**Tyndale Fellowship NT Study Group 2022
Ethics and Moral Transformation in the NT**

**Paper proposals (alphabetically by proposer surname)**

Joseph Allen
MPhil Student, University of Cambridge, UK

**Is James Also Among the Prophets? Prophetic Ethics in the Letter of James**

In scholarship on the letter of James, the role of prophetic literature in the letter has gone largely unexplored. In Dale Allison’s bibliography, only one entry deals specifically with James and the prophets and, even then, it is a short article focused on the minor prophets. In standard commentaries, citations of prophetic texts are generally limited to verbal parallels. This paper represents a modest attempt to address this lacuna. In particular, I intend to explore the function of four intertexts within the letter: Jeremiah 9.23-24 (James 1.9-11), Isaiah 32.15-20 (James 3.13-18), Isaiah 5 (James 5.1-6), and Malachi 3.5 (James 1.27; 5.4). I will briefly suggest why an allusion is justified in each case. Building on the work of Richard Hays, I will then argue that James invites his readers to consider the broader context of each passage. I hope to show that James reconfigures these texts in the light of his eschatological expectation and imaginatively casts his readers as heirs of Israel’s covenantal demands. James calls his community to boast in a God who loves justice (Jer. 9), who desires righteousness and peace (Isa. 32), who despises oppression (Isa. 5), and who fiercely protects the vulnerable (Mal. 3).

Revd Prof. Anthony Bash
Honorary Professor, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, UK

**The Place of Interpersonal Remorse in Moral Transformation**

Remorse towards God about sin has been well-explored. Remorse towards a fellow-believer about wrongs against a fellow-believer is a widely neglected topic in Christian theology and often (in the view of the writer of this paper) wrongly assumed to be an implicit aspect of repentance (which has been well-explored). Perhaps also surprisingly, there is remarkably little about interpersonal remorse in the OT that is explicit, and only an inchoate theology of interpersonal remorse in the NT. The view of the writer of this paper is that interpersonal remorse is a foundational and transformative Christian ethic, and an essential antecedent step of interpersonal repentance in its most richly-textured form. This paper explores the nature and forms of interpersonal remorse, sets them within the framework of related responses to interpersonal wrongdoing (such as regret and repentance), and articulates a theology of interpersonal remorse based on the ethics of the OT and NT. It also explores why the idea of interpersonal remorse is not explicitly articulated in the OT and NT but is in fact an important aspect of transformative Christian ethics and a necessary implication of dominical teaching.

Prof. Dr. Armin Baum
Professor of New Testament, Freie Theologische Hochschule Gießen, Germany

**Saving Wealthy Ephesian Women from a Self-Centered Way of Life (1 Tim 2:15): Salvation by Childbearing in the Context of Ancient Arguments against Sexual Intercourse, Pregnancy and Child-rearing**

Abstract: Many Bible readers regard Paul’s statement in 1 Timothy 2:15 (“She will be saved through childbearing …”) as very unfair in several respects. First, what about women who live as singles, voluntarily or involuntarily? What about married women who cannot have children for medical reasons? Further, why did Paul admonish just women to have children and not also men? Why did he lose sight of gender equality? And finally, is this passage not irreconcilable with passages such as Galatians 3:28, where Paul advocated the soteriological equality of the sexes, and with 1 Corinthians 7:8, where Paul encouraged unmarried women and widows to remain single? The statement in 1 Timothy 2:15 confronts us with two exegetical challenges. First, its telegraphic style was probably quite comprehensible for Paul’s protégé Timothy; but for us who are much less familiar with Paul’s thoughts it is much more difficult to decipher. Secondly, while for Paul, Timothy and the women concerned in 1 Timothy 2:15 the concrete situation in the church of Ephesus was crystal clear, for us who are not involved and look at it from a distance of 2000 years it is anything but easy to figure out what exactly Paul was talking about. But read against its literary and historical context, 1 Timothy 2:15 is not a misogynistic text but rather a statement against luxury-oriented selfishness which is in conflict with the law of love.

