Modern theologians are focused on the doctrine of divine impassibility, exploring the significance of God’s emotional experience and most especially the question of divine suffering. Professor Rob Lister speaks into the issue, outlining the history of the doctrine in the views of influential figures such as Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther, while carefully examining modernity’s growing rejection of impassibility and the subsequent evangelical response. With an eye toward holistic synthesis, this book proposes a theological model based upon fresh insights into the historical, biblical, and theological dimensions of this important doctrine.

"Lister has made a very significant contribution to one of the most difficult theological doctrines, the impassibility of God. This book sets the standard on this topic and is a model of evangelical scholarship at its finest!"

GREGG R. ALLISON, Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"Rob Lister boldly goes where few evangelicals have gone before in this very helpful study of how best to make sense of what Scripture says about God’s emotions."

KEVIN J. VANHOOZER, Research Professor of Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

"This study of divine passibilism is extremely helpful—it is preeminent scriptural, takes the Rezeptionsgeschichte of this doctrine very seriously, and satisfactorily answers current concerns."

MICHAEL A. G. HAYKIN, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

ROB LISTER (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is associate professor of biblical and theological studies at the Talbot School of Theology.
“Though a young and upcoming evangelical scholar, Rob Lister has made a very significant contribution to one of the most difficult theological doctrines, the impassibility of God. By combining historical theology, interaction with contemporary nonevangelical theories, a retroductive theological method, circumspect metaphysical reflection on divine revelation, biblical theology, and systematic theology (especially theology proper and christology), Lister offers a convincing case that God is both impassible and impassioned. This book sets the standard on this topic and is a model of evangelical scholarship at its finest!”

Gregg R. Allison, Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; author, Historical Theology and Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church

“Although the concept of divine passibilism, appropriate in some ways for a deeply sentimentalized culture, is all the rage in modern theology, for most of the history of the church, God was viewed as being impassible. Why was this so, and how did the Bible shape this perspective of God? And can we construct a model in this regard that does justice to what the Scriptures and church history say about God, and that also engages with modern sensibilities? This study by Rob Lister is extremely helpful in answering these questions: it is preeminently scriptural, takes the Rezeptionsgeschichte of this doctrine very seriously, and satisfactorily answers current concerns.”

Michael A. G. Haykin, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Rob Lister boldly goes where few evangelicals have gone before in this very helpful study of how best to make sense of what Scripture says about God’s emotions. Lister does away with caricatures of the Patristic tradition as having sold out to Greek philosophy, surveys contemporary evangelical positions on divine impassibility, and provides a constructive hermeneutical method and theological model for doing justice both to the impassibilist tradition and to biblical language about divine emotions. As G. K. Chesterton observes, ‘an inch is everything when you’re balancing,’ and to Lister’s credit he completes his routine without falling off the balance beam that is systematic theology.”

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Research Professor of Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Understanding how an infinite God relates to finite creatures is at the heart of most theological difficulties. How can God be holy and sovereign and personal and relational? That God is transcendent and immanent is central to understanding the God of the Bible. In this book, Rob Lister has given us tremendous help in navigating these deep theological waters. His theological method is a fantastic and much needed model of biblically grounded synthetic analysis that incorporates keen exegetical insights that are well informed by historical theology. Lister offers a biblically balanced understanding of God’s emotional life so that his sovereign majesty and covenant intimacy are preserved. The implications of this study for understanding God, humanity, Christ, relationships, and emotions in general are far-reaching and vital. I pray that the conclusions and theological method of this excellent work are deeply and widely influential for the glory of God.”

Erik Thoennes, Professor of Theology, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University; Pastor, Grace Evangelical Free Church, La Mirada, California; author, Life’s Biggest Questions
“In this well-organized and well-written volume, Rob Lister challenges the view that the church fathers’ version of divine impassibility precluded God’s showing emotion. He swims upstream against modern passibilism, and he opposes those evangelicals who reject impassibility in the name of affirming divine passion. I was impressed with Lister’s accuracy and kindness whenever he takes exception to others’ views. The work is largely positive and constructive rather than negative and reactive. Lister argues ‘passionately’ for the view that God is both impassible and impassioned, even as he is both transcendent and immanent. Lister’s work demonstrates multiple areas of competence—historical, biblical, theological, and philosophical—and is nuanced, holding that ‘God’s passion transcends human passion both ontologically and ethically.’ I am, therefore, pleased to commend it to readers for serious consideration.”

Robert A. Peterson, Professor of Systematic Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary

“Whether God is subject to suffering is hardly a recent question, but it is an issue that contemporary Christians have been constrained to ponder carefully in order to provide scripturally measured and biblically tempered answers in a generation that prefers to conceive of and worship a God forged after human likeness. Despite the profundity of this issue and the inherent difficulty of giving adequate expression to whether God is passible or impassible, Rob Lister provides accessibility and clarity to this issue in a scripturally governed, admirably balanced, and manifestly humble manner. He engages theologians ancient and modern as his theological conversation partners while he guides readers through the many pitfalls and hazards that threaten to entangle us primarily in two antithetical but equally defective views of God: either to cast him in our image and likeness or to project onto him an aloofness that renders him cold, even grotesque. Lister rightly insists that in order to provide biblically rooted answers to the questions he addresses it is crucial to acknowledge and embrace the chasm that distinguishes the Creator from his creatures. Yet, equally crucial is the fact that the Creator made humanity, the creature, in his image and after his likeness, for this is God’s revelatory nexus by which God makes himself known to us both as impassible and as impassioned.”

Ardel B. Caneday, Professor of New Testament Studies and Biblical Theology, Northwestern College; coauthor, The Race Set Before Us

“This is an excellent study in systematic theology that exemplifies detailed research in biblical theology and historical theology, and draws these into a coherent systematic construction with relevance for contemporary life. I found Lister’s hermeneutical and theological analyses of passibilist and impassibilist arguments to be instructive and sharp. The project is well conceived and follows an explicit methodology with systematic guardrails from Scripture to frame the difficult biblical and theological details. Lister has ably handled difficult questions that impinge on God’s impassibility and passionate involvement with his creations: God’s relation to time and eternity, incarnate suffering, biblical accounts of God’s repentance, theodicy, and God’s immanence and transcendence. Despite the difficulties, Lister provides careful definitional distinctions and clarity of communication in a surprisingly light writing style that is uncommon to academic theology.”

