

“AND THE NATIONS WILL SAY”:
 APOLOGETIC TESTIMONY FROM AN UNLIKELY
 SOURCE⁶
 Mark Eckel⁷

For years in my classes I have suggested that non-Christians must steal their ethics from Christians. Obvious irony aside, unbelievers cannot function without ethics yet depend on an outside source to answer the question “What *should* I do?” While I would never be so brusque in my delivery of such an idea outside a Christian context, the concept itself bears reflection. Where do questions of justice, decision-making, or simple issues of right-and-wrong find their answer? What makes law, law? How do courts equivocate between two parties? How do we get along with each other when we disagree? If no recourse for ethics exists *within* a human paradigm should not the paradigm change? And if no one at the discussion table has a viable solution for standards of conduct, would not allowing another party at the table who could offer a proposal seem a viable option? Steven D. Smith in his *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse* has not only accepted the nakedness of the so-called secular arguments but indeed suggests where one might find their clothes. Smith writes a series of essays showing the need to “consider deeper commitments and their bases in such things as metaphysics, ethics, and theology.” Smith admits and argues for what he terms “smuggling” as “inevitable . . . even indispensable.”⁸ Whether one steals or smuggles, as Smith contends, the baseline

⁶ This article is adapted from a paper delivered at the International Institute for Christian Studies in Kansas City, MO, July, 2010.

⁷ Mark Eckel (ThM, PhD) is currently Professor of Old Testament and Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Crossroads Bible College, Indianapolis, IN. Mark has taught in Christian high schools and colleges for over a quarter century. Some of Mark’s writing can be found at www.warpandwoof.org.

⁸ Steven D. Smith, *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse* (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 105-06.

conclusion remains—without a transcendent source of true Truth there is no basis for ethics outside of human power.

Smith questions whether one can have “morality without religion.” Anti-Christian moral theorists assume “everything that most needs to be proved, and begs every question we could think of asking”⁹ says Carl Becker in his work *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*. So where should Christ’s Body begin to look for an avenue into our twenty-first century cultural city? The First Testament provides the gate through which we can pass as we map our apologetic approach into the metropolis of our age. Continuity between The First and Second Testaments link The Church as “the Israel of God.”¹⁰ “Every tribe, language, people, and nation,”¹¹ “once far off,” are now “brought near by the blood of Christ.”¹² “The deceiver of the whole world”¹³ has been defeated by Jesus “who is to rule all the nations”: those which receive His grace might be saved.¹⁴ Our Lord’s instruction to preach The Gospel to all nations was constant,¹⁵ through both Testaments.¹⁶ Herein lays both opportunity and responsibility for The Church. Not only must Believers champion Smith’s premise of “smuggling” but we must show just cause why other earth-dwellers should listen to us in the first place.

“All the nations” is a recurrent Scriptural phrase¹⁷ punctuated by 1 Chronicles 16:23-24.

Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!
Tell of His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,

⁹ *Ibid.* 151, 186.

¹⁰ Galatians 6:16. Scripture quotations are from The English Standard Version (ESV).

¹¹ Revelation 5:9; 14:6; cf. 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 15:4; 17:15.

¹² Ephesians 2:13.

¹³ Revelation 12:9, 13:14, 18:23; 19:20; 20:3, 8, 10.

¹⁴ Revelation 12:5; 19:15 and Revelation 21:24.

¹⁵ Matthew 24:14; 28:19; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:47; John 20:21 with Acts 1:8.

¹⁶ cf. Exodus 19:6; 1 Kings 9-10; Psalms 96-100; Ecclesiastes; Nahum, Jonah; Romans 1:5; 4:17-18; Galatians 3:8; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:17.

¹⁷ I.e., Genesis 22:18; Deuteronomy 14:2; 1 Kings 4:31; Psalm 67:4; 72:11; Isaiah 66:18, 20; Jeremiah 3:17; etc.

His marvelous works among all the peoples.

