

open to the possibility of correction from a range of interpretive communities (place, time, race, etc.). Finally, Green's proposal is pervaded by a dependence upon the Holy Spirit who generates and continues to form the believing community.

Green rejects the notion of any single "correct" method for reading the Bible as Scripture. Assessing common *behind* the text, *in* the text, and *in front* of the text approaches, he prioritizes the text, but not to the exclusion of the history behind the text or of the text's readers. Nonetheless, Green relegates all methods to the service of Scripture's own aim, and he assesses valid readings both in terms of their ability to account for textual, historical, literary, and lexical forms, and by their ability to be ruled by a text's canonical embeddedness within the boundaries of doctrine and to be actualized in transformed lives.

Green concludes by articulating the nature of biblical authority inherent in his hermeneutical proposal. He emphasizes the Bible's intrinsic authority that is recognized by those who are being formed and shaped by Scripture. Because the biblical narrative adequately interprets reality in light of God's self-disclosure and graciously invites readers to participate in the narrative, ultimately, the reader who recognizes Scripture's authority is one who is formed by it in accordance with God's self-disclosure.

Overall, *Seized by Truth* presents a strong argument that the people of God should not strive for neutrality in their interaction with the Bible if it is to be formative in their lives. Green's positive evaluation of a reader's self-conscious theological location within the Christian community, coupled with an affirmation of rigorous historical and textual work, has compelling elements, and it challenges those who either intentionally or unwittingly denigrate theology, practice, and application to a status secondary to history and text. Nonetheless, if I as an interpreter did not already share Green's theological presuppositions about the nature of Scripture, the arguments he presents would not be compelling. Like all hermeneutical approaches intentionally located in a reading community, it cannot convince the outsider of the priority of this reading community over any other.

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Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation. By Graeme Goldsworthy. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 341 pp., \$29.00.

Goldsworthy is a praiseworthy author of a string of books and articles on biblical theology, and he identifies with conservative evangelicalism, Anglicanism, Calvinism, amillennialism, and presuppositional apologetics. He is now a retired lecturer at Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, where he has taught hermenutics since 1995.

The title reflects Goldsworthy's conviction that "hermeneutics focuses on the gospel as it has its outworking in the realm of our understanding of the Scriptures" (p. 16). The subtitle, however, may be partly misleading, because unlike many other hermenutics texts, this one does not focus on general and genre-specific interpretational "principles." Rather, it constructively criticizes hermenutics that obscure the gospel.

The body of the book has three major sections. In the first, "Evangelical Prolegomena to Hermeneutics" (pp. 21–85), Goldsworthy addresses evangelical foundations and presuppositions. One presupposition is that the Bible is God's infallible word because it says so (pp. 32–35). God created humans to have knowledge that is "true though finite," not "absolute and exhaustive" (p. 35; cf. pp. 53, 55). Augustine's epistemological stance,

"I believe in order to understand," rightly subordinates "human reason and understanding" to "divine truth and revelation" (pp. 41–42). "Non-Christian presuppositions" are "self-referentially incoherent" (p. 42; cf. 184). "The gospel is the interpretational norm for the whole Bible" as well as all reality (p. 63). Biblical theology, which "is essentially the examination of the individual parts to see how they fit into the big picture," is "uniquely appropriate for" understanding "what kind of hermeneutical model fits the world-view of Christian theism" (p. 68).

The section major section, entitled "Challenges to Evangelical Hermeneutics" (pp. 87–180), selectively highlights eight significant hermeneutical errors that "eclipse" the gospel. The metaphor recognizes "that eclipses are not always total and can even be partial enough to pass unnoticed by all but those trained to look for them" (p. 90). Although they have many positive features, the hermeneutics of the following eight frameworks eclipse the gospel: the early church's unwarranted allegory and typology; the medieval church's "unbiblical philosophical categories" (p. 108); Roman Catholicism's contradiction of justification by faith alone; liberalism's domestication of God; philosophical hermeneutics' proud self-subjectivity; historical criticism's naturalistic presuppositions; literary criticism's focus on the text and reader rather than the Author/author; and evangelicalism's "hermeneutical perfectionism" that views their positions on key issues as infallible. Many evangelical readers will likely find the chapter on evangelicalism (pp. 167–80) to be the most interesting, insightful, convicting, and controversial. It surveys eight evangelical aberrations that approach Scripture naively: (1) Quietism: evangelical Docetism; (2) literalism: evangelical Zionism; (3) legalism: evangelical Judaism; (4) decisionism: evangelical Bultmannism; (5) subjectivism: evangelical Schleiermacherism; (6) "Jesus-in-my-heart-ism": evangelical Catholicism; (7) evangelical pluralism; and (8) evangelical pragmatism.

