

Grace Reformed Network Pastors' Statement on Recent Theological Concerns

We, the pastors of the Grace Reformed Network (GRN), have endeavored to address Jon Moffitt's recent resignation from the board with care and charity. The prior public statement, issued by the board of GRN, was intentionally understated so as to avoid inflammatory language. We have taken great care to not impugn Jon's character or motivations. We will continue to operate in this manner.

This matter has continued to attract considerable public attention, which has led to misrepresentations of our concerns and has raised additional questions. Thus, we believe it wise and helpful to provide greater specificity regarding the concerns we have. We offer this expanded statement for the sake of clarity.

It is important to note that we are not concerned directly with Doug Van Dorn, as he nor his church are a part of our association. Our concern with Doug pertains to the content that Jon has created with him; there are numerous instances in which Jon has agreed with and affirmed Doug's statements on air; Jon has also repeatedly defended Doug's teaching publicly. Many of the statements and quotations included below are from Jon directly. Others were made by Doug but with Jon's agreement and consent and without repudiation, recantation, or repentance.

TIMELINE AND PROCESS

Before we get to the specific theological concerns, there have been questions raised about the process pertaining to Jon's resignation. Below is a brief chronological overview.

Over the last year: In response to the emphasis and content of the *Kingdoms Unveiled* and *Reformed Fringe* podcasts, as well as articles and posts on social media, many of the pastors of GRN have repeatedly addressed the concerns detailed in this statement directly and privately with Jon—through emails, phone calls, texts, and other forms of communication. These concerns, critiques, and requests for clarification led to a series of actions starting in September of this year (2025).

September 19: Jon issued an open letter about his theological commitments¹ and asked for forgiveness for his lack of clarity in how he spoke relating to the doctrine of God. At no point in that letter did Jon recant, repudiate, or repent of any statements made on the podcast or in his articles, but sought simply to "clarify my heart and my convictions." While this letter was posted on Jon's personal website and linked with his X and Instagram accounts, the same day, he posted a defense of his and Doug's teaching on Facebook.²

¹ "Open Letter on My Theological Commitments", Jon Moffitt, posted September 19, 2025.

<https://www.jonmoffitt.com/post/open-letter-on-my-theological-commitments>

² "Religious Zeal (Rom 10:2) and Exegetical Fallacies: Part VII of VII in the Elohim Series," Doug Van Dorn, posted by Jon Moffitt September 19, 2025. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BDt1EaoFn/>

September 29: An update was then issued on *Reformed Fringe* where Jon announced he would no longer be on the podcast. On this podcast episode, titled “Important Update...,” Jon announced he was exiting the podcast “not for any bad reasons” and communicated that he was simply too busy. Jon went on to say how much he enjoyed the podcast, will continue to be part of the online community, and he hopes the Lord will “continue to bless it” while Doug Van Dorn takes it over.³

September 30 - October 13: A number of GRN pastors raised concerns about Jon’s statement of clarification paired with his farewell to *Reformed Fringe*. These were communicated to Jon directly, as well as to the board of directors. None of the issues raised pertained to Jon’s motive in these statements, but that the statements demonstrated a concerning ambiguity by a board member of a confessional network engaging in public theology.

October 14: A meeting was held with the board (including Jon) and a number of pastors within the network in order to share these concerns with Jon in a group setting. Following that meeting, Jon met with the rest of the board and verbally offered his resignation because he did not share our concerns as expressed. Important: The board of directors took no action to have Jon removed, nor were any formal charges made against Jon by the board or the pastors of the network. Jon voluntarily resigned from his position, and the board accepted his resignation.

October 18 - November 1: The board began working on a public statement that briefly articulated the overarching concerns shared by the board and expressed by network pastors in the October 14 meeting. During this time, the board was also awaiting Jon’s letter of resignation, which was received on November 1.

November 3: The GRN Board shared the draft of their statement with the other elders of Grace Reformed Church (the church where Jon Moffitt pastors). The board received no pushback or negative feedback from those elders prior to the statement being released publicly.

November 5: The GRN Board’s statement regarding Jon’s resignation was shared online.