Dr Philip Church
Senior Research Fellow, Laidlaw College, New Zealand

**The Plymouth Brethren Christian Church and Separation from the (Evil) World**

Separation from the (evil) world based on 2 Tim 2:19–21 is a defining characteristic of Exclusive Brethrenism, both in its most extreme form, the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (PBCC) and in other Exclusive Brethren groups. I examine this text in its context and note the varieties of ethical injunctions present and the form they take. I then critically assess John Nelson Darby’s reading of this text, working from his translation and comments elsewhere in his writings. Darby misread the text as separation from “evil” people rather than avoidance of wrongdoing. His followers have concentrated on the deontological commands in the text, introduced their own teleological reasoning and overlooked the virtues that the text encourages the Lord’s servant to develop. The savage (mis)application of this text over almost 200 years by the PBCC has caused and continues to cause untold damage and hurt to numerous people and their families to this day.

Dr Channing L. Crisler
Associate Professor of NT, Clamp Divinity School, Anderson University, USA

**Justification by Suffering: The Transformative Link Between Justification and the Pain of the Justified**

NT exegetes, theologians, and other interested parties often struggle to articulate the connection between doctrine and ethics. Simply stated, how did the beliefs of early Christians inform and animate the way that they lived? Such a question betrays the religious instinct that a tension exists between theory and practice. One well-worn example of this tension is the relationship between justification by faith and works as it is articulated by Paul and James. Negative explanations tend to dominate here as many interpreters set out to place Paul and James on the same theological footing by underscoring what they did *not* mean in their use of justification language. A positive, though less discussed, alternative is available by comparing the shared intertextual features of relevant texts. Given the potential of this approach, the overarching argument of this paper is that Paul, James, and the author of Hebrews all explain justification by appealing to OT pre-texts in which “justified” figures suffer in a way that transforms them and shapes their experience of what it means to be right with God. Justifying faith is a painful experience that characterizes the entirety of the lives of the justified. The approach taken up in this paper consists of three movements: (1) analyze the intertextual features of Rom 4:1–25, Gal 3:1–29, James 2:14–26, and Heb 10:36–11:40 with a focus on the suffering of the OT figures that each NT writer evokes; (2) compare how the suffering of these OT figures impacts the way Paul, James, and the writer of Hebrews understand justification; and (3) infer how the suffering of the justified may bridge the gap between so-called initial justification, lived justification, and final justification.

Dr Amiel Drimbe
Lecturer in NT Language, Exegesis, and Theology, Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest, Romania

**‘A great difference between the two ways’: In search of the ethics of the earliest gentile Christians**

It has been argued recently that the Didache “was meant to be a companion writing,” i.e., it was meant to accompany the reading of Scriptures. Perhaps the most famous section of the Didache is the ethical treatise “The Two Ways” (Did. 1.1-6.3), which was quoted repeatedly in early Christian writings. Moreover, this treatise was likely composed between 50 and 70 CE, making it largely contemporary with several NT writings. If this is the case, then a comparison between “The Two Ways” and the NT corpus of the time (50-70 CE) could offer new insights into the emergence of “Christian” ethics. In this paper, I will attempt such a comparison and apply the concept of “companion writing” to the issue of ethics. My research questions will be: Was “The Two Ways” meant to accompany the reading of the earliest “Christian” Scriptures? What is there to be uncovered if we compare “The Two Ways” with some of the well-known NT ethical sections from the period? Was there a community that stood behind both “The Two Ways” treatise and other ethical texts that became part of the NT? If there was such a community, what is to be learned from it?

