

Survey of the Theology of History from the Patristic Period to Early Scholasticism

Marcel Mukadi

Jordan University College (JUCo), St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Morogoro, Tanzania
Email: mukadimarcel@yahoo.fr

How to cite this paper: Mukadi, M. (2025). Survey of the Theology of History from the Patristic Period to Early Scholasticism. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 13, 158-178. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2025.138010>

Received: June 25, 2025

Accepted: August 9, 2025

Published: August 12, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The paper discusses the Theology of history, which, while not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, influences key scriptural events and liturgy. It highlights how the theological interpretation of significant events transcends human reason. In the Old Testament, the Deuteronomist explains God's word in history, while in the New Testament, the Exodus tradition is alluded to rather than directly cited, with Christ viewed as the culmination of time. Early Christian literature and Patristic thought emphasize two key ideas: first, Christ as the telos of history, meaning Christ as the ultimate goal of historical progression, defended primarily by St. Augustine. Second, Christ is viewed as the axis of the ages, serving as the central point in the chronology of salvation history. This perspective faced challenges from Scholastic thinkers like Joachim of Fiore. The debate included discussions on historical progress and the uniqueness of historical centers. The Fathers of the Church viewed the Creation narrative as prophetic of humanity's history. Joachim proposed a three-part history aligned with the Holy Trinity, suggesting a new monasticism beyond the New Testament. In contrast, Bonaventure maintained a parallel structure of history, emphasizing Christ as the central figure, who prefigures the Old Testament events and progresses towards the eschaton. This view resolved debates about the center and end of history in Christ, presenting history as a journey of progress culminating in God-given Sabbath-Rest. He is the beginning of the end and brought definitive salvation. In him, the end has already started.

Keywords

Theology of History, History, Historical Progress

1. Introduction

Scripture serves as the primary source for the Jewish-Christian tradition, intertwined with history and theology. The foundation of sacred theology is Sacred

Tradition, which preserves Scripture's full meaning by connecting it with historical context. The theology of history interprets historical events through a theological lens, separate from the development of theological thought over time. This approach uses Scripture to analyze how divine providence shapes human history, revealing the intersection of faith and human experience.

This article explores the development of the theology of history in Scripture, focusing on major events like the Exodus, the destruction of the first Temple, the exile, and the Cross to uncover their theological significance. Understanding these events requires prophetic insight and a scriptural foundation.

Additionally, the paper examines the theology of history from the patristic period to the early scholastic era, highlighting various perspectives from theologians such as Saint Augustine, Joachim of Fiore, and the Spiritual Friars. The debate centers around Christ's role in history, with some viewing him as the telos of time and others as the center of history.

The Fathers of the Church viewed the Creation narrative as prophetic of humanity's history. Joachim proposed a three-part history aligned with the Holy Trinity, suggesting a new monasticism beyond the New Testament. In contrast, Bonaventure maintained a parallel structure of history, emphasizing Christ as the central figure, who prefigures the Old Testament events and progresses towards the eschaton. This view resolved debates about the center and end of history in Christ, presenting history as a journey of progress culminating in God-given Sabbath-Rest.

It is important to note that this paper is the first in a series of three consecutive articles. The second article will focus on "Saint Bonaventure and the Theology of History by Joseph Ratzinger." The final article, which will serve as the apex of the series, will address "The Theology of the Liturgy of Joseph Ratzinger in the Theology of History."

2. Theology of History in the Scripture

The history of salvation is a course of events that receives its own peculiar dramatic quality from the tension between constantly promulgated prophecies and their fulfilment. Any segment of universal history examined from the angle of humans' relationship with God would then refer to specific biblical sequences exemplary of God's conduct (Durand, 2014).

2.1. Theology of History in the Old Testament: Major Events and Sources of Theology of History

2.1.1. The Exodus Experience

In Gen 15:7, the narrative considers the Chaldeans' departure from Ur as an anticipation of the Exodus. The crossing of the Jordan River is also made to be a belated version of the crossing of the Red Sea (Josh 4:22-23) (Brueggemann, 1997). Wherever it occurs, the phrase "Yahweh delivered his people from Egypt" is Israel's original confession. Even in the old Credo of Deuteronomy 26:5ff, the exo-

Exodus is the dramatic mid-point of all the historical events (Rad, 1962).

The chief events of this experience are the miracle at the Red Sea, the revelation of the name of God, the revelation at Sinai, and the wandering in the wilderness (Rad, 1962). In the Pentateuch, the wilderness of Sinai is the centre of every event from Exodus 19 to Numbers 11, which includes the covenant, the Decalogue, and the entire Torah. It is a new event in human memory. It is attested by the Philistines' fear of the God of the Exodus: "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These gods struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness" (1 Sam 4:7-8; cf. Exod 12:12) (Wright, Murphy, & Fitzmyer, 1996).

The saving event enunciates God's resolution to intervene decisively against every oppressive circumstance and force that precludes a life of well-being. Brueggemann infers that this resolution bears three powerful and transformative exodus verbs: "to bring out" (Exod 13:3; Deut 16:3, 6), "to deliver" (Exod 3:8; 14:13, 30; 15:2; Ps 106:8), "to redeem" (Exod 6:6; Ps 106:10; 13:15; Ps 78:42). They are used in Israel's testimony and are given different nuances appropriate to the semantic fields from which they arise. These liberating verbs have not been enacted by the Lord only once at the outset of Israel's life in the world. Rather, he repeatedly enacted them throughout Israel's history (Brueggemann, 1997). The Exodus was an exchange of overlords. These words of the new overlord found in Leviticus are of great help: "For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves are sold" (Lev 25:42) (Brueggemann, 1997).

Exodus is not, in effect, a contextless emancipation. It is a powerful manifestation of God in history to lead his people to freedom. This is the very first moment of Israel's history (Ratzinger, 2004). The exodus experience led Israel to the theology of creation. Through the liberation, they came to conceive God as the one who creates everything and transforms chaos into order as a source of blessing and well-being. They are concerned with the action of God and not his character, nature, and being (Brueggemann, 1997). To pinpoint it, Brueggemann quotes that "what Yahweh does in the wilderness traditions is what Yahweh does cosmically in creation." (Brueggemann, 1997). From the historical account of the Exodus, they went to the cosmic account of creation; from Exodus faith to creation faith. On this breath, Ratzinger thought that the covenant without creation would be empty (Benedict XVI, 2011). It is logically right to notice that in the Old Testament, the knowledge of God is essentially reversal. Chronologically, knowledge of the God of the covenant precedes the God of creation. Israel did not discover God through a process of metaphysical reflection, beginning with the universe, but by using God's interventions in her history. Israel rose from the God of history to the God of creation. René Latourelle spelt it out in more detail (Latourelle, 1996):

Yahweh, actually, did not at first reveal Himself as God the Creator of heaven and earth, but as God the Saviour who delivered His people from bondage to make a covenant with them. The faith of Israel was born of her first experi-

ence of exodus and covenant, which revealed a God of salvation, present to His people, with all His power; thus, the idea of creation will always be associated with this idea of salvation and power. Creation will appear as a projection towards the past of the power of God already at work in history, and thus as the first act in the history of salvation. After the exodus and the covenant, Israel knows that she is in the powerful hand of Yahweh. Little by little, throughout the history of her relation with God, Israel discovers the dimensions of this power; Israel passes from the experience of this power to the knowledge of its absolute character. The deliverance from Egypt and the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan presuppose that God is master of nature and the peoples of earth: the miracles of exodus presuppose that God can mobilize nature according to His will, to effect the salvation of His people.

