Exegetical Tools Quarterly 2.1 (January 2016)
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Books of the Week

The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption, by Vern Poythress

***The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption*, by Vern Poythress (Crossway, 2016), 272 pages.**

Vern Poythress is a true "Renaissance man." He earned a PhD in math from Harvard. He studied linguistics with SIL. He knows philosophy quite well. And of course, he has a PhD in New Testament, which he has taught for a very long time at Westminster Theological Seminary. I had the pleasure of taking a hermeneutics course with him and it was a true *tour de force* of how various academic disciplines overlap.

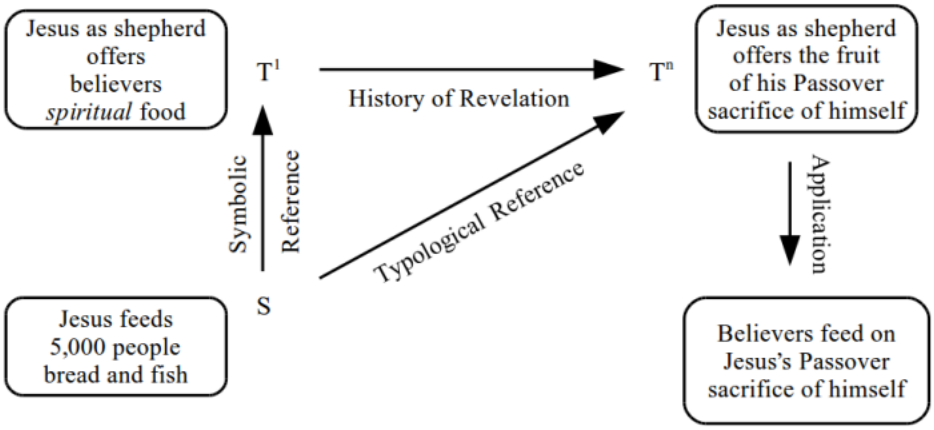
Poythress has now focused in his new *Miracles of Jesus* on a topic that still overlaps a few academic disciplines (and it's currently 40% off at the WTS Bookstore, $6 cheaper than Amazon's prices). He focuses on the *meaning* of Jesus' miracles, which necessarily involves a discussion of semiotics (a linguistics category), philosophy of language (what is "meaning?"), and theology. While he doesn't focus much on the historicity of Jesus' miracles, he does give a brief overview of the issues involved in the discussion (17-24).

Part 1 begins with the historicity issue and then the significance of miracles. Part 2 discusses the nature of miracles as signs. That is, miracles are not ends unto themselves, but point to something else; they act as signs to point to something signified. Throughout the book

Poythress makes liberal use of the "Clowney Rectangle," which is an illustration Ed Clowney came up with to show how one moves from the sign of a type to the signified of the antitype. The benefit of using the Clowney Rectangle to interpret the parables is that Poythress gives you a reproducible hermeneutic.

Part 3 consists of an exegesis of all the miracles in Matthew, passage by passage. Poythress moves briskly through the passage with mostly his own observations on the text. He explains what happened, what its symbolic referent is, how that symbolic referent is carried through redemptive history, and finally how it applies today to believers. Here is an example of his use of the Clowney Rectangle to explain the feeding of the 5,000.

Fig. 25.1: Clowney's Triangle for Feeding the 5,000, in Matthew



Explanation of the symbolic referents and the application of the symbol of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

Because each parable is explain briefly in Poythress' own observations, there are hardly any citations in this work. The bibliography spans only 1 page, with 7 of the 27 works being Poythress' books. That by no means implies that this is not a work of scholarship; as noted, Poythress' academic education and cross-disciplinary education allows a work of this nature to remain useful for laymen and pastors while maintaining academic credibility.

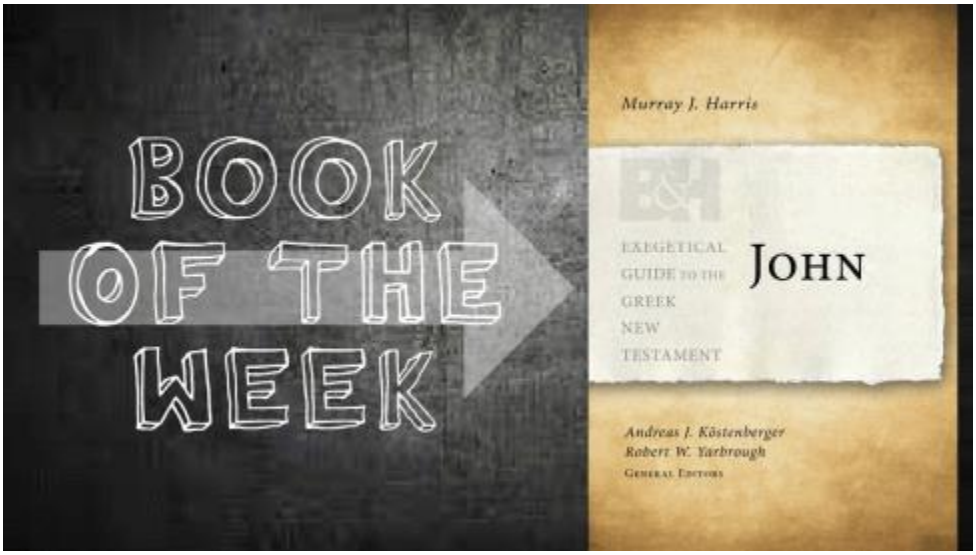
But one may be left wanting much more in these expositions. The method to skirt through each miracle allows Poythress to cover every miracle in Matthew, but one may wonder if more rigorous exegesis (at least visibly performed) would have altered Poythress' conclusions on what the spiritual referent is. What are other scholars saying about Matthew's point in including the parable in its literary context? Are there any significant (and mostly obvious) redactional issues to deal with, e.g., if Mark's version significantly differs from Matthew's? If so, is the

spiritual referent much different? Nevertheless, in its current form it reads easily and clearly and applies a consistent methodology.

This work seems ideal for small groups, who could take 4-5 weeks to learn the methodology in parts 1 and 2, and then read the chapters on 4-5 miracles a week. It would also be ideal for pastors who plan to preach on any of the Gospels, even though Poythress uses Matthew's accounts. This book would also be useful for those who want to see an interdisciplinary methodology at work. When reading Poythress' work, one can immediately see the benefits of becoming conversant in other related academic disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, science, or even mathematics. *The Miracles of Jesus* is a gift to the church and a welcome tribute to Poythress' faithful academic career.

