

Metaphor and the Mind of God in Nevi'im

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Abstract: In *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, Yoram Hazony contrasts the uses of metaphor in Nevi'im and the New Testament. According to Hazony, metaphor is employed by Jesus to obscure teachings, but the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures use metaphor to make teachings intelligible. However, this understanding of metaphor is too simplistic to capture the scope of metaphorical statements made by the Hebrew prophets. In this paper, I suggest that an important set of philosophical arguments are advanced by the prophets in ways not captured by current interpretive methodologies. The paper is divided into two parts. In the first half, I argue against Hazony's assessment of Nevi'im. In the second, I forward my position on the philosophical dimensions of Nevi'im: that prophetic writings reveal important moral facts about God's nature and the ways in which we should respond to him in both action and emotion. Appealing to the works of Dru Johnson, Eleonore Stump and Linda Zagzebski, I show that the writings of the Hebrew prophets may in fact advance certain arguments about the emotions and motivations of God. Through the collected writings of Nevi'im, God functions as an exemplar for those receiving the words of the prophets.

Keywords: Nevi'im, Hebrew Bible, Metaphor, Exemplarism, Analytic Theology, Exegetical Theology

1. Introduction

In *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, Yoram Hazony contrasts the uses of metaphor in Nevi'im and the New Testament.¹ According to Hazony, metaphor is employed by Jesus to obscure teachings, but the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures use metaphor to make teachings intelligible (2012, 84-85). Hazony's treatment of Nevi'im is arguably the most influential assessment of the prophetic writings as a means of philosophical argument. However, his understanding of metaphor is too simplistic to capture the scope of metaphorical statements made by the Hebrew prophets. In the first section of this paper,

¹ I'm indebted to Linda Zagzebski, Neal Judisch, Kevin Nordby, Jewelle Bickel, Dru Johnson, as well as a particularly helpful referee for their respective comments on this paper.

I explain why Hazony's characterization of Nevi'im fails to adequately address the unique contributions of these writings as a genre. I consider three types of passages appear incompatible with Hazony's framework. Ultimately, I think the prophets intend rather to *build upon* what is already recognized as the path to the good life by providing further insight into yet a deeper and more complex facet of morality. Prophetic instances of metaphor are used not merely to generate moral teachings about the good life and the consequences of human behavior; they are also used to describe the motivations and dispositions of God.² Indeed, these metaphorical statements often occur in texts that also describe God with what I will argue are non-metaphorical terms signifying emotions like רַחֵם (compassionate) and אַחַז (angry).

In the section that follows, I give my alternative to the position that the prophets meant to convey moral imperatives and a theory about the good life. Often the prophetic texts purport to give us insight into the reasons *why* God acts as well as the responses from God we should anticipate given the ethical decisions made by humans. Many of these passages can be construed as a kind of moral psychology of God. While Hazony's and Eleonore Stump's (2010) respective works on the uniqueness of Hebrew narrative and second-personal knowledge emphasize that narrative is especially suited to speak to us about certain aspects of God's nature, a detailed treatment of prophetic writings as a source of second-personal knowledge has not yet been articulated. I suggest that an important set of philosophical arguments are advanced by the prophets in ways not captured by current interpretive methodologies: The prophetic writings reveal important moral facts about God via metaphor and univocal descriptions of God's point of view. One consequence of this view is that, against Hazony, I contend that some prophetic language is intentionally opaque. By employing metaphor and univocal descriptions of God, the prophets disclose information about God's nature and the ways in which we should respond to him in both action and emotion.

If Dru Johnson's account of biblical epistemology is correct, the sort of knowledge advocated by Scripture involves reliance on authenticated authorities and participation in ritual (2013, 47, 140-149.). Additionally, Stump contends that Franciscan knowledge is an important type of knowledge that involves "social cognition or mind reading" (2010, 71-73). Appealing to the works of Johnson and Stump, I argue that the Hebrew prophets may in fact be advancing certain arguments about the emotions and motivations of God that are instructive to readers.³ A moral psychology of God is especially well-suited to promote the moral development of individuals. Drawing on Linda Zagzebski's divine motivation theory (2004) and recent work on exemplarism (2015, 2017), I contend that

² E.g., Jeremiah 3: 1, 6-13; Isaiah 49: 15-16; Hosea 1-2.

³ However, I anticipate that one consequence of my view is that some moral instruction contained in the prophetic writings will only be accessible to readers with important corresponding dispositions and inaccessible to those without them.

the prophetic writings serve the important function of allowing us to see into the ethical life of God. Zagzebski persuasively argues that God reveals both motive and emotion through the Incarnation; in my paper, I augment this claim to include the revelation of the Father through the prophets. Through the prophets, God functions as an exemplar for those receiving the words of the prophets.

2. Hazony, Metaphor, and the Prophets

In his recent work on the Hebrew Scriptures, Hazony elaborates on the various types of philosophical arguments given in the Hebrew Scriptures. These arguments roughly correspond to the genre of the biblical work.⁴ For example, narratives make arguments via contrasts or typologies; in contrast, the prophetic writings primarily employ metaphor (Hazony 2012, 66, 68).⁵ He illustrates how one might exegete particular arguments and philosophical positions through a series of case studies. From what I can tell, Hazony does not take himself to be giving an exhaustive list of the ways arguments might be articulated in the Hebrew Scriptures. Given the way Hazony aligns argumentative strategy with particular rhetorical modes, though, and the fact that these rhetorical modes occupy the vast majority of the texts, I would be surprised if Hazony did not think that his taxonomy accounts for the greatest plurality of arguments that appear in the Tanakh.⁶

⁴ It is important to note that Hazony primarily deals with the Hebrew Scriptures as a received text; he does not take himself to be engaged in textual criticism. Rather, as I understand him, Hazony sees himself as working with the Tanakh as it stands within a particular tradition and assessing if and how it furthers those positions that a contemporary audience would recognize as philosophical. Following Hazony, the discussion that follows is not directed at deconstructing the text or critiquing those claims made therein (whatever those may be). While I recognize that such scholarship is valuable and should certainly play an important (if not central) role in our understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, a detailed discussion of such issues is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I will treat the Hebrew Scriptures as a significant volume unified by tradition, and I will likewise focus on those themes, ideas, and conventions that strike me as most important in this context. It is with such concerns in mind that this essay looks for similarities amongst those writings recognized as *Nevi'im* by tradition despite notable dissimilarities among the very same texts: What *Nevi'im* offers by way of a prophetic genre unique to the Hebrew Bible, and more specifically, what *Nevi'im* offers in the way of philosophical argument, are of chief concern here.

⁵ Indeed, there is some dispute in biblical studies as to whether the authors of ancient biblical texts considered their anthropological descriptions of God to be metaphorical, or whether they thought of God as embodied. For a detailed discussion, see Sommers (2009). Cf. Hamori (2008), Hundley (2013), and van der Toorn (1998). If this turned out to be the case, it would only help my argument: The prophetic language describing God's moral deliberations can still serve as exemplary for our own moral formation. Still, this paper bypasses such critical concerns because I am assessing the philosophical positions of the Hebrew Scriptures as a corpus representative of a particular tradition. (See n. 4.)

⁶ See p. 66, where Hazony aligns modes of argument to particular genres of writing in the Hebrew Scriptures. His discussion the purpose of the Hebrew Bible is similar divided along lines of genre (2012, 47-65, especially 63ff). On p. 84, he introduces the discussion of techniques unique to the prophets as

For my purposes, it is best to focus on Hazony's treatment of the prophets. According to Hazony, the prophets typically advocate for particular views or actions in ways that encourage the reader to extrapolate from the prophet's words and take a larger view of the prophet's topic (2012, 84). The contemporary reader has trouble identifying these arguments because of the way they are conditioned to approach the Hebrew Scriptures. Today's readers do not recognize the way these ancient writers make arguments, and the poetic form of the prophets is foreign to many of those who want to understand their messages. Further, prophets are assumed to be engaged in some form of future telling or "the revelation of secrets" (2012, 86). Perhaps most frustratingly for Hazony, readers even expect the prophets to obscure their own meaning and use metaphors to conceal their messages. Hazony calls this "esotericism," a disposition to the texts for which the writers of the New Testament (and their depiction of Jesus) are at least partially responsible.

Jesus's use of parables in the New Testament should instead serve as contrast to the prophets, as he is depicted "speaking in parables whose meaning is hidden so as to be inaccessible to many or most of those who hear them" (2012, 84). Hazony writes,

"...the association of biblical metaphors with parables and riddles provided a part of the explanation for why the prophetic orations of the Hebrew Scriptures seem, to many readers, to be something quite different from reasoned discourse. But there, too, what is involved is the importation into the older Hebrew texts of purposes that are quite alien to them. As far as I can tell, the use of metaphor to obscure God's teaching from certain segments of the population occurs rarely, if at all, in the orations of the prophets of Israel...Indeed, the constant reliance on metaphor in the Israelite prophetic orations seems to have precisely the opposite purpose: Its aim is to make difficult subjects *easier to understand* for the broad audiences to whom prophetic oratory was, in the first instance, intended to appeal." (2012, 85)

While the prophets' respective audiences might find ethical theory and abstract reasoning challenging, the prophets render these ideas intelligible in their orations by translating important thoughts into the language of analogy and metaphor. The prophets draw on things familiar to their audiences in an effort to place important moral arguments within their reach, where, to apply Hazony's thinking to Isaiah 5, the common sight of a vineyard might stand in for the people of Israel, and the relatable vineyard owner for God (2012, 85).

grounds for interpreting them as making particular arguments. Here again, genre is tied to argumentative methodology in a way that suggests while other modes of argument may exist in the Hebrew Scriptures in addition to those Hazony discusses, the very genre on the texts necessitate that they will be flush with the modes of argument Hazony describes (should he be correct in his analysis).

