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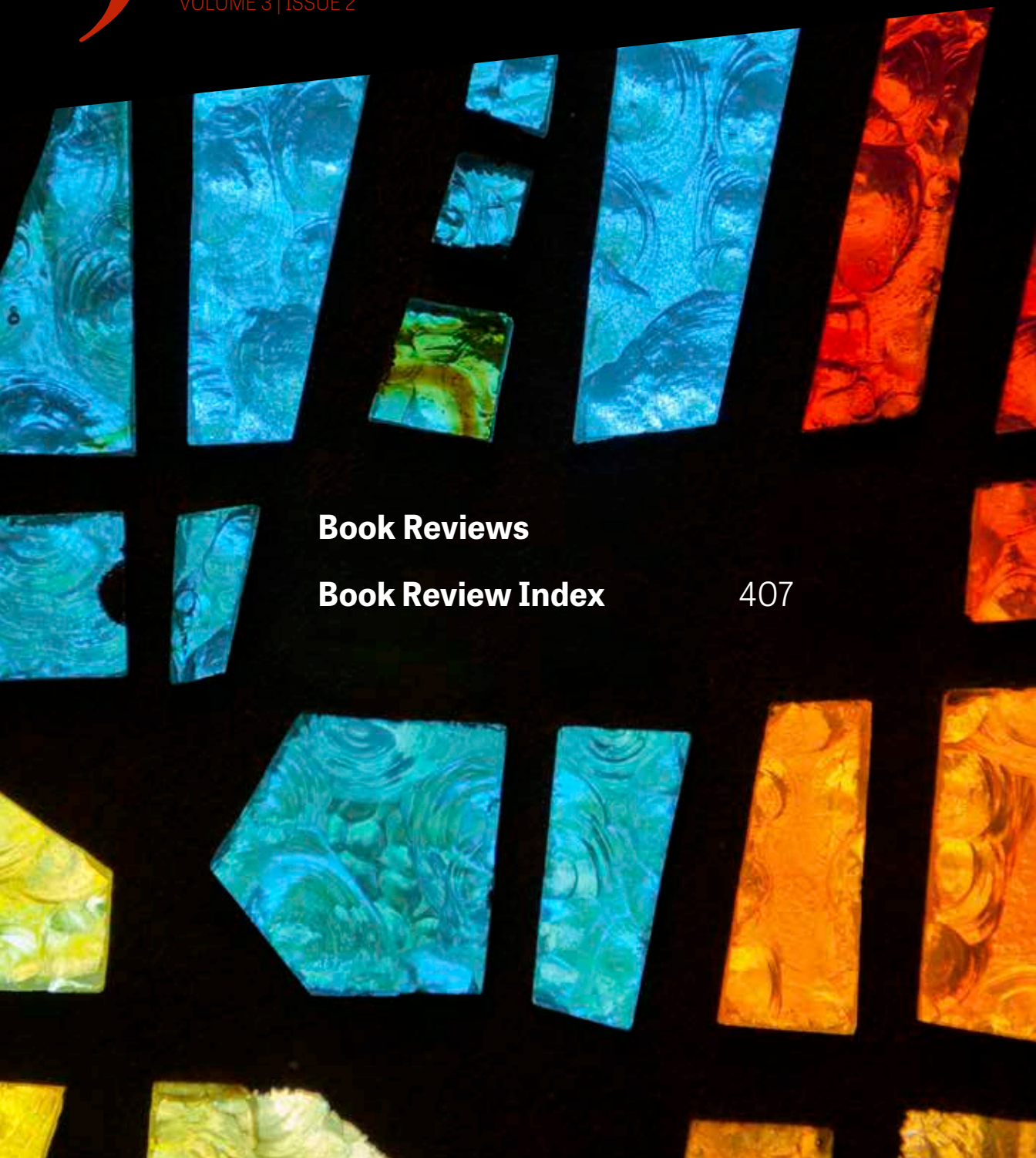
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## *Book Reviews*

**Boda, Mark J. *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Academic, 2017, pp. 220, \$22.99, paperback.**

Mark Boda holds a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge and is professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Ontario, Canada. Dr. Boda is the author of numerous articles and books, including reputable commentaries on Judges, 1-2 Chronicles, Haggai and Zechariah, and several independent volumes on Zechariah. He has also published *“Return To Me”: A Biblical Theology of Repentance* (2015) in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series edited by D.A. Carson. In addition to his duties at McMaster, Dr. Boda is a seasoned evangelical minister and itinerant preacher who has served in various pastoral, missionary, and consulting positions.

Chapter one argues that an over focus on the diversity of the Old Testament (OT) in late twentieth-century scholarship has led to a loss of the OT’s essential unity (p. 6). Boda submits that the core of OT theology is located within three rhythms of the OT: the narrative, character, and relational rhythms.

According to chapter one, the narrative rhythm of the OT is found in the multiple historical summaries (Deut 6:21-23; 26:5-9; 24:2-13; Ps 78; Neh 9) that recite “the history of God’s redemption through finite action, that is, particular acts within specific times of history” (p. 15). While the elements differ from text to text, the central historical actions of God are “exodus and conquest” (p. 16). Together, the elements “form a single story” (p. 23) that is repeated across multiple texts and thus “binds together the historical experience” of God’s people (p. 23).

The character rhythm of the OT, developed in chapter three, is “expressed as God’s redemptive character, described through consistent activity utilizing nonperfective/nonpreterite verbal forms...as well as personal attributes utilizing adjectives and nouns” (p. 29). The “foundational example [is] in Exod. 34:6-7” (p. 29). The “character creed” declares “Yahweh’s typical redemptive activity in relation to his people” with a “focus on God’s steadfast love, which entails forgiveness but also justice...[which] point to his key characteristics of mercy and holiness” (p. 49).

The relational rhythm is explored in chapter four and begins with the “copular syntactical construction”: “I will be God for you and you shall be a people for me” (p. 54-55). This foundational phrase is regularly located within covenant texts that appear at pivotal moments of redemptive history. Boda argues that “‘covenant’ is not the relationship itself [between God and his people] but rather an agreement that articulates the nature of the relationship and structures it” (p. 60). A *berît* (בְּרִית) is thus “an elected...relationship of obligation” (p. 61) that includes reciprocity, identity and responsibility (cf. Deut 26:16-19; Gen 17:1-15; Num 18; 1 Kgs 3:9; etc.) (p. 63).

Chapter five shows these three rhythms in concert together in Exodus 5:22-6:8 and Nehemiah 9. Chapter six relates the goal of these three creedal rhythms with the goal of redemption: the transformation of creation and the cosmos. Chapter seven demonstrates that these three rhythms continue into the New Testament while chapters eight and nine apply the three creeds to the Christian life.

Boda employs a careful methodology that is textually/Scripturally grounded, sensitive to the progress of revelation and the canonical context, and cognizant of current discussion in OT scholarship. Boda is pursuing the “core theology of the OT” through the theological hermeneutic of Biblical Theology (p. xiv). He terms his methodology a “selective-intertextual-canonical approach” (p. 7). He thus selects texts that “constitute its ‘inner structure’” by paying attention to intertextual rhythms that focus on “repeated use of particular phrases, expressions, and structures throughout the breadth of the OT and NT” (p. 7). The end of the book includes an appendix (pp. 151-182) that provides a robust overview and defense of the history and methods of Biblical Theology. As a whole, Boda’s methodology both explains and exemplifies the task of contemporary evangelical Biblical Theology.

While he does not use these words, Boda argues effectively that the center or “heartbeat” of the OT is located within these three rhythms of the OT. He rightly relates these three rhythms to the overall goal of redemption: creation and the cosmos. Boda shows how God’s creational activity is often the foundation for his redemptive activity, especially in the Psalter, the wider wisdom literature, and the prophetic literature: “the redemptive agreements with Israel were part of a much larger story of redemption that would impact not just all nations (Gen. 10) but also all creation” (p. 100).

The pursuit of a center in Biblical Theology has occupied scholarship for several decades. The search for a center has itself led to an overly narrow focus on particular themes or motifs within the OT. While various scholars may argue that the presence of God, the glory of God, the kingship of God, or the kingdom of God are at the center or a part of the center of OT theology, Boda’s three rhythms do indeed represent the heartbeat of OT theology. Any OT theology that is attempting to genuinely represent the OT scriptures as they present themselves must deal with the ubiquitous references back to Exodus 34:6-7, the multiple narrative summaries of Israel’s history, or the many covenantal texts that lie at pivotal moments in OT redemptive history. Boda’s three rhythms serve to summarize the message of the OT simply, within Scripture’s own categories, and with actual Scriptural language. Further, Boda shows multiple passages in which these three rhythms are woven together into a coherent theological statement contextualized within the history of Israel (cf. Exod 5:22-6:8 and Neh 9). The result is a thoroughly biblical description of OT theology.

Boda is careful to show how these three rhythms of the OT’s heartbeat make our own hearts beat for the Lord. For example, his call to evangelicals to not lose the essential narrative story of the Bible is a helpful corrective to pastors and scholars

alike who may stop with historical-grammatical exegesis and not connect the larger canonical dots. His other applications have a similar poignant and convicting call (p. 123). The character rhythm compels us to develop a spirituality that worships and regularly pursues relationship with a strikingly personal God who works miraculously in the present (pp. 130-133). The relational creed calls us to focus on biblical conceptions of covenant that emphasize relationship instead of extra-biblical covenantal systems.

Boda's consistent interaction with the non-evangelical guild of OT scholarship shows an appreciation for their work and a sincere effort to recognize their contribution. However, the absence of interaction with recent key evangelical authors within the field of Biblical Theology is surprising. Interaction with the likes of Kaiser, Hamilton, Schreiner, Sailhamer, Gentry, Wellum, Alexander, Hafemann, and perhaps most surprisingly, C. J. H. Wright, are essentially missing except in footnotes. By leaving these evangelical authors out, one wonders how Boda's argument complements and corroborates the most recent work done within evangelical Biblical Theology. Notwithstanding, Boda makes an important contribution to OT theology that is concise, exegetically sound, pastorally sensitive, and useful to scholars, students, and lay believers alike. I heartily recommend this work.

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**Gentry, Peter J. and Stephen J. Wellum. *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012, pp. 848, \$45.00, hardback.**

Peter J. Gentry serves as Donald L. Williams Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and as Director of the Hexapla Institute. Stephen J. Wellum serves as Professor of Christian Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and as Editor of *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*.

In *Kingdom Through Covenant*, Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum establish a biblical and systematic theology designed to “show how central the concept of ‘covenant’ is to the narrative plot structure of the Bible, and secondly, how a number of crucial theological differences within Christian theology, and the resolution of those differences, are directly tied to one’s understanding of how the biblical covenants unfold and relate to each other” (p.21). In effect, they contend that to know the covenants rightly is to know the Scriptures rightly (pp. 139, 603, 611). As such, they examine each OT covenant so as “to speak on its own terms” (p. 113) by aligning interpretation to 1) its immediate textual context, especially emphasizing a historical-grammatical hermeneutic of a covenantal text, 2) its epochal point in redemptive history, especially to what preceded it to ground the categories of covenants, and

3) its typological reception within the canon by latter texts in response to saving events in redemptive history (p. 93). They build their “‘thick’ reading of Scripture” (p. 89), which is their version of a canonical reading, in the covenant’s representation in the text and its position in progressive revelation so that the covenants define the points of comparison for typology (pp. 89–108; 606). They argue for a typological development from creation (Adam and Noah) and Israel (Moses and David) to the person and work of Jesus in the New Covenant (NC) with the Abrahamic Covenant (AC) playing the major role in their connections and in the critique of Covenant Theology (CT) and Dispensational Theology (DT).

Their “progressive covenantalism” (p. 24) aims to stand between the readings of CT and DT because both systems fail to follow the trail of typological links in the covenantal aspect most dear to their model (pp. 24, 113, 121). “[I]n order to discern properly how Old Testament types/patterns are brought to fulfillment in God’s plan, Jesus and the new covenant must become the hermeneutical lens by which we interpret the fulfillment of the types” (p. 608). They contend that CT too quickly equates circumcision with baptism without connecting circumcision to Christ first. CT settles, therefore, on an ecclesiology that equates the nature of Israel and the Church as mixed, visible and invisible, affirming paedobaptism. Progressive covenantalism, however, accepts a regenerate church and believer’s baptism that reflects the nature of Christ and the new covenant. In the same way, DT fails to appreciate that the antitype to the land and the creation itself is “the new creation that Jesus has inaugurated in the new covenant” (p. 607). The eschatology of DT, accordingly, moves too quickly to set the promised land in its old setting rather than as new creation, severing it from its typological development through the covenants to Christ and His perfect work.

This perfect work of Christ as King of His Kingdom is accomplished in the new covenant whose scope is the “the entire universe” (p. 592). His creation of everything, in other words, typologically anticipates its redemption in Christ that extends God’s rule “throughout the life of the covenant community and to the entire creation...in the context of a covenant relationship of “loyal love” (*hesed*) and “faithfulness” (*emet*)” (p. 594). These paired terms from the covenants (pp. 144–145) find their typological fulfillment in Christ, allowing the new covenant to supersede the older covenants because “we are no longer under those previous covenants as covenants, since they reached their fulfillment in Christ” (p. 605). As they advance their argument, Wellum and Gentry also reject seeing these covenants as merely unconditional or conditional because each covenant displays aspects of both in “a deliberate tension” (p. 609). Each covenant is “unconditional or unilaterally guaranteed by the power and grace of God” (p. 610). At the same time, each one demands an obedient partner, a condition, that frustrates the reader as “one works across the covenants and the tension increases” (p. 611). This magnifying tension eliminates any hope that a mere

man can meet this condition and leaves open only one possibility: God Himself will act to keep the condition of “a new and better covenant” (p. 611).

In chapters 1–3, Wellum and Gentry establish the importance of covenants to the Scriptures and theology. They highlight how CT and the various versions of DT come to differing conclusions based on their understanding of the covenants, especially in light of ecclesiology and eschatology. The nature of God’s people remains the primary evidence for underlying differences. Neither CT or DT consistently binds all of its conclusions to the Christological implications of the progressive and predictive nature of typology.

In chapters 4–11, therefore, Wellum and Gentry analyze each of the Old Testament (OT) covenants, beginning with defining the very nature of Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) covenants. In particular, they focus on the word pair *hesed* and *emet*, “loyal love” and “faithfulness” (p. 141). These terms serve as their semantic backbone for each covenant. Wellum and Gentry turn, next, to the Noahic covenant and define it as the confirmation of the original Adamic covenant that extends it to Noah and his descendants as it is “established” (p. 161). In a similar manner, they mark the Abrahamic covenant as one that is “cut” in Gen 15:18 and “established” in Gen 17:17. It becomes the centerpiece of God’s work to bless humanity and show his “loyal love” and “faithfulness” (pp. 245, 280). As Wellum and Gentry turn to the Israelite (Mosaic) covenant, they find the Ten Commandments and the covenant begun in Exod 19–24 as foundational to the expression of God’s will, contending that Deuteronomy stands as a renewal and “supplement to the covenant at Sinai” (pp. 379–381) so that Israel may “fulfill the Adamic role reassigned to Abraham” (p. 388). When they pivot to examine the Davidic covenant, therefore, they link it to both the AC, whose blessings will come “through the Davidic King/kingdom” (p. 427), and to the MC because this kingship will be “a means of accomplishing Exo 19:3b–6” (p. 422).

In chapters 12–15, Wellum and Gentry develop their understanding of the New Covenant by tracing its proclamation in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Daniel before turning to its proclamation in the NT. They focus on Ephesians and link the shape of the text and the new covenant community to the expectations embedded in Exod 19–24 (pp. 565–570). Paul’s instructions to the Ephesians draw together and fulfill the elements of *hesed* and *emet* from the earlier covenants with the call to speak truth in love (pp. 570–582) so that loving Jesus and others manifests itself in a renewed humanity that seeks social justice as a community through Jesus (pp. 582–587).

In chapters 16–17, Wellum and Gentry complete their project by defining their approach, “Kingdom through Covenant” as a canonical reading that embraces the story of Scripture through the covenants before stretching the implications of their work into “theology proper, Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology” (p. 653).

This volume serves as a needed reference for any scholar who pursues biblical theology within the evangelical traditions. Its cumulative argument advances a

reasonable case for its main thesis, especially by the detailed testing of its ideas through many key parts of the Scripture. They demonstrated that the covenants can be understood to frame the reading of Scripture and the development of theology. However, this project and the validity of its thesis depends heavily on its methodological starting points, especially its view of typology and its equating of the covenants with Scripture. If typology should not be grounded in the relationship of the covenants but in the author's acts of composition and canonization, for example, then typology may be broader than described. Their thesis, then, may have too narrowly defined how the different aspects of the Scriptures form connections, create exegetical comparisons and develop theology across a biblical book, books and the whole canon. Despite these limitations, Wellum and Gentry have in this work helped the various Protestant interpretive camps to understand each other and the Scriptures better.

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**DeRouchie, Jason. *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, pp. 640, \$39.99, hardback.**

While there are many introductory books on the Old Testament (OT), there are few which walk both beginning and advanced students together through each step of the exegetical process leading into theology and application. Jason DeRouchie does just that in *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology*. The book lays out a step-by-step guide to OT Exegesis intended to be accessible, yet complete. DeRouchie currently serves as an elder of Bethlehem Baptist Church, is Professor of OT and biblical theology at Bethlehem College & Seminary and received his Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. DeRouchie has published and contributed to other books on the OT including *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible*. He has also recently published an elementary Hebrew Grammar with Duane Garrett titled *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*.

The stated goal of the book is to provide a twelve-step guide to interpreting the OT, with a focus on textual analysis, synthesis, and significance. DeRouchie guides his readers from the foundational elements of genre, literary units, and translation concerns (part one), through text grammar and analysis (part two), context (part three), into biblical, systematic, and practical theology (parts four and five).

After his introduction, DeRouchie begins with step one on evaluating genre and understanding how it effects hermeneutical methodology. In step two he gives an initial demonstration of the tracing and diagramming method for bringing forth the natural divisions in the text. Steps three and four on text criticism and translation provide detailed information on each discipline alongside of practical methodology.

These chapters begin with basic elementary principles and then transition into the fields of Hebrew textual criticism and translation work respectively.

Steps five to seven provide the grammatical and syntactical meat of the book. Step five begins by defining grammatical terms, examining the use of various verb conjugations, and surveying markers of immediate significance and inference markers. From there, DeRouchie quickly broadens out into clause grammar and steps back further in step six of the exegetical process: argument tracing. Building on the previous steps, DeRouchie guides the reader through the process of deciphering the literary argument, creating an argument diagram, and drafting an exegetical outline. Step seven provides a guide to doing Hebrew word and concept studies, even for those without training in Hebrew.

In the next two steps, DeRouchie introduces how historical and literary context fits into the exegetical process by asking and answering the right questions. Steps ten and eleven define biblical and systematic theology, unpacking the use of these disciplines in the exegetical process. The final step dives into practical theology or how Christians should relate to, apply, and teach the OT.

DeRouchie has here provided a one of a kind work which efficiently unites grammatical and hermeneutical principles, generally learned from a Hebrew grammar and a hermeneutics book respectively, with exegetical practice. The uniting of these preeminent, seemingly abstract principles, with his steps of OT exegesis allow this one book to do the work of three. DeRouchie does all this while remaining accessible overall to those with little to no knowledge of Hebrew. This is possible through the labeling of each section under an “easy,” “moderate,” and “challenging” tract heading.

In the preface, DeRouchie says, “two of the distinctive contributions of this book are its focus on discourse analysis and biblical theology.” (p. xxiv). Regarding biblical theology, step ten does present a well-developed and thoroughgoing introduction to biblical theology. Furthermore, the “kingdom” acronym which he has created for tracing redemptive history and visualizing salvation-history connections (p. 353) provides a stellar redemptive history overview. Yet even with these, DeRouchie’s section on biblical theology, while important and informed, provides only a minimal contribution to those who are already acquainted with biblical theology. Furthermore, some will find this chapter’s progression of topics hard to follow, making future reference difficult and less fruitful than other resources on biblical theology.

On the other hand, steps two, five, and six of the exegetical process dealing with literary units and text hierarchy, clause and text grammar, and argument-tracing, make DeRouchie’s guide to OT exegesis stand out among similar books. Through these chapters, he manages to skillfully guide Hebrew students, both experienced and inexperienced, through the rugged terrain of exegesis (including the difficult work of lexical study and syntax) to the refreshing landscape of application. In so doing, the reader is equipped with the tools and skills necessary to take the text at face value



and see its relevance for practical life. After carefully reading and implementing the steps outlined in this central section, the intermediate Hebrew student will be well on his way to faithful Hebrew exegesis. These distinctive chapters in the book will supply readers with the tools needed to form an accurate text hierarchy by laying out the clauses and using the features of Hebrew text and clause grammar to trace the argument of the biblical author. Each of the steps presented in the book contribute to or flow out of this central grammatical process, making the strength of these sections invaluable to those seeking to better understand and apply the OT.