Creation for Israel becomes the first chapter in the history of salvation. The common point in all these accounts is that circumstances of hopelessness are transformed into occasions of life, possibility and joy (Brueggemann, 1997). The confession of God's liberating legal act was widened when elements of creation accounts were welded into it (Rad, 1962). In Israel's testimony, the exodus tradition is an interpretive lens to guide their understanding of God. It sheds light on their past and future life. It is the cornerstone of their history with God and constitutes the starting point of their faith.

2.1.2. The Destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian Exile

In 586/7 the state of Judah fell under Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It was devastated by the Babylonian army and plundered by different neighbours, such as Edom (Obad 11) and Ammon (Ezek 25:1-4). Almost 4600 were taken into exile (Jer 52:28-30). The king, the temple, and the city all fell. The inviolability of Zion and the covenant with God were at the centre of the Jewish faith. The destruction of Zion and the holy city opened a period of intense religious activity; the traditions were collected and given a written form (Wright, Murphy, & Fitzmyer, 1996).

The historical work started during the Babylonian Exile. The writer of the book of Second Kings gives the *terminus a quo*. It is the liberation of Jehoiachin in the year 561 (2 Kgs 25:27ff) (Rad, 1962). This debacle of 586/7 B.C is the outcome of the sin of Manasseh or the royal failure in terms of justice and righteousness. Besides the authentic unveiling of the divine way of acting, as well as in salvation as in judgment, biblical revelation delivers a focus on typical collective situations. The Prophet Jeremiah is too explicit: "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! Says the Lord. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them" (Jer 23:1-2) (Durand, 2014). It is at this time that the Gentile period (Luke 21:34) was revealed to Daniel. It extends from the Babylonian captivity to the *parousia*. This period is seen as continuing seventy weeks or heptads or seventy sab-

batical periods (Dan 9:24-27; Matt 24:6-14). Daniel's theology of history divides this time into two distinct periods: the time before the cutting off of the Messiah and the time after that event. Sixty-nine weeks, or heptads, were required for the fulfilment of the first period.

This was exactly fulfilled in 483 years (69×7). It would seem clear that a period of seven years (shortened a little, Matthew 24:22) will follow the present unpredictable period of the out-calling of the Church and precede the setting up of Messiah's Kingdom. Notwithstanding the fact that the mystery age of the Church did not come into the prophet's view, the time of the final heptad, or period of seven, was seen to be much delayed. This began with Daniel's time, or when the edict to restore Jerusalem was sent forth, and ended with the cutting off of the Messiah. The remaining predicted period, the seventieth week which is the time of the great tribulation has yet to run its course to complete the whole time required to finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy (Hartman & Di Lella, 1978). It should be noted that the fact and purpose of this present mystery age was not mentioned in this revelation; hence, there was a need for this sacred secret to be revealed when its time had fully come. Christ will accomplish this through the seven parables in Matthew 13. The course and moral development of this age is here divinely presented in these parables, and this, together with Daniel's seventy weeks, completes the revelation with respect to the whole period of the Gentiles. Similarly, it is written in the Acts of the Apostles regarding the completion of the church's calling: "After this I will return" (Acts 15:13-16). These great sacred secrets constitute the very elements in the parables which define the character and object of the age.

Daniel forecasts the movements of the successive Gentile world powers during this period. He first interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2:37-45) as descriptive of four successive world powers. The same is again revealed in the dream of Dan 7:1-28 by the vision of four beasts, and again in the dream recorded in the eighth chapter. The prophetic approach to history is grounded in the criterion of covenantal justice (Brueggemann, 1997). God's word and resolution are irreversible. This sentence was fulfilled after the reign of Josiah who was the best of all the kings of Judah: "Before him there was no king like him, who turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him" (2 Kgs 23:25) (Rad, 1962). The main question here is about the cause of the disaster. How did all this happen? What about the doctrine of election, the land, the temple, the covenant? Has God forgotten his people? The fault is attributed to Israel herself, who forfeited salvation. Therefore, the sentence of God is justified (Ps 51:6). This calamity is viewed as a divine punishment intended to bring them to God (שׁוּב, Deut 30:1-10) (Rad, 1962).

The doctrine of creation in the Old Testament reached its highest level in exile. Isaiah is the main figure of this articulation. The Priestly account of creation or

the liturgical narrative (Gen 1:1-2:4a) is somehow considered an exilic text written to counter the temptations of the Babylonian gods. In this interpretation, the chaos described in Genesis 1:2 represents the condition of the exile. The exiles faced life-threatening dangers and experienced deep disorder. They were traumatized by the immense suffering they endured, prompting them to question their faith in order to make sense of these events. From this perspective, the Sabbath Rest mentioned in Genesis 2:2-3 becomes a defining characteristic and a source of distinction for them, providing solace in a world filled with restless anxiety and a desire for control. On this day, slaves and masters become equals. All the relationships of subordination are broken (Ratzinger, 2001). In exile, they attempted to despair and to abandon their confidence in God (Brueggemann, 1997). The creation faith helped them to overcome this challenge (Isa 40:28-31; 45:12-13). They moved from cosmic scope to reality. Testimony is given to God not only as Creator of heaven and earth but also as Creator of Israel as his special object of faithfulness (Isa 43:1, 5-7, 15; 44:2). “Whereas he was the Father of all the peoples of the world through the creation, he was beyond that the father of Israel through election. But this special situation was the free disposition of God, which could, therefore, be altered at any time.” (Nichols, 2007). Obedience and deference are owed only to him. This claim strengthened Israel’s monotheism (Brueggemann, 1997).

