



themelios

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THE GOSPEL COALITION

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DESCRIPTION

Themelios is an international evangelical theological journal that expounds and defends the historic Christian faith. Its primary audience is theological students and pastors, though scholars read it as well. It was formerly a print journal operated by RTSF/UCCF in the UK, and it became a digital journal operated by The Gospel Coalition in 2008. The editorial team draws participants from across the globe as editors, essayists, and reviewers.

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REVIEWS

The book review editors generally select individuals for book reviews, but potential reviewers may contact them about reviewing specific books. As part of arranging book reviews, the book review editors will supply book review guidelines to reviewers.

EDITORIAL

As If Not

— D. A. Carson —

*D. A. Carson is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical
Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.*

I shall begin with a well-known exegetical conundrum and then branch out to a much larger issue that none of us can afford to ignore.

In a context where Paul is talking about “virgins,” both men and women, and delivers his judgment as to whether they should get married, he writes, “Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is” (1 Cor 7:26). To what does “the present crisis” refer? The Greek word ἀνάγκη has commonly been understood in one of two ways.

First, some have taken this present “crisis” to refer to a period of major social dislocation, owing either to persecution or to famine induced by grain shortages or to some combination of both. The logic would be straightforward: Under normal circumstances it might make good sense to marry, but in times of social upheaval it might be the part of wisdom to remain single. If the church is going through a period of persecution, or is about to go through such a period, there is much to be said for celibacy. For a start, if you are single it is easier to be mobile and easier to hide. Moreover, malicious opponents cannot get at you through your spouse and family if you have no spouse and family.

Nevertheless, three things stand against this interpretation. (1) The various sources to which scholars appeal so as to justify a theory about grain shortages and the like, signaling famine, are notoriously difficult to date. (2) There is precious little evidence within 1 Corinthians itself that the church feels itself under threat of famine, social dislocation, or persecution. This seems to be a church that prides itself in its wisdom, a church that includes significant numbers of people who hold to some form or other of over-realized eschatology (which simply does not happen when the church is under attack: the tendency then is toward futurist eschatology), a church that is smugly playing various internal games of one-upmanship (party spirit, claiming to possess superior χαρίσματα, God’s grace-gifts) rather than hunkering down to face social dislocation from outside pressures. Certainly 2 Cor 8–9 presuppose that the Corinthian church, far from teetering on the edge of famine, is quite well-off, and jolly well *ought* share its wealth with brothers and sisters in Judea who have much less. (3) Above all, this interpretation makes little sense of the peculiar list of “as if not” phrases in 1 Cor 7:29–31. For example, those who mourn, Paul tells the Corinthians, should live “as if they did not; those who were happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep.” It is not easy to fit such judgments into the first scenario.

Second, many scholars argue that what Paul has in mind by “the present crisis” (1 Cor 7:26) is the imminence of the Lord’s return—not the theological “imminence” that means only that Jesus could return at any moment yet equally could be long delayed, but the ordinary sense of imminence: Paul

believed, it is argued, that Jesus' return in glory was impending, so close to being upon the church, that it was the part of wisdom to serve the interests of the gospel flat-out. In the light of this impending *parousia*, distractions such as marriage are better put aside. After all, might not 1 Thess 4:17 be understood to mean that he expected to be among the "we" who would be caught up to be with the Lord Jesus at his return?

Once again, several considerations make this an unlikely interpretation. (1) First Thessalonians 4:17 can no more be taken to mean that Paul expected to be alive at the *parousia* than 1 Cor 6:14 can be taken to mean that Paul expected to be dead at the *parousia*. (2) This interpretation inevitably means that Paul was wrong in his expectations. Any interpretation of Paul that, to be right, must presuppose that Paul is wrong, is inherently suspicious. (3) The strange list of "as if not" phrases in 1 Cor 7:29–31 does not fit this reconstruction any better than it fits the previous one.

Part of the problem is that some of our versions render ἀνάγκη by "crisis." The English word "crisis" conjures up a short-term supreme test or climax. By contrast, the first lexical definition provided by BDAG is "necessity or constraint as inherent in the nature of things, necessity, pressure of any kind." None of this evokes images of crisis (such as social unrest spawned by war or famine), still less of the impending *parousia*. It might be less misleading to render 1 Cor 7:26, "Because of the present constraint, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is." The "constraint" that is "inherent in the nature of things" is then the sum of difficult challenges coughed up by a world that is simultaneously, on the one hand, lost and subject to catastrophic judgment, and, on the other, the locus of the gospel, mysteriously ruled by Christ until death itself is destroyed (1 Cor 15:25–26). It covers the entire period between the first advent of Christ and his second. It is akin to some uses of "tribulation" in the NT. The time is "short" (1 Cor 15:29) in exactly the same sense that Jesus is coming "soon" (Rev 22:20): the last act of the old order is winding down, and the new order has already begun, though it has not yet broken out in consummation splendor.

If this is right, then all of the "as if not" phrases make sense. "From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not" (1 Cor 7:29): this cannot mean that they should become monks or otherwise withdraw from their spouses, for in this same chapter Paul has already made it clear that this would defraud the spouse (7:1–7). Marriage itself, like celibacy, is a gracious gift from God, a χάρισμα (7:7). Each spouse owns the body of the other, and sexual intimacy must not be withheld except under the stringent conditions that 7:5 stipulates. Paul cannot be dismissing marriage; rather, he means something subtler: marriage is not the *summum bonum*, but stands under God's *as if not*. Because the new age has dawned and marriage itself does not continue into the resurrection existence of the new heaven and the new earth, then, as important and as wonderful as marriage is, the thoughtful Christian will not invest it with eternal significance. Similarly: "From now on . . . those who mourn, as if they did not": our tears, however free-flowing, belong to this dying age of death. They, too, stand under God's *as if not*: we sorrow, but not as those who have no hope. But exactly the same thing must be said of the inverse of mourning: "those who are happy, as if they were not" (7:30). Happiness is not banned, any more than marriage is banned or mourning is banned. Rather, the happiness that the world calls forth stands under God's *as if not*. Some people find their pleasure and identity in the acquisition of things, but Paul writes, "those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep" (7:30). Exactly so. It is not that there is no place for purchasing things, any more than there is now no place for marriage. But how can we attach overweening importance to things we cannot bring with us? They all stand under God's *as if not*. More generically: "those who use the things of the world, as if engrossed in them" (7:31). It is not that we do

not properly interact with “the things of the world,” for this is where we live. Nevertheless they all stand under God’s *as if not*, so we dare not be engrossed in them. Paul puts the matter succinctly: “For this world in its present form is passing away” (7:31).

This well-known exegetical *crux* could be usefully discussed at much greater length. For the moment, however, I shall assume that the interpretation defended here is the most plausible one and branch out into a broader issue.

Recent years have witnessed a plethora of books and articles on the relationship between the gospel and culture, between proclamation and doing good deeds, between the gospel of Paul and the gospel of the kingdom. Some of these polarities are singularly misjudged; others are important and deserve the most patient and biblically faithful exploration. But the lesson to be learned from the passages we have been surveying in 1 Cor 7 is this: even when we are rightly developing faithful cultural expressions of art and music, even when we are digging wells in the Sahel and developing centers to help the homeless, even when we patiently and lovingly build solid marriages in line with God’s disclosure of what marriage should be, even when we connect the use of our fiscal resources to kingdom priorities, the entire fabric of our current existence stands under God’s *as if not*. We cannot, we must not, be entirely engrossed even in good things that God himself labels *χαρίσματα*, God’s gracious gifts, if those gracious gifts are tied to an order that is passing away. If we learn this lesson well, we shall better understand what it means to lay up treasures in heaven.

* * * * *

The extensive book review section in each fascicle of *Themelios* is overseen by six book review editors. We have tried to draw these capable people from various quarters of the globe. Until this issue, Daniel Santos has capably served as our Old Testament Book Review Editor. He is now stepping down owing to increased responsibilities in Sao Paulo. We thank God for his service. At the same time we warmly welcome his successor, Jerry Hwang, of Singapore Bible College, who earned his doctorate at Wheaton College. Some readers will recognize his name from the reviews he has already written for *Themelios*. We look forward to fruitful collaboration. Dr Hwang may be contacted at jerry.hwang@thegospelcoalition.org. *Soli Deo gloria*.

OFF THE RECORD

Colonial Atheism: A Very British Vice

— Michael J. Ovey —

Mike Ovey is Principal of Oak Hill College in London.

As I write this the UK Parliament is considering Clause 1(1) of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill. It reads ‘Marriage of same sex couples is lawful’. Aside from all considerations about how Christians should respond to same-sex attraction and see biblical teaching reflected in the law of the land, what intrigues me here is one of the background assumptions, namely, that same-sex marriage is *possible*. Now, in the UK same-sex marriage has not been a social norm, to put it mildly. And the assumption of the UK government actually boils down to an assumption that, for the geographical entity of the UK, marriage ‘belongs’ to the UK government. It ‘belongs’ to it in the sense that it has the right to define and shape it. It has the right to ‘name’ what is and is not marriage.

Now, you do not have to have the theological acumen of John Calvin to spot that this is in practical terms atheistic. What I want to propose here is that this kind of atheism has a striking quality to it. It is colonialist. It is *colonial atheism*. There are no doubt other dimensions to it, but the colonial quality is important. And while I think it is very British, I do not think we Brits have any monopoly on this kind of colonialism.

Why should we describe some aspects of contemporary atheism as colonialist? The terms obviously suggest that colonial history and contemporary atheism have something in common. But what? The common denominator hinges on the idea of what is now called *terra nullius*, land that belongs to no one. And what I aim to do here is develop a line of thought that came up recently in discussion with the Bishop of St Albans in the UK, Alan Smith (‘colonial atheism’ is his phrase). It is hugely illuminating.

The idea behind *terra nullius* is quite simple. You declare that some land belongs to no-one, so it then becomes available for occupation. Something like this crops up in ancient Roman law, where it gave an account of how, for example, a newly appeared island in the sea could be reduced into ownership (Justinian’s *Institutes* II.1.22). This is not unreasonable: it is new land and clearly no one has laid any claim to it, either explicitly or implicitly. But imagine how very different the application is when you come across land where other people are living out their lives and you then declare it belongs to no one, thereby leaving it open to you to occupy for yourself. Now, the provenance of the term *terra nullius* is certainly a point of contention in academic circles just now, but the idea is found in judgments British authorities make in nineteenth-century Australia which relate to the claims to lands lived on by Aboriginal Australians. Unmistakably, it works to the disadvantage of those Aboriginal Australians.

However, whatever the original intention, there is a ‘Heads-I-win-tails-you-lose’ sense to *terra nullius* here. This happens in the following way. In order to qualify for recognition as owner, you have to have cultural forms which map onto the culture and practice of the colonial power. If you do have cultural forms which map onto the culture and practice of the colonial power, they are treated *as part*

of the culture and practice of the colonial power. They are not treated as having an *independent* validity. The risk then is that your own culture has simply been assimilated into the colonial power anyway. Alternatively, because you retain culture and practice which does not fit the colonial power, you are un-personed in one of the most significant ways a property-owning culture knows: you are a non-owner.

At this point, the *terra nullius* idea goes beyond being simply a 'legal' and 'respectable' way of getting hold of land other people have been living on for generations. It very readily becomes a strategy for un-personing someone else: they either conform to your norms or they are non-owners. But either way, they are not allowed to exist as someone different and other from you. Either way, they have to fit into your scheme of things. They are assimilated or annihilated, but not allowed a real coexistence. Assimilation or annihilation has, tragically, been precisely the experience of people groups who encounter the colonial attitude.

Let us now take one strand of contemporary atheism, of which the late Bertrand Russell is a good example. Asked the question what would he do if it turned out there was a God after all, he responded, 'Not enough evidence, God, not enough evidence.' Now, it is intriguing that Russell's remark has a superficial appeal. How rational, how reasonable, one thinks at first. But in fact the implicit demand is that God conform to whatever rules of evidence we lay down, in the same way that British authorities would only recognise Aboriginal Australian rights if they conformed to British rules of ownership. With regard to God, Bertrand Russell was thoroughly colonial.

Now, to put it mildly, we British had a vested interest in seeing things only in our cultural terms when it came to land ownership and *terra nullius*. In a similar way, humans have a vested interest in un-personing God. Psalm 24:1–2 tell us that the world belongs to God because he made it, all of it, us included. But if we are saying that God does not exist unless he meets our self-interested exacting standards of evidence or behaviour, well, who does everything belong to then? Us, I suppose. What could be more convenient?

There are profound issues at stake here. If as his human creature I belong to God, then I cannot say my body and mind are mine to do what I like with. My use of my body and the thoughts that I think are not my property. But if I can say God has not made good his 'property title', then why can I not use my body and mind as I wish? All this affects the obvious areas of sex, marriage, social life, but also the intellectual life. If my mind is God's property, what books should I read? What material should I entertain? Do I ever ask if God would have me read such-and-such a book? Or, as a teacher, do I ever ask why I think God would have my students read such-and-such a book?

Of course, it was not just the British who used ideas like *terra nullius* to justify expropriating land other people lived on. Over the years our species has proved frighteningly adept at un-personing other humans, whether on grounds of race, class, or belief. But then it is not just atheists who have colonial attitudes to God, because a key part of sin is trying to have God conform to us and our norms, rather than conforming ourselves to God and his. Twentieth-century atheists do indeed have an appalling record of un-personing others, but lest we forget, religious people were involved in the un-personing of God incarnate at the crucifixion. Colonialism: we British didn't start it, but it didn't stop when we left Africa.

The Pastoral Implications of Wise and Foolish Speech in the Book of Proverbs

— Eric Ortlund —

Eric Ortlund is associate professor of Old Testament at Briercrest College and Seminary in Caronport, Saskatchewan in Canada.

This article is written in love and admiration for pastors in North America. It is also written in brotherly concern, because pastors in our culture are frequently subjected to gossip, slander, and malicious speech. You probably do not have to attend church meetings for very long before witnessing this for yourself. I remember speaking with a friend who attended a church meeting that quickly turned ugly. His comment to me, as a new Christian, was, “My honeymoon in the church was over.” I doubt any of my readers will have trouble imagining what that meeting was like for my friend. While this is naturally a problem for any church in any age, certain tendencies in our culture make it an especially glaring one—and the Internet only makes things worse. I would like to think through the issue of foolish speech in a pastoral context by turning to the book of Proverbs because this book contains rich resources for both understanding and interpreting the roots of foolish speech and responding to it in a faithful way.

I would like to argue that, in the book of Proverbs, one cannot argue with a fool without making things worse. The wise person instead trusts the Lord to intervene by silencing and stopping foolish speech and vindicating those who trust him. I realize this conclusion may seem extreme. In order to recommend it, this article briefly sketches how the major characters in Proverbs speak and examines how the wise respond (or do not respond) to foolish speech. Then it turns to the NT, focusing on Paul’s directions to how Timothy and Titus should speak in different situations, as well as Paul’s presentation of Christ as the wisdom of God in 1 Cor 1. The essay closes by applying the wise speech of Proverbs to everyday-ministry settings.

1. Major Characters in Proverbs: The Simple, the Fool, and the Wise Man

The first major character in Proverbs is the simpleton, most often identified with the son or the youth in the book. The book of Proverbs portrays a pious Israelite father, guided by Solomon, teaching his son how to engage successfully in the complex adventure called “life.” The son or youth is classified as “simple” (פְּתִי) in the sense of being naïve about how life works and easily fooled (see Prov 1:4). While not morally wrong in itself, the youth’s simplicity is dangerous because it is susceptible to influence from either wisdom or folly (9:4–6, 16). If not left behind, the youth will suffer the most terrifying consequences (1:22, 31). Although more could be said about this character, it turns out that the simple youth does not have much to say in Proverbs—he is rather called on to listen quietly to the wise instruction of the father.

For this reason, we turn to the two other major characters in the book: the righteous-wise and the wicked-fool.¹ In making this distinction, I am not ignoring how Proverbs uses a number of words for different kinds of people. For instance, לָזֵל (“scoffer”) seems to denote a hardened cynic for whom there is the least hope of change.² Nevertheless, it is fair to make a broad distinction between two basic kinds of people in Proverbs: the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the foolish. The entire book of Proverbs is an appeal to the son to leave behind his simplicity and join the ranks of the righteous-wise by describing the life (and especially the speech) of these people and the blessed consequences that meet them under YHWH’s hand.³

The righteous-wise can be defined, first, as those who “do right by” God and neighbor (1:3; 2:9; 12:17; 21:21, etc.). They discharge all relational obligations, doing what is right in the complex junctures to which every relationship is subject. This righteousness should not be understood only in the sense of fairness or balance, but more extremely as going “over the top” to do as much as possible to enhance the life of one’s neighbor. “The righteous are willing to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community; the wicked are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves.”⁴ Second, this category of people are “wise” in the sense of being skilled at engaging with the complex order God has set up in creation, and especially in relationships (1:2–7). This category of people is consistently portrayed as morally upright and insightful about how life and relationships work.

By contrast, the wicked-fool privileges self over neighbor. His wickedness consists in working for his own advantage to the detriment of others. His folly is similarly seen in the lack of skill with which he lives, despite the disastrous consequences to himself and others. Furthermore, this type of person consistently refuses to listen to instruction or rebuke or advice. The fool is someone who is incorrigibly certain he knows how life works, no matter how he is warned (1:7, 22; 12:15; 15:5). They are the ones who are wise in their own eyes (3:5–8). In contrast, the wise are receptive, open, and listening to wisdom (1:7–8; 2:1–4; 10:8, etc.), even loving rebuke (9:8).

How do these two groups of people talk? Proverbs spends no small amount of space portraying wise and foolish speech.

¹I use hyphenated terms for these two groups because Proverbs refers to righteousness (צְדָקָה) and wickedness (רָשָׁע) almost as frequently as it does to wisdom and folly; the book cannot invoke wisdom terms without also referring to moral ones. For instance, Proverbs uses the חָכָם root (“be wise”) 55 times, while it refers to the צְדִיק (“the righteous”) 66 times. Similarly, the two most common words for “fool,” אָוִיל and בָּסִיל, combine to occur 76 times (27 and 49 times, respectively), while the רָשָׁע root (“be wicked”) occurs 83 times. While “righteousness” and “wisdom” are not synonymous (nor are “wickedness” and “foolishness”), in Proverbs, one cannot be wise without being righteous, and vice-versa. For this reason, I will refer sometimes to “the righteous-wise” and sometimes just “the wise,” but the same group of people is intended by both designations. The same is true of “the wicked-fools” and “fools.”

²See Bruce Waltke, *Proverbs 1–15* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 93–116, and Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 28–43, for an extremely helpful discussions of the nuances of different terms used for wisdom and folly.

³In speaking this way, of course, I am taking a book that was edited in several stages as a coherent, unified whole (for indications of redactional layers, see 25:1; 30:1; and 31:1; recall also the connection between the Instruction of Amenemope and Prov 22:17–23:11). Doing so is unproblematic in my opinion, for whatever differences one might detect in different parts of the book, no one editorial layer contradicts or criticizes the whole. A consistency in the book is unmistakable even within the diversity of thought that wisdom literature allowed and perhaps even encouraged.

⁴Waltke, *Proverbs 1–15*, 97.

2. Foolish Speech in Proverbs

We can broadly summarize foolish speech in two ways.

2.1. Constant

First, there is a lot of it: the fool is always talking. Instead of pondering how he should answer, his mouth pours forth wicked things (Prov 15:28; cf. 15:2). He answers before he listens (18:13). He gets involved in arguments not his own (26:17). This kind of person is completely unrestrained: cross him and he explodes (12:16; 29:11). He cannot keep another's secret (11:13; 12:23). He abuses people he dislikes (11:12)⁵ and criticizes them to others (10:18). Instead of keeping quiet, his rash words are sword-thrusts (12:18) that spark arguments with others (15:18).

The first-time reader of Proverbs might conclude at this point that people who are naturally outgoing and talkative are closer to folly than those with a quieter personality. Proverbs does contain some sober warnings about talking a lot: “in many words, sin is not lacking” (10:19); “the one guarding his lips guards his life” (13:3). But the biblical portrayal of the fool's unrestrained speech locates its source elsewhere: the fool talks so much because he is someone who *has* to be right. He will not stop arguing (20:3). If you get into an argument with the fool, instead of giving you the benefit of the doubt and working with you toward a resolution, “he only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet” (29:9). From the very first chapter of Proverbs, gaining wisdom means listening to those wiser than you; one cannot become wise without being receptive. An essential characteristic of the fool is that he will not do so, instead despising יִסָּר, “fatherly instruction” (1:7; 5:23; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1; cf. also the understatement for effect in 15:12). Refusing to accept instruction in how life works, the fool is interested only in airing his own opinion (18:2).

And there is a sense in which the fool cannot accept such instruction. The fool's unwise speech is constitutional: he does not know how to say anything else. The mouth of the wicked knows only what is perverse (10:32); when a fool decides to instruct someone, all he can dispense is more folly (16:22). Truths that would otherwise help others dangle like crippled legs in his mouth (26:7; cf. 1:22, 23; 13:19; 17:10; 24:7; 27:22).

2.2. Deliberately Violent and Destructive

The individual proverbs already cited show that the fool is a desperate character. But Proverbs has more to say about this kind of person: in addition to his ingrained, argumentative talkativeness, the fool speaks with the intention of hurting others. This is the second major characteristic of foolish speech: it is violent and destructive, and not merely as a secondary consequence, but deliberately so. The mouth of the wicked covers violence (סִנְאָה) and hatred (10:6, 11, 18): no matter what he says, violence lurks beneath. The most vivid metaphors are used for the destructive effects of the fool's speech: it sets a city on fire (29:8) and tears it down (11:11); it is a burning fire (16:27) and a cudgel to beat others (25:18). Wicked words “ambush blood” (12:6): the fool lies in wait, looking for ways to destroy others through what he says (cf. 14:25; 24:2). His desire is for violence (1:16; 13:2): his whole intention in starting a conversation is for the other person to walk away wounded and broken. This is the case even when

⁵When the second clause of this verse says that the man of understanding keeps silent, it implies that the third party in question is not worthy of praise. In other words, the fool who despises his companion is not necessarily saying false things. His folly consists in speaking when he should keep quiet.

the fool is practiced at hiding his hatred of others and passing himself off as a friend through flattery (26:24–26, 28; 29:5).

We should not fail to be shocked at this portrayal of the fool. In these proverbs and others, the Israelite father warns his son that there are members of God's people who can pass themselves off as entirely spiritual and loving, but whose conscious intention, when they speak, is to destroy someone. I am especially struck by 11:9:

בְּפִהוֹ חֲנִיף יִשְׁחַת רֵעֵהוּ וּבְדַעַת צְדִיקִים יִחְלְצוּ

With his mouth the hypocrite would destroy his companion;
but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.

Passing himself off as a friend, the hypocrite would ruin his neighbor. The verb in this verse (שחַת in the Hiphil) occurs in 6:32 for the deadly damage the adulterer does to himself; it occurs elsewhere for the destruction of the world in the flood (Gen 6:12–13) and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (five times in Gen 18–19). Clearly, Prov 11:9 is not warning against only receiving wounds from someone else, but the complete spiritual destruction of one of God's people by someone who hides their evil intentions. The proverb does not specify exactly how the hypocrite would devastate his neighbor; but the knowledge of the righteous that delivers them probably refers to their understanding of YHWH's rule over creation and the way he has set up life to work.⁶ As a result, this example of foolish speech probably has to do with the hypocrite's attempts to draw off those around him from trusting YHWH and fearing him (the overarching goal of the book of Proverbs [1:7; 3:5]) by joining the hypocrite in foolish behavior. This proverb is a most striking example of the frightening power of foolish speech and the sinister intentions against the righteous of those speaking this way.

Speaking of the knowledge of the righteous raises the issue of how this other category of persons speaks. But before exploring wise speech further, we must note Proverbs' insistence that YHWH will judge the fool and his speech. There are a number of ominous divine passives describing in particular the judgment of foolish speech (10:8, 31; 12:19; 19:5, 9; 21:28; 22:12; 26:2). Even if these verses leave the exact manner and timing of this judgment open, they insist that YHWH governs his creation in such a way that such speech will be judged, for it is an abomination to him (12:22; 15:26). Simultaneous with these assertions of divine judgment on foolish speech are predictions that it destroys itself: the mouth of a fool brings ruin near (10:14), acting as a snare for him (12:13) and a rod for his back (14:3; see also 10:13, 21; 18:6–7; 21:6). This dual assertion of divine judgment and natural consequence neatly fits, of course, with Proverbs' theology of retribution.

3. *Wise Speech in Proverbs*

How do the righteous speak? Just as the character of the righteous neatly mirrors that of the fool, so their speech: it is restrained and life-giving.

⁶Elsewhere Proverbs equates this knowledge with wisdom and the fear of the Lord; it gives the same benefits that wisdom does (1:7; 2:5–6; 8:12; 9:10; 13:16; 15:2; 19:2; 20:15; 21:11; 22:12; 24:4; 30:3).

3.1. Restrained

Proverbs frequently portrays the righteous-wise as extremely cautious when they talk. Often they simply say nothing (Prov 10:19; 11:12–13; 23:9), even when insulted (12:16; 19:11). Out of love, this kind of person does not repeat a matter (17:9). The prudent man even covers **תַּעֲרֵךְ**, “knowledge” (12:23)—the word referring elsewhere to that spiritual insight which YHWH himself gives those who fear him.⁷ One would think that something so precious would be shared, but, strikingly, it is precisely the wise man’s spiritual insight that is sometimes hidden.

When the righteous-wise do speak, they speak softly, even when someone is furious with them (15:1; cf. 29:8). This kind of person is sensible enough to stop before an argument starts (17:14; 20:3). His patience quells strife (15:18). He thinks about how to answer instead of saying the first thing that comes to mind (15:28). He is restrained and cool in spirit (17:27; 29:11). But his speech is not weak: it is sweetly persuasive (16:21, 24), judicious (16:23), and powerful even when gentle (25:15). If an issue with a neighbor does arise, he speaks directly to the offending party instead of criticizing him to others (25:9–10).

It was argued above that the fool’s talkativeness arises from a deeper moral defect, i.e., a need always to be right. In a similar way, the sparse speech of the wise is tied to a humble receptivity in them (13:10; 15:32; 17:10; 19:20, 25; 21:11). While fools always have to be right, the righteous-wise accept rebuke, confess their wrong, and abandon their sin (28:13). Instead of insisting on their own ideas about how life and relationships work, these are the ones who have turned to Lady Wisdom (1:23; 9:4–6), listened to their parents (1:8; 2:1–5), and submitted to YHWH’s discipline, even when it was painful (3:11–12). This is part and parcel of their fear of YHWH (1:7).

3.2. Life-Giving

The second major way wise speech is characterized in Proverbs concerns its wonderfully life-giving effect on others. Proverbs reserves the highest of praise for this kind of speech (10:20; 20:15; 25:11), calling it a well of life (10:11) and even a tree of life (15:4). The implication is that YHWH’s own life is communicated to others through wise human speech. This is “life” in the Johannine sense of the word.⁸

But how can wise speech produce such spiritual blessing in others? Part of the answer is that their instruction (lit. “torah”) in living wisely and skillfully in YHWH’s ways turns people away from spiritual death (13:14) and shepherds many (10:21). Another reason for the great spiritual benefits of wise speech is simpler: the contrast between the two clauses of 12:18 implies that the tongue of the wise is healing just because they are not rash in their words. Their restraint is healing in itself.

It should be added that, in addition to benefitting others, the speech of the wise satisfies themselves as speakers (12:14; 13:2; 15:23; 18:20) and delivers them from the destruction that fools bring on themselves (11:9; 12:6, 13; 14:3; 21:23). The neat contrast with the way foolish speech harms the speaker is obvious.

⁷ See the references listed in §2.2 above with the discussion of 11:9.

⁸ See Waltke, *Proverbs 1–15*, 105, 615, for this maximal interpretation of “life” in Proverbs.

4. *The Pastoral Implications of Wise Speech*

The righteous-wise and foolish-wicked neatly contrast in their character (§1) and in their speech: life-giving restraint sharply differs from a harmful talkativeness (§§2–3). But what do the righteous-wise say to fools? It is easy to imagine (or, unfortunately, as may be the case, remember) the abusive and destructive way in which fools speak to those who fear YHWH. But how does Proverbs portray the speech of the wise to the foolish? This question takes us to the heart of the pastoral implications of wise speech.

4.1. **The Righteous-Wise Do Not Argue with Wicked-Fools**

Stated briefly, Proverbs never shows the wise man arguing with the fool.⁹ For instance, in 19:25, Solomon teaches:

לֹץ תִּכָּהּ וּפְתֵי יַעֲרֹם וְהוֹכִיחַ לְנָבוֹן יִבִּין דַּעַת

Strike a scoffer, and the simple grows prudent;
rebuke a wise man, and he understands knowledge.

21:11 teaches the same truth in different words. Notice the implication: when a fool is confronted, a third party (the simple) may learn as they observe the situation. But the scoffer learns nothing. No matter how obvious his wrong is to you and those around you, the fool is constitutionally unable to see and admit their wrong. Little wonder that Proverbs elsewhere says that one word of rebuke sinks deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool (17:11).

Following the use of the words for rebuke (Hiphil of כִּיח) and instruction (סר)—specifically, who rebukes whom in Proverbs—leads to the same conclusion. The wise instruct the simple in 1:2–3, and chs. 1–9 are full of instruction from the father to the son (1:8; 4:13; etc.). As mentioned above, however, fools despise instruction (1:7; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1); only Lady Wisdom rebukes them at the end of ch. 1. It is hard to find any example in Proverbs of a successful rebuke of a fool or a command that we should rebuke this kind of person.¹⁰ Quite to the contrary: the one rebuking a scoffer or the wicked gets themselves only scorn and abuse (9:7). Proverbs recommends rebuking the wise, not a scoffer (9:8). Given what has been said above, it is not difficult to see why. This category of people will not be able to receive a rebuke, even when it is entirely justified. Because they have a deep-seated need to be right, they will turn any claim of wrongdoing back on the one giving the rebuke. Whatever the intentions of the one giving the rebuke or whatever valid reasons he could give for the rightness of his rebuke, he will get only injury and abuse for his efforts.

Other proverbs are similarly pessimistic. 18:2 teaches that a fool has no delight in תְּבוּנָה (“insight”), in understanding the moral and relational dimensions of a situation and how he may have hurt others; he wants only to air his own opinions (בְּהַתְגַּלוֹת לְבוֹ, lit. “in revealing his own mind/heart”). Because he cannot stop arguing (20:3), the only way for the argument to stop is to show the fool the door (22:10).

⁹§4.2 discusses whether 26:4–5 is a possible exception.

¹⁰The few exceptions to this rule turn out to be more apparent than real. In 24:25, a “good blessing” is promised to those who rebuke the wicked; but v. 23 shows that a legal context is in view here. This passage is speaking to judges (v. 23), promising a blessing for those who do not acquit the guilty. Similarly, 28:23 promises favor to the one rebuking a man—but the target of the rebuke in this verse is an אָדָם (*adam*), not a fool. The point is that if you have to rebuke someone (whoever that might be), better to do it quickly (cf. 27:5). The verse does not say anything about who will receive a rebuke and who will not.

If you do speak, you will not be heard, no matter how persuasive or biblical your claims are; the fool will only despise the good sense of your words (23:9). The aesthetic dimension of wisdom is in play in this proverb: it was painful to the sages to think of something as precious and worthy as wise speech (23:9, *שִׁכַּל מְלִידָה*) being held in contempt by a fool (see the opposite sentiment in 25:12).¹¹ A proverb mentioned above bears repeating: “A wise man enters into controversy with a foolish man, and [the fool] rages and laughs, and there is no quiet” (29:9, author’s translation).

These pessimistic statements in Proverbs are somewhat surprising and perhaps difficult to hear. After all, it is extremely easy to start arguing when subjected to foolish speech in the context of ministry (or any other context). Even when the fool is saying things that may be factually correct, they do so in deceptive, one-sided, and misleading ways. It is very difficult not to respond to such statements—and even more so when the fool is damaging your ministry by what they say. Often the fool’s claims about the pastor and his ministry are of a sort that cannot be adjudicated: either the fool is right and the pastor should resign, or the fool is wrong and should apologize. In these situations, it is extremely tempting to engage with the fool on the fool’s terms, to try to convince him he is wrong and compel him to apologize.

While I sympathize with the above strategy for dealing with foolish speech, the consistent witness of the book of Proverbs is that such arguing causes only more damage. The wise man holds his tongue; he is able to do so, even when subjected to the most vexatious criticism from fools (27:3), because he trusts that the Lord is active in the course of human events, both by direct intervention and through natural consequence, to protect, establish, and vindicate those who trust in him and to judge those who rebel and live life on their own terms (cf. 10:30). Indeed, the entire burden of Proverbs is to convince the son that the Lord is worth trusting and fearing even when the way of wisdom does not appear to be the most attractive or profitable way to live one’s life, even when it does not seem that the Lord is active in the world. Those bowing before YHWH’s rule of all things and accepting his way of dealing with each individual—in other words, those walking the path of wisdom—will remember and believe Proverbs’ repeated insistence that YHWH judges not only the wicked but also the speech of the wicked. Such wise men and women do not enter into controversy with the fool (Niphal of 29:9, *שָׁפֵט*). They leave that to the Lord.

4.2. The Righteous-Wise Are Not Necessarily Silent

This is not to claim, however, that the wise are reduced to stoic silence when subjected to foolish speech. In two frequently quoted verses, the sage teaches us:

אַל־תַּעַן כְּסִיל בְּאִוְלָתוֹ פֶּן־תִּשְׁוֶה־לוֹ גַּם־אַתָּא

עֲנֵה כְּסִיל בְּאִוְלָתוֹ פֶּן־יִהְיֶה חָכָם בְּעֵינָיו

Do not answer a fool according to his folly,

lest you become like him—even you.

Answer a fool according to his folly,

lest he be wise in his own eyes. (26:4–5)

¹¹ Michael Fox has helpfully shown how wisdom in Proverbs has intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions: it involves what one knows, what is perceived as attractive and valuable, and one’s sense of what is fitting and appropriate. See Fox, “The Epistemology of the Book of Proverbs,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 669–84, especially 681, 684.

Why are we told, in adjacent verses, both not to answer the fool and also to answer him? Surely the answer must lie in the repeated phrase, “according to his folly:” even though it is the same in both verses, it must mean something different in each verse. Waltke helpfully interprets v. 4 to mean that one does not answer the fool “according to his folly” in the sense that one does not answer in a foolish way.¹² One does not answer sarcastically or abrasively with insinuations and half-truths meant to harm and shame the fool, for otherwise, one is acting just like the fool.

On the other hand, the wise man is not necessarily silent. He may be very slow to speak and speak only little; but he does answer the fool “according to his folly” (v. 5) in the sense that he answers the fool’s folly. The wise man names the lies that the fool speaks and the harm that his words cause. In Waltke’s words, “The wise do not silently accept and tolerate the folly and thereby confirm fools in it.”¹³ Despite the danger of speaking with a fool at all, the wise “must expose the fool’s distortions to serve his own interests at the expense of the community and must not silently accept it and thereby contribute to establishing his topsy-turvy world against the rule of God.”¹⁴

Part of what is helpful in Waltke’s interpretation of these two verses is his refusal to relativize them to different situations. Claiming that each proverb applies to a different situation is a common strategy for resolving the seeming paradox created by Prov 26:4–5: sometimes one remains silent before a fool, and sometimes one speaks. Part of wisdom (according to this line of thinking) is that facility by which one knows when to apply which proverb. In contrast, without denying that there is a time to speak and a time to be silent, Waltke argues that one never answers a fool in such a way that one becomes like him, but one also always answers the lies and damage of foolish speech by naming them for what they are.¹⁵

The characteristics of wise speech given above can be enlisted here to flesh out the particular kind of response 26:4–5 calls for. As argued above, the many statements in Proverbs about the speech of the wise can be summarized under two headings: it is humbly restrained and life-giving. In the particular situation of being subjected to foolish speech, this restraint and humility does not necessarily imply that the wise man will admit that the fool is right, for even when the fool makes factually correct statements, he does so with the worst motives, only to hurt and destroy. Rather, the wise man is restrained in the sense that he gives up trying to be right in the eyes of the fool. Although the wise man will tell the fool what is misleading and distorted in the fool’s claims, as well as what will harm others, the wise man does so without trying to compel the fool to admit that the fool is being misleading and harmful. If I can put it this way, the wise man speaks the truth without hope that the fool will acknowledge it, but in full hope that causeless curses will not reach their target (26:2) and that the Lord will support and bless and establish wise speech (10:31; 11:30). The wise man answers the fool entirely in faith in the Lord, without any hope of producing results in the fool.

It seems to me another dimension of the restraint of the wise man is that he restricts his answer to the claims that the fool has made. He does not extend his comments to the moral character of the fool—even though the connection between the two may be obvious. In other words, I understand 26:5 to call on us to expose the half-truths and distortions of the fool; but perhaps we should refrain from also saying that the fool is acting in an unbiblical and sinful way (even when they clearly are). Because

¹² *Proverbs 15–31* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 348.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the fool simply cannot receive any kind of criticism, commenting on the moral character of a fool will probably spark a new volley of criticism and finger-pointing. One says simply what is false and harmful and then stops.

5. Wisdom and Wise Speech in the New Covenant

5.1. Paul

One does not have to look far in Paul's letters for the issue of foolish and wise speech to surface. Sinful humanity, suppressing God's truth (Rom 1:18), has become foolish (1:22), full of deceit, maliciousness, gossip, and slander (1:29–30, ESV). Paul also ends the letter by warning against people who cause divisions and create obstacles for people that go against sound doctrine (16:17–18). In reading this, one is quickly reminded of the refractory nature of the fool, as well as his ingrained tendency to turn away from wise instruction in the way of the Lord.

Similarly, Paul's list of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit echoes wise speech in Proverbs at a number of points, especially as rivalry, dissension, and divisions are contrasted with patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control (Gal 5:20–23). Paul also warns Timothy about people possessed by "an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth" (1 Tim 6:4–5). It is hardly a stretch to see the foolish speech of Proverbs at work in such people.

In a similar vein, Paul later calls for a wise restraint in speech as Timothy avoids arguments about words that hurt those involved (2 Tim 2:14), as well as irreverent babble that leads to ungodliness (2:16). Having nothing to do with foolish controversies that only lead to arguments, Timothy is not to be quarrelsome but kind, correcting his opponents gently in the hope that God would grant them repentance (2 Tim 2:23–26). This fits well with the cautious but truthful response called for in Prov 26:4–5. Proverb's pessimism about arguing with fools also fits well with Paul's advice to Titus: when Titus faces a divisive person, he must warn him twice and then sever his relationship with that person (Titus 3:10–11).

§4.2 discussed Proverbs' hesitancy about rebuking a fool. Rebuking is clearly part of Timothy's job description, along with preaching and exhortation (2 Tim 4:2). In itself, this is not surprising, since the wise of Proverbs do give instruction and rebuke to the simple and other wise men. But Paul seems less hesitant than Proverbs to call Timothy to rebuke others. In 1 Tim 5:20, for instance, Timothy must publicly rebuke the one persisting in sin so that the rest of the church will fear. Titus 1:13 also calls for a sharp rebuke as "insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers" upset whole families by insisting on circumcision (Titus 1:10–11). If the false teachers themselves are the intended object of this rebuke, then Paul's instruction here forms a relatively sharp contrast with Proverbs' teaching. There is some ambiguity, however, as to whether Titus must rebuke those of the circumcision party or those troubled by that party.¹⁶

This is only a brief discussion of several complex passages, but the harmony between Proverbs' teaching on wise and foolish speech and Paul's directions to Timothy and Titus—if not the perfect symmetry—is already apparent. We cannot, however, close the discussion at this point, for to do so would be to ignore Jesus Christ, who is both the mediator of a better covenant (Heb 9:15) and the

¹⁶ See the discussion in William Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville: Nelson, 2000).

wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18–31). Even brief reflection on this point will enrich our understanding of wise speech and its non/response to foolish speech.

5.2. Jesus

We can parse Jesus Christ as the wisdom of God in two ways, according to his human and divine natures. First, Jesus Christ perfectly embodies the wisdom of which Solomon speaks in the sense that, as our representative, he “fulfills all righteousness” (Matt 3:15) by perfectly discharging every obligation God laid on his human covenant partner in the OT. Jesus is that perfect example of a wise man who trusts his heavenly Father (Prov 3:6) and, as a result, enjoys not just long life in the promised land (Prov 2:21) but eternal life at the Father’s right hand.

But Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God in another sense, as God in the flesh, exeging the Father to us (John 1:18). It was mentioned above that part of Israelite wisdom involves a skillfulness at engaging with the complex order that God has set up in creation (Prov 3:19–20). In 1 Cor 1:18–31, however, the cross in its folly and weakness is presented as that new order or wisdom by which God is ruling over a new creation. Just as, in the old covenant, YHWH cared for, protected, and blessed those who fear and trust him and live wisely in a wicked world, so now, in the new covenant, God protects and blesses (not physically, but spiritually and eschatologically) those who trust in the folly of Christ’s death and live by the wisdom that comes from the cross. Forsaking their own ideas about how salvation is to be found, new covenant wise men and women come to God entirely on terms of grace in his Son and participate in his strange upheaval of human ideas of wisdom and status and worth (1 Cor 1:27–28) as Christ brings all things in submission to him (15:25). They trust a despised, humiliated, condemned criminal as their savior and take up their own crosses, dying with him in order to save their lives (Matt 16:24–25).

5.3. Folly and Legalism, Wisdom and Faith

A defining characteristic of the fool in Proverbs is his insistence that he is right (see §1 above). He rejects all instruction about how to live well in the world YHWH rules. In light of this, it is difficult not to draw a connection between fools in the old covenant and legalists in the new—and, correspondingly, between the wise who trust in YHWH in the book of Proverbs and Christians who have faith in Jesus. The analogy is not exact. Nevertheless, the fool in the book of Proverbs is someone who has to be right; the legalist in the new covenant is someone who tries to establish his own righteousness before God on the basis of religious accomplishment. Both groups of people are wise in their own eyes about how life works; neither trusts and fears God as Savior and Lord. Similarly, just as wisdom in the old covenant entirely trusts YHWH (Prov 3:5–6) and bows in reverence before him as God (1:7), so new covenant believers abandon every innate idea about how to achieve life and blessing through their own efforts, every attempt at self-salvation, and instead trust in God’s provision for sinful people (Rom 5:6). In making this connection, of course, it should be emphasized that part of trusting Jesus Christ is confessing that we are not inherently wise: left to ourselves, we will fall on the wrong side of Prov 1:7. Part of our inheritance from Adam is an innate tendency to try to play God for ourselves (Gen 3:5), trusting our own ideas about how to fix what is wrong with us, continually making fig leaves to cover over our shame (3:7). Only Jesus is that perfect wise man, and we share in the blessings that Proverbs promises only as God makes us more like his Son.

6. Conclusion and Application

Let us draw together the various strands of this article by fleshing out our understanding of wise and foolish speech in the context of the life of the church. In broaching this issue, I am assuming that Christians, regenerate and reborn as a new creation in Christ, can speak and act in foolish ways. Although I do not think it would be correct to label a Christian as a fool in the sense that Proverbs gives it—after all, fools in Proverbs are the wicked, who have forsaken God—Christians can speak and act in wicked and/or foolish ways, and this sin can become ingrained with time. (Of course, this distinction can cut both ways: it can apply to us as much as to others. We are perhaps more foolish than we think.)

Why does the fool always have to be right? Why is he always arguing, always putting others in the wrong and justifying himself? Because he does not relish the righteousness that is found in Jesus Christ—the very righteousness of God (Phil 3:10) that God confers on anyone forsaking whatever righteousness they can achieve on their own (3:9). In my experience, some Christians are burdened with a profound a sense of the wrongness of the world and the church, but do not have a correspondingly sweet sense of God’s grace for sinful people. Their strategy for dealing with the pain of this pervasive sense of wrongness is to offload it on others. I have known Christians whose “ministry” was pointing out others’ faults, being suspicious of false teaching in others, criticizing and scrutinizing other Christians, and so on. A Christian can rebuke and exhort in a larger context of grace, but the person I am talking about does not do this—it is a ministry of condemnation, not reconciliation.

Foolish Christians of this sort are recognizable in four ways. First, they are gossips. Instead of speaking directly to other Christians, they criticize others behind their backs. Second, they spin things in their favor: impartiality and honesty are not priorities. Third, they will tend not to work toward reconciliation. They will not lay out conditions, after the meeting of which they would be happy to reconcile. There is always another problem or worry or suspicion. Fourth, there is no larger gracious context to their speech. They do not receive and welcome other Christians as Christ has received them (Rom 15:7). This kind of Christian cannot be reasoned with. They will not meet you halfway. Their whole aim is to condemn you to make themselves feel better. Their gracelessness renders them unable to admit wrong and confess it. They are delivered from their sins by sealing others in their sin. They act and speak “unwisely” by walking contrary to how God is reordering all of creation—and the relationships in it—by grace.

Part of the burden of Proverbs is to put the son on his guard against foolish and perverse people (Prov 2:12). This involves describing them, as I have above. But another part of the book’s burden is to turn the son away from folly. In light of this, before proceeding further, we must scour our hearts, with the help of the Spirit, for foolish tendencies in ourselves. For instance, if I have something negative to say about another Christian, have I said it to anyone else? While there are a few situations in which one might have to do this (if one is asked, for example, to recommend another Christian for a ministry position), it is extremely easy to point out the faults of other Christians to third parties. This is foolish because Jesus, our wisdom and our great high priest, is interceding for all Christians, speaking the best of them before the Father. Why would we speak any differently? To give another example, in a

disagreement, do I spin things in my favor? Do I believe all things and hope all things for the other Christian (1 Cor 13:7)? Or do I assume the worst about them?¹⁷

In any case, to whatever extent we can repent of and crucify our tendencies toward folly, how do we respond to foolish criticism in a new covenant context? The wisdom of Proverbs can be restated for Christians in the following way: the righteous-wise of the new covenant—those reckoned righteous by faith, who are wise to God’s strange way of dealing with people in the cross—do not try to justify themselves in front of others. God is about reordering and reconquering his rebellious and corrupt creation by grace, justifying the godless by faith (Rom 4:5). It is therefore contradictory to get into an argument with a fool who condemns you because such an argument focuses on you and your relative merits. This is the exact opposite of how God deals with you in Christ. While remembering the command of Prov 26:5 to answer foolishness, new covenant wise men and women do not give into the temptation to justify themselves to others on the basis of themselves because doing so amounts to swimming upstream against God’s redemption of all things. The new covenant wise person is so delighted and content in their perfect, spotless rightness in Christ that they are able to remain quiet when others condemn them.

As stated above, Proverbs consistently insists that God intervenes to uproot and destroy foolish speech and to judge those who speak in this way. As a result, wise people, instead of arguing and justifying themselves, wait for God to intervene among his people as King, to establish his kingdom, to purge his people. And when wise people do so, they do nothing more than mimic Jesus, who went as a sheep to the slaughter silent, who trusted God to vindicate him when unjustly condemned. This is how God wins victories for his kingdom.

Proverbs 16:13 tells us that “Righteous lips are pleasing to kings; the one speaking uprightly, he loves.” If this was true of human Israelite kings, how much more is it true of that greater descendent of King David? How much more is he delighted when his children trust his righteousness enough to stay quiet when condemned? And how much more attentive will our Divine king be when one of his servants is attacked and when that servant speaks well?¹⁸

¹⁷I found most striking the evidence assembled by Cordelia Fine in her book, *A Mind of Its Own: How Your Brain Distorts and Deceives* (New York: Norton, 2006), for the unreliability of the moral judgments we make about others and our tendency to privilege ourselves in such judgment.

¹⁸Those wishing to read further on the subject of wise and foolish speech in Proverbs—especially with reference to pastoral settings—are directed to Bruce Waltke’s superb commentary (*Proverbs 1–15* and *Proverbs 16–31*; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004–2005). Waltke vibrantly describes the different characters one meets in Proverbs and how they speak, making it easy to see the application of different proverbs to everyday life. Beyond Waltke’s commentary, however, not many other scholarly works on Proverbs and wisdom literature are helpful pastorally for guiding a wise response to foolish speech; even the superb *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom Poetry and Writings* (ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns; Downers Grove: IVP, 2008) lacks an article on this subject, and its entries for Proverbs do not discuss this dimension of the book’s teaching. Outside of academic literature on Proverbs, I have also found helpful the second chapter of Henri Nouwen’s *The Way of the Heart*, entitled “Silence” (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981). Nouwen refers frequently to the desert fathers in his book, who themselves spoke often of the virtue of silence (see *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* [trans. Benedicta Ward; Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1975]). Even though the desert fathers discuss silence in a different context (that of retreat from the world for communion with God), there are numerous points of contact between Proverbs’ teaching on the tongue and theirs. Finally, the fourth section of Jonathan Edwards’s treatise, “Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England,” although not specifically geared toward the issue of speech, touches on many of the issues in this paper (see *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [ed. Edward Hickman; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1992], 365–430).

Telling the Story from the Bible (Part 2): Reviewing *The Big Picture Story Bible* and *The Jesus Storybook Bible*

— David A. Shaw —

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Children’s story bibles are not Bibles and, it turns out, neither are they for children.¹ My previous article explores the truth of the first statement.² Story bibles are illustrated, abridged, expanded, paraphrased, and fallible versions of the infallible book whose name they bear. They are not Bibles. But nor are they for children; at least, they are not *just* for children. Several pastors and reviewers recommend both *The Big Picture Story Bible* and *The Jesus Storybook Bible* for use among adults.³ One reviewer of the latter in *Christianity Today* says, “I’m hoping to invite my adult friends over for an evening with the Story. It will help some of us (well, me) to retool our theology a bit. We’ll pass *The Jesus Storybook Bible* around and read it aloud, taking time to look at the pictures.”⁴ Tim Keller goes further: “I would urge not just families with young children to get this book, but every Christian—from pew warmers, to ministry leaders, seminarians and even theologians!”⁵ Others make similar claims for *The Big Picture Story Bible*, which one blog-commenter suggests adding to a list of “Books to Read Before You Start Seminary/Divinity College.”⁶

¹To avoid ambiguity, this article refers to children’s bibles as “story bibles,” “children’s bibles,” or “bibles” (lowercase) and the Christian Scriptures as “the Bible” (uppercase) or “Scripture.”

²David A. Shaw, “Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work,” *Them* 37 (2012): 211–48, available at <http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/journal-issues/Themelios37.2.pdf>.

³David R. Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible* (illustrated by Gail Schoonmaker; Wheaton: Crossway, 2004); Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (illustrated by Jago; Grand Rapids: Zonderkidz, 2007).

⁴Ben Patterson, “A Very Grown-up Children’s Bible.” March 3, 2008, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/marchweb-only/110-22.0.html?paging=off>. (cited November 1, 2012).

⁵Quoted in Justin Taylor, “The Jesus Storybook Bible,” *Between Two Worlds*, February 22, 2007, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2007/02/22/jesus-storybook-bible/> (cited November 1, 2012). Tullian Tchividjian gives a similar endorsement: “The Jesus Storybook Bible is, in my opinion, one of the best resources available to help both children and adults see the Jesus-centered story line of the Bible.” “What the Bible is Not,” *The Gospel Coalition Blog*, December 28, 2009, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2009/12/28/what-the-bible-is-not/> (cited November 1, 2012).

⁶The suggestion appears in the comments after this post by Michael F. Bird: “Books to Read Before You Start Seminary/Divinity College,” *Euangelion*, September 14, 2012, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/euangelion/2012/09/books-to-read-before-you-start-seminarydivinity-college/>.

This is a relatively new situation. Prior to these story bibles, it is hard to find any such enthusiastic endorsements. So what are we to make of this? On the one hand it could highlight the extent of biblical illiteracy and theological immaturity among Christian adults and, more alarmingly, among seminary students. On the other hand, or perhaps in addition to this, it could speak of the quality of these books, although the lack of any sustained critical engagement with them means that claims of their value are largely untested.

That testing, therefore, is the focus of this article. Although several story bibles have appeared in recent years, the widespread popularity of these two justifies limiting our attention to them.⁷ My previous article demonstrates that it is neither an easy nor a quick task to evaluate a story bible. Drawing on the methodology my preceding article develops, this article considers these two popular story bibles with reference to four key relationships:

1. story bible text and Scripture
2. story bible images and Scripture
3. text and image within the story bible
4. the story bible and the child

Not every review of a story bible need follow this sequence, or do so at such length, but I hope in what follows to build on the previous article in two ways: (1) to underline the significance and multifaceted nature of these relationships and (2) to demonstrate their usefulness as a framework by which to evaluate story bibles.

1. The Big Picture Story Bible

The Big Picture Story Bible (hereafter *BPSB*), first published in 2004 by Crossway, now includes a companion audio CD (2010) and an eBook edition (2011), reflecting both the book's success and technological advances within publishing.⁸ Intended for ages 2–7, it is divided into 26 chapters, 11 covering the OT (201 pages), 15 the NT (225 pages).

1.1. The Relationship between *BPSB* Text and Scripture

There are four sides to the relationship between the text of a story bible and Scripture: omission, addition, reformulation, and transposition.⁹ In other words, we ask, “What has the author left out, added, changed, or rearranged?”

⁷Other story bibles published in the last few years that would merit further reviews include Starr Meade, *Mighty Acts of God: A Family Bible Story Book* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010); Doug Mauss, ed., *The Action Bible: God's Redemptive Story* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2010); Marty Machowski, *The Gospel Story Bible: Discovering Jesus in the Old and New Testaments* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2011); *The Story for Kids: Discover the Bible from Beginning to End* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Champ Thornton, *God's Love: A Bible Story-book* (Whitakers, NC: PositiveAction, 2012).

⁸For more information see <http://www.crossway.org/blog/2011/07/the-big-picture-story-bible-ebook-with-read-aloud>.

⁹These terms derive from Ruth Bottigheimer, “An Alternative Eve in Johann Hübner's Children's Bible,” *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 16 (1991): 75.

1.1.1. Omission

As with all story bibles, we must ask what has been left out at every level. Which biblical genres and books does it omit? Which narratives within books? Which details within narratives?

My first article recommends that readers quickly survey the contents page of any story bible to gauge the omission of genres, books, and narratives. In this case (and for *The Jesus Storybook Bible*), however, I must confess a failure: that recommendation works only where chapter titles sufficiently describe their contents. The chapter titles in these two are, for different reasons, rather opaque, so in both cases I include a table of contents, with the author's chapter titles and my summary of their contents (see Table 1).

Table 1: BPSB Contents

Chapter Title	Contents
Old Testament	
The Very Good Beginning	Creation
A Very Sad Day	The fall
Life Outside the Garden	Ongoing rebellion, Noah and the flood
God's Big Promise	The promise to Abraham of descendants as numerous as the stars
God's People Grow	Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
God's People Become Great	Israel's growth in Egypt and plagues 1–9
God's Great Sign	Passover, exodus, Sinai, wilderness wanderings
Going into God's Place	Fall of Jericho, Philistines, David and Goliath, David's reign
God's Blessing Grow	Davidic covenant, Solomon's temple, Queen of Sheba
Another Very Sad Day	Solomon's and people's idolatry, Mount Carmel, exile of northern and southern kingdoms, destruction of the temple
God's Promise Remains	In exile God still sends prophets: Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel. Return from exile. Rebuilding, celebration, but old men weep
New Testament	
Many Silent Years	Silence from God, rise of Caesar Augustus
God's Promised One Is Born	The census, annunciation, birth in the stable

Telling the Story from the Bible (Part 2)

God's Promised One Is Announced	Angels announce news to shepherds
God's New People Are Called	John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism, call of 12 disciples
Jesus Restores God's Place	Clearing the temple
Jesus Reveals God's Kingdom	Nicodemus
A Blind Man Sees	Healing the man born blind
A Dead Man Is Raised to Life	Lazarus and plot to kill Jesus
Jesus Wears God's Kingly Crown	Gethsemane, arrest, Pilate, abuse, death
Jesus' Followers Are in the Dark	Darkness in the land, burial
A Brand-New Day	Mary at the tomb, Peter and John, locked room appearance
God's Promise Is Explained	Jesus teaches disciples from the Scriptures
God's New Kingdom Spreads	40 days of post-resurrection teaching, ascension, Pentecost and Peter's sermon; Gospel spreading to Judea, Samaria and Rome
Letters to Live By	Letters inspired by the Holy Spirit with summary of NT epistles
The Very Good Ending	John in prison. Vision of future, the throne-room of God, the place of hell, new heavens and new earth

A number of omissions are worth highlighting here. First, as is so often the case with story bibles, *BPSB* largely excludes non-narrative genres. It briefly summarises the content of the Law as “how to love God . . . how to love others . . . how to live as God's people” (134).¹⁰ It includes no psalms, proverbs, or other wisdom literature. It makes some attempt, however, to summarise OT prophecy and NT letters:

The prophet Ezekiel wrote that one day God would raise up the temple and give his people new hearts. Isaiah reminded them that God's forever king would come from the family of David. The prophet Jeremiah was hopeful too. He said that Israel would return home again in seventy years. (214–17)

These letters told God's people: “Remember, hold on to the message. Keep believing in Jesus! Love one another like family. Forgive one another. Be careful! Don't let people trick you. Run away from sin. Endure hardship. And look for Jesus' return.” (432)¹¹

At the level of books and narratives, the more conspicuous omissions include any reference to Cain and Abel, the tower of Babel, the sacrifice of Isaac, Rahab, Saul, Samuel, any of the judges, Ruth, Esther,

¹⁰Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers in §1 refer to *BPSB*.

¹¹Among story bibles, the only recent attempt to cover the NT epistles in any more depth is Machowski's *The Gospel Story Bible*, 260–309.

the golden calf, Jonah, Daniel in the lion's den or his friends in the fiery furnace,¹² the magi, and the boy Jesus at the temple.¹³ While material from the Synoptic Gospels covers Jesus' infancy, *BPSB*'s account of his adult ministry draws almost exclusively from John 2, 3, 9, 11, and 17–20. Consequently, the question becomes, "What has *BPSB* omitted from the available material in John?" The answer includes John's prologue, the turning of water into wine, the "I am" sayings (apart from "I am the resurrection"), Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman, his feeding of the 5,000 and walking on water, his anointing by Mary, his washing his disciples feet, the entire upper room discourse (apart from one brief quotation of John 17:1), and Peter's denial and subsequent reinstatement. This relying on one Gospel is unusual and interesting; it would be a fascinating project to build a children's story bible one book at a time and to try to capture each book's distinctive voice and mood in text and image. One wonders, however, in this case, whether *BPSB*'s use of Synoptic birth-narratives and omissions from John's Gospel dilute the character of John's Gospel.

Turning to the relationship between *BPSB* text and Scripture in the retelling of those narratives it does include, there are two main issues to note. The first is a tendency to omit detail. According to *BPSB*, Adam and Eve are forbidden to eat of "a special tree," not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (33). Moses ascends "a mountaintop," not Sinai, in order receive, not the Law, but God's "good word" (132). When Moses descends, "something sad happened" (134), but that "something" remains rather abstract; instead of mentioning the golden calf, the grumbling in the desert, and the desire to return to Egypt, *BPSB* says, "God's people still forgot God's Word. Many of them doubted that God's Word was good. Many of them disobeyed God's Word. Many of them did not let God be king over them" (136). It is "a ruler from far away," not the Assyrians, who take away "many of God's people" (200). Jesus "chose twelve followers," but *BPSB* does not name them (284). "Some people who hated" Jesus brought the soldiers who arrested him (362). After discovering the empty tomb, Mary speaks to "two of Jesus' followers" (389), not Peter and John.¹⁴

In part, as we shall see, *BPSB* describes events in more general and formulaic terms in order to preserve their unity as part of one story, but the effect of their omission is worth pondering. Part of the significance of these details is to emphasise the locatedness of the events: they happened in this place, to these people. The Gospel writers' characterisation of Thomas or Peter will make an impression only if we are able to pin down who put their hand where and who cut off whose ear. This is especially significant for children. As I have observed with my own, they have a remarkable capacity to soak up names and details, but they struggle to engage with abstractions.

The second issue to note is that *BPSB* also directly quotes Scripture. Throughout the story bible there are short passages in quotation marks; on a few occasions these are Helm's way of indicating what people were thinking, and some examples are paraphrases rather than direct quotations; but the vast

¹² *BPSB* mentions Daniel as praying for the end of exile (219).

¹³ Omissions can be conspicuous either in comparison to other story bibles, for which there is a fairly well-established pool of narratives, or in comparison to Scripture. The latter is obviously more significant; we should learn to think which passages are significant in Scripture because they are prominent in their own place in the Bible (e.g., Babel), the Bible frequently alludes to them later (e.g. the golden calf), or they take on greater significance in the NT (the Son of Man prophecy or Rahab).

¹⁴ *BPSB* gives their names later when Peter preaches after Pentecost and when John pens Revelation. One might expect more individual names since *BPSB* names all of Jacob's sons (although my edition has "Reuben" for "Reuben"), king Zedekiah (203–5), and Nebuchadnezzar (207).

majority cite the ESV.¹⁵ Nothing on the page identifies these as quoting Scripture, so their relationship to Helm's own text is not as clear as it could be; the only hint is that the front matter mentions that Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV.¹⁶ Parents would be able to introduce their children to the idea that behind the story bible lies the true biblical text if *BPSB* identified quotations. So, should it prove useful, I include a list of texts *BPSB* quotes, the majority of which appear in the NT:

1. p. 17 = Gen 1:1
2. p. 38 = Gen 2:17 (alluded to on 34)
3. p. 69 = Gen 12:1–3
4. p. 78 = Gen 15:5 (paraphrased)
5. p. 114 = Exod 5:1
6. p. 144 = Josh 1:6
7. pp. 151–52 = Josh 24:15, 21
8. p. 179 = 2 Chr 7:3
9. p. 194 = 1 Kgs 18:36, 37
10. p. 223 = Ezra 3:11
11. p. 262 = Luke 2:10–12
12. p. 265 = Luke 2:14
13. p. 280 = John 1:21, 23 (paraphrased)
14. p. 282 = Luke 3:22/Mark 1:11
15. p. 284 = Matt 4:19/Mark 1:17
16. p. 296 = John 2:16
17. p. 299 = John 2:19
18. p. 302 = John 2:20
19. p. 313 = John 3:2, 5
20. p. 315 = John 3:4
21. p. 325 = John 9:2
22. p. 328 = John 9:11
23. p. 333 = John 9:16
24. p. 343 = John 11:21
25. p. 344 = John 11:23, 25–26
26. p. 346 = John 11:37
27. p. 349 = John 11:41–42
28. p. 351 = John 11:43
29. p. 361 = John 17:1
30. pp. 364–65 = John 19:12–15 (paraphrased)
31. p. 366 = John 18:33, 36
32. p. 369 = John 19:3
33. p. 389 = John 20:2
34. pp. 398, 406, 408 = John 20:25
35. p. 420 = Acts 2:15

¹⁵The ESV might seem a strange choice for a story bible intended for 2-7 year old, but the texts quoted are almost always sufficiently clear and simple.

¹⁶By contrast *The Gospel Story Bible* quotes from the ESV and gives a biblical reference each time.

36. p. 445 = Rev 21:3–5¹⁷

The text of *BPSB*, therefore, often omits details of narratives for the sake of clear, simple summaries, but intersperses that text with direct biblical quotations. The intent behind such an approach becomes clearer as we turn to what *BPSB* adds to the biblical text.

1.1.2. Addition

BPSB has *Big Picture* in the title because it attempts to give the Bible's big picture, to tell the storyline of Scripture as a unified whole. To that end Helm's text makes a number of additions. First, there are places where he points out connections between the individual stories he narrates. For example, the exile is related back to the expulsion from Eden: "Do you remember when God sent Adam and Eve away from him out of the garden? Well, God was doing it again. He was sending his people out of his place because of their sin" (209). Similarly, the way that Jesus chooses twelve disciples signals a reconstitution of Israel: "Do you remember Jacob's twelve sons? Well, Jesus was beginning to call out a new people for God" (284).¹⁸ *BPSB* also makes these links at the level of chapter headings. This is why the titles are less clear than they might be; they summarise chapters which sometimes contain several different passages and relate them to one another. Thus the book begins and ends with chapters entitled "The Very Good Beginning" and "The Very Good Ending." Chapters dealing with the fall and the exile are called "A Very Sad Day" and "Another Very Sad Day."

The most frequently used means of unifying the narrative, however, derives from Graeme Goldsworthy's work on biblical theology, outlining the story of Scripture as the story of "God's people in God's place under God's rule."¹⁹ Hence, summarising God's work in creation, Helm writes, "God's people, Adam and Eve, lived in God's place, the Garden of Eden. And they ruled God's world by obeying his good word" (35). As we have already glimpsed, the story bible then frames the history of Israel as God's people who are given God's word and enter his place, but then their rejecting his rule results in the exile. *BPSB* uses the same threefold formula to describe the sin of Adam and Eve, the grumbling of Israel in the wilderness, and the apostasy of Israel after the time of Solomon: doubting that God's word was good, disobeying God's word, and not letting God be king over them (42, 136, 189). Resolution occurs in the NT, which sees the regathering of God's people and the promise that "God's forever people will one day live in God's forever place under God's forever rule" (450).

The use of this scheme explains and, to some extent, justifies the omission of some of the details mentioned in §1.1.1 above. It also, I think, explains one curious addition, namely, a much-expanded role for Caesar in the birth narratives. *BPSB* introduces the birth of Jesus at length as a contest between God and Caesar; it devotes a whole chapter to the emperor and his motives for commanding the census:

¹⁷Page 453 quotes Rev 22:20, although it appears without quotation marks. In other places *BPSB* alludes to or echoes Scripture, but the purpose of this list is simply to identify the quotations of Scripture that *BPSB* signals by speech marks but leaves unidentified.

¹⁸*BPSB* also relates the growth of the church in Acts back to Israel's growth in Egypt: "God's people were growing in number again" (423). This seems to allude to the summary of Jacob's move to Egypt: "by now God's promise of a great people was really growing" (105).

¹⁹The brief "Acknowledgments" section in *BPSB* says, "We are indebted to Graeme Goldsworthy, who first helped us grasp the Bible along the lines of 'God's people in God's place under God's rule'" (13). For this scheme see Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy: Gospel and Kingdom, Gospel and Wisdom, The Gospel in Revelation* (2000; repr., Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 51–57.

This Roman ruler thought he was very important. One day he wondered to himself, *How will everyone know that I am the great Caesar, the Roman ruler, the king of the world? I know! I will count all the people under my rule. Surely that will show the world how great I am.*

So Caesar, the Roman ruler, the king of the whole Roman world, began counting all his people to show everyone how great he was. What Caesar did not know was that . . .

God, the world's true ruler, the king of the universe, was getting ready to show everyone how great *he* was . . .