Students of the Bible can benefit from simply becoming familiar with the twelve chapter-titles (twelve steps) of the book found in the table of contents (p. vii). These twelve steps are practically identical to what is presented by Douglas Stuart in *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, furnishing the student, pastor, teacher, and scholar with a tried and true process for faithfully laboring in the Scriptures. After this, the difficulty headings will guide the reader to those parts of the book which are accessible to them depending on their level of Hebrew. DeRouchie will be especially helpful to students transitioning from elementary Hebrew classes into intermediate and advanced exegetical study of the Hebrew Bible. Even so, readers with little to no knowledge of Hebrew will find most of the book refreshingly accessible. Those only reading “easy” and “moderate” sections of the book are encouraged to journey through an Elementary Hebrew grammar such as *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* by Duane Garrett and DeRouchie, so they may go back to read the “difficult” sections.

While many books on the OT inform readers about what the OT says, DeRouchie takes the time to show readers how to study it for themselves. As a comprehensive guide to studying the OT from exegesis to theology designed for beginning, intermediate, and advanced students of the Bible, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament* is a truly unique and invaluable resource.

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**Griffiths, Jonathan I. *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017, pp. 153, \$22, paperback.**

Jonathan Griffiths serves as the Lead Pastor of Metropolitan Bible Church and is on the council of The Gospel Coalition Canada. He has published a number of books, including *Hebrews and Divine Speech* in 2014. His latest contribution, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*, examines the nature of preaching in the New Testament and asks whether preaching should function as a distinct word ministry in the post-apostolic church.

At the outset of the book, Griffiths states that his interest does not lie in discussing homiletics or dissecting New Testament sermons to inform contemporary sermon formation. The primary goal of the book is to determine if the New Testament mandates “preaching” as a distinct ministry of the word, and, if so, what might characterize and distinguish preaching from other word ministries. After a brief introduction, Griffiths divides his work into three parts.

The first section addresses two objections. It asserts a biblical theology of God’s word, and it surveys the three key terms used to describe the concept of preaching in the New Testament. Griffiths also includes a brief excursus that explores the identity of the preachers in Philippians 1:14-18. Griffiths concludes that the New Testament contains three semi-technical verbs to describe preaching, and these verbs are not “used anywhere in the New Testament to frame an instruction, command, or commission for believers in general to ‘preach’” (p. 36). Preaching, then, is a specialized ministry only to be performed by duly authorized individuals although, as chapter 3 explains, all believers should participate in other types of word ministries.

Griffiths seeks to ground his conclusions from Part I in a series of exegetical studies in Part II of the book. Chapters 4-9 form the heart of the book, and Griffiths surveys various passages from 2 Timothy, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, and Hebrews, with an excursus on the relationship between New Testament preaching and Old Testament prophecy. In chapter 4, Timothy emerges as an important figure for Griffiths argument because he represents both a model of non-apostolic preaching ministry and a bridge from the apostolic era to the post-apostolic era. Paul’s commissioning of Timothy with authority to proclaim God’s Word in the church indicates that preaching did not end with the apostles, but rather Timothy stands “in a line of continuity with [Paul] and his own apostolic preaching” (p. 60). Having established this crucial point, Griffiths then proceeds to unfold the nature of Christian preaching in chapters 5-8 by analyzing the preaching of the Apostle Paul. Finally, chapter 9 considers the book of Hebrews, the “only full-length sermon recorded in the New Testament” (p. 117). This chapter brings the book back to the beginning when Griffiths offered a biblical theology of the word of God. Significantly, Griffiths argues that this theology underscores the importance and even necessity of preaching in the post-apostolic church as exemplified by how the writer of Hebrews views his own preaching.

Part III consists of only one chapter where Griffiths offers a summary of the work and some conclusions, both exegetical and biblical-theological in nature. He concludes that “the public proclamation of the word of God in the Christian assembly has a clear mandate from Scripture and occupies a place of central importance in the life of the local church” (p. 133).

Griffiths generally solid work suffers from a few shortcomings. The title of the book might mislead the reader into thinking the book analyzes the preaching found in the New Testament to understand the characteristics of that preaching and

how that might impact contemporary preaching. The book is not so much about preaching in the New Testament as preaching *after* the New Testament in the post-apostolic church.

A second criticism involves the inclusion of chapter 1. While certainly the opening chapter is helpful in developing a sound theology of God's Word, its contribution to this volume is questionable. Griffiths seems to include this chapter to guard the reader from "concluding that all the theological features we will find in the New Testament's presentation of preaching are unique to preaching" (p. 9). Protecting readers from this false conclusion is a worthy goal, but it could have been done in a shorter space than an entire chapter that seems somewhat disconnected from the overall goal of the book. Griffiths does return to his assertions from the opening chapter when he discusses Hebrews in chapter 9. The connection, however, is muddled by a failure to show how preaching in Hebrews functions differently from all word ministries if all word ministries share the characteristics found in the Hebrews sermon. Perhaps the reader would have been better served if Griffiths had included an epilogue or a section in his conclusion making this point. Chapter 9 and the book as a whole would have been stronger. As it stands, the first chapter seems to stall the momentum of the book and feels out of place and out of context.

These structural concerns related to chapters 1 and 9 are part of a larger critique, which is the structure of the book as a whole. Reading the book feels repetitive as chapter by chapter Griffiths makes similar if not identical points to the ones made in the previous chapters, just from different texts. For example, excursus 2 connects New Testament preaching with Old Testament prophecy. Chapter 5 (on Romans 10) has a section where Griffiths argues that preaching "stands in a line of continuity with Old Testament prophetic proclamation" (p. 69). Chapter 7 (on 2 Corinthians 2-6) concludes with a section entitled, "New-covenant preaching ministry has affinities to old-covenant prophetic ministry" (pp. 93-94). Chapters 5 and 10 both argue that preaching must be done by commissioned or approved agents. The reader might be forgiven for thinking he is rereading already covered ground. The repetitive nature of the chapters, although covering different texts, can make it difficult to keep the reader's interest, especially if earlier chapters or excursuses were convincing of the argument being made (or repeated).

Overall, these criticisms are minor and involve the structure of the book more than the content of it. Griffiths' content on the whole is helpful and grounded in sound, biblical exegesis. He helpfully reminds readers that the preaching of the Word of God is not merely a public oration like a political speech or philosophical discourse, but the sending of an authorized agent of God to speak His Word to His people. In contemporary church culture where seemingly anyone who feels "called" to pastor a church can plant his or her own church and become a preacher, Griffiths reminds that preaching in the post-apostolic church was never meant to be a free for

all is refreshing and much needed. After all, James 3:1 warns against many becoming teachers, and Griffiths book is a poignant reminder of why such warnings were given.

Anyone who is interested in preaching as a discipline or in what the New Testament teaches about the ongoing ministry of preaching in the Christian church will find this book useful. It is academic in nature, yet it remains accessible to all students of the Bible, whether they are in the academy or laymen wanting to improve their understanding of this subject. Those looking for works to improve their homiletics will not find help in this volume, but they will be reminded of the significance of their task as they preach the Word to God's people.

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**Bennett, Jana Marguerite. *Singleness and the Church: A New Theology of the Single Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 272, \$29.95, hardback.**

In this fresh reflection on singleness, theological ethicist, Jana M. Bennett, provides both a strong critique and hopeful corrective of American relationship culture. She writes as a Catholic scholar yet engages the American Protestant context just as insightfully—identifying the ways the church has often mirrored negative cultural narratives about singleness. The overall goal of this book is to magnify relational experiences often overlooked by the modern Christian community, specifically those in impermanent single states, and to acknowledge the ways these persons may uniquely witness to Christ and the church. Simultaneously, she encourages ways the church can be more of a witness to this community.

To begin, she proposes that one of the main problems facing current conceptions of singleness is the tacit assumption that to be single is to be lonely. She calls upon the Christian tradition which affirms both marriage and singleness for what it means to be the church, and that being lonely is neither specific nor necessary to singleness. Here, she also sets up the structure of the remainder of the book, which will look at the variety of expressions of singleness while calling upon specific guides who both contemplate and model these states.

Her second chapter focuses on the “never married,” and the unique witness they bear to the church and world regarding choice. Since her attention is on American culture, including the church, she addresses the fixation on choice and freedom for understanding adulthood. In contrast, the Apostle Paul, the guide for this chapter, exhorts the believer to be bound to Christ. This binding makes one free to follow Christ, but not free to make whatever decision one so desires (p. 49). The focus for both singles and marrieds is choosing devotion to Christ and love for the other, not “whether to get married or to remain unmarried” (p. 54). Yet, marriage is often made the ultimate ideal for relational life, even in the church. However, this is not the most

important choice a person can make, and never-married persons can help witness to the more foundational choice of following Jesus single-mindedly.

The third chapter turns to those in uncommitted relationships. Bennett recognizes this state takes many forms, not all of which the church would endorse, but which still need to be witnessed to by the church. Simultaneously, they may be able to witness to the church, especially as it relates to sexual desire. The problem she highlights here is the idolization of the sexual relationship, which often reduces sex to a mere tool, commodifying bodies and persons. Instead, she argues via the guide of Augustine, that sexual desire reveals the longing for God. Instead of fearing desire, desire can be understood as a gift which exposes a deep need for God.

Next, she turns to committed relationships such as long-term dating, serious cohabitation, and engagement in the fourth chapter. Again, she recognizes the moral debates regarding sexual relations in these contexts, but since her focus is on the impermanent states of singleness, these states (sexually active or not) need to be discussed. Often these states of singleness are characterized by an anxiety to find “the One,” and yet Bennett reminds the reader that there is only *one* Perfect One (p. 89). Additional anxiety manifests in wanting to avoid divorce. However, these anxieties seem sourced in thinking that once a person finds his/her “soul mate” all will be well—instead, this expression of singleness can witness to the need for Christ’s perfecting work instead of finding the perfect mate. John Wesley is the guide through this chapter.

The fifth chapter addresses the contentious topic of those same-sex attracted. Bennett does well to recognize the tensions both with language for the LGBTQ community and moral disagreements about same-sex sexual practices. She brackets this out, however, to move to the importance of this community for the church and how the church has often missed the gift of this group’s witness. Learning from guide, Aelred of Rievaulx, she argues that this community can teach the church about the depth of same-sex friendships, especially. This pushes against Freud’s over-eroticism of all relationships, the idolization of marriage, and the quest for freedom as independence from needing others.

Chapter six discusses widowhood in dialogue with Elizabeth Ann Seton. This community witnesses to the dependence believers should have on Christ, especially in the face of uncertainty and the sting of death. Bennett reveals the especial hiddenness of this group, as well as the clear scriptural mandate to care for the orphans and widows.

The seventh chapter moves into divorce which can teach Christians of the “nature of hope and the grace of God” (p. 157). She observes the lack of Christian writing on divorce, concluding that this is because it disrupts Christian idealization of marriage and because it assumes failure. Those who have experienced divorce, for whatever reason, can attest to God’s mercy and grace. Stanley Hauerwas is the guide for this chapter.

The eighth and final chapter addresses single parenting with Dorothy Day as the guide. This chapter highlights the problems with a two-tiered parenting hierarchy in which those who parent perfectly are on the first tier and those who do not are beneath them. Since single-parents are already understood to be imperfect and less than ideal, they are automatically relegated to this second tier which is shame-laden. This is not only inaccurate, but this group can also teach the church about the need for God's sufficiency often even better than dual-parent homes.

The general strengths of this book are its accessibility, clarity, attention to nuance, and willingness to be prescriptive. Bennett writes so that an average reader can understand her arguments, often citing blog posts, statistics, and including narratives, especially of her guides. Her writing is clear and her structure within each chapter is consistent. She also pays attention to the additional disparities that race and gender (especially in single-parent and widowed contexts) introduce into these single states, helping reveal further complexities of singleness. Finally, while she uncovers many of the problems in American culture and in the American church, her project is still constructive. Each chapter concludes with practical endorsements for how to counter-act the prevailing cultural messaging and values.

The areas for improvement regard the theological aspects of this work. For instance, throughout the work the author refers to "being human," often connecting relationships to this anthropology. However, nowhere is the undergirding anthropology stated even though it is frequently assumed (pp. 19, 57, 65, 72, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 103, 106, 113, 116, 118, 125, 201, 205). Also, discussion of Jesus' singleness was surprisingly absent from the discussion and would have likely bolstered Bennett's argument. Further, the New Testament attestation to the importance of spiritual kinship over blood or marital kinship is only briefly discussed and would have strengthened a theology of singleness as well. Thus, for this work to be a "new theology" more needs to be said.

In conclusion, perhaps a more accurate subtitle would have been "theological reflections on the single life," but this should not minimize the importance of those reflections for both the individual or the church. I would recommend this for any Christian reader thinking through marriage or singleness.

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**Collins, C. John. *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, pp. 192, \$16.99, paperback.**

C. John Collins is professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri. In *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist*, Collins uses his skills in Hebrew linguistics and biblical theology to discuss an issue that finds itself at the

intersection of science and faith. Collins has also published *Faith and Science* and a commentary discussing his linguistic and theological analysis of Genesis 1–4.

The traditional view of Adam and Eve throughout most of church history has been that they were actual people through whom all other human beings descended and through whom sin entered into the human experience. Modern scientific claims, however, have caused much skepticism concerning this traditional view and have led many Western Christians to abandon belief in a historical Adam and Eve. In *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist*, Collins argues that the traditional view (or some variation of it) does the best job accounting for the biblical materials and our everyday experiences as human beings. In doing so, his goal is to establish what he refers to as “mere historical-Adam-and-Eve-ism” (alluding to C. S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*) in which only the essential elements affirming the biblical depiction of a historical Adam and Eve are discussed. That is, Collins will only be establishing that the Bible and human experience demand that we understand Adam and Eve historically and will not proceed from this basic statement to discuss how he puts all the biblical and scientific details together (p. 13).

After a short introduction, chapter two establishes some foundations for the remainder of Collins’ book. Collins discusses 1) the importance of literary and linguistic approaches to Scripture, 2) the differences between “myth” and “story” and how “story” often contains a vital historical core for worldview formation, and 3) key elements of the biblical metanarrative, including the idea that humankind needs redemption because something went wrong at the “headwaters.” In chapter three, Collins discusses each biblical passage referring to Adam and Eve (he also discusses some references from intertestamental material). Collins concludes that while not every passage examined demands a historical Adam and Eve, some do. The manner in which Jesus (by way of the Gospels) and Paul invoke the biblical story and build upon it necessitates a historical Adam and Eve (pp. 76–90). In chapter four, Collins discusses theological convictions demanding a common origin for all human beings and argues that these convictions align with the human experience of both believers and non-believers. Collins specifically argues for the dignity of every human being because of their connection to the image of God in an original couple and how a common ancestor explains why all humans yearn for justice. In chapter five, Collins establishes four criteria for any acceptable scenario explaining human origins. Collins states that any acceptable scenario 1) must allow for the origin of the human race to go beyond a mere natural process, 2) allow for Adam and Eve at the headwaters of the human race, 3) allow for a historical and moral fall, 4) and allow for Adam and Eve to be at least the chieftains of a singular tribe if it were determined that humanity stems from multiple people. Collins then discusses several views which possibly fit within these criteria. Collins concludes by reiterating that the traditional understanding of Adam and Eve should be believed. He states five reasons why he believes this matters. 1) The goal of the Christian story is to help us

make sense of the world. If a foundational part of that story is abandoned, we give up all hope of understanding the world in which we live. 2) The idea that sin is an alien invader infecting the entire human race depends upon the story of an original human couple. 3) Failure to affirm a common origin for all mankind prohibits us from affirming the common dignity of all people. 4) The story of Adam and Eve will, sooner or later, determine how committed one is to biblical authority.

John Collins' expertise is in biblical interpretation and this expertise shows in chapter three in which Collins overviews all of the relevant biblical material pertaining to Adam and Eve. His discussions reveal his mastery of the material and leave the reader with no doubt that the Bible confirms a historical Adam and Eve. The subsequent chapter, in which Collins reflects theologically on the importance of a unified humanity, is also much appreciated. Even if one were to depart from Collins' exegetical views, he still provides a reason to affirm the importance of unified human origins.

Collins conceived of this work as an attempt to set the outer boundaries of what the biblical evidence could possibly allow concerning interpretations of Adam and Eve. Such an endeavor is of course valuable, but its usefulness for people trying to go beyond this basic issue will be limited. The scenarios which Collins discusses in chapter five illustrate the limited nature of the book. He surveys scenarios stemming from young earth creationist (p. 122), old earth creationist (pp. 122–128), and C. S. Lewis (pp. 128–130) and affirms that each one could conceivably fit within his presentation of the biblical evidence. Francis Collins, founder of BioLogos, affirms the view of C. S. Lewis. One could hardly find three more disparate views on any biblical subject. Since this is the case, it is somewhat unclear what John Collins has actually accomplished. One could make a similar critique of *Mere Christianity*, with which Collins compares his book. Lewis' book may identify some primary characteristics of Christianity, but it would be impossible for anyone to remain at that level for very long.

In conclusion, Collins' analysis of topics pertaining to biblical studies will always be welcomed. His insights into the biblical texts and linguistics will benefit any reader. Concerning the specific issue at hand, however, readers will need to supplement this book with the materials summarized in chapter five. Readers who do this may find themselves coming to different conclusions than Collins concerning what will fit within criteria derived from the biblical texts.

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**Schreiner, Thomas R. *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017, pp. 136, \$14.99, paperback.**

Thomas Schreiner is the James Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a Pauline scholar and has written numerous books and articles. This most recent book is in Crossway's series, "Short Studies in Biblical Theology." It is the fourth book in the series. The series is focused on giving a reading of the Bible that is unified and sees Jesus Christ as the culmination of the biblical story.

Schreiner begins his book carefully noting that his intent is not to argue that covenant is the "center" of biblical theology (p. 11). While covenant is an important notion in Scripture, Schreiner wants to avoid the language of center or heart when discussing biblical theology. While, for Schreiner, covenant is not the central theme of the Bible, he does go on to say, "we can't grasp how the Scriptures fit together if we lack clarity about the covenants God made with his people" (p. 12). Thus, before the study can go too far Schreiner proposes a definition of covenant: "a covenant is a chosen relationship in which two parties make binding promises to each other" (p. 13). He notes that this definition entails three aspects: first, covenant sets up a relationship (p. 13). Second, that relationship is a chosen or elect relationship. Third, that relationship brings promises and obligation.

With this proposed definition in mind, Schreiner proceeds to walk through the biblical covenants. Chapter one discusses the Covenant of Creation. Schreiner acknowledges that this is, admittedly, the most controversial of the covenants at which he will examine. In it he argues that though the word covenant is missing what is found in the opening chapters of Genesis is a covenant. Schreiner maintains that the elements of covenant are present in the Garden with God establishing a relationship with Adam and Eve that entailed blessings and curses.

The following chapters of the book walk through the rest of the Old Testament biblical covenants. Chapter two deals the covenant with Noah. Chapter three moves to the covenant with Abraham. Chapter four looks at the covenant with Israel at Sinai. Chapter five explores the Davidic covenant. Lastly, in Chapter six Schreiner discusses the New Covenant showing how it "represents the fulfillment of God's covenants with his people" (p. 89) to which he immediately notes "except...the covenant with Noah" (p. 90) because, in his view, it is not redemptive.

Overall, Schreiner's work is a well-constructed popular level introduction to the biblical covenants. He walks through each of the biblical covenants that are important for redemptive history. Schreiner explicates the covenants with thoughtful eloquence yet also at a level that is easily accessible for those who do not have any training in theology. His ability to show how each of the covenants plays a unique role in redemptive history proves helpful. The way in which Schreiner shows how the

covenants all point to Christ, who fulfills all of them, provides readers with a helpful grid when reading Scripture.

