

AWESOME ANALOGIES: KATHŌS CONSTRUCTS IN THE NT

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Experiential sanctification¹ is divinely designed to stand soteriologically in the gap between God's past and future eras of what has been completed in Christ.² The Church's past salvation history is a *fait accompli* attributed to the inexplorable, sovereign grace of God. As such, its reality is held up before members of Christ's body as one of the greatest incentives for holy living in the here and now. The same is true in reference to the divinely guaranteed consummation of the soteric process.³ Consequently the theological indicative of salvation history past (i.e. the historically finalized dimension of "already") is to function ethically in the experiential "not yet" by lovingly goading disciples forward along a pathway of practical righteousness. From the other end our Lord's inviolable, inscripturated promises concerning ultimate perfection (i.e. the guaranteed-to-be-historically-finalized dimension of "already") are similarly intended to function with impact upon his people in the "not yet," transitional phase by graciously drawing them toward their moral goal of Christlikeness. Therefore our area of acute responsibility is conveyed through a theological imperative to be who we are and ultimately shall be in Christ (i.e. we are to live our lives ethically between the unfathomable bookends of these indicatives). Herein lies the major motif for sanctification according to the NT.⁴

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¹ I.e. progressive sanctification or sanctification proper. A qualifier is necessary since the Bible also speaks of initial (i.e. past salvation) and ultimate (i.e. future glorification) "sanctification."

² It has been well said that we are "already" but "not yet." We, so to speak, live our Christian lives in a soteriological/eschatological time warp. See H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 91–100, 205–326; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1955) vol. 2, part 4, chap. 8; G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 437–447, 479–494, 511–525. C. F. D. Moule, "The New Life" in Colossians 3:1–17," *RevExp* 70 (1973) 481–493, enlists different illustrations for the Christian life, one among them being that of an amphibian. Furthermore, interfacing with this well-attested NT soterio-eschatological rubric are other theological constructs, e.g. the "two men" and their respective constituencies (Adam theology). Cf. J. Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959); *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957); S. L. Johnson, Jr., "Romans 5:12—An Exercise in Exegesis and Theology," *New Dimensions in New Testament Theology* (ed. R. Longenecker and M. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974).

³ Among the many passages confirming this, the *ordo salutis* of Rom 8:29–30 stands conspicuously as a divine blueprint (note especially its last great affirmation).

⁴ This motif is highly developed in the NT but is not absent from the OT. Statements such as Lev 11:44–45, *et al.*, although quite general, stand as predecessors.

Means of grace are abundantly offered for the experiential trek associated with the imperative.⁵ As far as the eye can see, revelation bridges from God's Word are provided to span even the most precipitous terrain so that his people might make moral progress. Constituting one group of these bridges is a majority of occurrences of *kathōs* clauses in the NT. Some operate in a theological arena so as to encourage pilgrims along their journey through vivid corroborations of the veracity of the God of the Word and/or the Word of God.⁶ Others, very significantly, operate directly in an ethical arena so as to challenge the travelers, via some very awesome analogies, to make more progress. From the perspective of disciples who are in and of themselves insufficient, these analogies (almost always related to the past and future indicatives) are overwhelmingly intimidating. But God's beloved ones understand that these statements too are a vital part of the means that he has graciously provided as if to push them to the limit in their exercise of moral responsibility. This should drive them to a greater degree of dependence upon their Lord and his infinite resources.

Prior to a survey of the theological grouping of *kathōs* clauses in the NT and an organizational synthesis of its ethical occurrences it will prove helpful to scan Greek literary history. This brief review of the meanings and functions of *kathōs* hopefully will provide some background for its morally significant impact in the NT.

I. SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC BACKGROUND

The extended family of particles⁷ to which *kathōs* belongs exhibits a variety of basic usages throughout its history in Greek literature. *Kathōs* has had many cousins functioning in the realms of comparison and/or correlation.⁸ Its

⁵ For theological commentary on the priority of faith in the sanctification process see G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952).

