

The Catholic Biblical Association of America

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL MEETING



MARCH 15, 2025

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ERDMAN CENTER AND ZOOM



PROGRAM

All Sessions will be held in the Cooper Room of the Erdman Center.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

8:00 – 8:45 AM **BREAKFAST** **ERDMAN CENTER**

8:45 – 8:50 AM **WELCOME**

ARCHIE WRIGHT, *CBA Executive Director*

JONATHAN LEE WALKER, *President, Princeton Theological Seminary*

9:00 – 10:30 AM **SESSION 1: PANEL**

CHAIR: ARCHIE WRIGHT, *The Catholic Biblical Association of America*

◆ **“Thinking about the Scripture(s) and the Temple(s)”**

JAMES VANDERKAM, *University of Notre Dame*

◆ **“Textual Resistance and Refiguration in Early Judaism”**

MAHRI LEONARD-FLECKMAN, *College of the Holy Cross*

◆ **“Paul in the Eye of the Beholder: Sorting Through the Many Traditions and Perspectives”**

PETER SPITALER, *Villanova University*

◆ **“‘Rewritten Scripture’: Gospel Copyists as Direct Inheritors of Jewish and Greco-Roman Story-Changing”**

ELIZABETH SCHRADER POLCZER, *Villanova University*

10:30 – 10:45AM **COFFEE BREAK**

10:44 – 12:15 PM **SESSION 2: PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

CHAIR: JOLYON G. R. PRUZINSKI, *Princeton University*

◆ **“A Moral Duty to Tell the Truth? John 8:32, the Truth, and the Post-Truth Era, with Ethical Applications in Postmodern Academia”**

TYLER BROWN-CROSS, *Villanova University*

Abstract: The importance of the concept of truth in the Bible makes the issue of truth-telling particularly salient to Christian ethics, and it is a topic of considerable historical interest. In postmodernity, however, approaches to the concept of truth are changing, and the idea of an absolute or objective truth is radically questioned. In the broader culture, attitudes towards truth are rapidly shifting, and this age has seen an emergence of a postmodern phenomenon known as "post-truth." How post-truth impacts the value of truth and truth-telling as a moral duty in academia may become an increasingly more relevant and challenging issue. This paper will address the ethical issue of truth-telling in academia, including to students, colleagues, the public, and in research, from within the context of the emerging post-truth era.

I argue that academics have a moral duty to truth-telling in the university, and this challenge may become increasingly difficult in the context of post-truth, which calls for more rigorously defined and emphasized standards of truth-telling in the academy. I will address this issue through the lens of the New Testament, with an investigation into John 8:32 and the concept of truth in the Bible. After exploring traditional biblical exegeses of this passage, I will explore the historical and cultural context of post-truth in postmodernity, as well as how it relates to theology. I will then discuss the theological implications of truth-telling generally, and more specifically in the academy, and I will highlight what is at stake

for Christians, from a moral and theological perspective. I will then more deeply explore the specific application of John 8:32 to this ethical issue, highlighting noteworthy aspects of interpreting John 8:32 for this ethical application. Finally, I will outline avenues for practical applications in the university setting, and areas for future research.

◆ **“On the Binding and Loosing of Lazarus (John 11:44)”**

DANIEL FRAYER-GRIGGS, *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

Abstract: The Fourth Evangelist’s depiction of the raised Lazarus emerging from his tomb with his hands and feet bound (John 11:44) has perplexed scholars for two main reasons: (1) it is difficult to envision Lazarus walking while so restrained, and (2) there is no evidence that ancient Jews bound the hands and feet of their dead. While this detail does not align with known burial practices of the time, the motif of binding hands and feet is well attested in various agonistic contexts wherein one person or spiritual entity subjugates another: angels bind demons, Satan binds demoniacs, Jesus binds Satan, and magical spells are used to summon demons or chthonic deities to bind rivals. Reading John 11:44 alongside texts such as 1 En. 10:4-6; 88:1-3; T. Sol. 8:1; Apoc. Zeph. 10:4; Matt. 22:13; Mark 5:3-4; Gos. Nic. 22:2, and several Greek curse tablets (*katadesmoi*), this paper argues that the depiction of Lazarus bound hand and foot – along with Jesus’s command that he be loosed – draws on imagery associated with exorcism and other forms of spiritual control or combat. In John’s symbolic universe, Lazarus’s bound hands and feet represent his captivity to the demonic forces of death while Jesus’s act of raising him and loosing his bonds signals the beginning of Satan’s defeat. This interpretation is further supported by exorcistic vocabulary both within the Lazarus narrative and elsewhere in John’s Gospel and also by John’s use of the raising of Lazarus to foreshadow Jesus’s own death and resurrection – the hour when “the ruler of this world will be driven out” (John 12:31).

