

Article

# Martin Heidegger on Primordial Christian Life Experience: A Phenomenological Theological Perspective

Xin Leng

Department of Philosophy, Tongji University, Shanghai 200082, China; bersia@163.com

**Abstract:** Through his phenomenological interpretation of Paul's letters, Martin Heidegger developed the Lutheran idea about Christian life experience as an experience of conversion, and argues that the Christian religiosity is rooted in the temporality of primordial Christian life experience as the expectation towards the Parousia. Heidegger also suggests that the Hellenic metaphysics are alien to primordial Christianity, therefore he is devoted to erasing Hellenic metaphysics from Christianity. Through his phenomenological interpretation of Saint Augustine, Heidegger deconstructs the value system and theology originated from Hellenic metaphysics by illustrating the existence of Dasein. In this article we will inspect Heidegger's religious phenomenon and propose our own views about the essence of Heidegger's primordial Christianity.

**Keywords:** Heidegger; phenomenology of religion; Parousia

## 1. Introduction: Phenomenology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion<sup>1</sup>

Since the Enlightenment began, knowledge about God has been marginalized in philosophical studies by the demands of rationalization.<sup>2</sup> However, philosophers who were active in phenomenological movement in the 20th century criticized the skepticism of logic caused by rationalization, and demanded epoche of assumptions such as naturalism. As Husserl (2001, p. 19) argued: "For the epistemological confusion in which we are placed by natural (pre-epistemological) reflection on the possibility of knowledge (on the possibility of knowledge making contact with its object) is predicated not only upon false views about the essence of knowledge, but also upon self-contradictory, and therefore fundamentally misleading, interpretations of being as it is known in the positive sciences." For that, Husserl chose to return to the evidence the principle of given phenomenon, which allowed for phenomenological philosophers to consider subjective feelings which cannot be logical revivification, such as emotion, life experience, and of course, religious experience, as essential philosophical questions. Martin Heidegger, one of the representative figures in phenomenological movement, will be discussed in this article to illustrate how phenomenological method is used in dealing with issues about religious life experience, God, transcendental theory, etc. We argue that religious phenomenology aims to find an irreducible experience of primordial religious life through a method of phenomenology and construct a structure of this religious life to explore the significance of religious life. As Denker (2010, p. 32) writes: "His real objective is systematic: the living structures of lived religious experience must be described and clarified in their essence, from the concrete fullness of their historical situations". While the scholasticism represented by Thomas Aquinas used the ontological method to demonstrate the existence of God, the nature of God and its relationship between the existence of God, the property of God, and other theological opinions, Heidegger suggests that such kinds of demonstrations are just metaphysical mechanisms which can be called as "onto-theo-logic", or ontological theology. He revealed the religiousness of primordial Christianity and primordial Christian life experience by interpreting the letters of St. Paul, in his *Introduction to the phenomenology of religion* (1920–1921).



**Citation:** Leng, Xin. 2022. Martin Heidegger on Primordial Christian Life Experience: A Phenomenological Theological Perspective. *Religions* 13: 1082. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13111082>

Academic Editor: Joseph Rivera

Received: 21 August 2022

Accepted: 1 November 2022

Published: 10 November 2022

**Publisher's Note:** MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Copyright:** © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 2. Factual Life Experience and Historicity

Heidegger proposes that scientific concepts are defined through the ordering and regularity of things; however, philosophical concepts are swaying, vague, manifold, and fluctuating. He finds a fundamental difference between the possible paths to philosophy and the possible paths to science. He believes that the starting point for the path to philosophy is practical life experience. The world can be understood as that “in which” a factual Dasein<sup>3</sup> “lives”, rather than a collection of objects. As Badger (2017, p. 11) states: “the paradoxical status of worldview philosophy is not due to the fact the conception of a worldview is arbitrary and subjective (which of course it is), but is instead due to the fact ‘the essence of worldview itself becomes a problem’ . . . it is paramount to keep in mind the way life and world are in fact a priori correlated and fused together”. Heidegger suggests the life-world should be divided into three elements, the communal world (Mitwelt), the surrounding world (Umwelt), and the self-world (Selbstwelt). What we are exploring is how one actually experiences the world and thus the meanings or senses of practical life experience. As Pfau (2017, p. 248) says: “The myriad experiences and interpretations that make up Heidegger’s world never coalesce into a coherent, meaningful framework. Instead, he claims, the world is ‘worldly’ through and through”. First of all, when we compare Heidegger’s structure of practical life experience with Husserl’s structure of intentionality, we can find that the structure of intentionality can be aware only by reflection, as we experience the noesis and noema simultaneously. Heidegger (1995, p. 12) argues that factual life experience manifests an indifference to the manner of experiencing, for people have initially already fallen prey<sup>4</sup> to the “world”. Moreover, Heidegger (1995, p. 16) argues that factual life experience is an attitudinal, falling, relationally indifferent, and self-sufficient concern for significance, which is prior to the objectification achieved by cognition. Heidegger also indicated that I myself always appear as the self-world experience, which has a strong relationship with the communal world, instead of treating self as a kind of transcendental self. He suggested the self-issue should always be treated as an issue of existential, instead of an epistemological problem such as how one can possess self-cognition in his work *Being and Time*. Dasein always finds itself in the things at hand which it takes care of in the surrounding world in everyday life (Heidegger 1977b, p. 159).

Heidegger (1995, p. 63) suggests that phenomenon can reveal itself only in form and phenomenon is the totality of sense in three directions. The first direction is the context of experience, which contains things we experienced in phenomenon, i.e., the context senses (Gehaltssinn). The second direction contains how phenomenon could be experienced, i.e., the relational senses (Bezugssinn). The third direction contains how the relational senses could be practiced or conducted, i.e., the enactment senses (Vollzugssinn). These three directions emphasize the practical characteristic of life experience according to Heidegger. In the view of Heidegger, practical life experience is the true base of phenomenology, and the essence of practical life is the sense of time. The historicity lies within the practical life experience. As Fehér (2009, pp. 121–22) notes: “The way history becomes object for scientific investigation is decided from time to time by the primordial historicity of Dasein”.

Heidegger’s concern about the historicity question has a close relation with his research of St. Augustine of Hippo and the religious life of primordial Christianity. Aristotle suggests all human affairs conducted by human are accidental, which includes all possible existence, non-existence, and all things unaccomplished. Aristotle’s thoughts already indicate the realm’s low ontological status—“a status never seriously challenged till Hegel’s discovery of Meaning and Necessity in History” (Arendt 1971, p. 15). Augustine proposed issues about the origin, the senses, and the purpose of history in his work *The City of God*. History has its origin from in the creation of God and develops through confrontations between the heavenly city and the earthly city. The criteria for dividing such two realms depends on the different way of life, i.e., the two different series of love. Augustine established the theology of history, and answered the question about the systematicness and entirety of human history by interpreting Holy Will. Jean-Francois Lyotard, a post-modern philosopher, regarded Augustine as the pioneer of modernity and concluded modernity as historicity

and meta-narratives. As Heiskala (2011, pp. 8–9) thinks: “In Lyotard’s book, the concept of modernity refers to any context in which there are narrations which claim to be literal and seek the position of a meta-narrative for the purpose of hiding their own narrative nature in the meaning struggle in social semiosis”.

