of Adam's fallen representational *Imago Dei* to Jesus Christ inaugurates and offers a renewed heavenly *Imago Dei* for all humankind. The transformed *Imago Dei* ends up being more representational of God than the former––a similar transfer we also see in the tabernacle.

Representational of the Tabernacle and Jesus Christ

As with the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle offers a transformational view of God's presence with humankind. This section will explore two Johannine references directly linked to the concept of the tabernacle with Jesus Christ, though several other passages also allude to such a connection.[477] Firstly and most significantly is John's understanding of the indwelling, incarnational Word in the first chapter of his gospel. Though scholars disagree on precisely how to link the concept of the historical tabernacle to the poetic prologue of John, Fretheim argues that its connection within the Gospel has been firmly established.[478] A good example of this is the connection of the Johannine reference to God's tabernacling presence and

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[476] Gunton, in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, 58-9.

[477] John 1:14, John 2:19-22.

[478] Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, *Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 315. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=478938&site=ehost-live. Fretheim sees the apparent contrasting poetic and prose styles as rhythmical prose and would argue for the prologue to be regarded as a unified composition and an integral part of the gospel.

Jesus Christ as a fulfilment of several Old Testament prophecies.[479] Koester highlights these connections when he writes:

> In the Word made flesh, in this Jesus of Nazareth, made of a woman, God whom the heavens and the heavens of heavens cannot contain had come to be with men; in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, not in a cloud but in Christ Jesus, the God-man."[480]

Beale expands on the divine self-revelatory connection in chapter one of the gospel of John between the tabernacle and Jesus when he writes:

> In the past God was present among his people in the tabernacle . . . but now he has taken up residence among his people in the person of Jesus Christ (1:14). In the past God made himself known through the law, but now he revealed himself definitively in and through Jesus Christ (1:16-17).[481]

The tabernacle-Christological connection in John 1:14 as a revelation of God's dwelling presence thus provides a firm scholarly grounding to explore.

Beyond such a divine self-revelation in this key passage in John's gospel, scholars have unsurprisingly identified and expanded on the representational connection between Jesus Christ and the tabernacle. For example, Henry connects the tabernacle's glory presence with Jesus Christ in a representational way when he writes, "That as of old God dwelt in the tabernacle of Moses, by the shechinah between the cherubim, so now he dwells in the human nature of Christ; that is now the true shechinah, the symbol of God's peculiar presence."[482] Another scholarly example that affirms this representational connection is McGee when he concludes:

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[479] Zech. 2:14 and Ezek 37:27.

[480] Koester, 102.

[481] Gregory K Beale, and Donald A Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Baker Books, 2007), 422.

[482] Henry, 1918.

> There must be one who can represent man before God and one to represent God before man. He must have authority to rule. Christ fulfils all this, for He was God before man, and today He is man before God. He is both God and man. He is able to bring a holy God and sinner man together. And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us.[483]

Thus, the representational connection between the tabernacle and Jesus Christ in the opening chapter of John sets the tone to investigate their theological connections in the rest of the New Testament. Divine representational tabernacling presence is therefore key to retrospectively understand the reconciling ministry of the Old Testament tabernacle in the way it points forward to and fulfills the sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ. Similarly to the tabernacle, the fullness of divinity came to dwell with humanity, only now in the fullness of Jesus' humanity represented via the incarnated Christ.

The idea of the incarnated Christ tabernacling with or indwelling a newly created community of faith is repeated in varying applications elsewhere in the New Testament.[484] For example, the apostle Paul prays for the believers in Ephesus that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith in the Holy Spirit whereby their bodies now become temples for the indwelling Spirit.[485] Similarly he encourages the new believers in Colossae to let the Word of Christ dwell in them as they grow in Christ.[486] As such, the concept of God's tabernacling presence with his people in the

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[483] McGee 35.

[484] The Greek σκηνόω, translated as dwell comes from σκῆνος, translated as "a hut or temporary residence, that is, (figuratively) the human body (as the abode of the spirit): - tabernacle", while ἐν is translated as among is used as "a primary preposition denoting (fixed) *position* (in place, time or state)". Hence, the use of tabernacling or indwelling.

[485] Eph 3:17, 1 Cor 6:19, 3:16.

[486] Col 1:10, 3:16.

OT is represented by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who now by faith dwells in the believer through his Spirit and his Word.

Another view of Christ's indwelling presence is illustrated by Paul when he approaches representation from a human perspective and theologises on the believer being in Christ. In other words, via faith in Christ, believers are representatively being transformed into a new creation in the resurrected humanity of Jesus Christ.[487] From a divine perspective, Beale views Christ's body temple as symbolic of humankind as a new creation.[488] Hence, a representational Christological indwelling picture is concisely painted when Paul argues that a new humanity of faith is being built together into a new dwelling place for God via his Spirit.[489] Thus comparatively, Christ dwells in the believer and the church (individually and collectively) similarly to the way God dwelt in the tabernacle among his people in the Old Testament.

The second direct connection is based on the use of the words σκῆνος ἐν. The idea of the tabernacle and Jesus Christ are linked when Jesus referred to the "temple of his body" that will be crucified but raised to life by him again.[490] Here, the reality of God dwelling in the Old Testament tabernacle, physically represented by the Shechinah glory-presence above the golden ark is representational of new life given by God and fulfilled in the incarnated physical body of Jesus. Thus, Jesus' statement

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[487] 2 Cor 5:17.

[488] Beale, The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God, 176.

[489] Eph 2:22.

[490] John 2:19-22.

to raise his own body-temple affirms his dual divine-human nature, and his act of divine self-resurrection demonstrates that the tabernacle is indeed representational of God's resurrection power.[491] The resurrection of Christ's temple-body after the crucifixion becomes the hope and reality Paul wanted to instil in the faith of the Colossian believers: they, too, have been raised with Christ.[492] In other words, as the first Adam representatively condemned all humankind to death, God has made all humanity potentially alive in the resurrected humanity of Christ. Being so represented in the incarnational second Adam, Jesus has potentially and collectively raised up a recreated faith-humanity together with him when he raised up his temple-body on the third day.[493] Paul comments on this connection when he reminds the believers in Rome that they were representatively crucified with Christ, made alive in Christ, raised with Christ, and seated with the resurrected Christ in heaven.[494] In this way, Jesus' body-temple represents all of humankind and consequently offers a reconciled and resurrected *Imago Dei* to all; though not all will accept God's gracious offer through Christ as the representative of humankind's second Adam.[495] Thus, Paul connects the Old Testament atoning and tabernacling presence of God with the New Testament idea of Christ's incarnational indwelling presence when he assures the culturally mixed group of believers in Rome that in the resurrection, their

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[491] Col 1:22, John 10:17.

[492] Col 3:1.

[493] Rom 5:17-8, John 2:19-22.

[494] Rom 5:17-8, Eph 2:5-6.

[495] Rom 5:12-21

mortal bodies will be raised as surely as Christ's body was raised through the indwelling Spirit that now abides in them.[496]

Finally, the meaning of Immanuel alludes to the concept of God's tabernacling presence that is prophetically represented and fulfilled in and through Christ.[497] Grenz comments on this connection when he writes, "The Old Testament experience forms the context for significance of Jesus Christ as Immanuel, God with us (Matt 1:22-23). In Jesus, the divine Word became flesh and 'tabernacled' among us (John 1:14); that is, in him God came to be present with humankind."[498] Thus, the concept of Christ dwelling with humankind as God with us is confirmed by Jesus referencing the "I am with you always" statement at his ascension.[499] This communicates an Immanuel-presence beyond the boundaries that the Fall has temporarily placed on humankind and suggests that God's tabernacling presence will be everlasting, irrespective of the temporal constraints of time and space. The same sentiment is repeated by the apostle John at the inauguration of a new heaven and earth: God's dwelling place will forever be with humankind to be their God, and they, his people.[500]

The temple of Jesus' body connects the idea of God's tabernacling glory-presence in the new Jerusalem to the essence of divinity when John sees no temple, but instead states that both the "Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" are indeed

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[496] Rom 8:11.