So far Hazony and I are in agreement. I agree that contemporary audiences are naive to the genre and aims of the prophetic writings. They seem to be aimed at making timely indictments and exhortations to the people of Israel far more than they are engaged in future-telling or mystical teaching. Like Hazony, I think that metaphor is often used to generate moral teachings in the prophets, and I concede that many of these instances of metaphor are intended to render teachings intelligible to their audience. Hazony and I must part ways, though, when he begins his exegesis of the book of Jeremiah.

It is helpful to frame what follows in a comment Hazony makes about *all* of the prophets: "What they are searching for is, in fact, *lawfulness*, in moral order – those laws that are God's will, in the sense that they lead, naturally and reliably, to the life and the good" (2012, 89). Hazony's point here is that the underlying assumption implicit to all of the prophetic writings is that there is some kind of moral law at work. The prophets expect there to be consequences following deeds: deleterious consequences to immoral actions, and whatever consequences amount to the good life following those who embrace the moral law.

In a section tellingly called "Profit and Pain," Hazony writes,

"If the laws given Israel by God are the natural law for men, then these laws will teach us what we must do if we want to attain life and the good, as individuals and as nations, By the same token, if we do not obey these laws, we will quickly begin to feel the pain of disintegration and collapse that will naturally follow." (2012, 177)

The picture painted by Hazony in his exegesis of Jeremiah is of a consequentialist or at least teleological moral theory emerging from the reasoning of the prophet. Jeremiah uses a term, *נֶזֶק*, which is often translated profit, benefit, avail, and gain. Moral laws are what men need to survive and thrive; ignoring the moral law will result in disastrous consequences because humans need to do what is right just as they need water for survival. The moral imperatives in the prophets are natural laws that benefit humankind. Turning from wrongdoing and living in obedience to God leads to a state of flourishing. The prophetic writings exist to illuminate this important relationship between morality and human nature; thus Jeremiah describes the pagan gods that have no benefit to humankind and the way in which God is like water to his people. Jeremiah's warnings amount to an argument about those things that profit humans and those that do not.

The centrality of this argument to the text is illuminated by a fundamental misunderstanding Hazony identifies in relation to his point about natural law and human benefit: The common prophetic phrase many translate as the "in the end of days" in fact means "in the course of time." According to Hazony, passages frequently construed as pertaining to apocalypse or judgment are really just about how things turn

out, the moral order of things, and the way moral laws order the world so that certain actions produce certain states of affairs (2012, 89). It is unclear in exactly what way Hazony intends us to interpret "in the course of time." He does not specify whether the natural law is good for man because it consists of those things that contribute to human flourishing given the way God made humans, or if God intends humans to enjoy a good life, and he therefore advises a natural law that will result in their good. In other words, it is not apparent whether Hazony reads Jeremiah as making a consequentialist argument about what is beneficial to man, or if he thinks Jeremiah has a eudaimonist view about what it means to be flourishing humans. In any case, what *is* clear is that Hazony thinks the prophets are primarily concerned with axiomatic principles and how they contribute to human wellbeing of some kind or another.

Indeed, Hazony's position is rather strong compared to those with less optimistic positions (say, a fideist or skeptical theist) concerning the way evils affect humans in the world. He thinks the ills that befall trespassers of the law are sufficient to show that the law is the "path of what is beneficial and good" (2012, 177). Jeremiah's argument is interpreted as the thesis that "pain and hardship" follow the violation of God's law (2012, 181). These consequences are not merely external. Ignoring or rejecting the teaching of God and the moral law has psychological consequences, among them the distortion of human thought. The human mind is what Hazony calls "arbitrary," his translation of שרירות לב, where arbitrary means the tendency of the human mind or heart to "walk away from those things that are true human ends rather than towards them" (2012, 171-72). Humankind is bad at identifying the good and those things that are in our best interest. Hazony's Jeremiah argues that violation of the moral law and false ideas about the good render one progressively more insensitive to the truth about the good. Remember, though, that this moral devolution is not the result of an act of God *per se*, but rather the native consequences that follow false understanding and wicked deeds.⁷ The word of God, delivered through the prophets, serves to correct such errant thinking and behavior.⁸

⁷ "One of the more remarkable aspects of Jeremiah's theory of knowledge is the emphasis the prophet places on consequences of maintaining false opinions. Jeremiah repeatedly tells us that false opinion has painful consequences, which bear down upon and punish those whose understanding is false" (Hazony 2012, 183).

⁸ "Here, then, is Jeremiah's answer to the question of whether we can escape the false words and false understanding that result from the arbitrariness of our minds. True, the mind is deceitful, and when it fixes on a mistaken way of seeing things, even painful consequences will not suffice to shake them loose. But God's word is like a hammer that shatters rock. It enters the world and takes on a reality so overwhelming that false conceptions, no matter how tightly we cling to them, are destroyed before it. Once freed from these false conceptions, a new understanding can arise in the minds of men, one that reflects the truth. Knowledge, then, may elude the men of a given time and place. But it is coming. And all men, it would appear, have a chance of attaining it 'in the end'" (Hazony 2012, 186-7).

Perhaps the above summary is too drastic a characterization of his position. It is unclear, after all, whether Hazony's claim is that pain and hardship follow the deviation from God's law necessarily, and following God's law only makes such terrible events less likely, or if he holds the stronger view that lack of pain, as well as blessing, necessarily follow obedience to the law. If my prior summary of Hazony is too radical, it seems Hazony is at least committed to the claim that obedience to the natural law diminishes the occurrence of pain and provides some benefits, and that disobedience results in at least some negative consequences, such as a decreased ability to recognize what is beneficial for humans. In my view, this is also the most charitable reading of Hazony for another reason; namely, the theodicetic elements in Hebrew Scriptures do not endorse a consequentialist ethics such that the moral law is constituted of whatever ultimately leads to our good. Arguably, it does not even endorse the eudaimonist perspective that habituation into good actions leads to the good life.⁹ (More on this later.) However, it does emphasize painful consequences that follow from the rejection of God and his commands, and it discusses at the length the errors in judgment that lead one to forsake God's way for idolatry and wickedness.

Such means-ends reasoning certainly does permeate the prophets, but even still I am skeptical that this really characterizes the chief aims of any of the prophets, much less Jeremiah. Most of biblical literature includes the theme of moral lawfulness and the importance of obedience to God's will (save, perhaps, Esther and Songs). On Hazony's view, the prophets continue to ponder God's will and the path to the good life, perhaps making these ideas more salient to the people of Israel by driving points home with graphic poetry, personalized rebukes, and often scathing first-personal style.

However, there seems to be ample evidence that explorations of the consequences that follow actions are not the central focus of prophetic writings. The next section examines three types of passages that are not readily reconciled to Hazony's framework. For one, prophets often pronounce detailed criticisms of behavior *after* judgment is already declared and sometimes even after the judgment has already occurred. If the central aim of the prophets is to make moral order and natural law intelligible to their audiences, it seems they undermine their own purposes by addressing those who are too late to turn from their ways and avoid the terrible consequences. Further, things do not always turn out the ways we expect when we examine them as Hazony exhorts us to, "in the course of time." The prophets describe at length individuals whose treatment does not obviously match their moral status, a strange state of affairs for those who would argue that benefit and harm are closely related to the natural law. Finally, the prophets put much of their writings to the use of exploring how things are for God and *not* how they are for man. While discussion of God's perspective on the state of his

⁹ See, for example, the books of Job or Ecclesiastes.

relationship to people is certainly interesting, it does not directly contribute to one's understanding of the natural law.

I will briefly address my first two objections before describing the third at length, as I think the final category of passages turns out to be the most interesting for the philosophy of the Hebrew Scriptures. This is because it appears that the prophets *build upon* what their audience should already recognize as the path to the good life by providing further insight into yet a more profound and complex aspect of morality. They illuminate the emotional and intellectual dispositions of the good, embodied by the superlatively good personality: God.