⁶ Brief discussions about *kathōs* being utilized in scenarios of testimonies or promises of God, Christ, the Spirit, and even the gospel, along with its use as an introductory formula, are forthcoming (cf. *infra*).

⁷ Because of the functional diversity of this group, the general designation "particle" seems appropriate. As Dana and Mantey note, a particle "has undefined limits among Greek grammarians," thereby including "nearly all parts of speech except verbs, nouns, and pronouns" and dealing with " 'odds and ends' in Greek grammar" (H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* [Toronto: Macmillan, 1955] 258). Subsequently they survey "the various connective particles" of the NT (ibid. 276) among which *kathōs* stands. Robertson labels them "comparative particles" (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Broadman, 1934] 967). Although virtually all lexicographers and grammarians recognize the versatility of this *hōs* word-group, some prefer the more focused label of adverb and/or conjunction (cf. e.g. LSJ 857, 2038–2040; BDF 236).

⁸ For two helpful surveys see N. Turner's syntax contribution to J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963) 3.319–320; W. D. Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1941) 173–177. Regarding correlative constructions, G. B. Winer observed long ago that "correlation is brought out with greatest precision in the form of comparison" (*A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament* [Andover: Draper, 1897] 440).

elder and more frequently occurring⁹ sibling, however, is *hōs*.¹⁰ Interestingly, all the members of the family “had their origin in the relative pronoun.”¹¹ Although *kathōs* itself is rarely attested in classical Greek it is found as early as Herodotus.¹²

Most Atticists, however, regarded it as an outcast relative from the wrong side of the literary tracks.¹³ Nevertheless its usage frequency increased in the Hellenistic¹⁴ era, as well documented in the papyri.¹⁵ In pre-NT Biblical Greek it is found in the LXX,¹⁶ *Enoch*, the *Epistle of Aristeeas*, Philo, Josephus, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and so on. By the time of the NT *kathōs* along with *hōs* are the most frequently occurring clausal particles within its pages.¹⁷

Basic usage categories for *kathōs* in the NT are sketched out by BAGD¹⁸ as follows: (1) comparison (with and without correlation);¹⁹ (2) as, to the

⁹ For a quantitative impression cf. the respective entries for *kathōs* and *hōs* in LSJ 857, 2038–2040. According to W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (rev. ed.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963) 512–514, 1026–1031, *kathōs* and *hōs* are found respectively 180 and 502 times in the NT.

¹⁰ Concerning *hōs*, although it exhibits nearly three times as many occurrences as *kathōs* in the NT, its percentage in ethical settings is not even remotely as high as *kathōs*. Consequently the former term’s ethical contributions will not be developed in this paper, except here to note the following: (1) In the gospels *hōs* regularly conveys the similes of the parables. (2) In Revelation it is the common vehicle for vision description. (3) It is used with general ethical associations in Matt 5:48; 6:12; Eph 5:1, 8, 15, 24, 28, 33; 6:5–7; Col 2:6; 3:12, 18, 22–23; 1 Pet 1:14; 4:10; 1 John 1:7; Rev 3:21. (4) It is used in specific comparisons of the love command in Matt 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8. It might be conjectured that in the course of semantic development the intensified *kathōs* (cf. Chamberlain, *Exegetical Grammar* 176; J. H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962] 314) had come to pack more punch in the Koine era (“just as, even as”). This would seem to be in harmony not only with the quantitative nature of NT *kathōs* occurrences in ethical settings but also with a possibly qualitative feature as well. But such conjectures must be offered with caution since both *hōs* and *kathōs* apparently alternate in the significantly ethical contexts of Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3.

¹¹ Chamberlain, *Exegetical Grammar* 173.

¹² LSJ 857.

¹³ MM 314; cf. Turner in Moulton, *Grammar* 3.320, who emphasizes the sharp criticisms against *kathōs*, especially by Phrynichus. He represented most classicists who regarded *kathō* and *katha* as the only acceptable relatives.

¹⁴ Cf. BDF 236 (“a Hellenistic and Modern Greek word”).