Both kinship and king-ship—social and political groups—are included as “peoples.”¹⁸ “That the world may know that I am Yahweh” is a cry that reverberates from once supreme Egyptian corridors of power through Goliath’s defeat; from David’s covenantal commitment to Solomon’s temple tribute; from Namaan’s confession to Hezekiah’s petition; from Jesus’ incarnation of Heaven’s love for the world to His Church’s embodiment of love for the world.¹⁹ Inclusive by being exclusive, Yahweh demands that all nations, all people everywhere serve Him alone.²⁰ Abraham will have nations come from him and be blessed because of Him.²¹ Paul referred to international inclusion as The Gospel preached “beforehand.”²²

Deuteronomy 4:5-8—An Expository Interpretation

As God’s people, Deuteronomy contends, Israel was to be a nation unto Himself saved by Yahweh, peculiar, special, holy, above all people, and Yahweh’s inheritance.²³ “Blessed above all people,” Israel existed to reveal the greatness of God’s Name.²⁴ Deuteronomy 28:10 declares, “All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of Yahweh and will be afraid of you.” So it was important that Israel not make God’s name “vain” or empty as in Deuteronomy 5:11. The

¹⁸ “Goy” has the political sense whereas “ham” is the ethnic concern. A.J. Kostenberger, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Reprint, InterVarsity Press, 2006), p. 676.

¹⁹ Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:6, 18; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 14:4, 18; 16:12; Joshua 4:23-24; 1 Samuel 17:46; 2 Samuel 7:22-26; 1 Kings 8:41-43, 60-61; 2 Kings 5:15; 19:15-19; John 14:31; 17:23.

²⁰ Psalm 66:1-7; 67:1-7; 72:11.

²¹ Genesis 17:4, 5, 6, 16 and Genesis 18:18; 22:18.

²² Galatians 3:8.

²³ God’s people (Deuteronomy 3:28), a people unto Himself (29:13) saved by Yahweh (33:29), peculiar (14:2; 26:18), special, holy, above all people (7:6), and Yahweh’s inheritance (9:29).

²⁴ Deuteronomy 7:14; 2 Samuel 7:23; 1 Kings 8:43, 60; 1 Chronicles 22:5; 2 Chronicles 6:33; Isaiah 12:4.

nomenclature “Yahweh” was the basis for an oath, having a place in the encampment.²⁵ Israel was God’s reputation since they “wore” His name.²⁶ But since the Hebrews rebelled against Yahweh, “I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived.”²⁷

Fearing “this glorious and awesome Name” was connected to keeping God’s law.²⁸ The intention was that Israel’s character and conduct would cause the nations to say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”²⁹ How God’s people lived would be the apologetics *coup* of the day “because in the ancient world nations were accustomed to think, and prove, that they had superior gods and divinely appointed institutions.”³⁰ *The Code of Hammurabi*, for instance, claimed only legal decisions. As John Walton points out “Today we think of justice as that which conforms to the law. For them justice was that which conformed to traditions.”³¹ But Deuteronomy 4:6 and other texts³² counter the accepted political views of the day: Yahweh alone is righteous, establishing fairness, by creating just laws, wrapped in wisdom. Yahweh’s Law is holy: distinctive, peerless, in a class by itself.

God’s laws lived out before the nations set an example for the nations. Keeping God’s commandments meant Yahweh would set Israel “in fame and in honor high above all nations that He has made.”³³ Threaded back to promises made

²⁵ “Oaths” in Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; “encampment” 12:3, 5, 11.

²⁶ Numbers 6:27. “We are called by your name” Jeremiah 14:9 (cf. 2 Chron 7:14).

²⁷ Ezekiel 20:9, 14, 22. Yahweh cares about His reputation. Notice the multiple times “for His name’s sake” is emphasized in Scripture: 1 Sam 12:22; 1 Kings 8:41; 2 Chronicles 6:32; Pss. 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 106:8; 109:21; 143:11; Isaiah 48:9; 66:5; Jeremiah 14:7; 14:21; Ezekiel 20:44; 36:22.

²⁸ Deuteronomy 28:58.

²⁹ Deuteronomy 4:6.

³⁰ J. C. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, In *Apollos Old Testament Commentary*, eds. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Baker, 2002), p. 104-05.