3. Textual Evidence from Nevi'im

If prophetic utterances are intended primarily for the moral instruction of its audience, the timing of many prophetic texts undermines the prophets' purposes. (I will focus my comments on the book of Jeremiah since this is the prophetic text chosen by Hazony; however, I think most if not all of the prophetic writings contain content relevant to at least one of my objections.¹⁰) Prophets often deliver censure once judgment has already been determined and there is no possibility of God relenting if the people repent. For example, God appears to give terms according to which he will rescind his judgment in Jeremiah 3, but Jeremiah appears to be so persuaded that judgment will come that he even accuses the Lord of deception (4:10). The picture painted by the prophets is often that of immediate judgment, such as in Jer. 2 and 6. In fact, in the case of Jeremiah, the explicit expectation is that his audience *will not* heed his warnings about the dire consequences of their actions; in Jer. 7:27-29, we see that Jeremiah will declare God's words to the people, but God advises the prophet in advance that the people will not

¹⁰ It is worth reiterating here that I will deal with the Hebrew Scriptures as a single corpus representing a tradition. Rather than engaging in criticism relevant to a single text and its genesis, this paper endeavors to discover the philosophical positions of the Hebrew Bible as it stands as the product of compilation and editing over centuries. When examining the Nevi'im and prophetic literature as a genre, I do so with an eye to what unites those instances of prophetic literature in the Hebrew Scriptures rather than what might unite instances of prophetic literature in (a) a more generalized cultural and historical context that would extend to all of ancient Near Eastern literature, or (b) a more localized context specific to the period and surroundings of a single writing, say, Amos. Thus, when I describe Jeremiah as declaring some feature of God, I am not necessarily making a statement about a historical figure Jeremiah, nor about a single author of a text bearing that name. Rather, 'Jeremiah' stands in for whatever authors, editors, and compilers are responsible for the book of Jeremiah (as the book exists within the Hebrew Scriptures). It may be the case that readings such as the one I am advocating rise and fall on the bases of analyses like (a) and (b) above; that said, I take it that my argument is compatible with a variety of positions occupied by textual critics. Cf. n. 4 and n. 5 of this paper.

listen to him. God even goes so far as to tell his people to not bother with praying because he will not listen (11:14).¹¹

Perhaps Hazony takes these writings to serve future audiences who will reflect back on the events leading to God's judgments. This strikes me as unlikely for two reasons. First, we would need to ignore the explicit claims the prophetic writers make about their intended audiences. In the case of Jeremiah, orations are often preceded by statements about who the prophet is expected by God to address (e.g., Jerusalem in Jer. 2:1). Second, while the absence of any statement concerning future audiences may not be compelling evidence in itself, the prophets were likely familiar with the historical writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. In some cases, prophets may have even written portions of these historical chronicles.¹² The historical writings, as Hazony himself notes, make use of a unique rhetorical style not employed in the prophetic writings (except in brief digressions, such as Jer. 21 and Is. 36, wherein the latter case Isaiah even appears to draw on the actual relevant historical passages as a source or vice versa), and further contain statements indicating that they were intended to function as a written history for the future people of Israel. Given the change in style and absence of any indication that these works were intended for a future audience (both of which were likely deliberate choices on the part of the prophetic authors), we should err on reading these texts as being directed at those explicitly mentioned in the text.

Even if the prophetic writings are intended for future audiences and not for the prophets' contemporaries, there are other passages that are not obviously amenable to the framework recommended by Hazony. If Hazony is correct, then the prophetic writings are intended to demonstrate what actions lead to the good life and those actions that result in God's judgment. However, there are many prophetic passages that resemble the seemingly unjust state of affairs in Job more than the teleological teachings of Hazony. Often consequences do not match behavior in the prophets. Jeremiah himself suffers alongside the objects of judgment in Lamentations even though he is an obvious case of someone who has God's approval in his life and conduct. In other passages, God kills the obedient prophet Ezekiel's wife and children (Ez. 24), and yet in the same book God promises rescue and assistance to those who had not yet repented (Ez. 34). The book of Hosea is a tragic case of suffering, and the good prophet Hosea's misery is used to demonstrate that God will woo and love those who are yet unworthy, adulterous, and vile (Hosea 2). Even if one excuses the sufferings of the prophets as a special case,

¹¹ See also Jer. 13, in which Jeremiah destroys a belt to reflect the current state of affairs for Judah; Jer. 15:2 in which judgment appears settled; Ez. 2-11, in which preaches judgement on Jerusalem and its leaders. In this last passage, the purpose of the book cannot be to bring about repentance in Jerusalem because Ezekiel is not even in Jerusalem, but far away in Babylon, and yet judgment is imminent.

¹² For example, Ezra was long thought to author parts of First and Second Chronicles, First and Second Kings is traditionally attributed to Jeremiah, and the Talmud describes Samuel, Nathan and Gad as authoring First and Second Samuel.

there is ample textual evidence of other incongruous consequences that are not unfortunate exceptions, but deliberate acts of God. In Ezekiel 37, God announces through the prophet not that he will rescue those who repent, but rather that he will rescue the wicked from their own sinful backsliding (v. 23). In Ez. 21, God uses wicked Babylon as his sword and gives them Israel and Judah as plunder. Elsewhere in Jer. 25:9 and 27:6, God calls Babylonian leader Nebuchadnezzar “my servant”¹³ when he was very wicked and idolatrous.¹⁴

So while there are many passages that are consistent with Hazony’s argumentative structure, there is an abundance of passages that cannot be interpreted using his framework. Hazony’s moral-instruction view may be a useful tool to understand a particular passage, especially when the author gives a direct indication that he is presenting his view for a contemporary audience within reach of the prophet, or when he indicates that deleterious consequences can be avoided through repentance. But this tool cannot be applied to large swaths of prophetic literature, and moreover, it cannot be derived from the entire rhetorical structure of the prophetic writings because too much of the content is incompatible with Hazony’s view. As I mentioned above, though, there is still another dimension prophetic discourse that is not easily subsumed under Hazony’s argumentative structure.

This leads to my final objection to Hazony’s assessment of the philosophical status of Nevi’im. The most dramatic and unique contribution of the prophetic writings is undersold by Hazony. Large portions of Nevi’im are dedicated to revealing a God’s-eye-view perspective on human events, whether or not this perspective will be of any help to the prophet’s stated audience. By God’s-eye-view, I mean to single out passages that seem dedicated to revealing God’s motivations, assessments, or even emotions. This also includes passages where God singles out the nature of the relationship between man and himself rather than the state of affairs between men. For example, in Jer. 2:27, Jeremiah reports God’s disapproval that the people have “turned their backs to me and not their faces,” and in Jer. 2:31, God reflects on how the people have forgotten how he has treated them with the rhetorical statements, “Have I been a desert to Israel or a land of great darkness? Why do my people say, ‘We are free, we will come to you no more?’”

4. God’s Perspective in the Prophets

Given the variety of passages that do not neatly fit into Hazony’s description of the philosophical aims of the prophetic writings, it is worthwhile to look elsewhere for an explanation of what the prophets intended to achieve. The last category of passages discussed, those containing a “God’s-eye-view,” deserve closer attention as a unique

¹³ Unless otherwise stated, all quoted Bible passages are from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹⁴ Is. 44:28 includes a similar statement regarding the pagan king Cyrus.

contribution of Nevi'im. I contend that they should feature significantly into our attempts to understand the arguments of the prophets. In the sections that follow, I describe these passages at length and propose that they serve a unique rhetorical function in furthering a distinct philosophical position. More specifically, I explain how these passages provide a moral psychology of God and why such a moral psychology would be especially beneficial to Nevi'im's audience.

One feature of passages containing a God's-eye-view is that God often invites people to reason from his perspective and not their own (Jer. 5:7-9). Surprisingly, when God does so, he does not say, as Hazony's interpretation would indicate, *look where your actions will lead you* but instead *look where I stand in relation to you*. The word "unfaithful," one indicating the state of a relationship between parties, is used repeatedly, indicating that one's standing to God is at issue and not consequences to oneself.

While subtle, it is important to stress that this is no trivial distinction. The difference between these two approaches to moral failing can be illuminated by comparison to human relationships. Consider a parent who tells a child who recklessly texted while driving, "You could have died." Such an indictment invites the child to consider the consequences of her behavior. Should the child change her behavior based on this reasoning, the motivation would presumably be to avoid future harm. In contrast, consider the parent who tells a child, "I am disappointed in you." This statement does not necessarily invoke any deleterious potential consequences to the child. Should the child care about her parent's opinion of her, then perhaps there is a negative consequence to the child involved. However, the child can just as readily decide that she does not care what her parent thinks (as I imagine many a teenager does) and eschew any negative consequences to herself. Should the child be moved by her parent's judgment, it is likely because of the harm that has come to their relationship: An expectation or trust has been violated, and now the affective state of the parent has changed toward her child. If the trespass is large enough, it will change the way the two parties interact, as well as the way the parent views the child. By acknowledging and changing her bad behavior, the child is moving towards reconciliation or improved standing with her parent.

Consider yet another case that is perhaps even more similar to the language used in the prophets. Suppose a parent prohibits a particular item or activity for a child and does so because it is in the child's best interest. However, the child ignores her parent, and instead listens to a friend who recommends that which was prohibited. The child ultimately comes to harm. A parent might have two concerns. First, the parent might be concerned that if the child continues in this behavior, she will come be harmed again in the future. The second and arguably the more important concern is that the child did not trust her parent over her friend.

The latter concern might be more troubling because it stands to undermine other things the parent might do in the interest of the child. Further, it may cause the parent to

wonder about the state of the relationship between the parent and child given where the child directed her trust and attention. Rather than merely be concerned about obedience, the wise parent would also worry that the child does not adequately know the parent and the extent of the parent's devotion and wisdom. Similarly, when God's people repeatedly ignore his commands for them, he begins to question whether the people know him at all. This lack of knowledge of God's character is frequently brought up in relation to the immoral acts of humans. There are many calls to know God in the prophets, and proclamations of judgments often seem to boil down to God's frustrations that his people do not know him (Jer. 2:5, 8, 31; 4:22; 9:24).

Even the descriptions of wrongdoing are frequently parsed in relational terms, as in 6: 16-19 where God proclaims the people "have not listened to Me, I said and they ignored" (paraphrase). Moreover, he gives reasons for his acts of judgment and appeals to examples to illustrate his previous actions based on such motivations (e.g. Jer. 3:4, and 7:12). In Jer. 14:10, God explains why he is not answering prayers. Jeremiah goes so far as to invite his audience to imagine what it would be like to be God when he records God as asking his people to contemplate his reasoning about coming judgments in 9:7, 9, "I will now refine and test them, for what else can I do with my sinful people?... Shall I not punish them for these things?"