November 4 and 7: Jon’s *Reformed Fringe* cohost, Doug Van Dorn, posted two articles⁴ in response to both Justin Perdue’s personal statement on leaving *Theocast* and GRN’s statement. Jon shared both of these articles via his social media accounts.

³ “Important Update...” episode of *Reformed Fringe*, posted September 29, 2025.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/reformed-fringe/id1673785890?i=1000729059214>

⁴ The Kobayashi Maru: A Clarification of a First and Final Word on an Impossible Situation.

<https://www.douglasvandorn.com/post/the-kobayashi-maru-a-clarification-of-a-first-and-final-word-on-an-impossible-situation>

My Orthodoxy: Affirmations and Denials Against Unaccountable Online Slander

<https://www.douglasvandorn.com/post/my-orthodoxy-affirmations-and-denials-against-unaccountable-online-slander>

Further, podcasts and other individuals online have begun dissecting the breakup of *Theocast* and calling GRN to repent of slandering Jon due to the claims made in GRN's public statement.⁵

Having given this overview of the timeline, we now move on to our theological concerns.

ON THE ELEVATION OF TERTIARY AND SPECULATIVE MATTERS

At the outset, let us unequivocally state that our issues are *not* disagreements over tertiary doctrines on which the creeds and our confession are silent. Differences in such matters are normal and healthy and ought to be held with great charity. Pertaining to tertiary doctrines, our concern is that they have been elevated to a place of primacy. As we will demonstrate, views on tertiary matters have been turned into tests of orthodoxy. This is unwise and unhelpful, and leads to confusion and division.

GRN has been accused of separating from our brother because of disagreements on tertiary doctrines. However, Jon started a ministry (*Kingdoms Unveiled* which later became *Reformed Fringe*) that centered on tertiary and speculative matters. In the content of this ministry, statements were regularly made that explicitly elevated these tertiary and speculative matters to a place of primacy.

Example #1: *Kingdoms Unveiled* "Genesis 6 and the Sethite Heresy"⁶

This episode, in its title and its content, elevates a tertiary doctrine not defined by the creeds or our confession (i.e., the angelic view of Genesis 6) and makes it a test of orthodoxy. Jon states:

"...the conclusion I come to is this: if you believe that the sons of God are not literal gods... if you believe that the giants were just some big men... if you reject the supernatural view of Psalm 82... then you're embracing anti-orthodox [views], you're going against church history, you're playing with heresy... If you reject all of that, you're actually embracing a Jewish opposition to Jesus... Jews who hated Jesus and wanted Him out of the Bible..." (~3:18–3:54).

"...the naturalistic interpretation... was... a direct attack against the deity and claims of Jesus Christ to be Israel's Messiah. Therefore, in persisting in naturalistic arguments for this... the church has unwittingly adopted a dangerous antichrist [exegesis] that was created to keep Jewish people from converting to Christianity" (~6:13–6:32, stated by Doug and affirmed by Jon).

⁵ *Theocast* is a completely separate entity from GRN, but due to Justin Perdue's involvement in both at a high level, much of the public discourse has conflated the two. This statement represents the concerns and clarifications of the pastors of GRN alone, and isn't connected with Justin's involvement with *Theocast*. He, as a GRN pastor, affirms this statement.

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5btF-j6jcQU&t=248s>, published October 14th, 2024

Jon continues:

“...if you are embracing a Sethite/ruler view of Psalm 82, you’re having a problem with Jesus, because Jesus is the one who is affirming that this is the actual translation of it....We’re showing the history of this is an anti-Jesus perspective: if you hold the Sethite view, if you hold the ruler view in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 82, it was invented... to divert people away from Jesus” (~38:48–39:08).

This excerpt is especially problematic because it collapses multiple passages and binds a particular view of Genesis 6 to an overly-developed and speculative view of the divine council—and if one does not hold this view in total, he is against Jesus.

Important note of clarity: A particular view of the divine council (i.e., whether it is the heavenly host or earthly magistrates) is not our concern; nor is a particular interpretation of Genesis 6 (i.e., the angelic or Sethite views). In other words, we think there is room for brothers in the Reformed tradition to charitably disagree on these texts and remain within the bounds of orthodoxy.