[497] Isa 7:14, Matt 1:23.

[498] Grenz, "Salvation and God's Program in Establishing Community," 506.

[499] Matt 28:20.

[500] Rev. 21:3.

the temple of the God.[501] This reconnects the incarnational Immanuel to the original covenantal presence of God with Israel when God requested Israel to make a dwelling-sanctuary for him.[502] Hence, the connection of the tabernacle to the concept of Immanuel is representational of the intent and reality of God's being to dwell with humankind in and beyond the temporal limitations of the Fall, space, and time.

Representational Christology

The representational connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle with Jesus Christ in the previous two sections opens a deeper view of a representational Christology that this section will focus on. By God sending his Son, who knew no sin, in the bodily likeness of sinful humankind, divinity not only took up dwelling residence among fallen humankind, but made Christ to be sin for humankind to become God's reconciliation on behalf of humankind.[503] Representationally speaking, the incarnational second Adam took on humankind's fallen *Imago Dei* from the first Adam to transform humankind into the renewed *Imago Dei* of Christ, the man of heaven.[504] In other words, by taking on the burden of the sinful *Imago Dei* of the first Adam, God representatively reconciled all things to himself through the physical death of the incarnational Christ. And by reconciling all things to himself, Christ became the resurrected second Adam, now offering a

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[501] John 2:19, 21, Rev. 21:22.

[502] See Exod 6:7, Lev 26:12, and Exod 25:8 respectively.

[503] 2 Cor 5:21.

[504] Rom 8:3, 2 Cor 3:18, and 1 Cor 15:49.

renewed *Imago Dei* to all fallen humankind.[505] Hence, it becomes imperative to incorporate a representational interpretation in the most basic Christology.

Another significant Christological implication resulting from Canale's proposal on the concept of divine temporality affirms the reality of God's tabernacling presence via the hypostatic union of Jesus' incarnational divine and human nature.[506] God's request to Israel for a sanctuary to dwell in their midst can be viewed as God's willingness to breach the gap to fallen temporality by being immanently present with humankind. Prospectively viewed from the tabernacle, the fullness of God's shekinah glory-presence finally took up physical and visible residence among people in the physical body of Christ.[507] Hence, the notion of divine temporality, as a consequence, allows for the transcendent divine to be immanently present in and through the incarnational Christ.[508] Thus, a biblically faithful Christology must incorporate the notion of representative divine temporality.

Consequently, we see Jesus representing the fallen and reconciled *Imago Dei* via the fullness of his humanity, and we see Jesus representing God's tabernacling nearness via the fullness of his divinity. This constitutes the ontology of the incarnational Christ; the fullness of his divine-being indwelling the fullness of his human-being. The Bible thus presents a representational Christological record of

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[505] Col 1:22.

[506] Canale 206. God's *presence* cannot be separated from his *being* and therefore his being (contrary to traditional theological assumptions) can indeed be present in the spatial-temporal confines of humankind's world.

[507] Exod 25:8.

[508] Col 1:19.

how the whole fullness of deity came to dwell bodily within the confined spatial-temporal limitations of humankind's world.[509]

Therefore, a representational Christology is consistent with the biblical record when Paul presents Christ himself as humankind's peace.[510] In other words, God's peace and reconciliation, achieved through Christ's bodily death and resurrection, representatively reconciled all things to himself, thereby potentially presenting all humankind holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.[511] This is crucial to this thesis, because both the *Imago Dei* and tabernacle represent the reconciling incarnational being of God's transcending immanence in some respect, particularly in their shared connection to Jesus Christ. Hence, we proceed to summarise the comparative representational connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle in the context of their shared Christology.

Summary of Shared Representational Connections

Having explored the individual representational connections of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle with Jesus Christ, this section will now draw on chapters three and four to present the comparable representational connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as they are brought together in Christ. This thesis has uncovered eight characteristics that expose either clear or tentative shared representational

[509] Col 2:9.

[510] Eph 2:14.

[511] Col 1:19-21.

connections that can be found between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and Jesus Christ. The ensuing sections of this chapter will thus outline these findings to highlight their theological connections as representations of God.

Representational of a Dynamic Priestly Order

The first and foremost connection between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and the incarnation lies in their shared divine origins of a dynamic priestly order. Adam served as archetypical priest of the first Edenic sanctuary followed by patriarchal sacred places.[512] Next came a perpetual Levitical priesthood, with a portable tabernacle that developed into a kingdom of priests around a central temple. After that came the body-temple of a royal priesthood of believers that finally culminated in Christ as High Priest serving in the heavenly sanctuary. [513] Thus, the concept and reality of the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and Jesus Christ are intricately connected to the concept of a priestly order and function, originated and instituted by God, and in turn, representational of God, who ultimately is the Father who gives his Son as a sacrificial ransom to reconcile humanity to himself.

Though God's handiwork declares that He is The Genesis of all animate and inanimate orders in the heavens and on the earth, the dynamic priestly orders of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are designed after heavenly originals as an image, likeness, pattern or copy and must therefore be viewed as representations of their

[512] See Footnotes 97-8, Gen 8:20, 12:7, 35:1-7, Exod15:15.

[513] Exod 19:6, 40:15, Num 1:50-3, 3:7-8, 1 Peter 2:5, 9, Heb 8:1-3, 9:7-11.

Designer and Creator.[514] The tabernacle, as an inanimate object made dynamic and alive by God's indwelling nearness, is representational of the fullness of God's transcending presence in recreating humankind after his image and likeness. In their shared origins, the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are thus to be seen as uniquely representational of God's priestly reconciliation to fulfil his original design for humankind to be a royal priesthood in a kingdom of priests, transformed into the renewed image and likeness of Jesus Christ, our High Priest and Image of God. The biblical record indicates that humankind's fallen *Imago Dei* can potentially be seen as recreated tabernacles which—like spiritual houses—are made alive and being built up into a holy priesthood for God, resulting in an offering of spiritual sacrifices through Jesus Christ that are now acceptable to God.[515]

Thus, the priestly origins of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle communicated to Israel that God was mercifully and dynamically present to recreate the fallen *Imago Dei* and as such representational of his covenantal promise to all humankind to receive his mercy and be his people as fulfilled in Christ, the restorer of the *Imago Dei* and High Priest of the heavenly tabernacle.[516] Hence, Paul encourages believers to put on their new *Imago Dei*, recreated after the likeness of God.[517] It is only by faith and the intercession of Christ as High Priest that humankind can believe and

[514] Gen 1:26-28, Exod 25:9, 40, Heb 8:5.

[515] 1 Peter 2:5.

[516] 1 Peter 2:9, Heb 9:11-2.

[517] Eph 4:24.

adopt their renewed *Imago Dei*, a transformed image and likeness reconciled in Christ's body of flesh, in which the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.[518]

The divine origins of the incarnation in preparing a body for Christ, meant that God chose to adopt humankind before the foundation of the world as his own children who are destined to inherit the renewed *Imago Dei* of the second Adam by faith.[519] As a result, the indwelling Spirit now tabernacles again, in a similar way to the tabernacle of old, in the body-temple of the believer whose faith is fixed on the reality and hope of a resurrected *Imago Dei*, to become God's own chosen and holy people, his royal priesthood.[520]

This thesis is thus proposing that the shared priestly origins of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can be seen as representational of God's own dynamic priestly ministry, particularly in the way they are connected to, and reflected in, the high priestly ministry of Christ to mediate his renewed *Imago Dei* on behalf of humankind in the heavenly tabernacle.

