

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



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Biblical Theology: Past, Present, and Future (Vol. 1)

Terry L. Wilder, Editor
twilder@swbts.edu

When Brevard Childs wrote *Biblical Theology in Crisis* in 1970, he prematurely pronounced the discipline to be dead—kaput. He held that scholars had not adequately bridged the gap between exegesis and theology, were too limited in their study of biblical theology, and in their current state, were simply not benefiting anyone. To cross the chasm between exegesis and theology, he contended the Bible really needed to be viewed within its own canonical context. That is to say, all of Scripture’s diverse constituent parts should be considered in light of the unified whole, i.e., the canon of Scripture and its unified message.

Since that time, the Biblical theology movement has grown substantially. Contrary to Childs’ claim, it is not dead at all. As a matter of fact, it is currently thriving—especially amongst evangelicals who are committed to Biblical inerrancy and inspiration. This development is good primarily because it can aid the church in the making and equipping of disciples, and it is timely, especially in a day when Biblical illiteracy has increased, even amongst church members.

Now, all of this is not to say that Biblical theology does not have its growing pains—it does. Unsettled questions in the minds of many abound, like, “What exactly is Biblical theology?” “How is it different from the disciplines of systematic theology, historical theology, practical theology, and theological interpretation?” “What precise approach should be used to do Biblical theology?” “How can we be helped in our quest by the inquiries and discussions of those who have gone before us in the church’s history?” Theological conferences are held for pastors and professors to explore and discuss answers to these kinds of questions. One such conference designed to benefit students, pastors, scholars, and the church, led to the publication of papers included in the next two issues of this journal.

This issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology (SWJT)* is the first of two volumes on the topic, *Biblical Theology: Past, Present, and Future*. The articles in these volumes were initially presented on March 9-10, 2012, at the Southwest Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), which met in the Riley Center on the campus of the host institution, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The plenary speakers for the

conference were Gerald Bray from Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, and Andreas J. Köstenberger from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Southwestern Seminary and the editorial staff of *SWJT* would like to thank Herbert W. Bateman IV, formerly professor of New Testament at Southwestern, for serving as program chair for the regional ETS meeting in 2012 from which conference he helped to select the papers for these two journal issues on Biblical theology.

The present volume is devoted to “Biblical Theology Past” and features three helpful articles. The lead article is presented by Gerald Bray entitled, “Biblical Theology and From Where It Came.” In this essay he looks at Biblical theology past and traces its roots and history from the early days of the discipline, through the Enlightenment era and the Barthian revolution, and in the English-speaking world. Robert Chisholm, professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, also contributes a paper titled, “Yahweh’s Self-Revelation in Deed and Word: A Biblical Theology of 1–2 Samuel.” In this article, he does not examine broad Biblical-theological themes in the text, but rather, looks at the text in a more restricted theocentric sense to see what it communicates about God. He also discusses the anthropological dimension of 1–2 Samuel’s theology by considering how God relates to people and what he expects from them. Further, Douglas Kennard, professor of New Testament at Houston Graduate School of Theology, provides an article called, “The Reef of Biblical Theology: A Method for Doing Biblical Theology that Makes Sense for Wisdom Literature.” In this essay, he contends that wisdom literature is the “reef” onto which Biblical theology often runs aground because wisdom does not easily fit into the broad dominant frameworks of the rest of the Bible. So, Kennard places a Biblical theology of OT wisdom within what he sees as the overarching OT Biblical theology strategy. This issue also contains for your perusal several book reviews, including an extended review essay.

We pray that these articles equip and assist you as you engage in and study Biblical theology. We hope you like what you read in this issue. If you would like to have one of our faculty members or students speak in your church, or lead your congregation in a study of any sort, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are more than happy to serve you. Further, if God has called you into his service please consider allowing us the privilege of preparing you for a lifetime of ministry. These are exciting times for the study of theology! God bless you!

Terry L. Wilder, Editor
Professor and Wesley Harrison Chair of New Testament

Biblical Theology and From Where it Came

Gerald L. Bray
Research Professor of Divinity
Beeson Divinity School, Samford University
Birmingham, AL
glbray@samford.edu

What's in a Name?

In 1970, the late Brevard Childs (1923-2007) published a provocative book entitled *Biblical Theology in Crisis*.¹ As Childs saw it, the previous generation had witnessed the growth of a Biblical theology movement, mainly in the United States, that had reached its apogee sometime around 1960 but only a decade later had already fallen into disarray. The basic problem, as Childs saw it, was that the leaders of the movement could not agree on where to go next and were in serious danger of splitting it up by following different and mutually incompatible theological options.

Childs' analysis of Biblical theology's supposed crisis did not go unchallenged. In their different ways, Bernhard Anderson (1916-2007)² and Bruce Vawter (1921-86)³ both questioned its legitimacy, pointing out that there was no real "movement" called Biblical theology and that many, if not most of its supposed protagonists were British or European, not American as Childs seemed to think. This line was subsequently taken up by James Smart (1906-82) in a series of lectures, originally delivered at the Bangor School of Theology in Maine and eventually published as *The Past, Present and Future of Biblical Theology*.⁴ Smart took issue with Childs' interpretation of what had been going on in twentieth-century Biblical studies and offered his own counter-analysis, which in effect led him to redefine the term "Biblical theology" in a looser, more comprehensive direction.

Like Anderson and Vawter before him, Smart argued that there was no such thing as a Biblical Theology *movement* and pointed out that the scholars associated with the term held different and sometimes incompatible views of what Biblical theology was. Without totally denying Childs' claim that

¹Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970).

²Bernhard Anderson, "The Crisis of Biblical Theology," in *Theology Today* 28 (1971-72): 321-7.

³See Vawter's review in *Biblica* 52 (1971): 567-70.

⁴James Smart, *The Past, Present and Future of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979).

Biblical theology had entered a crisis in the 1960s, Smart nevertheless tried to broaden the field of discourse in a way that was designed to make Childs' approach appear to be provincial and inadequate. He also wanted to show that Biblical Theology, far from having run its course as a scholarly fad, was in fact embarking on a series of new developments that held great promise for the future.

By now it will be clear that we shall not get anywhere with this until we have defined what we understand by Biblical theology. If we take it to mean the theological content of the Bible, and in particular the common outlook that binds the New to the Old Testament, we might be able to trace it back to the Epistle to the Hebrews. That epistle can plausibly claim to have been the first systematic attempt to demonstrate that the true meaning of the Hebrew Bible can only be found in the person and work of Jesus Christ, to which it bore witness "at many times and in many ways," as its opening sentence so memorably states. Few analysts of modern Biblical theology would go that far back, but there is little doubt that virtually all serious Christian writers from New Testament times to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment took the approach of Hebrews as axiomatic for their interpretation of the Bible and their understanding of what Christian theology is. Systematization, which began with what we now call scholastic theology in the thirteenth century and was adapted to both Protestant and Eastern Orthodox needs after the Reformation, may have gone beyond the Bible but it did not go against it, at least not intentionally.

In this connection, it is important to point out that the many differences that appeared among people who were equally devoted to the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura*, occurred most often over matters on which Scripture was silent or ambiguous. Divisions in the church occurred over things like worship, the structure of church government, and the administration of the sacraments but not over the Trinity, the work of Christ, or the way of salvation. The doctrine of predestination was a borderline case. The principle itself was generally accepted, but disagreements emerged about the implications that could legitimately be deduced from Biblical teaching, particularly when it came to reprobation. Yet even here, the problem arose mainly because Scripture was not entirely clear, not because its teaching was rejected or supplemented by something else.

In the seventeenth century, the different Protestant churches produced confessions of faith that were more or less systematic in form and governed the way the Bible would be read in the different churches. The classic example of this in the English-speaking world was the Westminster Confession of Faith, with its numerous proof-texts that were designed to show just how Biblical it was. The amazing thing is how widely the Westminster Confession was adopted, even by those like the Baptists who had to modify some of its provisions to make it fit their particular emphases. Modern church historians, seduced as they have sometimes been by the anti-confessional propaganda of the late seventeenth-century Pietists, have tended to deplore the

confessional era and see it as one in which different systems of theology were allowed to corral the Bible for their own purposes and divide the church. It might be better to say that this tendency was usually reserved for relatively secondary matters and that what the great confessions really show is how united the Protestant world was in its interpretation of the Bible as a whole.

Can the Protestant Reformers be regarded as forerunners of modern Biblical theology? They certainly made a clear distinction between historical and textual exegesis, which they practiced according to the best principles of the humanistic scholarship available to them, and theological application. Usually both things were included side-by-side in their writings, but Calvin broke with this habit by putting his exegesis in his commentaries and his exposition in his *Institutes* and his sermons, which applied the text to the pastoral needs of his hearers. Each of these three things has been an essential component of modern Biblical theology, whose practitioners have also recognized the distinctions we find in Calvin. Indeed, in some cases it appears that modern Biblical theologians, particularly those of a Presbyterian or Reformed background, have done much the same thing as Calvin did, the major difference lying at the exegetical level, where modern developments have often made sixteenth-century conclusions appear out of date.

As an example of this, few modern exegetes would assume, as Luther and Calvin both did, that Paul's letter to the Galatians was especially relevant to the churches of France and Germany because the Galatians were a Celtic people, and therefore closely related to both the French and the Germans! Still less would they imagine that this can explain why the disarray in the sixteenth-century Western European churches was so much like that in first-century Galatia. Modern scholars smile at such naivety, though they may be more inclined to accept the broader principle, that all human beings are fundamentally alike and so the problems Paul encountered in ancient Galatia can find ready parallels in the modern church. They know that Galatians was written to address a specific historical situation, and one that does not recur in the same form nowadays, but they still think that the epistle contains lessons that can be applied with profit in the church today.

If that were the only difference between the Reformers and modern Biblical Theologians, there would be every reason to regard the former as the true harbingers of twentieth-century Biblical theology. The differences would be largely confined to the realm of historical knowledge and would be ones of degree, rather than of kind. Some modern scholars like to point out that Luther and Calvin were not confessional theologians in the sense that their later followers were, and so they can be rescued, so to speak, from the clutches of that debilitating dogmatism which has used their names to betray their ideas and their ideals. It is something of a truism to say that Luther was not a Lutheran and that Calvin was not a Calvinist, but it is perverse to conclude from that that they were not dogmatic or confessional at all. Not only did both men operate within the historic framework of the Catholic Church, which they wanted to reform, not overthrow, but they believed,

as every Christian generation before them had believed, that the Scriptures were the Word of God, who was their true author.

They knew, of course, that God had spoken to particular individuals through the prism of their historical circumstances, but the light that was refracted through them was essentially the same. In their minds, what the Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle to the Romans then was what God is saying to us now. Just as a modern theater-goer can enter into the spirit of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* without being an expert on Renaissance England or on medieval Denmark and Scotland, so a Christian can understand the message of Romans without knowing anything about Rome, or even about the Jewish-Gentile conflict that apparently sparked the writing of the letter in the first place. The circumstances of time and place are interesting details that put flesh on the bones of doctrinal principle, but it is the latter that gives the body its shape and its meaning, and it is not bound by the limitations of time and space.

It is here that the Biblical interpretation of men like Luther and Calvin differs most obviously from that of modern Biblical theology and makes it hard to acknowledge them as its forerunners. The world has changed since the Reformation, and Biblical theology today reflects a way of thinking that was unknown to the Reformers and would probably have been rejected by them. To understand the difference, consider the word "atheism." Today, atheism is a philosophical position that denies the existence of a Creator God, but in the sixteenth-century an atheist was a man who lived an immoral life. Like a modern smoker, he knew the facts, but was determined to ignore them, even if it meant going to eternal damnation. Nowadays however, philosophical atheism is the default position, the common ground on which believers and unbelievers are expected to operate in the name of "objectivity." It is in that world that modern Biblical theology has come into being, and it is for those scholars and works which take that worldview as a given that the term is now generally reserved.

The Enlightenment Era

Biblical theology as we know it today is a child of the Enlightenment. The founding of the Royal Society in 1660, whose charter forbade any discussion of religion or politics that might intrude upon its purely scientific deliberations, and the settlement of the Carolinas twenty years later, for which John Locke wrote a constitution embedding the principle of religious toleration in the public life of the new colonies, were signposts of the new era that was dawning. If science could be pursued without reference to God, and if a society could be created in which different opinions about him could enjoy equal currency and respect, it would not be long before theology would be regarded as superfluous to requirements. That it took a century to happen says more about the innate conservatism of human life than it does about the resilience of the church, though intellectual defenses of the Christian tradi-

tion were not lacking, especially in England.

One of the curious results of this is that even as the new radicalism was spreading to France and across Europe, it was dying out in the land of its birth. Its funeral can be dated to 1776, the year that David Hume died, the year that the mature John Wesley first ventured beyond England with his message of spiritual regeneration, and the year that Thomas Jefferson made it clear that Enlightenment political ideas were not in Britain's interest. The fact that the American rebels were prepared to ally themselves with France and Spain, then regarded as the heart of darkness, shows how complex and contradictory the Enlightenment had become, and things were only to get worse as time went on. The French revolution introduced the virus of rationalist secularism into the European body politic which finally succumbed to it in the carnage of the First World War, dragging Enlightenment idealism down with it. The European Enlightenment committed suicide in the trenches of Flanders and Galicia, but in America, largely untouched by the catastrophe, the flame continued to burn and is only now showing signs that it may be starting to fail. It is against this background that modern Biblical theology came into being, and in both the triumph and the tragedy of the Enlightenment that it has flowered and faded. If the American experience of Biblical theology has been different from the European one, as Brevard Childs insisted, that is only because the Enlightenment and its idealism took a different course there and survived the European collapse by at least two and perhaps three generations.

To someone living in 1776, the term "Biblical theology" would have sounded strange and might even have been incomprehensible. What other kind of theology could there have been? University faculties and the churches to whom their graduates ministered were still locked in the confessionalism of an earlier era and those who tangled with them had to be careful, but other ways of circumventing their influence could be found. Voltaire spent time in the Bastille for his blasphemies, but that did not stop him from being idolized all over Europe, including by such unlikely people as Frederick the Great of Prussia. Diderot's famous *Encyclopedia* was soon doing the rounds of cultivated society everywhere and Rousseau was busily celebrating the noble savage unencumbered by religion or civilization. In Germany, the thoughts of a radical like Herman Reimarus (1694-1768) could not be published in his lifetime, but it was not long before Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) was circulating them as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments*. The writings of the English deists were freely available in the university library of Göttingen, founded by King George II of Great Britain who was also the Elector of Hanover in whose principality Göttingen lay. The philosopher Immanuel Kant was in full flow and was establishing the principle that religion had to be contained within the bounds of reason – not abolished, but domesticated and made useful as a moral bond for society as a whole.

It would be nice to think that the Enlightenment could have broken down the confessional barriers between Protestant and Catholic, but instead

it made the division between them deeper. The Roman Catholic Church turned its back on the new way of thinking and excommunicated anyone it caught subscribing to it. As a result, Enlightenment and Protestantism were paired together as the harbingers of a future era of reason and prosperity. This alliance, so foreign to the spirit of the Reformers, took a long time to mature and win converts, but eventually it prevailed. In the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the acknowledged father of nineteenth-century liberalism, the two coalesced. Schleiermacher understood religion not as outmoded superstition but as the expression of the non-rational side of life. Reason was vitally important but it did not cover everything, as the phenomena of love and beauty demonstrated. Where do such feelings come from? By 1776, a reaction to pure rationalism was setting in and a generation later it flowered into what we call the Romantic Movement. Romanticism displaced the center of culture from the mind to the feelings, or to what came to be understood as the "heart." Science was no longer the only, or even the main, source of knowledge. After all, what could a machine tell you about life?

As religion came back into the picture and was accorded an important place in human thought, its relationship to wider society had to be redefined. The religious impulse was not the same thing as confessional theology – almost the opposite, in fact. The Bible was a storehouse of passionate expression, but it had been chained up and almost killed by its official interpreters. The only way to rescue it and revitalize its message was to liberate it from this imprisonment and let it speak for itself. This was the task undertaken by Johann Philipp Gabler (1753-1826), who in 1787 declared that Biblical theology was quite independent of dogmatics.⁵ A truly scientific approach to the Scriptures, said Gabler, would seek to unlock the minds of the Biblical writers themselves, seeing them in the context of the ancient Middle East and interpreting them as voices rooted in their own time and culture. Gabler did not deny that the Biblical writers might have a message that we need to hear today, but that was true of all such literature. Gabler, after all, lived in the age of Herder and the brothers Grimm, who went around collecting the ancient folk wisdom and legends of whatever primitive peoples they could find, hoping to discover in them the essence of human spirituality unclouded by subsequent dogmatic elaboration.

Gabler's achievement marked a significant milestone in the development of modern Biblical theology because as something quite distinct from dogmatics, it was outside the control of the churches, but for that very reason Gabler was less influential than we might suppose. The churches were still highly confessional and for them, theology *was* dogmatics. To the extent that Biblical studies had become a science in its own right, it was based on very different principles. These principles were not necessarily opposed to the teaching of the church, but they claimed an objectivity that was lacking

⁵See L. T. Stuckenbruck, "Johann Philipp Gabler and the Delineation of Biblical Theology," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52 (1999): 139-57.

in confessional theology. There had long been a strong philological streak in the Protestant theological tradition, where the study of Hebrew and Greek had been pursued with great rigor, but its proponents had little to go on besides the texts themselves. Until the French revolution it was virtually impossible for scholars to travel to Biblical lands, most of which were ruled by the Ottoman Turks, but Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, which resulted in the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, among other things, changed all that. By the middle of the nineteenth century, scholarly expeditions were combing the Ottoman Empire, with men like Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-74) discovering the *Codex Sinaiticus*, deciphering previously unknown languages and developing Biblical archaeology.

For the first time in centuries, objective academic study of the Bible in its Near Eastern context could expand and acquire its own distinctive flavor. It was often conservative in outlook, but it was decidedly non-theological, and even anti-theological. Its practitioners felt that theology got in the way of objectivity and they preferred to stick with the facts as they found them on (and in) the ground. Fascinating discoveries were made that strengthened the faith of conservative Christians the world over but also, in a strange way, distanced them from the Bible. The reason for this was that the more archaeologists and philologists emphasized the exotic nature of Biblical times, the less ordinary believers could identify with what Scripture said, even if they were relieved to discover that Babylon and Nineveh had actually existed. As far as relevance to the modern church was concerned, the historical study of the Bible showed how far the human race had come over the years. The Old Testament got even older and more distant, while the New Testament was of interest mainly because the figure of Jesus continued to command widespread devotion. In extreme cases, theologians tried to detach Jesus from his historical environment, even to the point of almost denying that he was a Jew.

By the time a chair of Biblical theology was established at Princeton in 1894, Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949), its first holder, was forced to admit that Biblical theology had become a new discipline, born (as he put it) under an "evil star" and desperately needing to be rescued from its chief professors.⁶ In many ways, Vos was continuing the line developed by the German confessionalists of the previous generation, of whom Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-69) was the greatest example and whose technical expertise in Old Testament studies was most clearly revealed in the outstanding commentaries of Karl Friedrich Keil (1807-88) and Franz Delitzsch (1813-90). It would not be too much to say that the main thrust of their work was what Hengstenberg famously called *The Christology of the Old Testament*.⁷ The aim

⁶Geerhardus Vos, *The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co., 1894).

⁷Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *The Christology of the Old Testament* (London: Francis and John Rivington, 1847). Translated from *Die Christologie des Alten Testaments*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1829-35).

was to show how, over the course of many centuries, God had revealed his purposes to Israel in such a way as to make the New Testament's claim that the Hebrew Bible speaks of Christ seem irrefutable.

However, it was left to Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) to demonstrate just to what extent liberal nineteenth-century German theology rested on ideology as opposed to the facts of history. In his classic book, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* (1906), he virtually demolished it, though without subscribing to the conservative position of men like Hengstenberg and Vos. As far as Schweitzer was concerned, Jesus was a child of his time, an apocalyptic visionary as far removed from us as his contemporaries were from him. If this was indeed the authentic Jesus, then the Bible was even more remote from our everyday concerns than most people had thought and it might as well be abandoned altogether. The moral teachings attributed to Jesus were still valid, but just as his disciples had rescued them by domesticating him as a somewhat unusual rabbi, so the modern church had to save what it could and rebuild its teaching and preaching accordingly.

The Barthian Revolution

There things might have rested had it not been for the First World War and Karl Barth (1886-1968). How far Barth was moving away from liberal theology when war broke out in 1914 is disputed, but there is no doubt that by the time it was over, he was a changed man. In 1919, he put out the first edition of his commentary on Romans, which was followed three years later by a second and even more radical one. As men like Bernhard Anderson and James Smart saw it, the publication of that second edition launched Biblical theology as we know it today. Barth's intention was to show that the words of the Bible were not just a record of what ancient people thought about God, each other and themselves, but a revelation of what God was saying to them and is still saying to us today. He accepted the results of nineteenth-century historical criticism but was convinced that the Bible had survived and continued to form the centerpiece of Western civilization because it was more than just a record written by fallible human beings. It was when that civilization was falling apart, as it seemed to be doing in 1918, that the Bible spoke the Word of God again, pointing the church to repentance and to salvation by grace through faith, and not by reason or by the works of human hands.

Barth's choice of Romans for making his point was a good one. Not only does the epistle speak clearly to that very subject, but the historical critical questions it poses are relatively few. Nobody seriously doubts its Pauline authorship, and the fact that it was written before Paul went to Rome means that its *Sitz im Leben* is less significant for interpretation than it is in his other epistles. The apostle would hardly have written such a magnificent letter to a church he did not know personally if all he had wanted was a bed for a few nights on his way to Spain, so a good case can be made for arguing on purely historical critical grounds that the theology Paul outlines in it is

central to its meaning. Even so, Barth's commentary got a rough reception in academic circles, and was particularly criticized by Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) who thought that his former pupil had apostatized from the liberal faith which he took for granted as the way of the future. But in spite of the criticism, Barth's approach struck a chord in Germany and by the time the second edition of his commentary had appeared he was already teaching theology at Göttingen, the original home of the German Enlightenment.

It soon transpired that Barth was not alone. Other Biblical scholars had been moving in his direction even before the war, men like Martin Kähler (1835-1912) and Adolf Schlatter (1852-1938). Kähler's reputation was posthumously revised upwards and Schlatter embarked on a career which would see him write a commentary on every book of the New Testament before his death in 1938. Barth's influence even rubbed off briefly on Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), though Bultmann soon dissented from Barth's theological platform and moved off in quite a different direction.

Perhaps the most important thing about Barth's commentary on Romans was not the direct influence that it had on other theologians but the encouragement that it gave to the younger generation to pursue the theological meaning inherent in the Biblical texts as a proper subject of academic study. The old fear that such an approach would inevitably lapse into the confessional grooves of the post-Reformation era was not entirely dissipated, and the project was largely a Protestant enterprise until Pope Pius XII legitimated Biblical criticism in his encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*, issued in 1943, but the traditional constraints were much less evident than they had been before 1914. Thus, Walter Eichrodt (1890-1978) could develop a covenantal reading of the Old Testament which was rejected by Gerhard von Rad (1901-71) who had a more individualistic approach to ancient Israelite spirituality, but both men shared the same theological concerns in a way that would have been regarded as unscientific by the men of Harnack's generation. More boldly still, Oscar Cullmann (1902-99) developed the notion of salvation history into a full-blown interpretation of the entire Bible, which found its ultimate fulfillment and meaning in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁸ Though Cullmann was very popular in some circles for a while, most Biblical scholars recoiled from his somewhat extreme programmatization, but the fact that he could be taken seriously at all shows how much times had changed since the appearance of Barth's commentary.

What this shows is that theological interpretation of the Bible, no longer tied to the confessional churches as it would once have been, developed a considerable diversity which made it hard to pin down. From the academic point of view, theological interpretation called into question the objective basis of Biblical science as it had developed in the nineteenth century. There had always been disagreements about matters of textual criticism, but these

⁸Oscar Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1965), translated as *Salvation in History* (London: SCM Press, 1967).

were relatively minor compared to what now emerged, especially in Old Testament studies. It was one thing to argue that the Pentateuch had been put together from a number of different sources, but quite another to suggest that each of these sources had its own theological outlook which might be incompatible with that of the others. Likewise, the synoptic problem of the Gospels was transformed by the suggestion that the evangelists all had a theological program which led them to adapt their common material to suit their own agendas. That in turn contributed to the claim of men like Walter Bauer (1877-1960) who argued that the early church held a wide range of theological beliefs that was only gradually narrowed down to the orthodoxy with which we are familiar today.⁹ But if there was a Matthaean community, a Markan community, a Lukan community, and a Johannine community in the early church, how and why did they coalesce and exclude the rest as heretics? According to men like Bauer, this was more a political than a theological judgment, which leaves open the possibility that a broader range of views ought to be accepted within the church today. In other words, Biblical theology, which started out as an orthodox or at least neo-orthodox reaction to classical liberalism, could be co-opted into producing an even more radical program than the one it was superseding, especially once confessionism ceased to operate as a check on theological speculation.

Biblical Theology in the English-Speaking World

So far we have been considering the development of what might be called Biblical theology in the German-speaking world, which by common consent was the most productive area of theological discourse in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet many people today think that Biblical theology is (or was) a peculiarly American phenomenon. That was certainly the case with Brevard Childs, whose critique of it was based on that assumption, although James Smart was able to show without much difficulty how ill-founded that assumption actually was. Nevertheless, even Smart had to allow that there was a different atmosphere in America which could at least create the illusion of theological independence. Both Childs and Smart also pointed to the impact of certain British scholars on the American scene, reminding us that the English-speaking world has a cultural unity of its own that cannot be overlooked.

In the United Kingdom, the influence of nineteenth-century German Biblical scholarship was largely confined to the area of textual criticism. The innate conservatism of the British establishment was still resisting such things as the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch as late as the 1880s but after that the collapse was sudden and almost total. Even so, however, British scholarship remained extremely cautious and conservative, especially

⁹Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1934). Translated as *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

in New Testament studies where the influence of Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828-89), Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-92) remained dominant well into the twentieth century. Part of this conservatism, however, was an inherent resistance to theology, which was largely excluded from Biblical studies. The result of this was that a conservative Evangelical scholar like Frederick Fyvie Bruce (1910-91) could work happily alongside a radical liberal like John Arthur Thomas Robinson (1919-83) because they both shared the same conservative views about New Testament origins, although they interpreted its theological meaning very differently. To this day, British Biblical scholarship is remarkably open to people of both conservative and liberal theological views, largely because there is a sense of the objectivity of the Biblical text which transcends such things and a very cautious attitude towards theories of any kind.

In the United States, that approach has made its impact, especially in Evangelical circles where British influence has allowed many scholars to engage with critical theories without abandoning their conservative theological convictions, but as James Smart pointed out, the American scene has also been deeply affected by connections with Germany that go much deeper than anything found in Britain. The fact that Biblical theology could be called a “movement” in the United States but not in the United Kingdom shows us that, and it is to this phenomenon that we must now turn our attention.

A uniquely American factor at work in the development of modern Biblical theology was the damaging conflict between so-called “fundamentalists” and “liberals” or “modernists” in American universities and seminaries, which culminated in the reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1929. Largely because of the separation of church and state, theological institutions in the USA were more closely tied to their respective churches than they were in Europe, with the result that the controversies that shook them had a greater effect on ordinary churchgoers. Most of these were considerably more conservative in their outlook than the new breed of theology professor, and to keep them happy it was necessary to show that a change in scholarly methods and outlook need not affect them in any negative way. Scholarly methods might change but the same theological message could still be preached and so the gap between the liberals and the fundamentalists could be papered over at grassroots level.

In this climate, Biblical theology seemed to be an ideal way forward because it took both theology and historical criticism seriously. It was also able to benefit from the progress made in archaeology, which could be used to support conservative conclusions, as the career and influence of William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971) demonstrated. Though not a Biblical scholar or theologian himself, Albright’s impact was enormous and his highly conservative estimation of the historical reliability of the Bible made it, and a theology based on it, once again respectable in academic circles. Along with this came a renewed interest in Hebrew and Greek semantics, with scholars

postulating that the Hebrew language (and therefore the Bible) reflected a Semitic mentality quite different from that of the Greek world. The ancient Israelites had supposedly lived in a world of action and movement whereas the Greeks were more at home with theory and reflection, a difference that later produced the Christian dogmatic tradition and alienated it from its Biblical roots. Getting away from confessional theology could therefore be presented as a "back to the Bible" exercise that would appeal to people who were unsettled by modern theological developments.

Another influence on the American scene was the impact of Emil Brunner (1889-1966) who spent part of the Second World War in the United States and was able to mediate Karl Barth's theology to Americans in a way they could understand. The message that came across was that God is active in human history, working out his purposes in historically verifiable events, ranging from the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Israel's self-understanding was based on that historical reality and the life of Jesus was its natural (and from the Christian point of view, inevitable) culmination. This combination of ideas appealed to Americans, and after the war there was a steady stream of books and a number of new journals, including *Interpretation* and *Theology Today*, that were launched in order to reflect these concerns. By the mid-1950s it looked as though a new synthesis of critical scholarship and conservative conclusions based on the Bible had emerged as the dominant force in American Protestantism. Furthermore, the effects of this were beginning to be felt among Roman Catholics as well, as they gradually moved into the mainstream of Biblical scholarship.

Unfortunately, as Brevard Childs pointed out, the new consensus was more apparent than real. The English language does not distinguish, as German does, between *Historie*, which is the bare record of facts, and *Geschichte*, which is the narrative that explains their meaning. Because of this, American scholars were slow to pick up on discussions in Germany about whether (or how much) the Bible's interpretive *Geschichte* had a bearing on objective *Historie*. Even if some events recorded in the Bible, like the fall of Babylon to the Persians, were well documented in other sources, the Biblical authors wove them into their own *Geschichte*, which was essentially no different from myth. The common assumption that Israel's religion was radically different from anything in its contemporary world was highly unlikely to be true. Perhaps Israelite religion developed in a different direction later on, and it certainly did so if it was fulfilled in Christ, but to argue that it was like that from the beginning seemed to be taking things too far.

The Christological question was another problem. Biblical theology was concerned to maintain the fundamental unity of the two Testaments, and for this a Christological interpretation of the Old Testament was essential. That could be achieved by saying that Jesus and his followers claimed Israel's history for themselves. In this way, it was possible to give full historical credibility to the Old Testament as it stood, without having to resort

to allegory or other devices in order to discover Christ hidden somewhere in the text. At the same time, it also made it possible to make sense of the New Testament in its Hebraic context. One result of this was the emergence in the United States (and virtually only in the United States) of the term “Judaico-Christian” as a synonym for “Biblical,” which (if strictly interpreted) would make Judaism the basic revelation with Christianity as a kind of add-on. This Judaizing of Christianity tapped into an ancient strand of American fundamentalist Protestantism which only made it more welcome in the churches and was given added relevance by the re-establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine, which could be interpreted as the latest act of God in history. Only in America is there an alliance between right-wing Christians and secular Israelis based on the conviction of those Christians that their destiny is bound up with that of the Jewish people.

The belief that God intervenes in human affairs to work out his purposes is characteristic of Biblical theology, and the cataclysmic events of the first half of the twentieth century provided a congenial atmosphere in which that notion could flourish. But when asked how God is at work on a daily basis in the lives of his people, Biblical theology was hard pressed to give a satisfactory answer. Some of its advocates just assumed that God works today in and through the ministry of the institutional church, but that was hardly a plausible position to hold. Why would God have sent his prophets to upset the religious establishment in ancient Israel only to rest content with the middle class suburban captivity of the modern church? In the United States, that question became acute in the 1950s as the civil rights movement gathered steam and Martin Luther King appealed to Amos: “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). The institutional church had done nothing but institutionalize racism and so the prophetic voice moved elsewhere, making Biblical theology as it was practiced in the academy look anemic and even hypocritical.

From within the scholarly guild came other challenges. Johan Christiaan Beker (1924-99) for example, on his appointment to Vos’ old chair at Princeton, announced that he was completely disillusioned with Biblical theology and even blamed it for the apparent lack of interest among seminarians in the Bible!¹⁰ More rigorous and systematic than this was the critique that came from the philologist James Barr (1924-2006) who in 1961 published *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, a seminal work in which he demolished the claim that there was a Hebrew mindset different from that of the ancient Greek world. Before long, other scholars were questioning the foundations of Biblical archaeology and the reliability of Old Testament history was once more thrown into the melting pot. Biblical theology’s attempt to defend the exodus as a historical event, while at the same time dismissing much of the detail surrounding it as pious legend, came to seem feeble and inadequate,

¹⁰See *Theology Today* 25 (1968-69): 185-94. The lecture was delivered on 21 February 1968.

but the choice Biblical theologians faced was a stark one. Either they could accept the liberal challenge and in effect cease to be Biblical, or they could retreat into a quasi-inerrantist position and claim that everything in the text happened just as the Bible said it did. Since most Biblical theologians had escaped from such fundamentalism and had no intention of returning to it, there was really little option for them but to surrender to the liberal attack, even if they tried to be as conservative about it as they could.

Another challenge that Biblical theology had not even begun to face and was ill-equipped to deal with was that of hermeneutics. Brevard Childs was right to suspect that the so-called “new hermeneutic” of Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), Ernst Fuchs (1903-83) and Gerhard Ebeling (1912-2001) was unlikely to make much of an impact in the English-speaking world, but if their tortuous and incomprehensible philosophy was hard to digest, the wider hermeneutical question was not. Biblical theology had to make the Bible come alive and be relevant today, and for that, some way of applying the data of an ancient text to modern conditions had to be devised. Of course, this had long been done by resorting to allegory and most preachers could extract moral lessons from particular Biblical episodes, but this was not a systematic or scientific approach. The trouble was that no adequate or comprehensive method was readily available, with the result that hermeneutics became and has remained the most important single issue in Biblical interpretation to the present day.

In earlier times, the church’s theology had been its hermeneutic, but most scholars rejected that approach, with the result that there was soon a proliferation of different hermeneutical methods which often reflected contemporary trends rather than anything directly related to the Bible. A good example of this can be seen in feminist interpretation, which from the 1970s began to impose its agenda on the Biblical texts. Feminism was especially important because it had a practical effect on the life of the church, persuading many to accept the validity of women’s ordination. The contortions into which feminist Biblical scholars were forced in order to explain away the clear Scriptural prohibition on giving women authority over men in the church provide a clear example of how a particular hermeneutic can distort and even contradict the plain meaning of the Biblical text. Yet it is the inability or unwillingness of so much of the scholarly world to stand out against this that impresses us most. A solid theological framework, rooted in the Biblical doctrines of creation and the fall, might be able to withstand this assault, but although it exists in the textbooks of systematic theologians it is resisted by Biblical scholars who will not accept that theology of that kind can be an adequate, let alone a scientific, hermeneutical principle.

This brings us to the most serious defect of mid-twentieth century Biblical theology, which was its inability to move the hearts and minds of the church. A theology of proclamation should have resulted in great preaching, but it did not—instead, seminary students were given lectures on the importance of *kerygma*. Concepts like sin, grace and atonement were seldom

heard and when they were, they were not applied to the lives of those who heard them. Somehow or other, Biblical theology managed to be a study of the Bible without the challenge of the gospel. Those in the church who still preached for conversion could be grateful for its conservative stance on historical and textual questions, but could not relate to it at a deeper level because it never touched the heart of the matter. Brevard Childs noted that in his analysis and although James Smart did his best to ignore the charge, even he had to admit that the most promising future for Biblical theology lay with the erstwhile fundamentalist and now evangelical wing of the church, where these old-time truths had been preserved.

Finally, although critics of Biblical theology could attack its presuppositions and cast doubt on its supposed “results,” they were much less able to provide a viable alternative. This was particularly true of James Barr, who could demolish almost anything he came across but had nothing constructive to put in its place. It was in an attempt to do this reconstruction and to rescue Biblical theology from the *impasse* into which it had apparently stumbled that Brevard Childs put forward his own program of canonical criticism. Canonical criticism had the advantage of being both solidly Biblical and comprehensively hermeneutical without being specifically theological. Childs, it should be said, admitted that there were problems with using the canon as a guide. For a start, the differences between Protestant and Roman Catholics over the Apocrypha, which reflect those between Jerome and Augustine in the fourth century, affect the value we place on Hebrew and the Jewish tradition generally, which in turn affects the way we understand our faith. Then again, we do not know precisely how or why the canon came together as it did. All we can say is that the Christian church now recognizes it as the framework within which the Bible is read as the Word of God. Accepting it as such is not a scientific decision but an act of faith, even though that is not how it was seen by those who established it. They believed that they were hearing the Word of God in the texts and so canonized them, whereas what Childs was advocating is really the exact opposite—we ought to hear the Word of God in the texts because they are in the canon!

Childs pursued his vision of canonical criticism for the rest of his life but with very limited success. He has few followers, even though many people have benefitted from some of his insights. His real contribution has been to the history of Biblical interpretation rather than to Biblical interpretation itself, and in that respect he has helped to open up a whole new field of inquiry that may yet have fruitful results for the future of Biblical theology. Whether canon criticism can ever be revived is another question, and the answer must be very doubtful. It is possible that some books in the Old Testament were written with inclusion in a canon of Scripture in mind, but there is no evidence one way or the other. As for the New Testament, its authors clearly accepted the existence of an Old Testament canon but did not think that they were adding to it themselves, unless we interpret 2 Peter 3:16, where Peter refers to Paul’s letters as Scripture, in that sense. It seems

that the canon established itself by use over time and was not consciously assembled by anyone with a particular theological aim in view, which makes it hard to establish what its underlying theological principles might be and therefore almost impossible to construct an objectively verifiable Biblical theology on the basis of it.

At the same time, Childs is right to say that the Christian church has built its theology on the canonical books of Scripture, and in Protestant circles at least, regards itself as bound by them. What we have is a confessional theology based on the canon, not a canonical theology based on tradition. In the end, that may be the only way for Biblical theology to go. It can perhaps peel off certain elements that are not really Biblical, such as the claim that the pope is the Antichrist, which was made by the Westminster Confession of Faith (25.6), and add subject matter that the existing confessions omitted or had no cause to consider, like issues relating to human sexuality. But in the end, Biblical theology will look more like confessional theology than the attempts to replace it do. Perhaps this is the inevitable consequence of living in a church with a tradition stretching back to Biblical times that has drawn on the Scriptures for its life and its teaching from the very beginning.

Yahweh's Self Revelation in Deed and Word: A Biblical Theology of 1-2 Samuel

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.
Professor of Old Testament
Dallas Theological Seminary
Dallas, TX
bchisholm@dts.edu

Introduction

The phrase “Biblical theology,” when applied to a text, typically refers to the theological themes embedded in that text by authorial intention. For the purpose of this essay, I use the phrase in a more restricted theocentric sense to refer to what the text communicates about God. In my view, the vehicle of the theology of 1-2 Samuel is Yahweh’s self-revelation in both deed and word. The theology of 1-2 Samuel is what Yahweh reveals about his character through his self-revelation as recorded within these books. However, since Yahweh’s self-revelation is inherently relational (after all, the very concept of revelation assumes an audience or recipient), I also recognize that the theology of 1-2 Samuel has an anthropological dimension and includes the themes of how God relates to people and what he expects from them.

Quotations play an important role in Old Testament narrative.¹ In addition to their literary role of contributing to characterization and plot development, they are often the conveyors of a narrative’s themes and the narrator’s theological message. This is certainly the case in the Books of Samuel, where the major theological themes are often (perhaps we could say, almost always) stated in quotations.² The narrator describes Yahweh as very involved in the life of the covenant community. Yahweh intervenes in events and lives,

¹For example, in 1 Samuel 1-15 quotations appear in 228 of the 383 verses (60%).

²Bergen points out that the authors of biblical narrative express their “values and ideological concerns” through the “overall storyline,” “statements made by characters in the narrative,” and “nonnarrative comments embedded into the story.” He states that the second of these is the most common. In a method he calls “Quote Prominence Analysis,” Bergen seeks “to identify the quotations the canonical author highlighted the most, and in so doing to pinpoint the quotes most likely to contain thematically central propositions.” It is important to consider the importance of the character, ranked in the order “Israel’s deity, spokesmen for Israel’s deity, and kings,” and quotation length, as well as several other factors, some of which are stylistic and linguistic. See Robert D. Bergen, “Authorial Intent and the Spoken Word: A Discourse-critical Analysis of Speech Acts in Accounts of Israel’s United Monarchy (1 Sam. 1—1 Kings 11),” in *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts*, ed. David M. Howard, Jr. and Michael Grisanti (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 362-68.

and he reveals something of himself through his actions. But it is through the spoken word—statements made by Yahweh himself and/or by those who experience his self-revelation—that the theological significance of Yahweh’s deeds is articulated. Thus, pertinent quotations will be an important focus in our study. We will proceed inductively, surfacing the books’ major theological themes as we move through 1-2 Samuel, before concluding with a theological synthesis of 1-2 Samuel.

My approach differs to some degree from that of some recent major works on 1-2 Samuel. For example, Firth identifies three “central themes” in 1-2 Samuel—the reign of God, kingship, and prophetic authority.³ The “reign of God” is certainly a fundamental theological theme, but the second and third themes are more literary in nature, at least by my definition. Bergen lists four themes under the heading “1, 2 Samuel as Theology”—covenant, land, the presence of God, and the demand for wholehearted obedience to the Lord.⁴ The first two themes in his list are literary; the third and fourth are theological by my definition in that they focus on God’s self-revelation and his expectations of his people, respectively. Arnold, after a discussion of Yahweh’s kingship, lists three other theological themes in the book—messianism, the right use of power, and the definition and nature of repentance.⁵ Yahweh’s kingship is a theological theme, but messianism and the right use of power are more literary in nature. The repentance theme may be viewed as theological in the sense that it pertains to how people should relate to God. Yet it is anthropological in focus, rather than theocentric. Cartledge discusses three prominent themes—“the Deuteronomistic dichotomy of blessing for obedience and punishment for sin,” grace, and crisis.⁶ The third is literary in nature; the first two are theological in that they focus on how God relates to his people. Tsumura lists three categories under “Theology of 1 Samuel”—kingship of God, God’s providential guidance, and God’s sovereign will and power.⁷ These are theological themes that address God’s self-revelation in 1 Samuel.

This brief survey reveals diversity in recent approaches to the theology of 1-2 Samuel. There is a tendency to mingle literary themes with theological themes. Most address to some degree God’s character as self-revealed, but some focus more on the anthropological dimension of how God relates to people and how they should respond to him, rather than the theocentric dimension. In my view, literary and theological themes should be kept distinct, and theology *per se* should hold the theocentric and anthropological

³See David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, AOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 42-48.

⁴See Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 43-45.

⁵See Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 30-40.

⁶See Tony W. Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 13-15.

⁷See David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 69-73.

dimensions in balance.

This is well done in an earlier study by Martin.⁸ He identifies the “center” of the books’ theology as relational in nature; he summarizes it as follows: “The well-being of the people of God (Israel) depended on their response to His choosing them as His instruments and saving them; the righteous ones, those chosen by God, prosper while those who oppose God’s instruments of rulership are cut off.”⁹ Martin then organizes the theology of the books around the three headings of “the theology of God,” “the theology of man,” and “the relationship between God and man.” Under the first of these, he speaks of the character of God (he is compassionate, he communicates, he is spiritual and unique, he demands obedience, and he is worthy of praise) and the acts of God (he sovereignly chooses, is forgiving, and fights for his people). All of these themes are present, but I will be focusing on how the book articulates its theological themes through the voices that speak within its pages.

An Inductive Survey

1 Samuel 1:1—2:11

Oppressed Hannah is the central character in this first episode in the story. The plot complication (her oppression by and conflict with the rival wife due to her barren condition) is resolved when Hannah receives a son from Yahweh in response to her prayer. Hannah’s song of thanks (2:1-10) expresses the main theological theme of this episode: Yahweh is the incomparable, just king who vindicates his oppressed servants and brings down their proud oppressors. He had vindicated Hannah, and she anticipated he would do the same for Israel through an anointed king.¹⁰

Hannah affirmed the incomparability of Yahweh by asserting that there is none who can rival his kingship (v. 2a) or his ability to protect his people (v. 2b). Directly refuting what the Canaanites claimed about their fertility god Baal, Hannah declared that Yahweh alone is “holy,” a term referring fundamentally to his royal transcendence.¹¹ She also called Yahweh her “rock” (or, rocky cliff), a term depicting Yahweh as a source of refuge and protection for his people. In Hannah’s experience, Yahweh demonstrated his justice by vindicating her and humiliating her enemy (vv. 3-9).¹² Again, there

⁸See John A. Martin, “The Theology of Samuel,” *BSac* 141 (1984): 303-14.

⁹Martin, “The Theology of Samuel,” 306.

¹⁰Bergen (“Authorial Intent and the Spoken Word,” 367) points out that an author will sometimes highlight a quotation by placing it “in a highly stylized format, such as a poem.” This appears to be the case with Hannah’s poetic song.

¹¹On the polemical dimension of Hannah’s song, see Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., “Yahweh Versus the Canaanite Gods: Polemic in Judges and 1 Samuel 1-7,” *BSac* 164 (2007): 177-79.

¹²This “reversal-of-fortunes motif” becomes an important theme in 1-2 Samuel. See Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 42, as well as John A. Martin, “The Literary Quality of 1 and 2 Samuel,” *BSac* 141 (1984): 131-45.

is a polemical dimension. Yahweh (not Baal) is the one who gives children to the barren woman. In contrast to Baal, who succumbs periodically to Mot, the god of death, Yahweh holds both the power of life and death in his hands. Rather than descending into the land of the dead, as Baal did after being defeated by Mot, Yahweh “brings down to the grave and brings up” (v. 6).¹³ Hannah’s portrait of Yahweh culminates with a vision of him shattering his enemies and thundering against them from the sky (v. 10a). This depicts Yahweh, the source of all fertility and life, as superior to Baal, the Canaanite god of the storm who allegedly controlled the thunder and lightning. Anticipating the kingship theme that will dominate 1-2 Samuel, Hannah looked forward to a time when Yahweh would exercise his mighty power on behalf of his chosen human ruler (v. 10b). As we will see, Hannah’s declaration that Yahweh is his people’s incomparable king and protector is foundational to the theology of 1-2 Samuel.

1 Samuel 2:12-36 // 3:1—4:1a

The next two episodes form a thematic tandem. The first focuses on Eli and his sons, who were wicked and angered Yahweh. Eli rebuked them, but did not stop them. From Yahweh’s perspective, he had honored his sons more than Yahweh, so Yahweh announced Eli would forfeit his priestly dynasty. The second episode, which tells of Yahweh’s choice of Samuel to be his prophet, complements the first and reiterates the announcement of Eli’s rejection (cf. 2:27-36 with 3:11-14). The main theological theme of this section is spoken in 2:30 by Yahweh through the man of God: “for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.”¹⁴ This theme complements Hannah’s song by indicating that only those who honor Yahweh, as Hannah did, can expect to experience his vindication and protection. Those who fail to honor Yahweh, like Eli, will lose what they already have.