¹⁵ Robertson, *Grammar* 968; cf. MM 314 for some examples.

¹⁶ Counting occurrences in the Apocrypha and some duplicates in the related versions, its number tallies 303 (E. Hatch and A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint* [Austria: Akademische, 1954] 704–705). By way of selective summary: (1) Some correlatives are found; (2) several “as” or “just as” formulas (e.g. “as the Lord lives,” “as it is today,” “as it is [written]”) (some introduce direct quotes, but most appeal to the authority of Mosaic legislation in general); (3) many similes (cf. Ezekiel); (4) often used historically in obedience or disobedience illustrations; (5) some theologically impacting confirmations of God’s person and/or promises occur *passim* (cf. Ps 103[102]:13); (6) an awesome analogy in Hos 3:1.

¹⁷ Dana and Mantey, *Grammar* 276.

¹⁸ BAGD 391; compare and contrast those for *hōs* (ibid. 897–899).

¹⁹ Although *hōs* frequently has a correlative, *kathōs* “sometimes” has one (Robertson, *Grammar* 968).

degree that; (3) causally (i.e. since, in so far as); (4) temporally (i.e. when or while); and (5) after verbs of saying to introduce indirect discourse. It is of course its first and largest category of usage that predominantly furnishes the theological and ethical data for this study. The great significance of the comparative function of *kathōs* may be highlighted by Dana and Mantey's general observations:

A comparative clause introduces an analogous thought for the purpose of elucidating or emphasizing the thought expressed in the principal clause. . . . Description or emphasis will be found to be the function of nearly all comparative clauses, which are of frequent occurrence in the New Testament.²⁰

Consequently such syntactical constructs are excellent vehicles for conveying those awesome analogies that substantively contribute to the ethical thrust of the NT corpus.²¹

Concerning word order, Turner's tabulations are informative:

Kathōs (with *kathaper* and *katha* as variants)—clauses follow the main clause invariably in Mt, in Mk (except for Mk 1^{2f}, which is not an exception if punctuated with a stop after 1³), in Lk (except for 6³¹ 11³⁰ 17^{26,28}). But in Jn the distribution is more even (19 post: 13 pre), like the Joh. epp. (8:5). In Ac there are 10 post: 2 pre. In Ro 15 (+5 vl.) post: 1 pre. 1 and 2 Co 24 (+2 vl.): 7. Ga 3:0. Ph 2:1. Eph 10:0. Col 4:1. 1 and 2 Th 12:3. Past 0:1. Heb 7:2. 1 Pt 0:1. 2 Pt 2:0.²²

Within a more focused category of usage "where *kathōs* introduces a following quotation in [the] NT it almost invariably follows its main clause."²³

Building with these semantic and syntactic materials offers promise for an impressive structure. But one must begin at ground level—or, more technically, below-ground level—with the construction of a solid footing and foundation of a general theological nature. Then the eye-catching superstructure (i.e. of a more specific ethical nature) might rise solidly so as to exhibit its highly functional beauty.

II. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Commencing with this section the organizational grid for the *kathōs* data of the NT will shift from the purely semantic and syntactic to the theological and ethical. The contextually practical functions of this particle's phrases and clauses will now control further categorizations.

²⁰ Dana and Mantey, *Grammar* 275. Their first observation is correct in the realm of its descriptive function, but it should be modified technically by noting that "sometimes the principal clause is unexpressed" (Robertson, *Grammar* 968); e.g. cf. *kathōs* in 1 Tim 1:3 (MM 314 cites Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1299⁹ [4th century AD] as being syntactically parallel to this NT occurrence).

²¹ Another factor in reference to the special suitability of *kathōs* in this domain should be mentioned: It "is very frequent with the indicative" (Chamberlain, *Exegetical Grammar* 176).

²² Turner in Moulton, *Grammar* 3.345.

²³ *Ibid.* 3.320.