John E. McKinley, Associate Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University; author, Tempted for Us
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At this juncture of the book, we take an important turn from a descriptive discussion of the history of thought on divine impassibility to a prescriptive proposal and formulation of the doctrine. My goal in what follows is to faithfully develop this historically preceded and biblically required model, here entitled “Impassible and Impassioned.” As we begin this exposition, we must remain aware of our debt to our forebears on this issue. We are not the progenitors of the dual emphasis on divine impassibility and divine passion. That insight, as we have seen, is properly attributable to the mainstream representatives of the impassibility tradition—of what I have termed the qualified model—going all the way back to the Fathers surveyed in chapter 3.\(^1\) Having gratefully acknowledged this debt, we now will focus on how we might more thoroughly develop, both biblically and theologically, this precious insight about God that has been bequeathed to us.\(^2\)

Before we begin this endeavor, however, two preliminary comments are called for. First, in order to further clarify the focus of this formative proposal on the doctrine of divine impassibility, I should reiterate, in light of the preced-

\(^1\)It is neither necessary nor desirable, therefore, to drift over into the formulation of contemporary passibilism in order to affirm a \textit{meaningful}—or more importantly, a \textit{biblical}—sense of divine passion.

\(^2\)Recall my distinction at the end of the previous chapter between developing and revising. I undertake the expansion in my remaining chapters with the mind-set of a developer.
ing historical study, that the central hub of this issue is the question of divine emotion, of which suffering should be considered a subset. Therefore, in my formulation of the matter, I will focus my attention most prominently on the issue of divine emotion, without neglecting, however, the supplementary question of divine suffering.

Second, I also intend, in chapters 7–9, to focus on the issue of divine emotion specifically in relation to theology proper. My primary thesis in this respect is that, when appropriately understood, both impassibility and impassionedness are true of God. The duality inherent in this model stems, I suggest, from the duality inherent in Scripture’s overarching presentation of God’s transcendence and immanence, as well as in Scripture’s particular portrayal of this nexus of impassibility and impassionedness. In the remainder of this book, then, I will attempt to provide a sufficient methodological, hermeneutical, and theological expansion on the classical impassibilist insight that God is both impassible and impassioned.

On Drawing Metaphysical Conclusions from Biblical Revelation

Though it has been acknowledged in passing heretofore, it bears elaborating a bit at this point that, just as with the doctrine of the Trinity, Scripture nowhere provides a direct metaphysical proposition about the impassibility of God. Of course, it should also be noted that the contemporary passibilist

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3We may remind ourselves that many of the modern passibilists appear to have argued back from the subsidiary point of suffering to the main category of passibility. As was noted in the previous chapter, however, Marcel Sarot has rightly identified divine emotion as the focal point of the debate over divine impassibility. Marcel Sarot, God, Passibility and Corporeality (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992), 29–30. See also Richard Bauckham’s similar assessment. Richard Bauckham, “‘Only the Suffering God Can Help’: Divine Passibility in Modern Theology,” Themelios 9 (1984): 9. Sarot’s mistake comes in his seeming insistence that impassibility be defined entirely, and only, in terms of the absolute immutability of divine emotion. Recall his assessment that impassibility should be defined as “immutability with regard to one’s feelings, or the quality of one’s inner life.” Sarot, God, Passibility and Corporeality, 30. Now it is true—and this will be expounded further on—that there is an important sense in which we should conceive of the essential immutability of divine emotion. But if that is all that we recognize, then we have not understood enough. The remaining chapters of this book will seek to expound this duality, and more particularly, the way in which divine impassibility is the very foundation that gives rise to God’s perfectly fitted emotional and relational responses to his creatures.

4My reflections on the incarnational component of this question will come in chap. 10. 5The progression of the constructive chapters of this book through a series of considerations on methodology, hermeneutics, and theology reflects a self-conscious attempt to heed Kevin Vanhoozer’s instructive guidance that we treat “the questions of God, Scripture and hermeneutics as one problem,” something that he terms “first theology.” Kevin J. Vanhoozer, First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 9. Richard Lints would remind us of the related point that to read Scripture in a truly “biblical” manner, that is, to read Scripture as Scripture itself requires, we must account for the “textual,” “epochal,” and “canonical” horizons of Scripture. Richard Lints, The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 259–311.
understanding of metaphysical divine co-suffering itself extends beyond any explicit statement in Scripture. Had Scripture provided an explicit metaphysical statement in support of either divine impassibility or divine passibility, debate on this issue would be either precluded or framed very differently from its current form. In the absence of such a direct metaphysical statement, however, some may wonder why we should attempt to provide a theological category that Scripture itself does not explicitly supply. More broadly conceived, this concern brings into focus the crucial issue of second-order theological reflection on Scripture’s first-order statements.

Here we would do well to heed the counsel of Paul Helm, who has rightly noted in his essay on divine impassibility that it is a false dichotomy to present second-order theological and metaphysical reflection as necessarily opposed to first-order biblical discourse. As he puts it:

Biblical language and metaphysical concepts (whether these concepts are derived from Greek sources or from elsewhere) are not strict rivals. This is because of the fact that from the point of view of metaphysics the Bible is an underdeveloped book; there are few, if any, passages which are theoretical and reflective, or which make general claims and which rebut alternatives, of the sort typically advanced in metaphysical discussion. So the Bible does not repudiate developed

6 Though all of the following will be expanded upon in due course, it seems fitting to anticipate a possible objection on the grounds of the abundance of scriptural displays of divine emotion. For several reasons, the fact that Scripture contains many narrative depictions of divine emotional involvement with creation does not itself decide the matter in favor of passibility. First, since these narrative portrayals are not archetypal, metaphysical statements about the nature of the divine emotive capacity, they cannot serve as straightforward proof-texts of an archetypal, metaphysical understanding of the divine emotive capacity. This is hardly to suggest that such narrative statements are not truth bearing, but to get at their truth content, we must examine their purpose in the covenantal context of God’s gracious relation toward humanity. If we want to know their authorially intended truth content, we must first ask what function they bear in this context. Second, I will argue below that even the biblical descriptions of divine emotion ground the covenant-relational passion of God in the economy on his eternally unwavering passion in the Trinity. Third, these narrative descriptions of divine emotion are themselves complemented by narrative depictions of God’s transcendent lordship over creation, and thus the former category may not, on biblical grounds, be interpreted irrespective of the latter category. The method of analogical interpretation recognizes these two mutually interpreting sets of biblical data and proceeds accordingly. Passibilism and extreme impassibilism do not.