Preview or buy it here for 40% off.

Your Guide to Three Greek Exegetical Problems in John



You're sitting at home enjoying a nice show when your doorbell rings: it's a Jehovah's witness who wants to share with you about how Jesus is *a* god. How do you respond? Do you tell him you're busy and shut the door? Do you engage in a debate with him? Do you pull out your Greek New Testament to discuss the grammatical complexities of John 1:2?

There are many reasons we as Christians and academics should know Greek grammar solid, and this is only one of them. Of course each Christological passages in the Bible require careful exegesis and close attention to the language used, otherwise how would we know whether our theology of Christ is actually grounded in what the biblical authors wrote?

Murray Harris has devoted the majority of his writing to paying extremely close attention to what the NT texts say. His *Jesus as God* is a detailed study of all the passages that state or infer that Jesus is God. He has written the 2 Corinthians volume in the New International Greek Testament Commentary, and he launched the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series with his Colossians and Philemon volume. He has also recently published *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament*, a fantastic volume that treats every proper and improper preposition in the NT with a helpful introduction. In short, Murray Harris is "the exegete."

So imagine our delight when he published the John volume in the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series! This 400 page guide to the Greek of John's Gospel is a magnificent tribute to Harris' devotion to the language of the Bible. A guide to John's Gospel is especially significant because of the high Christology throughout.

In order to demonstrate the value of Harris' new volume, let's look at three passages in John's Gospel that are directly relevant for three important issues for Christians and scholars.

1. Was the Word "a god?"

Harris considers the various translation possibilities for καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. (John 1:1). (Remember, the problem is that θεὸς is anarthrous, and it *could* be grammatically permissible to translate it as "the word was a god," as Jehovah's Witnesses do.) Harris gives eight possible reasons for θεὸς being anarthrous, and then provides five possible translations for the phrase with arguments for and against each translation. To do this sort of analysis yourself, you would need to read about 8-15 commentaries, but Harris has pulled them all together for you in one place. He settles on "the Word was God," with "God" referring to a "generic title that signifies One who inherently shares the nature or essence of God" (20).

2. Did God ordain that the Jews would not believe in Jesus?

There is a debated use of ἵνα in John 12:38. The Jews did not believe in Jesus ἵνα Isa 53:1 might be fulfilled. Many commentators have tried to soften ἵνα to an ecbatic function, "so that," meaning the Jews did not believe *with the result that* Isa 53:1 was fulfilled (Isa 53:1 tells of the Jews rejecting Isaiah's message of the suffering servant, who would die on behalf of Israel to

bring them out of exile.) But the ecbatic function of ἵνα is only *possibly* evident in the Koine period (see further my article on John 12:37-43).

Harris notes both the telic and ecbatic sense of ἵνα and suggests that within God's divine knowledge, even a result would be God's purpose. Unfortunately, on v. 41, he takes "αὐτοῦ" as a reference to Jesus' pre-incarnate glory, which–I think–misses the way John uses Isaiah. But this is a Greek guide, not a hermeneutical guide, so I cannot fault Harris for that.

3. Why was John's Gospel Written?

John 20:31 says ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. There are two issues here. First, is Ἰησοῦς the subject or ὁ χριστὸς? Those who are familiar with the discussion will know that Carson has argued consistently throughout his commentary that "Jesus," though anarthrous," is the subject of this predicate nominative construction.

Harris discusses first the text-critical issue of whether the original reading is the present subjunctive πιστεύητε or the aorist subjunctive πιστεύσητε. While some argue that the aorist would necessarily have an ingressive meaning ("begin to believe"), Harris shows from other aorist uses of πιστεύω that this view is false (336). Carson has argued consistently that the subject of the phrase Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς is ὁ χριστὸς. Anyone may ask who Jesus is, but only Jews and God-fearing Gentiles would ask who "the Messiah" is. If this is true, then John's Gospel is written to evangelize diaspora Jews and Gentiles who want to know the identity of the Messiah.

But Harris asserts the subject of the clause is Ἰησοῦς, even though it is anarthrous. He cites Wallace, but makes no additional argument. So he discusses well the options available for dealing with the Greek of John 20:31, but fails to make an appropriate argument to support his position.

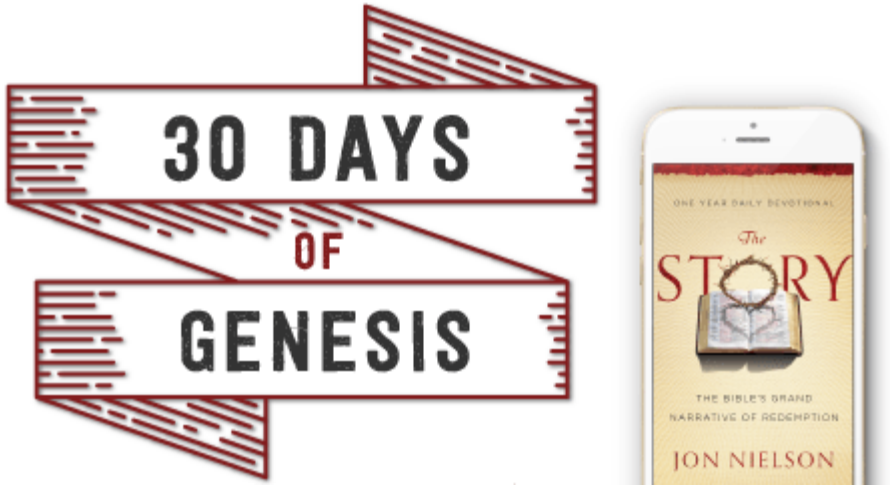
For Whom and for What is this Volume Valuable?

There are strengths and weaknesses to this volume. In the first example, we saw the strength of grammatical analysis. Harris' summary of the multitude of grammatical suggestions for John 1:1 is commendable, and his solution is plausible and strong. In the second example, he discusses the possibilities well, but the volume is limited because he cannot explore the hermeneutical issues involved in the use of the OT. In the third example, perhaps because of space issues, he simply asserts his position rather than argues it and cites Wallace.