Heidegger discussed several interpretations of Augustine, which were made by Ernst Troeltsch, Adolf von Harnack, and Wilhelm Dilthey. As Barash (2010, pp. 103–4) says: “Dilthey and Troeltsch had each proposed accounts of the development of historical consciousness in the broad field of culture. For each of these thinkers, the emergence of historical consciousness involved insight into the radical historicity of all values and all truths that human understanding might apprehend. For Heidegger, however, such questions concerning the cultural prerequisites for the emergence of historical consciousness had little bearing on genuine reflection on the originary experience of the ‘historical’ (das Historische)”. Heidegger (1995, pp. 160–62) considered the cultural philosophy of Troeltsch as a culture typology indeed. He also criticized Dilthey for his description of the objective order of history. Heidegger suggested the essence of history was not different cultural types as Dilthey insisted. The essence of history is the extension of life’s temporality (Zeitlichkeit) of Dasein. It is only by entering into the interior of this temporality of Dasein that we can truly find the essence of history. It is inappropriate to treat history as an external object, because history is the development of Dasein itself.

Heidegger’s interpretation of Paul’s letter and Augustine’s *Confessions* is not a comparison of two cultural typologies of Hellenistic and Christian cultures, nor is it a study of the historical process of the Hellenization of Christianity. What Heidegger aims to do is not the investigation of the objective process of history and history-typology, but the revelation of the meaning of Christian life based on primordial life experience, in order to understand the communal-worldly complexes of experience and the surrounding-worldly states of knowledge (Heidegger 1995, p. 247). Heidegger criticizes modern historical philosophy or historicism for only describing the objective development order of history according to the objective concept of history while omitting the primordial historicity. Heidegger advocates that historical issues can only be viewed from factual life, which lays the foundation for the objective process of history and different cultural types. Ruin (2017, pp. 53–54) argues that: “At the heart of Heidegger’s reading of Paul is the topic of so called factual life experience. In this way, Heidegger orients himself towards what he takes to be the basic existential meaning of the Pauline discourse, as characterized by a temporal horizon of the coming of Christ, of the Parousia, not primarily understood in the context of a theological–metaphysical dogma but as an open horizon of lived meaning”.

### 3. Primordial Christian Life Experience

#### 3.1. Factual Life Experience of Early Christians

In *Phenomenology and Theology*, Heidegger puts forward that theology is the science about God, but this does not mean that theology is abstract knowledge about God in scholastic philosophy. Theology is not the relationship between man and God asserted by modern liberal theology, which actually falls under religious philosophy or religious history as a religious science. Heidegger (1976, p. 61) believes that theology can only be demonstrated by faith without help of other sciences. Heidegger (1976, p. 55) insists that theology itself has its origin in faith, and can only be explained and manifested according to itself. Heidegger first selects Paul’s letters as the subject of his study on phenomenology of religion, because Paul did not belong to the ranks of twelve disciples summoned by Jesus at first. Paul must prove or realize the authenticity and facticity of his faith from his life.

Heidegger divides *Galatians* into three parts: the first part is Paul’s apostolic mission and his independence from the call of Christ, the second part is the conflict between faith and law, and the third part is the Christian life as a whole (Heidegger 1995, p. 69). Heidegger put forward the concept ‘primordial experience’ to make phenomenological interpretation for *Galatians*, and K. S. Norman (2019, p. 12) illustrates the concept by writing: “A primordial religious experience has its own determinate character, calling

forth what Heidegger describes as ‘the enactment [Vollzug] of the observer.’ Enactment contrasts to a philosophical-religious projection onto the religious experience”. Heidegger’s phenomenological interpretation focuses on the first and second parts of Paul’s primordial experience of becoming a Christian through conversion from a Jewish Pharisee who persecuted Christians to a real Christian (Stowers 2021, p. 173). Heidegger aims to analyze how primordial Christians learned the context senses, relational senses as well as enactment senses of religious life from factual life experience according to the text of *Galatians*. As McGrath (2006, p. 187) writes: “The religious experience of the early Christian community precipitated a turn away from Greek metaphysics and made possible spontaneous expressions of the historical self. For the Christian, the world was a temporal trial through which the self comes into being or perishes. They had discovered a new order of being”.

Heidegger (2010, p. 49) argues that: “Paul wants to say further that he has come to Christianity not through a historical tradition, but through an original experience (ursprüngliche Erfahrung). A theory that is controversial in Protestant theology connects with this: [it is asserted that] Paul had no historical consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth”. Emphasized by Heidegger, the primordial experience of Paul’s becoming a Christian refers to his conversion, including changes in Paul’s conduct—his manner of life and posture of life. As Stowers (2021, p. 173) notes: “Paul and believers experience the very sufferings that Christ experienced because they have his pneuma in them. In this scheme there is no sense to assigning all truth and value to transcending heroic acts of a self-creating subject who is radically cut off from an objective physical and social world”.

Heidegger’s phenomenological interpretation of Paul’s letters is to understand the meaning of religious life itself by elucidating the primordial situation and tracing back the primordial experience of religious life. Thus, Heidegger opposed the historical positivism held by David Strauss in *the Life of Jesus* and proposes that people do not need to turn to the Jesus in history. Influenced by the spirit of rational criticism from the Enlightenment, Strauss inherits Hegel’s religious criticism and defends the objective realism of Jesus’ history. At the same time, Heidegger also criticizes Adolf von Harnak, a Protestant liberalism theologian and Christian historian. In *History of Dogma*, Harnak believes that Greek philosophy has begun the process of dogmatization and theorization of Christianity since the third century A.D. While Heidegger believes that in the sense of religious hermeneutics, the primal doctrinal problem exists in primordial Christianity, and the meaning of primordial Christian life precedes Christian doctrines. Heidegger (2010, p. 91) states that: “Religiosity and religion grow into a factual life-world, grow up in the language that belongs to it”. Heidegger believes that Harnak’s history of Christian doctrine misses out the religiosity of primordial Christianity itself because what really determines the religiosity of Christianity lies in the meaning of the faith that Christians know in their faith life, which is the reason why they devote themselves to this faith life or implement this faith in factual life, instead of whether they know theoretical Christian doctrines. The essence of faith is a way of existence of human Dasein, and one knows about this fact only through believing. As Wrathall (2006, p. 76) says: “Faith is not a cognitive state but a mode of existence that reveals the world. To have faith, then, the world must be able to support a certain mode of existence—certain practices, dispositions”.