12:15– 1:00 PM LUNCH

ERDMAN CENTER

1:00 – 2:30 PM SESSION 3: PAPER PRESENTATIONS

CHAIR: RAFAEL RODRÍGUEZ, *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

◆ **“Stigma: A Strategy for Implicitly Promoting Gentile Inclusion in Acts 13:4-12”**

MICHAEL KOCHENASH, *Independent Scholar*

Abstract: The conversion of Sergius Paulus in Acts 13 is significant for the narrative’s development of the theme of gentile inclusion. The account marks Paul’s first conversion of a non-Jew and forms the foundation for what would become his testimony against requiring the circumcision of non-Jewish devotees in Acts 15. Despite its thematic importance, the episode lacks explicit argumentation on the question of including non-Jews. I argue that the episode is nevertheless designed to persuade readers with respect to this issue. Acts 13 exhibits structural and circumstantial similarities to, especially, the book of Exodus and Euripides’s *Bacchae*. Readers who recognize these similarities can understand them, because of how they are arranged, as stigmatizing Elymas by associating him with the opponents of Moses and Dionysus. Because Elymas opposes Paul’s ministering to a non-Jew, the narrative can be understood as stigmatizing opposition to gentile inclusion even among the readers of Acts. Thus, despite its notable lack of explicit argumentation, Acts 13 can be understood as contributing in an important way to the narrative’s theme of including non-Jews.

◆ **“Was Luke a Plagiarist?”**

JOHN J. PETERS, *Independent Scholar*

Abstract: The notion of plagiarism has played little or no role in the formulation of the prevailing source theories for the Synoptic Gospels. Consequently, most NT scholars presuppose compositional theories depicting the author of Luke’s Gospel as simply copying, sometimes verbatim, the work of prior authors as if plagiarism was acceptable in the ancient world. Some, like B H Streeter in 1924, the Jesus Seminar in the 90s, and more recently Pieter Botha and Bruce Malina, have more or less argued that the “concept of plagiarism was

unknown in the ancient world. Authors freely copied from predecessors without acknowledgment," (The Five Gospels, 22). This view is demonstrably false. Bart Ehrman was the first to identify the problem in Synoptic scholarship in "Apocryphal Forgeries: The Logic of Literary Deceit" (2017) and E. Randolph Richards responded with "Was Matthew a Plagiarist? Plagiarism in Greco-Roman Antiquity" (2018), while Ian Nelson Mills devotes eleven pages to it in his Duke dissertation (2021).

From the premise that "plagiarism" is the "culpable reuse of earlier texts, customarily described in terms of stealing, in which a person wins false credit by presenting another's work as his own" (McGill Plagiarism in Latin Literature, 3), I will show that Ehrman, Richards and Mills do not succeed in obviating the charge of plagiarism. The problem is particularly acute for Luke in view of the evidence, marshalled especially by Steve Reece (LNTS 2022), suggesting Luke was a *παιδευμένος* ("educated man") who completed at least the first two stages of the *ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία* ("curricular education") and thus knew better. Contra Ehrman and Richards, the author did not write anonymously and, contra Mills (following L. Alexander), Luke emulated historiography rather than technical/scientific literature. Was Luke a plagiarist? The prevailing Synoptic theories (2DH, Farrer, 2GH) seem inescapably to necessitate the conclusion that he was.