Jon concludes by saying:

“...the change came after Jesus’ resurrection, 100 years after it. You have rabbis who want to shut down Christianity... and so they change the meaning of the text. And so if you hold a non-supernatural view of Genesis 6, Deuteronomy 32, and Psalm 82, you’re actually holding an anti-Jesus perspective. That’s the argument, and I think it’s pretty sound” (~44:12–44:48).

This elevation would set many faithful Christians outside the bounds of orthodoxy, including: Julius Africanus, Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyril, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Bullinger, Voetius, Turretin, a Brakel, Poole, Henry, Owen, Gill, and many others.⁷

⁷ Augustine, for example, comments, “But that those angels were not angels in the sense of not being men, as some suppose, Scripture itself decides, which unambiguously declares that they were men.” And also, “Let us omit, then, the fables of those scriptures which are called apocryphal, because their obscure origin was unknown to the fathers from whom the authority of the true Scriptures has been transmitted to us by a most certain and well-ascertained succession. For though there is some truth in these apocryphal writings, yet they contain so many false statements, that they have no canonical authority.” Augustine of Hippo, [“The City of God.”](#) in *St. Augustine’s City of God and Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Marcus Dods, vol. 2, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 304-5. Calvin also states, “Moses, then, does not distinguish the sons of God from the daughters of men, because they were of dissimilar nature, or of different origin; but because they were the sons of God by adoption, whom he had set apart for himself; while the rest remained in their original condition.” John Calvin and John King, [Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis](#), vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 238. These quotes aren’t given to prove one side over the other but to demonstrate the danger in calling the view espoused by these fathers of the faith as a “heresy.”

Example #2: Reformed Fringe “What ‘No Other Gods’ Doesn’t Mean”⁸

Here, Doug Van Dorn argues (and Jon affirms) that many Reformed people read the Bible like Unitarians if they don’t embrace a particular view of God the Son becoming an *elohim*.

“It really troubles me that guys read the Old Testament like Unitarians. What do I mean by that? That they don’t recognize there is more than one person being discussed—one person of the Trinity—sometimes even in the same passage... But when, for example, Jacob says ‘my God,’ ‘my shepherd,’ ‘the rock,’ or ‘the angel,’ he actually has Jesus in mind—because he knew Jesus. He’s not thinking like a Unitarian, where there’s only one God in one person. And yet that’s how we so often speak as evangelical and Reformed Christians when we talk about the Old Testament... [The Second Person of the Trinity] took the form of a created *elohim*—an angelic being. He is the eternal Word of God who entered the universe he made, to manifest by his word. He became one of those creatures and is called the God of Israel. Now, this is different from the incarnation. Totally different. Because in this case, he became an *elohim*, not a human. He became an *ish*, not an *Adam*—an angel, not a man. But he still truly became one of them... Jesus came to the patriarchs as one of those *elohim*. And the second you say those *elohim* don’t exist, you’re saying he doesn’t exist... Even if you argue that the other *elohim* are not like him—that they lack the incommunicable attributes of Yahweh—you still must affirm that he is both Yahweh and *elohim*, united in one person. That’s the triune nature woven throughout all of Scripture. And I get fired up about this because this is how Jesus taught us to read the Bible—and we don’t do it. It creates unnecessary problems and divisions, causing brothers to attack each other when they actually agree on nearly everything—except semantics. And that semantic problem comes primarily from not seeing Jesus in the text” (~30:59-35:35).

We will directly address the high-level theological claims made here later in this statement, but it is quite a strong assertion that other brothers don’t read the Scriptures or teach with Trinitarian consistency unless they hold Jon and Doug’s view that God the Son became one of the *elohim*.

Starting a ministry that majored on what is “fringe” and explicitly elevated tertiary and speculative matters to a place of primacy inevitably sparked controversy and division. The present situation is the fruit of this activity. Starting such a ministry is especially unwise for a board member of a confessional network, as it will inherently detract from the network’s core mission. The controversy created has led to the public questioning of the orthodoxy of GRN and her churches, which in turn required the network to take up and address the matter privately and repeatedly to Jon over the past number of months before ultimately addressing it publicly.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sumKawbMij0>, published September 1st, 2025

While we all may have different convictions on tertiary and speculative matters, it is an entirely different thing to raise these convictions to a place of prominence in our public ministries. Paul repeatedly warns us against doing so:

“But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless” (Titus 3:9).