According to Heidegger, Apostle Paul’s primordial religious experience is Paul’s experience of conversion. In *Galatians*, Paul wrote, “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Galatians 1:4–5). Heidegger (2010, p. 48) explains: “Chapter 1, verse 5: αἰών, World (welt). The present time has already reached its end and a new αἰών has begun since the death of Christ”. In Apostle Paul’s view, Christians could enter the higher world through Christ, free from the world of sin.

In Norman’s (2019, p. 311) view, Heidegger also noticed a particular temporal emotion of the Apostle Paul. He called his readers to live according to a radical belief in time, a time embracing ‘instantaneous logic’, rather than the unreal ‘chronology’ or metaphysical time based on Greek theology. We argue that the primordial Christians’ experience of the world

was different from the Greeks' experience of αἰών, which was a kind of non-temporal experience essentially, concerning the relationship between beings and the original being. [Arendt and Kohn \(2006, p. 41\)](#) argued that for the Greeks, nature was eternal and did not need to be created by an external thing emerging by itself; on the contrary, all living creations, including human beings, were surrounded by the eternally existing realm of nature. Arendt suggested that if there were no human beings (as the mortal) in the world, nature would be an eternal being resting or circulating within itself, and it was human who broke the eternal tranquility of nature. According to Heidegger, the primordial experience of early Christian is essentially temporal. He asserted that the religiosity of primordial Christianity was lived temporality. [Delahaye \(2013, p. 12\)](#) said: "The devotional life of Christianity becomes evident in timeliness itself, which means that through this time can Christian life be lived authentically, which is the very goal of the transformation of life and time".

Since Heidegger believes that what people experience personally in real life is the world or the surrounding world, we are then, not to examine the history as an object, but to look at Apostle Paul's situation in the same way as he wrote his letters with him. [Heidegger \(2010, p. 63\)](#) argues that: "The turning-around from the object-historical to the enactment-historical lies in factual life experience itself. It is a turning-around to the situation. 'Situation' counts here for us as a phenomenological term". Heidegger considers the possibility that people may doubt whether they can be in Apostle Paul's situation, for we knew nothing about the communal world (Mitwelt) of Apostle Paul. Heidegger's consideration stems from the fact that people treat empathy from an epistemological perspective and thus missing the existential situation of empathy. Therefore, Heidegger approves Max Scheler's contribution to the conception of empathy, but also points out that Scheler still has carried the burden of epistemology ([Heidegger 1995, p. 89](#)). According to Heidegger, Paul saw Thessalonians as those whose life he had entered, and Paul also experienced himself in the congregation. Paul experienced their having-become (Gewordensein), and then Paul experienced, that they had a knowledge of their having-become ([Heidegger 1995, p. 93](#)).

Then, emphasis should be put on the historical situation of Paul's letters. Heidegger sees Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians as a mutual relationship, in which Paul also experiences himself and in which the Thessalonians become part of Paul. They can invest themselves in the understanding of each other's lives, which means the "knowledge" (Wissen) of what we all "having become" (Gewordensein) of each other. The Thessalonians' "having-become" is also the "having become" of Paul, who is involved in the Thessalonians' "having-become". Heidegger gets rid of the modern epistemological standpoint to understand the relationship between self and the others. He no longer understands the relationship between self and the others from the certainty of self-consciousness and knowledge of other minds, but from significances of the communal world and the surrounding world. As [Bruun \(2011, p. 28\)](#) said, "Paul 'owns' the Thessalonians in the sense of phenomenology rather than instrument. Phenomenally, the situation of the Thessalonians has entered Paul's own situation. The relationship between Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians . . . has become a part of his own world". For Paul, the Thessalonians were currently there, no matter how distant they were from him in space. Paul and the Thessalonians were aware of the significance of implementation of each other's religious life. This common historical situation makes the primordial experience of Christian Religiosity communicable.

[Heidegger \(1995, p. 95\)](#) believes that knowledge of one's own having-become is the starting point of theology, and the story of conversion is the being-present of God which has a basic relationship to the transformation of life. As [Fehér \(2011, p. 225\)](#) said, "The life experience of primordial Christian Religiosity is a movement away from the world and towards God". Heidegger argues that the acceptance of faith is actually related to one's being-present of God. In short, through the phenomenological interpretation of Apostle Paul's letters, Heidegger reveals the common life experience of primordial Christian groups, from "having-become", to knowing, to accepting the truth, serving, and waiting, and finally to being-present of God in faith, hope and love.

### 3.2. *The Parousia*

As mentioned above, Heidegger believes that the religiosity of the primordial Christians comes from the factual life experience. Heidegger (2010, p. 55) argues that: “Factual life experience is historical. Christian religiosity lives temporality as such”. In the historical situation of the primordial Christian college, they lived in the expectation of the Parousia. “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:1–2). In the Old Testament, there is a description of “the day of the Lord” or “the great and awesome day of the Lord”. “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come” (Joel 2:31–32). “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1). In the context of the Old Testament, the great and awesome day of the Lord has the following meanings: first, its advent is unforeseeable; second, this big and awesome day brings the shock and subversion of the whole universe; third, God begins to judge the world.

“Parousia” (παρουσία) in Greek means “season, time, moment, arrival” and so on. Heidegger believes that the life experience of primordial Christians gave the word a new meaning. When Paul faced the problem of the Parousia, his real concern was not the objective time series in the Old Testament or late Judaism, but man’s self-reaction towards the Parousia. As Van der Heiden (2016, p. 169) notes: “Paul is more concerned with the question of how the imminent Second Coming will affect the way of life of believers, and for Paul, the Parousia is the paradigm of the unforeseen and thus makes possible the human experience of the world”. Paul proposed two different ways of life, which formed the confrontation between “when they say” and “but you”. When their factual life is safe and stable, such a way of life makes their life rely on the world, and they are immersed in what life gives them (Heidegger 1995, p. 103). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes their existence as the being of the “non-authentic”. Brejdek (2010, pp. 209–10) argues that when Heidegger connects the religiosity of the early Christians with the life experience by reading medieval theologians’ works, the return of God is an appropriate future, encroaching upon facticity and disrupting the plans of inauthentic Dasein. Heidegger believes that the true meaning of the Parousia is about how I behave in my own life, rather than about the consciousness of future events, the objective time or when or how Christ will come. The factual experience of Parousia is a kind of knowledge of their own. Paul calls the Thessalonians back to themselves. This is the self-comportment (Sich-Verhalten), self-realization, or implementation of Christianity in their factual life, thus the solution of problems depends on their own way of life. As Oliva (2021, p. 464) says: “The ‘having become’ of Paul and the Thessalonians is the acceptance of the kerygma in suffering and joy: the anguish over a cataclysm that will end the world and the joy of renewal and resurrection”. The experience of the primordial conversion of Christians means that the Christians’ world has been renewed and can no longer be lived according to the previous pattern. Since the believers are convinced in this, the factual life of Christians has been changed.