The shared priestly origins that exist between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ make their relatable connection possible, thus bridging the gap for divinity to be present in humankind's temporal world that the next section shall focus on.

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[518] Col 1:19-22, Heb 9:11-5.

[519] Heb 10:5, Eph 1:4-5.

[520] 1 Peter 2:9, Heb 9:14.

Representational of Divine Temporality

Despite the apparent philosophical impassability of divine transcendence and immanence into humankind's fallen world and state, the biblical record consistently paints the picture of God's presence among his people.

Though both the *Imago Dei* and tabernacle are restricted by the temporality of time and space, their priestly origins allow for a connection with God's presence. The biblical record relates how God breaches all human and earthly limitations, including sin, to physically take up space and residence among humankind.[521] This is particularly evident in the way that the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God, reconciling the world to himself.[522]

However, the point of this section is not how God bridges the divide between eternity and temporality, but how the temporality of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can be seen as representational of God's presence in humankind's temporal existence in order to establish a covenantal relationship with them. Viewed through Jesus Christ as the perfect representation of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle opens "an analogical notion of divine temporality".[523]

The "Living Triune God's Being-as-life-in-relation" is revealed by creating and posturing the *Imago Dei* in relationship to nature, each other, and himself.[524]

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[521] Kim 540-1. See also Exod 19:11, 19-20.

[522] Col 1:19-20.

[523] Canale 18.

[524] Eunsoo Kim, *Time, Eternity, and the Trinity: A Trinitarian Analogical Understanding of Time and Eternity* (Wipf and Stock, 2010), 336. Divine temporality simply means that "the Living Triune God can really relate to our time without any change in His ontological mode of Being".

God's visible and audible theophanies demonstrate divine transcendence, and such theophanies, seen and heard by fallen human beings, are evidence of divine immanence.[525] By breaching the gap, between timeless changeless realities and temporal changing realities, he establishes a covenantal relationship with humankind.

It is shared aspects like a dynamic priestly order and temporality, that enables humankind to be in relationship with God and vice versa. Relational interactions between God and humans happen throughout the biblical narrative. However, in the creation account the third-person plural pronoun is employed to speak to directly humans: "God said to them".[526] This is the first of many interactions between God and humankind. However, interactions after the Fall indicates that "God must both affect and be affected by the world's temporality" and therefore demonstrates that God "is both eternal and temporal".[527] The biblical record also substantiates how God even moves beyond the limitations of sin to dwell in human temples with his Spirit to effect divine transformation.[528] Consequently, the relational presence of God's eternal transcendence with humankind confirms the concept of divine temporality, but most remarkably, also indicates that humankind's temporality in relationship with God is representational of God's own temporality.

Similarly, the divinely instituted and portable tabernacle, though comprised of perishable materials in a temporary tent made of animal skin and administered by fallen priests, was established with expressed purpose that God may dwell with his

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[525] Gen 3, 12:7, 26:24, Exod 3:2; 19.

[526] Gen 1:14-28. God "said" versus, God "said to them" and "given you".

[527] Peters, 150.

[528] 2 Chron 6:18, 1 Cor 3:16-8, Ps 139: 7-10, 1 Cor 15:45-53.

people.[529] However, it is also representational of the reality that divine presence has taken up residence among a nation on the move.[530] Most significantly, the divine filling of the tabernacle demonstrates the reality of how God can move from spaceless-and timeless transcendence to be immanently present with fallen humankind under the confines of space and time. Thus, occupying space and time in the temporal tabernacle radically proves the power of God to be "supremely temporal" in "uncreated self-subsistent time". [531] Hence, the temporal nature of both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle reveals the ability of divine reach into human temporal space and time in a unique way.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the incarnation of Jesus Christ to take on human flesh and become humankind's bridging reconciliation, radically displayed via his hypostatic, dual nature to demonstrate Immanuel, God with us. The notion of such a fully human, fully divine oneness corresponds with eternity and temporality.[532] Christ, who knew no sin, committed no sin, and in whom there was no sin, yet was made to be sin for fallen humankind's sake, represented both God in the fullness of eternal divinity and the *Imago Dei* in the fullness of his temporal humanity in order to demonstrate the presence of God with humankind.[533] Jesus Christ thus embodies and represents the confluence of divine and human temporality. Thus, the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus testify to the notion of divine

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[529] Exod 25:8, 40:34-5.

[530] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 234.

[531] Barth, 437.

[532] John 10:17-8.

[533] 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5.

temporality in the way eternal divinity could partake of both a birth-beginning and death-ending in the constraints of humankind's temporal world, without ceasing to be divine.

The concept of divine-temporal presence is crucial to this thesis because, though God is invisible and cannot be seen, it offers a way He can reveal himself and make himself accessible to temporal, sinful humankind.[534] Via the temporality of the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ, God demonstrates his own temporality and bridges all human and earthly limitations, including sin, to physically take up space and residence among humankind,[535] thus making his presence known and accessible to all humankind.[536]

Representational of God's Accessibility

This section will demonstrate that the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and Jesus Christ are also representational of God's accessibility.

The biblical record introduces the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as an image, likeness, pattern or copy of a heavenly original and therefore share in their sacred connection as representations of heavenly realities.[537] The *Imago Dei* originates as an image and likeness of a heavenly archetype, similarly to the tabernacle that originates as a copy or pattern of a heavenly sanctuary. Both shed light on unique

[534] Exod 33:20, John 14:8-11.

[535] Kim 540-1.

[536] Exod 19:11, 19-20, Eph 2:18, 3:8-12.

[537] Exod 25:9, 40, Acts 7:44, Heb 8:5.

ways that God is present with humankind.[538] Via the mobility of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle God's presence is represented as accessible and therefore available to humankind. Even after the Fall and Israel's rebellion at Mount Sinai, God still proceeded to be accessible and available to humankind. In other words, both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle were designed to representationally carry the divine presence wherever they went as God had promised Moses.[539]

The clear intent of God with the innate mobility of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle is demonstrated in the accompanying divine presence to "go with" or "be with" humankind—a reminder and promise frequently repeated in Scripture.[540] This essentially affirms the Abrahamic covenant to be fulfilled in and through Immanuel as the image of God, who became flesh to dwell among humankind.[541] The incarnational and tabernacling presence of God in Jesus Christ as the invisible Image of God affirms the representational mobility of both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as accessible representations of heavenly originals. This, of course, is entirely true of Jesus Christ, who as God in the flesh represented divine accessibility. The incarnation thus signified that God was presently accessible in Christ, tabernacling with humankind via the second Adam, the heavenly man, as the true Image of God.[542]

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[538] Exod 40:34-5, 1 Cor 6:19.

[539] Exod 33:14.

[540] Exod 33:14, Deut 31:8, Josh 1:5, John 14:16, Matt 28:20.

[541] Gen 28:15, John 1:14.

[542] 1 John 4:2, 1 Cor 15: 47-9, 2 Cor 4:4, John 1: 1-3, 14: 9-11.

The significance of the mobility of these sin-affected receptacles of heavenly archetypes as representations of the accessibility of God cannot be overstated as the implication points to the availability of God to humankind. For example, God's presence with Jacob wherever he went corresponds with the divine presence of the portable tabernacle wherever they moved,[543] demonstrating that Israel is to be considered as "followers of a God who is on the move."[544] Hence, the mobility of both humankind and the tabernacle is representational of the accessible presence of God to go with his people, wherever (space-wise) and whenever (timewise) they go. Such divine accessibility is illustrated in the way "Jesus went" throughout cities and villages like Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea Philippi, Galilee, and the Mount of Olives for example.[545]

Thus, the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as accessible representations of heavenly originals are corroborated in Jesus Christ. He is the incarnational image of the invisible God, who became flesh to dwell among us, thereby making God available to ordinary people who now dwell in human temples with his Spirit, revealing God's glory to humankind—a glory only seen "in the face of Jesus Christ". This is the focus of the next section.[546]

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[543] Gen 28:15, Exod 40:36.