Schreiner's attention to the text of Scripture must be commended. He is a thorough exegete. Yet it is his unwillingness to read the idea of covenant theologically that leads to some of the critiques that must be leveled. Because Schreiner chooses to read the covenants from a biblical rather than theological perspective, his entire method produces more discontinuity than continuity. One example of this is in the opening chapter where Schreiner is unable to reconcile the *proto-evangelion* (Gen 3:15) with the rest of the narrative. Schreiner understands the opening narrative in Genesis to be a sort of covenant, but he cannot understand how Genesis 3:15 fits into this picture. If Schreiner read Genesis 1-3 in a light of a broader theological understanding of Scripture, he could see in those chapters two different covenants being enacted. Schreiner rightly sees the Covenant of Creation (or what is often called the Covenant of Works), yet he misses a second covenant being developed in chapter 3, a theological covenant, the Covenant of Grace. This covenant contains all of the parts of a covenant: a chosen relationship (the seed of the woman) and promises and obligations (he will bruise your head, you will bruise his heel). One could even argue that this covenant goes a step farther than the necessary parts of a covenant that Schreiner lays out with the covenant sealed being in blood in Genesis 3:21. (O. Palmer Robertson does this in his classic work, *The Christ of the Covenants*.)

Schreiner's inattention to theological covenants ultimately makes the entire book seem disjointed. If he read these covenants both theologically and exegetically, he could then see how each subsequent covenant coming builds on and expands the Covenant of Grace found in Genesis 3. Depending on how one reads the Noah narrative, it can be solely a recapitulation of the Covenant of Creation (Schreiner's reading) or two covenants: one as a republication of the Covenant of Creation (Gen 8:20-9:17) and another as an expansion of the Covenant of Grace (Gen 6:13-21). Reading the covenant with Noah as two distinctly different covenants seems to fit better with Peter's reading of the narrative in 1 Peter 3:18-22. Schreiner's commitment to read these covenants without regard to a larger theological structure in the background leads to more discontinuity between them than continuity, and ultimately makes his claim that all the covenants find their fulfillment in the New Covenant appear vacuous.

These critiques notwithstanding, the book is still worthwhile for people who want a clear and concise understanding of the biblical covenants. Schreiner's approach is systematic and gives a compelling account of the biblical covenants. While this text favors discontinuity over continuity, the reader should consider supplemental works like Michael Horton's *Introduction to Covenant Theology*, Geerhardus Vos' *Biblical Theology*, or O. Palmer Robertson's *The Christ of the Covenants*, to give a more balanced view of concept of covenant in all of Scripture. Schreiner's short

introduction to the topic of biblical covenants reminds everyone once again that he is a biblical scholar par excellence and always worth reading.

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**Young, Edward J. *My Servants the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, pp. 231, \$23.50, paperback.**

The late Edward J. Young originally published *My Servants the Prophets* in 1952. He served as Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary and was esteemed as a very able conservative scholar. Young's works exhibit his high view of Scripture and his adherence to the view of the inspiration of Scripture as reflected in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Young's other influential works include *Thy Word is Truth* (Eerdmans, 1957), *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Eerdmans, 1949), and a three volume commentary on the book of Isaiah (Eerdmans, 1965, 1969, 1972).

In his preface, Young states that the purpose of *My Servants the Prophets* is to defend "in a modest way" the claim that the prophets of the Old Testament received and delivered messages from God—a claim that the prophets made concerning themselves. Young notes from the outset that his defense of the prophets' claim "flies in the face" of scholarship in vogue at that time.

In each chapter of his book, Young concentrates on a particular issue regarding the prophetic institution in the Old Testament. In chapters 1 through 3, Young addresses the divine origin of the prophets, the relationship of the prophets to the Mosaic Law, and the terminology of prophetism in the Old Testament ( , נְבִיא , נָבִיא , נְבִיאִים , etc.). In chapters 4 through 6, Young answers three questions: Was prophetism in Israel was a gift of God or did it arise as the "product of various circumstances"? (p. 75); What is the meaning of "the sons of the prophets"?; Did the prophets stand in opposition to the Israelite religious cult or as officials of the cult? In chapter 7, Young addresses the issue of true and false prophecy in Israel: if both true and false prophecy originated from Canaanite prophecy or if true prophecy was from God and false prophecy found its origins in Canaanite prophecy. In chapters 8 and 9, Young delineates the scope of the prophets' messages (if the messages were only contemporary or reached future generations as well), and he sought to determine if the prophets' messages were of human origin or were divine revelation.

As he addresses each issue, Young allows Scripture to speak for itself. Young builds upon Scripture's claim to be divine revelation and contends that any serious investigation must take that claim into consideration (pp. 181-82). Furthermore, Young takes into consideration the bearing the New Testament has on the interpretation of the Old Testament. "Any interpretation," writes Young, "which God places" upon the words of Scripture "must be taken into consideration. . . , and the New Testament, we believe, is such a Divine interpretation" (p. 33). Young also evaluates the conclusions

of critical scholarship. For example, in his analysis of Numbers 12:1-8 and the relationship of the prophets to the Mosaic Law, Young critiques August Dillman's contention that a redactor worked two accounts—one from E and another from J—into one account. In chapter 6, Young contends that Scandinavian scholarship overly emphasizes the similarity between Israelite prophetism with prophetism in the Ancient Near East (ANE) without duly recognizing their vast differences (pp. 108-10).

While Young's work is scholarly, it is very intelligible. Young's defense of the biblical view of prophecy is clearly delineated and well organized. The reader is not overly burdened with highly detailed or extensive endnotes. However, the readability of Young's book does not diminish its scholarly contribution. It is evident that Young has done his research; throughout the book he ably interacts with numerous scholars. Furthermore, his defense of the biblical view of prophecy is substantive and deserves consideration by scholars of all viewpoints.

Young's demonstration of how his understanding of inspiration impacts his interpretation of Scripture is particularly insightful. For example, Young's view of inspiration influences his interpretation of Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:9-22. Taking the Old Testament at face value and assuming the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Young asserts that Moses spoke the words of the prophecy to Israel (p. 20). Young's position is contrary to some critical scholars who contend that the book of Deuteronomy was written by a prophet(s) and was found and used by Josiah to make reforms (pp. 14-15). Young then contends that in Deuteronomy 18:9-22 Moses is establishing the "prophetic line" (p. 31). However, Young's view of inspiration leads him further: the New Testament is part of God's Word and has a bearing on the interpretation of Moses' prophecy. Verses such as John 1:20, 21; 6:14; 7:40, 41 clearly indicate that the Prophet—namely, Jesus Christ—is spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:9-22 (p. 34).

Young's view of inspiration also shapes his use of comparative information from the ANE. In his discussion of the relationship between the prophets of Israel and the Israelite religious cult, Young analyzes Alfred Haldar's contention that the Israelite prophets and priests—like the prophets and priests of the ANE—were cultic officials and were not to be "too sharply differentiated" (p. 104). Young, however, insists that although there may be similarities between Israel's prophets and priests and the prophets and priests of the ANE, the differences cannot be ignored. "To ignore these differences," writes Young, "is to close one's eyes to all the truth" (p. 110). When one considers the differences between Israel's priests and prophets and those of her neighbors, one will see that Israel's religion is revealed by God and that "the other is an expression of the sin darkened heart of the unregenerate man" (p. 110).

Some readers may argue that Young's book is dated; nevertheless, *My Servants the Prophets* is still a valuable tool for the Old Testament student, especially for those with a high view of Scripture. Young skillfully demonstrates how to use the teachings of Scripture regarding Israel's prophets and how to analyze critical

scholarship in light of the Old and New Testaments. Young's insistence that the Bible is the Word of God gives the reader confidence that Scripture is sufficient to answer critical scholarship.

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**Cavanaugh, William T. and James K. A. Smith, eds. *Evolution and the Fall*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017, pp. 261, \$26, paperback.**

A wide spectrum of twentieth century theology was marked by a revision of the doctrine of the origins of sin. In most cases, concern about evolutionary science, and especially the science of human origins, was a powerful motivation. The origins of sin were recast in various forms—either as mythopoetic, metaphysically inevitable, or the consequence of a certain sort of freedom—in a way that led the doctrine away from the problems posed by evolution, but also led it away from important traditional claims, for example, that all humans became sinners by the voluntary act of the first two human beings. Because of these novelties, or because of their perceived consequences, many evangelicals and other traditionally-minded theologians declined to follow many of the great twentieth century thinkers down this path. Yet the problems that prompted the revision of the doctrine have, if anything, grown in recent decades. There is thus a renewed urgency, but also a renewed spirit of openness from traditionally-minded thinkers for reconsidering if, and if so, how, to think of the Fall in light of evolution.

As traditionally-minded theologians increasingly come to think about issues related to natural science, there is a need for quality engagement from top scholars who can speak from and to their community. *Evolution and the Fall* offers a start at fulfilling this need by bringing together a largely (though not exclusively) non-specialist roster of authors to reflect upon this interesting and consequential topic in a compact volume.

The book has four parts which, besides the biblical theology section, are rather free gatherings of related topics which might have been arranged in any number of ways. The book begins by introducing the natural scientific basis of the problem and offering theological reflections. The second part centers around biblical scholarship on the relevant scriptural passages. The third part includes reflection on the Fall and culture, and the last section, "Reimagining the Conversation," includes two essays offering reflections more distant to the volume's center of gravity. Overall, the book's organization is slightly more distracting than helpful. Ten essays are distributed between four sections. With a collection this small, doing without sections altogether might have been better. Fortunately, this same short length means it is easy for the reader to find what they are interested in without reference to section or theme.

Two of the essays in this volume (Celia Deane-Drummond's "In Adam All Die?" and James K. A. Smith's "What Stands on the Fall?") deal mainly and directly with the theological difficulties evolutionary findings pose, and offer possible solutions. Both reflect on the problem from places of strength: Deane-Drummond from her Roman Catholic background, Smith from his Augustinian-Reformed background. Theologians interested in this topic should turn to these essays first. Smith's essay, in particular, offers a powerful and succinct case for the classic doctrine. Both offer imaginative retellings of the origins of sin, taking into account the evolutionary issues and the authority of their relative traditions. Whether either account is truly satisfactory, however, is up for debate.

For readers interested in detailed theological reflection on the Fall in light of evolution, the book ends here. The remaining essays are related, but not so specifically or pointedly. The biblical scholarship in part two is interesting but the principal conclusions are modest: the biblical texts, we are told, are underdetermined with respect to the Augustinian account. Further reflections in that and other sections include the suggestion that the Fall is a paradox that we should not attempt to understand but hold in tension, that the doctrine of the Fall has something important to teach transhumanists, and that there are limits to scientific authority in conversation with theology—all worthwhile theses in interesting essays, yet little help for the student or theologian wanting to explore or explain the difficulties and possibilities attending the doctrine of the Fall in light of evolution. If, on the other hand, these orbiting topics are of interest, this volume offers a number of accessible and worthwhile essays on a range of topics. What it lacks in focus or depth it makes up for in variety and breadth. For many readers that will mean greater interest.

The greatest strength of *Evolution and the Fall* is its tone, set in large part no doubt, by its germination in the warm soil of the Colossian Forum. The authors involved show remarkable care for the topic, for one another, and for their possible readership. Ideas are handled gently, differing opinions with respect, the project as a whole with a certain reverence. This makes the volume ideal for students, scholars, lay readers, and others who are new to the topic in its modern guise and who would benefit from approaching the topic from the comfort of cultivated piety.

On the other hand, aspects of this approach—for instance, the oft-repeated reference to engaging science "faithfully," and similar injunctions—might turn others off. Such mottos sometimes appear at precisely those points in the discussion that are least friendly to traditional accounts, suggesting perhaps that the limits of discussion have been set in advance, and within a rather limited scope at that.

This leads directly to what I take to be the volume's greatest weakness: that no author sufficiently engages, let alone advances, the theological claim that there was no Fall. Smith's essay is a possible exception, but while he offers a criticism of that possibility, he does not entertain its strengths, including its intra-theological and philosophical virtues. This major position cries out for consideration. Given the

ubiquity of this alternative in the last two-hundred years of theology, it is deeply disappointing that more reflection, even hostile reflection, was not devoted to it. I was not, therefore, convinced that the natural scientific, theological, and philosophical difficulties which attend the traditional doctrine of the Fall were considered adequately. As a result, the volume left me with the sense that the discussion did not, in the end, get to the bottom of things.

Because of its theological modesty and limited scope of engagement, theology and science specialists have fewer reasons than they might to turn to this volume. Because of its limited natural scientific content and, more importantly, because of its limited dealing with the systematic difficulties of the doctrine, systematic theologians, too, have fewer reasons to turn to this volume than they might. Last and most importantly, although traditionally-minded theologians will find its pages relatively cozy in both tone and content, theirs will be a false comfort since the greatest difficulties attending the doctrine have not really been pressed and so the true mettle of the various forms of the doctrine have been left untested.

Though reflecting a narrow set of initial commitments, I recommend this book to any who would find this angle of engagement a helpful introduction or illuminating perspective between conservative culture warriors and more radical modern theology. I would not hesitate to assign it to students, church study groups, or to converse with it in scholarship, though I would encourage that it be assigned as a conversation starter, not the final word. The volume's clear writing and potpourri selection makes it ideal for generating interest. Most of all, this volume stands for the courageous turn in traditionally-minded circles to potential problems posed by the natural sciences. And it accomplishes this important, difficult, and ground-breaking task with grace.

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**Ellis, Fiona, ed. *New Models of Religious Understanding*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 256, £55, hardback.**

Emerging out of research conducted by the Centre for the Philosophy of Religion in Heythrop College, London, *New Models of Religious Understanding* (ed. Fiona Ellis) offers reflections on a refreshing new approach to the philosophy of religion. Attempting to build bridges between the analytic and continental traditions, the contributors to this volume present a method of doing philosophy of religion which moves away from ontological and metaphysical questions about the existence and nature of God. This new approach is concerned with religious practice more than belief, the kinds of knowledge and understanding that are valuable in religious discourse, and the ways in which religious or spiritual realities might become accessible only to those who enquire after them in the right way. Religious understanding is not a matter

of what we know, but of what we do, how we do it, and how what we do opens up new facets or aspects of reality to us.

Despite containing contributions from eleven different authors, the book has a remarkable consistency of approach throughout; Fiona Ellis identifies two key themes in her introduction. First, the contributors to *New Models* are united in developing a new approach to naturalism. Ellis notes that naturalism is often interpreted to mean scientific naturalism, which in turn becomes scientism. On this view, all that exists is the scientifically measurable natural world; questions of divinity or transcendence, even value, are excluded at the outset. Ellis suggests an alternative “*expansive* or *liberal* naturalism” which allows the possibility that there may be “more to the natural world and more to our ways of explaining it that the scientific naturalist is prepared to allow” (p. 9). This is a conclusion to which all contributors would assent and is discussed explicitly in the first three chapters.

The second key theme is what Ellis (following John Cottingham) calls a “humane philosophy of religion” (p. 11). Humane philosophy of religion challenges the ratiocentric bias in much philosophy of religion, contending that truth is not wholly cognitive or intellectual. Rather, access to truth is often dependent upon the way in which one approaches something, or the stance one takes. This challenges the Enlightenment ideal that truth is accessible only to one who takes up a neutral and unbiased perspective; humane philosophy suggests not only that attempting to rid oneself entirely of bias is impossible, but that some truths require a certain commitment to be made before they can be accessed. The focus of the book, according to Ellis, is not how to understand religion, but “what it means to understand the world religiously” (p.14).

The volume succeeds on these two fronts. Cottingham excellently summarises the new approach to naturalism in his contribution (ch. 1), in which he criticises the “explanatory hypothesis” approach to religion – adopted by theists and atheists alike – according to which theism is one of various competing theories to explain the existence and nature of the world (p. 23). Cottingham is rightly sympathetic to those who are unconvinced by theism’s ability to fill in explanations where science fails, especially given the remarkable success of modern science on precisely this front. This does not admit defeat to scientific naturalism; rather, Cottingham avoids the temptation to place theism in competition with science and instead presents religious understanding as a new way of seeing the world. Echoing his earlier work (significantly, *The Spiritual Dimension*), Cottingham shows that the distinctiveness of religious understanding is found not in any particular content, but in a “certain *mode* or *manner* of understanding the world” (p. 29) which may not be the neutral and unbiased perspective of Enlightenment philosophy. This justifies the theistic claim made by many of the book’s contributors that achieving religious understanding requires taking up a certain starting point, posture or attitude.



This indicates the importance of a humane philosophy of religion, which Ellis describes as attendance to “the moral and spiritual sensibilities which shape religious belief” (p. 13). One of the virtues of *New Models* is that it displays various and complementary humane approaches to the philosophy of religion. For example, David McPherson proposes an involved epistemology of love as the starting point for a religious understanding which transfigures the world (ch. 4), and Eleanore Stump argues that we should regard theology as the pursuit of relational knowledge of God, rather than propositional knowledge about God (ch. 9). One benefit of a humane philosophy of religion is that it allows recognition of the importance of the practical and bodily aspects of religious life – aspects well known to theology and religious studies, but often neglected by the philosophy of religion. Particularly relevant here are the contributions of Clare Carlisle (ch. 5) and Mark Wynn (ch. 6). Carlisle offers a compelling analysis of the transformative power of practice and habit and skilfully integrates this with a theology of co-operative grace, while Wynn demonstrates the way in which the posture of one’s body and trained habits of perception can make visible spiritual virtues that are infused in the world. While sympathetic to the humane project, one might suggest that the book lacks a strong theoretical account of, to use Cottingham’s phrase, “the spiritual dimension”. One possible option would be to utilise Wittgenstein’s comments on aspect seeing in Part II of the *Philosophical Investigations*. The contributors to *New Models* are right to argue that engaging with or perceiving the world in different ways can divulge various moral, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions beyond what is available to the scientific, naturalistic viewpoint. There are clear commonalities with Wittgenstein’s comments on aspect seeing, and *New Models* would benefit from this kind of theoretical groundwork.

While the desire of *New Models* to move away from a philosophy of religion excessively concerned with cognition and belief is to be celebrated, there is a danger that this can go too far and undermine the significance that doctrinal commitments have for many religious practitioners. Kyle Scott (ch. 7) exemplifies this danger in his chapter, arguing that “religious understanding has greater epistemic value than religious knowledge” (p. 134). For Scott, this offers a response to scepticism concerning the reliability of religious knowledge and he concludes that “we should be willing to give up religious knowledge to achieve the greater epistemic good of religious understanding” (p. 150). While emphasising the value of understanding is a worthy task, many religious practitioners put stock in the ability for their religious understanding to reflect some true reality in the world. Even if one is convinced by Scott’s argument that understanding does not require knowledge, it is still reasonable to desire that one’s religious commitments can provide knowledge about reality as well as an understanding of one’s place within it. In a similar way, Keith Ward (ch. 10) responds to the challenge that the global and historical diversity of spiritual practice poses to religious belief by advocating an open and pluralistic approach to spirituality. Ward adopts a perennialist approach to religious experience and

advocates regarding all “religions as paths to an awareness of spiritual reality” (p. 204). While this hesitancy to describe precisely the nature of the spiritual dimension is laudable – and we must be alive to the fragility of our own understanding – the lesson of this volume must surely be that religious understanding is involved, practical and concrete. This means that religious practice involves making specific commitments – to communities, rituals, and doctrines. An open spirituality such as Ward’s, although appealing to liberal ears, will struggle to speak to any tradition which claims universal truth for its doctrinal commitments (including many mainstream moderate religious communities).

While not breaking significantly new ground, *New Models* represents developments that have taken place in the philosophy of religion over the past decade. While the traditional questions of classical theism remain important, there is much to be gained from approaching religion as an involved way of understanding the world. The volume benefits from the fact that all of its contributors are authoritative philosophers in their own right and many have published extensively on these themes. However, for the student looking to engage with this approach to the philosophy of religion, *New Models* offers an excellent starting point.

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**Campbell, Douglas A. *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. xxii + 468, \$39, paperback.**

Douglas Campbell has achieved prominence through two monographs, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel* (2005) and *The Deliverance of God* (2009), which place him broadly within the “apocalyptic” perspective on the apostle Paul, over against “Lutheran,” salvation-historical, or New Perspective views. He holds the position of Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School. He is also the resident provocateur in the field of Pauline studies, and this his third tome, *Framing Paul*, proposes a fresh chronology of Paul’s life and letters that differs in significant respects from the current consensus.

In his first chapter, “An Extended Methodological Introduction” (pp. 1–36), Campbell sets out a methodology to “frame” the apostle’s letters — that is, to give an at least provisional account of the contingent circumstances of all the books bearing Paul’s name (see esp. pp. 11–18) — that avoids the “vicious circularity” (p. 13) often present in such a project. Campbell criticizes the common practice of suggesting a particular doctrine (e.g., justification) as Paul’s “coherence” (utilizing J. C. Beker’s terminology) that is drawn particularly from a subset of his letters (in this case, Galatians, Romans, and Philippians), and then determining that other letters (say, Colossians or Titus) cannot be authored by Paul himself because they insufficiently fit the theme. If you say the essence of the color wheel is cool colors, based on a close

inspection of blue, green, and purple, then of course orange will not make the cut, but the initial subset chosen has determined the result. Campbell, therefore, approaches the Pauline epistles as “innocent until proven guilty” (p. 25). However, since many scholars doubt the reliability of Acts, he excludes it entirely from his project (hence “epistolary” in the subtitle). In this he is, by his own admission, following a method pioneered by John Knox, but doing so with much greater depth and with certain modifications along the way (pp. 19–36).

