

# TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY: A DOXOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL MODEL FOR BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

*This article critically engages the redemptive-historical model favored by a majority of contemporary evangelicals as the center for biblical theology. The article demonstrates inadequacies of this model and proposes an alternative, the doxological-historical model, which focuses on God's glory as progressing throughout canonical history. This model is the most satisfactory for centering biblical theology because it recognizes a comprehensive proposition throughout the Scriptures, underscoring God's glory as the end goal and the critical link between creation and redemption.*

## INTRODUCTION

SINCE THE DAWN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, scholars have proposed various models that offer a center for biblical theology. These models have advanced themes such as covenant, promise, and kingdom, attempting to provide a cohesive center that unites all of Scripture under a unifying purpose for history.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars advocating for “covenant” as a center for biblical theology include Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker, vol. 1, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961); Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006); and Thomas E. McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019). Arguing for a “promise” and “promise-fulfillment” model is Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) and *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008). Those advancing a “kingdom” theme for Scripture’s overarching metanarrative (with various nuances) include George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Alva J. McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2001); and Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God* (Silverton, OR: Lampion Press, 2017). Finally, a hybrid approach that views Scripture’s kingdom

Among conservative evangelicals, the history of redemption remains one of the most prevalent themes. This theme is offered as a center or interpretative paradigm through which to view all of Scripture, and it's known by various names including the history of redemption model, the redemptive-historical model, or the salvation-history model. While each of these attempts has admirably contributed to the knowledge of Scripture, they have also failed to identify an integral link between creation and redemption that carries the weight of the entire biblical canon.

This article will demonstrate inadequacies of the redemptive-historical model as a center for biblical theology and will argue for a doxological-historical model, one that emphasizes the theme of God's glory throughout canonical history, as the most capable heuristic framework. Such a theme will be shown as broad enough to subsume the landscape of Scripture, theology, and ethics yet specific enough to connect creation and redemption. The main thesis will drive the discussion: God is glorious, so he created. He created so he could redeem. He redeemed so he could re-create. He re-created so he is glorified in all creation. Viewing Scripture as primarily doxological rather than redemptive safeguards God's place as the sovereign who receives glory, providing a vital link connecting creation to redemption to re-creation.

#### THE REDEPTIVE-HISTORICAL MODEL

Viewing the history of redemption as the overarching framework of Scripture remains the most common approach to biblical theology in modern evangelicalism.<sup>2</sup> Goldsworthy defines the method as "the recognition that the books of the Bible, while not being uniformly historical in form, all relate to an overarching history in which God acts to bring salvation to his people."<sup>3</sup> Underscoring its prominence in evangelicalism, Yarbrough, who readily admits the term "salva-

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theme as primarily advanced through its covenant theme while ultimately subsumed by a redemptive-historical paradigm is Stephen J. Wellum and Peter J. Gentry, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Albert Wolters states the Christian metanarrative is "to refer to the overall story told by the Christian Scriptures . . . which makes possible the 'redemptive-historical' level of biblical interpretation." "Metanarrative," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 506–7.

<sup>3</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, "Relationship of Old Testament and New Testament," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 86.

tion-history” and its cognates do not appear in Scripture, surveyed over a dozen theologians who have advanced the idea that salvation-history is the main Christian paradigm through which to view the Bible.<sup>4</sup> Crossway’s *ESV Expository Commentary* has framed their series as “robustly biblical-theological,” by which they mean “reading the Bible as diverse yet bearing an overarching unity, *narrating a single storyline of redemption culminating in Christ*.”<sup>5</sup>

Modern evangelical scholarship virtually assumes this approach to the Bible, viewing humanity’s redemption as the ultimate paradigm through which to understand all other biblical themes. In fact, in Klink and Lockett’s helpful survey of approaches to biblical theology, their analysis of a model labeled “history of redemption” effectively presupposes that any approach to Scripture as a progressive disclosure upon historical lines *is* the historical-redemptive approach.<sup>6</sup> If one understands the Bible as a diachronic succession of God’s special revelation deposited throughout time—or in more familiar terms, progressive revelation—one is by default a member of the redemptive-historical school. No other themes progressing throughout canonical history rival this approach.