1 Samuel 4:1b—7:1

The next three episodes focus on the Ark of the Covenant. The first (4:1b-22) records the initial fulfillment of Yahweh’s decree of judgment (2:27-36), when Eli’s sons died on the same day (2:34). The Israelites took the Ark into battle, thinking it would assure them of victory, only to experience a humiliating defeat in which the Ark was captured. The news of the Ark’s capture so shocked aging Eli that he fell over dead. One tragedy led to another. When his pregnant daughter-in-law heard that the Ark was cap-

¹³Unless otherwise noted, biblical citations are from the *New King James Version* (NKJV).

¹⁴The quotation is highlighted by the fact that Yahweh speaks through an authorized spokesperson. Bergen suggests that “statistically rare speech acts,” such as a prophetic oracle, can be used for emphasis (“Authorial Intent and the Spoken Word,” 367). As Patrick D. Miller, Jr. points out, the statement also employs a “correspondence motif” that utilizes both verbal repetition and variation, and “is expressed in general theological terms.” See *Sin and Judgment in the Prophets*, SBLMS, 27 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 84.

tured and that her father-in-law and husband were dead, she went into labor and died in childbirth. Her statement, “the glory has departed from Israel” (4:22), states the literary theme of the episode.

The second episode in this section (5:1-12) tells how the Ark went to Philistine territory and did some serious damage, especially to the god Dagon. The main literary theme is stated in 5:7 by the Philistine victims, who recognized the superiority of Israel’s God: “The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god.”

In the third episode of the section (6:1—7:1), the Philistines sent the Ark back to Israel. Ironically, the Philistine priests state the primary theological theme of this entire so-called Ark narrative: “and you shall give glory to the God of Israel” (6:5).¹⁵ They even sound like prophets of Yahweh when they ask: “Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?” (6:6) This message, with its focus on the honor due Yahweh, complements the statement made by the man of God to Eli (cf. 2:30).

When the Ark returned to Israelite territory, the people of Beth Shemesh treated it with disrespect and paid a heavy price for their actions (6:19). Their statement complements the earlier exhortation of the Philistine leaders: “Who is able to stand before this holy LORD GOD?” (6:20). The Hebrew expression translated “stand before” can mean, “attend to” (Judg 20:27-28), but it can also carry the nuance “withstand, resist” (Exod 9:11; Judg 2:14; 2 Kgs 10:4),¹⁶ which fits well here as an affirmation of God’s invincible, destructive power. The term “holy” refers most basically to what is distinct from the commonplace or ordinary. Here the nuance may be “off limits, unapproachable,” since touching and peering into the Ark caused the death of the people. This is just the second time that the word has been used in 1 Samuel. Hannah used it to describe Yahweh as absolutely sovereign and unique in his capacity to protect his people (1 Sam 2:2). For Hannah, Yahweh’s holiness was reason to celebrate, because his incomparability ensured his loyal followers of vindication. The contrast between Hannah and the people of Beth Shemesh is striking. Those who disrespect the holy God experience him as terrifying, but those who honor him find his holiness to be reassuring and cause for hope.¹⁷

¹⁵It appears that this example goes counter to Bergen’s hierarchy of prominence for quotations, but, by having Philistine priests state the main theological point of the pericope in the form of hortatory discourse, the author contributes to the irony of this account. Yahweh is alienated from his people and the symbol of his presence is in foreign territory, so why not give these foreign priests a prophetic role? Their spiritual insight stands in contrast to the spiritual insensitivity of God’s covenant people described both before and after this. Furthermore, there are no Israelites in sight to make any profound theological statements! And that is precisely the point here.

¹⁶Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 60.

¹⁷When one recognizes this contrast, the apparent violation of Bergen’s quote prominence hierarchy in 6:20 makes sense. It would seem that deviation from the norm is a

1 Samuel 7:2-17

In this next episode, Israel repented and Samuel led them to a great victory over the Philistines, reversing their earlier defeat. Samuel's address to the people prior to the battle states the main theological theme of the episode: "and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines" (7:3b).¹⁸ "Serve" carries connotations of worship and loyalty. The addition of "only" emphasizes the exclusivity that is intended. Only here and in verse 4 is the Hebrew verb translated "serve" used with the Hebrew phrase translated "only."¹⁹ There is no room for polytheism or syncretism in the worship of the one true God. Samuel's exhortation and promise highlight Israel's responsibility. Allegiance to Yahweh is foundational to divine blessing in the form of deliverance. This theme complements the message of the Ark narrative by indicating what it means to honor Yahweh. It also complements Hannah's song by making it clear that only Yahweh's loyal followers can expect to experience his deliverance.

1 Samuel 8-12

These next five chapters tell how Israel came to have a king. They demanded a king "like all the nations" (8:5). Yahweh gave them a king, but maintained authority over this ruler (10:25; 12:14-15). Once again the major literary themes and primary theological themes appear in quotations:

1. In 8:7, Yahweh declares to Samuel: "for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."
2. In 9:16, Yahweh, after informing Samuel that he must anoint Saul as king, announces: "that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me." In verses 16-17, Yahweh calls Israel "my people" four times, in contrast to chapter 8, where he refers to them simply as "the people" (8:7). Despite being rejected by the people (8:7), Yahweh intended to maintain his relationship with them.²⁰ The people's desire for national security had motivated them to demand a king like all the nations (8:20; cf. 12:12). Their proposed solution to the military threat they faced was wrong and amounted to rejecting Yahweh (8:7), yet Yahweh recognized their need for security as legitimate. He promised to provide for this need through his chosen instrument of salvation, just as he had done through

feature of literary irony.

¹⁸It is not surprising that Samuel, Yahweh's prophetic spokesman, would state the main theological idea, nor that it occurs in hortatory discourse.

¹⁹Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History, Part Two: 1 Samuel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 74.

²⁰Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 123.

Samuel (7:7-10).

3. In 10:19, Samuel reiterates Yahweh's earlier statement (cf. 8:7): "But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations."
4. In 11:13, Saul, having defeated the Ammonites, declares: "for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel."

The theological theme that emerges from these quotations is apparent: Despite Israel's rejection of their king, Yahweh, he continues to save them.

This section concludes with Samuel's call to covenant renewal. Samuel laid out the options before the people in 12:14-15. Verses 20-25 reiterate the point, draw the expected application via hortatory discourse, and buttress it with a promise.²¹ The main theological themes of the speech are:

1. 12:20, 24: "but serve the LORD with all your heart . . . Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."
2. 12:22: "For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people."

Israel's rejection of Yahweh must not continue. Because of all Yahweh had done for them, he had every right to demand their full allegiance. Refusal to do so would deprive the community of Yahweh's protection and deliverance, and result in exile (12:25).

1 Samuel 13-15

These three chapters record the account of Saul's spiritual demise and Yahweh's rejection of him as king. The key literary theme appears in the following quotations:

1. In 13:14, Samuel informed disobedient Saul that he had forfeited his dynasty: "But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."
2. In 15:11, after another act of disobedience by Saul, Yahweh informed Samuel: "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments."
3. In 15:23, 26, Samuel announced to Saul that Yahweh had rejected him as king: "Because you have rejected the word of

²¹As Bergen ("Authorial Intent and Spoken Word," 371-72) points out, Samuel's speech in verses 6-17 has several indicators of prominence, including Samuel's prophetic status (validated by the miracle recorded in v. 18), the length of the discourse (Samuel's longest recorded speech), its "cultically significant geographic setting," "its temporal setting," and "its addressees (*all* Israel)." While the brief narrative of verses 18-19 concludes the discourse *per se*, verses 20-25 may be viewed as an epilogue to or extension of verses 6-17.

the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being* king . . . for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”²²

4. In 15:22, Samuel stated the theological theme that underlies Yahweh’s rejection of Saul: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.”²³

When Saul grabbed Samuel’s robe in an effort to keep him from leaving, Samuel stated another important theological principle that emerges from this story: “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He *is* not a man, that He should relent” (15:29). Of course, many passages depict Yahweh as relenting (or “changing his mind”). For example, 1 Sam 15:11, 35 uses the same Hebrew verb of Yahweh regretting having made Saul king. Two texts even indicate that Yahweh’s willingness to relent is characteristic of his immutable merciful nature (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). Rather than being a universal principle, true at all times in all situations, Samuel’s statement in verse 29 confirms that the previous announcement of Saul’s rejection was a divine decree, a speech act that sealed Saul’s destiny. When Yahweh, usually in response to flagrant and/or persistent sin, makes such an unconditional pronouncement, he does not retract it.²⁴

As in the case of Eli (2:12-36), Yahweh expected his servant to be loyal and obedient. Being called to a special position did not insulate one from divine discipline. Like Eli, Saul’s failure caused him to forfeit what Yahweh had intended for him (cf. 2:30 with 13:13) and for both of them the divine decision was sealed (cf. 3:14 with 15:28-29). Yet even in this tragic account of disobedience and divine rejection, the important theological theme of Yahweh’s deliverance is still visible. In 14:6, on the verge of battle, Saul’s son Jonathan, who is a literary foil for his father throughout the story, declares: “For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.”²⁵ Unfortu-

²²The correspondence pattern draws attention to the statement, which is the climax of the discourse. See Miller, *Sin and Judgment*, 85.

²³Samuel, as Yahweh’s authorized spokesman, makes both of the key theological statements in this section. The first gives the theological basis for Saul’s rejection notice (v. 23b) and the second (v. 29) seals the decision. Both theological statements can be recognized as such by their generalizing character.

²⁴For more on this subject, see Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., “Does God ‘Change His Mind?’” *BSac* 152 (1995): 387-99; Richard L. Pratt, Jr., “Historical Contingencies and Biblical Predictions,” in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 180-203; and Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., “How a Hermeneutical Virus Can Corrupt Theological Systems,” *BSac* 166 (2009): 270n18.

²⁵One might not expect a secondary character like Jonathan to make a key theological statement, but his status as a foil may explain this. In 11:13, Saul spoke of Yahweh’s saving power, but Saul faltered in chapter 13, leaving Jonathan to exhibit the kind of faith and courage that one would expect from the king. Jonathan’s generalizing statement reflects Israel’s experience. At the Red Sea, Yahweh rescued his defenseless people by miraculously drowning Pharaoh’s charging charioteers in the surging water. Ehud ignited a war of liberation by assassinating

nately, his father's failure to grasp this principle (see 13:11-12) contributed to his eventual demise.

1 Samuel 16

The two episodes in this chapter focus on David. The first describes Yahweh's choice of David, who apparently was not as impressive a candidate for king as his older brothers. But in directing Samuel to anoint David, Yahweh reminded the prophet of an important theological principle that is foundational to the narrative: "For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (16:7).²⁶ In the second episode, we discover that David's reputation preceded him to Saul's court. One of Saul's attendants, in commending David for Saul's service, observes: "the LORD is with him" (16:18).²⁷ This theme of Yahweh's enablement of his chosen servant, which links David with Samuel (3:19), becomes a prominent one in David's story (18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam 5:10; 7:3).

1 Samuel 17

In the account of David's victory over the Philistine hero Goliath, it is not surprising that the key theological theme comes from David's lips.²⁸ After declaring his confidence that Yahweh would give him the victory so "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (17:45-46), David stated: "Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands" (17:47; cf. v. 37). The expression "the battle is the LORD's," consists of the preposition "to" + LORD + article + common noun. When used elsewhere, this collocation indicates Yahweh's sole possession of the object in view and implies his sovereign authority over it: Exod 9:29 (the earth belongs to Yahweh; cf. Ps 24:1); Ps 22:28 (dominion; cf. Obad 21); Ps 3:8 (deliverance); Prov 21:31 (victory). This theme of Yahweh's absolute power to deliver has, of course, been a prominent one up to this point (see 2:1; 7:3; 9:16; 11:13; 14:6). Yet there is an added dimension in David's declaration—that of Yahweh's power being displayed in the world. Firth points out, "David goes on to insist that his victory will be a testimony to the reality of the God of Israel to

the oppressive Moabite king Eglon in the royal palace while the royal bodyguards stood by in a nearby room. Yahweh reduced Gideon's army to a meager three hundred men, armed with torches and trumpets, and then gave this small force a supernatural victory over the vast Midianite army. And, of course, the divine Spirit empowered Samson to defeat a thousand Philistines single handedly.

²⁶The Lord refers to himself in the third person; this is consistent with the generalizing nature of this theological statement.

²⁷As with the Philistine priests (6:5) and Jonathan (14:6), one would not expect a servant to make such a theologically significant statement, but his confession contributes to the narrator's strategy. That David is an object of the Lord's favor is obvious to everyone.

²⁸In 11:13, Saul made a theologically significant statement about Yahweh's capacity to save his people. But Saul falters in chapter 13, leaving his son and foil Jonathan to speak of Yahweh's ability to deliver (14:6). Now the newly anointed king proclaims Yahweh's power to save, while Saul stands paralyzed with fear on the sidelines.

the whole world. David has grasped the special nature of Israel's role before the nations in a way that Saul never does—Israel exists as a witness to the nations of the reality of Yahweh.²⁹

It is noteworthy that David twice called Yahweh the “living God” (vv. 26, 36). This is a relatively rare title that appears only once prior to this in the canon (Deut 5:26; for later uses, see 2 Kgs 19:4, 16 = Isa 37:4 17; Jer 10:10; 23:36). An alternative form of the title appears in Josh 3:10 (see as well Pss 42:2; 84:2; Hos 1:10). These titles do not simply affirm God's existence (he is alive, as opposed to non-existent or dead). They focus on God's active presence, self-revelation, power, authority, and ongoing involvement in history.³⁰ He is the living God in the sense that he actively intervenes for his people. He delivers (v. 37) and saves (v. 47) his people, and hands their enemies over to them (vv. 46–47). He is a mighty warrior king, who is “the LORD OF HOSTS, THE GOD OF THE ARMIES OF ISRAEL” (v. 45). The title “Lord of Hosts” in this context depicts Yahweh as the one who leads his “hosts” (here the Israelite army) into battle. He is the invincible warrior who determines the battle's outcome regardless of how well equipped the combatants may be (v. 47).³¹

1 Samuel 18—2 Samuel 1

This next lengthy major literary unit tells how Saul tried to kill David, forcing David to flee from his homeland and live as an exile. The unit ends with the tragic death of Saul, which paves the way for David to occupy the throne of Israel. Throughout this section, the narrator develops his primary agenda of demonstrating that David, the newly chosen one, was superior to Saul, the rejected one, and that David did not conspire to steal the throne from Saul.

Yahweh's enabling and protective presence is a prominent theme. For example, Jonathan recalled how David had risked his life against the Philistine and Yahweh had given Israel a great victory (19:5). He also anticipated that Yahweh would cut off David's enemies (20:15–16) and make him king (23:16). Saul even acknowledged David's destiny (24:20), as did Abigail (25:28–31). David praised Yahweh for keeping him from doing wrong (25:32–34, 39–40), and reminded his men that Yahweh had protected them from their enemies (30:23). While the narrator uses quotations throughout

²⁹Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 200.

³⁰For a helpful study of this title, see Trygve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (tr. F. Cryer; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 82–91. He concludes that this title “demarcated Israelite thought from the conception of a dying and rising god whose cyclical biography reflected the vegetational seasons, and which was ubiquitous in Israel's surroundings. The characterization of YHWH as ‘the living God’ does not signify that fertility and agricultural abundance were his preeminent manifestations. Rather, the field of expression of ‘the living God’ was history” (pp. 90–91).

³¹David's viewpoint is not unique in its ancient Near Eastern context. Though well equipped with chariots and weapons, Assyrian kings emphasized that victory came from their gods and criticized enemy kings for placing their confidence in their weapons. See Samuel A. Meier, “The Sword: From Saul to David,” in *Saul in Story and Tradition*, ed. C. S. Ehrlich and M. C. White (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 170.

this section to develop literary themes, there are relatively few theological statements comparable to the ones seen in 1 Samuel 1-17. One such statement appears in 26:23, where David, having again spared Saul's life, stated: "The LORD repays every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness" (author's translation).³² This reward motif is a prominent theological theme in David's song of thanks in the epilogue of 1-2 Samuel (2 Sam 22:21, 25).

A noteworthy feature of this literary unit is the narrator's use of what could be termed "counter-theological statements." At least twice a character makes a statement that is clearly false and runs counter to the theological themes the narrator highlights. These statements serve as foils to the narrator's theology. For example, when David was running from Saul, he was delighted when he discovered that Goliath's sword was available to him. He even said: "There is none like it" (21:9). His attitude toward swords had certainly changed. When he faced Goliath, he remembered how Yahweh had delivered him in the past (17:37) and courageously challenged the Philistine, announcing that Yahweh does not deliver by "sword and spear" (17:47). But now David, overcome by panic and fear, asked for "a spear or a sword" (21:8). He jumped at the opportunity to take Goliath's sword, declaring it to be an incomparable weapon (v. 9), and then went to Gath to seek security from his enemies (v. 10). It was as if David had become Goliath, armed with his sword and going to his hometown. David's language is ironic, for the only previous use of this precise idiom "there is none like" in 1 Samuel is when the people cried out regarding Saul, "there is no one like him" (10:24). Their vision was shortsighted and so was David's on this occasion. But this will change in 2 Sam 7:22, when David declares that "there is none like" Yahweh.

Another counter-theological statement comes from Saul in 23:7: "God has delivered him [David] into my hand." Saul believed that divine providence was working to his advantage, rather than David's. He based this on the wrong assumption that David had acted unwisely in taking refuge in a walled town. But his statement is clearly wrong, given Yahweh's assuring words (23:4) and protective oracle (23:11-12) to David.

2 Samuel 2-10

In this next section we read of David's rise to the throne of Israel, Yahweh's covenant with him, and his great military successes. David spoke of Yahweh's intervention on his behalf (4:9; 5:20) and of his election as Yahweh's king (6:21). The most theologically significant passage in this section is 2 Samuel 7, where Yahweh recalled his choice of David to be king and promised him an enduring dynasty that would be sustained by his divine loyal

³²The NKJV translation, "May the Lord repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness," understands the verb "repay" as a jussive (prayer), but the Hebrew prefixed verb is a distinctive long form, indicating it is imperfect. In this context, David appears to be stating a general truth. See Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 280. For this reason, it may be labeled theological, for it expresses a fact about Yahweh's self-revealed character.

love.³³ Yahweh made it clear that his ultimate purpose in choosing David was to make his covenant nation secure (7:10). In his response, David reiterated Yahweh's commitment to his covenant nation (7:23-24).³⁴ He also affirmed Yahweh's incomparability (7:22; note the contrast with 1 Sam 21:9) and the reliability of his promises (7:28).³⁵ Yahweh's incomparability is a foundational theme in 1-2 Samuel, expressed by both Hannah and David in their songs of thanks that bracket the Books of Samuel (see 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 22:32).

2 Samuel 11-20

The last major literary unit before the epilogue tells the tragic story of David's sin and how it seemingly jeopardized his rule and led to civil war in Israel. The story records the outworking of David's self-incriminating pronouncement of judgment (12:5-6) and of Nathan's judgment speech (12:7-14).

Perhaps the clearest theological statements are those made by David as he came to grips with the reality of divine discipline in his life. In 15:25, he told Zadok: "If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place." Later, when Shimei cursed him, David told his men: "Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day" (16:11-12).

David realized that he was being punished for his earlier crimes. His own son was seeking his life and David suspected that Yahweh had prompted Shimei to utter his curse. He must accept what this enemy was dishing out as part of Yahweh's discipline. This did not mean that David agreed with Shimei's accusation, but he was willing to accept such unjust treatment as coming from the hand of Yahweh. Actually, if the curse failed to materialize, David's innocence regarding Saul and his family would be proven, so David was willing to suffer this indignity in the meantime. David realized that Yahweh is merciful, even in the midst of dishing out punishment. After all, following the death of his infant son as punishment for his crimes, Yahweh had given him a child and named him Jedidiah as a sign of his special favor (12:24-25). David hoped that Yahweh would take notice of his suffering and

³³As Bergen ("Authorial Intent and the Spoken Word," 368) points out, 2 Sam 7:4-16, which contains 197 words, "is the longest quote by the highest-ranking character [Yahweh himself] within the United Monarchy narratives." He adds: "Discourse criticism suggests that among the propositions expressed through the medium of attributed quotations, those most central to the author's concerns are found here." Bergen points to several stylistic features that highlight the speech's special prominence (pp. 368-69).

³⁴As Bergen's chart shows ("Authorial Intent and the Spoken Word," 367), 2 Sam 7:18-29 is the second longest quotation from David in the United Monarchy narratives (198 words). The longest is 2 Samuel 22.

³⁵The prefixed verbal form is ambiguous; it can be taken as jussive, "may your words be true," or as imperfect, "your words are/will be true." If the form is jussive here, then the statement is a prayer, not a theological generalization. I understand the form as imperfect, indicating an affirmation in conjunction with the preceding assertion, "you are he, the God" (author's translation).

grant him favor in the face of Shimei's curse.³⁶ The failure of the curse to materialize indicates it is another example of a counter-theological statement, used as a foil to the narrator's message (see above).

Two other counter-theological statements appear in this section. Following Uriah's death in battle, David assured Joab: "Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another." (11:25). David's exhortation reads literally, "Let not this thing be evil in your eyes." A rare theological statement by the narrator counters it: "But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD" (11:27; literally, "the thing which David had done was evil in the eyes of the LORD"). Yahweh's words to David through Nathan bring out the full implications of what David had done: "Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? [literally, "eyes"]?" (12:9) The verb translated, "despised," also appears in 1 Sam 2:30 in Yahweh's denunciation of Eli: "those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." Nathan charged David with treating Yahweh with contempt (12:14).³⁷

Another counter-theological statement appears in 14:14, where Joab, speaking through the woman of Tekoa, made this statement: "But God does not take away life; instead he devises ways for the banished to be restored." Joab was trying to convince David to show leniency to the murderer Absalom (as David had already shown to Joab, the murderer of Abner). He pointed out that death is inevitable for all (as the death of Amnon illustrated), but argued that God is not in the business of taking away life. On the contrary, Joab claimed, God devises ways to reconcile to himself those who have been banished. One cannot help but think of David's experience. Despite his capital crimes, God forgave his sin and allowed him to retain his position as king. There is, of course, truth in what Joab claimed. Indeed, the Lord declared to Ezekiel: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek 33:11). He is predisposed to save, not destroy.

³⁶The Hebrew text in 2 Sam 16:12 reads "(will see) my iniquity," probably referring to "iniquity done [by Shimei] against me." A marginal reading in the Hebrew text has "my eye," perhaps meaning "my tears." However, some Hebrew manuscripts and ancient versions read "my suffering," (cf. NIV, "my distress") which makes better sense. In Hebrew the forms "my iniquity," "my eye," and "my suffering" are almost identical in spelling. David was not so much hoping for divine justice as he was for divine mercy.

³⁷The Hebrew text reads, "You have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt." However, the Hebrew verbal form elsewhere means, "to treat with contempt," not "make someone else treat with contempt" (Num 14:11, 23; 16:30; Deut 31:20; 1 Sam 2:17; Pss 10:3, 13; 74:10, 18; Isa 5:24; 60:14; Jer 23:17). "Enemies," which appears in the Hebrew text as the object of the verb, is a euphemistic scribal addition made out of respect for David. See P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1984), 296. (A Qumran text has "the word of the Lord" as the object.) There is an echo of the narrator's description of Eli's sons, who treated the Lord's offering with contempt (1 Sam 2:17). The charge of treating the Lord with contempt is serious, for elsewhere those who do so are evil enemies of God (Pss 10:3, 13; 74:10, 18; Isa 1:4) and receive severe punishment (Num 14:23; 16:30).

But the issue was not this simple. As Hannah declared, “The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up” (1 Sam 2:6). God does not automatically restore the banished. As he made clear to Ezekiel, he restores those who repent and turn from their wicked ways. Divine leniency was extended to David in part because he confessed his sin (2 Sam 12:13) and did so, unlike Saul, without trying first to deny or justify his behavior (1 Sam 13:11-12; 15:13-25). Furthermore, his subsequent behavior, while plagued by weakness at times, was consistent with his confession of sin and demonstrated genuine humility before God (see 2 Sam 15:25, 31; 16:11-12; 19:23). But in the case of Joab and Absalom there was no remorse, only a continuation and escalation of their self-serving, murderous behavior. As the Teacher says, there is “a time to kill and a time to heal” (Eccl 3:3), and it takes wisdom to know which one is appropriate in any given case. David made the wrong choice with Absalom, just as he had with Joab, and would live to regret it.

2 Samuel 21-24

The epilogue to 1-2 Samuel is arranged in a mirror structure, where the elements in the second half of the literary unit thematically correspond to those of the first half, but in reverse order, creating a mirror effect:³⁸

- A Saul’s sin and its atonement: David as royal judge (21:1-14)
- B The mighty deeds of David’s men (21:15-22)
- C David’s song of thanks (22:1-51)
- C’ David’s final words (23:1-7)
- B’ The mighty deeds of David’s men (23:8-39)
- A’ David’s sin and its atonement: David as royal priest (24:1-25)

The structure of the appendix corresponds to the course of David’s career as it unfolds in 1-2 Samuel.³⁹ Section A (21:1-14), with its contrast between David and Saul, supplements 1 Samuel 15—2 Samuel 4, which demonstrates that David, not Saul, was the rightful king of Israel and that David was not responsible for the death of Saul and his descendants. On the contrary, David always sought to honor Saul and his family. Sections B (21:15-22) and B’ (23:8-39) correspond to 2 Samuel 5-10, which describe

³⁸Several interpreters have recognized this structure. For a summary and bibliography, see Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 616, to which should be added, Herbert H. Klement, *II Samuel 21-24: Context, Structure, and Meaning in the Samuel Conclusion* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

³⁹Firth (*1 & 2 Samuel*, 502-03) sees the section as mirroring the literary unit 2 Sam 5:17—8:14, whereas I see the conclusion mirroring David’s entire career.

David's military victories. Section A' (24:1-25) is thematically parallel to 2 Samuel 11-20, which describes David's moral failure and punishment. Sections C (22:1-51) and C' (23:1-7) are poetic texts that give a theological commentary on the career of David.⁴⁰

These Davidic poems are a rich source for the theology of 1-2 Samuel. The major theme of the song (2 Samuel 22) is Yahweh's protection and deliverance.⁴¹ David opens the song by using nine different metaphors to assert that Yahweh is his protector and savior (vv. 2-3). In both the middle of and conclusion to the song, he again calls Yahweh his "rock" (or rocky cliff, vv. 32, 47). The song is filled with the vocabulary of protection and deliverance. David recalls that when he cried for help he was "saved" from his enemies (v. 4). Yahweh pulled him from the raging waters (v. 17) and "delivered" him from his powerful foes (v. 18). He led David into a "broad place" as he "delivered" him (v. 20). Yahweh characteristically saves the humble (v. 28) and is a "shield to all who trust in Him" (v. 31, cf. v. 3). Prior to battle Yahweh gave him a protective shield (v. 36; literally, "shield of salvation"). While David's enemies had no one to save them (v. 42), he experienced Yahweh's deliverance to the fullest extent (vv. 44, 47, 49, 51).

Another prominent theme in the song is Yahweh's supernatural enablement. Using hyperbole in some cases, David tells how he charged the enemy and even leaped over a wall with Yahweh's help (v. 30). Yahweh strengthened him (v. 40), giving him ability and skill (vv. 34-37) so that he was able to annihilate his enemies on the field of battle without stumbling (vv. 38-43). Yahweh elevated David to a position of kingship over nations, some of which had not yet recognized the authority of Israel (vv. 44-46, 48).

Because of Yahweh's mighty acts on his behalf, David was convinced that Yahweh is the incomparable king over all nations. He demonstrates his living presence by exercising his saving power on behalf of his people (v. 47). No other so-called god can begin to match his protective power (v. 32). In the thick of the battle, Yahweh saves; other gods do not (v. 42). Yahweh is the "Most High" and exercises control over even the raging waters of chaos (vv. 14-16). As ruler of the nations, he deserves their recognition and worship (v. 50). He controls the storm and uses it to subdue his enemies, including death

⁴⁰For an insightful study of how the material in the epilogue relates to the depiction of David's career given in the preceding narrative, see Philip E. Satterthwaite, "David in the Books of Samuel: A Messianic Hope?" in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess, and G. J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 41-65. He contends correctly that there is ambiguity and tension in the narrative of David's career and in the epilogue: "David as king has fallen short of the ideal represented by" the poetic texts in 1 Sam 2:1-10; 2 Samuel 22; and 2 Sam 23:1-7 and "has been subject to God's judgment." He adds, "The ideal remains intact, but the tension between David's Thanksgiving/David's Last Words and the preceding narrative remains unresolved" (p. 64).

⁴¹Regarding the song, Bergen ("Authorial Intent and the Spoken Word," 374) observes, "this quotation qualifies as the most prominent quotation attributed to a king. Its placement in the mouth of David, the central human figure of the narrative accounts of the United Monarchy, and its length (365 words) are sufficient to suggest its author-intended centrality."

itself (vv. 5-20).

On the basis of his experience, David also asserts that Yahweh is just and faithful. His assurances of victory are reliable (v. 31) and he keeps his covenant promises to his chosen servants (v. 51). He rewards those who are loyal and obedient (vv. 21-27a), but opposes the wicked (v. 27b). In fact, his actions toward an individual are a mirror image of that person's deeds. Loyal followers find God to be faithful in his dealings with them. Wicked and deceptive rebels, who oppose divine authority and seek to destroy others, find Yahweh to be a resolute and dangerous opponent who frustrates and reverses their efforts and is not beyond using deceptive methods of his own to bring about their demise (v. 27b).

The shorter poem in 23:1-7 makes an important theological contribution as well. Yahweh had chosen David to embody the Deuteronomic ideal of kingship (Deut 17:14-20). He was to promote righteousness, to fear Yahweh, and in so doing be an instrument of divine blessing for his people (23:3-4). At the same time, David could take confidence in his covenantal relationship with Yahweh, knowing that the divine promises had been formalized and secured (v. 5a). Consequently, David could expect to experience divine protection and blessing (v. 5b) and to see the demise of evil rebels (vv. 6-7). So, in short, the Davidic covenant demanded that the chosen king promote God's moral standard, and also guaranteed that obedience would be rewarded.

The two poems in the epilogue combine with Hannah's song of thanks (1 Sam 2:1-10) to form a theological framework for 1-2 Samuel. Several themes appear in both poems.⁴² Yahweh is the incomparable sovereign protector of his people (1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 22:32; 23:30) who rules the world with absolute justice, bringing low his proud enemies and exalting his humble servants (1 Sam 2:3-10; 2 Sam 22:21-28). He appears in royal theophanic splendor to bring deliverance to his servants, particularly his chosen king (1 Sam 2:10; 2 Sam 22:4-20).

Hannah, viewing her experience as typical, anticipated what Yahweh would do for Israel. Keil explains:

The experience which she, bowed down and oppressed as she was, had had of the gracious government of the omniscient and holy covenant God, was a pledge to her of the gracious way in which the nation itself was led by God, and a sign by which she discerned how God . . . would also lift up and glorify his whole nation, which was at that time so deeply bowed down and oppressed by its foes. Acquainted as she was with the destination of Israel to be a *kingdom* . . . she could see in spirit, and through the

⁴²Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 272- 274. For a survey of how others (Brueggemann, Polzin) have further developed Childs' proposal, see Randall C. Bailey, "The Redemption of YHWH: A Literary Critical Function of the Songs of Hannah and David," *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1995): 215-17.

inspiration of God, the *king* whom the Lord was about to give to his people, and through whom He would raise it up to might and dominion."⁴³

David, at the end of his life, looked back on his experience and saw the fulfillment of Hannah's expectation. Yahweh had raised David and Israel to great heights (see especially 2 Sam 22:44-46), guaranteeing the future realization of his covenant promise (2 Sam 22:51; 23:5-7), which would bring with it security and prosperity for his people (see 2 Sam 7:9-10, 22-24).

Synthesis

To return to our original agenda, what does Yahweh's self-revelation, as recorded in 1-2 Samuel, reveal about his character? What does Yahweh expect from his people? How should they respond to him?

As seen above in our comparison of their songs of thanks, the books' two primary human voices, Hannah and David, both recipients of Yahweh's deliverance, speak in unison. They affirm that Yahweh is incomparable, sovereign over life and death, just in his dealings, and a mighty warrior who controls the elements of the storm. Furthermore, the warriors Jonathan and David recognize that Yahweh alone determines the outcome of the battle. Soldiers and weapons have no impact on the outcome when Yahweh is involved (1 Sam 14:6; 17:47).

Yahweh is deserving of and demands honor. He honors those who trust in him and serve him faithfully (1 Sam 2:30; 6:5). These are the ones who experience his deliverance and are rewarded for their integrity (1 Sam 7:3; 12:20, 24; 26:23). Yahweh looks at the heart when choosing his servants, not at outward appearances (1 Sam 16:7). Loyal obedience gets priority over ritual with Yahweh (1 Sam 15:22). Those who despise Yahweh and his word suffer severe consequences (1 Sam 2:30; 15:23, 26; 2 Sam 12:9, 14). In the case of Eli and Saul, Yahweh irrevocably removed his blessing and promise (1 Sam 3:14; 15:29). In the case of David, to whom Yahweh had made an enduring promise, Yahweh subjected his servant to severe discipline. The proper response in this case was humble submission (2 Sam 15:25; 16:11-12).

In our survey, we encountered several counter-theological statements. In some cases, such statements reflected a purely human perspective that ignored the reality of Yahweh's power to save (1 Sam 21:9) or his commitment to justice (2 Sam 11:25). In other cases, enemies of David wrongly thought that Yahweh's providence or justice was working for them (1 Sam 23:7; 2 Sam 16:8), or a self-serving murderer misapplied the truth of Yahweh's commitment to redeem the banished (2 Sam 14:14). It is sobering to see self-serving individuals misuse theology by misinterpreting Yahweh's providence, justice, and mercy. But it is even more sobering that David, one

⁴³C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, BCOT (reprinted ed.; tr. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 29.

of the primary theological voices in 1-2 Samuel, denied, at a practical level, Yahweh's saving power and justice when blinded by fear. Like sinking Peter when he attempted to walk on the water, David's failure reminds and warns the people of God to keep their eyes firmly fixed on the incomparable God, the warrior-King whose sovereign power is their sole source of security.

The Reef of Biblical Theology: A Method for Doing Biblical Theology that Makes Sense for Wisdom Literature¹

Douglas Kennard
Professor of New Testament
Houston Graduate School of Theology
Houston, TX
dkennard@hgst.edu

Introduction

Biblical theology may be defined *as that branch of theological science which organizes in respect to proposition, form, symbol, and emphasis the historically conditioned progress of the Divine revelation about God and His creation as deposited in the Bible*. The reef for Biblical theology is the wisdom literature of the Bible because it does not fit in the broad frameworks of the rest of the Bible.

This article places wisdom in its ancient Near Eastern perspective and then unpacks several features of this Biblical theology methodology by illustrating them through this Old Testament wisdom. Ultimately, the chapter places a Biblical theology of Old Testament wisdom within the overarching Old Testament Biblical theology strategy. It is at this point, if not before, that most of the Old Testament Biblical theologies hit the reef of wisdom literature. There are many Titanics and lesser yawls strewn on the ocean floor around this reef. However, there is one clear passage through this reef and that is with critical realism surfacing creation theology, so this creation theology will be developed to position the wisdom program within. Examples of the theological contribution will be developed within this framework.

Old Testament Wisdom within its Ancient Near Eastern Perspective

The wisdom books do not seem to fit within the dominant Old Testament covenant strategy for Israel, as do the Law and the Prophets. W. G. Lambert reminds us that the piety of wisdom “is completely detached from the law and ritual, which gives it a distinctive place in the Hebrew Bible.”² As the covenant strategy moves from the covenant grants of Noahic and

¹This article draws from chapter six in Douglas Kennard, *A Critical Realist Theological Method: Returning to the Bible and Biblical Theology to be the Framer for Theology and Science*. CORE Issues in Creation, vol. 6 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

²W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 1.

Abrahamic to the suzerainty treaty of the Mosaic covenant, much more than simply revealing God is at stake for Biblical theology. The covenant grants champion reassuring blessings which set the mindset, hopes and destinies of those so blessed. These covenants also surface obligation as Abraham circumcises his family (Gen 17). However, the suzerainty treaty of the Mosaic covenant is laden with stipulation as tied to blessing or curse (especially in Deut 28–30). However, this suzerainty covenant strategy is very foreign to the focus of Old Testament wisdom. While the wisdom psalms and second Temple Jewish religious texts refer to the Mosaic covenant strategy as *torah* to inform them and direct the meditation of the wise people (e.g., Pss 1:2; 37:31),³ there is no indication that the Old Testament wisdom books themselves are positioned conceptually within the Mosaic covenant. For example, the use of *berit* or covenant within wisdom is best seen as referring to other kinds of relationships, like the marriage covenant that an adulteress spurns even though it is from God (Prov 2:17). Eliphaz uses *berit* as a metaphor of peace in a synonymous parallel relationship to *shalom* (Job 5:23). Job confesses that he has covenanted with his eyes not to gaze on a virgin in lust (Job 31:1). God also barrages Job with questions like, “Will you covenant with Leviathan to make him your servant?” (Job 41:4). Furthermore, *torah* in Job is a reference from Eliphaz that his own instruction is viewed by him as God’s (Job 22:22). However, the dominant pattern of *torah* in Proverbs is that of parental instruction, that especially a boy’s father tells his son, and the son must obey (Prov 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20, 23; 7:2; 23:14; 28:4, 7, 9; 29:18; 31:26).⁴ This of course positions Proverbs as within the emphasis of ancient Near East wisdom as it communicates broadly known instruction of how creation works communicated from father to son.⁵ Attempts (like Eichrodt’s *Theology of the Old Testament* and others) to capture the whole theology of the Old Testament under the rubric of covenant are doomed to fail by the reef of wisdom literature, at least in regard to wisdom’s place and contribution.

³E.g., Ben Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon.

⁴Hassell Bullock has produced a nice volume in *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988) but he alludes to overlapping and borrowing of wisdom from Law (31), and in two Evangelical Theological Society papers he defends this view. He seems to follow Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1962), I:433–34, and R. B. Y. Scott, “Priesthood, Prophecy, Wisdom, and the Knowledge of God,” *JBL* 80 (1961): 1–15 in this view. However, the evidence of these terms in the wisdom books contexts seems to go otherwise than to connect wisdom with Law. Wisdom and Law only seem to get connected in Psalms 1, 19, 111, and 119, and the second Temple works of Ben Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon, showing that wisdom and Law are not opposed to each other, even though neither seems to show evidence of being dependent on the other. Within the New Testament, wisdom and Law are intimately connected in the ministries of Jesus as sage and new Moses, and echoed in wisdom books like James. All this shows that wisdom and Law are harmonious but are grounded in different strategies.

⁵The forum of wisdom being communicated in the ancient Near East as from father to son is broadly exemplified by the following few samples: *Sumerian Instructions of Suruppak*, *Babylonian Counsels of Wisdom*, *Ugaritic Counsels of Shubeawilum*, *Egyptian Instruction of Merikare*, *Instruction of Ptahhotep*, and *Instruction of Any*.

The strategy of ancient Near Eastern wisdom draws upon the common wisdom available from observing the way creation works. For example, the Egyptian *Instruction of Amenemope*⁶ gives thirty chapters for well-being with many close parallels with Proverbs 22:17–24:22. Additionally, Westermann in *Roots of Wisdom* makes nice comparisons with this broad wisdom tradition.⁷ Michael Fox summarizes this ancient Near East wisdom context as follows:

The similarities in form and content between Israelite and Egyptian didactic wisdom literature have been so well established that there can be no doubt that Israelite Wisdom is part of an international genre (which includes Mesopotamian wisdom) and cannot be properly studied in isolation.⁸

However, the similarities penetrate deeper than structure to the fundamental concepts. For example, Crenshaw develops the foundational role for justice in wisdom literature:

The fundamental concept which underlies these instructions is *ma'at*, which may be translated as justice, order, truth. No distinction exists between secular and religious truth for this literature. God's will can be read from the natural order, social relations and political events. Life in accordance with the principle of order paid off in tangible blessings, just as conduct at variance with *ma'at* brought adversity.⁹

Some of the characteristics of the wise individual are good skills, manners and speech coupled with the discretion of when to be silent and listen.

Similarities extend to narrative wisdom as well. For example, Job has slight similarities to the Indian legend of Haris-candra in *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna*, though Haris-candra brings his sufferings upon himself by giving his wealth away, while Job is struck down by the sovereignty of God and the adversary in His court.¹⁰ The Ugaritic *Story of Keret* affirms the retribution principle¹¹ by following the placating of the gods through ritual prayers which Job's counselors encourage (e.g., Job 11). The use of speeches and ap-

⁶James Roger Black, *The Instruction of Amenemope: A Critical Edition and Commentary Prolegomenon and Prologue* (OCLC, 2002).

⁷Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1990), esp., 140–164.

⁸Michael Fox, "Two Decades of Research in Egyptian Wisdom Literature," *ZAS* 107(1980): 120.

⁹James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 214.

¹⁰F. E. Pargiter, *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna* (Delhi: Indological Book House, 1969).

¹¹A nice discussion of the retribution principle and its corollaries is carried on by John Walton in *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 179–89.

peals in the course of narrative wisdom is common in Job, *The Babylonian Theodicy*,¹² and the Egyptian *The Protest of the Eloquent Peasant*.¹³ Even Qoheleth has a high degree of similarity to Babylonian *Dialogue of Pessimism*¹⁴ and Egyptian works, like *The Harper's Song* and *The Dispute Between a Man and His Ba (soul)*.¹⁵ This does not require that everything is the same in these expressions of wisdom. Karel van der Toorn reminds us that the antithetic mode of expression between wise and fool is most emphasized within Hebrew wisdom and largely absent from Mesopotamian and Ugaritic wisdom.¹⁶

Even Song of Songs has some parallels in the ancient Near Eastern love poetry. There are six songs that describe the Sumerian love song of the shepherd-king Dumuzi and five of them describe the marriage and love play as it attempts to insure the fertility of the land. This narrative approach to love songs is loosely parallel to the narrative approach of the Song of Songs as it works up to the joys of procession, celebration and love making of marriage in chapters 3–4. The descriptive song form with its praise of the beloved in anatomical praise, admiration of beauty and in admiration dialog common in Egyptian psalms 31 and 54 sensitize the interpreter of Songs of Songs to the value of the lovers' praise of each other.¹⁷ Perhaps the Egyptian patterns of *Paraclisithyron* in which the lover is at his mistress's door is loosely parallel to Song of Songs chapter 5. John Walton reminds us that like other wisdom literature, this genre also fits into the broad wisdom pattern.

In every other genre, the greatest differences have been seen when Israelite beliefs about YHWH and her monotheistic faith enter the picture. In a work like Song of Songs, that never happens. Fox insists with good reason that this is secular literature (as opposed to the literature of the Sacred Marriage Rite that was used in cultic performances). Without the element of monotheism or the perception of deity being involved, we would expect that Israelite literature would look like any other literature in the ancient Near East, and indeed, that seems to be the case here.¹⁸ Thus, the import of the Song of Songs as contained in the canon is to affirm that the believer can engage in intimate love making with all its joys as the unbeliever can, espe-

¹²W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 68–69; James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 438–40, 601–4.

¹³Foster, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

¹⁴Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 142; Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 437–38.

¹⁵Foster, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*.

¹⁶Karel van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), 101.

¹⁷Michael Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: U. of Wisconsin, 1985), 271. Fox also translates the Egyptian love songs alluded to in the manuscript above. Cf. Louis Cohn-Haft, *Source Readings in Ancient History: The Ancient Near East and Greece* (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1965), 140–48.

¹⁸Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context*, 191–92.

cially if Song of Songs 5:1c is God's voice, "Eat, friends; drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers."

There are, however, clear differences with the Biblical wisdom when compared to the broader ancient Near Eastern wisdom. A clear example of the difference is seen in the absence from Song of Songs of those things so common among other ancient Near Eastern love poetry like cultic practices, gods, personified nature, drunkenness, lust, seduction, faithlessness, and jealousy. Unlike other ancient Near Eastern wisdom, Qoheleth incorporates occasional vertical refrains of God's generosity (Eccl 2:24–26; 3:12–15, 22; 7:14; 8:15; 12:9–14) amid the common cynical human perspective "under the sun." In the eighties, the upbeat refrains were emphasized in Biblical theology but as post-modernism continues to develop, the pessimism of the vanity of vanities tends to predominate contemporary Biblical theology of Qoheleth.¹⁹ Likewise, in the book of Job, *El Shadday's* dominance of the created order to overwhelm the retribution principle sets the book of Job apart as superior to other ancient Near Eastern theodicy texts. Of all the Old Testament wisdom texts, Proverbs is actually the closest parallel, but even here there is a greater emphasis of an orientation toward God than other ancient Near Eastern wisdom's nearly exclusive social orientation. This means that if we are to do a Biblical theology of Old Testament wisdom, then we must see a clear difference that the Biblical canonical context brings rather than identifying Biblical wisdom as identical to ancient Near Eastern wisdom.²⁰ That which is distinctive of Biblical wisdom needs to shine through in a Biblical theology.

Biblical

Biblical theology must first be biblical. Its source material is God's revelation as contained in the Christian canon. It is not the beliefs and practices of men described in or built upon the Bible, though it fully envisions the Bible as within its historical and cultural context. It is then a text-based theology inductively reflective of the Christian canonical text. It is the correlation of the exegesis of the Biblical text, not that which may predate or grow from the text.

Tradition Versus Scripture

One of the major debates still raging is whether the primary theological emphasis should be placed on the tradition *process* or on the final *result* of this process.²¹

¹⁹This point is illustrated in some of the recent works that show increasing effect of post-modernism such as Michael Fox, *A Time to Tear Down & A Time to Build Up* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) in contrast to Michael Fox, *Qoheleth and His Contradictions* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989). Cf. William Anderson, *Qoheleth and Its Pessimistic Theology: Hermeneutical Struggles in Wisdom Literature* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997).

²⁰Contrary to Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom*.

²¹Bernard Anderson, "Tradition and Scripture in the Community of Faith," *JBL* 100

Tradition history has been one avenue in which Biblical theology has been attempted. Von Rad's Biblical theology had to do with the history of the transmission of traditions antedating the Biblical texts in their final form. His point was that at whatever level of tradition was chosen, Biblical theology was characteristically descriptive, "retelling" the story. For him, "event has priority over logos."²² Traditio-historical theologians go even further than von Rad by emphasizing in the process of the transmission of traditions. In this process, people in a community on the move cope with the needs of their life situation, by searching for understanding of their identity and the identity of God.²³ Claus Westermann endeavors to penetrate behind the Biblical texts in order to perceive the lively process through which the community's wisdom statements develop.²⁴ This entire heritage is then related to contemporary experience to help a person understand where he fits in this same unfolding process today.²⁵ Under this view, the Biblical text becomes merely one snapshot among the myriads of slices of the history of theological views. Depending on how the text gets into its finished authorial form, this snapshot is either in Solomon's day or during the Babylonian captivity, if approached from a critical perspective. After becoming aware of the critical issues, there is a place for becoming post-critical and approaching the text with a new naiveté that appreciates claims for authorship that the text actually makes of itself, like the text substantially coming from Solomon's hand (Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1; Eccl 1:1, 12; maybe 12:9; Song 1:1; 1 Kgs 4:32). This orientation of authorship also connects Biblical theology to a historical-cultural context that now surrounds the narrative or other genre so that the interpreter does not allow the text to float freely in an a-historical manner.