Additionally, emotional terms are predicated of God throughout the prophets. His fierce anger is described in Jer. 4:8, 5:1, 12:13, and 15:14. The people are accused of provoking God to anger in 7:18-19 and 8:19. The people are called God's beloved in 11:15, and "the beloved of my heart" in 12:7-13. In the latter passage, God states that the people who were once the object of his love are now the object of his hatred. The anthropomorphisms of Jeremiah are laden with emotionally charged language, such as in 14:17, where God cries out, "Let my eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease, for the virgin daughter—my people—is struck down with a crushing blow, with a very grievous wound" and 15:1, where God announces that "my heart will not turn toward" the people and that he has withdrawn love and pity from them.¹⁵ Ezekiel also uses emotional terms like jealous wrath, burning zeal, and concern (e.g., Ez. 36).

Even when passages do not explicitly use terms signifying emotion, they still use emotionally-laden imagery: Jeremiah 2:32 uses a vivid bridal metaphor, and 3:1ff compares the people to a prostitute with many lovers. The language used by the prophets invokes a sense of intimacy and relationships that are characterized by intense passion and emotion, such as a divorced man and his remarried wife in Jer. 3:3, 4; sexual imagery in 3:6, 19ff; and a grieving father in 3:4, 19. The repeated appearance of metaphors that evoke a visceral emotional response in the reader suggests that strong emotion is an intentional theme of God's relationships to his people and that the

¹⁵ In some passages it is admittedly not clear if it is God or Jeremiah speaking. See Jer. 4:18-21 and 9:10.

passionate nature of the human-God connection is what the metaphors are meant to recommend to the audience.

It is this particular facet of the prophetic writings that I argue should at least be an important lens through which we read the prophetic genre, if not *the* lens. Note that many other types of passages can be subsumed under the idea of a God's-eye-view: Hazony's moral-instruction passages indicate what leads to a worthwhile life in the eyes of God, if not always in the eyes of man, and the sort of man and actions that amount to the truly good life. Descriptions of the ethically normative dimensions of human events are made salient by God's interjections about how he responds to the decisions of man, articulated through the voice of a prophet. Such passages serve something like a helpful epilogue when the narrator helpfully summarizes the principal lessons in a morality tale or fable. Even when earthly consequences do not seem properly related to the moral qualities of human actions, as in the examples mentioned in my second objection, we can read these passages as expressing what God thinks *ought* to follow such actions or why such suffering is being admitted on the part of his chosen representative. In other cases, God oftentimes mentions purpose for which he is withholding judgment from the wicked, even if just for a season.

If my assessment is correct, the entirety of the prophets serves as a portion of Scripture in which the prophets relate the words that God, as Jeremiah said, "put in [my] mouth" and felt like a "burning fire" that "I cannot (hold it in)" (Jer. 1:9; 20:9). Jeremiah's feelings of unworthiness, much like Moses's trepidation to relate God's words to the Hebrews and pharaoh, as well as the experience of purification related by Isaiah, reflect the significance of their respective callings as vehicles for a unique expression of God's perspective (Is. 6, Jer. 1). A possible exception is the book of Habakkuk, in which the prophet argues with God about apparent injustices. The book also serves as a vehicle for many of Habakkuk's thoughts. However, many of the prophetic writings reflect similar anxieties and protestations (e.g., Lamentations) of God's judgment, and significantly, Habakkuk also relates God's responses to his prayers, in which God provides his motivations and sizes up the inadequacies of Habakkuk's appraisal of human circumstances. Even this unique contribution to Nevi'im, then, manifests an emphasis on literature that describes a God's-eye-view.

Before continuing to why I think this aspect of prophetic literature is important to recognize for those engaged in the philosophy of Hebrew Scriptures, there is one more worry worth addressing here: Maybe I am making too much out of something that is only trivially true. One might protest that *all* of the Hebrew Scriptures purport to show a God's-eye-view, if only by recounting the experiences of those wrestling with God, like Jacob. One might think that pointing out the presence of this element in the prophetic writings is not instructive because it does not show us anything that is *uniquely* true about Nevi'im from which we can derive interpretive principles.

It may very well be the case that all, or at least most, of the Hebrew Scriptures are intended to tell us something about what God is like and his take on human affairs, whether via pronouncements through Abraham or the philosophical derivations of Solomon as he reflects on the nature of life in relationship to the existence of God. My claim that Nevi'im provides a God's-eye-view is not trivial, though, because of the scope and function of the God's-eye-view provided. Prophetic literature is singular in its expression of intimacy with God's thoughts and (so will I argue) emotions. The prophetic writings consist of thoroughgoing recordings of God's words that are often declared by the prophets as their reasons for writing anything at all, and they are transcribed in a first-personal way that only appears in short passages of other genres. The scope of these descriptions has an important function; my next sections are devoted to establishing what this function is. For all of these reasons, I contend that the reader ought to consider this dimension of prophetic literature as importantly unique, and therefore worthy of consideration as to its aims and whether such aims might merit inclusion in our interpretative strategies.

Whether or not my reader agrees that this aspect of the prophetic literature deserves to be our primary framework for reading scriptures in the prophetic genre, I hope that I have convinced her that it at least consumes a considerable portion of the literature and is therefore deserving of the attention of philosophers and theologians reading the Hebrew texts. If she is yet unconvinced, perhaps a discussion of what such passages are intended to reveal might serve as further persuasion.

5. God's Perspective and the Language of Divine Emotion

I mentioned before that this last set of passages expressing a "God's-eye-view" (that is, those in which God expresses his perspective on human states of affairs) turn out to be the most interesting for the philosophy of Hebrew Scriptures. When engaging in the philosophy of Hebrew Scripture and approaching these books as works of reason, I think an important question to ask is *why* writers choose to employ the particular genres they did. After all, the narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures can be read as parables; the prophets could have recorded morality tales that would have just as easily relayed moral principles and engaged in the search for truth Hazony finds so salient in the prophets. This is not to say that I think Hazony is wrong about the way prophetic works are suited to show how God's word cuts through the "arbitrariness" of the human mind. But if this is the central purpose of the prophets, it is puzzling why the prophets frequently purport to record *God's* voice and inner experience. For example, Jeremiah gives many of his orations from his own perspective (e.g., Jer. 10:17-25; 14:17-22). One could arguably omit entire sections that occur in the voice of God and lose nothing on Hazony's view.

So far as I can tell, the inclusion of the passages upon which my third objection is built accomplish something that none of the other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures are equipped to do. The contribution of these sections provides yet further important moral information that many of the prophets seem to think we need when meditating on the laws of God and the way of man. God's motivations and dispositions are not deemed irrelevant by the prophets, but rather recorded alongside other orations. They certainly must have possessed incentive to *not* use such language! I imagine these passages—that for simplicity I will henceforth call “Godview passages,” despite all of the term's theological infelicities—would be the most daunting to write, as failing to truthfully articulate the perspective of God would be a damning task indeed. And yet here we find them running parallel with more comfortable passages about our human error and immorality. Surprisingly, we find orations from God himself that are in some ways remarkably similar to our own inner experiences of emotion and cognition.

As the above passages illustrate, Hazony and others treat descriptions of God in the prophets as metaphorical, recognized as such by the use of anthropomorphisms (e.g., Jer. 9:12 where God is described as having פִּי , a mouth). While I am not aware of any contemporary philosophers or theologians who read these passages as anything other than metaphorical (although I am sure they are out there), there is some disagreement about the status of these metaphors in biblical studies.¹⁶ Theologians and philosophers, though, when seeking to uncover normative claims within the text, typically discount such readings of anthropomorphisms, at least insofar as they might be relevant to any view worth forwarding today. They suppose that when we read passages about God's frown or staff or hand, it is doubtful that we should understand the text as making a metaphysical assertion about God's constitution and whether he exists as an extended being, and whether God really does have a celestial staff as Zeus was thought by the Greeks to possess a shield.

There is significant disagreement about the exact linguistic function of metaphors, but at the very least they serve to elicit a particular response in which the audience is invited to think of the subject as in some way similar to otherwise dissimilar object.¹⁷ In the case of Jer. 3:12, the mention of a physical organ like a mouth is intended to bring to mind

¹⁶ See n. 5 above. Concerning my position, it only matters that the relevant descriptions of God espoused by the prophets serve as a morally informative model for human beings, regardless of whether the biblical authors intended for God to be understood as embodied.

¹⁷ See Soskice (1985) and Heim (2014) for more recent discussions of metaphor. While these works each contribute accounts in which metaphor performs a unique and valuable function in discourse, both Soskice and Heim resist the idea that metaphorical speech can be translated or synthesized into univocal statements. However affecting, such accounts of metaphor maintain a “vertiginous” quality (to use Soskice's term) and ultimately remain consistent with the historical dialectic concerning the various limitations of metaphor, analogy, and univocal predications. By my lights, God's-eye-view passages do not have this vertiginous quality and are better suited to univocal reading described below.

speech familiar to humans and make a comparison to what God might have done for the people of Judah. The point of the sentence is not the metaphysical constitution of God, but rather whether man understands God. The idea of a human mouth is invoked simply to this end.