7 In the case of contemporary passibilism, it is interesting to observe the following inconsistency: On the one hand, as we have pointed out, passibilists often suggest that they are suspicious of metaphysical reflection. On the other hand, they are very quick to appeal to Scripture’s many narrative depictions of God’s emotional involvement with creation as grounds for the metaphysical doctrine of divine passibility. That is to say that when passibilists claim that the divine affective capacity is constituted as they understand it, the doctrine of divine passibility is itself the product of second-order metaphysical reflection on (one side of, as we shall see) the biblical narrative. It seems that at least some passibilists, then, may be aware of the fact that they themselves depend on metaphysical reflection to arrive at their doctrinal conclusion. Of course, we have also seen that many passibilists have intentionally and aggressively adopted an anticlassical metaphysic to undergird their views.
metaphysics; rather, for the most part it obliquely sidesteps it, for its interests are for the most part elsewhere. But this does not mean that its first-order statements do not have metaphysical implications, only that they are not themselves metaphysical claims.

Thus, we may contend that metaphysical reflection on scriptural revelation is not, in principle, unacceptable. More than that, though, it is unavoidable. Indeed, Scripture does commend a metaphysic (e.g., the Creator/creature distinction), though of course, as Helm notes, its primary concern is not to provide a formal discourse on metaphysics. The operative question, then, must be, are we following scriptural parameters with respect to our metaphysical reflections on Scripture? Indeed, to be yet more precise, this question must concern itself with discerning whether or not the metaphysical proposal in question actually illumines the joint intent of the various aspects of the biblical data.

What we are specifically speaking of here is known as the retroductive element of theological formulation. Following induction and deduction, retroduction is the model-building component of logical reasoning that attempts to present a comprehensive theory sufficient to account for all the relevant data. Again, as is well illustrated in the case of Trinitarianism, the retroductive procedure understands that when the relevant biblical data are rightly related together, the joint conclusion following from the juxtaposed scriptural truths may yield a model that is itself scriptural in virtue of the synthesis of canonical teaching, though no individual text considered in isolation would be seen to convey the totality of the canonically synthesized model. Of course, it is possible to arrive at incorrect retroductive conclusions, just as one may arrive at an incorrect inductive observation or deductive conclusion. Thus, the retroductive formulation must be accountable to the totality of scriptural teaching, but it does not follow from this that retroduction is, in principle, an invalid procedure.

It is along these lines precisely, then, that we can see that the lack of a direct metaphysical proposition in Scripture, and thus the inability to settle this issue based singularly on the exegesis of an individual text, does not immediately disqualify either impassibility or passibility as unscriptural. In other words,
the disqualification or affirmation of one or the other of these views depends not upon the citation of a singular verse, but upon a whole-canon theology of divine emotion. Based on this approach, my contention remains that in this holistic sense it is in fact Scripture that leads us to the conclusion that God is both invulnerable to involuntarily precipitated emotional vicissitude and supremely passionate about his creatures’ practice of obedience and rebellion, as well as their experience of joy and affliction.

Impassibility and Redemptive History

In the attempt to develop this theological hermeneutic concerning the nature of divine emotion, we may begin with a survey of divine impassibility and passion in the broad sweep of redemptive history. The purpose of including this analysis, again, is to ensure that our hermeneutical approach to this question fully integrates Scripture’s broader (and not just narrower) contexts, thus helping us to avoid reductionistic exegesis.11 Graeme Goldsworthy provides a fitting reminder about the urgency of allowing this kind of hermeneutical interplay.

When the exegete gets down to a close reading of a text, there is always the attendant problem of losing sight of the forest (the big picture) for the trees (close exegesis). Contextual exegesis demands that we refuse to be content with our understanding of an individual text until we understand its place in the entire canon. In biblical theology, synchronic analysis of the theology of individual documents needs to be linked constantly with the diachronic synthesis of the theology of the whole range of biblical literature.12

In light of that good counsel, my specific aim in this section is to sketch, in miniature, the duality of divine impassibility and divine passion through the major phases of redemptive history. Though much of what is outlined here will require additional theological expansion further on, beginning with a big-picture glimpse at divine impassibility across the landscape of redemp-

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11Here it is important to remind the reader of my evangelical assumptions about the nature of Scripture (e.g., divine inspiration, overarching unity amid diversity) noted in chap. 1.

tive history will supply us with the needed interpretive protection to engage individual texts in a biblically balanced manner in the next chapter. If we follow the most basic framework of redemptive history, I suggest that this duality may be seen to unfold along the following lines.

**Eternal Intra-Trinitarian Relationality**

Prior to and apart from creation, both divine impassibility and divine impassionedness may be found co-terminously in the same act of eternal intra-Trinitarian love (John 3:35; 5:20; 14:31; 17:24). Prior to *creation*, there exists no *creaturely* entity that could hope to extract emotion (in this case, either involuntary or otherwise) from the triune fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It would seem also that, within the triune fellowship itself, there would be no emotional fluctuation, but only the perfectly pitched ontology of love, glory, holiness, and intra-Trinitarian delight, from which there would be no occasion to deviate. For in the sinlessly perfect union of the Godhead prior to creation, the perfection of divine love would never have need of receding, for example, in favor of an expression of either wrath or remorse.