2.1.3. The Deuteronomist View of History

The Deuteronomist judges the events from a theological standpoint. He writes in the shadow of the first and second exiles (722 and 587 B.C). He makes a comprehensive confession of Israel’s guilt and takes the history of the kingdom of Judah as an almost unbroken series of breaches of the revealed will of God. There is a gulf between the end of the period of the judges and the point at which the book of the Kings takes up (1 Kgs 3). The Deuteronomist exercises the historian’s office and expresses radical theological reflexions on the history at important points. He was confronted with many historical experiences, or remembered material, and theological traditions. He presents them in the form they came down, connects the individual units, and ends with the judgment. For instance, 1 and 2 Kings offer a marvellous picture of this view. Von Rad notes it in this way; “with the kings of Judah the framework runs at the beginning as follows: “in the year of such and such a king of Israel so and so became king of Judah; he was so many years old when he became king, he reigned so many years in Jerusalem; his mother was so and so the daughter of such and such, and he did what was pleasing (evil) in the sight of Yahweh.” At the end, it reads: “The rest of the history of so and so is written in the book of the history of the kings of Judah. Then so and so slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David, and so and so else became king in his stead.” (Rad, 1962).

Deuteronomy judges Israel by the criterion of obedience (Deut 28:15ff; 32:47). Great threats and curses were outlined in case of persistent disobedience. The Deuteronomist’s theology of history holds to the *status confessionis* established in

Deuteronomy and makes it the criterion of judgment (1 Kgs 15:26, 34; 16:19, 26). One has to choose between the Lord's worship and the Baal cult. It demands that the worship of God should be done only at the unique sanctuary where he had put his name, that is, the Temple of Jerusalem. The Deuteronomist relies on Deuteronomy's canonical word of God to interpret and judge historical events (Rad, 1962). All the kings of Israel and Judah have been judged in the light of this *status confessionis*. They have been condemned for having fallen into the sin of Jeroboam. Hezekiah and Josiah are given unqualified praise. Asa, Jehosaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham are accepted conditionally. All the others are condemned (Rad, 1962). Deuteronomy developed the notion of the Torah and kept it as mediation. It is "Sinai interpreted", but not "Sinai repeated". It calls Israel to remain faithful to the Torah while Moses is no longer there to mediate and instruct (Brueggemann, 1997). The Deuteronomist interprets Israel's demand for a king¹ (1 Sam 8; 10:17-27; 12) as rejection of the Lord, and it is an apostasy (1 Sam 8:8). The first king, Saul, was appointed *nāgîd* (military commander, crown prince?), and not *melek* (King). The nuance between these two words is up to now unknown (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1). It is a contrary stand to the tradition found in the above reference, which is favourable to the monarchy. In Deuteronomy's view, the monarchy was established by God himself. Its collapse is the result of disobedience (Rad, 1962).

The amphictyonic (Wright, Murphy, & Fitzmyer, 1996) traditions, which dated from Moses, had a reserve for the institution of the monarchy. Noth first used this concept to speak about the nature of the tribal federation. It refers to a sacral confederation of tribes gathered around a central sanctuary, analogous to the Greek organizations. The Sinai experience is the focus around which the tribes united in Canaan. The lineal descent of the twelve tribes from a common ancestor needs a broad interpretation. This genealogy is an expression of culture, geography, trade and other considerations rather than biological. It was a religious unity, not a political one, as evident from the period of the Judges. They wanted to be like other nations such as Edom, Moab, the Arameans, Egypt, and the peoples of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The redactional approach of verses 6a, 11-17, 19-22 shows that Samuel at first was not happy, but then the Lord overcame his indignation. Verses 6 b-7a, 9-10 are an addition that changed Samuel's warning into a warning from God. The addition of the rest of verse 7 turns Israel's demand into God's abandonment (Wright, Murphy, & Fitzmyer, 1996). The kings will cause the fall of Israel because their hearts were not perfect with God: *שלם צם יהוה* (1 Kgs 8:61; 11:4; 15:3, 14). This tradition attributes to the kings the spiritual authority they did not have. It is somehow connected to the newness introduced by Deuteronomy in attributing to Josiah the authority to forbid the cult outside Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23). However, the Deuteronomistic tradition goes beyond the extent of considering the whole cultic life of the people of God to be under the king.

¹Cf. A.G. WRIGHT - R.E. MURPHY - J.A. FITZMYER, "A History of Israel," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1231.

All the people are behind them like a *massa perditionis* or *salutis* (Rad, 1962).

The Deuteronomistic theology of history is the fusion of all Israel's traditions. Primarily, the traditions of election, specifically the Israel-Covenant and the Davidic Covenant traditions. It started with David, who brought the Ark to Jerusalem as the foundation of Israel's traditions (2 Sam 6). Moses is the recipient of the Law in Deuteronomy. But this theology gave the king the power to appeal to God's covenant with David (1 Kgs 8:25; 9:5). He has been entrusted with the Law of Moses. He has the duty to see what is valuable for his kingdom. In this view, the Torah of Moses and the dynasty of Moses were concrete historical powers. The history of Judah was therefore under divine guidance. God directs history through his word (cf. 2 Sam 7) (Rad, 1962). To support this idea, we can appeal to Von Rad who urges that "this Deuteronomistic theology of history was the first which clearly formulated the phenomenon of saving history, that is, of a course of history which was shaped and led to a fulfilment by a word of judgment and salvation continually injected into it." (Rad, 1962).

2.2. Theology of History in the New Testament

2.2.1. The Major Event and Source: The Cross

The life of Jesus of Nazareth was not understood by many and was truly foolishness for them. The apex of this foolishness is the Cross (Benedict XVI, 2009), the true wisdom as found in the instruction of Luther (Wengenroth, 1982). It reveals man's frailty and God's totally gratuitous love, which is his true power (1 Cor 1:24). The theology of history in the New Testament is made, if I agree with Ratzinger, under the shadow of two essential questions: "who was Jesus? Where was he from?" Later, the scholastics will respond to the question raised by Saint Anselm: *Cur Deus Homo?* (Ratzinger, 2012) Other questions can be added to this inquiry: Why was he crucified? Was his body corrupted? Where was he during the time between death and resurrection? The Cross remains the essential element of this theological quest.

The event of the Cross had a fundamental and primary place in the Apostles' teaching. This pivotal event of salvation concerns the death and resurrection of the Lord. Its particularity is that it looks inward and outward. It concerns the past and the future. The theology of the Cross led the disciples to find out that Moses and the prophets, that is, all the scriptures, had spoken of Jesus. Consequently, they had to read the Old Testament afresh (Ratzinger, 2011). The Cross manifests God's merciful love and is grasped through the Gospel of grace. It is a sign of communion with God and all those who accept this liberation through faith. It is, in fact, the synthesis of the Old Testament festivals, the Day of Atonement, the Passover, the point of passage into the New Testament (Ratzinger, 2001). The suffering that took place for creation's redemption becomes proof of the human potential for self-sacrificing love (Wengenroth, 1982). The Cross is the summit and culminating point of history. Jesus's last words on the Cross make it easier to be understood: "Τετέλεσται". That is, it is finished or it has been finished (John 19:30). These last words point back to the first words of the introduction of the

passion narrative in John's account. The sacred writer uses the phrase "εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτούς"; "He loved them to the end" (John 13:1).