Brevard Childs points out that one of the crises for the Biblical theology movement was "its failure to take the Biblical text seriously in its canonical form."²⁶ Sailhamer argued at length for finding the meaning in the text and not in the historical events behind the text.²⁷ Even though there is

(1981): 7. Westermann's *Roots of Wisdom* provides a good example of exploring the process which is valuable but not really Biblical theology.

²²Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:116.

²³James Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of the Canon," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas A. Knight (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1977), 531-60; and James Sanders, "Biblical Criticism and the Bible as Canon," *USQR* 32 (1977): 157-65.

²⁴Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom*.

²⁵R. E. Clements, *Wisdom in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) which is a publication of the Didsbury Lectures delivered at the British Isles Nazarene College, Manchester. This volume is a nice presentation of Hebrew wisdom heritage particularly slanted for applicability today.

²⁶Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crises* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 52, 102. However, Childs' *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1992) develops a Christian canonical strategy which opens the Old Testament texts up to unhelpful influence by reading New Testament texts back into them.

²⁷John Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 36-85. Unfortunately, Sailhamer's canonical strategy flattens the

development which lies behind the formation of canon, the focus of Biblical theology must be on the Bible if it is properly to be termed Biblical. Thus, the primary source for Biblical theology is resident *in* the words of the text, not *behind* the words in some event or “original meaning” antedating the text. Only when the Bible is valued as the source for Biblical theology is there proper recognition of the inspiration of Scripture. As such, each of the wisdom books as a whole will be explored as unified authorial projects available for literary criticism and genre study together rather than in fragmented ways. Part of the important contribution to the Biblical theology has then to identify what each part is doing within the whole. For example, the counselors of Job cannot be accepted as saying the truth of the matter in the whole account which has their counsel changing and God finally pointing out that they spoke in error. However, we know that Childs takes this canonical perspective to the completion of the canon, including the New Testament. This later perspective radically shifts the context from the authorial context to another author’s context, like Paul or John’s. A number of authors extend this even further to reading the Biblical text and its theology out of a Christian traditional systematic theology perspective.²⁸ These approaches distance the text under consideration from its own context (in which its genre makes a great deal of sense) and reframe it within a much later context that has no parallels within its genre. Better to let each of these books make their contribution in the context out of which they emerge. That is, this approach preserves within which these texts emerge rather than loose or confuse the distinctive of each text in its own context.

Historical-Cultural Context

The Bible when properly viewed is within a historical context of author and recipients. Krister Stendahl calls us to the historical-cultural context. He writes,

The task of biblical studies, even of biblical theology, is to *describe*, to relive and relate in the terms and the presuppositions of the period of the texts what they meant to their authors and their contemporaries. To furnish the original.²⁹

Biblical texts were written to address historical-cultural issues through the use of genres which made sense in their context. Brevard Childs sum-

progression of Old Testament texts by allowing for continuing textual development of early Mosaic texts until the Babylonian captivity.

²⁸Examples of this approach are a number of authors in *Between Two Horizons*, ed. Joel Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), especially Robert Wall, “Canonical Context and Canonical Conversations,” 165–82, and Trevor Hart, “Tradition, Authority, and a Christian Approach to the Bible as Scripture,” 183–204.

²⁹Krister Stendahl, “Implications of Form-Criticism and Tradition-Criticism for Biblical Interpretation,” *JBL* 77(1958): 38.

marizes the Biblical theology movement's view of the relation of the Bible to its environment as follows:

The Bible reflects the influence of its environment both in terms of its form and content, and therefore cannot be understood apart from the study of its common Near Eastern background. Yet in spite of its appropriations the Bible has used these common elements in a way that is totally distinct and unique from its environment.³⁰

The Bible utilizes concept and writing style to communicate with the people who were familiar with them. So in an ancient Near Eastern context the Song of Songs is seen as love poetry celebrating love within marriage and the cultivation of this love in spite of the difficulties. It should not be ripped from its context to be reinterpreted as a metaphor of God's love for Israel or the church, even if such ideas were helpful to get this steamy text accepted as within the canon in the first place. It is not as though all pagan thought or worldviews are brought within the framework of the Bible by our recognition that familiar genres are utilized. In fact, I previously acknowledged the absence from Song of Songs of those things so common among other ancient Near Eastern love poetry like cultic practices, gods, personified nature, drunkenness, lust, seduction, faithlessness, and jealousy. These changes show that the Biblical books are appropriating contextual thought forms selectively for their author's purposes, not merely being reflective of their ancient Near Eastern context. Biblical theology must describe these authorial purposes as communicated within the text.

After the meaning is understood in its historical-cultural context then this meaning must be explicated for modern man. The goal of Biblical theology here is to explain clearly the meaning of the text with its authorial application as evident in the text. Issues addressed by the text need to carry their full ethical weight calling the continuation of the original audience to faith and repentance. The Bible does not describe sins and warnings merely to inform; it describes such things to change lives. However, if understanding has actually been obtained then it can and must be communicated across the historical-cultural barriers to modern man. Increased correspondence between the similarities of the original readers and the modern ones indicate an increased likelihood of the applicability of these ethical demands on the particular modern audience in question.³¹ So that part of Biblical theology is to retain the same level of authoritative exhortation for the corresponding audience being addressed by the text. Which audience for wisdom is the broad range of humanity within the creation order, so there is no exclusive

³⁰Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, 48.

³¹This process is explained and exemplified in Doug Kennard, *The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1999), 133–48, 184.

group like Israel or the church singled out for special instruction. Thus application is merely developing equivalence of the practice in the contemporary situation. For example, though there are few kings in today's context most of the proverbs concerning kings still carry applicational weight for those in authority. Like with all wisdom, if one finds a wise saying that informs one's context, it is not good enough to know it, one must think through how to implement this wisdom into life in a thoughtful manner.

Linguistic Context

Within this historical-cultural context one needs to approach Biblical theology with exegesis utilizing the full linguistic context. This linguistic context is first the grammatical arrangement of words within the propositions of the text. Exegesis is not a series of loosely knit words, which serve to set up word studies but rather the utilization of these words in relation to one another in the text. When a normal hermeneutic is applied to these propositions the messages of the respective segments can be obtained. In this, hermeneutics is a spiral within the authorial context, which oscillates between contextual overviews and textual particulars as it tries to clarify the meaning of the text.³² This is a critical realist approach to the text, inductively observing the particulars which the text presents. Such induction does not try to get behind the text as one might to bridge Lessing's ugly ditch and apologetically recover the historic Solomon. Instead, such induction is committed to recovering the accounts of wisdom themselves with their theological biases, and inductively understanding these texts from the thought forms which these authors portray.

These Biblical thought forms serve as an inductive base from which to implement a textually grounded pragmatism (as Charles Peirce located an empirically grounded pragmatism) fueling the hermeneutic spiral. That is, the overview generalizations such as context, narrative themes and Biblical theology which the interpreter proposes are funded by the textual particulars in the author's context and life. The fact that Biblical theology is a generalization and correlation of multiple texts means that it is our best attempt at representing what these texts say in their thought forms. We are not trying to get behind the text to something like Hirsch's authorial intent or post-structuralism's deep structures. These, in effect, are claiming to know something prior to the text, such as something in the author's mind. Philosophically, I do not think we can obtain anything authoritative prior to the text, and for Biblical theology, it is the Biblical text which has authority and is the means of providing warrant. This warrant begins with coherent statements of the Biblical theology to be represented, for one is not properly functioning if he believes contradictory statements. The warrant for the interpretation and Biblical theology is provided by correspondence to the

³²Cf. Kennard, *Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*, 124–33.

textual support. This correspondence compares one's interpretation to the text being interpreted. Such a correspondence should not be a naive opinion that one's interpretation is identical to the text as, say, a reader response or Gadamer's fusing horizons or postmodern Biblical theology³³ from each of our human existential contexts. The plausibility of this correspondence is increased by the interpretation's comprehensiveness and congruity to the textual data. The correlation of these messages together is the major ingredient for Biblical theology, which is a kind of Peircian pragmatic proposal that should be revisited for warranting and sharpening whenever appropriate textual information is found.

These propositions are united making up a larger order in the text. This order includes a logical order of argument through the book and matters of form. Matters of form are significant in two ways. First, propositions are arranged in ways meaningful within the historical-cultural context. These matters of form serve as the main arrangement of some books, such as the various forms of wisdom and love poetry. Secondly, literary style highlights certain features in the book. The logical order conveys meaning through the propositions but other vivid meaning is also conveyed through the metaphors and symbols.³⁴ The compelling vivid presentation of descriptions of the beloved in Song of Songs expresses the passion involved in the love making process which clearly goes beyond trying to inform an artist's description. Such symbol legitimates the passionate love speak that motivates lovers to give themselves to each other in ravishing feast. Here, textually vivid metaphors existentially connect with the reader as urged by Ricoeur's aesthetic hermeneutic, surfacing vivid existential connections with the text to enable the reader to appreciate how to read this genre.³⁵ Such an existential connection prompts a shared passion and motivation to understand the text and work it out into life. The goal of this kind of engagement is to surface and to retain this passion and motivation throughout the dissecting process of the levels of correspondence. Additionally, such existential connections prompt self-understandings and self-possibilities which naturally arise from a new naive reading of the text without tools of hermeneutical suspicion. Those self-understandings and self-possibilities which survive the process of warranting through correspondence need to be folded into the Biblical theology statement as well. The other self-understandings and self-possibilities which

³³Walter Brueggemann in his *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) intentionally positions himself as developing a postmodern Biblical theology and legitimating the variety of voices from within the text and from the contemporary context as expressing intriguing testimonials of what is significant in Biblical theology. However, I think that many of the sage voices have been silenced by him to limit wisdom's contribution to theodicy and as a reminder of the role of human partner with God.

³⁴Leo. G. Perdue in *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 59–63, seems to appreciate Ricoeur's aesthetic hermeneutical process for interpreting symbol and metaphorical language.

³⁵Cf. Kennard, *Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*, 120–24.

find warrant in our context but not really from the context of the Biblical author are relevant significances for our context to reflect upon but are inappropriate to be seen as material for Biblical theology or to grant it divine authority for life.³⁶

The concept of context also includes the authorial perspective and emphasis, which is evident in the text. This is necessary so that the full body of material is dealt with and applied appropriately. This is not to say that major elements which are clear need excess pages of unnecessary description. It is to say that minor elements should not take over with excessive description or become the organizing principle. Additionally, the way a concept is used in the passage needs to be reflected in Biblical theology statement. Biblical theology must consist both of clear tight logic, coherence, and rhetorical elements aimed at motivating the reader to partake of the ethic and passion of the book, where appropriate. Some descriptions by their nature may be highly technical and as dry as dust but hopefully gold dust. This is not where such an explanation should stop. Biblical theology reflects a living faith, not a dead orthodoxy. Biblical concepts of knowledge extend to include the appropriation of this knowledge into proper action and feeling. A good example of this is the narrative parallel in proverbs between the enticing adulteress in the square and lady wisdom as a compelling rival metaphor to motivate young men to choose to live wisely.³⁷ Which option will they choose? We will only know by the life choice our students make. Perhaps metaphors like this are best to be sampled by more intimate exposition of these texts in the classroom so that the challenge with its outcomes comes alive to these students where they live.

The aim is to discover what the text meant in the context of its original author for his intended audience. The author is no longer present, nor the authorial intent, except as it is contained in the body of the text. In this, one is limited to what the text has to say about itself within its context (as best as it can be recaptured). Thus, we have a critical realism spiral process of interpreting particulars and correlating them as Biblical theology. Exegesis provides the building blocks of Biblical theology; Biblical theology is regulative of exegesis. The message can be obtained by the cooperative effort of the two. Biblical theology is not exegesis but it is wholly intertwined with it. Biblical theology must be Biblical.

³⁶Cf. Kennard, *Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*, 133–48, 184.

³⁷At this point, Perdue (*Wisdom and Creation*, 88–100) is too oversensitive to the extra-biblical context as he sees lady wisdom through goddess imagery, for the Biblical texts monotheism limits the range of acceptable options, excluding any queen of heaven as not properly Biblical. Also, Leo Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Creation Theology in the Book of Job* (Sheffield: JSOT/Almond, 1991) reflects a polytheistic post-Babylonian context for its metaphors of theology.

Canonically Christian

Biblical theology should be based on the Christian canon. Francis Watson argues that “Biblical theology is *Biblical*, that is, concerned with the whole Christian Bible; it is more than the sum of Old Testament theology and New Testament theology, understood as separate disciplines.”³⁸ This is not to diminish Old Testament theology and New Testament theology, for they are valid Biblical theology disciplines in their own right. That is, specialists in Hebrew scholarship and others in Greek scholarship mine the gems that each Testament has to offer. However, Biblical theology hopefully interacts with both of these realms of legitimate Biblical theology disciplines to formulate a whole Biblical theology. There is significant gain in doing a whole Biblical theology. As Peter Stuhlmacher said, “the Old and New Testaments have belonged together in a most intimate way since the beginning of the Christian Church. They belong together to such a degree that the testimony of the statement cannot be adequately understood without the Old and the exegesis of the Old Testament remains incomplete without taking the New into view.”³⁹

Few New Testament theologians would take issue with this stance since the Old Testament becomes part of the historical-cultural-linguistic context within which the New Testament is revealed. However, some Old Testament theologians do take issue with this stance since they do not wish to import later revelational material into a passage framed by an earlier stage of progressive revelation.⁴⁰ I resonate with this concern and have taught Old Testament theology as a course in its own right as a descriptive discipline to explain these earlier stages of revelation in their own context. Even when I trace an idea through the whole Biblical canon, I wish to handle the earlier material faithfully within its own context, so that the greater perspective is added as the idea matures within the canon (say in the Prophets or the New Testament).

Another canonical concern has to do with the format of each canon and the relationship of the books to each other. For the New Testament, this concern is simple as evident by the broad agreement across Christendom for the contents of the New Testament. Occasional challenges are levied against a book, like Luther’s challenge against James, but they have never been generally accepted. So this issue reduces to merely a matter of textual criticism. Since I hold to a critical text philosophy with regard to textual criticism, the

³⁸Francis Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 8.

³⁹Peter Stuhlmacher, *How to Do Biblical Theology* (Allison: Pickwick, 1995), 2. Cf. Gerhard Hasel, “Biblical Theology: Then, Now, and Tomorrow,” *HBT* 4 (1982): 74; Charles Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 58–60.

⁴⁰E.g., J. L. McKenzie, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 319; R. P. Knierim, “The Task of Old Testament Theology,” *HBT* 6 (1984): 52; Rolf Rendtorff, “Must ‘Biblical Theology’ Be Christian Theology?” *BRev* 4 (1988): 42.

issue of the canon is mainly a matter of exclusion of later scribal additions like Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11.

The Old Testament presents additional concerns for a Christian canon since both the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX) were used as authoritative Jewish and Christian canons. Early on these two different formats of the OT were merely scrolls of separate books or groups of books (like the Twelve prophets). There are slight differences between the *Samaritan Pentateuch* and the MT that are worth checking, but these differences are primarily reassuring concerning the care of both copying traditions and the fixity of the canon since they are both independent traditions from probably the ninth century BC when the northern tribes split from Judah. However, with the third to fifth century AD the independent scroll texts begin to be bound together into books, which began to raise the issue of canonicity in practical ways. The MT and LXX present a different order but in mainstream Judaism the contents were the same. While in Christian traditions that become Catholic or Anglican or Orthodox some additional books only accepted by sectarian Judaism were added to the LXX bound additions. The LXX includes as part of this continuing sectarian Jewish tradition the following books that are not part of the Hebrew canon: *1 Esdras*, *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Additions to Esther*, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *Ecclesiasticus* (= *Ben Sirach*), *Baruch*, *Letter of Jeremiah*, *Additions to Daniel* (*The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men*, *Susanna*, *Bel and the Dragon*), *Prayer of Manasses*, *1* and *2 Maccabees*. The Old Latin and editions of the Vulgate also included *2 Esdras*. These additions, except for *The Prayer of Manasses*, *1* and *2 Esdras*, were accepted as the Catholic canon at the Council of Trent.⁴¹ The New English Bible printed the Apocrypha with the downgraded books interspersed among the others.

The Eastern Orthodox churches included within their canon all of the above and *Psalms 151*, and *3* and *4 Maccabees*. As Judaism worked its way into a Mishnaic and Talmudic traditional orientation, the Apocrypha was excluded as less authoritative from the Hebrew Scriptures that became the Masoretic text.⁴² That is, the Apocrypha “does not defile the hands” of the reader as the Hebrew MT does. The Protestant churches followed the Hebrew Scriptural contents and placed them in the LXX order. The Protestants excluded the *Apocrypha* following some patristic documentation such as

⁴¹Council of Trent (1545-1563), Fourth Session celebrated on the eighth day of April, 1546, Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures similar to earliest official indication in Canon 87 Council of Carthage A.D. 397 except *Esdras* was included. The Syriac canon is close to that of the Orthodox Church, especially the Slavonic Orthodox except that for them *2 Esdras* only contains chapters 3–14, which is referred to as *4 Ezra*. The Ethiopian canon adds *3 Maccabees* and splits *Proverbs* into two books as compared to the Roman Catholic pattern.

⁴²Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra* 14b; Augustine admits Jews did not accept the Apocrypha, especially *Judith* into their canon even though they helpfully record history (*The City of God* 18.26 in *Augustine* vol. 18 of *Great Books of the Western World*, edited by Mortimer Adler [Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952], 485).

Athanasius' Easter letter and the *Synod of Laodicea* (343 AD), and in reaction to Catholic acceptance and its use to teach purgatory (e.g., *2 Macc.* 12:43–45).⁴³ I exclude the *Apocrypha* from my Christian canon partly because my tradition has but more because I do not see that these books make claim to inspiration. Remember that inspiration and authority is the issue in canonicity. For example, *2 Maccabees* concludes, "I will bring my work to an end. If it is found well written and aptly composed, that is what I myself hoped for; if cheap and mediocre, I could only do my best."⁴⁴ Such a claim falls far short of the prophetic "Thus says the Lord." Likewise, the New Testament does not quote the *Apocrypha* with divine authority, though allusions probably influence some texts. Additionally, pseudepigraphal texts (like *1* and *2 Enoch*) that do claim inspiration, were not accepted by either the broader Jewish community or the broader Christian community, so I do not accept them as well.⁴⁵

This dissonance of MT and LXX is made more acute because both these Old Testament versions are affirmed in the New Testament as Scripture. The continued authoritative nature of the Hebrew Scriptures is affirmed by Christ's statement that the smallest letter (*yod*) or stroke as part of a consonant letter will not pass away until all is accomplished, that is, until the Kingdom is fully realized (Matt 5:18; Luke 16:17). Additionally, the MT consonantal text is more authoritative than the vowel pointing added millennia later, reflecting Jewish rabbinic interpretation. However, Paul writes to Timothy and reminds him that the sacred writings in which he has been instructed from his youth (which in the dispersion for Jews would be the LXX) are God-breathed or inspired (θεόπνευστος; 1 Tim. 3:15–17).⁴⁶ This means

⁴³E.g., The French Confession (1559) art. 3–5 in *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition: Reformation Era*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), vol. 2, 376; Belgic Confession of Faith (1561) art. 4 and 6; Second Helvetic Confession (1566) 1.9; The Concept of Cologne (1591) art. 18; The Irish Articles (1615) art. 2–3; The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) ch. 1.1.2–3 in Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions and Reformed Confessions Harmonized: With an Annotated Bibliography of Reformed Doctrinal Works*, ed. Joel Beeke and Sinclair Ferguson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) and *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, ed. G. I. Williamson (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1964), 4; The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1571) article 6 in *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, ed. Mark Noll (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 215–16; Athanasius, "Easter Letter" in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wade (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 2nd series, 4:552, letter 39, sect. 4 and 5; Synod of Laodicea 343 AD, canon 59–60.

⁴⁴*2 Macc.* 15:38.

⁴⁵Though I acknowledge Tertullian makes a case for the acceptance of *1 Enoch* into the canon on the basis of its edification and because Jude quotes it, even though he acknowledges that neither the Jews nor the church accept it among the canon (*On the Apparel of Women*, 3).

⁴⁶Second Temple Judaism supported the view that translations were viewed as divinely inspired Scripture, such as LXX (Philo, *Vita Mos.* 2.7; *Letter of Aristaeus* 305–317) and an Aramaic Old Testament (Meg. 3a). This position was broadly affirmed by the LXX specialists who presented papers at the Institute for Biblical Research Nov. 19–20, 2004, namely: Karen Jobes, "When God Spoke Greek: The Place of the Greek Bible in Evangelical Scholarship,"

that inspiration needs to be redefined to fit the Biblical concept as: *God's superintending of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the words of the original autographs His revelation to man, and that this revelation is preserved with divine authority and benefit through accurate translations and copies.* Many evangelical theologians frame inspiration just to autographs in contrast to the liberal definition of inspiration for the reader. Notice the Biblical use of inspiration does both in a particular way. Also notice that the evangelical definition of inspiration as restricted to the autograph does not reflect the issue of the continuing authority of the Biblical text. The Biblical text retains continuing authority as part of its definition of inspiration. This continuing authority of the inspiration of the LXX is how the New Testament, and the apostolic fathers treat the LXX. About 80% of the New Testament quotations of the Old Testament evidence dependency upon LXX as the authoritative text quoted. Most of the Patristic writers continued to quote from the LXX as the authoritative text or a translation of it into their own language. This also has the ramification that our English Bibles can be seen as inspired by God and thus continuing with divine authority. Thus our English Bibles, LXX and MT are "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that God's person may be fully equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17).

In the field of textual criticism, Septuagint specialists still need to do considerable work but I would approach it through a critical text orientation as well. So differences in versions of the texts may well be handled as scribal emendations. However, some texts such as Jeremiah evidence multiple copies, some of which were destroyed. So that it may be possible to consider both MT and LXX versions of this book as accurate to stages of autograph.

The recent interest in the final form of the canonical text also raises interesting issues since the Hebrew canon has a different structure than the Christian Old Testament (and LXX). In both structures, the core of the Old Testament is the *Torah* or Pentateuch. The Christian LXX order emphasizes that from this covenantal base, the narrative unfolds with God's continued interaction with his people, and thus some popularity of narrative theology

Bulletin for Biblical Research 16(2006): 219–236; Peter Gentry, "The Septuagint and the Text of the Old Testament," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 16 (2006): 193–218, and Tim McLay's oral response. Cf. Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 22; Johan Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays by J. Lust*, ed. Katrin Hauspie (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 153; Sidney Jellicoe, "Septuagint Studies in the Current Century," *JBL* 88 (1969): 191–99; Natalio F. Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 322. Additionally, certain Patristics presented the LXX as authoritative Scripture (e.g., Irenaeus, *Ag. Her.* 3.21.3 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989], 1:452). Some Patristics even preferred the LXX over the Hebrew, such as when Augustine takes Jerome to task for not translating the Latin Vulgate closer to the LXX (Augustine, letter 56 to Jerome in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Phillip Schaff and Henry Wace [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991], series 2, 6:112).

as of late. However, the Hebrew categorizing and order emphasizes that the prophetic program echoes and answers and calls the people Israel back to the Mosaic Covenant. Both features are helpful to recognize in these texts. That is, God actively responds to his people but the agenda is that of his Mosaic Covenant.

Wisdom and the Psalms serve as an alternative program to that of the Mosaic Covenant, as was developed earlier in this chapter. This is indicated in the *Tanakh* by including them within the less authoritative *Kethubhim* or "Writings." In this configuration, the sequence of Proverbs 31, Ruth and Song of Songs contributes a focused unit on the ideal wife and the enjoyment of sex. So Ruth's different place in the *Tanakh* examples the ideal wife, while in the LXX, Ruth contributes toward the historical justification of David as king. Also, in the English and LXX Old Testament order, Psalms and Wisdom texts occupy a barrier category between the history and the prophets. Many of the wisdom texts would be seen as placed in this category as coming out from the history of Solomon the wise. Perhaps conceptually, the history tells where Israel had been and wisdom calls the faithful to live for God now, while the prophet especially includes the future hope of Israel. Either way wisdom is arranged, it serves as a helpful guide for contemporary living. However, in the Christian order, the Psalms enmeshed in wisdom are framed more as instruction, whereas in the *Tanakh*, they are more patterned prayers to perform (thus encouraging liturgy). Joining the Writings, Ruth is handled more like wisdom emphasizing generosity, and Lamentations extends the psalm laments in light of life and captivity issues.

The *Tanakh* diminishes the place of narrative theology mainstreaming Joshua-Kings as prophets in the dominant Covenant-Prophets program. Here narrative theology is carried by the narrative Babylonian exile and resolution texts (Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles). Notice that Daniel and Lamentations are framed for their prophetic emphasis in the English and LXX order, while in the Writings, Daniel is valued as a narrative that provides guidance for how the Jew is to live. Esther, a narrative book in both configurations is shocking in the absence of God from the text, both in the Hebrew and in the lack of LXX expansion so common in Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah. This lack of God in the varieties of Esther underscores the depth of God's rejection of Israel during the Babylonian captivity. Placing Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles at the end of the Writings provides a conclusion and climax to the entire canon that underscores the restoration of Israel and Temple with the establishment of the *Torah* as the norm of the community. Embedded within this establishment is a more ultimate Messianic hope after the pattern of the Davidic Covenant whereas the LXX order diffuses the Messianic hope to that of the continuing narrative saga, leaving the last statement of the prophet Malachi hoping for an Elijah who will bring about New Covenant restoration of hearts multi-generationally with God.

The Writings section sets up Jewish festival traditional readings and

Temple functioning. Psalms leads out the Writings as the main contributor to Temple worship in providing pattern prayers, in contrast to the LXX and English pattern of Psalms as instruction, being surrounded by wisdom. Ruth among the History grounds the Davidic Kingship in a line of blessing while among the Writings calls Israel to generous living. It is little wonder why Jewish tradition reads Ruth to celebrate the harvest festival of the Feast of Weeks for harvest is a theme in the book which provides the context for generosity and recovery. Furthermore, Passover utilizes Song of Songs as an allegorical love for Yahweh, a view imposed on the genre by tradition. The reflective feast of Tabernacles utilizes Qoheleth to remind that value comes through the vertical relationship with God (consistent with its refrain: Eccl 2:24–26; 3:12–15, 22; 7:14; 8:15; 12:9–14). Lamentations is the fitting choice for the Ninth of Ab fast that commemorates the destruction of Jerusalem and Temple. Likewise, the book of Esther comes to a close explaining the historical roots for the Feast of Purim, during which it is read traditionally.

The addition of the New Testament shifts the focus away from *Torah* to underscore the Kingdom (to which the covenants pointed) and the King, Lord Jesus Christ. Both arrangements of the Old Testament set this up in different ways as was mentioned above.

Theology

Biblical theology must be theology. It is a message that communicates unity and diversity. The unity is evident in the organizing principle; the diversity in the particulars and progress of the organization.

Organizing Principle

The Bible is a collection of various manuscripts, which address a multitude of issues. Most Biblical theologies are organized under a concept of center, which is a one- or few-word concept which is supposed to permeate the whole passage or section of Scripture. It is to be the focal point around which all else revolves, encompassing the particulars. However, the concept of center fails to do justice to Biblical theology in four main areas. This author advocates its replacement by the message. The message is a concise complex unity, which accurately reflects the particulars of the text and the order inherent between these particulars. Ken Barker develops this concept of message as a “center” but still retains the complex unity, which accurately reflects the particulars of the text.⁴⁷ The critical feature is not the name as much as it is the methodology and for our purposes here the names “center” and “message” help to distinguish the basic methodologies. In the four areas in which the concept of center fails, the concept of message demonstrates sufficiency.

⁴⁷This was developed by Ken Barker in doctoral classes like the theology of Isaiah and conversations at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1982.

First, center does not communicate clearly as does the message. The idea of a center as a one- or few-word concept is supposed to permeate the whole passage of Scripture. Examples of center include: covenant, kingdom, salvation history, and Jesus Christ. These terms are virtually meaningless as a center because whoever utilizes them imports his own meaning to them; the terms do not convey this meaning in and of themselves. To convey meaning with any clarity one needs to have a propositional statement expressing this meaning. Both the subject and the complement need to be included as the message of the passage rather than merely stating the subject and allowing others to import their own complement and thereby import their own meanings to it.

Second, the center is a philosophical impossibility, while the concept of message is philosophically possible. For Gerhard Hasel, the idea of center permeates and controls the author's writing of the passage.⁴⁸ A center is in a certain sense in the author's mind (as an authorial intent), while the concept of message is the reader's summarization of the correlation of content expressed in the passage. E. D. Hirsch proposed authorial intent as the way to obtain validity in interpretation as opposed to reader response.⁴⁹ However, the text itself provides a significant guide and warrant as the alternative to these existential and Hirschian conjectures. The center (and authorial intent) is behind and controlling the text; the message is expressed in the authorial thrust of the text. No one today can get behind the text with any warrant. C. S. Lewis was once asked about what he thought about literary critics who claimed that things were written because of a variety of authorial reasons. He thought rather poorly of them because they were almost always wrong when they claimed he wrote from a certain source for a particular intent, and they could have asked him.⁵⁰ We do not have the author to tell us what his center is or intent. Those who say that the author is God and He illuminates one to the center of specific passages do not settle the issue, they merely push it back one step into a mystical sphere. God does not tell one exegete a clear statement of what the center is.⁵¹ He allows exegetes to understand the message of a passage as expressed in the words of the text. All that one has today is the text and thus it is only possible to arrive at meaning that can be found in the text: that is the message.

The concept of center does not reflect the text as does the message. Any

⁴⁸Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 142. Such a philosophical impossibility exists in trying to decipher any meaning which tries to get behind the text, as Hirsch's authorial intent, or post-structuralism, or text as apologetic of history.

⁴⁹E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

⁵⁰C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 158–60.

⁵¹God nowhere promises to illumine the meaning of passages to interpreters so that they would cognitively know what the passage means. For a further development and defense of this claim, see the chapters on "Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic" and "Biblical Authority" in Kennard, *Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*, 139–42.

center is an attempt at conveying that which the book says in a simplicity; the message conveys what the book says in a complex unified whole. Any book of the Bible has complexity and divergent themes within its unity. There is none that is a simplicity; the concept of center is simplistic. Much of the Old Testament has been viewed under the centers like covenant and much of the New Testament has been viewed under the center of Christ. However, the wisdom literature of the Bible is the reef of both Old and New Testament theology. For example, Proverbs does not develop covenant but rather clearly identifies the *torah* as familial instruction rather than Law or Mosaic. Likewise, in the New Testament, James (a wisdom epistle) has virtually no Christology, while it does develop some monotheism. Even von Rad's center of God hits the reef in such Old Testament books as Proverbs, which clearly emphasize the horizontal social relationships within the creation. There is no kingdom or salvation history development in Proverbs either. To see them there is to abuse the text and land your scheme on the reef.

Finally, an accepted concept of center cannot be found. There is no center on which exegetes agree. A brief survey of twentieth-century centers shows the problem:

- Holiness (Hänel, 1931),⁵²
- God as Lord (Köhler, 1958),⁵³
- Israel's election (Wildberger, 1959),⁵⁴
- Covenant (Eichrodt, 1961, 1967),⁵⁵
- Yahweh (von Rad, 1963),⁵⁶
- The Kingdom of God (Klein, 1970),⁵⁷
- Communion with God (Vriezen, 1970),⁵⁸
- The blessing/promise plan (Kaiser, 1978),⁵⁹ and
- Testimony (Brueggeman, 1997).⁶⁰

If there ever could be agreement then these arguments could be muted a bit, but these arguments are the very reasons for why no center will ever capture the field. On the other hand, a message is easily arrived at and checked because it is ultimately tied to the text.

The messages of wisdom books can be summarized in the following

⁵²J. Hänel, *Die Religion der Heiligkeit* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1931).

⁵³Ludwig Köhler, *Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958).

⁵⁴H. Wildberger, "to choose" in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).

⁵⁵Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961 and 1967).

⁵⁶Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*.

⁵⁷Günther Klein, "The Biblical Understanding of 'The Kingdom of God,'" *Interpretation* 26 (1972): 393.

⁵⁸Theodorus Christian Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970).

⁵⁹Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

⁶⁰Brueggeman, *Theology of the Old Testament*.

inductive generalizations for your consideration and sharpening. Old Testament wisdom as a whole is summarized as: the wise man will hear, fear, and obey Yahweh and live life well according to the framework of how creation works (including the joys of love), understanding that apparent futility and suffering should not dissuade from faithfulness to God. The various components of Old Testament wisdom's message are seen as coming from respective books. For example, Proverbs can be summarized as: the wise man will hear, fear, and obey Yahweh, and live life well according to the framework of how creation works, whereas many others will be destroyed in their wicked plans. Additionally, the Song of Songs narratively and poetically illustrates the joys and pains of love while affirming erotic expressions of physical beauty. Furthermore, the message of Job is that the righteous sometimes suffer for sin, sometimes for purification and sometimes for reasons which they may never know under God's sovereignty, so that they need to remain faithful to God in whatever circumstances they find themselves. Likewise, in Qoheleth life appears to be futile in its aimless wanderings and problems under the sun, but life is a gift from God to be enjoyed to the fullest and God is to be obeyed, since He will eventually judge all men. Furthermore, in the New Testament, James exhorts Jewish believers in dispersion to maintain a consistent allegiance to God, as maturity, through the endurance of purifying trials, by readily receiving and applying the Law, by properly controlling oneself (especially one's tongue) and by humbly submitting to God's wisdom.

Organization

The content and organization developed in a Biblical theology is limited to the Biblical source material utilized. For example, when one investigates a theology of Job one does not actually obtain all or only what Job knew and believed. All we know is what the text actually reveals in its theologically constructed narrative conversational format. It is the text that surfaces the categories and warrants the generalizations of Biblical theology.

Biblical theology needs to draw its categories, themes, motifs, and concepts from the Biblical texts themselves. In the past, it has drawn too often on the concepts of systematic theology or other concepts of doctrine such as God, man, salvation. The recent situation of Biblical theology seems to maintain the same problem but only under the categories of contemporary philosophy. Such categories and presuppositions tend to bias a work. It is possible to cross-examine a Biblical text on the basis of modern philosophy or theology, as say Bultmann did, and to obtain answers about subjects that the contemporary reader desires of which the Biblical authors show no evidence that they ever thought in those ways.⁶¹ For example, in the epistle of James there is so little material about Jesus Christ that at best it should be a minute sub-category. The issue is even made more obvious when the Old

⁶¹J. Munck, "Pauline Research Since Schweitzer," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, 175-76.

Testament is considered with its Hebraic concepts and lack of Western philosophical categories.⁶² Biblical theology needs to distinguish the concepts utilized within the text by observing the various components that make up the message of the books utilized within the scope of this study. Once this is done, Biblical theology needs to utilize these same concepts as the components of its content and organization.

One category to be discussed in each section of Scripture that is significant for Biblical theology is the concept of God.⁶³ The word “theology” suggests that God and His activity are in view. The primary interest of the Bible is not man’s experience and thought; it is what God declares, demands and does. A vital study of Biblical theology cannot proceed as though God does not exist.⁶⁴ In fact, the Biblical wisdom makes significant advances in theology. Perhaps the most dramatic is the use of *Shadday* in Job. This name is only used 48 times in the Old Testament but 31 of these times come from the book of Job and from nearly every speaker as well. So that when it comes to developing the meaning of *Shadday*, the text of Job should predominate by indicating through its use, a meaning of *Shadday* as the powerful sovereign God who generously gives, creates, and destroys. Such a meaning excludes the idea of an Akkadian localized god of mountains or the narrowness of Hebrew etymology from *shadod* ‘to destroy.’ Additionally, Proverbs distinguishes itself from common ancient Near Eastern wisdom by being significantly more oriented toward God than the predominant social orientation. In fact, for Qoheleth, the role of God is so significant as to change the futile perspective of experience under the sun to an encouraging refrain of God providing the simple joys of life like work, food, and drink (Eccl 2:24–26; 3:12–15, 22; 7:14; 8:15; 12:9–14). These repeated choruses serve as providing a positive vertical direction for the theology through the book, which elevates above the futile horizontal or social perspective. Additionally, in the love poetry of Song of Songs, perhaps God has a speaking part (Song 5:1b), but there is a stark contrast to other ancient love poetry in the removal of the entwining cult practices and pagan gods.

The relationship between Biblical concepts should be reflected in Biblical theology. The tensions and variant emphases within and between these concepts should be maintained. One must resist the tendency to develop an artificial consistency.⁶⁵ For example, in Proverbs the concept of wisdom dominates the range of issues that are developed in the book. This predominance of wisdom is indicated by the emphasis in the introduction, the repetition of these themes, the strength of exhortation from the parents, and

⁶²Gerhard Ebeling, “The Meaning of ‘Biblical Theology,’” *JThSt* 6 (1955): 222.

⁶³This is also the case in books like Esther which do not mention the name of God. A major ingredient to a theology of Esther should be the shocking absence of God from covenantally cursed Israel.

⁶⁴Floyd Filson, “A New Testament Students’ Approach to Biblical Theology,” *JBR* 14 (1946): 23.

⁶⁵Wayne Ward, “Towards a Biblical Theology,” *RExpos* 74 (1977): 373.

the vividness of metaphor like lady wisdom. With this much emphasis, the theme of wisdom should be developed early and positioned prominently. The theme of the fear of Yahweh as the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7) extends this theme as a rider on the predominant wisdom theme. In Proverbs, the repeated contrasts between wisdom and foolishness elevate the theme of foolishness to the basic framework from the range of issues that follow. In these contrasts, the creation-based retribution principle of reaping what you sow is developed. The greatest example of this foolish lifestyle is that of the adulteress, so that theme seems to come best next in the exposition. Beyond the development of wisdom or fool, there is no clear pattern of categories that should dominate. In fact, the long section of individual proverbs accentuate a style that breaks up any overarching structure. The significant social and life issues that illustrate the wise and foolish lives require that these other topics be developed. However, the lack of a textual order leaves me to choose an alphabetical order to communicate a sense of completeness and to mirror the occasional strategy of acrostic that Proverbs chooses when it communicates a sense of completeness on a particular topic (e.g., Prov 31:10–31).

When narrative genres develop their material, Biblical theology should not simply reconfigure the theology into an ahistorical descriptive method but draw the reader into the essence of the drama to help accentuate the critical issues. Perhaps when these are developed orally in class, a sample of the vivid narrative can enable the student to enter into the poetic and nuanced issues even further. Often narrative Biblical texts have a video version (like *Prince of Egypt* for Exodus or *The Visual Bible* for Matthew, John, and Acts) to render the narrative vividly for the student. Within the accounting of the narrative overarching issues should not be lost. An example in Song of Songs is the drawing out the comparison between the love poetry of description of physical beauty, which seems to bring a wholesome balance, legitimacy and encouragement to verbal love making as said by both male and female in relationship.⁶⁶ Though this is a significant and healthy issue in the book, the narrative also serves as more than vivid glue that connects these descriptive love poems. In fact, the joys, tensions and pains in relationship are only really seen as the twists and turns of the narrative plays out. With other wisdom literature, one requires a wise sensitivity to discern how to take each part of the narrative. Additional wisdom is required to develop the self-understandings and self-possibilities that our lives might engage in juxtaposed closely to this text.

In the midst of narrative and counseling conversation, Job presents unique issues of practical theodicy as it is worked out through suffering. However, the issues are much more varied than merely theodicy. As mentioned earlier, the most significant development of *Shadday* in all the Old Testament comes from this book. Since Biblical theology is especially about

⁶⁶The inclusion of so much love description or physical beauty from the female perspective contrasts with ancient Near Eastern texts.

God, and the narrative begins with God in his throne room and the answer God eventually gives to Job is himself, my Biblical theology of Job begins with God. The second topic is set up in the contrast of the narrative with the adversary (*hasatan*). Development of *hasatan* is rather minimal in the Old Testament (elsewhere only in 1 Chr. 21:1; Ps.109:6; Zech. 3:1–2) but with thirteen references in Job 1–2, this is clearly the only context to develop the possibility of this descriptive raising to the status of a name. It is also the best place to develop the limitation of *hasatan* as merely one of many small emissaries in the court of the sovereign God. The narrative introduction brings a profound tension for the reader because he knows that the counsel is askew as he hears Job's friends urge him to placate Yahweh as one would for an ancient Near East god to remove the suffering within a mechanistic exposition of the retribution principle. The repeated interchanges which the narrative supplies helps to remind the reader that resisting this simplistic strategy is part of what a sufferer is to do without going to the other extreme of pridefully demanding God to answer (Elihu's counsel paints Job as falling prey here). The nature of the narrative and sheer volume of the interchanges sets Yahweh up in stark contrast, for the answer to suffering is not an answer to why Job suffers; it is that we must all know our humble place before a sovereign God who gets to do whatever He desires including the initiation and overseeing the suffering in our lives. In Biblical theology, I try to retain this gem of narrative theology, and in class it is helpful to develop by sampling selective counsel and then polemicizing it by the divine blast from the whirlwind concerning creation and Behemoth-Leviathan.

Progressive

Biblical theology reflects the history and progressive nature of divine revelation. To understand the meaning of a passage properly one needs to see and understand it within its historical and conceptual context. Where several passages are concerned, the historical progression should be reflected but this returns us to the point previously developed concerning the gems of narrative theology which do not need to be developed again. Where there is conceptual development like the wisdom program provides, the wisdom program should be nested within the conceptual framework in which it fits. Since the wisdom program has already been developed to be in the era of Solomon with subsequent sages for final arrangement, features like the Mosaic and Davidic covenants are in the context but they just do not seem to be developed conceptually within the wisdom texts.

The nesting of the wisdom program seems to fit best conceptually within creation theology. That is, the sovereign God has effortlessly brought the universe into existence out of the waters of chaos (Gen 1:2–26; 8). The order that God brought to the chaos (as indicated by separation Gen 1:4–7, 10, and by designed purposefulness *tob*, and the governance of time by the heavenly objects Gen 1:14–18; 8:22) serves to provide man with obligation to fit within this order as a player within creation. The role for man as image

of God serves to set man as God's representative on the scene as we minutely picture God's creating and sovereignty at work. Some of this obligation comes with the blessing of God to be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue, and rule the earth (Gen 1:28; 9:1-7). Other obligation comes by God's fiat framing specific obligations within this purposeful order (Gen 1:26; 2:15-17, 24; 9:2-6). There are significant benefits to be obtained in living rightly to this order (e.g., Gen 6:8-9; 8:1). However, so often mankind departs from this righteousness and plunges the creation order into a chaos of his own doing, which God responds with curse or a return to chaos within the created order, fighting chaos with chaos (Gen 3:6-21; 4:8-15; 6:2-7:24; 9:21-25; 11:1-9). The order of the creation that remains after these judgments is a frustrating, with futility among the order.

This application of creation theology is made more vivid by the wisdom texts. If man is to negotiate his way around the creation staying within those ways that bring success and staying clear of the pits of futility then this person needs wisdom. The retribution principle of "you reap what you sow" is part of this wise perspective. Proverbs joins in at this point to provide a variety of specific wise stepping stones, which strengthen both mind and will. For example, with regard to the specific issue of love and marriage there are many practical guidelines within the book of Proverbs ranging from the adulteress to avoid, to the ideal wife praised by all her family, and a host of scattered comments between. None of these quite has the same poetic passion of Adam's recognition of the fleshness of Eve and the implications to become one flesh for mankind (Gen 2:23-24). However, Proverbs develops further counsel within this context of marriage that helps complement the Genesis pattern. Here is where the Song of Songs encourages the love passion (which Adam briefly expressed), but it comes within a context that is also tainted by tension, conflict, and pain (Gen 3:16). So the Song of Songs reflects these elements of relationship with frustrating futility as well. This futility within the divine order is acutely driven home by the experimental nature of Qoheleth with periodic reminders that the divine order is still there when one takes into account the vertical blessings that come from God. The recognition of these blessings should motivate the wise person to enjoy the blessings and limit the range of one's own futile experimentation. However, sometimes the futility overwhelms the servant of God in excruciating suffering. Here, Job displays God's sovereignty because the whole process of extreme suffering is in the crucible of futility. While many judgments are brought on by our reaping the consequences of sin and foolishness, there are times when no explanation is given and we must still worship God and serve him righteously; Job reminds us of this struggle.

Wisdom nests in creation theology and conceptually develops an alternative universal revelatory program for the whole of humankind, which continues to stand as applicable to all humankind. As such, it provides a complementary voice to the profoundly Jewish program of Law and Prophets. With these issues in mind, my course of Old Testament Biblical theol-

ogy develops this wisdom theology after the creation theology and before the Jewish covenant program (which is so central to the Old Testament). Throughout the course, this wisdom program is not forgotten, for the Law and the Prophets do draw upon it. With so much of the revelatory program being God revealing himself to us, I find it helpful to conclude the course with the theology of the psalms which provides an opportunity to review wisdom theology again among a review of many of the other features of Old Testament Biblical theology. However, the psalms provide a different orientation as affirmation and outcry from the congregation draws the students into a deeper commitment of performing these prayers and possibly even to affirm to live by wisdom's guiding light.

Conclusion

Briefly put, Biblical theology should be Biblically accurate and complete, and theologically sensitive. This descriptive method traversing wisdom shows how Biblical theology can consistently be accomplished in a critical realist method without destroying itself on the reef for Biblical theology, wisdom literature.

Review Essay (Part Two): John Calvin on the Death of Christ and the Reformation's Forgotten Doctrine of Universal Vicarious Satisfaction: A Review and Critique of Tom Nettles' Chapter in Whomever He Wills¹

David W. Ponter
dponter@rts.edu

Evaluation and Response

The "Price of Redemption" Voided by Unbelief

There are many statements within Calvin's writings which speak of the price of redemption being cancelled or abolished and those for whom the redemptive price was given perishing in hell. For Calvin, the "price" of redemption refers to Christ's death. Some examples from Calvin:

He gave himself. No words can properly express what this means; for who can find language to declare the excellency of the Son of God? Yet he it is who gave himself as a *price for our redemption*. Atonements, cleansing, satisfaction, and all the benefits which we derive from the death of Christ, are here represented. The words for me, are very emphatic. It will not be enough for any man to contemplate Christ as having *died for the salvation of the world*, unless he has experienced the consequences of this death, and is enabled to claim it as his own (Calvin on *Galatians 2:20*, emphasis added).

It is this laying down of Christ's life as a redemptive price which forms the foundation for the following class of statements so prevalent in Calvin's writings:

Again when we see a man scourged at God's hand as fore as may be: let us consider not only that he was created after the image of God: but also that he is our neighbor, and in manner all one with us. We be all of one nature, all one flesh, all one mankind, so as it may be said that we be issued all out of one selfsame spring. [Since] it is so, ought we not to have consideration one of another? I see moreover *a poor soul that is going to destruction*: ought I not to pity him and to help him if it lie in my power? . . . Then we bethink ourselves, sure either we must needs to be hard-hearted and dull-witted, or else we consider thus, behold a man that is formed after the image of God, he is of the selfsame nature that I am, and again behold *a soul that was purchased with the blood of the Son*

¹Editor's Note: This is the second part of a two-part review essay. For part one, see *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 55, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 139-58.

