

## *True Love in Letting Go: A Pluralist Theology in 1 Kings 3:16–28*

Adam C. Toler

*Yale Divinity School*

### ABSTRACT

*An oft-unmentioned step in pluralist theologies is the a priori assumption that we theologians know precisely what it means for God to “love universally” in a soteriological sense. The common presumption is something like the following: It is God’s goal, Love’s purpose, to “save everyone.” Such an interpretation of God’s universal love reduces and objectifies the divine personality into a pitiable utility rather than a genuine lover and/or beloved. The nuances of relational love—jealousy, passion, desperation, compromise, etc.—are all obliterated by the perplexing assumption that a God who loves universally is a God who has no affect to their love. This essay will examine 1 Kings 3:16–28 to derive a model of love that maintains God’s particularity—acknowledging the emotional tumult God may experience when confronted with our construals of religious pluralism—even while affirming a pluralist soteriology.*

Keywords: 1 Kings 3, affect theory, eschatology, love, pluralism

### INTRODUCTION

According to Paul Knitter, the dilemma for theologies of religious pluralism is balancing the “universality and particularity of God’s relationship with humanity.”<sup>1</sup> Where one lands in this teeter-totter provides the foundational premise upon which to build a theological approach. Christian, pluralist approaches, then, tend to defer toward God’s universal love over particularity. Yet, an oft-unmentioned step of these pluralist theologies is the *a priori* assumption that we theologians know precisely what it means for God to “love universally” in a soteriological sense. We presume something like this: It is God’s goal, Love’s purpose, to “save everyone.” We are quick to flatten an irreducibly complex, cosmically transcendent Being—who-is-Love into something summarizable in just two words: our savior. Nietzsche makes a similar critique in his *The Antichrist*:

When ... the predicate “Savior,” “Redeemer,” is all that *remains* as it were of the godly predicate as such: *what* does such a transformation tell us? such a *reduction* of the Godly? ... He transfigured himself into something thinner and paler, became an “ideal,” became “pure spirit,” became “*absolutum*,” became “thing in itself” ... *Decline of a God*: God became “thing in itself.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Antichrist: Curse Upon Christianity,” in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche Vol. 9* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021), 147–148.

Correspondence should be addressed to Adam C. Toler at adam.toler@yale.edu.

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Nietzsche's claim is that our compassion, our interpretation of God's universal love reduces and objectifies the divine personality into a pitiable utility rather than a genuine lover and/or beloved. The nuances of relational love—jealousy, passion, desperation, compromise, etc.—are all obliterated by this perplexing assumption that a God who loves universally is a God who has no personality to their love. After all, if God's love is manifested through quirks and preferences in the divine personality, it could limit the lengths to which God might bend to grant everyone some form of salvation, would it not? This essay will look at 1 Kings 3:16–28 to derive a model of love that maintains God's particularity—acknowledging the emotional tumult God may experience when confronted with our construals of religious pluralism—even while affirming a pluralist soteriology. This essay asks, "How might God, themselves, feel about our attempts to pluralize our love toward and/or away from them?"

### BACKGROUND CLAIMS

1 Kings 3:16–28 is often employed to comment on the famous wisdom of King Solomon: "When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice."<sup>3</sup> Yet, by my lights, it also analogously models a compelling theology of religious pluralism that balances the universality of God's love alongside the nuance of particular, divine personalities. In short, the two prostitutes assume the roles of different deities/religious ends in the analogy, and the living child becomes a human being set in the liminal space between such ends. However, prior to treating 1 Kings 3:16–28 as an instructive analogy for religious pluralism, it will be helpful to acknowledge some background limitations and metaphysical assumptions to this essay's approach. The first is recognizing that any heuristic rooted in Judeo-Christian scripture will inevitably project some degree of personhood onto the divine. So, when we speak of soteriological ends, we inevitably speak of divine persons present in/at/through/as these ends. Moreover, our application of 1 Kings 3 is limited to a *theos*-centric religious pluralism, i.e., a theology centered around a divine being who engages humanity through interpersonal, even anthropomorphic, modalities. This alludes to a second fundamental assumption: The reader must be willing to countenance a plurality of religious ends.

Such eschatological architecture with differentiated religious ends is meticulously explored by S. Mark Heim in *Salvations*. Heim limns, "It could also be that there are in fact various realities in the noumenal realm which are religiously significant and which ground diverse religious fulfillments."<sup>4</sup> Influenced by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Heim further develops his eschaton's topography in *The Depth of the Riches*, mapping this noumenal realm with "several peaks ... diverse religious fulfillments stand[ing] at their own summits, set so within the texture of their own religious traditions and practices."<sup>5</sup> Because Heim's religious commitment is ultimately to a soteriocentric, Trinitarian Christianity where "each *enters* into this communion [with God] *through the dimension of relation with the Trinity* most characteristic of his or her religious experience," Heim's theology of religious pluralism

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:28, NIV.