³¹ John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Reprint, Baker, 2009), p. 291.

³² Deuteronomy 4:32-34; 29:20, 24; 1 Kings 9:7-9; 10:1-9.

to Abram in Genesis 12:3, “all the peoples of the earth will be blessed” by God’s people. Yahweh’s inclusive international interest can be traced back through the Genesis 10 table of nations, the Genesis 5 genealogies, the representation of an either-or, Cain-Abel choice in Genesis 4, the universal headship of “Adam’s race,” and ultimately to His immanent concerns for creation as “the Spirit of God was hovering” in Genesis 1:2. Yahweh’s Law through His people should have been “a city set upon a hill which cannot be hidden.” Believers’ responsibility to let their “light shine before others” immediately precedes Jesus’ linkage to the First Testament: after the Beatitudes, before His fulfillment of the Law. [While this is not the place to pursue instruction on the continuity between The Testaments, it should be said responsibilities for God’s chosen people have never changed. Salvation is by faith. Faith is shown by works. Works are a testimony to those “outside.”³⁴]

So, Deuteronomy 4:6-8 sets a standard for international acclaim in response to a people group whose lives are dedicated to Torah. C. J. H. Wright reaches back to Exodus 19:1-6 to proclaim that Israel was to be

A priesthood . . . teacher, model and mediator for the nations. Keeping the law, then, was not an end in itself for Israel, but related to their very reason for existence—God’s concern for the nations.³⁵

So Moses links Israel’s obedience to The Law with witness for The Law. The claim in Deuteronomy 4:6 is that “the nations will say.” There is an attraction to *torah’s* ordered uprightness which cannot be denied.³⁶ People talk about our lives when we walk The Laws. God’s rules are pervasive involving all of

³³ Deuteronomy 26:19, ESV.

³⁴ The 21st century application later in this paper will be developed through 1st century declarations in Matthew 5:16, Colossians 4:2-6, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 2:11-12, 3:1-2, 16 and Titus 2:1-10.

³⁵ Christopher J. H. Wright, “The Ethical Authority of the Old Testament,” *Tyndale Bulletin*, 43:2 (1992), p. 227.

³⁶ See also Deuteronomy 26:19 where Israel is to bring Yahweh “praise, glory, and fame” (Jer 13:11; 33:9). Titus 2:10 picks up the theme: believers are to “adorn the doctrine of our Savior” by how they live.

Hebrew life. Again and again words such as “statutes,” “rules,” “laws,” and “commands” are repeated, preceded by “all.” Perhaps the best 21st century connection to such inclusiveness is the word “lifestyle.”

Israel’s way of life would promote the view that she was a “great nation.” The phrase is used three times in the passage. It seems that other nations include the existence, importance, and comparative success of Israel as a *goy* amongst the *goyim*.³⁷ The Hebrew adverb *raq* sets the stage for exclusivity and distinctiveness: “surely this great nation. . . .” The superiority of Israel over all other cultures rests on the phrase “a wise and understanding people.” These two adjectives were prized elements in the socio-political life of First Testament culture. As a class, wise men were considered advisors and consultants to governments.³⁸ Ancient Near Eastern kings relied on their collection of laws to convince the gods they were wise and just rulers.³⁹ The application of knowledge (“wisdom”) and ability to judge (“understanding”) were prized possessions. Deuteronomy begins and ends with dependency upon respected, spirit-filled leadership.⁴⁰ So Israel was not dependent upon despotic decrees or a king’s whim. The Law was for all people, practiced by the populace, so pervasive that judges from family heads were more important than a sovereign’s headship.⁴¹ Genesis 18:19 famously predicts

³⁷ Comparison between “The One” and “the others” is constant in First Testament concerns. Measuring Yahweh against all other deities tops the list.

³⁸ Earl S. Kaland, “Deuteronomy,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 3 (Zondervan, 1979), p. 44.

³⁹ Walton, *et al*, *IVP Old Testament Background Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 2001), p. 175.

⁴⁰ “Respected,” 1:13, 15; “spirit-filled” 34:9.