In a similar vein, Yarbrough elevates the importance of the redemptive-historical approach to mountainous heights by claiming that if a “theologian doubts that the redemptive events recounted in Scripture happened, or that they bear the soteriological weight that biblical writers place on them, then the theologian will gravitate to some other emphasis or thematic center.”<sup>7</sup> This implies that only by approaching Scripture through a presupposed redemptive-historical lens one may agree that the redemptive events in the Bible are historically factual. Any other emphasis or center

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<sup>4</sup> Robert W. Yarbrough, “Salvation History,” in *God’s Glory Revealed in Christ: Essays on Biblical Theology in Honor of Thomas R. Schreiner*, ed. Denny Burk, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Brian Vickers (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Academic, 2019), 45–57.

<sup>5</sup> Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, eds., “Preface,” in *ESV Expository Commentary*, 12 vols. planned (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). Emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> See Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 59–89. For their exemplar representative of the history of redemption approach, Klink and Lockett chose D. A. Carson. Tellingly, they spend the bulk of their treatment addressing Carson’s distinctions between biblical and systematic theologies, with only a few passing remarks related to the actual history of redemption approach to Scripture. In doing so, they appear to assume that the history of redemption approach subsumes every subject related to Carson without explicit demonstration.

<sup>7</sup> Yarbrough, “Salvation History,” 56.

outside of the theme of salvation apparently dismisses Scripture's testimony of redemption.

#### INSUFFICIENCIES WITH THE REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL MODEL

No doubt soteriology plays a major role in the Bible. Scholars contending for such an emphasis are to be commended for not reducing or fragmenting Scripture's storyline into debates on historical-critical matters, calling into question not only dates and authors of canonical books but any theology of salvation in God through Christ. For this reason J. C. K. von Hofmann coined the term "salvation-history" (*Heilsgeschichte*) as a response to the reconstructionist scholars of Germany who essentially denied anything supernatural vis-à-vis Scripture.<sup>8</sup> Von Hoffman's emphasis on God's redeeming activity in the world introduced a refreshing corrective in the increasingly liberal milieu that characterized his day.

Positives of the redemptive-historical model notwithstanding, it is now worth asking, Does such a focus on humanity's salvation offer an understanding robust enough to encapsulate all of Scripture? Furthermore, does such an approach to Scripture, even if unintentional, elevate humans over God? In light of these questions this article argues that the theme of humanity's salvation—even though a prominent biblical theme—is nevertheless inadequate as the Bible's center or overarching theme. In so doing, this article also points out that viewing Scripture as a primary way to trace salvation-history cannot build a bridge that links creation to redemption to re-creation. The only theme able to subsume the entirety of Scripture and, more specifically, a theme that can connect the doctrines of creation and redemption is God's glory.

Before offering critiques, caveats must be stated. Scholars opting for redemptive-historical readings do not disparage emphasizing God's glory in Scripture. No one views the biblical themes of redemption and glory as competing or opposing ideas. Moreover, not all who view Scripture as a redemptive narrative restrict the benefits of salvation solely to humanity. Some advocates widen it to cosmic redemption as well, "as far as the curse is found."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, previous models that have attempted to underscore doxology inevitably fall short due to their overt focus on soteriology.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A. Josef Greig, "A Critical Note on the Origin of the Term *Heilsgeschichte*," *Expository Times* 87.4 (1976): 118–19.

<sup>9</sup> Glenn Kreider, email to the author, January 22, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Notable recent examples that emphasize God's glory (to a point) include James

These redemptive-historical advocates seem to find difficulty in remaining consistent with the notion that Scripture mainly tells the history of salvation. For example, Kimble and Spellman suggest that the Bible’s “grand storyline” is the “narration and interpretation of redemptive history.”<sup>11</sup> Yet later they declare that the Bible has one major plot: “The display of God’s glory in creation amongst a people who will reflect that glory and dwell with him forever.”<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Gladd discloses the purpose for his biblical theology: to “skim the redemptive-historical cream off the top.”<sup>13</sup> However, he also contends, “God’s glory is at the center of the created order.”<sup>14</sup> While both glory and redemption are related, even complimentary, concepts, they are distinct categories in Scripture. In simple terms one is bigger than the other. The glory of God, as progressing throughout the canon and manifested throughout history, subsumes humanity’s history of redemption. The Bible, therefore, conveys a history of God revealing himself rather than a history of humanity.