*of God if the same perish ought not we be grieved?*²

For Calvin, this price of redemption could be voided or abolished. For example, Calvin:

But when we hear that they which disguise the word of God in such sort, as merchants of our souls, (as S. Peter also says) (1 Pet 2:2) and make traffic of us and of our salvation and make no bones at it, *to cast us headlong into hell, yea, and to abolish the price that was given for our redemption, it is certain that they destroy souls* and besides that, make a mock of the blood of our Lord.³

Rainbow, when confronted with Calvin's language of the price of redemption being abolished attempts to solve the apparent dilemma by asserting:

While stating that unfaithful pastors are charged with the souls they lose, and are guilty of sacrilege for profaning the blood of Christ, and have undone Christ's redemption . . . So the distinction must be made between Calvin's theological perspective of the church, grounded in election, and his pastoral perspective of the church, grounded in the judgment of charity, from which the pastor's marching orders come. . . . While stating that unfaithful pastors are charged with the souls they lose, and are guilty of sacrilege for profaning the blood of Christ, and have undone Christ's redemption . . . Calvin added "as much as in them lies" (*quantum in se est*). . . . Apostates, he said, are those who, "as much as is in them" . . . crucify the Son of God again. . . . They are, from the point of view of their intention, and from the point of view of the judgment of charity and pastoral practice, destroying the work of Christ.⁴

Though there is some truth to what Rainbow says, it fails to do justice to the then current theological climate, and that of subsequent generations. In terms of the wider picture of Reformation theology, the standard teaching was that Christ, in laying down a price of redemption for all mankind, was said to have *redeemed* all mankind. Musculus:

Secondly, we must see from whence *mankind is redeemed*. Redemption takes no place in men that be at liberty, as another giving life again to them which be alive. For from whence should he be redeemed which is under bondage to no body. But mankind is redeemed. Which gave himself (says the Apostle) *the price of redemption for all men* (1 Timoth. 2.). *Ergo all mankind was subject unto bondage, from which it is redeemed.*⁵

Bullinger confirms the same idea:

Wherefore our Lord Jesus Christ, being both God and man, was a fit Mediator for both parties. Which thing the apostle witnessing saith: "One God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

²John Calvin, *Sermons on Job* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993), 333. Emphasis added.

³Calvin, *Sermons on Timothy*, 572-573.

⁴Rainbow, *Will of God and The Cross*, 167, 169.

⁵Musculus, *Common Places of Christian Religion*, 304, 305. Emphasis added.

who gave himself the price of redemption for all [1 Tim 2:5, 6.]⁶

And again:

There is one God, and one reconciler (or mediator) of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, *who gave himself the price (or ransom) for the redemption of all* [1 Tim 2.].⁷

Zwingli affirmed the same doctrine:

In the same way also our sins are forgiven and we may come to God on the strength and efficacy of the suffering which Christ endured once, *for us and all persons*. So costly and precious it is before God that it has become for all eternity the pledge and *price for all humankind* by which alone they may come to God.⁸

If we look to Reformed writers after Calvin, we can see an even clearer explication of this point. For example, the Elizabethan puritan, William Perkins, quoting Pope Innocent, affirmed,

Christ's blood was shed effectually for those only he had predestined, *but for all men in regard of sufficiency*: for the shedding of the blood of that just one for the unjust, was so rich in *price*, that if everyone had believed in the redeemer, none at all had been held captive of the devil.⁹

Perkins goes on to state,

Whereas they [the fathers] write that *Christ redeemed all men and the world*, their meaning is, that he did it according to the sufficiency, and the common cause, and common nature of all, which Christ did take upon him: and not effectually, on God's part. This very thing does Prosper make plain: 'All men' [says he], 'are rightly said to be redeemed, in respect of the one nature of all, and the one cause of all, which our Lord did truly take upon him: and yet all are not delivered from captivity.' The propriety of redemption without doubt belongs unto them for whom the prince of this world is sent abroad—whose death was not so bestowed for mankind, as should also pertain unto the

⁶Bullinger, *Decades*, 1:131. Emphasis added.

⁷Ibid., 2:214-215. Emphasis added.

⁸Huldrych Zwingli, "Exposition and Basis of the Conclusions or Articles Published by Huldrych Zwingli, 29 January 1523," in *Writings*, trans. E.J. Furcha (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 1:94. Emphasis added.

⁹William Perkins, *A Christian and Plaine Treatise of the Manner and Order of Predestination, and of the Largeness of Gods Grace* (London, 1606), 22. Emphasis and bracketed insert added. Jonathan Moore, in his *English Hypothetical Universalism; John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 27-68, argues that Perkins was a strict particularist in terms of the extent of the satisfaction. This is incorrect, however. It is true that Perkins was a transitional theologian moving in the direction of what we now have come to know as limited satisfaction or strict particularism, yet Perkins retained the classical medieval commitment to a universal price of redemption for all men. While it is admitted that Perkins' commitment to the medieval synthesis is slender, nonetheless, to characterize Perkins as a "norming" example of strict particularism is inaccurate and misleading. It is better to characterize him as a transitional theologian with respect to the extent of the satisfaction.

redemption of them, who were not to be regenerated.¹⁰

This thought is further asserted by the later Jacobean puritan, William Fenner who asserted, “for God intended his Son generally for mankind, to lay down a sufficient price to the remission of sins for the same, even for the reprobate men.”¹¹ Finally, one more author from a later period should make the point clear. In his exposition of 2 Peter 2:1, Archibald Symson sets out three non-mutually exclusive explanations. The first notes that the passage does not prove that Christ died for the reprobate absolutely or effectually. The second is that we are always to invoke a judgment of charity to those within the church who embrace and profess the Christian faith. The third remark, however, is the most interesting one:

Or finally in regard that in a large sense, all to whom the Gospel comes may be said to be bought by him; yea all men because the price by him paid, is sufficient to ransom all; neither is it by any default therein, any perish, but through their own wickedness and unbelief.¹²

From the above, certain central themes can be identified. First, we can see from Zwingli, Bullinger, and Musculus that there was an existent doctrine of universal redemption of all men which was accomplished by the act of laying down the price of redemption for all men. This theological idea was adopted and developed by later Reformed theologians—all of whom preceded Amyraut and the Amyraldian question. For Perkins, Christ shed his blood for all men, as to the sufficiency of the satisfaction, thereby laying down a price for all men, that is, for their sufficient redemption. What prevents all men from being saved is unbelief. Fenner, in more sophisticated language, affirms that Christ, by way of a general intention, laid down a sufficient price for all men. And from Symson, the same sentiment is present: to lay down a price of redemption for a person was to have redeemed that person. What voids the proper and full application of this redemption for both Perkins and Symson is unbelief. It was only post-Calvin that the idea of Christ properly or actually laying down a redemptive price for all men was denied.

Bringing this back to Rainbow and Nettles, while it is true that the apostate can void, “as much as is in them” the redemptive price *for them*, this is essentially all that Calvin is stressing. Unbelief voids the application of the benefit of Christ’s death.¹³ However, it would be wrong to claim from this that, for Calvin, the laying down of the price of redemption for those apostates and unbelievers was, itself, only a matter of human phenomenology. And so, Rainbow’s analysis, once again, treats Calvin as an isolated and a contextualized theologian. On the other hand, the

¹⁰Ibid., 105-106.

¹¹William Fenner, “Hidden Manna: Or The Mystery of Saving Grace,” in *The Works of W. Fenner. B. of Divinity* (Printed by E. Tyler for I. Stafford at the George near Fleet-Bridge, 1658), 388. Emphasis added.

¹²A. Symson, *An Exposition upon the Second Epistle General of Saint Peter: Plainly and Pithily Handled* (London: T. Cotes, 1632), 234. Symson’s name is sometimes spelled Simson or Simpson.

¹³In another place, Calvin says, “For though Christ has already come as the Redeemer of the world, *yet we know that this benefit is not come to all, and why? Because many through unbelief close the door against God and his grace through Christ.* Hence the faithful alone really know that God has spoken, and really partake of his favor, and for this reason, because they hear his voice; that is, they first by faith receive what God offers, and then they fall not away from his truth, but continue in the obedience of faith to the end” (Calvin, on *Zechariah* 6:15).

interpretation of Calvin, which locates his theological expression in the same stream as that of Zwingli, Bullinger, Musculus, and others, provides a better explanatory paradigm for understanding Calvin's theology. Seen in this way, Calvin held that Christ actually had redeemed all men generally and particularly, insofar as Christ had actually laid down a full redemption price for all men. However, in terms of application, the benefit of this price is voided by personal unbelief.

Calvin on "All," "Classes," and "World"

Part of the modern insistence that Calvin believed in a limited satisfaction is the belief that in 1 Tim 2:4-6, he opted for a reading of these verses which does not lend support to an unlimited satisfaction. Rainbow, for his part, further argues that the apparent universalism in Calvin's expression is just that, *apparent*. Nettles explains:

Calvin's discussion of 1 Timothy 2 gives a highly pertinent bridge to this discussion. In this place he quite clearly asserts that Paul does not mean each and every individual by his use of the words "all" and "world." Confronted with the challenge that the phrase, "willeth that all men be saved" contradicts predestination, Calvin turned aside that application of the phrase. Calvin believed that Paul referred to "classes and not of individuals." . . . In putting forth his interpretation, Calvin insisted that the word *all* should "always be referred to classes of men but never to individuals" (305).

The suggestion seems to be, then, that for Calvin, "all" functioned simply to denote classes or peoples as a general statement. Nettles further hints at this when he later adds,

That all men, that is, both Jew and Gentile, all classes and nations of men, are included in Christ's sacrifice and intercession justified Paul's mission to the Gentiles and calls for the universal proclamation of Christ as the only Savior of the world, freely available for all that will come to Him. By *all* Calvin referred to the New Covenant provision that brought the Messiah to people of every tongue, and tribe, and nation, none of them being omitted—both circumcision and uncircumcision may claim the Messiah as theirs for there is one Mediator between God and Man (306).

Thus Calvin, according to Nettles, only meant to posit a general or indefinite qualitative statement regarding the death of Christ, whereby, phenomenologically no person is to "view" himself qualitatively excluded from this position. "All," for Calvin, would have no real quantitative extension and never mean that Christ literally died for the sins of all men. In order to evaluate this claim, one must first survey Calvin's relevant statements on this verse range:

But I say nothing on that subject, because it has nothing to do with this passage; for the Apostle simply means, *that there is no people and no rank in the world that is excluded from salvation*; because God wishes that the gospel should be proclaimed to *all without exception*. Now the preaching of the gospel gives life; and hence he justly concludes that God invites all equally to partake salvation. But the present discourse relates to *classes*

of men, and not to individual persons;¹⁴ for his sole object is, to include in this number princes and foreign nations. That God wishes the doctrine of salvation to be enjoyed by them as well as others, is evident from the passages already quoted, and from other passages of a similar nature. . . . And one Mediator between God and men. This clause is of a similar import with the former; for, as there is one God, the Creator and Father of all, so he says that there is but one Mediator, through whom we have access to the Father; and that this Mediator was given, *not only to one nation, or to a small number of persons of some particular rank, but to all*; because the fruit of the sacrifice, by which he made atonement for sins, *extends* [Latin: *pertinere*] *to all*. More especially because a large portion of the world was at that time alienated from God, he expressly mentions the Mediator, through whom they that were afar off now approach. The universal term all must always be referred to classes: of men, and not to persons;¹⁵ as if he had said, that not only Jews, but Gentiles also, not only persons of humble rank, but princes also, were redeemed by the death of Christ. Since, therefore, he wishes the benefit of his death to be common to all, an insult is offered to him by those who, by their opinion, shut out any person from the hope of salvation (Calvin on 1 Timothy 2:4-5, emphasis added).

Using different language:

Who does not see that the reference is to orders of men rather than individual men? Nor indeed does the distinction lack substantial ground: what is meant is not individuals of nations but nations of individuals.¹⁶ At any rate, the context makes it clear that no other *will of God is intended than that which appears in the external preaching of the Gospel*. Thus Paul means that God wills the salvation of all whom He mercifully invites by preaching to Christ.¹⁷

On 1 Tim 2:4, Calvin in his *Institutes* says, “By this, Paul surely means only that God has not closed the way unto salvation to any order of men; rather, he has so poured out his mercy that he would have none without it.”¹⁸

When we read Calvin’s language of classes and orders, we must ask ourselves, “Did Calvin effectively mean *some men of all kinds*, or did he mean *all men of every kind*?”¹⁹ The idea that Paul, and by extension Calvin, meant some of all kinds of men

¹⁴Latin: *At de hominum generibus, non singulis personis, sermo est*. See John Calvin, *Corpus Reformatum, Joannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, ed. G. Braum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss (Brunsvigae: Apud C.A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863-1900), 52:268.

¹⁵Latin: *Particula universalis semper ad hominum genera referrri debet, non ad personas: ac si dixisset, non solos Iudaeos, sed gentiles quoque: non solos plebeios, sed etiam principes redemptos esse morte*. See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 52:270.

¹⁶Latin: *Non singulos generum, sed genera singulorum notari*. See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 52:303-04.

¹⁷John Calvin, *The Eternal Predestination of God* (London: James Clark, 1961), 108-109. Emphasis added. See also, John Calvin, *The Secret Providence of God*, trans. by John Lillie (New York: Carter Brothers, 1840), 28-29.

¹⁸John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 2:984.

¹⁹One might insist that by the terms “classes” and “orders” Calvin means only

dates back to Augustine. Augustine adopted the reading that the will of God in view here is the secret will. This assumption forced him to interpret the phrase “all men” as something like, all kinds of men, or men of all kinds of classes and races, not actually all men quantitatively. Thus, for Augustine, “all men” has a qualitative emphasis. The reader needs to understand that, for Calvin, the will of God is the revealed will, not the secret. It is the will “made known in the Gospel”²⁰ such that, for Calvin, recourse to Augustine’s strategy is unnecessary.

Given this, it would be impossible for Calvin to imagine that by the revealed will, God only desires the salvation of men (in abstraction) of every kind. The claim that Calvin meant only men of all kinds, or abstract classes, itself fails to attend to Calvin’s own expression from all of his comments on this passage. From his sermons on 1 Tim 2:4-6, Calvin expressly says,

Yet notwithstanding, (as we have here exhorted) let us not leave off, to pray for all men in general: For S. Paul shows us, *that God will have all men be saved*, that is to say all people and all nations. And therefore we must not settle ourselves in such sort upon the diversity which is seen amongst men, that we forget *that God has made us all in his image and likeness*, that we are his workmanship, that he may stretch forth his goodness over them which are at this day far from him, as we have a good proof of it.²¹

For Calvin, the phrase “all people” or “all nations” is distributed to mean all men of all people and all nations. Note also Calvin’s reference to all men being “image bearers” which is his way of emphasizing our equality as created children of God. Calvin makes the point that no one is to be excluded, nor is any man to exclude themselves, because the gospel is to be preached to all without exception. Indeed, Calvin notes that the gospel is not to be limited to a small number of individuals, or only to one nation, but to all. The restrictive reading of Calvin, in effect, reverses Calvin’s points. Implied in the restrictive reading is the idea that God wills that some men, or some individuals of all nations to be saved, which is the idea Calvin seeks to exclude when he says, “what is meant is not individuals of nations,” but “nations of individuals.” That is, whole collections of particulars. When Calvin refers to “individuals” his intent is to exclude the idea of “this person, but not that person.”

abstractions, not actual particulars. Theologically, the problem with this approach is that it has the will of God, itself, terminating upon abstractions or qualities and not on any specific persons. Turretin rightly rejects this idea: “The will of God is not indeed terminated on the classes, but on the singulars collected from them, and ought not therefore to be carried further to individuals. Thus when we say that we must pray for any people, we do not wish to pray for states and conditions of men, but for the undivided singulars in each class; not definitely for individuals, but indefinitely for any people; not so much positively (as if we should include all and particular persons in our prayers) as negatively (because we exclude no one precisely from our prayers)” (Turretin, *Institutes of Eclentic Theology*, 1:409-410). Even for Turretin, the term “individuals” denotes the equivalent of, “this man but not that man.” Turretin goes on to insist that Paul’s actual meaning is “some men of all kinds,” and not simply, “men of all kinds.” The problem is underscored by the fact that we do not pray for kinds of men, but actual particular men of every kind. Hence, we do not pray for abstractions either.

²⁰See also Calvin’s use of the same expression in his comments on 2 Pet 3:9 where he identifies the will of God in view as the revealed will by which God desires the salvation of the whole human race.

²¹Calvin, *Sermons on Timothy*, 160.

The will of God (namely, the will of God revealed in the gospel) is not to be limited to this or that individual, to the exclusion of others, but is to be extended to all persons in a class.

There are other examples of this juxtaposition in Calvin's writings. In each case, the stress is on the rejection of the idea of one person, to the exclusion of others, or as opposed to the whole class. Calvin writes,

And as the great majority of men, despising all modesty, rush headlong into indiscriminate licentiousness, *the prophet speaks not only of individual men, but of whole nations*;²² in other words, he affirms, that however men may conspire among themselves, and determine to attempt this or that with great hosts, yet shall their purposes be brought to nought, because it is as easy for God to scatter multitudes as to restrain a few (Calvin on *Psalms*, 33:10, emphasis added).

Rather, he is merely taking away arrogance and rash overconfidence in our own strength so that after the Jews have been rejected, the Gentiles, received into their place, may not exult more wildly. Yet, he there not only addresses believers but in his prayer includes also the hypocrites, who gloried only in outward show. *And he does not admonish individual men, but makes a comparison between Jews and Gentiles*;²³ and he shows that the Jews in being rejected underwent the just punishments of their unbelief and ingratitude (Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.22, emphasis added).

We therefore teach that faithful ministers are now not permitted to coin any new doctrine, but that they are simply to cleave to that doctrine to which God has subjected all men without exception. When I say this, I mean to show what is permitted *not only to individual men but to the whole church as well* (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.8.9, emphasis added).²⁴

In these three examples, Calvin is not alluding to "classes" as abstractions devoid of particulars. Rather, his intent is to prevent or deny the exclusion of "individuals" as proper members of the class. When Calvin says, "not to individuals," but "to classes," as a plural, he means, "not to this or that man," to the exclusion of others, but "to all men of every class," inclusively. The problem for Nettles, along with Nicole, Helm, and Rainbow is that they read Calvin uncritically as if he were asserting Augustine's hermeneutic, when a more thorough investigation reveals otherwise. When read in the context of his entire corpus, there is no evidence of limited satisfaction in Calvin's comments on these verses. Rather, there is evidence for unlimited satisfaction. Thus, Calvin says, "the fruit of the sacrifice, by which he made atonement for sins, extends to all," and, "Since, therefore, he [Christ] wishes the benefit of his death to be common to all an insult is offered to him by those who,

²²Latin: *Imo quia maior hominum pars contempta modestia, in confusam licentiam fertur, non de singulis tantum hominibus, sed de totis populis loquitur propheta, ac si diceret.* See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 31:329.

²³Latin: *Neque enim singulos homines admonet, sed comparatione inter Iudaeos et gentes posita.* See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 2:416.

²⁴Latin: *Hoc quum dico, non tantum ostendere volo quid singulis hominibus liceat, sed quid etiam universae ecclesiae.* Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 2:852.

by their opinion, shut out any person from the hope of salvation.”²⁵

In each case, when Calvin refers to “all,” he means all people of every kind or class or order. “All” for Calvin functions in this inclusive quantitative and qualitative sense. We can see from Calvin’s writings, explicit times when he abandons this alleged rule. For example, Calvin on 2 Pet 3:9, adopts a universal reading that God desires the salvation of all men, the whole human race. And in another place, Calvin specifically says that by the term “world” he expressly means all mankind. For example, Calvin writes,

Whenever, therefore, we hear this designation applied to the devil, let us be ashamed of our miserable condition; for, whatever may be the pride of men, they are the slaves of the devil, till they are regenerated by the Spirit of Christ; for *under the term world is here included the whole human race* (Calvin on *John*, 14:30, emphasis added).

“But that the world may know.” . . . What chiefly deserves our attention is, that the decree of God is here placed in the highest rank; that we may not suppose that Christ was dragged to death by the violence of Satan, in such a manner that anything happened contrary to the purpose of God. It was *God who appointed his Son to be the Propitiation, and who determined that the sins of the world should be expiated by his death* (Calvin, *John*, 14:31, emphasis added).²⁶

Calvin on Expiation and Intercession

Nettles then expands his argument to assert that for Calvin the expiation and the intercession refer to the same group of people:

The effect of Christ’s expiation in His intercession is the seamless continuation of His favor, begun on the cross, toward those that the Father gave Him. Because of this He is called both our advocate and our propitiation for “he who procures grace for us must be furnished with a sacrifice.” . . . If Christ intercedes for us, then He has died for us; if He died for us, then He certainly will intercede for us. Since He has done the greater in dying, He cannot fail to do the lesser in interceding (307).

The problem is that neither this nor any of the quotations adduced by Nettles indicate that, for Calvin, Christ’s expiation and intercession respect the same group of people. While Calvin grounds the intercession in the expiation, he does not imply any limitation of the expiation to the scope of the intercession. For “whose sakes” does Christ intercede in Calvin’s mind? For Calvin, it is for the sake of believers. Calvin never attempts to enlist the scope of the intercession to limit the scope of the satisfaction.

One hopes that Nettles is not engaging in the fallacy of affirming the

²⁵Calvin, *1 Timothy*, 2:4-5. Latin: *Nam sacrificii, quo peccata expiavit, fructum ad omnes pertinere*. See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 52:269; Latin: *Quum itaque commune mortis suae beneficium omnibus esse velit*. See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 2:270. The better translation of *pertinere* is probably “concerns,” “pertains,” or “applies.”

²⁶Calvin on *John* 17:9 holds that the “world” signifies the world of the non-elect. There is no absolute rule to invoke when reading Calvin’s many universal expressions.

consequent: If A then B, B therefore A. While it is true that if Christ is praying for us, he must have died for us (as his prayer is grounded in his death), it does not follow that if Christ died for us (as men) that he will effectually pray for us. If this is what Nettles is arguing, this is a basic logical fallacy. It may be that the “us” for Nettles represents the qualified idea of “we who believe” which would be an unstated premise. If that is so, then all that is being asserted is if Christ intercedes for us, who believe, then he died for us, who believe. If he died for us, who believe, then he will certainly intercede for us, who believe. If Nettles means to affirm the first, then not only is he invalidly affirming the consequent, but also projecting his own *a priori* beliefs and the same fallacy into Calvin. For example, there is no necessary reason to believe that, for Calvin, Christ’s high priestly intercessory prayer limits the scope of the expiation. That is a “grand assumption” behind many arguments for limited satisfaction in Calvin’s theology.

Against this assumption, Musculus is historically instructive. Musculus, by way of the French Reformer, Augustine Marlorate:

M. [Musculus] Moreover it is the office of a Mediator not only to pray but also to offer. And he offered himself upon the Cross for all men. For (as says Paul) “Christ died for all men.” Finally Saint John says that he is the “propitiation for the sins of the whole world.” *How then says he that he prays not for the world seeing he died for all men, and was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world?*²⁷

Musculus does not see a contradiction between Christ’s universal expiation and his limited intercession. Therefore, one cannot presuppose that in early Reformation theology, including Calvin’s, the existence of a one-to-one correspondence between the intercession of Christ and the satisfaction of Christ. Such an assumption is foreign to Calvin, and the other Reformers.

Calvin on Christ’s Death and its Infallible Application

Nettles’ next line of argument is the suggestion that salvation is infallibly applied to all for whom it was purchased. Nettles:

God is for us, not against us, in all these trials because He spared not His own Son; and that was precisely for the reason that He might grant His elect all that the Son brings in His substitutionary death and resurrection with the intercession that follows. . . . The argument, Calvin observed, is from the greater to the lesser—“since He had nothing dearer, more precious, or more excellent than His own Son, He will neglect nothing which He foresees will be profitable to us.” The giving over to death of God’s Son naturally means the bestowal of all blessings that are resident within this death; the Father will never fail to bestow what the Son has purchased to those for whom He has purchased them (312–313, emphasis added).

Nettles is asserting the basic argument that all for whom Christ died, salvation is infallibly purchased and applied. Then, by way of a standard form of a *modus tollens* argument, it is claimed that if salvation is not applied to a given man, Christ,

²⁷Augustine Marlorate, *A Catholike and Ecclesiasticall Exposition of the Holy Gospel after S. Iohn*, trans. Thomas Timme (Imprinted at London by Thomas Marshe, Anno Domini, 1575), 560. Emphasis added.

therefore, did not die for that given man. The critical weakness of the argument is there is no evidence in Calvin (as in Scripture) of this line of reasoning at all. On the contrary, for Calvin, many “souls” within the visible church have been “purchased” by the blood of Christ and yet are not saved. This fact alone should dispense with this argument.

As a theological excursus: the argument from the “lesser to the greater” regarding the alleged infallible application of the death of Christ relies on a chronologically later argument, which itself is never proposed by Calvin. The argument is based on Romans 8:32: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for *us all*, how will He not also with Him freely give *us* all things?” The proper scriptural sentiment paraphrased might look like this: “Seeing Christ died for us all, how much more will he give us, all things.” But this scriptural premise is unwisely converted into a formal premise, which might look something like this: “All—irrespective of belief or unbelief—for whom Christ died will infallibly be given all things.” Now this newly created “general” statement or “general” premise is converted into a *modus tollens* argument which will look something like this: “If any person is not infallibly given all things, then Christ did not die for that person.”

If, however, we reject the move to convert the Scripture premise into the above formal premise, the conclusion of the *modus tollens* does not follow as it begs the question. Paul is writing to believers.²⁸ All his predications are restricted to believers. It is believers for whom all things work for good. It is believers who are justified. It is believers for whom the Spirit intercedes. Paul assumes an unstated or enthymematic premise, that his readers comprise of the faithful, and so all conclusions, predications and assurances are limited to them. Thus, Paul’s point would look something like this: “Seeing that Christ died for us—who have believed—how much more will he not give us—who have believed—all things?” Even if we see the “us” as a group defined by the infallible election of God, nothing changes.²⁹ Paul’s *a fortiori* argument is still limited in its conclusions and application to believers. This is the basic sentiment Calvin on this chapter is seeking to draw out, not an argument for limited satisfaction.

Logically, the set “us” (v32b), if construed as believers should not be assumed to be identical with the set “all for whom Christ died.” If the set “us” respects all believers, then the conclusion to Paul’s *a fortiori* argument is limited to believers. The challenge needs to be made: “On what basis from the text do limited satisfaction proponents justify the term conversion?” If we accept that the “us all” (v32a) respects all mankind, as Calvin implies, would this then entail universalism? No. Again in terms of logic, Calvin (and Paul) would be operating on the assumption that the second “us” respects believers. And thus we would have a bi-conditional syllogism and argument: If A + B, then C. If Christ died for *us all*, and now that we also have believed, how much more will he also freely give us all things?

Paul follows this bi-conditional form exactly in Rom 5:8-10, when he states, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, *having now been justified by His blood*, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, *having been reconciled*,

²⁸In terms of logic, even if one insists that Paul is writing to the believing elect, the point of my argument remains unchanged.

²⁹If we assume that Paul speaks to believing elect persons, all that could be concluded is something like this: “Seeing that Christ died for us—we who are believing elect—how much more will he not give us—we who are believing elect—all things?”

we shall be saved by His life.” Here Paul identifies two conditions: 1) Christ died for us, and 2) now that we have been justified and reconciled he concludes: “much more then, shall we be saved from his wrath.” When Paul uses the same form of the *a fortiori* argument in 8:32, he has no need to restate the second condition, as it is obviously assumed, in that he is *now* expressly counseling believers. This is probably how Calvin also understood this passage. When Romans 8:32 is understood in this way, universalism is not entailed, as the *modus ponens* and *modus tollens* arguments are voided.

Coming back to Calvin, it is important to keep in mind that, for Calvin, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the first “us all” in Romans 8:32a, respects all mankind. We can discern this on the basis of his repeated verse conflation. Calvin conflates the “world” of John 3:16 with the “us all” of Romans 8:32a on a number of occasions. We know, also, that the “world” of John 3:16 for Calvin is all mankind, universally.³⁰ The conflation further supports the claim that, for Calvin, Christ died for all mankind. Examples:

So likewise, when it is said in the holy scripture, (1 Timothy 1:15) that this is a true and undoubted saying, that *God hath sent his only begotten son, to save all miserable sinners: . . .* And since it is said. *That God so loved the world, that he spared not his only begotten son: but delivered him to death for us* (John 3:16; Romans 8:32).³¹

Again:

But this must conduct us to God a great deal higher: that is, unto the inestimable love of God the Father, who spared not his only son, but delivered him to death for us [Romans. 8:32]. When the principal cause of our salvation is showed unto us, the scripture [John 3:16] sets before us the love of God: *God then so loved the World, as that he spared not his only son.*³²

And again:

Notwithstanding forasmuch as God has given his Son to death, as the Scripture bears witness, that he loved the world that he has not spared his only Son, but has delivered him up to death for us: Let us assure ourselves that God meant to show to our faces, that he laid upon him the curse due to us, so as the thing which we had deserved was laid upon the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.³³

Lastly, the claim that, for Calvin, those purchased blessings of salvation are infallibly applied to any and all for whom they were obtained is negated by the following statement from Calvin:

As for example, behold the Turks, *which cast away the grace which was purchased for all the world by Jesus Christ:* the Jews do the like: the

³⁰See Calvin’s comments on John 3:16-17.

³¹John Calvin, *Sermons on Psalm 119* (Audubon, New Jersey: Old Paths Publications, 1996), 133-134. Emphasis added. Original footnote cited inline in parenthesis.

³²John Calvin, *Sermons on Melchizedek & Abraham* (Willow Street, PA: Old Paths, 2000), 50-51. Emphasis added.

³³Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, 764. Emphasis added. See also Calvin’s remarks on Isaiah 52:12 in his *Sermons on Isaiah’s Prophecy*, 140-141; and in his *Sermons on Galatians*, 34.

Papists, although they say not so openly, they show it in effect. And all they are as well shut out, and banished from the redemption which was purchased for us, as if Jesus Christ had never come into the world. And why so? For they have not this witness, *That Jesus Christ is their redeemer.* and although they have some little taste, yet they remain always starved, and if they hear but this word, Redeemer, it brings them no substance, neither get they any profit by that which is contained in the Gospel. *And thus we see now, how men are not partakers of this benefit, which was purchased them by our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .* Therefore we must weigh that that Saint Paul says here, so much the more, to wit, that then we enjoy the redemption purchased by the death of Jesus Christ, when God bears witness that he is with us: when such a benefit is presented to us: and we can receive it by faith, thus we enjoy it. And this is the reason, why there are so few nowadays, that are reconciled to God, by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we see how a great part of the world deprives itself of this witness, *and we see how other[s] cast it away,* or at the least, profit so little by it, that Jesus Christ dwells not in them by faith, to make them partakers of all his benefits.³⁴

Here Calvin connects “grace” and redemption which are purchased for all the world, yet which are cast off. At this point, if we wish to sustain Nettles’ thesis, our interpretation of Calvin must become very contrived. For we must have a *purchased grace*, connected with redemption, which itself was not *redemptively purchased*.

Evidence for Limited Satisfaction in Calvin

In classical Calvinist scholarship, there are normally three lines of argumentation and evidence presented to prove that Calvin held to the doctrine of a limited satisfaction for the sins of the elect alone. The first one is normally Calvin’s statement to the Lutheran Heshusius. Given that Nettles does not reference this, however, I shall only attend to it briefly. The original statement from Calvin to Heshusius is,

But the first thing to be explained is, how Christ is present with unbelievers, as being the spiritual food of souls, and, in short, the life and salvation of the world. And as he adheres so doggedly to the words, I should like to know *how the wicked can eat the flesh of Christ which was not crucified for them?* and how they can drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins?³⁵

William Cunningham was probably the first to allude to this statement as evidence that Calvin held to a limited satisfaction doctrine:

This is a very explicit denial of the universality of the atonement. But it stands alone,—so far as we know,—in Calvin’s writings, and for this

³⁴Calvin, *Sermons on Timothy*, 177, 178. Emphasis added.

³⁵John Calvin, “Clear Explanation of Sound Doctrine Concerning the True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, in Order to Dissipate The Mists of Tileman Heshusius,” in *Selected Works of John Calvin*, ed. Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 2:527. Emphasis added. Latin: *Scire velim quomodo Christi carnem edant impii, pro quibus non est crucifixa, et quomodo sanguinem bibant, qui expiandis eorum peccatis non est effuses.* See Calvin, *Calvini Opera*, 9:484.

reason we do not find much upon it; though, at the same time, we must observe, that it is not easy to understand how, if Calvin really believed in a universal atonement for the human race, such a statement could ever have dropped from him. We admit, however, that he has not usually given any distinct indication, that he believed in any limitation as to the objects of the atonement; and that upon a survey of all that has been produced from his writings, there is fair ground for a difference of opinion as to what his doctrine upon this point really was.³⁶

Cunningham, and many others, have failed to take note that Calvin does not use the word “reprobate” but rather the word “ungodly.” If Calvin had used the word reprobate, then there would be strong evidence for limited satisfaction in Calvin’s theology.

After noting Nicole and Helm both reference this comment, Rouwendal acknowledges that the comment to Heshusius is in a single isolated tract on the subject of communion and not on the redemption of Christ, and it is not credible to use this one statement to ignore Calvin’s many statements that Christ died for the whole world. He points out that Calvin does not actually say that Christ did not die for “some” ungodly or that Christ did not die for all men, but simply that Christ did not die for the ungodly. Rouwendal’s explanation of this comment in light of Calvin’s wider theology is:

In the immediate context of the quoted sentence, he uses the argument that if Christ were present corporeally, the ungodly would eat his flesh and drink his blood, which Calvin deemed impossible. Hence, it is not implausible to interpret the quoted words as follows: “I would like to know how the ungodly can eat from Christ’s flesh, and how they can drink the blood of which they have no part through faith.” Another (maybe even more plausible) interpretation would be that since the context is about eating and drinking the flesh and blood of Christ by faith, Calvin here had in mind the efficiency of Christ’s death, so that the quotation can be read as follows: “I would like to know how the ungodly can eat from Christ’s flesh that was not crucified for them effectively, and how they can drink from the blood that was not effectively shed to reconcile their sins.”³⁷

The second line of argument pertains to Calvin’s use of “classes” and “orders” in 1 Timothy 2:4-6. As I have already responded to this, I need not attend to it here. The third line is Calvin’s comments on 1 John 2:2. Regarding Calvin on this verse, Nettles says,

Calvin’s comments on the next phrase in 1 John, “And not for ours only,” etc. fits with his comments on 1 Timothy 2. Calvin asked “how the sins of the whole world have been expiated.” Some dream that the reprobates and even the devils themselves eventually find salvation

³⁶William Cunningham, “Reformers and Theology of the Reformation,” in *Collected Works of the Rev. William Cunningham* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1862), 1:396. Cunningham attempts to ground his case in his interpretation of Calvin’s exegesis of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 John 2:2; Cunningham, 400.

³⁷Rouwendal, “Calvin’s Forgotten Classical Position,” 330-331. See also Thomas, 39-40 (footnote 58).

through Christ's expiation, a notion that Calvin calls the "dreams of the fanatics" and "a monstrous idea not worth refuting." Some apply the formula that "Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world but effectively only for the elect," as an explanation of the text; that was common among the scholastics, and Calvin affirms that the theological proposition is in itself true. That proposition, however, does not apply to this case for the answer is simple. "John's purpose," Calvin states, "was only to make this blessing common to the whole Church." He then clearly states the same principle already used in 1 Timothy, "under the word 'all' he does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe and those who were scattered through various regions of the earth." The language is appropriate for such a use, for by it "the grace of Christ is really made clear when it is declared to be the only salvation of the world." Truly there is no other name.

His universal language, therefore, in relation to Christ's atoning work, without exception, finds its meaning in the context of these three things: one, Christ alone is the savior of all who will be saved and there is no other savior; two, it is a linguistic device to express the expansion of the Messiah's saving work beyond the Jews to the whole world, that is, the New Covenant inclusion of the Gentiles, the uncircumcised; three, Calvin explicitly says that Christ's propitiatory work, both in justification and intercession, does not include the reprobate, and thus includes only the elect (307-308).

This is all he gives us to understand Calvin's explication of 1 John 2:2.³⁸ First, for Calvin the concern is the claim that all men, elect and non-elect, even demons, will someday be saved. And so, Calvin, while committed in principle to the Lombardian formula, does not want to allow Georgius' false doctrine of absolute universalism any exegetical foothold. It is probably the case that Calvin understood the Greek *hilasmos* or the Latin *propitiatio* of 1 John 2:2 as referring to the efficacy of the expiation. In other words, its effectual application and power in the same way Girolamo Zanchi interpreted this verse.³⁹ If this is so, this would not only explain Pighius's⁴⁰ and Georgius's use of this verse, but also explain Calvin's singular move to a particularist reading of this seeming universal text—something which has no other precedent in Calvin's writings other than his reading of "field" and "world" in Matt 13:28 and where he again follows Augustine. It is in this light that he settles for something similar to Augustine's reading of the passage. Second, there is no evidence that Calvin is parsing the word "world" along ethnic lines. Further, the *world* for Calvin, contrary to Nettles' assertion, does not represent "classes" or "orders," or "Gentiles," even elect Gentiles, or even believing Gentiles, but believers simply considered. Calvin is not, therefore, applying his 1 Tim 2:4 "rule." In Calvin's mind, John speaks to believers being scattered throughout the world.

Third, in his tract, Calvin most likely follows the basic medieval model of

³⁸Nettles overstates his case when he inserts the clause "without exception."

³⁹Hierome Zanchius, *Speculum Christianum*, trans. Henry Nelson (London: Printed by George Eld, 1614), 347.

⁴⁰See also Calvin's earlier rebuttal of Pighius: "however he may mangle this sentence, he can never stretch its efficacy to cover [Latin, *extendat*] all men"; Calvin, *The Eternal Predestination of God*, 114.

stating two sides of a question or problem, and then positing the solution.⁴¹ On one side, he has identified Georgius' claim that all men will be saved, ultimate universalism. On the other side, it is "incontestable that Christ came for the expiation of the sins of the whole world." Calvin's solution is to undercut Georgius' appeal to this verse by positing that, while it is true that Christ so suffered for all the world, with regard to his expiation, all that John is saying in this verse, is that the benefit of Christ's death is applied to the "believers" scattered throughout the world. We can see this because of Calvin's use of the Latin word *extendo* in both the tract and in the commentary, respectively:

And not for ours only. He added this for the sake of amplifying, in order that the faithful might be assured that the expiation made by Christ, *extends* to all who by faith embrace the gospel. . . . who under this pretense *extend* salvation to all the reprobate, and therefore to Satan himself.

We even see the same English and Latin word being used in his comments on Romans 5:18:

He makes this favor common to all, because it is propounded to all, and not because it is in reality *extended* to all; for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God's benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive him.

For Calvin, while the expiation is for all the sins of the world, the application, i.e., its extension, which he also calls its efficacy, is limited to the faithful, as Calvin goes on to explain in his tract:

For the present question is not how great the power of Christ is or what *efficacy* it has in itself, but to whom he gives Himself to be enjoyed. If possession lies in faith and faith emanates from the Spirit of adoption, it follows that only he is reckoned in the number of God's children who will be partakers of Christ. The evangelist John sets forth the office of Christ as nothing else than by His death to gather the children of God into one (Jn 11:52). Hence we conclude that the reconciliation is offered to all through Him, *yet the benefit is peculiar to the elect*, that they may be gathered into the society of life. However, while I say it is offered to all, I do not mean that this embassy, by which on Paul's testimony (II Cor 5.18) God reconciles the world to Himself, reaches to all, *but that it is not sealed indiscriminately on the hearts of all to whom it comes so as to be effectual.*⁴²

After noting that within Calvin we can identify two seemingly contradictory strands of thought, Bell posits an explanation. First, Bell notes that within Calvin's writings there is evidence of clear universalism with regard to the satisfaction.⁴³ Then he acknowledges the evidence of particularism with regard to the death of Christ, "Even the ungodly are included precisely because Calvin consistently teaches that 'no one is excluded from this salvation' wrought for all by the death of Christ,

⁴¹Ibid., 148-9.

⁴²Ibid., 149. Emphasis added.

⁴³Charles Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1985), 14. This brings us back to Calvin's statement to Heshusius.

provided they believe.” From this Bell asks the question:

Does this mean that Calvin’s teaching at Comm. 1 John 2:2 is contradictory? It does not! Calvin’s use of the term ‘all’ becomes consistent when we bear in mind the relation between atonement and faith in his writings. In several places he maintains that while Christ’s atonement is universal, the gift of faith is limited to the elect. This is precisely the situation at 1 John 2:2. Concerning the words ‘and not for ours only, but also for the whole world’, Calvin states that these are included ‘for amplification’, to convince believers that Christ’s expiation ‘extends to all who by faith embrace the Gospel. The key term in his entire discussion here is ‘faith.’ Because faith is given only to the elect, Calvin rejects the idea that salvation extends ‘to all the reprobate and even to Satan himself’. He rejects this idea not in light of the extent of the atonement, but of the extent of saving faith. Because faith is the interpreting factor in this passage, Calvin can state that under the term ‘all,’ John ‘does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe.’⁴⁴

Given the wider data from Calvin, this is probably the best explanation. Calvin on 1 John 2:2 seeks only to speak to John’s meaning of “world” in this verse, thereby limiting the efficacy of the satisfaction to believers only, not that Calvin was positing a general statement about the extent of the satisfaction, as *he* understood the satisfaction of Christ. Indeed, as part of the “problem,” his wider understanding is that it is “incontestable that Christ came to expiate the sins of the world.”

Conclusion

In Nettles’ treatment of Calvin, there are essentially six lines of argumentation and response. First, Nettles’ misstep is that he retrojects in Calvin what is clearly a later version of substitutionary atonement, one which is defined and determined by the dictates of a limited satisfaction for the sins of the elect alone. When Nettles reads Calvin affirming that Christ died in our place, Nettles assumes this means essentially the same thing for Calvin as it did for Owen, and as it does for Nettles. At this critical juncture, Nettles fails to engage Calvin historically, as a theologian in his own context. We have seen evidence that for the early Reformers, there was a model of vicarious satisfaction, that neither entailed some sort of debased form of the governmental view of the satisfaction, nor a limited satisfaction for the sins of the elect alone. However, if this model of satisfaction can be allowed to stand and be understood on its own terms and merits—that is, as not being recast as some sort of pre-Grotian anomaly, or some distortion of Augustinianism (as Rainbow suggests)—this can give us space to treat Calvin on his own terms. His various statements can now be seen as meaningfully coherent in the light of this wider theological context.

Second, this essay has sought to demonstrate that the doctrine of Christ’s sufficient satisfaction for all the sins of all men is not the same as Owen’s commitment to the revised version of the Lombardian sufficiency-efficiency formula. This being the case, it is impossible to use this as a grid to explain many of Calvin’s universal statements. For Calvin, as one committed to the true sentiment of Lombard’s formula, Christ truly did suffer the curse for sin in behalf of all men. Yet he did this

⁴⁴Ibid., 15-16.

with the special intention that this be the means whereby the benefit of his work be “extended” to all the elect, to all the faithful.

Third, this essay has argued that the modern reader is confronted with a pivotal question: When Calvin spoke of “classes” or “orders” did he mean to parse or distribute those terms to mean either “some men of all kinds” or “all men of every kind”? Modern scholars like Nicole, Helm, Rainbow, and Nettles, assume the former, but without any direct evidence from Calvin. Indeed, in the case of 1 Tim 2:4-6, this interpretation is actually anachronistic, as Calvin is not speaking to the secret will of God, which was the key concept which motivated Augustine’s exegesis. All the internal textual evidence strongly suggests that for Calvin the terms “classes” and “orders” were meant to deny the idea that the grace of God belonged to privileged individuals or groups, meaning this individual, but not that individual, this group but not that group. He meant to include all individuals, all members, of every possible class or rank or order in society. No one was to be excluded.

Fourth, with regard to the expiation and intercession argument, there is no evidence in Calvin that the intercession delimits the scope of the expiation or that both are restricted to the same group. All that can be shown, and which is entirely correct, is that, for Calvin the intercession is grounded upon the expiation, such that no expiation, then no intercession is possible. There is no evidence for the inverse, that if there is an expiation for a person, then there will be an effectual high-priestly intercession for that same person.

Fifth, with regard to the claim that, for Calvin, the benefit of Christ’s death is infallibly applied to all for whom Christ died. Such a proposition flies in the face of the scores of statements from Calvin where this cannot hold true. The argument that the expiation carries within itself its own application or that it infallibly purchases faith and salvation is a post-Calvinian argument. For Calvin, faith and salvation are purchased by Christ for all the world, but the application is conditioned by faith which can be voided by the sinner’s unbelief. In Calvin’s wider theology, the gift of faith to some is determined, not by the extent or nature of the satisfaction, but by election, and then secondarily by the effectual call.

Sixth, regarding the data within Calvin’s writings which suggests he was committed to a limited satisfaction for the sins of the elect alone, there are two competing methods when approaching Calvin on this topic. One method seeks to collate and identify all the varied and nuanced statements by Calvin which clearly speak to an unlimited expiation and redemption. This approach argues that the great body of data supporting this must regulate the three occasions which seemingly support the case that Calvin held to limited satisfaction. This side argues that these three instances must be read in the light of the larger body of evidence.

The other method argues that these three instances regulate and determine the meaning and intent of all that Calvin says regarding the extent of the satisfaction. What are these three instances? There is the famous statement Calvin made to Heshusius. Cunningham, while finding such a statement odd on the assumption that Calvin held to unlimited satisfaction for all sin, admits that it would be unwise to rest a case on this one statement. Then there is the argument from Calvin’s various comments on 1 Tim 2:1-6 which suggests a limited satisfaction for sin. Cunningham, and others, simply present, as it were, another grand assumption that the terms “classes” and “orders” either mean an abstraction or some men of every kind. And lastly, there are Calvin’s comments on 1 John 2:2, which, when understood against the backdrop of Georgius’ true universalism explain Calvin’s apparent need

to limit John's use of "world." There is no actual evidence that Calvin was, therein, positing any statement limiting the satisfaction as understood by Calvin generally, to the elect alone.

The claim that Calvin actually held to a doctrine of limited satisfaction for the sins of the elect alone, thereby placing Calvin on a line of discontinuity—in spite of all the identical or near-identical statements regarding the nature and extent of the satisfaction—is, indeed, an astounding claim to make. I would argue that there is no evidence in Calvin's writings which prove or entail the doctrine of a limited satisfaction for the sins of the elect alone. Rather, when the objections are removed, the evidence for Calvin's biblical universalism speaks for itself. Thus, Calvin's theology of satisfaction fits better with the Reformation's original, albeit forgotten, doctrine of universal vicarious satisfaction.

Book Reviews

A Biblical Theology of Gerassapience. By Joel A. A. Ajayi. *Studies in Biblical Literature.* Volume 134. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 267 Pages. Hardcover, \$15.99.