So understand this volume for what it is: a guide to the Greek text of John's Gospel. It is not a commentary; it is a prelude to a commentary. Although there are limitations, no volume can do it all! I would recommend this work to *anyone* who deals with the Greek text of John–student, pastor, and scholar. You should have this book on your shelf, and you should read through this book along with the Greek text of John. Such an exercise would be beneficial to your devotional life and your academic study of Scripture.

Find it at WTS Books, on Amazon, and really cheap on Kindle.

Don't get stuck at Leviticus on your new Bible reading plan



Each year many of us start afresh on our Bible reading plans. Sometimes we choose a new one and sometimes we choose the excitement of a new plan. There are lots of different plans, and each one has its benefits and drawbacks.

But one of the challenges to a plan that goes through the entire Bible is that the Old Testament is so foreign and inaccessible to those without formal theological training (and even then, of course, who has the Old Testament mastered?). This problem becomes especially discouraging when you hit Leviticus and it begins describing in repetitive detail the various kinds of sacrifices, the purity laws, and the priestly rituals. Many a devoted Christian has given up their reading plan because they got stuck at Leviticus.

So how can you make it through the Old Testament while understanding God's word and connecting with him through it?

The first time I read through the Bible I used a full-Bible commentary alongside my Bible reading to help me understand the bigger picture and the cultural milieu of the Israelites. It was encouraging to be growing exponentially in my understanding of the Bible and especially of the Old Testament. While that resource was helpful, I now know of a plethora of other similar resources that are even more helpful.

One new and exciting resource is *The Story: The Bible's Grand Narrative of Redemption*.

The Story was written with the conviction that the Bible is not a random collection of writings, but *one unified story of God's redemption*. That is why it's called *The Story*, because that's what the Bible is. It contains 365 devotions that walks through Scripture, putting God's plan on display. The idea is that you read the Scriptural readings assigned for the day in the book and then read the accompanying **one-page** devotional.

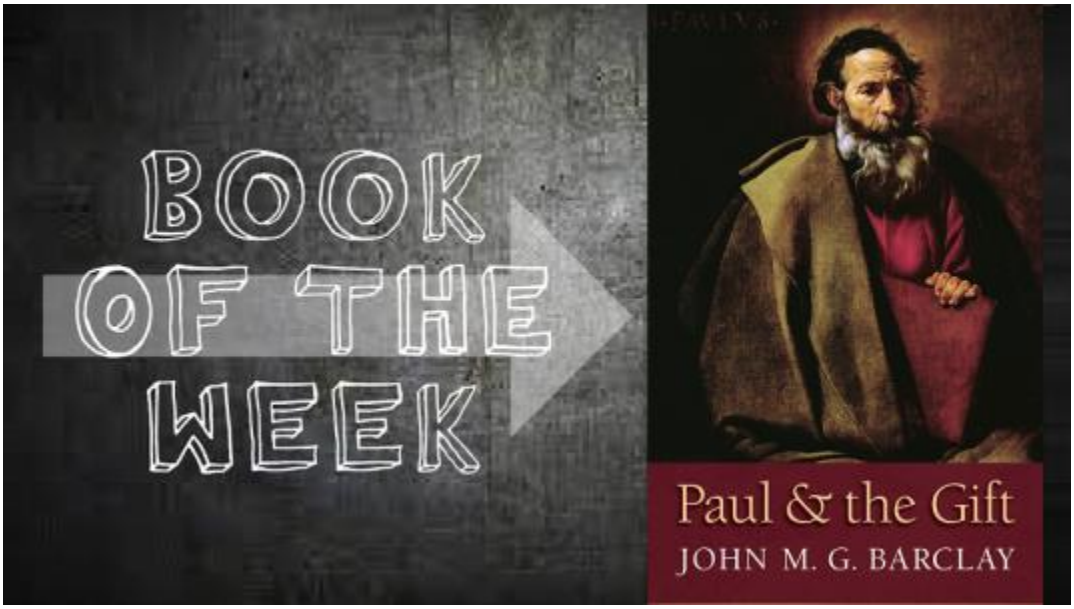
Your likely time investment would be 5-15 minutes of reading Scripture and 2 minutes reading the devotional. And if you're newer to the Old Testament and to the grand sweep of God's redemptive history, Nielson helps you along with his devotionals.

Don't get stuck at Leviticus on your new Bible reading plan**CLICK TO TWEET**

To get you started, P&R is providing the first 30 days of *The Story* – a tour through the book of Genesis – for **Free**. Sign up below and beginning January 1st you'll receive a new devotion from *The Story* each day – but remember – **PLEASE** read along with your Bible.

If you want to go ahead and buy the entire book now to have it ready for January, you can preview or buy it here in paperback or on Kindle.

Paul and the Gift, by John M. G. Barclay: A Crucial Corrective to the New Perspective on Paul



In 1977, E. P. Sanders wrote his landmark *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, which argued that second temple Jews did not believe in meriting salvation by works, but believed Jews were included in the covenant by grace and kept in by works. Thus, Judaism, like Christianity, was a religion of grace.

Since Sanders' work, Pauline studies has not been the same. Some followed Sanders' view of Judaism, including James Dunn who applied these results to a re-reading of Paul, dubbed the "New Perspective on Paul." Paul did not rail against Jews trying to merit salvation, but against those who tried to use boundary markers or separation from Gentiles to prove (or vindicate?) their right inclusion in the covenant. New Testament scholars are now split, some holding to this New Perspective (or one of its many variations, as categorized by Westerholm), some holding to some form of the Old Perspective (e.g.,Westerholm, Schreiner, Carson et al.).

While the debate has seemed at an impasse for some time now, John Barclay has exploded on the scene with a major correction to the New Perspective position. Sanders' conclusion was that Judaism was a religion of grace, but Barclay asks the question, what is "grace?" Is all grace the same, and is grace understood the same by all?

In his *Paul and the Gift*, Barclay looks at the idea of "grace" or "gift," both appropriate translations of χάρις, in its ancient context from an anthropological perspective. One of his main

contentions is that the Western world has a concept of a non-reciprocal gift, but the ancient world did not. Gifts told something about the sender and the recipient and their status relative to one another.