The book's third major section, "Reconstructing Evangelical Hermeneutics" (pp. 181–313), evaluates how to reconstruct gospel-centered hermeneutics, which includes delineating the extent to which evangelicals can profitably use other hermeneutical frameworks without compromise (p. 193). Here are four highlights: (1) Goldsworthy tentatively adapts speech-act theory (pp. 215–16). (2) Preachers should utilize history but not "set up dichotomies between the Bible as history and as literature or theology"; question the Bible's "overall historical timeline and metanarrative"; isolate narrative details "from the big picture and the goal of the gospel"; or let historicity overshadow the theological message (pp. 228, 231–33). (3) Macro-typology includes not only "facts, persons and events," but "entire epochs or stages within salvation history." Thus "any person, fact, or event in the Old Testament is a type of Christ to the degree that its theological function foreshadows that of Christ" (p. 248; cf. pp. 252–57). The hermeneutics of Jesus and the apostles demonstrate that the OT is "all about Jesus," but "many Christians want to go immediately to consider how the text is about them" (pp. 251–52). Every text in the OT and NT is connected to Christ (p. 252), and "the primary application of all texts is in Christ, not in us or something else" (pp. 256–57). (4) Biblical theology is a key to gospel-centered hermeneutics, but it is "probably the most neglected in all the literature on hermeneutics" (p. 258; cf. pp. 15, 312–13). Biblical and systematic theology are interrelated disciplines that should influence each other within the hermeneutical spiral (pp. 267–72). Goldsworthy concludes with a practical eleven-step hermeneutical checklist (pp. 308–13).

The weaknesses in the volume are relatively minor. (1) It includes a handful of typographical errors (e.g. pp. 36 n. 18, 202, 205) and inconsistently changes "centred" to "centered" on the cover and title page while keeping Australian spellings everywhere else. (2) The subdivisions for some chapters are artificially parallel and could use further subdivision (e.g. chap. 2). (3) Goldsworthy relies heavily on secondary literature, especially in Part 2. (4) Sometimes he lists strings of quotations or ideas from other

authors with little interaction or analysis. (5) By cautiously questioning the value of studying Jewish exegetical methods (pp. 92, 245), he does not seem to give sufficient weight to the Bible's historical character. (6) The definitions of key terms are not always clear. For example, although he quotes a variety of definitions of "hermeneutics" (p. 25), he does not clearly present his own. Another example is contrasting his references to "Krister Stendahl's distinction between what the text meant (exegesis) and what it means (hermeneutics)" (p. 203), the divisions in the *Interpreter's Bible* for "exegesis (what it meant)" and "exposition (what it means)" (p. 205), and "Krister Stendahl's now famous distinction between 'what it meant' (biblical theology) and 'what it means' (systematics)" (p. 267). Goldsworthy appears to equate exegesis and biblical theology on the one hand and hermeneutics, exposition, and systematics on the other. My understanding is that hermeneutics refers to theoretical interpretational principles and that exegesis is the application of those principles. Goldsworthy recognizes this distinction (p. 205) but does not follow it.

The book's strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. It is Christocentric, conservatively evangelical, and fitting as an upper-level graduate textbook. The most common theme is unmistakable: hermeneutics is based on and must center on the person and work of Christ. Goldsworthy demonstrates the need for a robust biblical theological method that exalts Jesus, which is exactly what his book does.

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Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets. By Christopher R. Seitz. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 264 pp., \$16.99 paper.

In biblical studies, as in all disciplines, methodological practices run the risk of outlasting the theoretical premises that engendered them. Such is the case, according to Seitz, with modern research in the prophetic literature of the OT.

Prophecy and Hermeneutics uses modern introductions to the prophets as a lens into the interpretive assumptions that govern the field. Typically, prophetic figures, ministering at particular times in Israel's history, are provided with a socio-political context against which their individual messages can be interpreted. This creates a record of how Israel's religious and prophetic traditions developed over time while also formulating a framework by which to organize the now-composite written legacy. In so doing, however, another context is overlooked, namely, the organization of the material within the canon and the coherence created by that arrangement, a feature Seitz proposes we need to factor into current descriptions of the Prophets.

Part 1 surveys the last two centuries of biblical studies, examining how reconstructions of Israel's history eclipsed the biblical presentation of prophecy. Gerhard von Rad, perhaps the most influential and representative figure of tradition-historical methods, is the primary interlocutor.

Tradition history sees the relationship between Law and Prophets in developmental terms as the adaptation of prior traditions for a subsequent audience. It is the unfolding tradition behind the biblical material that carries the theologically meaningful cargo and that the historian seeks to recreate. This is illustrated in Isaiah (thought to be composed at two or three different periods in Israel's history) and the Book of the Twelve (comprised of twelve individual witnesses from the whole spectrum of Israel's history, but joined together as one book). Both compositions are divided up, assigned to appropriate points on a historical timeline, and treated in historical sequence. According to