[544] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 234.

[545] Matt 15:12, Mark 8:27, John. 6:1, John 8:1.

[546] Col 1:15, John. 1:14, 2 Chron 6:18, 1 Cor 3:16-8, Ps 139: 7-10, Col 1:15, 22, 2 Cor 5:21, 2 Cor 4:6.

Representational of God's Glory

This section will explore the ways in which both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are connected to, and representational of the idea of the glory of God, particularly as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

Connections between the glory of God and creation as a whole do exist; however, only one reference in the Old Testament[547] and four in the New Testament directly link the *Imago Dei* with the glory of God.[548] The biblical narrative records many instances of connection between the tabernacle and the glory of God at significant times.[549] Hence, the connection of the *Imago Dei* and tabernacle with the glory of God is permeated throughout the biblical record.

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[547] Ps 19:1, 104:1-31, 8:1, 3-6.

[548] The first is a quote from Psalm eight in crowning humankind with glory and honour (Heb 2:7-8); the second is in the context of men not needing head coverings since they are the image of the glory of God (1 Cor 11:7); the third alludes to the idea that the resurrected will be raised in glory with spiritual bodies bearing the image of the man of heaven (1 Cor 15:40-9); and the last connects the idea of glory to humankind's progressive transformation in being changed into the image of the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

[549] The first of these appear at Sinai when the glory of God "dwelt" on the mountain in a cloud and appeared like a devouring fire (Exod 24:16-8); the second significant moment describes the cloud that covered the tent of meeting and filled the tabernacle with the glory of the Lord, a theophany subsequently repeated several times during Israel's exodus journey (Exod 40:34-5, Lev 9: 23, Num 14:10, 16:19, 42, 20:6); the third significant incident relates to how the glory of the Lord, with the appearance of the cloud and fire, filled Solomon's newly built temple (1 Kings 8:11, 2 Chron 5:14, 7:1-3); the fourth significant development alludes to a transition from God's former tabernacling glory to the latter glory of Jesus Christ where God himself will be the glory in Israel's midst (Hag. 2: 7-9, Zech. 2:5, 10); the sixth, the transition of the glory of the tabernacle into the NT is captured in the incarnational glory of Jesus Christ tabernacling among humankind, as well as his transfiguration, ascension into heaven, and his return (John 1:14, Luke 2:14, Mark 9:2-4, John 17: 5, Mark 13:26, Matt 25:31); and finally, God's tabernacling glory is also present through his indwelling Spirit within the body-temples of believers (2 Cor 3;18).

The significance of the interrelated connectedness of the glory of God with the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle only exists as a result of God making his presence accessible and available to humankind. It suffices to say, the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle have no glory of their own apart from the presence of God who sanctifies them both.[550] Pauline theology connects humankind's image to the dynamic ministry of the indwelling Spirit to transform believers into the glorious image of God, thus conforming them into the glorified image of Jesus as a unique representation of the glory of God.[551] The Apostle Paul affirms that divine glory comes to humankind via the presence of God's Spirit and that the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can, like Moses, only reflect the glory of God.[552] Similarly, the hovering cloud over Sinai and the tabernacle tent, above the mercy seat, and at the inauguration of Solomon's temple, connects the glory of the tabernacle to the Spirit, who, as the glory of the Lord, dwells with humankind.[553] The manifestation of the Spirit in a devouring fire on the top of the mountain also corresponds to the glory of the tongues of fire over the disciples when the Spirit filled them as temples to dwell in them.[554] Thus, it is via the presence of the Spirit that God's glory is manifested to humankind.

The flow-on effect of God's indwelling Spirit of glory results in a transformational sanctification as seen in both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle.[555] It

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[550] Ps 26:8, Lev 20:8, 21:23, Ezek 37:28, Heb 2:11.

[551] 2 Cor 3;8-18, Rom 8:3, 9, 26, 29-30.

[552] 2 Cor 3:6-18.

[553] Exod 24:15, 40: 34, Lev 16:2, 1 Kings 8:10-1, 2 Cor 3:17-8.

[554] Exod 24:17, Acts 2:3.

[555] Exod 29:43, 2 Cor 3:6-18, Heb 2:10.

is only God who sanctifies both place, time, and humankind to be holy like him.[556] Thus, it is the indwelling presence of God's sanctifying Spirit that transforms the ordinary into the holy—like the tabernacle, and the Sabbath for instance. In turn, the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can thus be seen as representations of God's sanctifying Spirit.

This transformation is vividly demonstrated in the glory of Christ's transfiguration.[557] The glorious image of Christ, represented by the Shekinah glory of the tabernacle, and veiled by the fullness of the *Imago Dei* in the incarnational Adam, is dynamically transformed by the glorious Spirit of God. However, Christ's own transfiguration also represents how God will transform believers into the restored, glorious image of Christ, thereby sanctifying them, and consequently bringing many sons to glory.[558] Though Christ in his humanity was made lower than the angels, he was crowned with glory and honour through his death in order to bring many sons to glory through the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle point to Jesus Christ, who represents the source of God's glorious Spirit, who alone sanctifies humankind. Therefore, they both also highlight the resultant, restored relationship of humankind with God, which is the focus of the next section.[559]

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[556] Exod 31:13, Lev 20:8, 21:8, Ezek 20:12, 37:28.

[557] Mark 9:2-3, Luke 9:31.

[558] 2 Cor 3:17-8, Heb 2:9-11.

[559] Heb 2:9-11.

Representational Relationality

This section will expand on the fundamental appointment of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle to exist and function in relationship with God as other representations of God, particularly demonstrated in the way Jesus Christ represents humankind's restored relationship to God.[560]

Despite the historical-philosophical assumptions on the impassability between divine eternity and humankind's temporality, and despite the Fall that only exacerbated humankind's distance from the holiness of God, the biblical record instead consistently attests to their relational confluence, demonstrating God's resolve to restore this broken relationship. Reconciliation between God and humankind only happens because it fundamentally lies within the mysterious will and plan of God's own Triunity to unite all things in Christ.[561] Consequently, Christ's work on behalf of humankind results in "bringing many sons to glory" through the sanctifying work of God's Spirit of glory that dwells in humankind.[562] Thus, God's own triune engagement is fundamental, not only to the existence of humankind, but importantly, to establish, maintain and restore a relationship with humankind, and vice versa for humankind to be in relationship with God.[563]

The relational view of the *Imago Dei* from chapter one affirms that humankind was made, above all creation, in the relational image and likeness of God

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[560] See the Relational View in chapter one.

[561] Eph 1:9-10.

[562] Col 1:20, Heb 2:10-1, Eph 1:13, 1 Cor 6:19.

[563] Rice, 21.

to be and function in a three-fold relationship with creation, with each other and with God.[564] Poignantly, however, irrespective of the Fall, humankind's three-fold relationship can in turn, also be seen as representational of divine Triunity.[565] Thus, from a theological perspective, humankind is consequently returned into a relationship with the transcendent divine because God's presence became accessible through the Holy Spirit that tabernacled with humankind, thereby offering them the opportunity to be sanctified. Thus, the ministry of the Glory-Spirit makes a restored, covenantal relationship possible between God and sanctified people.