Barclay spent ten years researching this book and four years writing it. The depth of research is evident. Chapter three surveys the concept of grace in Paul's writings as understood by Marcion, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and scholars in the modern period.

Part 2 examines grace or gift in five different writings or corpora in second temple Judaism: *Wisdom of Solomon*, Philo, the Hodayot (1QH), Pseudo-Philo, and 4 Ezra. He argues that these documents display various understandings of God's grace, which should lead us beyond Sanders' covenantal nomism paradigm with which scholars have worked for the past forty years.

Part 3 examines "gift" in Galatians, by which Barclay tries to locate Paul within this Jewish stream of discourse on divine grace. In contrast to Paul's ancient context, he focuses on Christ as God's *free, unmerited* gift, regardless of ethic of social worth. His lens of "grace/gift" allows Barclay to find a new scheme of coherence to the letter and to emphasize thoughts previously not highlighted with as much emphasis.

While he agrees with the New Perspective that Paul is not polemicizing against works righteousness, he disagrees with the New Perspective and concludes that Paul is guarding against social value systems, which in his Jewish context would find value in the Christ-gift only by its inclusion in the value system of Torah (444).

His final part of the book examines "gift" in Romans. As with those of the New Perspective and many recent Pauline scholars, his reading emphasizes the role of Romans 9-11 within the epistle as a whole. It is not a Pauline detour or a detached parentheses, but a climactic expression of God's "gift" of Christ. He finds both similarities and differences between the construal of grace in Galatians and Romans.

This work is a significant corrective to E. P. Sanders' paradigm of covenantal nomism. Several scholars had challenged his construal of second temple Jewish religion, but Barclay's may be the most formidable to date. Grace is everywhere grace, but grace is not to everyone the same.

Paul's understanding of God's gift is quite different from his contemporaries, especially in its unconditional nature. God himself has perfected the concept of gift through his gift of Christ to us. If Barclay's analysis is on target, both new and old perspective advocates will need to modify their understanding of Paul's polemic, especially in Galatians and Romans.

Based on the attention this book has received since its publication, on the depth of its research, and on the significance of its conclusions if correct, I conjecture this book will be one of the most frequently cited books in the ongoing Pauline-perspective debate. Although it is a bit pricey, this book should be required reading for anyone studying the new and old perspective on Paul.

Preview or buy it here on Amazon.

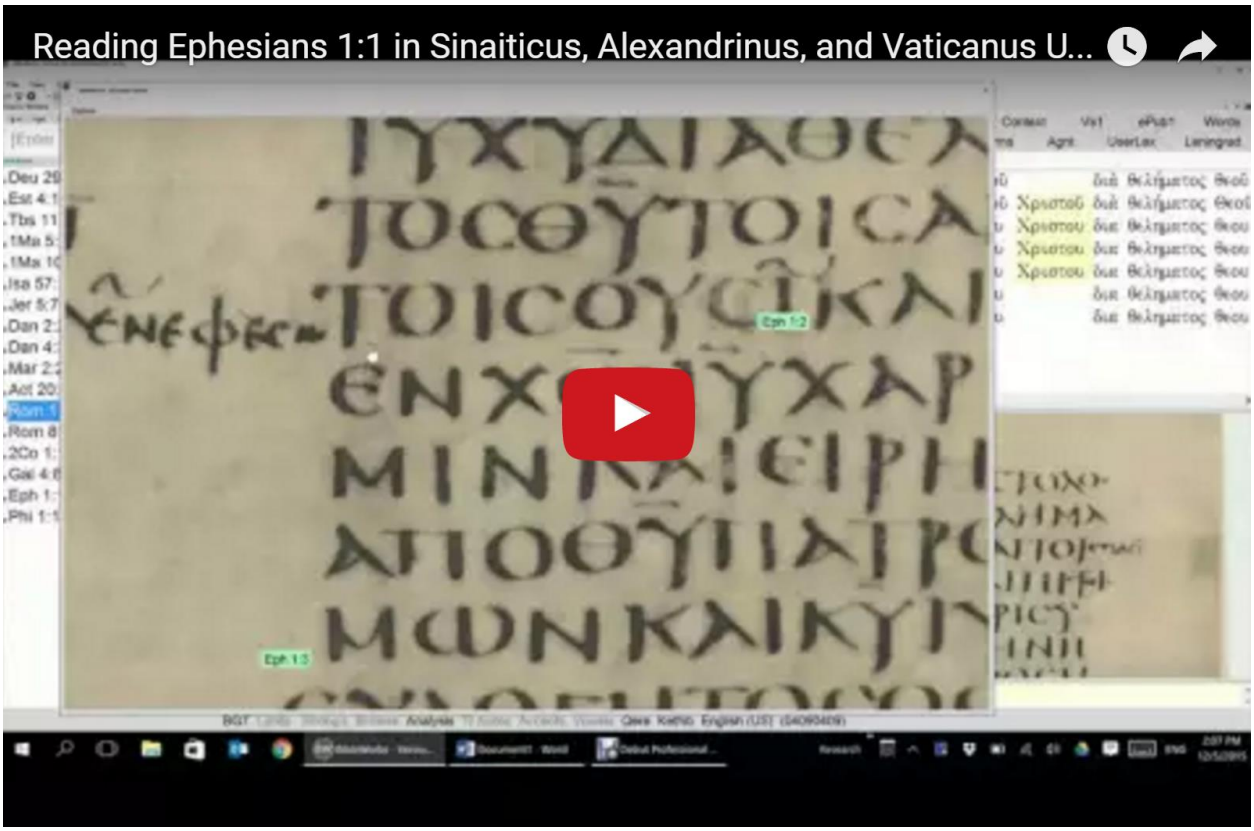
Learn Greek

To whom was Ephesians written? Reading Ephesians 1:1 in the earliest manuscripts using BibleWorks 10

In my dissertation I deal with the text-critical problem of whether “in Ephesus” was originally included in Ephesians 1:1. The earliest extant manuscripts do not contain the phrase; in fact, the earliest it shows up in our extant manuscripts is the fifth century.

In this video, I use the manuscript viewer function in BibleWorks 10 to look at Ephesians 1:1 in these earliest manuscripts.

As you’ll see, this function of BibleWorks 10 is worth the cost of the program itself. Studying the early manuscripts of Ephesians 1:1 is incredibly easy, although it is of course not comprehensive, as you’ll see.