Dr Peter W. Gosnell
Professor of Religion, Muskingum University, USA

**The Ethics of Valuing Others in the Gospel According to Luke**

The Gospel According to Luke is well known for its moral teachings that challenge attitudes about social standing and wealth. The Gospel also does more ethically than is generally recognized. Luke’s portrait of Jesus, with its ubiquitous reversal motif and its Kingdom orientation, offers a persistent challenge to readers to consider how they might overvalue themselves and devalue others, with Jesus setting the pattern for proper valuation. Out of that emerges the strong concern always to treat people fully as people, regardless of who they are or what they have done, which sets the stage for all sorts of personal, and even community, ethical decision making as encouraged by the words of the Gospel. Activity that advances the full humanity of others is good; that which dehumanizes is evil. This exploration follows a reading strategy that probes core messages holding Luke’s entire Life of Jesus together. The results suggest that ethics in the Bible can be founded on more than direct or implied moral teaching associated with divine mandates and with texts respected largely for their authority inherent as scripture.

Dr Robert W. Heimburger
Research Fellow in Theological Ethics, University of Aberdeen, UK

**“Wait for the Promise of the Father”: Waiting as the Beginning of the Christian Way in the Book of Acts**

One of the first instructions that God’s people receive in the Book of Acts is to “wait for the promise of the Father” (1:4). The Acts of the Apostles begins not with their acting but with their waiting, waiting upon God the Father to empower them with the Spirit by God’s Son. In this paper I will explore how Acts frames the Christian Way as beginning in waiting. I will do so, firstly, by examining the link between waiting and the description of the renewed people of Acts as “the Way,” a people walking in a Way prepared by the Spirit. Secondly, I will explore how waiting in Acts 1 connects to acts of worship, praise, prayer, and joy across the Book of Acts. Thirdly, I will link waiting to Sabbath in the Genesis creation accounts and in the Ten Commandments. Finally, I will address times when waiting is difficult, like during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus I will seek to discover Christian living in the Book of Acts as beginning in waiting, walking in a Way, praising, and resting.

Revd Dr Mark Keown
Senior Lecturer, Laidlaw College, New Zealand

**The Ethics of Evangelism: A Critique of Keown**

In 2008, I published a book *Congregational Evangelism in Philippians*. In the book I argue that central to “the fabric of Philippians” is an appeal for the Philippians to continue to be engaged in evangelistic mission. In this paper, I will critique my earlier work, arguing that while the book rightly captures the appeal for ongoing gospel contention in Philippians, it almost completely misses the critical theme of ethics in congregational evangelism. I will challenge the idea that the Christ-hymn can be relegated to a mere appendix as *Congregational Evangelism* does. I will contend instead that the Christ-hymn should play centre-stage in *any* analysis of Philippians. Then, building on my paper arguing that the hymn can and should be read missionally (Tyndale NT Study Group 2021), I will explore the summons to the Philippians not only to be proactively evangelistic, but to do so embodying the ethics of Christ so beautifully articulated through the letter, especially in Phil 2:1–11. I will conclude with one or two thoughts for evangelism today.

Alistair McKitterick
Lecturer in Biblical and Theological Studies, Moorlands College, UK

**The role of New Testament teleology in moral decision-making**

Richard Hays’s classic work on the Moral Vison of the New Testament provides three foci for Christian Praxis: Community, Cross and New Creation.  I want to integrate Hays’s insights with those of Samuel Wells in his Improvisation: the drama of Christian Living and David Kelsey work on the goals of God.  The argument I want to make is that Christian praxis can follow several goals (I will suggest that they incarnation, reconciliation, and new creation) and that the task of theological reflection is to discern which of these goals to pursue in any given situation.  This reflection process is neither predetermined (as if there were only one goal ultimately to be sought) nor arbitrary in the sense that it is discerned and the result of critical reflection and prayerful revelation.