And do you know how God was going to do this? Not like Caesar . . . not proudly, by counting all his people, but humbly, by becoming one of his people. (235–40, emphasis original)

Although that seems a small amount of text, it amounts to six pages and emphasizes Caesar by giving him a speaking part. Moreover, the next chapter takes up the theme again:

Look at all the people on the road to Bethlehem. They were on their way to be counted, and they were very unhappy. They were mad at the king, and they frowned as they walked. They were angry with the king, and they grumbled as they walked. (244–45)

This parallelism emphasizes the point, saying the same thing twice, which is very unusual in *BPSB*; elsewhere it uses words very sparingly. And then, after the birth of Jesus,

While Caesar, the king of the Roman world, was showing everyone how great he was by counting all of his people, God, the king of the universe, was showing the world how great *he* was by sending his Son into the world as one of his people. (255, emphasis original)

Presumably *BPSB* develops Caesar's role to serve as a foil to God's rule. Goldsworthy's framework explains this, but it is a curious addition given the restraint of the rest of text, even if there is some scriptural warrant for this foray into anti-imperial subtexts.²⁰

Despite this addition and because of the flattening out of individual narratives to unite them under the rubric of "God's people in God's place under God's rule," *BPSB* remains a strong introduction to biblical theology. Indeed we should view the book more as a biblical theology than a Bible, or at least at that end of the spectrum among books that call themselves story bibles. The Goldsworthy framework helpfully establishes the good authority of God over his world, the authority of his word in the life of

²⁰Seyoon Kim argues sensibly for *some* counter-imperial rhetoric in Luke's birth narratives in *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 77–81. Whether there is any anti-imperial thrust to the Gospels or Paul more widely has been hotly contested. For views in favour, see especially Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); N. T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005). For a critique of the view in relation to Paul, see Denny Burk, "Is Paul's Gospel Counterimperial? Evaluating the Prospects of the 'Fresh Perspective' for Evangelical Theology," *JETS* 51 (2008): 309–37; John M. G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire Was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews: Studies in the Social Formation of Christian Identity* (WUNT 275; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363–88.

his people, their role as the means of bringing blessing to the whole world, the corporate nature of the church, and the global implications of the gospel. These are themes that most other story bibles neglect.

1.1.3. Reformulation

Reformulations of Scripture in *BPSB* are minor. In a couple of places, Helm's text deviates from John's Gospel. In John 2:19–20, Jesus predicts that he will rise from the dead on the third day, but later in the Gospel, John surprisingly introduces the resurrection scene as taking place not on the third day but "the first day of the week" (20:1). But *BPSB* changes it back to "the third day" (385).²¹

BPSB also refers to Jesus' high priestly prayer ("Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son . . ." [361]) and contrasts it with the disciples sleeping, even though John makes no mention of the disciples sleeping in Gethsemane. This might seem pedantic when that material appears in the Synoptics, but it does raise the question once more of why *BPSB* chooses to follow John's Gospel as closely as it does but reformulate it at several points.

1.1.4. Transposition

Transposition involves the rearrangement of biblical material. In *BPSB* the only significant example of transposition reflects *BPSB*'s attempt to offer a Bible overview, for it deals with the return from exile in chronological rather than canonical order. In *BPSB* the OT ends with old men weeping in remembrance of the glory of the first temple (224), which comes in Ezra 3:12. Giving preference to chronology clearly makes it much easier to piece together the "big picture" in a single timeline rather than moving forwards and backwards in time. Nevertheless it is striking that no story bible I have seen attempts to cover each and every book of the Bible, let alone in their canonical order. In this sense story bibles are more story than they are Bible.

1.2. The Relationship between *BPSB* Images and Scripture

BPSB has *Big Picture* in the title not only because it attempts to give the Bible's big picture but because it contains, well, big pictures. The bible itself is larger than average (square in shape), and most images fill either a whole page or a two-page spread. Schoonmaker is clearly an excellent illustrator. The images are colourful and dynamic. Characters are clearly distinguishable from one another, which greatly helps the child identify them on the page. An informed viewer could have guessed that Mary found Peter and John long before the text finally names them because the illustrations have frequently and distinctively depicted them with Jesus. Dramatic developments are well-captured by several means. *BPSB* depicts the plagues on Egypt in several panels on each page and, alongside them, nicely captures Pharaoh's increasing obstinacy (Figure 1).

²¹ Perhaps John's intent is to signal the beginning of a new creation by alluding to Genesis, for like Gen 1, John 20 begins on the first day, in darkness, and the action unfolds in a garden (John 19:41).

Telling the Story from the Bible (Part 2)



So God made the river turn to blood.



The entire land swarmed with frogs.



and dust turned into gnats.

But Pharaoh still refused to let God's people go.



So God made the houses full of flies.



The animals of Egypt got sick and died,



and the people got painful sores.

But Pharaoh still refused to let God's people go.



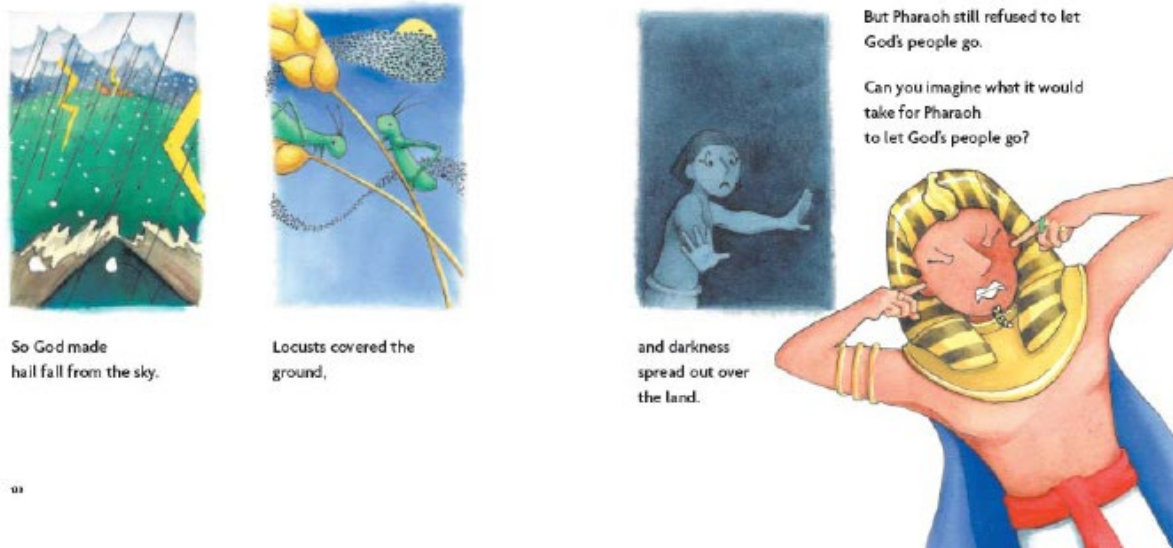


Figure 1: Pages 116–17, 118–19, 120–21

Elsewhere *BPSB* captures development within a single image. An image of Jesus appearing to the disciples after his resurrection captures the movement from fear to shock to joy as the eye moves from left to right (Figure 2).²²

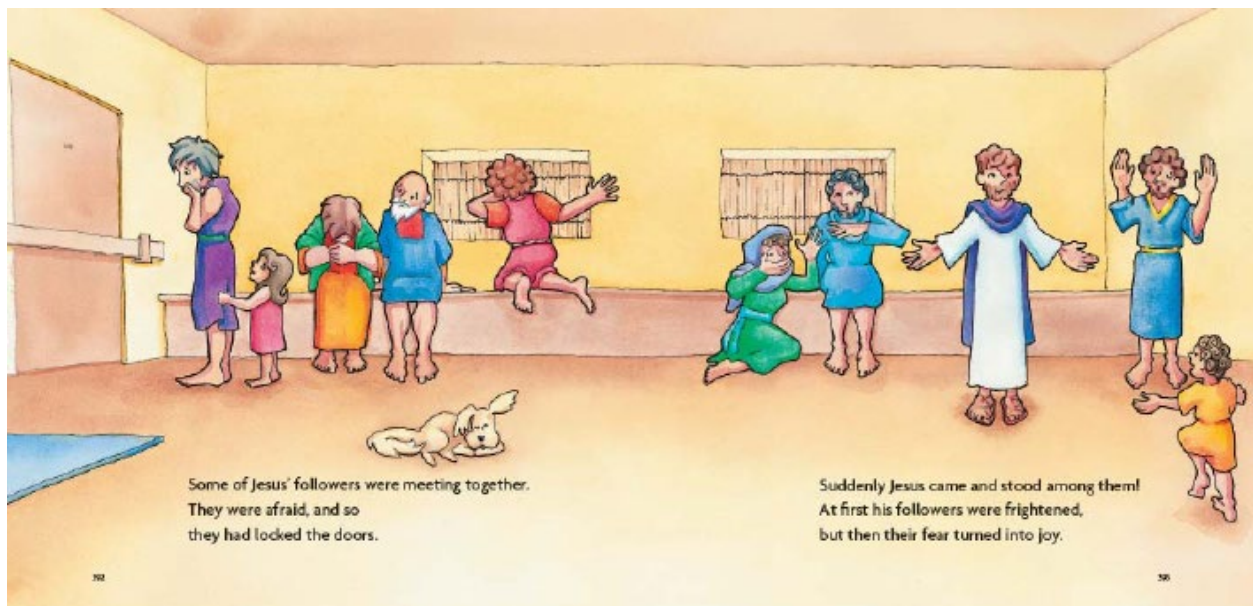


Figure 2: Pages 392–93

²²This is good example of the use of narrative structures, connecting characters within an image. On this see Vasiliki Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories: Proposing an Analytical Tool for the Study of the Visual in

There is also the occasional anachronism. Some are humorous: John the Baptist eats a honey-and-locust sandwich (277). Others are more poignant: alongside the childless Abraham and Sarah is an empty cot, a bundle of towels, and a little toy in the form of a ram, anticipating the sacrifice of Isaac in Gen 22 (77).

The charm and quality of the artwork in *BPSB* is obvious, but what might remain underappreciated is the strength of the relationship between Scripture and the artwork of *BPSB*. That relationship blossoms in two main areas: first, the artwork is filled with biblical detail, something which is sometimes absent from the text (cf. §1.1.1 above); second, the artwork makes intertextual connections visually.

1.2.1. Biblical Details Depicted but Not Described

The illustrations of John the Baptist and Isaac just mentioned are cases-in-point. The text omits the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac, but the image of the toy next to his cot alludes to it. Similarly the text introduces us to John the Baptist as someone who “did not eat like most of God’s people” (276) but does not specify his unusual diet; that is left to the illustration.

Additional examples abound. The text of the flood narrative does not say that pairs of animals came to the ark, but the illustrations depicts them in pairs;²³ the text does not mention the raven or the dove, but two shadows of birds fall on the ground beside Noah in the image as he offers sacrifices, which the text also does not mention. Nor does the text refer to the sign of the rainbow, but the illustrations depict it twice (64, 66). The text does not mention Esau, but Isaac appears beside two smiling baby boys (85). The text does not mention that Moses escapes the slaughter of Hebrew boys, but the image shows his mother placing him on the river in his basket (112–13). When Moses receives what the text calls “God’s good word,” he is holding two stone tablets complete with Hebrew script of the commandments in the image (133, 134–35). The text describes the grumbling of Israel in the wilderness, but the image combines that grumbling with the provision of manna, which the text also does not mention (136–37). The text does not mention Rahab, but a red cord hangs from a window in the illustration of Jericho (145). And the image (but not the text) reflects the prominence of the ark of the covenant in the conquest of the land (146, 149). The annunciation to Mary by the angel appears on 238, but it is eleven pages later that the text briefly recounts, “God had told Mary and Joseph that their baby was the one promised long ago” (249). The text does not mention but pictures show the star over Jesus’ birthplace (257), the guard at his tomb (377), and his post-resurrection wounds (393, 409, 414–15).²⁴ The same is true of healing miracles post-Pentecost and Paul’s imprisonment (424–25).

Probably this was an intentional partnership, with Helm’s text giving a stylised overview and the artwork supplying more of the detail. In any case, the result of placing more detail in the artwork is to make that detail less explicit. It takes a biblically literate adult to point out and explain those details which the text omits. In *BPSB*’s favour, however, the artwork itself remains remarkable for its biblical literacy.

Children’s Literature,” *The Journal of Children’s Literature Studies* 6 (2009): 56; and also the discussion in Shaw, “Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work,” 225.

²³I have yet to read a children’s bible which depicts or describes seven of every kind of clean animal and bird entering the ark (Gen 7:2). Apparently the iconography of two-by-two is too firmly ingrained.

²⁴Somewhat curiously, Jesus’ wounds appear on pages 393, 409, and 414–15 but not on 399 and 401.

1.2.2. Intertextual Connections Made Visually

In my previous article I note how the artwork for Gen 3 establishes several visual motifs which recur throughout *BPSB*: the artwork recreates a pose of worship that highlights the fall of humanity away from worship into idolatry and the restoration of true worship in the NT; a piece of fruit, half-eaten and discarded by Adam and Eve, appears again beside Solomon as he turns away from God; the conquest of Canaan and the exile from Judah show that God gave Israel a new Eden and that Israel lost it, recapitulating the fall; and finally, Schoonmaker connects Adam and Christ through their physical appearance and through the (somewhat incongruous) motif of a fox which appears in Eden and at the resurrection.²⁵ All of these recreate visually the intertextual features of the biblical text, and subsequent illustrations develop several more visual allusions beyond the creation narrative. Here are three examples:

First, the text connects Jesus' twelve disciples and Jacob's twelve sons (284) as well as the growth of Israel and the reconstituted people of God after Pentecost (423). The image of Jesus' reunion with his disciples further strengthens this connection by echoing Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers (100, 394, Figure 3).



Figure 3: Pages 100, 394

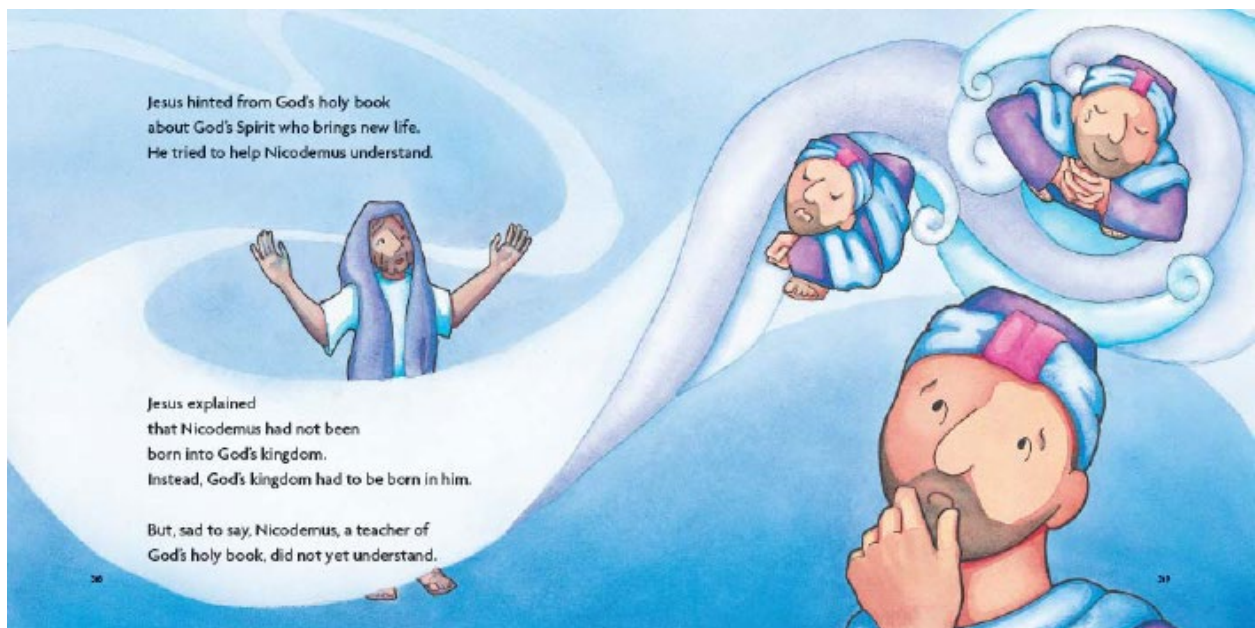
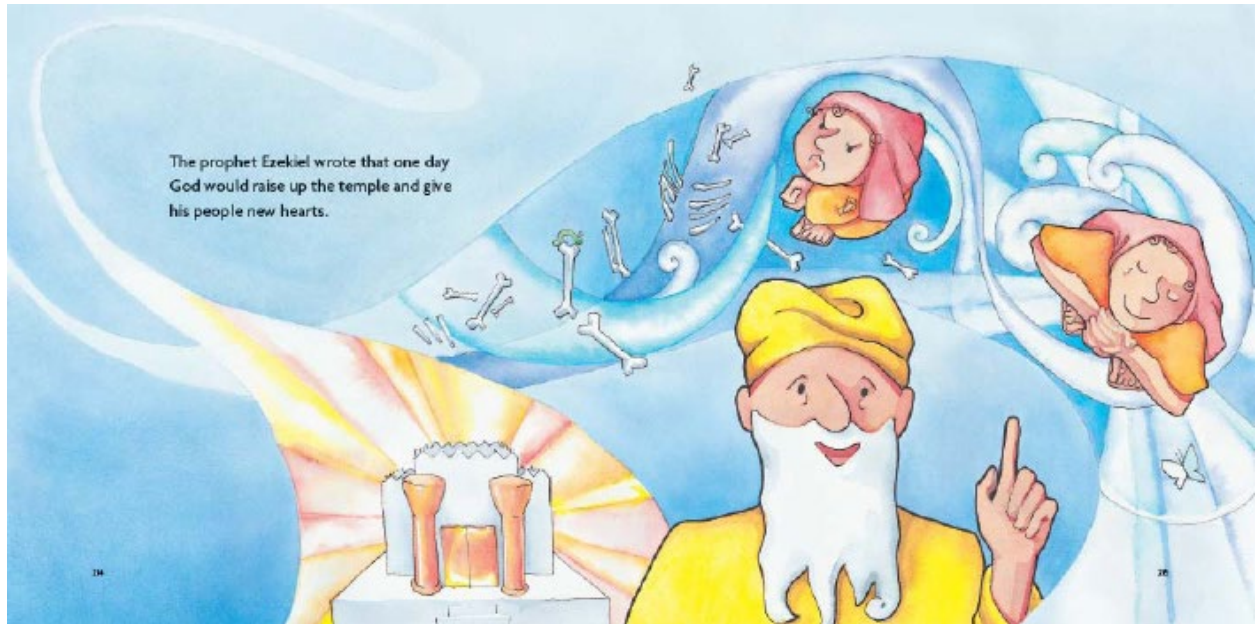
Second, the illustrations brilliantly capture the promise of inward transformation by the Holy Spirit in the new covenant (Figure 4). The image accompanying the précis of Ezekiel's message establishes a pattern of personal transformation, representing the Spirit's work by swirls of wind or cloud (214–15). Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus replicates this, just as Jesus alludes to Ezekiel in his insistence that one must be born again of the Spirit (318–19; see John 3:5).²⁶ The same image of the Spirit's activity appears

²⁵ Shaw, "Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work," 230–35.

²⁶ The text makes a more general allusion: "Jesus hinted from God's holy book about God's Spirit who brings new life" (318). On the textual allusion to Ezekiel and parallel new covenant promises in John 3, see D.

Telling the Story from the Bible (Part 2)

in the retelling of Acts 2 both to show the transformation of the disciples (418) and the substance of Peter's sermon (420–21). Finally, the motif of the Spirit's work represents the Spirit's inspiration of the NT (432–33).



A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 194–95.

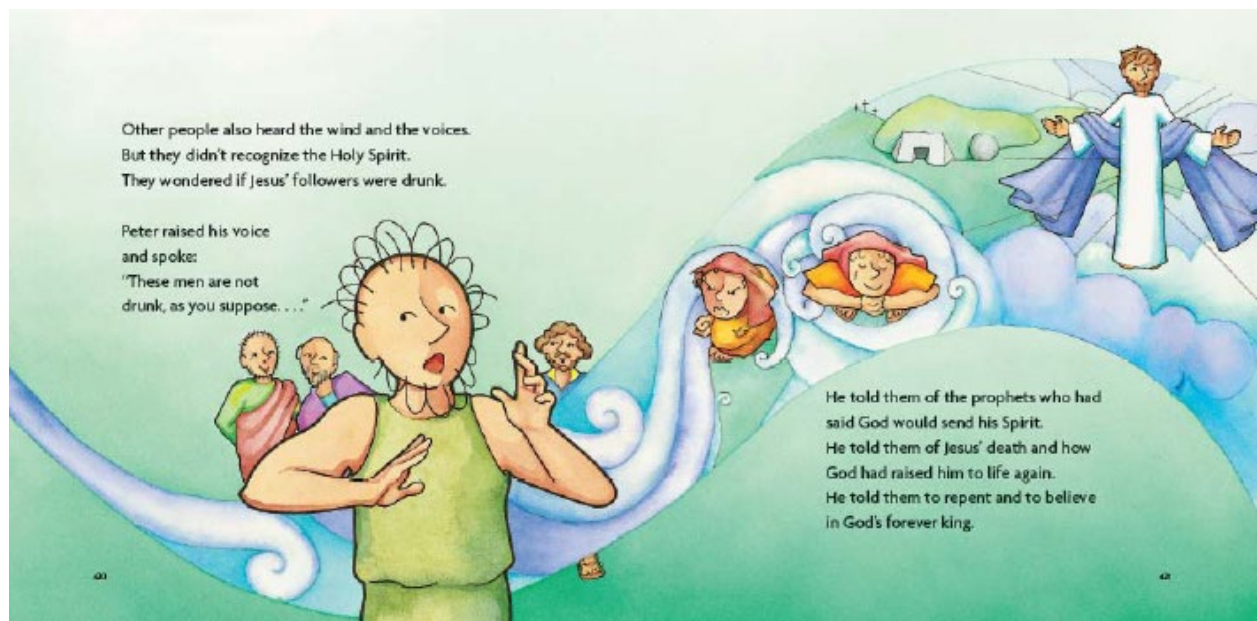


Then they heard something.
There was a loud sound like
the wind blowing.
It came from heaven and
filled the room.

28



Then they saw something.
Little flames of fire
floated overhead
and came to rest on each
of them.



Other people also heard the wind and the voices.
But they didn't recognize the Holy Spirit.
They wondered if Jesus' followers were drunk.

Peter raised his voice
and spoke:
"These men are not
drunk, as you suppose. . ."

He told them of the prophets who had
said God would send his Spirit.
He told them of Jesus' death and how
God had raised him to life again.
He told them to repent and to believe
in God's forever king.

29

30

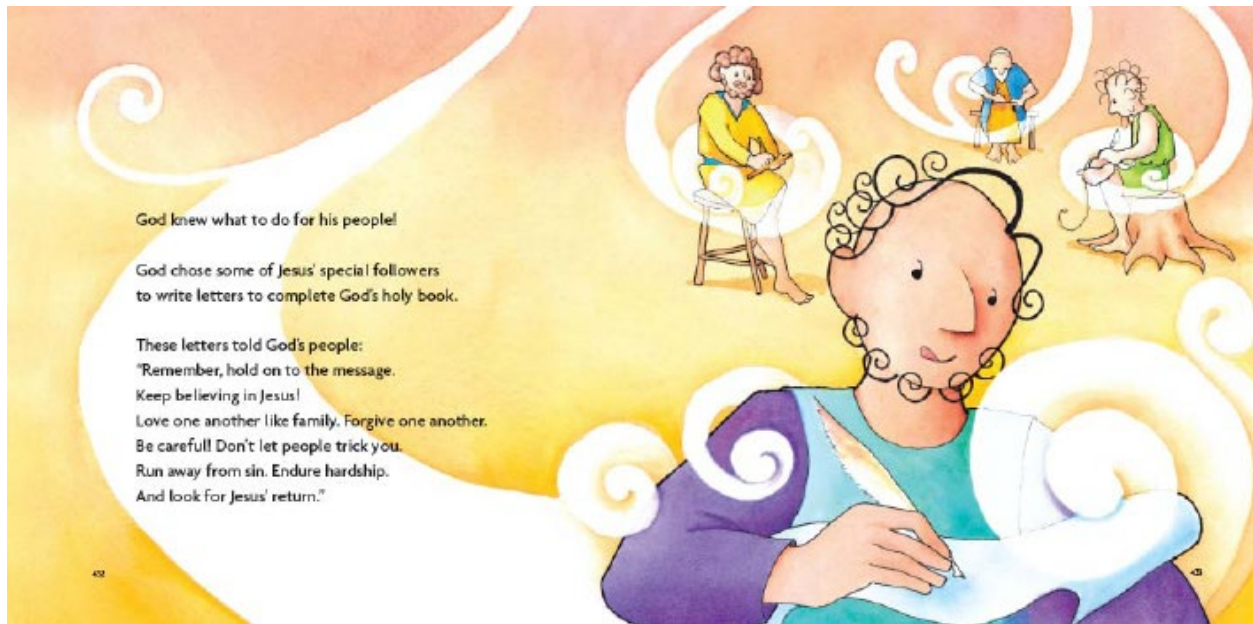
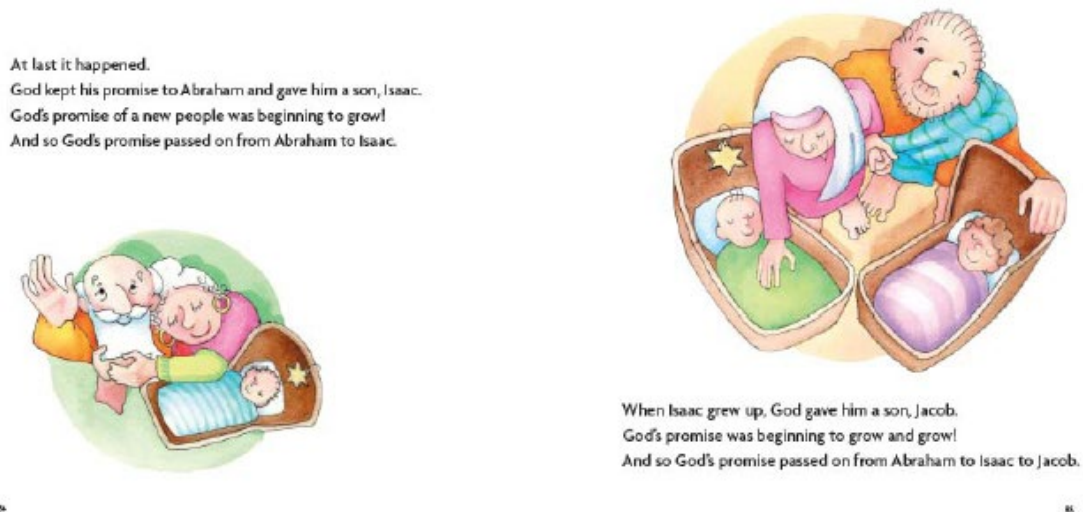
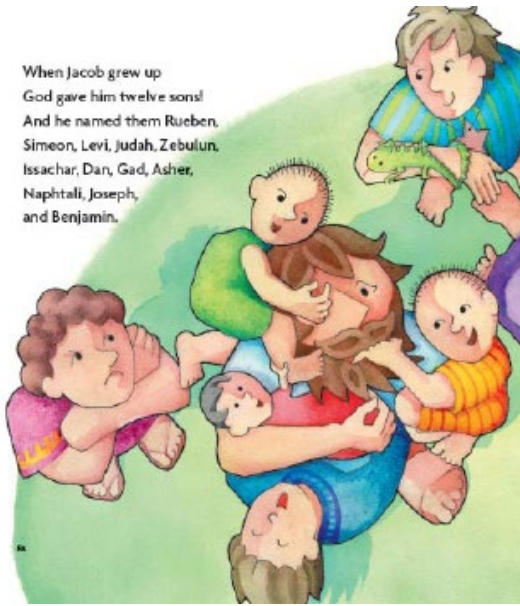


Figure 4: Pages 214–15, 318–19, 418, 420–21, 432–33

Third, a recurring visual motif of a star highlights the line of promise from Isaac onwards and the sense in which David, Solomon, and others are typologically as well as physically related to Christ (Figure 5). This first appears in the Isaac narrative (83, 84 and alluded to again on 317), then on Jacob's crib (85), around Joseph's neck (86), on David's throne or around his neck (165, 167, 168, 173), on Jesus in the image representing the promise of the Davidic covenant (170, shown again on 405 and 411), and finally on Solomon (175, 177, 181, 185, 187, 189).



When Jacob grew up
God gave him twelve sons!
And he named them Reuben,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun,
Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher,
Naphtali, Joseph,
and Benjamin.



A queen came to see Solomon,
his palace, and the temple he had built.

She asked him lots of questions,
and God gave Solomon wisdom for them all.
The queen was amazed and greatly helped by all he said
and was blessed by God for having come.



Figure 5: Pages 84–85, 86, 165, 170, 180–81

Each of these visual links has a firm basis in the biblical text and demonstrates the strength of relationship between Schoonmaker's artwork and Scripture. Less clearly derived from intertextual references in Scripture but effective nonetheless are moments when Schoonmaker gives us a God's-eye view (Figure 6), looking down on his people as they grumble against God (58–59), call out to him (110, 156–57, 430), or praise him (32, 84, 168–69, 22–23, 416).

Outside the garden
everyone doubted how good God was.

Outside the garden
everyone disobeyed God's word.

Outside the garden
everyone ruled the world in evil ways.



This made God very sad.
All the peoples of the earth
had rejected him as king.

So ...

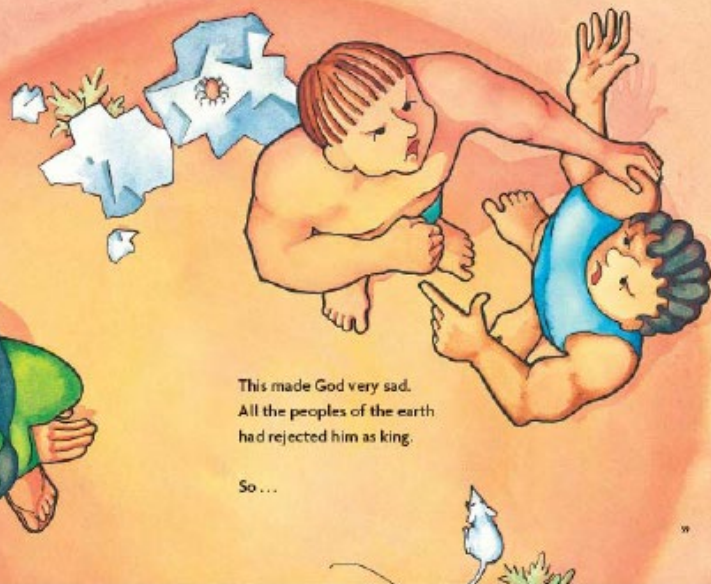




Figure 6: Pages 58–59, 156–57

Anecdotally, a number of parents have mentioned that children find the viewing angle of such artwork in *BPSB* disorientating. We will say more below about the significance of the point of view for how it communicates with the viewer; for now, suffice it to say there is probably a balance to strike. *BPSB* illustrates some scenes from above without any obvious gain (e.g. 112–13, 438), but the images in Figure 6 helpfully retain a vertical dimension to story bibles, reminding readers that the Bible is the story of God and his redemption of all creation so that we might worship him.

One final feature of the relationship between the artwork of *BPSB* and Scripture is that it adds a thematic animal to many of the narratives. My first article draws attention to this: “throughout *The Big Picture Story Bible* animals are used to demarcate narratives; a cat appears throughout the Abraham narrative, Joseph is accompanied by a lizard, butterflies populate Jerusalem post-exile, and in Eden, Eve is attended (and often has her modesty preserved) by a fox.”²⁷ That is not, however, the full extent of it. Many of the narratives have an animal in attendance, as Table 2 highlights.

²⁷ Shaw, “Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work,” 233.

Table 2: Thematic Animals

Person or Event	Thematic Animal	Pages
Creation and Resurrection	Fox	23, 24–25, 26–27, 28–29, 32, 34–25, 46–47, 52–53, 384, 387, 389
Abraham and Sarah	Cat	70–71, 72–73, 74–75, 76, 78–79
	Ram	67, 68–9, 70–1, 72–73, 74–75, 77 (as a toy) 78–79
Joseph	Lizard	86, 88, 90, 91, 93, 95, 97
	Snail	87, 88, 90, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99
Passover and exodus	Dove	125, 126, 129, 130, 137, 138–39
Conquest of Canaan and Davidic reign	Bee (?)	144, 154, 164
Prophets and exile	Dog	191, 192–93, 195, 196–97, 198, 203, 204, 207, 209
Return from exile	Butterfly	211, 215, 218, 221, 223
Birth of Jesus	Mouse (?)	236–37, 240, 243, 251, 253
Baptism of Jesus and call of disciples	Fish	281, 282, 284
Nicodemus	The mouse reappears!	312, 314, 317, 321
Healing of the blind man	Turtle	324, 326, 328, 335
Resurrection of Lazarus	Rock Hyrax ²⁸	343, 346, 348, 353, 354

Some of these animals, mice and dogs for example, recur at intervals throughout, but their concentration in specific narratives is clearly intentional, and most occur only in these sections. But why? Some story bibles hide an animal on each page for the child to find (which in my experience merely distracts children until they find it!),²⁹ but there is no such suggestion here. In the case of the exile, the dogs are anthropomorphised characters: they are mistreated by God’s people (198); they cover their

²⁸ With thanks to Kim Phillips for his superior knowledge of small herbivorous mammals!

²⁹ E.g., Kenneth N. Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* (Carlisle: Candle, 2004).

eyes at the sight of other violence (203) and are taken into exile (207, 209).³⁰ In one instance the animals contribute to the intertextual connections we have been discussing: the fox creates a link between creation and new creation. In others there is, perhaps, some correspondence between the narrative and its animal counterpart: a bee for the conquest of the land flowing with milk and *honey*? A dove at the exodus signifying sacrifice or the Spirit's presence (Neh 9:20)? Butterflies as the people emerge from the cocoon of exile or anticipating transformation in the new covenant? A snail representing Joseph's nomadic existence with his possessions on his back?³¹ As I argue in my earlier article, there is an opportunity here. Story bible artwork can replicate the intertextual connections of Scripture visually, and it can likewise capture something of Scripture's characterisation and other motifs. The Gospel of John's use of light and dark imagery lends itself well to this, and the text and artwork of *BPSB* are alert to that, at least in the Nicodemus scene. Why Abraham is never without a cat is less clear.

To sum up, Schoonmaker's illustrations have a strong relationship with Scripture. First, they are full of biblical detail, supplementing a more stylised and generalised text. Second, they make visual connections very effectively, linking OT promises and typological patterns with their fulfilment. In that respect they are without equal in story bibles.

1.3. The Relationship between Text and Image within *BPSB*

The first two relationships consider the connection of the story bible to the Bible. Now we turn to the relationship within the story bible of text and image. Their relationship can be characterised as one of enhancement, counterpoint, or contradiction.³² These are really points on a spectrum from a position where the two are in complete harmony, to where they offer complementary but different information, to where they fall into mutual contradiction. We have already noted a degree of counterpoint on the question of how much biblical detail text and artwork supply. There is, as far as I can see, no instance of outright contradiction. But there is a clear sense in which text and artwork mutually rely upon one another in a couple of ways we have not yet addressed.

First, the text relies on the artwork. *BPSB* text asks the reader approximately fifty questions, and the second most common question (after "Do you know . . .?" or "Can you guess . . .?") is "Can you see . . .?"³³ Far more than any other story bible, the text of *BPSB* sends its hearers to the image.

Second, the artwork draws upon and reinforces the text in powerful ways. Two examples will suffice. First, at creation, as Helm's text emphasises creation by word, Schoonmaker has lands and creatures coming out of the words "land" and "creatures" (18–19, Figure 7).

³⁰ But the dogs do not return; butterflies replace them.

³¹ I am indebted to the imaginations of Charles Anderson and Matthew Sleeman for these last two.

³² Shaw, "Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work," 235–37. The taxonomy is derived from Maria Nicolajeva and Carole Scott, *How Picturebooks Work* (New York: Garland, 2001).

³³ "Do you know . . .?" or "Can you guess . . .?" is asked 15 times (18, 35, 46, 131, 147, 134, 160, 194, 224, 240, 246, 251, 273, 329, 351). "Can you see?" is asked 11 times (24, 112, 130, 164, 221, 244, 246, 260, 309, 428, 439).

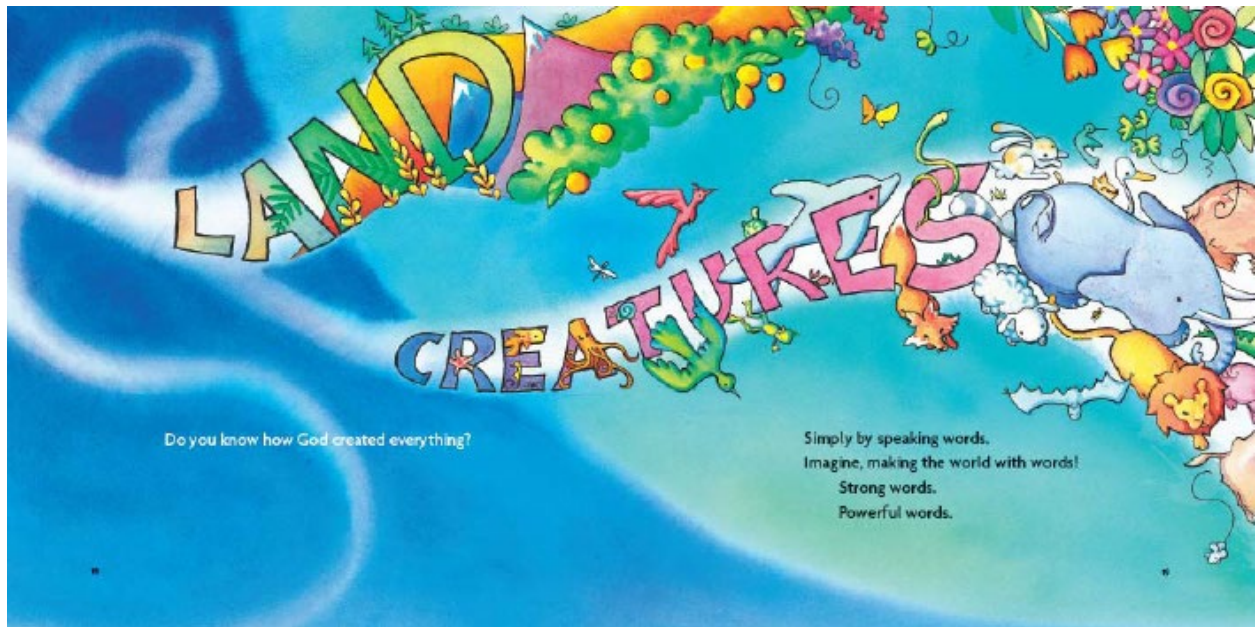


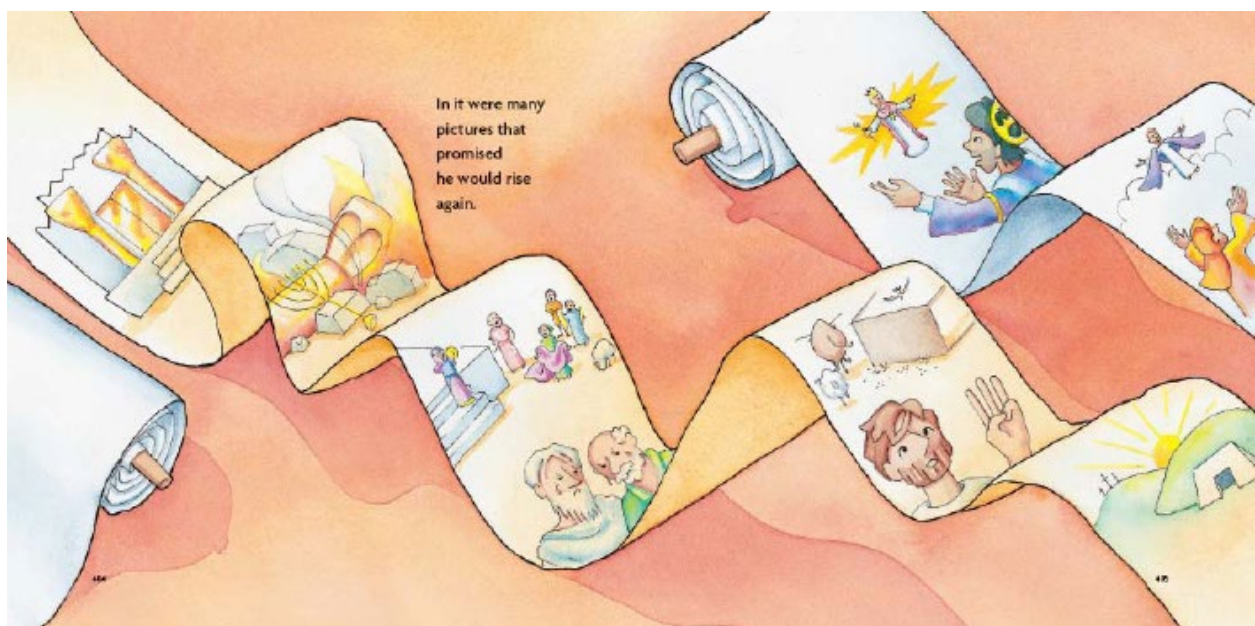
Figure 7: Pages 18–19

The second example concerns the growth of the church after Pentecost where again Schoonmaker's illustrations enhance the emphasis of the text. The artwork give windows onto the growth of the church made up of circular images which both become more crowded scenes and the pictures themselves grow in size across the double-page spread (424–25, Figure 8).



Figure 8: Pages 424–25

Most notably however, the illustrations further the aims of *BPSB* in part 23, the chapter devoted to Jesus' opening up the Scriptures to his disciples. Schoonmaker's images draw together earlier artwork to confirm the text's claim that there have been "many word pictures that proved he must die to pay the penalty for sin" (402–3) and that in the OT "were many pictures that promised he would rise again" (404–5, both in Figure 9). Finally behind the text which reads, "Do you see the Lord? Painted on the pages of Israel's hard and happy history is the big picture of God's forever king," the image highlights Jesus' links with Adam and God's presence in the tabernacle, the promise of the Davidic king and the events of Jesus' life (410–11).



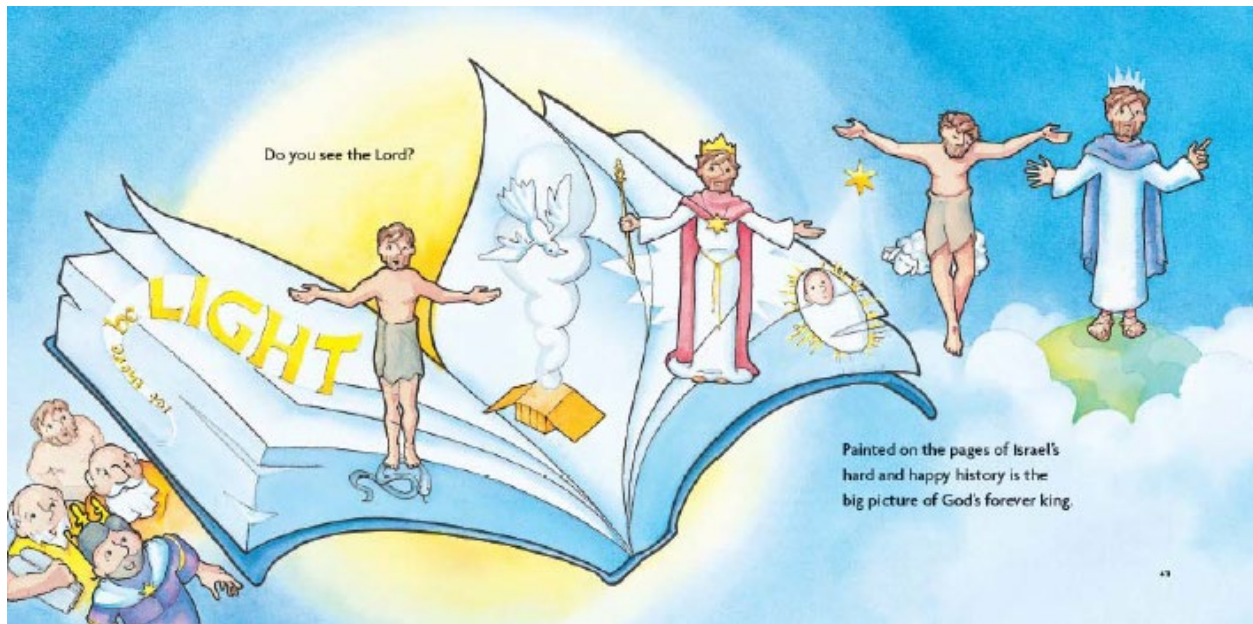


Figure 9: Pages 402–3, 404–5, 410–11

The whole effect, therefore, is a marriage of word and image uncommon in story bibles. Sometimes one wonders if the author and artist ever even spoke, but *BPSB* unites word and image in pursuit of its goals. But what exactly are its goals? For a fuller consideration of that, we come to the last of the four relationships.

1.4. The Relationship between *BPSB* and the Child

Story bibles are rarely simply abridged and illustrated versions of Scripture. Increasingly they add commentary, discussion questions, prayers, and so on, which require careful reading. How does the story bible view the child and his or her needs? How is the child being encouraged to respond to God or to conduct themselves? Even the purely abridged versions reveal something by what they deem worth including or omitting. Already in the case of *BPSB* there is the sense that its main aim is to offer a Bible overview, helping children see how the parts fit the whole and how the whole points to Christ. To explore this further we will consider first the engagement of the child from within the text and then consider how the artwork engages and situates the child.

1.4.1. Textual Interaction

Unlike some other story bibles, *BPSB* has no discussion questions at the end of chapters or in separate text boxes.³⁴ There is only the continuing narrative of the “big picture.” But within that narrative there are comments and questions which engage the child more directly. First, confirming the desire to offer a Bible overview, there are instances where individual narratives are connected to the whole. Three times, the text asks, “Do you remember?” reinforcing why Adam and Eve had to leave the garden (52),

³⁴Most recently Meade’s *Mighty Acts of God* gives questions of interpretation and application in a textbox with each story entitled “As for me and my house . . .”. Machowski’s *The Gospel Story Bible* has a section on each page called “Let’s talk about it”; Thornton’s *God’s Love* offers a “target truth” for each story.

linking that expulsion with the exile (208) and linking Jacob's sons with Jesus' disciples (284). Elsewhere the account of Solomon's wisdom finishes with the question "Does this make you wonder if Solomon might be God's forever king?" (184). Later the text voices the disciples' questions for the reader's benefit after Jesus' death: "Will God ever rescue his *people* from sin? Will we ever have our *place* with him? Will God ever bring again his blessings on *all peoples of the earth*?" (380, emphasis original). Leaving aside "Did you know?" and "Can you see?,"³⁵ the remainder of the questions directed at the reader are more significant:

Adam and Eve were very special to God. Did you know that you are also very special to God? (26)

Now Adam and Eve had a choice to make . . . What do you think you would have done? (41)

Can you imagine what God thought about all of this? God was very angry. (44)

Do you know why God had to punish them? God punished them because they disobeyed God's word, which was meant to rule over his place and his people. (45–46)

Do you know what the flood teaches us? God will judge every single person who rejects him as king. And do you know what God's judgment teaches us? Every single person needs God's blessing. (65)

[After God sends fire to consume Elijah's sacrifice] But do you think this made them return to God? No, it didn't. They continued to disobey God's word. (198)

[After Jesus has shown how Scripture points to himself] Do you see the Lord? (410)

[Raising the question of how the growing church would be taught beyond the apostolic age] God's people were growing in number. But how would they grow strong in their faith? . . . Would God's people know what to do? God knew what to do for his people! God chose some of Jesus' special followers to write letters to complete God's holy book. (429, 431–32)

God's forever people will one day live in God's forever place under God's forever rule. Can you believe it? (450–52)

A number of observations flow from this. First, and in passing, there is a glimpse here of how frequently *BPSB* invokes the Goldsworthy framework. Second, in most cases the text answers the question, indicating that the question-and-answer format is a means of emphasis. Third, in the fall and flood sections, divine judgment is clear and applies universally. Fourth, the solution is "blessing" from God, "belief," and as the NT section of *BPSB* makes clear, that belief involves repentance (421, 423) and following Jesus as king (282–83, 426, 428). Fifth, the questions unanswered by the text ask the child if they would have done as Adam and Eve did, whether they can see how the Bible points to Christ, and if they can believe that God will bring full and final salvation to the world. All in all, not a bad set of questions to put to a child! Taken together, this reveals that as well as wanting to communicate the "big

³⁵ See n33.

picture” there is also a desire to show children their need of forgiveness, the certainty of God’s judgment, the authority as well as the love of Jesus, and the centrality of the word in the life of his church.

1.4.2. Visual Interaction

Images engage their views in several ways: by manipulating the point of view, by making eye contact between characters and the viewer, and by framing, which brings the viewer near, either by use of close-ups or by softening the edges of the image. The last of these is the most subtle, but it is worth noting that *BPSB*’s images almost always fill the page or have soft edges which bring the viewer nearer to the action, compared to artwork with strong borders. The use of close-ups has more impact. My first article highlights how *BPSB* uses close-ups and point-of-view in the fall narrative, where Schoonmaker puts the viewer literally in Adam and Eve’s position, looking up at the fruit; and when they eat it, the close-up makes the viewer so proximate as to feel complicit (Figure 10).³⁶ In effect the image subtly answers the text’s question about whether we would have done as they did.



³⁶ Shaw, “Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work,” 243.

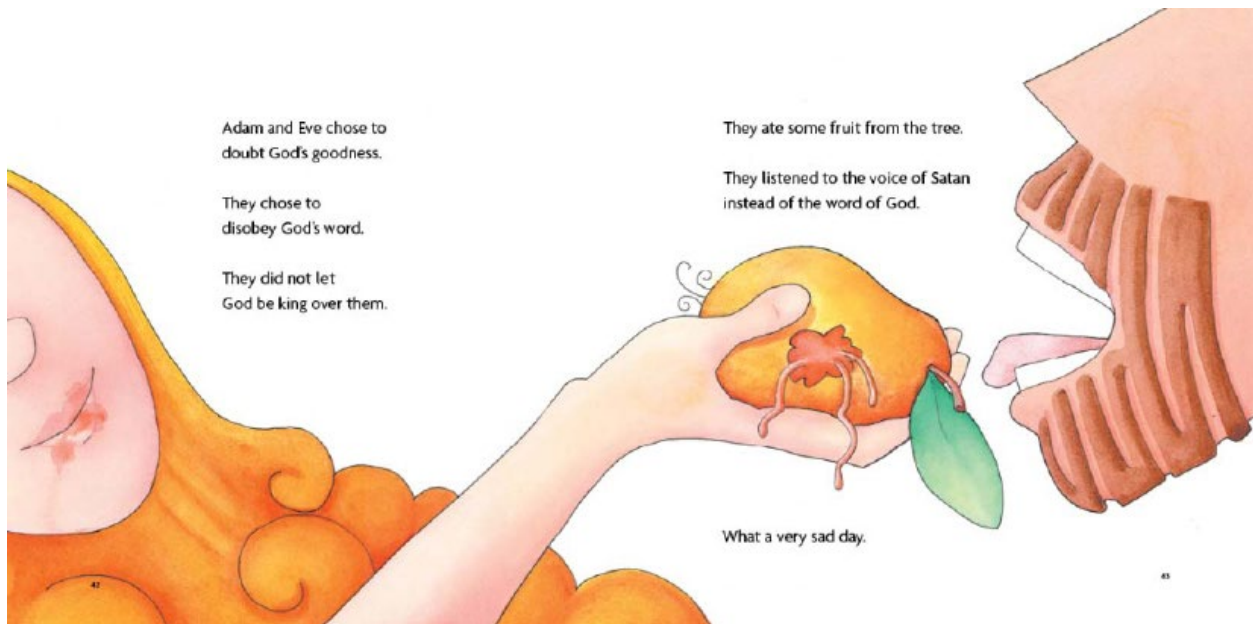


Figure 10: Pages 40–41, 42–43

Frequently, as §1.2.2 notes, the illustrations give the viewer the point of view of God himself as his people cry out to him or praise him. This is especially effective when the text invites us to see God's perspective on the fall for example (Figure 11), and throughout the work, it preserves the sense that the Bible is the story of how God relates to his people, rather than an anthology of heroes and cautionary tales.

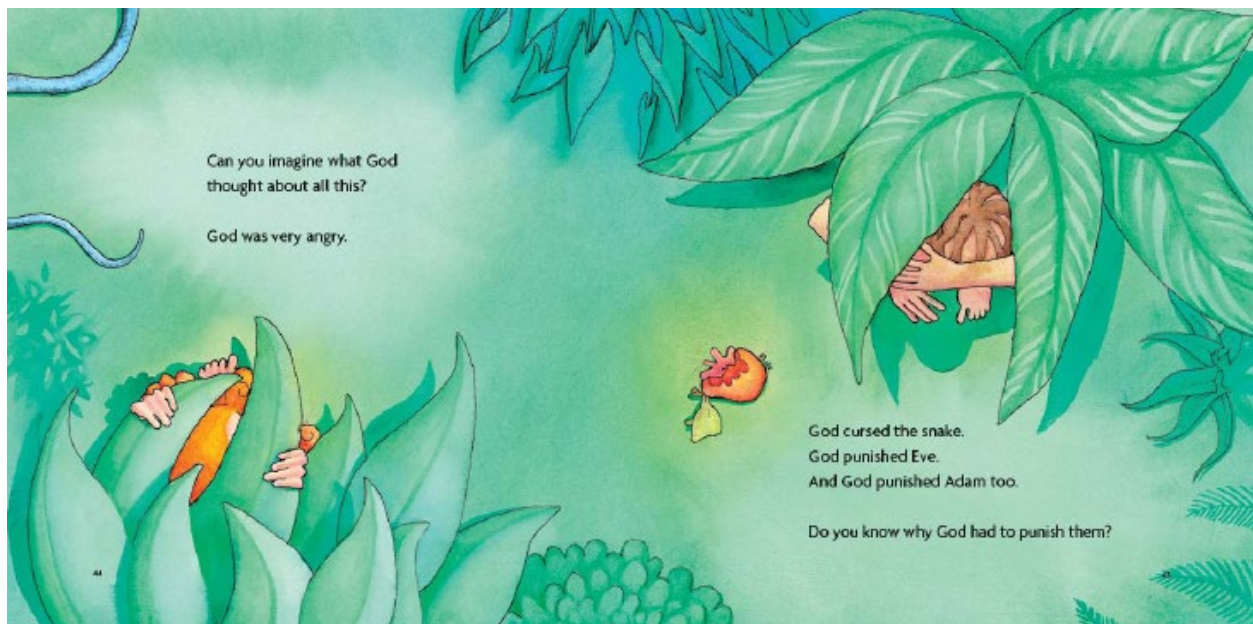


Figure 11: Pages 44–45

In other places we stand with Adam and Eve praising the Creator (30), with Abraham gazing at countless stars (80–81). We are in the cave with Lazarus, seeing and hearing Jesus call him/us out (350–51), and we stand with Peter and John as Mary rushes towards us with news of the resurrection (388–89). This variety is helpful. Scripture teaches that we are in Adam, that we are Abraham’s offspring, and so on, but Scripture also, as God’s self-revelation, tells us how he sees us and how he sees the world, and so for story-bible artwork to give us that point of view at choice moments is beneficial.

1.5. Conclusions

As I have become fond of saying, choosing a story bible is like choosing a commentary. It is not possible to say which is the “best”; it all depends who it is for (learned scholar, busy pastor, newly converted church member?) and what they need it for (help with Greek exegesis or for devotional reading on holiday?). Every story bible, like every commentary, should handle God’s word with care, but after that, there are legitimate and very different directions they can take. *BPSB* aims to present the Bible as a single story in which God’s king, his Son, brings blessing to the world through his death and resurrection for our sin and who reestablishes God’s rule over his world. The clarity of that presentation, derived from Goldsworthy, comes at the expense of the detail and texture of individual narratives, but that is in the nature of Bible overviews. The prominence of Caesar in the birth narratives is an oddity in an otherwise faithful story bible, and the use of ESV quotations, though unreferenced, tunes the ear to at least some of Scripture’s language and imagery. The extent to which the artwork contributes to the goals of the book is remarkable. Schoonmaker’s big pictures visualise the big picture brilliantly, connecting the parts to the whole in imitation of Scripture’s intertextuality. In our own family we have benefitted from it alongside other story bibles which preserve more biblical detail text in order to advance our children’s biblical literacy.³⁷ We have also given it away to several families in the hope that its strengths might bless child and parents alike.

2. *The Jesus Storybook Bible*

According to its own dedicated website,

Since its release in 2007, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* has become a must-have for children and adults and has grown into a brand that includes: a large trim Read-Aloud edition, an eBook for large and small group presentations, a bilingual Spanish/English edition, a complete curriculum kit, and a Deluxe Edition which includes the complete book on audio CD, read by award-winning British actor David Suchet.³⁸

Once more this says something about the success of the book and the nature of the publishing industry, but it also invites a clarification: this review is limited to the book itself and not the other materials.³⁹

³⁷ For younger children, Champ Thornton’s *God’s Love* is worth considering. So too is the underappreciated *Read with Me Bible: An NIV Story Bible for Children* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

³⁸ “About the *JSB*,” http://www.jesusstorybookbible.com/index.php?option=com_page&key=book (cited November 19, 2012).

³⁹ The Sunday school curriculum has additional material including “notes for teachers based on material from Timothy Keller” which there is not space to cover, even though strengths and weaknesses of the book will likely apply to a curriculum based upon it. Nor will the CD and DVD material (part of the curriculum and available for separate download as MP4’s) be addressed directly, but comments about the text and artwork will apply

Intended for ages 4–8, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (hereafter *JSB*) includes 44 stories, drawn evenly from the OT and the NT, with an introductory chapter. We begin, as before, with the text and its relationship to Scripture.

2.1. The Relationship between *JSB* Text and Scripture

As with *BPSB*, it is sometimes hard to discern the content of chapters from their titles, so once more I include a table of contents. At the beginning of each chapter, Lloyd-Jones gives subtitles and scriptural references upon which the chapters are based (but the subtitles and Scripture references are not listed in the book's table of contents), so in Table 3 the chapter titles and subtitles are hers, and the content summaries are mine.

Table 3: *JSB* Contents

Chapter Title	Contents
The Story and the Song: Introduction from Psalm 19 and Hebrews 1	Hermeneutical introduction: The Bible is not a book of rules, not a book of heroes, but a (love) story with a baby at the centre.
Old Testament	
The beginning: a perfect home; The Song of Creation from Genesis 1–2	Creation
The terrible lie: Adam and Eve lose everything, from Genesis 3	The fall, Adam and Eve clothed and sent away with a promise
A new beginning: Noah's ark, from Genesis 6–9	Noah's ark
A giant staircase to heaven: The tower of Babel, from Genesis 11	The Tower of Babel
Son of laughter: God's special promise to Abraham, from Genesis 12–21	The call of Abraham and the birth of Isaac
The present: The story of Abraham and Isaac, from Genesis 22	The sacrifice of Isaac
The girl no-one wanted: The story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, from Genesis 29–30	Jacob's marriage to Rachel and Leah
The forgiving prince: Joseph and his brothers, from Genesis 37–46	Joseph, sold as slave, elevated in Egypt and reconciled with brothers
God to the rescue! Moses and the Great Escape from Egypt, from Exodus 3–13	Egyptian slavery, the burning bush, plagues, Passover

to what is heard and seen in those formats. This is so because the audio is a verbatim reading of the text and the visuals are effectively slideshows which move around Jago's artwork but contain no original material.

Telling the Story from the Bible (Part 2)

God makes a way: Moses and the Red Sea, from Exodus 14–15	Egyptian pursuit and crossing the Red Sea
Ten ways to be perfect: Moses and the Ten Commandments, from Exodus 16–17, 19–40	Grumbling, providing manna and water from the rock, giving the 10 commandments
The warrior leader: Joshua and the battle of Jericho, from Joshua 3 and 6	The fall of Jericho
The teenie, weenie . . . true king: Samuel anoints David, from 1 Samuel 16	Israel's demand for king, Saul, Samuel sent to Jesse's sons, David chosen and anointed
The young hero and the horrible giant: David and Goliath, from 1 Samuel 17	David and Goliath
The Good Shepherd: David the Shepherd King, from Psalm 51, 2 Samuel 7; paraphrase of Psalm 23	Brief reference to David's murder of Uriah, confession, Davidic covenant, and then a paraphrase of Psalm 23
A little servant girl and the proud general: The little slave girl and Naaman, from 2 Kings 5	Healing Naaman
Operation "No More Tears!" The Rescuer will come: prophecies from Isaiah 9, 11, 40, 53, 55, 60	A summary of Isaiah's messianic prophecies
Daniel and the scary sleepover: Daniel and the lion's den, from Daniel 6	Daniel in the lion's den
God's messenger: Jonah and the big fish, from Jonah 1–4, Hebrews 1:1–2	Jonah's unwillingness, the storm, the fish and his eventual preaching to Nineveh
Get ready! God's people return from being slaves, from Nehemiah 8–10, Malachi 1, 3, and 4, Ezra 7	Reading the law, celebrating the Feast of Booths, paraphrase of parts of Malachi's prophecy
New Testament	
He's here: The Nativity, from Luke 1–2	Annunciation, journey to Bethlehem, birth in the stable
The Light of the whole world: The story of the shepherds, from Luke 2	Angelic announcement to the shepherds and their visit
The King of all kings: The story of the three Wise Men, from Matthew 2	Wise men's journey to Herod and then to Bethlehem with gifts
Heaven breaks through: The story of John the Baptist, from Matthew 3, Luke 1, 3, John 1	John the Baptist's birth, Zechariah's song, John's ministry and message, Jesus' baptism
Let's go: Jesus is tempted in the desert and chooses his helpers, from Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 4–6	Jesus' temptation and call of the 12 disciples

A little girl and a poor frail lady: The story of Jairus' daughter, from Luke 8	The healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman
How to pray: Jesus teaches people about prayer; paraphrase of The Lord's Prayer, from Matthew 6	Mention of Pharisees' public prayers, paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer
The Singer: The Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew 6, 9, Luke 12	Sermon on the Mount teaching concerning anxiety and God's provision of food and clothes
The Captain of the storm: The Storm on the Lake, from Mark 4 and Matthew 8	Calming the storm
Filled full! The Feeding of the 5,000, from Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9	Feeding the 5,000
Treasure hunt! The story of the hidden treasure, from Matthew 13	The parable of the hidden treasure
The friend of little children: Jesus and the children, from Matthew 18, 19, Mark 10, Luke 18	Who is the greatest? Let the children come
The man who didn't have any friends (none): The story of Zacchaeus, from Luke 19	The story of Zacchaeus
Running away: The story of the lost son, from Luke 15	The parable of the prodigal son
Washed with tears: A sinful woman anoints Jesus, from Mark 14, Luke 7, John 12	Jesus is anointed and Pharisees object
The Servant King: The Last Supper, from Mark 14, John 13–14	Feet washing, Judas leaving, institution of the Lord's Supper
A dark night in the garden: The Garden of Gethsemane, from Luke 22, Mark 14, John 18	Gethsemane and arrest and appearance before the Sanhedrin
The sun stops shining: The Crucifixion, from Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19	Jesus mocked, crucified, and buried
God's wonderful surprise: The resurrection, from Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20	Mary Magdalene at the tomb; "he is risen"; Mary's meeting with risen Jesus
Going home: The Ascension, from Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 14	Resurrection appearances to the disciples, great commission, and ascension
God sends help: Pentecost, from Acts 1–5; John 15	Pentecost, Peter's sermon, gospel spreads
A new way to see: The story of Paul, from Acts 6–9, 12–28, Colossians 2, Romans 8, Ephesians 2	Conversion and ministry of Paul
A dream of heaven: John sees into the future, from Revelation 1, 5, 21, 22	Vision of enthroned Christ, Satan's defeat and the New Jerusalem

2.1.1. Omission

While the narrative genre continues to dominate, there are attempts to incorporate at least some poetry, prophecy, and NT letters. *JSB* gives a summary of Isaiah's message a chapter of its own, and it paraphrases Psalm 23, Zechariah's song from Luke 1, the Lord's Prayer, and Paul's message.

On the question of which narratives *JSB* omits, some of the more notable OT absentees are Cain and Abel, the birth of Moses, the Golden Calf, Rahab and the spies, all of the judges, Ruth, Samuel as a boy, Solomon, the division of his kingdom, Elijah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the fiery furnace, and minor prophets (apart from Malachi). In the NT, notable omissions include the boy Jesus at the temple, the parable of the sower, the transfiguration, the triumphal entry, the cleansing of the temple, the rich young ruler, Peter's denial, and Jesus' predictions of his death.

Some of these omissions are, if we can say such a thing, almost welcome. Moralistic story bibles have often made the most of sibling rivalry (Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau) or the mention of children (Samuel or Jesus at the temple) to commend good behaviour, but *JSB* clearly rejects such approaches and chooses stories with other criteria in mind, as we shall see.⁴⁰

Before that, however, we must mention two notable omissions within narratives. The first is that at Jesus' baptism *JSB* does not mention the Holy Spirit by name, despite being identified with the dove in Matt 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, and John 1:32. Instead, *JSB* simply says, "a white dove flew down and gently rested on Jesus" (206).⁴¹ What is lost is not just a reference to the Holy Spirit but an opportunity to highlight the unity of the three persons of the Trinity at work for our salvation.⁴²

Second, the story of the prodigal son does not mention the older brother. Although this is quite typical of story bibles, it is surprising in this case, given the influence of Tim Keller on *JSB* and his dependence on Luke 15 to highlight three ways to live: irreligion (the younger brother), religion (the older brother), and the gospel.⁴³

2.1.2. Addition

The contrast between *BPSB* and *JSB* in what they add could not be more stark. Where *BPSB* strips stories down to fit into the "God's people in God's place under God's rule" rubric, *JSB* retells and expands the biblical narratives with a wealth of wit, adjectives, and conversational asides. Selected almost at random, here is the introduction to John the Baptist:

So John grew up and—well, to tell you the truth, he was a bit unusual. He lived in the desert. He wore itchy-scratchy outfits made of camel hair. . . . And here is the oddest thing of all—he only ate locusts (short for big, creepy, crunchy grasshoppers), which he dipped in honey (to disguise the taste, probably). (201)

There are a few more traditional and apocryphal additions (e.g., Noah's neighbours laughing at him, 40), but what stands out is the originality of Lloyd-Jones' text and how well it lends itself to reading

⁴⁰ We will also see that those criteria result in some regrettable omissions of their own.

⁴¹ Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers in §2 refer to *JSB*.

⁴² Some might object that Trinitarian ideas are too complex for young children, but we cannot be content to make the Trinity peripheral to how we speak of God to them. For a story bible aimed at a similar age-range which introduces God as Trinitarian from the start, see Thornton, *God's Love*, 7–9.

⁴³ See Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2009), 7–16.

aloud. The drama of scenes is well-imagined. For example, the shepherds breathlessly rush to see the baby Jesus:

Through the gates of Bethlehem, down the narrow cobble streets, through a courtyard, down some step, step, steps, past an inn, round a corner, through a hedge, until, at last, they reached . . . a tumbledown stable. (189–90; cf. 214)

There are moments of comedy too, as when Jonah requests, “One ticket to Not-Nineveh, please” (161), or in the account of the plagues: “God made frogs come hopping and leaping and jumping. In your bed frogs, in your hair frogs, in your soup frogs, all over everywhere frogs!” (86) and “God sent swarms of flies—flies buzzing in your eyes flies” (87).