Greek Matters: A Student's Epiphany about γάρ

This post was written by a former student after completing his final Greek course at Westminster Theological Seminary. Our Greek Matters series stems originally from practical points pulled out of our Colossians Greek Reading Videos.

Sometimes simple discoveries can change significant things. One of our assignments for third semester Greek at Westminster was to scrutinize, translate, sentence flow, and perform a discourse analysis on Romans 1:15-17.

This is a familiar passage for sure. I've worked for a parachurch missions agency. I listen to Christian rap. I know Romans 1:16. I have heard this passage preached from many times. I have heard missionary appeals given from this passage many times. I've heard this line sung many times. And I have seen "116" tattoos many times. It is familiar. Glorious. But familiar.

Dictionary: γάρ

Greek transliteration: *gar*

Simplified transliteration: *gar*

Numbers

Strong's number: 1063

GK Number: 1142

Statistics

Frequency in New Testament: 1041

I had no real problem translating it. I successfully flowed the sentence without thinking much about grammatical and syntactical relationships as it pertained to interpretation. But once it came time to look at the relationship between clauses in the sentence I realized that I didn't have much of a clue what was going on. I couldn't figure out what all those γαρ s were doing.

It wasn't Daniel Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* which solved my conundrum. Nor was it BDAG. It was our own Dr. Beale's little *Interpretive Lexicon of New Testament Greek*. I flipped to page 33 to help me think through what's going on. Of course, γαρ is a conjunction! In fact, in Beale's summary of Wallace it is a "coordinating, explanatory conjunction." The clauses are linked to each other, explaining one another!

In all the times I heard this text expounded, it never failed that the "for"s were blasted through as vestigial. I had come to read them as if they were "Oh!" or "Behold!" or "Yo!"

But more than that, I realized that Paul's being unashamed of the Gospel is him stating a reason for something. Paul wants to do something *because* he is unashamed of the Gospel. What is it that he wants to do? Verse 15, a verse missing an indicative verb and seemingly randomly

included in our assignment, supplies the answer: Paul wants to preach the gospel to the epistle's recipients in Rome because…because…because.

Yes, Romans 1:16 is about the gospel being the power of God to save wretched sinners. So it certainly is appropriate to use in an appeal to preach the gospel to the nations. But it doesn't mean only that. Romans 1:7 tells us that these reciepents in Rome are believers, "are loved by God and called to be saints" (ESV). Paul is saying that the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified, dead, buried, raised, and seated in heaven is for not only the Jew and the Gentile, but for the Christian and the lost.

Paul is holding up the goodness and the beauty of the Gospel before the Roman believers as being the driving force why he just wants to preach it everywhere. To reference that inevitably apocryphal Luther quote (thanks internet!), we can never move past the Gospel, we always, repeatedly need to hear it fresh. It's why Paul wanted to go to Rome.

Keep Your Greek: Reading Greek Devotionally

Many students wonder how to stay in their Greek New Testament consistently after finishing their Greek courses. Of course some upper level courses will utilize Greek or require translation, especially if you take a Greek elective. You will also need ways to keep up with your vocab and you will need to create a plan to read through books of the Bible. But, there is no better way to consistently enter the Greek New Testament than to integrate it into your daily devotional reading.

This of course presupposes that you are reading Scripture devotionally on a daily basis. It's difficult to keep up with reading Scripture daily when our schools tend to give the impression that secondary literature is more important. Indeed, the ratio of primary to secondary source required readings in most universities and seminaries is probably somewhere around 1:100. That is, for every hour you are required to read a portion of Scripture, you are required read 100 hours of secondary literature.

The one exception is elective book studies, such as a class on Matthew, in which you may spend a large amount of time reading Matthew, but most of the required readings would still likely be secondary literature on Matthew. So you must fight hard to keep yourself in the primary source of Scripture on a consistent, daily basis, and the more you can do in the original languages the more familiar you will be with the New Testament.

So you should be reading daily from the NT, and you should not let your program derail you. There are of course many reading plans out there, but how much Greek you integrate will depend on your plan. Do you read half a chapter each day from the NT? Read it all in Greek. Do you read a full chapter? Depending on your proficiency, you may want to read the entire chapter in Greek, or you may want to read half the chapter in Greek and the other in English. Are you really rusty? Then read three verses in Greek and then switch to English.

The goal is not to master an entire chapter in ten minutes, and the goal is definitely not to wear yourself out during your devotional reading trying to practice your languages. Do as much as you're able without getting exhausted, and then switch to English. You can re-read the verses in English to make sure your translation was correct.

Perhaps you're not convinced that you should do this. Maybe you think devotional practices and academic practices should be kept distinct, so as not to spoil each other (or at least so as not to let the academic spoil the devotional).

But many notable scholars with vibrant lives of faith have striven to integrate their spiritual and academic practices. B. B. Warfield has a little essay entitled *The Religious Life of Theological Students* on the importance of bringing faithful understanding of Scripture to your devotional practices.

D. A. Carson has advised similarly to integrate Greek into devotional reading in order to bring your education to bear on interpreting Scripture more accurately.

Tom Schreiner has advised to spend five minutes a day five days a week to keep up your languages. He doesn't say explicitly that he does this during his devotional studies, but as a full time professor and pastor I assume he treats that reading time in a way that fuses his academic, devotional, and pastoral life.

When N. T. Wright described in an interview his approach to studying the Bible, he responded that he spends time early in the morning in Greek and Hebrew reading through various portions of Scripture. About this practice, he added, "I don't know whether that's study or prayer; it's both, and I don't want it to be the one and not the other."

Allowing your academic and devotional life to fuse together is admittedly difficult, as one will often taint the other or skew a proper perspective, and it's a lifelong pursuit, but it's one worth undertaking. If you are trying to keep up with multiple languages, either do a small amount of time every day in each language, or do what William Carey did in India when he was trying to learn the local languages and dialects: choose a different day of the week to practice different languages. Practice Greek on Monday, Hebrew on Tuesday, Aramaic on Wednesday, back to Greek on Thursday, and so forth (adjust for the amount of languages you know, of course).