The atoning ministry of the tabernacle in a similar way also demonstrates God's will and plan to be in relationship with Israel, even more so after their idolatrous rebellion at Mount Carmel when finally, God confirmed with Moses that his divine tabernacling presence will indeed go with them.[566] This incident evidenced the essence of relational divine temporality because "God is both near and far". [567] The presence of God's Glory-Spirit in the tabernacle thus illustrates the divine desire for a relational covenant with Israel to dwell among them, and conversely also demonstrates God's expectation for humankind to be in relationship with him.[568] Thus, the reality of divine relational Triunity, who created the relational multiplicity of the *Imago Dei*, thus imbued humankind with the capacity to be and to function in relationship with creation, with each other and, most importantly, with God.

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[564] Hoekema, 49.

[565] Eph 2:18.

[566] Exod 34:6-7, Exod 33:3, 14.

[567] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 315.

[568] Exod 6:7, 25:8.

Such a divine-human relationship is vividly demonstrated in the incarnational Christ. He represents both the image of the invisible God and the second Adam in whom the fullness of God came to tabernacle, thereby making the presence of God available to humankind. Hence, immortal, unapproachable, and unseen divinity became flesh and dwelt among humankind to display and represent the glory of Israel's covenantal God.[569] By his sacrificial death, Jesus thus became both God's reconciliation and humankind's peace, representing in himself the confluence of divine and human relationality.[570] Jesus Christ ultimately represents God's indwelling, glorious and accessible presence existing in relationship with humankind—prophetically expressed by Moses in this Messianic Psalm: "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God".[571] Therefore, his incarnational divine-human nature thus magnificently represents the covenantal relationship that God wants with humankind.

Thus, the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Immanuel are uniquely representational of God's mysterious plan to be in relationship with humankind. "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God". But we also see how God's plan leads to reconciliation. The next section will expand on this.[572]

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[569] 1 Tim 6:15-6, John 1:14.

[570] Eph 2:14-8.

[571] Ps 90:1-2.

[572] Rev. 21:3, Eph 1:9-10.

Representational Reconciliation

This section will specifically look at how both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are representational of God's reconciliation that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Though reconciliation is not directly linked to the *Imago Dei* in the creation account, it is alluded to in the New Testament. By contrasting the image of Adam (the man of dust) with the image of the second Adam (the man of heaven) and offering humankind a renewed identity conformed after the image of the Son, divine reconciliation is achieved by God through Christ on behalf of humankind and traced back to the Fall in the creation account.[573] However, the pre-Fall creation account in Genesis chapters one and two paints a picture of unity in a good environment that sustains reproducible life for all plant life and living creatures co-existing in harmonious relationships. Specifically, and uniquely, the creation of "male and female" and the institution of "one flesh" between "the man and his wife" can be seen as a representation of the harmony and oneness of God in whose image and likeness humankind was created.[574] The Fall has broken this primal oneness and created the need for reconciliation and atonement to restore the Edenic oneness, or "at-one-ment". Triune divine oneness, seen through God's reconciliation in Christ, is displayed in the biblical narrative by the oneness in husband-wife relationships, the atonement of the tabernacle, the oneness in Christ's human/divine nature, and the oneness within the body of Christ.[575] Oneness and humankind's dire need for

[573] 1 Cor 15:49, Rom 8:29, Col 3:10, Col 1:15-23.

[574] Gen 1:27, 2:23-5.

[575] Gen 2:24, Eph 5:22-33, Eph 4:3-6, 1 Cor 8:6, Eph 4:13-6.

reconciliation as evidenced through the tabernacle is thus representational of God's own oneness and desire for reconciliation.

Nevertheless, it is the importance of divine relational proximity to the *Imago Dei* and through the tabernacle that is representational of God's desire for reconciled unity and oneness. The phrase "be with you", indicative of God's tabernacling presence, is repeated many times over in Scripture. God's indwelling nearness to affect a reconciled relationship with humankind necessitates the removal of sin. The Apostle Paul uses words like separated, alienated, strangers, far off, hostility and wall to describe what God's presence had to overcome in order to reconcile humankind. He describes the barriers as "uncircumcised" or "Gentiles in the flesh" though they have "access in one Spirit to the Father".[576] The way God chooses to bring about reconciliation for and through the *Imago Dei* is via divine forgiveness. Divine reconciliation offers humankind a renewed identity in "the likeness of God", with a capacity to forgive as God in Christ forgave others.[577] The *Imago Dei* is thus renewed as the old self becomes the new self "after the image of its creator".[578] Thus, the *Imago Dei*, particularly in its renewal and forgiveness, can be seen as representational of God's reconciliation.

The tabernacle, though similar to the *Imago Dei*, demonstrates an unambiguous representation of God's reconciliation. The intent of God to take up residence with Israel is directly associated with the establishment of tabernacle and at the heart of the atoning sacrificial system. God's very shekinah presence in meeting

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[576] Eph 2:11-22.

[577] Eph 4:24, 32.

[578] Col 3:10, 14.

Israel is located between the covering cherubs above the mercy seat where the atoning blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled, signifying God's reconciliation.[579] Thus, the context of the establishment of the tabernacle at the time of Israel's golden calf rebellion at Mount Sinai is a representation of God's reconciliation and presence through Israel's sacrificial system in a remarkable way.[580] This is underpinned by the reconciling Mosaic theophany of divine forgiveness of iniquity and sin as an expression of God's character.[581] Divine forgiveness is thus fundamental to the tabernacle and representational of God's reconciliation via his temporal tabernacling presence to renew the identity of God's people. It is via the indwelling Spirit in the body-temple of humankind that God transforms humankind's image to the glory of Christ.[582]

Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can be seen as representational of divine reconciliation via the indwelling presence of God that points to the reality of the reconciling death of Jesus Christ on the cross as humankind's peace.[583] Divine atoning reconciliation is offered to all humankind in the body of Christ.[584] Because reconciliation involves both divine and human participation, the uniqueness of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as receptacles of God's tabernacling presence can therefore be uniquely viewed as representational of God's reconciliation fulfilled in

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[579] Exod 25:22, Lev 16:14, Num 7:89, Heb 9:5-7.

[580] Exod 25:8, 33:3, 14.

[581] Exod 34:7.

[582] 1 Cor 3:16-7, 17-8.

[583] Eph 2:14.

[584] Eph 2:15-6, Heb 10:19-20.

the incarnational Immanuel.[585] It is evident that the reality of such a divine relational reconciliation in the biblical record is thus a representation of the Edenic covenant, repeated by Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, affirmed by the Messianic new covenant, and prophetically painted by John when he writes: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God".[586]

Ultimately, the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle, and Jesus Christ are representations of how God reconciled the world to himself, thereby renewing the *Imago Dei* into a holy temple for God's indwelling Spirit that also delegates humankind with divine representational authority.[587]

Representational Designation of Divine Authority

The most direct and unambiguous biblical connection to the *Imago Dei* in Gen 1:26-28 is the God-ordained task laid on humankind to have and exercise dominion, which will be the focus of the next section.[588] This section, however, will look at the shared characteristics of a delegated designated status of authority to be found between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ as representations of God's own authority.

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[585] Gen 26:3, 31:3, 48:21, Deut 31:23, Josh 1:5, Isa 43:2, 2 Cor 13:11, 2 Thess 3:16.

[586] Rev. 21:3.

[587] 2 Cor 5:19, Eph 2:22.

[588] See the Functional View in chapter one.