The French phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion thinks that the Parousia is the event as an saturated phenomenon. In the process of stretching back the phenomenized self to the self-being-given, the phenomenon itself retains the traces of its own giving, and makes its phenomenal pattern undoubtedly present its origin, which is called ‘the event-phenomenon’ by Marion (2001, p. 37). Marion manifests that the threefold characteristics of events are unpredictability, excessive quantity or the reasons and the explanations without the quantity, and the unrepeatability or irreversibility. According to the description of the saturated phenomenon, the Parousia is an unforeseen event quantitatively. Marion (1998, p. 326) says that: “This character of the event that occurs does not add the image assumed by Christ from the outside, but identifies its first aspect, for it is essentially as ‘cometh after me’ (John 1:15); the event as a comer who promoted its own advance deserves one of its names”. The

source of Christ essentially defines himself so that it has contained and preceded him. Here, Marion raises a phenomenological attitude adapted to the event—awakeness. For events, one can only purely be waiting for it in time. In Marion's view (Marion 2001, pp. 330–31), awakeness and waiting reverse the prophecy, making the event itself get rid of all the preparatory prophecies of the past and focus on its pure *fait accompli*, which could even be established as a new beginning after becoming *fait accompli*.

Heidegger asks how Christians should envisage the communal world and the surrounding world after Christians had converted. Heidegger thinks this question has been discussed in *1 Corinthians* 1:26–27 and 7:20. “Brothers, it can be seen that not many of you are called to be wise according to the flesh, not many are powerful, and not many are noble. But God chose the foolish in the world to shame the wise; And chose the weak in the world to shame the strong” (1Cor 1:26–27). “Every man should hold on to his status when he is called” (1Cor 7:20). Heidegger thinks that in terms of the Christians, this indicates that the significance of life is still the same, but a new behavior has taken place. Heidegger (2010, p. 84) says that: “The indeed existing [*daseienden*] significances of real life are lived *ὡς μὴ*, as if not”. “Brothers, I say to you, the time is reduced. From then on, those who have wives should be like those who have no wives; Cry like you don't cry; Happy, like unhappy; Buy as if you have nothing; Use worldly things, like not using worldly things; Because the appearance of this world is about to pass away, I want you to have nothing to worry about” (1Cor 7:29–32). Heidegger (2010, p. 86) argues that: “Christian life is not straight forward, but is rather broken up: all surrounding-world relations must pass through the complex of enactment of having-become, so that this complex is then co-present, but the relations themselves, and that to which they refer, are in no way touched”. Heidegger criticized Nietzsche's misunderstanding of Paul here, and it was inappropriate to understand Paul's situation morally. Therefore, when Nietzsche accused Paul of resentment, his understanding was wrong, and there was no resentment at all in this situation (Heidegger 1995, p. 120). Heidegger believes that for Christians, what has changed is not about content sense or relational sense, such as, whether you are a slave or a master. The significances of the surrounding world become temporal through the story of conversion. Heidegger (2010, p. 85) insists that: “The compressed temporality is constitutive for Christian religiosity: an ‘only-yet,’ there is no time for postponement”. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger secularize the eschatological problem of primordial Christianity into a temporal problem of being toward death. Heidegger puts forward that temporality is the ontological meaning of care<sup>5</sup>. Heidegger (1996, p. 302) declares: “Temporality is the primordial ‘outside of itself’ in and for itself. Thus, we call the phenomena of future, having been, and present, the ecstasies of temporality. Temporality is not, prior to this, a being that first emerges from itself; its essence is temporalizing in the unity of the ecstasies. Heidegger thinks that the vulgar view of time regards time as a pure series of the present, without beginning or end. In this view, time is considered as infinite. A typical example of this series is the pointer on the clock and the vulgar understanding of time is the activity of counting the precise time. It is constantly making present. In the now-time, the past and the future appear as “right-away-no-longer-now” and “just-now-not-yet”, which misses the characteristic of time's ecstasy because all the time is leveled down into the insoluble present. Thus, it covered over the temporality.

Furthermore, Heidegger transforms the problem of the eschatology of the primordial Christians towards the Parousia into the problem of the relational sense of primordial Christian religiosity. McManus (2013, p. 148) suggests that: “Heidegger sees St. Paul as struggling with his congregation to get them to see what their real concerns as Christians are, and thereby struggling against what one might call the ‘Theoretical Attitude’”. Heidegger (2010, pp. 83–84) believes that: “The meaning of temporality determines itself out of the fundamental relationship to God—however, in such a way that only those who live temporality in the manner of enactment understand eternity. The sense of the Being of God can be determined first only out of these complexes of enactment”. Ultimately, Heidegger believes that the significance of primordial Christian religiosity would be ac-

complished not through Plato's theorization and axiologization, but through the realization of Christian factual life.

#### 4. Reflections on Heidegger's Early Phenomenology of Religion

##### 4.1. From the Expectation of the Parousia to Being toward Death<sup>6</sup>

We affirm Heidegger's contributions to the religious phenomenology and phenomenological theology. His religious phenomenology implements the method of phenomenology, making the invisible become manifest. Experience of faith and religious life is not as experience of perception of real things (such as a table), but it is still factual and meaningful. Heidegger (1996, p. 25) argues that: "The Greek expression *phainomenon*, from which the term 'phenomenon' derives, comes from the verb *phainesthai*, meaning 'to show itself'. Thus, *phainomenon* means what shows itself, the self-showing, the manifest". We insist that Heidegger's phenomenological way has a pioneering influence on the theological turn of French phenomenology initiated later by Levinas, Marion, Henry, and others.

In his *Being and Time*, Heidegger transforms the expectation of primordial Christians towards Parousia into the being-towards-death of Dasein. What is the significance of this transformation? Nicholson (2010, pp. 230–31) argues that Paul correlates the return of Christ with the course of universal human history. Heidegger, however, turns to a microhistory related to personal death, and understands the time itself through the facticity of human existence. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, the temporal significance of Parousia is actually determined by the fundamental relationship between man and God. For Van der Heiden (2021, pp. 222–23), "To be in the presence of God in terms of this experience therefore means that believers anticipate and wait for the actualization of this possibility at every moment in their lives". The temporality of the primordial Christians towards Parousia is an enactment of comprehending their own existence and being-present of God, which is the self-comportment of Christians in their factual life and their living connection with God.