“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths” (1 Timothy 4:7a).

“Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels” (2 Timothy 2:23).

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ... Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head...” (Col. 2:8, 18-19a).

“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words...” (1 Timothy 6:3-4).

These verses ought to make godly pastors and teachers exercise care lest they stray from the primary doctrines of God, Christ, and the gospel, and stir up division and friction through the overemphasis of tertiary doctrines.

Again, the concern stated here is not that Jon holds certain tertiary beliefs, but that he (along with his co-host, whom he repeatedly affirms) calls into question the orthodoxy of those who do not hold those same beliefs. This is not a sound way of doing theology in public and should be avoided.

ON SPECIFIC TEACHINGS THAT OUGHT TO BE RECANTED, REPENTED OF, AND REPUDIATED

As we continually examined the content of the *Kingdoms Unveiled* and *Reformed Fringe* podcasts, we found some of the teaching not only elevated tertiary issues, but also compromised historic Christian orthodoxy pertaining to primary doctrines: the doctrines of God and Christ. This is the heart of the matter and what is most important to us.

Jon issued a clarification in which he stated his own positions positively and expressed regret for being misunderstood (as linked above). However, we are not addressing his intention but the actual content of what he has taught, platformed, and affirmed. We believe Jon's intentions have been good. We do not believe he would intentionally teach anything contrary to the creeds or our confession. *We do not think Jon is a heretic, nor have we ever called him one.* The two articles posted by Doug Van Dorn (linked above) following the previous GRN statement included accusations that he and Jon had been called heretics. Due to the timing of these articles, the implication was that the GRN made such a charge. This implication was picked up and stated as fact, with many online flatly accusing GRN and Justin Perdue (due to his Theocast resignation) of calling Jon a heretic. We deny these accusations. Jon's and Doug's clarifications demonstrate they seek to hold to orthodox doctrine. Yet, one's claim that he is confessional and orthodox does not inherently mean that everything he teaches is so. When one makes propositional statements that undermine primary doctrines, the specific statements themselves must be recanted, repudiated, and repented of. It is one thing to acknowledge that teaching was unclear; it is another to acknowledge that it was wrong. Jon has not done the latter.

ERRORS CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Elohim

Jon has repeatedly stated and written that the other beings called 'elohim' are 'real' gods; they are 'literal' gods; they are 'divine' beings; they are 'properly' called 'gods' stating, "They are truly gods in the proper sense..."⁹ And elsewhere: "Normally, God speaks to an elohim (a divine being), who delivers the message to a prophet, who then speaks to people."¹⁰

This language conveys that these beings possess a divine nature, not just a spiritual one. It makes clear ontological claims and raises legitimate questions about henotheism and polytheism. As the Nicene Creed begins, "We believe in one God..." As our confession states, "The Lord our God is one, the only living and true God." As many of our catechisms include, "Are there more gods than one? No."¹¹ Jon and Doug clearly state that they deny henotheism and polytheism. But their statements concerning the nature of these beings are confusing at best and must be recanted. This is not picking theological nits. The pastoral folly of this confusion is clear at the 7:10 mark of the *Reformed Fringe* episode titled "What 'No Other Gods' Doesn't Mean"¹² when Jon states that Jesus is fully God and fully man. Doug stops Jon and says that in light of their discussions his mind went to the 'other elohim' they had been discussing. Doug then says that Jesus alone is fully 'other elohim' (the meaning of which is covered under Christological errors below).

⁹ https://x.com/Babble_GPT/status/1956812007941775634?s=20

¹⁰ "Do These Verses Call Humans 'Elohim'? A Closer Look at Exodus 7:1, 21:6, and 22:8" Jon Moffit, <https://www.reformedfringe.com/post/do-these-verses-call-humans-elohim-a-closer-look-at-exodus-7-1-21-6-and-22-8>

¹¹ <https://baptistcatechism.org/>

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sumKawbMij0>, published September 1st, 2025

In the Reformed Fringe episode, “What ‘No Other Gods’ Doesn’t Mean,” (linked above), it is stated that God the Son became a created *elohim* and is “one of them” (~33:30-33:50). It is asserted that the second Person of the Trinity became one of the gods and functions like they do, at least in the era of the old covenant. This is another example of the confusion being sown.