<sup>4</sup> S. Mark Heim, *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), 146.

<sup>5</sup> S. Mark Heim, *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 278.

never explicitly addresses different deities or divine personalities.<sup>6</sup> As such, we must step beyond Heim in our analogy. Fortunately, there is both scriptural and academic precedent to support a plurality of divine persons while avoiding any reductions to polytheism.

Not only do many of the titles ascribed to God in the biblical text remain monotheistic even while implying the existence of other deities—“God of gods,”<sup>7</sup> for example—but Paul Knitter’s analysis of “love language” and plural “one-and-onlys” in *Introducing Theologies of Religions* goes a long way in helping us conceptualize the affirmation of multiple deities without collapsing toward polytheism. Knitter writes,

When the early Christians used this kind of one-and-only language they were not speaking from their heads, trying to give a conceptual, philosophical definition of Jesus. They were, rather, speaking from their hearts, trying to express what they felt about Jesus and what he meant to them. They were using what the experts call “confessional” language ... Better, it can be called *love language*—the language someone uses to talk about the person who has transformed one’s life and stands at its center ... From this perspective, there can be, paradoxically, many “one-and-onlys”—many unique expressions of divine truth, many particular and distinctive revelations in the different religions.”<sup>8, 9</sup>

Unfortunately, Knitter eventually oversimplifies this love language into mere poeticism: “If ... the judge would ask [a husband] to put his hand on the Bible and swear that his wife is the most beautiful woman in the world and that there is no other woman that he could have married, he could not so swear ... What is true as love language is not true as philosophical or doctrinal language.”<sup>10</sup> Though this may be accurate for “one-and-only” endearments between spouses who could have been otherwise, we ought to contend that this is *not* the case for faith. While a spouse is considered a temporally contingent being, God is taken by post-conversion, religious adherents to be philosophically necessary and providentially guiding. There is no feasible world in which it would not have been the case that the adherent was led to believe in the exclusive existence of and by their God. The confessional “one-and-only” is at its highest fidelity, then, when ascribed to God post-conversion as it retroacts fate onto the conversion journey. For the lover of God, their beloved divine truly is and was the only one for them. This is important for our analysis of 1 Kings 3, because the dilemma facing Solomon is not resolved through shared custody of the child (i.e., something analogous to a polytheistic theocentrism) nor by glossing the fact that Solomon’s decision was between two persons, each with their own distinct and equally valid emotions (i.e., Heim’s monotheistic soteriocentrism). Rather, Solomon is faced with a forced choice between exclusive options (i.e., monotheism) and deduces the identity of the living child’s mother—an identity claim over the child both in the present and into the past—by observation of the two mothers’ particular reactions (i.e., theocentrically attentive).

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<sup>6</sup> Heim, *The Depths*, 281, my emphasis.

<sup>7</sup> Deut. 10:17, NIV.

<sup>8</sup> Knitter, *Introducing Theologies*, 133.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

## A CONTENTION BETWEEN DEVOTION AND DIVINE

At this point, a pluralist reader may find multiple deities an agreeable posit yet have very little reason to consider any one deity's particularity important to the pluralist endeavor. For example, in Chapter II of his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Part Two*, Søren Kierkegaard claims that the adherent who "prays with all the passion of infinity ... upon the image of an idol ... prays in truth to God" more than one who "prays in untruth" with the "true idea of God."<sup>11</sup> In other words, after dissolving the barrier between idol and God, pluralist approaches ought to be satisfied with any genuine, mystical devotion to the divine as a pluralized generality. In fact, one might argue that precisifying any single divinity's personality—relegating the devotional affect to secondary consideration—would be to engage in actual idolatry. This is an argument forwarded by Wilfred Cantwell Smith:

To mistake [religious conceptions of God], however, for God Himself, or mistakenly to elevate any one of them to some divine status, is to commit the fallacy of looking at the window rather than through it to God, and giving to it the honour, dignity, deference, due only to God. Each "religion" is an "idol" in the best sense of the word, if one were going to use these words at all. *Exclusive claims for one's own is idolatry in the pejorative sense.*<sup>12</sup>