1. *Building upon the fidelity of the Word of God.* *Kathōs* is frequently used to convey historical precedent²⁴ or to confirm promise, be it fulfilled or anticipatory. The veracity and authority of God's Word is affirmed in many ways throughout its own pages. Introductory formulas, however, function often and well in this service. Conspicuously significant among them are the *kathōs* formulas.

The particle is used in conjunction with verbs referring to speaking (e.g. "just as it says") or writing (e.g. "just as it is written").²⁵ Although the combination sometimes does not cite chapter and verse from the OT but apparently appeals to an understood text, context or thematic conflation of OT teaching (e.g. Matt 26:24, cf. Mark 4:21 parallel; Mark 9:13; John 7:38; 1 Cor 14:34), the largest number of its uses targets a specific passage or catena of texts.

Even a cursory exploration of the references²⁶ yields much evidence for the conclusion that what God predicts or promises will be—or, in some cases, already has been—brought to fruition. Furthermore the preference for *kathōs* out of the pool of particles available for introductory formulas might possibly accentuate the extent of analogy between that which is cited or alluded to and its intended application. Consequently the Bibliological occurrences of *kathōs*, in the process of their revealing the fact, norms and depths of these inscripturated divine certitudes, stand as a truly awesome backdrop for the forthcoming ethical analogies that will impinge upon the frail but hopefully faithful people of God.

2. *Building upon the fidelity of the God of the Word.* As this sphere of data is explored it broadens and deepens the aforementioned background. Predictions, promises, testimonies and the like are fulfilled, guaranteed, confirmed, bolstered or powerfully illustrated, and this complex network exponentially enhances the veracity of the corresponding divine pronouncements. Although *kathōs* herein functions syntactically with notable variety, it is theologically instrumental in conveying the fact and/or the dramatic extent of such fidelity.

²⁴ Cf. the merely human illustrations noted in Mark 15:8 (because of this historical precedent, the crowds expected a release) and John 19:40 (according to the norm of Jewish burial practices). If this level of expectancy and conformity is generated by the precedents of human patterns, a much greater level would be energized by divine promises.

²⁵ Sometimes the subject (e.g. "it [i.e. Scripture] says") fluidly and understandably from a theological perspective shifts to "God says," "the Holy Spirit says," etc. This phenomenon seemingly provides an appropriate transition to the next section dealing with the promises/predictions of God/Christ. One should call to mind B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970) 299–348.

²⁶ Cf. Mark 1:2; Luke 1:55 (general summary of whole catena in vv. 46–55); 1:70 (the catena follows in vv. 71–79); 2:23; John 1:23; 6:31; 12:14 (quoted material in v. 15); Acts 7:42 (quoted material in vv. 42–43), 44, 58 (quoted material in vv. 49–50); 15:15 (quoted material in vv. 16–18); Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:10 (the catena follows in vv. 10–18); 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 29, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26 (a short catena in vv. 26–27); 15:3, 9 (the catena follows in vv. 9–12), 21; 1 Cor 1:31; 2:9; 10:7; 2 Cor 6:16 (the catena follows in vv. 16–18); 8:15; 9:9; Heb 3:7 (quoted material in vv. 7–11); 4:3, 7; 5:6.

For example, concerning Christ's word there are illustrative corroborations of its fulfillment already documented within the historical era encompassed by the gospel records. In Luke 19:32 (cf. Matt 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–10) it is noted that just prior to the triumphal entry two of his disciples found the colt "just as" Christ had said, and a little later that same week Mark (14:16; cf. Luke 22:13) records that two unnamed disciples followed a man and came to a room prepared for Passover "just as" their Lord had told them. Confirmation of his word continued after his resurrection, the most significant of which is the testimony of the angel to the women in Matt 28:6a: "He is not here, for he has risen, just as he said."²⁷ Additional material conveyed through the angel as recorded in Mark 16:7 further highlights the veracity of what Christ had been teaching his own: "He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him, just as he said to you."