It is in this spirit that many passages attributing emotion to God have been interpreted. To gloss over a complex history for the sake of brevity, the medieval philosophers, following a subset of Hellenistic thought from ancient Greece, considered “the passions” to be a physical phenomenon. The early modern philosophers followed suit, with thinkers like Kant making a sharp division between reason and the lower bodily faculty of emotions. In any case, emotions were tied to bodily states, such as the flushing of the face when one feels shame, or the burning sensible experience accompanying jealousy. Further, God’s emotions appear to change, and this could not be an accurate literal description of God given the widespread conviction that God is immutable. Emotionally-loaded passages, like Jer. 7:18 in which God is described as אַף, angry or Jer. 12:15 in which God is described with רַחֵם, compassion, were thought to be metaphorical.

At the very least, then, we are given some descriptions of what God is like via metaphor, and it is language about God in a unique context: God’s self-descriptions of his engagement with the moral facets of human experience. Metaphorical language is vague and unwieldy, but if we take the prophets at their word, these metaphors are how God would have us think of him when we wonder how he looks upon us in our most backslidden or oppressed states. At most, though, these metaphors function as epistemic placeholders for what God is really like.

Even if one does not find such anthropomorphism instructive, I have yet to argue my most controversial point: It is wrong to treat all of these statements as though they are metaphorical. Some are *not* metaphorical, but literal and possibly even univocal, and these passages provide important information about God’s moral psychology. First, though, some philosophy of language is in order.

It is helpful to consider the linguistic reasons why emphasis has not been placed upon the Godview texts I find so important, despite the fact that they are plentiful in Nevi'im. As I mentioned, metaphorical language is not terribly informative. It would be difficult to forward an argument about what God is like on metaphor alone. It is unsurprising then that those who take prophetic language to be largely metaphorical do not recognize that arguments about God’s moral psychology occur in the text. Take, for example, the account of the prophetic works we recently examined in the first part of this paper. Most of Hazony’s positions on language about God rest on a central assumption about divine predication:

“Theologians have long been of the opinion that human categories cannot describe God directly, so that all of our terms for describing God are necessarily metaphors— terms

drawn from other domains and used with reference to God by way of analogy. This is not merely an opinion of later theologians. We can easily see that the prophets and scholars who composed the Hebrew Bible were aware that all terms for God are metaphors from the fact that they freely use multiple and shifting metaphors for one and the same aspect of God's actions in the world. Indeed, we can say that the Bible relies upon "mixed metaphor" as perhaps the principal means by which human beings can approach a knowledge of God!" (2015).

Hazony's description of theological perspectives on metaphor is mistaken. As I have already mentioned, there is by no means consensus among scholars of Scripture about the nature of divine predications. Even if we rule out those arguments specific to biblical studies, there are considerable reasons to doubt Hazony's depiction of biblical language from within the fields of theology and philosophy. While this is not the venue to settle the matter about what forms of predication are available to finite humans who intend to truthfully describe God, I want to at least make the case that we can by no means assume all of this language is metaphorical by way of a more detailed overview of the philosophy of language concerning theistic predication.

First, metaphorical predications have a long history of being *rejected* by philosophers and theologians for many descriptions of God in the Scriptures. The medieval writers divided language about God into two categories: metaphorical and literal (Freddoso, n.d.). Metaphorical predications were the most remote forms of predication. As is likely clear from the discussion in the prior section, metaphors included the anthropomorphism of God ("God's hand," "God sits on his throne") as well as comparisons of God to other parts of his creation ("God is a lion," "God is our rock"). Since the objects to which God is compared in these statements were thought to be things with essential qualities that are incompatible with God's nature (such as being extended, temporal, imperfect, and finite), philosophers thought these predications tell us the least about what God actually is like.

Despite the mention of essences that Hazony would likely reject, the motivations for the metaphorical views of the Medievals seem similar to Hazony's: They thought that God's transcendence was so great that anything a human could be acquainted with (and thus attribute to God) would be so imperfect and distant from his actual nature that the proposition would be no more than a metaphor. However, unlike Hazony's assessment of contemporary theologians, the Medievals did not universally embrace metaphorical language. For example, Maimonides recognized the use of metaphor in Scripture, but he still rejected metaphor and analogy as means of speech about God (Benor 1995, Lahey 1993). The most significant objection to metaphorical forms of predication is that it does little to provide us with any real understanding of God's nature and may even amount to agnosticism. Once metaphorical language is determined to be the only method for talking about God, it becomes difficult to see how we could know anything about what

is salient in our metaphors in helping us to understand God. Many, like Maimonides, came to embrace negative theology because of this very problem (Broadie 1987, 159; cf. Buijs 1998).

One alternative for the Medievals was literal predication, which for them included univocal, equivocal and analogical forms of predication. Because of a widespread misunderstanding of literal predication that I will turn to in a moment, it is worth discussing the history of literal predication in more detail. If we take the view of the medieval philosophers, univocal predication is the strongest form of predication. When we predicate univocally of God, claims such as “God has knowledge like man has knowledge” mean that God has knowledge of the same species or kind that the term “knowledge” signifies in our ordinary discourse about man’s knowledge (Freddoso n.d.). Duns Scotus and William of Ockham both endorsed univocal predications of God (Langston 1979).

Equivocal predication designates homonyms, such as “a bow” worn by the neighborhood hipster and “a bow” such as the one Katniss Everdeen used to kill President Coin. This sort of predication uses a single term to signify two distinct things. Finally, analogical predication—historically one of the most popular positions on divine predication—is employed when what is predicated is not identical in two propositions but importantly related in some way. If we predicate analogically of God, then when we say “God has knowledge like man has knowledge,” we are not signifying the same form of knowledge that humans have (as in univocal predication); instead we are claiming that God’s knowledge is somehow significantly related to man’s knowledge, but the two terms “knowledge” are not identical (Freddoso n.d.).

Analogy was thought to be a stronger form of predication than metaphor because the nature of the relation standing between the two subjects could be specified. Scholastic philosophers recognized multiple forms of analogy. An analogy based upon proportions was referred to as a proportional analogy or “proper” analogy (Ashworth 1999). This was contrasted with attributive analogies. Attributive analogies distinguished terms on the basis of priority. Aristotle gives an example of attributive analogies when he describes the relationship between various terms related to health. (Ashworth 1999). “Healthy diet”, “healthy complexion” and “healthy person” are all distinct terms, and yet the sense in which diets or complexions are healthy is dependent upon the idea of a healthy person (*Metaphysics* 994a1-20). In this sense “healthy person” is prior to the terms “healthy diet” and “healthy complexion.”¹⁸ Finally, medieval

¹⁸ Ashworth (1999) provides a helpful summary of Aristotle, who was largely responsible for introducing the distinctions between forms of literal predication: “The Categories opens with a brief characterization of terms used equivocally, such as ‘animal’ used of real human beings and pictured human beings, and terms used univocally, such as ‘animal’ used of human beings and oxen. In the first case, the spoken term is the same but there are two distinct significates or intellectual conceptions; in the second case, both the spoken term and the significate are the same. We should note that equivocal terms

philosophers identified an analogy of imitation or participation. This form of analogy indicated that the terms were related by a kind of likeness unique to that between God and his creatures. The attributes of humans are analogically related to God's insofar as they reflect God or participate in his qualities. Aquinas argued in favor of using attributive analogy to predicate things of God.¹⁹ Cajetan further elaborated on Aquinas's version of analogy by expounding on the extrinsic/intrinsic distinction of analogical predications.²⁰

include homonyms (two words with the same form but different senses, e.g., 'pen'), polysemous words (one word with two or more senses), and, for medieval thinkers, proper names shared by different people."

¹⁹ Ashworth (1999) explains Aquinas's reasons for embracing attributive analogy: "Against this background, Aquinas asks how we are to interpret the divine names. He argues that they cannot be purely equivocal, for we could not then make intelligible claims about God. Nor can they be purely univocal, for God's manner of existence and his relationship to his properties are sufficiently different from ours that the words must be used in somewhat different senses. Hence, the words we use of God must be analogical, used in different but related senses. To be more precise, it seems that such words as 'good' and 'wise' must involve a relationship to one prior reality, and they must be predicated in a prior and a posterior sense, for these are the marks of analogical terms... he came to place much greater emphasis on agent causation, the active transmission of properties from God to creatures, than on exemplar causality, the creature's passive reflection or imitation of God's properties. In this context, Aquinas makes considerable use of his ontological distinction between univocal causes, whose effects are fully like them, and non-univocal causes, whose effects are not fully like them. God is an analogical cause, and this is the reality that underlies our use of analogical language." For more on this, see Ashworth in the bibliography.