There are also moments of real clarity and power. At the end of the feeding of the 5,000, Lloyd-Jones comments that although Jesus’ miracles were not “natural,”

It was the most natural thing in the world. It’s what God had been doing from the beginning, of course. Taking the nothing and making it everything. Taking the emptiness and filling it up. Taking the darkness and making it light. (249)

Perhaps most distinctively, *JSB* also concludes each OT chapter with some application to Christ and his work. The acknowledgements express “a debt of gratitude . . . to Dr Timothy Keller, whose teaching informs every story, and from whom I have liberally borrowed” (7), and that debt is most clear here. Whereas *BPSB* waits until after the resurrection to go back and show how everything points to Christ, *JSB* does this at each stage. So after retelling Gen 22, Lloyd-Jones writes,

Many years later, another Son would climb another hill, carrying wood on his back. Like Isaac, he would trust his Father and do what his Father asked. He wouldn’t struggle or run away. Who is he? God’s Son, his only Son—the Son he loved. The Lamb of God. (69)

And after the Joseph narrative:

One day, God would send another Prince, a young Prince whose heart would break. Like Joseph, he would leave his home and his Father. His brothers would hate him and want him dead. He would be sold for pieces of silver. He would be punished even though he had done nothing wrong. But God would use everything that happened to this young Prince—even the bad things—to do something good: to forgive the sins of the whole world. (82–83)

Of course, where so much is added to Scripture, the first question must be how, if at all, the two are distinguished. We can make three observations.

First, the biblical references at the start of each chapter signify where readers can find the biblical version of the story, but the relationship between the two texts varies considerably. *JSB* always dramatically retells the biblical passage in question, and sometimes the correspondence is quite clear. The chapter retelling the prodigal son directs the reader to Luke 15, and there is nothing too complicated about that. Other sections are less clear, however. Where the same or similar events in Jesus’ life occur in several Gospels, *JSB* cites all the passages, even if the text of *JSB* clearly relies on one Gospel more than the other. For example, when Jesus is anointed, *JSB* references Mark 14, Luke 7, and John 12 even though Lloyd-Jones retells the anointing which happens at the Pharisees house (Luke 7) and not at the home

of Simon (Mark 14 and John 12).⁴⁴ Perhaps most tangentially, *JSB* references Heb 1 in the Introduction and in the Jonah narrative. The connection is that in both places Lloyd-Jones draws attention to God speaking, but she does not discernibly use Heb 1; the application in the Jonah story is that God would one day send another messenger like Jonah: “he would be called ‘The Word’ because he himself would be God’s Message” (169), which surely evokes John 1:1 more than Heb 1:2.⁴⁵

Second, imaginative as much of the text is, there are places when the biblical text surfaces clearly, as when the introduction to the flood says, “Everyone everywhere had forgotten about God and were only doing bad things all the time” (38; cf. Gen 6:5), or when Jesus tells Zacchaeus, “Today God has rescued you” (270; cf. Luke 19:9). And there is the occasional direct quote: “even the wind and waves obey him” (242; Mark 4:41). The text does not differentiate between these phrases and the rest, however, so it is hard to chart the varying distance of the text from Scripture in many places without constant comparison with the biblical text.

Third, in a few places the font changes to signal a paraphrase of a biblical passage (Ps 23 on 132–34; Isaiah’s message on 146–49; Malachi 1, 3 and 4 on 174; the Benedictus on 200; the Lord’s Prayer on 226; Revelation on 344–47; and John 1:12–13 on 351). These are not direct quotations, however, but loose paraphrases which broadly follow the structure of the passage in question, yet reword them to a similar extent as the rest of the text. This, for example, is the Lord’s Prayer:

Hello Daddy!
We want to know you.
And be close to you.
Please show us how.
Make everything in the world right again.
And in our hearts, too.
Do what is best—just like you do in heaven,
And please do it down here, too.
Please give us everything we need today.
Forgive us for doing wrong, for hurting you.
Forgive us just as we forgive other people
When they hurt us.
Rescue us! We need you.
We don’t want to keep running away
And hiding from you.
Keep us safe from our enemies.
You’re strong, God.
You can do whatever you want.
You are in charge.

⁴⁴Matthew 26:6–13 is not even mentioned, but belongs with Mark and John as a separate incident to the one Luke 7 describes and that *JSB* retells. Another example is that *JSB* cites Mark 1 and 16 in the sections that deal with Jesus’ temptation and resurrection even though the text of *JSB* relies on the other Gospels, given how little Mark has to say about either.

⁴⁵There is also an opportunity missed here. Why is it only the chapter on Jonah that has a NT reference when each OT story finishes with some NT application to Christ? Why not give a reference to show that there is NT support for every fulfilment in Christ that Lloyd-Jones proposes?

Now and forever and for always!
 We think you're great!
 Amen!
 Yes we do! (226)

So *JSB* makes some attempt to distinguish itself from Scripture by referencing the biblical sources and by setting some text in a different font when paraphrasing. Those paraphrases and the rest of the text, however, vary considerably in their proximity to the biblical text. But does that matter? A story bible could retell a Bible story in completely different language and still capture its essence, and clearly many people feel *JSB* has done that. I have two reservations. First, the danger of these embellishments is that it prevents the child's growth in biblical literacy but for the opposite reason than *BPSB*. While *BPSB* gives the reader too few details, *JSB* overwhelms the reader with details, some derived from Scripture and some not. Without a clearer signal as to what is biblical and what is not, the child takes it all in and will later have to sift through what they recall of any given passage. Of course, these embellishments occur in the name of great storytelling, but if you want to tell great stories, why not tell *more* of the stories Jesus told? If you want to use humour, why not tell the Bible's jokes?⁴⁶ That way children will be spared searching their Bibles in vain for details they recall from childhood story bibles.

The second reservation relates to its conception of the Bible as a love story. The introduction helpfully states the Bible "isn't a book of rules, or a book of heroes." Rather, all the stories in the Bible "are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them" (17). As a result, the most frequently occurring refrain speaks of the "Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love" of God (36, 74, 134, 172–73, 200, 227, 270, 331, 340).⁴⁷ Of course there is much that is helpful about this approach, and the theme of God's love for his people, and of Christ's love and sacrifice for his bride, is thoroughly biblical and wonderfully true. My concern, however, is that *JSB* does not always develop it in a biblical way; it reformulates several stories to fit the theme, so §2.1.3 addresses these concerns.

2.1.3. Reformulation

By far the most frequent way that *JSB* describes the human plight is that we are children who have run away from God for fear that he does not love us or want us to be happy. In that sense we have hearts that are broken. *JSB* often describes the solution in corresponding terms: God comes in Jesus to convince us that he does love us, to mend broken hearts. Some examples are called for. At the fall, Satan does not come questioning the certainty of God's word (Did God really say?) but his love:

"Does God really love you?" the serpent whispered. "If he does, why won't he let you eat the nice, juicy, delicious fruit? Poor you, perhaps God doesn't want you to be happy." The snake's words hissed into her ears and sunk down deep into her heart, like poison. *Does God love me?* Eve wondered. Suddenly she didn't know anymore . . . Eve picked the fruit and ate some. And Adam ate some too. And a terrible lie came into the world.

⁴⁶ For example, in the tower of Babel narrative, humanity builds its tower up to the heavens, but God has to *come down* to get a look (Gen 11:5). Or there are Jesus' comical images: planks in eyes and camels in eyes of needles.

⁴⁷ The second most frequent refrain, derived from Tolkien, is that "Jesus was making the sad things come untrue" (149, 220, 316, 321, 346), an allusion to Samwise Gamgee's question to Gandalf: "Is everything sad going to come untrue?"

It would never leave. It would live on in every human heart, whispering to every one of God's children: "God doesn't love me." (30, emphasis original)

Of course in Gen 3 the snake does question God's generosity, converting God's prohibition concerning one tree into a prohibition about eating from any of them (Gen 3:1), but he also tempts them set to set themselves as rivals to him—"you will be like God" (Gen 3:5), and this is absent in *JSB*. Similarly, *JSB* reformulates God's response to their actions. First, there is grief that Gen 3 does not mention: "terrible pain came into God's heart. His children hadn't just broken the one rule; they had broken God's heart" (33). Second, he protects Adam and Eve:

Sin had come into God's perfect world. And it would never leave. God's children would always be running away from him and hiding in the dark. Their hearts would break now and never work properly again. God couldn't let his children live forever, not in such pain, not without him. There was only one way to protect them. "You will have to leave the garden now." (34)

In Gen 3, on the other hand, God combines judgment (curses on Adam, Eve, and the snake and expulsion from the garden) with provision (they are expelled so that they will not remain forever in their fallen state by eating from the tree of life, and God clothes them with skins), but *JSB* omits the curses and casts the expulsion as a purely protective measure.⁴⁸ *JSB* once again describes Adam and Eve's plight as lost children after God expels them from Eden: "though they would forget him, and run from him, deep in their hearts, God's children would miss him always, and long for him—lost children yearning for their home" (36).

The Noah account makes more of God's hostility to sin: people are doing "bad things," and they have "filled my world with hate instead of love. They are destroying themselves . . . and each other . . . and my world. I must stop them" (38). The application at the end even speaks of the day when "God's strong anger against hate and sadness and death would come down once more" (47) for Jesus to bear, but even then *JSB* directs God's anger at abstractions, "hate and sadness and death," not sinners.

JSB uses Naaman's leprosy to develop more clearly the pride as well as the brokenness of human hearts (140), but then Joshua's charge to the Israelites to serve the Lord is predicated on the fact that "only God can make your heart happy" (114), which though true, is rather different from Josh 24:20: "If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good." Likewise Jonah's message is not "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" but "Even though you've run far from God, he can't stop loving you . . . Run to him! So he can forgive you" (169).

The *JSB*'s NT stories present the same themes. *JSB* describes Jesus' temptation in similar language to Gen 3: "Are you really God's Son?" he whispered. 'Poor you. God must not love you. You don't need to die'" (209). Jesus' own ministry is

showing people that God would always love them—with a Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love. So they didn't need to hide any more,

⁴⁸*JSB* similarly describes the exile without reference to God's judgment: "Things were not looking good for God's people. They had been captured and taken far from home" (152); this contrasts with *BPSB*'s treatment of the same passages.

or be afraid, or ashamed. They could stop running away from God. And they could run to him instead. As a little child runs into her daddy's arms. (227)⁴⁹

Although this might preface an entirely unobjectionable account of Jesus' ministry, four specific examples clarify the extent to which *JSB* reformulates that ministry. First is the call of the disciples. Mark emphasises Jesus' authority ("immediately they left their nets," Mark 1:18; cf. 1:20). In Luke, Peter falls at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). But in *JSB* they come because when the disciples "looked at Jesus, their hearts filled up with a wonderful, forever sort of happiness and inside it was as if they were running free in an open field" (213).

Second, the parable of the prodigal son begins with some sense of rebellion against the father, but it becomes another moment of temptation to doubt his father's love, which is hardly present in Luke 15:

Now, one day, the boy gets to thinking, *Maybe if I didn't have my dad around telling me what is good for me all the time, I'd be happier. He's spoiling my fun*, he thinks. *Does my dad really want me to be happy? Does my dad really love me?* The son never thought of that before. But suddenly he doesn't know any more. (272, emphasis original)

Third, *JSB* first explains the parable of the hidden treasure from Matt 13 as a parable about our seeking after God's kingdom, but then Lloyd-Jones turns it around:

God had a treasure, too, of course. A treasure that was lost, long, long ago. What was God's treasure, his most important thing, the thing God loved best in all the world? God's treasure was his children. It was why Jesus had come into the world. To find God's treasure. And pay the price to win them back. And Jesus would do it—even if it cost him everything he had. (255)

At first sight this is moving stuff. In the context of the parable of the hidden treasure, however, it is quite troubling. In the parable the man spends everything he has to secure the treasure, but it is actually to his profit—the treasure is worth more than his expenditure. But that is precisely not the case with Christ's death for us. We were not "worth it." Of course, we must strike a balance. God values us in the sense that he made us in his image and sets his love upon us, but the backdrop of our lack of love for him illuminates God's love (1 John 4:10) and, at least in some sense, our worthlessness (Rom 3:12). It is this backdrop that *JSB's* account of the human plight lacks, and, ironically, given the emphasis on it in *JSB*, God's love appears less wonderful without it.

Fourth, the giving of the Great Commission in *JSB* does not say that Jesus has been given all authority nor does it include the charge to teach people to be obedient. Instead it involves telling people, "I love them so much that I died for them. It's the Truth that overcomes the terrible lie. God loves his children. Yes he really does!" (323).

JSB enhances this impression by frequently presenting Jesus as playful. At the feeding of the 5,000, he winks at the boy, saying, "Watch" (246). After the resurrection, Jesus appears and says not "Peace be with you" (John 20:19, 26) but "I'm hungry. What's for lunch?" and upon eating he says "Delicious! . . .

⁴⁹ Cf. the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount which says there is a "song people's hearts were made to sing: 'God made us. He loves us. He is very pleased with us.' It was why Jesus came into the world: to sing to them that wonderful song; to sing it not only with his voice, but with his whole life—so that God's children could remember it and join in and sing it too" (235). Notably the only material used from the Sermon is the Lord's Prayer and the instruction not to be anxious; nothing of the Sermon's challenge remains. The preacher becomes the singer.

Can a ghost do that?’ He winked. And then they all laughed . . . Peter’s heart leapt with joy and he fell into Jesus’ arms, hugging and kissing him. The others followed” (318–21).

Given this book’s popularity, it is worth repeating myself. The JSP *does* speak of God’s anger at sin, but the primary account of the human plight is that we are his children who doubt his love rather than, in the terms of Rom 1:21, rebellious idolaters who refuse to honour him as God or give thanks to him. In *JSB* we are clearly objects of divine love, but it less clear that we are also objects of divine wrath (Eph 2:3). This creates something of a tension within the story bible. When Jesus dies, “the full force of the storm of God’s fierce anger at sin was coming down” (306), but little of what comes before prepares us for that as the fitting or necessary solution to the plight. As Justin Taylor writes, “My one qualm is that it so emphasizes the (legitimate) biblical theme of God’s yearning/wooing love that the theme of judgment and wrath in the OT stories tends to be muted; when the story comes to the cross, the readers have not really been ‘set up’ very well to understand the need for propitiation.”⁵⁰ This over-emphasis, as I have argued above, also pulls some of the OT stories and the life and teaching of Jesus out of shape.⁵¹ It also, paradoxically, downplays God’s love. The power of God’s demonstration of his love for us in the death of Christ is that it happened while *we were still sinners* (Rom 5:8) and enemies (5:10), and we will appreciate that love only to the degree that we recognise we are sinners deserving condemnation.

There are other minor reformulations unrelated to this theme which need not detain us,⁵² but one is worth highlighting for its significance. When Jesus appears to his disciples after the resurrection, Lloyd-Jones has Thomas in the room and gives him a speaking part: “‘It’s a ghost!’ Thomas screamed and hid under the table” (318), even though John 20:24–29 is quite explicit that Thomas is not with the rest and makes much of that fact. Of course there is no need to mention Thomas’ later meeting with Jesus—Luke’s account does not—but it seems odd to insert him at the first appearance in contradiction to John.

2.1.4. Transposition

Like *BPSB* the OT section of *JSB* transposes Ezra and Nehemiah to the end, reflecting a chronological interest, but a summary of those books combines them with a paraphrase of Malachi 1, 3, and 4, reflecting its place in the OT canon. Within the NT the only example of transposition is innocuous: *JSB* does not relate the substance of John 14:5–6 before Jesus’ death; rather, the disciples recall it after the resurrection (322), just as Jesus promised they would (John 14:26).

To conclude this lengthy section, *JSB*’s relationship to Scripture is complicated. *JSB* identifies the biblical sources of its stories, and a change of font highlights several paraphrases which follow the

⁵⁰Justin Taylor, “The New ‘Gospel Story Bible’: 67% Off,” *Between Two Worlds*, November 28, 2011, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2011/11/28/the-new-gospel-story-bible-65-off/> (cited November 1, 2012).

⁵¹It also accounts for some of the omissions that §2.1.1 notes. Unlike many story bibles, there is no mention of Jesus clearing the temple, the transfiguration, or the rich young ruler. With the exception of Jesus’ calming the storm, there is little to suggest Jesus’ power and authority. The treatment of the Sermon on the Mount is also highly selective, on which see n49 above.

⁵²*JSB*’s Daniel narrative twice says that Daniel prays in his room with the door closed (153, 55), but the narrator in the book of Daniel is more interested in the open window than the closed door (Dan 6:10). Of course they are not mutually exclusive, but it seems a strange shift, perhaps owing more to Matt 6:6 than Dan 6. Another room-related reformulation says that the disciples are “scared and hiding” in a locked room before Pentecost when Acts 2 says nothing about them being afraid at that stage. They were in hiding after Jesus’ death, but between the resurrection and Pentecost, Luke 24:52 says, “they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

structure of the relevant biblical passages. Lloyd-Jones creatively retells biblical stories. As a result, the text is often moving or amusing by turns, but it is hard to distinguish where Scripture ends and retelling begins. The narratives of the OT helpfully connect to Christ, and a clear theme throughout is the love of God for the lost and his pursuit of them. My chief concern is that *JSB* elevates this one biblical theme as the central theme of Scripture at the expense of others, such as the enmity between God and his world (think Ps 2 or John 15) and the authority of Christ as the king set over and against the nations (Ps 2 again).

2.2. The Relationship between *JSB* Images and Scripture

The quality of Jago's artwork is immediately clear.⁵³ It is rich, detailed, full of warmth and life. The illustrations are very much illustrations of Lloyd-Jones's text (see §2.3), but there are several comments to make about the artwork's relationship to Scripture. First, the artwork is clearly well-researched to reflect the historical periods of the Bible. Pharaoh looks like an Egyptian Pharaoh; David plays a turtle-shell lyre (131); Jericho falls at the sounding of horns that clearly once belonged to a ram (113, cf. Joshua 6:5). In the same category is the skin colour of all the Near Middle Eastern characters, which is far more realistic than many story bibles.

There are also biblical details or motifs which Jago's artwork helpfully reflects. Genesis 3 is silent on the location of the serpent during the temptation, and several story bibles have it in the tree. Jago, however, has it coiled round Eve, ensnaring her with his body as with his words (31). When God expels Adam and Eve, the artwork indicates God's judgment more strongly than the text by means of the pathetic fallacy—dark clouds covering the sky (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Pages 34–35

⁵³ Regrettably, circumstances prevented use of Jago's artwork beyond the six images included.

JSB uses a break with visual narrative convention to great effect in the illustration of the return of the prodigal son. In illustrated books, if there is movement in an image, it will almost always move with the eye from left to right. In this illustration however, the picture is dominated by the father who runs right to left, breaking the visual convention just as the father's sprint to his son broke social convention (Figure 13).

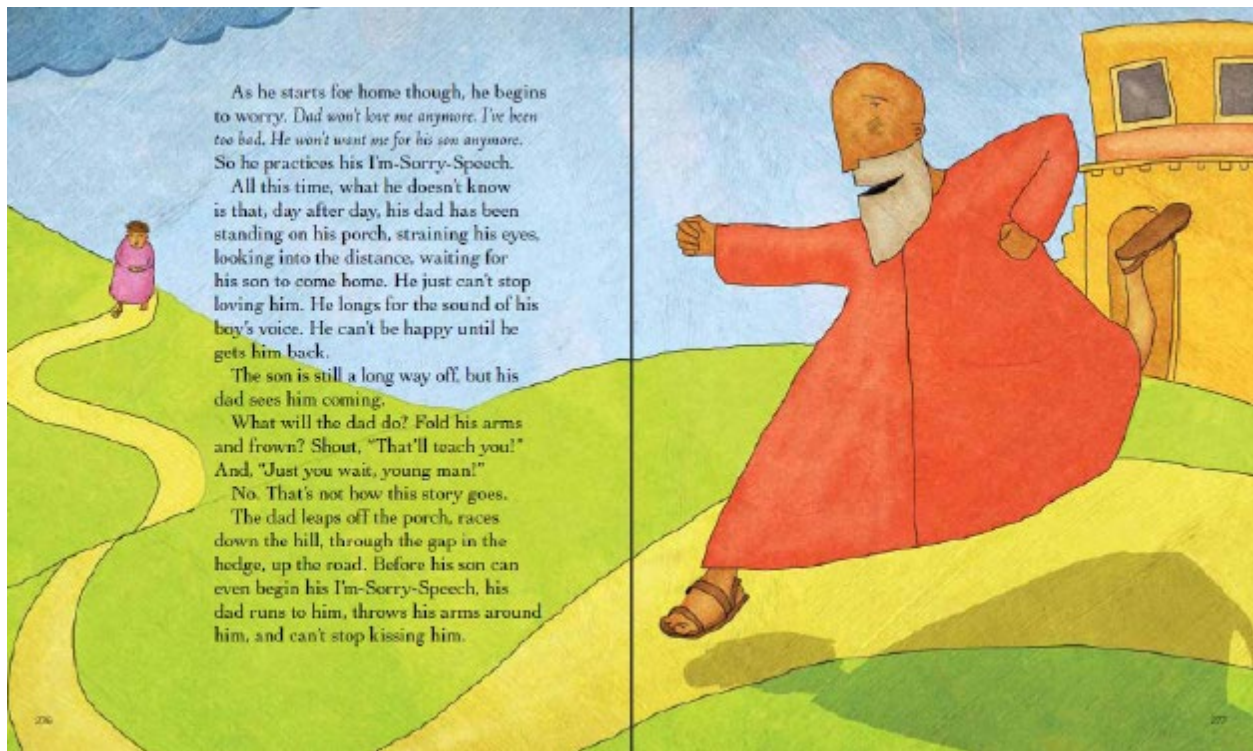


Figure 13: Pages 276–77

In the NT, two illustrations deserve particular mention. First, in the précis of the Sermon on the Mount, Lloyd-Jones retells Jesus' instruction not to worry since God provides for the birds and flowers without their needing to farm and store food or to make clothes for themselves (Matt 6:25–34). The illustrations run with that image, showing its absurdity by depicting birds with shopping trolleys (Figure 14) and flowers sewing clothes and buying off the rack (232–33).



Figure 14: Pages 230–31

Given the visual quality of many of Jesus' parables, or OT proverbs for that matter, it is surprising that so many story bible illustrators overlook their potential. Where is the gold ring in the pig's snout (Prov 11:22) or the soft tongue that breaks a bone (Prov 25:15)? Where is the camel straining to pass through the eye of a needle or the man doing eye surgery with a plank firmly in his eye?

The second NT illustration is a fine example of salience, using colour to emphasise one aspect of an image. Throughout the NT, Jesus wears a robe with a creamy, off-white colour. But at his arrest, in the darkness of that scene, his robe becomes a brighter white, indicating perhaps his innocence or the inability of the darkness to overcome the light (Figure 15). Either way, it is a powerful and biblical image.

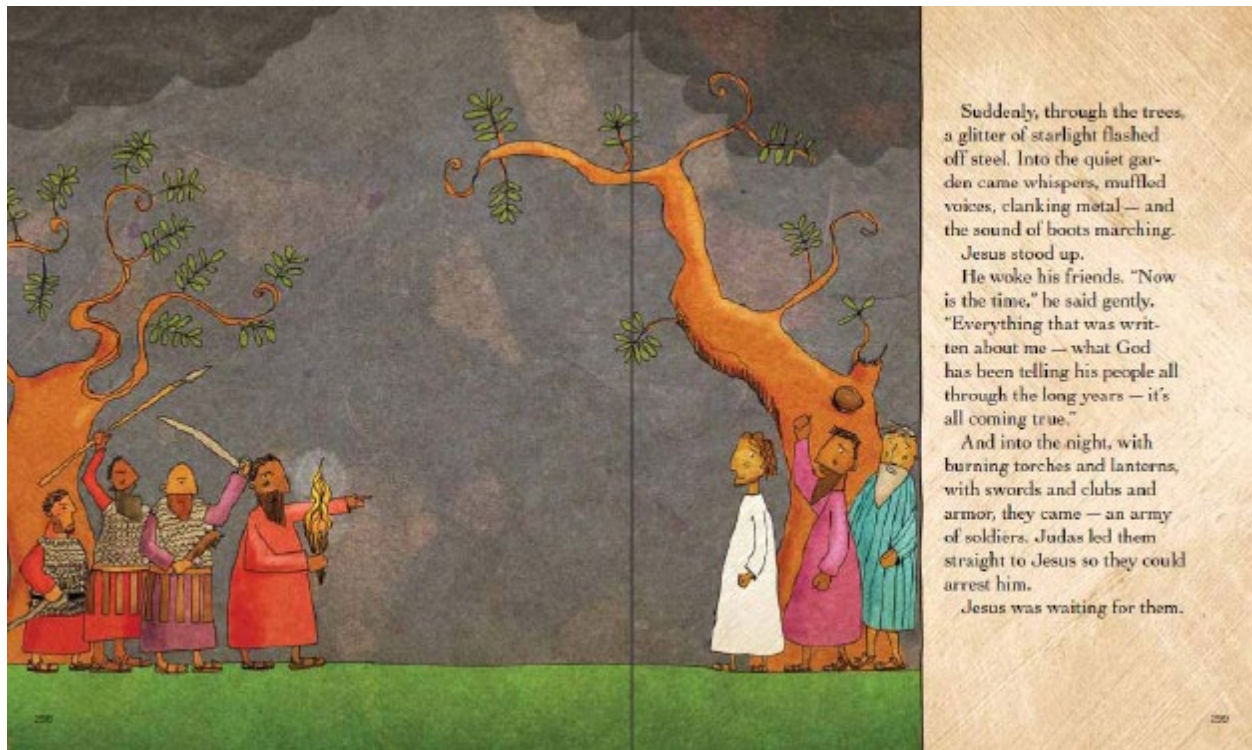


Figure 15: Pages 298–99

2.3. The Relationship between Text and Image within *JSB*

Compared to Schoonmaker, Jago has much more to work with. Whereas Helm's text is short on detail, Lloyd-Jones's overflows, and the result is that Jago's illustrations are closely related to Lloyd-Jones's text. The same sense of humour occurs in both; after the confusion of languages at Babel, the text describes comical misunderstandings while the artwork shows slapstick mishaps. While Lloyd-Jones imagines Jacob's scream upon waking up with Leah, Jago imagines his expression. In content and tone, the overriding relationship is one of enhancement.⁵⁴ Often this is a positive thing, but of course the power of images to linger and reinforce the text means that sometimes the effect is less salutary. In some instances, it means simply that Lloyd-Jones's artistic flourishes will be lingering impressions. For example, for Jesus' baptism, Jago illustrates the "beads of water" which "glittered and sparkled in his hair" (206–7). Likewise the illustration of David and Goliath picks up the fairy-tale allusions of Lloyd-

⁵⁴The only example of counterpoint might be where a picture of dark clouds east of Eden signifies the involvement of God's judgment more than the text (32–33, 34–35). The three hints of contradiction are minor. First, the picture of Jonah emerging from the fish has a more heroic pose than the text or Scripture warrants (168). Second, whereas Scripture says that Jesus addressed the Sermon on the Mount to his disciples (Matt 5:1), the text of *JSB* has him teaching "people" how to pray, and the image shows him surrounded by children only (224–25). Lastly, at the crucifixion, the text says, "the soldiers made a sign—'Our king'—and nailed it to a wooden cross" (303), whereas the sign in the image on 303 and 305 more properly reads, "King of the Jews."

Jones's text ("his beady greedy eyes glowered at them hungrily . . . as if any minute he really might just gobble them all up" [123]) and draws him to be at least twenty feet high (122–23).⁵⁵

Other times this attention to the detail of Lloyd-Jones's text means that the illustrations reinforce some longstanding but apocryphal details such as the mockery of Noah's neighbours (40). An illustration also reinforces Lloyd-Jones's placement of Thomas with the disciples when the risen Jesus first appears by depicting him hiding under the table (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Page 319

⁵⁵The title of the chapter "The young hero and the horrible giant" also evokes the fairy tale genre: it could serve equally well as the title of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. In the same narrative, Lloyd-Jones also talks about Goliath's voice "echoing horribly around and around the dry, dry valley" (123) which seems to overlook the stream from which David gathered his stones (1 Sam 17:40), and the illustration of a waterless valley reinforces that.

Similarly, Jago's illustrations enhance the characterisation of Jesus as playful. Jesus winks twice in the text, and on both occasions Jago includes the detail in the artwork. (247, 320). As the text speaks of Jesus laughing and playing games with children, the illustration shows him playing "ring-a-ring of roses" (262–63).

2.4. The Relationship between *JSB* and the Child

2.4.1. Textual Interaction

Like *BPSB*, *JSB* has no discussion questions or suggested prayers, simply the stories retold. That retelling is thoroughly conversational and is peppered with explanatory asides such as "now in those days" (72, 118, 186, 222) or "You see . . ." (30, 34, 36, 54, 74, 256). Insofar as the text addresses the child or invites a response to the stories, three things stand out. First, in several places *JSB* invites the reader to identify with the narrator's viewpoint. When Israel grumbles in the wilderness, saying, "God brought us our here to kill us. God doesn't love us!" the narrator turns to the reader and says, "they didn't know God very well did they?" (101). When Naaman refuses to wash in the Jordan ("*I am Naaman. I am important. I should do something important so God will heal me*"), Lloyd-Jones writes in parentheses, "Of course you and I know that's not how God does things" (140, emphasis original). The same phrase appears when Lloyd-Jones describes the Pharisees' confidence that their holiness earns them God's love (222). The danger of such comments is that we fail to heed the warning of their examples because actually we are just like grumbling Israel (1 Cor 10:1–13) and proud Naaman. On the other hand, the comments have an exhortatory function: they teach us to see things aright, and to that extent are helpful.

Second, we need to reflect on the impact of the widespread idea that people are fundamentally God's children who doubt his love and so flee and hide.

There is not only the question of how well that reflects Scripture but also how well that serves the readers. Certainly we want to emphasise God's love, but it is important to distinguish, as D. A. Carson so helpfully does, between God's love understood as his "salvific stance towards his fallen world" and "God's particular, effective, selecting love toward his elect."⁵⁶ *JSB* confuses these, and the result is that it views people as children already within God's family who need assurances of love, rather than as sinners who by adoption might join the family.⁵⁷ The implicit response called for is "now I see I've been mistaken, God really does love me."

Finally, to end on a more positive note, a wonderful motif throughout *JSB* is that God's love is unconditional. As the introduction says, the Bible is not a book of heroes, and "most of the people in the Bible aren't heroes at all. They make some big mistakes (sometimes on purpose), they get afraid and run away. At times they are downright mean" (15). Subsequent stories highlight how God persists in working through people irrespective of beauty (brought out in the Leah narrative, 74), strength (David,

⁵⁶For these terms see D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 17–18.

⁵⁷The book ends by paraphrasing John 1:12–13, which speaks of the offer "to be born into a whole new life. To be who they really are. Who God has always made them to be—their own true selves—God's dear child" (351). Although this does express some discontinuity, it should be noted how different this is from the text of John 1:12–13, where the emphasis is entirely on conversion as adoption into a new family, rather than conversion being a realisation of what we "really" are already: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

118–19), popularity (Zacchaeus, 270), good works (Pharisees, 222), or bad ones (Jacob, 70, David, 130, Zacchaeus, 270). It appears that *JSB* chooses some of these stories to make exactly these (well-made) points and to do so in ways applicable to both sexes. Thus, even if the older brother is missing from the parable of the prodigal son, *JSB* challenges his reliance on works throughout the book: we cannot earn or lose God’s love by our actions.⁵⁸

2.4.2. Visual Interaction

Lastly, we come to the way in which Jago’s artwork communicates with the reader. Compared to *BPSB*, Jago’s artwork much more often views events from a bystander’s perspective, rather than viewing from above, but this is occasionally used to good effect. In the tower of Babel narrative, the first illustration of the tower is in a portrait orientation, so the reader has to rotate the book to view it. Even then the tower more than fills the page. When one views the tower from God’s perspective a couple of pages later, however, it looks far less impressive (50–51, 54–55).

The Zacchaeus narrative twice gives us his point of view, first unable to see Jesus through the crowds and then in the tree, looking down to see Jesus calling us down (266–69). Interestingly, Zacchaeus, shown in the tree, looks not at Jesus but at the viewer, as if looking for guidance.

One other combined use of the point of view and gazes comes in the lion’s den. As Daniel is dropped in, two lions wait for him, but a third is turned, roaring at the reader who is already in the den (Figure 17). To that extent we are united with Daniel, in his peril, and (over the page) in his rescue.

⁵⁸Even here, though, greater precision would be welcome, for the emphasis ought to fall on the irrelevance of good works, physical appearance, or popularity to election. God sets his love on the elect without reference to those factors, whereas in *JSB* it seems more as though God unconditionally loves all humanity. That, though true in a sense, needs developing more carefully.

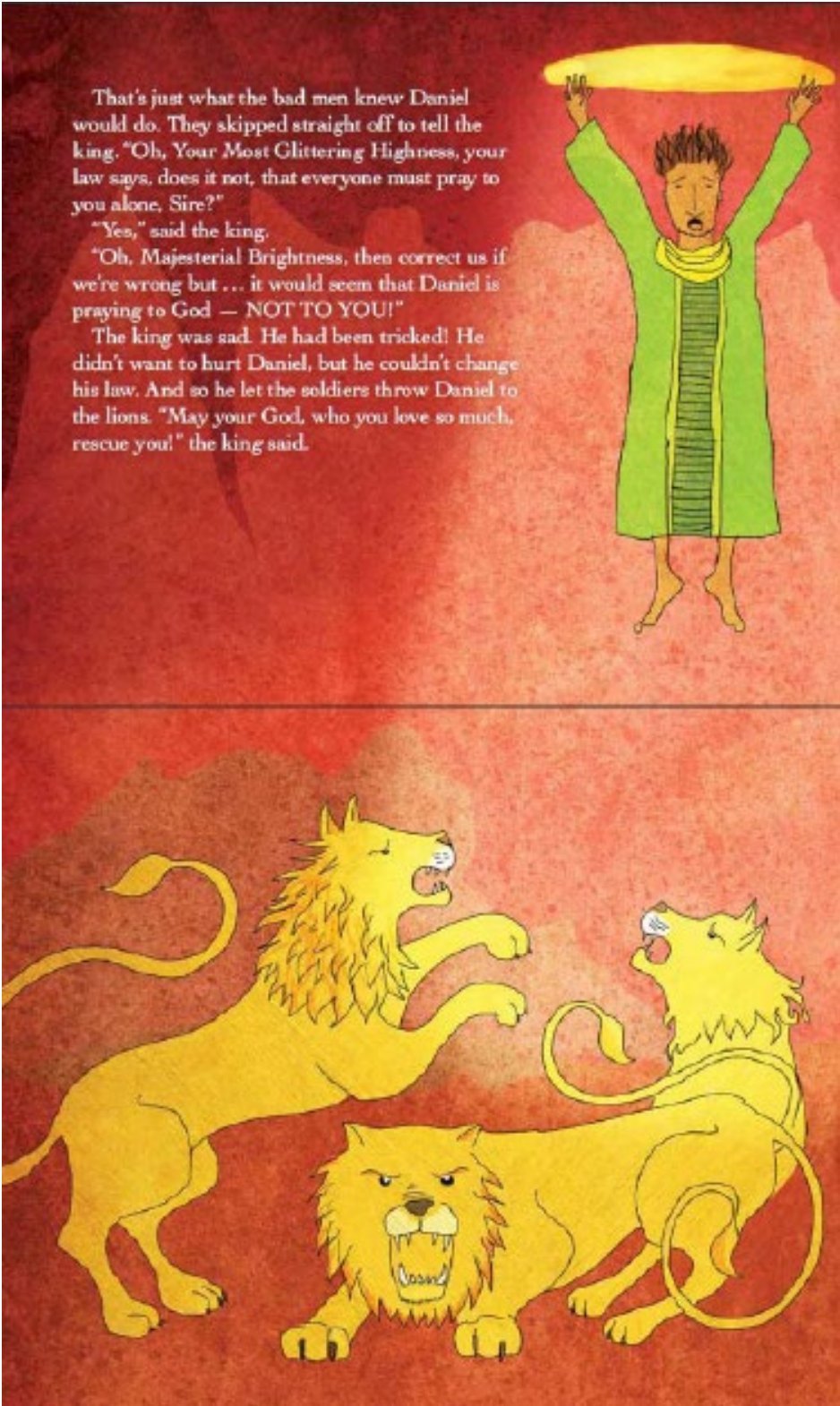


Figure 17: Pages 156–57

2.5. Conclusions

JSB aims to relate the stories of the Bible to the larger story of salvation, and, more specifically, to show how the OT narratives prefigure Christ's role in that salvation, hence *The Jesus Storybook Bible*.⁵⁹ It chooses the love of God for his children as the central theme, which is certainly a more relational and dynamic choice than *BPSB*'s categories of people, place, and rule. Lloyd-Jones's talents as a storyteller are clear, hence *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, as are Jago's as an artist, and the same humour, depth, and richness suffuses both of their efforts. *JSB* often artfully and movingly makes connections between OT passages and their christological fulfilment. The stories, creatively retold, place the emphasis as much on "storybook" as "bible," but *JSB* brilliantly captures the drama, humour, and earthy reality of many of the narratives. The emphasis on the unconditional love of God is well-deployed against the thought that we might earn or lose it on account of how we look, what we have, or what we do. On the other hand, its emphasis without sufficient reference to God's authority or holiness creates a tension with *JSB*'s clear account of the wrath-bearing death of Jesus. The characterisation of humanity principally as God's children deceived into thinking that God does not love them makes the necessity of Jesus' death harder to integrate and the wonder of it harder to grasp. It also shapes the account of Jesus' earthly ministry: attractive in its beauty but hardly ever challenging in its authority, power, or purity. For that reason I would want to use *JSB* more selectively and cannot offer the unconditional endorsement that others often give it. I recognise that this is something of a conclusion *contra mundum*, but I believe it is borne out by a careful reading of *JSB*. I also, tentatively, and in closing, suggest that this imbalance (emphasising the attractiveness of Christ and defining the human predicament as a search for happiness in the wrong places, to the neglect of harder truths) is not limited to story bibles.

3. Summary

BPSB and *JSB* broke the mould in important respects. Instead of offering an anthology of biblical stories, they sought to tell one story: the story of "God's people in God's place under God's rule" and the story of the "Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love of God." The benefits of tracing one thought throughout are clear, both as a way of emphasising the unity of Scripture and as a pedagogical tool for young children. Of course, where the message of the Bible is distilled to a sentence, everything hangs on its quality.

Of the two I believe *BPSB* is the more successful in combining faithfulness to Scripture with a hermeneutical approach that lends clarity and unity to its presentation. As an overview of the Bible's message it serves a useful purpose, and other story bibles which offer a greater level of detail and a broader coverage of Scripture can supplement it. While the love of God has a strong *prima facie* claim to being a central theme of Scripture, *JSB* reflects some of the weaknesses of that model, at least insofar as it is finding expression in contemporary evangelicalism.

Whether or not others accept these judgments, I hope the approach taken at least models the level of engagement that these works deserve, both in light of the enormous energies poured into them by authors and artists, and their widespread use in our churches. Our thanks are due to these authors, and I hope that even my criticisms demonstrate how seriously I take their work. This kind of sustained

⁵⁹ To that extent it reflects a wider and resurgent interest in Christocentric preaching of the OT and Keller's influence within that movement.

attention is a compliment of sorts, and I hope that others will pay the same compliment by taking up these tools to evaluate yet more story bibles. To the extent that these books are used by children and adults alike, the whole church stands to benefit.

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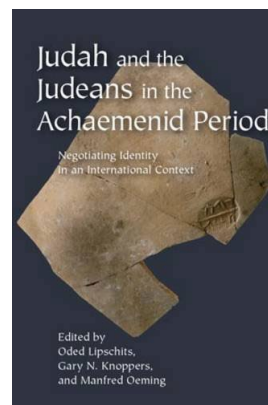
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— OLD TESTAMENT —

Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011. xvi + 600 pp. £42.50/\$64.50.

This is the fourth volume to appear in a *de facto* series whose previous volumes covered the Neo-Babylonian (2003), Persian (2006), and fourth-century periods (2007). All four volumes issue from an international colloquium that has met regularly since 2001, and all boast contributions from leading scholars on several continents. The volume under review divides its two dozen contributions almost evenly between studies of the biblical material (ten chapters) and studies of cultural, historical, social, and environmental factors (fourteen chapters). The volume is well-bound and includes author and Scripture indexes; each chapter includes its own bibliography, many of which are quite extensive. A list of the individual contributions would consume too much space and tax readers' patience; see <http://www.eisenbrauns.com/item/LIPACHAEM>.



The strength of this volume is that it constitutes a nearly comprehensive overview of the field it treats while preserving a healthy diversity among its contributors. The biblical material covered includes especially Ezra–Nehemiah, the minor prophets, Ezekiel, and Isa 56–66, with several essays drawing on the Abraham cycle on the understanding that several key passages, e.g., Gen 17 and 20:1–18, derive from late authors like “P.” The biblical material is thoroughly examined through the first group’s chosen optic of identity, and in the second group of essays it is viewed alongside (among other data) Late Babylonian personal names, ostraca from Elaphantine in Egypt, indigenous Persian-period Palestinian coinages, and Josephus.

The collection exhibits diversity on various levels. In terms of method, the diachronic-synchronic spectrum of approaches to the biblical material is well-represented, with Jakob Wöhrle suggesting that the Twelve (Minor Prophets) passed through at least four stages of redaction that explain its perspective on foreign nations and Dalit Rom-Shiloni making no mention of a redaction history in the case of Ezekiel. In terms of a willingness to question time-honored conclusions of OT theology or the history of Israel’s religion, Yonina Dor argues that the “rite of separation” of the foreign wives in Ezra did not lead to the actual expulsion of these wives, so that Ezra elevates pluralism over zealotry and xenophobia (p. 186). Contrariwise, Joachim Schaper affirms the widely held view that for the first time in Israel’s history, the post-exilic period saw “a heavy reliance on written texts” due to a developing understanding of what constitutes scripture or canon (p. 36).

It is not possible in the space available here to interact with the individual contributions. Instead, it is more useful to reflect on a few aspects of the volume’s juxtaposition of biblical and interdisciplinary approaches and their relation to the theme of identity. First, the organic relationship between biblical and other (cultural, historical, etc.) approaches is immediately apparent in the various contributions, and it is gratifying to see robust, multidisciplinary approaches to what might simply be called exegesis. While it is possible to lose sight of the theological forest by reason of the varied methodological trees, the contributions generally demonstrate well the interrelatedness often circumscribed with the trio of the biblical text’s literary, historical, and theological facets.

Second, while identity may seem to be a contemporary category foisted on the biblical text, it would be a mistake to assume that OT authors do not talk about identity of any kind, or even that they are interested solely in religious identity. It could be argued, for example, that the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants both link ethnic/national identity with religious identity, although they do so in highly complex ways, particularly by prioritizing spiritual or internal elements above external or ethnic ones (Gen 15; 17:1 regarding Abraham; Deut 6:5 regarding Israel). Indeed, it is precisely this element that the writing prophets find lacking from many in Israel and Judah, and this critique often leads to the identification of a remnant *within* Israel to which the covenantal promises attach. Since by definition the remnant is constituted of some Israelites to the exclusion of others, and since the remnant is identified most often by its righteousness (Amos 9:1–4) or its relationship with YHWH (Mal 3:16–18), those Israelites who are not part of the remnant are excluded from the future deliverance connected with the covenantal promises despite being “Israelite” in nearly every way.

C. Nihan follows a similar line when he argues in his contribution that “the dispute in Third Isaiah is about *how* Judean ethnicity is defined.” In Isa 56–66 genealogical ethnicity alone no longer suffices to identify Israelites, so “ethnic markers” like the Sabbath are now “even more significant.” This explains why disobedient Judeans “will not survive the judgment . . . whereas . . . ‘righteous foreigners’ will be included within Israel” (pp. 92–93). While these chapters do insist (among other things) on a certain type of behavior, however, one wonders if the key element in Israelite identity is indeed merely observance of Sinaitic mores—if nothing else, those whom God delivers “bind themselves to YHWH” and love his name (Isa 56:6) and are characterized by reverence for YHWH and repentance (Isa 59:19–20).

Given the close link between the aspects of identity discussed in this volume and the “boundary markers” so important to the New Perspective on Paul, it is clear that the OT’s formulations of identity, especially religious identity, are extremely important when wrestling with significant developments in Israel’s history and in biblical theology. While the variety of perspectives and conclusions in this volume mean that it is not the only resource necessary for understanding Judahite identity in the Achaemenid period, its diversity will help the reader to identify important areas of agreement and disagreement. The fact that it helps interpreters approach the biblical text with a useful hermeneutical lens can be happily received as an added benefit.

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Jack R. Lundbom. *The Hebrew Prophets: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010. 272 pp. £16.99/\$28.00.

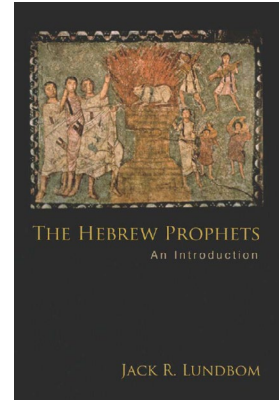
Lundbom, the significant Jeremiah scholar, adds a volume on the prophets in the tradition of Heschel, Wood, and Chisholm. Lundbom opens and closes by bringing the Hebrew prophets into resemblance with the modern prophets Martin Luther King Jr. and Billy Graham. In the core of the book, Lundbom gives attention to the office of the prophet, specific prophets, and a special look at their literature.

In a highly accessible fashion, he engages the typical discussion on prophets as foretellers and forth-tellers as well as conduits of social justice. Lundbom offers his own six “distinguishing marks” of prophets that are partially possessed by those usually deemed modern prophets (e.g., King and Graham). These marks are the divine call, the divine word, the divine vision, mighty works, the divine spirit, and prayer. Divine vision for Lundbom is distinguished from the other marks as the ability to perceive, emphasizing the visual not merely the audible. A helpful explanation fills this section with a discussion of visions, divination, and the title of “seer” in the Hebrew Bible.

About half of the book deals with the prophet’s general message and then delves into twenty-five particular prophets and their messages. In the discussion of the general message, Lundbom deals with the less addressed themes of the other nations and covenant faithfulness along with the important theme of social justice. Arguably, these are quite brief and could use a bit of expansion even for an introductory work. He distills well, in an economy of words, that the prophets by-and-large assumed the covenant as broken and then used the social justice shortcomings as case-in-point indictments. Then the theme of judgment by the other nations used at God’s discretion to punish Israel is woven together as a theme in many of the writing prophets. While looking at the particular messages of the prophets, both the writing and non-writing prophets are examined. Lundbom’s examination is typically proportional to the amount of canonical material available with an allowable exception of special attention to Jeremiah. In these treatments he takes a strong literary approach highlighting ANE background, genre sensitivity, and rhetorical awareness.

The authenticity of a prophet comes into focus both from how the original audiences may have recognized an authentic prophet as well as from the canonical text’s prescribed tests for authenticity. The original audience would have understood the authentic prophet as experiencing an inspirational event that was relayed to hearers in a prophetic act with a dynamic message for the hearers’ situation that would take root in the believing community. Lundbom examines more than whether a prophet’s message comes to pass as the test for authenticity. He takes a careful exegetical eye to Deut 13 and 18. He also takes an intriguing look at prophetic integrity using Jeremiah as his lens. This discussion on integrity points a finger at disparaging behavior among prophets including persecution of the upright, seeking wealth, and inappropriate conduct such as public nudity, marrying a prostitute, and lying. The prophets’ actions should be evaluated by the current reader since undoubtedly the original audience would have wondered at times if the true prophets’ integrity could be upheld.

Part two of the book deals with the means of communication of the prophets in prose, poetry, rhetoric, and symbolism. Discussing the poetry and prose of the prophets, Lundbom provides a history



of interpretive views of these genres in the prophets. Most of this subject is modeled with Jer 7 as an example of oracle prose.

The gold mine for the student is most clearly chapter five, which explains and illustrates Hebrew rhetoric with prophetic passages in textbook fashion to help the reader get a sense of the forms. From *abusio* to verbal irony, Lundbom illustrates fifty rhetorical devices in command of the Hebrew prophets. Lundbom provides this more accessible version of his 1973 dissertation (also in a 1997 monograph) on rhetoric in Jeremiah, which was the first answer to the call of James Muilenberg for rhetorical work in biblical studies. Lundbom's groundbreaking work predates even seminal works such as Kennedy's important *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (1984).

The final chapter departs from words to take up prophetic actions. Signs and wonders include authenticating actions of the early prophets as well as sudden appearance and disappearance of prophets in the scenes of the texts. The latter prophets in Israel's history accompanied their messages with bizarre behaviors. Lundbom considers the meaning of the symbolic actions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ahijah the Shilonite, Amos, Elijah, and Elisha. Finally, Lundbom considers the prophet himself as a symbol: like Hosea, he symbolizes a broken marriage that is reestablished, and like Jeremiah, he symbolizes a suffering nation and a suffering God.

With mastery of the prophets' nuances of message and attention to the character of both the well-known and lesser-known prophets, Lundbom makes a helpful contribution to introductory and handbook literature of the Hebrew prophets. His attention to rhetorical devices and relation of the prophets to NT topics are distinct chords heard above the standard chorus of voices on the subject. Students should find this work accessible and meaningful in locating topics for further inquiry while all readers will want to keep handy chapter five's display of rhetoric in prophetic literature.

Tim Barker

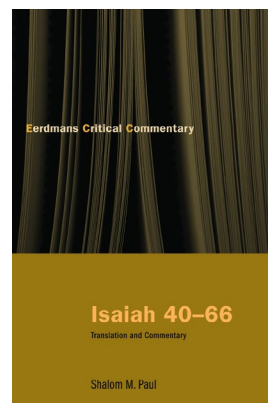
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Shalom M. Paul. *Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary*. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. xiii + 728 pp. \$68.00.

For some time modern commentaries on Isaiah were hard to come by but no longer. In the past decade and a half, a number of significant works have been published. The most recent of these is Shalom Paul's work on Isa 40–66 in the Eerdmans Critical Commentary series. This is a new series edited by the late David Noel Freedman aimed at textual, philological, literary, historical, and archaeological inquiry. Given Freedman's influence, the series appears to follow the aims of the Anchor Bible commentaries and is similarly represented by historical-critical scholars of various religious backgrounds. Paul is a Jew and describes the unique contribution of his commentary as

the exegesis of the Hebrew text with its emphasis on the philological, poetic, literary, linguistic, grammatical, historical, archaeological, ideational, and theological aspects of the prophecies, in which every word, phrase, clause and verse is examined and explicated, and, in addition, aided by both inner-



biblical allusions, influences, and parallels, and extrabiblical sources, primarily from Akkadian and Ugaritic literature. (p. ix)

The Masoretic text is Paul's main interest, and inquiries into the Septuagint and the Great Isaiah Scroll (IQIsa^a) are made only when they deviate from the MT. Paul does not to engage all the secondary literature on Isaiah yet chooses to interact with Medieval Jewish commentators, a segment rarely represented in scholarship. In addition, the commentary interacts with scholarship written in modern Hebrew and exposes readers to what is typically inaccessible.

Paul is Yehezkel Kaufmann Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Paul follows in the tradition of Jewish historical-critical scholarship in the manner of Kaufmann, Haran, and Sommer, who believe that an anonymous prophet deemed "Deutero-Isaiah" (DI) wrote chs. 40–66 in the second half of the sixth century BCE. These scholars reject the notion of a separate "Trito-Isaiah" (TI), a prophet or school of prophets who wrote chs. 56–66 in the Second Temple period. Rather than see a distinct break in the prophecy between chs. 55 and 56, Paul follows the view that the more significant turning point in these chapters is between chs. 48 and 49. He believes chs. 40–48 were preached or written while in Babylon and that chs. 49–66 represent DI's prophecies in Jerusalem upon the prophet's return to Palestine. Paul attributes the authorship of chs. 1–39, or "First Isaiah" (FI), to Isaiah ben Amoz, the prophet mentioned in the book itself. Rather than emphasize the differences between chs. 40–55 and 56–66, Paul highlights their common language and themes. Paul catalogues not only shared ideas within chs. 40–66, but provides an extensive list of similar phraseology throughout these chapters. In addition he identifies the following literary influences on DI: the primeval and patriarchal traditions, the Exodus traditions, Deuteronomistic traditions, the influence of FI, Jeremiah, other prophetic traditions, Psalms, and parallels with Lamentations. Paul concludes his introduction by describing the influence of Ugaritic and Mesopotamian traditions on DI, and the textual variants between the MT and other ancient translations.

Since Paul views chs. 40–66 as a unity, the commentary proper does not contain sections on composition and form for each pericope in the manner of other critical commentaries. Literary units are defined, but rarely is attention given to a text's social or historical setting. Chapters 40–66 are treated as a unified prophecy, so careful attention is given to its literary features. Attention is given to a pericope's shared language with other parts of the prophecy or other biblical or extra-biblical texts. For example, Paul's exegesis of Isa 54 explores its inner biblical allusions to Lamentations, Hosea, and Ps 89. Paul suggests numerous parallels between DI and ANE literature. He observes that the Babylonians attributed the cosmologic triad of the water, sky, and earth to Markuk, and he believes their mention in Isa 40:12 serves as a covert polemic against Babylonian deities since here they are attributed to Yahweh. Careful attention is given to reading texts in their literary context within chs. 40–66 and the book of Isaiah. So when he interprets ch. 56, he situates it in the context of the early Second Temple Period, but also demonstrates its numerous linguistic connections with ch. 55.

The strengths of Paul's commentary are those features I have mentioned above: careful attention to the philological and literary features of the text, comparatively modest speculation in regard to matters of composition, and exploration of biblical and extra-biblical allusions. The Hebrew font is retained and used extensively throughout the commentary, so facility with the Hebrew language is necessary in order to appreciate this work. English-only Bible readers in this case need not apply. Yet for this reason I could see how this commentary might be useful for a Hebrew exegesis course on Isa 40–66 since it covers the text phrase by phrase, attends to its linguistic and literary features, and does not weigh the

reader down with the vast secondary literature. Paul's mastery of the biblical text and related literature is evident throughout his exegesis, and reading the commentary will facilitate a greater knowledge of Hebrew language and poetry as well as Isaiah's prophecy.

In what way will this commentary serve Christian ministers, teachers, and students since it is written from a Jewish critical perspective? Paul does provide ample evidence for the unity of the Book of Isaiah through his demonstration of literary connections within chs. 40–66 and between these texts and chs. 1–39. For example, in his interpretation of ch. 65, he identifies connections with ch. 1; 11:6–9; 63:7–64:11; and ch. 66. Yet Paul lacks a theology of Christian Scripture, so his understanding of these connections often remain at a literary level. His interests are historical: tracing the development of literary and religious traditions. Paul's commentary lacks theological reflection on the nature of canonical prophecy and therefore does not concern itself with the theological witness of the book of Isaiah as a unity, how this prophecy testifies of Christ, and Isaiah's contribution to Christian theology and ministry. In this regard I wonder how useful this commentary will be to pastors since it will need to be supplemented with other works. For students and teachers interested in engaging Isaianic studies, other commentaries need to be consulted since Paul chooses to interact with only a select group of scholars.

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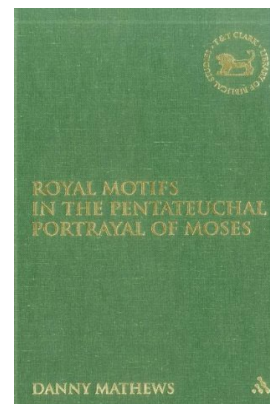
Danny Mathews. *Royal Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 571. New York: T&T Clark, 2012. xii + 172 pp. £65.00/\$120.00.

Moses is one of the most pivotal figures in all of biblical history. He is known primarily as both prophet and lawgiver. But Danny Mathews believes that there may be more to Moses than these designations. In his work *Royal Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses*, Mathews believes that Exod 7:1, where Moses is said to be God to Pharaoh, raises “the question of the basic portrayal of Moses in the Pentateuch” (p. ix). He believes that the portrayal of Moses in the Pentateuch contains significant royal characterization. He argues that “royalty as it is generally understood in the ancient Near East provides a more appropriate category that can comprehend these fantastic and varied portrayals of Moses” (p. ix).

In the first chapter of the work, Mathews states,

Pentateuchal authors adapted tropes and traditions, well-attested elsewhere in biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources, to identify Moses as an exalted, even divinized figure. While other offices or vocations also find support in biblical descriptions of Moses (especially ‘prophet,’ ‘priest,’ and ‘judge’), the portrayal of Moses in the likeness of a ‘king’ serves to elevate Moses and to emphasize the preeminence of his work. (p. 2)

He finds support for this characterization in Deut 33:4–5, where he believes the implied subject is Moses. He does, however, qualify his thesis by stating that while Moses is described with royal motifs, this does not necessitate that he actually held the position of a king. The remainder of the first chapter



surveys the history of interpretation of the character of Moses beginning with early Hellenistic sources through the modern portrayal of Moses within scholarship.

The second chapter overviews “the various ways Moses is portrayed in the Pentateuch in order to show that the view of Moses primarily as a prophet or covenant mediator cannot comprehend cogently the varied ways he is presented in the Pentateuch” (p. 44). Mathews discusses fifteen different motifs used to portray Moses: the birth and abandonment of Moses, beauty and health, Moses’ name, flight and exile, shepherd, private commissioning, public emergence and controversy, divinity, military success, temple building, lawgiving and covenant-making, judge, humility, intercessor and appeaser, and succession by Joshua. After he analyzes these themes individually he shows how they are clustered in the presentation of four different ancient Near Eastern rulers: Hammurabi, Esarhaddon, Nabonidus, and Cyrus. His basic conclusions are that Pentateuchal authors used techniques common in other ancient Near Eastern sources and that they did so in order to portray Moses as an exalted royal figure.

The third chapter analyzes four of the motifs discussed in chapter two in more detail: “the birth, flight, private commissioning and divine empowerment, and public emergence of Moses as God’s designated royal leader of Israel” (p. 87). These motifs are present and clustered in Exod 1:1–7:1, and they serve to portray Moses as an empowered deliverer who is affirmed by God.

Chapter four examines four more of the royal motifs in further detail: the exaltation of king and deity, the king as lawgiver and covenant-maker, the king as temple builder, and the death of the king and the succession of another. His discussion of the exaltation of king and deity concludes that Exodus portrays Moses in close association with God and that because of this he is able to speak for God to Israel. This is built upon in his discussion of Moses as lawgiver, where Israel is portrayed in a continued state of disobedience. Moses, however, is authenticated as the lawgiver and covenant-maker and his leadership demonstrates the Lord’s power even in the midst of the nation’s disobedience. Moses’ royal presentation also appears through the temple-building motif. Mathews believes that this activity cannot be accounted for in any other presentation of Moses that is non-royal. He ends with a discussion of the contrasting characterization of Moses and Joshua and that Joshua serves as an epigone of Moses; he believes that Joshua’s diminished qualities highlight Moses all the more.

The fifth and final chapter ends with a discussion of why Mathews does not believe that Moses should be viewed primarily as a prophet, but instead as a “man of God” and as a “servant.” The portrayal of Moses as a man of God “resembles the selection, exaltation, and empowerment of a ruler in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East” (p. 144). Likewise, the characterization of Moses as servant of the Lord serves as a common royal epithet. Mathews therefore concludes that Moses is depicted as a “vice-regent’ exercising temporal sovereignty on the Lord’s behalf to establish Israel as a discrete nation” (pp. 147–48). He ends his study with a short survey of his understanding of the composition of the Pentateuch, which follows the documentary hypothesis.

Mathews’ work displays many good qualities. First, he brings to the fore a discussion of Moses’ characterization of king that has not been discussed in this much detail in decades. Hopefully this study will not only invigorate a discussion into a royal portrayal of Moses, but also to the presence of strong royal elements throughout the Pentateuch that lead to a more robust discussion of the importance of the monarchy in ancient Israel and its importance for biblical theology.

A second strength of Mathews’ work is his individual discussion of the royal motifs. While some of these motifs are stronger than others, the sum whole of them serves as a convincing argument that Moses is intentionally portrayed with royal elements.

This work also contains some weaknesses. First, this work begins with a discussion of the Hellenistic sources and then jumps to the present. It would benefit greatly from a discussion of the rabbinic sources and other ancient sources instead of just jumping to the present. There seems to be a gap in the history of interpretation.

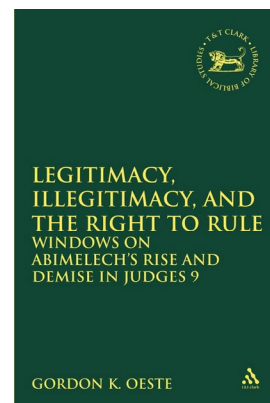
Second, he assumes his interpretation of Deut 33:4–5 with little discussion of alternative interpretations. He fails to show exegetical support for why the subject in Deut 33:5 must be Moses. Though I agree that this is the most likely reading, some more exegetical work here and elsewhere could have been helpful.

Overall, Mathews provides a convincing case that Moses is portrayed with motifs that are common to that of royalty both elsewhere in the biblical text and throughout the ancient Near East. Mathews does, however, overstate his thesis by claiming that Moses should be primarily viewed through the lens of royalty, which is only explicitly stated one time in Deut 33:4–5 (and his interpretation of this text is not universally held). It needs to be noted that the royal characterization of Moses neither necessitates nor supports source-critical theories. As Meeks shows in his survey of Hellenistic and Rabbinic literature in *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Brill, 1967), Moses was portrayed as a king well before the advent of source-critical theory. He could make a convincing case that Moses could be more broadly understood as the Lord's servant, which as he correctly notes is the standard designation of Moses throughout the rest of the OT. He does not, however, tie the role of servant closely enough to that of king to necessitate that the term servant be understood only or primarily as a royal designation. This book would be a helpful resource to a serious student or scholar working within the Pentateuch or interested in the characterization of Moses.

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Gordon K. Oeste. *Legitimacy, Illegitimacy, and the Right to Rule: Windows on Abimelech's Rise and Demise in Judges 9*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 546. New York: T&T Clark, 2011. xiii + 267 pp. £75.00/\$140.00.

The book of Judges has largely been viewed by scholarship as a pro-monarchial book. Support for this position has focused on the epilogue of the book where there is a refrain repeated four times that laments the lack of a king in Israel (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The difficulty that has remained, however, is that there are two episodes in the body of the book that have been viewed as largely anti-monarchial: Gideon's response to the men of Israel in 8:23 and the portrayal of Abimelech in ch. 9. Gordon Oeste, in a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, believes that this apparent difficulty can be answered. What he proposes is a "multi-disciplinary approach using the tools of narrative, rhetorical, and social-scientific analysis [which] will provide data that support theories holding to a monarchic context for Judg 9" (p. 2). His thesis claims that the negative portrayal of the rule of Abimelech was used to legitimate the monarchy by delegitimizing local power bases that were similar to Abimelech's. He believes that



this “negative analogy was then utilized to legitimize the role, function, and authority of a centralized monarchy” (p. 2).

The first chapter serves as the prolegomena for the book. After he advances the above thesis he discusses what he calls the importance of having multiple sight lines, which is the same as a multidisciplinary approach. One of the ways that Judg 9 is viewed is through narrative analysis. This type of analysis is necessary to understand how the storyteller conveys his message. He also outlines his assumptions: coherence and the recoverability of authorial intent. Besides narrative analysis the other approaches used are rhetorical and social-scientific analysis. These approaches are combined to understand the monarchic context of the passage.

Chapter two notes two tensions generally discussed within the study of Judg 9. The first has to do with the reader’s response to the chapter and how the reader tries to make sense of the different elements of the story. The second tension deals with reconciling the presentation of kingship in this chapter with the presentation of kingship in the rest of the book. The remainder of the chapter surveys how different approaches have dealt with these two tensions. Oeste notes that the “differing interpretations of Judg 9 can be attributed, in large part, to the differing methods that scholars have applied to the chapter. Yet . . . very few scholars have applied more than one method to the same chapter or narrative block in Judges” (p. 54).

The third chapter provides a narrative analysis of Judg 9. He does this by first setting this chapter within the context of the Gideon narrative and the kingship motif within it. He then discusses the narrative structure of Judg 9. He notes five elements to the storyline of the Abimelech narrative: exposition (9:1–6), complication (9:7–15, 16–22), change (9:23–24), unraveling (9:25–55), and ending (9:56–57). Oeste believes that the structure “illustrates the dangers of utilizing kinship ties as a basis for power, both for those seeking power, and for those who support their rise” (p. 115). Jotham’s fable, for instance, illustrates the dangers of promoting an illegitimate king.

Oeste spends the fourth chapter engaging in a rhetorical analysis of Abimelech. He argues that the rhetorical structure “allows readers not only to appreciate the literary artistry of the passage, but also to recognize how this literary artistry has been harnessed to achieve the persuasive aims of its implied author” (p. 119). The key elements to the rhetorical context, which he also refers to as the argumentative context, are the dangers of elevating both kinsman and unworthy people to positions of leadership.

The fifth chapter discusses the social world of Judg 9. He begins by noting the difficulty of the modern reader in understanding the cultural aspects of a chapter like this one. He advocates a social-scientific analysis of that text and advances two different contexts in which this is to be applied. The first context is the socio-cultural world described in the text. The second is the socio-cultural context “presupposed by the rhetoric of the text—the world of the implied author and his implied audience” (p. 175). The summation of this analysis is that there is a warning within this chapter against those who seek power illegitimately.

In the sixth and final chapter Oeste summarizes the conclusions of his multidisciplinary approach to Judg 9. He recaps the contribution that each method makes towards understanding the chapter and then combines them to argue that the narrative further argues “for a centralized monarchy embodied in a human king” (p. 236). He further states that this helps to make sense of the tension between the epilogue and this chapter: “Both parts of the book of Judges illustrate the chaos that comes without proper leadership” (p. 236).

There are several admirable features to this work, but I will only mention three here. The first is that Oeste is well-versed in the scholarship on Judges, and his presentation of the different positions is clear and charitable. One of the most helpful aspects of this book is the way that Oeste discusses the history of scholarship. Most surveys of the literature just go through various works chronologically, but Oeste analyzes works according to their methodology. He looks at redactional, social-scientific, ideological, and literary-holistic studies. With this he is able to show the contribution that each of these types of studies have made to understanding both the overall narrative and Judg 9 in particular.

The second admirable feature of the work is that it recognizes one of the greatest difficulties in the study of Judges, the tension within scholarship and interpretation between the synchronic view of the book being largely pro-monarchial and the diachronic assumption that there are anti-monarchial texts present within the book. This tension has only become stronger with the rise of synchronic studies in the book, and Oeste advances one of the most comprehensive and cogent arguments on how to understand the view of monarchy throughout the entirety of the book of Judges, not just in an individual part of it.

The third is that Oeste stays focused on his thesis and argues towards it. In a larger monograph like this it is common for the author to lose sight of the overall intended goal and go off on tertiary things, but Oeste stays focused and draws his content back to how Judg 9 functions as a warning against the promotion of both familial relations and unworthy individuals to leadership positions illegitimately. Oeste's writing is clear, and he makes a solid case towards his thesis.