⁴¹ Kingship is limited in Israel. He is simply “one of the brothers.” He has no jurisdiction over land—Yahweh alone retains that right (Deut 16:18). He cannot go to war, create a harem, or amass wealth. The people request his services (17:14-15; 28:36). The king’s role is subservient to every other position: judges, priests, and prophets are chosen by God. Even the king’s words are less important than that of the prophet: the king must copy words already in existence, the prophet speaks God’s words into human existence (compare Deut 17:18-20 with 18:15-22).

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation,
and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him . .
. for I have chosen him, that he may command his
children and his household after him to keep the way of
the LORD by doing righteousness and justice.

Moses picks up the “great nation” mantle given by the nations to ask two rhetorical questions. The second establishes the basis for the first. Yahweh’s righteousness is consistently linked with acts of justice throughout The First Testament. So complete is the connection between the two words “righteousness and justice” that they often appear as a couplet.⁴² Those who seek justice must first stand on the righteousness of God. The nearness of “a god” was a proclamation of superiority. The act of establishing laws reveals Yahweh as distinguished from other gods. In ancient Near Eastern belief, human laws were simply resident within the structure of the universe. That Yahweh declared Himself to be the source of The Law, coming from His personal character, He was considered “near” His people in that sense.⁴³

Yahweh’s holy character is the essence of The Law’s distinction. Whereas, for the ancient Near Eastern king, the law existed for self-glorification, *torah* displayed Yahweh’s nature. Whereas, human sovereigns revealed despotic justice, Yahweh’s Law required obedience to His covenantal grace. Whereas, ancient Near Eastern concerns had to do with order in society, Yahweh was concerned with building a community.⁴⁴ As Psalm 147:19-20 makes abundantly clear

He declares His Word to Jacob, His statutes and rules to
Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they
do not know His rules.

Summarizing the distinction between cultures becomes clear: the Hebrews were to worship their God based on gratitude, other nations worshipped man-made gods for fear.

⁴² For example, Genesis 18:19; Psalm 89:14; 97:2.

⁴³ Walton, *OTBC*, p. 175.

⁴⁴ Walton, *Ancient*, p. 293.

Military and economic exploits, created by Yahweh's Law-Wisdom, would contribute to international fear of Israel. Nation states would "hear the report of you and shall tremble" (Deuteronomy 2:25). But make no mistake: it would be Yahweh's presence and power that defeated mighty nations.⁴⁵ Deuteronomy 9:4-5 makes it doubly clear that triumph is not based on human righteousness. Because of Yahweh's blessing, banking practices (lending and borrowing) would be controlled by Israel, making His people "the head, not the tail."⁴⁶

Israel's headship of the nations reached its apex of apologetic achievement in 1 Kings 9 and 10. If ever Deuteronomy 4:6-8 had its near fulfillment on earth, it was in the kingship of Solomon. Other nation's testimony recorded by Moses would be repeated by an African queen.

And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your *wisdom* . . . Your *wisdom* and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. . . .Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your *wisdom*! . . . Because the LORD loved Israel forever, He has made you king, that you may execute *justice and righteousness*. . . . And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his *wisdom*, which God had put into his mind."⁴⁷

So eschatologically important was Solomon's witness to the nations that Jesus Himself repeats the 1 Kings 10 episode, "The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."⁴⁸ If the wisdom of Israel could make Israel a great nation, the opposite was also possible. Israel could "become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples."⁴⁹ Israel would be scattered in other lands and nations. There would be no respite, no resting place for "the

⁴⁵ Deuteronomy 4:34, 38; 7:22; 8:20; 11:23; 12:29; 19:1; 31:3.

⁴⁶ Deuteronomy 15:6; 28:12 and 28:13.

⁴⁷ 1 Kings 10:6-9, 24.

⁴⁸ Matthew 12:42.

⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 28:37

sole of your foot.” Yahweh would bring a nation against His people for discipline which would then take them to a place they had not known.⁵⁰ The nations would take note as Deuteronomy 29:24-28 states:

All the nations will say, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?” Then people will say, “It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them. Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.”