The fruits of Campbell’s process are generally plausible, always stimulating, and often novel. He begins in ch. 2 (pp. 37–121) with the “epistolary backbone” of Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians. He chooses these because they are Paul’s three longest letters, and they all mention a collection Paul is raising for the poor in Judea. Campbell argues for the integrity of all three epistles, including the often dissected 2 Corinthians, and proposes (against the view of most) that 1 Corinthians is the “letter of tears” that 2 Corinthians mentions. This compresses the timeline of the Corinthian correspondence to three letters (including a now lost initial letter to Corinth) in two years. Campbell then “augments the backbone” (ch. 3, pp. 122–89) with Philippians and Galatians. He proposes a Corinthian imprisonment as the most likely situation for Paul’s epistle to Philippi, one that soon ends in release. Rather than turning to either the southern or northern provenance for dating Galatians, he instead uses Gal 2:10 to tie it into the collection effort and further notes that it fits into the “year of crisis” that Paul faces with his Jewish-Christian opponents. Campbell slots Galatians just prior to Philippians, itself just prior to Romans. It is at this point that Campbell’s timeline takes on a firm shape. Galatians 1–2 contains Paul’s most specific dating of his own life, so the developing frame is now put within a wider Pauline biography. More significantly, Campbell links the reference to Paul’s stay in Damascus, mentioned in Galatians, with an obscure event in 2 Cor 11:32–33. This event, Campbell avers, can be dated precisely. King Aretas IV of Nabataea could have been in control of Damascus during only a short window of time, from late 36 to 37, and so there is an absolute date within the Pauline corpus that anchors the thus-far relative chronology into history (pp. 182–89). The result is that Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem (the Jerusalem Council) is in 49/50, and his “year of crisis,” including the letters so far surveyed, all fall within the span of 51 to 52. This is not far off from one common date proposed for Galatians, but it locates Romans (as well as Paul’s apparently fateful third visit to Jerusalem) half a decade earlier than where most scholars put it.

Chapter 4 (pp. 190–253) defends the authenticity of both 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, and Campbell locates them shortly after the effort by Gaius Caligula to install an image of himself as Jupiter in the Jerusalem temple, an event that occurred ca. 39/40. (If he is right, the first extant Christian document dates to within a decade of Jesus’s death and resurrection.) In ch. 5 (pp. 254–338) Campbell turns to the epistles associated with the province of Asia. He understands their

situation to be this: Paul is experiencing an otherwise unknown imprisonment in the year 50 in Asia Minor *en route* to his founding visit to Ephesus (he proposes the city of Apamea as a potential location), writing to churches he has not yet met. He begins with a summary of his gospel as it pertains to gentiles in our “Ephesians” (which he takes to be the Laodiceans of Col 4:16 — and he calls for Bibles to rename this letter!), when he is paid a visit by Onesimus, who informs Paul of certain false teachings present at Colossae. So Paul finishes up “Ephesians,” repurposes much of the material in writing Colossians, and then also composes Philemon, sending the three together as a packet. All of this occurs, in his view, before Galatians or the Corinthian correspondence are written.

In the final substantive chapter (ch. 6, pp. 339–403), Campbell attempts to locate Titus, 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy individually (rather than as a unit, “the Pastoral Epistles”) in the developing frame. At the outset he gives each the presumption of authenticity, but ultimately finds telltale marks of anachronism, implausible accounts of Paul’s travel, or oddities of style that do not fit with the other letters. He is least certain about 2 Timothy, but in the end it, too, is deemed pseudonymous. Having disassociated these letters from the apostle himself, he finds evidence of anti-Marcionite warnings, and pushes them into the mid-second century. In a short conclusion (pp. 404–11), Campbell gives the main results of his study: the frame includes ten letters, with 1–2 Thessalonians in 40–42, followed by “years of shadow” of largely unsuccessful missionary activity, an Asian crisis around 50 (“Ephesians,” Colossians, Philemon), difficulties with the church in Corinth in 50–51, and his “year of crisis” (Galatians, Philippians, Romans) in 51–52. After this, Paul makes for Jerusalem, and as far as his epistles are concerned, we lose sight of him. In the last couple of pages, Campbell intimates an upcoming study of the Acts of the Apostles, in which he will use this frame to test the accuracy of Acts and supplement our knowledge of the apostle (pp. 410–11), a task he does not touch in this monograph.

*Framing Paul* is an important work from a well regarded scholar. Campbell’s ingenuity, if not idiosyncrasy, is an asset, and makes for an enjoyable, unpredictable read. An imprisonment at Apamea, with “Laodiceans” as genuine and pre-dating Galatians? Yet the Pastorals are anti-Marcionite tracts from around 150? Romans in the spring of 52? Paul is writing authoritative letters in the early 40s, not just recalibrating in Syria or Arabia after his visionary encounter with Jesus? Campbell is, to be sure, an independent thinker, and it is on clear display in this “epistolary biography” of Paul. His methodological reconstruction of Paul’s life is at every step engaging and plausible. Indeed, in many instances, I find his case cogent, such as locating Paul’s escape from Damascus in 36/37, and I think his objections to circular reasoning and selective use of evidence, particularly in regard to judging pseudepigraphy, are on target. The chronology Campbell ultimately proposes is self-consistent and at least possible.

Whether his reconstruction is compelling is another matter. For one thing, probability introduces an unavoidable fragility into any firm dating of Paul's letters because uncertainty multiplies at every juncture (a danger Campbell is aware of; see p. 403), barring, of course, any later reconfirmations that boost the probability. For example, if there are two steps to a proposal, and each has a 70% chance of being true, the possibility that both are true is now under 50/50 (49%). Add a third step, also at 70%, and it drops to a one-in-three chance that all are right (34.3%). This problem is most acute for the early part of a logical progression, since any doubt will ripple through the remaining reconstruction amplified. And I have my doubts about Campbell's conclusions at various points. For example, despite his arguments that Paul's stated travel plans will not brook a separate, now lost, harsh epistle between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, I have a hard time equating 1 Corinthians with the "letter of tears," for the simple reason that 2 Corinthians seems far more likely to induce tears than 1 Corinthians. It would be odd for the more severe letter to refer to the gentler one as a causing sorrow. But even if we grant that Campbell has a 70% chance of being right, any subsequent, 70%-likely judgment that is based on this identification still means the overall scenario is more likely to be incorrect than correct. *Framing Paul* is a book with many steps that build on each other. Some have confirmatory evidence later, but on the whole, I doubt that we can sequence Paul's life with such precision. A letter or event, here or there, might be dated independently with some exactness, yes, but I think the very concept of a highly developed "frame" like this one holding together is questionable. Remove a couple of bricks from the foundation, and the wall topples.

For another thing, at times it seems like Campbell's thumb is on the scale as he weighs the evidence. This is most evident in the contrast between ch. 5 and ch. 6. Having (correctly, in my opinion) disputed the stylistic arguments often wielded against Colossians and Ephesians, style is used as part of the evidence against the Pastoral Epistles. Now, with Titus and 1 Timothy, Campbell has other evidence at the forefront, and stylistic differences come in secondarily, but with 2 Timothy two of the main arguments he employs differentiate the prescript and thanksgiving of 2 Timothy from the other Pauline letters. Also, throughout ch. 6 Campbell contends that 1–2 Timothy and Titus are unlike Paul's other writings since they address individuals, not churches. However, even if Philemon is sent with Colossians and Ephesians, the majority of the letter is in the second person singular: it is written to Philemon, even if it is heard by the whole church at Colossae. A single addressee is not unprecedented for the apostle. For these and other reasons, I suspect that the major alternative Pauline chronologies will not be dislodged, despite Campbell's spirited campaign.

I would also add here that *Framing Paul* is not advised for beginning or even intermediate students in biblical studies. Unless you are well acquainted with the academic debates surrounding Paul's biography and corpus, this book will be

prohibitively difficult. It is a work meant for scholars, and it includes untranslated foreign languages (esp. Greek, but also Latin and modern languages) and various technical discussions occurring in dense commentaries and high-level journals. At almost 500 pages, it is also time consuming to read. Campbell does recapitulate his main points at the end of each chapter, and an appendix helpfully summarizes his key chronological dates (pp. 412–14). However, quick recourse to Campbell's conclusions does not do justice to the logical path he travels to get there.

These concerns noted, however, let me end with appreciation for *Framing Paul*. There are many incidental points and observations throughout this work that I cannot cover here but are valuable, irrespective of one's agreement (or not) with Campbell's specific proposals. More importantly, if only as an exercise in thinking through Paul's life and letter-writing, this book repays close reading. Campbell identifies the crucial issues at play, and by arguing often uncanny positions, he challenges us not to lapse into safe and perfunctory dating schemes. It is easy to adopt the general conclusions found in the literature on Paul. But processing through all the details, options, and hints in Paul's letters is not unlike a "treasure hunt," as Campbell promises near the outset (p. 15). For those with several years of academic study under their belt, this is a worthy book indeed.

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**Goldingay, John. *A Reader's Guide to the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017, pp. 192, \$18.00, paperback.**

John Goldingay is the David Allan Hubbard Professor of Old Testament at the Fuller Theological Seminary School of Theology and is a prolific author in Old Testament theology, as well as in Isaiah and Psalms studies. In *A Reader's Guide to the Bible*, Goldingay aims to provide his readers with an introduction to the main events, people, places, themes, and structure of the Bible.

Assuming that his readers know little to nothing about the Bible, the author highlights the Bible's key events (chapter one) and describes the geographical features of the lands of the Bible, primarily that of Palestine (ch. 2). He then breaks down most of the rest of the book into two helpful categories: "God's story" (Part II, five chapters long) and "God's word" (Part III, five chapters long) (p. 2). Since most of the Bible consists of the Old Testament, Goldingay focuses on discussing the story of God's dealings with the nation of Israel. However, for Goldingay, the story of God's relationship with his people culminates with the coming of Jesus Christ, his cross work, and the birth of the Church. Part III details the different literary genres that God used to instruct his followers: "law, prophecy, advice, letter writing, and visions" (p. 2). In response to God's spoken word, Israel worshipped God through prayer and praise (chapter 13) and questioned God when life did not make sense (ch.

14). After examining the Bible thematically, Goldingay concludes with an epilogue that explores how the Bible can speak to today's readers.

Goldingay's work is helpful to its readers because it provides them with a nuanced view of the nature of ancient historical writing. Goldingay argues that in the West, in order for a work to be considered "objective history," a historian must discuss "politics or culture or social developments for their own sake" (p. 34). If one judges the Bible's accounting of history in this way, then it falls short of modern, Western standards of history. However, biblical authors, though they reported on events that happened, were more "interested in what God was doing with his people, in how people were responding to God, and in the lessons that this story has for their readers" (p. 34). Goldingay urges his readers to be open to the fact that the Bible communicates history and its other contents differently than present writers do and that his audience must approach the understanding of scripture on its own rules (pp. 3, 173). Another satisfying feature of the book is the author's observation that the New Testament epistle writers did not seek to communicate complex theological truths with "abstract and theoretical language." Instead, epistle writers wrote "in picture language" (p. 122). For instance, when talking about the importance of Christ's atonement for Christians, Goldingay notes how "being a Christian is like being declared innocent when you were guilty, like being made free instead of being a slave, like being admitted to the presence of a great king" (p. 123). This quote also shows the writer's skill as a wordsmith. Most of his writing pops with precision, clarity, and vivacity.

Concerning problems with the book, there is one major possibility. Goldingay claims that in the prophetic books of the Old Testament that "not everything in each book was uttered by the prophet whose name appears at the head of the first chapter" (p. 100). In short, the prophet Isaiah did not write the whole of Isaiah; a "Second Isaiah" wrote some of it (pp. 100-108). Also, the author of the book of Daniel lived in the second century B.C. and was not the Prophet Daniel from the sixth century (pp. 141-144). The traditional view is that there is only one author of the book of Isaiah, Isaiah himself, and the Prophet Daniel predicts details that happened to the Jews a few centuries after he lived. Potentially, readers of a more conservative evangelical or fundamentalist theological persuasion with at least a passing familiarity with aspects of higher criticism may put the author in a moderate/ liberal theological box and neglect the valuable insights that he makes available to his readers. Additionally, a surprising number of typographical errors are present on page two of the book. The chapter numbers do not correspond with the descriptions of the chapters that they follow, nor do they match the chapter numbers listed in the Table of Contents. For example, the two chapters in Part IV in the Table of Contents are chapters 13 and 14, *not* chapters 14 and 15 (p. 2).

*A Reader's Guide to the Bible* does not cite any scholarly sources but provides a brief scripture index. These features make it easier for a general audience unfamiliar

with the Bible to read the book. Also, the book is ideal for an “Introduction to the Bible” class in Bible College and university settings for beginning theological and biblical studies students. If someone is seeking works of a more technical nature, Goldingay’s opus alone would supply them with numerous choices. Overall, this reviewer highly recommends this work as a creative and useful introduction to the Bible.

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**Rainey, Anson F., and R. Steven Notley. *The Sacred Bridge: Carta’s Atlas of the Biblical World (Second Emended and Enhanced Edition)*. Jerusalem: Carta, 2014, pp. 448, \$120, hardback.**

Anson F. Rainey was Emeritus Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic Linguistics at Tel Aviv University and Adjunct Professor of Historical Geography at Bar Llan University and American Institute for Holy Land Studies. Rainey was a student of Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, authors of *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, and he co-authored the updated atlas, reissued as *The Carta Bible Atlas*. Rainey also worked extensively with the Amarna tablets, offering new readings and corrections to previous scholarship. R. Steven Notley is Professor of Biblical Studies, Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, and the Director of Graduate Programs in Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins at Nyack College, New York City. Notley has published extensively on the Jewish background to the New Testament and with Carta on various atlas projects, including *In the Master’s Steps: The Gospels in the Land*.

*The Sacred Bridge* is a self-described “historical geography of the Levant” emphasizing original research on the ancient written sources (p. 7). Though much of the volume pertains to biblical scholarship, the book utilizes more than the biblical texts, presenting relevant written materials from the earliest artifacts available (c. Fourth millennium BCE) through the Bar Kochba Revolt (135 CE). *The Sacred Bridge* aims to be a source of scholarly research and thus includes these written sources in the original language, the author’s translation into English, and references for additional information. Here, the book offers an innovative feature, using color coding to distinguish between these resources: light blue (original language), dark blue (English translation), and red (references). Each page contains three columns of dense text and numerous maps, illustrations, and photographs. Additionally, the 15-page index directs the reader not only to information in the text, but also to maps which show the location of specific place names.

Rainey wrote Chapters 1–16, first providing introductory information in Chapters 1–3, including a discussion of historical geography, physical geography, philology, and archaeology. These chapters provide background and methodology for



the in-depth analysis of the periods discussed in the remainder of the book. Rainey covers each period of the Bronze Age in Chapters 4—8, and then he moves to a century-by-century analysis in Chapters 9—16, ending with the Persian domination of the Levant. Notley wrote Chapters 17—25, beginning with the early Hellenistic period and moves through each era until the end of the Bar Kochba Revolt in 135 CE.

Each chapter is written in a narrative style, with references and written sources interspersed according to the color scheme described above. The authors provide sufficient source material to accurately describe the events and geography of the period covered and also include frequent citations of other works which provide more detailed study of the subject. These chapters frequently contain excurses addressing important artifacts, events, or historical details, e.g. the excurses in Chapter 14 (on the rise of Assyrian influence and domination in the Levant) study the *Via Maris* (pp. 250-51), royal wine jars (pp. 251-53), and the Siloam Tunnel Inscription (p. 253).

*The Sacred Bridge* is a significant scholarly resource, both as a source of detailed information, especially through its interaction with primary resources, and as a reference for more detailed studies of specific topics. For example, Rainey points the reader to nearly fifty important scholarly resources in his discussion of the Early Bronze Age (pp. 43-46). Later, he includes a table of over one hundred topographical place names given by Thutmose III, including their original hieroglyph, transcription, and alternate forms (pp. 72-74). In his description of the story of Deborah and Barak, Rainey includes a map of the region and the battle sites derived from the biblical account in Judges 4-5 and some parts of Joshua (pp. 137-38). This description includes an excursus on Harosheth-ha-goiim in which he discusses archaeology, philology, and topology to provide a reasoned alternative to the traditional sites (pp. 150-51). Notley works with the same precision, which undoubtedly will provide NT scholars with a substantive resource from which to begin detailed study of NT texts.

The authors clearly work with the goal of trying to describe objectively the history of the Levant from extant texts. One gets the impression that Rainey finds the biblical witness generally reliable but wants to let the evidence speak for itself. An example of this is in his description of the emergence of new cultural elements in the Cisjordan and Transjordan regions in the late thirteenth and early twelfth centuries BCE, particularly the appearance of small campsite-like settlements (pp. 111-16). He argues based on archaeological and linguistic evidence for a Transjordanian pastoralist origin for these settlements, indicating that there is no reason to doubt the basic assumptions of the biblical traditions (p. 112). Only then does Rainey provide a detailed discussion of the biblical texts (pp. 112-15).

Practically speaking, *The Sacred Bridge* is a large book (over 13 inches by 9 inches) and is nearly 450 pages long. There is no wasted space; even the end covers contain a helpful chronological overview of the ancient Near East! The text is small and arranged densely over three columns on each page, which might make it difficult for some to read. It is thus a desk resource and more than one needs for

simple reference of biblical geography. However, the information is arranged clearly, and with the Table of Contents and Index, readers should have no problem finding pertinent information. Additionally, though the text is small and densely arranged, the color-coding system works remarkably well, and future reference works could benefit from this feature. Readers will quickly adapt to the system, glancing only at the red text (references) when desiring to know more about the sources. As such, *The Sacred Bridge* manages to provide an efficient but substantial resource for historical geography.

*The Sacred Bridge* is expensive and contains a level of detail and description that likely precludes it from being a common required text for introductory biblical or historical courses. The *Holman Bible Atlas*, *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*, or the *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas* fill that niche at a price point and level of detail appropriate to those kinds of courses. However, those atlases lack the significant interaction with primary sources and detailed discussion of pertinent matters which make *The Sacred Bridge* a legitimate scholarly resource for historical geography. As such, any serious Bible student or biblical scholar will want to turn to this atlas first. These two types of atlases are aimed at different audiences, but a wise instructor might consider how to incorporate *The Sacred Bridge* across multiple courses to make this resource accessible for any Bible student.

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**DeRouchie, Jason. *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology*. Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017. Pp. 640. \$39.00, hardcover.**

Jason DeRouchie, author of this volume, having taught at Gordon-Conwell, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and University of Northwestern-St. Paul, currently serves as professor of Old Testament & biblical theology at Bethlehem College & Seminary. In addition to *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, he has also co-authored *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (B&H, 2009), *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* (Kregel, 2013), and other books and articles. His location in and care for both the church world and academic world is apparent throughout this work.

As one might gather from the title, DeRouchie has organized his book around twelve steps that a student of the Old Testament might take in order to properly exegete the Scripture and apply its meaning. Its textbook format will feel refreshing to those who share its goals, yet it might disappoint one who had wanted more historical or critical exploration. This, however, is not to say that it is light or devotional—in fact, it is quite the opposite! Rather, to say that the volume does not deal with

historical or critical issues is simply to note that DeRouchie interacts with the text-level as contained in the Old Testament rather than the composition-history of the biblical text.

Each of DeRouchie's twelve steps is organized into one of five larger groups, labeled "Parts." Part 1 is Text—"What is the Makeup of the Passage?", Part 2: Observation—"How is the Passage Communicated?", Part 3: Context—"Where Does the Passage Fit?", Part 4: Meaning—"What Does the Passage Mean?", and Part 5: Application—"Why Does the Subject Matter?". These Parts contain one or more of the titular 12 steps, but each is also marked with a "Track." Using a pictogram of a mountain climber for easy identification, these tracks will orient students as to whether the section is **Easy**, aimed at material for all readers including beginning interpreters, **Moderate**, for intermediate interpreters including some modeling of the use of Hebrew, and **Challenging**, for advanced interpreters with some grasp of Biblical Hebrew themselves. The track system is designed to allow students to choose only material pertinent to them. Each chapter also includes a concluding section with Key Words and Concepts, Questions for Further Reflection, and Resources for Further Study. These additional components will certainly benefit those who want to use this volume as a foundation for their study and reflection, check their reading comprehension, or update their awareness of current works in exegesis and linguistics. At each of his twelve steps, DeRouchie guides the reader through an application of that particular method to Exodus 19:4-6. By using the same passage for each of his steps, a reader is able to build understanding of the methodology and see how each step benefits the others. The choice to use the same text throughout the book was one of the most helpful aspects of this work.