And yet, while this pre-creational Trinitarian reality admits of no shadow of emotional turning—for again, on what occasion would the Trinitarian love burn any brighter or dimmer—it does not follow that it is therefore either less than complete when compared to ours or in some sense “unreal.” No, it is not *necessarily* true that emotional variation, or even emotional volatility, testifies to the strength or fullness (biblically understood) of one’s emotional capacity. I suggest that we are prone to assume the superior strength/fullness of emotional variation because of our own experience. But often what our own experience of emotional variation reveals is the weakness, and not the strength, of our emotional capacity.13 We see this, for instance, every time our

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13 Augustine well illustrated this point with a parallel observation related to God’s omnipotence. He reports, “Neither is His power diminished when we say that He cannot die or fall into error,—for this is in such a way impossible to Him, that if it were possible for Him, He would be of less power. But assuredly He is rightly called omnipotent, though He can neither die nor fall into error. For He is called omnipotent on account of His doing what He wills, not on account of His suffering what He wills not; for if that should befall Him, He would by no means be omnipotent. Wherefore, He cannot do some things for the very reason that He is omnipotent.” Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 5.10; trans. Marcus Dods, *NPNF*, 2:92. In other words, the fact that we as humans can do certain things that God cannot do—e.g., die, fall into error, or be afflicted against our wills—is not an intrinsic testimony to our superiority, but rather a sign of some of our significant frailties. Having said all that, however, I do wish to return to my initial point of human emotional variation and clearly state that I do not intend to absolutize a principle whereby *all* human emotional variation is a sign of emotional weakness, even though some of it certainly is. In other words, when patterned after God’s own commitment to his glory, our own emotional variation (e.g., experiencing righteous indignation against sin) is sometimes an appropriate testament to our emotional fortitude, biblically speaking.
delight to obey God wavers, only to be swallowed up instead in the desire to pursue the fleeting pleasures of sin.

Therefore, we must not conclude that unwavering passion is the antithesis of “real” passion, where the criterion for “real” is the human experience of emotional fluctuation. Rather, in God’s pre-creational existence, the perfectly passionate and perfectly steady expression of intra-Trinitarian love is the epitome and fountainhead of all other forms of passion, whether creaturely reflections by divine image bearers or the expressions of God’s ultimate passionate commitment to his own glory that come to be manifested in relation to a creation fallen into sin and rebellion against its Maker.

**Pre-Fall Creation**

In the pre-fall environment of Genesis 1 and 2, God remains impassible in that he cannot be forced by his creatures into any involuntary emotional experience. God’s act of creation and his decision to involve himself with his creatures subsequent to creation are both actions of divine freedom (Isa. 66:1–2; Acts 17:24–25; Rom. 11:36). As Karl Barth puts it, “God is not dependent on anything that is not Himself; on anything outside Himself. He is not limited by anything outside Himself, and is not subject to any necessity distinct from Himself. On the contrary, everything that exists is dependent on His will.”

And yet that is not all there is to say. For, remarkably, in the aftermath of God’s free decision to create, the impassionedness of God, though it remains ever grounded in the undiminished passion of intra-Trinitarian delight, now begins to find a new outward expression in the voluntary outgoing of divine love toward the created other.


15 Nor, of course, is it all that Barth himself had to say on the matter. Although Barth evidently (and mistakenly; see following quote) attributes to the mainstream impassibility tradition a belief in impassivity, it appears that he may nevertheless be classified as a proponent of the two-pronged model: “The personal God has a heart. He can feel, and be affected. He is not impassible. He cannot be moved from outside by an extraneous power. But this does not mean that He is not capable of moving Himself. No, God is moved and stirred, yet not like ourselves in powerlessness, but in His own free power, in His innermost being: moved and touched by another’s suffering and therefore to assistance, impelled to take the initiative to relieve this distress. . . . God finds no suffering in Himself. And no cause outside God can cause Him suffering if He does not will it so. . . . The ‘affection’ of God is different from all creaturely affections in that it originates in Himself. But in this sense it cannot be denied.” Barth, *CD*, 2/1:370–71. Note how Barth defends the content of the classical model of impassibility, while also asserting that God “is not impassible.” In concept, therefore—though his use of terminology is less than desirable—Barth is denying extreme impassibility and affirming classical impassibility. For a plausible interpretation of Barth on this matter, see John M. Russell, “Impassibility and Pathos in Barth’s Idea of God,” *Anglican Theological Review* 70 (1988): 221–27.

16 Surely, this outgoing of God’s love toward creation is part of the thematic, even if not lexical, emphasis of Gen. 1:31—“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.
The Fall

As a result of the fall (Genesis 3), God’s emotional expression takes on yet new manifestations in relation to his image-bearing creatures. Now, for the first time, God’s image-bearing creatures have rebelled against their Maker. Therefore, God’s eternal passion for his own glory (e.g., Ex. 20:4–5; 34:14; Deut. 6:4–15; Isa. 48:9–11; John 17:1–5)\(^17\) takes on the expression of justified wrath in the presence of that rebellion (e.g., Rom. 1:18).\(^18\) Divine wrath, then, every bit as much as God’s outwardly focused redemptive love, is grounded in God’s eternally passionate self-commitment. The difference is just that following the entrance of sin, the expression of that foundational passion and character becomes manifest in ways suitable to the situation of human rebellion.

At the same time, however, it is important for us to see that God’s post-fall passion remains an impassible passion, in the long-standing sense we have advocated. That is to say that God’s emotional expression, even in the aftermath of the fall, continues to be voluntary. Everything occurring in creation history is the outworking of God’s eternal intention (e.g., Eph. 1:11). So, God has always purposed to respond volitionally and emotively in just this or that way in the face of given actions by his creatures.\(^19\) In this, then, God remains the initiative bearer. And again, we must maintain that God’s emotional expression of wrath in response to a sinful creation is grounded upon the eternally stable and unwavering reality of God’s intra-Trinitarian love. Yes, God now has occasion to express himself anew in the face of a fallen order, but this new emotional manifestation does not arise from a varying ultimate principle of divine passion.\(^20\) In other words, God’s emotionally varying responsiveness to his creatures’ status in a fallen world is perfectly

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\(^17\) Erik Thoennes provides us with an instructive reminder when we come to consider biblical passages that convey God’s passion (i.e., his jealousy) for his own glory. “Because the theology of the Bible unfolds within human history, God’s character is usually revealed in the context of his relationship with humanity. So, as would be expected within this salvation history scheme, the majority of divine jealousy passages have God’s people as the focus. Although God’s self-directed jealousy is foundational for all other types of godly jealousy, passages where God’s own honor is emphasized are not as common or consistently found through all parts of Scripture. . . . This does not make God’s jealousy for his own glory any less significant or foundational, it merely points to the historical nature of God’s revelation of himself.” K. Erik Thoennes, Godly Jealousy: A Theology of Intolerant Love (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2005), 32–33.