What would cause Yahweh’s wrath? His peoples’ desire to be “like all the other nations.”⁵¹ The famed comment came in conversation between The Almighty and Samuel. One of the results of kingship patterned after pagan thinking would be the usurpation of power by the powerful. If Israel failed to maintain the distinctiveness of Yahweh or Yahweh’s Law in comparison with other cultures, then syncretism would replace Yahwehism. The Naboth episode in 1 Kings 21 stands as an insult to Yahweh, His Law, and the common man whom The Law was to protect. Ahab the king wants to follow the general cultural course of his day: totalitarian despotism over people and property. Paul Hanson reminds us:

Ahab’s attitude toward his subject’s property was consistent with that of the Canaanites, as indicated by the Ugaritic texts of ancient Ras Shamra and by Egyptian attitudes toward real estate, including the Pharaoh’s unlimited claims over property. But Naboth responds from a completely different perspective: “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my

⁵⁰ Deuteronomy 30:1, 3; and 28:64; and 28:65; 28:49-51 and 28:33, 36.

⁵¹ 1 Samuel 8:10-18.

fathers.” He thereby appeals to the early Yahwistic institution of the *nachala* . . . as a means in early Israel of protecting the rights of each family against the self-aggrandizement of the powerful.⁵²

While the intention was that the nations would look at Israel as “a wise and understanding people” for keeping God’s statutes, the standard for the nations would always be the righteousness of Yahweh.⁵³ God considered all people from every nation as important, calling them to repentance and rejoicing.⁵⁴ Centerpiece to Yahweh’s concern for *goyim* was Israel’s just treatment of the resident alien. True empathy for displaced peoples was impressed on the Hebrews because they literally understood what it felt like to be enslaved by foreigners.⁵⁵ While The Law made outsiders a special focus of protection, they were also to obey Yahweh’s commands.⁵⁶ Contrary to every other culture in the ancient world, foreign servants were to be included in another cultural anomaly—Sabbath rest.⁵⁷ Ultimately, Israel would have the obedience of the nations, bringing justice to the nations, climbing Mt. Zion with the nations, worshipping alongside the nations.⁵⁸

⁵² Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible*, (Reprint, Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 143-44.

⁵³ Deuteronomy 4:6. The First Testament, though written to the Hebrews, was germane to and, at times, composed directly for Gentile nations. Genesis 3 shows the whole human condition; Genesis 6-9 the sin of whole earth brought judgment; Genesis 11 the sin of unified humanity was judged; Genesis 12:1-3 the whole earth was blessed through the Hebrews; Genesis 13:13 the 5 cities “sinned greatly against The LORD”; Genesis 18:20 the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah sins “were grievous”; Genesis 18:25 “Will not the judge of all the earth do right?”; Genesis 19:13 “the outcry was so great, I sent to destroy”; Isaiah 13-23; Jeremiah 45-51; Ezekiel 25-32; Daniel 2 and 7; Amos 1-2; Obadiah; Jonah; Nahum.

⁵⁴ Psalms 96-100.

⁵⁵ Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:18-19; 24:14, 17-18

⁵⁶ Leviticus 24:22; 25:35; Deuteronomy 14:29; 24:19; 26:11-15

⁵⁷ Exodus 20:8-11.

⁵⁸ Obedience Genesis 49:10; justice Isaiah 42:1; 49:6; Zion Isaiah 2:2-4; worship Isaiah 66:18-20.

God called people to Himself through the witness of creation, conscience, human law, miracles and the attraction of First Testament believers.⁵⁹ Even God's judgments were designed specifically to demonstrate to other nations that "there was no one like Yahweh in all the earth."⁶⁰ And His people were to bear the light of "the gospel" to others.⁶¹ There is hope for all nations, even in the afterlife.⁶² The ethical codes of the First Testament are universal in scope, based on the righteousness of the "creator of the ends of the earth." All earthly nations were to know the statutes of Yahweh by the priestly nature of His people. Yahweh's covenant loyalty would create "a nation, great, mighty, and populous." Yahweh's "treasured possession" would be set "in praise and in fame and in honor high above all the nations that He has made."⁶³

Yahweh's eternal glory, through the future redemption, of His people is praised through international testimony captured by Isaiah and Ezekiel:

Strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you . . . And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD . . . and I will do it.⁶⁴

All the nations will be united by the blood of Christ, uttering the words of Isaiah 2:2-3, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." And Yahweh concludes in Isaiah 66:18-20, "The time is coming to

⁵⁹ Psalm 19; conscience (Rom 2:14-15), human law (Deut 4:5-8; 1 Tim 1:8-11), miracles (2 Kings 5) and the attraction of First Testament believers (Ruth 1:16, 17; 1 Kings 10:1-9).