Dr Tim Murray & Revd Dr Mark Wreford
Pastor, Amblecote Christian Centre, UK; Curate, Trinity Church Nottingham, UK

**Moral Formation and the Shape of the Early Church: Novelty, Methodology, History**

In this paper, we will discuss how the approach to moral formation evidenced in the NT has implications for historical research and specifically presuppositions concerning its continuity with surrounding cultural models. Taking Galatians as an example of a pattern found throughout the NT, we argue that Paul outlines a novel pattern of affective transformation: his own identity was replaced with Christ’s, and he seeks to embed the Galatians in a similar identity both as individuals and as a group. In each case, this depends on God’s revelation in a) specific experiences and b) an ongoing educative process, whose shape is derived from the historical particularity of Jesus Christ. Despite similarities with other approaches to moral formation in the ancient world, Paul’s process is distinctive because it is presented as both a work of the Spirit (whose character is sufficiently stable as to be useful evidence for Paul’s argument) and dependent on ongoing instruction in the significance of Jesus, understanding scripture, ethical direction, etc. The historical specificity of such factors represent a departure from other available approaches, and in light of this it makes sense to postulate that the organisation of the communities he is addressing differed from those around them in novel ways which calls into question the overwhelming presupposition of continuity which fuels the search for comparative models.

Dr Calin Popescu
Teacher, Campulung Theological Seminary, Romania

**Did Judas really *lifted his heel* against the Lord? What Bible tells about his guilt**

The former apostle Judas Iscariot was portrayed by the Gospels as the archetypal traitor, by alluding to a passage from Psalm 41/40:10 which John 13:18 is quoting explicitly. Traditionally, translations of the passage say that Judas ‘lifted up his heel against’ the Lord. A more thorough approach may suggest that behind the strong phrase might be a mere calque and a stylistic Hebraism (leading to frequent misinterpretations of the verse). In the Psalm John quotes, the translator of Septuagint rendered the Hebrew for ‘heel’ by the Greek for ‘craft’, since he saw there a metonymy describing a nonviolent meaning. According to that wider meaning, which goes beyond the literal sense (the anatomical back part of the foot), the ‘heel’ denoted the notion of deceiving someone (like by grasping by that anatomical part). Hence, one could question what the real meaning of the quotation was: did the guilt of the fallen disciple (called ‘devil’ by Lord) consist in such an act of violence? The extensive account of the facts doesn’t show that. Or rather the verse was mistranslated, and the text originally referred only to a subtle treason and moral dishonesty? There are sufficient grounds in the Patristic and modern Western exegesis as well, for revising the translation in that direction.

Filip J. Sylwestrowicz
DPhil Student, University of Oxford, UK

**Pauline Exhortations to Bless Persecutors as a Model for Christian Response to Hostility**

This presentation will focus on Rom 12:14 and 1 Cor 4:12 as these are two texts where Paul appropriates Jesus' injunction that enemies should be blessed (cf. Matt 5:44, Luke 6:28). The presentation will explore how the Pauline admonition to bless hostile outsiders compares with interpretations and applications of Lev 19:17–18 preserved in other Jewish texts (e.g., 1QS, CD, *Sifra*). It will also set the Christian posture of blessing enemies against the contemporary background of using curse tablets to vindicate justice or win personal rivalry. It will be argued that Paul appropriated the Jesus tradition to challenge his communities to adopt the counter-cultural posture of blessing even those who treat them with open hostility. The presentation will also explore the ethical implications of Pauline parenesis for Christians today, as they interact with outsiders and respond to hostility. It will seek to identify some ways in which Christians can ‘bless’ people who are opposed to Christianity and what it means to refrain from ‘cursing’ in the modern context.