Heidegger's shift or leap from the expectation of the Parousia in early Christians' factual life to being-toward-death of Dasein comes from the development of his thought. Heidegger (2010, p. 73) argues that: "The meaning of this temporality is also fundamental for factual life experience, as well as for problems such as that of the eternity of God. In the medieval period these problems were no longer grasped originally, following the penetration of Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy into Christianity". Heidegger believes that the primordial Christian experience is that people exist towards God to escape from the mundanity of the world, and the significance of their factual life is constant insecurity. The non-Christians indulge in the peace and security of factual life, attach to the world, and immerse themselves in what life brings to them. Brejda argues that by examining Paul's and Augustine's view of time, Heidegger defines temporality as an ecstatic event. The fundamental occurrence of temporality opens the possibility of self-setting, which is close to the possibility that has been thrown out by the world in some way. Therefore, temporality makes it possible for Dasein to enter the world (Brejda 2010, p. 216).

Heidegger manifests the Christian comport himself to the surrounding world and communal world through the manner of factual life's enactment-structure. Heidegger (2010, p. 84) believes that: "The indeed existing [daseienden] significances of real life are lived *ὡς μὴ*, as if not". The meaning of Christian life remains the same but generates a new behavior, and the factual life's enactment-structure is transformed into being-present of God. According to Heidegger, the center of Christian life is the issue of eschatology. At the end of the first century, the issue of eschatology had been revealed in Christianity, but people in later times mistook all the original Christian concepts. Brencio argues that Heidegger realizes a profound irreconcilability between the primordial Christian experience and the later developed Christian philosophy and culture, and that he is committed to finding a liberal Christianity different from the Hellenistic religion in the primordial Christianity. In Brencio's view, Heidegger developed a kind of eschatology without eschatology theory, which reached its peak in Heidegger's description of Being-towards-Death in *Being and Time*



(Brencio 2020, pp. 140–41). We argue that Heidegger was committed to taking Hellenistic metaphysics out of primordial Christianity and returning what is God to God and what is being to being.

#### 4.2. What Kind of Christianity: Primal Christian Life Experience or Axiologization?

Friedrich Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, cried out “God is dead” through the mouth of a madman. Nietzsche argues that we have killed God, we are all murderers and God has been dead forever (Nietzsche 1999, pp. 480–81). In *The Will to Power*, “God is dead” is interpreted as the self-deprecation of the highest value. According to Heidegger, the meaning of this sentence is that the Christian God has lost its dominant power over beings and over all human affairs. We believe that for Western civilization, “God is dead” means the collapse of the super-perceptual ideal world represented by God, and also the collapse of the traditional metaphysical system. In the traditional metaphysical system, the world of being and the world of meaning are two separate worlds, but Nietzsche pulls the transcendental meaning world back into the real world, thus the world of being and the world of meaning are integrated into one.

Heidegger believes that the Christianity criticized by Nietzsche is not the authenticity of Christian faith and primordial Christian religiosity, but the church and its historical politics formed in Western culture, which is not the same thing as the Christian faith of the New Testament. Even a non-Christian life can also affirm this kind of Christianity and use it as a factor of power. Similarly, the reverse is true that an authentic Christian life does not necessarily require this kind of Christianity (Heidegger 1977a, pp. 219–20). Heidegger declares that Nietzsche grasps Platonism as a two-world doctrine. As long as Christianity regards our real world as a temporal passage leading to the eternal world, then Nietzsche can understand the whole of Christianity as a kind of popular Platonism. Heidegger believes that the Christianity criticized by Nietzsche is a Christianity theorized and axiologized according to Platonism. As Ingraffia (1995, p. 7) says, “Through the death of God and the abolition of the real world, a metaphysical distinction between the real world and the apparent world disintegrates, and with it all metaphysical and anthropological dualisms that depend on this distinction. Nietzsche hopes to abolish the real world of theology because it helps to slander the real world”.

Heidegger believes that Hellenistic Christianity was the invasion of primordial Christianity by Greek metaphysics, which was based on the early patristic philosophical stage and ran through the entire later Christian history. Martin Luther’s Reformation was precisely the elimination of the Greek metaphysical spirit in Christianity. Heidegger (2010, p. 212) declares that: “The Pauline passage of the Letter to the Romans, chapter 1:20, is fundamental for the whole of Patristic ‘philosophy,’ for the orientation of the formation of Christian doctrine in Greek philosophy. The motif for the Greek underlying structure and re-structuring [Unter- und Neubau] of Christian dogmatism has been taken from this passage”. Romans 1:20 reads, “since the creation of heaven and earth, the eternal power and divinity of God have been clearly known. Although it is invisible to the eye, it can be known through the creation, so that people can’t blame it”. Heidegger believes that the Patristic Philosophy repeatedly returned to the proposition of Romans 1:20, which was considered by early Christian fathers as the evidence that Paul had accepted the Platonic ascent from the sensible world to the supersensible world. Heidegger argues that only Martin Luther understood this passage and opened up a new understanding of primordial Christianity. Byle believes that young Luther opened up or won a new and real religious status by truly restoring the primordial Christian experience of his time, and for Heidegger, Luther is also an important model of real Christian life (Byle 2019, p. 139). Heidegger (1995, p. 334) declares that Luther warned people that, “those who see the invisible of God through the invisible of creation are not theologians. The confession of theological objects (Vorgabe) is not obtained through metaphysical meditation on the world”. Heidegger argues that traditional metaphysics forgets the issue of Being, and this forgetting prevents the possibility of

another beginning in history. Therefore, he devotes himself to criticism of Platonism and onto-theology.

In Nietzsche's words: "God is dead", Heidegger points out that in the process of people killing God, the most violent attack has come from Christian believers and theologians holding Hellenic metaphysics. Heidegger proclaims that the harshest blow against God is not that God is regarded as unknowable, nor that God's existence is proved to be unproven, but that God in reality is elevated to the highest value. From the perspective of the faith, this kind of thought and that kind of talk, if they interfere with the theology of faith, are nothing more than a kind of blasphemy (Heidegger 1977a, p. 260). Heidegger believes that the metaphysical God criticized by Nietzsche is the God as a necessary link in the "Onto-Theologie" mechanism of Western metaphysics. Brencio proposes that the apostolic literature itself and the theology developed in the Patristic Philosophy and the Middle Ages showed how the Hellenization of primordial Christianity had taken place (Brencio 2020, p. 141). Marino argues that Heidegger regarded history as a holistic "occurrence". Starting from the primordial origin, Heidegger experienced a forgotten "dark night of the soul", but finally concretely restored the redemption prospect hidden at the origin (Marino 2010, p. 294).