⁶⁰ Exodus 9:13-21; cf. Daniel 4:28-37.

⁶¹ E. g., Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 4:5-8; 1 Kings 10:1-9, 24; Ecclesiastes; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6.

⁶² Isaiah 19; Zechariah 14:16-19; Malachi 1:5.

⁶³ Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:5, 18, 19.

⁶⁴ Isaiah 25: 3 and Ezekiel 36:35-36. See also Zechariah 8:20-23 and Micah 4:2.

gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory . . . and they shall declare my glory . . . and they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 4:5-8—A Practical Application

How, then, do Christian academicians lead intellectual pursuits so that “all the universities will say”? Establishing the biblical record of national responses to Israel in the First Testament sets parameters for application in the academy, now and in the future. Unapologetic apologetics, extolling the greatness of Yahweh’s name, is possible through rigorous, robust, and redemptive Christian scholarship. Based on the Deuteronomic statement of Israel’s greatness based on Yahweh’s Law, and many companion passages, I suggest five traits for a conservative, Evangelical Christian reputation in the university.

1. “Surely, this great nation”: Superior by Comparison

As the Hebrew adverb suggests,⁶⁵ life lived based on Heavenly wisdom should stand out. When compared with all the other nations, “this great nation” was found to be superior because of Yahweh’s Law-Wisdom. By way of scholarly application, a spate of articles and books has suggested recently that university research has become lax, superficial, and what’s worse, unimportant. *Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World* by Eugenie Samuel Reich⁶⁶ shows, among other things, how some peer-review social science research failed over a four year time frame. Sloppiness together with misuse of statistics caused several studies in social psychology to be questioned.⁶⁷ The title of Mark Bauerlein’s

⁶⁵ See above. The ESV translates the word “surely.”

⁶⁶ Eugenie Samuel Reich, *Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

⁶⁷ Carl Bialik, “Are You W.S.J.? Is That Why You’re Reading This?” *Wall Street Journal* 15 May 2010.

article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* says it all: we must stop the avalanche of low-quality research.⁶⁸

In contradistinction, pursuit of scholarship by Christians in the academe cannot afford and should not stand for such appalling responses to the pursuit of knowledge. Christian social science work should demonstrate its superiority as does the work of Christian Smith from the University of Virginia in *Soul Searching*. Joseph Pearce's work in new critical editions of classic works of fiction through Ignatius Press renews the place of authorial intent in literature. Our empirical data via the application of human study can reveal little more than "the tip of the iceberg" of God's works.⁶⁹ Yet, it is our "glory" to search out what God has concealed.⁷⁰

2. "Statutes and rules so righteous as all this law": Uniqueness of Biblical Thinking

The Hebraic-Christian system of thought should be distinctive from all others. Clouser's *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*⁷¹ exposed the fallacy that unbiased research is possible. Counter-cultural assumptions obviously do exist in a Christian framework. As Polkinghorne contests, "All participants seek to speak humbly but definitely from the integrity of their own positions."⁷² Arguing for the indispensable role of theological encounter in the university, Polkinghorne—who holds terminal degrees in both theology and the sciences—continues, "In the case of Christianity . . . Theology can no more be forbidden this use of its own rational resources than science can be forbidden a similar freedom."⁷³

⁶⁸ Mark Bauerlein, *et al.*, "We Must Stop the Avalanche of Low-Quality Research," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 13 June 2010.

<http://chronicle.com/article/We-Must-Stop-the-Avalanche-of/65890/>

⁶⁹ Job 26:14; "these are but the outer fringe of God's works; cf. 28:3, 11.