This event creates the Church and renews the creation (Ratzinger, 2011). The inscription of Pilate is the prophetic proclamation of Jesus's universal status (Moloney, 1998) for the whole world and the whole history: "Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων" (John 19:19) (Bornkamm, 1960). Ratzinger went to the extent to see in Jesus not only as the one of whom the book of Wisdom speaks (Wis 2:18) (Ratzinger, 2011) but also as the one of whom the *Republic* of Plato speaks: "And if it is somewhat rustically told, do not suppose that it is I who speaks, Socrates, but rather those who praise injustice ahead of justice. They will say that the just man who has such a disposition will be whipped; he will be racked; he will be bound; he will have both his eyes burned out; and, at the end, when he has undergone every sort of evil, he will be crucified and know that one should not wish to be, but to seem to be, just." (Plato, 1991). Benedict XVI identified three groups of challengers to this event: the Jews, for whom the Cross is a *skandalon*, the Greeks, for whom the Cross is a *moria*, and the heretics who forged their own ideas (Benedict XVI, 2009). The Cross is, in fact, the key to understanding God. The λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ (logos tou staurou) becomes then scandal and folly (1 Cor 1:18-23). In the mind of the Jews, it contradicts the essence of God, and in the opinion of the Greeks, it is an insult to common sense. Paul, in his teaching, wants to remind us that the Christ of resurrection is always the Christ of crucifixion. "He loved them to the end." However, he does not use the word "cross" in the letter to the Romans, which is a form of staurology (Nichols, 2007).

Actually, neither *sophia* (1 Cor 1:21) nor *nomos* (Rom 3:21, 28), neither *ratio* nor *lex*, can be a source of salvation. The event of the Cross brings the reversal in the history of salvation. From God's revelation through wonderful signs to revelation through seeming weakness, from the worthiness of the spirit over the body to the worthiness of both, and from salvation through deeds to salvation through grace. These words of the Athenians are valuable to be quoted: "We will hear you again about this" (Acts 17:32). The fate of the whole world and history is consequently bound. The Cross is a symbol of Christ's love for humanity, of his victory over death and destruction, and of his κένωσις and humility, which overcomes all the pride and haughtiness of the world. The λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ is of ultimate significance. It is therefore the message of Christ's love and sacrifice (Wengenroth, 1982).

Paul saw the event of the Cross as the beginning of the apocalyptic event of the general resurrection (1 Cor 15:12-20). It is the beginning of the center of Daniel's division of history (Dan 12:2-3). Jesus's death on the Cross draws its inner meaning from God's relationship with his people. It is a dying for. If one proceeds from the Apostles' Creed, via the Nicene, to the Athanasian Creed, one sees the *crucifixus* (was crucified) give place to the richer *crucifixus etiam pro nobis* (was crucified for us) and finally to *qui passus est pro salute nostra* (who suffered for our salvation)." (Wengenroth, 1982). All things in heaven and on earth were recon-

ciled with God through this event (Col 1:13-14; 19-20) (Ratzinger, 2000). Ratzinger highlights that “it is an event in which the words of Scripture are fulfilled; it bears within itself *logos*, or logic; it proceeds from the word and returns to the word; it surrounds the word and fulfils it.” (Ratzinger, 2011). Christ is “the ultimate man who speaks the words of God (John 3:34) and completes the work of salvation (John 5:36; 17:4, DV 2),” that is the definitive liberation of man and the suppression of all particular histories’ cause of temporal salvation (Ratzinger, 1982). He is at the same time “the mediator and the fullness of all revelation (DV 4).” In this vein, Benedict XVI made a wonderful approach to the death of Christ on the Cross: “Christ’s death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form.” (Benedict XVI, 2005). Moreover, in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, he notes (Benedict XVI, 2007):

The mission for which Jesus came among us was accomplished in the Paschal Mystery. On the Cross from which he draws all people to himself (cf. John 12:32), just before giving up the Spirit, he utters the words: “it is finished” (John 19:20). In the mystery of Christ’s obedience unto death, even death on a Cross (cf. Phil 2:8), the new and eternal covenant was brought about. In his crucified flesh, God’s freedom and our human freedom met definitively in an inviolable, eternally valid pact.

Saint Peter universalizes this event, which concerns him with the whole history that is the past, the present, and the future. He is concerned with the redemptive and atoning power of the Cross (1 Pet 3:18-20). The use of the word *kai* (also) in 3:19 shows that Christ did other activities during this time (Senior, 2003).

2.2.2. The Exodus Tradition

In the New Testament, the exodus tradition is so articulated. Traces of passages in Exodus appear at some points in the gospel accounts. For example, Matthew started his account of the Gospel by referring to the exodus from Egypt by quoting Hos 11:1 (Matt 2:13-15) (Brueggemann, 1997). The various accounts of the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36) provide a strong echo to the book of Exodus by alluding to the image of Moses ascending Mount Sinai. In Mark, Jesus’ appearance is changed, and at the same time, his clothing becomes an intense, radiant white. This change in appearance and clothing, together with the appearance of Moses and Elijah, clearly involves some aspect of a theophany. The strong connection with the cluster of Sinai theophanies is enhanced by the desire of Peter to make three dwellings, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. Jesus’s Transfiguration can be considered as the high point and the synthesis of the inner meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles (Ratzinger, 2011).

Luke explicitly used the term exodus in the transfiguration narrative (Luke 9:31). The topic of Jesus’s conversation with Moses and Elijah is Jesus’s exodus, a departure from this life, through the Red Sea of the passion, to glory (Ratzinger, 2011). Luke makes a strong connection to the Exodus-Sinai theophany stories.

Jesus is brought into relation with Moses and Elijah (especially with Moses), and the story of Jesus is linked to the story of Israel's journey to the Promised Land. While Mark's account offers tangible connections to the Exodus accounts of Moses' ascent on Sinai, the subsequent expansions by Matthew and Luke make it even clearer. Matthew adds and interprets the "transfiguration" with a comment that Jesus' "face shone like the sun." (Matt 17:2). In a very similar way, Luke interprets the metamorphosis in terms of Jesus' face: "the appearance of his face was altered" (Luke 9:29). Both of these gospels also intensify, though in very different ways, the colour of Jesus' clothing. Matthew says that his clothing became "white as light," while Luke says his clothing became "dazzling white." (Ratzinger, 2008a).