DeRouchie's introduction is a microcosm of the benefits and limitations of this work. He lays out four presuppositions that guide his work (3-5), ten reasons why the Old Testament is important for Christians (6-10), and four benefits of studying the original Biblical languages (12-14). This clarity is a hallmark of his writing throughout, with the list-based form one he returns to at length. Particularly notable was his forthrightness with his presuppositions, something that not many authors make so obvious. This directness allows his readers a fairer basis for following DeRouchie's interpretive judgments made later in the volume. It also reinforces the particular aim of the book: helping students who see Scripture as God's Word rightly understand and interpret it. In specific, DeRouchie sees the Old Testament as Christian Scripture whose full understanding and interpretation is found when viewed as part of a coherent whole alongside the New Testament. As such, this book is most valuable for those who share this particular presupposition and understanding of the nature of the biblical text.

The 12-step process employed in this work allows DeRouchie to be thorough without bogging the reader down in areas not pertinent to the task at hand. In his chapter on Genre (pp. 21-97), for example, DeRouchie discusses Historical Narrative,

Prophecy and Law, Psalms, and Proverbs. Each of these subsections is robust enough that they would be fruitful reference reading for a student exploring those areas, yet DeRouchie's arrangement of them together helps the reader appreciate the diversity of the Old Testament literature and understand the care that must be taken when exegeting any particular text. This over-arching attention employed in this book's composition is apparent when viewing the Analytical Outline (pp. xv-xix). Somewhat frustratingly, this analytical outline lacks page number references, so one must cross-reference this tool with the regular Contents (pp. vi-vii). Since a high-level detail is poured into even each small section of this work and therefore worthy of later reference, this difficulty of navigation feels like an unfortunate oversight.

DeRouchie has managed to occupy an intriguing niche with this volume. It feels quite heavy for an introductory volume or for one's first initiation to these concepts. By comparison, for example, Gordon Fee's *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* might serve as a more approachable effort along similar lines. Yet, this book is also not as in-depth as some other volumes who attempt a narrower subset of the topics under exploration. Perhaps DeRouchie's chapter on Clause and Text Grammar is the best example of this. He begins by encouraging students to not leave their Hebrew knowledge at only the level of vocabulary and parsing but to push on towards analyzing texts, paragraphs, and pericopes (p. 186). This is of course an encouragement that his readers should follow, yet the space allowed in this chapter is only enough for a demonstration of the fruits of the method and not enough to actually teach the methodology to anyone unfamiliar with it. DeRouchie's own *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* would be better for that task, and indeed he borrows from it liberally throughout the book. The "track" system functions well here, however, and identifies the more difficult sections for students who may need to skip them. Readers who persevere with concepts they are not yet prepared for will benefit from DeRouchie's decision to err on the side of the comprehensive and robust.

This methodologically and textually robust approach continues throughout the book, yet part five contains only a single chapter: Practical Theology. This chapter is largely concerned with interpreting the Old Testament from a Christian point of view. While this approach fits well with the presuppositions outlined by DeRouchie in his introduction, his insistence that even the authors of the Old Testament itself were not privy to its full understanding (pp. 417, 421) will not be universally agreed with. Admittedly, he includes these statements to disprove the idea that the Old Testament is not valuable to Christians today rather than to argue that the revelation that the Old Testament contained was not valuable until Christ's coming. Perhaps some more expansion of what the value of the Old Testament was prior to Christ and the penning of the New Testament would have been helpful in articulating a full understanding of DeRouchie's approach. Likewise, some sort of guidelines for turning this practical theology into proclamation or preaching would have helped augment the book. DeRouchie continually stresses a proper cognitive approach to the

text; even this section on practical theology seems more interested in categorizations and interpretive approaches than on formational strategies or application steps. This should be expected in an academic work like this one, yet in such an avowedly Christian one these extra topics may not have felt out of place.

With so many choices in the field of biblical interpretation, it would be difficult to categorize *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament* as a necessary purchase for scholars or practitioners. However, it remains a worthy one for several reasons. First, the ambition of the project stretches beyond that of most other books. While DeRouchie was not attempting to produce a single-stop reference for exegetes, it is perhaps the closest any recent work in that vein comes to claiming that mantle. Any student of the biblical text wishing for an orientation to a particular methodology will benefit from DeRouchie's exploration, especially so due to his inclusion of robust bibliographies and next-steps for his readers. Second, the clarity of the writing is rare. Some of the more technical aspects and difficult concepts explored in this book are unraveled with an easy-to-understand, clear, and precise approach. Third, the organization of this book helps build a proper foundation for readers from the first chapter. This approach helps even a non-specialist engage the work, though it is likely a more helpful volume for a seminary student or someone with a level of Hebrew language facility. This is no surprise, as the volume was originally prepared as part of a course for students at the Logos Mobile Ed program (p. xxiv). For readers who have the baseline level of preparation to approach this work and the interest in going deeper in exploring the process involved in working from a text to theology, this volume is highly recommended.

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**Kline, Jonathan G. *Keep Up Your Biblical Hebrew in Two Minutes a Day, Volume 1*. Hendrickson: Peabody, MA. 2017, 370pp. \$39.95.**

In Hendrickson's *2 Minutes a Day Biblical Language Series*, Jonathan Kline has compiled and edited one year's worth of readings in the original biblical languages. Kline received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, and is the author of several key Hebrew resources, including his contribution to *Biblical Aramaic: A Reader & Handbook*, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: A Reader's Edition*, and *Allusive Soundplay in the Hebrew Bible*. Kline is currently the academic editor for Hendrickson Publishers in Peabody, MA.

In this volume, Kline provides biblical Hebrew verses "to help you build on your previous study of Hebrew by reading a small amount of the Hebrew Bible in its original language every day in an easy, manageable, and spiritually enriching way" (p. vii). To that end, Kline has produced a resource that many will find most helpful as a *guide* for short daily readings in the Hebrew Bible.

The book begins with a preface describing the goal of the book as well as how best to use it. In this preface, one finds the pertinent information for making the most of this work. Kline discusses first the format of each reading. Each day's reading includes the verse in English with a few Hebrew words in parenthesis following their corresponding English word. Kline points out that for those who may only have 10 seconds to 1 minute of the day to use this resource, reading the English translation alone may be helpful for learning and retaining some basic vocabulary by seeing these parenthetical Hebrew words (p. viii). One caveat to mention here is that these English translations come from a variety of contemporary English translations (CSB, NASB, NRSV, MLB, ESV, NIV, etc.) that may or may not best capture the Hebrew in a way that lends itself toward learning the Hebrew language.

The next element on each day's page is the vocabulary apparatus. In this apparatus, Kline lists one new word, and he includes its number of occurrences as well as the key number in Strong's Concordance. In addition to the new word, Kline lists two additional "review" words that have occurred in previous readings. In doing so, Kline argues that one will be regularly reviewing the vocabulary and "enabling you to build a robust vocabulary base" (p. vii, see also pp. ix-x for creative ways to use the vocabulary apparatus).

The third major element included with each day's reading is the Hebrew text. Within the Hebrew text, the vocabulary words are again highlighted so that the reader continues to reinforce those basic words.

The final element of each day's reading is a phrase-by-phrase breakdown of the text. In this section, Kline breaks the text into its respective phrases to show the reader how the English translations match up to the Hebrew phrases/clauses. This section is probably the most helpful for the novice Hebrew student since it shows the correspondence between the Hebrew text and English translation, allowing one to see how to move from text to translation. Kline points out that the correspondence is never perfect, and so it is important to realize that he has constructed phrases and translations in this section to best match what the Hebrew is saying rather than to give clunky and unhelpful word-for-word translations.

An overall assessment of this work would list it as minimally helpful for the novice student, and only marginally helpful for intermediate to advanced Hebrew students. First, for the novice Hebrew student, the primary benefit would be the vocabulary review and apparatus. However, there are other, more beneficial methods for learning and retaining Hebrew vocabulary than the assortment of words in this work. Even so, Kline's structure for learning and retaining vocabulary is creative and could serve introductory students well, especially by giving them the words in the context of the Hebrew Bible rather than in random lists.

Second, for the novice to intermediate student, this volume fails to include grammatical, syntactical, or exegetical comments about *how* to translate Hebrew. Likewise, there is no parsing information for verbs, one of the foundational (and

potentially more difficult) elements of Hebrew translation. For a first year Hebrew student, this volume would not help him or her develop parsing and translation skills; it would only show them how a Hebrew phrase leads to an English translation.

Third, for the intermediate to advanced student, this volume could serve as a guide for daily readings. However, I have to imagine that most intermediate students intend to move beyond the scope of what this volume offers, and most advanced students already read Hebrew daily, and perhaps in larger swaths than a single verse. Kline has certainly accomplished his goal to compile a year's worth of daily readings, but for students with enough Hebrew knowledge to use this volume proficiently, it would serve only as a format for daily reading, very likely less reading than they do now. Without parsing verbs and presenting Hebrew syntax, there is little in this volume that would move a novice student toward intermediacy, or an intermediate student toward a more advanced knowledge of Hebrew. Certainly, Kline did not set out to construct a Hebrew grammar, graded reader, or handbook. Even so, basic syntactic and parsing information would be more beneficial than vocabulary for what I would consider the target market for this volume.

Overall, Kline's *Keep Up Your Biblical Hebrew in Two Minutes a Day: Volume I* is a valuable *guide* for those wanting to maintain some Hebrew knowledge and need a "checklist" or format for doing so. The vocabulary apparatus will help solidify basic vocabulary, and Kline's translations of the text phrase-by-phrase demonstrates how an English translation derives from the Hebrew text in smaller chunks. I would recommend this volume to students and pastors who need a daily guide for Hebrew reading, and who have minimal time to invest in retaining their Hebrew. However, for the vast majority of Hebrew students, I would not recommend these daily readings primarily because handbooks, grammars, and graded readers are more helpful for advancing one's study of Hebrew.

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**Gentry, Peter J. *How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017, pp. 141, \$18, paperback.**

*How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets* is a student oriented look at the unique hermeneutical issues at hand when interpreting the prophets of the Old Testament. Author Peter J. Gentry (PhD, University of Toronto) is the Donald L. Williams professor of Old Testament Interpretation at South Baptist Theological Seminary and director of the Hexapla Institute. His other academic works include *Kingdom Through Covenant* (Crossway, 2012). His expertise is clearly at the fore as he seeks here to make the prophets, major books of the Old Testament, approachable to the Christian student. *How to Read & Understand The Biblical Prophets* achieves in every way its titled purpose, and is an introductory work of the highest order.

Gentry sets out with a clear goal through *How to Read*. His stated purpose is to define seven central characteristics of prophetic literature that are vital for understanding. By understanding these prophetic literature characteristics, Gentry hopes that they “will help Christians comprehend these texts for themselves, perhaps for the first time with real understanding” (p. 14). Each of the characteristics of prophetic literature that Gentry outlines corresponds to a chapter of the book. Starting first, He shows that prophets seek to call the people back to covenant loyalty. To Gentry, this is “the first and perhaps most important... message of the biblical prophets” (p. 30). Second, prophets speak to judgment and restoration of the people. This is where Gentry classifies predictive prophecy in his work; it is given to call Israel to account for covenant disloyalty. Third, Gentry focuses on the use of repetition as marking emphasis in the writing of the prophets. Fourth, he examines how prophets speak to foreign nations in order to emphasize God’s sovereignty over them. Fifth, the book examines the use of typology and the eschatological idea of the New Exodus within the prophetic corpus. Sixth, Gentry seeks to provide the basis for understanding apocalyptic writing as being focused giving meaning over details. Lastly, the tension between the already and not yet of prophetic prophecy and writing is discussed with an eye towards meaning for modern application. The book closes with brief concluding thoughts from Gentry and an appendix on the “Literary Structure of the Book of Revelation” (pp. 125ff). Through all this, Gentry hopes that his readers will “consciously apply these principles” as they read from the Old Testament prophets (p. 124).

Gentry’s work excels in several key ways. Foremost of his successes is the crafting of a book that, simultaneously, is both scholarly and approachable. Gentry is able to include scholastic understanding and exegeting of the texts he engages with. He traces: thematic developments within a corpus, e.g. the theme of New Exodus in Isaiah (p. 79-80), the use of chiasm as a literary device (p. 47), and ancient Near Eastern metaphors as used in the text, e.g. creation and un-creation motifs in Jeremiah (pp. 102-5). While engaging in these discussions, however, Gentry does not lose the pastor or undergraduate reader. Several stylistic choices aid him here. He intentionally avoids putting Hebrew in the book either transliterated or raw. Likewise, his choice of grammar and terminology will not leave many behind. Jargon and technical terminology are used sparingly and always with ample definition. Any student with a cursory knowledge of biblical studies will be able to follow Gentry’s arguments throughout.

Also worthy of special note is Gentry’s chapter on apocalyptic literature. His description of precisely how apocalyptic literature works is phenomenal and perhaps worth the price of admission alone. Gentry employs an example of a traffic accident, and shows in concrete fashion how apocalyptic language works by describing an event in terms of its meaning rather than form (p. 101). This illustration, fortified with a quote from N.T. Wright on the matter, takes apocalypse from an esoteric and



mysterious genre to one that the student may begin to understand. This concrete, non-sensational approach to the text will serve new students and set them up for success as they advance in their hermeneutical knowledge and study.

Only one item from the book stands out as being out of place. In the sole appendix to the work, Gentry includes a short chapter and then an illustration from Andrew Fountain on the literary structure of the book of Revelation (pp. 125-132). While the material is well done, its inclusion in this book is anomalous. Certainly, a better understanding of the prophets can lead to a better understanding of other works, and clearly apocalyptic literature is discussed in this book. These facts, however, do not make a clear case as to why this appendix belongs here. Gentry seems to have landed on an unsatisfactory middle point with this inclusion. If the book wishes to tie the prophets to eschatology in Revelation, then it should embrace that goal and devote more time and space to that study. If, however, the book only seeks to better understand the prophets, then this addition is counterproductive and not germane to its purpose. The book would be better served by either dropping the appendix or expanding it fully into the purpose of the book.

*How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets* seeks to introduce Christian readers to the wonder and knowledge found within the prophetic corpus of the Old Testament. Peter Gentry brings brilliant scholarship to the table in a winsome and engageable manner. This book is best suited for the undergraduate Christian student or pastor seeking to sharpen and deepen their knowledge. This work would be well used as an undergraduate text for specific hermeneutical issues within the prophets. It can serve as an excellent introduction and gateway to further study. Masters students and those beyond should seek more comprehensive works on the subject, although it may retain some benefit as a quick refresher. Peter Gentry himself suggests Aaron Chalmers work, *Interpreting the Prophets: Reading, Understanding, and Preaching from the Worlds of the Prophets* (IVP, 2015) as a more academic work in a similar vein (p. 123). Altogether, Gentry's present work is a resounding success that should open up the prophets to many students going forward. Any eager new student of the prophets will be well served by engaging with this work.

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**Hasker, William. *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 269, £25.00, paperback.**

In this impressive study William Hasker, the Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Huntington University, takes on the task of analysing the trinitarian three-in-one problem. That is, how we should understand the theological statement that "God is three persons in one being."

Hasker seeks to establish, first, the foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity and, second, articulate and defend social trinitarianism (*ST*). Previous philosophical interactions with central Christian doctrines have often been accused of lacking historical and contextual awareness. It is Hasker's goal to show that this picture is mistaken, and to demonstrate how the emerging field of analytic theology is not only philosophically rigorous, but that it carefully considers the witness of Scripture and the importance of Church history.

The book is structured into three sections. The first section outlines the presuppositions for Hasker's analytical endeavour. As Hasker remarks, it is difficult to attribute the label "social trinitarianism" to any ancient thinker, given that the ontological model for *ST* grew out of modern categories – especially with regards to philosophy, psychology, and sociology (p. 24). Nevertheless, Hasker—equipped with Plantinga's definition of Persons as "distinct centers of knowledge, will, love, and action" (p. 22)—sets out to locate pro-*ST* themes in historical thinkers, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine. Notable thinkers, including Richard Cross, have rejected a pro-social reading of Nyssa. Hasker, however, argues that Cross' misguided rejection of *ST* is based on a narrow understanding of divine simplicity (p. 39). Indeed, Hasker rejects the stronger notion of divine simplicity (p. 60). Similarly, some scholars have ruled out a pro-social reading of Augustine due to his usage of psychological analogies. Hasker contends, however, that the later developments in Augustine's *De Trinitate*, which portrays a dramatic interaction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirits, seems to lend itself to a social understanding of the Trinity: three Persons sharing one nature.

What is this nature which binds the Trinity together? Here Hasker introduces the metaphysical notion of a *trope*. A trope is an instance of a property, and such property-instances have causal consequences. Applied on the Trinity, we might say that a trope of the divine essence is the divine essence instantiated in a divine being (p. 52). This is a complicated definition, which I will later return to in this review.

In section two, Hasker evaluates recent and contemporary explorations of the Trinity. Beginning with theological models of the Trinity, he evaluates the proposals of Barth/Rahner (ch. 12) and Moltmann/Zizioulas (ch. 13). Hasker argues (rather connivingly) from these modern Trinitarian models to his own *ST* model by suggesting that the most reasonable way to understand the fellowship within the Trinity and communion between the members of the divine nature is to say that there is a fellowship between persons, which is the core claim of *ST*.

The remaining chapters of this section (ch. 14-19) discuss several philosophical evaluations of the Trinity by Brian Leftow, Peter van Inwagen, Michael Rea, Jeffrey Brouwer, William Lane Craig, Richard Swinburne, and Keith Yandell. Hasker engages critically with these proposals and suggests that they either fail to adhere to Orthodox Christianity (Craig), fall short of monotheism (Yandell), or that they entail a problematic tri-theism (Swinburne).

The third and final section is devoted to Hasker's own proposal, and particularly the metaphysical notion of tropes and the role it plays in a robust philosophy of the Trinity. As Hasker says, the "three persons share a single concrete nature, a single instance or trope of deity" (p. 226). This leads Hasker to propose that the divine essence (trope) supports the ontological persistence of three distinct lives. How should we, then, understand the concept of "support" with regard to the three distinct lives of the Trinity? Hasker suggests, drawing on the metaphysical landscape of *constitution*, not that each Person is identical with the divine nature, but that each Person is constituted by the nature. A classic example of the relationship of constitution is a statue. A statue is constituted by a lump of clay, but the form of the statue is not identical with the material basis of the statue. This is because, the form of the statue can change (it can be destroyed or formed into something else) while still being the same lump of clay. Hence, we have constitution without identity.

It is at this point, however, that the philosophical and theological problems of Hasker's Trinitarian proposal emerge. I want to suggest that the metaphysics of constitution significantly challenges the reality and distinctiveness of the three Persons of the Trinity. The metaphysics of constitution – as formulated by Lynn Rudder Baker – is an attempt to safeguard a generally materialistic ontology from the charge that it collapses into reductionism (or identityism). Frequently applied on the mind-body problem, the constitutionist says that the mind is constituted by (ontologically supported by) the physical (the brain structure) without being reducible to purely physical stuff or neurochemical interactions. However, many critics of this view suggest that this metaphysical theory encounters significant problems regarding the causal efficacy of the mental. This is because, either everything is causally determined by the physical structure, which renders the causal contributions of the mental epiphenomenal. Or, the mental produces something ontologically above and beyond the physical, but then the relationship of dependency is broken between the mental and the physical; and this would invite dualism. Hence, the constitution view is intrinsically unstable.

Hasker's Social Trinitarianism seems to encounter a similar challenge. If a Person of the Trinity is truly dependent on the divine essence (the trope) then the causal efficacy of that Person is in jeopardy, because whatever the Person produces is already contained at the base level; in this case it is located within the trope. Conversely, if a member of the Trinity produces something which is not contained within the trope, then the relationship of dependency is broken. The constitution view is therefore undermined. This could in worst case scenario invite tri-theism. Indeed, given that Hasker clearly rejects the unification of the will between the three Persons of the Trinity (no "single act of willing", p. 205), a tritheistic entailment is made probable. Therefore, in order to avoid these conclusions Hasker needs to clarify his usage of *trope*, and how it relates to and can uphold the causal efficacy and distinctiveness of the members of the Trinity.