⁷⁰ Proverbs 25:2.

⁷¹ Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).

⁷² John C. Polkinghorne, "Christian Interdisciplinarity," In *Christianity and the Soul of the University* (Baker, 2006), p. 61

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

While biblical thinking is distinctive, there should be no distinction from the ordered processes of defining theories, setting hypotheses, exploration, interpretation, statistical analysis, peer-review, or any other universally accepted parameter for academic research. Francis Collins, leader of the human genome project, is a sterling example of unique utility in discovering secrets in God's world. As he told *National Geographic*, "The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome . . . He can be worshiped in the cathedral or in the laboratory."⁷⁴ Yahweh's Law establishes a standard by which all other standards can be measured.

Yet, David Solomon, director of Notre Dame's Center for Ethics and Culture, asks an important, illustrative question, "Who remembers that the University of Chicago was ever a Christian university?"⁷⁵ If the current infatuation with perspectivalism, for instance, continues to permeate the university one wonders if "graduates of religious colleges will add anything distinctive"⁷⁶ to life. However, the unique Christian view of academic inquiry can demonstrate rigorous, robust scholarship.

3. "Keep them and do them for this is your wisdom": Attraction of Discernment

Susan M. Felch believes in the "hermeneutics of delight" as an educational marker.⁷⁷ Beauty as an aesthetic demonstration of mathematics is a mysterious marker in the definition of mathematical formula.⁷⁸ One of Susan Handelman's students suggested that truth in literature "stops the heart."⁷⁹ These

⁷⁴ *National Geographic* February, 2007.

⁷⁵ Naomi Schaefer Riley, *God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation are Changing America* (Reprint, Ivan R. Dee, 2006), p. 54.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁷⁷ Susan M. Felch, "Doubt and the Hermeneutics of Delight," *Christianity and the Soul of the University* (Baker, 2006), p. 103-18.

⁷⁸ Polkinghorne, 55-56

⁷⁹ Susan Handelman, "Stopping the Heart" in *Religion, Scholarship, & Higher Education: Perspectives, Models, and Future Prospects*, ed. Andrea Sterk. (University of Notre Dame, 2002), p. 202-29.

affective attractions are accessible apologetic markers which peak the interest of outsiders. Jesus' deference to the wisdom of serpents and the shrewdness of unbelievers tickles the need for academic subtlety.

For my part, I believe E. B. White's dictum, "Humor plays close to the white hot fire of truth." So, for years, I have adorned the doors and walls outside my office or classroom with cartoons using them in teaching for their philosophical truths. I connect narrative to doctrine by collecting stories which draw my students by true Truth. Just as the incarnation "fleshed out" God to us, so we place the flesh of story on the bone of truth. Poetry and proverb I believe identify invasive instruction, unattainable in other forms. Film clips and internet connections are ever before my classes. The Word will interpret the picture attracting the inquiry of discerning academicians.

4. "In the sight of the peoples": Cultural Inclusion

Aurelie A. Hagstrom calls it "Christian Hospitality in the Intellectual Community."⁸⁰ The Consortium of Christian Study Centers headed by Drew Trotter, connects biblical thought with university settings.⁸¹ The International Institute for Christian Studies endeavors to place Christ followers on pagan campuses so that Jesus' name may be heard through how the believing professor practices his academic craft.⁸² Alistar McGrath is part of a growing number of scholars who have advanced degrees in two separate fields, building bridges between them. One of my own students, Dr. John Milliken, obtained his Ph.D. in practical philosophy turning then to study theology. The only way for believers in Jesus as Lord to attract the attention of the academe is to be "in the academe but not of it." Perhaps Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, says it best:

⁸⁰ Aurelie A. Hagstrom, "Christian Hospitality in the Intellectual Classroom" in *Christianity and the Soul of the University* (Baker, 2006), p. 119-32.