The Being of Christ that predominates the Christology of incarnation is a continuous exodus, a permanent act of being Son (Nichols, 2007). Ratzinger examines the tension between two Christological perspectives: the Christology of the Incarnation, rooted in Johannine and Patristic models, and the Christology of the Cross, found in Pauline literature and among sixteenth-century Reformers, particularly Martin Luther. During the Heidelberg Disputation in May 1518, Luther contrasted the term *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross) with *theologia gloriae* (theology of glory). Additionally, the New Testament writers interpret the language of the Exodus in a spiritualized manner. Wengenroth aligns with Luther and expresses his viewpoints regarding the *theologia gloriae*, which he views as highly dangerous. He argues that the church should strive to live according to *theologia crucis*, focusing on personal piety, worship, pastoral care, the administration of the sacraments, and stewardship (Wengenroth, 1982). In addition, Jesus' miracles can be seen as powerful, transformative acts reminiscent of the Exodus. Based on the Exodus tradition, both Jews and Christians view their history as one of salvation and divine victory, as illustrated in Exodus 12:12. The Exodus narratives remained central to the community of Jesus. However, they emphasize Jesus' unique relationship with God. This suggests that the gospels echo certain aspects of the Exodus accounts while interpreting them through a distinctly Christological lens (Brueggemann, 1997).

In John, the clearest indications of the Exodus traditions are found in the opening prologue (John 1:1-18) (Ratzinger, 2008a) and the feeding of the five thousand (John 6). In an exchange subsequent to the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus interprets that feeding in terms of the manna which Moses gave the ancestors in the wilderness (John 6:31). John is drawing upon the story from Exodus 16. John 6 also connects the feeding and subsequent interpretation specifically with the Passover tradition. John 6:4 specifically notes that the feeding miracle took place near the festival of Passover. Moreover, the feeding itself seems to have taken place in a wilderness location on "the other side" of the Sea of Galilee. In John 1:17, then, there is a cluster of connections to Exodus 33-34, connections that may also point to a connection between John 1 and Luke 9. The passage opens with a reference to Moses and the giving of the Law, which is the primary focus of the Sinai narrative in Exodus. Jesus is explicitly compared to Moses; in this comparison, He

is superior even to Moses. Jesus' revelation of grace and truth is superior to the law that was given by Moses. While the gospels use the accounts to deal with the human transformation, Saint Paul uses the rhetoric to give a general and cosmic dimension to individual disabilities. Therefore, the enemy whom Jesus must defeat for the sake of liberation is not poverty, leprosy, or blindness, but the Devil, sin, and death (Brueggemann, 1997). The exodus of Jesus brings definitive liberation and renewal. It opens the door into freedom, light, and joy. The salvation brought by the Passion is therefore filled with the glory of God (Ratzinger, 2008a).

3. Theology of History in the Patristic and Early Scholastic Time

3.1. Saint Augustin

3.1.1. The Concept of History

The concept of history as inherited from St. Augustine means a flow of individual events with no common elements. These events are pure external realities which have no inner intelligibility. From the early centuries, Christians believed that history could only be believed, not understood, because science deals with the universal. Therefore, it cannot be a real science. In the perception of the antiques and, to some extent, of some scholastics, in history reigns the accidentally ordered causality proper to every creature. It is the world of chance. It cannot be approached in a real scientific way. They rely on the *regressus in infinitum* (Ratzinger, 1971). This status of history started to be changed with Saint Augustine in 476. He used the term with a two-fold meaning or signification. The first meaning is investigation or research; the second one is narration. As research, *historia* takes the past and the present. As narration, it does not mean a succession of events, but an exposition of either present or past. His argument is worthy of note: "*Alia sunt, quae semper creduntur et nunquam intelliguntur, sicut est omnis historia temporalia et humana gesta percurrentes.*" There are always things that we believe are never understood, as is the whole history of human events, temporal and fleeting (Ratzinger, 1971).

All history is built by the duality of the conflict between the *civitas Dei* (Ratzinger, 2001) and the *civitas terrena*, between the *corpus Christi* and the *corpus Diaboli*. The whole of history since the ascension of Jesus into heaven is concerned with one work only: the building and perfecting of the City of God. God's city lives in this world as a foreign pilgrim as long as its human elements are considered. These cities started together from the time of Abraham. *The City of God* is led by the love of God and the neighbour, while the other city is led by the love of self and is opposed to God (Augustine, 1976). Ratzinger looks at the city of God as a sacramental, eschatological reality of the world to come. Augustine's teaching then attacks political religion, a reaction against the pagans and Pelagius's sympathisers (Marrou, 1954). Augustine draws the existential of human history from temporality, sin, death, the duty of love and eschatological hope. The two cities are rooted in the twofold fall before all history in the ordinary sense. Their *finis*

sine fine lies outside all inner-wordly happenings (Darlap, Splett, 2010). In this way, Rahner concluded that “der Raum und die Vorgeschichte der Geschichte Christi.” (Wengenroth, 1982). This means the history of the world is the sphere and the pre-history of Christ.

3.1.2. The Doctrine of the Seven Ages of History

Regarding the orders of history, the patristic theology is divided into two: the “imperialistic theology” and the “pneumatic theology”. The first consists of an emphatic “Yes” to the orders of history and to the theocratic spirit of the Old Testament. Its prominent figures are Eusebius in the East and Orosius in the West. The second understands history as developed in the New Testament and preserves its eschatology. Its prominent figure is Augustine (Ratzinger, 1971). Augustine divided the history of the world and the salvation history into seven ages from Adam to Christ: from Adam to Noah; from Noah to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the *Transmigratio Babylonis*; *Christus*, from *Christus* to *Finis mundi* whose generations are known by God alone (Acts 1:7; Matt. 1); the seventh will be the Sabbath or the day of the Lord which is also the eighth day. This day has no evening (Augustine, 1976). It is consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, foreshadowing the resurrection of the spirit and body (Augustine, 1976). This schema is simple. It has to be distinguished from the double schemata, which will be developed later by Joachim of Fiore.

Augustine found a relation between these seven ages and the days of creation. At this epoch, Christian persecutions were compared to the plagues of Egypt. The notion of the ten persecutions was first found in Orosius. The first plague is reckoned to be the persecution of Nero (64 A.D), the second that of Domitian (81-96), the third of Trajan, the fourth of Antoninus, the fifth of Severus, the sixth of Maximinus, the seventh of Decius (251), the eighth of Valerian (257), the ninth of Aurelian, the tenth of Diocletian (303) and Maximilian. In the opinion of Augustine, this scheme omits the crucifixion of the Lord, the persecution of Jerusalem, including the martyrdom of Stephen, James, the imprisonment of Peter, and the suffering of Paul in Judea and among the Gentiles. In this structure, he places the *parousia* at the final age of a *mundus senescens* (Ratzinger, 1971). This ontological approach gave way to historical thinking. Every oracle or prophetic speech is a complex of allegorical meanings. This doctrine was secondary in the theology of Augustine because his primary aim was to make the present and the future of the Church understandable from its past. He is the normative master of *allegoria* (Augustine, 1976).