While the overwhelming majority of this work is very clear and helpful there are three critiques that I would like to make of Oeste's work. First, Oeste believes that Judg 9 is a single narrative unit. He puts it within the context of the Gideon narrative, but says that it functions on its own as an individual unit. This is difficult to prove, especially since this is the only hereditary leadership found within the book of Judges and none of the normal formulaic elements that are common to the other leaders in the book are used to describe Abimelech. There is no doubt that this unit can be studied on its own, which Oeste does quite well, but to advance that it is intentionally set apart within the overall narrative of Judges is more difficult to prove.

Second, he assumes that the majority position among scholars is that Judg 9 is as an anti-monarchial text. This is not the case. The majority of scholarship views Judg 9 as anti-Abimelech, not anti-monarchial. There is an odd tension, however, in that most works that focus on Judg 9 start with the assumption, like Oeste does, that the majority of scholarship views this chapter as anti-monarchial. This chapter provides a very interesting test-case among scholarship in that most scholars are under the impression that the prevailing understanding of the chapter is anti-monarchial, but in actuality the prevailing opinion is that this chapter is anti-Abimelech.

The third feature of the book that could be improved upon is that it could contain a greater discussion of how Gideon's response in Judg 8:23 is to be understood within the framework of monarchy within the book as a whole. Oeste does explore how this text relates to Judg 9 but not how it relates to the book as a whole. Furthermore, Gideon's response in 8:23 is the text predominately viewed by scholarship as the most anti-monarchial of the book (if not the most anti-monarchial of the OT). This text could have been dealt with in more detail.

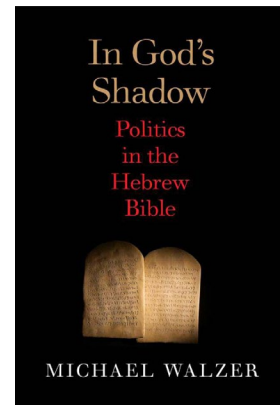
Despite these relatively minor critiques, this is a well-argued work that gives a compelling argument and answer to one of the most perplexing questions in the study of Judges. This work would benefit any

serious student or scholar working through the book of Judges or the reader with an interest in the study of the monarchy in ancient Israel.

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Michael Walzer. *In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. xxi + 232 pp. £20.00/\$28.00.

The past several years have seen a deepening interest in the political vantage point of the OT. Some of the more notable volumes that have appeared are Norman Gottwald's *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Westminster John Knox), J. G. McConville's *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology* (Continuum), Mira Morgenstern's *Conceiving a Nation: The Development of Political Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (Pennsylvania State University Press), and Jules Gleicher's *Political Themes in the Hebrew Scriptures* (Palgrave Macmillan). The recent publication of *In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible* by Michael Walzer can be added to this list. Walzer is professor emeritus of social science at Princeton University and has widely published in the area of political theory.



In the preface Walzer gives the aim of the book as well as his vantage point. He also discusses what his work does and does not intend to accomplish. The aim of the work “is to examine the ideas about politics, the understandings of government and law, that are expressed in the Hebrew Bible” (p. ix). He approaches the biblical text from the point of view of a political theorist, not a theologian. With this his intention is not to figure out whether the events of the Bible are truthful or to confirm his own political view (social democrat) or write as an apologist, and he is not trying to discuss the influence of biblical politics on modern political thought. Instead, he wants to answer questions that surround the kingship of God, his giving of divine commands, and how that relates to issues of national decision making. With this in mind he notes that the Hebrew Bible is not concerned primarily with politics and that the biblical writers are actually rather anti-political with their understanding of God as a man of war and as king. With this said, however, he believes that even anti-politics is a type of politics and that the biblical writers have much to say about political matters. Therefore, the “program in this book [is] to look at the biblical writers, more or less chronologically, as they deal with the different covenants, the three legal codes, the successive regimes, the wars of Israelite judges and kings, and the experience of imperial conquest and to describe the arguments . . . that the writers make about legitimacy, hierarchy, and social justice” (p. xiii).

His treatment is broken into twelve chapters that are roughly fifteen to twenty pages in length. In the first nine chapters Walzer goes through various biblical subjects in roughly chronological order. Chapters ten and eleven deviate from this slightly with a discussion of messianism and politics in chapter ten and a discussion of elders in ancient Israel in chapter eleven. The final chapter entitled “Politics in the Shadow” serves as Walzer’s concluding thoughts. His analysis can be partially summed up in the following, “The Bible contains an explicit history of political change—from judges to kings to priests—

even as it explicitly repudiates the idea of change in religion or morality. Its writers invite, though they do not practice, a comparative politics; they neither invite nor practice a comparative religion. Each successive regime has its defenders; no alternative religion is ever defended” (204).

There are a number of admirable qualities in Walzer’s work. The first is the work’s readability. This book is written in such a way that either a popular or academic audience could find great benefit from its content. A second admirable quality is the way in which Walzer is clear about what this book aims to do (and not to do) and the vantage point from which this subject is viewed. Walzer understands his limitations as a political theorist when discussing biblical ideas, but realizes that he has valuable insight into the text. His discussion of the text from the vantage point of a political theorist allows him to approach the text without the baggage of some of the preconceived notions of biblical scholarship. This is evidenced on the issue of kingship, which has largely been viewed negatively within biblical studies. Waltzer, while he sees a tension in the portrayal of the monarchy, does not appear to see kingship as any more antithetical to the rule of God than any other political authority, such as the authority that is exercised by priests or prophets (see p. 204). A third contribution is his keen look at different biblical subjects and the politics inherent within them. One of the more interesting subjects broached was that of the politics of wisdom. While it is easy to see how prophets, priests, kings, and law encounter politics, it would be easy to skip over wisdom.

There are also some deficiencies to be noted within this work. There are a few minor things that if included in this work would have improved it significantly. First, it lacks a Scripture index. The index includes page numbers where biblical books are referenced, but it references no individual passages. A Scripture index is standard on any book that deals largely with the biblical text. For instance, it would be helpful to be able to find all of the references to Deut 17:14–20 instead of having to skim back through the work. Second, the book lacks a bibliography. All of the authors that are referenced within the body of the work can be found in the one index of the book and in the endnotes section, but it would be helpful to have a bibliography. Third, there are a number of important works on this subject that Walzer does not interact with at all. Of the recent books dealing with politics and the OT mentioned in the introduction of this review the only one that Waltzer interacts with is Gottwald. There are a few other glaring omissions. On the subject of Yahweh as a man of war there are two works that could have been interacted with: Miller’s *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (SBL) and Longman and Reid’s *God Is a Warrior* (Zondervan). On the subject of the kingship of God, Waltzer’s discussion is largely dependent upon the older work of Buber. He would have done well to interact with Gray’s *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God* (T&T Clark) and Brettler’s *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (T&T Clark). There are other aspects of the work that could be discussed here, but many of them center on theological subjects that are not the main focus of this work.

While I disagree with several points of Walzer’s work, there is still much value to it. It will not become the standard for understanding political thought within the OT, but it does serve as a valuable introductory-level read into the political thought of the OT from the vantage point of a political theorist. This book would be valuable to the discerning reader who is interested in politics and biblical thought.

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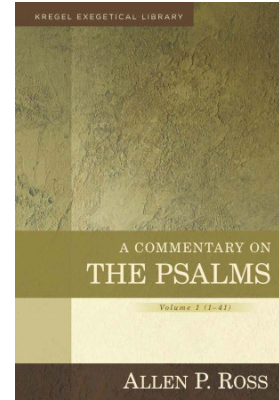
Allen P. Ross. *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1–41)*. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 887 pp. \$44.99.

Allen P. Ross's *A Commentary on the Psalms* represents the inaugural volume in the Kregel Exegetical Library. Ross is a professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School and has published commentaries on Genesis, Leviticus, and Proverbs as well as a widely used Hebrew grammar.

This volume contains an introduction to the entire book of Psalms and exegesis and exposition of the first book of the Psalms (Pss 1–41). The introduction is quite extensive and contains about 155 pages of background on the entire Psalter. The introduction begins with a discussion of the value of the Psalms. In this section Ross discusses how the “Psalter has for ages served as the book of praises and prayers for the worshipping community as well as for devout individuals in their private meditations” (p. 28). The Psalms then serve as “the model for our songs of praise, the instruction for our prayers and meditations, and the inspiration for our quest for piety” (pp. 28–29). In the remainder of the introduction Ross discusses the text and ancient versions of the Psalms, the meanings of the titles and headings in the Psalms, the history of interpretation of the book, how to interpret Hebrew poetry, the different literary forms of the Psalms, how the Psalms are used in worship, the theology of the Psalms, and how to exposit the Psalms.

The commentary proper discusses each psalm in three sections: an introduction, a commentary in exposition form, and a discussion of the message and application of the psalm. The introduction consists of three parts: a translation of the text and a discussion of the textual variants, a discussion of the context and composition and context of the psalm, and an exegetical analysis of the psalm (which consists of a summary and outline). The commentary in exposition form goes verse by verse through the psalm and is based upon the outline that is given in the exegetical analysis section. The commentary is a mixture of pastoral sensitivity and academic analysis. Each section of the psalm is summarized in one line and discussed in a very thorough manner. The final section is the message and application of the psalm. This section discusses the relevance of the psalm for life today and usually draws links to other biblical texts, especially NT texts that have affinity with the concepts or themes that are present in the psalm.

This volume is a veritable gold mine of expository content and academic analysis. There are several features within this volume that make it an indispensable resource on the Psalms for the student, the pastor, or the academic. First, like Ross's other commentaries this volume not only contains great exegetical content, but also keen pastoral insights. It is rare for a commentary to contain both of these elements, but it is even rarer for a commentary to do both of these things exceedingly well. I imagine that a great many preachers will use his one sentence summaries as their explanation of the psalm. By way of example, his summary of the message of Ps 8 is this: “God has chosen to display his majesty by enabling weak and vulnerable mortals to play a part in carrying out his plan for creation” (p. 298). Second, each psalm is thoroughly researched and analyzed. One of the ways that this is most readily apparent is in the analysis of individual words in their Hebrew form. Many commentaries, even technical ones, shy away from using the Hebrew text and favor transliteration, but this volume (and hopefully the series as a whole) does not. Third, the message and application section serves as a great help for both teaching



and meditation in the personal application of the psalm. Ross's insights are tempered by sound exegesis and robust biblical-theological knowledge.

While my comments about this volume are overwhelmingly positive, there is one thing that could have improved this volume: a lengthier discussion on the current trends in Psalter study. Ross spends much of his time in the history of interpretation section discussing the form critical method that dominated Psalms study for much of the previous generation. This, however, has not been the main concern of more recent research on the Psalms. One of the major discussions (if not the major one) in Psalms research today is the canonical shape of the Psalter and whether the book as a whole contains a coherent or intentional message. This subject is largely ignored in this volume. This, however, does not distract too much from the overall high quality of the work whose great value is found largely in the analysis and commentary of each of the individual psalms.

This volume should serve as a primary volume for preaching and teaching Psalms 1–41 and would benefit any student, pastor, Bible study teacher, or biblical scholar. It will be the first volume that I consult when teaching or researching one of these psalms. Ross's volume makes the Kregel Exegetical Library look very promising as a series. Time will soon tell whether the series will maintain this high level of pastoral sensitivity while at the same time maintaining academic rigor or if this is just a distinctive of Ross's unique gifts. The next volume slated to come out in the series is Robert Chisholm on Judges and Ruth.

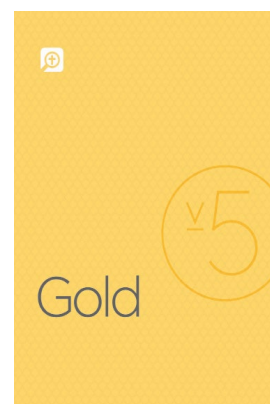
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— NEW TESTAMENT —

Logos Bible Software 5. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012. www.logos.com/comparison

Logos Bible Software released Logos 5 in November 2012. Logos continues to serve its users both by improving its current features and by adding new features to enhance biblical study. Logos 4 users will notice improvements to the look of the Logos 5 homepage, offering you the option to customize it according to what interests you. While the improvements to existing features result in greater aesthetics and a more friendly usability, the new features take serious Bible study to the next level, making Logos 5 a worthwhile investment. Some of these new features include the following:

1. *Clause Search and Search Suggestions.* The ability to search an entire library in seconds makes Logos invaluable to students of Scripture. Logos has greatly improved its search options by suggesting examples based on words typed. Now users can find material that not only includes the specific words in the search, but also discover any item related to the word being searched. Clause searches can be done in English, Greek, or Hebrew.



2. *Timeline*. All of history is redemptive history, and the new Logos Timeline feature highlights this truth by showing how God has worked in time throughout the ages. The timeline includes Bible history, church history, and world history.
3. *Bible Sense Lexicon*. Words in Hebrew and Greek are often broader than in English. With this new feature you can learn the various senses in which words are used in a particular biblical context.
4. *Topic Guide*. Logos now provides the ability to search according to topic, linking passages, themes, people, places, and events to consolidate as much material as possible in just a few seconds time.
5. *Bibliography*. The bibliography feature records the resources you have used and offers you the possibility of annotating your bibliography. You can record your sources according to the style of your choosing (SBL, Turabian, MLA, etc.). Not only will Logos 5 sort your bibliography, you can share it and export it to a personal document and print.

These are not the only new features in Logos 5, but they are the ones that I found to be the most helpful and beneficial for biblical studies. In order to maximize Logos Bible Software, customers can utilize demo videos on the Logos website. In addition, Logos has continued to keep its product valuable by making it accessible across multiple platforms. Logos can be used on Windows and Mac, as well as iPhones, Androids, and tablets (iPad and Kindle Fire).

One of the largest obstacles presented to customers is cost. This is true whether you are currently using Logos 4 and considering an upgrade or if you are considering purchasing Logos Bible Software the first time. With regard to upgrading from Logos 4 there are a few things to consider. If you use Logos primarily as an electronic library for reading commentaries and other theological literature without implementing a lot of the research tools available, then upgrading may not be worth the investment. However, if you do utilize the search tools and exegetical guides in your study, then the datasets that are unique to Logos 5 will definitely benefit your studies.

Another factor to consider when upgrading from Logos 4 to Logos 5 is that all the new features of Logos 5 are included in Logos Gold base package and higher. You would keep every resource you already own in your Logos 4 package while receiving all the new datasets of Logos 5 if you purchase Gold or higher. This means that you do not necessarily have to purchase the same package of Logos 5 that you have in Logos 4 to receive all the benefits. For example, I owned Logos 4 Portfolio and upgraded to Logos 5 Platinum. While Portfolio is technically a higher package, moving from Portfolio 4 to Platinum 5 was not a downgrade.

Regarding the cost, Logos offers various options to alleviate the cost. If you are upgrading, Logos has a “dynamic pricing” calculator to factor what you already own so that you receive a credit toward your upgrade. Your upgrade will be specifically tailored to your current package. One more option Logos offers is a monthly payment plan that spreads the cost out so that purchasing a Logos 5 package is made easier.

If you are a layperson, student, pastor, or teacher considering purchasing Bible study software to aid in your study of Scriptures, Logos will exceed your expectations. The user-friendly software along with

the searching capabilities available will help in your study. Logos Bible Software provides one a wide variety of commentaries, theological works, and language tools available electronically.

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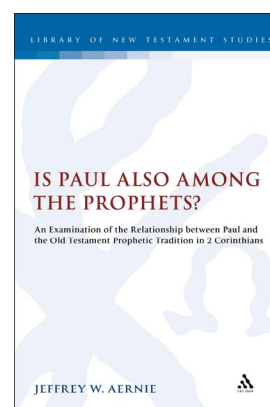
Jeffrey W. Aernie. *Is Paul Also among the Prophets? An Examination of the Relationship between Paul and the Old Testament Prophetic Tradition in 2 Corinthians*. Library of New Testament Studies 467. New York: T&T Clark, 2012. 320 pp. \$120.00.

Perhaps with Bruce Winter's *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* in view, Jeffrey W. Aernie has written a perceptive monograph in which he asks, *Is Paul Also among the Prophets?* Chapter 1 introduces the work's general contours. Aernie's main objective is to analyze the autobiographical sections of 2 Cor 2:14–7:4 and chs. 10–13 in order to determine the ways in which the prophetic tradition of the OT influenced the “dimension(s) of Paul's apostolic self-presentation and rhetoric” (p. 1). Although Aernie examines 1 Cor 9:15–18 and 14:20–25 for contextual and methodological purposes, he focuses primarily on 2 Corinthians by building on the seminal works in this field written by Karl O. Sandnes, Florian Wilk, and Tobias Nicklas, which paid little or no attention to the letter.

Chapter 2 involves an analysis of the prophetic tradition within the OT, Second Temple Judaism, the Hellenistic world, and the Gospel traditions, specifically paying attention to the way it developed. In the OT, the prophetic material of Israel carried an internal progression, as seen in the influence of prophetic figures such as Moses, Samuel, and Elijah and the relationship between the prophetic material within the different literary corpora. As an organic entity, the prophetic tradition continued to develop in the literature of Second Temple Judaism and the Gospel traditions. Although these sources exhibit a wide array of emphases, Aernie argues that there was “continuity in the development of the material throughout Israel's history” (p. 71). In fact, a crucial argument is that the prophetic material in the OT determined the shape and function of prophetic literature from Moses' day to the time of Jesus and his contemporaries. This, for Aernie, seems to make the prophetic tradition the most plausible background for Paul's self-presentation and rhetoric.

After outlining a general (though not monolithic) prophetic tradition, Aernie, in chapter 3, applies this framework to 1 Cor 9:15–18 and 14:20–25. This chapter functions as a “methodological precursor” to his analysis of 2 Corinthians (p. 72), and its purpose is to explain Paul's relationship to the prophetic material and the use of it in his rhetoric. In 1 Cor 9:15–18, the terms ἀνάγκη and οὐαί, the former as a divine compulsion and the latter as an eschatological woe, places Paul within the prophetic tradition that centers on God's relationship to his prophets. The apostle therefore viewed his οἰκονομία as a prophetic commission. The exegetical consideration of Paul's use of the Isaianic movement from exile to restoration in 1 Cor 14:20–25 only further substantiates his argument. It demonstrates that Paul's apostolic self-presentation and the form of his rhetoric were shaped by OT prophetic material.

Chapter 4 deals with Paul's prophetic self-presentation in 2 Corinthians. In particular, Aernie compares Paul's description of his ministry with that of three OT prophets: Moses, the Isaianic Servant,



and Jeremiah. After identifying the four elements of a prophetic call in Paul's self-presentation (i.e., an initial theophany, a divine commission, recognition of the prophet's own insufficiency, and a divine work of grace that overcomes the prophet's deficiency; p. 117), he parallels Paul's call, nature of his ministry, and characteristics of that ministry with Moses's, concluding that they both function as insufficient, suffering prophets. He then compares Paul's authority and mission to that of the Isaianic Servant, demonstrating that Paul mediates the new eschatological work of God as an ambassador of Christ. Lastly, Aernie notes the overlap between Paul's and Jeremiah's ministries and considers Paul a minister of the new covenant, primarily because of the nature of his call, the description of his apostolic authority (i.e., building and tearing down), and his discussion about the proper criteria for evaluating one's boast. Nevertheless, for Aernie, Paul is not the second Moses, nor the typological embodiment of the Servant, nor a type of second Jeremiah. After all, the apostle can relate to elements in the Mosaic *and* Isaianic tradition, proving that he is not bound by either but stands within a developing tradition. Paul therefore presents himself as a member of the prophetic tradition.

Chapter 5 investigates Paul's prophetic rhetoric in 2 Cor 2:14–16; 4:1–6; 6:14–7:1; 12:1–10. Aernie discovers a “distinctly prophetic hermeneutic” (p. 185), whereby Paul incorporates prophetic material into his rhetorical argumentation in 2 Corinthians. In 2:14–4:6, the origin, nature, and function of Paul's apostolic ministry and the gospel is rooted in the prophetic narrative of God's triumphal, messianic victory (2:14–16) and the redemptive activity of Isaiah's narrative (4:1–6). Moreover, the catena in 6:14–7:1 demonstrates that Paul situates the theological existence of the Corinthians in the prophetic hope of restoration from an exilic condition. Lastly, Paul's failed heavenly ascent and thorn narrative in 12:1–10 serve as an interesting rhetorical connection with the ascent motif of Isa 14 and Ezek 28, two texts that portray ascension to God's throne as self-exaltation that results in judgment.

Aernie's conclusion in chapter 6 reasserts his principal contention: the OT prophetic tradition influenced Paul's apostolic identity and rhetorical agenda in 2 Corinthians. It also lucidly summarizes his entire argument and ends with the implications that his study can have on other texts within 2 Corinthians (i.e., 1:3–11 and chs. 8–9).

I certainly commend Aernie for his work on Paul and the prophetic tradition, which, from his perspective, solely operates as *a* lens, not *the* lens, through which to analyze Paul's apostolic identity and rhetoric. As such, he does not concede to the Hellenistic/Judaism divide, *either* situating Paul in the Greco-Roman world *or* his Jewish heritage (hence the “also” in his title). Students and pastors interested in Paul can certainly learn much from Aernie's exegetical treatment and theological engagement with OT prophetic material and 2 Corinthians.

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G. K. Beale. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 192 pp. \$17.99.

Over the past three decades, Professor G. K. Beale has made a substantial contribution to the study of the use of the OT through numerous influential publications, including his magnum opus, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, and his edited volumes *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?* and *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (with D. A. Carson). In his most recent book, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, Beale writes as a seasoned teacher “to provide pastors, students, and other serious readers of Scripture with a how-to approach for interpreting the use of the OT in the NT” (pp. ix–x).

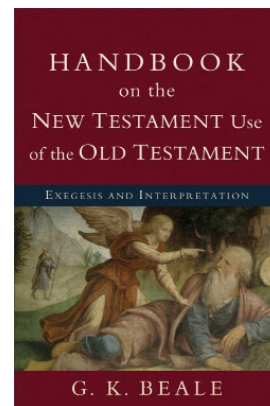
Chapter 1 introduces readers to various interpretive challenges and debates concerning the OT in the NT. The most significant question is whether the NT interprets the OT in line with its original meaning. Beale briefly summarizes and critiques the positions of Longenecker, Enns, and Stanley, who argue, for various reasons, that NT writers often do not cite the OT contextually. Beale notes the complexity of these issues but contends that NT authors *do* consistently cite the OT with an awareness of its wider literary context. He also reviews the long-standing debate over typology and concludes that biblical types include five essential elements: (1) analogical correspondence, (2) historicity, (3) foreshadowing, (4) escalation, and (5) retrospection (p. 14).

Chapter 2 defines key terms. “Quotation” is “a direct citation of an OT passage that is easily recognizable by its clear and unique verbal parallelism” (p. 29), and “allusion” is “a brief expression consciously intended by an author to be dependent on an OT passage” (p. 31). Beale suggests that the term “intertextuality” is fuzzy and sometimes confusing; he prefers to speak of “inner-biblical exegesis” or “allusion” (p. 40). Beale suggests that strong verbal, syntactical, and thematic parallels are of prime importance for seeing the OT in the NT.

Chapter 3 is, in Beale’s words, “the core of the book” (p. 41). While there is no airtight method ensuring correct interpretations, Beale’s approach is commendable for its rigorous examination of OT and NT texts in their literary and redemptive-historical contexts. He lays out nine steps to interpreting the NT use of the OT:

1. Identify the OT reference.
2. Analyze the broad NT context where the citation occurs.
3. Examine the broad and immediate OT context.
4. Survey the use of this OT text by early and late Jewish authors.
5. Compare the specific wording of the texts in the NT, LXX, MT, and other sources to determine which text the NT author relies on.
6. Analyze the author’s textual use of the OT.
7. Analyze the author’s interpretive (hermeneutical) use of the OT.
8. Analyze the author’s theological use of the OT.
9. Analyze the author’s rhetorical use of the OT.

Beale briefly illustrates several of these steps in ch. 3 and offers extended discussion of steps 4, 5, and 7 in the next three chapters.



Chapter 4 discusses twelve different ways that NT authors employ the OT, with examples of each. Beale extensively examines the typological use of the OT (pp. 57–66), illustrated by numerous texts, including Matt 2:15 (Hos 11:1), John 13:18 (Ps 41:9), and John 19:36 (Exod 12:46 and Ps 34:20). He also devotes substantial attention to the “Use of an Old Testament Segment as a Blueprint or Prototype for a New Testament Segment” (pp. 80–89). Beale argues that Dan 7 serves as a framework for Rev 4–5, that Isa 49–55 provides the main conceptual substructure for Galatians (following Harmon), and that Rom 9:25–11:35 is organized around the OT theme of captivity-restoration.

Chapter 5 unfolds five key hermeneutical and theological presuppositions of NT authors that served as “an ever-present heuristic guide to the OT” (p. 98):

1. Corporate solidarity or representation is assumed.
2. Jesus represents true Israel.
3. Earlier and later parts of history correspond since God’s plan unify them.
4. Christ ushers in the period of eschatological fulfillment.
5. Christ is central to redemptive history and is “the *key to interpreting the earlier portions of the OT and its promises*” (pp. 96–97).

Beale claims that each of these presuppositions is rooted in the OT itself, though most examples are given in footnotes and not argued for in detail.

Chapter 6 discusses how and why to study the use of the OT in Jewish sources. Beale suggests approaching Jewish interpretations of the OT (especially from the Second Temple period) as ancient commentaries, which may offer insight into the way NT authors cite Scripture. This task entails three basic steps: (1) collect and study Jewish references to a specific OT text; (2) note trends or patterns in the Jewish employments of a given text; (3) compare Jewish and NT uses of the same OT text, which may be similar, different, or even antithetical (p. 103). Beale includes a helpful annotated bibliography to guide readers through the labyrinth of Jewish sources, and he illustrates his method by studying the “tongues of fire” in Acts 2 in light of its OT background and clarifying Jewish references (pp. 124–29).

Chapter 7 examines in detail the informal citation of Isa 22:22 in Rev 3:7 using Beale’s nine-step approach that ch. 3 outlines. Beale masterfully unfolds the original context of Isa 22:22, which he claims develops Isa 9:6–7, and he demonstrates that John uses Isa 22:22 *typologically* to stress “that Jesus holds the power over salvation and judgment” (p. 141). The *Handbook* concludes with a select bibliography on NT use of the OT and author and text indices.

I offer three modest critiques of this useful, well-written book. First, Beale’s argument in chapter 5 could be strengthened by comparing the interpretive presuppositions of NT authors to those of their Jewish contemporaries (from Qumran to Alexandria). As Darrell Bock observes, first-century Jews and Christians together affirmed corporate solidarity, typology, and Scripture’s authority, but NT authors differed radically in their view of Jesus as the Messiah and the inaugurated fulfillment of Scripture in him (in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [ed. Berding and Lunde; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007], p. 111).

Second, the chapters vary substantially in length, from 8 to 40 pages. Arguably the two most important chapters (3 and 5) in the *Handbook* are the shortest. The book comes to an abrupt end in ch. 7 and may have benefited from a brief conclusion that restates Beale’s methodological approach and stresses the importance of careful study of the OT in the NT for the church, as well as the academy.

Third, while Beale discusses abundant examples of the OT in the NT, he focuses primarily on the Gospels and Acts, Paul, and Revelation (as one would expect). Given the importance of the OT in

Hebrews and 1 Peter, it is somewhat surprising that these books do not feature more prominently in Beale's discussion. His bibliography includes 27 entries for Paul and 15 for Revelation, but only two entries for the General Epistles. Important additional studies of 1 Peter's use of the OT include those by Karen Jobes ("Got Milk? Septuagint Psalm 33 and the Interpretation of 1 Peter 2:1–3," *WTJ* 63 [2002]: 1–14) and Gene Green ("The Use of the Old Testament for Christian Ethics in 1 Peter," *TynBul* 41 [1990]: 276–89).

Numerous books and articles are published each year that explore the use of the OT in the NT, but Beale's *Handbook* stands out as a uniquely important and helpful contribution. This is the first book-length handbook written, not merely to expose readers to different *views* of the NT use of the OT, but to guide them step-by-step through the *interpretive task* itself. I can think of no one more suited than Professor Beale to write such a handbook, given his influential publications and respected teaching career at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Wheaton College, and Westminster Seminary.

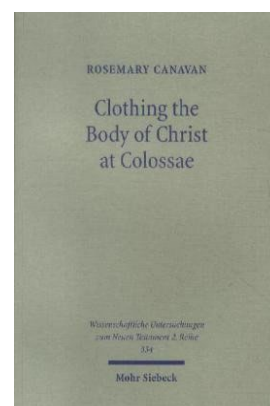
In conclusion, the *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* is required reading for students, scholars, pastors, and others who are interested in studying the relationship of the OT and the NT. The *Handbook* serves as a fitting complement to the masterful volume, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. I plan to use the *Handbook* in the classroom, as a supplemental hermeneutics textbook and a staple text in elective courses on the NT use of the OT. In the important and complex issue of the NT's use of the OT, Beale has once again proved to be a reliable guide.

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Rosemary Canavan. *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae: A Visual Construction of Identity*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 334. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. ix + 247 pp. £60.42/\$109.00.

In *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae*, Rosemary Canavan approaches the Epistle to the Colossians through a diverse variety of hermeneutical perspectives including the usage of visual exegesis, social identity theory, art history, and socio-rhetorical interpretation. In her thesis statement for the project, Canavan writes, "I propose that the imagery of clothing and body in Colossians 3:1–17 parallels and critiques a systematic visual construction of identity in the cities of the Lycus Valley in the first century CE" (p. 5). The clothing metaphor employed by the author of Colossians, in her view, is primarily aimed at constructing the identity of the church at Colossae by means of referring their headship and communal way of life to the person of Christ (see p. 6). She refers to this phenomenon as a "visual construction of identity" (p. 54).

In her "visual exegesis," she engages in the interpretation of Colossians through a comparison of the clothing metaphor in Col 3:1–17 with the usage and significance of clothing in ancient images from or connected to the Lycus Valley, such as statues, funerary monuments, stelae, and coins, in order to highlight a common pattern in which clothing in Greco-Roman works of art often convey virtue and vice.



While Canavan successfully demonstrates that the clothing metaphor in Col 3 should be situated within this cultural-artistic pattern, I am not convinced that she has shown that the text and author of Colossians were consciously informed by or consciously offering a “critique” of (p. 5) the virtue/vice themes in contemporaneous Greco-Roman works of art. She seems to suggest a conscious influence and usage of the pattern by the author when she states that the “images are the *basis* for the metaphor of clothing in the Letter to the Colossians” (p. 105, my emphasis). However, Canavan’s own work later in this monograph, concerning the intertextuality of the letter with the LXX which is arrived at through a socio-rhetorical interpretative technique that builds off of Vernon Robbins’s social theory (p. 58), actually makes a stronger case for the reception of the clothing metaphor from the OT than from works of art.

The socio-rhetorical method proves to be a powerful supplement to the interpretive task. This approach intentionally seeks to uncover the various levels of “texture” within a given piece of literature. I find the presentation/introduction, usage, and results of the socio-rhetorical approach itself to be one of the many strengths of this robust scholarly monograph (see pp. 57–64 for a concise and extremely helpful overview of the socio-rhetorical approach). The exegetical insights that surface from her application of the theory to Col 3:1–17 are illuminating. Her findings both add weight to the general perspectives of the existing Colossians commentaries and contribute a fresh interpretive perspective on the epistle.

For example, Canavan’s socio-rhetorical approach, by drawing attention to the “inner texture” of the epistle, reveals the “repetitive pattern of Χριστός” which then serves to create “an auditory effect” that “cements the heart of their identity, ἐν Χριστῷ, for the hearer” (p. 142). Through the identification of a chiasm (in Col 3:10–12), she uncovers a literary and lexical inner-textual centeredness on Christ (pp. 143–46). Her careful and strong exegesis and her many charts make this section intellectually satisfying and pedagogically successful. Canavan’s visual aids are consistently helpful throughout the monograph and especially in her fivefold appendix. These charts are of the sort that one will find themselves wanting to not only refer to them, but to actually read through them for edification and enjoyment.

In addition to a socio-rhetorical focus on the “inner texture” (i.e., elements within the text itself), Canavan engages in a multi-perspectival investigation of the “intertextures,” or the various elements outside the text (whether canonical, Jewish/Christian, or Greco-Roman) which are detected and which contribute to our understanding of the various “textures” of meaning in the text. She focuses on themes of identity, clothing, and body in the various potential streams of intertexture. Many of her findings here contribute not only to a generally edifying grammatical-historical exegesis, but to the identification and explication of fresh and genuinely orthodox theological themes within the text.

For example, through her intertextual investigation of clothing language in the OT, Canavan catalogues the usage of clothing terms in the LXX, particularly noting the usages that occur in a context in which someone is clothed in priestly garments, or clothed metaphorically with a virtue or a vice. She argues that these usages (especially the metaphorical ones) would likely be, “embedded in the memory of those familiar with the scriptures” and that “consciously or unconsciously” these images would be weaved into the way of thinking of both the author and his hearers (p. 150). I find this to be compelling and the most likely source for the clothing metaphor in Col 3.

Later, investigating the social/cultural textures, she argues that the vice list in Col 3:5 is evoking the category of “purity laws” (pp. 169–70). I completely agree with her assertion, yet I am disappointed that she does not develop this point further before quickly moving on. It strikes me that a deeper investigation

of the Colossian vices and their relation to Jewish purity laws might have strongly contributed to her sections on identity in light of the Jewish antecedents and inherent Jewish elements that carry over to this new eschatological identity in Christ.

The section on “ideological” texture is thoroughly satisfying. Canavan detects and contrasts in Col 3:1–17 the ideology of Rome, which promotes unity through hierarchical structure, with the “ideology of the Christ communities,” which also promotes unity but through a more egalitarian vision for community. In other words, she perceives that the ideology of Rome is “counteracted in Christ” (p. 174).

I do have several very minor, mostly exegetical, disagreements with Canavan’s conclusions. First, though she is certainly not alone in making the argument that σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ should be translated “body of Christ” rather than “the substance is Christ,” I, along with the majority of interpreters, find that translation to be highly unlikely. When she makes the assertion that “the auditory effect” would have been that what “the first century CE audience heard was ‘body of Christ,’” while the “coupling of ‘shadow’ and ‘substance’ may have been a secondary understanding,” I find this proposition to be quite puzzling indeed (p. 156). Are we really to believe that a primarily Hellenistic, first-century audience would have been unaware of or unlikely to recognize a popular Platonic substance/reality metaphor, a literary construct used even in Hellenistic Jewish circles long earlier by Philo? I believe that her (helpful) focus on the concept of “body” has led her to a strained exegetical conclusion in this case.

Likewise, and secondly, in trying to establish the clothing metaphor as a symbol of “the coming of age in the identity of Christ” (p. 156), Canavan glosses the verbal form of τελειόω with the (lexically possible according to Liddell and Scott) meaning of “consecration to a sacred office” (p. 155). She then tries to argue that the meaning of the substantive τέλειος allows us to conclude that, in Colossians, this idea of “consecration” is in play. She writes, “The clothing imagery that places love upon all links that love as the bond of the coming age, confirming membership in the kingdom that is the body of Christ and consecrating them as ministers in Christ” (p. 155). I find this to be a problematic and improbable interpretation, for five reasons: (1) the form in Colossians is a noun, not a verb, and neither BDAG nor Liddell and Scott mention the noun form as carrying the meaning “consecration”; (2) the context argues for a more traditional rendering of the word as “mature” or “perfect”; (3) even if it did mean “consecrated,” the addition of “confirming membership” is nowhere to be found in the text; (4) the “kingdom” and “the body” are not equated in the text of Colossians, and this too is a concept which must be read in and one that I find to be incommensurable with the whole of Pauline theology; and (5) while it is theologically true that all members of Christ’s body are ministers and priests in some sense, Col 3 does not frame the argument in this way. Ultimately, it seems that she has read in some right (and some wrong) doctrines which can perhaps be established elsewhere (or nowhere, as in the case of the “kingdom”/“body” equation) but not in or from the text of Colossians.

Thirdly, Canavan offers a theologically perplexing statement which asserts that the “community assembly” is also “the resurrected body of Christ” (p. 157). While such a concept is probably consonant with a Roman Catholic view of the Church as the Body of Christ, I would argue that it is not derivable from the text of Colossians, nor in fact, any biblical text.

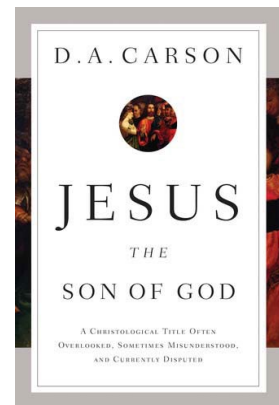
Despite these critiques, I find *Clothing the Body of Christ at Colossae* to be a thoroughly rigorous, sociologically conscious, exegetically illuminating, and archaeologically rich world-class and well-argued monograph. It is not an overstatement to say that the work will indeed become a standard reference volume for all serious future scholarly work on Colossians, particularly studies that focus on the exegesis of Col 3:1–17. Canavan provides an engaging, multifold interpretation of the epistle through

the use of “visual exegesis” and the socio-rhetorical method. The result is both a significant contribution to our understanding of the culture and background to Colossians and a wealth of exegetical insights which can serve the cause of orthodox theological discourse in broad and powerful ways.

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D. A. Carson. *Jesus the Son of God: A Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 128 pp. \$15.99.

D. A. Carson’s survey of the term *Son of God* comprises three chapters of sound thinking and engaging prose on a topic of great concern for missions among Muslims and translation principles. You will be tempted to skip chapters one and two in order to head right to chapter three (his evaluations). Do not give in to the temptation. It is well worth your time—it does not take much time to read a book that is slightly more than 100 pages in length—to work through the broad understanding of the christological title (chapter one) and the exegesis of Heb 1 and John 5:16–30 (chapter two). Both chapters plow some important ground for the harvest of chapter three.



Chapter one surveys the various uses of “son,” “sonship,” “son[s] of God,” and then Jesus “the Son of God.” It is not an exhaustive investigation of all the uses, rather a representative appraisal. One of the more significant thoughts in this chapter is the relationship between a father and son. Carson writes, “your paternity was responsible for much more than your genes; your father provided much more than school fees. He established your vocation, your place in the culture, your identity, your place in the family. This is the dynamic of a culture that is preindustrial and fundamentally characterized by agriculture, handcrafts, and small-time trade” (p. 20). Here Carson has laid some important groundwork for understanding Jesus as “Son.”

Discussing “Son of God,” Carson offers four categories to consider. First is the large grouping of passages in which “son” seems to fit no one particular or technical meaning; Carson calls this category “the catchall.” These are uses of “son” that are ambiguous as to what exactly they reveal beyond Jesus as the “Son of God.” Or perhaps more precisely, the catchall category contains those references that are not technical; they do not lead the reader to see just one meaning. Some may grimace at this category—rather hoping to make each of the references into more definitive statements about Jesus’ divinity—but Carson’s nuanced scholarship weathers the storm. The second of the four categories handles Jesus as “son” in reference to his role as the Davidic King. This is followed by the third group: references to Jesus as the fulfillment of Suffering Servant and as Israel, but not as a king. Finally, Carson presents “the most stunning Christological sonship passages . . . those that assign transparently divine status to the Son, or speak, with varying degrees of clarity, of his preexistence” (p. 40).

Whereas chapter one is a shotgun of categories, chapter two is a laser that focuses on two passages: Heb 1 and John 5. I will not belabor the details, but I will go right to the heart of the matter. In discussing these two passages Carson’s aim is to help the reader see “the exegetical pieces that would be forged into what would one day be called Trinitarianism.” I appreciate his work on these passages; it is lucid and

practical. The chapter is enlightened exegesis, making me wonder why those on the insider movements (IM) side of the discussion have yet to produce such solid exegesis. Perhaps the weakness of the chapter is that rather than providing a phrase-by-phrase reading of the two passages—which by Carson’s own admission “would make for a very long chapter” (p. 43)—the exegesis is bit jumpy and broad at times. Surely the publisher would have been happy to add a few more pages for this very important chapter.

Carson’s final chapter, “Jesus the Son of God’ in Christian and Muslim Contexts,” handles the subtitle of the book: *A Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*. This chapter’s tone is irenic and amiable to those proponents of IM, yet there are some sobering warnings. His six evaluations (pp. 91–109) provide admonitions and cautions to all of us:

1. “We should all recognize the extraordinary diversity of ‘son of’ expressions in the Bible. Probably they should not all be handled the same way” (p. 91). Carson concludes that it is better “to render the original more directly” and explain with notes when necessary. I did not read this as a concession to the new translations (i.e., it is *preferable* to translate *son* as *son* and *father* as *father*, which is essentially the WBT/SIL statement), but merely an acknowledgement that this is a complex concept in which it is best to translate the familial terms as familial terms with the explanation found in textual notes when necessary.
2. The second caution is directed toward the awkward work of Rick Brown. Carson finds Brown’s evidence flawed in three areas, but the following statement summarizes his evaluation: “The result of the logic being deployed is a systematically unfaithful translation” (p. 97).
3. Carson rues the pragmatism that drives the new translations—his diplomatic tone is appreciated here since he refuses to call these new translations Muslim-compliant. Anyone who has followed the conversation between the critics and proponents of IM is aware of the charge of pragmatism. Carson believes “a very good argument can be advanced for *consistent* renderings that reflect ‘Son’ and ‘Father’” (p. 100) as opposed to the pragmatic underpinnings of the new translations.
4. Substitution of *Son of God* with another phrase minimizes the reader’s appreciation for the reality that Jesus is the Davidic King, Israel, Messiah, and Incarnate Deity. “[T]he richest theological loading of the expression ‘Son of God’ as applied to Jesus springs from passages that deploy the expression to *cross-pollinate distinctive uses*. This fact constitutes a driving reason to translate ‘Son of God’ and ‘Father’ expressions consistently” (p. 107).
5. Penultimately, Carson urges more translators to obtain training in exegesis and hermeneutics, training that only enriches one’s linguistic abilities and skills.
6. Finally, Carson encourages those involved in new translations to reconsider their labors for three reasons: (a) such translations forge a disconnect between new believers and the church at large or the historical orthodox church; (b) Muslim converts’ voices appear to be negative toward the new translations, which are viewed as impositions upon new believers by Westerners; and (c) “One wonders if at least some of the tensions over Bible translation springs from the commitment on the part of some to provide adequate translations without simultaneously providing missionaries and pastors” (pp. 108–9). In other words, poor (or absent) discipleship has accompanied the distribution of new translations.

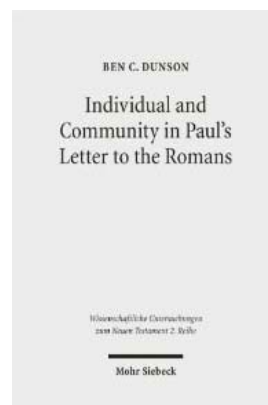
D. A. Carson has done mission work among Muslims a great service. Missionaries involved with Muslims will benefit if they add this book to a “must have” list (which also includes Lingel, Morton,

Nikides, *Chriislam: How Missionaries are Promoting an Islamized Gospel*, and Morton, *Insider Movements: Biblically Incredible or Incredibly Brilliant*). In fact, why not buy two and give one to your favorite IM proponent?

Bunyan Towery (the penname of a former missionary among Muslims and university professor, but now serving as a pastor of discipleship in the central United States)

Ben Dunson. *Individual and Community in Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 332. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. xii + 217 pp. £ 59.00/\$117.50.

The present monograph constitutes a revision of Dunson's PhD thesis, completed at the University of Durham under the supervision of Professor Francis Watson. Dunson's specific thesis is that there is an essential connection between the individual and the community in Pauline theology. Dunson clearly recognizes the potentially contentious nature of the thesis, noting what he perceives to be a "seismic shift" (p. 1) in Pauline studies from a primary focus on the individual to one centered on the community. However, he rightly notes from the beginning of the volume that the perpetuation of a divide between the individual and the community in the study of Paul will likely result in a diminished portrait of Pauline theology.



Dunson traces the basic divide between the individual and the community in studies of Paul to the distinctions developed between the anthropological reading of Rudolf Bultmann and the cosmological reading of Ernst Käsemann. Dunson engages constructively with both scholars in demonstrating the inherent strengths and weaknesses of their respective interpretations. He helpfully outlines that Bultmann's anthropological reading is not entirely devoid of an emphasis on communal identity, but notes that Bultmann never seems to provide an adequate description of the convergence between the individual and the community in Paul's letters. Conversely, while Dunson is sympathetic to much of Käsemann's cosmological reading, he shows clearly that Käsemann frequently fails to highlight the position of the individual within his apocalyptic Christology. In many ways it appears that Käsemann has simply swung the pendulum too far, pitting his cosmological reading against Bultmann's anthropology as a way to further emphasize the transparently communal dimensions of Paul's theology. Dunson attempts to find equilibrium between these two positions, not by swinging the pendulum away from Käsemann, but rather by demonstrating that Paul's conception of the individual and the community are intricately intertwined.

In an effort to offer a perspective on the individual and community that is coterminous with Paul, Dunson presents a structured analysis of the function of these two concepts in the material attributed to the Stoic philosopher Epictetus. Dunson's survey of Epictetus is not intended in the first instance to provide a comparison with Paul in terms of the *content* of each other's material, but with regard to their context and scope. Indeed, the most important point that arises out of Dunson's material is that a contemporary of Paul was dealing with the interrelation of the individual and the community. Thus, despite potential questions concerning whether Epictetus is the most constructive dialogue partner in analysis of Paul, the most significant import of this section for Dunson's argument is that within the

theoretical world of the first century CE it would not have been unexpected for someone to consider the relationship between these two formative concepts.

The methodological heart of Dunson's analysis is the formulation of his own typology of the individual in Paul. Through an extensive analysis of a number of texts from Romans, Dunson identifies eight types of Pauline individuals. The first half of the typology focuses primarily on the argument of Rom 2–4 and identifies the first four of Dunson's types: the characteristic individual (the Jewish judge of Rom 2–3), the generic individual, the binary individual (focusing on Jew-Gentile distinctions), and the exemplary individual (Abraham and David in Rom 4). The second half of Dunson's typology focuses on a wider section of Romans and attempts to deal more directly with those types of individuals that are evocative of the relationship between the individual and the community: the representative individual (Adam and Christ in Rom 5), the negative exemplary individual (the "I" in Rom 7), the somatic individual (those in the "body of Christ" in Rom 14), and the particular individual (the specific individuals mentioned in Rom 16). Dunson's arguments concerning each of the eight individuals in his typology are precise and well-nuanced. Even if one disagrees with certain exegetical decisions (e.g., the meaning of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Rom 3:23 or the identity of the ἐγώ in Romans 7), the cumulative force of Dunson's analysis makes it clear that the individual is indeed an essential figure in the rhetoric of Romans. Paul's understanding of the covenant community is constructed in constant conjunction with his understanding of the individual, not in opposition to it.

The most significant limitation of Dunson's argument is the lack of an extended discussion of the christological implications of his typology. Dunson helpfully demonstrates that Paul's discourse on eschatological judgment and justification are a description of the soteriological position of the individual *coram Deo*. To bridge the divide between the individual and the community, however, Paul's Christology is seemingly an essential starting point. Christ is the individual who restores the community as he stands *coram Deo*. I believe this notion is where Dunson is leaning in his analysis of the so-called representative individual (pp. 148–54), but I want to suggest that he take the argument one step further (a need Dunson himself recognizes; see p. 180n3). There is no isolated individual in Paul's theology and no community without individuals *precisely because* of Christ's act of identification and representation. It is in Christ that the anthropological and cosmological elements of Paul's theology are so thoroughly and essentially intertwined. This interconnection comes to light expressly in the Christological and pneumatological argument of Romans 8. There is no condemnation for those individuals who are in Christ Jesus because they are defined by the same Spirit—that which makes them a communal entity.

Notwithstanding my certain exegetical disagreements and a desire for further emphasis at a number of stages, Dunson persuasively develops the main thesis of his monograph. The individual and the community are inseparable realities in Pauline theology. The individual exists within the community, and the community is formed through the soteriological communion of individuals. Overall, Dunson's monograph represents a constructive contribution to Pauline theology and to the specific study of Romans.

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John K. Goodrich. *Paul as an Administrator of God in 1 Corinthians*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 152. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. xiv + 248 pp. €60.00/\$99.00.

An area that is attracting a great deal of attention in Paul's letters is the role of authority. The letter of 1 Corinthians is an important one to consider in this regard since Paul was the founder of the church at Corinth and dealt with leadership issues throughout his correspondence with this church. In *Paul as an Administrator of God in 1 Corinthians*, John Goodrich provides a study of two critical passages from 1 Cor 4 and 9 where Paul employs the word *oikonomos* and *oikonomia* for steward and administrator. What emerges is an engaging study with fresh insights on Paul, leadership, and authority.

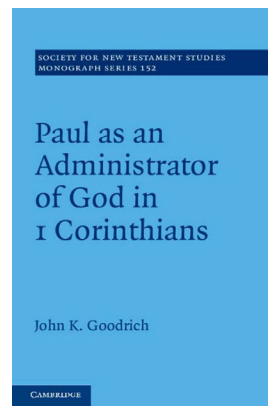
Goodrich's first chapter surveys apostolic authority broadly within 1 Corinthians. He rightfully notes how the letter of 1 Corinthians reveals in a unique way Paul's theology in practice, particularly how his gospel applies to real people and problems. Goodrich observes that several scholars have examined apostolic authority in various ways. Some consider how authority was constructed. J. H. Schütz examined Paul's authority and concluded that Paul's authority rested on two figures of interpretation: the gospel and the apostle himself. Scholars such as K. H. Rengstorf, J. B. Lightfoot, and K. O. Sandnes have studied the word *apostolos*, aiming to expose the nature of apostleship by examining this title's origin. J. N. Collins has considered the word *diakonos*, while others like S. J. Joubert and T. J. Burke have studied Paul's metaphor of being a father.

Others have examined instead how Paul's apostolic authority has been asserted. B. Holmberg, G. Shaw, E. A. Castelli, and S. H. Polaski have written regarding Paul's assertion of his authority. These studies have raised significant questions about the purity of Paul's motives and effects of Paul's apostolic authority. While E. Best, K. Ehrensberger, A. Long, and R. F. Talbot have also written about the assertion of Paul's authority, their studies provide a counter opinion. They claim that Paul's authoritarian practice can be explained more positively by other motives. For Best, Paul is using authoritative language that would naturally derive from the fact that he was the founder of the church at Corinth. For Ehrensberger, Long, and Talbot, any of Paul's language that would seem to be imposing was used to bring communities to an equal standing with Paul.

Goodrich takes a different approach to authority than these previous studies. Rather than defining Paul's power by the means that he constructed it or asserted it, Goodrich examines Paul's authority in both ways by examining the word administrators (*oikonomoi*). A book-length study of this image is absent within recent studies. Those that have considered this image are few, and their results are out of date.

When scholars have considered this word, some have examined it in terms of religious history, Jewish overlaps, Greco-Roman regal administrative backgrounds, Hellenistic moral philosophy, or Greco-Roman managerial slavery. Goodrich chooses to examine the word in relation to the three main administrative contexts in which it was used—regal, municipal, and private. Given that the Greco-Roman background is well-established as a means for evaluating Paul's writing, Goodrich's approach is a good one.

Goodrich's study then turns to a lengthy examination of administration (*oikonomoi*). This takes about half of the rest of the book and becomes a key contribution for his study. His examination of this



term within Greco-Roman culture is considerable. For its use for regal administrators, he looks at its appearance within sources that date from the Ptolemaic, Seleucid, Attelid, and Macedonian Kingdoms. When he considers the word's use for civic administrators, he considers sources from Hellenistic Greek cities, Roman Greek cities, and Roman colonies and *municipia*. For his examination of *oikonomoi* in private administration, he considers the economic handbooks from the Hellenistic philosophical tradition as well as the caricatures and stereotypes of private administrators. These are supplemented by Greek and Roman sources that use synonyms to *oikonomoi*.

He then brings the fruits of this Greco-Roman study to Paul's description of his administration within 1 Corinthians. The overlaps with Corinth's economy make sense as to why the *oikonomos* idea should be considered with the backdrop of private administration in mind rather than the regal or civic administration background. This is a helpful distinction as he proceeds further.

Goodrich then proposes that administration (*oikonomoi*) should be considered as a metaphor within 1 Corinthians. This particularly makes sense in 1 Cor 4:1 as Paul is providing a comparison. Paul declares that he and his fellow workers are to be considered as servants (*hōs oikonomoys*). The metaphor concept is also helpful in evaluating 1 Cor 9:17. In this text Paul declares that he has been entrusted with a stewardship (*oikonomian*).

Ideas from the Greco-Roman background to administration are then applied to the contexts of 1 Cor 4 and 9. In 1 Cor 4:1–5, Goodrich finds that *oikonomos* contributes to the understanding of hierarchy where the *oikonomos* had an intermediate position between that of the superior and those he was leading. As an *oikonomos*, Paul was vastly insignificant in comparison to his God. He was like a slave and his immediate delegate as were his other coworkers. As a result, there could be no real tension among his coworkers. These conclusions dovetail well with other studies on words like *diakonos* by J. N. Collins in which he also finds that 1 Cor 3–4 deemphasize a hierarchical role for Paul. Goodrich does rightfully see, however, that Paul as an *oikonomos* is not completely without authority. An *oikonomos* had a restricted authority when operating for his sovereign. He had authority when dispensing the message from his sovereign God, and he was accountable to him.

Goodrich also applies the Greco-Roman ideas of *oikonomos* to 1 Cor 9:16–23. In doing so he counters the perception that Paul receives no pay because he has merely done his slave duty as Dale Martin proposes or foregoing pay that he rightfully deserves as Abraham Malherbe advances. With the private administrative backdrop in mind, Paul had a right to a wage. He foregoes the wage, however, because of the greater concern of ministering for the benefit of others.

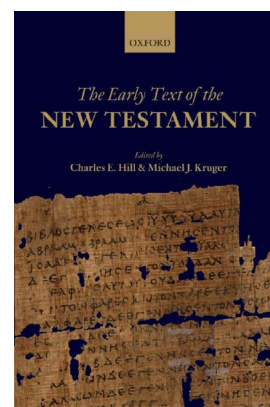
Goodrich's study challenges a number of held viewpoints on the interpretation of 1 Cor 4 and 9. The Greco-Roman backdrop on the concept of administration does provide a number of fresh interpretations for Paul's role as a Christian leader. It rightly challenges those who assume that Paul is motivated by asserting his authority in their midst. It would be helpful if Goodrich would reconcile some of his thoughts with those brought by others who have examined the Jewish backdrop in several of these passages, particularly 1 Cor 9. In this passage, Paul has been considered to be functioning as a prophet from the OT. Some have seen that Paul is compelled to preach like OT prophets. In 1 Cor 9:5–18 Paul applies the ideas of preaching under compulsion (Amos 3:7–8; Jer 4:19; 20:7–9) as well as the self-directed woe of the prophets (Isa 6:5; Jer 15:10; 45:3) to his ministry. Some attention to the

Jewish perspective would likely support a number of the good conclusions that are made in *Paul as an Administrator of God in 1 Corinthians*.

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Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger, eds. *The Early Text of the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xiv + 483 pp. £90.00/\$175.00.

Given that our understanding of the earliest witnesses to the NT and the literary world in which they were produced continues to evolve and develop, it is understandable that many find it difficult to remain current on the latest developments in the important field of NT textual criticism. Thankfully, those wishing to expand their knowledge of the recent trends and current state of the discipline will find *The Early Text of the New Testament* to be of significant value. The volume contains twenty-one essays written by leading scholars in the fields of NT textual criticism and early Christianity and promises to be of great benefit and usefulness to students and scholars alike. The articles are fairly technical and specialized, yet for the most part are written in such a way that those with only a rudimentary background in NT textual criticism will be able to benefit from the material. In addition to helpful treatments of the extant evidence and attestation to the NT writings, several of the essays in this volume provide helpful analysis of the objectives and assumptions of contemporary textual critics, many of which continue to be debated and questioned.



The editors, Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger, begin the volume with a helpful introduction which addresses many of the current developments in the field. In the first portion of the introduction, the editors discuss the objective of textual criticism. In prior generations, it was widely recognized that the aim of the discipline was to establish, as closely as possible, the original text of the NT writings. In recent decades, however, this assumption has been widely challenged as many scholars now believe the primary task is not so much to determine the original reading of a given passage, but to account for the various motivations early Christians may have had to alter biblical texts. In other words, it is now assumed by many in the field that the task of textual criticism is to discern what our earliest extant witnesses to the NT reveal about early Christianity and the various theological debates that took place during the primitive period of the church's existence. The editors object to this new line of thinking, arguing that while "recovering the original text faces substantial obstacles (and therefore the results should be qualified), there is little to suggest that it is an illegitimate enterprise. If it were illegitimate, then we would expect the same would be true for Greek and Roman literature outside the New Testament" (p. 4).

In addition to their discussion regarding the objective of textual criticism, the editors also identify a number of subjects which are currently the subject of debate. These subjects include the relevance of recently discovered papyri, the validity of text-types, the possibility that a "loose" or "free" text preceded a more standardized or "normal" text, the difficulty of accounting for a text's "transmission quality," and

finally, the possible relevance that non-textual features of our earliest papyri such as *nomina sacra* and the use of the codex present for our understanding of the text of the NT in early Christianity.

The twenty-one essays in this volume are organized into three sections. In the first section, four essays deal with the literary world of the NT. This is a subject that has been given an increased amount of attention in recent years with much yet to be explored. Contributors in this section include Harry Gamble, Scott Charlesworth, Larry Hurtado, and Michael Kruger.

Section two includes nine essays on the manuscript tradition. With the exception of an article by Peter Williams on the various early translations of the NT, each of these essays is devoted to the early textual witnesses for a particular writing or group of writings in the NT. Each essay contains a helpful and well-researched overview of the extant textual witnesses and, in many cases, the authors seek to reconstruct the early history of their assigned text(s) based on this evidence. The essays are written by a number of notable scholars including Tommy Wasserman (Matthew), Peter Head (Mark), Juan Hernández Jr. (Luke), Juan Chapa (John), Christopher Tuckett (Acts), James Royse (the Pauline corpus), J. K. Elliott (the Catholic Epistles), and Tobias Nicklas (Revelation).

Finally, section three includes eight essays on the reception of the NT in various sources from early Christianity. Charles Hill contributed an article on the subject of literary borrowing in the second century, a subject that has significance for our understanding of pseudepigraphal texts. Paul Foster's essay provides a helpful overview of the significance of references and allusions to the NT in the Apostolic Fathers while Stanley Porter discusses the relevance of early apocryphal gospels. The remaining essays in this section focus on what might be determined about the early state of the NT from important personalities such as Marcion (Dieter Roth), Justin (Joseph Verheyden), Tatian (Tjitze Baarda), Irenaeus (D. Jeffrey Bingham and Billy R. Todd Jr.), and Clement of Alexandria (Carl Cosaert).

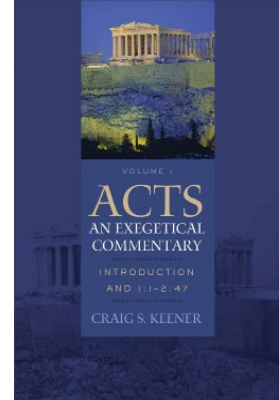
Along with this volume, the second edition of *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, edited by Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Brill), was scheduled for release in 2012. Both volumes address many of the same subjects, albeit with somewhat different emphases. While the volume edited by Ehrman and Holmes devotes more attention to the text of the NT in the ancient translations and on methodological concerns, the volume edited by Hill and Kruger provides a more thorough overview of the various textual witnesses to the NT writings. This is in keeping with the editors' stated desire "to provide an inventory and some analysis of the evidence available for understanding the pre-fourth-century period of the transmission of the NT materials" (p. 2). In spite of its great scholarship and usefulness, many will find the expensive price of the volume to be prohibitive. One can only hope that the publishers will release a paperback edition at a more affordable price in the near future.

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Craig S. Keener. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary—Introduction and 1:1–2:47*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xlii + 1,038 pp. \$59.99.

Craig Keener, a prolific and established commentator on the NT, has scaled the Everest of biblical exposition: he has authored what may prove to be the lengthiest and most thorough commentary on the Acts of the Apostles in the English language. This volume is the first installment of a projected four-volume set. Those four volumes, Keener estimates, will exceed 2.5 million words—the equivalent of “35 two-hundred page monographs” (p. xv).

Volume One contains introductory material (pp. 3–638) and an exposition of Acts 1–2 (pp. 641–1038). As in his other commentaries, Keener’s approach emphasizes the “social, historical, and rhetorical dimensions of the text” (p. 40). It is not indifferent either to exegetical questions or to biblical theology, but it seeks to set Luke’s account in the context of the world within which it was written (p. 40; cf. p. 25).



The introductory material is divided into eighteen separate discussions. These discussions range from such matters of special introduction as authorship, date, and purpose to such broader topics as ancient historiography, women and gender in Acts, and the production of books in antiquity. Keener’s scholarship is replete with citations both of secondary literature and of ancient sources. As a result, many of his introductory discussions are encyclopedic in scope and will enrich one’s understanding not only of Acts but also of the world of the first century.

The exposition proceeds verse by verse, interspersed by such excursions as “God’s Kingdom . . .” (after the exposition of 1:3), and “zealots” (after 1:13). Keener’s exegetical discussion is often topically sequenced and focused. For example, his exposition of 2:25–28 begins with a discussion of Luke’s understanding of Ps 16, followed by thematic treatments of “the Lord’s presence and right hand” (2:25); “joy and hope” (2:26); “hades and decay” (2:27); and “ways of life and God’s presence” (2:28).

One of the most prominent features of this first volume is the author’s insistence that Acts is “history, probably apologetic history in the form of a historical monograph” (p. 115; cf. p. 89). Keener argues that readers of history in antiquity expected historical accounts to be accurate and reliable even if authors were afforded leeway to craft speeches and details “in the most plausible . . . manner consistent with what was known” (p. 219). Luke’s narrative in particular so consistently demonstrates its historical accuracy that the reader may fairly presume the work’s accuracy rather than the converse (pp. 201, 219–20). Following F. F. Bruce, Keener concludes that Luke’s speeches, while not “verbatim” and while “freely reworked . . . to fit the overall literary and theological purpose of his work” provide the “essential substance” of the original addresses (pp. 311, 310).

Keener’s defense of the historicity and the accuracy of Acts is both measured and welcome. One wishes, however, that he had given more pointed attention to his understanding both of Acts as Scripture and of the canonicity of Acts. As it stands, these are striking lacunae in his prolegomena.

For Keener, Luke’s genre and Luke’s purpose in writing are closely intertwined (p. 435). Recognizing that Luke “probably has more than one agenda in Luke-Acts,” Keener stresses Luke’s intent to vindicate “the Christian movement within the larger Roman world” and particularly to non-Christian audiences (p. 458). Luke is also concerned to vindicate “the mission to uncircumcised Gentiles” (p. 458). In doing so, he presents the Gentile mission as a “model” for the church (p. 510). The mission charted by Acts

is an “unfinished” one and left to the church to complete (pp. 438, 697–711). The “ends of the earth” (1:8), while “prefigured” by Luke’s conclusion in Acts 28, is the unrealized destination of that continuing mission to which the church in every age is called (p. 708).

Keener is surely correct to accent Luke’s twofold apologetic purposes. One may ask, however, whether Keener has adequately represented the once-for-all, foundational, and non-repeatable character of the events that Luke documents. The witness to Christ in the book is overwhelmingly an apostolic witness (see 1:6–8 with 1:21–22), and the progression of the gospel in Acts is nothing short of epochal, advancing from Jerusalem to Samaria to the Gentiles. Without disputing that the mission documented by Luke has relevance for the mission of the contemporary church, one may nevertheless recognize a basic redemptive-historical boundary between these two missions. This question is not without exegetical and theological significance and has implications for the way in which we are to understand the work of the Spirit in the church today (see, for example, Keener’s discussions at pp. 522–23; 984–86).

This first volume is a rich mine of detail from which scholar and pastor alike will profit. It will not answer, and is not intended to answer, all the exegetical questions one may bring to the text of Acts. It does, however, paint a rich tapestry of the world within which Luke lived and to which he wrote. Keener’s work therefore helps students of the Scripture undertake the work of exegesis in living color. One can only eagerly await the remaining volumes in this set.

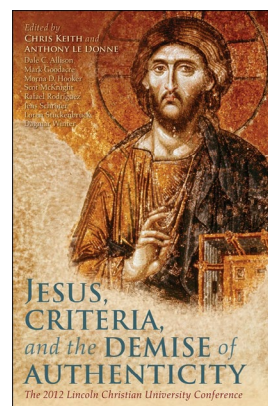
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Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne, eds. *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*. New York: T&T Clark, 2012. xvii + 230 pp. \$34.95.

Anyone who has spent any amount of time in historical Jesus studies has encountered the traditional “criteria of authenticity.” For years these criterion have been passed down and employed as the only tools that allow us to say anything about the Jesus of history with certainty. If one is going to do “serious scholarship” regarding the historical Jesus, it has often been assumed that the criteria of authenticity provide the foundation for a reconstruction of the life of Jesus.

In *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne have assembled a group of NT scholars who question the validity of the traditional criteria of authenticity to varying degrees. Contributors to this volume include Morna Hooker, Jens Schröter, Loren Stuckenbruck, Dagmar Winter, Rafael Rodríguez, Mark Goodacre, Scot McKnight, and Dale Allison. Many of these authors cite Morna Hooker’s observations on this topic to be foundational for their thinking.

In the foreword, Hooker reemphasizes her previous concerns with the criteria and connects the use of the criteria of authenticity with the scholarly desire for a purely scientific method to study the historical Jesus. However, Hooker shows how use of the criteria led to competing and sometimes contradictory “sure footed” conclusions. She hints at a way forward in Jesus research by arguing for a



sustained look at the repeated and emphasized themes in the life of Jesus as opposed to study of the fragmentary details of the gospels.

Part one of this work focuses on the methodological foundations for the criteria of authenticity. Keith shows that the use of the criteria of authenticity was simply an outgrowth of the methodological foundations of form criticism. Both those who use the criteria and form critics assert that the scholar's task is to separate the authentic traditions found in the Gospels from the unauthentic layers of tradition added by the Gospel authors and the early church. Keith discusses the impossibility of ever separating the "interpreted" from the "authentic" elements of the Gospels. Since the criteria cannot provide their intended results, they should be abandoned. Schröter also deals with what he views as the faulty presuppositions of the criteria approach based on historiographical method.

Part two assesses specific criterion of authenticity. Stuckenbruck discusses the "methodological difficulties" in trying to discover the original Aramaic sayings of Jesus behind our Greek text. He questions this linear understanding of transmission and translation by highlighting how the Gospels present Jesus in multilingual contexts. Stuckenbruck also discusses how the Greek of the NT could appear Semitic due to the influence of LXX patterns, not necessarily because there was an Aramaic original.

Le Donne takes aim at the criterion of coherence. This criterion argues that material about Jesus can be judged to be reliable if it coheres with a specific set of sound foundational facts. However, Le Donne shows there are very few sound foundational facts about the life of Jesus according to the various criteria. On top of this, the criterion of coherence assumes that Jesus could have never deviated from the core of his teaching.