Consequently the facts and fashionings of everything else he taught or said should be looked upon with unshakable confidence. Undergirding this contention is the fact that our incarnate Lord often pointed to his transcendent authority in the process of conveying revelation. Interestingly *kathōs* served as a prominent vehicle in Christ's testimony to his ultimate Source of documentation. For example, the *kathōs* clauses of John 8:28; 12:50 affirm that his teachings originated with the Father, the one in 5:30 confirms that his judicial pronouncements issue from the Chief Justice of the universe, and the one in 17:2 attests that his universal authority, especially as applied to the soteriological capstone of his mission, was bestowed upon him by the sovereign Architect of salvation history's blueprint. So everything he promises or predicts, whether it be directed to an individual in particular (cf. e.g. 2 Pet 1:14) or to his sheep in general, is to be looked upon as signed, sealed and delivered. Concerning this last important category, consider the following catena of sample references: "Just as my father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:29–30a). "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he who eats me, he also shall live because of me" (John 6:57).²⁸ "I am the good shepherd; and I know my own, and my own know me, even as the Father knows me and I know the Father" (10:14–15a).²⁹ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (17:14; cf. v. 16). "Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you" (15:9).³⁰ "Thou . . . didst love them, even as thou didst love me" (17:23). Of course his promises or predictions along with their overwhelming degree of completion or expected fulfillment did not cease with his resurrection and ascension. They contin-

²⁷ All English translations are taken from the NASB unless noted otherwise.

²⁸ The verse is best construed as a *kathōs . . . kai* correlative with subtle but extremely significant parallels surrounding these syntactical pivots.

²⁹ Note that the degree of reciprocal intimacy between the Good Shepherd and his sheep is stated to be the same as that which exists between the Father and the Son.

³⁰ Here the awesome analogy of the theological indicative is immediately followed by a commensurate imperative of sustained ethical responsibility: "Abide in my love!"

ued to issue from Messiah's messengers through the apostolic Scriptures to his Church.³¹

In summary, whether *kathōs* is used to convey precision of prediction, degree of declaration, or the like, its contribution to the theological indicative is exceedingly impacting: "Great is his faithfulness!" Furthermore the implication, via semantic and syntactic parallelisms, seems to be that it is this kind of unwavering fidelity that is expected when transition is made to our responsibility within the arena of the theological imperative. For example, as a backdrop consider Christ's prayers and pattern (note the staggering inferences of these *kathōs* clauses) for essential unity in John 17:11, 21, 22 (cf. the concept in Paul in Eph 4:4). This unity with the divine Unity is to be manifested morally among true disciples.

III. ETHICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

1. *Confirmed by obedience.* *Kathōs* is sometimes used in the NT, either didactically or illustratively, to document the fact and/or the degree of obedience (or, in some cases, disobedience). Historically, examples of obedience are found in the episodes of the disciples following Christ's orders in preparation for his triumphal entry (Matt 21:6; cf. Mark 11:6),³² the proportional giving on the part of the Antiochian Christians to their brethren in Judea (Acts 11:29), general adherence to *paradosis* (1 Cor 11:2), the beneficence of the Macedonian churches (2 Cor 8:5), the anticipated continuance and completion of Titus' productive ministry among the Corinthians (8:6), the overarching obedience of the Philippians to Paul's shepherding (Phil 2:12), the sufferings of the Thessalonian believers as paralleled with their spiritual predecessors in Judea (1 Thess 2:14), their ongoing encouragement and edification of one another (5:11), and the integrity (3 John 2) and consistency (v. 3) of Gaius.³³ On the negative side, the example of Cain dramatically documents the propriety of the love commandment as it is restated in 1 John 3:12.

The few other occurrences of *kathōs* constructs relating to obedience seem to operate in an atmosphere of incentive. The negatively phrased analogy of John 15:4b makes a significant contribution to our Lord's teaching on the necessity of abiding. When we turn to Paul, we find two important testimonies. In 2 Cor 4:1 he affirms that since he had received great mercy, being thwarted in life and ministry is an unthinkable option. Then in 1 Thess 2:4 he argues that his unswerving boldness in preaching the gospel was founded upon God's call. How could he be anything else but faithful?