Heidegger believes that the urgent task of Christianity today is to get rid of the traces of Hellenistic metaphysics and return to the true religiosity of primordial Christianity. As Adluri (2013, p. 131) argues, "because of the limitation of the Greek concept on real life, it is no longer possible to simply return or restore history". In Heidegger's early thought, he insists that actual life is the general principle of all significances, and starts from the factual life experience of Christianity to explore how Christian doctrine has been based on this primordial experience, rather than constructing Christian doctrine with the help of Hellenistic metaphysics. In Russell's view, Heidegger's critical reflection on the metaphysical tradition makes him realize that the entanglement between ontology and theology will only blur the most basic meaning of existence (Russell 2011, p. 644).

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger obliterates the second coming of Christ and directly replaces it with Dasein's being-towards-death, that is rooted in his thinking about which of temporization and axiologization in factual life is more in a foundational position. Heidegger believes that there was primordial Christian experience in Augustine's factual religious life, and realized his intention to eliminate Hellenistic metaphysics from primordial Christianity through the phenomenological interpretation of Augustine's *Confessions*. Heidegger uses the method of formal indication<sup>7</sup> to show how confession is triggered in the fundamental progression, which also means I have become a question to myself. Heidegger (1995, pp. 177–78) argues that Augustine's motive for confession in front of God and man is not the sin that occurred in the past, but is that what once existed and now no longer exists. Such change in the way of living is the history of the Paul's conversion, which was previously mentioned as the primordial Christian experience. Heidegger believes that the relational meaning of faith is not to ask what the nature of God is, but whether I can live and experience the love of God in factual life.

Heidegger (1995, p. 209) believes that in my pursuit of God, the realization of pursuing itself is also something stems from myself that constitutes my own reality and my concern. Augustine considers life as a constant test or trial. Heidegger (1995, p. 229) regards probe and temptation as the characteristics of factual life experienced by Augustine. The temptation of life that Augustine mentioned comes from 1 John 2:16. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world". (1 John 2:16). Heidegger (1995, p. 232) believes that the temptation of life is rooted in the contradiction of life, which is the unique coexistence phenomenon of the multifold meanings of the world in which I factually live, and the various concerns that factual life experience has. Heidegger (2010, p. 209) believes: "It is not natural that that which is experienced in the delectatio stands in a ranking order of value. Rather, this is based on an 'axiologization' which, in the end, is on the same level as the 'theorization'. This ranking order of values is of Greek origin".

Heidegger is committed to deconstructing the axiologization and theorization of the Hellenic origins in primordial Christianity according to the basic ontological analysis of Dasein. In Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of Augustine's confessions, he focuses on the existential analysis of desire, arguing that desire is a desire to be together, a kind of concentration that the object of attention is the objective world, while the self is drawn into it. Heidegger reduces three kinds of temptations to the different ways of Dasein's being-in-the-world. The first temptation is the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the flesh is the enjoyment of dealing with something. In the pleasures of the eye, seeing has nothing to do with sensuous objects, but a way of dealing with something. Desire of the flesh is Dasein's escape from opening possibility and the fixation of the self in what is actual. The desire of the flesh is that Dasein escapes from opening possibilities and indulges the self in what is actual. The second temptation is the desire of the eye. Desire of the eye is the curious looking-about-Oneself in the world that only wants to explore. In desire of the eye, pure desire to look, direct curiosity, and emotional looking go through the entire actual experience, and there is no mutual communication between God and man. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1996, p. 65) insists that: "Our association with useful things is subordinate to the manifold of references of the 'in-order-to'. The kind of seeing of this accommodation to things is called circumspection". In these two temptations, factual experience refers to things in the surrounding-world, not to things themselves. Heidegger (2010, p. 170) argues: "even here this dealing-with and looking-about-oneself remain in an essentially surrounding-worldly character of the object (significance): that is precisely what is characteristic of their corresponding experiential relations". The third temptation is the temporal ambition, clearly related to the self, and the self-world is closely related to the surrounding world and the communal world. Heidegger (2010, p. 171) argues: "In the *timeri et amari velle*, the self-world puts on airs in a communal-worldly situation it views in a special way. It is about the being-in-communal-worldly validity". This kind of temptation is understood in the way of axiologization as a change in the direction of desire, namely, "how they think of us", and God himself is no longer considered decisively important.

Augustine explores how to overcome these three temptations from the perspective of man's relationship with God and the order of love. The order of love is the ultimate relationship between man and the Creator. Augustine believes that bodily beauty is created by God, but it is transient, corporeal, and thus a lower good, whereas God is eternal, immanent, and permanent. If people love the bodily beauty more than God, then this kind of love is wrong. Augustine thinks that any object of love can be good, but if the love for it is out of order, this kind of love is illegitimate. Virtue is the right and orderly love. Augustine (1963, p. 260) declared: "For only true love may be called love, otherwise it is desire. Therefore, it is a misuse of terms to say of those who desire that they love, just as it is a misuse of terms to say of those who love that they desire. But this is true love, that while holding fast to the truth, we may live justly, and, therefore, may despise everything mortal for the sake of the love of men, whereby we wish them to live justly". Augustine believed that proper love means one adjusts himself to be in harmony with the proper hierarchy of love, and to love God before and above all else, and for that purpose, to love God for God's sake. A man who lives according to the proper order of love is a happy life. However, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger regards falling prey of Dasein as the Everyday Being of the There, which includes idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. Idle talk is the way to understand and interpret everyday Dasein. Curiosity is only to see, and seeks novelty only to leap from it again to another novelty. Ambiguity is to pass off talking about things ahead of time and curious guessing as what really happened. Heidegger believes that falling prey characterizes the disclosedness of Dasein's being-in-the-world in an everyday way.

Heidegger's critique of Augustine—including Max Scheler, Augustine's other great successor in the 20th century—is that Augustine took a Platonic theorizing and axiological attitude toward the primordial Christian experience. Augustine's hierarchy of values has its roots in Hellenistic metaphysics. Augustine's theory of value is based on his metaphysics,

which stems from Augustine's understanding of things. McGrath believes that when Augustine's revelation of history is classified into Neo-Platonic metaphysics, the uneasiness of human life is solved in divine tranquility. A happy life has been transferred to a field beyond history. A basic aesthetic and non-secular behavior has become the basic direction of life. This is the revival of Neo-Platonism, which imposes value hierarchy on reality (McGrath 2006, p. 201). As Coyne (2011, p. 382) argues that: "in Heidegger's view, Augustine's axiologization must be eliminated. Some basic features of Augustine's thought, such as the doctrine of the Supreme God, the hierarchy of creation, the universal pursuit of happiness, and human desire to rest in God . . . are like part of a pagan framework, incompatible with living Christian experience". One of the primordial Christian experiences is Heidegger's explanation of factual Christian life experience, which is the source of significances, and the other is Augustine's explanation of axiologization. Heidegger uses factual life experience—the so-called general principle of all meaning—to obliterate the theorizing and axiologization trends in Greek metaphysics.