This distinction between redemption and glory should not be surprising. The same applies to distinct, yet related, biblical entities such as Israel and the church, and the church and the kingdom of God. Even the biblical covenants, while united in the promises of God, nevertheless remain distinct, retaining their unique purposes and economies. Indeed, distinctions within unity are customary of divine revelation breathed out by the God whose ontology is eternally distinct within unity. Consequently, a balanced biblical theology will do well not to emphasize one distinction to the exclusion or confusion of another.

Such is the unintended result of well-meaning scholars who fail to maintain consistency when offering a center, metanarrative, or interpretative approach that promotes salvation-history as the Bible’s main focus. While salvation is certainly a major theme in Scripture, it is not the primary theme—God’s glory manifested

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M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory through Salvation in Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); and J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *God’s Relational Presence: The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy M. Kimble and Ched Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology: Exploring the Shape, Storyline, and Themes of Scripture*, Invitation to Theological Studies (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2020), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Kimble and Spellman, 251.

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin L. Gladd, *From Adam and Israel to the Church: A Biblical Theology of the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 2.

<sup>14</sup> Gladd, 10.

throughout the progress of canonical history is. When the two frameworks are compared, it becomes clear that the redemptive-historical model cannot bear the weight of the entire biblical canon. It is insufficient vis-à-vis the canon and theology, and it falls short of offering a specific link between creation and redemption.

#### CANONICAL SHORTCOMINGS

The redemptive-historical model tends to be individualistic and restrictive. While individual salvation is revealed in the biblical covenants, for example, some of them specifically denote national or priestly redemption. For instance, the Phineas covenant promises the perpetuation of the corporate Levitical priesthood (Lev 25:13), and the New Covenant promises a corporate restoration for national Israel (Jer 31:31–34). Moreover, a sizeable section of the biblical corpora, namely the wisdom writings, does not mention an explicit theme of salvation. Song of Solomon, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes remain relatively silent concerning any explicit redemption theme. House includes “salvation-history” as one of the more difficult approaches to maintain in Scripture, one that often reflects the interpreter rather than the Bible itself. He notes, “Perhaps the most evident example of books being neglected [in such models] is the omission of the Writings in some OT theologies and biblical theologies.”<sup>15</sup> He adds, “Many of the Psalms, Job, Proverbs and Esther do not overtly address salvation-history.”<sup>16</sup>

Further, attempting to trace an overarching theme of salvation-history is restricted to a certain canonical order. Scholars have pointed out that the redemptive-historical approach largely ignores the shape of the Hebrew Tanak. “The primary reason,” observes Sailhamer, “is that the Tanak does not always follow the history of salvation.”<sup>17</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth follows Proverbs (rather than Judges), and Chronicles is either placed with the Psalms or in most cases closes out the Tanak.<sup>18</sup> Thus, if one were to begin with the Hebrew canon, the unity of the Old and New Testaments *can-*

<sup>15</sup> Paul R. House, “Steps toward a Program for the Future,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 274.

<sup>16</sup> House, 274.

<sup>17</sup> John H. Sailhamer, “Biblical Theology and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> “It remakes students’ minds to read Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings as the Former Prophets rather than as the Historical Books. It alters one’s perception of Ruth if one reads Ruth as the successor to Proverbs or Judges. Reading strategies do matter.” House, “Steps,” 269.

not be tied together by a redemptive-historical approach that seeks to trace the exit from ancient Judaism into Christianity. Its shape does not allow it.