Other theologians make weaker claims, reading onto God a love that is entirely absent of jealousy, prioritizing the devotional comfort of the religious adherent over the deity's desired ends. Heim describes the Christian God along such lines:

God always manifests a loving and merciful purpose that seeks to bring creation into participation in the divine life. God seeks *communion* and never fails to fulfill *relation* to the greatest capacity possible, in harmony with the freedom of the creature. Every response to the divine initiative has its reward.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, this amenable conception of the divine reached broader audiences through C.S. Lewis's final book in the Chronicles of Narnia, *The Last Battle*. In the novel, a god/demon named Tash deceives many Narnians into worshipping *him* as the same divine being as Aslan. Yet, when one of Tash's devout adherents finally meets the true Aslan, the following words of comfort are spoken by the lion: "Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me ... Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him."<sup>14</sup> While Aslan still differentiates himself from Tash, the devotional desire of the adherent eclipses the identity of the one receiving the devotional practices. I find this to be a highly contentious passivization of God that is particularly inappropriate when

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<sup>11</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Writings, XII, Volume I: Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 201.

<sup>12</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Idolatry: In Comparative Perspective," in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 59–60, my emphasis.

<sup>13</sup> Heim, *The Depth*, 290.

<sup>14</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), retrieved from <https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/lewiscs-lastbattle/lewiscs-lastbattle-00-h.html>.

talking about love. To illustrate my reasoning, let us ask in which scenario would a husband be showing more love: 1) when he puts on a facade of love for his wife or 2) when he demonstrates love toward his mistress? The conclusion should be that neither attitude is more loving. Both miss the mark of what it means to love appropriately. Further, neither the husband's wife nor his mistress is likely to find either of these scenarios ultimately satisfying. In the same way, devotion to any god should not be ultimately "in truth" if it is not conscious of and directed toward the particular person of God.<sup>15</sup> This assertion not only expects the adherent's faith to be *faithful* but also acknowledges that "universal love" should *not* coerce God into conflating their particularity with all other deities just to receive our faith unto themselves: "For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."<sup>16</sup>

How might divine jealousy, then, be compatible with *any* kind of universal love? When would a jealous God *ever* share or let go of their beloved? These questions lead us into our primary analysis of 1 Kings 3:16–28.

### A PLURALIST READING OF 1 KINGS 3:16–28

The remainder of this essay will proceed through a series of guiding questions, highlighting important elements of pluralist theologies that otherwise might go unnoticed. In answering these questions, we will glimpse some insight into God's possible reaction to our pluralist theories and begin to develop a deeper appreciation for the intimacy and practical necessity for pursuing theologies of religious pluralism.

First, what aspects of the 1 Kings 3 pericope can be read as demonstrating God's universal love?

The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!"<sup>17</sup>

Love is explicitly named here in verse 26, and we garner a greater appreciation for the content of this love in its Hebrew—*nikm'rû rahāmehā*—which connotes a feeling of familial recognition and literally "bowel-" or gut-wrenching compassion. The mother's love, then, is not expressed as a contractual duty-to-intervene but, rather, as the kind of heartbreaking desperation that manifestly testifies to a shared, parental history. It is all the more astounding, then, that this mother's *nikm'rû rahāmehā* for her son is enacted through disownment, "Give *her* the living baby!"<sup>18</sup> This is a formal proclamation made in the court of a king, and, by the description of this mother's reaction, we know that she has no doubt in Solomon's authority and willingness to follow through on his threat. Thus, this five-word plea comes from a mother who is not only resigning herself to the loss of her son—along with all the futures he could have lived with *her*—but also the loss of her identity as his mother and the historicity that that identity carries. Further still, all these losses are not merely lost to her but are given away to another person! Such is the kind of loss a relational God faces when a pluralist theology is proposed. The divine's universal, unconditional love is a paradox of intolerable and, yet, entirely unavoidable, personal loss. Additionally, the emotional turmoil expressed

<sup>15</sup> Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Writings*, 201.

<sup>16</sup> Exod. 34:14, NIV.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:26, NIV.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

by both women communicates to us readers the role jealousy might play in God's response to religious pluralism.