How on earth should we evaluate Heidegger's de-Greek metaphysics and devaluation of Christianity? When the primordial Christian life experience is reduced by Heidegger to an eschatological problem that has nothing to do with values, in what sense is this Christianity? Perhaps Emmanuel Levinas provides us with a perspective to evaluate Heidegger. Levinas criticizes Heidegger's fundamental ontology for presupposing a factual situation in which the foundation of understanding is laid in the openness of being. For Heidegger, the priority of ontology and the openness of being lies in the structural association between Dasein and being. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas criticizes Heidegger for presetting that being is the horizon from which any beings emerge. Levinas (1979, p. 45) declares, "to affirm the priority of Being over existents is to already decide the essence of philosophy; it is to subordinate the relation with someone, who is an existent, (the ethical relation) to a relation with the Being of existents, which, impersonal, permits the apprehension, the domination of existents (a relationship of knowing), subordinates justice to freedom". Levinas criticizes that Heidegger's interactive subjectivity is *Mitsein*, the "We" that is prior to the self and the others, and a neutral interactive subjectivity. Levinas declares that the substantiality of the I will not be apperceived as the subject of the verb to be, but as something exists in the happiness. It belongs to axiology instead of ontology (Levinas 1979, p. 119). The fundamental ontology of Dasein addressed by Heidegger precisely neglects practicality, corporeality, and things to cherish in life, which makes life dissolved into ghosts.

We believe that Heidegger's early thoughts did not actually escape the category of the ontological theology which he opposed. However, Heidegger began to strongly criticize ontological theology and introduce the factual life experience to replace the history of reason and concept in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. If *Being and Time* is a reconsideration of thousands year's history of western metaphysics, then *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* is its prelude. The question whether the world of thought in *Being and Time* is the secularization of Christian eschatology in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* is the key to understanding the conversion in Heidegger's early thoughts. Heidegger's concept of timelessness always points to the future. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Christians' time for faith is actually a time waiting for the Parousia which is open to the life of the Christians themselves. In waiting, the time for faith always points to the future. In *Being and Time*, the timeliness of Dasein changes from the expectation for the Parousia to the ecstasy of facing the death. The time still points to the future in being towards death. It can be seen that the timeliness oriented to the future had not changed but the dimension of distinguishing the factual time had changed. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, the factual time is based on the expectation of the Parousia. The time for the faith is different from the time for the ignorant daily life, it is related to God. In *Being and Time*, the time's authentication of Dasein lies in the self-recognition of the limitation of death and the call of conscience<sup>8</sup> which is all rooted in the Dasein itself and has nothing to do with God. It can be seen that Heidegger's conversion of judging time's authenticity is aimed at turning redemption from the collective to the individual. Salvation is not only limited to a group with common

life experience, but also to every individual. Heidegger removes the historical dimension of religious experience by generalizing the religious experience. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Heidegger begins the history of refusing Greek metaphysics into his thoughts. In this history, Christians did not have any so-called security because their life of faith was constantly oppressed. The hoping history in this urgency didn't exist as a history of entity but as a history of life. However, the history of Dasein means a finite and special history. This transition means the decline of religion in real history. Dasein does not expect the savior in the real life but seeks itself, which also means the depreciation of common history. Although there is still a dimension of the common existence in *Being and Time*, it is more inclined to the world of common existence, which is a consistent condition of existence. The authenticity of Dasein can only be shown from itself because it always belongs to mine. Dasein will no longer pray for a certain moment of permanent redemption and return the hope to itself, which means giving up the certainty of redemption. In the subversion of the history of faith, a new open world comes. Dasein enters into the contingency of history and this is the main idea of the secularization of religious experience.

We think that Dasein is always immersed by daily life, in the secularity. Submitting to the finite at the same time means that Dasein is immersed in vanity and escape from the being of the whole. In this sense, Dasein experiences the nothingness and only through experiencing the nothingness can it be possible to transcend the Being itself. In the possibility of Dasein's existence contains the nothingness where Dasein becomes nothing. This possibility is always in the future, and the future is based on death. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger focusing on human's finity by using the concept of conscience and falling. He connected the eschatology with the finite death of secularity and replaced Christians' life to God by the concept of being towards death at the same time. The assertion that death is the necessity of being also destroyed the religious basis of primordial Christians' eschatology. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, the expectation for God itself is the desire for what you cannot obtain. This predicament of being is the source of the expectation for the eschatological God. Man can only know himself by being seen by God through the authentic time which is no longer possible in the world of Dasein.

We believe that the problem of Being's history expounded after Heidegger's *Being and Time* can be regarded as the return from the eschatology of individual history to the eschatology of collective history, which is the comparison of the previous transition from Christians' collective life experience to the experience of Dasein's individual survival experience. The theological idea in the early Heidegger's thoughts was not abandoned just because he gave up the theological path. Instead, he still hoped to return to a history of collective being through this kind of circuitous reversal. However, this path is still difficult. The eschatology of individual history can be positioned by death, but the dimensions of culture, state, and history themselves cannot have the same interpretation through the historical eschatology. The condition for the eschatology of history is linear time. In the face of the linear time, death has always come before a person's finality; it cannot go beyond the experience of an individual's being. However, it is still doubtful whether the structure of the historical eschatology in the dimensions of state and history can go beyond the category of philosophical thoughts.

**Funding:** This paper is fund by The National Social Science Fund of China grand number 200,000RMB. It is a phased achievement of the 2020 National Social Science Fund project "Religion and Transcendence from the Perspective of Phenomenology" (20BZJ003).