Winter addresses the criterion of dissimilarity. He again stresses the faulty methodology of the criterion for focusing on isolated units of the gospels as opposed to assessing the whole. Winter argues that the current pictures of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity available are simply too incomplete to use this criterion. Winter's final critique of this criterion highlights that the unique elements of Jesus' ministry need not be defining for the historical Jesus.

Rodríguez assesses the criterion of embarrassment. He shows how the historical context of the interpreter radically shapes how they employ this criterion. What is embarrassing to Christians in the twenty-first century may not have been embarrassing to the early church. He also uses the crucifixion to show how events that would have been embarrassing to the early church became central for their life and doctrine.

In the final chapter of section two, Goodacre deals with the criterion of multiple attestation. He notes that a number of scholars employ this criterion with the assumption that Q and Thomas are independent witnesses. Goodacre shows why these two documents in particular are suspect as "independent witnesses." He also makes the point that simply because an event is recorded once, that does not make it untrue. This simple fact should give the interpreter pause in employing this criterion.

In the final section of the book, McKnight and Allison wrestle with the implications of dismissing these tools for historical Jesus research. McKnight addresses the question of the historical Jesus and the church and ultimately argues that historical Jesus research, defined as putting forward a Jesus different from the Jesus of the church, is ultimately of no value for the church. He highlights the optimism of many that a clearer picture of Jesus would emerge when this kind of research was taken up, but that ultimately it led to very little consensus.

Finally Allison offers some way forward in regard to future work on the historical Jesus. Rather than focusing on individual units and what is distinctive in the life of Jesus, Allison encourages interpreters to turn their focus toward the larger narrative. Within these narratives, it is in the material that is repeated in which the interpreter will find the most assured historical facts.

This volume raises serious questions about the ability of the criteria of authenticity to deliver what it promises. The authors in this work have taken a considerable step toward realizing Hooker's initial goal of putting the criteria of authenticity behind us. These criteria simply cannot give us the historically authentic elements of the Gospels, and this book is a clear call for Jesus scholars to find a better way forward in building a foundation of historical facts about Jesus on which to stand.

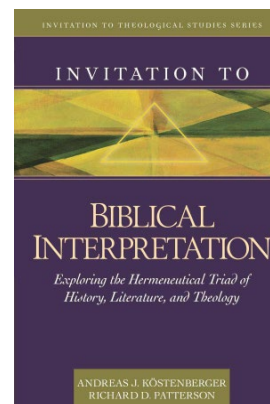
A number of readers may disagree with individual authors regarding their views on various ancillary issues throughout the volume. However, when it comes to the work's main objective, one is left to consider if some of the authors have gone too far in completely dismissing the criteria of authenticity. Again, the authors disagree on the degree to which the criteria can be helpful in offering anything beneficial to Jesus research, but overall they take a skeptical attitude toward them. Is it fair to argue that the criteria are of little to no value? Some might argue that within the right context some of the traditional criterion can still be useful. For example, careful use of the criterion of multiple attestation is still a worthwhile historical tool for investigating events in the past. Le Donne actually goes on to defend the criterion of multiple attestation arguing that it does not stem from a foundation of form criticism, but is simply a method of good historical investigation.

Anyone invested in historical Jesus research must come to terms with the arguments put forth in this book. The authors have raised serious questions regarding the way historical Jesus research has been done, and they show that the commonly accepted tools have largely failed to deliver what they promised. This book is an important starting point for progressing in what some feel is a stalled discipline.

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Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 896 pp. \$46.99.

In their lengthy book, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, Andreas Köstenberger and Richard Patterson have given us a wide-ranging guide to the interpretation of Scripture. The subtitle of the book, *Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*, identifies the threefold model that undergirds the entire work. The terms of this triad have been used in different ways in a number of other books, including my own. So it is helpful that an introductory chapter spells out how these authors use the terms. The main body of the book divides into three parts: history as “the context of Scripture” (p. 89), literature as “the focus of Scripture” (p. 150), and theology as “the goal” (p. 689). Then a final chapter closes the book with a discussion of “application and proclamation” (p.



727). The fact that this book tackles all of these topics with the entire Bible in view makes it difficult to imagine a more ambitious, if not impossible, goal for one volume.

Contrary to what the language of the title and subtitle may suggest, this book is much more methodological and prescriptive than invitational and exploratory. This is not surprising, given that the authors define hermeneutics in the narrow traditional sense as “the methodological principles of interpretation” (p. 157n1). This book is not a heuristic look into the historical, literary, and theological dimensions of biblical interpretation. So don’t expect it to break much new ground. Instead, the authors set forth principles that map a rather well-known path that they believe others ought to follow. This methodological focus makes the book a valuable introduction for inexperienced students. More experienced students and scholars, however, will quickly see its limitations. For our purposes, it will help to point out a few of these values and limitations.

The greatest value of *Invitation* is that the authors unabashedly state their conservative, evangelical frame of reference. For far too long, many evangelical scholars have hesitated to admit how their religious commitments influence their interpretation of Scripture. By contrast, our authors boldly affirm the inspiration and full historical reliability of Scripture and argue for the priority of Scripture over extra-biblical data in historical reconstructions (e.g., p. 117). They insist that attention to the Holy Spirit is essential and that the spiritual condition of interpreters deeply affects their understanding of Scripture (e.g., p. 64). The authors’ self-awareness and boldness serve as a model for students and scholars everywhere.

Another value of the book is its attention to andragogy (learning strategies focused on adults). The stated goal is “to teach a simple method for interpreting the Bible” (p. 23). One merely needs to read the “Personal Note to Teachers, Students, and Readers” (pp. 23–30) to see the authors’ devotion to this goal. Their style is at times quite personal, informal, and even anecdotal. Each lesson begins with a list of objectives and an outline. Graphics and charts appear from time to time. Each lesson ends with practical guidelines, a list of key words, study guides, assignments, and bibliographies. On a larger scale, the logical organization of the entire book is something to behold. The “Complete Outline” (pp. 31–47) indicates that much effort was given to keeping the discussion as linear as possible. The same can be said of the subheadings of each chapter. These features of the book will delight many teachers and students.

More than this, the authors are usually judicious when they address issues over which evangelicals commonly disagree. For instance, their moderation is evident in the ways they handle the account of creation (pp. 97–99), the relevance of the Mosaic law (p. 166), the interpretation of OT prophecy (pp. 346–358), Christ-centered interpretation (p. 159), and the book of Revelation (pp. 522–25). In these and other ways, the book models the kind of humility and spirit of unity that every evangelical discussion of hermeneutics should reflect.

Despite these and many other very positive features of *Invitation*, at least three limitations should be mentioned. First, the academic level is uneven. For instance, the authors translate some Latin expressions, but not others. They refer their readers to popular study Bibles as helpful resources (e.g., p. 94), but they apparently believe that these same readers will understand their observations on the Old Greek, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Alexandrianus as they discuss the Septuagint (p. 155). These and other examples of unevenness are likely to be problematic for many students.

Second, the amount of attention given to some issues is disproportionate. Nearly twenty-two pages are devoted to a history of biblical interpretation (pp. 67–78) and primary sources (pp. 117–26). Yet

neither of these sections contributes much to the book. These pages may have been better spent on other much more important issues.

For instance, the authors assert, “authorial intention is the locus of meaning” (p. 118), but they never explain what an authorial intention is. Nor do they address how their view differs from others who treat the author, the document, and the original audience as interdependent loci of meaning. These issues are far too important to be overlooked.

One of the weakest points in the book is the claim that “there are three primary themes that form the focal points of the OT: God’s *law*, the *exodus*, and *covenant*” (p. 162). This statement is made in the context of establishing large scale, canonical perspectives that guide more detailed interpretation. Had the authors simply said that these are important themes, there would be no problem. But as it stands, the proposal is highly problematic because it falls so short of representing the systemic theological perspectives of the OT. As just one example, the themes of God’s kingship and his kingdom permeate the OT and link it to the theology of the NT. Yet the authors barely mention these crucial themes (p. 188).

In much the same way, many readers will be surprised to find so little attention given to the now well-established hermeneutical significance of NT eschatology. The authors certainly understand the subject (e.g., pp. 187, 215, 343, 518). Yet they give very little attention to the ways the eschatology of Paul and other NT authors provide all-important interpretive frameworks for both Testaments. Disproportionalities like this leave enormous gaps that students will not be able to fill on their own.

On the whole then, *Invitation* will be very helpful for many upper-college and entering-seminary students. Most beginners, however, will have to be helped through its many details. More advanced students and scholars will wish for more discussion at every turn, but this is to be expected of a book that touches so many issues. Their greatest benefit is likely to come from evaluating the methodological dimensions of the book. In all events, we all have much to learn from the path that Köstenberger and Patterson recommend for those walking through the difficult terrain of biblical hermeneutics.

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Hermann V. A. Kuma. *The Centrality of Αἷμα (Blood) in the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews: An Exegetical and Philological Study*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012. 422 pp. \$159.95.

The Centrality of Αἷμα (Blood) in the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews by Hermann V. A. Kuma is a doctoral dissertation that examines the use of the term αἷμα (blood) in the epistle to the Hebrews in light of the term’s significance in the OT, ANE background, intertestamental period, and NT context. Kuma also surveys the scholarly debate concerning the meaning of “blood” as a medium of either death or life. At the heart of the blood-debate is the term’s symbolic import with reference to Christ. Does “blood of Christ” in the NT indicate death or life or both? According to Kuma it is the ambivalent view that “carried the day” in NT scholarship until the “blood debate” lost steam during the 1950s (p. 33).

Following this survey of literature, Kuma provides a thorough analysis of the OT perception of blood (דָּם). Kuma considers דָּם in (1) the cultic practices of the ANE, (2) the pre-Israelite setting of the Patriarchs, (3) the OT cultus, and (4) the OT covenant relationship. He argues that the Torah establishes

blood (דָּם) as a means of atonement and makes a close connection between life and blood (p. 169). He concludes that the OT perception of blood is ambivalent in that it both defiles and cleanses and conveys both life and death.

Kuma then assesses the concept of blood in the NT world. He considers the meaning of blood in the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran literature, Philo, Josephus, Rabbinic literature, and the NT. In the extra-biblical sources, blood is most often used in reference to humanity, family relationships, murder or death, and cultic issues involving purity and defilement. These same concepts for blood are also found in the NT. However, the NT also uses blood symbolically to signify the vicarious death of Christ.

In the main part of the book Kuma investigates αἷμα in Hebrews and how the term is connected to Hebrews's primary theological motif of the superiority of Christ. According to Kuma, the term "blood" has a multivalent quality in Hebrews: "The term 'blood' encapsulates and connotes all that has to do with the vicarious self-oblation of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews" (p. 345).

In his final chapter Kuma reports the conclusions and implications of his research, concluding that the term αἷμα in Hebrews is multivalent and ambiguous and that the term connotes all that has to do with the vicarious self-sacrifice of Jesus (p. 359). Furthermore, blood can represent either life or death. It represents life in the sense that the sinner is liberated through the blood of Christ to serve the Living God (p. 360). It represents death by both pointing to the death of Christ and by having the ability to effect death on those who despise the new covenant (p. 360).

Kuma helpfully connects his exegetical and philological analysis of αἷμα to the theological argument of Hebrews. He recognizes that the major theological motif of Hebrews is the supremacy and superiority of Jesus Christ over all that defined the old era of redemptive history. The christological argument of Hebrews is supported by the author's presentation of the blood of Christ. At every point the blood of Christ is depicted as superior to the bloodshed in the old covenant because Christ's blood is able to effect forgiveness for all time. Kuma insightfully notes that of the twenty-one occurrences of "blood" in the epistle, fourteen occur in chs. 9–10, "which embody the main Christological/theological argument of Hebrews alone" (p. 349). Christ's blood, being superior to the blood of dumb animals, was shed once for all to atone for sin.

Kuma's conclusion deserves a slight critique. Does blood mean death or life? Kuma argues for both but appears to overemphasize the dimension of life. He suggests that there is a strong connection between blood and life in Hebrews. Thus, the author of Hebrews's "chief interest," according to Kuma, is not the death of Christ, but the life that is possible as a result of Christ's death (p. 347). The fact remains however, that the life that is possible for the believer is possible only as a result of the blood spilt in sacrifice. The shed blood of Christ represents a life that was surrendered. The sacrifice of Christ's blood necessarily refers to his death at Calvary. It therefore appears that Kuma overemphasizes the effect of Christ's blood and underemphasizes its actual referent, namely, sacrificial death.

Overall, *The Centrality of Αἷμα (Blood) in the Theology of The Epistle to The Hebrews* is an insightful contribution to the meaning of αἷμα in NT studies. Kuma successfully analyzes the meaning of blood in the primary sources and relevant secondary sources. He accomplishes his purpose of demonstrating

the importance of αἷμα in the theology of Hebrews. Any future study on the significance of “blood” in the NT should interact with Kuma’s book.

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Lee Martin McDonald. *Formation of the Bible: The Story of the Church’s Canon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012. xiv + 178 pp. \$24.95.

I have enjoyed reading Lee McDonald’s many works on the NT canon. He has established himself as one of the leading voices in this area through his numerous books and articles. So I was pleased to see this latest volume, which is intended to be a lay-level introduction to the origins of the Bible. There are very few introductory works on this subject matter (a point McDonald makes in the preface), so it is good to see something written for the person in the pew.

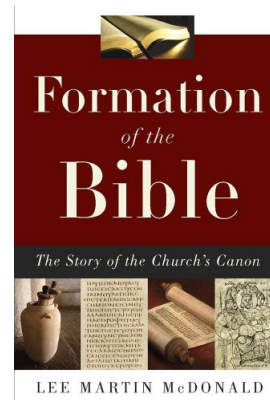
After an introductory chapter on “What is the Bible?”, McDonald divides the volume into approximately two halves with three chapters covering the story of the OT and three the NT. Throughout these chapters, he lays out all the standard historical facts about the development of these books, along with many charts, maps, and pictures. And he is quite thorough. Despite the fact that this volume is intended for a lay audience, it is thick with the relevant historical data.

As McDonald discusses the historical details, he is quite willing to lay (aspects of) his theological views on the table. He openly acknowledges the Bible as “word of God” (p. xi) and that it is “sacred and authoritative Scripture” (p. 17). He also offers a bit of an apologetic motive for his book when he says, “Given the current skepticism of many contemporary scholars about the origin of the Bible and its faith claims, it is important to answer recent challenges to the Bible and to aid those who recognize the Bible as a sacred book, but who do not regularly deal with its origins” (p. xi). So, on the one hand, it seems that McDonald is out to defend the authority of the Bible to the layman who may not be aware of the complex scholarly issues. I appreciate this dimension of his book and find it commendable.

However, on the other hand, it seems that the book runs into a number of problems when McDonald actually starts sifting through the historical evidence. Although most of the evidence McDonald reviews is fairly routine, there are a number of areas where the historical analysis proves to be problematic. Most of these issues arise in two main areas:

1. *The Significance of Biblical Citations for Establishing the Canon*. One of the main ways that we know whether an ancient author considered a book to be canonical is the manner in which he cited the book. If an ancient author explicitly referred to a writing as “Scripture” or used a standard introductory formula (e.g., “it is written”), then we have good grounds for thinking that the author regarded the book as having divine authority. However, it is important to recognize that ancient authors frequently used, cited, and appealed to books that were not necessarily part of their scriptural collection. In other words, mere use does not establish a book’s canonicity.

McDonald rightly recognizes this principle and goes out of his way to make it plain (p. 27). The problem, however, is that this principle does not seem to be consistently followed throughout the volume.



For instance, in the discussion of the canon of the Qumran community, McDonald observes that many non-biblical texts were also found in the caves by the Dead Sea. Then, he argues, “The presence of many non-biblical books at Qumran, some of which may date from the late fourth century BC, suggests that the matter of the scope of the Jewish Scriptures was not settled in the time of Jesus” (p. 43). But how does the mere “presence” of other books in the Qumran library prove this? Sure, the presence of these books shows that they were *used* by the Qumran community. But as just discussed, mere use does not demonstrate that they possessed scriptural authority. Indeed, if one were to find a modern theological library buried in the sand a thousand years from now, it would contain more than just biblical books, but many other kinds of books as well. But this cannot be used as evidence that these books were all considered canonical.

This same issue comes up again when McDonald examines which books Jesus and his disciples considered scriptural (as witnessed in the NT writings). In an effort to show that there was no fixed canon during this time, he mentions, “Some of Jesus’ teachings have parallels in certain non-biblical books” (p. 56). McDonald makes the same argument when it comes to Jesus’ disciples. He argues there was no fixed canon because Jesus’ disciples “often cite other religious texts not in the Hebrew Bible” (p. 56). But again, how do these instances prove that there was no fixed canon? McDonald passes over the fact that Jesus and his disciples never refer to any of these non-biblical books as Scripture (Jude notwithstanding). Mere use of a book does not demonstrate that it has canonical status.

2. *The Nature of Early Christian Book Production.* I appreciate that McDonald spends a significant amount of time on the NT manuscripts themselves and what they can tell us about the origins of the canon—an area often overlooked in prior studies. However, there are also a number of concerns about the presentation of the data in this section.

First, McDonald regularly presents the earliest manuscripts as “poor in quality with many mistakes in them” (p. 122) and presents the scribes as “amateur copiers and not professional” (pp. 122–23). However, this is not quite an accurate presentation of the literary culture of early Christianity. While we would certainly agree that some Christian scribes were amateurs who produced a low-quality product, there are no reasons to think all Christian scribes were this way. In fact, when we look at the earliest NT manuscripts, a significant number of them have a high quality scribal hand, typical of those who have been trained to write and copy books. In fact, in Graham Stanton’s recent study on this question, he has shown that we have numerous early papyri written with professional book hands and “made with great skill and at some expense” (*Jesus and Gospel* [Cambridge University Press, 2004], pp. 192–206). Thus, it would be more accurate to characterize the quality of early Christian scribes as mixed—some were low quality, some average quality, and some high quality.

Second, McDonald addresses the special scribal abbreviations called the *nomina sacra*. While most scholars have considered these abbreviations as indicative of impressive scribal cooperation and organization, McDonald, surprisingly, sees them as indicative of the opposite, namely, that the scribes were unprofessional and “not conscious of copying literary, sacred texts” (p. 123). On what basis does McDonald make this claim? He does so on the basis that “abbreviations were not generally made in standard books or scrolls of a literary quality” (p. 123). But to compare the *nomina sacra* to standard scribal abbreviations is to seriously miss what the *nomina sacra* are. They were not created to save space but to show honor to the name of God and Christ. In other words, the *nomina sacra* were more about religious devotion than about punctuation. In this way, they were quite similar to the Tetragrammaton—the special writing of the divine name in the OT books. Surely, McDonald would not suggest that the

existence of the Tetragrammaton is an indication of low scribal quality and a belief that those books were not Scripture. For these reasons, John Barton has made the opposite point of McDonald and has argued, “the existence of the *nomina sacra* indicates that for Christians as for Jews there were features of the text as a physical object that were used to express its sacredness” (*The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon* [SPCK, 1997], p. 123).

Third, when McDonald addresses the state of the earliest Christian papyri, there are additional problems in the presentation of the evidence. He indicates, “there are only two known manuscripts of the New Testament from the second century” (p. 137). But again, this is not the whole story. Manuscripts are often given dates in a range (usually about fifty years), and McDonald has chosen only the upper portion of that range. If one considers the whole range, then numerous manuscripts could fall into the second century (e.g., P104, P4–64–67, P77, P103, P75, P66, P46, P52, P90). In addition, when talking about the NT papyri, McDonald argues, “some contain New Testament books alongside the non-biblical books” (pp. 125–26). It seems that he raises this point to show that there was canonical diversity amongst early Christians. As an example, he mentions P72 where 1 and 2 Peter occur alongside some extrabiblical books. But he never mentions that this is the only example of this phenomenon amongst the papyri! There are not “some” papyri that do this, but only one. P72 is not the norm, but the exception.

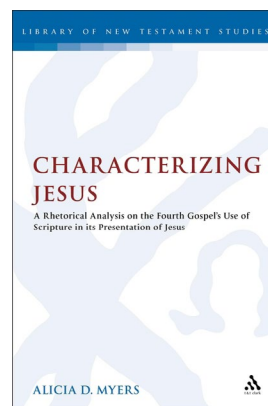
In sum, this volume has a number of positive features as it covers a variety of complex historical topics for the layman, but it also runs into some difficulties as it evaluates some of the historical evidence. The repeated theme of the book, to which McDonald regularly returns, is that of canonical diversity. He seems intent to show that there was no fixed canon at an early point and that there was significant disagreement over these books. While this is partially true, the arguments of the book could be more nuanced and rounded out in the ways that I indicate above.

Nevertheless, McDonald has provided a positive contribution to the field of canonical studies and a helpful introduction for a lay audience. And I particularly appreciate the way he ends the book. Regardless of all the complexities of the canonical process, argues McDonald, we still must ask the most important question of whether we are willing to *follow* the canon: “We do not have a biblical canon unless we are willing to follow its guidelines for ordering our lives” (p. 161). Thus, McDonald rightly reminds us that the most important issue regarding the canon is not academic, but practical. The canon is not just something to investigate but something to obey.

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Alicia D. Myers. *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis on the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus*. Library of New Testament Studies 458. London, T&T Clark, 2012. vii + 242 pp. \$120.00.

The Fourth Gospel does not contain many explicit quotations of the OT. In fact, there are fewer explicit quotations of the OT in the Fourth Gospel than in Matthew and Luke, but it is clear that the OT forms the foundation upon which the author constructs his Gospel. Most studies on the Gospel of John focus on explicit quotations rather than on the literary and rhetorical roles of the OT. Moreover, these works do not focus on how the appeals to the OT contribute to the characterization of Jesus. In *Characterizing Jesus*, Alicia Myers seeks to examine how OT texts contribute to the Gospel of John's characterization of Jesus in light of ancient rhetorical techniques. She argues that the background of ancient rhetorical handbooks and other comparative literature from the first century helps us to better understand and see how the evangelist uses the OT in his portrayal of Jesus. Her approach combines interdisciplinary research of three areas: rhetorical criticism, characterization studies, and the use of the OT.



Other studies in these areas typically focus on one area to the exclusion of the others. Rhetorical studies have been done on the farewell discourse and Jesus' speeches, but do not use rhetoric to explore how the OT functions in the characterization of Jesus. Studies on the characterization of Jesus typically follow narrative-critical categories. Myers's study uses rhetorical handbooks in its analysis of the characterization of Jesus rather than employing modern categories. Additionally, studies on the use of the OT in the Fourth Gospel usually study Jewish exegetical techniques or intertextuality in order to understand the use of the OT in the Gospel. However, Myers utilizes rhetoric to build on both approaches, arguing that her examination of "the Fourth Gospel's use of Israel's Scriptures through the lens of Graeco-Roman rhetoric offers a new way to approach the characterization of Jesus in this Gospel" (p. 21). The evangelist uses rhetorical categories because he "aims to persuade his audience that Jesus truly is the *Logos* of God made flesh" (p. 21).

Myers begins by outlining the key definitions of rhetorical categories and providing examples in the Greco-Roman literature. In this same chapter, she argues that the prologue of the Gospel establishes key concepts that are later explored in the Gospel. In chapter three, she identifies where these rhetorical categories exist in the discourses of Jesus, but focuses only on the discourses that contain scriptural appeals. In chapter four, she turns her attention to other passages narrated by the evangelist, but once again limits her study to those passages that contain some allusion to the OT. In both chapters, she notes connections these passages have with the prologue and how the evangelist characterizes Jesus through his use of the OT.

Characterizing Jesus has a number of strengths. First, Myers rightly sees the foundational nature of the prologue for the rest of the Gospel. She notes that in the prologue the audience is made privy to Jesus' origins while the rest of the characters in the Gospel are unaware of these details. Furthermore, she sees the major role that the OT plays in the prologue, which prefigures its importance in the remainder of the Gospel.

Second, Myers is consistent and clear with her methodology. She outlines the major features that characterize rhetorical handbooks, and these features appear in the rest of her work. Her work is a good

example of how an author can lay out a methodology in a systematic manner and consistently work through it in the remainder of the study (though it is also true that the definitions of key terms are a little unclear).

Third, it appears that at least some features of rhetoric are present in the Fourth Gospel. The evangelist is concerned to establish the credibility of Jesus (e.g., when Jesus mentions those who testify about him in 5:32–39) as well as his own credibility with the audience (which he establishes through eyewitness testimony, 1:14; 21:24). Myers correctly points out that the evangelist seeks to be brief (20:30–31) and clear. Though the aspect of clarity is a bit obscure, the dramatic irony in 2:21; 6:71; and 12:33 bears this out when the evangelist offers clarifying comments for the reader in situations when Jesus speaks obscurely to the others in the story.

While *Characterizing Jesus* has much to commend it, there are a few weaknesses as well. First, Myers seems to stretch the evidence to make it fit the rhetorical categories. For example, she mentions that a common *topos* is that of upbringing and notes that the evangelist's omission of Jesus' upbringing in the prologue is an argument that Jesus does not need human education because of his heavenly origins. It is likely that the evangelist is not utilizing every rhetorical category, so it is speculative at best to argue that the omission of this *topos* is an argument on the part of the evangelist. In addition, Myers also claims that the "deeds" (another common *topos*) of Jesus mentioned in the prologue is a reference to giving life. However, Jesus's giving life to humanity seems to be categorically different than the deeds mentioned in other *bioi*, which are typically heroic actions. It seems that other actions of Jesus would better fit this category (such as healing the lame man, raising Lazarus, etc.), but the description of him giving life stretches the category. In addition, Myers observes that the prologue mimics OT style and imagery. This begs the question of whether OT allusion would be a better candidate for the primary category of the prologue rather than *bioi*. This point is not discussed.

Second, it is unclear how an understanding of the rhetorical categories helps a reader to better understand any of these passages beyond understanding the original context of the allusion to the OT. For example, in John 6, Myers mentions the five differences between Jesus and the exodus narrative. If a reader knows the context of the OT allusion, it seems like he or she would reach the same conclusion about the characterization of Jesus in this passage without knowing the ancient rhetorical categories. Therefore, it is not always clear how a knowledge of these rhetorical categories enhances the message the evangelist is communicating. As it stands, it seems that knowing the original context of the OT allusions and comparing it with how the Gospel utilizes the allusion is all the reader needs to know in order to properly understand the characterization of Jesus.

Characterizing Jesus will be a good resource for academics seeking a better knowledge of ancient rhetorical categories and examples of them within the context of a Gospel. It would also greatly aid preachers who want to see the importance of the prologue and how its themes are carried throughout the Gospel.

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Jonathan T. Pennington. *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xvi + 268 pp. \$24.99.

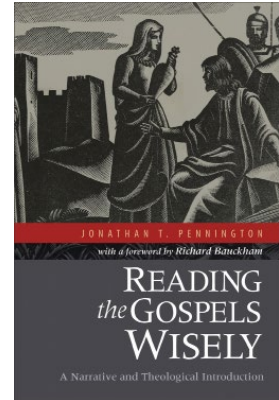
Jonathan T. Pennington, associate professor of New Testament interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has contributed an excellent introduction to the study of the Gospels from the perspective of the Theological Interpretation of Scripture. This method has been developing for a number of years and has become a popular balance to the historical methods commonly found in introductions to the study of the Gospels. The main hermeneutical contribution of this book should not be limited to reading the Gospels wisely; Pennington's presentation is equally applicable to any portion of Scripture. In order to illustrate his method, he chooses to focus on the Gospels.

Pennington begins by carefully defining the genre of Gospel. The first two chapters survey a range of definitions, but primarily focus on Richard Burridge's suggestion that the Gospels are most like Greek *Bioi*. Pennington finds this definition convincing, but expands it because the Gospels do not claim that Jesus was merely a significant person, but rather that all human history is consummated in Jesus. As such, the Gospels go well beyond the Greek idea of a *Bioi* because they are revelatory statements about who Jesus is and what his death means. The Gospels are in fact historical, but they are also theological and aretological (virtue-forming). This is an important methodological statement since Pennington will not treat the Gospels as historical documents which have some theological components, but rather as theological documents based on historical events.

Pennington takes these three elements of his definition of Gospel and describes three approaches to the Gospels as traveling along "avenues." All three have value and contribute toward a "wise reading" of the Gospels. In Pennington's view, however, the historical approach has been too emphasized in scholarship in the last century, and it is time for the theological reading to assert itself as the best way to get to the meaning of the Gospels in a modern context.

Pennington describes the first avenue for reading the Gospels as historical and includes such methods as form, source and redaction criticism. The typical elements of historical criticism of the Gospels are "behind the text," but Pennington does not want to imply that these methods are necessarily bad. They simply do not result in anything that contributes to theology or practice. Pennington is committed to the final form of the Gospels in their canonical form, so it matters very little to his hermeneutical method if Matthew used a variety of sources. It is only the text of Matthew that matters for reading the Gospels wisely. In fact, Pennington argues for a "reasoned harmonization" for treating parallel texts (ch. 4).

He also eschews the so-called "quest for the historical Jesus" because he sees it as a dead-end. He develops this in an overview and critique of the historical methodologies in the twentieth century (ch. 5). Beginning with the interaction between N. T. Wright and Richard Hays at the Wheaton Theology Conference in 2010, Pennington argues that the sort of historical studies found in Wright and others in the historical-Jesus field ultimately miss the point. The "history" that concerns these sorts of studies has little to do with the "theology" presented in the NT. While Wright claims to balance his historical study and theological reflection, Pennington follows the critique by Hays and others that concludes that Wright favors history to the exclusion of theology.



A second avenue for reading the Gospels is literary studies, which Pennington describes as “in the text.” Here he lists literary and narrative criticism, as well as genre and composition analysis. Like theological interpretation of the Gospels, literary methods were developed in response to the perceived dead-end of historical criticism. These methods necessarily focus on the author of a text and attempt to study how the author crafted a plot or created an effect. This involves careful analysis of the plot of the whole Gospel in order to place the pericope in the proper context as well as attention to intratextual allusions to other stories within the Gospel itself. While this second collection of approaches to the Gospels does not come under the same critique as historical studies, Pennington does not find literary studies to be anything more than a means into the theological heart of the Gospels.

The third avenue for interpretation of the Gospels is the Canonical or Theological approach, what Pennington describes as “in front of the text.” This category seems roughly equivalent with “biblical theology” and includes history of interpretation, reception history, and intertextual allusions to other canonical texts. It is somewhat surprising that he includes patristic interpretation in this category since this is not usually included in a book on methods of biblical theology. Since Pennington is interested in reading the Gospels in a larger community of readers, this means hearing what other interpreters have said about the Gospels throughout church history. On a more narrow level, this theological reading of the Gospels is often done within a confessional community, so Pennington includes the principle of *Regula fidei* in his method of reading the Gospels wisely.

The driving motivation for this third way of reading the Gospels is that readers of Scripture seek to apply the text to the situation in which they find themselves. The “original historical meaning” is not the “application” of the text. The first avenue of reading the Gospels does not give access to application since it is concerned only with the original text and the author’s intent. How that original intent ought to impact the reader is the work of the third way of reading. The “scientific method” driving the methods of the first avenue of reading the Gospels “tend to objectify the text,” turning the text into something to be examined by the right tools and creating a situation in which the application of the text to real-world issues is completely subsumed by the drive for “original meaning.”

After laying out this method, Pennington offers two chapters demonstrating these hermeneutical principles at work in reading the Gospels wisely. Using the healing of the Centurion’s servant in Luke 7:1–10 as an example, he describes how to read the story within the narrative framework of the Gospel of Luke and how the parts of the plot function (rising tension climax, resolution, application). The historical way of reading this text might ask questions about a centurion or the reason Luke places the story where he does (in contrast to Matthew). The literary avenue describes the development of the plot and allusions to other texts in the Gospel of Luke. But only the theological avenue can make a contribution to a theology of Jesus and an application to the present reader.

For Pennington, there is no “single right application,” but applications that “grow organically” from the text are “best and wisest” (p. 218). In order to develop a wise application, Pennington shows that an active reading of the text that fully articulates the revelation present will result in an application that says something about the fallen condition of humans, the redemptive solution provided by God as well as a virtue-forming teaching that addresses people today (p. 223). When one attempts to read the Gospels without this honest, soul-searching work, the sermon becomes mere information, falling short of “the faith-eliciting and virtue-forming goal of the Gospels” (p. 223).

Pennington’s critique of historical studies of the Gospels is appropriate, although it is possible that he errs in the opposite direction in his theological interpretation of the Gospels. While he never fully

dismisses historical studies as invalid, he does describe them as mechanical, interested in only the human author's intent rather than the divine author's intent. He says that the historical and literary methods are "skills that can be developed by most readers," while the third avenue of theological interpretation "requires a more expanded set of insights and abilities" (p. 119). This third way of reading is the only one that will allow a reader to move from the "literal" sense to the more "spiritual" sense of Scripture. The literal is described as "mechanical" as opposed to "art, or the "letter" as opposed to the "spirit" (pp. 117–21). By reading the Gospels in this way, the interpreter is able to go beyond authorial intent in order to apply the text to new situations. While he includes all three avenues as a part of his method, it is clear that the third way is "more equal" than the others.

Pennington's presentation of a theological and narrative approach to the Gospels is lucid and entertaining, and his analogies are excellent. While this book would be of value as a textbook for a class that surveys the Gospels, it will also serve the general reader as an introduction to the application of Theological Interpretation to the study of the Gospels.

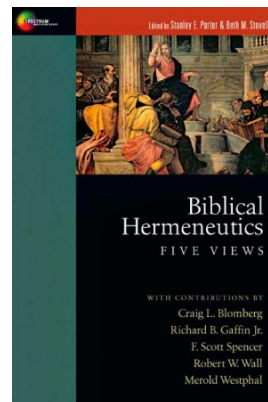
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Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovell, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 224 pp. \$20.00.

Evangelical publishers are releasing "multi-view" volumes with stunning rapidity. Such rapidity, in fact, that jaded readers may find themselves asking, "why one more?" They will be delighted to discover that Stan Porter and Beth Stovell's contribution to this genre admirably justifies its existence, helpfully framing and fostering hermeneutical discussions in ways that will promote constructive reflection within both the church and the academy.

The editors' introduction clarifies that this work, unlike many overviews of the science of biblical interpretation, does not focus "on procedure, history, or even the perspective of a single viewpoint or author" (p. 11). Even so, they are not historically unaware and venture a "brief history" of biblical interpretation along three lines—approaches that are "behind the text," "in the text," and "in front of the text" (pp. 12–16). The editors conclude their chapter by introducing the five approaches represented in this volume. Craig Blomberg advocates a "conservative" or "maximalist" version of the "historical-critical/grammatical" view. Scott Spencer represents a "literary/postmodern view." Richard B. Gaffin Jr. articulates a "redemptive-historical view" in the tradition of Geerhardus Vos. Robert Wall offers a canonical-critical approach to the Scripture. Finally, Merold Westphal presents what the editors call "the philosophical/theological approach."

The format of the volume is conducive not only to the exposition of each view, but also to the mutual engagement one expects in multi-view volumes. In Part One, each author presents his view and then applies it to a biblical text that is hermeneutically both challenging and rich—Matt 2:7–15. In Part Two, each author is given a single chapter in which to respond to the other four positions. The editors provide a concluding summary chapter.



Space precludes an exhaustive summary of the presentation of, much less interaction among, these five views. Focusing upon Gaffin's exposition of a "redemptive historical" view and the other contributors' responses to that exposition provides a representative sampling of the important issues raised in this book. Outlining six principles that inform Vossian redemptive-historical interpretation, Gaffin exposites Heb 1:1–4 in order to demonstrate those principles' biblical warrant (pp. 91–93, 94–97). He grounds his approach upon the identification of Scripture with divine revelation (p. 93). His interpretative principles seek to honor the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture and that Scripture evidences an organic and redemptive-historical unity (p. 97). Since contemporary believers find themselves in precisely the same redemptive-historical position as the NT writers, Gaffin reasons, our interpretative posture must be one of fundamental continuity with them (pp. 97–8).

Some of the criticisms raise questions about Gaffin's understanding of the relationship among the biblical writers. While expressing sympathy for Gaffin's general outlook, Blomberg claims that Gaffin illegitimately "use[s] . . . later text[s] to interpret . . . earlier one[s]" and fails to let earlier texts speak for themselves (p. 141; cf. Spencer's remarks at p. 154). Wall distinguishes his canonical approach from that of Gaffin, whom he argues fails to recognize that "the New Testament interpretation of Old Testament texts sometimes rewrites them or alters their communicative intention" (p. 197).

Other criticisms concern the way Gaffin understands the relationship between the biblical text and the reader. Westphal argues that Gaffin's claim of interpretive continuity between the NT authors and contemporary readers must be set in "tension" with the "historical-cultural-linguistic diversity" among them as well (p. 166). He further argues that Gaffin has not given "the finitude of our perspectives on the totality of God's redemptive and revealing activity" their due (p. 168). Spencer believes that Gaffin's insistence upon a specifically redemptive unity to the Scripture has the effect of muting or dismissing the "wide variety of questions and concerns that readers bring to the interpretative process" (p. 154).

As Gaffin himself acknowledges, this interchange highlights the way in which one's understanding of the nature, authority, and purpose of the Scripture is not inconsequential for one's principles of interpreting the Scripture (p. 177). The doctrine of Scripture surfaces in important ways elsewhere in this volume. For example, what particularly distinguishes the redemptive-historical from the canonical-critical approaches in this volume is that the former understands Scripture to be divine revelation and the latter understands Scripture to be a witness to divine revelation (pp. 112–14, 182–83, 197–98). Further, Blomberg and Gaffin disagree about the manner in and degree to which evangelicals committed to inerrancy may appropriate the historical-critical method in their interpretation (pp. 36–37, 178–82).

While one appreciates the editors' efforts to construct a "constructive hermeneutical analysis and synthesis" of the five views represented in the book (p. 202), the five views likely prove too diverse to admit of a hermeneutically practicable synthesis. This diversity is attributable, in no small measure, to differences among the contributors concerning the doctrine of Scripture and its implications for the interpretation of the Bible. In setting these views side by side and in conversation with one another, the editors have done their readership a great service. A careful reading of *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views* can assist readers of Scripture in reflecting with greater precision and self-awareness in doing what they already do—interpret the Bible.

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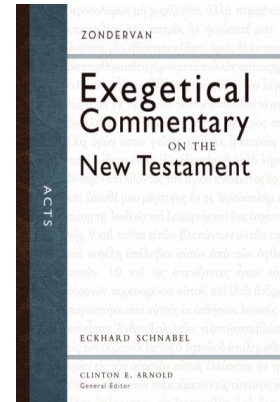
Eckhard J. Schnabel. *Acts*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 5. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 1,162 pp. \$59.99.

The Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT Series (ZECNT) is designed to provide pastors and bible teachers with a clear exposition of the Greek text of the NT, illuminating the main message of the biblical authors in a format that is easy to read and readily transferable into Bible lessons and sermons. Eckhard Schnabel's volume on the book of Acts admirably attends to the aims of the ZECNT series, and as such the work is sure to be a valuable resource for those seeking to preach and teach through the text of Acts.

The commentary begins with an introductory section in which Schnabel addresses standard issues pertaining to the authorship, dating, genre, historicity, and purpose of the book of Acts. Schnabel approaches such matters from a conservative-evangelical perspective, favoring an early date for the work (some time shortly after AD 62) and affirming the historical reliability of Luke's second volume. This introductory section closes with a chronology of early Christian history, an outline of the book of Acts, and a select bibliography.

Following the introduction, the commentary adopts a consistent structure as it proceeds through the text of Acts. A discussion of the literary context of each new passage is followed by a concise statement of the main idea of the passage. Then the translation of the passage is set within a graphical layout intended to reflect the grammatical and conceptual development of the unit of Scripture. Independent clauses are emboldened, subordinate clauses are indented, and interpretive labels are placed in the left margin to identify how each part of the passage contributes to the flow of thought. Following the graphical layout, Schnabel briefly discusses the structure of the passage and offers a detailed outline. The commentary then proceeds with a verse-by-verse exposition of the text, followed by a brief section entitled "Theology in Application," in which Schnabel addresses the implications of the passage for the faith and practice of the contemporary church. "In Depth" sections appear within the verse-by-verse exposition of the commentary and offer useful topical discussions arising from the passage at hand. The clear and consistent format of the commentary makes Schnabel's work very accessible, and the author's prose is quite readable and devoid of technical jargon. The commentary concludes with a short section on the theology of Acts, and the work also includes indices for Scripture, ancient literature, subjects, and authors.

The graphical layout of each passage is perhaps the single most distinctive feature of the ZECNT series. This element of the commentary is intended to help readers visualize the flow of thought in the text, and this innovative approach is an improvement over a block text format for translations. Still, aspects of the graphical layout are puzzling. For example, the translation and shading of conjunctions throughout the commentary seems arbitrary. Some conjunctions from the Greek text are left out of the English translation (e.g., $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$ in Acts 1:6, 18; 2:41; 5:41; etc.). Other conjunctions are translated and shaded inconsistently in certain passages (e.g., $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\iota$ in 1:13–14). At other points, the English translation adds a conjunction where none is present and shades the conjunction grey, giving the impression that it carries some special function in the text (e.g., "and" in 8:4; 23:17–18). Schnabel's translation and usage of conjunctions is certainly defensible, yet the shading of the text could potentially be misleading, and Schnabel does not provide much explanation for his translation decisions.



Indeed, even where the text is rather difficult and adaptable (e.g., 10:36; 13:27), Schnabel does not comment upon the Greek text, and his translation occasionally obscures features of the text that are readily apparent in the Greek (e.g., the repetition of ἀρνέομαι in Acts 3:13–14). Moreover, at times the graphical layout of the passage does not conform to the corresponding analysis in the commentary. In the verse-by-verse exposition on Acts 3:13–15, for instance, Schnabel identifies a chiasm contrasting divine and human action in the death and resurrection of Jesus (p. 205). The graphical layout of the passage does not reflect this chiasm because the chiasm is conceptual rather than grammatical, and the graphical layout generally follows the grammatical structure of the passage. On the other hand, at 3:9–10, the graphical layout does not match the grammatical structure of the Greek text, as two independent clauses are translated and formatted as though the first clause is a subordinate temporal clause. Here conceptual rather than grammatical factors have apparently determined the formatting and translation of the passage.

Thus, Schnabel is not always consistent in his translation, graphical layout, and verse-by-verse exposition, even within a single passage, as the above examples demonstrate. Printing a graphical layout of the Greek text rather than the English translation would address some of these concerns, but then the commentary would be less accessible for its target audience. On the whole, the graphical layout of the translation is a helpful innovation, yet readers of the commentary should critically evaluate the formatting and translation of each passage for themselves.

Critical scholarship informs Schnabel's analysis, yet the focus of the commentary is certainly upon Schnabel's understanding of the main message of the biblical author. Schnabel only occasionally interacts with the history of scholarship on Acts and spends little space arguing in support of his interpretations, though the preface mentions that the electronic version of this commentary contains more extensive interaction with alternative viewpoints. For the most part, readers of the print version of Schnabel's commentary are expected to take the author at his word. This is not necessarily a deficiency, for Schnabel's selectivity in scholarly engagement allows the commentary to convey a good sense of the pace and progression of the narrative in Acts.

Schnabel's interpretation of Acts is generally sensible and defensible, and pastors and Bible teachers are likely to appreciate the way in which the commentary offers helpful insights into the text of Acts without becoming bogged down in lengthy exegetical debates. A comparable work would be David Peterson's commentary on Acts for the Pillar NT Commentary Series. In fact, whereas Peterson's work is especially helpful for its literary and theological engagement, Schnabel's volume provides a wealth of historical insights that enrich one's reading of Acts. The two commentaries would therefore complement each other nicely on the desks of preachers and teachers in the church as they interpret and teach the text of Acts for their congregations.

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David I. Starling. *Not My People: Gentiles as Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 184. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011. xi + 254 pp. \$140.00.

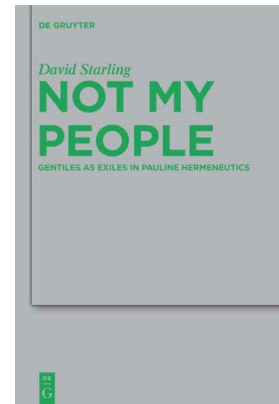
Not My People is a study on one particular aspect of Paul's hermeneutics, namely, his interpretation of OT passages about Israel's experience of exile that are applied to a Gentile audience. This study is the published dissertation of David I. Starling, a lecturer in New Testament at Morling College. The key passages discussed are (1) Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27, (2) the conflated scriptural citation in 2 Cor 6:16–18, (3) Hos 1:10; 2:23 in Rom 9:25–26, and (4) Isa 57:19 in Eph 2:17.

Starling begins by surveying various issues related to Paul's use of Scripture before interacting with a few of the major methodologies for intertextuality as advocated by Richard Hays, Francis Watson, and Christopher Stanley. After addressing these approaches, Starling explains his own developed methodology that he employs in the project. Each chapter follows the same basic pattern, according to Starling's methodology. After introducing the passage, Starling explores the extant Jewish interpretations of the OT text(s) in question within the Second Temple period, surveys and critiques proposed solutions to the problematic Pauline citation, addresses how the OT is used elsewhere in the particular letter under discussion (the 'hermeneutical framework'), and looks at how Paul addresses the story of Israel in the same letter before offering his own interpretation and solution to the problem.

In the passages that Starling explores, it could be suggested that Paul is using the OT texts atomistically without regard for the context about Israel in exile. Yet Starling demonstrates how Paul's hermeneutics fit within the purpose of the letter in question in a manner that provides satisfying results. Starling contends that by applying these passages to his Gentile audience, Paul believes that Gentiles do not enter the people of God by living like Israel, under the law, but like *exiled Israel*.

On the use of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27, it is clear that the passage about the end of Israel's exile is applied to Paul's Gentile audience (cf. Gal 4:28). From passages like Gal 3:10–14, it is apparent that Paul presents Israel in the same predicament of exile. As Starling states, "Paul depicts himself and his fellow-Israelites as having inherited not the blessings of the law but its curses, standing in Gentile shoes and (either literally or metaphorically) on Gentile soil" (p. 60). Thus, given the Jewish predicament of exile, by applying Isa 54:1 to Gentiles, Paul is claiming that both groups are "in exile" and in need of "justification by faith and not works of the law." Starling rightly notes that the context of exile is important for interpreting Galatians, though I would add that there is a more immediately pressing issue for why Paul chose Isa 54:1. Just as the end of exile spoken of in Isa 54:1 is predicated upon the exilic suffering of Isa 53, so also the citation of Isa 54:1 is a vision of hope in the midst of the Galatians' suffering. This is seen from Paul's immediate comments on this passage (Gal 4:29) and the focus on suffering and persecution elsewhere (Gal 1:13, 23; 3:4; 4:13, 19; 5:11; 6:12, 17).

In the next chapter, Starling addresses the scriptural catena in 2 Cor 6:16–18. Starling demonstrates that the conflated citation should be interpreted along the salvation-historical trajectory of 2 Cor 1:20–22, which states that Christ is the "yes" to all of God's promises. The most significant aspect of this chapter is that Starling provides a strong case for two disputed facts about this conflated citation: (1) the originality of this text in 2 Corinthians and (2) Pauline authorship of this section.



Then in chapter four, which focuses on the Paul's use of Hosea in Rom 9:25–26, the same application of an exiled Israel passage can be situated in a context where the plight of Jews and Gentiles are made equal (cf. Rom 3:22). Thus, the logic is that God indeed accepts Gentiles because he accepts Israel in her transgressed state after the covenant had been breached: "Gentiles can become 'my people' because Israel has first become 'not my people'" (p. 164).

Chapter five focuses on the use of Isa 57:19 in Eph 2:17. Just as in the previous examples, both Jews and Gentiles are presented as being in the same plight through the language of "near" and "far," though originally this referred to Jews in the land and Jews in the diaspora respectively. Gentiles are included in this promise because "the predicament of exile" corresponds to their disposition as "spiritually dead and far off from God" (p. 193). Given that Ephesians is one of the disputed letters in the Pauline corpus, Starling demonstrates in this chapter that hermeneutics cannot be the ground for denying Pauline authorship, since he discerns a similar hermeneutical pattern. This is a welcome implication as I have offered treatments on Ephesians and hermeneutics elsewhere with Jonathan M. Lunde on the use of Ps 68 in Eph 4:8 (*WTJ* 74:1) and the use of Isaiah in Eph 5:14 (*JETS* 55.1).

Starling then has an extensive conclusion with a summary of his findings as well as a discussion on the implications of his study. These implications are primarily that (1) Paul's use of Scripture evinces a (complex, not simple) continuity with salvation history and (b) both Gentiles and Jews experience the same plight and are equally in need of grace and life.

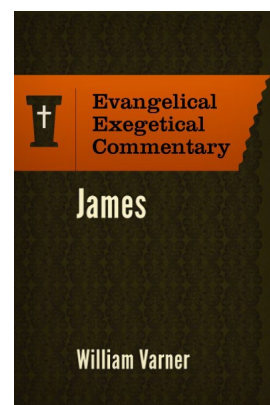
Overall, Starling's study provides impressive research on a fascinating phenomenon in the Pauline corpus. Starling succeeds in demonstrating that this unique feature of Paul's hermeneutics—the application of passages about exiled Israel to Gentiles—has a consistent and coherent logic. *Not My People* is highly commended for those interested in Paul's letters as well as intertextuality broadly.

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William Varner. *James*. Evangelical Exegetical Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012. 414 pp. www.logos.com/product/25001/james-evangelical-exegetical-commentary. \$33.21.

"Of the writing of books there is no end," writes the author of Ecclesiastes. Up until recently, the same could not have been said about the number of commentaries on James. Though there were the weighty treatments of Mayor (1913) and Dibelius (1921), for whatever reasons (Luther's assessment of the book as "an epistle of straw"? the Roman Catholic tradition of identifying the letter's author as James *the Less*?), James's epistle never received the attention that the Pauline and Petrine writings did. Presently, however, NT commentary series are appearing one after another, and within these series, volumes on James. It is within this growing milieu that William Varner's *James* takes its place. Why another series and commentary on James? Because, Varner argues, fresh linguistic methods demand a fresh look and, citing a Pilgrim axiom, "God yet has light to spring forth from His word" (p. 14n4).



Although the introduction might lack the scholastic depth of Martin, the grammatical breadth of Mayor, and the rhetorical finesse of Johnson, it is nevertheless comprehensive (almost seventy pages) and (especially appreciated by pastors hard-pressed for time) easily more accessible, thanks in part to the clear and concise summary statements that are interspersed throughout. For example, on provenance Varner states,

James, the uterine brother of Jesus and the undisputed leader during the first generation of the Christian movement (at least from A.D. 44–62), is writing a sort of “Diaspora encyclical” from Jerusalem to groups of primarily Jewish-Christian congregations. His writing most likely took place during the mid-to-late forties A.D., and the original recipient communities were probably located somewhere in or around Syria. (p. 25)

With regard to the conclusions that the introduction presents, most are not new. Varner provides a fresh repackaging, however, and tightens some screws where more precision has been needed. Well-stated, for example, is his analysis of the Greek of James and corrective that its elevated style has been overstated (pp. 45–46). Fresh arguments also abound drawn from untapped sources. For instance, Varner gleans evidence from Josephus’s reference to James (*Ant.* 20.200) to establish his leadership position in the early church (why else would Josephus single out James? [pp. 21–22]), and he argues for the early date of the letter by bringing to the stand the supportive testimony of two scholars whom most evangelicals would consider hostile witnesses, J. A. T. Robinson and Martin Dibelius.

True to the epistle he introduces, Varner is also practical; he moves everywhere from information to implication. For example, regarding authorship Varner states,

If James was *the* leader of the early church, there are some serious implications of this fact both for Roman Catholicism [which elevates Peter] and also for Protestant evangelicalism [which is prone to elevate Paul] As James the leader should not be marginalized, so James the letter should not be marginalized. (pp. 22, 56)

Unfortunately, while Varner’s discussions are cogent and thoughtful, the interchange of bold and italic headings and subheadings is often confusing. Perhaps a table of contents would force a more consistent arrangement. In addition, some of the discussions could be rearranged. For example, Varner’s conclusion regarding the date of the letter (p. 25) oddly appears prior to his section on *Dating*, and the discussion of the letter’s canonical role sits uncomfortably between analyses of the sayings of Jesus in the epistle and the epistle’s structure.

There are also discussions that could be more substantive. For instance, in light of the virtually countless similarities that he cites between the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the letter, Varner could well provide a lengthier critique of the theory that the letter is an allegory patterned after Jacob’s farewell address (e.g., A. Meyer’s *Das Ratsel des Jacobusbriefes*). More importantly, since Varner considers the question of structure to be among “the biggest internal issues that have engaged scholars studying the book” (p. 56), his assertion that 3:13–18 comprises the thematic peak that casts its shadow over the entire epistle (and becomes the meta-narrative that permeates the commentary itself) deserves more literary evidence than he provides. Perhaps these sections can be beefed up in a later version.

The commentary section is the bread and butter of the volume, suitable for readers who have an intermediate-to-expert knowledge of biblical Greek. Textual units (averaging 3–4 verses long) are thoroughly analyzed and discussed under the following headings, a quick glance at which will distinguish

the volume from current NT syntactical/lexical analyses, such as the Baylor Handbook on the Greek Text series on the one hand and traditional commentaries on the other:

- Introduction
- Outline
- Original Text
- Textual Notes
- Translation
- Commentary
- Biblical Theology Comments
- Application and Devotional Implications
- Selected Bibliography

As can be expected, the reader may not agree with all of Varner's interpretations, and in some cases, it is virtually Varner against the world (e.g., his interpretation that 4:5 contains a question, "Does the spirit that he has caused to dwell in us long enviously?" that assumes a negative response, "No" [pp. 300–301]). And while there is hardly a stone left unturned, there could be a bit more digging underneath some of the rocks. For example, in 1:25 the phrase νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας ("the perfect law of freedom") begs the question of how the genitive is functioning and how the law can be related to freedom when elsewhere it is associated with bondage (e.g., Rom 7).

Typical of an effort of this length, there are typos and glitches too numerous to list here: e.g., overused phrases (consecutive sentences beginning with "in other words" [p. 300]); scores of standalone Greek words with grave accents; misspellings (e.g., "even" on p. 78 should be "ever"; Kammel on pp. 106n96, 111, 136, 139 should be Kamell); improper page citations (e.g., the Moo quotes are from p. 103 not p. 107 [p. 208n416] and p. 133 not p. 138 [p. 273]; bibliographical confusion (Moo 2000? or Moo 1985? [p. 84n145]); and improper spacing of ellipses. Nevertheless, though there may be bones in the filet (to change the above metaphor of bread and butter), they are few and are easily removed, and none are anywhere near large enough to choke on.

As with the Introduction, Varner's commentary on the text is both comprehensive and comprehensible. Like a catcher, he sees every player and the entire field of play. Virtually every issue that faces a student of James is addressed, an up-to-date corpus of James-related literature is canvassed, a wide net is cast to draw light from a vast range of ancient extrabiblical literature, current insights of linguistic and rhetorical analysis are applied, all the major commentators are engaged, and where interpreters differ, most every exegetical option is perceptively weighed.

Although it is wise for pastors to have a witness of two or three commentaries on their desk to consult as they prepare their sermons, if they had only Varner's they would be provided with a virtual education of the book of James—and yet more than an education. Because Varner writes, as it were, with one foot behind the lectern and the other behind the pulpit, the volume contains a treasure of exegetical and theological insights that will provide payoff in the pew.

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L. L. Welborn. *An End to Enmity: Paul and the “Wrongdoer” of Second Corinthians*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 185. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011. 570 pp. \$182.00.

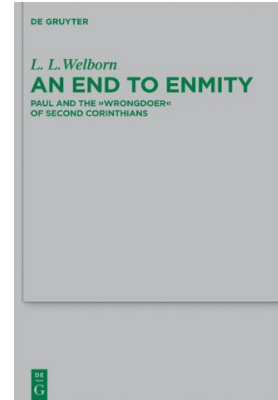
Whenever a person opens up a book by L. L. Welborn, one will inevitably find a comprehensive, meticulous, and illuminating work, and this is no less the case with *An End to Enmity*. With a firm grasp on English and Continental biblical scholarship, as well as the relevant Greco-Roman sources and social conventions of Paul’s day, Welborn enters the debate on the identity of the wrongdoer in Second Corinthians, attempting to reconstruct the type of offence that was committed, the character of the perpetrator, and the sort of relationship this influential figure shared with Paul and the Corinthians.

Welborn begins the book with an extended preface on the composition of Second Corinthians, considering it composed of five letters (in chronological order: ch. 8; chs. 10–13; 2:14–6:13; 7:2–4; 1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; and ch. 9). The support for this partition theory is fourfold: (1) there is a conspicuous discrepancy between chs. 10–13 and the rest of the letter; (2) chs. 8 and 9 are individual appeals to participate in the collection; (3) 2:14–7:4 must be a letter fragment inserted into the text since the thought of 2:12–13 is continued seamlessly in 7:5–6; and (4) 6:14–7:1 is a non-Pauline interpolation.

In Chapter 1, Welborn expresses his amazement in finding only three articles that thematically examine the identity of the wrongdoer and the nature of his offence (recorded in 2 Cor 2 and 7), especially because this incident lies at the root of the relational issues between Paul and Corinth. He therefore explains how he will approach the matter: a detailed exegesis of pertinent texts, a close examination of vocabulary describing the offence, an appeal to ancient rhetorical conventions to explain why Paul does not mention the offender by name, and the use of prosopographic data to determine the individual’s social status.

Chapter 2 details the history of interpretation on the wrongdoer and the offence. For eighteen-hundred years, one view prevailed: the wrongdoer was the incestuous man whom Paul had expelled in 1 Cor 5. Tertullian, however, was the only exception. He argued that the two accounts are separate incidents. Much later, F. C. Baur and Heinrich Ewald built on Tertullian’s conclusion and triggered a decisive break with this interpretation. By the twentieth century, the traditional interpretation had been largely abandoned. With the help of two recent theories by M. Thrall and C. K. Barrett, Welborn advances a working hypothesis in this chapter: (1) the wrongdoer was a member of the Corinthian church, (2) influenced by Jewish-Christian opponents, (3) and offended Paul during his second visit to Corinth; (4) money was involved in the injury, most likely in the connection with the collection, (5) with the Corinthians somehow complicit in his offence.

Chapter 3 contains well-informed inferences, extrapolated from a detailed exegetical analysis of specific texts in 2 Corinthians. Through the lens of Greco-Roman literature and ancient conciliatory and therapeutic letters, Welborn investigates various terms related to the offence against Paul (χαρίζεσθαι, ἐπιτιμία, λυπεῖν, πρᾶγμα, and ἀδικεῖν). Consequently, he adds three crucial pieces to his working hypothesis: (1) the wrongdoer possessed high social status; (2) enjoyed a patron-client friendship with Paul; and (3) “the offence involved Paul and the wrongdoer in a legal dispute, in which a fraudulent use of funds was somehow a factor” (p. 59).



Turning to 2 Cor 10–13, Welborn bolsters this hypothesis by going against the tide of the majority of scholars and affirming that the singular pronouns and verbs in 10:7, 10–11; 11:16; and 12:6 refer to the wrongdoer rather than Paul’s opponent(s). As such, much can be said about the offender. This individual possesses a clear understanding of the Christ-event that accords well with early apostolic preaching (“belonging to Christ,” 10:7). He also looks down on Paul for plying a trade (a common view among the elite; 10:1), and he was most likely trained in rhetoric and Stoic ideology (10:10–11). In view of the wrongdoer’s high social position, Welborn reasons that he must have been behind the criticism leveled against Paul in 11:7–11 and 12:13–15, two explicit texts that involve the refusal of an offered gift and the ensuing charge of mishandling funds for the collection (12:16–18).

Chapter 4 depends heavily on the work of Peter Marshall but also supplements it to explain why Paul does not mention the wrongdoer by name. Welborn appeals to the rhetorical convention of *periphrasis*, a convention associated with friendship, enmity, and political rivalry that permitted the writer to denigrate a well-known person in the community. But Paul intentionally uses this convention in order to reconcile this alienated friend. Then after drawing inferences from what can be known about the social status of the wrongdoer, as well as examining hospitality as a form of reconciliation, Welborn concludes that “Gaius was the wrongdoer” (p. 287). He was part of the wealthy elite and served as a host for Paul and the whole church (Rom 16:23; cf. 1 Cor 1:14).

Chapter 5 advances prosopography as a means to recreate a social portrait of Gaius. By extracting information from archaeology, onomastics, and epigraphy, he deduces that Gaius was a wealthy Roman provincial with considerable wealth and status, who was very familiar with the cultural norms of friendship, and who owned a home large enough to house the congregation.

In his final chapter (ch. 6), Welborn reconstructs the history of friendship between Paul and his “host” Gaius, the wrongdoer. To understand this relationship, the model of “friendship” between two socially unequal parties is applied. This is supported by the strong affinities between the language Paul employs in 2 Corinthians and the language of ancient friendship. The relational picture that emerges may be summarized as follows:

Having met Paul during his first visit to Corinth, Gaius, a God-fearer, believed in Christ (Acts 18:8) and was baptized by Paul (1 Cor 1:14). Being wealthy, he sought out a patron-client friendship that involved acting as his host and supplying financial support. But Paul refused and plied a trade instead (1 Cor 9:1–18). This created a rift in their relationship, particularly because there were some, such as Apollos, who had accepted monetary support (cf. 1 Cor 9:12). In response, Gaius, along with other wealthy members, refrained from contributing to the Jerusalem collection, considering it a façade for Paul’s underhanded ways. During Paul’s second visit, Gaius accused the apostle of embezzlement. This event disturbed Paul emotionally, provoking him to write the “tearful letter” (2 Cor 10–13), before sending his Conciliatory Apology (2:14–6:13; 7:2–4). Together, these letters produced repentance in Gaius and in other members, as seen in Paul’s Therapeutic Epistle (1:1–2:13; 7:5–16; see esp. 7:7–11). Thereafter, Paul sends another appeal to reinvigorate their participation in the collection (2 Cor 9) since his initial entreaty had failed (2 Cor 8).

There is much to commend in *An End to Enmity*, such as Welborn’s close attention to detail in the exegetical sections, his admirable handle on the Greco-Roman sources and first-century cultural conventions, and his intellectual honesty concerning his well-informed theory concerning Gaius as the wrongdoer in 2 Corinthians. He even admits that his argument would be less valid if his reconstruction of the tearful letter as 2 Cor 10–13 was not correct (p. 207). While his partition theory is dubious, having

been challenged by many scholars who affirm the unity of the letter on literary and rhetorical grounds (i.e., Ivar Vegge, Frederick Long, Frank Matera, Reimund Bieringer, etc.), I particularly question whether or not patronage or “friendship” is the most helpful model through which to analyze Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians, the opponents, or even the wrongdoer.

At one point, Welborn asks, “But who would doubt the usefulness of ‘patronage’ as a category for analyzing relationships in the Roman world?” (p. 388). To which I would say that the model of patronage is indeed helpful when examining relationships in the Roman world, but Paul’s bond with his churches is not your typical relationship “in the Roman world.” Those relationships exist “in the economy of grace” and always comprise a “vertical” party, God, whose presence necessarily reconfigures the “horizontal” dimension of relationship. *From Paul’s perspective*, his relationships are therefore triangulated. This poses a problem when applying a model, such as patronage or friendship, which is fit only for two. But Welborn, for the most part, focuses on *Gaius’s perspective* on Paul’s actions, especially when determining the causes of the rupture in their relationship (utilitarian motives, deception, and ill character [see pp. 426–30]). One wonders what the outcome of his study would have been if he expounded on Paul’s *theological* perspective of their relationship rather than providing a *historical* description.

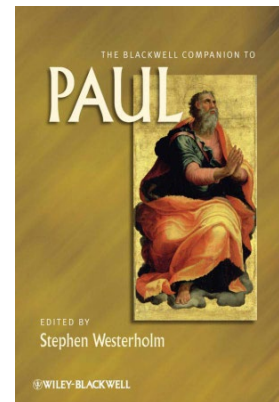
In any case, Welborn has served scholars and students well by providing an exhaustive resource on the wrongdoer in 2 Corinthians, for even if you disagree with his informed hypothesis about Gaius, you will nevertheless be confronted by an incisive alternative with which to interact.

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Stephen Westerholm, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. xviii + 615 pp. \$199.95.

“In the end, the story of Paul is the story of the power of Paul’s message to create communities of faith and to transform the lives and thinking of their members” (p. 4). So says Stephen Westerholm in his introduction to the thirty-seven essays that make up *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*. The remark underlies Westerholm’s conviction that the message of Paul is worthy of sustained reflection by biblical scholars, theologians, and simply those “who find themselves addressed by the letters of Paul” (p. 4). And the comment further betrays his methodological decision to divide the work into three sections: (1) Paul and Christian Origins, (2) Readers of Paul, and (3) The Legacy of Paul.

Part One is devoted to “the story of Paul” and is comprised of traditional historical topics and issues that have preoccupied historians and exegetes since (at least) the Enlightenment. After the first essay, “Pauline Chronology,” the next five essays are devoted to the historical relationships between Paul and his churches. Though necessarily quite general, each of these essays describes the city or region in Paul’s day, examines Paul’s visits and/or relationships to the church(es), and lays out the themes and content of Paul’s letter(s) to the church(es). In Part One, the reader also enjoys essays devoted to traditional historical topics such as “Paul and Scripture” (J. Ross Wagner), “Paul’s Christology” (Simon Gathercole), “Paul and the Law” (Arland J. Hultgren), and “Paul,



Judaism and the Jewish People” (John M. G. Barclay). Barclay’s essay demonstrates that Paul’s treatment of Jewish identity and his relationship to the Jewish people cannot be understood in abstraction but demands to be situated within “the midst of social practices and social circumstances” (p. 198). On the one hand, Paul’s commitment to the ongoing significance of Israel within God’s redemptive history stems from the social practice of reading Scripture. On the other hand, his antithetical constructions (law/Christ) and his notion of “new creation” that transcends ethnicity allowed “later Christians to read him as establishing a sharp distinction between the church and Israel” (p. 200). Wagner’s essay on Paul’s use of Israel’s Scriptures surveys a number of central topics including the role of Scripture in Paul’s mission, Paul’s sources, Paul’s rhetorical techniques, and the way in which Scripture functions for Paul as providing the context for understanding the death and resurrection of God’s Messiah and the inclusion of the Gentiles. Moving beyond traditional Pauline theological topics, however, one also enjoys essays on “Rhetoric in the Letters of Paul (Jean Noël-Aletti), “The Social Setting of Pauline Communities” (Gerd Theissen), “Women in the Pauline Churches” (Margaret Y. MacDonald), and “Paul and Empire” (N. T. Wright). Aletti demonstrates the numerous advances (and some setbacks) that have come from the application of rhetorical criticism to Paul’s letters (e.g., Rom 7:7–25 as an example of speech-in-character). MacDonald calls attention to the impressive amount and role of women in Paul’s mission. Wright’s essay functions as a chastened and updated attempt to situate Paul and his message within the Age of the Augustan Empire and suggests that some of Paul’s discourse may have been composed to challenge the claims of the Roman rulers (e.g., 1 Cor 15:20–28; Phil 2:5–11).