\(^18\) Clearly, God’s display of wrath toward his image-bearing creatures is depicted narratively in accord with the judgment dispensed in Genesis 3.

\(^19\) Much more on this, of course, is forthcoming in the systematic formulation in chap. 9.

\(^20\) As we will see, this statement is true of all God’s forms of emotional engagement within the created order, whether benevolent or condemning.
expressive of his unwavering passion of intra-Trinitarian character. Seen in this light, the manifestation of God’s eternally holy love in the expression of wrath against sinful creatures is ultimately a testimony to the strength and utter stability of divine emotion.21

**Redemption**

From the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 all the way until the final consummation of the eschaton, it is the zenith of grace that, though God was not obliged to intercede, he did not leave mankind under the wrathful condemnation of their sin, but instead provided a way in which sinners may be reconciled to God.22 From the standpoint of divine passion, this means that now as sinners move from their sinful rebellion to repentance and forgiveness, God’s emotive response likewise parallels his volitional response to repentant sinners. That is, just as surely as God’s in-time volitional response to a newly redeemed sinner shifts from a posture of judgment to one of forgiveness, God’s in-time emotive response to a newly redeemed sinner shifts from a posture of wrath to a posture of loving acceptance.23

Here we begin especially to grasp something of the complexity of God’s passionate relation to the created order—a complexity that is one biblical element protecting us from an anthropocentric reading and instead requiring an analogical interpretation of divine-emotion texts. Indeed, the reality is even more complex than I have just described in the preceding paragraph, for it is God’s love, even toward his fallen creatures (e.g., John 3:16), that initiates the offer of grace to them in the first place.24 And this outward disposition of redemptive love occurs simultaneously, and without conflict, with his unremitting wrath against sinners. So, it is hardly the case that sinners inadvertently

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21 As it has been stated on a few occasions prior to this, God’s emotional responsiveness toward his creation is perfectly fitted. Thus, divine wrath is the appropriate, and not excessive, response to creaturely sin and rebellion. Accordingly, God’s wrath should not be misinterpreted along the lines of our experience of “losing it” or “flying off the handle.”

22 For our purposes, I am leaving this heading of “Redemption” very broad. Obviously, although there is an overarching redemptive continuity, it is widely understood that this category of redemption could be subdivided into smaller epochs or administrations of the plan of redemption.

23 Bruce Ware nicely demonstrates this divine responsiveness by pointing out the transition that occurs in God, when moving from Rom. 1:18 (“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth”) to Rom. 5:1 (“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”), and similarly from Eph. 2:3 (“among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind”) to Eph. 2:7 (“so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”). Bruce A. Ware, *God’s Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 142.

24 Amazingly, the doctrine of God’s love involves yet more complexity, some of which we will return to in our textual examinations and theological formulations to follow.
stumble upon the mechanism of repentance, in turn setting off a stunned and perhaps unexpected divine response of compassion and forgiveness to the unanticipated gesture of human contrition. Rather, God, who is rightly angered at sin, is also the one who lovingly initiates the offer of his grace to undeserving sinners in order that he may respond to them with compassion and forgiveness when they turn from their sin in repentance and faith to receive his gracious provision.25

Additionally, in this redemptive period of the “already and not yet,” justified sinners continue to experience an ongoing struggle with the flesh. Just on the individual level, this admits of much emotional complexity on the part of God’s engagement. For now we observe (and personally experience) redeemed sinners falling at times into sin (e.g., Gal. 3:1–3), whereupon God must look at them with both tenderness and harshness because, though they are covered with the righteousness of Christ, their sin nevertheless still produces a relational offense to God.26 Add to that the observation that God is perfectly and simultaneously responsive to all of his image-bearing creatures—whether unredeemed, newly repentant, backsliding saints struggling with sin, or long maturing believers—with all of the emotional diversity required thereby. Again, I say, though there is evident analogy with human emotional experience, this complexity clearly precludes us from conceiving the divine emotional capacity univocally along anthropocentric lines.27

These observations lend credence to the notion that God’s redemptive emotions are not involuntarily extracted from him by his creatures. For ultimately it is God’s loving initiative—both volitional and emotional—that first

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25 This point may be illustrated from numerous soteriological perspectives, for example, the nature of new covenant transformation (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:22–28), election (Eph. 1:3–6), regeneration (John 3:3–8), etc. Perhaps it is even clearer still in the teaching of Rom. 5:8 that “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

26 The logic that opposes the errant doctrine of eternal justification is valid here as well. The doctrine of eternal justification wrongly maintains that because an individual is elect before the foundation of the earth, he is therefore eternally justified, which is to say, eternally a believer. But that, of course, is not so. Even the elect are born into the world not as justified believers, but as “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), who need at some point in time to become justified by faith if they are to be saved. Similarly, we should not conclude that the ongoing struggle with sin of one who has already been justified is not offensive to God at the time the sin is committed, because the person committing the sin is justified. Paul’s argument in Romans 6 seems, at least implicitly, to reject this argument.

27 I should clarify here that I am intentionally using the term anthropocentric in a sense that should be distinguished from anthropomorphic. That is to say, I am using anthropocentric as a synonym of univocal, in which a supposed understanding of God’s emotions would be reasoned to on the basis of human experience. This sense of anthropocentricism may be contrasted with a focused sense of anthropomorphism, which ascribes nonliteral corporeal features to God in the service of conveying a particular point. I will offer more extended comments on the importance of this kind of hermeneutical issue in the section below on analogical interpretation. For now, it will suffice to reiterate that I am proposing to avoid this kind of anthropocentric reading of divine emotion.
provides sinners with the opportunity for redemption and then subsequently responds to the ebb and flow of sinful humanity. In this, God’s relationally redemptive responsiveness remains grounded in his eternally perfect passion. In other words, God’s varying emotional response to his fallen and repentant creatures is the in-time expression of his eternal character and passion. The temporal fluctuation is secured in virtue of the fact that God’s commitment to his own glory is perfectly and eternally unwavering.