3.1.3. The End of History

The early Christians and the Fathers understood the Christ-Event as the fullness of time (Gal 4:4). It is seen in this affirmation: “Christ became man *quasi in fine temporum*.” (Ratzinger, 1971). The word *quasi* reflects how difficult it is for the human mind to grasp the mystery of God. Nevertheless, this means that Christ is the fundamental end of history. Despite their different approaches to history, the

Fathers are united by this teaching and set the *Christos pneumatikos* above the historical *Christos sarkikos*. He is the beginning of the end and brought definitive salvation. In him, the end has already started. Augustine, who lived in this period, does not oppose this idea, but rather clarifies it (Ratzinger, 1971).

At the end, God will rest as it was on the seventh day, and the whole creation will rest in him (De Lubac, 1958). Israel's notion of the Sabbath strengthens it. It is for them a day to imitate God, a day of reforming the circle of family and household. It is the fundamental element of the social order. Jesus will orient this day to himself as the Lord of the Sabbath (Ratzinger, 2008a). The end of the ages is our end, which constitutes the beginning of the world without end. About what will happen in the eternal kingdom, Augustine replies marvellously: "there we shall be still and see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and praise." (Augustine, 1976).

3.2. Rupert of Deutz

3.2.1. The Meaning of Creation

Augustine's thesis was received as a heritage and developed in the Middle Ages. This impulse is first seen in the work of Rupert of Deutz (1070-1135). Though some theologians undermine his thought, Joseph Ratzinger stands for its genuine greatness and unique power. Instead of Scholastic methodology, Rupert preferred meditation as a way to penetrate the spirit of the Scripture. In "*De sancta trinitate et operibus eius*," basing on the Scripture, he attempts to interpret history theologically from creation to the final judgment. He made a historical typology on the creation account to which he gave a three-fold meaning instead of two, like the patristic approach (Ratzinger, 2008b):

First of all, this account indicates the work of creation itself, which is the work of the Father. It further indicates the history of salvation, which was worked out in the well-known six ages of history; this is the work of the Son. Finally, as a new dimension, it points to the history of salvation determined by the Holy Spirit in the world-epoch of grace opened by Christ.

Christology ratifies the inner meaning and unity of creation. Through the creation account, which opens the book of Genesis, Scripture becomes the true enlightenment of human reason, which is now opened to the truth and love of the Triune God. Creation is only one, and it is good (Ratzinger, 1971).

3.2.2. The Trinitarian Structure of History

The three-fold meaning of the creation account gave rise to a Trinitarian structure of history. Rupert divided history into three parts. The first is the time of the Father, which goes from "Let there be" to the fall; the second is the time of the Son, which departs from the fall to the Cross; the third is the time of the Holy Spirit, which starts with the resurrection till the final judgment. It is known as the time of the resurrection. Rupert, inspired by Augustine, separates the resurrection of the souls and the resurrection of the bodies. He divided the time into seven parts

in relation to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: “*Spiritus sapientiae in relation to passio; Spiritus intellectus in relation to intellectus scripturarum apostolis datus; Spiritus consilii in relation to caecitas in Israel; Spiritus fortitudinis in relation to tempus martyrum; Spiritus scientiae to tempus doctorum; pietatis to conversio Israel; and timoris Domini to ultimum iudicium.*” that means the spirit of wisdom in relation to the Passion of Jesus Christ; the understanding of Scripture poured into the hearts of the Disciples because of the fact that they were filled with the spirit of understanding; the spirit of divine counsel to the rejection of the Jews; the spirit of fortitude to the struggle and victory of the martyrs; the spirit of knowledge to the holy Fathers; the spirit of piety points toward the future conversion of the Jews at the end of history; the spirit of the fear of the Lord to the final hour of inner worldly history (Augustine, 1976).

The passion of Christ is considered as the revelation of the spirit of wisdom. The tearing of the veil of the Temple (Matt 27:51) was an image of the covering that was torn away from the face of Moses (Exod 34:33, 35; 2 Cor 3:12-18). It also symbolises the disciples’ understanding of Scripture after receiving the Spirit of understanding. The spirit of divine counsel is seen in the rejection of the Jews. The spirit of fortitude is manifested in the life of the martyrs. The spirit of knowledge is seen in the Fathers of the Church. The spirit of piety will be seen in the eschatological conversion of the Jews. And at last, the spirit of the fear of the Lord announces the hour of the final judgment (Ratzinger, 1971).

In order to speak of these three ages, Rupert divides history into three world-weeks: the week of creation, the week of redemption and the week of grace. Because the Persons of the Trinity interpenetrate and their works cannot be separated, these periods are inseparable. The term division here should not be taken in the literal sense. It emphasizes the oneness of the Spirit. The divine persons exist in *circumincessio* or *περιχώρησις* (De Lubac, 1998). It is a relationship of being toward one another in mutual exchange and reciprocity. The eternal divine relations of begetting and spiration define the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as persons (Groppe, 2004).

3.2.3. The Final Age: The *Gemina Resurrectio*

History, by essence, moves towards an end. The final age, which is the third period of history, constitutes the real time of the Spirit. It is the fullness of time characterized by maturity and wisdom. In this age, all that has been awaited in all the ages is fulfilled and perfect; all that was figurative is true. It is essentially the era of the seven gifts of the Spirit, which represent the unity of the Spirit when they are considered as a whole. Any periodisation is excluded to maintain the unity of time. Ratzinger differentiates the declining line of the Spirit from the declining line of history and thinks they are not identical (Ratzinger, 1971). This time is the era of the resurrection (*gemina resurrectio*). The total meaning of the Scripture will be revealed and grasped. He categorises three types of vision: the *visio corporalis* (external), the *visio spiritualis* (internal power of imagination). It is the case of Pharaoh, who had a dream but could not understand its meaning. And the *visio intel-*

lectualis (Mens Dei spiritu illuminata), that is the case of Joseph, who understands the dream in spirit through divine illumination.