William Hasker has delivered an excellent defence of social trinitarianism. This is a well-argued and thoughtful book that will be of interest to those working at the interdisciplinary arena between philosophy and theology, primarily at a postgraduate and research level.

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**Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Recovering the Unity of the Bible: One Continuous Story, Plan and Purpose*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009, pp. 252, \$19.86, paperback.**

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. serves as Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and President Emeritus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts.

In *Recovering the Unity of the Bible*, Kaiser explores the connected questions of Scripture's unity and argues that "the case for the unity of the Bible...rests on two main theses: (1) the self-claims of the Bible and (2) the message of Scripture" (p. 24). He contends for a unity to the canon that also recognizes genuine diversity as the canon grows from one part to the next with a common plan, purpose, and story in an organic progression (p. 218) that emphasizes a link between the promises of the OT and their fulfillment in the NT. As such, he leads his reader through a surprisingly detailed analysis of apologetic and interpretive issues related to the canon's continuity and diversity that rejects imposing the NT upon the OT or adopting the common notion of *sensus plenior* (pp. 216–7). Kaiser seeks, instead, to thread an interpretive needle by keeping the meaning of OT texts bound to the intentions of their writing in grammatical-historical interpretation and also to the growing, progressive context of their placement within the canon by utilizing Hirsch's distinction between meaning and significance, even as he levels partial criticism of Hirsch (pp. 79–80; 196–200). Kaiser unites the Bible, therefore, by emphasizing the promise-plan of God that engages the individual moments of the Bible in light of a progressive series that enables the preaching of the whole Scripture around the gospel and all of revelation.

In chapter 1, Kaiser tackles critical claims against the Bible's unity by exposing how such assumptions of disunity mirror the prior eras' assumption of unity (pp. 12–13). From this point, he contends for a diverse categorization of unity along a multi-layered front: structural, historic, prophetic, spiritual, and kerygmatic unity (pp. 20–24). Such analysis leads to chapter 2's categorization of the corresponding types of diversity and chapter 3's general guidelines for the most common means of harmonizing such.

In chapter 4, Kaiser provides a focus on the structural unity of the Hebrew Bible, while in chapter 5 he provides the same analysis for the New Testament.

Kaiser employs leading scholarship to refute the most common apologetic arguments against the unity of each testament alongside its legitimate diversity.

Chapter 6, however, marks a subtle pivot towards the most important parts of Kaiser's project. Specifically, he examines OT messianic promises and contends for a *sensus literalis* to the OT texts that leaves no space for a distinction between the human and divine author's meanings but eases the resulting interpretive tension by partially accepting Hirsch's distinctions between meaning and significance. Specifically, he focuses "special attention to *what it was that connected*: (1) the ancient prediction and (2) the New Testament fulfillment" (82). In short, it was and is a planned and purposeful *series*. He binds the meaning to a series of texts and events that finds its ultimate significance and renewed meaning in the NT fulfillment of these promises in Christ (pp. 82–84). This series gives purpose and meaning to each of its points without invalidating individual uniqueness. However, Kaiser fails to articulate the nature of the series as a purely textually phenomenon or one that moves between the text of the canon and the events of salvation history.

Chapters 7 and 8, then, allow Kaiser to more directly address the relationship between the testaments, creating intellectual space for a common message by refuting the most common critiques of the OT's view of God and its primary human characters' moral failings. From these recalibrations, chapter 9 highlights the question of the people of God across the Bible. While he conceives of the biblical writers advancing only one people of God (p. 125), his nuanced answer rejects "all reports of Israel's death and demise as the people of God in every sense" (p. 125).

Chapter 10, therefore, moves to the consideration of God's Kingdom as His program in both testaments. Kaiser contends for the Kingdom of God concept in "seed" form in the OT and full form in the NT with the Davidic covenant serving as the main way to link the series that continues in a present and future form so that it "is both a soteriological as well as an eschatological concept" (p. 140). Such a connection paves the way for chapter 11's definition of Kaiser's promise-plan paradigm, relating the different parts of his series around the promise of a Messiah and His arrival that branches into other theological concerns: law and gospel, mission and kingdom. The thread of promise plan, therefore, becomes the primary way for Kaiser to unite the Bible while respecting its diversity because it "it is broad and wide enough to embrace the numerous strands of topics that flesh out its plurality in unity" (p. 155).

From this approach, chapter 12 unites the doctrine of law across the canons, while chapter 13 joins together soteriology across OT and NT. He sees unity in both instances as they stand in the promise-plan series with meaning and significance for those who lived before and after the NT. Having bound law and gospel to both testaments, chapter 14 digs into the mission of God and His people in the OT. In particular, Kaiser unfolds the OT's call for Israel and the nations "to hear about the Promised One who was to come and redeem the world from their sins" (p. 193).

Kaiser, then, turns to the question of unity in hermeneutical methods in chapter 15 and proclamation in chapter 16. Returning to earlier observations, he contends for principalizing OT texts through grammatical-historical interpretation that respects their ancient meaning and does not impose later meanings but does allow the natural growth of ideas within his promise-plan methodology (pp. 203–207). This approach, then, suggests that preaching itself must set its message in terms of the “overall plan, purpose and unifying story [of the Scripture]” (p. 218). He rejects finding Jesus in every verse, but he argues that one must apply each verse to the larger story so that it may proclaim all of the “revelation of God” (p. 218).

Kaiser’s argument builds cumulatively across many aspects of the interpretive dilemmas, but in the end he proves his thesis: the canon has a natural unity in what it claims of itself and its message, even if certain aspects of the unity prove contested and difficult. While he has not proven that his approach is the only or best approach to measure unity, his goal seems to be much smaller and more helpful. Indeed, the strength of the book is not a singular conclusion to how the Bible’s unity should be considered but in exposing how much of theology and interpretation hinge on how we consider this question. Kaiser shows, in other words, that the unity of the Bible impacts our assumptions, methods and conclusions. After reading this work, his readers will be far better prepared to hold the Scriptures together.

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**Longman, Tremper, III. *The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 311 pgs. \$32.99.**

There has long been a need for a focused, comprehensive treatment of the biblical theology of wisdom from an evangelical perspective. Tremper Longman III’s recent volume, *The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel*, fills this void. The book focuses on the theological dimensions of the concept of wisdom as it appears throughout the Christian Bible and the Second Temple literature. The approach of the book is synchronic—it examines wisdom as a concept in the final form of the texts that we have, rather than tracing the diachronic development of the theme through Israel’s history.

The book is divided into five parts. Part one examines the corpus of books traditionally understood as biblical wisdom literature—namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job, with Longman devoting a chapter to each. Longman surveys the literary contours of each of these books and unpacks their distinctive theological messages. These chapters provide a lucid summary of the wisdom books and lay out Longman’s approach to some of their interpretive challenges. Anyone familiar with Longman’s commentaries on these books will not be surprised at the conclusions

he reaches or the points he emphasizes in these chapters. Even so, Longman makes a fresh contribution, demonstrating that these three books, through all of their distinctive concerns, present wisdom in a similar way, as having its ultimate source in God himself and as accessible to humans who fear him and humble themselves before him.

In part two, Longman examines the appearance of wisdom in OT books not traditionally included with the wisdom literature. Chapter 4 focuses on Deuteronomy, the Prophets, Psalms and Song of Songs. An important topic taken up in this chapter is the genre of Song of Songs, which Longman does not discuss alongside Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job in part one. Longman concludes that Song of Songs does not directly address the topic of wisdom (as do the three books in part one), though the book does, in effect, offer instruction reminiscent of that found in Proverbs regarding sexuality. Chapter 5 offers a comparison of the stories of Joseph and Daniel, who receive wisdom directly from, God, resulting in their finding favor in the courts of Egypt and Babylon respectively. In chapter 6, Longman then turns his attention to Adam and Solomon, who, in contrast to Joseph and Daniel, exemplify the abandonment of wisdom. Wisdom is not permanent, but it can be lost when one ceases to live in fearful submission to God.

Part three is perhaps the most significant section of Longman's volume, for it is where he articulates what he considers to be the distinguishing theological characteristics of Israelite wisdom. He begins part three with a chapter on the sources of wisdom, arguing that while experience and observation have a place in acquiring wisdom, they can lead to skewed understanding and folly if wisdom is sought solely from them to the exclusion of God's revelation. Next, in chapter 8, Longman acknowledges that wisdom entails understanding the order and function of the world. Yet, to study the world without knowing God is to be ignorant of the most profound truth undergirding the universe. Accordingly, in chapter 9, Longman contends that surrounding ANE peoples had a measure of wisdom, and this explains the similarity between some of their wisdom writings to those of the Bible. However, in not knowing or submitting to the Lord, these peoples lacked the most necessary component of wisdom in its fullest sense (p. 161). In chapter 10, Longman challenges the notion that OT wisdom is not covenantal in nature.

In part four, Longman addresses some debated issues in the study of biblical wisdom. He devotes chapter 11 to the issue of retribution theology in the wisdom literature, concluding that to pit Job and Ecclesiastes against the teaching of Proverbs is to misunderstand Proverbs. In chapter 12, he takes up the issue of the social setting of OT wisdom, concluding that the wisdom literature is likely the product of a variety of social settings. One of the most unique chapters in the volume appears in chapter 13, where Longman explores the issue of gender and wisdom, with special attention to the book of Proverbs. There, wisdom is personified as a woman before a male

implied audience; in light of this, Longman takes up the question of how women can receive and appropriate the teachings of the book.

Part Five covers the presence of wisdom in the literature of the Second Temple period (ch. 14) and the New Testament (ch. 15). Among the most significant observations Longman makes about the former is that this literature makes even more explicit the connection between wisdom and revelation (particularly the Torah) already alluded to in the OT. With respect to the latter, Longman contends that the NT depicts Jesus Christ as embodying and exemplifying the wisdom of God described in the OT.

Two appendices conclude the book. Appendix 1 discusses how the modern day significance of biblical wisdom. In appendix 2, Longman weighs in on the contemporary discussion among scholars regarding whether it is proper to speak of wisdom literature as a genre. In particular, Longman responds to the recent work of Will Kynes, suggesting that “wisdom literature” remains a helpful category for classifying texts whose primary focus is the theme of wisdom.

This volume has numerous strengths and valuable insights. The scope of the book is remarkable from a biblical-theological standpoint; Longman rightly recognizes that wisdom is not a theme unique to the OT, but one that surfaces in significant ways in the NT. Longman’s discussion about the meaning of the fear of the Lord is theologically perceptive and thought provoking. The fear of the Lord as referred to in Scripture is often misunderstood. Longman clarifies that what the Bible describes is not terror that inspires retreat. Instead, the fear being referenced is more like a profound sense of “awe” that makes us tremble, for “He [God] takes our breath away and makes our knees knock together” (p. 13). Such a view of God is certainly necessary for living wisely in the world he himself made. Longman’s treatment of how the individual wise sayings in Proverbs function is perhaps the book’s most important section from a pastoral standpoint, as many in the Church today misunderstand these sayings as air-tight promises. Longman explains, to the contrary, that the truthfulness of these sayings depends on whether one applies them in the right circumstances. Additionally, I was pleased to see Longman articulate how biblical wisdom, grounded in the fear of the Lord, relates to other wisdom from the ancient Near East. Many have noted parallels between biblical wisdom and wisdom teaching from surrounding peoples, and many have noted that “the fear of the Lord” has covenantal connotations. Yet few have explained how these two aspects of biblical wisdom square with each other. Longman carefully and lucidly addresses this matter. The Bible looks favorably, to a certain extent, on the wisdom and understanding of Israel’s neighbors; however, this need not imply that the surrounding nations, who did not worship the Lord, were *wise* in the truest and fullest sense of the term as described in the wisdom literature. A final aspect of the book that I found to be valuable is Longman’s response to contemporary issues. Longman’s response to the question of wisdom and genre, found in Appendix 2, is one example of this; another



example is his critique of the so-called “Sophia Movement,” which arises from a misreading of the references to Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9.

I do not have many criticisms to offer regarding this volume. I wish Longman, in his overview of the canonical wisdom books, had interacted more with scholarship that had presented different interpretive approaches than those found in his commentaries. For example, nowhere does Longman respond to the approach to Ecclesiastes advocated by Craig Bartholomew or Ryan O’Dowd (the latter of which published a response to Longman’s treatment of wisdom in a separate volume).<sup>1</sup> Longman raises some significant hermeneutical questions, particularly about Proverbs, in chapter 13, where he discusses gender and wisdom. Yet, I wonder if the concerns about gender that Longman raises are overplayed at times. The personification of wisdom as an attractive woman (desirable to men) should not present much of an obstacle to female readers of the book. As Raymond Van Leeuwen has noted, the metaphor of the two paths (leading to wisdom and folly) found in Proverbs 1–9 is just as fundamental to the book’s message as that of Lady Wisdom.<sup>2</sup> The metaphor of the two paths is gender-neutral and readily grasped by *any* reader, whether male or female.

As a young scholar interested in biblical theology and the OT wisdom literature, I am indebted in many ways to Tremper Longman’s publications. Even when I am not convinced by his proposals, I always walk away from his books and articles feeling challenged and having grown in my understanding of the Bible. This book is no exception. *The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom* is a welcome contribution to biblical scholarship by evangelicalism’s leading wisdom specialist. The book is theologically stimulating, attentive to contemporary approaches and pastorally useful. I highly recommend this landmark volume to professors, students and clergy.

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**Todd, James M., III. *Sinai and the Saints: Reading Old Covenant Laws for the New Covenant Community*. IVP: Downers Grove, IL, 2017.**

The relationship between the Old and New Testaments, and specifically the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant, remains a perennial question in biblical and theological studies. James Todd has written *Sinai and the Saints* to bring clarity to this question. While he successfully describes the positions in the debate, his own position fails to convince.

1. Craig G. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009); Ryan P. O’Dowd, “Wisdom as Canonical Imagination: Pleasant Words for Tremper Longman,” in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al., SHS 7 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 374–92.

2. Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Liminality and Worldview in Proverbs 1–9,” *Semeia* 50 (1990): 111–44.

Todd writes *Sinai and the Saints* because it is difficult to understand the Bible without understanding how the laws fit in (p. 8). He limits his discussion to the laws of Sinai (pp. 21–22). He notes that law and covenant exist together both in the Bible and in the surrounding culture (p. 15).

After setting the stage, Todd reviews the different approaches to the relationship between the laws of Sinai and the New Covenant, acknowledging that there is much common ground between the positions (p. 31). He lists three different positions: 1) moral law Christians affirm the authority of some Old Covenant laws, 2) Ten Commandments Christians affirm the continuing validity of the Ten Commandments, and 3) No-Old-Law Christians deny any continuing validity of the Old Covenant laws. He describes his method as follows (pp. 42–44): he is a “No-Old-Law” Christian, with some nuances; i.e. the Old Covenant was a temporary, conditional covenant, while the New Covenant ended the Old Covenant and therefore the members of the New Covenant are under the law of Christ. However, the Hebrew Bible is Christian Scripture and the Old Covenant laws are a positive good. He seeks to interpret the laws according to authorial intent, which he claims we discover by examining the clues left in the text (p. 47). Todd proceeds to set the Mosaic covenant in the context of the broader storyline of the Pentateuch, arguing that this broader context helps explain the nature of the Sinai Covenant (Chapters 3–5).

Todd spends the next two chapters discussing the Ten Commandments and the Law of Christ. Todd argues that the Ten Commandments are no longer binding on Christians. He attempts to answer the charge of antinomianism by explaining how believers are under the law of Christ (p. 109), which he defines as the law of love (p. 110). He explains that natural law accounts for the ethical overlap between the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant (pp. 112ff).

Should Christians be concerned to know the Mosaic covenant? Todd answers yes. The Mosaic covenant reveals God’s righteousness in space and time (p. 128). The sacrificial elements of the Mosaic covenant, such as the tabernacle and the sacrificial system, point ahead to the work of Christ (pp. 129–139). He points out a link between wisdom and law, arguing that knowledge of the specific Old Covenant laws provides a sense of God’s moral order (p. 143). Additionally, the whole law finds its fulfillment in the gospel.

*Sinai and the Saints* is a helpful book because Todd overviews some of the central problems which surround discussions of the Mosaic law. While summarizing these problems, Todd emphasizes the amount of common ground that adherents of the different positions have. This concession is important since discussions of the Mosaic law are often fraught with tension.

Todd follows the standard New Covenant Theology line of argumentation. The critiques that have been leveled at that system over the past several years apply to Todd’s work as well. A few of these critiques are worth noting, especially since Todd communicates his position so clearly.

First, Todd criticizes the standard moral, civil, and ceremonial distinction commonly held by proponents of covenant theology. He charges proponents with picking and choosing which laws apply and which ones do not (p. 36). He also argues that the moral, civil, and ceremonial terms do not appear in Scripture. These criticisms seem compelling at first glance. On further examination, however, they fall short. The tripartite distinction does not necessarily lead to “picking and choosing” which laws to apply, especially when certain laws in the “moral” category predate the Mosaic covenant (pp. 14, 143). Moral law Christians may be identifying a concept within the text and applying an extra-biblical label to it.

Todd rejects the tripartite distinction because it is an extra-biblical category without explicit textual warrant. However, Christian theology and hermeneutics often lack an explicit reference. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity consists almost entirely of inferences drawn from the biblical data. Additionally, it is commonplace for modern interpreters to see Genesis 3:15 as a reference to Christ, although Scripture never uses this verse in reference to Christ (my thanks to William R. Smith for this observation). Lack of explicit reference is insufficient grounds for rejecting the tripartite division position.

Second, the Sabbath command is a major touchstone for the critique of the Mosaic law’s applicability (pp. 95–103). This critique is a common trope of New Covenant Theology literature. This critique assumes the Sabbatarian position of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms (and the 1689 London Baptist confession which is based on Westminster). One immediate problem with this critique is that it assumes that many who hold to a moral law view or a Ten Commandments view of the law also subscribe to the Westminster position. A cursory reading of Reformed confessions and exegetes would demonstrate that the Westminster position is not the consensus position. Since the Ten Commandments only position does not rest on the Westminster interpretation of the Sabbath commandment, Todd’s argument falls short.

Third, Todd spent several chapters retelling the narrative around the events at Sinai. His description was accurate, but it was unclear how his retelling advanced his argument. It appears that he wanted to show how Israel’s interaction with the Mosaic law was negative. However, it is not clear how retelling Israel’s story informs this discussion. Todd’s argument works well if he is arguing against those who believe the law justifies, but I do not know of any Christian—evangelical, Catholic, or Orthodox—explicitly making such an argument.

Finally, Todd’s language about the law’s discontinuity runs into problems of theology proper. He makes a strong contrast between the law of Moses and the law of Christ, failing to mention that the law of Moses was written by the finger of God (p. 109). This contrast places discontinuity between God the Father and God the Son, not the Mosaic and New covenants.

*Sinai and the Saints* clearly summarizes different positions on the Old Testament law. It is a clear representative of New Covenant Theology. However, this book's argument is not convincing. The book contains problems that mar Todd's position. It may be valuable for those who want to understand New Covenant Theology better, but it will likely be persuasive only for those who already subscribe to Todd's basic premises.

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**Mortenson, Terry. ed. *Searching for Adam: Genesis & the Truth about Man's Origin*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2016, 524 pp, \$24.99, paperback.**

The debate over evolutionary theory and biblical history still stirs significant controversy in the American Church. Related topics like the age of the earth and the special creation of mankind factor into an ever-growing body of literature on the subject. But many readers struggle to understand why this debate matters and why Christians can't just "agree to disagree." The urgency of the "so what" question drives this new volume. Terry Mortenson (Ph.D., history of geology) has assembled a collection of fresh essays to address one issue: the significance of belief in a recent, special creation of Adam and Eve. His contributors hail from a wide variety of fields, from Bible, theology, and hermeneutics to biology, genetics, anthropology, and archaeology. Mortenson and his team seek to clear up misconceptions about the young-earth creationist perspective while offering a scientifically informed and fundamentally biblical apologetic for the supernatural origin of Adam.