Perhaps one's interest in studying the themes of aging and wisdom grows more acute as he or she increases in age and the appellation of sagacity grows more and more elusive. Such was certainly the case for this reviewer. Toward that pursuit, Joel Ajayi has produced a thorough, scholarly, and thought-provoking book on the significance of aging and wisdom in the Old Testament. While he is careful to acknowledge that long life is certainly no guarantee of wisdom, Ajayi demonstrates a clear relationship between these two themes.

The book begins with a comprehensive literature review on the subject of elders in the Old Testament. Ajayi demonstrates detailed research that is critically analyzed. The author is not afraid to point to deficiencies within earlier works, but when he does, he carefully delineates his position with reason and research.

Throughout the work, the author displays keen language skills that are informed by Hebrew grammar, syntax, and ancient Near Eastern comparative analysis. He not only traces the various words and phrases used in the Hebrew Bible for elders, he demonstrates how they are used and connected. Similarly, in his discussion of wisdom, Ajayi both defines the term and analyzes its uses in Scripture, synonyms, characteristics, contextual parallels, and antonyms. After a systematic examination of the term, his summative definition (69 ff) is by no means original and understandably general, but captures the essence of this biblically rich concept. He helpfully demonstrates the intellectual as well as practical aspects of wisdom and accurately concludes that true wisdom ultimately finds its origin in Yahweh (74).

Ajayi acknowledges that the Bible offers no definition for "old age" (102); thus, any discussion of the role and significance of elders is depending on its use in context. Nevertheless, according to the author, the connotation of elders in the Old Testament appears to shift in "semantic nature and/or social religious function" (102) throughout the period recorded in Scripture. He maintains that the concept of elders in the Old Testament originally seems exclusively related to chronological age, but develops into a leadership function that may not necessarily refer to one who is advanced in age. Unfortunately, his tracing of such development is somewhat inhibited by his ambiguity regarding the historicity of the "real historic figures" of the pre-monarchical times (115). However, he finally concludes that the "folkloristic nature of several parts of these materials . . . are reflective of some transmitted traditions" (115).

Ajayi contends that the major function of old age, or gerassapience (a term he coined) is didactic. That teaching or guidance coupled with the respect inherent with seniority in the community allows for the leadership influence of elders. Ajayi traces many such evidences throughout Scripture concluding that the functional elements of gerassapience include: instruction, counsel/guidance, lifestyle legacies, and literary legacies (211-12).

Despite the obvious limitations of tackling two such broad fields as wisdom

and elders in the Old Testament, and occasionally getting sidetracked chasing text-critical rabbits, Ajayi more than admirably contributes to the field. The work is well-written, thoroughly researched, and meticulously documented. Students and teachers will find much to stimulate knowledge and further research. Where further analysis is needed, Ajayi helpfully points the way. Finally, readers will both experience the profound influence of many of the senior saints who have gone before us and be challenged to leave behind our own legacies of faith.

Deron J. Biles
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Jewish World Around the New Testament.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 560 pages. Softcover, \$60.00.**

The Jewish World Around the New Testament, released by Baker Academic, is a reprint of the WUNT monograph published in 2008. Around the time of its original publication came Bauckham's *Jesus and the God of Israel*. This collection of essays centered on the belief of early high Christology by the early church, whose doctrinal beliefs were framed by its mother religion—the Jewish monotheistic religion of Second Temple Judaism.

The Jewish World Around the New Testament, on the other hand, is a collection of essays without a common thesis running through the variety of writing. Instead, they represent a wide range of interests and discussions in the Jewish world for Bauckham and biblical researchers. This Jewish world is much more involved than simply the Torah, the New Testament accounts, and the significance of the temple in Jerusalem—although all of these are included. Bauckham extends the exploration to a wider range even within Second Temple literature, from the apocryphal *Martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah*, *2 Baruch*, and *Tobit*, to the peculiarities in the historical writings of Josephus. Bauckham is not in any way suggesting that noncanonical sources should be considered for canonization, but instead, by looking at how the Jewish world contextualizes the early Christians, Bauckham offers new lenses to glean ways of understanding a world that seems so far removed from the modern era.

All of the articles are reprints from as early as the seventies to 2008. They are all worth a second take and a second publication, judging by the contributions that they have made in the discussions surrounding Jewish literature as they relate to the rise of the Christian community in that period. Bauckham often responds to certain notable works, like J.D.G. Dunn's *The Parting of the Ways* for example, and carefully parses them for valuable insight into the Jerusalem church and their temple practices (187). Similarly, in "Pseudo-Apostolic Letters," Bauckham deals with the challenges posed by certain writings in the New Testament with pseudepigraphal tendencies and how these patterns parallel those reflected in Jewish pseudepigraphal writings (132-37).

Bauckham is careful not to blur the line between the canon as it stands from those works that are excluded from the canon. The book of Daniel, for example, is one that he undertakes as apocalyptic literature, but the discussion of the work is not reduced to the normal polarity of dating, which chooses between sixth or second century. Rather, he examines the complexities within the content of canonical works, positing the dating of the Daniel tradition as having "dual affinities," developed over time, incorporating Babylonian mantic wisdom as well as the Hasidic apocalyptic of the later years ("The Rise of the Apocalyptic," 46).

In ecclesial settings, these issues may not amount to much when delivering expositions of the canonical text, but in scholarly debates, these issues of the Jewish world matter a great deal. No student or teacher should shy away from these dialogues. Bauckham has done a great service to present the variety of positions as they stand and as they are juxtaposed with their contrary opinions.

Donald H. Kim

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation. By Richard Bauckham. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. 226 pages. Softcover, \$24.95.

In this brief work, Bauckham, well-known professor of New Testament studies, addresses the question of the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. He begins the work with the concept of the dominion of mankind in the creation account. This foundation leads to a multitude of issues which Bauckham introduces in four respective chapters throughout the remainder of the book. Underpinning the entire work is Bauckham's belief that the relationship of humans to other creatures, including both animate and inanimate, is more complex than the traditional concept of stewardship or dominion. The relationship, which Bauckham calls the community of creation, involves interconnectedness and interdependence of all living things instead of the idea that the non-human creation was created for the sake of humans, an idea not even present in the creation account.

Admitting the wide influence that the concept of stewardship has had upon Christian living, Bauckham notes several limitations of stewardship as a controlling model for understanding the relationship: it elicits an unwarranted hubris of humanity; it excludes, or at least minimizes, God's activity in the world; it lacks specific content; it sets humans over creation instead of within it; and it tends to isolate Gen 1:26 and 28 from the rest of Scripture (2–12). After an analysis of Genesis 1, he concludes that the text speaks to humanity's solidarity with all creation. Mankind, made in the image of God, is to exercise responsible care of creation, ruling not in a role that sets him over creation, but within the order and according to the example that God has set forth—one of kindness, compassion, and preservation.

In chapters two through five, Bauckham expands upon the synthesis that he offers in the first chapter. Using Job 38–39, and expanding upon the mandate of dominion found in Genesis 1, he argues that God desires that humans possess a cosmic humility. The relevance of the subtitle of the work comes out especially in chapter three. Writing, "This is a theocentric, not an anthropocentric world" (79), Bauckham argues from Psalms 104, 148, and Matt 6:25–33 that instead of setting humans apart from creation, the concept of dominion should take place in a community as humans relate to other fellow creatures in a reciprocal manner. In addition to those passages in the Old Testament that speak the praise of all creation, Bauckham sees the aspects of community in various texts which speak to the mourning and lamentation of the non-human creation. In chapter four, Bauckham examines the concept of wilderness, arguing that the distinction between wilderness and orchard in Scripture speaks "to the historical disruption between humans and wild nature" (115). Bauckham, in the final chapter, argues that the foundation that is set in the Old Testament is assumed going into the New Testament and that the New Testament often uses comprehensive language to include all creatures as a part of God's redemption which accomplishes "not the replacement but the renewal of

creation” (150).

This volume is a valuable contribution toward a proper understanding of what the Bible says about the non-human creation. Bauckham succeeds in showing that the Bible is about more than simply the relationship between humans and God. He should be commended in allowing the Scripture to drive his argument and in avoiding the current ecological crisis. He notes, however, that the recent interest of society in the relationship between humans and nature provides the context for reading “with our eyes retrained to see that the Bible also takes our relationship to the non-human creation with absolute seriousness” (146). Toward the end of the book, Bauckham probably oversimplifies the reason behind the modern Christian belief that the Bible is concerned with salvation history rather than creation theology. It can be argued that, in addition to “the technological project of domination” (150), the emphasis on individual salvation since the period of the Reformation has also played a major impact. Some readers may be uncomfortable with Bauckham’s acquiescence regarding an old earth and his high view of science. The reader may also feel at times that Bauckham is not going far enough in the way of applying what he says to Christian living. What he makes clear, however, is that there is much more work to be done in the area of the Bible and ecology. Bauckham’s most important contribution is that he raises numerous possible implications that a proper understanding of creation has upon systematic formulations of the doctrine of creation, the holistic nature of redemption, Christology (especially regarding the role of the cross), and the eschatological topics of the kingdom of God and the eternal state.

Steven L. James

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Godly Home.* By Richard Baxter. Edited by Randall J. Pederson. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 224 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Reading the work of Puritan authors can be an humbling experience. In an age when we believe we know more than everyone who has ever lived before us, reaching back to the authors of previous centuries requires a measure of humility and a receptive spirit. The work of Richard Baxter is generally well-known; therefore, those familiar with this author will not be surprised to hear that this volume speaks directly into the context of the twenty-first century church. *The Godly Home* is an edited and slightly updated version of the second part of Baxter’s *A Christian Directory*. The second part of that work specifically addresses “Christian Economics,” or family duties. In the introduction, J. I. Packer offers two reasons for reprinting this Puritan discourse on the family: 1) “in the Western world at least, and increasingly elsewhere, the family is in deep trouble;” and 2) “on this topic, no less than on many others, Richard Baxter was superb” (12).

After beginning with more general directions for marriage, Baxter moves from topic to topic addressing such ideas as family worship, the oversight and governance of families, the father’s role in managing a family, education of children, and the duties of various members of the family to each other. The structure is consistent throughout the work as he makes a statement (labeled as a “direction”) and then explains it. Thus, one can grasp the main ideas of a chapter merely by looking at the direction statements in each chapter.

This book is not for the casual reader who wants to feel better about his marriage or parenting. Instead, Baxter’s work serves as a source of conviction,

challenge, and introspection to the one who reads it. One section of the book that provides a great deal of challenge and conviction for the reader is Baxter's discussion of family worship. Family worship has become more popular in recent days as a discipline for Christian families. On many levels, it almost appears as a new concept. However, Baxter demonstrates that family worship has long been an element of the Christian life. He urges his readers to participate in worship as a family unit on a regular basis. In fact, he states, "We are bound to take all fit occasions and opportunities to worship God. Families have daily (morning and evening) occasions and opportunities; therefore, they are bound to take them" (94).

The weakness of this book comes from some of the cultural context of Baxter's writing that has not bridged the three centuries since its original publication. Much of the language has been modernized in this edition to avoid some of the awkwardness of seventeenth-century English, but not everything can be smoothed over by changing a few words. Even with some of the older language and contextual elements in place, this is still a volume worthy of the time necessary to read it. Overall, this edition of Baxter's work is in keeping with the quality and insight of his other writings. He successfully bridges the gap of more than 300 years since its original publication in most places and speaks directly to issues that we currently face in the twenty-first century. One should note, however, that this book is not light reading to be skimmed at one's leisure. Instead, it requires concentration and time to digest the substance of what Baxter believes to be God's instructions for the family.

Evan Lenow

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Politics for Christians: Statecraft as Soulcraft. Francis J. Beckwith. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010. Christian Worldview Integration Series. 175 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

In an era of statism and unpopular, unethical statesmanship, Francis Beckwith attempts to create a Christian worldview of political "soulcraft" based upon the need for Christian citizenship. Christians have inherited in the history of ideas the responsibilities for shaping the public arena. The main contention is phenomenological, that is, Christians should hold back in abeyance their political beliefs before they engage in the political spectrum. In this day of talk radio, pundits, spinoffs, and clichés, a phenomenological approach to politics is certainly needed, but difficult to achieve in the market place of ideas. However, his call for an understanding of the foundations of political science, its history, its laws, and its founders, should provide a fundamental origin for those duties as a citizen. After all, it is the wisdom of applying these precepts that makes political science not merely the accumulation of knowledge, but transformational values for the society. What better way for a Christian to transform the culture for Christ's values?

In his series preface, Beckwith addresses students with a personal tone, imploring them to integrate Scripture and faith with a unified private and public life. His introduction serves more as pedagogy for integration in education rather than an introduction to the book. Beckwith is then justifying his study as a part of the series for the Christian Worldview Integration Series. Finally, Beckwith addresses the "introduction" or thesis of his book: "In this book, *Politics for Christians*, the author discusses how Christians should think about their role in the public square. He argues that, liberal democracy, if properly understood, permits Christians to influence and shape their nation's political and cultural institutions in order to

advance the common good. Moreover, the liberties we cherish—such as the freedoms of speech, religion and association—seem to depend on a natural moral law that is best explained by the existence of God. The author introduces the reader to the study of politics by exploring several issues central to a Christian engagement in politics: the discipline of politics, liberal democracy and the Christian citizen, separation of church and state, secular liberalism and the neutral state, and God and natural rights” (26).

Beckwith would do better in introducing the reader to these essential issues in his book rather than spending time justifying the publisher’s series theme. Although admirable in his desire for uniting scholarship and theistic Christianity, Beckwith emphasizes the educational methods rather than introducing the content of political science.

In his introduction, Beckwith criticizes the approach of “politics plus the Bible,” offering his approach instead, “complete truth in Christian virtues” (34). Although he admits we live in a fallen world of politics, the Bible offers universal values through biblical virtues. He makes no apology for addressing conservative Christian values since liberals claim never to mix religion with politics. He summarizes chapter one, describing how universities and colleges teach liberal democracy, and how Christians can encounter those teachings with community-oriented interests. He spends the next three chapters emphasizing the issue of separation of church and state, the neutral approach to the state in liberal democracy, and the role of God, natural law, and the natural moral law. Beckwith claims there can be no neutrality in the politics of the state since politics is an outcome of social and political philosophy, a branch of ethics, or axiology, filled with presuppositions and value systems, including secular humanism or liberal democracy. He desires citizens to enter into a pluralistic society with a legal view that supports religious liberty and allows citizens to make a public case for their views (38). Therefore, in chapter four, Beckwith argues the liberal democratic state cannot remain neutral for those who oppose its views. In chapter five, Beckwith argues for the existence of natural rights based upon a natural moral law best accounted for by the existence of a God who is the source of the natural law (39). In the conclusion, Beckwith urges students to become involved with the “messy conflict” of politics (165).

Although Beckwith’s book serves as a short introduction to political philosophy, the preface to the series serves the instructor more than the student as the audience. He calls for a foundational understanding of the history of political philosophy, but only quotes or alludes to the classical theorists like Aristotle, Plato, Locke, and others, scarcely throughout the book. His contemporary approach emphasizes contemporary issues like separation of church and state, narrowing the scope of his book. A better historical survey for political philosophy is the historical collection of primary sources from Hackett publications, and a better integrative study of the Bible and politics is Wayne Grudem’s book from Zondervan publications, which actually practices the integration of Scripture with politics. However, Beckwith’s book is admirable for what it is, as a beginning book for students in political philosophy.

Harvey Solganick

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture. By J. Todd Billings. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 235 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

J. Todd Billings joins the collection of theologians writing on the subject of theological interpretation. Billings' purpose for writing is to provide an accessible resource on the topic for students and church leaders who may otherwise remain outside the direct impact of this development at the nexus of biblical studies, systematic theology, and hermeneutics. In accord with Billings' intent to provide a book which widens the influence theological hermeneutics, his work demonstrates the strengths of readability, explanation of unfamiliar terminology, clear organization and a broad scope rather than focusing on technical discussions.

Billings provides his reader the service of defining theological interpretation on the first page of the introduction. He defines it as "a multifaceted practice of a community of faith in reading the Bible as God's instrument of self-revelation and saving fellowship" (xii). He sets the interpretation of Scripture in the context of reading for the purpose of faith seeking understanding. Specifically, he asserts that the readers should approach with the expectation that Scripture will provide "an encounter with the triune God himself" such that the Word of God in Scripture is a guide to a life of faith (8). This approach to Scripture is placed in opposition to viewing the Bible as a storehouse of theological building blocks (propositions) on the one hand and a resource for authoritative warrant for the interests of the interpreter on the other hand. The foundation of the correct approach to Scripture is the acknowledgment that reading is a theological task which inescapably involves theological presuppositions. In contrast to historical-critical presuppositions, Billings opts for a reading based upon the rule of faith which "emerges from Scripture itself, but is also a lens through which Christians receive Scripture" and "identifies the center and the boundaries of a Christian interpretation" (29). In the body of the book, Billings provides discussion on the place of general hermeneutics and biblical criticism, the strong role the doctrine of revelation must take in theological interpretation, the impact of the reader's context, the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation, the value of pre-modern biblical interpretation, and scriptural interpretation as a spiritual discipline in the life of the church.

The value of the book is that it provides what the subtitle indicates: an entryway to the theological interpretation of Scripture. In doing so, Billings has provided many features helpful to churchmen and students where other works on theological interpretation fall short. One notable (if not altogether simple) feature is that Billings provides a definition for theological interpretation in the introduction to the book that is then explicated in a clear theological progression throughout the remainder of the text. The many strengths of the book include a constructive appreciation of pre-critical interpretation for modern interpretation, a strong connection between biblical interpretation and the spiritual life of the individual and church, a theological perspective on biblical criticism, the manner in which the Holy Spirit conducts a "varied yet bounded" work in interpretation, and the importance of revelation as a theological starting point for Scripture.

There is, however, a point of potential improvement with Billings' work. Chapter three, entitled "Revelation and Scripture Interpretation," provides an account of how Scripture relates to the revelation of God. The two consequent attributes of Scripture as revelation that influence interpretation are that Scripture

is inspired and is a canonical unity. Billings' point here follows that approach which argues Scripture is best understood in light of its relationship to God himself. This relationship is mediated through human elements which are specially used by God as his means for communication. Concern arises not in what is emphasized in terms of the Bible's authority as a function of how God uses it, but in what is omitted, specifically that the text itself is revelation and therefore inerrant and authoritative. The absence of explicit discussion on this point leaves Billings' reader open to wonder what the bottom line reliability of the Bible has for communicating God's revelation as opposed to other functional means of communication God may employ. Given Billings' overarching emphasis that interpretation is for the church, it is likely that he grants the text authority making this omission a point of emphasis, yet such a point deserves mention because of its importance. Overall, Billings has provided an excellent introduction to the benefits offered by theological interpretation that is unique to date in terms of its readability, breadth of discussion, and potential to edify the church.

Jon Wood

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Crossing Over Sea and Land: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period. By Michael F. Bird. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010. 208 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.

This book grew out of a footnote! The pregnant footnote was in *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission*, which Michael Bird wrote in 2006. In the footnote, he touched on the question of Jewish missionary activity in the Second Temple period based on his current research; however, he did not have an opportunity to explain properly his conclusions until this present volume (1). In *Crossing Over Sea and Land*, Bird asserts the lack of a concerted or organized Jewish missionary activity, thus offering "an update, revision, and sometimes a challenge" (viii, see 12-13) to his mentor Scot McKnight's earlier work, *A Light among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period*. Bird mostly sides with McKnight in demonstrating that the sparse Jewish missionary activity among the Gentiles did not help contribute to early Christian evangelism among Gentiles (6, 12-13). Thus, Bird demonstrates that these Jewish activities were not an organized mission (7, 76, 97-98, 132, 148-50). Proselytizing Gentiles was rare and spasmodic (149), and the conversions of Gentiles to Judaism usually occurred at the initiation of the Gentiles (13).

To modern Christians unfamiliar with these modern studies, an assertion of concerted Jewish missionary activity at any time may come as a surprise, yet this was the prominent scholarly view a century ago (8-9). Certainly orthodox Jews in Paul's day (Acts 4:15-18; 5:17-18, 27-28; 14:19; 17:5-9, 13; 18:12-13; 19:9; 21:27-28; 22:22) as well as today strongly resist what they call proselytizing, such as Christian evangelism among fellow Jews, but they rarely go on the offensive actively to seek converts to Judaism.

The extant evidence is fragmentary (a helpful appendix lists the source texts in the original language along with an English translation, 157-76), so it results in differing interpretations among scholars. Bird correctly describes how part of the controversy over whether or not the Jews had an organized mission is due to differing definitions of words such as "Jew" and "mission," so he starts this helpful

study by defining terms (17-43).

Bird effectively engages with and refutes scholars who assert organized Jewish missional activity, such as Louis Feldman (11, 111). Bird does a good job in examining and interpreting the pertinent Palestinian evidence (rabbinic literature, Qumran literature, and inscriptions, 55-76), Diaspora evidence (i.e., Philo, Josephus, and apologetic-propagandistic literature, 77-132), and the New Testament and early Christian literature (133-48).

Matt 23:15 is the strongest NT indication of a possible Jewish mission to the Gentiles, and the book title comes from this verse. However, Bird effectively offers three alternate, plausible interpretations for Pharisees and scribes crossing land and sea to make one convert that avoid the interpretation of proselytizing Gentiles: (1) converting other Jews to the Pharisee sect, (2) converting God-fearers into full Jews, or (3) converting God-fearers to a zealot-like rebellion against Rome (68-69). Yet, this reviewer disagrees with what Bird calls the clearest example of Jewish missional activity in the New Testament: Jewish Christian proselytizers (also known as Judaizers, although Bird dislikes this term) (136-37, 146). It seems they were simply a reactionary movement against Christianity, and they tried to reclaim Jews who became Christians rather than seeking to convert Gentiles.

Bird teaches theology at the Bible College of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. Along with N. T. Wright, Bird was a featured lecturer at the 2010 Institute for Biblical Research meeting in Atlanta. He is an engaging speaker, and in *Crossing Over Sea and Land* he gives a fascinating book that ought to be of interest to both Christians and Jews who are interested in their history, which in turn, helps one better understand both faiths today.

James R. Wicker
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis. By Craig L. Blomberg and Jennifer Foutz Markley. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 298 pages. Paperback, \$22.99.

Craig Blomberg has written an excellent volume on New Testament exegesis. Jennifer Markley, a former research assistant to Blomberg as well as graduate assistant at Denver Theological Seminary, wrote the first drafts of five of the chapters, but Blomberg gave the final touches on all chapters, so the book has a unified style throughout (ix). Gordon Fee's *New Testament Exegesis* inspired this present volume, which Blomberg intended to be more expansive (xii). Blomberg organizes his book around the ten primary steps in the process of exegeting the New Testament, and he devotes a full chapter to each step.

Blomberg aims at a large audience—both specialist and non-specialist, and those who know New Testament Greek and those who do not (xii). He does accomplish this purpose, giving ample explanations. He always translates the Greek; however, English transliterations would have made this handbook even more accessible to readers who do not know Greek (i.e., 154-59, 183-87). There are some helpful tables, such as the textual criticism worksheets and examples (30-35) and the one describing the differences between formal and functional equivalence Bible translation (46). However, a table that plots the major Bible translations on the formal/functional equivalence grid would be helpful. Baker Academic added sidebars throughout the text, and they are very handy for summarizing the major points in each chapter (i.e., 19, 87, 119, 126).

Strengths of the book include, first, ample illustrations for each exegetical lesson. Second, Blomberg devotes an entire chapter on how to interpret the most difficult texts (chap 7). Third, Blomberg gives fair and balanced descriptions, and critiques of various interpretive options on the difficult texts—often returning to them later in order to illustrate the use of different exegetical tools (e.g., on Heb 6:4-8: 102, 171-72, 221, 234-35)—or controversial issues, such as the inclusive language debate (50-53). However, this reviewer disagrees with his positive view on using inclusive language (52-53). Fourth, he employs helpful metaphors or illustrations to explain his points—especially at the beginning of his chapters (37, 63, 93). Fifth, the chapter on application is unusual in books on exegesis because it is such a subjective area; however, Blomberg does an excellent job in giving keys to the appropriate application of the text once one has thoroughly accomplished the exegesis—including the important admonition to “leave room for the Holy Spirit” (267).

This is an excellent textbook that will benefit any student or teacher of the Bible, including both those who know Greek and those who do not. For instance, in the necessary chapter on outlining, there is a section for people who know Greek (197-210) and a section for those who do not (210-17). However, here are some suggestions for some improvements in this handbook in addition to the suggestions above. First, expand the description of how electronic Bible software can aid in this process other than the very brief mention of the tools (130; 170n5; 196n1). Second, although the use of footnotes rather than endnotes in this book is a great formatting choice, it is not necessary to give a full citation of the first mention of a book in every chapter (such as the full citation of his *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* that continually reappears (i.e., 102, 124, 168, 228, 241). Third, the statement that the New International Commentary on the New Testament is based on the NIV translation is partly wrong (170n6). The author of each volume chose which text he used in his volume. Early volumes tend to use the ASV (e.g., Mark, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians by Grosheide), later volumes tend to use the NIV, and R. T. France (Matthew) used his own translation. However, these are minor criticisms; this handbook is excellent.

James R. Wicker

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume.* By Herman Bavinck. Edited and Abridged by John Bolt. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011. 848 pages. Hardcover, \$59.99.**

Abridging the work of a theological giant is a daunting task. Critics of the art of abridgment will invariably argue that what is cut entails a loss of substance that the virtue of brevity cannot overcome. In this volume, John Bolt attempts to present the core of Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck’s major work. Having recently translated the four volumes of *Reformed Dogmatics* into English, Bolt is uniquely suited to this task and undertakes it with a deep respect for and familiarity with Bavinck’s classic work.

In his abridgement, Bolt seeks to provide an “outline” of *Reformed Dogmatics* that will capture the heart of the original and aid readers in catching the flow of Bavinck’s theology. Before each chapter in his previous translation, Bolt provided a précis that outlined the content and flow of the subsequent section. These editorial reflections became the building blocks for this “one-volume summary of Bavinck’s

theology” (xi). In this task, Bolt strives “to preserve Bavinck’s own voice, even his own words, keeping [Bolt’s] transitions and paraphrases to a minimum” (xi). He hopes that “even the most attentive readers will hear only Bavinck’s voice throughout” (xi).

In order to achieve this condensed version, Bolt has added editorial footnotes that provide “additional historical comments when reductions in the text make them necessary, illustrative references to contemporary thinkers and issues under discussion in the text, and updated bibliographic material” (xii). These footnotes are the method Bolt uses to orient readers to the content that was omitted from the larger volumes. Bolt also develops some of Bavinck’s citations and clarifies historical matters mentioned that might confuse/mislead uninformed readers. These editorial notes are typically complementary to Bavinck’s positions. In the few cases where there is a contrast between an editorial comment and the main text, Bolt clearly marks this in his note. For example, in the discussion of the mode and manner of Baptism, Bavinck’s text reads, “Apart from Baptist churches and mission fields, most now know baptism almost exclusively as infant baptism” (667). Bolt comments in a footnote that “while this may have been true in Bavinck’s day, it clearly is not true in the third millennium thanks to the explosive growth around the world of evangelical Pentecostalism” (667n46). Again on Baptism, Bavinck states that “because of the rapid expansion and ordinary occurrence of adult baptism in the first and second centuries of the church, direct witness to infant baptism is lacking until the time of Tertullian” (670). Bolt notes, though, that “this judgment may be in error thanks to new historical evidence” (670n51). He then points to Joachim Jeremias’ volume on *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (London: SCM, 1960). Sometimes, too, Bolt adds a citation or expands on a reference that Bavinck originally omitted (e.g., 542n51). On the whole, Bolt’s notes are unobtrusive and enhance the volume’s usefulness to contemporary readers.

Most of the material Bolt omits consists of Bavinck’s extensive interaction with historical figures and his historical theological reflection. While many would consider this unfortunate because historical theology is one of Bavinck’s contributions, Bolt’s goal is simply “to reduce the amount of detail without sacrificing the important concreteness of Bavinck’s discussion” (xii). Instead of including Bavinck’s extended interaction, for example, Bolt might list which theologians Bavinck cited in the original (see, e.g., 530n17). In doing so, Bolt reduces the work from 58 chapters to 25, and 3,000 plus pages to just below 800. He also transfers some sections to others in order to streamline the topics and mirror the “classic order of Protestant Orthodoxy” (xii; e.g., the section on providence is rearranged, see 297n104).

Serious readers of Bavinck will still want to have the four volumes of *Reformed Dogmatics* on hand for reading and reference. To facilitate this cross-referencing, Bolt has helpfully maintained the bracketed section numbers of the translated volumes. In his editorial work, Bolt consistently takes “whole sentences and even paragraphs directly from the larger work but [rearranges] them to fit a new, abridged, narrative structure” (xiii). The result is a volume that is not quite Bavinck and not quite Bolt. However, as a gateway into Bavinck’s theological framework and approach to the task of systematic theology, Bolt’s Bavinck retains a distinctive voice that has considerable value and will serve well readers who lend him an ear.

Ched Spellman
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension. By Julie Canlis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 286 pages. Softcover, \$32.00.

Julie Canlis' book, *Calvin's Ladder* offers a new interpretation of the oft-ignored aspect of ascent in Calvin's theology. She assigns the theme an explanatory power greater than its role in Calvin's eucharistic theology (112-13). In the doctrine of spiritual ascent and the communion/participation with Christ to which the ascent leads, Canlis find a nuanced understanding of several other elements of Calvin's theology, especially Calvin's Christology and soteriology.

Canlis traces ascent theologies from Plato through Christian appropriations and rejections of that starting point (chap 1). Last on the itinerary, to borrow Canlis' metaphor, was Calvin's ascension theology, which, while retaining souvenirs of previous thinkers, had a different foundation. For Calvin, ascent was not a way to participate in an impersonal ontological divinity as for the Platonists but rather the means of ascent toward participation with the person of Jesus Christ (50).

Calvin understood creation in light of participation. In Canlis' perspective, Calvin wove Christ into the pattern of creation (71). By the Fall, therefore, mankind lost participation with Christ in creation (83-87). The way for Calvin's Christology is thus paved, for Christ restores that lost communion. Christ's mission not only rescues and appeases but more fundamentally it is the movement of Trinitarian love toward sinners bringing the lost back into communion with that love (92). The pneumatological implication is that the presence of the descended Spirit after Christ's ascension is the historical means of present communion until an eschatologically fulfilled communion is realized (117-18).

Canlis later describes the state of communion in the life of the believer. It is the Spirit who binds the believer in participation with Trinity in accordance with the imagery of adoption (148). The role of the eucharist in this is important. Calvin's doctrine was not developed simply as his contribution to the controversy of his day but rather the fullest expression of his doctrine of participation (161). In Canlis' participatory interpretation of Calvin's theology, the eucharist is not just a glimpse of ascent but rather that ascent seen in full exposure.

Canlis portrays the participatory theology of Irenaeus, providing an in depth treatment beyond mere comparison with Calvin's theology. She recognizes several differences, including Irenaeus' anthropological and Calvin's Christological starting points (230). Her understanding is generally more sympathetic toward Irenaeus, saying that his theology could act as a corrective to Calvin's (233). She fears that Calvin's participatory theology led to undesirable implications such as penal atonement, depravity, and moralism (243). This provides a starting point for a discussion of the value of these theologies for contemporary theological development.

One must be aware of Canlis' use of certain terms. The work stresses the concepts of ascent and participation—the former being the means of attaining the latter. She uses participation and communion (and less often union or presence) synonymously, or so it seems at first. She has a difference in mind to the point that she could say, "participation is nuanced with communion" (60). She says that all the terminology overlap in meaning but even then after having said that communion was the fruit of participation (14). What exactly the difference is unfortunately is not made clear from the beginning in any concise definitional form, leaving readers to discover for themselves the difference as they read. It would have been beneficial to have taken a moment to distinguish these ideas at the outset in order to avoid

any confusion in attempts to locate what must be a very fine line between the terms.

Generally, Canlis avoids the temptation to exalt the subject of her study to become the dominant or central theme of Calvin's theology. Rather, she hopes to bring into the open a significant trait others have often overlooked as, for instance, typified in his doctrine of adoption (131). Canlis still somewhat tends to see the doctrine above other theological characteristics. She criticizes Torrance's description of Calvin's mirror metaphor for not giving place to participation (80-81). She also thinks that the Spirit as bond of communion was significant enough that she finds it odd that the title of Book III of the *Institutes* did not include the Spirit (148). Additionally, although the ladder image is not foreign to Calvin's writings, Calvin himself did not use it broadly as Canlis does as a metaphor for ascent. The ladder as a unifying image for Canlis gains weight from Plato's initial usage in the Symposium.

Most admirably, Canlis' work does the work of a church historian with proper purpose. She does not forget that her effort is in service to the church and she believes that Calvin has something to say today (24), especially within her own Reformed tradition, which tends to play down such participation (13). As such, *Calvin's Ladder* gives the church a tool for crafting its own theology by rediscovering the communion and ascent that Calvin felt was so vital to the Christian life.

Peter Coleman

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism.* Edited by John Collins and Daniel C. Harlow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2010. 1397 pages. Hardcover, \$95.00.**

This is the first of its kind reference work that focuses on Second Temple Judaism. While the title says that it is a dictionary, it is not merely a source that provides definitions of terms. This is a synthetic research volume whose entries are major articles of the particular subject; complete with a review of the scholarly literature and issues, and a comprehensive bibliography. The dictionary consists of two parts: the first part contains major essays that make up 20% of the book. The second part contains 520 alphabetical entries.

The first part includes 13 major essays addressing issues and aspects of Judaism between the Hellenistic and the second century AD. The essays are, "Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship," "Jewish history from Alexander to Hadrian," "Judaism in the Land of Israel," "Judaism in the Diaspora," "The Jewish Scriptures: Texts, Versions, Canons," "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation," "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," "Dead Sea Scrolls," "Early Jewish Literature," "Archaeology, Papyri, and Inscriptions," "Jews among Greeks and Romans," "Early Judaism and Early Christianity," and "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism."

The second part contains the 520 entries. The entries focus on Second Temple Judaism in ancient Palestine, and the Diaspora. Emphasis is placed on entries that are important to Biblical studies, early Judaism, and history. Major topics include, "Primary Languages of Jews during the Second Temple period," "Secondary Languages" (e.g., Armenian, Ethiopic), "Literary Genres," "Biblical Texts, Versions, and Canon," "Hebrew Bible," "Apocrypha," "Pseudepigrapha and Hellenistic Jewish Texts," "Dead Sea Scrolls," "Philo of Alexandria," "Josephus," "Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism," "New Testament," "Rabbinic Literature," "Groups and Dynasties," "Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Life," "Biblical Figures

in Early Jewish Interpretation” (e.g. Abraham, Moses, Melchizedek), “Mythological and Primordial Figures, Places and Events” (includes Angels, Behemoth, Serpent, Sons of God), “Religious Beliefs and Influences, Practices” (including Asceticism, Burial Practices, Celibacy, Crucifixion, Intermarriage), “Religious Institutions,” “Jewish Revolts,” “Cities, Countries and Regions,” “Archaeology,” and “Modern Interpreters of Early Judaism.”

While the promotional literature states that many of the entries contain “cross-references,” a perusal of several articles shows that this is very minimal. For example, the entry on Jerusalem mentions *miqva’ot* (792) as spreading throughout Hasmonean Jerusalem, but it does not cross-reference the article on *miqva’ot* (924-256). This is also the case whenever there is an article on a major historical figure (e.g. Josephus, Paul) that does not have references to articles on that person’s writings. The entry for Qumran does reference the articles on Dead Sea Scrolls and Essenes but not any cross-listings for Josephus, Pottery, or Archaeology. While this type of cross-referencing would be cumbersome, perhaps indexes in the back would be beneficial to those using the dictionary. This would be especially valuable to those who are unfamiliar with the discipline of Early Judaism, but would use this dictionary as a valuable resource (e.g., students, scholars of New Testament or Early Church, pastors).

The field of Second Temple Judaism has emerged as a major discipline within scholarship and is only beginning to be explored by Christian scholars. While it has flourished as an auxiliary approach within history, rabbinic studies, and New Testament studies—it is now recognized as a stand alone discipline within the field of Biblical studies. This reference work provides an excellent introduction to what will be an important and viable aspect of Biblical studies, particularly historic Jesus studies, as well as the New Testament texts and early church fathers in their historic context and trajectory. The approach will be unique to seminary students and pastors. You will not find entries for Gospel or New Testament, but you will find each of the Gospels as well as the Jesus Movement and Jesus of Nazareth. Under the topic of Miracles and Miracle Workers there is no reference to the New Testament but a discussion of Miracles in Second Temple literature. While seminary students will initially find this dictionary difficult to use, once they are immersed in this field they will find that this dictionary will provide a wealth of data for study. One example is the entry on Beatitudes (4QBeatitudes) (434). While this entry is specifically focused on a Dead Sea Scroll found in Cave 4, the entry provides important data for this specific and unique literary form that was common in the Second Temple Period. Naturally, this is the same literary genre used by Jesus in the famous Sermon on the Mount and provides a reader with an important avenue of research for this text.

The list of contributors is a who’s who of scholars both Jewish and Christian, with 270 authors from 20 countries. The dictionary contains over 150 illustrations, maps, photos, drawings, and plans. The bibliographies are extensive and up-to-date making this an excellent starting point for research. This volume is important for seminary students and New Testament and Early church scholars. It places the writings of the early church and life and ministry of Jesus within its proper historical context. While it is theoretically a reference work, because of the extensive surveys and overviews, this can easily be utilized as a textbook for graduate studies. This volume should be the first consult in any research of the Second Temple Period. While it is focused on early Judaism, any student, faculty, and interested lay person

will find this a valuable investment for their library.

Steven Ortiz
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text. By Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. 802 pages. Softcover, \$49.95.

A common problem for the serious student of New Testament Greek is the paucity of resources which analyze the Greek text line-by-line. Though commentaries will often cover important grammatical constructions, inevitably the student will find that commentaries and grammars do not answer some grammatical and syntactical questions. This is the conundrum *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* solves. In this handy, yet solid volume, Martin Culy, Mikeal Parsons, and Joshua Stigall provide a grammatical introduction, translation, and word-by-word analysis of the Greek text of Luke. The book is a tremendous help to Greek students who regularly ask "Why?" of the text.

In the introduction, the authors provide some general analysis of Luke's grammar, providing brief evaluations of Luke's use of discourse-level conjunctions, participles, verbal aspect, and word order. This offers the reader preparation for interpreting some of these more difficult features of the Greek language. Perhaps the most important section here is the overview of verbal aspect in Luke. The authors lay out the current debate on aspect, and explain how that research affects the interpretation of Luke. Their main point is that perfective aspect often points toward mainline narrative material, while imperfective aspect points to background narrative material (xxviii). Though the jargon of the discussion could be burdensome for those not versed in this technical debate, it is nice to see that the research is beginning to find its way into reference works such as this. In fact, the entire series is applying recent research. Following Conrad and Pennington's work on deponency, the series typically sees verbs which are usually viewed as deponents as being true middles (xiii). Some of these technical introductions may be overwhelming for the intermediate student, but more advanced students will find them stimulating and enlightening.

The real meat of the book, however, is the translation and analysis. The authors translate each pericope of Luke, then provide verse-by-verse analysis. The translations are smooth, yet obviously informed by interpretive decisions made in the analysis. Words implied or not included in Greek are placed in parentheses. Following the translation, each verse of the pericope in Greek serves as a heading. Under the heading each word or short phrase of the verse is given and analyzed. Each part is described with regard to relevant morphological and syntactical information, such as tense, lexical meaning, case, verb form, etc., but the authors also offer interpretations of many of these grammatical features. For interpreting the syntax, categories are used like those found in Daniel Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, though interpretive categories are not given for verb tenses (for more on this see, xi).

The analysis for each word or phrase varies in length, though no entry is longer than a short paragraph. In some cases, readers find simple entries including only parsing information or the interpretation of a case (e.g., subjective genitive), but at other times, the authors provide discourse-level details. For example, regarding ἐγένετο in 1:8, the authors use half a page to parse the verb and to explain how

the verb “introduces ‘the event line’ of the narrative following the background information on Zechariah and Elizabeth” (10). This particular entry refers to several other researchers, offering the reader other opinions and options for further study.

At the back of the book, the authors have included a short glossary of technical terms, a bibliography, a grammar index, and an author index. The glossary is a wonderful aid to those unfamiliar or far removed from intermediate to advanced grammar. Also, the grammar index conveniently provides occurrences of all the grammatical features within Luke, making it a great supplement to the Scripture index of grammar textbooks, like Wallace’s, for finding examples of certain constructions. All of the back matter will be helpful for the inquisitive reader or researcher.

The danger of this book is that it could become a crutch. With so much information on the Greek text, one might not have to think for himself about possible interpretive options. However, this problem is no worse than the problem of using Bible software to parse verbs. The book is what the reader makes of it. If used as a reference for stumping questions, it will guide the reader into further research, but if used it to solve every Greek interpretive problem, one might as well stick to English translation.

I highly recommend this book and series to those seriously interested in Greek and who want to further develop their Greek skills. Some of the technical jargon could be overwhelming for intermediate students, but the main sections of the book would be helpful for anyone from the student to the scholar.

Phillip A. Davis, Jr.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life. By Barry Danylak. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 256 pages. Softcover, \$16.99.

Any search for good, biblically-sound books addressing the issue of singleness is most likely to leave the searcher disappointed and frustrated. Even the majority of Christian books on singleness generally leave the reader with a bad taste in his or her mouth. They either bemoan the problems found in marriage and suggest that it is better for singles to remain unmarried, or they serve as little more than a dating guide for Christian singles to find their perfect mate. Neither one of these outcomes, remaining single or finding a mate, are inherently wrong, but the methodology that most Christian singles books employ only separates itself from the magazines found at the grocery store checkout line by the smattering of Bible verses pasted across worldly wisdom. Thus, the reader will welcome a breath of fresh air upon opening this book with the expressed purpose of reflecting “on the purpose of the biblical affirmation of the single life by exploring how singleness itself fits into God’s larger purpose of redeeming a people for his glory” (15). Barry Danylak, a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, offers this new book as a different look at the role of singleness in God’s plan for redemption and how it affects the contemporary church’s understanding of the single life.

Danylak opens the book with an eye-opening look at singleness in the American culture and its impact on the church. His statistics about lack of church involvement, low commitment, and sparse financial contributions among singles coupled with the cultural retreat from marriage paint a grim picture for the future of the church in America. However, he believes that the church can overcome this

potentially dire situation. He admonishes his readers, “The composite message of the data is clear: the future life and vitality of the evangelical faith will require greater engagement with single adults both inside and outside the walls of the local church” (19).

During the six main chapters of the book, Danylak’s work reads like a biblical theology of marriage. He begins with a discussion of marriage and procreation from the creation account and moves to the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant and the blessings that were passed down through the generations of that covenant. The author rightfully asks the question for his readers about what this has to do with singleness and sets up a later comparison to spiritual offspring as a source of blessing (52–53). In chapters 2–4, Danylak continues to trace the results of the Abrahamic covenant through the history of Israel and documents the various times that singleness appears in the Old Testament, usually as a liability but sometimes with blessing.

In chapters 5–6, the author finally gets to the heart of biblical teaching on singleness. He offers a lengthy discussion on Jesus’ teaching about marriage and singleness, noting that Jesus has a surprisingly positive perspective on remaining unmarried. He then exegetes Paul’s discussion of singleness in 1 Corinthians 7 as a charisma for the church. He concludes that both Jesus and Paul retained a positive outlook on singleness because they recognized that the responsibilities of marriage could take away from a singular focus on ministry. In addition, being part of the body of Christ would provide a “new family” for believers whose bonds were even stronger than an earthly family (168).

As a biblical theology of marriage and offspring, Danylak’s work certainly excels because he traces the role of marriage and children in the covenants that God established with his people as an avenue for blessings. This is in keeping with an overall commendation of proper family relationships that one can see throughout the corpus of Scripture. In addition, he waded through some difficult waters to provide sound, theologically-grounded exegesis of Jesus’ and Paul’s teaching on the single life. There are some difficulties with those passages that Danylak handled skillfully and demonstrated his ability as a theologian.

As a biblical theology of singleness, which Danylak claims to have written, the book is a little lacking. He definitely handles the limited Scriptural teaching on the subject well, but the book gets weighed down in his lengthy discussions of marriage, offspring, and the difficulty of singleness in the Old Testament. While those are important topics to the discussion, a full two-thirds of the book is devoted to marriage and offspring and only one-third to the issue of singleness. The interesting thing is that he recognizes this as an issue in a couple of different places in the book, but he leaves the reader wanting with his promise of more to come later in the book. Finally, after his buildup in the introduction where he notes the pressing need for the church to engage singles both inside the church and in the culture, the book lacks a discussion on how actually to begin such engagement.

Despite its weaknesses, this book still has value for those interested in engaging singles with a gospel-centered focus. Danylak effectively dismisses the myth that singles are second-class citizens and shows how the single life can be a testimony of God’s faithfulness and unfettered devotion to the gospel. He concludes, “Christian singleness is a testimony to the supreme sufficiency of Christ for all things, testifying that through Christ life is fully blessed even without marriage and children. It prophetically points to a reality greater than the satisfactions of this present age by

consciously anticipating the Christian's eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God" (215). In this closing statement, he confirms what he intended to do—show that the ultimate redemption story of Scripture affirms the single life.

Evan Lenow
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Book of Hosea.* By J. Andrew Dearman. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 408 pages. Hardcover, \$29.70.**

In a field where commentaries are legion and with a book on which interpretations abound, Andrew Dearman has produced a work that contributes to the field and accomplishes the lofty purposes established as part of the NICOT series. The commentary is well-organized, thoroughly researched, and carefully documented. Moreover, the style is clear and readable. It is a work not likely simply to sit on one's bookshelf, but will be referenced time and again.

Throughout the work, Dearman presents reasoned conclusions, but is also respectful of and interacts with those of dissenting opinions. He holds interpreter's feet to the fire with his insistence that one's interpretation of the book must "begin and end with the text" (81). Moreover, he takes issue with those who too narrowly confine the root metaphor in Hosea simply to the institution of marriage. Instead, the author explains that the fundamental metaphor of the book is about the household (44-45). He noted that Hosea was the first biblical writer to employ the metaphor of husband for deity, later employed by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (54).

Dearman makes a strong case for traditional authorship and also maintains that there is "little or nothing in the book itself [that] requires a date later than the end of the 8th century B.C." (6). Still, the bulk of his work focuses on the final form of the text. Despite the difficulties in the Hebrew text of Hosea, which Dearman describes as "among the most difficult in the OT" (9), the text is well-translated and the author's interaction with the Hebrew throughout conveys his considerable linguistic skills.

The organization of the commentary is helpful. The work begins with an introduction covering the literary features, historical background, the theology of the prophet, and concluding with an exhaustive bibliography of the book. Next, the section on Text and Commentary is subdivided into five chapters corresponding to Dearman's outline of the book. Except for the fact that two of the headings carry the exact same title, the outline flows logically with the book. The last section of the book is comprised of ten helpful appendices.