³¹ Again, *kathōs* lends its weight to this reality in a variety of ways; e.g. cf. Acts 15:8; 1 Cor 1:6 (note its centralized function in vv. 4–8); 12:11, 18; 13:12; 15:38, 49; 2 Cor 1:5 (note how comfort supplants suffering); Eph 4:21; Col 1:6 (cf. context of vv. 3–8); 2 Thess 3:1; etc.

³² On this occasion they demonstrated an acknowledgment of and acquiescence to the axiom expressed in John 5:23 "that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

³³ In several of these examples the *kathōs* statements provide assistance in clarifying the ministry of modeling urged in the NT; cf. G. J. Zemek, "The Modeling of Ministers," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 4/2 (1993) 165–185.

2. *Conveyed through obligation.*³⁴ Leaving historically diversified corroborations of obedience behind in the annals of NT history it is time to draw a bead on the bull's-eye of all this discussion: the contribution of *kathōs* constructs to NT parenesis. In addition to there being a fair number of them these ethical imperatives will most frequently be intensified by divine yardsticks.

A be-who-you-are-in-Christ obligation surfaces through a vivid metaphor in 1 Cor 5:7a: "Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened." In the context of the Corinthian congregation unjustifiably tolerating heinous sin in their midst, Paul confronts them with the demand to be holy ("clean out the old leaven") because in Christ they were holy ("unleavened"). Quite typically, here the *kathōs* functions as a bridge both to link the imperative with the indicative and to spotlight the absolute standard of expected obedience.

In Eph 1:3–4 what God has done for the church (cf. all of 1:3–14) not only constitutes the basis (cf. the introductory *kathōs* of v. 4)³⁵ of Paul's lofty doxology but also presses on to the general, theological imperative relating to our holiness and blamelessness.³⁶ Since he elected us in Christ pretemporally (the indicative) we ought to be holy and blameless (the ethical imperative) in the here and now. Ethical progress is expected and should be evidenced in the very presence of the merciful Architect of sovereign grace.

The major message of 1 John, an epistle saturated with measurements for the existence and/or maturation of spiritual life and vitality, is catalyzed by strategic occurrences of *kathōs* constructs. Concerning holiness and purity in general, the third chapter is especially conspicuous. Consider the strategic function of *kathōs* in vv. 2, 3 and 7: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet that [i.e. what] we shall be. We know that, if he should appear [i.e. whenever he appears], we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is. And every one who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as he is pure. . . . Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous."

Needless to say, these are astounding assertions. The passage begins with a challenge to reflect upon the reality of our past as documented by God's grace-gift³⁷ of elective love (v. 1a). This leads to our positional title as "children of God," and that appellative is then confirmed initially by the

³⁴ Occurrences of *kathōs* clauses conveying ministerial obligations will be bypassed; cf. e.g. the impact of John 17:18; 20:21 on the apostolic circle in particular and 1 Pet 4:10 on the body in general.

³⁵ It is probably better to render this occurrence of *kathōs* by "since, or, insofar as" (cf. BAG 392).

³⁶ Although some might construe the intention of God's acts of sovereign grace herein exclusively in a telic or eschatological sense regarding their ultimate fruition, nothing in the immediate context would proscribe an application in the present realm of sanctification. As a matter of fact, 1:3–14 especially predepicts the "calling" of 4:1, which in turn becomes a significant factor of propriety for our "walk" as developed in this epistle's last half.

³⁷ Note the perfect tense of *didōmi*, which captures both its historical inception and its consequent results.

simple statement “and we are.”³⁸ Probably due to the profundity of such an affirmation about our present status, a restatement is given in v. 2a to help us grasp the magnitude of its reality. By God’s grace in Christ, we are his beloved children.³⁹

After these introductory words about our current status, a smooth but dramatic shift is made to the future. Although what we shall be is not yet fully manifested (v. 2b) we realize that concurrent with Christ’s coming we shall be similar to him (i.e. in moral Christlikeness) since we are going to see him just as he is. This indicative-future is firmly foundationed on the past dimension of salvation-history reality. Consequently, building upon these supporting structures we are to become ethical roofers in assuming the human responsibility of our imperative (v. 3). All those who are genuinely his children not only hope in the consummation of the future indicative but also exercise themselves strenuously toward that guaranteed goal. And furthermore the standard of their perpetual pursuit of purity is that of Christ himself.