In all of this, it is critically instructive to point out the centrality of covenant relationship. God’s relationship to his people is, according to Scripture, a covenant relationship. While it is not my purpose to supply an exposition of the various biblical covenants—it has already been capably done by others—we cannot neglect to mention this fabric of God’s relationship to mankind in Scripture.28 We may highlight the overarching theological point behind this relational apparatus by citing, with approval, the following observation by Michael Horton:

> God is bound by his nature, but only by his nature. But just so, God is bound to us (better, has bound himself to us) by a free decision to enter into covenant with us and with the whole creation. God is not free to act contrary to such covenantal guarantees because doing so would entail the violation not only of his decision but of his nature, particularly his faithfulness.29

Again, given the nature of divinely initiated covenant relationship with humanity, we must not rush headlong into an anthropocentrically conceived belief about divine relationality, without understanding the very covenant framework in which it is essentially bound up.

On this point, one of the most crucial features to observe about the biblical structure of covenant relationship is that the creature has no intrinsic claim on God the Creator, and so the only reason we may have relationship with God is that he has freely chosen to bind himself in faithfulness for our good. What this is not is a peer-to-peer relationship. Indeed, this relationship

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28One such capable treatment of the biblical covenants can be found in W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1984). Since I am only now, in this section on redemption, treating the biblical concept of covenant relationship, some may wonder whether I do not acknowledge a pre-fall creation covenant. In response, I would briefly say that though Scripture does not explicitly state the presence of a pre-fall creation covenant, I do recognize its implicit presence. For more on the presence of a pre-fall creation covenant, see especially chap. 1 of Dumbrell’s book. The debate over whether such a covenant should be understood as a covenant of works, as it is sometimes explained, must remain a discussion for another occasion.

29Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 33. This very fine statement anticipates some of our systematic theological reflections on the relation of divine immutability and divine impassibility, which in turn will help us to avoid dichotomizing the capacities of divine volition and divine affection.
even exceeds the more analogous king-vassal form of many of the ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns that are structurally similar to the biblical covenants. Yes, beyond even that, God’s covenantal invitation to us signifies the gracious condescension of one who metaphysically stoops, as it were, to love us. Indeed, without at all invoking a Platonic metaphysic, we may rightly acknowledge that God is the one being who engages us from the posture of a higher ontological order.

**New Creation**

Though the biblical teaching treating the new creation (e.g., Revelation 21–22; Isa. 65:17–25) is sparser than that covering the period between the fall and the eschaton, certain findings related to the doctrine of divine impassibility nevertheless seem reasonably clear. For example, in the new heavens and earth, it follows from what we have already seen that certain of God’s redemptive emotional fluctuations will cease when the sinful created order is restored and the age of salvific opportunity is no more. God’s wrath of course will burn eternally toward the unrepentant in hell (e.g., Matt. 25:41–46; 2 Thess. 1:5–9), just as his delight in the redeemed of heaven will not waver. But in that day, all the destinies will be fixed (Heb. 9:27). There will be no more sinners moving into repentance (Luke 16:19–31) and no more of the redeemed stumbling through a period of backsliding (1 John 3:2). Thus there will no longer be the possibility of God’s moving from an emotive posture of wrath toward one of mercy or vice versa in response to any individual.

Moreover, God’s impassibility, once again, will not have to be forsaken in this era of redemptive history in order for this passionate display to occur. The redeemed will not be able to claim that they have extracted an involuntary emotion of delight from God, as if God were uncertain of the outcome of their salvation (Phil. 1:6). Nor will the condemned have the pleasure of knowing that they caused God to rage against his ultimate will (Rom. 9:15–24). Rather, as with the other epochs we have surveyed, it seems best to conclude of the eschaton that God will remain both impassible and impassioned in the senses we have been advocating.

**Interpreting the Language of Divine Passion: The Importance of Analogy**

Before launching into an interpretive analysis of theologically relevant texts, we must spend a moment expanding upon the biblically necessitated method of analogical interpretation that I have only gestured at up to this point.\(^{30}\) To

\(^{30}\)It is not my purpose to trace the formal history of or the technical debates over the doctrine of analogy. For a thorough discussion of analogical language and its accompanying debates, see Michael S. Horton,
begin, in the simplest terms, we are forced to think with careful precision about God’s experience of emotion precisely because it is a *divine*, and not a *human*, experience of emotion. Moving a step further into this reflection, we must keep in mind that, when it comes to God’s relationship to creation, he not only is engaging with his people in the redemptive economy, but also stands over redemptive history as the one who has ordained all that has taken place, the nature of his responsive engagement included.31 In his own terms, Horton makes a similar point by commending to us a covenant theology that focuses on the dynamic outworking of God’s redemptive plan in concrete history, taking very seriously the twists and turns in the road—including God’s responses to human beings. But it does so without denying the clear biblical witness to the fact that God transcends these historical relationships. Transcendence and immanence are not antithetical categories for us, compelling us to choose one over another.32

As Horton suggests here, it is Scripture itself that gives rise to analogical interpretation. Fundamentally, this observation is grounded not in an alien metaphysical presupposition, but in the Creator/creature distinction. This

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*Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002). To quote Horton in another context, however, we may point out one feature of the Reformed view of analogy that is axiomatic for my own view. He observes, “One important difference between the Thomist and Reformed approaches to analogy is that the latter is suspicious of the claim that we can know what God is *not* (*via negationis*) any more than we can know what God is, apart from God’s own self-disclosure in revelation. We cannot start with our idea of perfect being, in a way either of eminence or negation.” Horton, *Lord and Servant*, 29, italics his. This, of course, is not to say that God is not the most perfect being; only that the categories of perfection must themselves be supplied to us from God’s self-revelation in Scripture. Finally, I should point out that, on a purely terminological level, my embrace of analogical interpretation seemingly puts me at odds with a theologian like Carl F. H. Henry, someone for whom I have the utmost regard. See, for example, his comment that “only univocal assertions protect us from equivocacy; only univocal knowledge is, therefore, genuine and authentic knowledge. . . . Unless we have some literal truth about God, no similarity between man and God can in fact be predicated.” Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 3, *God Who Speaks and Shows: Fifteen Theses, Part Two* (Waco, TX: Word, 1979; repr., Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 364. On a conceptual level, however, I believe that my explanation to follow will demonstrate that I have not relinquished what Henry sought to protect, namely, a proper sense of the incomprehensibility of God. It seems clear from Henry’s statement that he has equated *univocal* with *literal* and *analogical* with *nonliteral*. I do not make such an equation between these terms, however, and in fact I will argue below that to force a necessary disjunction between *analogical* and *literal* is mistaken.