This book launches a two-pronged advance of the young-earth understanding of the origin of mankind. First, chapters one through seven offer a biblical and theological presentation rooted in a historical-grammatical hermeneutic that holds to the inspiration, inerrancy, and supreme authority of God's word (p. 8). Second, chapters eight through fifteen present evidences from numerous other scientific disciplines like paleontology, genetics, anatomy, archaeology, and anthropology. While many aspects of these disciplines overlap across chapters, most remain neatly defined in one or two chapters. Chapter topics include: (1) Old Testament, with a focus on Genesis 1–5 [Barrick]; (2) New Testament, with a focus on 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 [Croteau/Naylor]; (3) historical-theological perspectives [Nettles]; (4) a synthesis of biblical and theological thought [Merrill]; (5) historical narrative and the age of the earth [Mortenson]; (6) a critique of Walton's *The Lost World of Adam and Eve* [S. Ham]; (7) *imago Dei* theology in relation to special creation [Casas]; (8) fossils, apes, and hominin myths [Menton]; (9) DNA, fossil, and archaeology surrounding neanderthals [Lubenow]; (10) genetics as it relates to the biology, anthropology, chronology, and geography discussions [Jeanson/Tomkins]; (11/12) the uniqueness

of human anatomy [Burgess]; (13) evolution, racism, and errant views of mankind [Bergman]; (14) the amazing accomplishments of ancient human civilizations [Landis]; (15) common history of humanity represented in societal legends [Chaffey]; (16) human morality and the authority of Scripture [Mortenson]. Each chapter of this book builds a united case from across the scientific and biblical spectrum.

Throughout this book the editor and authors seek to maintain a distinction between “operation” and “origin” science. Mortenson defines the two disciplines this way:

[Operation science is] the use of observable, repeatable, experiments in a controlled environment (e.g., a lab) to understand how things operate or function in this *present* physical universe...[Origin science is] the use of reliable, eyewitness testimony (if any is available) and observable evidence to determine the past, unobservable, unrepeatable event(s), which produced the observable evidence we see in the present (pp. 10–11).

Many people also call the latter of these “historical science.” Naturalistic, neo-Darwinian theory approaches historical events through the lens of uniformitarianism, that present rates and changes in the natural world exist now as they always have in the past. This evolutionary presupposition finds itself in the crosshairs of numerous articles. Chapters one through seven seek to elucidate the “eyewitness testimony” of the Bible regarding past events that do not always conform to present rates and changes. Chapters eight through fifteen seek to critique the data without the uniformitarian and evolutionary lenses. For example, chapter eight begins the comparison on anatomical features between humans and apes with a discussion Christian and naturalist assumptions (pp. 232–233). Similarly, chapter ten (genetics) and chapter fourteen (archaeology) also begin with methodological discussions related to biblical and naturalistic approaches to the same data. While the book focuses on the overall argument for the historicity of Adam, this presuppositional analysis offers readers an additional education in methodology.

Compilation volumes generally stand or fall based on two factors: (1) the strength of the individual essays; (2) the unity of the essays in contributing to the overall argument. On the second count this book receives a passing grade. Some authors tie their argument into the thesis more explicitly (e.g., chapter ten), others less so (e.g. chapter seven). But Mortenson has selected a strong slate of authors whose efforts each contribute to the overall goal from their respective angle. On the whole, each essay does a good job of not straying from the specific topic under consideration. The variable scope of chapters may prove difficult for some readers (e.g., chapter four covers all of historical theology; chapter six responds to Walton’s book *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*). But regardless of length or scope, each chapter contributes clear argumentation towards the overall thesis. So, on both accounts, this compilation makes a strong contribution to the discussion surrounding the special creation of mankind.

Another common weakness of compilation works tends to arise in excessive overlap between essays. Too much overlap can reduce the effectiveness of an argument by bogging down readers. While the essays in *Searching for Adam* generally remained distinct, some overlap does occur: two in-depth studies on the various terms for “man” occur in different chapters (pp. 29, 132–133); chapter four reviews much of the content from the first three chapters; illustrations get shared across chapters on similar topics (pp. 247, 337); arguments from anatomy fill three separate chapters of this volume. Despite these instances of overlap, each author has generally maintained their unique contribution to the thesis. This creates an engaging volume with a wide variety of argumentation for a recent, historical Adam.

Perhaps the greatest value of this book for pastors and students lies not in individual evidences but in the ability of this book to connect the issue of a historical Adam to the gospel. Barrick begins this emphasis citing examples of how evangelicals have lost a “presumption of factuality” with regard to the biblical testimony and have instead accepted a hermeneutic of doubt (p. 44). Croteau and Naylor state outright that “the gospel itself is impacted by one’s view on Adam. If the historical Adam did not exist, then the historical Christ did not need to come to redeem a human race that inherited Adam’s sinful nature and guilt” (pp. 71–72). Nettles goes on to cite Dyson Hague saying, “without Adam’s fall the science of theology is evacuated of its most salient feature, the atonement” (p. 111). Indeed, most essays in this book offer some sort of answer to the “so what” question. Mortenson sums it up in the final chapter, “belief in a literal Adam and literal historical Fall is not a salvation issue. It is a gospel-consistency or gospel-coherency issue” (p. 497). One’s conclusion on this issue may not determine their eternal destiny, but it does significantly impact his or her ability to read the Scriptures in a coherent fashion.

*Searching for Adam* offers readers a useful compendium on the subject of the historicity of Adam from a young-earth creationist perspective. The authors fairly and deftly handle the critiques of their position while offering the best arguments from their specific discipline. The range of disciplines and depth of argumentation make this volume useful to pastors, students, and scholars. But most importantly, this book does the important work of connecting this debate to gospel defense and proclamation.

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**Nagasawa, Yujin. *Maximal God: A New Defence of Perfect Being Theism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 256, \$60.**

Yujin Nagasawa is a professor of philosophy at the University of Birmingham, and the co-director of the John Hick Centre for the Philosophy of Religion. He has published books on phenomenal consciousness, miracles, and the existence of God. In *Maximal*

*God*, Nagasawa examines the claim that God is a perfect being, and the role this plays in developing the ontological argument for the existence of God. *Maximal God* is comprised of 7 chapters.

Chapter 1 considers the conceptual, historical, and cognitive roots of perfect being theism. According to Nagasawa, perfect being theism affirms that God is the greatest metaphysically possible being. This entails that God is *value commensurate* with all other possible beings. In other words, the greatness of God can be *compared* with the greatness of all other possible beings such as humans, aardvarks, and escalators.

As Nagasawa notes, most philosophers and theologians assume that perfect being theism entails The Omni God Thesis. The Omni God Thesis says that God is an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent being. Throughout *Maximal God*, it is Nagasawa's contention that perfect being theism does not need The Omni God Thesis. Instead, perfect being theism only needs a more minimal claim called The Maximal God Thesis. The Maximal God Thesis says that God has the maximal consistent set of knowledge, power, and benevolence. The Maximal God Thesis is consistent with, but does not entail, The Omni God Thesis. So, a perfect being theologian can affirm both theses; but she need not, if there are problems with The Omni God Thesis.

Nagasawa identifies three kinds of problems that face perfect being theism. Each of these three kinds of problems seeks to show that the existence of a perfect being is metaphysically impossible. According to Nagasawa, these three problems are really aimed at The Omni God Thesis, and not perfect being theism. What Nagasawa calls Type-A arguments focus on the internal coherence of one divine attribute. For example, someone might argue that omnipotence is incoherent because God cannot create a stone that is so heavy that He cannot lift it. If the property of omnipotence is incoherent, then the existence of an omnipotent being is metaphysically impossible. What Nagasawa calls Type-B arguments focus on the internal coherence of two or more of God's attributes. A classic example is the apparent conflict between omnipotence and omnibenevolence. As omnipotent, God should be able to perform sinful actions. Yet, as omnibenevolent, God cannot perform sinful actions. This purportedly raises a question: is an omnibenevolent God really omnipotent? What Nagasawa calls Type-C arguments focus on the mutual consistency of God's properties with certain facts about the world. The classic example here is the logical problem of evil, which seeks to show that there is a contradiction between the existence of evil and the existence of a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. To be sure, there are replies to Type-A, Type-B, and Type-C arguments, but those must be considered on a case by case basis.

Chapter 2 of *Maximal God* examines the claim that God is the metaphysically greatest being. I found this chapter to be an incredibly important contribution to contemporary discussions on God's perfection. In contemporary theology, it is often

asserted that God is the greatest, has eternal glory, and so on. Theologians will often assert that their doctrine of God is greater than their opponent's doctrine of God. However, there is rarely any explication of what this "greatness" means. Nagasawa offers a detailed discussion of what this means, and the theological world should take note.

According to Nagasawa, God is the greatest metaphysically possible being in that God is extensively and intensively superior to all other beings with regards to great-making properties. A great-making property is a property that, all things being equal, contributes to the intrinsic greatness of its possessor. A being is extensively superior to other beings if it has more great-making properties than other beings. A being is intensively superior to other beings if it has the great-making properties to a higher degree of intensity than other beings. Nagasawa considers different ways to understand this superiority, and how each can be used to develop the great chain of being—the hierarchical ordering of all possible beings according to their greatness.

In Chapter 3 Nagasawa examines the structure of Type-A, Type-B, and Type-C arguments in detail. As noted before, it is often assumed that perfect being theism entails The Omni God Thesis. Nagasawa explains that The Omni God Thesis has to consider Type-A, Type-B, and Type-C arguments on a case by case basis. He notes that there are good theistic replies to these arguments, but that it is inefficient to consider these arguments one by one. Instead, one can undermine all of these arguments in one fell swoop by adopting The Maximal God Thesis. Thus, The Maximal God Thesis offers a more efficient way to defend perfect being theism.

In Chapter 4 Nagasawa considers various objections to The Maximal God Thesis. For example, one might say that The Maximal God Thesis prevents God from being worthy of worship. Another might complain that The Maximal God Thesis undermines the uniqueness of God that is captured in The Omni God Thesis. Nagasawa assesses these objections, and finds them wanting.

Chapters 5 and 6 offer a rigorous examination and defence of the classical ontological argument developed by Anselm. Nagasawa does an excellent job at pinpointing the structure of the ontological argument. This allows Nagasawa to specify where objections to the ontological argument fail. One common type of objection to the ontological argument is to develop a parody argument. The parody arguments are intended to have the same structure as the ontological argument, but they have premises that entail absurd conclusions. A successful parody indicates that there is something wrong with the structure of the classical ontological argument. Nagasawa contends, however, that most parody arguments fail to parody the structure of the classical ontological argument.

In Chapter 7 Nagasawa turns his attention to the modal ontological argument. The success of the modal ontological argument rests on establishing the premise that it is possible that God exists. What is needed is to show that 'God is the metaphysically greatest possible being' is consistent, and thus it is possible that God exists. After



surveying various attempts to establish the possibility that God exists, Nagasawa concludes that each attempt is unsuccessful. However, Nagasawa assures us that all is not lost for the modal ontological argument. In order to establish the possibility that God exists, one should adopt The Maximal God Thesis. The Maximal God Thesis has the needed consistency already built into its concept of God. So, adopting The Maximal God Thesis is a huge advantage for the modal ontological argument.

Advanced students of theology and philosophy will find *Maximal God* rewarding because it contains clear arguments and rigorous analysis of important issues in the doctrine of God. For those interested in apologetics, Nagasawa's approach to the ontological argument should not be missed. For those who are brand new to theology and philosophy of religion, I recommend starting with Nagasawa's earlier book *The Existence of God: A Philosophical Introduction*.

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**Davison, Scott A. *Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Investigation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 189, \$75.00, hardback.**

Scott Davison is Professor of Philosophy at Morehead State University. His other writings on petitionary prayer appear in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, and *The European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. This monograph is his first full-length treatment of the subject.

Petitionary prayer is a practice which is central to Christian piety, yet, few Christians stop to ask, does prayer make a difference to God? One almost assumes that it does, or else prayer seems to be redundant. Scott Davison, in *Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Investigation*, poses this type of question as follows: "Assuming that the God of traditional theism exists, is it reasonable to think that God answers specific petitionary prayers? Or are those prayers pointless in the sense that they do not influence God's action?" (p. 8). In attempting to answer this question, Davison refrains from interjecting his own religious beliefs and seeks instead to "write as a philosopher trying to be responsible for what we know from reason about metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory" (p. 4). He explains that he will defend his conclusions "by appealing to philosophical reasons that could be appreciated by anyone, reasons that do not require accepting the teachings of any specific religion," yet at the same time he concedes that "specific religious doctrines are very important in connection with this topic" (p. 4).

Although Davison himself does not divide the book into parts, *Petitionary Prayer* could be read as having four parts. Part one sets the framework necessary for tackling the question of petitionary prayer (chapters 1-2). Here Davison addresses what counts as answered prayers. According to him, answered prayers are those prayers which God actually brings about the thing that was requested. But what

does it mean to say that God brought about the thing requested? Davison answers this question in chapter two. After finding Thomas Flint's counterfactual account and Alexander Pruss's omnirationality account wanting, he proposes what he calls the Contrastive Reason Account. According to this account a "petitionary prayer is answered by God if and only if God's desire to provide the object of the prayer just because the petitioner requested it plays an essential role in a true contrastive explanation of God's providing that object rather than not" (p. 163). With this account in hand Davison proceeds with part two.

The second part develops challenges to petitionary prayer (chapters 3-5). First, he addresses challenges that arise from various accounts of divine freedom. Then he turns his attention to epistemological challenges. Although there are various epistemological challenges, the primary challenge Davison addresses concerns how we would know if God answered a particular person's (S) petitionary prayer for a specific thing (E). After all, it seems as though E could be explained in numerous ways:

1. E was caused by natural forces.
2. E was caused by some intelligent person who is not God.
3. God brought about E because someone else prayed for it.
4. God brought about E because S prayed for it.

Even if (4) was the case, it seems as though, apart from direct revelation by God, S is not in a position to know which of these reasons explain E. S might correctly believe (4) but simply holding this true belief does not mean that S knows (4). According to Davison, the most reasonable thing to do in this case is to withhold belief as to whether or not E was an answer to S's prayer. Regrettably, Davison does not avail himself to theological resources which can help overcome the agnosticism that results from this challenge. Davison should not be blamed for this given his self-imposed philosophical constraints. But what if he did make use of these resources? What options would be available to him? One option would be to say that God in fact often directly reveals that he has answered a particular prayer. Christians in charismatic traditions often report such experiences. But if one doubts that God commonly reveals himself in this way today, there are other ways around this challenge. Consider the following example. Dexter asks his friend Ed to buy him a burger. Ed walks away. Five minutes later, someone walks up to Dexter and says to him, "here is your burger." What explains the appearance of a burger? Well the burger could have been purchased for Dexter by some other person, the burger could have been purchased for some other person and incorrectly delivered to Dexter, or Ed could have purchased the burger and had it sent to him. Dexter might correctly believe that this last option was in fact the case. But could he *know* this was the case? Surely the answer to this question depends on what one believes is required for a belief to count as knowledge. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that knowledge is warranted true belief. Might it be the case that knowing that in the past

Ed had promised to always buy burgers when asked warrants Dexter's belief that Ed bought the burger? If one grants this, might it not be the case that knowing, because it is revealed in Scripture, that God has promised to answer all prayers for S, warrants belief in (4)? If one believes this, then perhaps one does not need to withhold belief about (4).

In part three Davison shifts his attention from challenges towards defenses of petitionary prayers. Defenses, roughly speaking, concern arguments for why God would withhold certain goods from persons unless that person offers petitionary prayers (chapters 6-8). Here Davison critiques recent defenses of petitionary prayer including those offered by Richard Swinburne, Daniel and Frances Howard-Snyder, and Isaac Choi. However, his most significant contribution in this section is his development of The Autonomy Defense. Roughly, this defense claims that through petitionary prayer people authorize God to do things that otherwise might be inappropriate for God to do (p. 136). He further nuances this defense by making a distinction between "permission required goods" and "non-permission required good" (p. 138). The result is a plausible defense of petitionary prayer that fits both libertarian and compatibilist accounts of human freedom. Compatibilists will appreciate this, as compatibilist accounts of petitionary prayer have received little attention in philosophical literature. The final part of the book addresses various practical issues involved in petitionary prayer, the aims of prayer, prayer's relation to faith, and thanksgiving.

This book is a welcome contribution to philosophical discussions concerning petitionary prayer. Novices to the topic, including undergraduates, will find it helpful that Davison defines elementary concepts. They will also find it useful that he has cataloged many recent defenses and challenges to prayer. Readers who believe it is impossible to approach the topic from a purely philosophical angle will find his lack of engagement with theological sources frustrating. Nevertheless, anyone who reads this book will find something that stimulates further reflection on this perennially significant topic. I pray that this book gets the wide audience it deserves.

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**James E. Dolezal, *All That Is In God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017, pp. 162, \$18.**

James E. Dolezal is an assistant professor at Cairn University's school of divinity. He has previously published on the doctrine of divine simplicity. In his new book, *All That Is In God* (ATIIG), Dolezal offers a concise defense of classical theism. On classical Christian theism, the triune God is a necessarily existent being who is

simple, immutable, impassible, and timeless. ATIIG contains seven chapters that take the reader through these classical attributes and the doctrine of the Trinity.

ATIIG also offers a critique of contemporary evangelical attempts to modify or reject the classical understanding of God. Various contemporary evangelical theologians and philosophers have rejected this understanding of God in favor of a God who enters into a genuine give-and-take relationship with creation. Dolezal labels such thinkers “theistic mutualists.” Dolezal notes that theistic mutualism comes in a variety of forms such as process theism and open theism, but his main target in ATIIG tends to be Calvinists and social trinitarians. It is worth noting that the term “theistic mutualism” is a neologism of Dolezal’s own making. Since theistic mutualism applies to such a broad range of theological views, one might worry that the term is too course-grained to demarcate positions in theology. For example, the underlying metaphysical and theological assumptions within the process theology of Charles Hartshorne are quite different from that of Karl Barth, and yet they are both classified as theistic mutualists in Dolezal’s eyes.

Dolezal starts ATIIG by explaining that this is a work in contemplative theology, and not biblical theology. According to Dolezal, biblical theology is not well-suited for the task of theology proper because biblical theology treats God like a historical character in the narrative of redemption. Instead, Dolezal asserts that one must take the contemplative approach to theology which treats God as ahistorical (p. xv). At this point, one might worry that Dolezal is starting his project with the God of classical theism and then turning to the Bible for proof-texts. One might be worried indeed that this is Dolezal’s approach upon surveying the bibliography of ATIIG. In the bibliography, one will see a preponderance of references to works on Thomistic metaphysics, and yet only one reference to a biblical scholar—D. A. Carson. To be sure, Dolezal will not be offering any engagement with biblical scholars like Richard Bauckham, Walter Brueggemann, Terence Fretheim, John Goldingay, and R. W. L. Moberly. I gather that such biblical scholars are excluded from the conversation because they do not take the contemplative approach to theology.

This is unfortunate since the work of these scholars is a major motivation for believing that the God of the Bible is mutable, passible, and temporal. So one might wonder if Dolezal is ignoring these biblical arguments. Dolezal will deny that he is ignoring these biblical arguments. As he explains, the biblical passages that portray God as mutable, passible, and temporal are easily explained away as metaphorical and anthropomorphic (cf. pp. 85-86). In other places, Dolezal assures us that Thomistic scholars have the correct interpretation of passages like Exodus 3:14 (p. 46). Apparently, there is no need to discuss what Old Testament scholars think of the divine name in Exodus 3 because the contemplative theologians have it covered.

Throughout ATIIG, Dolezal complains that theistic mutualists are unable to maintain the absoluteness and infinite fullness of God’s being. I am not entirely sure what Dolezal means by the terms *absoluteness* and *fullness of being*, but these

terms play a large role in Dolezal's argument in ATIIG. At times these terms seem to be interchangeable with divine simplicity and immutability (cf. pp. 7-8, and 137). However, in other places, these terms are meant to motivate these doctrines (chapter 3). Hopefully, fullness of being is not identical to divine simplicity and immutability. If it is, the arguments in chapters 2 and 4 are question begging. In these chapters, Dolezal argues that theistic mutualism is incompatible with divine simplicity and immutability. Yet a few of his remarks make it sound like he is arguing that theistic mutualism is incompatible with the absolute fullness of God's being. A definition of these key terms would help a reader see if Dolezal is begging the question, or offering a substantive argument against theistic mutualism.

The term *infinite* is given a large role as well in Dolezal's arguments for classical theism. Yet infinity does not receive a definition until page 87 when most of the arguments have already been given. On page 87, 'infinity' seems to mean that God is without limitations. Yet in several other places, Dolezal suggests that infinite has a meaning that is analogical to a transfinite mathematical concept (p. 136). These are very different conceptions of infinity, and neither clearly leads to classical theism. This is evidenced by the fact that the definition of divine infinity as "without limits" plays a key role in arguments for pantheism during the 17th and 18th Century pantheism controversy (cf. Philip Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*). Further, the mathematical concept of the actual infinite does not obviously have any theological place here as evidenced by the fact that Georg Cantor (the father of transfinite math) did not predicate an actual infinite to God. Instead, Cantor says that there is a different concept of infinity that applies to God: perfection.