Throughout the work, a number of timely excursions are added which enhance the understanding of the book. Reader's who might normally be tempted to gloss over such sections will find the expositions on "Similes and Metaphors" (11-13), "Wordplays on Names and Their Reversals in Hosea 1-2 and the New Testament" (100-102), "David Their King" (142-45), "Being Raised on the Third Day" (193-95), and "Israel and Sonship" (278-80) alone worth the cost of the book.

In the end, it is Dearman's skillful treatment of the textual difficulties and thorough treatment of the first three chapters of Hosea that stand out as the strengths of the commentary. Students, scholars, pastors, and all others interested in a better understanding of Hosea will find this volume useful.

Deron J. Biles
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence. By James D. G. Dunn. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. 168 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.

James D. G. (Jimmy) Dunn, Lightfoot Professor of Divinity Emeritus at the University of Durham in England, is a prolific scholar in both Jesus and Pauline studies, and while he can be thought-provoking and engaging, he can also be unorthodox in his views. This short book is an example of all three of these characteristics. Dunn wrote it primarily as a response to Larry W. Hurtado's books *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotions to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (2003) and *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (2005) and Richard Bauckham's *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (1998) and *Jesus and the God of Israel* (2008). Dunn states at the outset that he substantially agrees with much of what those two writers say on this issue of early Christian worship of Jesus (4), and certainly Hurtado and Bauckham have done much research and writing in this subject area already. However, Dunn writes this present volume: (1) to focus more narrowly on the first generation of Christians, and (2) to look more at the whole picture, which includes New Testament texts which are more "controversial" and appear to answer the book's question negatively (2-3). Thus, Dunn's thesis is that the first generation of Christians did not worship Jesus as God or by himself; rather, they worshipped him as a means to God. So, they worshipped God through Jesus and in the power of the Spirit (6, 146-51). So, in short, Dunn's answer to the book's title question is an unqualified "No." Dunn even calls the question "rather naive" (53) and "potentially misleading" (150).

Dunn is certainly convinced he proves his case, and he does make some interesting points in defining worship and in examining the Greek and Hebrew terms used for worship (7-22) as well as what practices were involved in worship (29-58). However, Dunn misses the mark because he appears to fail to believe Jesus is truly God and was worshipped as God by the first generation of believers. He really ends up with an adoptionistic type of Christology (144-46). Dunn seems more comfortable describing Jesus as the man God used than as the God-man. For instance, he minimizes the denotation and connotation of the term "Lord" used for Jesus (and the accompanying worship of him in Philippians 2:11) (104-07).

There are other problems in Dunn's perspective. It does not help his case that Dunn disbelieves parts of the Gospel of John. Sadly, this point of view is typical among modern New Testament scholars, but it is a flawed point of view. For instance, Dunn claims John the Evangelist put some sayings in Jesus' mouth that Jesus never said, such as the "I am" statements, which Dunn claims the Synoptic Gospels would have mentioned if Jesus had actually said them (119)! Of course, this erroneous argument is an argument from silence, which is one of the weakest arguments one can make. Unfortunately, Dunn ignores one of the clearest New Testament verses on the book's subject: when Thomas proclaimed to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Interestingly, he claims one cannot know if Jesus would have approved of anyone worshipping him (93), yet this is exactly what Thomas was doing in that statement. Another disappointment is when Dunn claims Enoch, Moses, and Elijah were "ancient, legendary or even mythical figures" (89). Well, they were ancient!

Dunn is an eminent scholar and a good, meticulous writer. He knows how to lead the reader carefully through the fruits of his research. Throughout this book

he carries on a rich “dialogue” with Bauckham and Hurtado in both the text and voluminous content footnotes (e.g., 3-5, 9-11, 15-16, 22, 29). Yet, on this issue, Bauckham and Hurtado get it right and Dunn does not.

James R. Wicker

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Evangelism Is . . . : How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence. By Dave Earley and David Wheeler. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 358 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.

Why is it that a number of believers in Jesus Christ do not evangelize? Perhaps they find themselves gripped by either a fear of the unknown or their own unpreparedness. In *Evangelism Is*, Dave Earley and David Wheeler offer substantive answers to fearful, would-be personal evangelists concerning their questions about and preparation for evangelism. Possessing more than twenty years of experience as both a church planter and a pastor, Earley has written over a dozen books. Now he teaches courses in both pastoral ministries and church expansion at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. David Wheeler, credited with popularizing servanthood evangelism, serves as professor of evangelism at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. Together, Earley and Wheeler have compiled forty concise essays that explore the motive, meaning, manner, and methods that frame an effective understanding and practice of personal evangelism.

Before they present their concept of evangelism, Earley and Wheeler address a number of common myths concerning evangelism (vii–ix). They build a case against these misconceptions and, in doing so, assemble a strong foundation in order to define and describe a healthy view of evangelism. Earley and Wheeler use both Biblical and narrative approaches in explaining what “evangelism is.” By employing Biblical exposition at times, while simply offering scriptural support at others, the authors establish Scripture as the authoritative basis for their evangelistic propositions. The inclusion of the authors’ own personal experiences and encounters in evangelism demonstrate that evangelism will always be caught more than it is taught.

Evangelism Is challenges readers’ thoughts and ideas concerning evangelism. In fact, one may be forced to question certain presuppositions about evangelism. However, readers may want to question Earley and Wheeler on some finer, more minute points. First, Wheeler asserts early in the book that evangelism is not “the same as ‘missions’” (viii). He makes a case against blurring the lines between evangelism and missions, arguing that attempts to do so have caused evangelism to lose “its distinctiveness and importance to the church” (viii). However, Earley later appears to combine evangelism and missions in his chapter on “Evangelism is being a Missionary, Not a Mission Field” (101 ff). Second, in his discussion on the Holy Spirit’s role in evangelism, Earley submits a chart with no explanation or title (140). The chart assigns God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit to specific historical times. Because he offers no explanation concerning the content of the chart, novice believers might incorrectly surmise modalistic teaching here. Last, Earley’s essay, “Evangelism is Sharing Your Story” (245–51), and Wheeler’s essay, “Evangelism is Sharing Your Recovery Testimony” (260–67), both deal with issues related to sharing one’s testimony. Is not the content similar enough to combine these essays into one chapter? To do so would make the work’s treatment of utilizing

testimonies for evangelism more concise.

Regardless of these questions concerning the book's clarity, the content of *Evangelism Is* provides readers with some highly useful information. Earley and Wheeler summarize the contents of each article in a concluding section. They utilize a number of these concluding remarks to offer readers helpful suggestions in order to apply each chapter's content (e.g., 16, 101, 117, 154, 202–03, 226–27, 251, 259, 267). In addition, Early and Wheeler present strong arguments against a “gift” of evangelism (vii, 20), as well as a convincing argument for the use of public invitations (283–90).

Despite its merits, *Evangelism Is* is not without its weaknesses. First, Earley neglects to include key scriptural passages in his discussions on the Great Commission and spiritual gifts. John 20:21 is absent from his list of Great Commission passages (17–18), as well as Ephesians 4:7–16 in his discussion of spiritual gifts (176). Second, Wheeler makes the foundational case that “evangelism and discipleship are uniquely dependent on each another” (viii); however, neither he nor Earley formally explores or examines the subject of discipleship. Finally, while the authors explain and describe evangelism as a process leading to an event, they do not sufficiently address or emphasize a spontaneous kind of evangelism that begins with an event and leads to a process of life-long discipleship.

Evangelism instructors and educators will find *Evangelism Is* a helpful textbook for a course in basic evangelism. Despite the book's appeal to those studying in the academy, it also speaks to those sitting in the pew. Pastors and ministers in local churches will find they can select any of the book's chapters as stand-alone articles in order to assist them in equipping the members of their congregations to evangelize.

Matt Queen

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Key Questions About Christian Faith: Old Testament Answers.* By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 345 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

This collection of essays brings together twenty-five essays from John Goldingay's celebrated career. With only a few exceptions, the essays have been previously published elsewhere. Each essay answers a popular question such as, “Should I tithe net or gross?” or, “How should we think about same-sex relationships?” Goldingay attempts to answer these questions from the perspective of a Biblical theologian rooted firmly in the Old Testament.

It should be noted that despite the title, this is not a collection of exclusively Old Testament answers. Goldingay admits as much in the preface writing that these answers find their “center of gravity in the Old Testament” (xi), but come from the entire Bible. It should also be noted that whereas the collection intends to present Biblical theological answers, it is nevertheless organized in a systematic format; moving from essays on God to man to sin to covenant to eschatology with the bulk of cultural questions on topics such as animals, gender roles and homosexuality near the end.

Goldingay rapidly moves from passage to passage in order to make his points, repeatedly aiming the reader back to the Biblical text. He also regularly discusses events from his personal life in order to illumine his points. The stories of his relationship and love for a severely disabled wife make his arguments all the more authoritative when speaking of how disability relates to Biblical anthropology.

Goldingay is an engaging writer with a warm writing style.

With such an engaging writing style and frequent focus on the Biblical text, it makes it all the more difficult not to recommend this book. Whereas Goldingay should be praised for his careful attention to the biblical text, he should be rejected for his hermeneutic, which leads to unorthodox conclusions. The most influential hermeneutical principle leading to such faulty conclusions comes from reading human personality into the text and even into the nature of God himself. For instance, Goldingay describes God as having dominant and secondary personality traits, just as humans do. He images God as a bundle of emotions, sometimes spilling out in anger, but usually keeping his “temper under control” (12). Complex and contradictory emotions in God do not cause a problem for Goldingay because he thinks they reflect human emotional states and thus reveal something of what it means to be created in God’s image. Goldingay projects human categories onto God with regularity in these essays. He makes his hermeneutic explicit when he suggests that since “human beings are made in God’s image . . . using human models to understand God is illuminating” (40). Although Goldingay opposes using philosophical and theological categories to understand God, unless they are explicitly outlined in the text, he nevertheless regularly reads human emotional, mental and psychological states onto God in a similar manner.

The clearest examples of this hermeneutic leading to unorthodox conclusions come in the chapter considering whether or not God has surprises (25). Goldingay argues that both classical and open theists are incorrect. Instead of presenting a *via media*, as he often does in regards to other topics in this collection, Goldingay goes beyond the open theists in his rejection of orthodox theology. He says that God “gains knowledge in the same way as anyone does,” and that God “can find out anything” (34), but must look to find it. He claims that God has both “hardwired” innate and empirically learned knowledge. Whereas the open theist argues that God knows all things present and past, Goldingay suggests that God must even discover information about the present, although He has the power to find whatever he seeks. In regards to human hearts, Goldingay says that “God does not automatically know what is in them but can look in and discover what is there” (34).

Obviously, such views must be rejected by Baptists who confess that God’s “perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future” (2000 *BF&M*, II). Goldingay realizes that most Christians interpret his key passages anthropomorphically, but he rejects such readings for more literalistic ones. Strangely, he rejects this literalistic hermeneutic when discussing gender roles or other culturally controversial topics where the conservative position finds support in a literal reading of the text.

In summary, this collection of essays show how one prominent Old Testament scholar views a wide range of topics, and does give a stronger emphasis to the writings of the Old Testament than most popular Christian writing. Still, the negatives outweigh the positives and conservatives will need to look elsewhere for orthodox applications of the Old Testament to Christian life.

G. Kyle Essary
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (IMB)

The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in its Narrative Role. By Timothy C. Gray. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 226 pages. Softcover, \$43.00.

Timothy C. Gray, president and professor of Sacred Scripture at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, has written an interesting narrative study of Mark's Gospel with an emphasis on how Jesus relates to the Jewish temple (3). This book is an adaptation of his dissertation, first published in 2008 by Mohr Sierbeck in Tübingen, Germany.

Gray analyzes the temple motif in Mark from both an intertextual (looking at connections with Old Testament texts) and intratextual (examining the texts within Mark) perspective. The uniqueness of this approach comes in demonstrating how the intertextual and intratextual elements in Mark are integrally related—especially how the Evangelist wove Old Testament themes into his narrative (3-6). Yet, Gray shows Mark was doing more than mere proof texting. Instead, he was a “sophisticated author who often employs the contextual richness of the OT texts he uses, which he interweaves into his wider narrative” (5).

Strengths of the book include: (1) thorough exegesis, (2) good balanced incorporation of both intertextual and intratextual elements, and (3) his careful handling of Mark's literary tools, such as intercalation (5, 8, 100-02, 151), gap (50), and inclusio (110, 146). In addition, Gray does a commendable job of wedding narrative criticism (a synchronic criticism that normally ignores historical aspects of the text) with diachronic criticisms (those that deal with historical matters), such as redaction criticism (4, 23-43).

However, Gray's starting point, major date assumption, and conclusion are problematic for this reviewer. First, his starting point is the contention that Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is a construct by the Evangelist rather than an accurate picture of the historical Jesus (79, 145). Thus, there is the “Markan Jesus” (76, 145, 198), who is allegedly different from the historical Jesus. However, the Jesus of Mark is the Jesus of history. Second, Gray's date assumption is that Mark wrote during or after the AD 70 Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (38, 98-99, 153-54). This date is problematic because Gray comes close to saying Jesus' prediction of the future fall of the temple was a prophecy *ex eventu* (written after the event fulfillment rather than before it) rather than a genuine prophecy. Thus, Gray appears to say that Mark artificially concocted the scenes in the temple for his narrative, such as Jesus' temple cleansing (78). Although it is possible that Mark wrote a post-AD 70 theological interpretation of the actual historical events of what Jesus said and did, Gray does not clearly make this claim, and he claims Mark may have invented events. However, if Mark wrote pre-AD 67, as this reviewer believes, then much of Gray's entire thesis vanishes.

Third, Gray goes beyond the evidence in Mark to claim that Jesus is the new temple (198-99). Of course, the temple is prominent in Mark 12-16 because it was prominent in Second Temple Judaism, Certainly Jesus' atoning death ended the need for temple sacrifice; however, Jesus' atonement did not make him the new temple, nor did Mark present him as such.

Unfortunately, Gray limits the fulfillment of Jesus' eschatological sayings to the first century AD. So, the crucifixion/resurrection of Jesus and temple destruction, as well as the events leading up to those two destructions, are all that Jesus anticipated. Thus, Jesus was the eschatological new temple (150, 178-79). Why could not Jesus have also anticipated and addressed his second coming as well?

Mark continues to be a popular testing ground for new interpretations, and scholars consider this Gospel to be a masterful writing. Gray gives a good example of how to employ narrative criticism to Mark while taking into account the historical events in the text even though his ultimate conclusion goes beyond the text.

James R. Wicker

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew. By Jo Ann Hackett. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010. 302 pages. Hardcover, \$39.95.

Jo Ann Hackett provides a welcome addition to the ever-expanding introductory literature of Biblical Hebrew. This introductory grammar demonstrates the skill of a seasoned grammarian and lexicographer. Intended for a one-semester period (10-15 weeks), *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* makes several unique contributions to the study of the Old Testament.

While the content of her grammar is similar to other introductory works, Hackett's orientation, linguistic labeling, and descriptions stand apart from earlier grammars in at least four ways. First, she highlights the first-person in her presentation of verbal paradigms (67). Her justification for doing so seems to be pedagogical in that she aligns the paradigm with pronominal suffixes and stays with the familiar order of learning in English (xix). Second, Hackett presents the order of the conjugations in a unique way. She discusses the prefix conjugation (imperfect), and then moves to the imperative, the consecutive preterite, and finally the suffix conjugation (perfect). The purpose of the organization is to provide the proper foundation for discussing the consecutive preterite (xx). Third, as already noted, Hackett uses descriptive labels for conjugations differently than other grammars. While the terms "prefix" and "suffix" are not novel designations, several current introductory grammars continue to label the conjugations as "imperfect" and "perfect," respectively. Furthermore, Hackett breaks away from the rhetorical pattern of past grammarians by offering a new term, "consecutive preterite." Fourth, she presents the strong verb by discussing all of the verbal stems (chaps 12-24), after which she explains the weak verb in its various forms (chaps 25-30).

The format of the grammar allows for a user-friendly approach to learning Biblical Hebrew. This is evidenced in the overview and scope paragraphs (chaps 1-6), the single and double lined boxes containing interesting and essential information, and the use of Hebrew numbering system for the chapters. The whole design keeps the student in mind. The exercises concluding each chapter, though artificial, benefit the student greatly. To assist in the exercises, Hackett provides a CD which is particularly important for first-semester language study. On the CD, Hackett and an equally well-known scholar, John Huehnergard, provide most of the pronunciation for the alphabet, vocabulary in each chapter, and Genesis 22:1-19. While these features benefit any introductory Hebrew class, classes that meet only once a week or online courses may profit even more.

Another salient feature of the textbook's CD is the answer key for the exercises of each chapter. In addition to helping students who are outside of a typical classroom setting, the answer key provides immediate feedback. While an answer key may hinder a lazy or apathetic student, it has the potential to stimulate interest, curiosity, and confidence.

While the pedagogical nature of the work is worthy of praise, there are aspects

of the format that could be improved. The dense paragraph laden presentation forces a student to find many of Hackett's illustrations inside the paragraphs rather than after paragraph-formatted explanations. While it allows for a condensed book, the format makes a brief overview of chapters difficult. Not surprisingly, Hackett's overall discussion of grammar is appropriately succinct and well-founded. The presentation of the piel stem, however, does not explain the current linguistic evidence well (140). Placing the label "intensive" in the first category within the piel stem may lead students to erroneous conclusions of former generations.

As a first-semester grammar, *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* provides a helpful invitation to the text of the Old Testament. Seminaries that require only two semesters of Biblical Hebrew may benefit from using it as a first-semester text. This structure would allow the second semester to focus on the details of syntax. Despite the work's clear presentation of grammar, it remains to be seen if scholars will adopt Hackett's organizational scheme of verbs and her descriptive labels.

Ethan Jones

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Colossians and Philemon. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament.* By Murray J. Harris. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 272 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

Murray J. Harris is professor emeritus of New Testament Exegesis and Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This book is the first of the EGGNT series, of which many more will be welcomed by scholars, pastors, and students alike.

Harris deals in only a few pages with the introductory matters. He considers Paul the author of both Colossians and Philemon, arguing briefly from the affinities between the two letters, especially Paul's co-workers mentioned in each epistle. He writes, "If Paul authored Philemon, it seems a priori likely that he also wrote Colossians, given these remarkable similarities of circumstance" (3). He opts for a dating during Paul's first Roman imprisonment for both letters (4, 207-209) and states that Paul wrote the letter to exhort them away from their relapse into paganism as well as to combat false teaching (5). Harris refers the reader to external sources for further reading on these matters.

The purpose of the series is to deal extensively with grammatical and syntactical issues, while briefly explaining the implications of such issues for theological interpretation. Harris' interaction with the secondary literature is immense and his layout of various grammatical and syntactical options is superb. Each section begins with Harris' custom block diagram, intended to explain the structure of the passage. Next comes Harris' exegetical spadework, followed by a list of suggested further readings for topics that surface in text. Last, Harris provides homiletical suggestions in the form of a bare sermon outline. After the full text has been examined, a translation of each epistle is given in its entirety: first a literal translation, followed by an extended paraphrase.

Harris clearly states his exegetical decisions and theological conclusions throughout the book. This contrasts with a similar series, SIL International's Exegetical Summaries series. SIL's series focuses solely on grammatical and syntactical issues and explains the positions of a multitude of secondary literature, but the authors make no decisions themselves. They are neutral providers of information. Both series have their advantages, but Harris' volume makes a greater contribution

to scholarship since he makes arguments that may be evaluated and appropriated.

One way Harris could have improved the volume is to include more discussion of Pauline theology in exegetical decisions. While he does make references to passages elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, his discussions on passages involving words such as “body,” “flesh,” “rulers and powers,” “elementary spirits” (στοικεῖλον), etc., would have been enriched by a brief discussion involving a more comprehensive Pauline theology. The reader will only find recommended resources for further reading, and it seems unfortunate that Harris does not expand his discussions to include his knowledge of the field.

Harris’ work is the first of many eagerly awaited volumes that will aid the student and pastor in studying and preaching while also contributing to scholarly discussions on key passages where grammatical and syntactical issues are in dispute. Any serious student of Colossians and Philemon should own this volume.

Todd A. Scacewater
Westminster Theological Seminary

Luther and the Beloved Community: A Path for Christian Theology after Christendom.
By Paul R. Hinlicky. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 405 pages. Softcover, \$45.00.

Paul Hinlicky’s *Luther and the Beloved Community* is a systematic theologian’s pathfinding for theology in creedal traditions confronting post-Christendom. Drawing inspiration from Luther, or what he calls, “my Luther,” by which he means the emphases he draws from Luther, Hinlicky converses with several disputable issues in this transitory time. His vision for appropriating Luther for contemporary theology is not limited to the Lutheran tradition but hopes to extend to inform all creedal Christianity in order to develop an ecumenical direction of thought to face post-Christendom.

The book is not for the uninitiated. Consistent use of untranslated Latin and many undefined terms suits that audience but unfortunately terminology specific to Hinlicky’s project is also left undefined. Readers unfamiliar with Hinlicky’s work are thus left without resource to understand the meanings of “beloved community” or “critical dogmatics” (which I can best describe as theologization rejecting synchronic systemization, favoring a diachronic approach mindful of ecumenical creedal orthodoxy). Also, this is not intended to be a work of historical theology but rather an appropriation of a historical figure’s thought in dialogue with contemporary issues. As such, church historians and systematic theologians both will have the delight of encountering new ideas that can stretch their attempts to appropriate historical theology or to find historical inspiration for theology.

As in *Paths not Taken*, Hinlicky uses the path metaphor for the direction of Christian theology. *Luther and the Beloved Community* intends to set up a starting point for the continued path of theological enterprise; a veritable prolegomena to any future theology. Hinlicky majors on setting Luther’s thought, or at least his vision of Luther’s thought, against post-Christendom thinking, but Hinlicky does not present a unified vision for how theology should proceed. It is as though the path has been obscured by the wild brush of such thinkers as Josiah Royce or William James. Dissappointingly, Hinlicky approaches the obfuscated path with a theological machete, albeit a particularly sharp one, not to cut away the foliage but merely to point to each branch in the way and to declare that there is a path underneath. While there is value knowing where the path is and what problems are in the way,

this must be understood as only an initial task doing little path clearing itself.

This is not to say that the book is unorganized, but direction is elusive. Even the last chapter, "By Way of Conclusion," provides little conclusive direction for the path to be taken but rather presents a few other issues more briefly than the other issues addressed. The impression is that the work is not to stand alone but serves as a part of a larger project, including *Paths Not Taken*, since the chapters are Hinlicky's settings of Luther, or at least his conception of Luther, as interlocutor to several issues with a common goal in mind for each. The book as a whole seems, then, to be setting some groundwork for what direction Hinlicky may have in mind for post-Christendom theology but his final answer is not found here. One is left picking through the book for the occasional nugget like his insistence that preaching should not be based on human persuasion but rather on the exaltation of the cross (138).

Although Luther was Hinlicky's theological "resource," Luther's authentic voice is often not heard. Rather than citing Luther specifically, Hinlicky often stated his view of Luther's theology without grounding those inferences in any specific writing from Luther. For instance, speaking of correlations between Anselm, Luther, and Paul on the atonement, Hinlicky thoroughly cites Anselm and the text from Paul from which Luther derived his idea but merely states what Lutheran belief has been (90). Further, using Luther as a resource rather than a guide allows Hinlicky divergence from Luther's thought. One must question the use of "my Luther" rather than an attempt to discover Luther himself. Initially, the concept of the beloved community takes a much more directive role in Hinlicky than in Luther. Meanwhile, Hinlicky draws conclusions from some of Luther's ideas to which Luther would certainly object. When advising churches to recognize homosexual unions because homosexuality is a disorder of the Fall like a disease rather than a sin (215-216), one must wonder whether Luther would appreciate sexual immorality parading as a God-ordained institution being an anticipatory model of eschatological community. More suspect are instances when Luther, even in interpretation, is left out of the conversation. For instance, he is notably silent for most of the discussion on the New Perspective.

Hinlicky has invested serious thought into many issues but the full formulation of his thought remains forthcoming (xv). This book would be better read as a collection of essays rather than as a monograph since most of the materials are of independent origins (xxiii). Without the end yet in sight, however, it remains difficult to grasp the full import of what is presented.

Peter Coleman
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Westminster Handbook to Theologies of the Reformation. Edited by R. Ward Holder. The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 218 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.

The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther. Edited by Denis R. Janz. The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 147 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.

Is the only thing you know about the Thirty-years War that it lasted thirty years? Do you keep forgetting which soft drink company distributes Agricola? Can you never remember what Luther taught about consubstantiation? Most

students early on in their theological studies have a difficult time keeping track of the universe of new terminology, unfamiliar names, and foreign concepts to which they are introduced in systematic theology and church history courses. It is for this audience that Westminster John Knox has been publishing its series, *The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology*. The latest installments of this series are *The Westminster Handbook to Theologies of the Reformation* and *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther*.

The selection of articles in *The Westminster Handbook to Theologies of the Reformation* goes beyond simply the time period of the Reformation. Articles like those on Augustine and on Gratian reflect aspects of church history from which reformers drew inspiration or against which they strove when those ideas were still in force. Also, articles on Wyclif and Hus demonstrate a sensitivity toward acknowledging proto-reformers who came well before 1517 but who plowed the soil out of which the Reformation would grow. The reformers saw themselves as part of the tapestry of ecclesiastical history that had gone before and students utilizing this handbook will not be deprived of reference to those who, though living outside of the Reformation era, were integral figures in the minds of the reformers.

Beyond the biographies of both major and minor figures, the handbook also touches on the events, creeds, and theology of the era. The theological articles are not limited to the traditional categories of Christology, sacramentology and the like but also touch on symbols and images important in the minds of the reformers such as Calvin's doctrine of accommodation or Luther's image of the blessed exchange. Further, article selection is sensitive to the broad range of categories involved. The handbook does not narrow its focus to the Lutheran and Reformed tradition but extends its range to include the Catholics, radical reformers and even more fringe topics like Servetus and magic.

This volume is also to be commended for its wide range of scholars involved in the project. The lineup includes scholars from a variety of confessional stances. Also, the broad base of historical interpretations is extended by the inclusion of both established scholars like R. Emmet McLaughlin and Randall Zachman and younger scholars like Geoffrey Dipple and Edwin Tait.

In contrast, *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther* is not an edited multi-author volume but is left to the capable hands of Denis R. Janz. The selection of articles in this volume has less variety than the other volume. Janz' handbook focuses almost entirely on theological categories, whereas Holder's handbook includes events and personalities. So, one looking up Luther's participation in the Marburg Colloquy would have to look under the "Lord's Supper," but Luther's relationship to personalities like Karlstadt remain less identifiable. The Luther handbook also includes a chronology listing the events and writings.

Both handbooks improve on earlier volumes in the series by bibliographies to the secondary literature in the fields. For reference to primary sources, the Reformation handbook provides a separate bibliography while the Luther handbook prefers to use extensively cited primary sources exclusively to model the content of the articles. This method provides the reader with ready access to Luther's words but is not as helpful in introducing students to the debates that accompany Luther scholarship such as the question of the Finnish school of interpretation.

These handbooks provide students with reference that can be a helpful accompaniment to introductory courses. Even scholars whose primary interests are in other fields might appreciate the volumes in this series as quick refreshers when

their research interests touch on these subjects. In this spirit, further volumes in the series are anticipated.

Peter Coleman
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching. Edited by Grenville J. R. Kent, Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010. 256 pages. Softcover, \$23.00.

This book begins with the noteworthy goal of reclaiming the 78% of the Bible that is often neglected in the pulpit (11). To the detriment of the church, the Old Testament is frequently merely cherry-picked for Sunday School favorites, while much of the text remains neglected in our preaching and teaching. This work presents a clear and consistent focus on the relevance of the Old Testament for contemporary Christian proclamation. It effectively and consistently reminds the reader of the riches and resources of the Hebrew Bible.

The book consists of a collection of articles by an impressive list of contributors on various literary genres of the Old Testament. The articles cover narratives, laments, poetry, wisdom, apocalyptic, and prophecy. In addition, three of the articles are based on individual books (Songs, Isaiah, and Ezekiel). These articles are all well-written, but tip-toe into the arena of "one of these is not like the other," as it is not established why these three books were chosen as opposed to others. Since the rest of the chapters are genre-based, a brief explanation behind the selection of these books, which would not be difficult to justify, would have been helpful. The last two articles cover difficult texts in the Bible and preaching Christ in the Old Testament.

Organizationally, the chapters are similar. Each chapter contains a discussion of the genre or section under consideration, important considerations for preaching, and concludes with a representative sermon outline. Especially noteworthy is Longman's article on wisdom, with several extended sections of practical applications and preaching helps on theology, exegetical issues, organization of the books, and even authorship.

There are a number of noteworthy features of this book. The articles accentuate the strengths of the various contributors, yet focus the readers' attention on practical tips for preaching. Critical issues are addressed toward the goal of their exposition. The emphasis of focusing on the genre of the passage under consideration as key for its interpretation is well-taken. In addition, the practical applications highlighted by many of the authors make the work valuable and the Biblical text current.

Perhaps the most helpful of the articles is by Wenham on preaching from difficult texts. He tackles the thorny issue of preaching such passages as genealogies, sacrifice, slavery, talion, Genesis 1, violence, and imprecatory psalms. Curiously, the sermon outline that he included did not come from any of those difficult passages, but the chapter provided useful guidelines.

The article by Turner may not have been the strongest start for the book. In his article, Turner makes some effective points about the importance of understanding the plot in Old Testament narrative. In addition, his point about preaching a pericope within its context is solid (18). However, those who affirm the literal historicity of the text will likely find unpalatable his suggestion that such a belief is "extreme" (14). Further, he seems to set up a straw man argument based on a misrepresentation of Hadden Robinson's Big Idea principle, and then proceeds to espouse a strategy that

is oddly similar (22). The use of citations and the bibliography section are somewhat inconsistent among the authors. Several of the articles make significant use of footnotes (Turner, Kissling, Villanueva, Wenham, and Moberly), with Wright's article making only sparse use of them (and only referencing his own works), while Williamson's article had none.

Overall, the book is a very good resource for students and Christian servants. It would be useful as supplementary reading in a preaching course or even an Old Testament theology course.

Deron J. Biles

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irrenicism. By Brian Lugioyo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 256 pages. Hardcover, \$49.00.

Few Protestant reformers have had the monumental impact on the formation of the Protestant Church in Europe with so little historical recognition than Martin Bucer and Heinrich Bullinger. It is no exaggeration to state that John Calvin's influence on Protestant ecclesiology would have been negligible had his mentor and father in the faith, Martin Bucer, not invested such capital in the young reformer at Strasbourg. Called the *Vermittlung*, the "in-between" pastor, Bucer was best known for his middle stance theologically (between Luther and Zwingli), ecclesologically (between Luther and Bullinger), and geographically (living on the edge of France, Germany, and Switzerland). Professor and author, Brian Lugioyo, says of Bucer, "He was neither a Lutheran nor Reformed. He saw himself as a follower of Luther and a mentor to Calvin. He was a humanist and theologian, pastor, diplomat, author, and disputer . . . mediating between Protestants, Anabaptists, and Catholics, he was [truly] a reformer in-between" (8). A prodigious reformer in his own right, Martin Bucer set the stage for both theological and ecclesiastical reform in Germany, Switzerland, and England while championing peaceful negotiations between leaders of both the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant reformation. As such, Bucer was unfortunately disparaged and discredited by both sides throughout his ministry.

In this work, Brian Lugioyo presents a compelling case that Bucer developed a strong view of justification by faith independent of outside influences. A new contribution to Bucerian study, Lugioyo writes with force and clarity, unearthing older historical analyses of the forgotten reformer. Through an exhaustive examination of Bucer's commentary on the book of Romans, Lugioyo argues that Bucer's thoughts on justification were not only original to his own conception of Pauline theology, but intensely applicable to his generation's debate raging between Protestants and Catholics. Painstakingly, Lugioyo's research indicates that during many of Bucer's arbitrate disputations with varying sides of the theological and ecclesiological debate, Bucer never departed from his central understanding of the core tenet of Protestant theology, namely justification by faith and not works. Lugioyo states, "For Bucer reform could not be achieved at the expense of the truth of justification as he understood it" (12). Thus, as a new standard for the contribution toward Protestant Bucerian studies, Lugioyo's work serves as a firm response to historical critique that Bucer's development of justification by faith was simply a compendium of "mediating theology."

At the outset of his work, Lugioyo displays Bucer's life, ministry, and

theological method as that of consistency. Lugioyo authenticates that Bucer held to a consistent definition and use of the doctrine of justification by faith as early as 1536 and represented this view faithfully during the religious colloquies of 1539-1541 and thereafter. Lugioyo then compares Johannes Gropper's view on justification in the *Enchiridion* as a stark contrast to Bucer. Gropper, who as a moderate Roman Catholic reformer, wrote eloquently concerning the Roman Catholic perspective on justification and accompanied his archbishop to various disputations and colloquies where he interacted with Bucer. In contradistinction to Gropper and the Roman Catholic position, Lugioyo demonstrates that Bucer held believers' justification to be both declarative and effective since justification derived from God's imputation rather than a progressive impartation. Lugioyo notes that Bucer believed and taught that God declared men righteous and just only through Christ's mediating work as employed through faith by Holy Spirit's leading. To this view of justification, Bucer never waned or relented. Rather, Bucer launched his reformational ministry on his independent study and biblical conception of Paul's use of justification by faith.

To be highly recommended, this book is helpful on many levels for pastors, theologians, and historians. An impactful study, Lugioyo balances with ease a book about neglected reformational history, insightful exegesis, and practical theology which he smartly coalesces for contemporary application. In the ever-growing discussion on practical methodology of the needed theological discourse within one's community, Lugioyo's work on Bucer is among other things an encouraging study on theological methodology for conservative evangelical Protestants wishing to engage both moderate leaders and non-believers in a post-modern and post-evangelical nation. As Lugioyo brilliantly articulates, men of faith and passion for God's truth do not have to relent their theological position in order to engage effectively competing postures or negotiate compromise in non-essential matters. If Lugioyo leaves anything with his blessed readers, he leaves, as a modern example to follow, an informed portrait of a godly reformer who led men guided by coherent theological convictions. Bucer, like Lugioyo's work reflecting a newly discovered dimension of the reformer's theology and doctrine, will positively impact successive generations for truth and peace.

Matthew Harding
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Joshua.* By J. Gordon McConville and Stephen N. Williams. The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 278 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.**

Joshua is the fourth book to be covered in the Two Horizon's Old Testament Commentary series, in addition to Genesis, Lamentations, and Psalms. As the other volumes in this series each had only one author, this one adds a different dynamic to the series. The two authors, both noted scholars in the field, bring different perspectives and emphases, but they also add a layer of redundancy and occasional disagreements. Like the other books in this series, the intention is to bring together theological exegesis and theological reflection. The book is organized around alternating sections by the authors with some concluding interaction between them. McConville begins the commentary with a brief introduction that outlines the general content of the book, which is God's fulfillment of His promise to give the Hebrew people the land of Israel and the subsequent distribution of the tribes

within the land. Early and often in the short introduction, McConville highlights what becomes a prevalent theme throughout the commentary, the interrelationship between theology and history within the book of Joshua.

In the next section, McConville offers a compendious commentary on Joshua. The strength of this section is the demonstration of the interconnectedness of the book of Joshua with the rest of Scripture. However, the exegesis is marked by somewhat limited interaction with the Hebrew and an over-reliance on a limited number of sources. Of the 113 citations in the 80 pages of commentary, 46 of the references derive from three sources (Hawk, Nelson, and Hess).

The Theological Horizon section, by Williams, begins with a helpful discussion of the land. He includes an extended and thorough discussion on the question of genocide in the book. However, in trying to address questions related to science, he awkwardly backs himself in a corner and ends up presenting a thesis which questions the omnipotence of God (163). The next section, by McConville, addresses “Joshua and Biblical Theology.” It is not readily apparent how this section is distinguished from the previous section by Williams. In fact, both chapters include somewhat lengthy sections on the theological significance of the land and the question of evil and violence. McConville also includes in this section a discussion of the relationship of Joshua with books of the Pentateuch along with Judges and Kings.

Interestingly, this volume also includes sections where each author interacts with the material from the other. Williams uses his chapter to take issue with McConville on what he perceives to be McConville’s attempt to differentiate between biblical and theological approaches to the Biblical text. McConville, in his response to Williams, curiously spends the entire section emphasizing an area on which the two authors agree. In fact, the question of the historicity of the text is a recurrent theme throughout the sections by both authors. Yet, though the question repeatedly occurs in the commentary (3-5, 6-7, 10, 29, 31, 53, 119-20, 154-70, 171-72, 190, 194-99, 207-14, and 230-35), with the authors clearly questioning the book’s historicity at several points, the authors essentially conclude rather benignly that the question itself does not really matter. One wonders, if the question of the historicity of the text is indeed a “distraction from engagement with the text as text” (213), and if it actually is the “prevailing view” (4) that the book is not factual, why is the matter so frequently and extensively addressed in a work with such limited space for commentary on the text?

In the end, even given the stated parameters of the series, this volume would have been strengthened with more collaboration between the authors which may have reduced some of the redundancies and allowed for greater interaction with the text. In this case, one of the horizons clearly overshadows the other, with theological exegesis getting the shorter end of the stick. Seemingly underserved are some of the rich exegetical gems of the book of Joshua that are overshadowed by the author’s theological preferences.

Deron J. Biles

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Gospel of John. By J. Ramsey Michaels. *New International Commentary on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 1094 pages. Hardcover, \$65.00.

J. Ramsey Michaels is Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Missouri

State University. He took on a difficult assignment when he agreed to write a commentary on John intended to take the place of Leon Morris's respected volume in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series. Leon Morris's commentary has long been valued by Evangelical scholars and pastors for its conservative judgments on historical issues and for its insights into the theology of John's Gospel. Evangelicals will not find these same strengths in Michaels's commentary on John. Michaels's commentary is quite distinct from its predecessor and it will probably appeal to a more specialized audience.

The value of Michaels's work will become clear if we first look at its chief characteristics. Unlike other volumes in this series, Michaels does not include significant interaction with recent scholarship on John. When he does interact with other commentaries, Michaels favors Bultmann, Schnackenburg, and Brown. These are all well-known commentaries on John, but all are thirty plus years old. Along these lines, it is noteworthy that Michaels cites Church Fathers, like Chrysostom and Origen, more often than he cites most recent scholars. Although Michaels's footnotes are plentiful, they are more likely to contain interaction with the Greek text than interaction with scholarship.

Michaels's footnotes point to both his emphasis and area of strength. He wants to tie his commentary closely to the Greek text. He makes a number of helpful comments about John's grammar and syntax in footnotes. In addition, Michaels makes frequent comments about textual variants. Some of these are in the actual text rather than limited to the footnotes. Readers who are working through the Greek text will appreciate Michael's help with John's Greek and with textual variants. It appears, then, that Michaels primarily intends to provide the reader with his own close reading of the Greek text of John. Such a commentary could be quite useful, as is the case with Michaels's commendable volume on 1 Peter in the Word Biblical Commentary. Michaels's work on John is more difficult to recommend with enthusiasm, because it does not contain the same depth of theological insight that one can find in other recent commentaries on John or in its predecessor by Leon Morris. This lack of depth becomes clear, for instance, when one looks at his treatment of significant verses related to the death of Jesus in John (like John 1:29, 6:51-58, 19:31-37).

In sum, Michaels's detailed commentary is useful and insightful for someone who is working through the Greek text, but it will be less useful for someone who is looking for a commentary that will treat each verse with an eye to its contribution to the theology of the Gospel of John.

Paul M. Hoskins
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

A Theology of James: Wisdom for God's People. By Christopher W. Morgan. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010. 218 pages. Softcover, \$17.00.

Christians today are the living expressions of God's heart toward the world. Though this biblical concept may be frightening for many leaders of the church who see Christians behaving badly, the reality is that God has charged every believer with the task of faithfully living-out the Christian message (the gospel) before a watching and spiritually needy world. Attempting to help each maturing believer walk more faithfully in tune with God's heart, Christopher Morgan has written a comprehensive and intensely practical biblical exegesis of the book of James,

insightfully subtitled *Wisdom for God's People*.

As a continuation in the Explorations in Biblical Theology series, a reformed-perspective-driven series intending on addressing popular and needed biblical theology within the church, the book of James comes as the third installment following a rich exposition of Romans and Mark. On the heels of such foundational Biblical study in Romans and Mark within the series, the task fell to Morgan to write a practical theology for the church and community. Thus, Morgan writes in a fashion to render a practical outworking of useful theology in community with a keen adherence to Biblical exegesis. In short, Morgan accomplishes his task and produces a very helpful volume for the growing Christian desiring to live more like Christ.

A Theology for James contains many positive elements which are intended to help the reader (1) learn empowering Biblical theology, (2) reflect on newfound truths concerning God's heart toward ministry, (3) apply these truths to daily life, (4) and even help direct others to learn the practical theology of James. Unique to this commentary, Morgan organizes the entirety of his text around the six major themes of James (wisdom, consistency, suffering, the poor, words, and the law). Instead of the expected chronological exegesis of the text, Morgan utilizes the theological themes within James to expound both exegetically and theologically on the major topics which James develops in his epistle. Also, unlike technical commentaries which assume the reader is adept with primary languages, Morgan translates the more critical phrases of the Greek text, allowing both the layperson and untrained clergy to benefit from the primary sense of each pericope. Exegeting each section of the text with clarity, Morgan ultimately takes each of James' six biblical themes and demonstrates their spiritual connectivity as one source for a unified Biblical theology of the book.

Also helpful, Morgan includes a chapter comparing Paul's theology with James', demonstrating that the epistles in the New Testament core are both uniquely divine and inspired by God to advance a central unified (theme) message to the world. Further, in his book, Morgan unpacks how every Christian can apply the practical theology of James in a chapter he entitles *Theology at Work*. Using an encouraging balance of theological axioms to remember, Scripture to memorize, and pointed questions upon which to reflect, Morgan turns his exegetical commentary into a practical field manual on the daily Christian life. In this combined commentary and workbook, every layman along with those in the ministry will benefit from the practical questions to answer or use as a discussion guide for small groups.

In this volume, Morgan exerts outstanding effort not only developing the critical theology which makes the book of James so insightful to the human heart, but he brilliantly exploits the truths of James to help the growing Christian daily advance their walk into Christ-likeness. The fact that this little volume is affordable, conservative, theologically-driven, and intensely practical for personal study or groups make this particular book a great addition to every theologian's, pastor's, or serious layman's library.

Matthew Harding
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Paul and Scripture. By Steve Moyise. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 151 pages. Softcover, \$21.99.

Was Paul faithful to the trust of the Old Testament Scriptures with which he worked to explain Jesus Christ? Was Paul inventive in his exegesis and theological application of the Old Testament or did he serve as a descriptor of what had been communicated before? How exactly did Paul use Scripture? These questions are a few that inevitably arise from reading Paul's corpus with an eye toward the Old Testament influences on his letters. In this brief book, Steven Moyise undertakes the task of demonstrating the varied ways in which Paul makes use of authoritative Scripture in the composition of his works. Moyise's survey includes Paul's use of Old Testament Scripture in the following categories: the creation stories, Abraham narratives, Moses, the Law, the Prophets, the Writings. Following the analysis of the preceding categories, Moyise provides a short survey of modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture.

The introduction to the book makes mention (without being detained by the discussion) of what sources would have been available to Paul, noting the prominence of the LXX as Paul's primary source while acknowledging the place of the Hebrew text and extra-biblical sources. Moyise acknowledges the disputed status of Pauline authorship for several of the letters traditionally attributed to Paul. However, this does not hinder his discussion because he finds the majority of Old Testament references in the "undisputed" letters, thus making the authorship of the disputed letters insignificant for his study.

After unpacking Paul's use of the creation narrative, Moyise concludes that Paul's primary purpose was to use the Genesis narratives to support his Christological arguments in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. Following his treatment of Moses, Moyise turns his attention to Paul's use of Abraham. The primary focus of the relationship between Paul and the Abraham narratives is that faith is the identity marker for belonging to God's people based on the fact that God's promise to Abraham came before circumcision. Turning from the Abraham narratives, chapter four contains Moyise's analysis of Paul and the Law. Moyise provides an appreciative account of the New Perspective's ability to explain in a unified way Paul's varied statements about the Law and justification. Yet, Moyise does not seem to commit fully to the New Perspective as a thorough explanation of Paul and the Law, leaving open the option that the Old Testament contains multiple voices concerning the relationship between the Law and Gospel, which at certain points may even be competing. While Moyise is not entirely clear on the details of his position concerning Paul and the Law, it appears by his account the "covenantal nomism" of the New Perspective has the most to offer in explaining Paul's approach to the Law.

According to Moyise, Paul utilizes the Prophets to make the point that the gospel is God's extension of salvation to the Gentiles beyond the Jews. The fact that the Jews failed to believe while Paul's ministry was successful among the Gentiles became a hermeneutical lens with which he read the texts of the Prophets. Moyise draws out three ways in which the writings of the Prophets were reapplied along these lines. First, "Paul finds references to Gentiles in texts that spoke about the restoration of rebellious Jews" (85). Second, Paul finds reference to the Jews' current unbelief in texts that speak of Israel's former unbelief. Third, Paul finds references to the salvation of Jews and Gentiles in texts that speak of the restoration of Israel from exile. In Moyise's analysis of Paul's use of the Writings, he finds the same pattern

of use previously mentioned with reference to the Prophets. Specifically, Paul uses the Writings to demonstrate the inclusion of the Gentiles. The book concludes with a chapter summarizing the modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture. In this chapter, Moyise provides three approaches: the intertextual approach, the narrative approach, and the rhetorical approach. In summary, Moyise claims an eclectic use of the aforementioned approaches with an acknowledgment that "one's overall view of Scripture is bound to have an effect on how one analyses Paul's use of it" (124). Additional features include appendices which provide an index of all of Paul's Old Testament quotations and a summary of Paul's quotations for Isaiah.

Moyise's concluding chapter on modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture illustrates the point that each approach inevitably contains its own unifying theme. When this author searches for such a theme in Moyise's book, he arrives at the conclusion that Moyise consistently thinks Paul's use of Scripture was functional. Under Moyise's view, Paul held certain beliefs about Christ; therefore, he looked to the creation narratives to support his beliefs. Similarly, Paul thought his mission to the Gentiles was of such importance that he returned to the Scriptures "to find the promise that the Gentiles would be blessed in Abraham" (45). Further, Paul's participation in the inclusion of the Gentiles through the gospel led him to find support in the Prophets and Writings by applying texts about Israel to the Gentiles.

This functional mindset may be contrasted with an account of Paul's use of the Old Testament in which his assertions about Christ arise from the Scriptures themselves. Absent from Moyise's functional account is consideration for how the canonical content of the Old Testament may have produced Paul's interpretations of those Scriptures. Similarly, Moyise does not appear to acknowledge that Paul's authoritative Christological hermeneutic may have been a product of his reading of Scripture which in turn produced his functional hermeneutic. Despite these points which note a limitation in the scope of Moyise's approach, Paul and Scripture provides a useful introduction to a modern approach to Paul's use of the Old Testament.