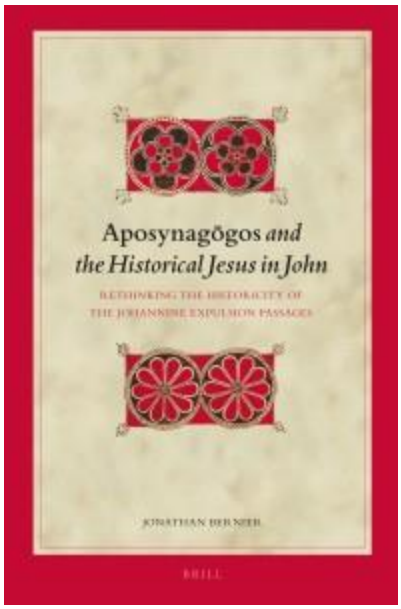
Lastly, if you want to spend even more time each day in Greek than just your devotional time, or if you are really motivated to increase your devotional reading and do it all in Greek, you can try Daniel Wallace's schedule to read through the Greek NT in a year (or even in a month!).

Book Reviews

Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John: Rethinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Passages

***Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John: Rethinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Passages*, by Jonathan Bernier (Brill, 2013), 182 pages.**

As the title suggests, Jonathan Bernier's McMaster University PhD thesis, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John,* is a reconsideration of the Johannine expulsion passages found in John 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2. Bernier's central thesis is both exegetical and hermeneutical. With respect to the former, Bernier argues that these expulsion texts reflect an informal mechanism for expulsion, which occurred sometime around 30 CE, and are not correlated to the later Birkat ha-Minim (a formalized legislative method of explosion).



The hermeneutical implications for this conclusion result in a rejection of the two-level reading of John (one level that tells the story of Jesus while the other level reflects the concerns of the Johannine community). Those familiarly with J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in John* will recognize that Bernier is offering a direct challenge to Martyn's original (and seminal!) thesis and to any recent iterations.

[J. Louis Martyn argued that the aposynagōgos *passages reveal the concerns of a much later Johannine community, who were systematically expelled from the synagogue through the mechanism of the* Birkat ha-Minim. *Thus John should be read with an eye to both the story of Jesus and to the concerns of this later community]*

The ***first*** chapter functions as an ***introduction*** to both the history of research and the structure of Bernier's study. Having outlined the major trends in the study of John, Bernier classifies the Martynian tradition along two lines; the classical and neo-Martynian approaches. Both 'schools' would agree that these passages cannot refer to historical events in the time of Jesus and as a consequence John's gospel should be read on two levels.

The classical Martynians, however, contend that the expulsion passages refer to events in the late first century, while the neo-Martynians suggest that these explosion passages do not refer

to *any* historical event. This forms the scholarly backdrop to Bernier's study, and while acknowledging the work of Edward Klink, Bernier offers a Post-Martynian alternative that sees these expulsion passages as references to actions taken against 'Christians' in 30 CE.

Integral to understanding the culminating argument of this thesis is the work of **Ben Meyer** (and Bernard Lonergan). In contrast to the methodology often utilized in Jesus studies known as the 'criteria of authenticity', Meyer preferred the term 'index' over 'criterion' (since the criteria proposed by the historical critic is not 'requisite to the inference of historicity', and the presence of indices favor historicity while their absence do not suggest non-historicity).

Indices can be established through both oblique and direct patterns of inference. Oblique patterns of inference interact with the narrative indirectly, providing no definition of intentionality nor are they dependent upon such a definition. Direct patterns of intentionality refer to the explicit intentions of the writer towards factuality, the plausibility of the writer to possess knowledgeability, and the degree to which the writer is free from suspicion or fraud.

Chapters two through four address various oblique patterns of inference in order to demonstrate the thesis' plausibility, while chapter five considers direct patterns of inference in order to conclude that the thesis is not only plausible, but probable.

The ***second*** chapter investigates the Martynian tradition's use of the Birkat ha-Minim, namely, that the Birkat was the formalized method of expelling Jewish Christians from the synagogue due to their association with the Johannine community. Although Bernier here agrees with the Neo-Martynians, who argue that the Birkat ha-Minim is not in view in John 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2, Bernier breaks from the Neo-Martynians' on hermeneutical grounds (i.e. the two level reading).

Seizing upon the work of Runesson (along with Levine and Binder), who identifies a dual institution understanding of the synagogue (an Official [Municipal] Synagogue located in the land of Israel and a Non-official [Association] synagogue located in the land of Israel and the Diaspora), Bernier notes that John 9:22 and 12:42 are located in and around Jerusalem and therefore could refer to either official (municipal) or non-official (association) synagogues.

Bernier argues that the *aposynagōgos* texts have in view the municipal synagogue, therefore expulsion would indeed incite the type of fear depicted in John's account. Moreover the Pharisees (as apart of a broader coalition) are the specific party who directly threatened the removal of Jesus' followers from the synagogue, apart from any formalized decree. This

naturally leads to a discussion regarding the motivations for expelling Jesus' followers in chapters three and four.

In the ***third*** chapter Bernier turns to consider the potential correlation between the *aposynagōgos* passages and Jesus' messianic identity. After identifying the ongoing influence of Bultmann's understanding of John's Gospel upon Martyn and the Martynian tradition as a whole, Bernier questions why the rhetoric surrounding Jesus' messianic status is deemed to be *a priori* inconceivable during Jesus' lifetime and therefore non-historical (e.g. Bultmann and Martyn on John 9:28b).

Since, for Bernier, the history-of-religions school (following Bousset), which claimed that non-Jewish Hellenistic traditions were the main source for early Christian belief, has largely been refuted, the framework offered by Hurtado (*"A Taxonomy of Recent Historical-Jesus Work"*) and Dunn (*Jesus Remembered*) proves more fruitful. Such an approach sees the significant amount of data that present Jesus in Jewish-messianic terms not as obstacles to be overcome, but as the only lens through which to understand Jesus' life.

So if one is confronted with a significant stream of Jewish messianic interpretations then 'one has good reason to accept as probable the thesis that such data came to be data about Jesus precisely because Jesus was someone whose life was conducive to such messianic interpretations' (90). Such a messianic interpretation of Jesus' life would likely have contributed to the conflict located within the *aposynagōgos* narratives.