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This paper is a phased achievement of the 2020 National Social Science Fund project “Religion and Transcendence from the Perspective of Phenomenology” (20BZJ003).
- <sup>2</sup> Thanks to my students for their contributions to this paper. They are Yixuan Han, Yiyang Chen, Tianyi Li, Ruohan Wang, Yu Zhang, Yiwei Zhang, and Pei Zhu.
- <sup>3</sup> The word “Dasein” used by Heidegger in *Being and Time* is to indicate that man who living in the world has factual “there-being”. Man is living existence thrown in the world, and Heidegger used Dasein to distinguish it from the traditional metaphysical concept of subject.
- <sup>4</sup> “Fallen prey to the ‘world’” means that Dasein has been lost in the crowd and absorbed by the others. Within this situation, Dasein do not care about itself any more.
- <sup>5</sup> Care (Sorge) is a term which Heidegger used to illustrate a state of Dasein’s being. In this state, Dasein is forced to care and worry about human affairs related to it because Dasein is already living in the world, but Dasein cannot distinguish affairs concerned with its very being from others yet, due to the fact that Dasein’s being in this stage lacks authenticity.
- <sup>6</sup> As for Dasein, being-towards-death means that the being of Dasein confront death all the time. Everyone is dying though we are all alive. Man can only die for himself, and death is the only thing concerned with authenticity of individual. So the being-toward-death is not religious.
- <sup>7</sup> The formal regulation in traditional metaphysics obscure the realization of the phenomenon, so Heidegger’s method of formal indication means that the phenomenon covered by scientific thinking and objectification is reduced to their own original state so that they can avoid the arbitrary and preconceptions of judging things.
- <sup>8</sup> Heidegger’s concept of conscience has nothing to do with morality. Conscience is Dasein’s reaction to the finite of its own being through the awareness of the certainty of its death, and conscience calls forth Dasein to be responsible or even be guilty for its being.

## References

- Adluri, Vishwa. 2013. Heidegger, Luther, and Aristotle: A Theological Deconstruction of Metaphysics. *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18: 129–60. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Arendt, Hannah. 1971. “Volume Two: Willing”. *The Life of the Mind*, 1st ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.
- Arendt, Hannah, and Jerome Kohn. 2006. *Between Past and Future*. London: Penguin.
- Augustine, Saint. 1963. *The Trinity*. Translated by Stephen McKenna. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Badger, Lee Michael. 2017. Phenomenology as the original science of life in Heidegger’s early Freiburg Lectures. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 48: 28–43. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Barash, Jeffrey Andrew. 2010. Theology and the historicity of faith in the perspective of the Young Martin Heidegger. In *A Companion to Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Religious Life*. New York: Brill Rodopi.
- Brejdak, Jaromir. 2010. Philosophia Crucis: The Influence of Paul on Heidegger’s Phenomenology. In *A Companion to Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Religious Life*. New York: Brill Rodopi.
- Brencio, Francesca. 2020. Heidegger, Catholicism and the history of Being. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 51: 137–50. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bruun, Lars. 2011. Back to the future: Reading Heidegger reading Paul. *The Bible and Critical Theory* 5: 28. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Byle, Nicholas. 2019. Freedom and Servitude in Heidegger’s Dasein and Luther’s Christian. *Sophia* 58: 137–51. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Coyne, Ryan. 2011. A difficult proximity: The figure of Augustine in Heidegger’s path. *The Journal of Religion* 91: 365–96. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Delahaye, Ezra. 2013. Re activating Paul. On the theoretical background of Heidegger’s philosophical reading of the letters of Paul. *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 74: 12. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Denker, Alfrd. 2010. Traces of Heidegger’s Religious Struggle in his Phenomenology of Religious Life. In *A Companion to Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Religious Life*. New York: Brill Rodopi.
- Fehér, István. 2009. Religion, Theology, and Philosophy on the Way to Being and Time: Heidegger, the Hermeneutical, the Factual, and the Historical with respect to Dilthey and Early Christianity. *Research in Phenomenology* 39: 121–22. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Fehér, István. 2011. Primal Christian Life Experience and Eschatological Time Martin Heidegger’s Early Lectures on the Phenomenology of Religion. *Philobiblon: Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities* 16: 225.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1976. *GA 9: Wegmarken*. Edited by Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1977a. *GA5: Holzwege*. Edited by Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1977b. *GA2: Sein und Zeit*. Edited by Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1995. *GA60: Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*. Edited by Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly and Claudius Strube. Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1996. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Stambaugh. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Heidegger, Martin. 2010. *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Translated by Matthias Fritsch, and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Heiskala, Risto. 2011. From modernity through postmodernity to reflexive modernization. Did we learn anything? *International Review of Sociology* 21: 3–19. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Husserl, Edmund. 2001. *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Translated by Lee Hardy. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Ingraffia, Brian. 1995. *Postmodern Theory and Biblical Theology: Vanquishing God's Shadow*. San Diego: University of California.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. 1979. *Totality and Infinity*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and Duquesne University Press.
- Marino, Stefano. 2010. Gadamer on Heidegger: Is the History of Being 'Just' Another Philosophy of History? *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 41: 287–303. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Marion, Jean-Luc. 1998. *Étant donné: Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Marion, Jean-Luc. 2001. *De Surcroît: Études sur les phénomènes saturés*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- McGrath, Sean. 2006. *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology for the Godforsaken*. Washington, DC: CUA Press.
- McManus, Denis. 2013. Heidegger, Wittgenstein and St Paul on the Last Judgement: On the Roots and Significance of 'the Theoretical Attitude'. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21: 143–64. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Nicholson, Graeme. 2010. The End of Time: Temporality in Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians. In *A Companion to Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Edited by Sean Joseph McGrath and Andrzej Wierciński. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi B.V.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1999. *KSA 3: Morgenröte. Idyllen aus Messina. Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Norman, K. Swazo. 2019. Heidegger's Destruction of Theology: Primordial Faith and Recognition of the Messiah. *Modern Theology* 35: 138–62.
- Norman, Mark. 2019. Luther, Heidegger, and the Hiddenness of God. *Tyndale Bulletin* 70: 291–316. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Oliva, Mirela. 2021. How to Reasonably Wait for the End of the World: Aquinas and Heidegger on the Letters to the Thessalonians. *Open Theology* 7: 461–74. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Pfau, Thomas. 2017. "Not in Time's Covenant": Questions of Time and Eschatology in Heidegger and TS Eliot. *Konteksty Kultury* 14: 245–63.
- Ruin, Hans. 2017. In the Spirit of Paul: Thinking the Hebraic Inheritance (Heidegger, Bultmann, Jonas). In *Heidegger's Black Notebooks and the Future of Theology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Russell, Matheson. 2011. Phenomenology and theology: Situating Heidegger's philosophy of religion. *Sophia* 50: 641–55. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Stowers, Stanley. 2021. Paul as a Hero of Subjectivity. In *Paul and the Philosophers*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Van der Heiden, Gert-Jan. 2016. The Experience of Contingency and the Attitude to Life: Nietzsche and Heidegger on Paul. In *Rethinking Faith: Heidegger between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Van der Heiden, Gert-Jan. 2021. The Christian Experience of Life and the Task of Phenomenology: Heidegger on Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, and Descartes. *Forum Philosophicum* 26: 207–26. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Wrathall, Mark. 2006. The revealed word and world disclosure: Heidegger and pascal on the phenomenology of religious faith. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 37: 75–88. [[CrossRef](#)]