3.3. Joachim of Fiore and the Spiritual Friars

3.3.1. Context

The gifts of the Spirit constitute the center of Rupert's approach. If this notion is put aside, his entire interpretation of history is destroyed. The question raised was how to combine this interpretation, its notion of a time proper to the Spirit, together with the temporal periodization of the Church considered to be the real time of Christ. The prophecy of a Spirit-church of the future arose as the answer. The patristic typology is left behind, and history is underlined for the first time as a continuous line from Adam up to the present. The work of Honorius of Autun harmonised the *ecclesia ab Abel*, eschatology, and the appearance of Christ. The term *ecclesia ab Abel* includes the Old Testament righteous in the Church of the elect. This means that the Church started with Abel as the first righteous person. In giving privilege to his idea of harmony, Honorius makes the incarnation of the *Logos* meaningless. Some modern theologians have inherited this approach, though it conflicts with the Christian faith and the doctrine as defined by the First Council of Nicea. The Christ-Event becomes an event like others. It is the turning point of ages, but does not bring any newness in history; while all the Old Testament's signs and periods point to Christ, who is the fulfilment and the plenitude of the Testament and the prophetic power (Helminiak, 1986).

Anselm of Havelberg developed temporal-historical growth in the Church. For him, the Father is openly proclaimed in the Old Testament, and the Son is mentioned in a hidden way. The New Testament speaks openly of the Father and the Son, and keeps in darkness the Spirit. The knowledge of the Holy Spirit has developed progressively. He interpreted the seven seals of the Apocalypse as the seven ages after Christ: the white horse is Christ; the red horse is the time of the Martyrs; the black horse is the time of the Heretics; the pale horse is the false Christians; at the same time, the founding of orders; the call of the Saints under the altar earthquake is the persecution by the anti-Christ; silence is the eternal vision (Ratzinger, 1971). The problem with this interpretation is the determination of the present, whether it is the fourth or the fifth age. He understood the history of the Church as the history of salvation. Honorius and Anselm considered their period to stand at the end of history. In their view, Christ is not the end of history, but he inaugurates a new stage (Ratzinger, 1971). These attempts can be seen as a way shown to Joachim of Fiore to develop his prophecy.

3.3.2. The Historical Prophecies of Joachim

Joachim's sympathisers maintained that the Church, founded hitherto on the sacramental and ministerial pattern laid down by God the Son, was shortly to enter a new charismatic condition of unmediated access to grace. It is a kind of developed Montanism (Nichols, 2007). Joachim announced a new monasticism and a new period of history, surpassing the revelation of the New Testament (Benedict

XVI, 2010). The medieval theology agrees with Cassiodorus, who defines prophecy as *inspiratio vel revelatio*. It is important to note that for many scholastics, revelation is defined as a speculative-scientific exegesis of Scripture. It is identified with discursive thinking. This speculation is purely a *gratia*. Prophecy thus becomes the *gratia interpretandi*.

Joachim connected the prophecy of Malachi about Elias (Mal 3:23) (Mottu, 1977) with the apocalyptic prediction of the two witnesses of Rev 11:3 (Nichols, 2007). This connection led him to foretell the coming of a new Elias and a new Henoah at the beginning of the third age, which is the age of salvation (Nichols, 2007).

This prophecy was probably fulfilled in Francis and Dominic (Ratzinger, 1971). He also predicted the coming of the angel with the seal of the living God (Rev 7:2ff). This angel's task is to renew the Christian religion as the *novus dux de Babylone* (the new leader of Babylon) and the *universalis pontifex novae Hierusalem* (Universal pontiff of the New Jerusalem). Joachim sees in this angel the *novus ordo*, the *sanctae matris ecclesiae*, the *ecclesia contemplativa*, *ordo contemplativum*, *virii spiritualis*. Ratzinger contested the view of Dempf, which interpreted this angel as the *homo Christus*. Joachim uses *Ordo* as equivalent to *Populus*. It is translated by Benz as the new order of salvation or the new religious social order, and by Ratzinger as the New People of God. The third age is a contemplative and monastic age of pure interiority. At the end of his reflection, after realizing that the unredeemed and defective history runs on even after Christ, he announces the imminent coming of the expected good and redeemed history. Gerard of Borgo San Donnino takes the message of Joachim as an *Evangelium aeternum* mentioned in Revelation 14:6: "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people." It is, in his opinion, a new Scripture. That is why he calls Joachim *scriptor huius operis*. This teaching was condemned and rejected by the Church and by some theologians like Bonaventure. Joachim himself sees in this Eternal Gospel the Holy Spirit and not a book or a text. He developed the historical-allegorical exegesis that became the source of his theology. Applying this method to the Old Testament, he concluded that the signs and periods of the Old Testament are oriented to a similar course of events in the New Testament (Ratzinger, 1971).

3.3.3. The New and Final Order

The *novus ordo* will be preceded by a transitory time that is the end of the sixth age in the late second period and the beginning of the seventh age and third period. The Calabrian Abbot divides history into three stages, subdivided into seven ages. He makes a double-seven schema. Christ is in the center between the third and the fourth ages. Two temporary Orders will be sent by God, at the end of the sixth age, to assume a forerunner role. They are like Moses and Elijah (Nichols, 2007). One will lead the People of God in the desert, and the other will be a solitary living far from the community of men and women. They are more spiritual than the preceding Orders and less spiritual and contemplative than the coming Order.

They will be interested in *gustare* and *studere*, whereas the spiritual people of the final age will look only for the heavenly things. They correspond to the angels of the communities of Philadelphia and Laodicea (Rev 3). Relying on the triple-schema Zachary, John the Baptist, *Homo Christus* Jesus, the Abbot of Fiore concludes that the *novus Ordo* is the final and definitive. The Church of the Spirit is where the Sermon on the Mount will be fulfilled *sine glossa* (Ratzinger, 1971).

3.3.4. The Triple-Schema of History

Joachim, like Rupert, related his three stages to the Persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. History is substantially united. This reckoning refers to the *una deitas*. He considers the Old and the New Testaments as two halves of history, having Christ as the center and turning point. Christ is then the axis of world history. This idea was new. It is not found clearly in the pre-Joachimite period, which spans the first Christian millennium, but was prepared by Rupert, Hori, and Anselm. At this precise point, Ratzinger rejected Kamlah, who, in his critique of Cullmann, who supports the idea of Christ the center, considers “Christ the axis of world-history” as the original idea of Rupert and is not the center of the ages but one dividing point among many. The division of history into Before and After Christ is possibly the work of John Nauklerus (d.1510). The reckoning of time as “before the birth of Christ” became common only in the 18th century, while the determination of years “after the birth of Christ” onwards is much older.

Contrary to his predecessors, for him, with Christ, the course of history starts again on a new and higher level. The world is therefore transformed and redeemed. The unredeemed history is terminated. He attributes the work of Christ to historical significance. It is no longer seen as the beginning of the suppression of history. He developed a double-seven-schema of history: Adam-Noah; Noah-Abraham; Abraham-Moses; Moses-Samuel; David-Ezechiah; Ezechiah-Zorobabel; Zorobabel-Christ; Christ and Apostles-Clement I; Clement I-Silvestrum (314-335); Sylvestre-Leo I; Leo I-Gregory I, Gregory I-Hadrianum I; Hadrianum I-(?); Angelic Clamor (Rev 10:6, 7)-(?). The final age is the *Finis novi testamenti*. Therefore, the time of the New Testament is in the process of passing away to make way for the coming of the greater one. Benedict XVI argues that for the Cistercian abbot, “The whole of history was thus interpreted as a history of progress: from the severity of the Old Testament to the relative freedom of the time of the Son, in the Church, to the full freedom of the Sons of God in the period of the Holy Spirit.” (Benedict XVI, 2010).