In the light of humankind's comparative insignificance, it is important to note that humankind is entrusted with an authority that is "given" by God.[589] Such an allowance of authority must be seen as ambassadorial or delegated in nature as a consequence of being made in the image and likeness of God, which imbues humankind with a divine-like status.[590] Such an ambassadorial status of authority, though inherently part of the *Imago Dei*, does not translate into ownership and can be taken away.[591] Ultimately, all of creation is under the ownership and authority of God.[592] Thus, instilling the *Imago Dei* with a vicarious authority over God's own possessions is representational of God's own delegated authority. The *Imago Dei* can therefore be viewed as an appointed ambassador or steward, but simultaneously, it also raises humankind's status of authority, which is better seen as representational of the way God puts all things in subjection under his feet.[593]

Like the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle is imbued with a delegated authority which raised its status among the Israelites, demonstrated by the transference of the theophanic presence from Mount Sinai to the tabernacle. Thus, the ensuing cloud and glory manifestation that filled the tabernacle communicated to Israel that it had now become Israel's portable Sinai.[594] Thus, the tabernacle in some way, as a receptacle

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[589] Job 7:17, Ps 8:6, Ps 103:15, 144:3-4, 1 Pet 1:24, Gen 1:27, Heb 2:6-9.

[590]K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996). "Let them have" indicates a unique divine deliberation of allowance different to any prior creative acts.

[591] Dan 4:22-5.

[592] Texts like Ps 50:10-1 indicates that all life "is mine".

[593] Ps 8:6, 1 Cor 15:27-8, Eph 1:22, Heb 2:8.

[594] Fretheim, Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 294.

of God's dwelling presence in covenant with Israel, is a representation of the status of legitimate divine authority that issued the ten commandments on Mount Sinai.[595] Consequently, the shekinah glory of the Lord would appear above the tabernacle to administer further decisions and instructions.[596]

Another example that connects the tabernacle with the *Imago Dei* and highlights its representational status of divine authority is the creation of a kingdom of priests and a holy nation for the Lord through its ministry.[597] The establishment of the entire Old Testament priestly ministry and sacrificial system had its roots and purpose grounded on the tabernacle. Thus, the creation of a covenantal people, or recreation of a kingdom of priests is represented by the tabernacle. This newness of life in God's kingdom is further demonstrated by the Day of Atonement, for example, in providing all of Israel with a clean beginning for each year.[598] Hence, divine creative power at work in and through the tabernacle is representational of God's status of divine authority in the way that it fills his kingdom with people made holy by his transcending presence—ultimately, pointing to Christ.

Nowhere do we see a better display of delegated and designated divine authority than in Christ, who wielded power over creation that seems remarkably similar to God's authority at creation when he spoke "and it stood firm".[599] Jesus'

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[595] Exod 25:8.

[596] Lev 1:1, 9:23, 14:10, Deut 31:15. Like sanctioning or abstaining from Israel's battles, (see 1 Samuel chapter 4).

[597] Exod 19: 4-11.

[598] Lev 16:30 describes a clean beginning from past sins through atonement.

[599] Gen 1:3-24, Ps 33:9.

miracles demonstrated and represented God's power in the way he spoke to the storm and filled fishermen's nets with hundreds of fish, and the way he healed people by a touch or a word whether or not he was physically present. Jesus demonstrated and represented God's command of authority that was given to him to forgive, to cast out demons, to commission his disciples, to judge and speak on behalf of God, and to give eternal life to whomever he wants.[600]

The Apostle Paul paints a theological picture where all things are being put in subjection to Christ[601] with the purpose to reconcile and unite all things in heaven and earth.[602] Such ultimate divine authority is delegated and designated in Christ. The biblical record plainly states that all things were created and made new by Jesus Christ.[603]

Hence, the representational status of authority, seen in the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle, was ultimately displayed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ when all authority in heaven and on earth was given to him.[604] Such a status of divine authority is inevitably associated with a responsibility and task to extend God's rule in his kingdom. This will be the focus of the last comparative characteristic in this chapter.

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[600] Matt 9:6, Mark 3:15, 6:7, 28:18, John 5:27, 7:17-8, 17:2.

[601] 1 Cor 15:27-8, Eph 1:22,

[602] Eph 1:10, Col 1:15-22.

[603] Col 1:16, Eph 3:9, Rev. 21:5.

[604] Matt 28:18.

Representational Servant Rulership

This section will demonstrate that the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can also be seen as representational of God's rule, particularly in the way Jesus Christ has demonstrated what ruling in God's kingdom essentially entails.

Though the substantive and functional views expounded in chapter one of this thesis connected the *Imago Dei* to dominion in Genesis 1, Mathews prefers to portray the identity of humankind as that of a "royal vice-regent" over creation that is more representative of God's own rule over the universe.[605] In line with this, Moltmann supports the idea that man's lordship over the earth corresponds to God's general lordship over the world.[606] However, in the light of the *Imago Dei* being a portable receptacle of a heavenly original and reflecting the temporal glory of God in relationality, God imparts a delegated status of authority to humankind to ultimately exercise dominion on earth in accordance with his divine will in heaven.[607] The Bible narrates stories of humankind exercising such ambassadorial authority whilst being held accountable by divine authority.[608] In the likeness of Jesus, the true image of God who came to serve and not be served, the intend of humankind's divine delegated authority was to exercise dominion over the created world as a servant and as a representation of God's servant-rulership over the entire universe.[609]

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[605] Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 166. Also, see "Representing God as Ruler" in chapter 3.

[606] Moltmann, 220.

[607] Matt 6:10.

[608] Daniel in Chapter 4: 22, 25 and 7:14 for example admonishes King Nebuchadnezzar that his "dominion" is subject to the rule and kingdom of the Most High and of the Son of Man.

[609] Matt 20:28, Mark 10:45.

Theologically, the idea of humankind's dominion and subjection in Genesis chapter one—according to God's will—is clarified in other related texts in the context of being "crowned with glory and honour".[610] God's glory is nowhere better seen than in Christ, who with all authority, used his authority not to condemn but to save the world in service—such is the glory of Jesus, who came from the Father to dwell among humankind in order to serve and not be served.[611] Hence, the delegation of divine authority to rule is better understood as "to serve". It is in the context of service that the Apostle Paul addresses the issue of head coverings to help clarify the glory of man and woman.[612] Ruling authority and glory is determined by order of the head—first God, then Christ, followed by the husband and the wife. In other words, God's headship, or rulership over his Son, rightly understood in the context of 1 Cor 11:11-16, portrays the Father as head over Christ but as one who lovingly serves his Son, who, in turn, appropriately responds to his head in submissive obedience. Similarly, Christ's headship and rulership over man is best viewed as his loving service—not to be served but to serve—and man's fitting response, in turn, is submission and obedience. Hence, the requirement of wives to submit to their husbands—as their head—is in response to husbands who love and serve their wives as Christ loves and serves the church.[613] Note how husbands, made first in the order of the glory of the *Imago Dei*, are admonished to serve their wives, in the likeness of

[610] Gen 1:26-28, Ps 8:5-6, Heb 2:7-8.

[611] Matt 28:18, John 3:17, 1:14, Matt 20:28, Mark 10:45.

[612] 1 Cor 11:3-10.

[613] Eph 5:22-32.

Christ, who loved and gave up his life for the church.[614] Poignantly, the head of covering that is the symbol of the wife's submission to the husband is set in the context of his loving service. Thus, the *Imago Dei* is better represented by a servant rulership than by an authoritative rulership.

The connection of ruling servanthood with humankind's dominion is further affirmed when Paul compares the unity between Christ and the church to the marital "one flesh" unity between husbands and wives in the creation account.[615] Thus, the servant rulership of the husband as head, similar to the *Imago Dei* over creation, is representational of God's own loving servant-rulership as head over the entire universe, demonstrated by Christ as the head of his church. The theological connection of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle with Jesus Christ can finally be seen in the way Paul symbolises the unifying "one flesh" bond of marriage between husband and wife with believers becoming members of the temple of Christ's body, thereby making Christ available to all humankind.[616] The inauguration into the body of Christ through faith and baptism also initiates the believer into a journey of transformation into the glory-image of the man of heaven administered by Christ as humankind's High Priest in a heavenly tabernacle.[617]

In a similar way, the ministry and service associated with the tabernacle can be seen as a representation of God's rule and loving service to his people. With its connection to all the ceremonial rules and the Ten Commandments hidden inside it,

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[614] Col 1:20.