²⁰ Cajetan thought that the forms of analogical predication can either indicate that the subject of the predication has the attribute intrinsically as a real feature of the subject, or that the subject of the predication only can only be said to have the attribute extrinsically, meaning that the subject can only be said to possess the attribute "by reference" to some other being. Attributive analogy, according to Cajetan, predicates features of God like goodness or knowledge intrinsically, and creatures possess these attributes extrinsically, due to their ontological dependence upon God for these features. This is because God has the position of ontological priority in attributive analogy, while creatures are ontologically posterior. In contrast proportional analogy predicates some attribute intrinsically to both subjects of the predication—both can rightly be said to possess the attribute in and of themselves, and not just to possess an important relationship to a prior being. What distinguishes the two subjects is the difference in degree, amount, etc., as two mathematical figures may have proportional relationship to each other. Cajetan contended that (with the exception of the term being, which was properly an attributive analogical predication) most theological predications of God should be thought of as proportionally predicating of God. As has been pointed out by Ralph McInney (2011), Cajetan criticizes Aquinas on the grounds that his analogy of proper proportionality requires univocity. While the extrinsic/intrinsic denominations of attributive analogy permit one to claim that what we predicate of both God and his creatures are of a different kind or species, proper proportionality when applied to God requires that we attribute things intrinsically. If we predicate things of God and man intrinsically we must mean that there is not merely a relationship between God and goodness, and man and goodness, that is preserved by the analogy. Goodness must be found in God and in man—goodness merely differs in degree. McInney thinks Cajetan is wrong in his

6. Predicating Emotions of God in Contemporary Philosophy

This discussion of medieval views of predication is instructive not just as evidence that the relationship between metaphor and literal language is grossly oversimplified in modern discourse. As William Alston points out in *Divine Nature and Human Language*, the term “literal” is often conflated with “univocal” and “empirical” language. Analogical language can arguably be literal, and the idea that literal language *must* be empirical, that is, derived from creaturely experience in the natural world, only follows if we are also committed to empiricist theories of meaning (according to which all human experience and cognition features the physically sensible world alone) (Alston 1989, 25). Theists do not have to embrace such theories, and indeed many do not: One might embrace *sensus divinitatis* (the idea that humans have a specific faculty for perceiving the divine), or like Alston dispute that human experience is confined to the natural. One can also contest the theories of language that rule out literal predications and, like Richard Swinburne (2007) and Kevin Hector (2011, 2014), maintain that it is public use (and not features of mental representation and experience) that determine whether language is literal.

For my purposes, I am not sure that it matters which form of literal predication one embraces, but I am inclined to think my reading of the prophets is more suited to one of the stronger analogical positions (e.g., attributive analogy) or univocal predication. I myself have argued in favor of univocal predications following William Alston elsewhere, so it is from this perspective I am going to proceed.²¹

Theologians and philosophers often take terms signifying emotions and affective states as metaphorical, while not doing likewise for terms like wisdom and goodness, because of what is thought to be entailed by particular terms. Often proponents of analogy and univocal predication think that wisdom can be so predicated of God because they think there is not anything in the ontology of wisdom that entails properties or states antithetical to the nature of God.²² While wisdom, so far as we understand it, is realized in humans in a way that requires its subject to possess particular traits, there is nothing about wisdom per se that entails that it cannot be realized in an immaterial, immutable being (or so the argument goes).

Wisdom, goodness and perfection, when predicated of God, entail different things than when they are predicated of humans. If one is a proponent of analogical predication, she might argue that God’s wisdom is metaphysically prior to human

criticisms of Aquinas and that one can make proportional analogies while still maintaining that one subject’s predicate is of the extrinsic denomination, while the other is of the intrinsic denomination.

²¹ See chapter four of my dissertation, *Essays on Discourse by and about the Divine* (2016).

²² See, for example, Swinburne (2007, 227ff).

wisdom, and while God is so transcendent that we cannot fathom what his wisdom is like, we can at least say that our wisdom is dependent on God's wisdom for its existence. Conversely, if one is a fan of univocal predication, she might instead argue that wisdom is being used in the same sense regardless of whether it is predicated of God or man and that differences in logical entailments do not amount to a difference in sense because the entailment is a product of the meaning of the word *God* rather than the predications themselves. In *Revelation*, Richard Swinburne makes a similar argument in favor of univocal predication for some predications of divine attributes: "God is wise" entails that God is *essentially* wise (whereas "Socrates is wise" does not) because we are antecedently committed to certain facts about God: "'*x* is God' by itself entails '*x* is essentially wise', or... it entails 'if *x* is wise, then he is essentially wise'" (2007, 227). Put succinctly, suppose that we are committed to all of God's properties being essential properties. Or suppose we take the word *God* to necessitate certain perfections. Swinburne thinks these commitments do not affect the sense of the word *wise* itself.²³ They only affect the sense of the word *God*. It turns out that when we say *God is wise*, he is essentially wise, etc. This is a function of either the sense of the word *God*, or it is a result of what is entailed by two independent premises, neither of which relies on the sense of *wise* having any unusual properties.²⁴

²³ This is because Swinburne argues that words coined in the context of mere human experience can be employed in "new circumstances" while retaining their normal sense (2007, 225). Swinburne mentions two examples of such circumstances: a) when the word "diameter" is used for both the 1 meter diameter of a ball and the 300,000 light-year diameter of a galaxy, and b) when the word "cause" is used in saying that an explosion causes the collapse of a galaxy and a chatty individual causes those around him to be annoyed. Similarly, just because we use the word "wise" of a dramatically different subject (God) than we would in our mundane uses of the word, does not imply that the word "wise" has undergone any change any more than "cause" or "diameter" has undergone change. The fact that their predicate schemes are preserved shows that the senses are the same.

²⁴ Here it is helpful to see how Swinburne's view comes apart from more traditional views like Aquinas's. Aquinas denied that doctrinal terms should be understood univocally because of this metaphysical commitment concerning properties. According to Aquinas, if we predicate univocally of God, claims such as "God has knowledge like man has knowledge" mean that God has knowledge of the same species or kind that the term "knowledge" signifies in our ordinary discourse about man's knowledge (Freddoso). (Once again, we find Hazony and Aquinas in agreement, if albeit for very different reasons!) This understanding of univocal predication commits theists to attributing undesirable properties to God, and for this reason Aquinas rejected the notion that we can make univocal predications of God. On Swinburne's view, the theist is obligated to no such metaphysical positions when she makes univocal predications: "Words which denote properties in beings of different genera may be univocal (in my sense of 'univocal'), and how we derive our understanding of the sense of a word does not have such a direct relation to what that sense is. We may learn what a word means by learning the syntactic criteria for its application and observing objects to which it paradigmatically applies; and this may allow us to ascribe it in the same sense to objects which we cannot observe" (2007, 228). However, it is not clear that Swinburne can use a word univocally while remaining so agnostic about the metaphysical implications of the word.

Those who deny univocal predication is suitable for statements about God often do so in virtue of God's transcendence. The idea is that the vast difference between God and His creation is sufficient to undermine our ability to know sufficient truth-conditions for univocal predication and the content of words applied to God. Swinburne argues, contra advocates of analogical predication, that the human inability to "know what it is like to be God, how God knows things, or from which (if any) deeper properties of God his wisdom derives" does not put any constraints on our ability to predicate univocally of God (2007, 229). He denies that such lack of knowledge affects our ability to know the relevant truth-conditions for predicates like *wise*. Further, we commonly make predications of creatures whose experiences are very remote from us: We do not know what it is like to be a bat, but we still say *bats perceive*, intending the sense of *perceive* to be univocal with *humans perceive*.

Whether or not one agrees with Swinburne's account of univocal predication, his arguments concerning terms like *wisdom* have similar consequences for terms signifying emotional states.²⁵ As I mentioned in the prior section, emotions, according to a long history of theologians and philosophers, are necessarily physical, and thus disqualified from any literal forms of predication. However, things are not nearly this clear cut. For one, even our application of everyday predicates to material, empirical objects is incredibly complicated. To use Swinburne's above example, it is not obvious to me that we *do* use *perceive* univocally when we say that bats perceive. Consider a more dramatic example: *the caterpillar perceives the leaf*, or *the lobster perceives the boiling water*. In these cases, words that seem obviously univocal given our contact with these animals, upon closer examination appear to be used in an analogical sense. This is because caterpillars and lobsters have radically dissimilar nervous systems from humans. Much of what we think are the relevant states of affairs for determining the truth-values for uses of *perceive* involves certain assumptions about what is required for mental states. In the absence of specific metaphysical commitments to things like caterpillar souls, the fact that caterpillars and lobsters possess different nervous systems (and in the case of lobsters, lack brains altogether) casts considerable doubt on whether such animals *perceive* in the same sense that humans do.

Returning to the example of bats, the sense in which we use *perceive* for life forms that share similar but not identical anatomy is at the very least ambiguous. There is very likely significant disagreement and linguistic ambiguity on exactly what *perceive*, so applied, entails for bats. Those more optimistic about animal intelligence or animal souls might be willing to affirm the exact same predicate entailments for both bats and humans; however, it seems just as possible that a large (if not majority) segment of the

²⁵ Swinburne is not himself an advocate for univocal predications of emotion to God. He explicitly argues against univocal predications of emotions for reasons similar to those I will address in this section; as a result, I think his argument fails.

linguistic community might think there is only some overlap in our uses and understanding of human and bat perception. They would argue that *perceive* has two senses or that we are using *perceive* analogically.²⁶ Additionally, the scope of dissimilarity between humans and bats may turn out to be trivial compared to the dissimilarity between humans and a transcendent God.

Even if we can use “perceive” univocally of bats, using mundane words to predicate of God seems an entirely different matter. Humans and bats share important features: Bats are spatially and temporally situated; aspects of their anatomy are similar to ours; and they manifest certain behaviors that resemble our own. It is possible to predict certain implications of a bat perception given these shared features. However, it is difficult to see how we can anticipate the implications of God’s wisdom given our own experience of wise humans. We observe wisdom obtaining in a human agent in spatiotemporal contexts: Wisdom produces certain results over time, implies certain things about their cognitive abilities, etc. We know none of these things for God.²⁷

Nevertheless, many of us do not want to abandon literal forms of predication in favor of metaphorical predication for reasons already mentioned. Rather, it seems that at least one of our reasons for discounting terms signifying emotion –our familiarity with emotions being realized in a very specific way in humans– is not a good reason to draw a distinction between it and other terms thought to be literal, like wisdom and goodness. Whether *perceives* and *wisdom* are analogical or univocal predicates, they share the propensity to be recognized in subjects that might realize these predicates in significantly different ways.