Of course, no one expects every historical matter related to Paul to be treated in a companion. Given the excellence, however, with which this companion covers both old and new concerns, I was surprised not to find a chapter devoted to “Paul and the Ancient Philosophers.” Abraham Malherbe and many of his students have demonstrated the relevance (especially) of the popular philosophers to some of Paul’s language and *topoi*, and one might have expected this to come through more directly somewhere in the volume. Likewise, an essay directly devoted to the relationship between Paul and Jesus of Nazareth (including his teachings) would have benefited the volume.

But, Westerholm asks, are not the thoughts of such figures as Origen, Augustine, Calvin, Charles and John Wesley, and other great biblical interpreters of the past “at least as important as the most recently proposed reconstruction of what the apostle *really* thought by an associate professor at a local university” (p. 2)? Part Two, then, is devoted to “the story of Paul’s message to create communities of faith,” namely, the effects of Paul upon those who have believed and been transformed by his message. It is obvious that a one-volume companion cannot be comprehensive here; nevertheless, in this section one finds an impressive set of essays devoted to numerous Church Fathers, Aquinas, the Reformers, Barth, contemporary Continental Philosophers, recent Jewish interpretations, Orthodox readings, and African readings of Paul. Peter Widdicombe nicely demonstrates how Origen’s method for reading Scripture derives (largely) out of Pauline texts (2 Cor 3:15–17; Gal 4:21–31; 1 Thess 5:23). Christopher Hall shows how Paul functions as an exemplar and teacher who forms “his readers into the image of Christ” (p. 331). Richard E. Burnett recounts Barth’s own experience of God through his encounter with Paul’s letter to the Romans and the way in which his commentary on the epistle led to a break with both the dominant modes of theology *and* biblical criticism in the early twentieth century. P. Travis Kroeker tells the story of recent continental philosophers, such as Alain Badiou and Giorgio Agamben, who have appropriated Paul’s messianic discourse to problematize “the political ontologies of our age” (p. 452).

The essays in this section are (predictably) excellent. If I had been permitted to make two suggestions I would have appreciated seeing an essay on Irenaeus, Athanasius, or Cyril of Alexandria and the way Paul's texts shape patristic soteriology (especially as related to notions of *theosis*). Also, perhaps no one has shaped the way in which Paul has been read in the past two centuries as much as F. C. Baur and his (now largely outdated) historical reconstructions. An essay on Baur would have been worthy of inclusion.

Part Three continues to demonstrate Westerholm's concern with effective history as six essays take up the topic of Paul's legacy as seen in art, literature, and four doctrines from Christian theology. Theologians and biblical scholars will be surprised, I imagine, to discover the abundant appropriations of Paul in art and literature. If I may be permitted a personal note here, I discovered (hitherto unknown to me) two diptychs devoted to the scene represented in Acts 28:1–10 (Paul on Malta), a passage which formed the topic of my dissertation. The final four essays explore how Paul and his epistles have influenced such Christian doctrines as sin and the fall, the Spirit, ethics, and the church.

I have no reservations about wholeheartedly recommending Westerholm's *Blackwell Companion to Paul*. It is comprehensive, well-written, and composed of the best scholars on each topic. The work further exemplifies the contemporary turn to reception history and the belief that the meaning of texts and individuals extends into their effects upon history, culture, and communities. While the language is not used, practitioners of the theological interpretation of Scripture will find many of their concerns validated by this volume as many of the essays do not separate Scripture from theology.

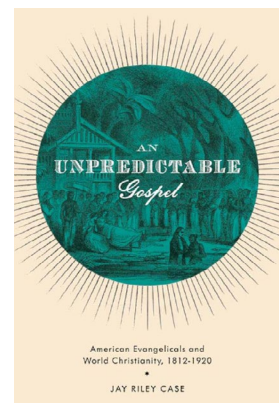
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— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

Jay Riley Chase. *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812–1920*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xi + 311 pp. \$24.95.

Most historians of missions frame their narratives as stories of cultural imperialism wherein Western missionaries impose their religion and values on indigenous peoples. In *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812–1920*, Jay Riley Case challenges this tired but persistent interpretation. Case argues that the real picture was far more complicated. “Missionary engagement . . . involved cooperation, negotiation, conversation, reassessment, and transformation, from all parties” (p. 7). Case focuses his attention on the American evangelical side of these encounters, demonstrating that foreign missions is actually a resounding success story for evangelicals, though that success came in ways unforeseen by many of the earliest missionaries.

Case makes a distinction between two different evangelical missionary strategies. Evangelical “formalists” emphasized personal conversion and were moderately revivalistic, but they also believed



that God advanced his kingdom through Christianized (and thus civilized) societal structures. Formalists built institutions such as hospitals and schools, maintained alliances when possible with indigenous officials, and sought to Christianize as much of the social order as they could through a combination of evangelism and cultural engagement (p. 13). “Antiformalists” were far more revivalistic and were motivated by an almost exclusive focus upon conversions. The antiformalists were more egalitarian and less consistently doctrinaire than their formalist counterparts. They were also less inclined to engage with indigenous culture and more apt to disregard social conventions for the sake of greater evangelistic results (pp. 13–14). Perhaps not surprisingly, formalists were more successful at making broader societal contributions (both good and bad), while antiformalists were generally more successful at winning converts.

This important distinction between formalists and antiformalists runs throughout the book’s nine chapters. For example, the Baptist missionaries George and Sarah Boardman (ch. 1) began their ministry in Burma among the dominant Burman people group. When presented with the opportunity to work among the less-civilized Karens, a minority group, the Boardmans hesitated. But the Karens persisted in asking for the gospel (!), so the Boardmans acquiesced and switched the emphasis of their ministry. Though the Boardmans remained paternalistic in their approach to the Karens, the latter insisted on indigenous leadership, including pastors and evangelists. This forced the Boardmans and other missionaries to focus on institutions and initiatives (like Bible translation) to aid the Karens in their own inter-cultural missionary work. This shift, in turn, influenced the entire American Baptist missionary strategy as the Karens embraced Christianity in large numbers and became a selling point for further missionary recruitment.

The Boardmans’s experience with the Karens included both formalist and antiformalist elements, which introduced tensions concerning strategy among missions-minded American Baptists (ch. 2). Some advocated missionaries gradually giving up their power to indigenous leaders, while others wished to maintain a paternalistic relationship with those among whom they were ministering. Formalists advocated working through institutions to both evangelize and civilize from a culturally privileged position, while antiformalists were more open to somewhat more egalitarian partnership relationships with national leaders. This led to a significant debate among Baptists in the 1840s (ch. 3). Francis Wayland—a university president—advocated an antiformalist approach, emphasizing granting autonomy to national believers as soon as reasonable. Barna Sears countered by arguing for a formalist strategy that emphasized education and maintained a paternalistic vantage point for missionaries. Sears’s vision ultimately carried the day, spurred on by the growth of single female missionaries, most of whom were educators, as well as the North American context of postbellum mission work among African Americans, much of which was educational. Foreign mission engagement had influenced home mission strategies.

Other evangelicals, especially Wesleyans, tended to be more committed to antiformalist approaches. William Taylor, a Methodist missionary to South Africa, partnered with a national evangelist named Charles Pamla (ch. 4). The result was a revival that made Taylor famous. Taylor cared little for civilizing nationals, opting for a vision similar to Wayland’s, though adapted to a Wesleyan theological context. The South African revival became an apologetic for Taylor’s belief in a transcultural, minimally adapted gospel that would always lead to large numbers of conversions and the rapid growth of indigenous churches. Taylor became an influential itinerant missionary and eventually African bishop for the Methodist Episcopal Church (ch. 5). His evangelistic results were mixed, depending upon context.

His antiformalist strategy drew criticism from many Methodist officials, but it paved the way for the Holiness approach that would eventually help birth global Pentecostalism.

Case next turns to what he calls the African American Great Awakening, when Blacks began to embrace evangelicalism following the mid-eighteenth century (ch. 6). As with the foreign mission field, white evangelists labored among African Americans, though the preponderance of conversions came at the hand of indigenous evangelists. Black evangelicals adopted antiformalist strategies for ministry, even as whites such as the American Baptists used formalist strategies to educate African Americans and (at times) curb their autonomy. Ironically, by the postbellum era, Black denominations were becoming more formalist in their own mission work. When South African Methodists broke from the control of American Methodists, they affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church (ch. 7). The AME missionaries then began to struggle with the same formalist-antiformalist tensions that white Baptists had faced with the Karens in Burma.

In the late nineteenth century, Wesleyan Holiness views began to spread to new foreign fields (ch. 8). The Holiness movement was anti-formalist, egalitarian, and far less concerned with middle-class sensibilities than mainline Methodists. As Holiness missionaries engaged foreign cultures, their sensibilities often connected with indigenous believers. Holiness missionary Agnes McAllister sparked a revival in East Africa in the 1890s that challenged received gender expectations and served as a precursor to Pentecostalism. In India, Pandita Ramabi became the leading figure in the Mukti Revival of 1905, another pre-Pentecostal, antiformalist movement led by a woman (ch. 9). In her case, Ramabi rejected the paradigm of the formalist Anglican missionaries who first evangelized her, leading to an indigenous revival that resulted in numerous conversions. The Azusa Street Revival (1906) is thus best understood as the American version of a wider movement that had already begun among antiformalist missionaries and national believers on other continents.

In *The New Shape of World Christianity* (IVP, 2009), Mark Noll argues that North American evangelicalism has shaped global Christianity by exporting a low church, democratic, conversionist ethos that has resonated worldwide. Case demonstrates that much of this ethos was refined through the influence that the earliest foreign converts had on their missionaries and sending denominations back home. Global evangelicalism is mostly antiformalist, in part because the antiformalist impulses of indigenous evangelicals influenced nineteenth-century American evangelicalism, in some cases furthering evangelical republicanism and in other cases challenging latent evangelical formalism. The American evangelical DNA that has been replicated worldwide includes mutations introduced through earlier interactions with foreign converts. *An Unpredictable Gospel* is an important book that challenges faulty assumptions about cultural imperialism while also raising new questions about the nature of contextualization, the relationship between evangelism and social control, and the contours of intra-denominational debates about mission strategy at home and abroad. Highly recommended.

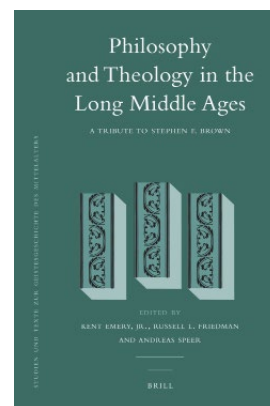
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Kent Emery Jr., Russell L. Friedman, and Andreas Speer, eds. *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown*. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters. Leiden: Brill, 2011. xii + 1,005 pp. \$340.00.

In this *Festschrift* for the medievalist Stephen Brown, the editors have assembled an impressive array of essays. The volume's thirty-five chapters are distributed topically through five sections: (1) metaphysics and natural theology; (2) epistemology and ethics; (3) philosophy and theology; (4) theological questions; and (5) text and context. Some of the contributions bring little-known figures to light for the first time. Others challenge prevailing assumptions about certain medieval thinkers (usually Thomas Aquinas). Others seek to break new ground entirely, suggesting new paradigms of interpretation. While it is difficult in a volume of such magnitude and diversity to isolate dominant or recurring themes, at least two stand out. First, the contributors show that the Christian commitment of the medieval theologians tends to shape their philosophizing to such an extent that their philosophy cannot be simply read as a Christian repristation of one or another of the ancients. Medieval Christian philosophy is distinct in its own right. Second, the contributors show that medieval Christian theology and philosophy was not monolithic, but was characterized by great diversity and lively debates. Each chapter is marked by extensive interaction with primary sources, and each attempts to offer interpretations based on those sources rather than on secondary literature. It will suffice for this review to consider a few of the chapters that spotlight philosophical and theological changes that develop in the middle ages.

In the opening chapter, Jan Aertsen sets the tone for the volume by examining the transformation of metaphysics in the middle ages. This emphasis upon transformation is striking inasmuch as many medievals, such as Aquinas, are often charged with simply appropriating a ready-made Aristotelian conception of metaphysics in which God stands atop the univocal great chain of being. Yet Aertsen notes that Aquinas made a major contribution to the Christian understanding of metaphysics by distinguishing "First Philosophy" from Christian theology. The two are distinguished not only according to their sources—nature and Scripture, respectively—but also according to their subjects. "In philosophical theology," Aertsen explains, "the divine is not the subject—that is being-as-being—but the causal principle of this subject. Christian theology, on the other hand, considers the divine in itself as the subject of its science" (p. 27). The basic assumption is that the proper cause of a science's subject—in the case of metaphysics, being-in-general—cannot also be the proper subject of that science since each science takes its subject as a given and must look beyond itself for its ultimate and proper cause. Christian theology does not need to do this because God, its subject, has no proper cause. This distinction between Christian theology and the lower science of metaphysics is possible only on the Christian assumption that God is the ultimate cause of being-in-general—an assumption that Aristotle and Plato did not make inasmuch as they believed in eternal, uncreated, non-divine realities (e.g., matter, forms, or ideas). Thus, Aquinas's Christian commitment caused his conception of the proper subject of metaphysics itself to differ monumentally from the ancients.

Andreas Speer's chapter, on the other hand, shows that Aquinas's conception of metaphysics as a science distinct from Christian theology was by no means the universal consensus among the medievals. Others, such as Meister Eckhart, sought to preserve a form of metaphysics inherited from Boethius that was fundamentally at odds with Aquinas's. In other words, there is no "Aristotelian master



narrative” that explains the high middle ages and its relationship to earlier Christian philosophers (p. 94). Boethius equated metaphysics and theology, and Aquinas disapproved. Many fail to see the stark contrast between Boethius and Aquinas, according to Speer, because both share a common Aristotelian understanding of the lower speculative sciences such as physics and mathematics. But Aquinas’s later distinction between “First Philosophy” and Christian theology signals “a division of two divergent and incommensurate metaphysical discourses” (p. 104) and does not represent an advancement of a single shared metaphysical outlook with Boethius. In following Boethius’s equation of metaphysics and theology, Eckhart is led to treat God himself as if he were a transcendental in nature. Yet he presumes to have the advantage of uniting reason and faith, philosophy, and Christianity.

Oliva Blanchette also pushes back against the notion that Aquinas endorsed Greek philosophy whole-hog. Following the conclusions of Arthur Lovejoy’s 1936 study *The Great Chain of Being*, many have assumed that Aquinas self-contradictorily held to two different conceptions of the universe—the Christian one in which God freely wills the world’s existence and the Greek one in which he creates the world by an absolute necessity rooted in the diffusiveness of his goodness. In his chapter, Blanchette seeks to exonerate Aquinas by showing that Lovejoy has set up a false dichotomy between divine freedom and necessity. Lovejoy, according to Blanchette, fails to perceive that the causality Aquinas associates with the necessary diffusiveness of God’s goodness is not an *efficient* causality—which remains free for God—but a *final* causality. Part of the reason Lovejoy makes this mistake is that he thinks of the diffusiveness of divine goodness as a Spinozan “principle of plentitude” rather than according to its common medieval connotation, as a “principle of perfection” (pp. 157–58). As a principle of perfection God’s necessary diffusion of goodness is for the purpose of bringing all things to their proper end (which is God himself as the highest good). But this diffusion is necessary only on the assumption that God has in fact efficiently willed to create anything at all. Thus, the absolute necessity of the diffusion of God’s goodness is not an absolute necessity requiring the world’s *existence*, but only necessitates that if God should efficiently (and freely) will a world to exist he wills it to exist with himself as its final end and good. Blanchette masterfully dismantles Lovejoy’s paradigm and shows that he has misconceived Aquinas’s understanding of the role of divine freedom and necessity in creation.

Touching matters more theological, Jeremy Wilkens argues in his chapter that many have incorrectly judged Aquinas’s Trinitarianism and his “psychological analogy” as privileging substances over Persons and generally isolating itself from the rest of his theology. This charge was perpetrated in the last century by Karl Rahner in his criticism of Thomas’s division of theology into *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino*. According to Wilkens, no such division was ever made by Thomas and in fact his Trinitarianism is fully conversant with his views on God’s simplicity, work of creation, and work in the salvation of sinners. While many will likely disagree with Thomas’s conception of divine grace and sanctification, Wilkens’s chapter should persuade readers that Thomas was a truly Trinitarian theologian.

In one of the volume’s most intriguing chapters, Michael Gorman investigates the question of how many “existences” Christ has. Does he have one according to his one person or two according to his two natures? The Chalcedonian formula alone is not sufficient to answer this challenge. Aquinas, Gorman observes, answers the question by affirming in four texts only one act of existence (*esse*) in Christ and in another text that he has more than one *esse*. Thomas distinguishes between the *esse* that we ascribe to suppositis (persons) and to natures so that, for instance, we may distinguish between the affirmations “Christ exists” and “Christ’s human nature exists.” The existence of suppositis is the more fundamental sense of existence. Inasmuch as Aquinas is clear that Christ as a person can have only

one *esse*, Gorman reformulates the question: “Instead of asking merely how many existences are had by Christ, the supposit, we can ask, first, how many substantial existences he has and second, how many non-substantial existences he has” (p. 721). In answer to the first, Gorman discovers that Thomas holds to only one substantial existence in Christ: “To attribute two substantial existences to him would be to make him a supposit twice over, which would be to fall into the Nestorian heresy” (p. 722). So what does Christ’s human nature contribute if not substantial existence? Here Gorman shows that Thomas transcends the bounds of Aristotelian categories in the interest of theological truth by affirming that the existence of Christ’s human nature is neither substantial nor accidental. Some readers will undoubtedly feel that Gorman leaves them on the hook as he declines to explicate this doctrine of the secondary non-accidental existence of Christ’s humanity. He is satisfied to have isolated the questions and divisions embedded in Aquinas’s texts. This article is a tantalizing bit of clarification that should be an impetus to further research in Thomas’s Christology.

Two other chapters that deserve brief mention treat figures other than Aquinas. Matthew Levering offers a careful study of William of Ockham’s teaching on the possibility of papal heresy and his proposed response that national, regional, or local churches may have to resort to an aristocratic form of church government as a stopgap measure to ensure the maintenance of orthodoxy. From a Catholic perspective, Levering locates the weakness of Ockham’s argument in his conception of the church’s papal headship as a primarily juridical reality rather than a sacramental reality. Ockham’s implicit anti-monarchial posture with respect to ultimate church authority was a harbinger of the conflicts over ecclesiastical authority that would follow in the ensuing centuries. Finally, John Slotemaker offers the thesis that John Calvin’s Trinitarianism is wrongly categorized by those who claim its essential Cappadocianism (T. F. Torrance) and those who hold to its essential Augustinianism (B. B. Warfield, Paul Helm). Beside the fact that Calvin most frequently appeals to the pre-Nicenes for patristic support, he also tends to distinguish the divine persons by their possession of the non-relational properties of source (Father), wisdom (Son), and power (Spirit). Slotemaker interprets this as an explicit rejection of the Cappadocian, Augustinian, and Thomistic insistence that the properties that distinguish the persons are *relations*. Instead, he notes, Calvin’s view most closely approximates that of John Duns Scotus. Whatever one makes of this thesis, no future work on Calvin’s Trinitarianism can ignore Slotemaker’s argument.

While its cost ensures that *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages* will be primarily a volume for institutional collections, its content cannot be ignored by students working in the field. Many of its chapters will undoubtedly become staples in the years to come. The book is simply brimming with numerous original discoveries and new interpretations of old discoveries.

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Peter W. Martens. *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xii + 280 pp. £65.00/\$125.00.

Imagine that a renowned sculptor decided to chisel a massive statue out of the rock in a mountain range. A viewer walking along the valley might admire the finely hewn base of the sculpture. Another observer, taking a higher mountain path, might insightfully describe the statue's upper part. But only when someone happened upon the right vantage point, and so could perceive the whole at once, would the parts formerly discovered assume their richest possible significance.

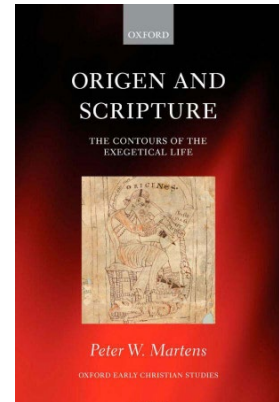
In his study of Origen and the Bible, Peter Martens appears to have gained such a privileged viewpoint on the great Alexandrian's theology by focusing on readers of Scripture themselves. Martens asks what kind of life the exegete lives for Origen. His thesis is that Origen's ideal interpreters are those who participate in the drama of salvation even while studying that drama on Scripture's pages.

This "subjective" approach, concentrating on the interpreter per se, allows Martens to join together Origen's many comments on ideal reading practice with Origen's own biography, since he sought to embody this mode of Christian existence himself. As Martens states with justified confidence, "This topic also holds the key for unlocking Origen's panoramic vision of the entire exegetical enterprise" (p. 5).

In the introductory chapter 1, Martens provides a helpful summary of the hot topic of Origen's hermeneutics. Much attention has been paid to Origen's exegetical method both because he so profoundly influenced subsequent biblical interpretation up to the Enlightenment and because he can serve as a resource for those dissatisfied with modern ideals of professional biblical interpretation put forth in the past two centuries. Martens also lays out the plan for his study: Part One (chs. 2–3) discusses Origen's understanding of Greco-Roman *paideia* (education) and his theological arguments for its necessity for good biblical interpretation. Part Two (chs. 4–10) describes how the equipped exegete participates in the Christian story.

Origen eagerly cultivated skills and knowledge in philology himself and directed his students to do likewise. (The term "philology" could be misunderstood since some within the modern academy consider that an arcane discipline. However, for Origen—as Martens describes him—philology was synonymous with what the Victorians called "a man of letters," accomplished in the liberal arts and philosophy.) Origen knew undergoing *paideia* was a laborious process, but it provided the tools necessary to mine the deeper gems hidden in Scripture's text. While Martens's account here offers much, it would have been more complete had he explained how *rhetorical* education would illumine Origen's vision of the well-trained philologist—he instead focuses more on grammatical curriculum—especially as key terms from ancient rhetorical curriculum occur in his description of historical analysis of the text ("refutation and confirmation," pp. 49–50) and literary analysis (pp. 54–63).

Along these lines, Martens cites a fascinating quotation from *Contra Celsum* (3.58) in which Origen describes these students as "having been trained beforehand (*progymnasmenous*)" in "general education" and "philosophical thought." Then, through study of Scripture, Origen would "lead them on to the exalted height . . . of the profoundest doctrines of the Christians." The word *progymnasmenous* is closely related to the technical term for the pre-rhetorical curriculum (*progymnasmata*) students learned throughout the Greco-Roman world as the next-to-last step before attaining the height



of education. (For a relevant reconstruction of these exercises in ancient Alexandria, see Raffaella Cribiore's *Gymnastics of the Mind* [Princeton University Press, 2001].) Martens could have mentioned how Origen's assertion here displays a breathtaking subversion of the usual ends of *paideia*—namely, political power, social status, and/or a place in a philosophical school—toward Bible study in the small and seemingly insignificant church of the mid-third century, but his focus is (not wrongly) on Origen's "openness to" and "ambitious endorsement of" Greco-Roman education.

In Part 2, Martens shows how Origen locates the well-rounded scholar in the Christian narrative. Chapter 4 explains that Origen situated Greco-Roman learning under God's providential activity in history, and as such, could interpret it as divinely instituted for the sake of biblical exegesis. For instance, Origen pits the Apostle Paul's allegorical reading strategies (e.g., Gal 4:21–24), against the pagan Celsus's literalistic reading of the OT, thus sanctioning the view that the Bible was *intentionally* composed in a multivalent fashion. In other words, the Bible shared with pagan literature allegorical meaning and thus could and should use the "pagan" tool of allegorical interpretation.

The search for the deepest things of God by delving into Scripture's manifold meaning marks off Origen's ideal interpreter from the simpler members of the Church (the *simpliciores*), Martens's subject in chapter 5. Scriptural inquiry orders the mind, the aspect of humanity bearing closest resemblance to God, and moves the exegete beyond faith to discover the underlying reasons for Christian beliefs. While such an elitist view might place Origen under suspicion of undermining the church, chapters 6 and 7 prove Origen a devout churchman insofar as his exegesis adhered strictly to the rule of faith. These basic doctrines, passed on from the Apostles, demarcate what Origen took to be his orthodox exegesis from the aberrant readings of Gnostics and Jews.

The final three chapters (8–10) explore other facets of Origen's inscription of the interpreter into the Christian story. In addition to cultivating virtuous character and trusting that the Bible is unified in one message despite its diversity, the ideal reader also proleptically participates in the eschatological schooling for which every soul is destined.

It is impressive how much historical background the study covers: we learn about pagan education, ancient apologetics, Gnosticism, and Jewish-Christian conflict, to name a few of the core topics in patristics Martens deftly handles. But one of the study's chief strengths is the author's thorough knowledge of Origen's *oeuvre*, which permits him to substantiate his general claims with ample concrete evidence. Many of the footnotes contain additional citations of texts where Origen discusses the theme at hand. Between the copious notes, an extensive yet well-organized bibliography, and the concise survey of scholarship in chapter 1, this book could double as a reference manual for Origenian studies. While Martens does not claim to have defended Origen's assessment of scriptural scholarship against the sort of training in biblical interpretation most of us receive in seminaries and graduate school (p. 244), his masterful study, which succeeds in making Origen's account of biblical interpretation more intelligible to us moderns, functions as prolegomena to retrieving at least some facets of it for the Church.

All in all, Martens's account of the ideal interpreter in *Origen and Scripture* is an ideal starting point to encounter Origen's hermeneutics.

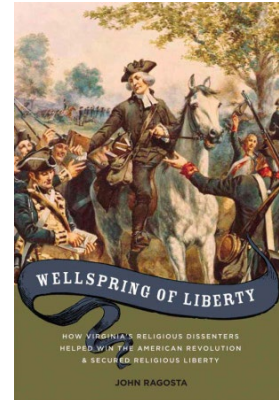
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John A. Ragosta. *Wellspring of Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped Win the American Revolution and Secured Religious Liberty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 261 pp. \$34.95.

The American Revolution secured political liberty for the United States, but according to John Ragosta, it is also the wellspring of religious liberty in America. The war, he argues, provided the unique conditions that enabled religious dissenters to demand and finally secure the liberty they had long sought. This development occurred almost exclusively in the Anglican-dominated colony of Virginia, but it propelled Virginia's leaders, especially James Madison, to enshrine religious liberty not only in state law, but also in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Consequently, as is indicated in the book's subtitle, Virginia's religious dissenters are responsible for the establishment of religious freedom in America.

Virginia's dissenting population consisted of Lutherans, Quakers, Mennonites, Methodists, German Reformed, Presbyterians, and Baptists, but Ragosta focuses on the latter two groups as they were the largest in number and the most influential. While all dissenters made up about one-third of the colony's population on the eve of the revolution, Virginia was governed by members of the Church of England, who did everything in their power to suppress non-Anglican religious activity. No group suffered at the hands of Virginia's Anglican elite more so than the Baptists. Anglicans targeted the rapidly-growing Baptist population not only because they tended to be poor and uneducated, but also because they actively evangelized both blacks and women. By 1774, more than half of the Baptist preachers in the colony had been imprisoned for violating one or more of the many laws supporting the Anglican monopoly. Only Anglicans could be licensed to preach in Virginia, and only Anglicans were authorized to perform baptisms and weddings. Anglican hegemony, Ragosta argues, was alive and well in Virginia when the revolution began.

However, when the revolution began, the new patriot leaders of Virginia, who were Anglicans, realized they would need the assistance of the dissenters they previously persecuted in order to militarily defeat the British. Consequently, the members of the Virginia House of Delegates began considering the previously ignored petitions sent to that body by dissenting churches and associations. Likewise, Ragosta shows, the petitions from the dissenters increasingly included statements expressing a willingness to fight for political liberty in exchange for religious liberty. As a result, between 1776 and 1780, Virginia lawmakers rescinded many of the laws that discriminated against the dissenters. In turn, the dissenters recruited and volunteered for the war effort and were instrumental in keeping the British from conquering Virginia. With Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown (1781) and American victory all but assured, the Anglican (Episcopalian) elites in Virginia sought to reverse the advances made by dissenters during the war and restore the church to its privileged position. But by this point, Ragosta argues, the growing dissenter population had been politicized, and Virginia politics had been republicanized. While Jefferson, Madison, and others were sympathetic to dissenter arguments, they and others also recognized that dissenters were a political force to be reckoned with. Consequently, Madison led the narrowly successful effort to defeat the general assessment bill (taxes to support Christian denominations) in 1785 and to pass Jefferson's Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom the following year. In the course of a decade (1776–1786) Virginia went from having one of the most entrenched established churches in the colonies to being the state with the broadest protection of



religion freedom in the country. This amazing transformation occurred because of the dissenters and the leverage they gained against their oppressors because of the demands of the war.

Ragosta's book is worth reading for his telling of this story alone. At a time when American culture typically depicts evangelical Christianity as a hindrance to freedom and democracy, Ragosta shows that evangelical Virginians, especially Calvinistic Baptists and Presbyterians, were essential to winning the American Revolution in the South, to democratizing Virginia politics, and to establishing religious freedom in America. The latter is true, Ragosta asserts, because Madison used Virginia's version of religious liberty as the basis for the religious components of the First Amendment. Upon making this point, Ragosta then turns his attention, in the last chapter, from the story of Virginia's dissenters in the revolutionary period to the meaning of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. In short, he argues that since the Virginia dissenters shaped Madison's thinking and Madison in turn crafted the First Amendment, it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the meaning of the Establishment clause can be found in the arguments of the Virginia dissenters. Because the "dissenters fought for a strict disestablishment and clear separation of church and state" (p. 138), Ragosta says that the First Amendment does not simply mandate that the federal government could not establish a state church, but rather demands complete separation of church and state.

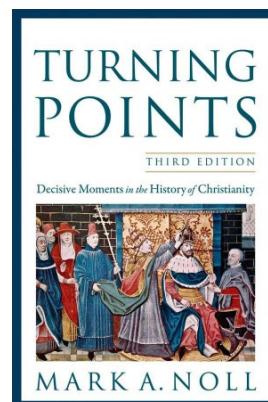
This portion of the book proves to be the most problematic. In attempting to identify the original intention or meaning of the Establishment Clause, would it not make more sense to examine the first Congress that wrote and debated the clause than what dissenters in Virginia argued a decade earlier during the revolution? If so, it is difficult to argue that the First Amendment demands strict separation of church and state when the same Congress that wrote the amendment appropriated funds for Christian missionaries and allowed worship services to be held in the capitol. Second, while it is true that some of dissenter petitions seemed to advocate complete separation—particularly those penned by Baptists—there is evidence that Baptists and other dissenters did not object to the government issuing proclamations of thanksgiving to God or calling upon the citizenry to pray. In other words, it appears—contrary to what Ragosta asserts in his last chapter—that while Virginia dissenters demanded religious liberty they did not champion a strictly secular state completely devoid of religious influence.

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Book Note

Mark A. Noll. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xii + 356. \$22.99.

Mark Noll is among the most distinguished historians in American evangelicalism. His book *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, now in its third edition, is a semi-scholarly survey written for students and everyday church members. The title captures the essence of the book, which summarizes the story of Christian history by recounting thirteen significant vignettes. Besides some general updating, the major change in the third edition is a new chapter thirteen dedicated to Vatican II and the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. Noll argues that these two meetings were important ecumenical and missionary endeavors that captured some of the momentum of and ultimately furthered the growth of global Christianity, especially in the majority world. Overall, Noll does a fine job of summarizing church history. Some readers will quibble with him over his choice of particular turning points. For example, Jesuit missions is given a whole chapter, but Constantine's story is treated as background information to the fourth-century christological debates. Others will bristle at the omissions—where are Anselm and Jonathan Edwards, and why are Pentecostals and Charismatics only briefly treated in the Afterword? Nevertheless, *Turning Points* remains an excellent resource for church reading groups or, if it is appropriately supplemented, undergraduate surveys of church history.

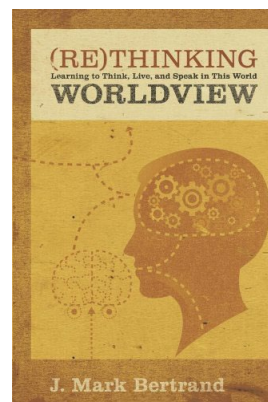


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— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

J. Mark Bertrand. *Rethinking Worldview: Learning to Think, Live, and Speak in This World*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007. 256 pp. £10.99/\$16.99.

“Worldview” has become a fixture in evangelical discourse. J. Mark Bertrand, novelist and teacher with Worldview Academy, describes himself as having a “fascination with worldviews” (p. 20), and he understands why the apparent ubiquity of the concept might lead some to deem another book on the subject superfluous. It is exactly because the subject has become so widespread that a volume such as his is needed. Bertrand is concerned that the popularization of Christian worldview-thinking has had the unintentional effect of diluting its strength. “We need to take a second look and make sure that, in adopting the concept so widely and making it such a staple of evangelical discourse, we have



not gutted it . . . In streamlining the idea of worldviews for mass consumption, we have been simplistic. We have been pedantic. And worst of all, we have been overconfident” (p. 20).

Another reason for reconsidering the notion of worldview is to resist the tendency to regard it as strictly intellectual and thus largely irrelevant to Christian life. A truly Christian worldview must be situated “in the broader context of a lived faith so as to demonstrate how thinking is (or should be) integrally connected to how we act” (p. 21). I agree with Bertrand’s observation that much “worldview chatter” (including, regrettably, my own) fails to make this connection. “Worldview formation,” he reminds us, “is not just a means of getting one’s intellectual ducks in a row, ensuring that one buys into the official evangelical position on the various hot button issues of the day. Instead, worldview thinking should lead inevitably and organically to changed behavior” (p. 115).

The book consists of three parts, corresponding to its subtitle: Worldview (Think), Wisdom (Live), and Witness (Speak). Part I defines a worldview as “an interpretation of influences, experiences, circumstances, and insight” (p. 26) of which we’re mostly unaware except in times of crisis or contemplation. Like glasses, we spend most of our time looking *through* them, not *at* them. Ideally, a worldview should enable us to perceive reality with clarity. Bertrand suggests three tests (correspondence, coherence, and productivity) for evaluating worldviews and helpfully discusses how worldviews form and change. Worldview formation is a kind of “mental self-defense” in response to the constant aggressive pressure of our environment. (This description brings to mind Francis Schaeffer’s imagery of “blowing the roof” off.) Bertrand also acknowledges the interdependent relationship between worldview and behavior. What we believe about what is real affects how we live. But our actions and practices likewise play a role in shaping and confirming our worldview.

Worldviews function on three levels: as starting points (he identifies creation, order, rationality, and fear of the Lord as weight-bearing pillars of a Christian worldview), systems, and stories (“The gospel story [creation, fall, and redemption] delivers us from the power of other tales, other conceptions of ourselves” [p. 106].) It is a mistake to accentuate any one of these at the expense of the other two. “My tendency . . . is to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The worldview concept is complicated and we are not faced with an either/or proposition” (p. 97).

Bertrand concedes that there is no such thing as *the* Christian worldview if by that we have in mind a monolithic view of reality held by every professing Christian. “Christians are too imperfect to see the world around them in a consistent and consistently biblical way” (p. 82). Regardless of the existence of a variety of Christian worldviews, they share enough in common to distinguish them from alternative perspectives.

Worldview and wisdom, according to Bertrand, should compose a “one-two punch.” “Equipping people to think is a noble task, but not a sufficient one. God expects us not just to think, but to live” (p. 116). A sturdy Christian worldview is an essential foundation upon which the strong wall of wisdom (“practical discernment, the ability to judge, the faculty for distinguishing the truth from lies” [p. 126]) is to be built. Bertrand contrasts popular notions of wisdom (intelligence and/or something mystical and esoteric reserved for the Yoda-like few) and biblical wisdom that comes from God and is meant to be displayed in life’s ordinariness as “a lifestyle of daily obedience” (p. 135). Since Christ is “the wisdom of God” and Christians are to be conformed to his likeness, growing in wisdom is implicit in sanctification.

In the final section, Bertrand shows how witness should organically arise from worldview and wisdom. He includes helpful chapters on worldview apologetics and the nature of unbelief but avers that witness, properly understood, extends beyond explicit evangelistic and apologetic activity. In addition

to declaring and defending the gospel, Christians need to bear witness to the truth by being creative contributors to culture. A grasp of a Christian worldview enables believers to become self-conscious cultural consumers who make deliberate choices to resist being molded into anti-Christian ways of life and thought. The cultivation of biblical wisdom equips us to engage in “discerning systematic critique of the culture’s shaping processes” (p. 187). Criticism, in turn, should empower creative expression. “Criticism is healthy when it supports creativity, wisdom leading to witness. It is unhealthy when it inhibits cultural contribution, either by stigmatizing it or by failing to equip us with the necessary tools and mind-set” (p. 188). Unfortunately, criticism and creativity are often disconnected with some segments of the church adopting an unhealthy criticism void of creativity while others abound in creativity in need of greater discernment. “What we need, both personally and corporately, is a healthy critical outlook that organically blends into creative contribution” (p. 189). In the final chapter, Bertrand casts a vision for Christian artists (especially storytellers) bearing witness by “imagining the truth” thereby giving culture new eyes (p. 231). *Rethinking Worldview* was written before Bertrand’s Roland March mystery trilogy. As a fan of that series, I especially appreciated a view into the thinking that went into its creation.

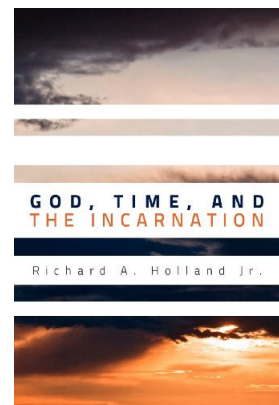
This work makes a valuable contribution by helping readers see the vital interconnectedness of areas evangelicals tend to dichotomize: doctrine and life, theory and practice, intellect and artistic expression. In recounting his introduction to worldview thinking and its impact on his own Christian life, Bertrand says that it encouraged him to pursue the mind of Christ. His is a volume that will encourage others to do likewise.

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Richard A. Holland Jr. *God, Time, and the Incarnation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012. viii + 197 pp. £15.00/\$23.00.

Richard Holland’s book comes at an interesting time. Two different conversations have been taking place within contemporary philosophy of religion and philosophical theology. One conversation is over God’s relation to time. The other conversation is in regards to the doctrine of the incarnation. Over the last few years several philosophical and systematic theologians have turned their attention toward the metaphysics of the incarnation. Various models have been proposed, and the discussions are starting to become quite rigorous. Among divine temporalists there is a common claim that the incarnation shows that God must be temporal. The problem is that only a few temporalists have attempted to rigorously argue this point. Holland’s work is the first book-length attempt to argue from the incarnation to the claim that God must be temporal.

In order to develop this argument, Holland surveys and analyses the relevant issues and debates within the philosophy of time and theology. For instance, he briefly discusses different theories of time, biblical theology, and the history of divine timelessness. He also critically examines some of the major thinkers in the contemporary debates.



One relevant issue for the debate that Holland notes is that time involves change and succession. The connection between this understanding of time and theology is as follows. To say that God is timeless is to say that God exists without beginning, without end, and without succession. God does not undergo any change such that he has no before or after in his life. He enjoys all of his life at once in a timeless present. To say that God is temporal is to hold that God exists without beginning and without end, but to affirm that God does have succession in his life. After laying out these definitions, Holland goes on to argue that there is no biblical evidence that God exists without succession. On the contrary, the Bible clearly portrays God as having succession in his life. Another issue that Holland focuses on is the debate between the tensed and tenseless theories of time. It is commonly held today that if a tensed theory of time is true, God is temporal, whereas if the tenseless theory of time is true, God must be timeless.

After laying out the above issues, Holland delves into the doctrine of the incarnation. He offers an analysis of biblical and creedal issues in the development of the doctrine. It is Holland's contention that the incarnation should serve as a control-belief for the debate over God and time. If Jesus Christ truly is the God-man and the one who reveals God to us, then Christian theology must allow the incarnation to inform our beliefs about the divine nature. Holland offers three issues from the incarnation that serve as a paradigm for his argument that God is temporal. First, the incarnation-event indicates succession in the life of God the Son in its occurrence and in its permanence. The doctrine of the incarnation affirms that God the Son existed prior to the incarnation. Once the Son became incarnate, he continued to be incarnate and will continue to be incarnate forever and ever amen. Second, the earthly life of Jesus demonstrates temporal succession. The Gospels clearly show Jesus doing one thing and then another. Third, the salvific work of Christ indicates succession in the life of God. The work of salvation comes to a completion in Christ. This indicates that salvation was not timelessly complete, but comes to completion at some point. Throughout the book Holland expands upon these three paradigmatic issues to come to the conclusion that the Christian God cannot be timeless.

In what follows I will point out some of the weaknesses I find in Holland's book. My first complaint is one that I have with just about every recent treatment of God and time. Most of the contemporary discussions on God and time have not kept up with the contemporary discussions within the philosophy of time. For far too long the debates about God's relation to time have focused on the tensed versus tenseless theories of time. A tensed theory of time holds that tensed propositions are more fundamental to reality than tenseless propositions, whereas the tenseless theory of time holds that tenseless propositions are more fundamental. For much of the late twentieth century, it was assumed that each theory corresponded to a particular ontology of time, but this has turned out to be false. If you put three tenseless theorists in a room, you can find them holding three different ontologies of time. One will say that only the present exists. Another will say that the past and present exist. The third will say that the past, present, and future exist. The same thing can happen if you put three tensed theorists in a room too. What is actually relevant for understanding God's relation to time is knowing which ontology of time is correct.

Propositions about time are not the crucial issue and serve only to obscure the debate. This brings me to my second criticism of Holland's book. This criticism, like the last one, applies to most contemporary discussions on God and time. As noted above, there is somewhat of a consensus that God can be timeless if the tenseless theory of time is true. What is often misunderstood is that the tenseless theory of time is, in fact, a theory on time and change. Holland, like most others, treats the tenseless

theory of time as if it were about timelessness. The idea seems to be that a tenseless theory of time gives us a world where all moments are equally, wholly, simultaneously, and timelessly present to God. But the tenseless theory of time does not give us this. All it gives us is a theory about what is true at certain times without any reference to tense. An example of a tenseless truth is <Wipf & Stock publish Richard Holland's book on February 20, 2012 at 8:00am>. Granted, this proposition does not change its truth-value like <Wipf & Stock will publish Holland's book tomorrow> does. But the tenseless proposition still gives us a proposition about what is true at a particular time. Even if the tenseless theory did entail a particular ontology of time whereby the past, present, and future all exist, it would not give us a state of affairs where all moments of time are simultaneously present to God. This is because all moments of time are not simultaneous together, even on a tenseless theory of time.

This misunderstanding of the tenseless theory of time has led to a misunderstanding of the classical tradition. Again, Holland is no different in this respect. For instance, he claims that Boethius holds that all moments of time are literally present to God. In other words, Boethius holds to a tenseless theory of time. However, this is false. Boethius holds that only the present moment of time exists. In fact, Boethius uses this ontology of time to describe and argue for God's timeless present. What Holland and others grab onto is an analogy that Boethius offers to explain divine foreknowledge. Boethius says that God is like a man standing on top of a mountain. He can see the road below all at once. What Holland and others ignore is Boethius's claim that God's knowledge is in no way dependent upon the temporal world. "[H]ow absurd it is that we should say that the result of temporal affairs is the cause of eternal foreknowledge!" (*Consolations of Philosophy*, V.147). Instead, God has a perfect knowledge of himself and thus "views in [his] own direct comprehension everything *as though* it were taking place in the present" (*Consolations of Philosophy*, V.163). What Boethian commentators like John Marenbon point out is that Boethius is falling in line with a long tradition of thinkers who hold that the divine essence generates eternal truths. In God having a perfect knowledge of himself, he is able to know all true propositions regardless of whether the temporal world exists. The debates over the tensed and tenseless theories of time have tended to obscure this.

However, these criticisms are not unique to Holland's work. What criticisms are unique to Holland? The main weakness I see with Holland's work is a lack of metaphysical rigor. Due to an underdeveloped account of the metaphysics of time, as well as an underdeveloped account of the metaphysics of the incarnation, I worry that Holland's arguments might not be as persuasive as they could be. When it comes to articulating the doctrine of the incarnation, Holland's account simply is not as rigorous as one will find in the works of thinkers like Stephen Davis, Thomas Senor, Oliver Crisp, or Richard Cross. In regards to the metaphysics of time, there is no discussion of presentism or four-dimensional eternalism nor any discussion about theories of persistence through time. Though Holland's argument packs quite a punch, I can easily foresee an analytic theologian who is committed to a three-part Christology, four-dimensional eternalism, and divine timelessness failing to feel any force from Holland's argument. I believe that if Holland were to delve deeper into the metaphysics of the incarnation and time, he could give his argument some serious teeth.

I do not wish these criticisms to overshadow the fact that Holland's arguments do have force, especially if one is committed to the belief that only the present moment of time exists and that the past no longer exists and the future does not yet exist. This book gives a much needed treatment of how the doctrine of the incarnation relates to the debate about God's eternity. Holland offers several critiques of thinkers like Paul Helm and Brian Leftow that are quite devastating. Also, his argument from the

atonement to divine temporality is interesting and novel. It certainly deserves more attention. At the very least, Holland has clearly driven home the point that the doctrine of the incarnation has not played a significant role in how theologians typically understand God's eternity. Holland persuasively argues that Christian theologians cannot continue to do this. Instead, the incarnation must be a control-belief for thinking about the divine nature.

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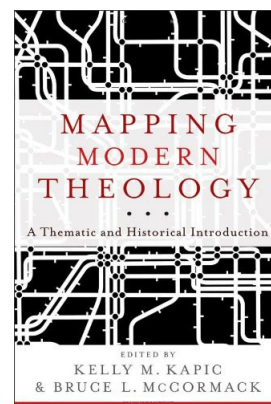
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Kelly M. Kapic and Bruce L. McCormack, eds. *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 432 pp. £19.99/\$34.99.

This is a wonderful compendium of fifteen essays, contributed by a high-caliber array of evangelical scholars, that all concentrate on the development of various classical Christian doctrines over the course of the modern period—roughly within the last two hundred years or so. I will not comment on each individual essay, as I could do the whole collection justice only with a full essay-length treatment of its own. I will, however, highlight the main features and flavor that characterize the book throughout.

Bruce McCormack leads off with an introductory essay that sets up expectations nicely for the rest of the essays. For this reason a bit more needs to be said about it than applies to the other chapters. The project's overall intention is given at the outset: "Our idea is to organize modern theology along the lines of classical doctrinal topics or themes so that more complete coverage of significant developments in each area of doctrinal construction might be achieved" (p. 1). In this opening essay, McCormack gives his take on the critical earmarks that characterize modernity, that is, "certain defining moments in which those commitments emerge that will help us in identifying 'modern' theologies" (p. 2). Each contributor could choose whatever constructive approach they wanted to take, e.g., typological, thematic, or more historical. The only firm parameter set "was that contributors work descriptively, rather than prescriptively. That way, even the differences of opinion that exist would not become an issue" (p. 18). Following the introductory essay, the other essays given here in order cover the following topics: The Trinity (Fred Sanders); Divine Attributes (Stephen R. Holmes); Scripture and Hermeneutics (Daniel J. Treier); Creation (Katherine Sonderegger); Anthropology (Kelly M. Kapic); The Person of Christ (Bruce L. McCormack); Atonement (Kevin J. Vanhoozer); Providence (John Webster); Pneumatology (Telford Work); Soteriology (Richard Lints); Christian Ethics (Brian Brock); Practical Theology (Richard R. Osmer); Ecclesiology (Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen); and Eschatology (Michael Horton).

Though the focus of the book historically is on the modern era, quite a few of the essays start off giving relevant background with respect to the pre-modern era (maybe the medieval period or the early Reformation period) or otherwise beginning with the post-Reformation period. The pre-modern background given in these instances definitely helps one appreciate better the various theological paradigms and movements that take shape in the modern period. As one would naturally expect, the theological paradigms and/or movements that became most influential in the development of a given



doctrine are not necessarily the same as those that influenced other doctrines. Schools of thought or movements stemming out of Enlightenment thought, German idealism, Romanticism, neo-Thomism, historical criticism, social gospel movement, neo-orthodoxy, Radical Orthodoxy, and Reformed/confessional Protestantism are but a cross-section of the important influences and sources of contention that show up regularly in the narratives describing what has shaped the various Christian doctrines over the modern period. Worth particularly commending, a number of essays also address the associated trends in the Roman Catholic Church and in Eastern Orthodoxy. In the case of the RCC, what factor the Vatican I and II Councils have respectively played is also discussed. Moreover, attention is given in certain places to the significance of contemporary ecumenical confabulations and initiatives between Rome and major bodies of Protestantism.

The essays are between twenty to thirty pages in length, and given this limitation, all of them are impressively informative. Generally speaking, works that provide a history of doctrinal development often seek to cover either a broader range of history at the expense of topical depth or focus on the theological development of a particular individual. While this book covers a lot of topical ground, it succeeds overall in providing a good balance of substantive breadth and depth. Usually when an edited work has anywhere approaching fifteen contributions as this book does, a fair amount of disparity in regard to the level of scholarship and writing quality of the essays is expected. In my judgment, the quality of these fifteen essays is consistently excellent. Of course, I did find some essays more to my liking than others, but this has much more to do with my own areas of theological interest than it does with any major unevenness of essay-quality.

The word “Introduction” in the book’s title should not be taken to mean “appropriate for undergraduate-level studies but not graduate-level”; it is suitable for both levels of study. The book’s weakness is simply the natural weakness one would expect for this type of project. That is to say, the narrative that each of the contributors tells regarding the doctrinal development being presented is still selective according to that contributor’s own theological biases and specialized interest and knowledge. That alone makes it easy to take issue with certain points in any of the narratives presented—whether some other influence to the theological development should have been included or otherwise given a different slant, and the like. The question is whether any of the essays give an unfair or unbalanced account in describing those influences that have effected the development of a given doctrine. To this point I think all of the contributors do present a fair and knowledgeable narrative.

Besides serving the more-general theologically interested readership, this compendium will serve very well as a supplemental textbook for any systematic theology or modern/contemporary theology courses of study. Does the book achieve its aim of organizing modern theology along the lines of classical doctrinal topics or themes so that more complete coverage of significant developments in each area of doctrinal construction might be achieved? The answer most definitely is Yes.

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Jonathan Norgate. *Isaak A. Dorner: The Triune God and the Gospel of Salvation*. T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology. London: T&T Clark, 2009. viii + 234 pp. £70.00/\$130.00.

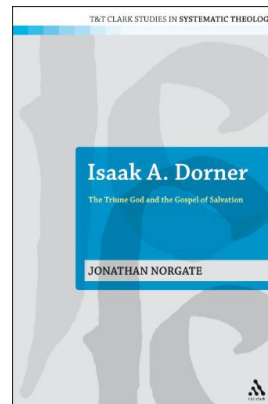
While several significant monographs have been written recently on the theology of Isaak Dorner, the oft-neglected nineteenth-century German Lutheran theologian—most notably, H. Walter Frei’s *I. A. Dorners Christology und Trinitätslehre*, Thomas Koppehl’s *Der Wissenschaftliche Standpunkt der Theologie des Isaak August Dorners*, and Christine Axt-Piscalar’s *Der Grund Des Glaubens*—Jonathan Norgate’s *Isaak A. Dorner: The Triune God and the Gospel of Salvation* brings a substantial work on a significant theological figure to the English-speaking world. Dorner, besides being important on his own terms, as Norgate ably illustrates, is a significant figure connecting the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth.

Norgate examines the connection between Dorner’s doctrine of God and five other loci of theology: the God/world relationship, anthropology, hamartiology, Christology, and soteriology. As he puts it, “we wish to measure the extent to which key aspects of his [Dorner’s] account of God’s essential being play out in the explication of God’s relation to the world, culminating in the work of atonement” (p. 8). Through his analysis, Norgate claims both that Dorner is a significant Trinitarian theologian and “an *evangelical* theologian whose account of the Gospel of Jesus Christ displays the earnest endeavour of a dogmatist seeking the consistent (if not always successful) connection between the triune God and the cross of Christ” (p. 9). In the introduction, Norgate gives a brief overview of Dorner’s theological method and provides a succinct biographical sketch that helps historically situate the figure for those unfamiliar with his work.

Because the doctrine of God functions as a “dogmatic control” for Dorner’s project, Norgate addresses it in chapter 1, noting how Dorner moves from the general concept of God to the specifically Christian concept. Dorner thinks that “the Christian idea of a triune God is that to which a general idea of God . . . leads” (p. 10), and this conviction serves an important apologetic function for Dorner to demonstrate the necessity and certainty of the incarnation. Through his discussion of the proofs for God’s existence, Dorner concludes that, on the general idea of God, God’s being is an ethical, Absolute Personality. Moving to the specific, Christian doctrine of God, Norgate highlights how, for Dorner, all of the divine attributes find their culmination in the triune persons subsisting in relations of holy love.

It is noteworthy that Norgate takes issue with Dorner’s methodological starting point, claiming that the material content of Dorner’s *Christian* doctrine of God is critically shaped by his treatment of the general doctrine of God. As Norgate sees it, “A consequence of this is that he is exposed to the charge that he treats the doctrine of God not primarily in terms of how God *saves*, but how God *solves* the problems of His own Being” (p. 39). Among other things, Norgate thinks this weakness leads Dorner to an insufficient treatment of the distinct divine hypostases of the triune God.

After describing the “immanent completeness” (p. 48) of the triune God in chapter 1, Norgate moves on in chapter 2 to discuss Dorner’s conception of the triune God’s relationship with the world. Significantly, Dorner treats the economic trinity within his doctrine of God; who God is in himself—a being of holy love—serves as the ground for how God relates to creation. As Norgate sees it, one of the major contributions of Dorner’s project is in the way he uses aseity to maintain “the priority of God without detriment either to the independent integrity of the world nor its concomitant dependence on



God. God relates to the world because He is in Himself self-sufficient; and the world is free to relate to God because it depends on God” (p. 64). God’s being of holy love, serving as the ground of creation, corresponds to—yet is distinct from—what God posits in creation. This allows Dorner to tread lightly between the two opposing “enemies of orthodoxy” (p. 83) of his day: pantheism, in which God’s being is tied to the world process, and deism, in which God has no real relation to the created order.

Following the discussion of creation, Norgate turns to God’s relationship to humanity. Where one would expect a robust doctrine of humanity—in the trend of nineteenth-century anthropocentric theologies—Dorner instead gives an account not of humanity as such, but of the God-man. “It is the demonstration of the necessity of the Incarnation for the world’s perfection rather than the doctrine of the creature,” Norgate says, “which represents the dénouement of Fundamental Doctrine” (p. 84). This obviously supralapsarian account, as Norgate notes, is not simply a choice between several available doctrinal options but instead the inevitable result of Dorner’s chosen starting point. Jesus Christ, then, as the realization of the divinely appointed relationship between God and humanity, safeguards the non-competitive account of the relationship between God and man, and Norgate sees this as a valuable contribution.

Norgate carefully handles Barth’s critique of Dorner, in which Dorner is criticized for focusing on the deification of the creature over and against the creature’s reconciliation. Norgate claims that, while Dorner underplays the significance of the fall (or, as Norgate puts it, the “stumble” [p. 96]), he avoids Barth’s overstated accusation of deification through implementing the concept of communion. Nonetheless, Norgate observes “a systemic problem concerning the extent to which the soteriological import of the incarnation is reduced because of the supralapsarian structure of the project” (p. 115). It is important to view this chapter in light of Norgate’s larger project, namely, that of expositing the way in which Dorner’s doctrine of God shapes other loci of theology within his system.

Moving on to the doctrine of sin, Norgate suggests, “It is the point of connection between the *idea* of the God-man and His *historic* manifestation; between the motivation for the incarnation and the cause of its modification” (p. 117). Sin serves the role, in Dorner’s theology, of introducing Christology; yet Norgate worries that while Dorner does not intentionally minimize the dogmatic function of sin in a construal of Christ’s person and work, “because of Dorner’s supralapsarianism, his account of sin is exposed to the charge that it fails to provide sufficient justification for the God-man to come as *Saviour*” (p. 120).

Norgate treats Dorner’s Christology in chapter 5, noting that he “is not inappropriately described as the Christologian *par excellence* of the nineteenth century” (p. 142). Like the doctrines of creation and sin, Dorner’s Christology is intimately connected to his doctrine of God. The *Logos*, for Dorner, is God’s mode of being that becomes incarnate, and neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit could have done so. Further, in his treatment of the hypostatic union, Dorner makes an attempt to bridge the gap between the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. The notion of Christ as the “Second Adam” plays a significant role in Dorner’s formulation of Christ’s person; it connects creation and incarnation and allows Dorner to state the significance of Christ’s personal humanity as the fulfillment of human nature as such, which was always fit for receptivity of the divine nature. Oddly, Norgate fails to see (or at least to point out) the continuity between Dorner and Schleiermacher’s use of Second Adam language. Dorner’s Christology, viewed against a backdrop of divine aseity and supralapsarianism, has the resources to resolve a number of tensions in traditional Chalcedonian Christology. But Norgate worries that Dorner does not give

sufficient attention to the role of the Holy Spirit's role in Christ's incarnate work, namely, the "continual upholding of this humanity for its telos" (p. 172).

Finally, chapter 6 moves to Dorner's account of Christ's atoning work and justification by faith. Once again, Norgate argues that this topic, like all the others in Dorner's system, is shaped by his account of the doctrine of God. Dorner makes unique use of the *munus triplex* as a tool for explicating Christ's redeeming work, locating Christ's atoning work properly under the office of priest. As Norgate notes, "Dorner's intentions for his account of the doctrines of atonement and justification is the representation of salvation as that which corresponds with the ethical constitution of the divine Absolute Personality as holy Love" (p. 214). Once again, however, Norgate notes a lack of the Spirit in Dorner's doctrine of Christ's work and suggests that the Spirit is essential to an account of the ethical life of the believer and the triune God.

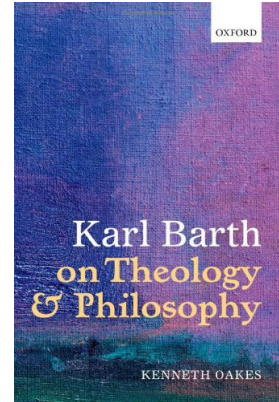
In concluding his work, Norgate asserts once again his thesis that Dorner's doctrine of God orients the rest of his doctrinal treatments. Notwithstanding the several problems mentioned above (viz., moving from a general account of God to the triune God, the lack of role of the Holy Spirit, the downplaying of sin as a result of supralapsarianism, etc.), Norgate maintains that Dorner "provides himself with the resources to depict the saving significance of Jesus Christ as inimical neither to the ideas of divine justice or love" (p. 221). Dorner's account of God's ethical constancy (immutability) and his use of the *munus triplex*, among other things, secure him as a figure in church history whose theology ought to be a subject of retrieval for theologians doing constructive dogmatic work in the twenty-first century.

Norgate's work is exceptional on a variety of levels. He deals with a vast amount of primary-source material from Dorner's work and is competent in both English and foreign-language secondary sources. Norgate nimbly and judiciously—and cautiously!—summarizes and evaluates the intricacies of Dorner's thought in a way that those interested in the serious study of dogmatic theology will appreciate. Admirably, Norgate successfully accomplishes his goal of showing how Dorner's doctrine of God shapes the entirety of his dogmatics. However, one would have liked to see Norgate tease out the connection between Schleiermacher and Dorner a bit further, specifically with regard to the extent to which Dorner's theology is significantly shaped by the work of the father of modern theology. Nonetheless, this minor quibble in no way undermines the top-notch work Norgate has provided.

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Kenneth Oakes. *Karl Barth on Theology and Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. x + 288 pp. £65.00/\$125.00.

In this monograph, Kenneth Oakes, currently research fellow at Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, addresses Karl Barth's account of the relationship between theology and philosophy. Oakes explains, "The existence of . . . two opposing lines of interpretation regarding Barth on philosophy and theology should suggest that something more complex, nuanced, or confused is happening in Barth's works than his critics often assume" (p. 6). More specifically, he makes three interrelated claims: (1) Barth's account is both influenced by and distinct from Wilhelm Herrmann and the liberal Protestant tradition. (2) Barth's account is not stable or cogent, and this despite its constant emphasis on theology's independence. (3) Barth's "various accounts of theology and philosophy . . . are heavily informed by the Christian doctrines under consideration" (p. 17).



Chapter 1, "The Earlier Barth," is concerned with Barth's liberal/pre-dialectical years (1909–1914), taking up the conversation of convergence/congruence (i.e., between philosophy and theology). Oakes discusses Herrmann's influence as well as Barth's years at Marburg and Geneva before explaining the impact of the First World War and his "uncanny break with liberalism" (p. 51). Regarding the latter, Oakes argues that it was "complicated and messy" (p. 51), having more to do with the early Barth's "theopolitical commitments" than his "epistemological nuances" (p. 58). Oakes goes so far as to say that "it might prove more useful to abandon this 'break with liberalism' historiography altogether and see Barth's theology as another mutation within nineteenth-century liberal theology" (p. 58n160; cf. 251ff.).

Chapter 2 continues the conversation of convergence/congruence via an examination and comparison of Barth's *Romans I* and *Romans II*, paying particular attention to Barth's favorable treatment of Socrates, Plato, and Immanuel Kant. Chapter 3 examines Barth's three theological prolegomena, or "non-prolegomenon," which were intended "to decelerate . . . the typical impulse driving the production of prolegomena" (p. 89). The picture Oakes paints from the time between *Romans* and the dogmatics is one of increasing caution with regard to Barth's account of the relationship between philosophy and theology. More specifically, "The definition of the human person as a hearer of the Word begins to crowd out and take priority over pilgrim man" (p. 119). It is, after all, theology's relationship to the Word of God that separates it from philosophy. Rudolf Bultmann, of course, criticized Barth's supposed freeing of theology, arguing that Barth had simply substituted one philosophy for another (p. 123).

Chapter 4 addresses the period during which "Barth wrestled with the relationship between theology and philosophy with an intensity and frequency that will not be encountered again" (p. 125). More specifically, Oakes considers two selections from Barth's published works and a lecture as well as a series of lectures: four "experiments in theology and philosophy" (p. 125). These experiments reinforce theology's independence but speak against its isolation. That said, Oakes concludes, in concordance with the second of his three interrelated claims (noted in this review's first paragraph), "Barth leaves unclear how one might reconcile these four different experiments" (p. 160).

Chapter 5, "Barth's Third Prolegomenon," examines the two-part *Church Dogmatics I*. Chapter 6 takes up *Church Dogmatics III* before chapter 7's consideration of "Barth's later thoughts" which were "remarkably similar to his earlier ones" (p. 244). Oakes concludes, "It should now be clear that Barth never settled on an exact and well-defined account of theology and philosophy . . . one cannot look at

any single text from any one period of Barth's *oeuvre* and assert that his understanding of philosophy and theology has been presented" (p. 243). And it is here that Oakes's monograph makes its contribution: gathering together and systematically examining scattered texts, and presenting them as a story of change in which Barth is characterized as "a recovering Hermannian" (pp. 245–46). Stated implications, or perhaps questions, include how strict a distinction between theology and philosophy might be had, as well as the extent to which Barth actually achieved a non-apologetic theology (p. 252–53). Oakes observes, "It is this reckless dream of an entirely non-apologetic theology that explains why Barth's project seems more like a dare than a well-defined programme" (p. 253; cf. 264).

Several specifics: Oakes's discussion of Barth's concept of parable in *Romans II* (pp. 75ff.) is especially helpful, both with regard to Barth studies as well as the more general conversations of analogy and perhaps even natural theology. On a related note, Oakes mentions, "Certainly on Barth's terms there is such a thing as anthropological 'natural theology,' for the humanity of Jesus Christ definitively establishes and reveals humanity *tout court*" (p. 223). Perhaps this idea could have been explored further, something Oakes mentions a bit further on (p. 254). Additionally, more engagement with Von Balthasar's notion of the *stretto* would have been helpful. Oakes's three-page treatment seems a bit too brief (pp. 220–22). Hans Boersma's *Nouvelle Théologie* (Oxford University Press, 2009; ch. 4 in particular) might have been useful here, though pursuing the conversation might have taken things too far afield. That said, this volume achieves its task and is recommended for Barth scholars and would-be Barth scholars, as well as those interested in twentieth-century conversations of prolegomena.

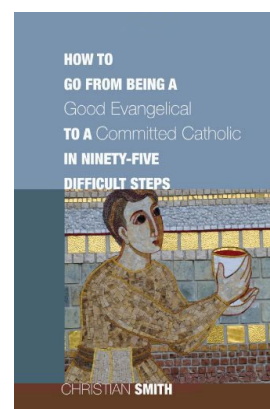
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Christian Smith. *How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-Five Difficult Steps*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011. 190 pp. £15.41/\$24.00.

In 2011, Christian Smith, a Notre Dame sociologist, said farewell to evangelical Protestantism. Raised in evangelical Christian day schools, an alumnus of the evangelical Gordon College, and in his second research university posting, Smith—after lengthy deliberation—was received into Roman Catholicism. Such transitions are often reported today, and such recruits to Catholicism regularly write books describing their change of loyalty. Smith is conversant with this "convert" literature, and this volume boasts endorsements from such writers.

Thus Smith's *Ninety-five Difficult Steps* ought to be seen as of one piece with Tom Howard's *Evangelical Is Not Enough* (1984), Scott and Kimberly Hahn's *Rome Sweet Home* (1993), and Frank Beckwith's *Return to Rome* (2009). Yet there is a sense in which it is *not* like them. As a social scientist with strong interest in the sociological study of religion, Smith is intrigued with the question of how negative perceptions, which formerly seemed non-negotiable, are sometimes displaced by new ways of thinking. He believes that his own re-affiliation to Catholicism was the outworking of just such a paradigm-shift.

Smith describes how such shifts unfold in the mind of thoughtful persons who gradually tabulate the "anomalies" (i.e., the embarrassing features) of evangelical Protestantism. Granted, our minds do



“file away” things that “grate” on our sensibilities. We do periodically revisit these, and sometimes a major conviction *is* overturned. Here Smith proceeds plausibly; his description works just as well to explain how a Pentecostal might turn Episcopalian or a Catholic turn Baptist. But granting this, it is also fair to point out that Smith’s subsequent attempt to catalog forty-four evangelical “anomalies” (all “trending” towards Catholicism) is a contrivance. Smith, having set out to tabulate so many evangelical foibles has, by this determination, committed himself to overreach. In reality, there simply are not this many truly substantive items to be named. In order to arrive at that number, he will need to include the half-cocked with the weighty. Pursuing so many, Smith will also wade beyond his depth, leaving social science for theology, where his opinions need not be treated with the same deference.

Consider *Step 5* (p. 33): the existence, within evangelicalism, of “embarrassing evangelical spokespeople.” Smith is reminding us of hucksters within religious broadcasting, with their exaggerated claims to divine promptings and so on. It is not hard to fill in the blanks with the names of some, already exposed as frauds, and some who still await exposure. But does it never cross Smith’s mind that the Catholic world has also had its share of envelope-pushers? Consider Father Joseph Coughlin (1891–1979) of Michigan, a kind of Catholic counterpart to the fundamentalist Protestant Carl McIntire (1906–2002) in anti-Communist crusading. And if American evangelical Protestantism has had to cringe over the broadcast gaffes of CBN’s Pat Robertson (b. 1930), world Catholicism has had to swallow hard over the antics of Holocaust-denying bishop Richard Williamson (b. 1940). Every expression of Christianity has those who “go rogue”; their existence proves nothing in particular about that one expression of the faith.