Finally, recognizing earlier noted caveats, the redemptive-historical model cannot account for the latter New Testament canon. That is, the history of humanity's salvation stops with Jesus Christ and his work of redemption. Yet the canonical witness stretches beyond the salvation Christ brings to the eternal state (Rev 21–22). In other words, humanity's (or creation's) redemption no longer remains necessary in the new heavens and the new earth. Thus, salvation history stops short of the last portion of the biblical canon. In the end the redemptive-historical model, though admirable in pointing to and exalting Christ, nevertheless falls short of offering a robust canonical paradigm that reaches past individuals, accounts for the entirety of the Old Testament canon, and extends to the end of the New Testament canon.

#### THEOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS

The redemptive-historical model is also limited in its theological offering. By focusing on humanity's redemption, crucial biblical themes are dismissed, overlooked, or absorbed into a presupposed salvation-history. Both Testaments say a great deal about subjects other than redemption. They testify to the angelic realm (Gen 6:1–2; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7; 38:7; Pss 103:20–21; 148:1–2; Luke 2:8–15; 1 Cor 6:3; Jude 6; Rev 2–22), the creation and moving of nations and cultures (Gen 10–11; Dan 7; Acts 17:22–26), and the animal kingdom and all of nature (Gen 1; Job 39; Pss 19:1–6; 50:1–2; Prov 12:10–11; 30:4). The prophetic books, for example, do not just prophesy about salvation in Christ but also foretell end-time events (Isa 11; 60–66; Dan 12; Amos 9; Zech 14; Rev 19–22). Noting the Old Testament's emphasis on "eschatological-prophetic theology," Wells observes that "the OT is far more than a record of salvation-history that must be reconstructed, interpreted, and reread by the NT authors and today's biblical theologian."<sup>19</sup> Ironically, by restricting Scripture's storyline to humanity's salvation throughout history, Scripture's biggest character—God himself—can strangely be overlooked. Such was the impetus behind House's *Old Testament Theology*, which structures all of the Old Testament canon around the character of God, not any one theme related to humani-

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<sup>19</sup> M. Jay Wells, "Figural Representation and Canonical Unity," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, 124.

ty.<sup>20</sup> Whereas the history of redemption is limited, God and his glory bridge the whole Bible, subsuming every topic. This is possible because glory's source is God. Because God is glorious, he created and redeemed for his glory.

#### THEMATIC SHORTCOMINGS

This final critique of the redemptive-historical model addresses the integral link between creation and redemption. Viewing all Scripture through this paradigm cannot provide an actual link that connects creation to redemption. In other words, to say, "the history of redemption *is* the link between creation and redemption" is to offer no link at all. It is tantamount to tautology and is as redundant as it is circular. Something *outside* the category of humanity's salvation must connect humanity's creation to their redemption. Paul's letter to the Romans provides such a link. After the apostle delivered his *ordo salutis* in chapter 8, he specifically linked the salvation of man by way of exalting Christ: "But, in all these things we are more than conquerors *through him who loved us*" (v. 37, emphasis added).<sup>21</sup> God in Christ is the emphasis, not humanity. Paul later ended in explicit doxology: "For from him and through him and to him are all things. *To him be the glory forever. Amen*" (11:36, emphasis added). Only the theme of God's glory can advance creation to redemption. The glorious God created so he could redeem and be glorified by his creation.

#### A CONSISTENT DOXOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL APPROACH

Against the backdrop of the redemptive-historical model, this article argues for an approach that views God's *glory* progressing through canonical history as the only theme large enough to subsume all of Scripture. This approach, called "doxological-historical," views Scripture primarily as the revealed history of God's glory. God's glory is the only theme that can be *consistently* maintained as the main biblical theme, center, or metanarrative. Moreover, by its emphasis on glory, it provides a crucial link connecting creation to redemption (both individual and corporate). Further support for a "doxological-historical" approach over a "redemptive-historical" model includes: (1) the false dichotomization of "actual history" and "redemptive history" (*Heilsgeschichte*) stemming from the widely

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<sup>20</sup> Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018).