Returning to the claim that terms like *angry* are metaphorical because they are marked, in part, by their physical manifestations in humans,²⁸ this could be merely a function of how emotion realizes itself in humans and not a feature intrinsic to emotion

²⁶ Disagreements about bat perception highlight two important problems for Swinburne’s account. What facts are relevant to establishing the sense of a word? Swinburne’s use of predicate scheme is promising, but the synonyms, antonyms, determinates, and determinables of a given word are not clearly delineated. When we say that a bat perceives, does our sense of “perceive” include the idea “realized in *x* brain state”? Does “perceive” entail that perceiving comes with a certain set of phenomenal qualities? Swinburne would certainly say no. However, if the sense of a word merely depends on publically agreed upon criteria, it could turn out that the sense of “perceive” carries with it these metaphysical implications.

²⁷ Swinburne may just deny that any of these things are relevant to the meaning of “wise” and insist that the dissimilarity I just described only affects the sense of the word “God” and not the word “wise”. But when making distinctions between analogical and univocal predications, Swinburne helps himself to metaphysical implications that it seems he should ignore if he is to remain consistent with the view he expresses here.

²⁸ Swinburne argues that the words *pity*, *love*, and *anger* all include desire and bodily sensation in their meanings: “No one is really angry or feels pity or love unless they feel these things in their stomach or breasts or bowels or behind the eyes, and have an urge, hard to control, to vent their anger or show their pity and love” (2007, 230).

itself. Given that we deny that the physical implications of a bat perceiving has bearing on the sense of the word *perceives*, we can also deny that the physical implications of a human's experience of anger has any bearing on the meaning of *anger* itself, and thereby apply it to God. More to the point, why can we not say that *anger* is like *wise*: It is not that the sense of *anger* changes when we predicate it of God, it is that the meaning of *God* and *human* entail different things about anger obtaining in God and humans respectively. Conversely, if bat perception is only perception in the analogical sense of the word due to how it is realized, God's anger should be understood as analogical as well (albeit of a different scope).

To successfully deny that the physical dimensions of emotion are essential, or to use a less metaphysically-loaded word, central, to the sense of *emotion*, one would need some kind of evidence that physical states are tied to emotions ontologically. This is not consistent with current thought on emotions, though; most recent work on emotion affirms the plausibility of my position. Contemporary research on emotion is not in agreement on the relationship between bodily states and emotions even so far as humans are concerned. While some philosophers and scientists do indeed consider bodily states to be an essential component of emotions, others dispute this claim, arguing that different emotions can produce identical physical reactions and that this is evidence that the bodily manifestations of emotion are not identical to the emotions themselves (de Sousa 2003). Linda Zagzebski famously disputed the long-observed distinction between cognitive and emotional states, arguing instead that emotions should be defined as a state that has inseparable cognitive *and* affective content, and further, made the case that emotions play a key role in moral judgment (1998). Psychological studies seem to indicate that humans identify identical physiological states with different emotional states depending on what beliefs or intentional objects correspond with the physiological state in question, suggesting that the emotional content is something over and above a physical state (Barrett 2006). There is at least reason to doubt that the physicality of emotions is inseparable from emotions themselves rather than the way in which they are realized in humans.

Turning back to the question of divine emotions, if emotions are not necessarily physical as was assumed by the Ancients, Medievals, and Early Moderns, there is no compelling reason to rule them out as divine predicates. It is possible that God has emotions much like we think God has thoughts; his emotions simply do not entail those aspects of emotion that are perceptible in human expressions of emotion but incompatible with his nature. A similar argument is made by Zagzebski: Zagzebski contends that so long as emotions are an aspect of our personhood and not of our nature as humans, it is possible that God has (perfect) emotions (2004, 204ff). She contends that emotions need not imply passivity or change; rather, Zagzebski contends that godly emotions can be understood much like we understand godly thoughts or beliefs. Many of the qualities of thoughts and beliefs that seem incompatible with divine attributes

apply to emotions as well. Thoughts and beliefs strike us as time-bound and mutable just as feelings do, and yet we can imagine God has knowledge that is immutable and eternal. Affective states could likewise be immutable and eternal. She writes, "It can be shown that God has seemingly mutable emotions in the same way that he has seemingly mutable knowledge" (2004, 208-209). If Zagzebski is right, there is no reason to object to statements describing divine emotions, and our traditional reasons for reading such statements metaphorically should be reconsidered. In the absence of textual evidence suggesting prophetic authors intended to speak metaphorically, interpreters of Nevi'im can read Godview statements containing emotion as literal.

7. Zagzebski and the Emotions of God

Zagzebski's work on emotion turns out to be extremely important for her ethical theory, and it is this theory that provides insight into why the prophets may have included so many Godview passages in their writings. Zagzebski's divine motivation theory and exemplarist virtue ethics describe a moral psychology in which emotions play a key role. We are indebted to exemplars for our moral education. These exemplars evoke our admiration when they embody the virtues, and it is through this emotional response that we begin to identify what is good about exemplars and understand the virtues (Zagzebski 2017). This emotion of admiration is central to our ability to make moral judgments. Furthermore, like other virtue theories, Zagzebski expects the habituation that is part and parcel of virtue acquisition to shape the emotions of the virtuous. Since moral judgment involves beholding an intentional object through the valence of emotion, those who are truly virtuous will stand in the correct emotional relationship to that which is good and that which is bad. They will feel pity when someone deserves pity; they will feel anger when states of affairs call for anger. When we emulate exemplars and attempt to acquire the virtues they exemplify, we do more than copy those we admire; we try to assimilate both the actions and motivating emotions into our life (2017, 219-220).

Given the role of such internal states for moral formation, accounts that give us insight into the inner life of moral exemplars are mentioned as an important source of moral understanding (2017, 104-111). Among these accounts are biographies, fictional narratives, and studies that rely on data from interviews and diaries. In the Christian predecessor to Zagzebski's exemplarism, *Divine Motivation Theory*, Zagzebski suggests looking to Jesus Christ as the ultimate moral exemplar (2004, 228-256). The doctrine of the Incarnation provides an unusually fitting candidate for this kind of exemplarism because the moral perfection of the divine is manifested in human psychological states. Biographical content about the life of Christ contributes to our moral education because it permits us to imitate him. His emotions and actions serve as a model for how we should respond to objects of moral evaluation in our lives.

In one explanation of divine motivation theory, Zagzebski makes the interesting claim that God's motivational states are the ontological and explanatory basis for moral properties (1998, 539). According to this view, our motives should resemble God's motives. This does not mean that the set of virtues for humans and God will be identical (1998, 548). Some of our virtues are related to our creaturely nature and therefore inadmissible as virtues of God. Nevertheless, God serves as the basis for all that is good in us; Lev. 19:20 says something to this effect when it exhorts us to be holy as God himself is holy.

To see how this theory might apply to the genre of prophetic writings, consider Nevi'im in light of Zagzebski's account of moral formation. Passages in which the prophets relay a Godview of human matters, particular those of moral significance, give the reader an idea of God's perfect emotions and motivations. Take, for example, a passage from Jeremiah:

"Thus says the Lord:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me
 that they went far from me,
 and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?
 They did not say, "Where is the Lord
 who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
 who led us in the wilderness,
 in a land of deserts and pits,
 in a land of drought and deep darkness,
 in a land that no one passes through,
 where no one lives?"
 I brought you into a plentiful land
 to eat its fruits and its good things.
 But when you entered you defiled my land,
 and made my heritage an abomination.
 The priests did not say, "Where is the Lord?"
 Those who handle the law did not know me;
 the rulers transgressed against me;
 the prophets prophesied by Baal,
 and went after things that do not profit.
 Therefore once more I accuse you,
 says the Lord,
 and I accuse your children's children.
 Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look,
 send to Kedar and examine with care;
 see if there has ever been such a thing.
 Has a nation changed its gods,

even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory
for something that does not profit.
Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
be shocked, be utterly desolate,
says the Lord,
for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living water,
and dug out cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns
that can hold no water.

(Jer. 2:5-13)

In this passage, note that God takes issue not only with the actions of his people, but the way in which his people seem to view him. The reasons for God's "charges" against his people are given in explicit terms. They neglected to ask, "Where is the Lord?" Even those who should have been experts when it came to knowledge of God did not know him. By posing the rhetorical question, "What wrong did your ancestors find in me?", God makes it clear that he has been faultless in his dealings with his people, and yet they have failed in their part of the relationship. God has been good, a "fountain of living waters" in the desert, and yet his people prefer corrupt nations and idols to him.

That God gives an account of the reasons for his judgment is incredibly important. Like the parent whose child heeds the guidance of a friend over parental instruction, knowing *why* God acts is morally informative. A parent who is merely concerned with the obedience of her child will not attempt to amend her relationship with a teenager who is beginning to trust friends over her parents. If she can coerce her child into correct behavior through punishment, her goal will be achieved. However, a parent who uses such an incident to not only modify the behavior of her child, but help her child relate properly to those she should trust (i.e., those who have her best interest at heart and the wisdom to guide her) is interested in more than the actions of her child; she is interested in whether her child has certain affective states. Further, the parent's interest in her child's inner life manifests aspects of her own affective states; namely, it shows what she values and finds to be morally significant. The prophetic writings make it abundantly clear that God is not merely interested in getting his people to "behave"; he is interested in being known by his people and relied upon by them. God contends such a relationship will be like a spring of living water to his people; he wants them to continue to draw from this relationship rather than turning to other relationships that will ultimately destroy them. When God acts in judgment, this passage tells us that at least one reason he does so is because of a damaged relationship.