Saint Thomas will reject this view of Joachim and his exegesis as applied to the Old Testament (Nichols, 2007). He did away with all revelations regarding the time of the end of the world. This time cannot be found in natural ratione because of the course of the universe, that is, its movement and its measure, *secundum naturam suam possit in perpetuum durare* (by their nature, cannot last forever) (Ratzinger, 1971). He opposed the Christocentric perspective of the Scripture and the Fathers in the exegesis of Fiore. The main aim of his work is to bring the second age to the third. If Christ is the axis of history, the world has two axes, not

one. Consequently, it is divided into three ages and not two. With this viewpoint, he is the path-finder for a new theology of history (Ratzinger, 1971).

3.3.5. The Spiritual Friars

The event of Francis marks, in the thought of Joachim, a new period which is the age of the Spirit and the end of the age of Christ (Nichols, 2007). He used this event to challenge the patristic exegetical tradition and the fixation of the fathers as the end of theology. It was held up to the Middle Ages that the understanding of Scripture was revealed to them once and for all (Ratzinger, 1971). Contrary to Augustin, who reflected on a dialectic of two terms, Joachim's system is a dialectic of three terms, of which the third makes a *processus d'assomption* of the two (Mottu, 1977). He uses three concepts to maintain the interpenetration of these three ages: *sterilitas*, fructification or fecunditas, and *partus* or consummation (Mottu, 1977). This approach was taken and developed by a group of Minor Friars who will be called Spirituals. For this trend, with Francis, the eternal Gospel came to replace the New Testament, and the Church had been replaced by a charismatic community of free men guided from within by the Spirit, namely the Spiritual Franciscans. In their mind, Saint Francis inaugurated a new age (Benedict XVI, 2010). Thus, the Franciscan Order was divided.

4. Conclusion

The concept of the Theology of History, while not explicitly found in Scripture, recognizes the theological interpretation of significant events and liturgy. In the Old Testament, the Deuteronomist illustrates God's word in history, while the New Testament highlights the Exodus tradition, particularly through allusion. Christ is seen as the culmination of time, a theme reflected in early Christian hymns. During the Patristic and early Scholastic periods, two key axioms emerged: Christ as the telos (goal) of history and as the axis of the ages. St. Augustine prominently defended the idea of Christ as the telos, representing the convergence of all things towards salvation and the culmination of history. In contrast, the second axiom, proposed by Joachim of Fiore, viewed history as a Trinitarian narrative of progress, although it lacked a unique center. Debates continued among Joachim's followers and the Spiritual Franciscans, leading St. Bonaventure to assert the oneness of history. This will be the focus of my next paper: "Saint Bonaventure and the Theology of History by Joseph Ratzinger."

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Augustine (1976). *City of God*. Penguin Books.
- Benedict XVI (2005). *Deus Caritas Est*. Encyclical Letter on Christian Love, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

- Benedict XVI (2007) *Sacramentum Caritatis*. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Benedict XVI (2009). *Saint Paul, General Audiences July 2, 2008-February 4, 2009*. Ignatius Press.
- Benedict XVI (2010). *Saint Bonaventure*. General Audience, 3 March 2010, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Benedict XVI (2011, April). *Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI*. Saint Peter's Basilica, Holy Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Bornkamm, G. (1960). *Jesus of Nazareth*. Harper & Row.
- Brueggemann, W. (1997). *Theology of the Old Testament*. Fortress Press.
- Darlap, A., & Splett, J. (2010). History and Historicity. In K. Rahner (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Theology* (pp. 619-620). ST PAULS.
- De Lubac, H. (1998). *Medieval Exegesis, I*. W. B. Eerdmans.
- Durand, E. (2014). Note sur la théologie de l'histoire. *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 98, 353-379. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rspt.982.0353>
- Groppe, E. T. (2004). *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0195166426.001.0001>
- Hartman, L. F., & Di Lella, A. (1978). Daniel. In L. F. Hartman, & A. Di Lella (Eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (pp. 4AB.23, 1.1. Collins18.418). Doubleday.
- Helminiak, D. A. (1986). *The Same Jesus*. Loyola University Press. <https://books.google.co.tz/books?id=sIMqrD50qZgC&pg=PA245&dq>
<https://books.google.co.tz/books?id=VDE9DwAAQBAJ&pg=>
- Latourelle, R. (1996). *Théologie de la Révélation*. Society of Saint Paul.
- Lubac, H. D. (1958). *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*. Sheed and Ward.
- Marrou, H. I. (1954). *De la Connaissance Historique*. Seuil.
- Moloney, F. J. (1998). *The Gospel of John, Sacra Pagina* (4th ed.). Daniel Harrington, Liturgical Press.
- Mottu, H. (1977). *Manifestation de l'Esprit selon Joachim of Fiore*. Delachaux et Niestle.
- Nichols, A. (2007). *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*. Burns & Oates.
- Plato (1991). *The Republic, II*. Basic Books.
- Rad, G. V. (1962). *Old Testament Theology, I*. Harper & Row.
- Ratzinger, J. (1971). *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*. Franciscan Herald Press.
- Ratzinger, J. (1982). *Les Principes de la Théologie Catholique*. Pierre Tequi.
- Ratzinger, J. (2000, August 6). *Declaration "Dominus Iesus", on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*.
- Ratzinger, J. (2001). *L'Esprit de la Liturgie*. Ad Solem.
- Ratzinger, J. (2004). *The Garden of God*. The Catholic University of America Press.
- Ratzinger, J. (2008a). *Jesus of Nazareth, I*. London.
- Ratzinger, J. (2008b). *Theology of the Liturgy: Collected Works, XI*. Ignatius Press.
- Ratzinger, J. (2011). *Jesus of Nazareth, II*. Ignatius Press.
- Ratzinger, J. (2012). *Jesus of Nazareth. The Infancy Narratives*. Bloomsbury.

- Senior, D. P. (2003). *1 Peter*. Sacra Pagina, 15, Ed. Daniel Harrington, Liturgical Press.
- Wengenroth, K. (1982). The Theology of the Cross. *Concordia Theological Quarterly (CTQ)*, 46, 267-275.
- Wright, A. G., Murphy, R. E., & Fitzmyer, J. A. (1996). A History of Israel. In *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (pp. 1228-1237). Geoffrey Chapman.