The ***fourth*** chapter develops more fully why such messianic overtures would incite the degree of conflict depicted in John. In order to develop this chapter, Bernier uses the emerging sub-field known as 'empire-criticism', which seeks "to contextualize biblical texts within the ancient imperial contexts in which they were produced and first received…" (94).

It is here argued that Jesus and his followers were targeted, in part, as a result of a warranted fear of Roman intervention and that the *aposynagōgos* passages reflect these fears. This is made explicit in John 11:47b-54, where fear of lethal Roman intervention as a result of Jesus potentially amassing followers ('…the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation') is explicitly said to fuel motivations for the death of Jesus ('…from that day they made plans to put him to death.')

The ***fifth*** chapter addresses various direct patterns of inference in John's Gospel, namely, intentionality, knowledgeability, and veracity. If these patterns can be determined, a judgement of plausibility can be converted into probability with respect to historicity [Bernier is here

employing the 'social history of knowledge' approach as developed by Gerhardsson, Byrskog, and Bauckham, which prioritizes the study of historical particularities (the Gospels) before developing 'analytical syntheses that might legitimately be informed by…theoretical apparatuses…" (112)].

After outlining the Johannine references that have reference to factuality (1:14, 2:19-22, 14:26, 19:35, 20:30-31, 21:24-25 and 1 John 1:1-3), Bernier concludes that John simply intends factuality. With respect to knowledgeability (whether John was in a position to gain knowledge about Jesus) Bernier highlights, as a first principle of historical examination, the importance of eyewitness testimony as the authoritative custodians of the tradition in question.

The conclusion offered at this point is that if John either relies upon an eyewitness or draws from eye witness testimony (see Appendix B for internal data on John's eyewitness status), then the reports may be considered reliable (i.e. "a general rather than detail-rich description" 132). Lastly, there is every indication that John intended the *aposynagōgos* passages to simply be read as reports about the life of Jesus.

Bernier's ***final*** chapter presents a summary of the study as a whole through the presentation of three significant contributions. First, Bernier has challenged the Martyn reading of John. Although jettisoning a two-level reading does not necessitate a rejection of any Johannine *Sitz im Leben,* the allegorical approach is both circular and without explicit textual warrant (see 18, 24-25). Second, with respect to the philosophy of history, those who study the New Testament are encouraged to employ the approach developed by Ben F. Meyer and Bernard Lonergan known as 'critical realism', especially the oblique and direct patterns of reference. Third, this study offers a detailed study of the *aposynagōgos* passages with the overarching conclusion that the references found therein refer to historical events sometime around 30 CE.

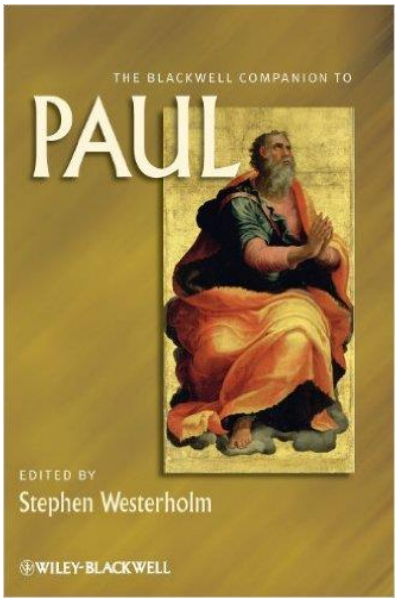
NB Master Students – For those interesting in reading a well-argued and carefully structured thesis, I would highly recommend Bernier's work. Especially if you are a MA student seeking PhD work, sit down with this text and enjoy a lesson in structural organization, erudite research, and relevant academic interaction. Moreover, if you are at all interested in studying all things Johannine, the bibliography section will be a key resource for academic preparation.

Find it here on Amazon.

The Blackwell Companion to Paul, ed. Stephen Westerholm

***The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 634 pages.**

Moses and Paul: these two would likely be considered the two most prominent and influential biblical authors who have shaped world civilization through Christianity. (Jesus, of course, did not write anything.) As Westerholm's *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* showed us, Paul shaped the Christian theological giants theologically more than any other biblical writer. It is therefore no surprise that Pauline studies continues to be (perhaps) the most active and saturated field in biblical studies today (I've never heard of any seminary short on Pauline scholars).



With such an important field of study, there are bound to be several introductory books and textbooks. A couple recent textbooks are excellent introductions to all areas of Pauline study (history, theology, and literary issues), including Bruce Longenecker's and Todd Still's *Thinking Through Paul* and, even better, *Rediscovering Paul* by Capes, Richards, and Reeves. But a companion or guide to Paul is quite different. These resources will provide up-to-date discussions on scholarly consensuses and contentions. And that is the purpose of *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*.

This companion is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the typical Pauline issues within Pauline studies. Paul's relation to the Macedonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Western Asians, and Romans are considered in a chapter each. Riesner introduces the section with a chapter on Pauline chronology, condensing his larger (and thoroughly impressive) monograph on the same topic. Porter writes on Paul in Acts, I. H. Marshall on the Pastorals, Dunn on the gospel, Wagner on Scripture, Gathercole on Christology, Wright on empire, and on and on. This companion to Paul leaves no stone unturned for scholars leading the field.

But this companion is not only interested in strictly biblical studies. It also integrates systematic and historical theology, as well as Paul's legacy. Part two looks at readers of Paul, beginning with Marcion, spanning through Origen, Augustine, Calvin, Barth, recent continental philosophers, modern Jewish readers, etc., finally concluding with African readers.

Part three is the shortest, containing chapters on Paul's legacy in art, literature, theology on sin and the fall, the Spirit, ethics, and the church. These chapters alone are worth the read because they give an impression of the various ways Paul has left his legacy, which exposes a variety of lenses that have been put over Paul's writings. Such exposure helps us to reconsider our own lenses with which we read Paul's letters.

The chapters—37 in total—are obviously too many to summarize. Each chapter spans around 10-15 somewhat large pages of small-ish text. They are therefore somewhat lengthy, but not entirely comprehensive. These chapters packed with many references, but only of a quite general kind. There is no detailed exegesis, nor is there space to unpack issues in serious detail. A broad sweep of the pressing issues is all the authors can manage in these chapters.