⁸¹ www.studycentersonline.org

⁸² www.iics.com

Through the law he offers Israel the opportunity to build a social and political order that breaks new ground. Through the law he makes Israel wise and shows her the way a man should live, so as to live aright. . . . This joy in the law astounds us. We have become used to regarding it as a burden that oppresses man. At its best periods, Israel saw in the law in fact something that set them free for the truth, free from the burden of uncertainty, the gracious gift of the way.⁸³

5. *"When they hear all these statutes will say": Wordless Witness*

Verizon uses the promotional phrase, "Raise your voice without having to say a thing." My dentist, a Seventh Day Adventist, gives two weeks out of his year to apply his skills in poor countries via Christian Medical Mission. The John Jay Institute, founded by and functioning as a Christian enterprise, prepares cultural apologists in law, public policy, and political theory. H2O Africa was started by believers who initiated clean water applications for the poorest of the poor. Such examples point to Scripture's many "so that" passages. Often the apologetic method of Christ and His followers was to preach without speaking. That-they-be-won-without-a-word" metaphors communicate lifestyle witness: "A city set upon a hill," "speech seasoned with salt," "walking properly," and "adorning."⁸⁴ Christian scholars should be missionaries or, as Haddon Robinson put it, "evangelistic scholars."⁸⁵ We are strategically placed in a position of influence to influence others' vocational commitments. Hear Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra:

Mission is about *being*. It is about being a distinctive kind of people, a countercultural, multinational community among the nations. It is modeling before a skeptical

⁸³ http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features/ratzinger_godisnearusjuly04.asp

⁸⁴ 1 Peter 3:1, Matthew 5:16; Colossian 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; Titus 2:10. See many others.

⁸⁵ Haddon W. Robinson, "The Theologian and the Evangelist." *JETS* 28:1 (March, 1985), p. 3-8.

world what the living God of the Bible really is like. Whether we remain all our lives in the towns of our birth or travel to the slums of Calcutta or the wastelands of Madison Avenue, we are all called to mission. For mission is to put our lives on the cutting edge where God is at work.⁸⁶

Conclusion

It is fitting that Deuteronomy 4:6-8 is followed immediately by the second usage of the Hebrew adverb *raq* in this pericope. Verse nine reads, "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart." The verbal structure demands introspective reflection, personal accountability, to stay within the boundaries of Yahweh's Law. The enticements particular to our station in life as scholars must caution us always. Idols, the product of other worldviews, are monuments of human affection for the created and rejection of The Creator. Any representation, theory, or model which sets itself up in the place of God is objectively compared and found wanting.⁸⁷ The *hubris* of academic prowess or success is the potential downfall for any of us who believe that our acumen or achievement is anything other than the beneficence of Providence.

Yet, we have been given Heavenly responsibility for earthly scholarship. We agree with Jeremiah 31:35-37 that it is Yahweh who created a "fixed order" so that "the foundations of the earth can be explored." Mathematicians and scientists rely upon God's stable universe. Order establishes logic, logic constitutes pattern, pattern produces models, models make possible probability, probability allows for prediction, prediction predicates hypothesis, and hypothesis identifies proof. A proof demonstrates "true Truth." We believe with Psalm 64:9 that "All mankind ponders what God has done." Discoveries are verifiable by researchers around the world.

⁸⁶ Howard Peskett & Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), p. 123.

⁸⁷ Romans 1:22, 23, 25; Jeremiah 10:11-13; 51:16-18.

What is true in one place is true in another. All people, consciously or unconsciously, take note of God's interaction in the world.⁸⁸

So it is no surprise that Steven Smith in *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse* knows that secularists depend upon “smuggling” theological concepts into their discussions. My students have heard my similar concern for years: unbelievers cannot live without stealing Christian ethics. It is fitting that another voice be added to this refrain begun in Deuteronomy 4:5-8. James Orr, a 19th century Christian integrator, explains

No duty is more imperative on the Christian teacher than that of showing that instead of Christianity being simply one theory among the rest, it is really the higher truth which is the synthesis and completion of all the others; that view which, rejecting the error, takes up the vitalising elements in all other systems and religions, and unites them into a living organism, with Christ as head.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ See also Psalm 65: esp. v. 8; 66: esp. vv. 3-4; 67: esp. v 7; 107; etc.

⁸⁹ James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Reprint, Morrison and Gibb, 1897), p. 11-12.