Jon Wood

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith. By Stuart Murray. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 2010. 190 pages. Softcover, \$13.99.

As the Western world heads further into post-Christendom, Stuart Murray contends that the Anabaptist tradition offers "a prophetic movement whose voices we need to hear today" (33). Murray provides an introduction to the heritage of the Anabaptist tradition for those unfamiliar with Anabaptism and for those whose curiosities have been piqued by contact with that tradition. That introduction comes via Murray's outline of the core convictions of contemporary Anabaptists and a narrative of the movement's history.

Murray, writing primarily for a British and Irish audience, joins many scholars hoping to identify the central distinctive of Anabaptist (or in Murray's case, neo-Anabaptist) thought. For Bender it is discipleship while it is a more nuanced idea of "existential" Christianity for Friedmann and ecclesiology for Littell. Murray's distillation is not as reductionistic. He finds seven core convictions, namely following and worshiping Jesus, Jesus' centrality, the end of Christendom, the danger of associating Christianity with established society, a distinctive believers'

church ecclesiology, the interconnectedness of the spiritual and the economic, and the importance of peacemaking (45-46). In these core convictions, Murray seeks to provide a view of “naked” Anabaptist–Anabaptism in a non-enculturated form, without the “clothing” various inheritors of the Anabaptist tradition wear (43-44). While Murray speaks figuratively of the unique cultural forms different Anabaptist communities take, the metaphor aptly points to his purpose of introducing Anabaptism to those who might only be familiar with the literal distinctive dress of many Anabaptist groups. The bulk of the book (chaps 3-6) go into greater depth about what these convictions mean for present-day Anabaptists.

Though Murray’s first conviction shows an affinity to earlier suggestions of what the essence of Anabaptism might be, it is the third and fourth convictions that shape the basis of Murray’s purpose for the book. Murray often speaks of Anabaptist convictions making “sense in a post-Christendom culture” (49) and of Anabaptism as “a movement whose time has come” (22). In introducing outsiders to the Anabaptist tradition, Murray presents a group that has longed wrestled with the question of how the Christian faith might operate outside of societal privilege, a condition more acute among Murray’s primarily European audience than yet in the United States. Murray notes that Anabaptists always had a minority status but “the Anabaptist heritage of operating on the margins of Christendom means that this tradition has distinctive contributions to make as western Christians from all traditions move from grieving the end of Christendom” (81).

Murray’s work, though not scholarly, is well informed. After detailing the core convictions, Murray gives a competent introduction to Anabaptist origins, noting the diversity out of which the movement eventually coalesced (136). Having identified central tenets of sixteenth-century Anabaptism, Murray briefly narrates the development of the movement while pointing to contemporary expressions. The contemporary expression on which Murray is most focused is what he labels the “neo-Anabaptists,” who are those from various denominational backgrounds that bring Anabaptist influence into their own traditions (154). It is at this point that Murray finds an affinity with the emergent churches. He often quotes Brian McLaren approvingly, repeating that the emergent church of today follows the spirit of the Anabaptist of centuries ago (27, 96-97).

Part of Murray’s goal in introducing Anabaptism is to give an honest portrayal of the movement including the faults to which Anabaptists have been susceptible. Though Murray is not idealistic about Anabaptism in either its early or contemporary forms, he remains apologetic. For instance, when remarking on the tendency of Anabaptists to practice church discipline in an excessively harsh manner, Murray shoots back that “at least they didn’t execute those who stepped out of line” (104). That certainly is a critique of the typical response toward Anabaptism of Christendom, of which he is severely critical. Despite his admittance of Christendom’s “achievements and treasures” (72), one would be hard pressed to find Murray identifying what any of these might be. Nonetheless, Murray’s recognition of the similarities between the situations faced by the Anabaptists and by the whole of Western Christianity is incisive, providing a helpful starting point for both churches and individuals in confronting the shift to a post-Christendom society.

Much has been written about post-modern philosophy and how the church should respond to those changes but *The Naked Anabaptist* alerts the church to the parallel concern of post-Christendom, with which the church must also interact. In many ways Murray has stripped Anabaptism down to its barest essential so that

those who must face the advent of a post-Christendom world might have guidance, even if not a complete goal, from a tradition that has historically operated outside of Christendom. The goal of historical theology is thus upheld—that the answers of those who have gone before may inform the questions that are faced today.

Peter Coleman
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Psychology & Christianity: Five Views. Edited by Eric Johnson. Second Edition. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010. 319 pages. Softcover, \$14.99.

Over the last several decades, evangelicals have taken a variety of different positions regarding the proper relationship between psychology and Christianity. Eric Johnson and his colleagues have taken the occasion of this book “to dialogue publically about these differences” (7). Johnson is the director of the Society for Christian Psychology (AACC), an associate editor for several journals, has authored *Foundations for Soul Care*, and serves as a professor for Pastoral Care at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

The text is a revised version of an earlier edition, *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views*, which was published in 2000. The current edition has both similarities and differences from the first edition. The format and structure is virtually the same. There are seven chapters in the book. Johnson offers his own introduction and conclusion. Every additional chapter consists of a “view” or model being promoted by a distinguished advocate of that view. Once a view is presented, each alternate view has a brief opportunity (3-5 pages) to critique and challenge the particular model presented. This occurs in five separate chapters in the book, with each topic being given equal time to both promote its beliefs as well as respond to opponents. Readers of the first edition will notice some common content with the earlier volume, although when that occurs it is usually refreshed, updated, and set within the contemporary dialogue.

There are, however, two particular items that are especially important to notice when comparing with the first edition. Gary Collins, who represented the integrationist position in the earlier version, does not appear here. Instead, Stanton L. Jones assumes that task. Additionally, as the title indicates, there is a new or “fifth” view being added. The four models originally found in the first edition are found here again, with the transformation psychology view being explained and included as the fifth model.

David Myers presents first with his levels-of-explanation model. This view can be described as an approach which values all the different academic disciplines, and recognizes their “place” in contributing to humanity’s well being. We do not need to confuse these levels (33), but rather with humility (49) should see psychology as a scientific perspective, much like theology and chemistry, from which we can study nature and our place in it (51). Myers argues that sometimes this psychology may challenge certain [theological] assumptions, and that this may help “keep alive that ‘ever reforming’ Reformation spirit” (75).

An integration view is explained by Stanton L. Jones. This model “surmises that Scripture does not provide us with all we need in order to understand human beings fully, and that there is a legitimate and strategic role for psychology as a science” (101). The integrationist, however, believes that God’s Word and His answers must form the foundation and structure for the practice of a Christian psychologist (101).

A Christian Psychology view is presented by Roberts and Watson. This model attempts to examine and capture the great “psychological” insights from great Christian thinkers from history, indeed even Christ and Scriptures. They write, “We wish to develop a psychology that accurately describes the psychological nature of human beings as understood according to historic Christianity” (155). The authors examine, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, and mine the psychological treasures found therein (157-64).

Coe and Hall present the newest model, the transformational psychology view. This perspective believes that ultimately psychology must be done as an act of love (199). Doing psychology within a tradition should be suspended, and replaced with doing psychology anew in the Spirit (201). The authors develop a model that is very person or practitioner centered. The sanctification or “goodness” of the person practicing psychology is the fundamental element of correctness. Thus, it is the “good person” which is most able to do psychology (215).

The last perspective presented is the Biblical counseling model. Powlison offers one of the most unique descriptions of psychology in the entire text, defining it in six different “levels,” Psych-1 through Psych-6 (249-61). Psych-1 is the most basic component of psychology (descriptive facts only). Ultimately, Psych-6 is the most complex, referring to a mass ethos or pop culture zeitgeist. With each level, Powlison offers guidelines with how a Christian should think, interact, and “integrate” with that particular “psych.” He concludes his chapter with an interesting case study, applying all six levels to the case and counselee.

There is much to be commended concerning this effort. Although the chapters are not long enough to provide a detailed explanation of each view, the reader will gain an understanding of the distinctives of each model, as well as the critiques to which each advocate must respond.

The dialogue is lively, and the spirit and tone is amicable for the most part. There are a few occasions, however, of misrepresentations and caricatures. Conservative evangelicals are typically in the cross hairs when this occurs, being depicted as fundamentalist (29), Amish (286), and refusing to crawl out of their cultural ghettos (29). These unfair portraits, however, are the exception and not the norm.

Some of the biggest weakness are found in Johnson’s introduction as he attempts to frame the “crisis.” He describes the long history of Christianity “integrating” with science and secular thinkers, and uses this history as an appeal for contemporary consideration (9-20). He commits the error, however, of equating modern psychology with science. This subject itself is a debated topic, and would have been a valuable addition for clarity and consideration. Although he partially handles objections in a footnote (21), this is an important, formative point in the book and thus should have received comprehensive treatment. Additionally, Johnson advances the idea that the crisis being debated in this book is similar to other sociological crises insofar as an established “tradition” is being challenged. Throughout the introduction, and later in the conclusion, models are considered for understanding how to dialogue with, interpret, and systematically arrange competing theories within any given “crisis.” The goal is then to cherry pick the best of what each system has to offer, arriving at a final “metasystem” of thought (308-10). Although there could be fruit to this undertaking, this solution is indicative of the philosophical, rather than theological, orientation of the text.

Overall the book is an enlightening read that will edify its readers. Students

and teachers in psychology, counseling, and the pastoral field should consider this a must have in their collection. Not only is it being debated in the class room, but our pews and homes are filled with the fruit, and sometimes confusion, of these competing views. It is highly recommended.

Travis Trawick
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Introducing the New Testament: A Short Guide to its History and Message.* By D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo. Edited by Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 163 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

This volume provides a condensation of the popular New Testament introduction by Carson and Moo. Naselli, a PhD student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and research assistant to Carson at the time, earned editor status by providing the initial condensation of the longer work. For each New Testament book, the authors discuss the content, author, genre, date, place, audience, purpose, and contributions. Additional chapters discuss the Synoptic Gospels and Synoptic problem, focusing on issues rather than scholars, New Testament letters, including a discussion of pseudonymity and pseudepigraphy, and Paul as apostle and theologian, including several pages on “The New Perspective.”

The first chapter, “Thinking about the Study of the New Testament,” rightfully omits almost all of that which appears in the corresponding chapter in the original volume. The chapter on the New Testament canon is absent, although one may wish that this chapter would appear in an abbreviated form rather than having been omitted. Unlike the original volume, footnotes are completely absent. Additionally, each chapter closes with questions for review and discussion.

This text-only volume (except for one map) aims at a popular audience yet still addresses significant issues. The condensation effectively introduces issues and creates a desire to learn more without leaving the reader stranded. The authors provide an evangelical response to perspectives of critical scholars. In this form, the book would not be appropriate as a regular text in a graduate or undergraduate course on the New Testament. However, it could certainly serve as a supplemental text at either level to point students quickly to significant issues in each book. Furthermore, the text might serve well in a one-semester survey of the entire Bible at the undergraduate level. In the local church, an academically minded believer may find the text helpful.

Some readers in the target audience may prefer a volume with extensive images and color. For these, this black and white text may prove bland. Some may also find the discussions too weighty even though significantly condensed. Perhaps the greatest challenge in producing a short introduction is to summarize the contents of a New Testament book effectively, particularly the Gospels. The summary of Matthew is the most challenged in this text, yet the volume as a whole meets this challenge well.

David Hutchison
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

An Ethics of Biodiversity: Christianity Ecology, and the Variety of Life. By Kevin J. O'Brien. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2010. 221 pages. Softcover, \$26.95.

The contemporary environmental movement is awash with ethical scholarship pointing toward the urgency of action to preserve the ecological stability of Earth. O'Brien's monograph is no exception to this trend as he argues from a Roman Catholic perspective for the preservation of biodiversity on the earth and the urgency for action, particularly among the religious communities, to slow the rate of species extinction.

In many ways, this work espouses a typical secular ethics of the environment. The first chapter focuses on defining biodiversity and beginning to emphasize the apparent impact of humans on the rate of species extinction. In chapter two, O'Brien relies on the arguments of the 1992 Earth Summit's Convention on Biodiversity to support his argument that biodiversity is valuable. The religious flavor of O'Brien's ethics of biodiversity becomes apparent in the third chapter where he asserts a sacramental perspective on biodiversity. In chapter four, O'Brien shifts his focus from the justification of the preservation of biodiversity to an examination of the scale of action necessary to preserve it on a global scope. O'Brien argues in the fifth chapter for a balanced approach, considering the principles of subsidiarity in comparison with socialization. O'Brien spends the next chapter extolling the merits of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and recounting various victories the environmental movement in the US has tallied against economic development. In chapter seven, O'Brien also briefly addresses the topic of dominion of man, but defines dominion as an unfortunate power that humans have to negatively impact the welfare of the environment. Chapter eight focuses on cultural diversity and biodiversity, labeling the two forms of diversity as homologous. Then the penultimate chapter examines the relationship between environmental efforts and liberation theology. The final chapter is a brief conclusion to the discussion and an exhortation for social action.

This book reads much like a secular ethics of the environment, which is a significant weakness for a text purporting to be Christian. Early on, O'Brien declares his sympathy with the theory of macro-evolution and his antipathy toward an acceptance of the historicity of Genesis. O'Brien goes on to state that his ethics of biodiversity are dependent on "openness to the reality of evolution" (31). This view of God's limited involvement in the development of biodiversity hampers his attempts to explain the value of biodiversity. The majority of the arguments support the instrumental value of biodiversity, but the last argument O'Brien outlines is a naked assertion that biodiversity has value beyond human interest. O'Brien recognizes that there needs to be a stronger argument for the intrinsic worth of biodiversity, so he looks to the concept of biodiversity as sacrament to provide that argument.

A second weakness is that O'Brien advocates for community involvement by Christian organizations, but not in a way that seems consistent with evangelical worship and ecclesiology. According to O'Brien, in order to firm up support for conservation the religious communities of the world need to work for the moral formation of their adherents with a positive view toward biodiversity. O'Brien cites examples such as a blessing of animals conducted in New York City (135), and urges the use of "scriptural interpretation, imaginatively applying ancient, sacred texts to contemporary issues" in order to inculcate a sense of moral responsibilities (137). Subsequently, O'Brien points to a contemporary application of Noah's ark as

beneficial to an ethics of biodiversity.

A third weakness is the strong emphasis of reliance on government regulation in this book. O'Brien celebrates the recent advances in government regulation and apparent growth in public concern for biodiversity, but concludes with a plaintive statement that human intervention in the environment is the best hope for biodiversity and that immediate, intensive action is required. Regulatory solutions are tenuous, O'Brien argues, because the law rests on political foundation which could shift in the future.

One strength of this volume is that O'Brien effectively differentiates between the sacramental value and the sacredness of the environment (61). By making this distinction he narrowly avoids a pantheistic approach to the environment. Instead, O'Brien asserts that biodiversity helps individuals to comprehend their role as a part of the interrelated ecological web of the Earth and accept their place as equal to all other creatures in the creation. The equality of all creatures seems to be a result of an evolutionary worldview which discounts the historicity of Genesis.

A second strength is that the author has a more holistic view of the world than many environmentalists, showing legitimate concern for human wellbeing. O'Brien cites several examples of well meant environmental regulation impinging on cultural diversity and moves toward an argument for including environmental justice under the umbrella of social justice. He points out the high number of humans, particularly the poor, who have been negatively impacted by environmental regulation, mainly through displacement off newly protected land. Therefore when making decisions and creating regulation, both cultural diversity and biodiversity must be considered as competing concerns. O'Brien staunchly maintains a balanced position that Christians are called to care for all of the poor and oppressed including threatened species.

Another strength of this volume is that O'Brien argues for immediate action by Christians. He supports governmental action on a global scale, but tempers that by discussing the importance of a local focus of action. He asserts that Christians need to be concerned for the environment on both a local and a global level (92). In the end, O'Brien advocates a mediating view which allows concern at the regional level to impact both the global and local environment.

This book is an excellent example of the argumentation of many environmental ethicists for the importance of political and social activism from the church. It represents another voice in the chorus of Christians calling for more global regulation as well as local action. This book would be a valuable read for those examining the basis for the increasing trend in the Christian environmental movement, though it should be read with a critical eye.

Andrew Spencer

***The Letter to the Hebrews.* Peter T. O'Brien. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 596 pages. Hardcover, \$52.00.**

The book of Hebrews is both a masterpiece and an enigma. Serious readers of the letter have always recognized the powerful effect of its carefully crafted discourse. They have also grappled with the implications of its theologically complex message. With his contribution to the Pillar New Testament Commentary series on *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Peter O'Brien takes his place in this long line of interpreters. Research fellow at Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, O'Brien is a

well-established figure in the world of New Testament studies.

As with most commentaries, O'Brien begins with a brief overview of the introductory issues (1-43). O'Brien holds that the author of Hebrews was a prominent leader among the churches and a competent exegete exceedingly familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The letter was most likely written in the mid-first century to Jewish Christians located in Rome and in danger of returning to some form of Judaism. As a "word of exhortation," Hebrews takes the form of a written sermon meant to be "read aloud again and again" (22). The many sermonic qualities of the text such as the use of the first person, the language of speaking and hearing, and the intimacy of the discourse confirm this observation. Accordingly, the structure of the book reflects this "complex interplay between exposition and exhortation" that runs throughout, with "major turning points" at 4:14-16 and 10:19-25 and central theological exposition in chapters 5:1-10:18 (34). Theologically, Hebrews stands within the mainstream of early Christian tradition but also contributes its own distinctive developments. These elements undergird the author's purpose in writing which was to "hammer home repeatedly the importance of faithful endurance" to his readers so that they might "reach the eternal rest in the heavenly city" (35).

O'Brien's introductory survey is helpful and represents a snapshot of significant interpretive decisions he makes in his interpretation of the letter. One noticeable lacuna here is the omission of any type of theological survey, which turns out to be an intentional decision. O'Brien states that he will address the letter's "major theological themes" in a forthcoming volume on the theology of Hebrews (xiv). Though understandable, his decision is nonetheless disappointing for a reader of this commentary. Though his comments on the text certainly account for theological elements, at least a brief survey would have provided a useful orientation to a document brimming with overt theological discourse.

O'Brien's comments on the text itself are both substantive and concise. This characteristic keeps the flow of the commentary moving at a steady pace. O'Brien makes good use of the footnotes in order to interact with contrary arguments on various interpretive decisions. On most of the issues he addresses, O'Brien utilizes the recent and most relevant scholarship available (e.g., journal articles, scholarly monographs, and unpublished dissertations). He also consistently draws on a wide-range of lexical and text-critical data to support his exegetical decisions. This robust interaction complements his dependably incisive textual commentary. One missed opportunity in this regard involves the use of "notes" at the end of exposition sections. After his comments on 1:1-2, O'Brien interacts with competing interpretations of the notion of "Christ as divine wisdom" under the heading of "Note 1." However, this valuable tool is quite underused, occurring only once. This format could have been used in the text to outline the interpretive spectrum on a few pivotal issues (e.g., the warning passages).

The value of a new commentary is not necessarily found in its synthesis of all previous interpretive work done on a book. These commentaries are readily available to most scholars and informed students. Rather, the contribution is often in how an author brings new developments in disciplines of New Testament scholarship to bear on the text under scrutiny. For example, O'Brien utilizes discourse analysis, which examines meaning above the sentence level. This tool aids in determining the relationship that each paragraph has to its surrounding material and also in discerning the structure of the book as a whole. O'Brien follows George H. Guthrie's broad structure that traces the recurring shifts between the exposition and

exhortation sections. At the appropriate places in the commentary, O'Brien works out the details of his structural decisions. This emphasis is especially appropriate for a letter that doubles as a sermon.

O'Brien also makes use of verbal aspect theory, which holds that verb tense forms convey the viewpoint of the speaker rather than merely the time of the action. This discussion is typically theoretical, so O'Brien's application of its insights is helpful and sheds interpretive light on a number of texts. To give one example, the statement in Heb 1:4 that Jesus "inherited" a name greater than the angels is in the perfect tense form. O'Brien notes that the aspect of the perfect tense "powerfully draws attention to Jesus' prominence and the superiority of his present position, rather than indicating when he received the name" (61). Thus, in relevant cases, O'Brien highlights the function of a verb's aspect rather than only its temporal implications (see also 18, 99, 150, 421).

O'Brien is also keen on new research concerning the New Testament's use of the Old Testament. For instance, he integrates the recent strand of inquiry that detects a sustained allusion to the wilderness generation of Israel in key passages (e.g., 217-18). He also consistently examines the function of the Old Testament material. In this regard, he notes that the seven Old Testament quotations in 1:5-11 provide the exegetical support for the lofty Christological statements in the prologue (1:1-4). This type of analysis is also crucial in understanding a book that is rife with quotations, allusions, and echoes of Israel's Scriptures.

In sum, O'Brien has provided the church with a readable, rigorous analysis of an important New Testament document from a confessional standpoint. His volume certainly functions as a pillar in this commentary series and will represent a reliable account of the meaning and message of the book of Hebrews for years to come.

Ched Spellman

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Jesus The Temple. Nicholas Perrin. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 223 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.

In this thought-provoking monograph, Nicholas Perrin attempts to bridge the perceived gap between the historical Jesus and the teachings of Paul and the early church (1). To do so, he looks for the identification of Jesus as the new eschatological temple within the actions of Jesus himself (12). Although other scholars have made this identification, Perrin's approach is new in: (1) identifying Jesus within the counter-temple movements of his day, and (2) claiming "the imminence of the eschatological temple provided the basic rationale for his most characteristic actions" (15, see also 78-79).

Perrin is Franklin S. Dryness Associate Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School. He deftly deals with the New Testament, Old Testament, and Second Temple writings in this interesting book. In chapter one, he compares Jesus' counter-temple claims with other first-century Jewish sects as well as John the Baptist. In chapter two, he compares Jesus' claims with the early church's teachings. Chapters three through five deal with specific actions and accompanying teachings of Jesus: cleansing the temple, actions dealing with the poor, and activities dealing with inaugurating the new temple/kingdom: healings, exorcisms, and meals with controversial friends.

There are a number of strengths in this volume. First, Perrin gives a careful,

thoughtful approach to the question of truthfulness of each of the primary biblical passages he interprets. Each time he carefully answers objections and affirms the event's historicity (e.g., 82-82, 121, 132, 157-58, 173-74). Second, he gives a consistent presentation of his hypothesis that Jesus presented himself and his followers as the new temple—both present and eschatological in nature (13-15, 180, 185-86). Third, he gives a good harmonistic explanation in that when the words and actions in a given text are hard to reconcile, it is likely that if the full message were available today the reconciliation would be much easier to perceive (84). Fourth, Perrin employs helpful descriptive imagery, such as, assigning causation in human decisions is not like single-line trajectories in billiard shots (81), sometimes two broad approaches need not be mutually exclusive since “it is possible for a trail to traverse two faces of a mountain on the way to the top” (89), the Jewish high priesthood was a mix between Columbian drug lords and overpaid boardroom executives (97), and instigating swine running off of the cliff was like throwing snowballs at a team's mascot (167). However, Perrin wrongly said Jesus drove the swine off of the cliff—the Gospels said the swine themselves caused this action, likely led by the demons (Mark 5:13). Fifth, Perrin retains a humility and tentativeness throughout the book, gently and effectively guiding the reader rather than zealously forcing one to certain conclusions (15, 183).

This reviewer believes Perrin overstates his case. With his tenacious determination and temple-shaped lens, Perrin views all of Jesus' actions as temple related. Although there are certainly some New Testament typological references as well as allusions to Jesus and his followers as being temple or temple-like, it is a stretch to claim that everything that Jesus did and everything that he asked his followers to do are temple practices (78-79). If Perrin's hypothesis is correct that Jesus the temple is the overarching New Testament theme, there would be more explicit references to the temple in Jesus' words and deeds throughout the Gospels; however, at times Perrin has to resort to hidden meanings or associations to make his case, such as in Jesus' comment about the always-present poor in Mark 14:7 (138-44) or in Jesus' exorcism at Gadara (164-70). Even if Perrin is correct in his interpretation, it would be helpful to provide the reader with application. Apart from a problematic liberation theology interpretation of Jesus' dealings with the poor (127, 129, 135-48), there is little for the reader to apply.

Perrin purposefully limits his study to the actions of Jesus, although from time to time he necessarily interprets what Jesus said at some of those events. He believes he can effectively make his case this way (15), and certainly this focus keeps the book shorter. Yet, this reviewer remains unconvinced and believes two purposeful omissions would have helped Perrin's argument: Jesus' discourses as well as his death and resurrection. Fortunately, Perrin will deal with these texts in two subsequent volumes. They will be welcome additions to help Perrin try to prove his interesting hypothesis.

Both students and scholars will benefit from a critical reading of *Jesus the Temple*. It is a good example of how to question a common interpretation of Scripture as well as how to examine and offer a consistent interpretive theme. It is good food for thought.

James R. Wicker
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World.
By Raymond Person, Jr. Leiden: Brill, 2010. 205 pages. Hardcover, \$131.00.

In this book, Person argues that Deuteronomy through Kings, referred to as the Deuteronomistic History (DH), and Chronicles are both the result of a long process of editorial work that finishes in the Persian period. His argument goes against a strong tide of scholarship for the past century that has viewed DH as exilic and viewed Chronicles as a Persian (or later) work that used DH as its main source for the history of the pre-exilic monarchy.

According to his own admission, his argument is based on his assessment of the most probable historical reconstruction that can account for the complexities of DH and the existence of Chronicles. His reconstruction proceeds along the following lines. First, scribes active during the Judean monarchy were exiled into Babylon. These scribes brought with them texts from Judah and continued to preserve and edit them in exile. Some within this group of scribes returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. This school of scribes is what Person identifies as the Deuteronomistic school. During this period the school finished editing DH. Another group of scribes remained in Babylon until Ezra returned to Jerusalem. They accompanied Ezra, established a competing scribal school, and eventually displaced the Deuteronomistic school. Their work did not start with DH, but began with the texts that were preserved and edited in exile. He argues that this reconstruction allows for diversity and unity in DH, accounts for the similarities between DH and Chronicles, and explains the differences between the two historical works.

Much of Person's book is heading off challenges to his reconstruction: 1) there are significant linguistic differences between DH and Chronicles, 2) Chronicles appears to omit important background because it is found in DH, 3) DH and Chronicles have represent differences in ideology that can be traced to their historical context, and 4) although Chronicles likely used a different form of Samuel than the Masoretic text, the same does not appear to be true for Kings.

First, the current consensus regarding linguistic differences is that they reflect the historical development of Classical Hebrew. DH exhibits Standard Biblical Hebrew; Chronicles exhibits Late Biblical Hebrew. Person builds on recent challenges to the consensus and suggests that his reconstruction which involves two different scribal schools with a common origin in Babylon could account for the linguistic differences. However, his suggestion does not deal adequately with the linguistic character of Ezekiel nor does it explain the preponderance of Standard Biblical Hebrew over Late Biblical Hebrew.

Second, Person argues the model of production for Chronicles should be shifted. Because the scribes who wrote Chronicles operated in an oral context, they did not view their work as a modern book. Instead, their role was to instantiate the larger tradition of their context. They drew on the larger tradition available to them within their oral context and accessed it, most often through memory and dialogue, and worked to record it so that it may be handed down to the next generation. Using this model, Person mollifies the challenge that Chronicles assumes information from DH. However, this model does not explain the existence of sophisticated literary artistry that spans a large amount of text (e.g., chiasmus), nor is one able to determine whether Chronicles is drawing from assumed tradition since the only evidence for the tradition is found in DH and Chronicles.

Third, because of the oral context in which these works were produced, the

scribes were comfortable with multiformity. By multiformity Person means that the scribes often understood what modern readers might call different texts as the same thing. He argues that the scribes responsible for DH and those responsible for Chronicles likely would not have noticed any real difference in their works. Therefore, they can both be works arising from the same general context.

Fourth, by examining the Hebrew and Greek textual witnesses, he argues that the material unique to DH or Chronicles is not original to DH because it is found in different locations among the textual witnesses. Therefore, Chronicles did not use DH, but an earlier version of it.

Person's work is a stimulating challenge to the consensus regarding the relationship between DH and Chronicles. Although I do not share many of his presuppositions nor agree with his thesis, his work highlights some current important questions in Old Testament studies. For one, it raises the question of what role orality played in the production and preservation of biblical books. For those interested in academic research on Samuel-Kings or Chronicles, the book is a good example of emerging trends in biblical research regarding linguistic dating, the relationship of orality and textuality, and the question of multiformity.

Joshua E. Williams
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible.* By Robert Plummer. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010. 347 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Answering questions is a central task for any teacher. Robert L. Plummer sets out to ask and answer forty of them in *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*. Plummer is a New Testament professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and in this volume he has rendered his course on Biblical Hermeneutics into a series of "frequently asked questions." Plummer aims for his work to "serve as a textbook for an introductory Bible course," but wants it also to be "beneficial for any curious Christian." Consequently, he attempts to be "accessible without being simplistic" and "scholarly without being pedantic" (11).

Choosing the Q&A format makes the structure of the text readily accessible but also weakens the narrative flow of the book. The questions and answers are self-contained and not necessarily meant to be read in order or even in light of each other. To compensate for this disjunction, Plummer fashions the macrostructure of the "parts" and "sections" of the book in a way that eases the reader into the discussion.

Part one addresses preliminary questions on "text, canon, and translation" (chaps 1-7). Part two examines "approaching the Bible generally," with sections of questions related to interpretation (chaps 8-13) and questions related to meaning (chaps 14-20). Part three talks about "approaching specific texts" and deals with genres that are equally distributed in both Testaments (chaps 21-27), genres that primarily occur in the Old Testament (chaps 28-31), and those that occur primarily in the New Testament (chaps 32-35). Part four ends the volume with a survey of hermeneutical issues in recent scholarly discussions.

There is a movement here from very basic questions (e.g., "What is the Bible?") to more advanced matters (e.g., "What is Speech-Act Theory?"). Thus, in addition to using the book as a reference tool, beginning students would benefit from moving through these larger sections sequentially.

The content of most chapters is in the form of wide-angle lens overviews.

Some of the chapters are brief arguments for Plummer's position, like in chapter four where he quickly answers the question of whether the Bible contains error in the negative and lays out a positive case for biblical inerrancy. Other chapters outline the major options on an issue, and Plummer argues for the option he thinks is best. For instance, chapter fourteen answers the question, "Who determines the meaning of a text?" Plummer walks through the choices of the reader, the text, and the author (he argues for the author). Many of the chapters basically consist of bullet-points that provide a framework for thinking about an issue or a question. For instance, in chapter ten, Plummer lists five "general principles for interpreting the Bible" (95): Approach the Bible in prayer, read the Bible as a book that points to Jesus, let Scripture interpret Scripture, meditate on the Bible, and approach the Bible in faith and obedience.

As I made my way through these chapters, I occasionally thought to myself, "Who is this book for?" One of the challenges of writing for a broad audience involves maintaining a level of consistency in the terms used and the style of writing employed. Plummer attempts to write for both lay readers and beginning students of theology, and he does both in various places. However, at times this characteristic gives the flow of the book a feeling of unevenness. Plummer's writing style is deliberately informal and brings clarity to a number of complicated issues. To make the discussions accessible to a broad audience, Plummer sprinkles his chapter with illustrations, made-up conversations, personal anecdotes, and simplified definitions. He also makes use of humor. For instance, when explaining the importance of examining the literary context of a passage, Plummer recounts, "I tell my students to hold onto the biblical text like a rider in a rodeo holds onto a bull. And, I also warn them that the only persons in the rodeo ring not on bulls are clowns" (105).

Alongside this informal tone, though, there are a number of places where terms or concepts are introduced without definition or explanation (e.g., *lingua franca*, Codex Vaticanus, and diglot). Further, because of the subject matter, the content of some of the chapters is unavoidably technical (e.g., the discussion of figures of speech in chap 27). There is also a striking range of sources cited. Whereas on one page Plummer points readers to Wikipedia, on other pages he quotes from unpublished doctoral dissertations. Though this unevenness might simply be the byproduct of writing for students in a clear and easily understood manner, there still lingers the sensation that there are essentially two different types of books lurking within these chapters.

Any introductory textbook will need to make a myriad of exegetical and interpretive decisions in its presentation. Thus, professors looking to adopt this text for their hermeneutics courses will inevitably have a few questions of their own about Plummer's questions. To give only one example, Plummer at times seems to equate the Old Testament with the old covenant (17, 23, 161). Many will take issue with this presentation, arguing that it is imperative to distinguish clearly that the Old Testament is not coterminous with the Mosaic covenant. In fact, some would argue that the Pentateuch itself does not represent the old covenant, but rather intends to demonstrate the failure of the old covenant. Despite the presence of these types of debatable issues (something unavoidable), Plummer's format can be easily adjusted or modified in person by professors who see various issues in a different light. Many of the chapters would function well as the starting point for interactive classroom discussion.

One feature of Plummer's book that will edify believing Bible readers is his

consistent integration of comments regarding the spiritual components involved in the task of interpretation. Plummer writes from a confessional standpoint that seeks to take into account key theological realities. For instance, Plummer frequently emphasizes that the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical authors in the writing of their texts. The overarching message of these inspired texts is, in turn, all about Jesus. In other words, the Bible is “Christocentric” (15, chap 18, etc). Interpreters should also acknowledge their own sinfulness and their inability to grasp the fullness of this message without the illumination of the Spirit (145). Accordingly, Plummer holds up the practices of reading the text and praying for God’s guidance as necessary elements of a sound interpretive approach. To give one example, Plummer’s outline for reading the Psalms includes the exhortations to read, pray, memorize, and sing the Psalms. These elements will especially benefit readers attempting to foster a thoroughgoing hermeneutic of trust.

For what it is, this volume of hermeneutical catechesis achieves its purpose of providing helpful answers to a number of questions about interpreting the Bible. At its best, the book serves as a primer for those unfamiliar with the formal study of hermeneutics and as a refresher for advanced students on basic (and therefore sometimes neglected) theological concepts.

Ched Spellman

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Rise of Christian Beliefs: The Thought World of Early Christians. By Heikki Räisänen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. 479 pages. Softcover, \$39.99.

Long-term research within the New Testament and early Christianity produced this work by Heikki Räisänen, the Emeritus Professor of the University of Finland. It consists of two parts, the first refers to the historical, cultural, philosophical, and religious background of the birth of Christianity. The second major division discusses various beliefs among early Christians. For those who have an introductory education in Biblical studies, Räisänen suggests that they might skip the first part and start reading the second part, carefully reminding them that his prepositions for later theological discussions occur in the first section.

Part I (chaps 1-3) shows how early Christianity was diverse in its beliefs. Caution concerning oversimplification of any early Christian element remains both necessary and recommendable. However, evangelical readers need to be aware that Räisänen considers Gnostic believers as genuine Christians whose views are simply different from so-called orthodox Christians and could possibly be closer to the original understanding of the gospel. Räisänen assumes that a first-century New Testament theology does not have the authority or the right to judge the orthodoxy of later Christians and to prescribe a solution for any theological problem. As a result of this presupposition, Räisänen adopts William Wrede’s thesis of “no New Testament writing was born with the predicate ‘canonical’ attached” and asks his readers to see that “the canon is a later construction that came gradually into existence in a complicated process during the second to fourth centuries” (4). Therefore, in order to capture a true picture of Christianity from the unfixed Christian world of thought, Räisänen does not mind moving beyond and reinterpreting New Testament theologies in light of non-canonical and even heretical writings of Nag Hammadi. Räisänen intentionally avoids a confessional reading of the development of early Christianity because there is no “prescriptive or normative” element in first-century

Christianity yet.

Räisänen repeats F. C. Baur's old but still popular hypothesis that first-century Christianity struggled with a rivalry between a Pauline (Gentile) Christianity and a Petrine (Jewish) Christianity. However, one must admit that such a theological conflict between two rival Christian communities in Galatians, in particular, argues from silence at best because the text itself does not describe how Paul's correction of Peter ended. Furthermore, the second-century writers seem to disagree with Baur and Räisänen. In his admonition to Corinth, Clement of Rome mentioned Peter and Paul as the "righteous pillars [of the Church]" and presented them as the examples of all Christians (*First Letters to the Corinthians*, 5). Clement's description of Peter and Paul does not show any rivalry or tension in the church of Rome and in the church of Corinth. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*, 3.12), Origen (*Against Celsus*, 2.1.), and Tertullian (*Against Marcion*, 4.5.3.), who mentioned Paul's rebuke of Peter, never recognized the existence of a theological conflict between a Petrine community and a Pauline community in first-century Christianity.

Part II discusses several fundamental early Christian beliefs: eschatology (chaps 4-5); anthropology (chap 6); soteriology (chap 7); Christology (chap 8); pneumatology (chap 9); ecclesiology (chap 10); Christian relationship with pagans (chap 11); and the development of Christian orthodoxy (chap 12).

With regard to eschatology, the resurrection of deceased non-believers and eternal punishment for sinners include no room in Räisänen's understanding of the early Christian world. If any resurrection arrives for nonbelievers, it would only transpire for their judgment, and, then, annihilation would occur. Resurrection and eternal life belong to believers alone. Räisänen believes that Paul and the *Didache* (16.7) support his conclusion. One should not take Paul's relative lack of using the term "hell" or "eternal punishment" as evidence of the apostle's defense of annihilation or rejection of Jesus and John's clear teaching on eternal conscious suffering in hell as the second or eternal death. Paul continued the ministry of Jesus and worked with other apostles. Therefore, Paul would not have been hesitant to clarify his position if he was different from other Christians or so-called apostles on eternal punishment. Rather, Paul's relative silence about hell could mean that Paul accepted Jesus and John's lessons on that subject and might have felt no need to highlight the issue further. As a matter of fact, Paul spoke of ὀλεθρον αἰώνιον (eternal destruction, 2 Thess 1:9) as a rightful payment for the sinners. In contrast to Räisänen's appeal to 2 Thess 1:9, the word ὀλεθρον (destruction) itself does not favor annihilationism. 4 Macc has the same phrase ὀλεθρον αἰώνιον (10:15) and uses it as eternal torment of fire (9:9) by which sinners will suffer forever (12:12). In addition, the second-century writings, such as the *Didache* and *Hermas*, do not provide enough contents for their readers to judge whether those patristic works rejected eternal punishment or could be simply read in favor of annihilation. In contrast, other contemporary works such as *Second Clement* (17.7), *Letter to Diognetus* (1.29) and Justin Martyr (*I Apology*, 8; 28; 52) provide explicit references to eternal conscious suffering of sinners.

Nor does the Finnish scholar accept that the resurrected body of Christ could ascend into heaven because that body, if transformed, did not quite become spiritual and kept its fleshly constitution. Indeed, Paul taught that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50), and only the spiritual body could receive incorruptible things in heaven. Paul's teaching of the resurrection is not much different from the Greco-Roman view of "the immortal, but material, *soul*" (emphasis Räisänen's) or the "Jewish visions" of the "resurrection of the spirit from Sheol" (127).

In addition, the *Gospel of Thomas* presents a more Pauline ideology concerning the resurrection because Thomas spoke of the “rest of the soul” and the abolishment of “dichotomy” between sexes or the body and the soul, not “the idea of immediate postmortem retribution” in the Gospel of Luke 16 (129). The Platonic negation of the body strongly influenced Paul in spite of his Biblical emphasis on the corporeal nature of the resurrected body. For Räsänen, Origen’s denial of the actual physicality of the resurrected body is not heretical at all but is rather “a reasonable attempt to make sense of Paul’s [unclear] account in 1 Corinthians 15” (131). However, Räsänen misunderstands Paul’s notion of the *pneumatic sōma*. The resurrected body is not a simple improved body. The resurrected body is pneumatic not because it will be no longer corporeal but because it will be completely under the power of the Holy Spirit and will be no longer vulnerable to corruption, sin, and death.

On anthropology, Räsänen acknowledges the universality of sin as part of Hebraic biblical anthropology but rejects the concepts of original sin. No one is born with the inherent sinful nature. Every sin is “acquired” (140) later in one’s life. The Hebrew Bible and other Jewish literature, except *4 Ezra*, remain at odds with the Augustinian despair of human incapability to accomplish the requirements of the law. Pelagius, not Augustine, maintained the theological legacy of Hebraic Biblical anthropology. If any difference exists between Räsänen’s early Christian representatives and Pelagius, it appears in the possibility of a sinless life. The former did not believe it, whereas the latter defended it. Surprisingly, Räsänen argues, “Jesus himself went to be baptized by John, indubitably in order to repent and to receive forgiveness for his sins” (139). The predominant thought of early Christians on humanity is “much closer to Judaism (and Islam!) than to mainstream Protestantism [based on Augustine’s original sin] with regard to the issue of the human condition” (153).

Regarding soteriology, Jesus did not expect his disciples to understand his death as an exclusively salvific event in the Protestant sense. Penal substitution or bearing the guilt of others, even though some of the New Testament writings contain several references to the death of Jesus as a ransom, does not receive weight. Räsänen states, “It is even controversial whether Jesus anticipated his imminent death....this would be hard to understand if Jesus had spoken to his followers of its extraordinary saving significance” (159). If there is any value in the vicarious death of Jesus, it shows the exemplary death of one Jewish martyr. As E. P. Sanders already demonstrated, the Second Temple Judaism and the early Christianity described in the New Testament taught the necessity of good works not as the evidence of salvation but as one ingredient of salvation. Therefore, for early Christians, salvation comes not from Luther’s *sola fide* but from Pelagius’s synergism between divine grace implanted in nature and human effort by observing the law. Räsänen does not see any theological consistency within Paul himself and between Paul and other writers such as James.

The title of Räsänen’s section on Christology – True Man or True God? – shows a very close theological affinity with James Dunn’s adoptionist argument. Christ never taught his ontological equality with God the Father. If there is any equality between Christ and God, it is always to be functional, not ontological. What early Christians did in their worship of Jesus was not the adoration uniquely set aside for the true God but the veneration attributed to the angels and the servants of God who appeared with divine authority and power. High Christology in the Gospel of John is a completely rewritten story of Jesus by later Christians.

Even the Gospel of John presents a docetic Christology in order to promote the deity of Christ. Räisänen sees the later Christological confession of the councils as a theological evolution, not a theological clarification, from the New Testament. Like John Hick, Räisänen does not accept the genuine incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 11 on the Christian relationship with pagans in early Christianity might be the least controversial part of this book, although there are still debatable arguments. Räisänen is right in that the persecutions of Christians in the first and the second centuries were not universal but local in the Roman Empire and that the local citizens, not the government, were responsible for those persecutions. Christians' rejection of joining pagan social practices involving idol worship, and their refusal to offer honor to the cult of the Emperor, might be the immediate cause of the persecutions of Christians in the Roman Empire during the first two centuries. However, Räisänen desires to minimize the contribution of Christian martyrdom in the development of early Christianity and its growth. Therefore, he describes John's references to the persecutions of the seven Asia Minor churches in Revelation as his "expectation of a worldwide persecution" "due to the tremendous impact of his apocalyptic thought world," not as the actual threats to the churches (292).

The last chapter is the author's summary of his own arguments in this book. To read this last chapter even before reading the first chapter might be a good way for readers to grasp the author's theological presuppositions of the formation of early Christian beliefs.

This book may not be a good textbook for evangelical seminary students whose theological understandings of the Bible and Christian orthodoxy find foundation on their confessions. Nonetheless, Räisänen's detailed exegesis of various Gnostic views would undeniably deepen conservative evangelicals' understanding of Gnostic alternatives to the early orthodox Christian beliefs. An instructor or students of department of religion at a college that pursues more inter-faith dialogues might discover interesting thoughts for their concerns. Räisänen offers very provocative thoughts and perspectives on essential Christian themes. However, he presents them in a way that denies the commonly accepted assumptions and conclusions that historic orthodox Christianity has preserved since New Testament Christianity. Not only evangelicals but also many Catholic or Orthodox believers would not easily embrace the methodology and theological conclusions that Räisänen employs in this book.

Dongsun Cho

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic? By Michael Rydelnik. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 206 pages. Hardcover, \$19.99.

Michael Rydelnik, professor of Jewish studies at Moody Bible Institute, asks whether Christ is predicted and to what extent he can be seen in the Hebrew Bible. His concern "that the Messiah is a central feature of Old Testament biblical theology" (xvi) embodies a twofold thesis. First, he desires to show that a shift began to take place in the early 18th century regarding the way the church has understood Old Testament messianic prophecies. Beginning with Anthony Collins, J. G. Von Herder, and J. G. Eichorn, he gives a brief historical analysis, concluding that the overwhelming majority of interpreters in the modern period (operating under the

influence of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzkhaki's non-messianic interpretations, 1040–1105) have at least undervalued Old Testament messianic prediction. Second, he wants to show that "reading the Old Testament according to its compositional strategies and canonical shape will yield a clear messianic intent, with far more direct messianic prediction than is commonly held" (33).

It is this second element that dominates the content of the work. Rydelnik understands Old Testament messianic prophecy primarily as strict predictions of Christ instead of forms of general promise. According to him, giving proper attention to compositional strategies of Biblical authors and innerbiblical connections results in interpreting the Old Testament as an eschatological, messianic text. Examining Gen 49:8–12 (in light of Eze 21:27); Num 24:14–19 (in light of Amos 9:11–12); and Deut 18:15–19 (in light of Num 12:6–8 and Deut 34:10–12), Rydelnik argues that textual criticism is necessary in order to see certain messianic prophecies since only variant texts such as the Septuagint reveal these meanings. He also asserts that each Old Testament book included in the Canon "had to have a messianic hope as part of its message" (69). Old Testament writers, he claims, knew that they were writing a messianic message. He offers as evidence Jesus' words (e.g., Luke 24:25–27, 44–46 and John 5:45–47) and the apostles' words (Acts 2:29–31; 1 Pet 1:10–12). By examining the four Old Testament quotations in Matthew 2, he argues that the New Testament uses the Old in one of four ways: direct, typical, applicational, and summary. In the final three chapters, Rydelnik, applying his thesis, surveys the various views of Gen 3:15, Isa 7:14, and Psalm 110 and argues that each passage should be seen as strict predictions of Jesus.

Rydelnik's aim is presented with clarity and force. His argumentation is easy to follow, although the reader may be initially confused as to Rydelnik's position regarding other types of fulfillment. His examination of the four categories of interpretation evidenced in Matthew 2 and his allowance for elements of historical fulfillment in, for example, explaining the Davidic kingship (74) are evidence that his view is not as restrictive as it may first seem. At least two questions seem to arise from the work. Would the evangelical theologians that he places in the camp of non-messianic interpretations accept the charge that they do not see the Old Testament as an eschatological and messianic text? Is understanding the Old Testament as promise of an ultimate Messiah, but including the prospect of partial, typical, or progressive historical fulfillment of messianic texts, a move away from interpreting the Hebrew Bible as a messianic book?