We wholeheartedly affirm the real existence of other real spiritual beings (e.g., Satan, holy and unholy angels, demons, evil spirits, etc.). However, the creeds and our confession are clear—there is only one being who is properly divine. All other beings are called ‘gods’ analogically, metaphorically, improperly, or in a diminutive sense.

Loyalty versus Ontology

Jon has repeatedly asserted that when the Lord makes statements about there being no other gods besides him (or similar), he is talking about loyalty, not ontology. (For example, see the 28:06 mark in the *Reformed Fringe* episode “What ‘No Other Gods’ Doesn’t Mean.”)¹³

In other words, Jon contends that God is calling his people, Israel, to worship him alone; he is *not* making categorical statements about his nature versus the nature of the ‘other *elohim*.’

But, this does not square with many instances in the Scriptures where this language is used.

Deuteronomy 4:35 (and surrounding) cannot be reduced to an issue of loyalty or allegiance. “To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.” The Lord is distinguishing himself ontologically from all the other gods. He is not just doing more for Israel than the other gods are doing for their nations; they are not in his class. Other gods are not gods in the proper sense. The Lord alone is the true God, not just for Israel, but for all.

Isaiah 45:5 is especially helpful because, in this verse, the Lord is not even speaking to an Israelite; he is speaking to Cyrus, the king of Persia. “I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me.” Cyrus does not know the Lord, nor is he in covenant relationship with him. In this instance, the Lord is not calling one of his covenant people to be loyal to him above any other god; he is making a strong pronouncement about who he is. He is entirely unique, in a class all by himself. There is no other being who is like him, ontologically.

Jon’s statements on the podcast also contradict his open letter of clarification, where he states, “the primary and overwhelming use of *Elohim* in Scripture refers to Yahweh, the one true and living God... [These other beings in the spiritual realm] may be called ‘gods’ in a lowercase sense because they exist in the spiritual realm, just as Yahweh is spirit.”¹⁴ These statements cannot stand together. Jon has not just been unclear. He has contradicted himself and yet, has never owned ways he was wrong. More importantly, he has contradicted Scripture, and yet, has never recanted.

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sumKawbMij0>.

¹⁴ <https://www.jonmoffitt.com/post/open-letter-on-my-theological-commitments>

Stripping the Bible of these categorical, ontological statements diminishes God and robs him of his glory. This ought not be done.

ERRORS CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Along with many saints throughout history, we wholeheartedly affirm that the Angel of the Lord is the second Person of the Trinity. Christophanies, pre-incarnation manifestations of the second Person, are widely recognized throughout the Old Testament. Teaching on *Reformed Fringe* and in Doug Van Dorn's writing pushes far beyond any historical understanding by positing the assumption of a created *elohim* nature (or angelic nature) by God the Son. This is novel theology and introduces a whole host of Christological problems. These are not simple mis-statements one could conceivably find in an informal, non-academic podcast—they are found in Doug Van Dorn's published writings, and therefore represent a cohesive system of thought behind his statements. As our concern is not with Doug directly, these statements are quoted here because they have been shared, restated, or affirmed by Jon.

“It is actually also true that [God the Son is] the only one who is *fully human and fully other elohim*. That’s right. And the reason I say that is... he’s not half human, half *elohim*... he’s fully, fully, and I guess I could add a third ‘fully’ because Jesus... has all the communicable attributes of other *elohim*. He has the full set of attributes of [a] human being, but he also has the full attribute set of what it means to be God himself” (“What ‘No Other Gods’ Doesn't Mean” ~8:24–9:43; emphasis added).¹⁵

Here, language of the hypostatic union is being used to describe the way in which God the Son took on the nature of an *elohim*.