Step 26 (p. 57) lampoons evangelical Protestantism’s current fascination with Catholic monasticism shown by its preparedness to launch “a new monasticism.” Why not take hold of the “original” as it continues within the Roman communion? Why create some “ersatz” evangelical substitute? This is a telling argument, but it conveniently overlooks that outside Africa, Catholic forms of monasticism (male and female) are on life-support. How many monasteries now house evangelical colleges and seminaries? Some are bed and breakfast establishments, while others are museums. You too may (for a fee) step into Savonarola’s former cell at Florence. But do not expect Smith to acknowledge such “feet of clay” in the movement he has embraced after his paradigm shift.

Step 30 (p. 63) proposes that evangelical Protestants are blissfully unaware of the fact that it was the *Roman* Church that gave us classic formulations of the Trinity and Christology. Yet evangelicalism, in appropriating these, is the beneficiary of the very “teaching office” of Catholicism that our movement pretends does not exist. Smith’s narrow proprietary perspective on this question, by extension, faults the Eastern Church too. For that communion also does not accept suggestions (like Smith’s) that the doctrinal deliverances of the early ecumenical councils were the property of *Rome*. We agree with Orthodoxy on this; we speak of the accomplishment of the whole early *undivided* church.

Step 32 (p. 67) urges that evangelical Christians ponder their being part of a rootless movement cut off from the nurture of Rome. Evangelicalism, which is barely 300 years old (so Smith holds), and Protestantism, which is barely 500, should admit that they are striplings. The splintering so common to the Protestant world is only the bitter harvest that has come from original willful division. But Smith, functioning as apologist, cannot mention the fact that Rome was party to a schism with the Eastern Church in 1054 or the splintering that went on century after century within the monastic world. The claimed “unity of the faith” preserved *only* by Rome, so important for the purposes of Smith’s apologetic, is fairly cosmetic.

In *Step 33* (p. 68) Smith lays at the door of Protestantism the advance of secularization in the West since 1500. Here, Smith, as social scientist, raises a critical issue. A continued allegiance to Rome, he proposes, would have at least *delayed* the West's plunge into this abyss. Though he does allow that post-Revolutionary (and nominally Catholic) France contradicts his hypothesis, real complexities are papered over. By all accounts, European Catholicism deliberately and successfully adapted itself to the separation of church and state that prevails in the new world. Was this adaptation a tragic betrayal? And is Smith's ideal of the non-secular nation that of nineteenth-century Italy, in which the Papacy opposed freedom of religion, the extension of the right to vote, and public education? This question is not treated with evenhandedness.

Step 36 (p. 71) entails Smith's lecturing evangelical Protestants on the folly of staking so much on a claimed inerrancy of the Bible. Yet his implying that Catholicism has never gone out so far on this limb is incorrect. Pope Leo XIII espoused this doctrine, and a dictation theory of inspiration to boot, in the 1893 Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*.

Of special gravity for Smith is *Step 44* (p. 77): the reality that there are so few evangelical Protestant Americans who are "public intellectuals." The Supreme Court of the United States contains several Roman Catholic jurists of distinction but no Protestants. Things have improved since Mark Noll wrote *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* in 1995, but the sober fact remains that it is institutions like the Roman Catholic University of Notre Dame that are increasingly providing today's evangelical Protestant scholars with the opportunity to teach in research universities. This anomaly has plainly perturbed Smith, yet he has not faced the fact that Notre Dame has been pleased to employ *many* Protestant academics (such as he was on arrival) on their *own* terms, given the research and writing profiles they developed earlier. Most of them retain their evangelicalism. Why is Smith's outlook towards fellow evangelicals more peevish than that of his university?

Having maximized the difficulty that evangelicalism's anomalies represent to thoughtful persons, he depicts a range of difficulties present within his new communion likely to be faced by seekers after truth. Will it be claims to papal infallibility (*Step 71*), the practice of prayers for the dead (*Step 74*), Rome's policy on birth control (*Step 77*), your local Catholic parishes' almost certain failure to provide you with a place of spiritual fellowship (*Step 84*), or the widespread child abuse scandals (*Step 92*) that makes you hesitant to come after him to Rome? Smith's purpose is to stress that these difficulties are only *apparent*—trifles really. Intelligent persons cannot be put off by them. But remember: evangelicalism's anomalies are real and insurmountable!

In sum, this is a provocative book that requires careful reading. It provides some insight as to how minds sometimes relinquish entrenched religious convictions. But it is the opposite of evenhanded in handling hard questions. Was Smith's own mind changed by this kind of "heads I win, tails you lose" argument? Does he truly suppose ours should be? Discussed in multi-disciplinary settings (where Smith's sociology credentials are not equated with theological acumen), it will emerge that *95 Steps* regularly misrepresents evangelical Protestantism and often misrepresents Catholicism. *95 Steps* is much more the partisan tract of the headstrong convert than it is a helpful exploration of how thoughtful persons change their minds.

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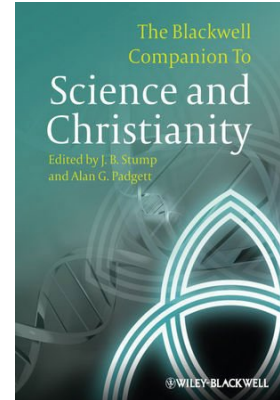
J. B. Stump and Alan Padgett, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. viii + 664 pp. £120.00/\$199.95.

The last few decades have seen a growing number of publications on the dialogue between science and religion. The publication of *The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity*, edited by J. B. Stump and Alan G. Padgett, is a welcome addition to this burgeoning interdisciplinary discipline. What distinguishes this volume from other works in the field is that it has a narrower aim. This work provides a focused analysis on the complex interaction between modern science and Christianity rather than on science and religion in general. The editors make their purpose explicitly clear from the Introduction:

In this work, we narrow the conversation to science and Christianity to allow for greater specificity and depth on the topics. Of course there are some commonalities among religions with respect to their interactions with science, but as we get into specific doctrines, it is the differences in both the science and in the various world religions that become important after a certain basic introduction to this fascinating interdisciplinary field. (p. xvii)

The result is a fascinating, rich collection of fifty-four essays grouped into eleven major sections. The essays are written by young and established scholars in the science-and-religion dialogue. Topics are diverse and wide-ranging. Part I introduces the historical interactions between science and Christianity. Part II articulates various epistemological and methodological approaches for Christian engagement with science. Parts III–X address salient issues of natural theology, cosmology and physics, evolution, the human sciences, Christian bioethics, metaphysics, the concepts of mind and emergence, and theology. The final section (Part XI) concludes with an overview of significant figures of the twentieth century in science and Christianity (e.g., Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, T. F. Torrance, Arthur Peacocke, and Ian Barbour). The shortcoming in this section is that it is restricted to key figures in the twentieth century, but in the past decade alone there has been an exponential growth in the scholarly publication within this interdisciplinary field. As a result, many recent significant contributors (and their significant works) in the field are not included in the discussion.

As one comes to expect in volumes such as this, it is unlikely that the diversity of voices on such wide-ranging topics would share the same perspective on every issue. The editors acknowledge that while “the authors all write with Christianity in mind, they are not all themselves Christians” (p. xix). The volume is not meant to be exhaustive in its scope, and the authors’ viewpoints are not expected to be in unison. Rather, the essays are meant to give a “fair representation of the topics,” and the authors are encouraged to “defend their own views and pick out salient points for discussion” (p. xix). Assessing the essays in the volume, I find that each is written in readable prose with non-technical language that newcomers to this field can appreciate. Each essay ends with a concise bibliography for further consultation and reading if the reader so desires. To sum up, this volume nicely complements other recent works in the ongoing interaction between science and religion. Students and teachers in the field



will find this volume an accessible, reliable, and up-to-date resource for the contemporary discourse between science and Christianity.

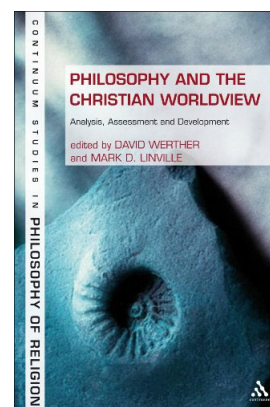
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David Werther and Mark D. Linville, eds. *Philosophy and the Christian Worldview: Analysis, Assessment and Development*. New York: Continuum, 2012. xiii + 274. £65.00/\$120.00.

There are days when I doubt my decision to study theology. Some of the current fashion trends in contemporary theology can often be disheartening to a young philosophical theologian. When one tries to rigorously explore one's faith, certain contemporary theologians throw down the most unfortunate and unnecessary roadblocks to intellectual inquiry. In some theological circles it is hard to have a conversation without hearing the phrase, 'All language is metaphor.' At times it can be difficult to ask hard questions about one's faith without being told that Christian faith involves ineffable mysteries that ought not to be pried into. These types of roadblocks to intellectual inquiry can be frustrating for those who have a faith that seeks understanding. Perhaps I was spoiled during my graduate education. You see, I had the privilege to study under one of the most interesting characters in philosophy of religion—Keith Yandell. The intellectual rigor (and wonderful sense of humor) that this man exhibits set a very high standard in my mind as to what counts as good philosophical theology. Yandell has little patience for unnecessary intellectual roadblocks and is always interested in seeing how far philosophical inquiry can help us understand our faith. These virtues—or maybe you would consider them vices—rubbed off on me. As such, I was delighted to read this Festschrift for Yandell. This book reminded me of why I originally wanted to study theology.

David Werther and Mark Linville have put together a wonderful collection of essays in honor of Yandell. Each contributor has been a student of Yandell's in one way or another, and each offers a paper touching on a theme within Yandell's work. Yandell's work has covered a broad range of topics within traditional philosophy as well as topics within Christian theology and Eastern religions. The essays in this collection break down into four main areas of Yandell's work: (1) religion and worldview assessment; (2) religion and epistemology; (3) religion and morality; and (4) religion and metaphysics.

Yandell begins section 1 with his paper, "Is Philosophy of Religion Possible?" One of the things I enjoyed about studying under Yandell was the opportunity to see how philosophy is done. When one encounters Yandell, one gets to see philosophy in action. His paper exhibits those qualities by not only showing that philosophy of religion is possible, but by also showing how to go about doing high-quality work in philosophy of religion. He starts by considering a host of roadblocks to philosophy of religion and demonstrates that these are self-defeating. Some examples of self-defeating roadblocks are 'all language is metaphorical' and 'all our beliefs are culturally determined and thus not true.' With those self-defeating objections out of the way, he turns his attention to evidence, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. For Yandell, philosophy of religion must be done cross-culturally. When he gets to the task



of examining each of these philosophical topics, he does so with this cross-cultural goal in mind by looking at issues that arise from Buddhism and Hinduism.

Section one ends with two papers. The first is Harold Netland's "Religious Pluralism as an Explanation for Religious Diversity," and the second is Paul Copan's "The Naturalists are Declaring the Glory of God." Netland describes the current situation of religious diversity before critiquing John Hick's religious pluralist hypothesis. Copan argues that theism can better explain the world than naturalism. Naturalists, he says, have done us a favor by clearly articulating their views to help us see this fact.

Section two contains four essays on religion and epistemology. Matthew Davidson and Gordon Barnes offer a rigorous defense of internalism. Charles Taliaferro considers objections to the trustworthiness of religious experience and refutes each in turn. William Wainwright presents a thorough treatment of theistic mystical experiences and enlightenment experiences, as well as attempts to defend ineffability against Yandell's objections to that doctrine. (It would have been fascinating to see Yandell's response to this paper.) Terence Penelhum ends the section by offering an interpretation of David Hume's views on religion and natural theology.

Section three contains three papers. Mark Linville discusses Bertrand Russell's departure from moral realism. He offers a careful argument to show the incompatibility of moral realism and naturalism. Michael Peterson offers an open-theist reply to William Rowe's evidential problem of evil. He argues that the approaches of skeptical theists fail to rebut the evidential problem of evil, as does Alvin Plantinga's *O Felix Culpa* theodicy. Ultimately, Peterson says that Christians should not be bound by the constraints of Rowe's argument. Instead, Christians should draw upon the resources of their own beliefs to answer the objection. Part of Peterson's open-theist approach is that God can allow gratuitous evil to occur. Paul Reasoner closes the section with a fascinating look at the similarities and differences between the Confucian doctrine of sincerity and the Christian doctrine of the *imago dei*. Reasoner shows a deep awareness of both religious traditions.

Section four closes the book with three papers on religion and metaphysics. William Hasker considers Jaegwon Kim's rejection of substance dualism. Hasker offers a point-by-point refutation of Kim's arguments before turning his attention to some alternatives to Cartesian dualism. He ends his paper by critiquing Timothy O'Connor's property emergentism and defending his own substance emergentism. Noel Hendrickson develops some new arguments for an incompatibilist account of free will. Most defenses of incompatibilism focus on moral responsibility. Hendrickson argues that an explanatory approach can offer a better defense than older approaches. In an effort to show the superiority of his approach, he tackles three objections to free will: the freedom-foreknowledge problem, moral responsibility, and a lack of evidence for the existence of free will. David Werther ends the section, and the book, by considering a problem that arises from the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. God is necessarily morally good, yet Jesus Christ is tempted in every way. It seems that a being that is necessarily morally good cannot be tempted. How is the Christian to respond? Werther considers and critiques answers from Thomas Flint and Thomas Morris before defending and extending the approach of Richard Swinburne.

It is often the case that a volume like this contains essays that are not worth reading. This volume, however, does not fit that mold. Every essay offers clear and interesting discussions on a wide variety of topics within philosophy of religion and theology. Werther and Linville have done a fine job at bringing together these contributors to offer a careful analysis and development of the Christian worldview

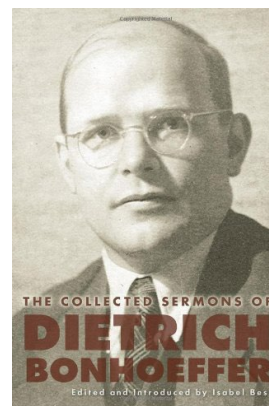
while at the same time engaging in cross-cultural assessment. This book deserves a close read from philosophers and theologians.

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— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

Isabel Best, ed. *The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Translated by Douglas Stott et al. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. xxvi + 214 pp. £19.99/\$29.95.

In this volume Isabel Best has compiled 31 sermons (of the 71 extant) from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's pastoral life. She has arranged them in chronological order with pertinent contextual introductions. Best has contributed to the translation of Fortress's nearly complete *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, English Edition (DBWE)*, the first English translation of the entire Bonhoeffer corpus. Each selection in *The Collected Sermons* comes from the new translations, which is noteworthy because Bonhoeffer's vivacious style has been captured more fully here than in earlier translations. Best's volume supplements the Fortress set because it offers a single platform for the sermons, which are otherwise scattered throughout the last eight books of *DBWE* (and are thus prohibitively expensive for many).



“Preaching was the great event for him,” wrote friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge, of Bonhoeffer. “His severe theologizing and critical love for his church were all for its sake, because preaching proclaimed the message of Christ, the bringer of peace” (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* [rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000], 234). Given Bonhoeffer's emphasis on preaching, one wonders why it took so long for a volume such as *The Collected Sermons* to appear. Previous editions of Bonhoeffer's sermons focused on specific themes, such as Advent and the Psalter, or were part of broader anthologies. Best's work finally offers a generous collection of Bonhoeffer sermons together, by themselves.

Due to his reputation for social action, which was sealed by his involvement in a plot to kill Hitler, the scarcity of practical application in Bonhoeffer's sermons may seem odd. Instead, Bonhoeffer repeatedly pits cultural phenomena against biblical testimony in order to create a crisis encounter with God and then stops short of offering action points. Thus he can (and does) criticize sermons devoted to what we might call heart change, yet he also avoid appeals to immediate social action. Instead, Bonhoeffer seeks to win the *whole person* by preaching as though he were holding “a glass of cool water in front of a thirsty person and then asking: do you want it?” (p. 34).

Bonhoeffer's peculiar imagination brings us into the presence of God not, as it were, by transporting us into the throne room, but by making us aware that we are already in his presence, if we have eyes to see him. One of the more unique elements of these sermons is that way that Bonhoeffer sanctifies the realm of the ordinary. As a result, we come to see that in Jesus Christ, God has truly affirmed both the ultimate *and* penultimate value of his creation. In this way, Bonhoeffer simultaneously awakens a

deeper love for the God who is truly with us and the unshakable sense that we must be concerned for this world if we are to love God truly.

Readers in the evangelical stream will likely find Bonhoeffer's high view of the sacraments off-putting at times, just as Best vocalizes her surprise at his "rather old-fashioned" views of marriage in the introduction to one of his sermons (p. 29). Moreover, evangelicals will surely be surprised on occasion by his use of typology and some of his evocations of the nearness of God. One could wish for more examples of sermons from the OT, of which there are only two (plus one from the Apocrypha), though the collection represents Bonhoeffer's own proclivities.

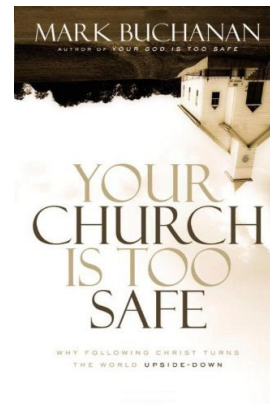
The book comes in a smart-looking dust jacket with a portrait of the well-dressed Bonhoeffer at the height of his powers. Its binding and printing are superior to most contemporary publications, and the dignified typeset and mahogany fonts display the elegance of a product that was designed to be kept and used for many years. Yet the raw form of this finely crafted product disappears in the sermons themselves behind the vibrant encounter of Christ as the holy infant in the manger, the abandoned God on the cross, and the true life of the resurrection. Indeed, the most striking aspect of this book, and the most valuable, is that in it one meets the living God.

The Collected Sermons will certainly not be on this year's bestseller list, but then again Bonhoeffer was never on the bestseller list during his own lifetime. Our age is often neither interested in nor able to handle the depth of a preacher such as this. Yet we would do well to halt the pervasive white noise of postmodern existence and listen to a man who, like C. S. Lewis, possessed a generation-transcending passion for the dynamism of life in Christ. Many in the German Confessing Church (read: non-Nazis) had hoped that Bonhoeffer would lead the faithful back to solid ground after the war and unite the church again around Christ, but it was not to be. Perhaps he may yet speak a word, however, to the church today, helping us recover a taste for both the clear truth *and* the bond of love in Jesus Christ at a time when many opt for one or the other. For pastors who desire to speak into contemporary culture without sacrificing the gospel and for those already gripped by the German prophet, this volume will be very worthwhile.

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Mark Buchanan. *Your Church Is Too Safe: Why Following Christ Turns the World Upside-Down*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 240 pp. \$18.99.

Almost every pastor and church leader would like for their congregation to more effectively engage their community. The obstacles to that kind of engagement are numerous—indifference, fear, legalism, and non-engaging methodologies render churches ineffective in mission and irrelevant to those they are trying to reach. In *Your Church Is Too Safe*, Mark Buchanan diagnoses the “enormous gap between the life Jesus offered and the life we’re living” (p. 9) and offers a rousing call to those who “want more from the church and for the church” (p. 10). Buchanan, a pastor in western Canada, draws on personal experiences and stories from Scripture to paint a picture of what a church could do if it was willing to love the lost the way Jesus loved them.



Your Church Is Too Safe has much to commend it. Buchanan repeatedly calls the church to sacrifice, grow, and change in order to love and serve lost people. His compassion for the lost is helpfully matched by the clarity of his observations about why Christians (including himself) are so often inept and tone-deaf when it comes to reaching the world around them. The book regularly challenged me, encouraged me, and motivated me to give myself more fully to seeing my own congregation live up to its scriptural calling.

Most of the eighteen chapters are structured either around an event from Scripture (e.g., Jonah’s reluctance to go to Nineveh; the men in Mark 2 who dig a hole in the roof to get to Jesus) or a teaching of Jesus (e.g., the parable of the talents in Matt 25). These Scriptures serve as organizing illustrations for the points that Buchanan wants to make about reaching the world—for example, we must love as God loved, and we must put God’s good gifts to use in the service of others. Buchanan also fills each chapter with vivid and arresting personal stories that show the power of the gospel to overcome sin and transform people’s lives.

In the hands of a less down-to-earth writer, a book like this could be wearisome or discouraging to Christians who want to share their lives with the people around them but have little hope that it is possible. Buchanan is, however, very engaging. His humility and sense of humor draw the reader in. He perceptively anticipates his reader’s objections; I occasionally found myself forming an objection only to have the author clarify his statement helpfully. The book doesn’t scold the reader for their failures but inspires them with the author’s compassion for the lost, love for the church, and desire to honor Christ.

But while a book like *Your Church Is Too Safe* deserves a generous reading (i.e., not blaming the author for not accomplishing what he didn’t set out to do), a few concerns prevent me from recommending it wholeheartedly. First, the author’s use of Scripture is at times problematic. A prophecy of end-time peace and blessing from Zech 8, for example, is held up as “the dream of every church” (p. 79) and a description of what happens when churches are faithful. While that prophecy may be applicable in some ways to the church, the author fails to do sufficient work to show how it may or may not apply to the believer’s experience before Christ’s final return.

In addition, the author sometimes reads questionable significance into the details of a story from the Bible. Thus for Buchanan, Abraham’s standing in the doorway of his tent in Gen 18 is an example of how believers should inhabit two worlds: comfortable at home but still facing the world (p. 98). The fact that James and John were leading the way as Jesus walked along (Luke 18:39) is a warning to believers

that we should not put ourselves forward (p. 198). While I don't disagree with the point the author is trying to make more generally in either of these instances, the points do not follow from the texts he cites.

Finally, though I appreciated the author's accessible style, I found myself at several points looking for more nuanced and careful thinking. At one point Buchanan advocates churches collaborating with secular groups, including marching in a parade with gay rights activists (p. 110). While one can appreciate the instinct towards tearing down barriers and showing kindness and grace, the book lacks a careful consideration of the downsides of such collaboration. Should Christians be at all concerned about the danger of appearing to give approval to groups that oppose God and his Word? How much time should a church spend on things that do not directly relate to the preaching of the gospel? What is the difference between the responsibility of the church and the responsibilities of individual believers? I wish Buchanan had addressed some of these issues.

In conclusion, there is much in this book to receive and appreciate. Its heart is absolutely in the right place. But its usefulness is, unfortunately, limited by the concerns described above.

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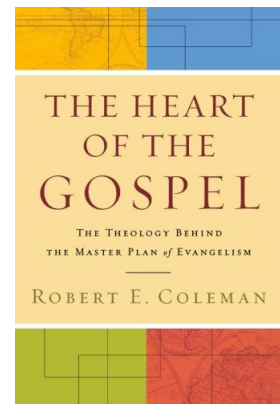
Robert E. Coleman. *The Heart of the Gospel: The Theology behind the Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 298 pp. \$19.99.

When it comes to deciding where to put certain books on our shelves, the decision is generally fairly straightforward. Theology books go with theology. Commentaries go with other commentaries, probably in canonical order. You may have sections for books on prayer, evangelism, missions, and other topics.

Robert Coleman has written a book that defies neat categorization. It could go in the theology section or fit nicely in the evangelism section. A case could be made for slipping it in with missions, discipleship, devotionals, or several other sections. And that's probably the way Coleman would like it. In the introduction to *The Heart of the Gospel*, he tells us, "theology and evangelism belong together. When the two are separated in practice, as so often happens, both suffer loss—theology loses direction and evangelism loses content" (p. 9). But this should not be.

He is right. Theology and evangelism have not been as closely wedded, historically, as they should be. This book, perhaps Dr. Coleman's capstone to a great career as missionary, preacher, professor, and author of the classic *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, seeks to rectify that problem. His goal is to present a theological overview of the standard systematic theology categories (e.g., the doctrines of God, man, Christ, salvation, sanctification, last things, and so on) with "greater attention to application" (p. 11), specifically evangelism.

Each of Coleman's eighteen chapters does a fair job of presenting the theological issues at stake, as well as responses to those outside the church who deny these teachings, and a balanced discussion of debates within the church. Each chapter then concludes with a section of "Summary Applications"



exploring how the chapter informs or shapes the practice of proclaiming the good news. There are also sections and even entire chapters that shine as doxological masterpieces. The chapters on the character of God, grace, rebellion against God, and how to live in light of eternity display Coleman, the revival preacher, at his best.

The discussions of debates, especially between Arminians (Coleman's camp) and Calvinists, are exemplary displays of fairness, clarity, and grace. Even the staunchest Calvinist, who would disagree with the author's conclusions about soteriology, sanctification, and eschatology, would benefit from Coleman's gentle tone, which is absent of malice yet uncompromising. That may be the best feature of the book. Nonetheless, Calvinists will have the expected reservations they would experience when reading any Arminian. Coleman does little to convince Reformed thinkers that Arminians have a sufficiently robust view of the deadliness of sin or the impotence of the law. One also finds the characteristic Arminian argument that predestination is really just foreknowledge.

Some readers may further quibble (I did) with Coleman's placement of certain topics in his sequence of theological categories. Most puzzling is why his chapter on the providence of God is the seventeenth of eighteen chapters. It is in this chapter that Coleman most clearly argues for his Arminian views. It is odd that he does not include this content in his earlier chapter on the character of God. Relatedly, the book would benefit from a Scripture index since Coleman alludes to and quotes Scripture frequently. But these critiques are minor.

There are also more substantial weaknesses. As a theological work, it is simply not deep enough to be helpful. Virtually every treatment of an issue leaves you wanting far more, recalling other books that address the topic with greater nuance and clarity. Too many important topics are omitted, minimized, or misrepresented.

Coleman inserts many stories as illustrations of theological concepts such as sin, grace, providence, etc. Almost without fail, I found myself scratching my head after reading these stories and even saying out loud, "No, that's not quite right." For example, in trying to illustrate grace, he tells a story of a family that forgave their son after he got involved in drugs and crime and spent time in jail. They welcomed him home with open arms. It's a touching story, but it is not the grace offered by the gospel. This illustration's "grace" has no price being paid. Given our current climate of "love wins," such sentimental, gospel-vacuous illustrations of grace create more problems than they solve. This neglects the punishment sin requires and the wrath of God that makes such punishment unavoidable with a substitute.

The most significant problem is that, despite Coleman's insistence, many readers will be unconvinced that "evangelism is the reason for the Bible" (p. 39). As important as evangelism is, it is not the best candidate for "the" reason for the Bible. Better would be God's glory or perhaps worship. The picture in Rev 21–22 of the redeemed gathered in the new heavens and the new earth shows them worshipping, not evangelizing. In other words, while worship will continue forever, evangelism will cease. One appreciates Coleman's emphasis on evangelism, but his desire to read all of Scripture against the backdrop of evangelism feels forced and artificial and not ultimate enough to be "the reason for the Bible."

Whether Coleman achieves his objective of bridging the gap between theology and evangelism is debatable. I do hope he inspires others to write books with similar goals—to link theology to practical

matters such as missions, worship, discipleship, and a host of other tasks that should be pursued with theological depth. But they will want to stay away from some of the pitfalls Coleman does not avoid.

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Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert. *Preach: Theology Meets Practice*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2012. xii + 212 pp. \$14.99.

The uniqueness of two pastors (one seasoned and one newer to his pastorate) writing a book together on preaching itself makes *Preach* a worthwhile read. Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert offer an extremely pastoral approach to heralding the word of God to both believers and unbelievers among a local gathering of worshipers.

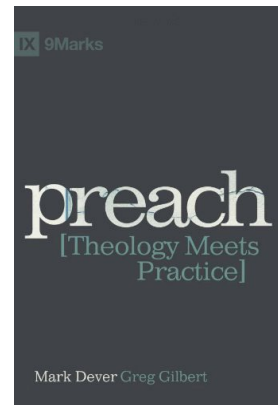
The book has three parts. Part One considers the theology of the preaching task, in which the authors make a strong case for exposition as the needed main diet of preaching for every congregation. Part Two examines the various tasks involved in preaching, including how to decide on a topic and schedule, individual sermon preparation, sermon structure and delivery, and how to review sermons for improvement. Part Three offers one sermon manuscript from each author with a critique by the other.

The book is grounded in theology proper. God's voice is central to their philosophy of preaching, for "words are enormously important to the God who made the universe" (p. 13). The writers are careful to show that man's preaching must be God's word and is a picture of the gospel itself: "For one person to speak God's Word while others listen is a depiction of God's gracious self-disclosure and of our salvation being a gift" (p. 21).

The first section reads as a biblical theology-based apologetic for expositional preaching. For example, a discourse on the creative power of God's word moves from Adam to the Messiah in Isaiah 11 to Paul in 2 Thess 2:8 to Rev 19 and back to Matt 8 (pp. 19–24). Similarly, the authors trace the concept of God's word as the basis of the believer's relationship with Christ through Adam, Abraham, the nation of Israel, and finally to Christ (pp. 19–20). All this demonstrates that those preaching the gospel are conduits of the voice that spoke in Eden and that the spoken word, first from God and then through his servants, is a whole-Bible theme that gives preaching its foundational importance.

Dever and Gilbert tie the preaching of theology to life (note the double entendre of "Practice" in the subtitle). Their case for the centrality of preaching moves from revelation to preaching to personal living and then to the life of the church. Into a church culture that leans toward dumbing down sermon content and shortening sermon length, the two pastors write,

We would argue . . . that the center of a church's main public service—the most attention-demanding element in the service—ought to be the sermon. In fact, the sermon should be the one thing that shapes everything else in the worship service. The form of the service, from its songs to its Scripture readings to its prayers, should flow from and be shaped by the text of Scripture that's about to be expounded. (p. 45)



Pleasantly, this work distinguishes between preaching as method (exposition) and a singular preacher's style of communication. This allows those without a high church or more formal or liturgical style of preaching—that is, those with more expressive communication styles—to embrace this work as helpful to their tasks as expositors too.

Preach is replete with insights into the role of preaching in each author's congregational church life and many examples of the application of Scripture to kingdom living. The authors' exhortations to seek out criticism of one's sermons are beneficial to the building up of a pastor and congregation (pp. 134–35).

As I find this work to be so pastorally beneficial, I wish to limit my criticisms to two. First, the authors seem unaware of their cultural biases. Having both been members of the same sound evangelical congregation, they assume an equivalent experience on the part of the reader. Their charge, "Brothers, never be afraid to address non-Christians directly in preaching" (p. 59), works in their shared setting on Capitol Hill. However, the congregation of an honor/shame-motivated culture where I serve would find such direct address to be arrogant. Similarly, toggling a preaching schedule back and forth between the OT and NT books, and different genres of Scripture, has found success in the authors' congregations, but may not always be the best strategy for growing young believers in the faith.

Second, the authors do not seem to find exegesis of original languages necessary. Certainly these two shepherds would not suggest that those without skills in the original languages could not preach the text well. Yet pastors need to be encouraged to invest time in the languages when their schedules are full of funerals and counseling.

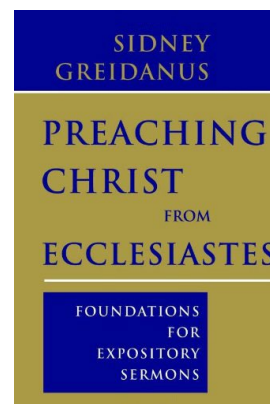
Preach is a solid tool for preachers and will help readers think through the place of preaching in their own overall ecclesiology. One should, however, supplement this work with more exegetically focused preaching volumes when using it in a college or seminary homiletics course.

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Sidney Greidanus. *Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes: Foundations for Expository Sermons*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. vii + 340. \$26.00.

The steady, scholarly, and pastorally practical work of Sidney Greidanus is rightly renowned and respected. In his book, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (1999), he lays the foundation for his future studies on handling various OT genres. In his *Preaching Christ from Genesis* (2007), he first demonstrates his principles in the genre of OT narrative, and *Preaching Christ from Daniel* (2012) does the same for prophetic and apocalyptic literature. *Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes* now tackles the wisdom literature of the Bible.

Throughout the books mentioned above, Greidanus shows a consistent and careful hermeneutic at work. He effectively demonstrates seven legitimate ways to preach Christ from the OT: (1) redemptive-historical progression, (2) promise-fulfillment, (3) typology, (4) analogy, (5) longitudinal themes, (6) NT references, and (7)



contrast (cf. pp. xi–xii). For the wisdom genre, while he walks through all seven with each pericope, he centers especially on analogy (i.e., Christ as teacher) and shows the limitations of promise-fulfillment and typology.

This book is much more than simply an additional hermeneutical textbook on preaching Christ from the OT. Greidanus also provides invaluable exegesis of the text as well as helpful expositional examples. Besides the section “Ways to Preach Christ,” each chapter also contains sections entitled “Text and Context,” “Textual Structure,” “Textual Theme and Goal,” “Sermon Theme and Goal,” and “Sermon Exposition.” These additional features are outstanding, and they will prove, for preachers of Ecclesiastes, to be tremendous aids to the weekly explanation and application of God’s Word.

The word “appreciation” best summarizes my view toward this book and its author. I disagree with some of his views—e.g., his too-easy dismissal of Solomonic authorship (p. 7), date of composition (pp. 10–11), and certain text divisions (e.g., along with Daniel Fredericks [“Life’s Storms and Structural Unity in Qoheleth 11:1–12:8,” *JOT* 52 (1991)], I would make 11:1–12:8 one pericope). And at times he undervalues certain key theological themes such as final eschatological judgment (e.g., his comments on 3:17 on p. 99 or his exposition of 12:14 on p. 310) and Qoheleth’s view of the afterlife or lack thereof (e.g., he speaks of “the Old Testament Teacher who offers no hope for life beyond death” (p. 284). Yet I deeply appreciate what Greidanus says on the nature of wisdom literature, especially his section on “The Relation of Wisdom to Redemptive History” (pp. 3–4). Also very useful is his work on the genre and forms of Ecclesiastes (pp. 12–21), including his magnificent treatment of structure. One can also be grateful for his humility in tackling the difficulties of Ecclesiastes (p. 22), as well as the clarity and correctness of the purpose and overall message of this book (pp. 12, 20, 22). Indeed, one will not find a better summary of Ecclesiastes than what Greidanus offers: “Fear God in order to turn a vain, empty life into a meaningful life which will enjoy God’s gifts” (p. 22).

Moreover, as a student of the history of biblical interpretation, I appreciate that Greidanus is the first in the history of the church (!) to write a hermeneutical handbook on each pericope of a biblical wisdom text, systematically showing ways to preach Christ. Therefore, just as Luther asked his students for leniency—a “first effort deserves leniency”—when he tried (quite unsuccessfully in my view) to clear a “new path” for the interpretation of the Song of Songs, one quite distant from the “absurdity” of traditional “musings” (Martin Luther, “Lectures on the Song of Solomon,” in *Works*, Vol. 15, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1972], pp. 191, 194–95), so Greidanus deserves leniency (and respect!) as well. Those reviewers who criticize Greidanus’s efforts from a distance have likely never done the hard and long work of plowing through the tough wisdom texts with a view toward Christ-honoring preaching, as Greidanus has. This book is now (and maybe for years to come) the best tool available to preachers in understanding how to preach from the wisdom literature mindful of what Jesus himself says about the OT’s relation to himself (Luke 24:27, 44).

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Dave Harvey. *Am I Called? The Summons to Pastoral Ministry*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 221 pp. \$12.99.

Many Christian men have wondered if they should enter into pastoral ministry. They ask the very question that has become the title for Dave Harvey's new book: "Am I called?" Other questions rise along with this one, which is why it can become an agonizing question. Is God calling me to change the course of my life? Should I go to seminary? Should I leave my current job? Perhaps surprisingly, there are not many good resources on this topic, which is why Harvey's excellent book is a welcome addition. Simply put, his overarching agenda is to answer the question, "How do you know if you're called to plant a church or be a pastor?" (p. 24).

The first three chapters form the first section of the book, "approaching the call." After introducing the topic in the first chapter, the second sets the call to ministry within the broader context of a call to Christ and salvation. In Harvey's words, "before [God] calls us to ministry, he calls us to himself" (p. 36). The third chapter sets the call within another context: the church. Harvey presses the individualism expressed by so many men who feel called to "ministry" viewed in the abstract rather than viewed in the context of the mess of a local church. Regardless of the role higher education might serve, pastors are to be raised up *in* a local church *for* a local church.

The second section is the heart of the book. Here he "diagnoses" a call to ministry by exploring several questions for prospective pastors. Most of the questions arise out of the biblical qualifications for eldership in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1, as well as other texts in the Pastoral Epistles that apply specifically to those elders whom we often refer to as preaching or teaching pastors. The first two questions emphasize a man's character: Are you godly? How's your home? The next three emphasize a man's capabilities: Can you preach? Can you shepherd? Do you love the lost? A final one revisits the importance of the local church as the context of the call: Who agrees? Yes, a man must look internally to see if he has the qualifications for pastoral ministry, but there must also be a confirmation by others in the local church. He defines this external confirmation as "the process of evaluation whereby the church affirms God's call to the man" (p. 167). The book closes with a third section (oddly consisting of only one chapter) on how to prepare while one waits to enter into ministry.

There are several clear strengths. First, Harvey shows that pastoral ministry must be gospel-driven ministry. Certainly some men who head towards pastoral ministry aren't even Christians themselves, but Harvey addresses the temptation of even Christian men to pursue pastoral ministry in such a way that they forget their identity in Christ. From the outset, he wants men to slow down in their pursuit of discerning whether or not they're supposed to be pastors so that they don't lose sight of that which is of first importance, the gospel itself. The gospel is not only the reason pastoral ministry exists in the first place; it is the wonder of the gospel that should continually compel pastors on in their service.

Second, Harvey addresses the radical individualism that is often present when a man wonders if he should become a pastor. From beginning to end, Harvey sets the call to pastoral ministry within the context of the local church. The decision to pursue pastoral ministry should be affirmed by those in a local church; much of the training should be done within the local church; and the reason for ministry should be a love for the church. This emphasis on godly character and pastoral gifting identified within the local church provide a robust approach to thinking about the pursuit of pastoral ministry.

FOREWORD BY MATT CHANDLER



Am I Called?

THE SUMMONS TO PASTORAL MINISTRY

.....DAVE HARVEY.....

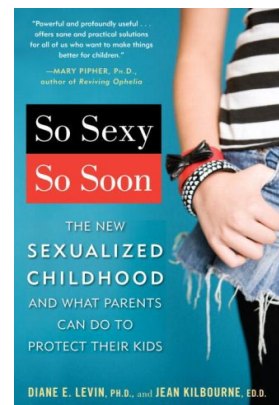
One thing some readers (including myself) will wish were different is how the topic is framed. The image used in the title and throughout the book are the “call” and “summons” to pastoral ministry. Although a thorough explanation of this idea is missing, with the picture of a telephone on the cover and language of hearing a summons from God throughout, we get an idea of what he means. While this is not the place for any thorough interaction with the idea of calling, the NT doesn’t seem to frame pastoral ministry this way. It speaks of godly, qualified men who desire to lead the church as elders (1 Tim 3:1–7), one or more of whom will likely be recognized and freed up to be the primary teacher/preacher (1 Tim 5:17). The NT doesn’t seem to note any particular summons that one or all of these elders must discern, nor do the qualifications serve as “signs” that “demonstrate” that God is necessarily summoning and positioning a man for pastoral ministry (cf. pp. 75, 103, 108).

Aside from this aspect of framing the discussion, the content of this book is excellent. With his numerous stories and conversational writing style, Harvey pulls up a chair beside us to help us think about the decision to enter pastoral ministry. He helps us all to see that the decision to pursue pastoral ministry isn’t merely about an individual and his intuition; it is about desiring to serve Christ as a leader in the context of the local church. And it is about others affirming your qualifications for such a task. It would be very useful for pastors to put this book in the hands of any man wondering if it would be wise to pursue pastoral ministry.

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Diane E. Levin and Jean Kilbourne. *So Sexy, So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids*. New York: Ballantine, 2008. 185 pp. £9.99/\$15.00.

Many times as I’ve dropped my kids off at school or waved to them as they walk with the neighborhood kids to the bus stop, I have been amazed at what other parents and the school administration let them wear. I can’t help thinking about the environment their clothing choices create for other children, especially my own as I think, “I could not have sat next to you all day at your age and done anything except stare at you.” How are my sons supposed to ignore what is so prominently displayed for them? How hard will it be for my daughter to resist believing that her worth and value are measured by how successfully she competes in capturing other people’s attention? I wish I could tell you that these are only high school or junior high students, but they’re not. And I wonder as I continue driving to work, *Doesn’t anybody else see what I’m seeing? Doesn’t anyone care?*



The answer, is yes, they do. In *So Sexy, So Soon*, authors Diane Levin and Jean Kilbourne raise the alarm for how American society is sexualizing our kids long before they hit their teen years, by which they mean that our children learn “their value comes primarily from their sex appeal” (p. 7). No one should be surprised to hear that American society continues to promote the twin errors that people have value only if they maintain a certain appearance and that relationships are mostly about

what you get out of them instead of what you put in. What may surprise you is to hear how early those misconceptions are currently taking root.

The authors recount numerous anecdotes from parents and teachers demonstrating that children from preschool through their tween years (eight- to twelve-year olds) are wrestling with sexualized messages and not always wrestling well. Drs. Levin and Kilbourne lay most of the blame on our commercial culture that over the past few decades has increasingly used sexuality and violence to market toys, clothing, music, and entertainment to very young children. They argue that even at such young ages, associating sex more with “consuming than with connecting” (p. 9) undermines the ability of boys and girls to develop caring, nurturing, giving relationships. Instead, such messages socialize children into thinking that “it’s normal to treat oneself and others as objects and to judge people by what they buy and how they look” (p. 70).

The authors are not coming from the perspective of an out-of-touch Victorian prudery that argues, “The less said about sex, the better.” Rather they assert, “[T]he problem today isn’t that our kids are learning about sex. The problem is *what* they are learning, the age at which they’re learning it, and who is teaching them” (p. 31). They believe that children are not picking up their primary lessons from their immediate adult relationships, but from the depersonalized media and marketing industries.

The book’s stated audience is the parents and teachers of young children—although two very disturbing chapters focus on the teenage environment—and it aims not only to alert you to a current problem, but also to provide practical suggestions for how to help children navigate the cultural messages that bombard them. In that sense, it is more than a scare-’em-with-stats book (although the stories and statistics are arresting). It is also a book with numerous ideas, strategies and practical applications served up with a good deal of hope. It is well-written and easily accessible, though the authors do tend to repeat themselves a bit (and overly rely on the exclamation mark to signify their emphases and enthusiasm).

I especially appreciate two aspects of their solution. First, they are not looking for a quick, overnight fix to an entire milieu of complex, societally created problems. Instead, second, they opt for a much slower, relational approach. They urge you to spend large amounts of time with your children learning to know them and their world, asking them questions and dialoguing about their experiences in ways to give them confidence that you can help them process their world. It is in “build[ing] deeper connections with children” that they’ll “develop the resources and skills they need in order to resist at least some of the impact of sexualized and violent media culture” (p. 132).

In other words, Levin and Kilbourne urge you to replace the impersonal, negative experience of relationships your children get from our consumer culture with a personal, positive one driven by your interest in them. Chapters 5, 8, and 9 are essentially extended lists of what you can do or say, fleshed out with examples that are especially helpful in suggesting how to engage both your child and the surrounding social settings in which he or she lives.

You may find yourself disagreeing with the authors’ own morality as they express their anti-Abstinence Only bias, their openness to homosexuality, or their wish that condom commercials be shown on major TV networks. You may also sense a certain fear underlying assertions like, “Marketers . . . work very hard to create a strong childhood culture that divides children from adults” (p. 48). Or you may share my skepticism that the goal of an individual marketer is to turn children into consumers-for-life (p. 50) since that sounds far too altruistic. It’s hard for me to imagine someone sitting in their office thinking, *I’ll spend my life working to turn four-year-olds into people who will compulsively purchase*

stuff thirty years from now that will benefit other marketers whom I've never met. I suspect that turning people into consumers-for-life is more an effect of marketing than a shared business goal.

More problematic, however, is that Levin and Kilbourne's solution subtly shifts the underlying problem rather than addresses it. A very engaging extended story in chapter 6 details the distress of 7-year-old Hannah. She tearfully tells her mother that she is fat, but wants "to be pretty like Isabelle . . . sexy like her!" (p. 117) so that the boys will like her. Her solution is to insist that she be allowed to go on a diet. Hannah's mother is very affirming and handles her daughter's fears and concerns in a way that creates a safe place for her daughter while helping Hannah consider that there might be a healthy weight, not just a pretty weight. Hannah agrees to discuss this idea with her pediatrician, whom she'll be seeing shortly.

This vignette sounds like it resolves well until you realize that Hannah's real issue is not sexiness, but her underlying longing to be liked. For Hannah, her appearance has become a malleable resource she can use to get what she wants. Her mom has appropriately communicated that she likes Hannah regardless of her appearance and is not put off by Hannah's struggle, but she has not addressed the I-will-do-whatever-it-takes-to-be-noticed-and-liked desire that controls her daughter. Hannah is now in danger of shifting her longing to be noticed by boys at school onto her mother and doctor, doing whatever she needs in order to keep their approval.

Clearly Hannah's mom did much better than some version of "Aw, honey. You don't need to be sexy. You look fine! The boys will notice soon enough." But just as clearly her approach did not take seriously how entrenched Hannah's longing for attention is, how out-of-control it is or how desperately she needs Jesus to shrink it back to an appropriate size.

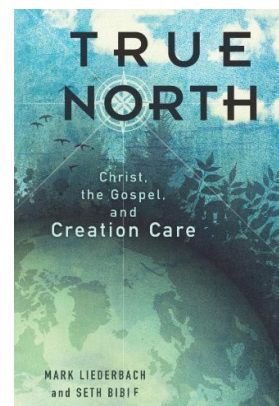
Even with my critique, there is much value in this book and with a little reframing it can go a long way toward helping all of us who regularly serve children and their families in a heavily sexualized culture.

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Mark Liederbach and Seth Bible. *True North: Christ, the Gospel, and Creation Care*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2012. xvi + 173 pp. £12.99/\$19.99.

The choice of "Caring for Creation" as the theme of the 2012 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society signified that the topic of creation care has grown into a significant interest for evangelicals. The plenary sessions, however, revealed sharp disagreement regarding matters such as human-caused climate change and decreasing biodiversity. Mark Liederbach and Seth Bible of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary seek to steer the conversation away from these controversial issues to topics that unite Christians by offering an approach to creation care that focuses on it as an act of worship stemming from belief in Christ as the creator, redeemer, and coming king.

The first chapter introduces the book's nautical metaphor and examines various perspectives on creation care. Just as the North Star offered sailors a



fixed point to determine their position and their course, so Christ should be “True North” for Christians in the midst of a world that lacks a standard in ethical debates. Before drawing attention to “True North” by concentrating on Christ the creator (chs. 2–3), redeemer (ch. 4), and coming king (ch. 5), and plotting a course for action (ch. 6), the authors show the importance of “True North” for environmental ethics in light of the diverse approaches featured in secular and Christian treatments. After examining three dominant perspectives in secular discussions (biocentrism, ecocentrism, anthropocentrism) and three influential Christian models (dominionists, dependents, stewards), the authors state that they offer a refinement of the stewardship model by emphasizing stewardship as a form of worship. Liederbach and Bible also identify and critique two competing perspectives found in Christians: (1) “Chicken Littles” declare impending disaster and can be overly pragmatic, and (2) “Ostriches” deny that there is an ecological crisis and risk disembodiment of the gospel by ignoring the issue of creation care. The authors seek to avoid both dangers by using worship as the primary motivation for creation care.

Chapter 2 shows that the doctrine of creation, with special attention devoted to Col 1:16, teaches that the created world points to the creator, who is Christ himself. Rather than living in light of the intended purpose of creation, however, humans often focus too much on creation itself or view creation as an instrument for human use. Chapter 3 concentrates on the special place of humans in the universe, as Gen 1:26–27 and 2:15 present humans as “embedded heads” that are the only part of the created world made in the image of God. Humans are not to serve creation for its sake nor use it for their interests but are to bring glory to God through their care of the created world. Connections between the garden and the temple situate the duty to care for creation within the context of worship.

In discussing redemption, chapter 4 highlights that the ultimate crisis is not ecological but spiritual, as sin causes humans to misdirect worship and abuse the created world. The incarnation, atonement, and resurrection of Christ present the opportunity for all things to be brought back into proper relationship and call Christians to glorify God by living in accordance with God’s original purposes, which means ceasing negative behaviors toward the created world and seeking to restore places damaged by sinful behaviors. Additionally, the Great Commission is a call to fill the earth with worshiping image-bearers. While not excluding traditional approaches to creation care (legislation, awareness, etc.), Liederbach and Bible maintain that evangelism has a positive effect on the environment because hearts set on “True North” will behave in positive ways towards creation.

The authors focus on the “positive draw” of eschatology for creation care in chapter 5. Liederbach and Bible highlight two extremes in discussions of eschatology. While some mainstream views are too “this-worldly” by viewing the present world as all that exists, many Christians run the risk of becoming “Christian Gnostics” by being too “other worldly” and emphasizing the destruction of creation. An examination of 2 Pet 3 and discussion of Christ’s resurrection indicates that the present order neither continues nor is eradicated; rather, it is renewed.

After reviewing the broader argument of the book, the final chapter develops a “deontological virtue ethic” that stresses the importance of duty and of character. The authors argue that this approach reflects the stress on proper actions and proper dispositions in Deuteronomy and the Sermon on the Mount and avoids the pitfalls of relativism and legalism that plague virtue and deontological approaches, respectively. The book concludes with indexes of authors, subjects, and Scripture references.

This work of Liederbach and Bible fills a gap in evangelical discourse on creation care and can prove useful to a wide range of readership. The book’s introduction indicates that the authors’ attendance at two conferences revealed that evangelical discussions about creation care often use biblical texts as a

starting point but lack extended exegetical reflection, assume rather than rigorously engage theological ideas, and rarely link ethics and evangelism. The authors are mostly successful in their attempt to remedy these problems, with their strongest contribution appearing in the link they establish between creation care and evangelism through viewing creation care as part of the call to teach all that Jesus taught. In addition, the christological focus of the work reflects an effort at rigorous theological reflection. The present reviewer did not find the book's exegesis to be noticeably more careful or extended than other works in the field, but the focus on Col 1:16 injects a fresh text for consideration alongside the more common texts in discussions of creation care (Gen 1–2; Col 1:20; Rom 8:18–23; 2 Pet 3) and thus reflects an exegetical contribution.

The Baptist background of the authors is apparent in their choice of commentators and theologians, though their use of thinkers like Bavinck and Hodge will connect with those in the Reformed tradition. The focus on worship is likely amiable to Christians of other theological persuasions. Readers desiring concrete guidance on particular environmental issues will not find it in this book, but Liederbach and Bible make it clear from the outset that they are focusing on theological foundations and defer these discussions to others. This choice of the authors, however, unfortunately means that the reader is not able to see how this approach speaks to practical concerns and leads to tangible actions. Even a brief discussion of implications or a few case studies would strengthen the book's value.

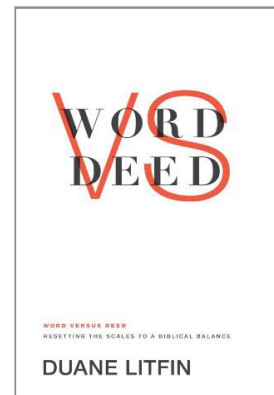
The thrust of the book makes it a worthwhile read both for evangelicals interested in environmental ethics and those who may be suspicious of the growing interest in the area, as it reminds the first group of the centrality of worship in evangelical activism and the second that creation care arises not from the influence of wider culture but from the gospel itself. Moreover, Liederbach and Bible's criticisms of "Chicken Littles" and "Ostriches" suggest that Christians on both sides of the debate about the ecological crisis would not only benefit from this study but should pay careful attention to it. If they don't, they may fall into common pitfalls or forget that the issue of creation care is ultimately not about interpreting empirical data but worship of Jesus, the creator, redeemer, and king of creation.

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Duane Litfin. *Word Versus Deed: Resetting the Scales to a Biblical Balance*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 205 pp. \$15.99.

Duane Litfin, president emeritus of Wheaton College, believes that a key truth has been obscured in our day: "The church's mission in the world is both *verbal* and *nonverbal*. The two dimensions play complementary roles, and neither can substitute for the other" (p. 138). In *Word Versus Deed*, Litfin offers a three-part corrective.

In part 1 of the book, Litfin refutes the claim that the gospel can be preached with deeds *instead of* words. To make such a claim, he argues, we must either apply the word "gospel" to something devoid of cognitive content or use the verb "preach" in a way that is foreign to Scripture. Litfin recognizes that the



church's mission—like all good communication—involves nonverbal elements. What he denies is that the gospel can be adequately communicated apart from verbal witness to Christ.

Part 2 presents a biblical understanding of “gospel-worthy” deeds. Litfin laments the tendency of many contemporary Christians to (1) neglect duties of personal obedience, love for family, and love for fellow believers and (2) emphasize duties to care for “society at large” and for “the natural world” (p. 83), even though Scripture offers more numerous and more specific directives in the first three spheres. He then seeks to carefully outline the social obligations Christians have “beyond the believing community” (p. 101). He devotes a chapter each to living wisely, loving our neighbors, serving as agents of God's cosmos-renewing kingdom, “adorning” the verbal witness of the gospel with our nonverbal witness, and stewarding faithfully God's creation.

Finally, in part 3 Litfin contends against the careless handling of biblical texts in an effort to stress the church's ministry of deeds. After addressing broader interpretive mistakes (e.g., failing to reflect Scripture's nuanced teaching about poverty), Litfin narrows his focus to three specific texts: Jer 29:4–7; Luke 4:16–21; and Matt 25:31–46. In the first two cases, he argues, proponents of social justice ignore key aspects of redemptive-historical context. In the third, they assume that the call to minister to “the least of these my brothers” extends to all who are poor, even though Jesus' phrase refers only to “his disciples, his little ones who believe” (p. 192).

A concluding chapter offers the reader practical advice for discerning how to prioritize “word versus deed” responsibilities. Litfin recommends that we do this concretely rather than abstractly, asking three questions about any person to whom God might call us to minister: (1) What are this person's needs? (2) What are this person's most important needs? (3) What are this person's most urgent needs? He closes the book with an exhortation that is both wise and strong: “while none of us can do *everything*, all of us can do and are called to do *something*” (p. 203; emphasis original).

For many reasons, *Word Versus Deed* deserves a wide readership. While Litfin seems at times to stress ministry of word over that of deed, the book's overall effect is a clear, biblical insistence that both are essential. He is right to insist that God's Word be handled with care, lest we begin to accept uncritically any interpretation that supports our preferred ministry emphasis. Representative of his careful thought is the multifaceted understanding of faithfulness that pervades the book: every believer has a *personal* part to play in the church's *corporate* mission to advance God's *cosmic* work of redemption. Yet Litfin consistently combines careful thought with wise, practical instruction, as his treatment of the five spheres of application and his concluding chapter attest. In short, *Word Versus Deed* is characterized by the kind of balance that so easily eludes us when dealing with these topics.

Despite these strengths, three features of Litfin's work will leave sympathetic readers wanting further explanation and may leave those who strongly disagree with his main arguments unpersuaded. First, at some points, Litfin overstates his case, as when he remarks that the book of Proverbs “is devoid of references to Israel's unique identity, history, and privileges” (pp. 101–2). Given that the Davidic covenant stands back of the book as a whole (see Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1), such a conclusion needs qualification. Litfin's main points could stand even without such occasional overstatements, which do not model the kind of careful interpretation for which he calls. Second, at times Litfin draws conclusions for which he has not provided sufficient evidence. For instance, he concludes that justification is “the central emphasis” (p. 96) of God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham, without discussing the eschatological aspects of this promise presented in Gal 3:14 and Rom 4:17, 24–25. Perhaps his point has merit, but it is asserted rather than argued. Third, Litfin typically interacts with nameless opponents:

“some,” “many,” “they.” As a result, readers must charitably assume that Litfin adequately represents the views he critiques. While the book never takes on the feel of a straw-man argument, interaction with specific arguments as formulated by actual proponents would give it more persuasive power.

On the whole, Litfin’s book is characterized by balance and clarity of thought, and its strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. *Word Versus Deed* will stimulate many readers to more biblical thinking—and more balanced living.

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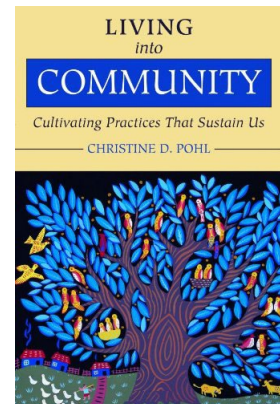
Christine D. Pohl. *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 213 pp. £12.99/\$20.00.

The call to pursue “community” is not new. Exhortations from sociologists and religious pundits to strengthen the sense of community in any given context are frequent, and they match the deep desire of many people to quell their loneliness, find a place to belong, and love and be loved.

But according to Christine Pohl, “few writers discuss the challenges of actually forging alternative communities in contemporary society” (p. 8). In undertaking such a task, Pohl draws our attention to the crucial role of Christian *practices* in knitting together and sustaining community. For the Christian, practices may be understood “as responses to the grace we have already received in Christ, in light of the word and work of God, and for the sake of one another and the world” (p. 5). Practices draw theological reflections into the lived experience of the community.

Pohl focuses on four practices: expressing gratitude, making and keeping promises, living and speaking truthfully, and showing hospitality. These four arose as common motifs in her own study as to what seemed central for community life, rooted in Christian moral tradition and God’s own character. Pohl emphasizes that the four practices are interconnected, and bear on other important practices (e.g., celebration, Sabbath-keeping, forgiveness, discernment).

The work is divided into four parts, each devoted to one practice. The first three parts on gratitude, fidelity, and truthfulness consist of three chapters each. Pohl first explores biblical and historical traditions on the practice and considers ways in which it is out of step with the contemporary cultural context. Second, Pohl addresses “complications” in the pursuit of each practice arising from conflicts in responsibilities, the complexity of relationships, varying circumstances, cultural influences, and the fallenness of our existence. Third, she addresses ways in which sin causes “deformations” in the practice, and also ways to strengthen the practice. The fourth part of the book consists of a single chapter on hospitality. Less time is spent here, in part because Pohl explored the practice in depth in her 1999 work *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, and in part because hospitality can be viewed as a space in which each of the practices may intersect and operate.



Pohl's work is dense with practical and earthy wisdom. She demonstrates deep discernment regarding the complexities of our lived experience, enabling her to probe difficult but practical questions concerning each practice. Of many strengths to the book, four in particular deserve mention.

First, Pohl emphasizes the embodied nature of our existence. Practices are necessarily things we *do*, habits of *living*, irreducible to thoughts or emotions. Pohl explores several implications arising from this, but an especially important one is that embodied life always takes on particular forms. By orienting the rhythms and patterns of life in certain ways, we can cultivate readiness and skill in the practices she commends.

Second, Pohl frequently offers the advice of opening up “space” for the practices to take place. We do well to devote a regular time and place for offering gratitude to others. Since promises are implicitly made or expectations raised in a variety of non-verbal ways, it is helpful to make room for expressly stating expectations and implicit promises. When disagreements arise, “Creating a place that is safe for each to hear the other” in honest, sensitive, and specific (not general) ways is of utmost importance (p. 153). We might think of the practice of hospitality as opening up “space” for other practices to occur.

Third, Pohl sheds light upon our embeddedness in culture and the impact that has on our pursuit of the practices, for good or ill. On the one hand, culture shapes the frames through which we conceive of and practice community. She observes, “we don't always notice how profoundly our expectations, desires, and practices are . . . shaped by our culture. We bring the values of self-actualization, individual success, consumption, and personal freedom—and the choices that result from them—to church life, just as we bring them into family and work. . . . This is not a promising recipe for strong or lasting communities” (p. 4). Additionally, Pohl reveals how several contemporary forms of living such tools and technologies, which in our cultural context seem normal and harmless, can undermine the cultivation of Christian virtue and practice, weakening our communities.

Fourth, Pohl presents the practices as a way of being, a “posture for life.” Thankfulness, fidelity, honesty, and hospitality are not means to some other end, but simply the life *into which we are saved*. The goal in pursuing the practices “is not to try harder to build community or to get the practices right. It is about living and loving well in response to Christ” (p. 175).

One brief but significant criticism may be noted. Pohl only occasionally and passingly mentions the cross and resurrection, and the role of the Spirit in Christian practice is virtually absent from her discussions. We might ask, “What makes the practices and community Pohl commends expressly *Christian*?” This is not to suggest that Pohl offers a book of generic moralizing. Far from it. But we would benefit not simply from the use of the Christian tradition on practices, but also from a clearer expression of their distinctly Christian and Trinitarian roots.

But this criticism hardly diminishes the great value of the book, nor the joy of allowing it to guide us in pursuing Christian practices. Pohl's work is well worth reading and pondering. She challenges us to be what we were created to be, and what Christ redeemed us to be, namely, a community of thankful, faithful, truthful, and welcoming worshipers, for God's glory and our good.

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David Rohrer. *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry: Preparing a People for the Presence of the Lord*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 180 pp. \$15.00.

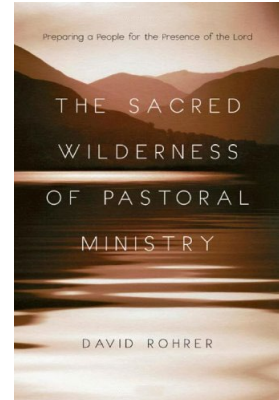
In *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry*, David Rohrer leads off with the delimitations of his work. He makes it clear that it is not his intention to write a “manual on pastoral ministry” (p. 19), though he sees the need for “a pastoral theology adequate for the task before us” (p. 15). He sets out to use the ministry of John the Baptist as a “case study of pastoral work” (p. 17) for the contemporary pastor. Rohrer himself admits that this model may lead to some head-scratching to those who first engage the concept. Let’s see how he does.

One of the first hints that the book is written by a seasoned pastor is his alliterative approach to chapter titles. After the introduction he presents nine challenging concepts under the headings of Consolation, Call, Covenant, Commission, Context, Confrontation, Conflict, Confusion, and Confidence. Each chapter includes stories from his ministry experience, mostly from his work at Michillinda Presbyterian Church of Pasadena, California. Lessons from the ministry of John the Baptist sometimes cross-reference with other biblical material and the connection for the contemporary pastor. The experienced pastor will resonate with the principles communicated and the parishioners introduced along the way for illustrative purposes. After all, what pastor hasn’t had a “Phil” in the church who not only thought but told you, “This is my church. I was here before you got here. I’ll be here after you leave”? (p. 68).

For the younger pastor there are beneficial insights and warnings that may save them from avoidable pain. These are often well-written tidbits that are worthy not only of reading, but careful pondering. In speaking about conflict, for example, Rohrer writes, “Obviously, pointing to truth can be risky business and the rub of the risk is in the wildcard of people’s response” (p. 120). A matter that I have seen many younger ministers wrestle with after a few years in the trenches is the concept of calling. Rohrer helpfully writes, “The circumstances that arise on acting on our calling inevitably lead us to question that calling, and in the struggle of this conflict we learn something more about God and about ourselves that fosters our own spiritual growth” (p. 136).

There is some difficulty in following the train of thought in some of the early chapters. As helpful as the material is, where the chapter finished was not quite what one was led to expect early on in the chapter. That may be partly due to the fact that, as every alliterative preacher knows, there is often a bit of forced shoe-horning that goes on to maintain the alliteration. However, the later chapters on Confrontation, Conflict, and Confusion were more focused and tightly written. As the book progresses one also gets the sense that this book is more about the heart of the pastor than about “preparing a people for the presence of the Lord,” as the book subtitle announces.

In terms of using John the Baptist as a model for contemporary pastors, those who are sensitive to the unique redemptive historical “bridge” role that he plays will at times be jarred by Rohrer’s blurring of the nuance that is needed to appreciate the continuity/discontinuity dimension of the Baptist’s ministry. Certainly we see traits of boldness, proclamation, and mission focus in John that ministers today should emulate. But his unique place in redemptive history could have been more clearly delineated. Despite a passing concession of this point (p. 93), the contemporary pastor’s discontinuity with John could have been helpfully noted more often.

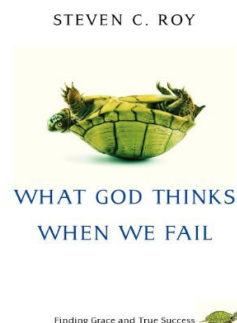


In the introduction, Rohrer sets a very high bar as he hopes to do “for new pastors what Eugene Peterson did for me in the early years of my ministry” (p. 20). Even among those who appreciate Peterson’s ministry, Rohrer should get credit for the effort. Nevertheless in writing, as in preaching, it is crucial for each author to find his own “voice.” Rohrer is not Peterson, but Rohrer is worthy of the reader’s effort, which will be rewarded with much wisdom drawn both from Scriptures and from decades of experience in pastoral ministry. The experienced minister will find encouragement to “finish strong” and the younger pastor will get a “reality check” that both sobers and motivates him to persist in the sacred calling that comes from God.

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Steven C. Roy. *What God Thinks When We Fail: Finding Grace and True Success*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 192 pp. \$16.00.

Steven Roy’s *What God Thinks When We Fail* is the type of book every ministry professional, not least pastors, should pick up and read on a regular basis. It is a pastoral and theological reflection on handling the disappointments of failure. As I began to read this book, I was reminded of *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome* by R. Kent Hughes, one of the most formative books for me on what true pastoral success is and is not. So I was pleasantly surprised to read that Roy himself credited that very book as significant to his own pastoral and theological reflections on the nature of failure and true success (p. 22). *What God Thinks When We Fail* is a fresh expression of a poignant pastoral topic and builds off works such as Hughes’s in a biblically meaningful and “deeply personal” manner (p. 7).



Roy begins with autobiography, for the book was born out of a soul-shaking experience of pastoral “failure” that he and his wife experienced. With honesty and humility, Roy takes us through that experience—how crushing it was and how it led him to find the perspective that now inhabits this book. This personal narrative sets up the rest of the book by focusing the reader on how emotionally charged this topic is and what it is about failure and success that drives our emotions.

The author’s next move is to take on notions of success (and failure) by exploring the ways in which our definitions are so culturally bound. His analysis of the connection between the American story and our cultural definitions of success and failure is especially helpful. In doing this, Roy further sets the stage for what the gospel minister ought to use as the measure of success and failure, namely, God’s Word.

The second half of the book invites the reader into the biblical text, theological themes, and consequent definitions of true failure and true success. The reader is pointed toward one of the most compelling and moving metaphors Roy employs, that God is the ultimate “significant other” whose opinion matters most. This God-as-significant-other approach is perhaps Roy’s most vivid tool in making his point. Our emotional response to our circumstances is a result of who or what our significant other is. If it is a human, or anything else within the created order, our emotions will not accord to truth. But

if God himself is our significant other and we know his disposition through Scripture, our emotions will be on surer footing as we wrestle through the trials of ministry.