31 As I have intimated above and will expand upon further on, this kind of observation helps establish the analogical point that while God in his *voluntary* emotional engagements with his creatures in the economy of salvation is certainly *responsive* (similarity), since he also transcends those very relationships that he has ordained, his responsiveness should not be seen either as *involuntarily extracted* or as the equivalent to *passivity* (dissimilarity).

distinction, in turn, uniquely gives rise to a transcendence/immanence balance that avoids the twin pitfalls of hyper-transcendence and hyper-immanence. Spiraling off of the Creator/creature distinction and arising throughout the Scriptures, there are a number of teachings about God—for example, the aforementioned transcendence/immanence balance, incorporeality, self-sufficiency, eternality, omniscience, exhaustive sovereignty, immutability, intra-Trinitarian love and holiness—that place hermeneutical constraints on the way we interpret God-language in general, and for our purposes, the language of divine passion in particular. These factors and others like them led our forebears, as I believe they should also lead us, to expect some (but not complete) dissimilarity in how emotion-laden predicates apply to God and humans. Recognizing that humans are made in the *imago Dei*, we also expect some (but not complete) similarity. Again, it is this scriptural and theological framework that requires the method of analogical interpretation.

At this point, in order to continue this analysis with yet more precision, we need to make some comments on the connection of analogical God-language to the doctrine of accommodated revelation more broadly. Simply put, all Scripture presents us with revelation accommodated to human understanding. At one level, this is rather obvious. For, if God were to speak to us in some sort of heavenly language, none of us could hope to understand any of it. It is precisely at this point, however, that we must proceed with great care, for sometimes theologians have reasoned as though the accommodated revelation of God in Scripture justifies our theologizing about God anthropocentrically. But that is precisely not the point of accommodated revelation.

Rather, our need of God’s accommodated self-disclosure serves to remind us that there are crucial dissimilarities between the Creator and his creatures. God’s thoughts and knowledge vastly transcend our own (Pss. 139:6; 147:5; Isa. 55:8–9; 1 Cor. 2:9–11), and we would have no hope of knowing him apart

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33Each of these doctrines and its impact on the impassibility question in particular will be explored in more detail in the theological formulation of chap. 9.

34For the relevant citations and a discussion of Calvin’s famous treatment of accommodated revelation, refer back to the analysis of Calvin in chap. 4.

35A. B. Caneday shows how Open Theist John Sanders steps into this trap. A. B. Caneday, “Veiled Glory: God’s Self-Revelation in Human Likeness—A Biblical Theology of God’s Anthropomorphic Self-Disclosure,” in Piper, Taylor, and Helseth, *Beyond the Bounds*, 155–56. Additionally, it seems that the passibilistic reading of Scripture and the passibilistic understanding of divine love and responsiveness discussed in chap. 5 of this study display this error in abundance. There we saw that passibilists often appear to tend more toward univocal interpretation because they build more exclusively on one half of the balance, namely, the similarity springing from our status as *imago Dei*. Recall that for my purposes I am using the term *anthropocentric* as a synonym of *univocal*, and thus distinguishing it from *anthropomorphism* specifically.
from his gracious self-revelation. On the other hand, there is a similarity criterion established not only in the fact of God’s self-revelation to humanity, but also in making mankind in the “image” and “likeness” of God (Gen. 1:26), whereby man is fitted to receive the accommodated revelation God has provided. As A. B. Caneday nicely puts it:

God made mankind in his image and likeness. Therefore, God reveals himself to us with reference to ourselves. The image of God is his revelatory nexus integrated into our very being. He discloses himself to us with reference to his likeness in us. Thus, apart from this first analogical revelation imprinted upon us, we would know nothing about God.

To take our handling of accommodated revelation a step further, we may benefit from John Frame’s attempt at clarifying proper senses in which we should understand scriptural God-language as both anthropomorphic and theomorphic. He reasons as follows:

All Scripture is written in human language, not some divine language. God’s revelation is “accommodated” as Calvin liked to say, to human understanding. . . . This is the only kind of revelation there is. . . . All human language is taken from human life. But all human language is also God’s creation, given to us not only to communicate earthly realities, but also to reveal God to us. . . . We should not think of human language as if it were wholly concerned with the creation and therefore has to be twisted, qualified, or taken figuratively in order to refer to God. All human language is anthropomorphic; but more fundamentally it is, like the creation itself, theomorphic.

Stated differently, I suggest that we think of God’s self-revelation as anthropomorphic in the order of knowing and theomorphic in the order of being. That is to say that we can understand God’s revelation because it comes to

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36Because of God’s self-revelation, we can know God truly, as Scripture itself indicates (Deut. 29:29; Jer. 9:23–24; 31:31–34; John 17:3; 1 John 2:3; 4:7–8), though not exhaustively. I will provide an additional comment on the proper sense of divine incomprehensibility below.


38John M. Frame, The Doctrine of God (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 367–68. Clearly, Frame is here using the term anthropomorphic in a broader sense than in the more common (and narrower sense) in which an anthropomorphism depicts God, in nonliteral fashion, as having human bodily characteristics. His point is simply that all of scriptural revelation is anthropomorphic in the broader sense that it is given in human (and not divine) language, while human language is ultimately theomorphic in that, “like the rest of creation,” it comes to us from God, bearing his imprint. Similarly, see e.g., J. I. Packer, “The Adequacy of Human Language,” in Inerrancy, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 214–16.