“He is the eternal Word of God who came into this universe that he made to manifest by his word and he *became one of those creatures* and he is called the God of Israel... This is different from the incarnation. This is totally different from the incarnation because he’s becoming an *elohim*, not a human. He’s becoming an *ish*, not an *adam*. He’s becoming an angel, not a man. *But he still nevertheless became those things. And he was one of them*... Jesus came to the patriarchs as one of those *elohim*. And the second you say those *elohim* don’t exist, you’re saying he doesn’t exist... *Even if you argue that the other elohim are not like him—that they lack the incommunicable attributes of Yahweh—you still must affirm that he is both Yahweh and elohim, united in one person*” (“What ‘No Other Gods’ Doesn't Mean” ~32:06–34:59; emphases added).¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sumKawbMij0>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

These statements were made by Doug with Jon’s visual and verbal approval and affirmation. Again, this is language of the hypostatic union used to describe the second Person taking on the nature of an *elohim*. In addition, parallels are being drawn to the incarnation.

“Related to this is that when we look at this from different language used of him, we quickly learn that this mediary is assuming the created properties *of an angel*—the Word became an angel (Passing the Impassible Impasse, p. 13).”¹⁷

This language is ontological, not phenomenological¹⁸, and ought not be used about anything other than God the Son becoming a man.

“Second, the only begotten Son has taken on, in the OT, the form and image of an angel in a way that is directly analogous to taking on the form and image of a man. Not in a way that is univocal (one to one), for he is not taking the form of a son of Adam—a human. But again, it is analogous. Once more we use this language of ‘form’ and ‘image’ because it is the language used of Christ becoming a man in the NT. However people want to talk about this, assuming created properties of a human, assuming the form of a male human, becoming a man, or whatever, this is the same language we would want to use for him in the OT with regards to an angel. The Word became human even as the Word became an angel... In becoming an angel, the Second Person of the Trinity thereby accepted to take on those attributes and qualities of that kind of created being, in a way analogous to his agreeing to take on the properties of a human being” (Passing, p. 27).

This language draws *very* strong parallels between the Son of God taking on the form and image of a human and him taking on the form and nature of an angel. Doug states this is not univocal language, but then defines it in univocal terms by saying that the only difference is in the form, not the manner of assumption (“this is the same language we would want to use for him in the OT”).

"The parallels are obvious, but what really was happening here with Jesus? What does it mean that he was ‘transfigured’ with his face shining ‘like the sun’ and his clothes ‘white as light’? Commentators all agree that something of his divine glory was being revealed, that the veil of the flesh was being lifted to show his true glory. But what does that really mean? Was the veil of the flesh being removed to show merely an anthropomorphism of God? Was the physical reality

¹⁷ Doug Van Dorn, *Passing the Impassible Impasse: Christological Reflections on the Impassibility of God* (Reformed Baptist Church of Northern Colorado, February 2015), 13. This paper was then republished by Doug in 2024 demonstrating he still holds these views.

¹⁸ “Ontological” pertains to nature, being, or essence, whereas “phenomenological” pertains to appearance or manifestation. Phenomenological language is good as it preserves mystery regarding exactly how God the Son revealed himself to his people as the Angel of the Lord in the Old Covenant. In everything, we must remember that “the secret things belong to the Lord” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

of the flesh giving way to a semblance of the essence? It can't be his glorified human body, because he hadn't earned that yet; he had to be raised from the dead to receive this body. In fact, what the Apostles saw was what Moses and the elders of Israel and others in the Old Testament saw of the divine glory. They all saw the Angel of the Lord – the Son of God in a supernatural form, with a supernatural body... In other words, the Apostles were being shown Jesus in a typical supernatural form, similar to the way he manifests in the heavenly realm, as other supernatural beings from the heavenly realm appear from the perspective of those on earth” (The Angel of the Lord, pp. 209-210).

Here, it is posited that what is revealed at Jesus’s transfiguration is his elohim/angelic nature. This is especially problematic because it necessarily entails the person of God the Son possessing three natures simultaneously (that of God, man, and created elohim). Doug has recently issued affirmations and denials (again, linked above) and stated he believes this “angelic nature,” was “likely permanently manifested...until the incarnation.” Not only is this a novel view denied by Reformed theologians, it is also inconsistent with his own view that Jesus manifested this assumed nature at the transfiguration.¹⁹ This is speculative theology at best. At worst, it denies chapter 8 of our confession which states unambiguously,

“The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholds and governs all things He has made, did, when the fullness of time was complete, take upon Him man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities of it, yet without sin...so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man” (2LCF 8.2).