There is a further problem related to divine infinity. Dolezal continually claims that divine infinity is the classical understanding of God; but this is demonstrably false. Philosophers like Katherin Rogers, Philip Clayton, and Graham Oppy have pointed out that theologians were wary of predicating infinity of God prior to the scholastic era because of the negative connotations with infinity. Once scholastic thinkers like Aquinas and Scotus start predicating infinity of God, there is no clear agreement between them over the definition of this attribute. So Dolezal needs to offer the reader a clear explication of divine infinity in order to establish its proper place in classical theism. (For more on infinity, see Michael Heller and W. Hugh Woodin, eds., *Infinity: New Research Frontiers*.)

Whatever terms like *absoluteness*, *infinity*, and *fullness of being* mean, Dolezal thinks that theistic mutualists are incapable of maintaining them. Hence, Dolezal says theistic mutualism entails idolatry. The accusation of idolatry is a recurring theme throughout the book (cf. p. 6-7, 58). It is a curious accusation, since the God of theistic mutualism is a necessarily existent triune being who is the omnipotent and omniscient Creator of all contingent reality. Of course, the God of theistic mutualism acquires accidental properties like "being the *Creator*." For Dolezal, this entails that the mutualist God is an idol. I must confess that this is a rather impressive idol.

Much more impressive than the idols that Isaiah rejected. However, Dolezal argues that such a God is an idol because this God acquires being and actuality from His creatures when He acquires accidental properties like “being the *Creator*” (p. 97).

At this point, it is worth noting two things. First, throughout ATIIG, Dolezal uncritically accepts Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, and offers little explication of these philosophical concepts. One will need to read a further source, like Edward Feser’s *Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*, in order to see just how much Thomistic metaphysics is being assumed in Dolezal’s work. Second, throughout ATIIG, Dolezal pays little attention to the essentialist metaphysics of his opponents. At times, the caricatures of his opponents’ metaphysics are painfully apparent. Allow me to illustrate.

According to Dolezal, contemporary theistic mutualists tend to say that God’s *being* refers to God’s *essence* or *nature*. Dolezal complains that mutualists just do not understand ontology because this is not the true, existential meaning of *being* that one finds in the scholastic metaphysical tradition. On this scholastic understanding, *being* refers to actuality or any participation in the act of existing (pp. 7-8). Much like with Dolezal’s handling of biblical passages, there is no need for debate with contemporary metaphysicians on these sorts of things because the Thomists clearly have the right metaphysical story. As Dolezal sees things, theistic mutualists have unwittingly embraced a rudimentary form of process theism instead of affirming the true notion of being (pp. 7-8).

To be clear, the theistic mutualists that Dolezal critiques do not unwittingly embrace a rudimentary form of process theism. For example, one of Dolezal’s targets is John Feinberg. In Feinberg’s *No One Like Him*, an entire chapter is devoted to critiquing process theism. Feinberg also articulates the essentialist metaphysics that he is working with in his theology. However, Dolezal shows no clear understanding of the essentialism his opponents embrace. Thankfully, Jay Wesley Richards’s *The Untamed God: A Philosophical Exploration of Divine Perfection, Simplicity, and Immutability* spends two chapters laying out an essentialist metaphysics before critiquing the doctrines of God found in process theology, Barthian thought, and classical theism. Readers who are interested in understanding the clear and widely acknowledged differences between theistic essentialism and process theology should start with Richards’s book.

ATIIG is intended for popular evangelical audiences. To his credit, Dolezal has given us a concise articulation of classical theism that can serve as a primer for students and pastors. This will be ideal for readers of this journal who are looking for an introduction to the classical doctrine of God and its place within evangelical theology. However, more advanced students will need to look elsewhere for a defense of classical theism that fully engages with opponents to the classical doctrine of God. For these advanced students, I recommend Katherin Roger’s *Perfect Being Theology*.

Pastors may also wish to find a more charitable introductory text to classical theism that does not accuse others of idolatry. To be fair to Dolezal, I have seen some of Dolezal's Calvinist interlocutors accuse open theists of idolatry. I have also witnessed open and relational theists accuse classical theists of idolatry. So the charge of idolatry is being thrown around by all sides within contemporary evangelical theology. Perhaps evangelical theologians should lay off the idolatry card, and focus more on the arguments.

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**Sailhamer, John H. *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995, pp. 327, \$21.99, paperback.**

John H. Sailhamer (1946-2017) taught Old Testament at Biola University, Bethel Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Western Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Golden Gate Baptist Seminary. In 2000, he was elected president of the Evangelical Theological Society, and made major contributions to Evangelical Old Testament scholarship through his writing. Sailhamer recently passed away and a review of one of his significant contributions is merited as it has retained its value for over 20 years. He published over fifteen books, many articles and contributions to edited volumes, and left a legacy for appreciating the Old Testament that can inspire and continue to guide Biblical Studies students today.

Sailhamer's classic work, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*, is designed to provide a "student-oriented, comprehensive overview of the discipline" (p. 5). Additionally, Sailhamer sought to offer a fresh contribution to Evangelical Old Testament scholarship through his own canonical approach. His book has three parts: an introduction, historical and methodological overview, and a concluding section containing Sailhamer's own methodological proposal for a biblical theology of the Old Testament. The appendices after his concluding chapter provide short examples of his canonical approach.

In part one, Sailhamer examines what is meant by the words Old Testament Theology, which he defines as "the study and presentation of what is revealed in the Old Testament" (p. 17). The Old Testament scholar's task involves hermeneutics, language, translation, exegesis, and introductory questions (date, author, genre, form) as well as articulating the dynamic relationship of the Old to New Testament (making this a distinctly Christian enterprise), the Old Testament within the context of the Ancient Near East, and then presenting the conclusion of this process in a specific format.

Part two (The Methodology of the Old Testament) is the largest portion of Sailhamer's book. In chapter two, he proposes a linguistic, taxonomical approach

(componential analysis) in order to evaluate the assumptions that drive the different Old Testament theologies. His binary (+/-) approach evaluates four general components that comprise scholars working assumptions: text or event, criticism or canon, descriptive or confessional, and diachronic or synchronic. These binary components are the subject of the four subsequent chapters.

Chapter three (Text or Event) considers whether an OT theology focuses on the Hebrew text or the historical events behind the text. Responding to the historical criticism of Modern critical scholarship, conservative (Evangelical) scholars have reacted by retaining the historical methodology of Modern biblical criticism to demonstrate the meaningfulness and reliability of the Old Testament. Sailhamer's proposed corrective is for Evangelicals to take seriously their own claim that revelation is tied to the *written* Word of God, with the result that claims to verbal inspiration should lead one to adopt a text-oriented approach to the meaning of the Old Testament rather than an event-oriented method, however useful for apologetic purposes.

Chapter four (Criticism or Canon) examines approaches to OT theology that either focus on the reconstruction of previous forms of the text or those that focus on the final form. These approaches can be further sub-divided by the previous question concerning text- or event-oriented assumptions to help the student situate the major critical sub-fields of biblical studies, including literary, source, form, tradition, phenomenological, canon, composition, redaction, text-linguistic, and historical criticism.

In chapter five (Descriptive or Confessional), Sailhamer considers methods which exclusively utilize scientific methodology so as to more objectively describe the theology of the Old Testament, and those which retain faith commitment intentionally. After a lengthy overview in which he attempts "to take all the current and past versions of the origin of biblical and OT theology into account" (p. 117), he concludes by contending that even confessional approaches must attempt to be as descriptive as possible in order to consider the meaning of the Old Testament to the original audience.

Finally, in chapter six (Diachronic or Synchronic), he examines the diachronic or synchronic approaches by which OT scholars choose to present their Old Testament theologies. Diachronic approaches are generally temporally ordered, but some are structured by logical connections while others are constructed by thematic connections built on a temporal sequence. Synchronic approaches, on the other hand, are organized by major topics or central ideas, and include synchronic-systematic, synchronic-synthetic, and synchronic-scriptural presentations. Although ultimately proposing a diachronic model, Sailhamer is sympathetic to other modes of Old Testament theological presentation and concedes their validity based on their usefulness in their specific context.

Part Three contains Sailhamer's proposal for his canonical theology of the Old Testament. In this chapter, he shows how his four basic assumptions (text, canon,



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confessional, and diachronic) shape his specific approach. Sailhamer contends for a text-oriented approach because his view of Scripture as divine revelation in verbal inspiration leads him to find the meaning of the Old Testament in the history of God's acts with his people *as represented in the Hebrew text*, not in a reconstruction of the factual, historical events. Thus, he proposes a text-theory that takes seriously philology, in-textuality, inner-textuality, inter-textuality, con-textuality, narratology, and compositional strategy. As Sailhamer locates divine revelation in the final form, he finds value in tradition and text-criticism only in so far as they contribute towards helping understand the meaning of the final form of the canon. His confessional approach appreciates the apologetic usefulness of historical method for demonstrating the general truthfulness of the Old Testament, but does not utilize it for understanding the meaning of the final text. Finally, he proposes a diachronic approach that follows the structure of the Hebrew Bible (Law, Prophets, and Writings) because the nature of the Hebrew Bible lends towards a diachronic approach due to inter-textuality, canonical redaction, and con-textuality.

After his concluding proposal, Sailhamer includes four appendices that illustrate his approach. Appendix A evaluates the major themes and purpose of the Law in the Pentateuch. Appendix B applies compositional critical methodology to the Pentateuch in order to highlight the specific compositional strategies at work. Appendix C is a consideration of literary techniques in the narrative world of Genesis, while Appendix D is an exegetical investigation of the inter-biblical interpretation in 1 Chronicles 21:1.

Sailhamer's *Introduction to Old Testament Theology* still maintains significant value for the student in three ways. First, Sailhamer's taxonomical analysis of the assumptions driving different methods for Old Testament theologies will help every student, pastor, and even scholar quickly and insightfully situate Old Testament theologies by their assumptions. Second, his categorical distinctions will help the student in developing their own method for studying and presenting the theology of the Old Testament. The historical and methodological overview will help students to assess their own assumptions and intentionally choose their own approach. Finally, Sailhamer's own canonical approach offers a method that takes seriously divine revelation and yet does not become overly fixated with attempting to prove the historicity of the narratives. Rather, separating methodologically from the historical method, the text-oriented, canonical approach offers a confessional student of the Old Testament a diachronic method which takes the historical facticity of the text for granted, and focuses on compositional strategies in order to exegete the meaning of the Old Testament for the church today. Sailhamer's introduction belongs on the bookshelf of every biblical studies student, pastor, and Old Testament scholar.

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**Seevers, Boyd. *Warfare in the Old Testament: The Organization, Weapons, and Tactics of Ancient Near Eastern Armies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013.**

*Warfare in the Old Testament* by Boyd Seevers documents the reality of warfare in the history of the six most prominent nations of the Old Testament, specifically: Israel, Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylon and Persia. Each nation is examined through the events, duties, weapons, and battles from a historical background of known conflicts. The discussion of military organization, weapons, strategy and tactics allow Seevers to guide the reader by providing details of these armies through stories, historical information, military artifacts, drawings, sketches and maps. Through the eyes of a civilian, Seevers tells the story of a native Israeli who comments in an interview, “I can’t imagine life without the army” (p. 19). Warfare affected the lives of the people. The idea of people desiring, “that we may be like all nations, and that our king my judge us and go out before us and fight our battles” (1 Samuel 8:20) is brought into context, “in the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle” (2 Samuel 11:1).

Seevers’ writing engages the reader to consider the details of Israel’s war involvement and the sovereignty of God is emphasized in His aid to the nation merging the biblical narrative with application of the history of war. Biblical and extra-biblical accounts are woven together providing a picture to the reader. Scripture references allow one to refer to the specifics for themselves. For example, in Joshua, the details of the entrance into Canaan and the battle of Jericho are magnified as the significance of physical protection by the Lord during the time of healing from circumcision. This biblical story is paralleled with a modern soldier’s story from Seevers’ life experience. Israel’s five major enemies, although there were other nations, are highlighted in the different eras of their history. Egypt was a large empire to the West where the Israelites escaped by the hand of God through Moses. However, they continued to exert influence throughout the region. The Seafaring Philistines troubled Israel during the period of the Judges and early monarchy. The Assyrian’s cruelty destroyed the northern Kingdom of Israel while turning Judah into a vassal state and laid siege upon Jerusalem. Babylon’s attack on Judah carried its people into exile also with the spoils of war. The Medes and Persians later overthrew the Babylonian empire. Seevers illustrates the unique features of each culture by describing battles from the perspective of one of its military commanders along with organization, weapons and tactics.

Old Testament scholars seek to avoid relegating Scripture to secondary status. As theologians, one seeks to understand the hermeneutical construction of the biblical texts claiming that God is the first source initiator and sustainer of events. War in the Old Testament does not have a simple solution. Seevers provides an excellent basis for focusing on Scripture and allowing it to enlighten one’s theology. God’s

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ideal judgment of Israel's enemies is left to Yahweh as a warrior. Israel fights with Yahweh under the rule of the judges and Saul; again under David; while Yahweh fights against Israel's disobedience by sending the nation into exile. Security against external threats is grounded in the warrior of Yahweh and not the armies of the people. One cannot understand the Old Testament without reference to war. Bethel, an important city to ancient Israel, was destroyed four times in the two-hundred year period from the time of the Judges to the establishment of the Davidic monarchy. The differences between Israel and their enemies point to different value systems. The focus of obedience to Yahweh is reflected in that the Israelites did not glorify warfare as did their neighbors. Israel did not engage in hero worship or erecting monuments commemorating battles as did the Assyrians. Such focus is found in Isaiah, who prophesied during military crises by exhorting the nation to trust in God alone to meet these military needs (Isaiah 19:1-3; 30:15-18; 31:1-5). God alone has the right to destroy and kill. For example, in Joshua 5:13-15, Joshua asks the army commander of the Lord whether he is for us, or for our adversary? Neither! The Lord is for those who follow His command. The book provides an excellent background and context for the biblical text. Seevers' synthesis and summary of Ancient Near East provides a resources for pastors working to exegete a text, even though Seevers writes expositively. The book may also be an opportunity for a Bible study, military Chaplin, or anyone seeking to view the Old Testament through a lens that is not often considered as it spans the whole of Israel's national, military history and how weaponry, armor and military structure changed over the centuries as the Lord led.

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**Oliphint, K. Scott, *Thomas Aquinas (Great Thinkers)*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, pp. 145, \$14.99, paperback.**

Scott Oliphint serves as professor of apologetics and systematic theology at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He studied directly under Cornelius Van Til, the father of present-day presuppositional apologetics. Oliphint champions Van Til's view in the twenty-first century through his publications, such as, *Covenantal Apologetics: Principles and Practice in Defense of Our Faith*; *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics*; as well as the editor for numerous books on Cornelius Van Til, including: *The Defense of the Faith*; *Christian Theistic Evidences*, and *Common Grace and The Gospel*. His latest contribution, *Thomas Aquinas*, is one book in a series of publications reviewing "Great Thinkers," which seek to understand and evaluate influential theologians and philosophers throughout church history.

At the outset of the book, Oliphint states his interest in this book is to argue that Reformed Thomism cannot be reconciled with historic Reformed theology. “Whatever ‘Reformed Thomism’ might be,” says Oliphint, “or might mean, in our current context, it cannot be a synthesis of biblically foreign Thomistic teachings and a consistent, biblical theology” (p. 3). He believes Reformed theologians either cannot incorporate Aquinas’s views into their theology, or, if incorporated, Thomism must be “reworked and reoriented—‘reshaped,’ as it were—in order to be consistent with a Reformed theological context” (p. 2). Moreover, since Aquinas’s literature is so vast and voluminous, Oliphint narrows the scope of his analysis to two topics: “the foundation of *existence* (*principium essendi*), which is God himself, and the foundation of *knowledge* (*principium cognoscendi*), which is God’s revelation” (p. 2). After a brief overview and introduction, Oliphint divides his work accordingly, offering one chapter on each *principium* and a conclusion.

Oliphint addresses the *principium cognoscendi* by outlining Aquinas’s view of reason and revelation, the problem of self-existence, epistemology and metaphysics, and the *praeambula fidei* (preambles of the faith). For Aquinas, there is a twofold truth of divine things. The first is by way of natural reason, and the second by way of revelation. “Thomas thinks that natural reason forms the foundational structure of which revelation is the superstructure, in part because of his understanding of certain biblical passages” claims Oliphint (p. 13). In particular, Aquinas bases his natural theology on Romans 1:19, arguing, “It is written (Rom. 1:19), *That which is known of God, namely, what can be known of God by natural reason, is manifest in them*” (p. 13, emphasis in original). Thus, Aquinas believes natural reason is able, by itself, to demonstrate God’s existence and obtain knowledge of him (p. 13). Oliphint’s primary critique of Aquinas in this chapter is epistemological. He claims that Aquinas has an anemic view of the noetic effects of sin and the proper function of “natural reason.” Oliphint quotes one person, noting, “Whereas the medieval doctors had assumed that the fall affected primarily the will and its affections and *not the reason*, the Reformers assumed also the fallenness of the rational faculty” (p. 33). Therefore, Oliphint responds to each level of Aquinas’s argument, namely, he addresses: 1) the relationship between the noetic effects of sin and natural theology; 2) faults he finds in Aquinas’s exegesis of passages such as John 1:9 and Romans 1:19, namely, he believes they do not allow for natural theology; and 3) the self-evident knowledge of God *via the sensus divinitatis* (i.e., Oliphint believes the rebellious natural man reject this third type of knowledge because it is the only sure form of knowledge, not a form of knowledge derived from natural theology or natural reason, since he considers both of these modes unsure forms of knowledge). Oliphint continues this critique throughout his chapter on the *principium essendi* where he discusses God’s existence, nature, knowledge, and attributes (pp. 55-77). He also evaluates the classical attributes of God (e.g., the prospect of affirming classical theism), in

particular Eleonore Stump's models of simplicity. We will now proceed to a brief evaluation.

First, Oliphint interacts significantly with classic texts by Aquinas and demonstrates a thorough knowledge of secondary literature in Thomistic studies. Conceivably, some Thomists will be concerned that Oliphint has not read a sufficient amount of primary and secondary literature in Thomistic studies. Such a Thomist need not be concerned; for Oliphint demonstrates a noteworthy depth in the primary and secondary sources, including his remarkable breadth of knowledge concerning sundry scholarly debates amongst Thomists. For example, Oliphint interacts well with a debate over the *praeambula fidei*, noting that one camp believes Aquinas offers a *purely philosophical* "preambles of the faith," and those following Gilson, who argue that Thomas's philosophical theology is primarily *theological* (p. 26). Therefore, critics of Oliphint should not dismiss his criticisms at the level of insufficient knowledge or improper dedication to the plethora of primary and secondary Thomistic resources.

Second, Oliphint seems rightly to understand significant differences between Aquinas and numerous Reformed theologians. However, in the conclusion of Oliphint's book he offers an inadequate understanding of the primary differences between Thomism and Molinism and the nature of God's knowledge. He claims that Molina's view of middle knowledge (*scientia media*) is based upon a Thomistic understanding of God's knowledge of future contingent things (p. 125). Unfortunately, this is a misreading of both Aquinas and Molina. Aquinas did not claim, contrary to Molina, that God's knowledge of future contingents is based upon actual persons or events, and the way those individuals would freely act in a given situation. Namely, Aquinas's view does not fall prey to the grounding objection leveled against middle knowledge. For Aquinas, God knows himself perfectly; therefore, God knows his causality perfectly (including future contingent events and beings) and his knowledge is in no way dependent upon future contingent free choices. Therefore, unlike Molinism, Thomism does not fall prey to the grounding objection because God is the ground of his knowledge. Second, Molinism allows for a discursive element to God's knowledge, even if it is a logical discursiveness, because of the *way* middle knowledge functions and the *means* God obtains his foreknowledge of the actual world. Aquinas would reject this view of God's knowledge, first, because God is Pure Act and lacks the ability to change. Second, since God's being is the proper object of his knowledge (which lacks the ability change), not mutable future contingent objects, his knowledge is not grounded on mutable beings and does not require any change in the act of cognition. In brief, these differences between Aquinas and Molina on this topic are not one of degree, but of kind.

Nonetheless, Oliphint offers a strong reminder to theologians that our view of God and revelation must first and foremost be grounded upon Scripture, not philosophical reasoning. His consistent interaction with the primary and secondary

literature of Aquinas demonstrates that Reformed theologians in particular, whether they embrace Aquinas or not, must filter Thomas's thought through biblical theology and the confessional standards of Reformed thought (p. 126). In that sense, Oliphint provides not only a clear and throughout explanation of Aquinas, but a reminder that Scripture must be our source-criterion and ultimate authority for all Christian theology, philosophy, and apologetics.

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