This one says, "My son is alive and your son is dead," while that one says, "No! Your son is dead and mine is alive."<sup>19</sup> ... But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!"<sup>20</sup>

According to Daniel M. Farrell, "Jealousy can be thought of as a rather special kind of threat-response—a response, that is, to the possibility that one's status as a favored individual is in jeopardy."<sup>21</sup> It is important to note, then, that both women continue to refer to themselves as mothers *still*, in that each speaks of having their own son who is not the other's—the language of "your son" versus "mine."<sup>22</sup> In reality, one of these women is no longer a mother and no longer has a son to love as her own. Her son has passed. Her son is past. Responsive jealousy is recognized in this self-ascription of labels. Either woman is in jeopardy of reverting from a "mother with a son of her own" to a "childless 'prostitute'"<sup>23</sup>—the social status levied upon both women in verse 16 only to be replaced by "mother" for *one* of these women in verse 27.<sup>24</sup> The difference between these two "mothers" is that one of them remains trapped, blinded by jealousy, which only views the threat to *her* status, while the other mother is "deeply moved out of love" to be jealous over *her son's* life, recognizing the threat against *his* status.<sup>25</sup> There is, then, jealousy in love—even universal love—and it should be acknowledged as such. It is not God's plan to settle for relation when God desires communion. And yet, would a jealously loving God ever condone religious pluralism? Ever let their child go? Yes. In the face of trauma-provoked, *utter* lostness, God's jealousy and desire to be *our* God intermingles with God's universal love—a love made known in letting go.

### A PRACTICAL REASON FOR PLURALIST THEOLOGIES

During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him.<sup>26</sup> ... [Solomon] then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other."<sup>27</sup>

"Letting go" is only a loving response when the alternative is "trauma-provoked, *utter* lostness." In other words, pluralist theologies require significant justification. Pluralism is not a value-neutral endeavor for most Jews and Christians. In fact, for many, having a God named Jealous interrupts any willingness to engage pluralist theologies. While most pluralists find soteriological exclusivism ethically intolerable and defend pluralism on broad assertions

<sup>19</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:23, NIV.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:26b, NIV.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel M. Farrell, "Of Jealousy and Envy," in *Person to Person*, ed. George Graham and Hugh Lafollette (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 262.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:23, NIV.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:16, NIV.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:27, NIV.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:26, NIV.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:19, NIV.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:25, NIV.

of universal love, exclusivists can very easily—and rightly so—circumvent this critique. The heaven and hell architecture is frequently buttressed by arguments from justice, from God's unique deservedness of our love, and from definitions of God's "love" that transcend our moral sensibilities. Thus, pluralist theologians are tasked with justifying not only why exclusivism is intolerable to humanity but why or, more accurately, *when* exclusivism might be intolerable to a jealous God. Trauma-informed theologies provide an avenue for such a justification.

In Jennifer Erin Beste's book, *God and the Victim*, a number of empirical philosophers and practical theologians comment on a characteristic of trauma that is horrifying: there exists such degrees of suffering in our world *so* potent that the trauma they induce can wholly shatter a human being's ability to make soteriologically significant decisions:

There is pain that renders people blind and deaf ... Radical suffering attacks those abilities that make persons most human: the capacities to "exercise freedom to feel affection, to hope, *to love God*." ... "Spirits can be destroyed just as bones can be broken and bodies killed. Human beings can be subjected to such pain that they are crushed rather than redeemed by it."<sup>28</sup>

In our analogy with 1 Kings 3, we see trauma on two fronts: 1) the "religious trauma" of the one mother unintentionally suffocating her son during the night<sup>29</sup> and 2) the "eschatological trauma" associated with Solomon's command to divide the child in two.<sup>30</sup> I refer to the mother's suffocation of her child as "religious trauma" because, in our analogy, the mothers are treated as deities/religious ends, and it is appropriate to consider the role certain conceptions of the divine play in *creating* the necessity for religious pluralism. Through the legalism of non-affirming doctrines, religion can very easily make itself unlivable by stoking trauma. For example, some sociological studies have recorded a direct correlation from religious involvement to suicidal ideation/life-long suicidality amongst queer folks.<sup>31</sup> The crux-point of such data is that these individuals are faced with a religion they can neither choose *against* (i.e., exclusivism) nor continue existing in as the persons they are. So, they are lost, suffocated by their religious bodies, and cut down by the promise of eschatological damnation. Exclusivism, then, is God as the second mother, screaming about her lost child, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!"<sup>32</sup> Moral injury and "the vicious cycle of traumatization"<sup>33</sup> instead necessitate a plurality of religious ends with a God who cries more loudly, "Give her the living baby! Don't kill him!"<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Jennifer Erin Beste, *God and the Victim: Traumatic Intrusions on Grace and Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11, my emphasis.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:19, NIV.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:25, NIV.

<sup>31</sup> Megan C. Lytle, John R. Blosnich, Susan M. De Luca, and Chris Brownson, "Association of Religiosity With Sexual Minority Suicide Ideation and Attempt," *Am. J. Prev. Med.* 54, no. 8 (2018): 650.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:26b, NIV.