39My intent here in using the term anthropomorphic in this way is simply to capitalize on Frame’s precedent in using the terminology this way. Though I understand and agree with the way he is using
us in an accommodated form using human language. But undergirding that is the reality that all of God’s creation, including human beings (imago Dei) and human language, is first of all, as Frame says, theomorphic.

Thus, in the realm of emotion, we can understand something of what it means for God to exhibit emotion because he has disclosed this of himself using human language. It would be a huge mistake, however, to attempt to fill out our understanding of divine emotion by univocally extrapolating from our experience of emotion and applying that to God on a larger scale. Instead, I submit that the order of being (the ontology of the matter) moves from the Creator, as the point of origin, to the creature, as the reflection or image. So, then, it is God who, in fact, is most perfectly passionate, and we the creatures have the God-given (or theomorphic) capacity—diminished, though not obliterated, by sin—to reflect that passion in a creaturely manner.

We must now make a brief comment about the truth-value of analogical God-language, for it is sometimes thought that “analogical” equates to nonliteral or even untruthful. Here I must stress that I am not using the term analogical as the opposite of the term literal. Moreover, I do not believe that there is a necessary disjunction between those two terms. In fact, I concur with Michael Horton’s argument that scriptural God-language may be (and often is) both analogical and literal. To elaborate on this construct with an example for a moment, I would argue that, in the case of an anthropomorphism narrowly defined, describing God as possessing an outstretched arm (e.g., Ex. 6:6) is an example of nonliteral speech applied to God, because of divine incorporeality. However, even this recognition does not undermine the truth-value of the revelation about God. The question is simply one of authorial intent: what does the author want us to understand about God in Exodus 6:6 when he is described with an outstretched arm? The answer

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40 Horton, Covenant and Eschatology, 50–54, 75–76, 84–85. On p. 52, Horton distances his analogical/literal view from the analogical/mythological view of Langdon Gilkey. His point is that Gilkey equates univocal with literal, so that when Gilkey himself moves to adopt an analogical model, he assumes that it cannot be literal (and so must be symbolic or mythological) because it is not univocal. In this respect, Horton observes that Gilkey’s move displays “a surprising unfamiliarity with the clearly stated positions of medieval scholastics, the Reformers, and their own scholastic successors.” On p. 75 Horton adds, “... ‘literal’ is not synonymous with ‘univocal.’ In analogical language particularly, as applied to interpreting scripture, certain characteristics ascribed to God are meant to be taken literally... That determination rests on the goal of the text. What really counts is not what signs or even genres ‘mean’ in the abstract, but how they are used.” To stress the point once more, on p. 84, Horton states, “An apt analogy picks out literal predicates, but God’s acting and God’s embracing or loving (or, for that matter, God’s being good, just, etc.) are both like and unlike an embodied... agent’s.”
of course is not that God has a fleshly appendage, but that he is strong to deliver his people. Now, when we shift over to a consideration of divine love, for example, we should understand that, theomorphically speaking, love does refer literally to God because God is a personal being. Corporeality is thus a prerequisite of having a literal arm; it is not, however, a prerequisite of literally expressing love. To put it yet another way, divine incorporeality leads us to the conclusion that anthropomorphisms are analogical and nonliteral (though nevertheless truth bearing), whereas anthropopathisms are analogical and literal.

All of that is to say, then, that analogical God-language does not at all undermine the truth-value of the revelation. It merely reflects the fact that the statement in question is accommodated. The point, according to Horton, is that analogical revelation “is correct description, but not univocal description.”41 For our purposes, then, we should affirm that the emotional predications of God in Scripture refer literally and truthfully to him. Thus God is truly impassioned. At the same time, the truth of these predications is analogical, in that the meaning of these terms when applied to God is both similar and dissimilar to how the truth of these terms applies to humans. God literally and truthfully loves his creation. But what it means for God the Creator to love the created other involves some important dissimilarities from any expression of creaturely love—not the least of which is the sense of impassibility for which we have been arguing, namely, that God’s love (or any of his other ad extra emotional expressions) cannot be wrung from him involuntarily. Finally, we must

41Horton, “Hellenistic or Hebrew?,” 210. Since it is not my intention to provide an extended engagement with the debate over divine incomprehensibility, I will make a brief comment here, followed by the citation of a couple of similar scholarly observations on the matter. First, my own comment: In harmony with this analogical method, I should point out that I differentiate two senses of divine incomprehensibility, one that I reject and one that I accept. Because God has seen fit to reveal himself to us, I reject incomprehensibility when it is held to mean that God is entirely unintelligible. On the other hand, because God’s self-revelation is analogical, I also reject the belief that we can know God exhaustively. Thus, the definition of incomprehensibility that I accept in relation to God is that of unfathomability. Hence, while we may know God truly in accord with his self-revelation, we may never hope to exhaustively fathom the depths of God. John Frame commends a similar understanding. He says, “We should think of God’s incomprehensibility, then, not as a ‘wholly otherness,’ but as the result of transcendence in the biblical sense: God has control and authority over creaturely knowledge. So his thoughts are not our thoughts, and his mystery permeates our knowledge. This kind of incomprehensibility does not compromise God’s knowability. Rather, God’s incomprehensible nature becomes immanent in his revelation of himself.” Frame, The Doctrine of God, 207. As Herman Bavinck puts it, “The ectypal knowledge of God that is granted to creatures by revelation is not the absolute self-knowledge of God but the knowledge of God as it has been accommodated to and made fit for the finite consciousness—hence anthropomorphized.” Herman Bavinck, Reformen Dogmatics, vol. 1, Prolegomena, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 214.
also recall that, in deference to biblical authority, we are not at liberty to pick or privilege our own preferred analogical emphases within Scripture. In order to practice analogical interpretation on scriptural terms and thus avoid the establishment of our own preferred canon within the canon, we must take all of the analogies together.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{42}The following quotation of Michael Horton, used previously in chap. 5 to critique Terence Fretheim’s proposal, is fitting here as well: “Here the analogy of Scripture becomes essential. We might even call it, somewhat awkwardly, the analogy of analogy. No single analogy, abstracted from the rest, adequately represents God’s character. Only taken together as one multifaceted self-revelation do the analogies effectively render a sufficient knowledge of God.” Horton, “Hellenistic or Hebrew?,” 221–22.
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