Rydelnik's area of specialization is neither in Old Testament or systematic theology, yet he has done well to enter into both disciplines and contribute to the scholarly discussion of Old Testament prophecy. While not everyone will agree with the trajectory of his canonical reading of the Hebrew Bible, one would find it difficult to deny that he is consciously seeking to be "consistent with the biblical data" (7). Some readers may be uncomfortable with Rydelnik's canonical redaction, or some of his conclusions which seem to be dependent solely upon a small variant from the MT. What should be appreciated in the work, however, is the intextual (the immediate context), innertextual (the context of the writing as a contained unit), and intertextual (the context of the canon as a whole) connections that Rydelnik alludes to when interpreting the messianic texts. Even if one does not come to the conclusion of direct messianic prediction on a particular text, he should benefit from the connections being made. Many readers may affirm more of a developmental understanding of Old Testament messianic prophecies, including multiple levels

of reading Old Testament prophecy and fulfillment. Nonetheless, the connections that Rydelnik affirms could enhance a developmental view and guard against a strictly historical reading that excludes Christological fulfillment of Old Testament messianic prophecy.

Steven L. James

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Galatians.* By Thomas Schreiner. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 423 pages. Hardcover, \$34.99.**

Thomas Schreiner, a well-known Pauline scholar, has added the ninth volume to Zondervan's new exegetical commentary series. The series is still in progress and far from being complete, but it impressively lives up to its name. The series calls not only for an exegesis of the text, but each pericope is broken down into "literary context," "main idea," "translation," "structure," "exegetical outline," "explanation of the text," and "theology in application."

Some elements become repetitious since there is naturally some overlap between "literary context" and "explanation of the text," but the layout is beneficial for students and pastors, especially for those who wish to teach or preach the text. Those who are preparing to do so will benefit from the "main idea" section. They can immediately discover a brief explanation of the main idea of the pericope and study the text while keeping the main idea in mind.

The "translation" portion is more than just text. The translation is given in block diagram format, with the function of each clause given in the left margin (e.g., inference, result, apposition). Also helpful is the exegetical outline, which is repeated (in compressed form) before each "explanation of the text" so one may see visually where the passage fits into the epistle as a whole. Perhaps one of the best features of the commentary is that, for every verse, Schreiner's English translation is given, followed by the Greek text, followed by Schreiner's explanation. Thus, the commentary may be read by itself without the necessity of one or two Bibles sitting nearby.

Schreiner does nothing too surprising in the commentary. His conservative exegesis in the Reformed tradition is to be expected—but this does not mean it is poorly done. Throughout the commentary he shows both exegetical skill and abundant interaction with secondary sources. As expected, he also interacts with the New Perspective throughout the commentary, usually rejecting their conclusions. One regrettable aspect of this commentary series is that it seems Schreiner was limited in his ability to argue specific points, especially with advocates of the New Perspective or of anti-imperial readings. An occasional footnote reads, for example, "It is less likely that Paul has in mind Israel's political subjugation under Rome. Contra Hays, *Galatians*, 303-4" (302). The student or pastor may not worry about such an issue, but scholars and those interested in such critical issues will be better served by other commentaries than Schreiner's.

Schreiner follows the South Galatian theory, although tentatively (29), noting the difficulties of both the South and North Galatian positions. His position on "mirror-reading" to discover the opponents' arguments, theology, and origin is also quite conservative and helpful. He notes the evidence in the epistle that are explicit, then the evidence that may be "justly inferred," then what is "probable," then what is "less certain," and finally what is "conceivable and possible" (33-35). After critiquing

the history of research on the identity of the opponents in Galatia, he opts for the traditional Judaizer theory. The opponents were probably Pharisaic Jews as in Acts 15 who believed themselves to be Christians (48-49). They accused Paul of (1) deriving his gospel from the Jerusalem pillars, (2) distorting this gospel, and (3) doing so to please the Gentiles and win their approval (49).

Schreiner's treatment of difficult passages, such as 2:11-21 and 4:21-5:1, are both careful and helpful. While no one will agree with him on every point, his arguments hold weight. Again, however, more space would have allowed for more extensive argumentation and interaction with other views. While the sub-sections are nice, they do take up about a third of the commentary. The student and pastor will forgive Zondervan for this, especially since Schreiner's pastoral side shines forth in the "theology in application" section. Lastly, everyone can appreciate the last section of the commentary, where Schreiner explains twelve theological themes in Galatians. This commentary will not impact the scholarly community as the commentaries of Lightfoot and Burton, but for what it attempts to do for the student and pastor, it is probably the best commentary yet.

Todd A. Scacewater
Westminster Theological Seminary

Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee. Edited by Don Schweitzer. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 272 pages. Hardcover, \$94.95.

This volume is an excellent resource for scholars and theological readers interested in Jonathan Edwards's theology and philosophy. The book is a festschrift honoring Sang Hyun Lee who spent his career teaching systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Lee's bold interpretation of Edwards's philosophical theology, known as dispositional ontology, has become the starting point for scholars who seek to grasp the incredibly intricate world of Edwards's doctrine of God. No one who examines Edwards's philosophical theology can fail to appreciate Lee's immense contribution to the field.

Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary seeks to demonstrate how Edwards's eighteenth-century reflections can address theological problems in our twenty-first-century world. "Though Edwards was a person of his time," Don Schweitzer writes in the preface, "his thought provides significant resources for addressing theological and philosophical issues in the present" (ix). The book contains fifteen essays written by scholars who are well-known in the field. Half of the essays address aspects related to Edwards's doctrine of God such as the Trinity (Paul Helm, Michael McClymond), divine infinity (Don Schweitzer), the Incarnation (Seng-Kong Tan), and philosophical issues such as Edwards's occasionalism (Stephen Daniel), dispositional ontology (Anri Morimoto), panentheism (Oliver Crisp), and philosophy of nature (Avihu Zakai). The remaining chapters treat a mixture of topics, including Edwards's theology of justification (Douglas Sweeney), ecclesiology (Amy Plantinga Pauw), revelation (Gerald McDermott), homiletics (Wilson Kinnach), and a delightful study of Edwards's relationship to Princeton (Stephen Crocco). Kenneth Minkema and Harry Stout provide an informative essay that reviews the secondary literature on Edwards in the last fifty years, and Robert Jenson rounds out the book with a personal reflection on "How I Stole from Jonathan Edwards." The extensive footnotes in the essays are a goldmine that any Edwards researcher will treasure.

An overview of each essay cannot be given here so comments will be confined to a few highlights. One issue that has divided scholars over the years has been the degree to which Edwards is to be categorized as a modern, progressive theologian. Was Edwards consciously a traditional, Reformed thinker, or do his views foreshadow theological elements of a later era? Those familiar with Edwards's writings realize how complex this question is, and some of the essays here weigh-in on this debate.

Michael McClymond's essay "Hearing the Symphony: A Critique of Some Critics of Sang Lee's and Amy Pauw's Accounts of Jonathan Edwards' View of God," defends a progressive reading of Edwards's trinitarianism and doctrine of God. In agreement with Pauw, he maintains that Edwards recast the doctrine of divine simplicity in a way that allows for a genuine intrapersonal community within the divine life. This recasting was integral to Edwards's trinitarianism which resonates with recent theological movements such as social trinitarianism. "Speaking generally," he writes, "the Lee-Pauw perspective sees Edwards's God as dynamic, relational, expansive, and pluralistic" (68). Critics of this interpretation, he notes, make the "hermeneutical mistake" of reading too much Reformed orthodoxy into Edwards and thereby miss how forward-thinking he really was (71-72). While there is much to commend in his essay—such as his symphony metaphor, and the call to interpret Edwards's theology holistically—this reviewer wonders whether a theological "presentism" has crept into his interpretation on these issues. In other words, by closely associating Edwards with today's theological discussions, one risks missing how deeply situated he was in his own context and indebted he was to his own tradition.

On the surface, Oliver Crisp's essay, "Jonathan Edwards's Pantheism," appears to be liable to the same problem of presentism, yet in the end avoids this pitfall. Pantheism has been a notoriously elastic term given to models of the God-world relationship that lie somewhere between traditional theism and pantheism. Red flags go up among evangelicals whenever the term surfaces since it is usually associated with process and open theism. Recent work, however, has identified Christian versions of pantheism which, though not without problems, appear to be just another name for Christian Neoplatonism. Crisp's essay includes a discussion of Edwards's Neoplatonism, and his summary of Edwards's "pantheism" contains points that are familiar to close readers of Edwards: Edwards's God creates out of an overflow of his creative disposition, creation is an ideal world "being a series of ideal momentary world-stages in the divine mind, [that] is continuously created by God who is, in fact, the sole causal agent of all that comes to pass" (115). These points are a fairly accurate reflection of Edwards's views. However, I am hesitant to label this nexus of ideas "pantheism" mainly because the term is so elastic and means so many different things to different people.

Douglas Sweeney's contribution, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification: the Rest of the Story," counters a recent trend that discerns "Catholic" themes in Edwards's doctrine of justification. Edwards's Catholic-sounding construal of the doctrine—his identification of faith with love, for instance—must be understood contextually. Personally, Edwards embraced the deep anti-Catholicism of Puritanism which viewed the Roman Catholic Church as antichrist. A robust sola-fideism shines through in his sermons. And his emphasis on acts of evangelical love and perseverance as necessary factors to final justification must be understood in the context of a backsliding culture which had just experienced an incredible season of awakening. Though Edwards's ideas may provide resources for ecumenical dialogue

between Catholics and Protestants, it is most certain that he never would have blessed such a project. He probably would have pointed out, as Sweeney does, that every point in his doctrine of justification which sounds “Catholic” to today’s ears finds precedent in Reformed tradition on justification. Edwards, in other words, was not saying anything innovative, ecumenical, or Catholic on the topic of justification; he was merely advancing his own Reformed interpretation of the doctrine.

My hope is that these snapshots provide a glimpse of the exciting world of Edwards scholarship. I recommend *Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary* to anyone who desires to keep up with the expanding universe of Edwards studies. The book is not without a few minor problems. Close readers will note misspellings throughout the work. The table of contents does not divide the essays in three parts (philosophy, theology, context) as specified on the back cover. And the steep price of the volume will prohibit a wide readership. But these minor issues should not detract interested Edwards readers from obtaining a copy.

Robert W. Caldwell III
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy. By A. Edward Sicienski. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 355 pages. Hardcover, \$49.95.

This work is a result of Sicienski’s extended research based on his dissertation on “Maximus the Confessor’s theology of the procession and its use at the Council of Ferrara-Florence” (vii). The greatest value of this work is that we now have the first monograph that deals with the entire history of the filioque controversy from the second century to the present. Sicienski tries to give a fair presentation of the respective views of the Western and Eastern Churches, although his favor for the Eastern Church and Maximus the Confessor among other Eastern theologians is clearly visible concerning the filioque. Reading this work should assist both the Western and Eastern Churches in understanding why one counterpart Church cannot accept the other one’s traditional position.

The Eastern Church rejects the Western doctrine of the filioque (the process of the Spirit from the Father and from the Son) for the following reasons. First, the filioque destroys the monarchy of the Father by creating two causes (the Father and the Son) within the Trinity. Second, the filioque introduces a semi-Sabellianism by granting a unique personal property of the Father (i.e., generating power) to the Son. Third, the filioque was an illegitimate addition to the Nicene Creed that acknowledged the Spirit’s procession (ἐκπορεύεται) from the Father alone. In response to those critiques, the Western Church has argued, since Augustine, that the filioque does not create two causes in the process of the Spirit or destroy the monarchy of the Father because the Spirit proceeds principally from the Father and from the Son who is eternally with the Father. The Western Church has been very confident about the preservation of a personal distinction between the Father and the Son in the process of the Spirit because the Spirit proceeds from the Father as “origin not of origin” (*principium non de principio*) and from the Son as “the origin of origin” (*principium de principio*). Lastly, the filioque is not an arbitrary or illegitimate addition to the Nicene Creed but a more explicit clarification of the procession of the Spirit.

Concerning the eternal relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, the historic Eastern Church’s position is that the Holy Spirit eternally

proceeds (ἐκπορεύεται) from (ἐκ) the Father through (διὰ) the Son, not from (ἐκ) the Son. The idea “through the Son” acknowledges that the Son has a role in the procession of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. However, the Son’s involvement in the eternal being of the Spirit does not mean that the Spirit receives his hypostatic being from the Son. Therefore, the Eastern theologians have preserved a theological distinction between “to proceed” (ἐκπορεύεται) and “to come forth” (ἐξέρχομαι). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father for his hypostatic being and comes from the Son for his manifestation in the intratrinitarian relationship. The procession of the Spirit belongs to the personal property of the Father alone. The personal property of the Spirit is caused by his procession from the Father but manifested through the Son because the Father is not merely the Father but always the Father of the Son. Sicienski describes Maximus the Confessor’s position as the most ideal one that could be acceptable to the Western and the Eastern Churches. Sicienski indicates his optimism for a theological reconciliation between the two Churches through Maximus’s view, according to which the Son really participates in the process of the Holy Spirit as the mediator, not as the cause of the procession. Sicienski asserts that Maximus developed what Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria taught, and Palamas’s distinction between the divine essence and the divine energy is a rightful implication of Maximus’s doctrine of the process.

However, Sicienski’s hope for the reunion of the two Churches based on Maximus’s affirmation of the Son’s meaningful role in the process of the Spirit would be neither easy nor soon achieved. The official website of the Vatican (www.vatican.va) still shows that the Roman Catholic Church has no desire to compromise her historical position on the filioque or yield to the teaching of the Eastern Church. Despite recent ecumenical councils between the Eastern Church and Anglicans or the Old Catholics, the Vatican has three rationales for its firm belief in the filioque. First, the Vatican feels that Catholics have a Biblical foundation of the filioque. Like Augustine and Karl Barth, the Vatican sees the reflection of the immanent Trinity in the economic Trinity. In light of John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, the Vatican depicts the Son as the subject, rather than an instrument, of the procession of the Spirit, whether in eternity or in time. Second, the Vatican reminds the Catholics and others of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Second Council of Lyons (1274), and the Council of Florence (1439) where both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church accepted the procession of the Spirit from the Son, not merely through the Son. Third, the Vatican still sees Ephraim, Athanasius, Basil, Epiphanius, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus, John Damascene from the East and Tertullian, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine from the West as the supporters of the filioque.

Unlike the Vatican’s appeal to the Latin fathers, Sicienski acknowledges only Augustine as the Latin theologian who talked about the filioque in a real sense. However, this reviewer is somewhat confused about Sicienski’s final view on Augustine. Sicienski precisely recognizes that Augustine tried to protect the Father’s monarchy in the process of the Spirit in eternity with the adverb “principaliter” (principally). The Spirit proceeds principally from the Father and from the Son. However, Sicienski comes to a surprising conclusion: “Augustine was deliberately attempting to ward off any idea of a ‘double procession’ of the Holy Spirit” (84). The adverb principaliter, according to Sicienski, shows the North African bishop’s denial of the Son’s being the “hypostatic origination” of the Spirit (83). In other words, the bishop of Hippo did not want to teach that the Son is causative somehow in the process of the being of the Spirit from the Father.

This reviewer wants to point out two things. First, Siecienski's conclusion is self-contradictory, referring to his early evaluation of Augustine: "For Augustine . . . the Spirit, who is the mutual love of Father and Son . . . proceeds, from both. While there are literally dozens of passages, chiefly from *De Trinitate*, the *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, and the *Contra Maximinum*, there could be adduced to demonstrate Augustine's support for a double procession" (62). Second, Siecienski reads his Eastern theology of the filioque into Augustine's principaliter. For Augustine, the Son is equal with the Father in their being the source of the Spirit, but the Son is the second only in the hypostatic order of the Trinity. Since the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son simultaneously, there was no time when the Son existed without sending the Spirit from himself. For Augustine, the word "principally" preserves both the Son's equality with and distinction from the Father.

This book would be more beneficial to its readers if Siecienski could point out how Augustine's exegesis influenced his theological descendants like Anselm and Aquinas in formulating the classical position of the Western Church on the filioque. Sometimes, Siecienski presents the Latin medieval theologians' views as their unique contributions to the historical development of the doctrine of the filioque without realizing their exegetical and theological dependence upon Augustine.

In contrast to Siecienski, this reviewer would also argue that the filioque was primarily a Biblical and spiritual issue to Augustine and to the Western Christianity. Augustine taught the filioque not because it was predominantly effectual in defeating Arianism but because it would help Christians worship the triune God properly. Edmund Hill and other Augustinian scholars do not see *De Trinitate* as a polemic work. Rather, many regard it as Augustine's instruction for Christian spiritual formation. Like Rahner, Augustine saw the inevitable connection between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Unlike Rahner, Augustine rightly rejected the absolute identity of the two Trinities. More than a century before Maximus in the East, Augustine in the West already taught the epistemological priority of the economic Trinity and the ontological priority of the immanent Trinity when discussing a relationship between the two Trinities. In the economy the Son was sent by the Father, and the Father was never sent by the Son. The Father sending the Son in the economy displays the former generating the latter in eternity. Augustine finds parallelism between the Son's way of being and the Spirit's way of being both in the economic Trinity and in the immanent Trinity. Therefore, the Father and the Son's co-sending the Spirit in the economy also displays their co-generating the Spirit in eternity. Augustine could not ignore that the historical activities of the economic Trinity reveal the truth of the immanent Trinity.

Despite this reviewer's disagreements, this book must be commended for its careful presentation of the historical development of the filioque controversy between the Western and Eastern Churches in their political and social contexts. This book is not for a MDiv student or a pastor. However, a professional researcher or a professor would want to use this book as an invaluable source for his or her work on the filioque.

Dongsun Cho
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Ephesians. By Frank Thielman. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. 520 pages. Hardcover, \$44.99.

Frank Thielman, Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School and author of numerous works on the law in the New Testament, has delivered an excellent addition to the Baker Exegetical series with his commentary on Ephesians. In his introductory section, Thielman argues: (1) that Ephesians is an authentic Pauline letter written after nearly all of his undisputed letters (5); (2) that certain “peculiarities” in the style of Ephesians may be attributed to specific circumstances being experienced by Paul (10); (3) that the phrase “in Ephesus” in 1:1 is genuine and identifies the letter’s recipients (14); and (4) that Paul writes at the end of his two-year imprisonment in Rome (19) to remind believers of the gospel’s power, of their role as a church, and of their ethical responsibilities (28).

The strengths of this commentary are numerous. As Thielman deals the text’s details, he avoids getting bogged down by keeping sight of the letter’s overall flow. By doing so, Thielman shows consideration for both the discourse as a whole and its individual parts. Furthermore, Thielman repeatedly allows the letter’s context to inform his treatment of difficulties within the text. So, for example, in dealing with Paul’s instruction about submitting “to one another” in 5:21, Thielman examines how the previous occurrences of “one another” (4:2, 25, 32) shed light on the verse (373). Similar examples occur elsewhere in the work (e.g., 397, 415). In this way, Thielman’s commentary exemplifies sound exegetical methodology for students and scholars.

Thielman exhibits remarkable thoroughness in his “Additional Notes” sections, especially in his treatment of text-critical matters. Unlike many commentators that seem overly dependent on Metzger or handle variants in a shallow and simplistic manner, Thielman models depth, breadth, and freshness in this area. He resists the temptation slavishly to follow \aleph and B (e.g., 403), and adequately considers the author’s style and the variant’s geographical distribution. For such consistently excellent treatments of text-critical matters, Thielman’s commentary will be beneficial for those who focus their research on this area of the NT.

Thielman meaningfully interacts with scholars of all ages in his exegesis. Throughout the commentary, he refers to both Jewish and Greco-Roman sources, to early church Fathers, to interpreters from the middle ages, and to more recent scholars of Ephesians. The result is that Thielman’s exegesis is neither narrow-sighted nor unformed, but marked by a rich balance of insights from modern research alongside the wisdom of the ancients.

Only a few minor weaknesses are found in Thielman’s work. Thielman consistently refers to the dative of sphere. While this is by all means an important aspect of Greek grammar, Thielman regularly refers to it without ever providing a definition. And when Thielman mentions the dative of sphere, he does so in very ambiguous language. So, for example, he explains that believers “live within the sphere of existence that Christ defines” (34), grow “in the sphere encompassed by Christ” (183), and at one point describes the “sphere of knowledge” of prayer (97). Similar language occurs in numerous places throughout the commentary (e.g., 79, 82, 84, 94, 102). It seems that such a consistently used term should have been clearly defined in order to remove the possibility of ambiguity.

One final aspect that may have been improved in this commentary relates to Thielman’s understanding of the oral nature of Ephesians. In numerous places,

Thielman views disjointed syntax (119), ambiguous structural details (49, 225), and disorderly compositional style (310) as evidence of the letter's oral nature. At one point, Thielman states that "Paul seems to have caught himself drifting away . . . [but] then he pulls his train of thought quickly back on track" (379). Such statements regarding the language of the epistle deserve a more focused treatment, perhaps even a section in the introduction, rather than merely appearing as scattered remarks throughout the commentary.

In the end, Thielman's Ephesians commentary is an invaluable resource that will serve a wide audience for many generations to come. The work's strengths far outshine its few minor weaknesses. To be sure, Thielman's work has accomplished the goal of the Baker series by appealing to a wide audience of students, pastors, and scholars, and by giving balanced attention to both the specific details and broader context of the text.

Andrew Bowden
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Histories and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History. By Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 189 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.

In this introduction to historical method, Carl R. Trueman confesses his former leeriness toward books about the theories and techniques of the historian: "those who can write history, do write history; those who cannot, write books telling others how do it" (13). Fortunately, Trueman has written and taught history with excellence for nearly two decades, and his book on historical method is infused with a passion for practicing history.

Throughout his book, Trueman sets out to find a *via media* between two contemporary views on history. On the one hand, Trueman tries to correct the common view that history is merely "a collation of facts which can only be related together in one valid narrative" (17). On the other hand, he wants to counter relativists who deny the historian's ability to know the past and who see all historical narratives as equally valid (19). History, Trueman argues, cannot be boiled down to a single, inflexible pattern or narrative. Historians add their own biases, perspectives, and interpretations to the facts of history; furthermore, they can consider various facets of the historical drama—that is, for example, political, religious, or economic factors. On the other hand, historians can access the past and show the validity of some narratives over others through commonly used historical methods. Trueman's discussion of various historical methods and fallacies throughout his book are formed by, and give emphasis to, these primary claims.

Trueman's book, moreover, does not only present what students of history should avoid. As mentioned above, it is a book designed for those who desire to practice history, and its strength lies in the insight it provides for those who want to do history. Indeed, compared with the vast body of material on this subject, this book does not (nor does it try to) measure up to the relatively comprehensive nature of David Fischer's *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, nor to the theoretical depth, for example, of David Bebbington's *Patterns in History: A Christian View*. This book is an invaluable tool, however, especially for the beginning student who desires to learn how, as the English poet George Herbert once wrote, "to copy fair, what time hath blurred."

Trueman achieves his goals, of showing students what to avoid as well as

how to practice history, by discussing his material through the use of specific and compelling case studies. Thus, the student, in a sense, is taken as an apprentice, not only reading what Trueman says about history, but also watching him do history. In chapter one, for example, he examines the notion of objectivity by interacting with the proponents of Holocaust Denial (HD). If relativists claim that all historical narratives are equally valid, they must face a question, both historical and ethical in nature: Is it good history when HD proponents call the Nazi's mass murder of the Jews a hoax? No, Trueman answers (25–68). Though historians will not be neutral (i.e., they will still have biases), they can practice history objectively by the constant “corroboration and verification” of the data (62–63).

In chapter two, Trueman takes up the case of Marxist history, as exemplified by Christopher Hill, a historian of seventeenth-century England. Positively, Trueman praises Marxist historians for reminding others of the importance of economic factors in past societies (69–107). The “grand schemes” of Marxist history, however, hold these historians captive, particularly when they inflexibly hold to their theories about the patterns of history (69). All historians, Trueman writes, are prone to this temptation when their philosophies become “less a means of penetrating history and more a prescriptive, Procrustean bed into which the evidence must fit or be twisted to fit” (107).

In chapter three, Trueman considers a problem characteristic especially of intellectual and theological historians, namely, anachronism. Historians, he explains, can easily “impose on the past ideas, categories, or values that were simply nonexistent or that did not have the same function or significance during the time being studied” (109). To illustrate this issue, Trueman presents two case studies.

In the first case, he compares John Calvin with the seventeenth-century reformed theologian, Francis Turretin. Some scholars have compared these two figures merely by examining the form and language of their major works—that is, Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and Turretin's *The Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Such practice leads to anachronistic results because each text is read outside of its own historical context. Only by examining context can historians discover the complex relationship between the two men and their two texts, finding their true similarities and differences (120–29). Trueman's appendix, “The Reception of Calvin: Historical Considerations,” provides a larger context for this discussion while adding more helpful methodological advice (183–89). In his second case study, Trueman considers the problem of Martin Luther's supposed racism. Again noting Luther's context, he argues, in short, that Luther was no racist, for sixteenth-century men thought in terms of religion rather than race (129–38).

Over the next two chapters, Trueman changes his approach. In chapter four, he examines the most common historical fallacies, such as reification, oversimplification, and generalization. He also discusses the importance of asking questions in the proper manner, as well as the relationship between providence and history (141–68). In his “Concluding Historical Postscript,” Trueman defends the helpfulness of history in a society characterized by “antihistorical tendencies” because of the “dominance of science” and the effect of constant technological advances (169–70). More valuable in this chapter, however, is Trueman's advice to the history student who wants to improve his craft: “Be aware of the various errors and fallacies noted in this book; read widely in the discipline; as you do so, ask not simply what is being said, but how the historian is going about the work of saying it; read widely in the culture of your chosen period; read eclectically across the disciplines, pillaging

anything from other fields of intellectual endeavor that might help you understand the complexity of human action; read the classics of history; know the history of your discipline; and read sane accounts, by proven historians, of how they themselves pursue their craft" (180).

Histories and Fallacies is itself a "sane" account by a "proven" historian that would benefit any student of history—or, as a matter of fact, any theologian, pastor or lay person casually interested in history. In it, Trueman provides lucid discussions of compelling subjects, from the history of the Holocaust, to the history of revolutionary England, to the background of Martin Luther's supposed racism. In the process, he clearly explains and illustrates good historical practice. His own passion for doing history permeates this book, and it would be difficult for any reader to put it down without a desire to read and practice history for himself.

Benjamin Hawkins
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew.* By Miles V. Van Pelt. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 112 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

Miles V. Van Pelt is well aware of students' struggles with English grammar and syntax as they study beginning Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Van Pelt actually teaches all three languages at Reformed Theological Seminary (11). He sees that students are consistently learning just as much English as they are the Biblical languages. Many students may remember learning what an English participle is and how it functions—in Hebrew class. Van Pelt wrote this book to help students understand how their own language works to make studying Hebrew an easier and more enjoyable experience.

The book is laid out in fourteen brief chapters, explaining everything in English grammar from the alphabet to the verbal system. With each new concept of English grammar, Van Pelt subsequently explains how Hebrew is similar and dissimilar to English in that area. Each chapter is keyed to the relevant chapters in Van Pelt's *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*, but the format allows it to be used in tandem with any basic grammar. The book is user-friendly enough to be read in its entirety before opening a Hebrew grammar, but would probably be most effective if read alongside a Hebrew grammar as the student progresses through it.

Learning Hebrew can be a nightmare for some students, so Van Pelt writes in a light-hearted and jovial manner to make students feel comfortable and perhaps even evoke a smile. Personal anecdotes, such as his editorial work on a church bulletin (38), and random jokes ("So, a man stormed into his doctor's office . . .") (64) allow the reader's mind a rest for a moment after a section of grammatical information. The student will also be encouraged by Van Pelt's uplifting words in each chapter, often pointing out that he is not presenting new information, but only placing "categories and labels" on what they already know intuitively (22). Multiple metaphors also turn this would-be stuffy English grammar into a more enjoyable and digestible work. For example, "Pronouns are the substitute teachers, surrogate mothers, pinch hitters, union scabs, and stunt doubles of the grammatical world" (47). And again, "[verbs] are the movers and shakers of the grammatical world. They are the electricity that runs through the sentence, causing the lights to go on as actions and ideas come to life" (63).

Rarely is Van Pelt confusing, although his discussion on verbal voice is

somewhat so since he describes the active and passive voice as “actions that move away from the verbal subject” and “actions that move toward the verbal subject,” respectively (74). He neglects to mention intransitive verbs such as “to drift” and the student may be confused as he accidentally reverses the definitions on the next page (75). Nevertheless, the work as a whole is concise, clear, encouraging, and helpful. Since the book ends by explaining the verbal system, it prepares the student for all English grammatical concepts they will encounter in a Hebrew grammar. Professors would be wise to consider using this book for their first-semester Hebrew students. Not only will it prepare them by teaching them the English grammar they need to learn biblical Hebrew, but it will encourage them as they begin to study a difficult subject, one which is very daunting to many students.

Todd A. Scaewater
Westminster Theological Seminary

Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation. By Michael J. Vlach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 224 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.

Michael Vlach, professor of Theology at The Master’s Seminary in Sun Valley, California, seeks to answer the complex question regarding the relationship between the church and the nation of Israel. The book, the fruit of Vlach’s doctoral dissertation, includes changes/additions to the Peter Lang edition entitled *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (2009). The work has four parts: an introduction to supersessionism, supersessionism in church history, supersessionism and hermeneutics, and supersessionism and theological arguments. After setting the foundation in parts one and two, Vlach’s method seems to be, first, to present the case that the church is a complete replacement or fulfillment of the nationalistic promises to Israel, and, second, to evaluate this case based on hermeneutical principles and specific arguments from Scripture.

Vlach defines replacement theology or supersessionism as “the view that the NT Church is the new and/or true Israel that has forever superseded the nation Israel as the people of God” (12). He explains three types of supersessionism (punitive, economic, and structural) and distinguishes between strong and moderate forms. He classifies as moderate those who believe “that the church is the new Israel but still hold to a future for national Israel” (20). In part two, Vlach argues that “the doctrine of supersession has deep roots in church history” (75) by presenting the dominant views of major theologians within the patristic, medieval, reformation, and modern eras, respectively (35–76). Because arguments from church history are not decisive in theological matters, parts three and four of Vlach’s work seem to be the most important.

In part three, he presents and critiques the hermeneutics of supersessionism and offers an alternative nonsupersessionist hermeneutic. Within supersessionism, he notes the following interrelated beliefs: “(1) belief in the interpretive priority of the NT over the OT, (2) belief in nonliteral fulfillments of OT texts regarding Israel, and (3) belief that national Israel is a type of the NT church” (79). In analyzing the starting point of understanding Old Testament passages, the typology of Israel, and the multiple fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy and Christ, Vlach dismisses the supersessionist position and makes a case for a nonsupersessionist understanding. In the final part of the book, Vlach attempts to do at least three things. First, he presents the various Biblical texts used to argue for supersessionism. He categorizes

these texts into five primary arguments (chaps 11–12). Second, he evaluates these arguments by questioning the legitimacy of the supercessionist interpretation of the key texts (chap 13). Third, he proposes that God has a plan not only for the nation of Israel, but for nations in general (chap 14). This plan corresponds more closely to a new creation model of eschatology than it does to a spiritual vision model. In the final two chapters, Vlach presents a positive case for the restoration of Israel.

Vlach's work is a helpful contribution to a very important question in theology. His attempt to keep the argument focused on the Biblical text should be commended, and, if evaluated on these grounds, the attempt is a great success. Despite being wholly committed to the view that God remains true to his promises for Israel as a nation, Vlach writes with an irenic spirit. His writing is also accessible, making it beneficial for the student, pastor, and even layman. There are two recommendations that would seem to make the work even better. First, Vlach chose to present the case for supercessionism in a separate section from critiquing it. Granting that he may have had good reasons for doing so, it seems that the argument may have been clearer if the presentation and critique appeared together. Second, while Vlach does provide a selected bibliography at the end of the work, the work would be more helpful if a comprehensive bibliography of the sources used in the work were included. This would avoid the frustration of having to look for the full reference in the previous footnotes when only a short reference is given.

Steven L. James

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Gospel and Letters of John. 3 Volumes. By Urban C. von Wahlde. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 2075 pages. Softcover, \$180.

Urban C. von Wahlde is professor of New Testament at Loyola University in Chicago. He has written a number of works on the Gospel of John. One significant aspect of his work has involved looking for clues concerning the history of the composition of John's Gospel. He presents the culmination of his work along these lines in his three-volume commentary on the *Gospel and Letters of John* for the Eerdmans Critical Commentary Series. He contends that the Gospel of John went through three editions over a period of time from about AD 55-95 (50-55). He believes that an understanding of these three editions will allow for more precision in interpretation of the Gospel and will make it possible to trace the development of the theology of the Johannine community (2-5). In this review, I will focus upon volume one and describe briefly the three editions of the Gospel of John. Such a description will capture the central focus of von Wahlde's massive project.

The first edition of the Gospel of John is a narrative about Jesus and his miracles or signs (58). Its attention to geographical details suggests that it originated in Judea (51). The narrative shows a gradual increase in hostility toward Jesus on the part of the Jewish leaders. Along the way, they disagree with one another about the significance of Jesus and his signs (59). The Christology of the first edition is "low" Christology consistent with a Jewish setting. No claims to divinity occur in the first edition (98-101). The first edition gives shape to the narrative of the Gospel. In the course of editing, parts of the original first edition were cut out (62).

The second edition was produced after the Johannine community experienced sharp conflict with the Jews, probably in Judea (52). Conflict with, and opposition

from, the Jewish leaders is present from the start in the second edition. A “radical new theology” appears in the second edition (140). An important aspect of its theology is “high” Christology. “High” Christology manifests itself in claims to divinity that lead to conflicts with the Jewish leaders, known as “the Jews” (174-75). The second edition has a second author. It does not accurately represent the historical ministry of Jesus, but provides indications about the history of the Johannine community (143).

The third edition follows the “internal crisis” in the Johannine community that leads “the Elder” to write 1 John (52-54). The third edition of the Gospel of John incorporates the Elder’s insights from 1 John and addresses “new issues,” like the significance of the sacraments (54, 235). In terms of Christology, the third edition has the highest Christology. It “affirms the preexistence of Jesus” and “Jesus identifies himself as ‘I AM’” (309-10). The third edition also introduces elements “that would correlate the Johannine tradition with that of the Synoptics” (235). The third edition is the work of a third author.

In the second major part of volume one, von Wahlde traces the development of Johannine theology (395-560). Volumes two and three of the commentary proceed through the Gospel and Letters of John interpreting them in light of the three editions.

As the above summary shows, von Wahlde provides support for a common teaching of historical-critical scholarship, namely, that high Christology is a later development in the church’s teaching about Jesus. This is not a surprising finding for a critical commentary. It is an important finding, because von Wahlde’s work now provides detailed support for other theological treatments of John’s writings. Von Wahlde’s work supports a developmental view of New Testament theology. He adds more diversity to New Testament theology by showing that various theologies exist even in the editions of the writings of John. If Johannine theology was developing so radically, then what about the writings of other New Testament authors or communities? For anyone interested in New Testament theology, von Wahlde provides a thorough example of the challenges to the unity of New Testament theology that continue to arise from critical New Testament scholarship.

For someone, like me, who believes in high Christology that goes back to the teaching of Jesus himself and in the apostolic authorship of John’s writings, how is von Wahlde’s work helpful? Von Wahlde provides a helpful introduction to the view that the rough places (“aporias”) in the Gospel of John point to the stitching together of sources or to various editors (especially 10-55). He also provides a challenge to show that John’s aporias can be explained a different way. Andreas Köstenberger works at this in his recent work *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters* (145-50). Others have provided helpful explanations in the past. In light of von Wahlde’s substantial work, the discussion will continue.

Paul M. Hoskins

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

We Have Seen His Glory: A Vision of Kingdom Worship. By Ben Witherington III. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 166 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

Prolific Methodist author Ben Witherington has ventured into the realm of worship in this addition to the Liturgical Studies Series from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. In *We Have Seen His Glory*, Witherington argues that the church

should focus on the future and not the past in worship. Inasmuch as he means the orient (the perfect worship of eternity over against the ritual of yesteryear) and not the content (the kingdom of priests over against the action of Christ in history), he presents an interesting model. Whether he has been able to walk that line effectively is an issue to consider.

Witherington has attempted to structure the book as a series of small group studies. He presents a thesis (or sermon), draws conclusions, then offers discussion questions. The primary points he argues are that salvation is a means to the end of worship, that a consumer mentality subverts the God-focus of worship (even though that worship is entirely man-driven), that Sunday worship reflects the eschatological order as opposed to Saturday and the created order, that worship is about edification as well as adoration, that we should study the epistles as rhetoric and not letters. Little of what he has to say is new; a number of authors have raised the points elsewhere. The last point is the major exception and points to the central concern about this book.

The book consists of eight chapters, each of fifteen to twenty pages, with one exception. The chapter in which Witherington presents his personal hermeneutic runs more than twice as long as any other. In fact, it would be nearly impossible to cover this chapter in one group study session. Furthermore, he attempts in no way to connect this chapter with his overall thesis of kingdom worship, choosing instead to discuss issues such as the meaning of *Q* and his understanding of Hebrews. Once this has been recognized, it becomes evident that Witherington has injected a number of hermeneutical assumptions throughout the book. For example, he returns to the argument that male leadership in the church is based on the Old Testament priesthood, he assumes that elder and overseer refers to two separate offices, and he assumes a number of liturgical uses of various passages.

While it is certainly true that church leaders need to prioritize the Biblical study of church worship and rescue it from the consumerism and secularism prevalent in many churches today—and to that end this book is well-intentioned and should be appreciated—it is also true that such a study must come without assumptions and preconceptions. Unless a reader is particularly interested in Witherington's personal opinions about worship, this book will not be of great use.

Matt Ward
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Abstracts of Recently Published Dissertations in the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“The Church as Place in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Theology.” By W. Madison Grace,
II. Supervised by Malcolm B. Yarnell.

This dissertation argues that the three main doctrinal loci of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s theology—ecclesiology, Christology, and ethics—find continuity and expression in his concept of the church as place. In recognizing this theme of the church as place in Bonhoeffer’s mind, one is able to see that from his earliest days to those in prison he was concerned with the church. This concern was expressed and developed in the three major theological enquiries of his life addressing not just formal ecclesiological themes but how Christians are to exist as the church in Christ for the world.

Methodologically, this thesis is argued by examining a selection of Bonhoeffer’s writings concerning each of the three doctrines in turn to exhibit how it functions and coinheres with the others. Thus the interconnection of ecclesiology with Christology and ethics becomes apparent. Specifically each doctrine will be examined chronologically from his major writings, especially coming out of Bonhoeffer’s first work *Sanctorum Communio*, wherein an examination of it introduces Bonhoeffer’s three doctrines as well as his methodological style.

Chapters three, four, and five are similar in so far as each chapter concerns one of the three loci. The examination of ecclesiology shows the emphasis not just upon the structure of the church, but the necessary essence of the church existing in Jesus Christ. Building upon this, chapter four shows Bonhoeffer’s turn to Christology wherein Christ exists not just as the church, but exists *pro me*. This concept is helpfully illustrated in the concept of *Stellvertretung*, vicarious representative action, which is an action Christ performs for humanity by incurring humanity’s guilt and suffering. This develops into the final loci and chapter five on Ethics wherein Bonhoeffer finds Jesus Christ as the only form for ethics. Such an affirmation leads to an ethic of love wherein Christians, in the church in specific places, are to act as representatives for the world.

The conclusion of the dissertation summarizes the previous work and helps one see the forest for the many trees of Bonhoeffer’s thought and thoughts. In the concept of the church as place, seen in each of the loci, one has a way to understand Bonhoeffer’s theological concerns and impulses for ministry and life.

“The Ideal of Moral Formation in Anglican Puritanism from 1559-1662.” By Micah S. Meek. Supervised by William Goff.

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the moral development efforts of the Anglican Puritan clergy from 1559-1662. The thesis is that the Anglican Puritan pastor sought to enhance the moral concern in the lives of church members by focusing on the development of the individual conscience through personal pastoral ministry. This ministry encompassed both the public and private duties of the pastorate.

Chapter 1 introduces the problem and thesis of the dissertation as well as the general historical explanation of Puritanism.

Chapter 2 explains the role of the pastor within Puritanism. It is established that his work was viewed as integral to the moral education of those under his care.

Chapter 3 provides details related to the Anglican Puritan understanding of morality. It is revealed that the conscience was viewed as the judicial center for an individual and, thusly, was of great significance for ethical training.

Chapter 4 describes the public means utilized by Anglican Puritan ministers to develop the consciences of their flocks. These include preaching sermons which were practical and understandable, the giving of the sacraments, the use of discipline, and pastoral modeling.

Chapter 5 reveals the private avenues of Puritan pastors to form consciences. In particular, this included personal pastoral visitation, assessment functions, and the providing of moral guidance through comforting and counseling.

Chapter 6 summarizes the various chapters and details some implications of the dissertation.

“The Meaning of the Hebrew Word [Torah] in the Book of Psalms.” By Kevin James Moore. Supervised by George L. Klein.

This dissertation seeks to refine the meaning of [Torah] in Psalms 1, 19, 37, 40, 78, 89, 94, 105, and 119. Through an exegetical analysis of the nine Psalms that utilize the term, the study argues that [Torah] most frequently refers to the written Pentateuch.

Chapter 1 introduces the research question, thesis, and surveys the various approaches to the meaning of [Torah] in book of Psalms.

Chapter 2 evaluates current linguistic methods that have been applied to the semantic study of Hebrew words. This chapter also explains the exegetical approach of the dissertation.

Chapter 3 surveys the meaning of [Torah] in the Old Testament. The purpose of this chapter is to study the diverse manner in which the term is employed throughout the Old Testament. The procedure of establishing a definition will produce the parameters within which [Torah] can be understood in the book of Psalms.

Chapter 4 surveys the semantic usage of [Torah] in Psalms 1, 19, 37, 40, 78, 89, 94, 105, and 119. The exegetical analysis will include an evaluation of words, phrases, and themes that might indicate the semantic usage of [Torah] in context. The exegetical analysis will also compare the usage of [Torah] with other contexts outside the book of Psalms where the meaning of the word is more apparent.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings of the exegetical analysis.

“The Confessing Community as the Ecclesiological Core of the Baptists in the Soviet Union, 1960-1990.” By Yaroslav Pyzh. Supervised by Malcolm B. Yarnell.

This study will enable the author to conclude that identification with a confessing community was a key feature in the development of the ecclesiology of the Baptists of the Former Soviet Union (BFSU) from 1960 to 1990.

In addition to the Introduction and Conclusion, this research is divided into four chapters. In the Introduction, the author defines the scope and emphasizes the need for undertaking the project. The term “Baptist” is defined in the context of the Soviet Union. The reader is provided with an introductory guide to available sources and literature on the ecclesiology and history of the BFSU.

The first chapter reconstructs the historical-theological development of the ecclesiology of the BFSU, formulates the methodological strategy, sets the limits

of the research, and outlines the main theological developments that affected the later ecclesiology of the BFSU. Special attention is paid to the various groups who formed and shaped the Baptist faith, and to a number of their important leaders who labored in developing theology among the Baptist churches.

The second chapter presents a study of various sources of Baptist theology written prior to and during the 1960-1990 period. First, the author analyzes the important Baptist creeds, comparing and emphasizing the ecclesiological developments in each of them. Second, the official Baptist magazines are studied in order to form an overall picture of the ecclesiological issues that the BFSU considered. Third, the official book, *Dogmatic*, and the published theological works of various Baptist authors on ecclesiological questions are examined.

In the third chapter, the author systematizes and formulates the ecclesiology of the BFSU, using material from the first and second chapters and breaking it into four main categories: the nature and mission of the church, the organization of the church, the membership of the church, and the activities of the church.

In chapter four, the author argues that the model of the confessing community was the main factor that affected the ecclesiology of the BFSU since it enabled them to survive persecution and maintain their Baptist identity. Afterwards, the ecclesiology of the BFSU, with its emphasis on the confessing community, is placed in a wider context in a discussion of communal ecclesiology.

“Neither Mystic nor Muentzerite: The Controversial Theology of Hans Denck.” By Ralf Schowalter. Supervised by Malcolm B. Yarnell.

This dissertation argues that Hans Denck's concept of theology and Christian life does not primarily depend on medieval mysticism and on the thought of Thomas Müntzer. Instead, Denck pursues conversational theology in discussion with various theological-theoretical traditions and religious phenomena of his times.

Chapter one reviews the scholarly literature on South German Anabaptism and Hans Denck and shows a need to challenge assessments on the theology of Hans Denck which have become commonplace since the 1970s.

Chapter two presents the historical context and relevant biographical data of Hans Denck, a necessary precondition for an understanding of his written works.

Chapter three concentrates on the refutation of inadequate assumptions concerning Denck's dependence on medieval mysticism. A reading of relevant primary sources is a fundamental first step. Complemented by a reading of secondary sources, the achieved definition of mysticism will be applied to the works of Denck.

Chapter four challenges the assumption that Denck is strongly influenced by Thomas Müntzer. While considering Müntzer's and Denck's biographies, the focus is on a comparison of their extant written works.

Because essential elements of the prevalent picture of Denck in scholarly literature have been called into question throughout the preceding chapters, chapter five will try to offer a new approach: An inductive study of Denck's works read in their chronological order, following an approach of conversational theology presented by Malcolm B. Yarnell III, reveals new insight into Denck's theology. In consequence, a reading of Denck's works from a believer's church perspective is needed for an adequate understanding and assessment of his works.

A conclusion summarizes the findings of the present study and offers suggestions for further research.

“Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of Scripture: The Legitimacy of Utilizing the Concept of Canon as a Control on the Interpretive Task.” By Ched Edward Spellman. Supervised by Jason K. Lee.

This dissertation seeks to answer two broad and basic questions. First, “How did the biblical canon come to be?” Second, “What hermeneutical effect does that canon have on its readers?” Though these questions have often been pursued in virtual isolation from one another, there are considerable gains from noting the inherent interconnections between the two lines of inquiry. In examining these questions, the author seeks to demonstrate that contemporary interpreters of the Bible have legitimate grounds for utilizing the concept of canon as a control on the interpretive task.

In chapter one, methodological issues central to the canon debate are delineated, including the nature of a broad and a narrow understanding of “canon.” In chapter two, the author examines and develops the nature of “canon-consciousness.” Internal and external evidence suggests that a form of canon-consciousness was active among the biblical writers and among the believing community during the composition and canonization phase of the formation of the Christian canon.

In chapters three through five, the author seeks to provide a theoretical framework for how the concept of canon might function for a contemporary canon-conscious interpreter. In chapter three, the author describes the guiding function of the canonical collection in terms of *mere* and *meant* contextuality. If the biblical authors and those who were collecting the biblical writings were aware of a larger body of literature, then it is plausible that they could have strategically composed and arranged certain writings in particular ways in order to create a particular intended effect.

After noting the shape generated by the broad canonical context, in chapter four the author investigates how the concept of canon informs the study of biblical intertextuality. This chapter examines the way a “production-oriented” approach to the study of intertextuality can function within the canonical context. In chapter five, the author utilizes the notion of “implied reader” and “ideal reader” to examine the way biblical authors envision a certain type of reader and a certain type of response that their writings are intended to produce. The collective argument of chapters three through five is that the concept of canon guides biblical readers as they investigate the context of a biblical writing (*contextuality*), the compositional strategy of its author (*intertextuality*), and the proper response demanded by that author’s textually mediated message (*ideal reader*).

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