[615] Eph 5:31, Gen 2:24.

[616] Eph 5:30, John 2:21.

[617] Gen 5:3, Exod 25:9, 2 Cor 3:18, 1 Cor 15:49, Heb 8:1-5.

the tabernacle facilitated the removal of Israel's sin, and thereby signified the reign of God in loving service to his covenantal people. The shekinah glory-presence of God above the mercy seat of the tabernacle represented the sacrificial love of God in his servant rulership over Israel. Thus, with the mercy seat covering the ten commandments, the tabernacle symbolised the law serving the mercy of God, resulting in reconciliation and atonement for God's people.[618] As with the unity between husbands and wives that pointed to Christ and the church, the tabernacle brought unity and at-one-ment to God's people representational of God's own servant rulership.[619]

The concept of service and unity connected to the tabernacle's atonement can also be seen in the *Imago Dei* illustrated by "husbands and wives", and "Christ and the church".[620] Only here, the Apostle Paul equates the unity between God's Spirit, who dwells within the body-temple of the believer, and the believer to spiritual oneness. In juxtaposition to immoral oneness—becoming one body with a prostitute––Paul connects the *Imago Dei* and the institution of marriage—when two become one flesh—with spiritual oneness when believers become "one flesh" with God's indwelling Spirit. Hence, the unifying ministry and services of the tabernacle, along with its rules and regulations, represent the idea of God's atonement with humankind as a spiritual oneness.

Nowhere is divine ruling servanthood better demonstrated than in Christ, as McGee contends:

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[618] Deut 11:1-13, Josh 22:5, Matt 22:37.

[619] Eph 5:31-2, Exod 30:16.

[620] 1 Cor 6:15-20, Eph 5:22-32.

> There must be one who can represent man before God and one to represent God before man. He must have authority to rule. Christ fulfils all this, for He was God before man, and today He is man before God. He is both God and man. He is able to bring a holy God and sinner man together. And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us.[621]

Marriage thus, when husbands and wives become one, is a representation of Christ's fully-human-divine incarnational oneness, which is also a representation of the oneness between Christ and the church.[622] Such a divine oneness demonstrates God's own heart of servanthood to save humankind when, through Christ as the invisible image of God and ruler of heaven and earth, God reconciled the world to himself.[623] As a result, we see Jesus Christ who, in service to God and humankind, was made lower than the angels for a little while, yet crowned with glory and honour far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.[624]

Ultimately, Jesus as God's chosen servant, tabernacled incarnationally with humankind to restore the *Imago Dei*, thereby representing God's own Servant Rulership with eternal dominion over his kingdom as the only Sovereign and King of kings.[625]

Chapter Conclusion

Associations and connections between the *Imago Dei* and tabernacle do exist and highlight how they are independently representational of God. However, their confluence and fulfilment in Jesus Christ enlighten their representation of God in magnificent consistency, resulting in a deeper theological understanding and

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[621] McGee 35.

[622] Eph 5:31-2.

[623] Col 1:15-20, John 3:16-7.

[624] Heb 2:9, Eph 1:20-1.

[625] Isa 42:1-8 repeated in Matt 1218, 1 Tim 6:15-6.

appreciation of God's engagement with humankind by his Spirit through Jesus Christ. Jesus truly embodies the image of God who came to tabernacle with humankind.

Despite the Fall of humankind and its effect on the *Imago Dei*, and despite Israel's rebellion and its effect on the tabernacle, the biblical narrative consistently reveals divine intervention and the engagement of God's persistent dwelling presence with humankind.[626] Contrary to the irreconcilable philosophical conundrum of transcendence versus immanence, the biblical record confirms the tabernacling nearness and accessibility of Israel's holy God to be with sinful humankind.[627]

The ensuing eight summaries demonstrate the immense lengths to which God has gone to restore humankind's broken relationship with himself through recreating and sanctifying humankind in his image and likeness. Signified by the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, God reconciled humankind to himself by restoring and recreating the *Imago Dei* in Christ.[628] As a result, God offers humankind Christ's image and likeness as their new identity to be conformed and transformed by his Spirit into the image likeness of his Son, thereby reappointing believers as stewards of his grace to serve creation, each other and God in love.

Jesus Christ—embodying the invisible image and fullness of God—came to tabernacle with humankind as the perfect representation of God, the *Imago Dei*, and the tabernacle. This chapter demonstrates that the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as

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[626] Rom 5:20.

[627] Matt 1:23, Exod 25:8.

[628] Gen 1:1, 27, Col 1:16-7.

representations of God are specifically and ultimately fulfilled by and through Jesus Christ in the following ways:

1. As the High Priest of the heavenly tabernacle, Jesus Christ represents and intercedes for his kingdom of priests through the ministry of the Holy Spirit who dwells in their body-temples for the upbuilding of his church as a spiritual house for God's presence.
2. Jesus Christ is Immanuel, the eternal God incarnationally present with temporal humankind and represents the visible *Imago Dei* tabernacling with humankind.
3. Jesus Christ is God present and available to humankind. He represents the accessibility of God who dwells up close and personal through his Spirit in human temples and his church.
4. As the Glory of God, Jesus Christ has sanctified the *Imago Dei* by his death and resurrection and represents the sanctification and glorification of all believers through the indwelling transformation of the Holy Spirit.
5. Jesus Christ is both Son of God and Son of Man and represents the covenantal relationship God wants with humankind, personally and in community.
6. Jesus Christ is God's reconciliation for humankind, representing the peace and oneness of God and the unity of the *Imago Dei* that results from divine forgiveness.
7. Jesus Christ is the Creator and Ruler over all creation and represents the authority and identity granted to humankind to manage his kingdom as designated stewards.
8. Jesus Christ is God's Servant crowned with glory and honour and represents how humankind as a priesthood of all believers should likewise serve God, his church and each other with love and submission.

To summarise, life with God after the Fall is only made possible because the eternal God came to tabernacle and be accessible with his presence in humankind's temporal sinful world in order to reconcile humanity to himself through the incarnational Christ, as the image of the invisible God. Through his life and death as the second Adam, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, God restored the *Imago Dei* for all humankind to its original designation of ruling servanthood in Jesus Christ. Thus, ultimately, we see in the concepts of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle, as well as via Jesus Christ a representation of God's presence, restoring the relationship with humankind.

CHAPTER 5: THESIS CONCLUSION

This thesis employed a comparative systematic methodology and set out to ask if theological connections between the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle as representations of God can be found, and in what ways they are associated with and reflected in Jesus Christ.

Though shrouded in mystery, the *Imago Dei* remains important to anthropology and theology. The substantive view remains the preferred approach to interpretating the *Imago Dei*. Several important, though unsatisfactorily single and combined views have been proposed in an attempt to identify a shared essence between God and humankind. Hence, the proposal of this thesis to consider a representational view as a broader and more inclusive approach. This thesis has demonstrated that a representational approach not only remains faithful to the biblical record but provides a basis for further development to explore other possible theologically comparative connections.

Similarly, a careful study of the historical interpretations of the tabernacle, revealed that the two main approaches simply conflicted with the biblical narrative and rendered a simple reading of God's presence among humankind as untenable. However, recent archaeological findings and scholarly contributions not only successfully challenged these assumptions of form criticism but also validated an analogical view of God's tabernacling presence within the confines of human time and space. Recognising the tabernacle as one of the most significant revelations of God in the Old Testament, this thesis explored how and in what ways the tabernacle might be better seen as a representation of God.