<sup>21</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the ESV.



influential approaches of previous Old Testament scholars,<sup>22</sup> and (2) the unfortunate tendency to elevate humanity's redemption in contemporary evangelical scholarship to such a height that the Bible can be mistaken as human-centered rather than God-centered. As Paul made clear, all things were created "for" (εἰς) Christ (Col 1:16)—even humanity's redemption being "to the praise of His glory" (Eph 1:12, 14). The glory of God is, according to Paul, the goal of salvation. As such, Scripture's salvation-history theme, as prominent as it is, is itself trumped by the Bible's doxological focus. God's glory is the supreme theme carried throughout history via the covenants, the kingdom of God, judgment, promise-fulfillment, and every other theme previously offered as centers to biblical theology. Redemption, certainly a major biblical reality, is itself subsumed under God's glory. As such, a doxological-historical approach not only provides the crucial link between creation and redemption and discloses the goal for redemption, but it is also the major unifying theme carried throughout all of Scripture.<sup>23</sup>

Morgan points out, "In a way that is consistent but by no means uniform, every major section of Scripture addresses *the glory of God*"; he lists examples from the Law, Prophets, Writings, Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles, and Revelation.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Kimble and Spellman, who earlier emphasized the history of redemption, nevertheless correctly observe: "The glory of God . . . shapes the whole of the grand narrative of Scripture."<sup>25</sup> The biblical witness exalts the God of glory, who created so he could redeem and who re-creates so all might glorify him. Consequently, God's glory progresses historically throughout the canon, providing the only consistent model by which to center biblical theology. In

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<sup>22</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962). Cf. Graeme Goldsworthy, "Relationship of Old Testament and New Testament," 87. Darian Lockett notes, "The problem is that the salvation-historical concept argues the Bible's theological subject matter can be limited to a reconstructed special (salvation) history." "Limitations of a Purely Salvation-historical Approach to Biblical Theology," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 39.2 (2017): 230.

<sup>23</sup> See Cory M. Marsh, "A Dynamic Relationship: Christ, the Covenants, and Israel," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 30.2 (2019): 263–65, where I first proposed this argument vis-à-vis the biblical covenants through a "doxological-redemptive" theme. However, I do call attention to the possibility of Scripture's "doxological-historical" priority, which I have since developed and argue here.

<sup>24</sup> Christopher W. Morgan, "Toward a Theology of the Glory of God," in *The Glory of God*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, *Theology in Community* 2 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 154. Emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> Kimble and Spellman, *Invitation*, 252.

sum, where the theme of humanity's redemption falls short of unifying Scripture—whether canonically, theologically, or thematically—God's glory encompasses it all as his glory progresses throughout the Bible's storyline. Indeed, all things in creation—especially the Christian life—are to be done to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). God's glory frames Scripture, theology, and Christian ethics.

#### GLORY CONNECTS CREATION TO REDEMPTION TO RE-CREATION

This article has argued that only a theme underscoring *God's glory throughout canonical history* is large enough to subsume the landscape of Scripture and also specific enough to provide the crucial link between creation, redemption, and the world's re-creation. The glory of God is the one consistent theme running through the creation of humanity (Ps 8:5), the redemption of humanity (21:5), and the world's re-creation (Matt 19:28; Rom 8:20–21). As the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps 19:1), God's glory encapsulates all the earth (57:11).

As the final capstone to biblical revelation, a newly created or restored (redeemed) existence on earth is presented where “the glory of God gives its light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev 21:23). Thus, all of creation ends its groaning and enjoys its glorified state forever (cf. Rom 8:18, 20). As such, the glorification of God throughout history is not only the crucial link between creation and redemption (both individual and global) but also the primary theme or center of biblical theology. To further demonstrate this, it is helpful to engage Scripture's own testimony of its glory theme and the connection it makes to salvation.

The biblical use of “glory” has an interesting history of transition.<sup>26</sup> The concept of glory originated with the Hebrew כְּבוֹד, which carries a semantic range from “heavy” to “honor” to “visible splendor.”<sup>27</sup> The Septuagint writers adopted a term known in secular Greek, δοκέω (“to think”), to translate כְּבוֹד, giving it the nuance of a “high opinion” (thus, δοξάζω), as in to honor someone, usually God himself (e.g., Exod 14:18). In addition, the Septuagint retained the Hebrew sense of “visible splendor.” For example, in Exodus 33:22

<sup>26</sup> See the various essays in Morgan and Peterson, eds., *Glory of God*. Moreover, Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 44–46, provides helpful charts and breakdowns of the word's usage in the Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Greek New Testament.