We confess that there are only two natures in Christ, very God and very man in one person. There was not a third “assumed” nature prior to or concurrent with this where God the Son “became” an elohim. You cannot claim that you hold to every line of chapter 8 of the confession while teaching things directly contradictory to it. This is disingenuous and goes against the very heart of the confession, which has “no itch to clog religion with new words.”²⁰

¹⁹ See statement #9 in Van Dorn’s Affirmations and Denials, shared by Jon the day it was published, Nov. 7, on Facebook. See also Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*, 74-76, where he states, “The form in which the Angel appeared was a form assumed for the moment, laid aside again as soon as the purpose of its assumption had been served.” He continues by critiquing the permanent assumption view by saying, “This would run contrary to the variableness of the form in which the manifestations took place. It would also anticipate the incarnation, in which *the new feature is precisely that the Second Person of the Godhead assumes a form which remains permanently His own (Jn. 1:14)*” (italics ours) meaning Van Dorn’s view is in error because only in the incarnation do we see permanent assumption take place.

²⁰ From the introduction to the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith, commonly called the 1689.

The language in all of the above quotations is contradictory to Nicene and Chalcedonian definitions of Jesus Christ, as well as to our confession (chapter 8 on 'Christ the Mediator'). This teaching posits a third nature assumed by the second Person of the Trinity that the creeds and our confession do not allow.

This novel theology of God the Son taking on the nature of an angel and possessing three natures raises real and problematic questions about the Trinity, the uniqueness of mankind as being made in God's image to be his vice regents, the role of Jesus as the one mediator between God and man, and the centrality of the redemption of mankind in the eternal plan of God.

Consider the witness of our confession, the Nicene Creed, and the Scriptures:

Jesus is the mediator between God and man (2LCF 8.1, 8.2).

God the Son is the one "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man" (Nicene Creed).

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people"(Hebrews 2:14-17).

God the Son partook of flesh and blood—for our sake. Surely it is not angels that he helps. When God the Son took on flesh, he did it to redeem and restore and reclaim his image in mankind. This cannot be said of angels.

We have nearly two thousand years of the history of the church seeking to interpret and understand the Scriptures. We should be exceedingly careful of any theological novelty at this point. Such ideas must be thoroughly tested against Scripture, the creeds, confessions, and historical interpretations prior to being confidently taught. When tested in this manner, this idea of God the Son taking the nature of an angel must be rejected.

OUR CALL

There is nothing more important than the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Christ. This is what the creeds, as well as chapters two and eight of our confession, were written to articulate and defend. To violate the boundaries of the careful and proven language found in these documents is unwise, dangerous, and is not in accord with 'the pattern of sound words' entrusted to us. As it

pertains to the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Christ, there are specific erroneous statements made and/or affirmed by Jon that require explicit recantation and repudiation. Our call is for an unambiguous, public acknowledgement that the specific doctrinal assertions addressed in this statement were not just unclear but false.

FINAL WORDS

We affirm that there is room for charitable disagreement over tertiary matters. Such disagreements have never been our concern.

The elevation of speculative tertiary issues on a public ministry platform has been pastorally unwise and detrimental to our network. It has caused confusion, division, and unnecessary controversy in our churches.

We, the pastors of GRN, have never called Jon a heretic. We have never suggested that he has departed from confessional orthodoxy in total. On top of this, our intention has never been condemnation but corrective restoration. Our primary concerns lie with certain statements and teachings, which, as stated, fall outside the bounds of orthodoxy and have needed to be addressed within our network of churches. Our prayer is that Jon would hear, see, and heed these concerns.

The Grace Reformed Network—our board, our pastors, and our churches—remain committed to warm-hearted and robust confessional integrity, and to the sufficiency of Christ above all things.

Signed,

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Joey Carroll, Christ Covenant Church, Ashland, KY
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