Consider nearby verses in which God describes his people as a bride who is no longer devoted (Jer. 2:2), or as a donkey in heat (2:23-25), or as a disgraced thief (2:26). Such language gives us insight into how disobedience and idolatry are perceived by God. As an object of moral evaluation, God sees his people like we would see such a bride, donkey, or thief. These examples elicit a sense of betrayal and disappointment, revulsion at unbridled lust, and frustration and indignation. This is in addition to passages like Jer. 7:20 and 14:17, in which God expressly attributes emotions like anger and grief to himself.

In these passages God models perfect dispositions towards the subjects of his contemplation. The prophets show us the perfect being's side of his relationship with us, making it clear that he is not unaffected by our moral states. They allow us to know God as more than just the law giver; we gain perspective on the intensely personal way God is connected to his people. This psychological language serves another closely related function. It models for us how we should respond to our own moral transgressions and the transgressions of others. When we or others cheat the poor, the proper response is intense anger (Jer. 2:34-35). When we fail to seek God, we should feel as though we have neglected or betrayed someone as close to us as a spouse (2:1-3). While some of these responses will be modified due to the unique relational demands God can make of us versus those we can ethically make of each other, many of God's self-descriptions can readily be understood as exemplifying the way a perfect agent evaluates human action on a cognitive and emotional level.

In many ways, this position is in harmony with recent works on biblical epistemology and narrative. Eleonore Stump emphasizes the usefulness of biblical narrative (and narrative in general) in addressing ethical questions (such as the existence of suffering) not easily answered by other realms of thought (2010, 26). She argues that narratives dealing with personal relationships have the capacity to confer what she calls Franciscan (elsewhere dubbed "second-personal") knowledge. This knowledge of persons is not reducible to propositions, and it "enables a person to know the actions, intentions, and emotions of another person in a direct, intuitive way analogous in some respects to perception" (2010, 41-42, 47-48, 81). Read in this light, by second-personal knowledge we share in the explanation God gives to Job, and we know something of what Abraham knew when God gave back his heart's desire, none of which can be stated in propositional form (2010, 222-27, 307-08).

One way of understanding my reading of Nevi'im is as augmenting the claims of both Zagzebski and Stump. In response to Zagzebski, I suggest that Christians should learn from what I loosely call the moral psychology of God as revealed by the prophets. This moral psychology has important differences from the one provided by the Incarnation: The example of Jesus provides all the virtues realized in human form, and it is therefore more easily observed and emulated. Jesus's life also provides important context for how the virtues are enacted through duties and habits. He "emptied himself,

taking the form of a servant” as it says in Phil. 2, and he modeled obedience to his Father and the devotion of a faithful Jew.

In contrast, many of the emotions of God in the prophets would be inappropriate for human emulation, as it would often be prideful to treat a fellow sinner with wrathful anger because of our status of moral equals. The nature of our allegiance to God far outweighs any allegiance another might owe us, making God’s expressed feelings of indignation and betrayal incommensurate with those we might be tempted to feel. This does not mean that we can learn nothing from orations about God’s emotions and motivations. We see that God is willing to go to great lengths so that his people will know him, even allowing terrible suffering, demonstrating the importance of knowing who God is and treating him accordingly. We also see those human actions that move God to act in anger, and learn in many cases what should disgust and inflame our moral sensibilities, such as pagan worship, corrupt leaders, and the abandonment of children and widows. We learn more than *what* we should do; we learn *how* we should behold certain actions and qualities, and the motivating emotions that should ultimately compel us to act.

These passages have something important in common with the narratives mentioned by Stump. Their depiction of God’s “moral psychology” is a source of instructive second-personal knowledge that gives us insight into who God is. The judgments and complaints issued by God in narratives are made more comprehensible by the emotive orations in the prophets. Even the figurative language, such as that depicting God as an abandoned husband or nursing mother, has an undeniably emotionally-charged tone that makes more sense if we think that emotions are an important part of moral judgment and second-personal knowledge is morally instructive: There is something genuinely relevant about the emotions of earthly mothers and husbands that is relevant to God’s cognitive and affective disposition towards his people.

8. Biblical Epistemology, Opacity, and the New Testament

One consequence of my view is that not all readers will be able to grasp the entirety of important prophetic messages. This is because one’s understanding of the moral psychology of God will vary with one’s own moral development. Humans vary in their acquisition of virtues and their relevant motivating emotions. Some will need to practice and observe traits like compassion in others for some time before they have acquired it for themselves. They may be able to comprehend a propositional formulation of compassion, but until they have reflected on it in the lives of others, they will lack important understanding of what compassion is. They may gain yet greater knowledge when they become virtuous themselves.

This consequence is in harmony with a biblical understanding how humans acquire knowledge. According to Dru Johnson, the Hebrew Scriptures take participation and

practice to play a central role in human understanding. He forwards a theory of biblical epistemology in which deference to authorities and enactment are key components of what it is to know (2013; 2016).²⁹ Johnson makes an analogy between the acquisition of language and biblical knowledge acquisition: Ritualized practice, like that conducted when learning a language, opens the gateway to the recognition of truth and eventually what he calls “discernment,” a mastery or skillfulness in a domain of knowledge (2016, 78-89).

Consider how moral education might be understood along this understanding of biblical epistemology. On Johnson’s theory, practice of virtue would precede one’s ability to recognize and understand many aspects of virtue. It follows that those with undeveloped moral sensibilities--who have not “tried” to be loving, compassionate, etc.--will not understand some salient aspects of God’s moral judgments. His statements will be opaque or unclear because such individuals lack the Franciscan knowledge and moral understanding necessary to fully comprehend the terms He is using. If I am right, it is not that God and the prophetic authors are intentionally making moral claims obscure; it is that they are intentionally making claims they know will be inscrutable to some, and only partially available to others.

In this way, the prophetic writings are “opaque” to some audiences. This explains why God might proclaim on the outset of a message that his words will not be understood or even heard by his people. If the point is merely to communicate instructions about the kind of life that leads to the good, it seems strange or even passive aggressive of God to dismiss his audience so immediately. However, if his point is to exemplify the perfect moral life of God in the way I have described it, these passages are not nearly as puzzling. When Jeremiah proclaims that the people cannot see or hear, it is unsurprising that he appears to draw a connection to stubborn and rebellious hearts (5:21-25). No one listens and ears are closed because they do not stand in the proper affective and cognitive state in relation to the word of the Lord; that is, they find it offensive and find no pleasure in it when instead they should love and relish it (6:10). Devotion to idols has so distorted the moral psychology of some that Isaiah compares them to the idols because they cannot see or understand (44:18ff). Such people are “ever hearing, but never understanding...ever seeing, but never perceiving” (Is. 6:9) because understanding increases with the acquisition of virtue and good (rather than vicious) habituated emotions.³⁰ That means that, by their own blindness, the morally corrupt

²⁹ Admittedly, Johnson focuses on connection between knowledge and the enactment of rituals, but it is impossible to ignore the parallels with Zagzebski and Stump, especially since the rituals in the Hebrew Scriptures have wisdom and moral qualities like thankfulness as their aims.

³⁰ This passage is interpreted by Hazony as “psychological thesis” about humans’ lack of understanding obscuring reality (2012, 87). His interpretation bears certain similarities to my own, but he fails to apply it to his reading of the New Testament.

cannot understand much of what God says, and the virtuous will understand more. This obscurity is built into the nature of ethics and the moral education of persons.

Interestingly, it is this passage –Isaiah 6:9– that Jesus quotes in Mark 4, and this passage has caused many to interpret Jesus’s teaching as mystical or obscure. Hazony apparently shares this view, or at least takes it to be the consensus among interpreters of the New Testament (2012, 84-5). If we take Jesus at his word, though, he intended to do something continuous with the Hebrew prophets. I see no reason why Jesus’s many comments about his audience’s inability to comprehend him should not be taken in the same vein as the saying of prophets like Isaiah. Like the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus employed language to make his moral teachings accessible. His moral instruction is filled with parables drawing upon the everyday life of his audience. He also built upon passages of the Hebrew Scriptures that would be familiar to the Jewish people. Why, if it is clear that Jesus meant to obscure his teachings, did Jesus make use of these rhetorical devices? Perhaps, like the prophets of Nevi’im, Jesus knew his words would both disclose moral truths to those prepared to hear them, while remaining challenging or even imperceptible to the hard of heart.

If my understanding of Nevi’im is correct, I have shown that the prophetic writings serve the unique purpose of providing a moral psychology of God. This means that the prophetic writings contain important moral content that should inform Jewish and Christian ethics. Further work would involve interpreting exactly what morally relevant psychological states are depicted in Nevi’im and which of these states might be applicable to a human audience. Of particular interest are those passages describing divine wrath that often frighten Christians, who sometimes find it difficult to reconcile wrathful descriptions of God with the example set by Jesus in the New Testament. I have some ideas about how this reconciliation might be accomplished, but that is a task for another project.

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