2:45 – 4:15 PM **SESSION 4: PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

CHAIR: ELAINE T. JAMES, Princeton Theological Seminary

◆ **"Second Passover: A Missing or Unwanted Feast from the OT Calendars?"**

HRYHORIY LOZINSKY, Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Pittsburgh, PA

Abstract: Not all the feasts attested in biblical texts have been codified in the OT calendars: it is the case of Second Passover, Purim, and Hanukkah. For the latter two, the answer should be found in their recent origin (2nd century BC), therefore after the codification of the last calendar. But what about the Second Passover, found in Num 9:1-14 but not even in the most recent OT calendar, that is Numbers 28-29? The topic of the Second Passover is surprisingly an unexplored argument, and so it is its absence from the most recent OT calendars.

It seems the scribes wanted to justify the origin of this feast, very probably also recent, by inserting it in the Pentateuch, i.e. in the legislative body presented as command by the Lord (cf. Num 9:1). The only other place where this feast is found is another recent text: 2 Chr 30:1-27. Probably in later times the festival acquired an importance comparable to that of the other festivals already contained in the calendar since it is regularly found in the mishmarot, referring to priestly courses or divisions (4Q320 4 iii 4; 4 iv 9; 4 v 3.12; 4 iv 8; 4Q321 V, 5.9; VI, 4.8), while the part where it could have been found in the Temple Scroll is lost. Num 9:1-14 is thus probably one of the most recent texts of homonymous book, added to it in one of the newest layers of the formation of the book. In sum, this study aims at analyzing the intricacies of this feast, whether it was an unwanted one, and why a second chance is given for the celebration of Passover but not for other feasts.

◆ **"Rape and Vengeance: The Rape(s) of Dinah"**

ILONA RASHKOW, SUNY Stony Brook

Abstract: Genesis 34 is about the rape of a virgin, Dinah, and its consequences. The Biblical text is straightforward: Dinah goes out (alone) from her father's house and is raped by the local prince, Shechem. Shechem's lust turns to love and his desire for her is so great that he and his father (Hamor) meet with Dinah's father (Jacob) to request Dinah as Shechem's wife. Shechem and Hamor offer an agreement of mutual exchange of wives between the Shechemite men, and the Israelite men. In addition, they agree to the stipulation added by Dinah's brothers (Simeon and Levi) that all the Shechemite men be circumcised in order to comply with Israelite laws. Simeon and Levi base this condition on a loss of personal honor and religious fervor. This is in contrast to Abraham's and Isaac's pandering of their wives in Genesis chapters 12 and 20. After agreeing to the pact, Simeon and Levi wait until the third

day after the circumcisions (when the Shechemite men are incapacitated): they seized Dinah from Shechem's house; they pillaged the town; they killed all the males; they carried off all the wives and children; and they left with their spoils.

This narrative is one of most disturbing stories in the Hebrew Bible for a few reasons. First, Dinah went out from her father's house and was raped by the local prince, Shechem. Second, although the punishment for rape of an unattached girl is forcible marriage with no divorce, and payment of set bride money, neither of which were available to Dinah. And third, Shechem agreed to the stipulation added by Dinah's brothers that all the Shechemite men be circumcised in order to comply with Israelite laws. After agreeing to the pact, Simeon and Levi waited until the third day after the circumcisions, seized Dinah from Shechem's house, pillaged the town, killed all the males, carried off all the wives and children, and left with their spoils. Simeon and Levi based this condition on a loss of personal honor and religious fervor. The slaughter of the Shechemites was falsely perpetrated in the name of Simeon's and Levi's religion and against the precepts of the religion relating to vengeance.

4:15 – 5:45 PM **SESSION 5: PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

CHAIR: ANGELA KIM HARKINS, *CSTM Boson College*

◆ **“YHWH in the Servant Poems of Isaiah and in Matthew 4-12”** VIRTUAL

MARK C. KILEY, *St. John's University*

Abstract: I propose that the letters of the Tetragrammaton inform the four Servant poems, each letter limned throughout the four poems in succession, and Matthew adapts that agenda in his summaries of Jesus' ministry.

The letters YHWH function literarily as substructure of the Servant poems, Isaiah 42, 49, 50, and 52/53.