The message of v. 7b is parallel and also confirming in reference to both our expected morality and its perfect Model. It may be paraphrased as follows: “The one who characteristically exhibits righteousness confirms his positional righteousness, just as that One, i.e. Christ (cf. vv. 5–6), is innately righteous.” Indeed, these lofty realities surround our overarching obligation to be holy, for he is holy.

Primary Biblical word-pictures for lifestyle obedience crop up throughout God’s Word. As might be anticipated, *kathōs* lends its moral intensity to many of these in the NT. For example, in 1 Cor 11:1 Paul urges the Corinthians consistently to be or become (*ginesthe*) mimics (*mimētai*) of his character and conduct. Had he arrived ethically? Hardly. He immediately qualified his injunctions with a very significant *kathōs* clause (“just as I also imitate Christ”).

The cautions and challenges of Philippians 3 are essentially similar. Although Paul understandably disclaimed personal perfection (3:12–13a), his own striving (vv. 13b–14) undergirded both his hortatory challenge for mutual progress (vv. 14–15) and his subsequent direct injunction: “Brethren, join in following my example,⁴⁰ and observe those who walk according to [*kathōs*] the pattern you have in us” (3:17).

Turning to Ephesians we find an interesting negative example of lifestyle in chap. 4. In the epistle that regularly intersperses Paul’s before-and-after soteriic motif, 4:17 warns the membership of the body that they should no longer carry on a course of life “just as the Gentiles walk.” A debauched lifestyle emanating from faculties that are futile, from hearts that are calcified (vv. 17c–19a), would be wholly incompatible with who they are in Christ.

³⁸ The textual evidence for *kai esmen* is both broad and deep.

³⁹ Note how the vocative *agapētoi* and its following indicative reality *nyn tekna Theou esmen* now pick up the major thoughts of v. 1a–b.

⁴⁰ The same imperative (*ginesthe*) as encountered in 1 Cor 11:1, now with an intensified complement (*symmimētai*).

To the Thessalonian disciples Paul writes: "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that . . . just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. . . . Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you" (1 Thess 4:1–3a, 6b, 11). His recipients had already demonstrated a notable degree of ethical integrity (vv. 1b, 10a). Notwithstanding, the apostle urges⁴¹ them onward and upward.⁴² Advancement in moral maturity is expected generally and also consistently in the comprehensive realm of "walking" and "pleasing" God (v. 1), then in the arenas of sexual propriety (vv. 3–7), brotherly love (vv. 9–10) and personal productivity (vv. 11–12). The standard of ethical compliance (cf. esp. the occurrences of *kathōs* in vv. 6, 11) throughout is the apostolic tradition⁴³ that had been faithfully passed down to them from Christ through Paul.

Union with Christ is designed by God to produce moral results according to his norms. For example, in 1 John 2:6 the one who professes union with Christ—that is, "the one who says he abides in him"⁴⁴—must "himself . . . walk in the same manner as he walked."

In his second epistle John writes: "And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it" (v. 6). Biblical love is to issue in obedience to God's commandments. In accordance with the teaching of Christ and his apostles, and especially this "apostle of love," it is incumbent upon us that our lifestyle be driven by Biblical *agapē*. This focal point provides a natural transition to the next focused area of obligation.

John 13:34; 15:9–14 capture the priority concern on our Lord's heart immediately before his salvific departure. In a significant way all of Jesus' teachings to his disciples during his earthly ministry were circumscribed by his command to love one another.