<sup>33</sup> Beste, *God and the Victim*, 127.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:26a, NIV.

### SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Before we wrap up our treatment of 1 Kings 3:16–28, I would like to explore two implications of the passage’s conclusion.

Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.”<sup>35</sup>

By way of this mother’s love—evinced in her willingness to let her own son go—the child is not killed and instead returned to his mother, the truth of her identity revealed, prevailing against the other woman’s falsehoods. On our analogy, this may seem at first blush to ultimately resolve into inclusivism. There is a *true* mother and a *false* mother, and neither trauma nor loss, “neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation” can keep the child from returning to his true mother’s embrace.<sup>36</sup> In this vein, one might read the difference between the two women as a difference between God and an impotent idol rather than between two divine persons. To rebut such an interpretation, let’s do a close analysis of the penultimate verse: “Then the king gave his ruling: ‘Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.’”<sup>37</sup> The “first woman” refers back to verse 26: “The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, ‘Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!’”<sup>38</sup> That is, rather tautologically, the woman who is moved out of love for her son is declared by Solomon to be the child’s mother. Otherwise, it is not entirely clear which woman at the start of the pericope is the mother who speaks in love versus the mother who speaks in jealousy at the end of the pericope. It remains ambiguous whether the real mother is found to be the one who made the accusation or the one being accused of swapping out the other’s child for her deceased son’s body. Both mothers claim their son as the living one, and neither woman is given a name, so the reader is left to the simple comfort that the child found his way into the arms of the mother who loves him. This in no way indicates that the mothers are fungible, nor is their particularity unimportant. Rather, it implies that either woman in this passage—any deity in our analogy—could respond as the true mother of the living child with a love-that-lets-go. It is a pluralist theology that, like Heim’s “orientational pluralism,” can be picked up by adherents from different religious commitments.<sup>39</sup> It is a framework that “allows those in individual traditions to continue to regard their referent as more ultimate than that in another tradition ... it presumes that adherence to different religious truths will eventuate in distinct fulfillments” or, in our case, distinct relationships to particular divines.<sup>40</sup>

### CONCLUSION

There are many ways to pursue a Christian, pluralist approach to religious diversity. Most frequently, theologians employ a moralizing lens, anthropological theory, or

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<sup>35</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:27, NIV.

<sup>36</sup> Romans 8:38–39, NIV.

<sup>37</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:27, NIV.

<sup>38</sup> 1 Kgs. 3:26a, NIV.

<sup>39</sup> Heim, *Salvations*, 136.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.



Westernized philosophical conception of what the divine nature is or *ought* to be, and this premise, then, justifies their pluralist constructions—justifies *that* Love lets go to some extent. Yet, as a practicing Christian, while many of these justifications are personally compelling, they often leave my spirit feeling disconcerted and dissatisfied in one regard: they all presume God’s unhesitant, unperturbed resignation, even *approbation*, of our attempts to find eschatological fulfillment through different loves. In the narrative of pluralism, the character of God lets us, God’s beloveds, leave God without qualms. Of course, the metaphysics of many pluralist approaches flatten some aspect of God’s character and/or explain how religious traditions collapse into a single Ultimate Concern, allowing them to avoid the question of God’s affective, *effected* response to pluralism. However, in order to both honor the divine personality evidenced in Scripture *and* be an integrous reader of other religious traditions, theologians must do better. We must find a way to justify—from the divine’s perspective—*why* Love would ever let go. This essay, as such, seeks to give depth to God’s love, recognizing the intrinsic heartbreak, necessity, and fidelity buried within a sovereign, monotheistic deity’s willingness to co-exist (at least in *our* pluralist theories) alongside other religious ends. The only way to engage in such a persuasive argument over the personality of God is through a close exegesis of Scripture, mining both literal and metaphorical self-disclosures in God’s Word. 1 Kings 3:16–28 is a paradigmatic example of metaphorical, divine self-disclosure. It limns the tale of a mother who loves her son *so* deeply that she forsakes him to keep his life from being lost entirely. Recognizing the degree of suffering and trauma endured both in this passage and in our everyday lives, lostness—whether it be to an eschatological void or the visceral reality of religious trauma and suicide—is a potent threat to exclusivist theologies. Yes, a God of Love will claw tooth-and-nail for us, God’s beloveds, but when pain crushes rather than redeems, when our ability to see and accept God’s love is amputated, when life has turned all hope into despair and all faith into betrayal, we find in pluralist theologies a God who lets go, and we can recognize that that, too, is a God of Love.

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