Mr Miles Tradewell
PhD Student, University of Exeter, UK

**Intertextual Metaphor as a Catalyst for Moral Transformation: Romans 13:11-14 as a Test Case**

The call to moral transformation is a consistent thread throughout the New Testament, but how exactly do these texts invite their readers to change the way that they live? A broad range of techniques are employed, but one of the most persuasive tools in the hands of the New Testament authors is metaphor. Linguists have long recognised the compelling power of metaphor and their insights have been fruitfully applied by biblical scholars for several decades. However, recent research into notions such as *Deliberate Metaphor* and *Intertextual Metaphor* suggest that these intentional forms of metaphor impact readers and listeners in an especially compelling way. Using Romans 13:11-14 as a test case, this paper considers how Paul weaves metaphors that are crafted from intertextual material into his writing to exhort his readers in an intensified way. I identify the main *Intertextual Metaphors* present in the passage and consider how drawing on Israel’s Scriptures for their source domain significantly increases their persuasive power. This metaphor analysis also helpfully brings precision to the exact nature of the moral transformation that Paul calls for in Romans 13:11-14 and demonstrates the significance of *Intertextual Metaphor* within the New Testament for encouraging moral change.

Prof. Dr. Joel White
Professor of New Testament, Freie Theologische Hochschule Gießen, Germany

**Between Theology and Ethics: Philemon as a Case Study in Managing Theological Convictions and Competing Interests**

The brief letter to Philemon offers us a glimpse of Paul the apostle in action as he maneuvers among competing interests in a local community of Christ followers: those of Philemon, Onesimus, the church in Colossae, and his own. What seems like a straightforward issue concerning the fate of a slave is in its ancient context a difficult question that Paul seeks to address with reference to three intersecting considerations: 1. conceptions of honor, 2. the familial character of the church, and 3. convictions concerning election and calling. In my paper, I seek to describe how Paul assesses each of these and weighs them in relation to each other, articulates an ethical stance that reflects his theological convictions, and subtly moves all parties to adopting that stance as their own.

Dr Matt Williams
Head of Biblical Insight, Jubilee Centre, Cambridge, UK

1. **“Not in my Father’s House!” Jesus’ Business Ethics and the Temple Incident of John 2:13–25**

In John, Jesus’ first visit to Jerusalem sees him expel traders from the Temple. Much attention given to this incident revolves around its relationship to similar stories in the Synoptics or its significance within the Gospel’s broader Christological aims. Very little is said about the language used to castigate the traders’ activity, that they are making τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρός μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου (2:16b). What kind of house are they making ‘my Father’s house’ into? Why is ἐμπορίον a negative term? Hardly any detailed work has been done to answer this question of what exactly it is about what was happening in the Temple that Jesus objects to because one or both of two things are assumed. Firstly, since οἶκον ἐμπορίου is less derogatory than the σπήλαιον λῃστῶν (house of bandits) used by Matthew, Mark and Luke, John neutralises the ethical force of Jesus’ words. Secondly, any passing interest that the Fourth Gospel may have in economic ethics is eclipsed by the priority of communicating Jesus’ identity. My paper problematises these assumptions and, taking a fresh look at Jesus’ words in John 2:16 in its literary and historical context, shows its relevance for our understanding of Early Christian business ethics.

Mr Paul Wilson
Lecturer, Tilsley College; PhD Student, University of Edinburgh, UK

**‘The migrant messiah’: biblical perspectives on an ethical claim**

The claim that ‘Jesus was a refugee’ or that Christians follow a ‘migrant messiah’ has become a shibboleth among those who advocate a more benevolent response to migrants. This manner of identifying Jesus has gained traction in the past decade, even being promoted by politicians and pop stars. In response, ‘Refujesus’ has received backlash from those who view migration as a threat. Proponents on all sides of this debate reference the ‘escape to Egypt’ (Matt 2:13–23), but are often more concerned with current ethical questions related to migration than the text itself. This paper will argue that while portraying Jesus as a refugee has some exegetical merit, the NT has much more to offer on the issue. First, this paper will overview the current ‘Jesus was (not) a refugee’ debate, noting its eisegetical and anachronistic pitfalls. Second, ‘the escape’ will be discussed in its historical and literary context, incorporating insights from migration studies. Third, it will be argued that ‘the escape’ is but one key NT text that should form Christian ethical thinking on migration, with reference to Acts 7-8, 1 Pet 2, and Eph 2 as demonstrative examples.