Those who belonged to him had been perfectly loved by him (John 13:1). Furthermore the transcendent pattern for his own love originated in the Father (15:9). The standard (cf. *kathōs* in v. 9a) of his love toward his own was not different from the Father's love for the Son. In him, therefore, we see the concrete Exemplar of divine beneficence. Most intimidating, however, is the inescapable intention of God that we are to emulate such an ethical Model.

To begin with, since the nature of Biblical *agapē* predominantly relates to obedience, we should "keep" his commandments so as to thereby docu-

⁴¹ Note the functionally hortatory occurrences of *erōtaō* in v. 1 and *parakaleō* in vv. 1, 10b.

⁴² Note *perisseuō* plus *mallon* in vv. 1, 10.

⁴³ Note the introductory *parelabete par hēmōn* (a familiar *paradosis* formula), Paul's reference to the "giving of commandments" (v. 2), and some subsequent key verbs, e.g. *proiepon*, *diamartyromai* (v. 6), *parangellō* (v. 11).

⁴⁴ In v. 27 the abiding itself might possibly be construed as an imperatival obligation.

ment continuance in our Lord's love. As one might anticipate, this too has a Christological precedent: "just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (15:10b). These are the vertical prerequisites for genuine love. When we move to the horizontal plane, once again we encounter not only obligation but also divine exemplification. Herein familiar words engage us: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:34–35). And again, in 15:12: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

Among the volleys of present imperatives in the latter half of Ephesians, those in 5:3 ff. are especially pointed and practical. Immediately preceding this echoing volley is its overarching directive: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;⁴⁵ and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (5:1–2). Paul is obviously perpetuating the prescriptions of Jesus, especially through his injunction to keep on walking in *agapē*. As a matter of fact, the yardstick of such ethically energizing love is to be the self-sacrificial model of our Lord himself.

In the subsequent context Paul particularizes this overwhelming obligation in reference to husbands when he writes: "Love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her. . . . So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church" (5:25, 28–29). A volitionally-directed, self-sacrificial love constantly extends itself and pampers its object irrespective of any indications of reciprocity. With Christ as their pattern for propriety, men have absolutely no room for conditions, contingencies, concessions, and the like when it comes to this divine injunction for them to love their wives.

It is fitting to appeal to the apostle of love once again in order to bring this facet of our ethical obligations to a close: "And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us" (1 John 3:23). Here our Lord's great commandment in its horizontal application is reiterated by John and passed along to subsequent generations of believers.

The so-called golden rule as spoken by Jesus in Luke 6:31 reads: "And just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way." This divine wisdom is being passed along to sinners, albeit saved sinners. Positive responses to and applications of injunctions to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, and so on (6:27 ff.), do not come about easily. If we are relegated only to our own innate resources, conformity is impossible. To make matters seemingly worse from our self-oriented perspective, the eth-

⁴⁵ The description *tekna agapēta* connotes the indicative reality upon which the surrounding imperatival obligations are founded.

ical pressure greatly increases as our Lord goes on to say, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (6:36).

Where our Lord leaves off, Paul takes up. In the context of the Christian community we are told to "accept one another just as Christ also accepted us⁴⁶ to the glory of God" (Rom 15:7). Christ's unqualified acceptance is to be the transcendent norm for all body life, regardless of some members being viewed as "weak" and others as "strong" (15:1 ff.). Similarly, in Eph 4:32 the instruction is to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." And again: "And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved,⁴⁷ put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against any one; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Col 3:12-13). To the degree that God has forgiven, to the degree that he has demonstrated kindness, to the degree that he has shown himself to be long-suffering, we are called upon to respond in kind.

These are all truly awesome analogies for Christian conduct. Let them expose our inadequacy and prompt us to a genuine humility. Such an appropriate response should then drive us to our Lord and his resources in the process of sanctification.

⁴⁶ The variant *hymas* has far better textual support. But this will in no way affect our responsibility, since from our applicational perspective the "you" pertains to "us."

⁴⁷ A couple of the many statements of indicative interfacing with the imperatives of Colossians 3.