<sup>27</sup> Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:455.

Yahweh allowed Moses to see his δόξα (“glory” or “visible splendor”) as it passed by.<sup>28</sup>

The New Testament, especially John, advances the meaning of “visible splendor” for glory as God’s visible splendor itself serves as a revelation; that is, “glory” reveals God’s character and power in tangible and dramatic expression. Jesus’s prayer to the Father regarding his impending death on a cross clearly demonstrates this as Jesus asks that God “glorify” (or reveal) the Son so that the Son may “glorify” (or reveal) the Father (John 17:1). Even Jesus’s death, which secured salvation for all who believe, upheld the glory of God as its ultimate purpose. These two realities—Jesus and glory—are not to be viewed in competition with one another. Rather, the canonical Gospels present glory as a phenomenon of visible splendor that characterized Jesus’s entire ontology: from his preexistence (John 12:41; 17:5; cf. Isa 6:1), to his incarnation (John 1:14), to his earthly ministry (2:11; 9:3; 11:4), to his death and resurrection (Luke 24:26), to his return to earth (Matt 24:30; 25:31).

Though Scripture’s use of the term “glory” is clearly widespread, God’s glory is not restricted merely to the *word* “glory.” The majesty and revealing of God’s character and power transcend any single word and connect all of Christian theology. As Morgan contends, “Every major doctrine is significantly related to [God’s glory]” and includes examples about revelation, God, humanity, sin, Christ, salvation, the church, and eschatology.<sup>29</sup> Clearly the glory of God progresses through all of biblical history, manifesting God’s presence from creation (Rom 1:20) through redemption (Exod 15:13) to re-creation (Rev 21:10–11).

While God’s glory is clearly connected to the atonement and redemption, the New Testament does not present them on equal footing. For example, in Romans 3:23–26 Paul conceptualizes a doxological priority over humanity’s salvation by pointing out that Jesus’s atonement occurred to “show” or “indicate” (ἐνδειξίς) God’s righteousness. That is, God had not forgotten or overlooked humanity’s sins but put forth Christ as the payment for them, safeguarding his own righteousness. The ultimate purpose of Christ’s death was to glorify or reveal God’s righteousness first, with salvation following second. In addition, Paul’s most explicit declaration

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<sup>28</sup> For further discussion on the glory word group, see Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 1:761–67.

<sup>29</sup> Morgan, *Glory of God*, 154. Morgan charts fifteen separate turning points of God’s glory revealed throughout biblical history.

of God's glory subsuming man's redemption is in Ephesians. There, the priority of God's glory is evidenced as the very purpose for man's redemption, as in 1:12, "So that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be *to/for* [εἰς] *the praise of his glory*," and 1:14, "[The Holy Spirit] is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, *to/for* [εἰς] *the praise of his glory*."<sup>30</sup>

God's glory, therefore, not only connects the creation to the fall to redemption but subsumes it. It is the goal or telos. Gladd was correct that "[God] redeemed us so that we might faithfully represent him on the earth and bring him glory in all that we say and do."<sup>31</sup> Or in Paul's words, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). The progression in Scripture evidences that God is glorious, so he created. He created so he could redeem. He redeemed so he could re-create. He re-created so he is glorified in all creation. In the end, God is glorified in all of it as his glory progresses throughout the biblical canon.

#### CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated that the most commonly assumed framework in biblical theology, the redemptive-historical model, provides an inadequate central theme or paradigm to account for all of Scripture. Rather, only a doxological-historical framework, which emphasizes the theme of God's glory as it progresses throughout canonical history, is broad enough to subsume the landscape of Scripture, theology, and ethics and to connect creation to redemption to re-creation.

Viewing Scripture as primarily doxological rather than redemptive safeguards God's place in creation as the ultimate sovereign, who receives glory from all of his creation, chiefly underscored by his creation and redemption of the elect in Christ. Implementing a doxological-historical approach to Scripture reveals a dramatic progression of glory throughout the canon, one sourced in God.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 435, emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> Gladd, *Adam and Israel to the Church*, 159.