Thus, to compare and investigate the validity of an alternative approach, this dissertation provides sufficient literary and biblical evidence of a representational methodology and applies it to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle. It substantiates several shared representational connections that will be summarised below. Notably, a representational approach is widely referenced by scholars, supported by the biblical narrative, and most importantly, corroborated by Jesus Christ, who via the incarnation, tabernacled with humankind as the image of God.

A further review of the philosophical origins and first principles exposed a classical predisposition toward allegorising and spiritualising the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle. However, this thesis has demonstrated that a literal interpretation of the biblical position supports a representational view of God's actual presence tabernacling with humankind. Hence, a representational approach to interpreting the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle was applied in depth over two chapters and consequently corroborated by both biblical and scholarly contributions, particularly in their association with Jesus Christ. This thesis thus not only demonstrated that both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle independently can be better viewed as representations of God, but that they are associated with and reflected in Jesus Christ in several significant ways.

Primarily, this comparative study has revealed three fundamental findings that emerged from this comparative investigation. Firstly, it not only highlighted the validity of a biblical representational view of the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle but uncovered several significant ways in which they can be seen as representational of God. Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are divinely originated as images, likenesses or copies of a heavenly original that are associated with a dynamic priestly ministry. As such they are representations of God, who loved the world and found a

way to atone for humankind's sins and offer everlasting life to all. Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle exist and operate within the constraints of human temporality as either a body-temple or vessel-temple and are a representation of God's divine temporality. Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle can be filled with the Holy Spirit who is the glory of God. Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are appointed with an authority to serve as a representation of God's own service to humankind. Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle exist and function within the context of relationships and community as a representation of the Triunity of God in relationship to all creation. Both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are engaged in the process of reconciliation and are representational of God who reconciles the world to himself in Christ.

Secondly, this thesis also demonstrated how the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle—as representations of God—enhance a Christocentric theology in the way that they point to, and are fulfilled in, Jesus Christ, who also represents God to humankind.[629] Thus, both the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who came to tabernacle and transform the *Imago Dei* into his glory-image as the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world.[630]Fundamentally, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the ultimate representation of "the radiance of the glory of God" and the "express image of His person" who "became flesh and dwelt among us" in order to reveal God to humankind.[631]

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[629] See the conclusion in Chapter Five how Jesus Christ ultimately embodies the fullness of the invisible divine image who came to tabernacle with humankind as the perfect representation of God.

[630] 1 Cor 3:18, Rev. 13:8.

[631] Heb 1:3 and John 1:14 quoted from both the ESV and NKJV.

Thirdly, this thesis also uncovers the existence of a possible representational systematic theology that emerges from the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle in their connection to Jesus Christ and as representations of God. The shared theological characteristics between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ not only provide a broader approach toward a biblically faithful anthropology but also a wider lens to a view of God that is consistent with the biblical narrative. Viewed as a representation of God, the *Imago Dei* offers a more comprehensive perspective of the divine, particularly in the way that God's presence is accessible to humankind as demonstrated via the tabernacle and Jesus Christ. Applying a representational approach to the *Imago Dei* and the tabernacle connects them theologically to a wider priestly and sanctuary system with Christ as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. It They are both also patterned after heavenly originals and serve as representations of the ultimate "dwelling place" where finally "God [will be] with man".[632] A representational view also highlights God's reconciliation through Jesus Christ with himself by adopting Adam's fallen *Imago Dei* and restoring it to the glory of the image of God.[633] A representational approach also sheds further light on the sanctifying work of the indwelling Spirit in transforming the image in believers into the glory image of Christ, the man of heaven, thereby "bringing many sons to glory".[634] Finally, a representational methodology also helps clarify the original divine appointment of authority imbued in the *Imago Dei* to have dominion in the

[632] Rev. 21:3.

[633] Col 1:19-20, 1 Cor 15:48-9, 2 Cor 3:18.

[634] 2 Cor 3:8-18, 1 Cor 3:16, Heb 2:10.

likeness of the Son of Man who came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.[635]

One of the implications of applying a representational approach to the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ is that such a view most prominently affirms the cohesion and veracity of God's presence with humankind in a broken world. "God with us" is a consistent theme verified in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The church, as a divine initiative, can thus boldly believe the biblical position that God is indeed present with humankind to effect reconciliation and restoration for whosoever believes. The church doesn't have to pray for this, but simply accept this biblical reality in faith. Teaching and encouraging others to respond to God's presence, however, is a matter of earnest prayer and evangelistic effort. A further implication is the continued ministry of the indwelling Spirit to both transform the *Imago Dei* into the glorious image of Christ and equip the church to intercede for others in spreading the Good News of Christ to all humankind. Importantly, God's presence is assured by the last words of Jesus: "I am with you always, to the end of the age".[636] Thus, as co-workers and ambassadors, the church labours alongside God's active presence to affect the reconciliation He has enacted in and through Christ. It is well illustrated by Paul's Christo-centric, theological philosophy to the believers in Colossae when he argued:

> See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells

[635] Gen 1:27-8, Ps 8:5-9, Heb 2:7-9, Matt 20:28, Mark 10:45.

[636] Matt 28:18-20.

> bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.[637]

Thus, humankind's connectedness to God's presence via the *Imago Dei*, as evidenced by the tabernacle and displayed via Jesus Christ, serves as a biblical representation of God.

This thesis has also raised a few areas of interest for further study. One aspect of humankind's connectedness to God's presence that comes to mind, not explored in this thesis, yet fundamental to ecclesiology, is worship and the Sabbath. As a critical practice of faith for all believers and a central ritual to the tabernacle, worship is a vital topic addressed and modelled by Jesus, yet often wrapped in ecclesiastical controversy. The holiness and blessing of the Sabbath at the conclusion of the creation account are intrinsically connected to the *Imago Dei* and the concept of God's tabernacling presence. Sabbath is particularly blessed and holy because the eternal and holy God is present in humankind's fallen world to also bless and sanctify those who are coming into his presence to worship him. As much as God rested on the creation Sabbath, so a rest remains that is indicative of the peace that comes from God, who, in Christ has reconciled all things to himself and now present believers "holy and blameless and above reproach before him".[638] Hence, the Sabbath in its shared correlation between the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ, could offer the church another representational view of God.

Another area for further exploration is the importance of the ministry of the glory-Spirit of God in the transformation of believers from one degree to another into the image of the glory of Christ. The presence of the Spirit at the creation of

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[637] Col 2:8-10.

[638] Col 1:19-22

humankind (and the formation of the *Imago Dei*), on Mount Sinai (and the filling of the tabernacle), with Jesus (at his baptism and throughout ministry), and the disciples (particularly during Pentecost) correlate with the work of Jesus Christ to reveal the Father to humankind.[639] Thus, approaching the ministry of the glory-presence of the Spirit as representing the presence of God will contribute towards a fuller understanding of God's reach into humankind's fallen world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the representational approach of this thesis reveals a systematic theology that emerges across a number of important theological concepts, like the priestly-and sanctuary system, divine temporality, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and God's delegated authority to humankind to service. This thesis also contributes toward the call for a philosophical deconstruction of classical macro-hermeneutical principles in faithfulness to the divine presence in the biblical narrative.[640]

Though the development of a representational systematic theology is needed, a representational approach to the *Imago Dei*, the tabernacle and Jesus Christ demonstrates that a broader, more inclusive, and Christ-centred view must be considered.

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[639] Gen 1:2, 26, Exod 16:16-9, 40:34-8, Matt 3:16, Acts 2:2-4, John 14:9-11.

[640] Fernando L Canale, "Deconstructing Evangelical Theology?," *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 44, no. 1 (2006): 129-30.

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