The letter *yodh* informs Isaiah 42:1-4 through the opening volley of four possessive pronouns: my servant, my chosen one, my soul delights, my spirit. The second and fourth poems begin with *heh*. The second poem, Isaiah 49:1-6 invokes YHWH four times. The same is true in the fourth poem Isaiah 52:13-53:12. In the third poem, Isaiah 50:4-9, there are four double asseverations of the Name; not simply YHWH but Adonay YHWH or Adonay Elohim. That emphasis literary reflects the letter *waw* in its additive function "and."

Matthew's presentation of Jesus' ministry of preaching and healing in chapters 4, 8, 9, and 12 has adapted the prophet's vision of a life informed by the presence of the Name.

The *yodh*, as tenth letter of the alphabet, is reflected in the Decapolis of Matt 4:23-25. Both Matthew 8:17 and 12:18-21 quote Servant poems that begin with the letter *heh*. Matthew 9:35-36 is peppered with six occurrences of *kai* that reflect the additive, replete function of the letter *waw*. The Isaiah poems are utilized in a different order from that presented by the prophet so that the final summary of Jesus' ministry constitutes a crescendo of sorts; the Septuagintal rendering of Isaiah 42 in Matt 12: 18-21 that explicitly celebrates the Name. Matthew has interwoven this Name-agenda into the first three chapters of his Markan base, capping the integral unit present in Mark 2:1-3:6.

John also calls on YHWH, in the signs.

◆ **“Jerome's Approach to Judith and Tobit”**

PETER VALE, *Boston College*

Abstract: Most scholars agree that Jerome's translations of Tobit and Judith likely emerged from the same commission and would have featured the same approach. In his preface to Tobit, Jerome explains, "And since the Aramaic tongue is close to the Hebrew language, I found a speaker who was exceedingly skilled in each language and devoted one day's work [to the task]: whatever he expressed to me in Hebrew words, I relayed these things in Latin words to [my] hired secretary (Praef. Tob. 8-9). In his preface to Judith, he attests: "I eradicated the most error-ridden diversity of the many codices; I expressed in Latin [words] only those things which I was able to find wholly coherent in the Aramaic words" (Praef. Jdt. 6-7). It would thus seem that Jerome remained reasonably faithful to the text of the

Vorlagen he consulted. A majority of modern scholars disagree, contending that Jerome reworked the *Vetus Latina* to downplay Judith's agency and accentuate her chastity and virtue. This would imply that he capitalized on a commission by creating personal propaganda, penned an inaccurate accounting of the circumstances, and freely put his reputation and subsequent commissions on the line. I will argue that the case is not closed and that Jerome's prefaces to both *Tobit* and *Judith* could be truthful, albeit playful, accounts of the circumstances in which he produced the respective translations.

5:45– 7:15 PM **DINNER**
(on your own)

7:15– 8:45 PM **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**"Jesus and the Scriptures:
Skepticism versus Patterns"**

DALE ALLISON

*Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament at
Princeton Theological Seminary*

Abstract: Some important scholars have been inclined to dissociate Jesus from most of the scriptural quotations and clear allusions that are attributed to him. They assign them rather to the post-Easter community. This presentation outlines the reasons for their position, critically analyzes and rejects those reasons, and mounts a case to the contrary. It then contends that one plausible way of approaching the topic of Jesus and the Scriptures is to hunt for patterns that run across the sources. One outcome of doing this is that Jesus appears to have had a strongly Mosaic self-conception



For over 85 years, The Catholic Biblical Association of America has promoted, within a context of faith, scholarly study in Scripture and related fields through meetings of the association, publications, and support to those from all traditions engaged in such studies.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 9, 2025, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (EDT)

Unbound Book Review: Rafael Rodríguez's *The First Christian Letters: Reading 1 and 2 Thessalonians*

CBA free virtual event drawing together scholars from diverse fields to discuss a recent publication through reflections on specific questions.



April 25, 2025, 12:00 PM - 5:30 PM (EDT)

Women and Gender Conference: A Virtual Appetizer

CBA free virtual conference



August 2-5, 2025, Loyola University Chicago & Zoom

87th International Meeting of the CBA

Annual General Meeting of The Catholic Biblical Association of America