The book concludes with several thoughtful applications for the reader in light of the biblical and theological reflections. The running theme of Roy's work is the grace of God. Grace is always held forth for the broken and burdened. Grace reminds us that Christ is the Successful One, who has succeeded for us. True success, therefore, is not in numbers, human approval, notoriety, or getting one's way, but in faithfulness, whatever public opinion may be.

This is not a technical work. But nor is it shallow. And while not the first work on this topic, it is fresh, not redundant. Roy writes in a biblically faithful and approachable way that takes us back to the ancient paths of grace-filled truth. This book is a wise balance between the raw and real experience of every minister of the gospel, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the rich truths of what the gospel holds out for those who feel defeated by the work of the ministry. It does not attempt to be novel, but simply takes a theme every Christian is going to face one day, and may be desperately facing today, and calls the reader to an honest wrestling with the God of grace in the face of perceived failure.

One wishes the author spent more time developing a robust reflection on the place of suffering and failure as a regular part of faithful ministry. This seemed implicit and touched upon, but the Scriptures seem to clearly teach that suffering, at the hand of men yet guided by the hand of God, is part and parcel of success (a theme that runs throughout, e.g., 2 Corinthians). In other words, faithfulness often leads to, and is bound up with, affliction. Roy focused on trusting the grace of God during affliction, but could have spent more time on planning for affliction as we make it our aim to be faithful stewards of the grace of God.

If you are a seminary student, church planter, seasoned church leader, or lay leader in your church, this book would be a fine addition to your shelf—to be thoughtfully read, and then returned to when the winds of disappointment in ministry blow.

Perhaps I could end with some personal narrative. When I began to read this book to fulfill my duty to write this review, I happened to be experiencing some rough waters as a pastor. I found myself thanking God that he providentially put this book in my hands at that appointed time. This book did not point me inwardly, asking me to dig down deeper to find hope and meaning in disappointment. Rather, it asked me to drink ever deeper of God's grace. Because of that, it is a worthy read.

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— MISSION AND CULTURE —

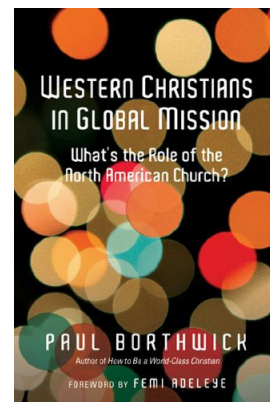
Paul Borthwick. *Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church?* Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 223 pp. £9.58/\$15.00.

Paul Borthwick has a laudable agenda: he wants to demonstrate that the worldwide church, and the role of North Americans in it, is very different from the perceptions of many of his compatriots. To do this he distils the writings of significant scholars, gathers commentary from insightful church leaders around the globe, and tells stories of his own experiences. He presents his material in a punchy and accessible manner with questions for discussion at the end of each chapter and with references that encourage further reading. Borthwick has been changed by his relationships with Christians in the global south, and he writes to transform the attitudes of others.

He wants to persuade most of his readership that there are mature churches with their own missionary approaches in places some erroneously still consider unevangelised and in need of North American intervention. For those readers who are already critical of North American involvement in global mission, he wishes to show a way forward that does not shy away from engagement but does so in a humble and collaborative way. For example, he is straightforwardly critical of forms of mission tourism that jet-set into a country for two weeks for a particular program but avoid developing deep relationships with local Christians. He calls for mission under the authority of the local church, one which is relational rather than task-oriented.

Borthwick appraises the contemporary churches of North America and the Majority World in part one, entitled 'Where are we now?' In part two, 'Moving Forward,' he first examines the biblical mandate for mission, before exploring in the next six chapters the importance of humility, reciprocity, sacrifice, equality in partnership, and listening to those of the majority world. He identifies the positive characteristics, like optimism, that North Americans bring to mission as well as critiquing attitudes of activism and superiority. The ultimate aim is summed up in the title of the final chapter 'United Together—So That the World Might Know'; Christians across the globe should work together in mission as a witness to the world.

The approach, while welcome, does not go far enough. For this British reviewer the gung-ho tone of the book does little to reinforce the message of humility and attentiveness—but maybe that is an issue of differing cultural communication! More serious is the dismissal of the views of others without proper examination, most clearly evidenced in the assumption that anything but an exclusivist position on other faiths simply should not be tolerated, rather than an enquiry as to how and why alternative views had been reached. Where is the humility and listening here? Issues of power are also inadequately tackled: Borthwick acknowledges the inequality of the world and its influence on forms of missional activity but he does little to address the largely Western systems that maintain it. Global mission as advocacy of fairer international structures is mentioned only in a couple of anecdotes yet the lack of reciprocity and equality and the attitudes that go with it appear central to his theme and significantly impact on mission strategies. There is little mention of the environmental impact of the global mission he suggests.

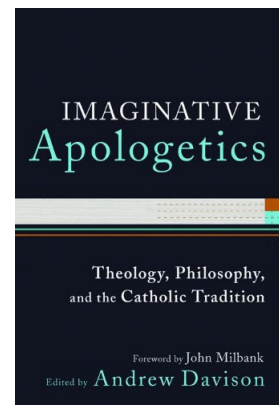


Borthwick's biblical basis for mission focuses mainly on the Great Commission and John 3:16 rather than situating them within a missionary hermeneutic of the entire Bible. Comprehending the pervasive influence of societal structures and interpreting the whole Bible as a demonstration of the many ways of God's loving sending forth into the world seem fundamental to a proper sense of the divine mission in which we are called to participate. There is therefore room for greater reflection on the important issues that this book raises which would serve to strengthen our witness to Christ in the world, whether we cross geographical frontiers or not.

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Andrew Davison, ed. *Imaginative Apologetics: Theology, Philosophy, and the Catholic Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xxviii + 169 pp. £19.99/\$25.00.

In the twenty-first century West, Christians are faced with the challenge of defending the faith in an environment in which hostile apathy or genial indifference are increasingly common. In *Imaginative Apologetics*, ten scholars offer a bracing and insightful perspective on this challenge, writing from a range of disciplines, from theology and philosophy to literature and the sciences. The editor, Andrew Davison, sums up the book's approach as making the case "for a version of Christian apologetics—theological, philosophical, and 'catholic'—that embraces the whole of human reason and takes an expansive view of what it means to be a human being" (p. xxvii). He notes that although most of the contributors are Anglican or Roman Catholic, the book is intended for "readers of all traditions" (p. xxviii). In fact, it is this "catholic" vision that grounds the enterprise of *Imaginative Apologetics* in the historic faith and makes it eminently useful for conservative, evangelical readers.



Imaginative Apologetics sets out its argument in four sections: Faith and Reason Reconsidered; Christian Apologetics and the Human Imagination; Being Imaginative about Christian Apologetics; and Situating Christian Apologetics.

John Hughes takes an aggressive approach in the first essay, arguing, "the rationalist project of proofs has sold out the Christian faith to deism and turned the God of Jesus Christ into an idol of human reason" (p. 7). "Postmodernism is internally incoherent" (p. 9). His vision of apologetics is one that "engages with, criticizes and responds to the other views that are current in our world, and that is attractive and persuasive in itself" (p. 11). Davison follows with a challenge to what he calls the "myth of neutral reason" (p. 18) and its expression in arguments based on axioms such as the principle of non-contradiction.

Whether or not one entirely agrees with the arguments of Hughes and Davison, their critiques are a salutary shaking-up of ideas about what is effective in apologetics today. However, their arguments seem to assume readers' familiarity with the basic issues; those who know the work of cultural apologists such as Francis Schaeffer and Nancy Pearcey will appreciate this section, but many readers will wish for more development of the background issues. Fortunately, the key ideas are given a more carefully developed

and significantly more nuanced approach in Michael Ward's essay in Part 2, and some of the necessary context for the first section is provided in Part 4.

The heart of *Imaginative Apologetics* is in Part 2, Christian Apologetics and the Human Imagination, which provides possible approaches to the challenge of doing apologetics differently. Alison Milbank considers literature and the visual arts as a way of engaging in a form of imaginative apologetics that will "shock people into engagement with reality" (p. 38). Donna Lazenby argues that the contemporary apologist must be able "to read the signs of the times" (p. 46). She considers a number of examples from literature, pointing out that these are "diagnostic spaces" where we can "discover . . . what people are spiritually hungering for" (p. 47).

Michael Ward's "The Good Serves the Better and Both the Best: C. S. Lewis on Imagination and Reason in Apologetics" is worth the price of the book by itself. Other contributors address the value of the imagination and possible approaches to imaginative apologetics, but Ward addresses the core conceptual question: how do imagination and reason work together? Moving carefully through an analysis of the relationship between imagination and reason, Ward shows that "imagination is insufficient without reason" (p. 73) and that "imaginative reason is also insufficient" (p. 75), pulling the pieces together by exploring how "imaginative reason serves a purpose" (p. 76). Further, Ward articulates the role of imagination even in traditional forms of apologetic argument:

It is no good arguing for 'God' or 'Christ' or for 'the atonement' or even for 'truth' until the apologist has shown, at least at some basic level, that these terms have real meaning. Otherwise they will just be counters in an intellectual game, leaving most readers cold. Likewise, apologetic arguments for the authority of 'the Church' or 'the Bible' or 'experience' or 'reason' itself, must all be imaginatively realized before they can begin to make traction on the reader's reason, let alone on the reader's will. (p. 72)

A serious consideration of imaginative apologetics thus includes a renewed vision of the way imagination and reason together facilitate the work of the Spirit on the human will.

The second half of *Imaginative Apologetics* is likely to be the most accessible to the working apologist. In Part 3, Being Imaginative about Christian Apologetics, Stephen Bullivant focuses on the ways that the imagination can help apologists engage with contemporary atheism, and Craig Hovey follows by setting forth a case for the ways in which Christian ethics can be seen as part of the apologetic enterprise, drawing usefully on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre.

Part 4, Situating Christian Apologetics, begins with Graham Ward's consideration of cultural hermeneutics, in which he argues that apologists must learn to read the "signs of the times" (p. 125); this piece pairs nicely with Lazenby's essay in Part 2. Richard Conrad provides a salutary overview of the history of apologetics from Pentecost to the present. Alister McGrath's essay on science and apologetics demonstrates that logical argument indeed has a place in imaginative apologetics. This final section would have been more effective as the book's first part; readers are recommended to read it out of order.

Imaginative Apologetics outlines a mode of engagement that has the potential to transform the discipline of apologetics. This relatively short book offers both conceptual insights and practical

application, but its greatest value may be that it makes a powerful case for a new approach to apologetics that uses the imagination, allied with reason, to give a reason for our hope.

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Douglas S. Huffman, ed. *Christian Contours: How a Biblical Worldview Shapes the Mind and Heart*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 238 pp. \$22.99.

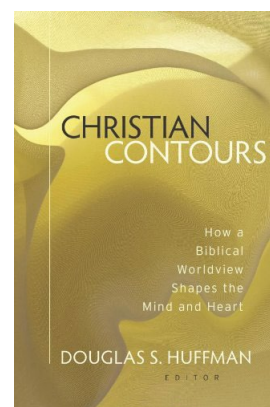
I have lived my life among students, teaching in many places to many people. And while I am not a pastor, there have been times when the pastoral thread in my vocation has been drawn out as I have worked as a professor. Years ago, for example, I was asked to preach on a “university Sunday” for a large Presbyterian church in a major academic center.

As I shook hands with the congregation as they left, one undergraduate stopped and said, “It sounds to me like you don’t think I should have to choose between praying and thinking. Is that right?” And so for months he and I met at a bagel café for breakfasts, praying and thinking our way through his hope. His story is the story of Everyman and Everywoman, of everyone who wants to live a coherent life.

It is that vision that is the heart of the new book *Christian Contours: How the Biblical Worldview Shapes the Mind and Heart*. Huffman writes that the “grounding assumption of this book is that faith and thinking are *not* opposites” (p. 9). Drawing on a faculty of friends, he offers a collection of essays by serious people about a serious concern, namely, “to think about life as a whole and to strive to have a Bible-oriented view of everything” (p. 10). Amen and amen.

As I read I found myself thinking of scores of students and faculty I have known, in faith-centered institutions and secular-shaped ones as well. Having lived between these different kinds of schools for all of my life, I know that there is a divide that wounds the church and the world; that we misread their respective roles is tragic. Within what we call “Christian colleges” it is often difficult to imagine the concreteness and rigor of the questions of the pluralizing world. And on the other side, within what we know as public and private universities rooted in secularizing visions of life and learning, it is almost impossible to imagine alternative accounts of the universe, especially ones marked by transcendence and truth. Knowing this world of higher education as I do, I read the contributors and their essays, wondering each time, “So how would an eager freshman at Gordon/Geneva/Taylor/Wheaton/Biola read this?” Or “How would an earnest professor who wants to think and teach Christianly at the University of Virginia/University of Chicago/Boston University/Stanford read this?” Good questions for all of us, and for the writers, because it is in answering that question well where the value of a book like this is found.

In my reading of what we learn and how we learn, the word “primer” is a good one. It promises us a way in. By reading carefully and critically, we become trained to do more, to understand more completely, to form habits of heart that teach us to pray and think in ways that make sense of the world and of our place in it. This volume is a primer, introducing the reader to the contours of academic discipleship. From its first pages where the vision of “the whole of life” is set forth, a learning where mind



and heart are twined together, on to its chapters focused on the particularities of worldviews in general and the plausibility of a Christian worldview especially, and finally its last chapters where everything anyone wanted to know about academic and professional resources are offered in great scope and detail, the book is intended for someone who wants to understand the foundations of faithful learning.

The authors draw upon most everyone who has written on this subject over the last half-century. From Richard Niebuhr's early contribution to the long life of James Sire's writings on through Arthur Holmes and David Naugle—and many more—each writer interacts with the best work over the years, standing on the shoulders of good people who have done good work. I confess that, sometimes, that seemed too much; I wanted more original reflection and less, “As so and so has said.” Not tragic, but I noticed.

Two questions. First, while there is a nod to the Middle Eastern character of the biblical worldview, the writing reflects a more Western and modern understanding of the ways we learn. While each writer offers a nuanced reading of his particular question, always attending to the dynamic of mind and heart together, the style is characteristically “modern” in the sense of a propositional statement of the issue and the way it is to be addressed. Perhaps that was the agreed-upon editorial style, and that is one way to learn. But there is little of “the first-century Palestinian” (to quote one of the writers) attention to stories that bring ideas to life, that give words flesh, and I wondered why. The longer I teach, the more sure I am that the Incarnation is not only creedally crucial, but pedagogically brilliant. We do not learn unless we see that words can become flesh. I found myself longing for a good story of the way these good ideas get worked out in life.

And second, there is an assumption of coherence throughout, which is exactly right. “[W]e live in a ‘universe’ (uni = one), not a ‘multi-verse.’ Only one reality is really real, and we should think about it in a properly integrated and honest way” (p. 20). Yes, and yes again—mostly. As a professor, so much of my deep hope is that my students will come to see that we get only one world to live in, and that is the world that God made. But a little poke too. If it is a universe, a cosmos, why not assume its coherence and therefore offer a vision of scholarship that sees life and learning as an *integral* whole—not something to be *integrated*? It is a matter of words and of what we mean by them; I will not die over the difference. If the problem is ours though, that we do not see truthfully—but only through a glass darkly—then our best praying and thinking ought to be toward the end that we will see things as they are to be seen, in their reality, the reality of the “one reality.” Integral, not integrated—there is a difference, and the difference matters, metaphysically and pedagogically.

There is much to commend in *Christian Contours*. For readers young and old who want to understand what it means to teach and to be taught in ways that are biblically rooted, the writers have offered a strong contribution to the growing resources available for thinking Christianly about everything and anything. That is a gift to all of us. Given who I am and whom I meet, my questions are always, “So how does this work out? Will it be persuasive?” One of the most important chapters is titled, “How Can I Live the Christian Worldview in a Culture That Does Not Share It?” The few paragraphs on the difference between virtues and values are almost priceless; to know why these are different can give life to the mind and the heart.

A last word: As I listened to these writers, I found myself thinking of a student who has recently come back into my life through the strange graces of social media. Watching his comments on life and the world, I can see that his ways of making sense have changed. No longer someone who asks and asks about the meaning of mere Christianity, he has drunk deeply of his pluralizing PhD studies at one of the

world's most prestigious universities, and he resists the possibility of a *proper confidence* (to remember Newbigin's important image) about the faith he once believed to be true. In a thousand ways, he argues for a culture of whatever, with intellectual sophistication. What would he think of this book and its argument? Would the words find a way in? Would they have helped him as an undergraduate? As a graduate student? Would they have been ballast against the world, the flesh, and the devil, as he has met them over the last years?

Whether our pilgrimages take us to Desperate State University or to Such-and-Such Christian College, at the end of the day the question is the same: will you be able to take up your life, and live—especially so in the face of the complex challenges of a pluralizing, secularizing, globalizing world? Only if we learn to pray well and to think well. This volume is a good gift to all for whom that question becomes the vocation that threads through life and learning, mind and heart, for a little while or for the whole of life.

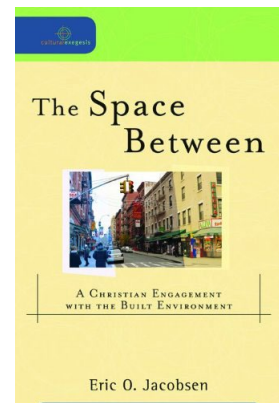
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Eric O. Jacobsen. *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 297 pp. £14.99/\$22.99.

In this fine addition to Baker's 'cultural exegesis' series, Jacobsen bridges the gap between biblical exegesis and urban studies. As such, this book will open our eyes to the world around us which we have made and which daily makes us. It challenges the exegete to ground their work within the built environment and extends a daring invitation for urbanists to consider the Bible as a meaningful contributor in their work. On both these fronts, Jacobsen's book is fruitful, and worthy of a wide readership.

The title, 'The Space Between,' carries a double meaning. It alludes both to the built environment which, as more than architecture or town planning, is also concerned with relationships between buildings within a wider sense of 'enacted space,' and to the eschatological time and space which our urban forms occupy, between Christ's first and second comings to earth. It is perhaps too much to expect one book to fill this space, but Jacobsen certainly spans the gap and heralds ongoing theological reflection and praxis. As a biblical scholar-pastor I find his book very stimulating, and would have rejoiced over it when I was a young Christian geographer. It builds well on its assertion of one unified kingdom, not two kingdoms, lived *coram deo*, before the face of God. This framework implicitly owes a lot to Dutch neo-Calvinist Reformed thought and is very apposite for the topic in view as it threads through the course of Jacobsen's work.

The frame of the book is wide-ranging. After an introduction to the built environment, which deftly introduces this focal concept, three sections follow. The first, 'Orientation,' consists of four chapters which set the big picture in place. At its essence, this opening section probes who we are in our world: are we human beings or merely automobile operators? This dichotomy is firmly grasped and cast as reflecting a conundrum facing twenty-first-century America. Jacobsen's perspective is clear:



we are made for embodied existence and for bodily faithfulness to God, and our locations are not to be sped through nor structured in such a way that life in them is impossible without a car. Such built environments diminish life for both pedestrian and driver, whether assessed at the scale of functional zoning or on the ground in widening curb radii on road junctions. A porch on the front of a house, where passers-by can be greeted, is to be preferred over a Porsche in the garage, ready to drive to other, relationally disconnected spaces. This big picture includes a history of modern urbanism, especially as developed in post-war USA, interwoven with a Christian worldview within a creation-fall-redemption framework.

These chapters develop well, and these two poles are well-integrated within a cultural exegesis. The pay-off is mutually enhancing and generative for further engagement. At some points, however, I wondered to what extent this was a Christian engagement with *the* built environment or, more limitedly, an engagement with *American* built environments. The degree to which this is description or criticism of this book will vary for different readers, but for this transatlantic reader terms such as ‘exurb’ needed explaining when they were first used (p. 34), rather than some pages later (p. 49). ‘Strip mall’, I don’t think ever was explained. There is some potential for misunderstanding in cultural translation, and timely and adequate explanation of terms would enable the readership this book deserves. Such gripes are small—usually a quick trip to Wikipedia is enough to gain clarity—but this rootedness in the North American context also endured at a larger analytical scale. Quite likely, this will be a strength for this book if North America is its target audience. But further works more reflective of, for instance, a British setting remain to be written. If this book provokes their writing, that will be a fine thing.

The book’s second section, ‘Participation’, contains chapters addressing family, politics, and church. Again, this worked well within its North American context. As earlier, this strength can tilt into a weakness, with non-American examples such as Wilberforce and the Clapham community remaining isolated from their contexts, and there was, I thought, a risk of romanticising a ‘parish’ model of church. Nevertheless, again there is much in these chapters to feed thoughtful application into non-American contexts, even if the usefulness of Jacobsen’s engagement will be all the stronger closer to home.

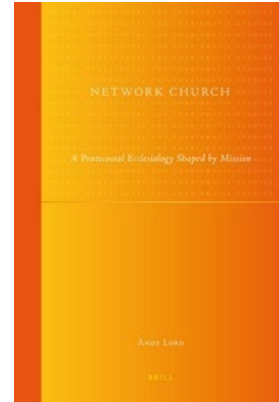
A final section, ‘Engagement’, is wide-ranging and less immediately focused, but draws out many and varied implications from the preceding chapters. Overall, it and the final chapter on ‘a geography of rest’ left me better equipped to live in, and to read, the built environment Christianly. The book finishes strongly, with the hope that readers ‘are beginning to see new possibilities for the redemption of all creation’ while waiting ‘expectantly for Christ to reign over all in the space between.’

As mentioned above, I hope this book will be a spur and catalyst for far more Christian engagement of this kind, whether that be at the macro-scale of policy and lobbying, or at the local-scale of lives lived Christianly within the built environments we have at present. Jacobsen has clear likes and dislikes within the built environment: functional zoning with its car-based dependencies and corrosions of community is rebuffed, but New Urbanism is not fully and uncritically embraced. This nuanced deliberation, especially when run through the multiple scales and lenses in the book’s second section, promises much engagement yet to come. We all need more engagement such as Jacobsen offers and demands, characterised by his helpful synthesis and vision, and warmed by his pastoral concern mixed well with analytic insight.

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Andy Lord. *Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission*. Edited by William Kay and Andrew Davies. Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies II. Leiden: Brill, 2012. xi + 264 pp.

In the past, Pentecostalism has been viewed as a movement without a theology; but recent scholarship has taken up the challenge and is developing a theology of its own distinct shape. Andy Lord is one of those scholars. Lord's work fits within a larger project that is developing a Pentecostal theology from within the Pentecostal experience, and which also engages systematically with the wider corpus of Christian theology, and the surrounding culture. This particular book attempts to expand on Lord's earlier engagement with mission and Pentecostal theology (*Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Missiology* [Paternoster, 2005]) in order to develop a constructive account of Pentecostal ecclesiology.



When reading this book, the reader must keep in mind that Lord is writing within a framework shaped by the experiential contours of Pentecostalism. Lord is developing a coherent account of ecclesiology that is consistent with the Pentecostal tradition. With this in mind, the reader will see that Lord develops an ecclesiology using a triadic scheme of descriptive, constructive, and critical analysis of the topics throughout this book.

In chs. 1–3, Lord discusses the state of Pentecostal scholarship as well as establishing the location and purpose of his particular ecclesiology. In chapter one, Lord introduces how ecclesiology has been viewed in earlier accounts of Pentecostal theology. Here he introduces the method of the book; instead of creating a new account of ecclesiology, Lord is codifying the ecclesiological practices of Pentecostalism since its inception in the early twentieth-century. For Lord, Pentecostalism has operated as a loosely structured group of individual assemblies and/or organizations that cooperate in areas such as missions. Lord refers to these loosely structured cooperative units as networks. So it is through the use of the Pentecostal ecclesiological experience defined by networks of missional cooperation that Lord develops his account of Pentecostal theology: developing theology from the inside-out.

The method for developing a Pentecostal theology takes shape in chs. 2–3. Throughout this work, Lord engages recent Pentecostal scholars such as Kenneth J. Archer, Simon Chan, Frank Macchia, and Amos Yong, but it is Yong's method that further refines and shapes Lord's ecclesiology. Yong's approach is a threefold approach of *Spirit-Word-Community* that seeks to maintain a Pentecostal identity while engaging with a broader ecumenical appeal (i.e., other non-Pentecostal Christian traditions) as well as reaching out to "other religions [and] to the whole of creation" (p. 35). This is an important inclusion because Lord appeals to the outworking movement of the Trinity to demonstrate that Pentecostals have always moved outward toward the other, albeit some Pentecostal groups have been more successful than others. Yong's approach, as described in the book, ultimately leads to an ecumenical and secular engagement that Lord finds is an appropriate model for Pentecostals as people of the Holy Spirit, who is poured out on *all* flesh.

The Holy Spirit is at the center of Lord's Pentecostal ecclesiology as seen through his concept of networks, where the Holy Spirit creates an openness in mission which allows for coordinated effort towards church planting and growth. Lord does not develop his theology of ecclesiological mission-oriented networks through theological reflection alone, for "there is sufficient evidence of the Spirit generating networks that there is a need for an ecclesiology that takes this into account rather than one

developed independently of this working of the Spirit” (p. 94). Lord discusses Paul’s missionary strategy and the theological developments of the (so-called) Latin and Eastern fathers in order to firmly locate his network concept within the early traditions of the church. This allows Lord to maintain continuity with wider traditions, thereby maintaining his connection with recent ecumenical concerns of other Pentecostal scholars.

The ecumenical concern is fleshed out when Lord introduces catholicity, which is a cipher for connecting the unity of the Trinity with the Spirit’s eschatological drive towards unity in creation. It is the drive towards unity that also marks Pentecostal ecclesiology towards network partnerships and also a missiology of contextualization. By including network partnership and the notion of contextualization, Lord is giving space to an ecclesiology that is shaped by the doctrine of the Trinity because of the outward turn to the community. This is a return to Yong’s method of *Spirit-Word-Community*.

This work must be viewed from within a Pentecostal context, which serves as the book’s strength and weakness. This serves as its weakness in that Lord does not adequately engage with other traditions in developing his ecclesiology; and neither does he give a full systematic treatment of his ecclesiology concerning other doctrines, such as creation, sin, soteriology, etc. But the Pentecostal context also serves as its strength because Lord is developing a systematic account of Pentecostal ecclesiology from *within* a Pentecostal framework, which takes into account the experiential nature of Pentecostalism. As long as the reader understands that this is a Pentecostal theological work, then the reader should be rewarded with an ecclesiology that is truly Pentecostal but also ecumenically oriented.

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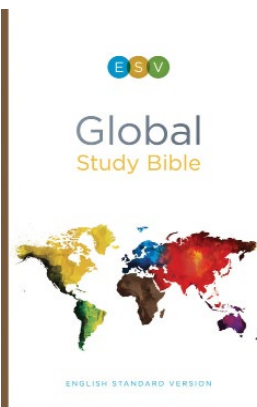
J. I. Packer, Wayne Grudem, and Ajith Fernando, eds. *ESV Global Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 1,984 pp. \$19.99–\$44.99.

Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation, eds. *The Mission of God Study Bible*. Nashville: Holman, 2012. 1,440 pp. \$39.99.

The Mission of God Study Bible (MGSB) seeks to bring glory to God by pointing to God’s work of redemption and eventual restoration of creation (p. vi). The *MGSB* supplements the HCSB text with thirteen different kinds of supplemental features.

Many of the articles in the *MGSB* are well-written and helpful—standout examples include Eric Mason on “The Impact of Sin on the Mission of God,” Adrian Warnock on “Resurrection,” and Christopher Wright on “The Metanarrative of God’s Mission.” Articles reminding of opportunities for mission in particular regions and cultures are well-chosen, and the concluding “letters to the church” are strong, clear calls for missional engagement.

Owners of the print version of *MGSB* are able to enter a code to gain access to all of the notes from the Study Bible on the companion website, <http://missionofgodstudybible.com>. Those who do not own a print version can either buy permanent access or “rent” temporary access.



The website also offers, apparently free to all visitors, a library of video commentaries in which Stetzer or Nation offers approximately five minutes of teaching on each of the topics raised in the study notes. While the design of the site seems to still be under development, the site is already a valuable resource for learning about mission because of the supplemental video content as well as the ease of access it provides to the articles from the Study Bible.

One concern with the *MGSB* is its inconsistency regarding the definition of “mission.” In the introduction, the editors offer this definition: “God’s mission among us is to glorify Himself through the work of redeeming people and restoring creation” (p. xxvii). Yet this clear definition is not followed throughout the work. Indeed, most of the book introductions and many of the notes supply their own varying definitions as to the nature of mission (e.g., pp. 174, 1131, 1177, 1249, 1256), confusing the project’s central theme.

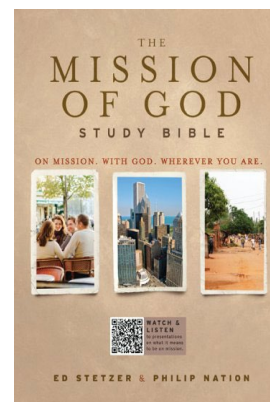
The *MGSB*’s handling of the OT is often disappointing. In a work devoted to one theme, it is surprising how often *MGSB*’s introductions miss the primary ways a given book contributes to that theme. For example, the introduction to Leviticus makes no linkage between mission and holiness; the Psalms introduction obscures the book’s connection between worshipping God and declaring him among the nations; the Isaiah introduction minimizes the connection between the universal vision of the book and the mission of God’s people; the Ezekiel introduction misses the book’s consistent emphasis on God’s self-revelation. Additionally, the *MGSB* introductions often fail to point the reader towards the book’s key texts on God’s mission, so, for instance, the Genesis introduction doesn’t mention Gen 12:1–3, and the Exodus introduction doesn’t mention Exod 19:4–6. Apart from their introductions, most OT books have only one or two notes inserted, and often these notes have little relationship to the book in question. For example, the only note in the book of Leviticus is a feature on missionary Martin Burnham (p. 116); other books receive similar treatment, and 2 Samuel receives no notes at all. The troubling implication is that the first two-thirds of the Bible have little to say about God’s mission.

The treatment of the NT is better; there is more interaction with texts and more careful introductions. But here too are surprising gaps; for example the Matthew introduction mentions neither the “mission discourse” of Matt 10 nor the key passage on the missional identity of God’s people in 5:13–16 nor the closing commission of 28:18–20.

While some of the individual pieces of the *MGSB* are well-written and helpful in their own right, one does wonder in places why these particular articles have been chosen and inserted where they are throughout Scripture. A curious editorial decision is the inclusion of a number of excerpts of Francis Dubose’s 1983 book *God Who Sends*. The Dubose quotes are not written for, or well-suited for a Study Bible format; perhaps it would have been more effective if the HCSB editors had instead commissioned original notes on these texts.

The *ESV Global Study Bible (GSB)* is a different kind of project, more along the lines of a traditional Study Bible. It contains both original material and content adapted from the *ESV Study Bible (ESVSB)* in order “to help people know and understand the Bible” (p. 7) and to serve Christians who are “global” either in their international context or in their vision for ministry.

The *GSB* seeks to achieve its global vision through international print and online distribution, as well as through content written by and tailored for a global audience. Thus, in addition to a standard introduction (condensed from the *ESVSB*), each book of the Bible is also introduced with a “global message”



feature that locates the book in God's plan of redemption and identifies key applications to a global audience. These global message sections are alone worth the price of the volume, especially as they reflect a careful understanding of the book that keeps in mind both the big picture of Scripture and how the book in question develops the story of how God will bring blessing to all nations in fulfillment of his promise to Abraham in Gen 12:1–3. The quality and consistency of the *GSB* introductions comes into stark relief in contrast to the *MGSB* introductions reflected on above. While *GSB* certainly does more than trace the mission of God throughout Scripture, the global message sections do trace God's mission in a way that is clear, helpful, and draws the reader into the text, identifying the key passages and their larger connection to biblical theology. Finally, the volume ends with thirteen short articles that introduce theology, interpretation, ethics, and mission clearly and succinctly.

The differences in the introductions of the two Study Bibles may in part be a reflection of the kinds of contributors chosen. Both projects have impressive lists of contributors with long records of faithful service to the body of Christ. For the *MGSB*, the contributors seem to be chosen based on past blogging or popular publishing related to the topic they address. This editorial choice often leads to interesting and engaging content, yet perhaps is also related to the lacuna noted above and places where texts are applied in what seems to be a superficial way (e.g., notes near Gen 18; Exod 18; 1 Kgs 19; 2 Kgs 5; Isa 6). The *GSB*'s list of contributors has more of an orientation to biblical scholarship with an international perspective and specialization in the particular book or topic, and this seems to be reflected how the *GSB* interacts more widely with the content of the books and has fewer noticeable omissions.

Alongside the English Standard Version text, the *GSB* adapts 12,000 study notes from the *ESVSB*, condensed to about half their original length and also includes many of the beautiful tables, maps, and diagrams of the *ESVSB*. Without attempting to interact with all of this content, suffice it to say that the praise that has consistently been applied to the *ESVSB* applies equally to this valuable resource. Owners of the print version of the *GSB* can access all of the notes and other content in a helpful format alongside the biblical text via the very well-designed www.esvbible.org platform.

It is difficult to find fault with the *GSB*. Perhaps those of differing theological perspectives may in places be uncomfortable with how the *GSB*, while consistently evangelical and fair, emphasizes such themes as continuity between the OT and NT, Jesus' fulfillment of the OT, the already/not yet nature of the kingdom, and Reformed soteriology. One might also note that the concluding articles, while certainly global in their contributors, could bring a more explicitly global perspective to the content of their articles.

That said, the *GSB* is an excellent overall Study Bible. Its size, comparable to a standard Pew Bible, is better suited to carrying around than its bulky cousin, the *ESVSB*. No matter what part of Scripture you are studying, the *GSB* notes and introductions will consistently help your understanding and point you in a fruitful interpretative direction.

Which of these two Bibles would best help a careful student of Scripture understand God's mission and best equip a person to participate in that mission? The *GSB* is the clear answer, though it is also helpful in many other ways. I recommend the *GSB* to any believer as a resource in understanding the individual parts and overall storyline of Scripture and their place in God's mission. The *MGSB* is best used as a kind of anthology, and perhaps there are many who would find flipping through its various articles thought-provoking in suggesting areas for further missional reflection. Yet one looking for careful interaction with and explanation of texts of Scripture would be better served by other resources. While both volumes have their place, after reading both, one can't help but reflect that perhaps we don't

need a dedicated Mission of God Study Bible as much as we need to see the Mission of God developed throughout our regular Study Bible, and this is what the *GSB* does so well.

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Christian Scharen. *Broken Hallelujahs: Why Popular Music Matters to Those Seeking God*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011. 184 pp. \$18.00.

Christian Scharen, echoing Andy Crouch, reminds us that “culture is not some distinct area from which we can remove ourselves” (p. 140). Fish, as the saying goes, don’t think much about their being wet. And yet we sometimes approach the issue of engaging culture all too naively. Quite simply, we live in culture, and we are engaging it all the time. The question Scharen puts before us is this: How can we live in culture *theologically*? As the chapters of his book unfold, three options of living theologically in culture present themselves.

First, there is that of James Dobson, formerly of Focus on the Family, and *Plugged In*, the entertainment-analyzer for Christians. Though Focus on the Family has put some distance between them and their founder, Scharen notes how *Plugged In* pulses along the same vein as Dobson. Though blessed with a radio voice, when Dobson speaks of culture he tends to sound “shrill,” as Scharen puts it (p. 103). Popular culture, according to Dobson, shows primarily the decline of culture. So follows *Plugged In*. If you’re looking for tallies of swear words in rap albums or movies, consult the reviews at *Plugged In*. If you’re looking or listening for a more a sympathetic or profound engagement of culture, Scharen argues you’ll need to look elsewhere.

The elsewhere includes the Fuller Seminary duo of Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor. They stand at the other end of the spectrum on engaging culture, promoting a program of creating “a theology out of popular culture rather than theology for popular culture” (cited by Scharen on p. 118). Scharen proceeds to indict their proposal for privileging pop culture over Scripture. Put away the tallies of swear words because pop culture sets the agenda for theologizing today, Detweiler and Taylor argue. They promote a reversal of the “hermeneutical flow,” arguing that you start with culture and not with Scripture (pp. 117–21). Scharen corrects this misstep, persuasively making a case for Scripture as the only possible starting point for the “hermeneutical flow.”

Between these two approaches to cultural engagement on the right and left flanks, Scharen rushes up the middle with his proposal of a renewed and robust imagination. In chapter one, Scharen reveals his intentions: “The question at the heart of this book is how to find—or better yet, how we are found by—a God of promise and mercy who offers us all an imagination deep and substantial enough for the struggles the world faces in our day” (p. 17). Yes, C. S. Lewis has never really left the building. Playing off of Lewis’s brief but pivotal essay, *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961), Scharen’s book may be understood as a theological-cultural exploration of imagination.

Scharen looks (mostly) to pop music as a case-study for the contours of such an imagination. The music of Leonard Cohen becomes the first foray (ch. 2). His lyric “broken hallelujahs” pulls duty as the



book's title. Then Scharen heads South to listen to some Blues (ch. 3). Scharen wants us to hear in these songs not the avoidance of suffering and hardship, as we so often attempt, but the head-on confrontation with it. Borrowing from theologian David Ford, Scharen points out how Scripture repeatedly turns to the "cry," adding that Christian wisdom (living skillfully) is heard in the cry (ch. 4). These songs help us see more clearly our hermeneutic, one that leads us ultimately to the cross and then from the cross to the challenges of our day. Scharen, himself Lutheran, offers a delightful twenty-first-century riff on Luther's theology of the cross. Scharen also makes the case that these are not simply cries for mercy amidst pain and suffering and the ravages of sin. The cries are also for joy. Herein lies the rub: broken hallelujahs are hallelujahs still.

Scharen's remarkable blend of being both poetic and profound—and everywhere theologically minded and informed—comes out nowhere more prominently than in his choice of Leonard Cohen's lyric "broken hallelujahs," from Cohen's song "Hallelujah," as a focal point. Arguably one of the most frustratingly enigmatic songs, you simply can't ignore it. But you also can't merely enjoy it either. The song is in the end perhaps a bit like beauty itself. It remains elusive. And as such it compels a listen (and the tune has a way of sticking with you anyway). Someday we will arrive at the final verse of Cohen's song. The broken will fall off and the pure, true, righteous, and just "hallelujahs" will be sung. But for now we need to hear the broken hallelujahs. For now we live in some ambiguity and perplexity. King David, also a musician, lived there himself and sung about it. So did Luther. So, Scharen commends, should we.

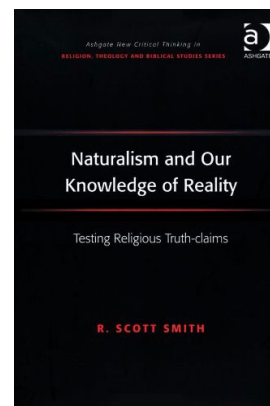
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R. Scott Smith. *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. ix + 241 pp. £55.00/\$99.95.

Since Alvin Plantinga first suggested that evolutionary naturalism is self-defeating, philosophers have taken significant interest in the subject. R. Scott Smith addresses this issue in a book-length treatment, understanding "philosophical naturalism to be a thesis that reality consists solely of the physical, spatiotemporal world; thus there are no supernatural or nonnatural entities or beings" (p. 1). Smith argues cogently and compellingly that philosophical naturalism lacks the resources to allow for knowledge of reality. Believing that humans enjoy knowledge of reality, Smith concludes against philosophical naturalism.

This book helpfully surveys contemporary naturalistic epistemology and philosophy of mind theories. Those unfamiliar with contemporary epistemology and topics like reliability, internalism/externalism, intentionality, and qualia will likely find the book foreboding. But those willing to cast off into the deep, rigorous waters of contemporary analytic epistemology will be richly rewarded.

Smith begins by introducing direct realism, as advocated by naturalist D. M. Armstrong. According to Armstrong, our brains directly and accurately perceive reality. Smith critiques Armstrong's failure



to account for intentionality—the idea that we *intend* to behold in the understanding what we think about. Smith also uses Frank Jackson’s argument concerning epiphenomenalism and the concept of qualia (which is an individual’s conscious experience of subjective phenomena), which Armstrong’s epistemology struggles to account for.

Smith also interacts with Fred Dretske, Michael Tye, and William Lycan, each advancing beyond Armstrong in postulating direct representationalism to account for qualia. However, direct representationalism fails to account for conceptualization. There is nothing physical that enables the process by which we come to have concepts of anything at all—including concepts of reliability, representation, causation, etc., which are necessary to make sense of direct representationalism.

Next Smith takes on John Searle, who argues that everything that exists is composed solely of physical particles. Despite his naturalism, social realities force Searle to acknowledge, “there is more to the world than just brute physical facts” (p. 56). To explain this, Searle posits, “the Background,” a neuropsychological mechanism that supposedly accounts for how our beliefs “hook-up” with reality. Smith realizes that Searle’s attempts to stave off attacks with philosophy of language (owing to the later Wittgenstein) fail to achieve what is needed, for “Searle owes us an account of which linguistic community it is out of which he speaks,” and “whatsoever claims we make, these are done once we have [already] adopted a way of speaking” (pp. 66–67). He argues that Searle’s views don’t guarantee that locutions actually represent reality, but rather represent the view(s) of a particular linguistic community—which may or may not be true.

Discussing David Papineau, Smith helps readers understand the philosophy of science that drives Papineau’s project—a sophisticated version of scientism without the philosophical naïveté so frequently accompanying such views (p. 72). Papineau denies that anything other than empirically verified information should serve as a “first philosophy.” Smith clarifies how Papineau distinguishes between the physical and the material, noting that the latter is broader than the former. As an ontological monist, Papineau affirms conceptual dualism to account for certain properties of mental states, even though these mental states reduce to brain states. Smith explains the teleological theory of mental representation which, when coupled together with reliabilism, Papineau believes is enough to account for intentionality and concept formation (pp. 74–77). However, Smith argues that because Papineau maintains that experience need not be truthful, the issue of concept formation is just as much a problem of him as for Dretske, Tye, and Lycan.

Daniel Dennett’s radical proposal includes rejecting the “self.” By adopting what Dennett calls “the Intentional Stance,” one can see that science regulates philosophy. Smith summarizes by showing that Dennett’s proposal assumes the existence of a self as a pragmatically valuable heuristic. Dennett’s naturalized epistemology is based on a realist philosophy of science. But Smith notes that Dennett’s views are self-referentially incoherent and end up denying a genuinely realist account of even scientific knowledge. Dennett’s project fails because his view reduces everything in the world, including knowledge (which is really nothing more than brain states), to something requiring interpretation. Accordingly, Smith contends that this leads to radical postmodernism à la Derrida’s contention that everything is a text in need of interpretation (pp. 101–6).

Errin D. Clark’s chapter on Paul and Patricia Churchland’s naturalized epistemology details the cognitive neuromechanics that underlie their project(s), and explains how such epistemology is both realist and epistemically pluralistic. Clark argues, “their project . . . violates conditions I set forth as necessary for an epistemology worth pursuing” (p. 110) for three reasons. First, their project faces

problems concerning perception and experience. Second, their project cannot adequately map onto any correspondence theory of truth, or at least, there is no way to know whether what we seem to know is really the truth or just our interpretation thereof (pp. 124–29). Third, the Churchlands’s project really amounts to a type of idealism rather than realism (pp. 129–32).

Smith makes efforts to see if any naturalized epistemology can succeed. He considers John Pollock’s view, noting that epistemological internalism differentiates his proposal from externalists. But internalism does nothing to help Pollock avoid the problems that Smith raises. Peggy Burke summarizes Jaegwon Kim’s views, noting that he advocates a physicalist functionalism in part because of problems of multiple realization and epiphenomenalism. Although functionalism allows for the preservation of the mental, the moves Kim makes either eliminate pure physicalism or fail to account for qualia. Additionally, Kim’s account faces problems for epistemic intentionality, so his views should be rejected because “knowledge” is merely one’s interpreting something as such-and-such. Smith also considers whether naturalism could offer alternative externalist epistemologies to mitigate these concerns but concludes that those proposals would create tensions that render the overall naturalistic outlook internally inconsistent.

Considering potential responses, including how immanent universals, moderate nominalism, and trope theory might accommodate naturalism, Smith shows that such suggestions fail to overcome his central concerns. He also considers Nancy Murphy’s proposal, which involves Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language, which MacIntyre and Hauerwas have taken up. But Smith notes, again, that appeals to philosophy language don’t help naturalists.

A naturalist could admit that we don’t actually know reality. This might appeal to some, perhaps as a gesture of intellectual humility, but it leads to self-referential incoherence. Besides, Smith offers numerous case studies demonstrating that we *do* have genuine knowledge of reality (pp. 184–87). Thus, philosophical naturalism is false, so some other ontology is necessary for knowledge of reality.

Philosophers of science might object that this leads to the rejection of methodological naturalism. But rejecting philosophical naturalism doesn’t mean that methodological naturalism offers nothing valuable for scientific inquiry. Methodological naturalism is often the best way to seek out interpretations of data. But Smith cautions against any model that rules out the possibility of supernatural involvement because such models beg the question in favor of naturalism (pp. 197–204).

Smith concludes the book with a discussion of moral and religious knowledge, showing that many of the arguments against the possibility of knowledge of moral and religious truths (assuming such truths exist) rely on philosophical naturalism. But these arguments against moral and religious knowledge are undermined by Smith’s arguments that philosophical naturalism is necessarily false (p. 207). Hence, our knowledge of reality includes religious and moral knowledge—even that God desires that we know reality. Smith suggests that his project has significant implications for other fields of inquiry, such as bioethics, education, and public policy. It is easy to see why Smith’s ideas should be considered by biologists, educators, political philosophers, and policy makers. The irrationality of philosophical naturalism should influence those fields and the areas of life they impact.

All told, Smith’s *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality* devastatingly critiques philosophical naturalism, given knowledge of reality. Philosophers need to familiarize themselves with this important work. Christians should hope that Smith’s arguments will gain traction in the academy, leading many

away from atheism and agnosticism towards theism and, ultimately, to Jesus Christ, by whom, and through whom, all things were made.

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Willard M. Swartley. *Health, Healing, and the Church's Mission: Biblical Perspectives and Moral Priorities*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 268 pp. \$24.00.

It is sadly ironic that two noble words “health care” have recently seemed to conjure up political controversy that has been neither healthy nor caring. This is especially true in the United States, where President Obama’s Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act—signed into law in March 2010 and recently affirmed both by the Supreme Court and the President’s reelection—has led to a vigorous and often bitter debate.

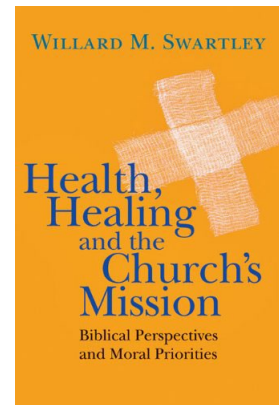
In this context, Willard Swartley’s analysis of the biblical, ethical, and practical issues at stake in the area of health care provides a welcome contribution and a distinctly Christian voice in the current debate. Swartley, professor emeritus of New Testament at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, undertakes an audacious task as he seeks to articulate both a theology of healing and health care (chs. 1–9) and a biblically informed perspective on the U.S. health care system and its current overhaul (chs. 10–12).

At the heart of Swartley’s main thesis is the distinction between “healing” and “health care.” Healing, he argues, is the restoration of *shalom*, the well-being that is God’s ultimate purpose for human beings. This well-being encompasses much more than just good physical health. Drawing on the Psalms, the author shows that the psalmists’s complaints are almost always related to a loss of this *shalom* due to a number of adverse circumstances: gloating enemies, broken relationships, shame, and illness (p. 52). Swartley extends this paradigm to a broader biblical theology: “God intends shalom and community for humans and all creation, but sin and Satan play adversarial roles against us and against God’s intentions for us” (p. 27). The book’s first five chapters reaffirm the prominence of healing in this broad sense of “restoring shalom” both in the OT and NT.

In part 2, Swartley narrows his focus onto the subject of *health care*, articulating the relevance to this issue of key NT concepts, notably love, grace, and community. He also draws on church history to show that providing and facilitating health care was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the early church (pp. 149–50) and remained a priority in much of church history (pp. 151–53).

Part 3 describes the U.S. health care system, succinctly explains the nature of the Affordable Care Act, and outlines its implementation (pp. 190–92). Moving beyond this political issue, the author describes the successful efforts of some hospitals, churches, and health care providers to promote and practice health care in ways that are competent, accessible, and affordable.

There is much to applaud in this book. Swartley successfully sets the current debate within the bigger picture of God’s purposes and the church’s mission. I found the distinction between healing and health care to be legitimate and helpful. Other qualities include its lively style, as well as its irenic tone.



The author shows that he is also sensitive to the global reality of the church, as he frequently cites non-U.S. examples. Lastly, Swartley succeeds in conveying a sense of mission: how could the church not be at the forefront of the effort to provide health care and promote physical and spiritual well-being?

There are nonetheless some weaknesses, three of which I consider to be major flaws.

First, the book lacks gospel-centeredness. It could place much more emphasis on God's initiative to deliver sinners from their sins and grant them new life. This is the most fundamental healing of all and the essential reason *why* God, both in the OT and in the incarnation, acted as Healer toward his people. Swartley thankfully *assumes* the gospel in many ways, but in my opinion should have made it the center of his theological analysis. Among other aspects, it would have been interesting to explore how the *free* nature of God's healing might have theological implications for the U.S. health care debate and the ethical issue of whether access to health care should be market-driven.

Secondly, Swartley shows surprising sympathy toward almost any form of purported "Christian healing," no matter what its theological underpinnings. For instance, a native American who among other things promoted a "Ghost dance" aimed at receiving visions of deceased relatives, is given an exclusively positive portrayal (p. 82); the insistence that the Reformation went too far in its disavowal of many medieval healing practices (pp. 153–54) is not counterbalanced by any questioning of at least some of these practices, not even relics or devotion to saints (p. 151–53)!

Lastly, Swartley completely ignores one philosophical and theological issue that is central to the health care debate: How should one view the respective roles of government and church? Should the church encourage and promote some government intervention to reduce poverty and promote access to health care? Should it rather defend strictly limited government and claim the mission of healing and health care as its exclusive domain? Swartley assumes the former but fails to ever make the case for it. No doubt it is a defensible view, and one to which the present reviewer happens to be favorably inclined—but surely the matter ought to be argued carefully and biblically.

Despite these significant shortcomings, *Health, Healing and the Church's Mission* is a valuable contribution to any theology of health care, and one can only hope it will help generate a renewed theological discussion of this immensely important issue.

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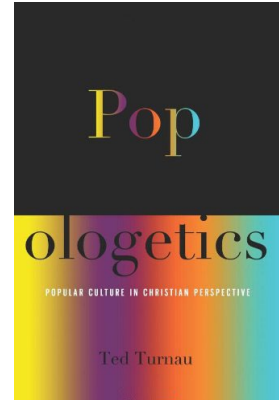
Ted Turnau. *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2012. xviii + 368 pp. £13.99/\$19.99.

Popular culture scholar and apologist Ted Turnau has written a manual for “those who want to be able to give an intelligent, warmhearted, biblical answer back to the worldviews presented in popular culture.” *Popologetics* presents its argument in three sections that build toward a “workshop.” Part One defines culture, popular culture, and worldview. Part Two deepens understanding by contrasting Turnau’s approach to other evangelical approaches. Part Three outlines a procedure for engaging popular culture with the gospel, illustrated with a “workshop” of examples.

Part One’s first three chapters show how popular culture provides clues to worldviews. Those who want to commend the Christian faith cannot respond to only isolated affirmations of culture. Visible culture shows something of the heart of a society, so understanding its implicit worldviews is essential for a full response. Culture products are evidence of dialogues within individuals and their society about what is true, good, and beautiful. Thus Christian readers need a biblical understanding of culture.

Turnau’s theology of popular culture (ch. 4) uses the familiar rubric of creation, fall, and redemption but makes a couple of key moves. He gives a preliminary definition of culture as “the human imaging of God’s community, communion, and creativity by engaging and responding to the meanings inherent in God’s creation (revelation) in order to create ‘worlds’ of shared meanings that glorify God, demonstrate love to other human beings, and demonstrate care for the rest of creation” (p. 58). For example, God’s ways are revealed in farming because humans are paying careful attention to the way creation works as in Isa 28 (pp. 66, 69n36). But “imaging” is a key term in the definition because Turnau’s creation includes creational relationships and institutions such as marriage. This expansion is because humans were created in God’s image (pp. 45–48). Turnau is much like Albert Wolters, who distinguishes God-given creational *structure* from its fallen or redemptive *direction* (p. 59). Acknowledging divine creation means that though cultures indeed make “worlds” (p. 57), human culture cannot itself be other than derivative of the world made by God. Because humans are addressed by creational givens from the natural world outside them and by the inescapable image of God within them, no neutral or “objective” account of culture is possible. Turnau’s virtual starting point is that creation is clear in speaking of God.

After the fall recorded in Genesis, however, culture has become a mixed bag. Though God established culture as good, fallen human culture can express either evil or good. Turnau says that interpreting popular culture is like trying to listen to a radio tuned to two stations at once, with the second station using the best songs of the first station to drown out the first: secular culture tries to drown out God’s voice so that truth and idolatry vie for loyal followers (pp. 70–71). Culture is the site of conflicting religious interpretations of God, world, ourselves, and each other (p. 72). Though some Christian thinkers advocate for high culture, to Turnau the main difference between high and low culture is only their audiences, since similar dynamics of the heart apply to Mickey Mouse and Mozart (pp. 72–74). The important contribution of chapter 4 is its employment of Rom 1. Human beings systematically hold down the truth that presses on us. Turnau’s conceptualization of culture thus combines positive recognitions of goodness with a Foucault-like recognition that culture is a “systemed exclusion,” constituted by what it cannot say.



Part 2 interacts with evangelical approaches to popular culture that Turnau sees as less-than-helpful. Three chapters dissect the “What, Me Worry?” attitude, the “Ew-Yuck” attitude, and the “We’re-above-all-that” attitude. The first attitude imbibes popular culture uncritically because religion is limited to personal uplift; the second creates cleansed cultural products because it revolts at sin in culture; and the third attitude imagines that though low culture debases the soul, high culture is good for it, so that Brahms is thought to sustain a spiritual life (pp. 79–133). Turnau adds two more approaches to these—imagophobia or the fear of images and a search for Christian relevance through whatever is trendy (pp. 135–208). Turnau conducts an exercise in discernment with “cheerleaders of the postmodern,” evangelical thinkers who emphasize the good revealed in popular culture and would want it to be appreciated on its own terms. But culture then takes precedence over Bible. Turnau’s Rom 1 culture theory avoids their implicit syncretism by connecting a theory of culture to the biblical concept of idolatry.

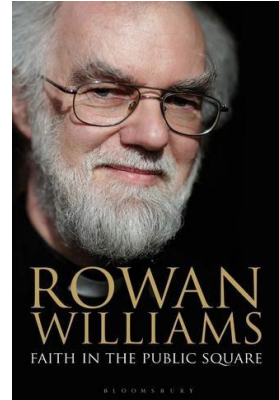
Part 3 details Turnau’s own five-question rubric for engaging popular culture: (1) What’s the Story (or mood)? (2) Where is the world of the cultural product (the “text”) to be located? (3) What’s good and true and beautiful about it? (4) What’s false and ugly and perverse about it? (5) How does the gospel apply? By comparison, Wolters’s structure-direction discernment process yields broad and debatable answers. Similarly, Michael Paul Gallagher’s *Clashing Symbols* (1997, 2003) has a three-step discernment procedure that asks how the product is humanizing or crushing our freedom and which dimensions of our humanity are being silenced or ignored. While Wolters’s and Gallagher’s questions are likely to yield insights, Turnau’s procedure allows texts to be carefully appreciated and critiqued, as creational goods from what Calvin saw as the factory of idols. Turnau’s procedure yields the finely grained and compelling analyses of five pop-culture products that close out the book (pp. 247–312). These appreciative critiques are in the style of Roland Barthes’s culture dissections in *Mythologies* (1957) and left this reviewer wanting many more—say, the same twenty-eight analyses that Barthes’s seminal book provided.

Turnau, a missionary and cultural studies professor in Prague, is an intellectual heir of Francis Schaeffer and Cornelius Van Til. *Popologetics* is compassionate, trenchant, culturally attuned, and rigorous. Avoiding a Christ-against-culture disengaged stance or a Christ-of-culture syncretism, Turnau shows how cultural discernment can lead one to a deeper appreciation of the Christian faith and all the way to worship. Not only parents and friends of teens and twenty-somethings, but pastors and seminarians stand to see the worlds in which so many in Western culture really live, and to come away equipped to give an “answer for the hope that is within them” (1 Pet 3:15).

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Rowan Williams. *Faith in the Public Square*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. 336 pp. £20.00/\$21.45.

Many conservative Christians think that Rowan Williams is a liberal. Announcement of his appointment to Canterbury provoked storms of protest from evangelicals. The day he announced his resignation I was phoned by the BBC and asked to comment on the significance of his decade-long leadership of the Church of England. I declined, telling the reporter that it was far too early to say. Despite his views being uncongenial to evangelicals at many points, under his leadership the Church of England resisted intense pressure to support same-sex marriage. One of Williams's final acts in office was to defeat Richard Dawkins in debate at the Oxford Union. The book he published prior to this one was an acclaimed exposition of C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*.



Can evangelicals learn from Williams? Does this book, published as he steps down from Canterbury, contain resources which will help us be faithful Christians over the next hundred years? I think so—and I hazard to suggest that the valuable raw materials in these published lectures are not easily mined from our normal stable of theologians.

Faith in the Public Square is a collection of lectures delivered by Williams in places that range from Georgetown University in Washington to the European Policy Centre in Brussels and numerous churches in the UK, Singapore, and the USA. Midway between high-level academia and informed writing for non-specialists, these lectures are demanding, but not impenetrable. Knowledge of key philosophical, cultural, and theological figures aids a reader in seeing the significance of Williams's comments, but he usually explains the views of people he interacts with at key junctures.

The lectures are divided into seven sections, covering Secularism, Pluralism, the Environment, Economics, Justice, Religious Diversity, and Spirituality. At least three themes recur throughout the lectures, which may make them a resource for evangelicals who wish to grapple with the realities of the cultural issues we will face over the next few generations.

First, Williams continually theologizes at the intersection between secular culture and Christian theology. So he says his lectures are, 'A series of worked examples of trying to find the connecting points between various public questions and the fundamental beliefs about creation and salvation from which (I hope) Christians begin in thinking about anything at all' (p. 2). Williams uses theological claims to challenge both left and right political narratives (p. 4) and finds striking illustrations and opportunities for Christian doctrine in investment banking (p. 213), environmental movements (p. 235), and our attitudes to the elderly (p. 243).

The concluding paper in the collection contends for a vision of the Christian life which refuses to be merely spiritual or disembodied. We should accept our physicality. 'A religious life is a material life . . . I'm laboring the point because of the persistent cultural error of treating questions about religion as questions about beliefs that may be more or less justifiable at the bar of public reason' (p. 26). The reason Williams is so persistent at untangling the confusions and misunderstandings that lie at the heart of secular pluralism and culture is that he feels strongly that Christians, and indeed all people, live real lives in real locations. He resists the temptation to retreat to a Platonic idealism, or to hanker after a Christian world that either existed long ago or nowhere other than our imaginations. The relentless determination to deal with the secular world as it is, to stand between church and state, is a clarion call against the reductionism and siege-mentality that we as evangelicals are tempted to take refuge in.

Second, Williams calls us to deal with the complexity of our world by repeatedly exploring the definitions of key terms. He realizes that words are used in different ways, and key concepts that shape our churches and cultures have levels of meaning. So, for example, Williams offers multiple definitions of secularism and observes, 'I suspect we may learn more from them than from arguments about the statistical levels of belief in religious propositions or self-identification with religious institutions' (p. 22). Probing the meaning of democracy, Williams reflects, 'Democracy seeks to consult everyone, but it cannot guarantee the enactment of everyone's wishes' (p. 63; see also p. 49). The notoriously ill-defined but much used term 'sustainability' is said by Williams to be 'about living in an environment that has a future we can imagine' (p. 235). Christians may resist pluralism, but 'the word "pluralism" has come to mean an uncomfortable variety of things in both the political and religious sphere' (p. 126). Williams challenges readers to reflect on the shades of difference between 'character,' 'empathy,' and 'bleeding-heart liberal' (p. 267). Against those tempted to elide secular political freedoms with the gospel, Williams warns, 'political freedom is more complex than the license to pursue a set of individual or group projects with minimal interference' (p. 24). Concerning these terms and others, Williams does not let us accept superficial definitions: 'We seem to be worried about multiculturalism; but we seem to be equally unclear about what the word means' (p. 100). Seeking to evangelize a culture while we are equipped with minimalist definitions—perhaps not shared by others—is in the end a failure of love. Williams's writing is an invitation to understand the culture we are facing so that we can witness and serve faithfully.

Third, Williams returns repeatedly to the theme of the damage done to Christianity and life by commercialization: 'The challenge to those of us who maintain our involvement in traditionally conceived religious communities is not just an assault by principled secularists on all religious belief—though that is hardly insignificant. More immediately in most contexts it is that we can't help being committed . . . to living with a market mentality. We have to learn how to make ourselves look credible and attractive, marketable' (p. 87). Williams finds it concerning that 'there is indeed one dominant culture in the world, and that is the exchange system of the market' (p. 109). When everything is thought of in terms of a market economy, it is difficult to make 'faith communities be more than a pool of cheap labour for projects of social integration' (p. 48). Speedy economic evaluation is assumed to be the natural way of assessing everything; consequently we suffer 'a deep and systemic impatience with the whole idea of taking time to arrive at a desired goal'. This is particularly troubling for Christians because 'trust is learned gradually' (p. 211). If evangelicalism is to have a fresh word for our generation, it must learn to not be conformed to the world. It is too easy for evangelicalism to seek to market—rather than witness to—Jesus. The warnings Williams gives about commercialization as a major feature of our culture may help alert us to that insidious danger.

There is much we evangelicals could learn by reflecting on Williams's alertness to these themes—interaction with secularism, complexity of definition, and the pervasiveness of the market. It is humbling to see how deeply he probes areas of vital import to the future survival of Christianity in secular culture. So many of these matters are treated glibly and superficially by others. Perhaps the reason for this is that Williams's insights have been forged in conversation with profound thinkers, well beyond the fields normally traversed by evangelicals. Much of his ability to probe the complexity of words and meaning is

surely fruit of his engagement with Derrida, somebody whose beliefs he would at major junctures reject. Perhaps if Williams can learn from Derrida, we evangelicals can learn from Williams?

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J. R. Woodward. *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 256 pp. £10.22/\$16.00.

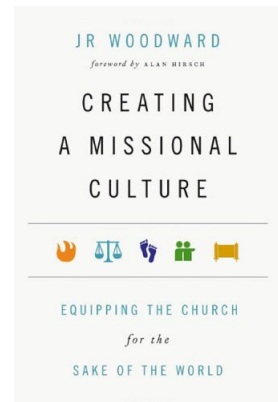
Woodward, a church planter/activist/missiologist, writes to address the issue of church culture particularly within church plants. In Woodward's words, "[E]ffective church planting requires thinking about *the culture of the congregation*" (p. 19). This topic is addressed in four parts. Part 1 looks at the power of culture. Culture is often assumed and taken for granted, so Woodward calls the church to ask questions about its cultural assumptions.

Culture is presented as having six elements: language, artifacts, narratives, rituals, institutions, and ethics (pp. 36–44). The environment of the church should be one that is learning, healing, welcoming, liberating, and thriving (pp. 46–54).

Part 2 focuses on "a leadership imagination that shapes missional culture" (p. 63). Woodward reasons that there are numerous shifts that have taken place in culture across several disciplines that challenge the traditional church's hierarchical leadership structures. Collaboration and teamwork is how people in the current generation work, and therefore the leadership structures that may have worked in previous times and situations do not work today. He notes also, "It seems that God uses situational leadership" (p. 80). Woodward calls on leaders then to relinquish the need for control and rather pursue a polycentric approach.

Woodward looks at the five-fold ministry in Eph 4:11 as the model for polycentric leadership in Part 3. He calls the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, "the five culture creators" (p. 111) or "five equippers" (p. 116). He defines the apostle as a *dream awakener* who focuses on helping church members live out their calling in order to create "a discipleship ethos and calling people to participate in advancing God's kingdom" (p. 126). Prophets are *heart revealers*, who pursue God's shalom with the goal of "calling the church to God's new social order and standing with the poor and oppressed" (p. 133). Evangelists as *story tellers* are called to "incarnate the good news" by "proclaiming the good news by being witnesses and being redemptive agents" (p. 143). The pastor as *soul healer* seeks wholeness and holiness as one who cultivates "life-giving spirituality within community and embodying reconciliation" (p. 152). Finally, the teacher as *light giver* helps people inhabit the sacred text, "immersing ourselves in Scripture and dwelling faithfully in God's story" (p. 162).

This leads to Part 4 of Woodward's book "Embodying a Missional Culture" (p. 168). This part seeks to put the fivefold callings of the church to work. He maintains that every Christian has one of the above gifts and that church leadership teams should be made up of leaders representing each of these five callings. He argues that the leaders train within each particular area. These leaders should look something like the guilds of the renaissance, which he refers to as *equipper guilds* (p. 206).



Woodward rightly notices that churches need to proactively create a culture that centers on mission. He also accurately points out that the leadership sets the tone and that certain practices, attitudes, and structures can actually work against shaping a culture of mission. Yet although he calls the church not to assume their culture, but to ask questions about their culture and to define it, I was left wondering how Woodward defines the gospel. He refers to the “good news” but never clarifies what this news is outside of its social implications. The reader is left to assume or read between the lines as to what the author’s definition of the gospel truly is.

Throughout the book, the application of missional culture is applied to good works and social action, which leaves the reader to assume that the gospel is social action. Such a gospel would be only anthropocentric. An example of this is how Woodward describes *light givers* (teachers). He refers to the understanding he gains by studying the Scripture in community, that is, the community of “those who consider themselves outside of the kingdom of God” (p. 162). In other words, the teachers in the church have their understanding of Scripture bettered by insights from those who are spiritually blind.

There are also some unusual perspectives presented. For example, the role of *soul healer* (pastor) is one of play coordinator as a means to healing. “There are likely some people in the congregation you serve that feel as if *they have no one to play with*, and this simple fact is beating them up emotionally” (p. 154, italics mine). This seems a misrepresentation of the biblical role of pastor.

Woodward’s suggested method of church decisions is also highly subjective. He claims that the church should pursue direction in decision-making as the Quakers did, where all participants would say what they feel in order to get “a sense of the Spirit” (p. 217).

Woodward has given a lot of thought as to how a church should function. Addressing the fatigue of church leaders, Woodward explores new ways of empowering congregations to be active in ministry. This book, however, leans more to being driven by praxis instead of theology. I would have liked to have seen the same level of creativity spring forth while holding fast to a more robust understanding of the equipping gifts listed in Eph 4. Our ecclesiology should be theological first and practical second. Perhaps a complementary book on activating the passive church for the call to active and passionate ministry, with a stronger theological basis, would be *The Trellis and the Vine* by Tony Payne and Colin Marshall.

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