But this does not render the book useless. On the contrary, students may gain a quick view of the landscape on any one issue and build further study on that foundation. I would suggest that this resource would be most useful to the student who has already read a textbook on Paul (perhaps one of the ones mentioned above) and who now is seeking either to gain a better understanding of academic issues involved in Pauline studies, or who is researching a specific topic in Pauline studies. This companion is a good place to start with researching topics such as Paul and empire, chronology, and the like.

But how does it fare against other similar works? *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* is the strongest competitor, with just as impressive a lineup of scholars and more total pages and topics. *DPL* is a "dictionary," though (more like an encyclopedia, really), and reads more like a stripped down version of the facts, whereas the Blackwell Companion reads more like essays. In this sense, the two volumes are complementary and should be owned together. *DPL* may be your first go-to resource to be acquainted quickly with any issue, while the Companion could be consulted afterward.

A handbook has also been published in German by Mohr Siebeck, *Paulus Handbuch.* I have not had the chance to get ahold of a copy of this work, and I cannot find a table of contents for it anywhere online. If anyone knows what is in this handbook, please feel free to comment below, especially if you have a link to the table of contents. I suppose it covers much the same ground as this companion and would therefore be a complement from a more thoroughly German perspective.

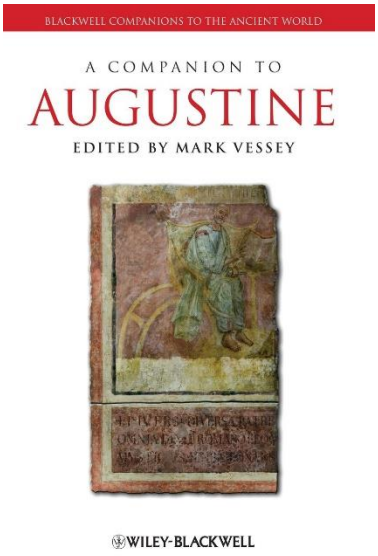
In sum, this companion deserves a place on the shelf of every student, pastor, and scholar. It will be of more use to the former two, but even the scholar may reap some insights from this

volume, especially in the sections that are more foreign to one's field. I highly recommend this work.

Find it here on Amazon.

A Companion to Augustine, edited by Mark Vessey

A Companion to Augustine **(Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World), edited by Mark Vessey (Wiley, 2015), 595 pages.**



Augustine is arguably the most important Christian theologian outside of the biblical authors. Many different theological camps claim Augustine for their theological positions. *The Confessions* makes him a very personal historical figure. Because of the massive weight of Augustine's historical character it is essential that we understand Augustine in his historical context as well as his social context. That is the purpose for which this companion has been written.

This companion was first published in 2012 and has now been republished in paperback. Its scope and breadth is as impressive as its list of contributors. It is divided into seven parts. Part 1 lays out the historical, social, and religious context in which Augustine lived. Part 2 revisits *The Confessions*. Part 3 is entitled "media" and surveys communication strategies deployed by Augustine and his contemporaries. Part 4 examines Augustine's subjective experience with texts from his time period, while Part 5 looks at Augustine in his various capacities. Part 6 examines Augustine's theological and philosophical positions, and finally, Part 7 looks at Augustine's historical reception.

A major emphasis in this work is Augustine's share in late antiquity rather than his share in the early church fathers. The effect is that the authors focus much more on Augustine's historical

context within the Roman Empire and on his interaction with contemporary philosophers and teachers. As the editor states, there has not been "any compendious work, in English but representing more than Anglophone scholarship, that introduces the subject of Augustine as it has begun to reappear after the invention of late antiquity. The commission for this *Companion* was to set forth that subject" (4).

The chapters of this companion are quite introductory and for the most part do not make any incredibly controversial theses. For example the chapter on Augustine and Scripture covers familiar topics of the character of Scripture, divine rhetorical strategy, the idea of love in Augustine's hermeneutic, and the necessity of divine illumination for proper interpretation of Scripture. Similarly the chapter on the Donatists gives a brief history of the sect, a survey of Augustine's writing against the Donatists, and relates the events to the worldwide church and to the sacraments.

But this is not to discourage the quality of these chapters. The citations show that the authors are steeped in the secondary literature and the information is concise and informative. The average chapter is about 12 to 15 pages and each chapter contains a list of further readings at the end.

If there is one complaint to be made about this volume it is the lack of sustained attention to Augustine's treatment Scripture and his hermeneutic. The more historical focus on Augustine causes the section on "positions" to be dominated by much historical analysis. Many other chapters should have been included, such as Augustine's treatment of the Old Testament, Augustine's hermeneutic, Augustine and Christology, and more.

I reckon the reason chapters such as these were omitted is that the analysis of Augustine is more historical and belongs more to the domain of universal history rather than to the domain of the church. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this approach, but it does leave a large gap in a companion on Augustine.

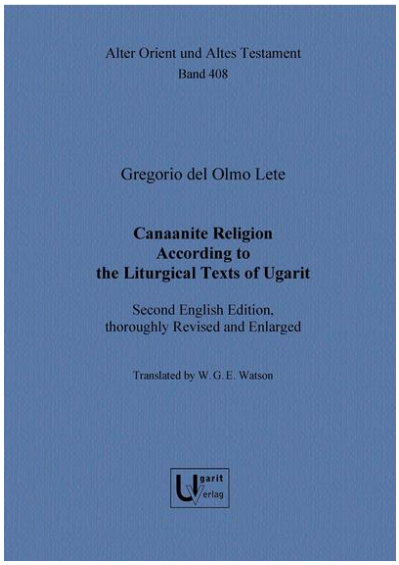
Overall, this volume is an essential tool for any theologian's or philosopher's library and it will make a nice complementary volume to the Cambridge Companion to Augustine, the second volume of which was just published last year. The reader may want to take note of the prices of the two different volumes with the Cambridge volume falling in the $30 range while this Blackwell volume falls in the $50 range. Thankfully this paperback volume is much cheaper than the $200 hardback volume published in 2012. I definitely recommend purchasing both books to

have in your library as solid reference works on the most important theologian the church has ever known.

Find it here on Amazon.

Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit, 2nd English Revised Edition, by Gregorio del Olmo Lete

***Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, 2nd English Revised Edition (Alter Orient und Altest Testament 408), by Gregorio del Olmo Lete, translated by W. G. E. Watson (Ugarit Vorlag, 2014), 423 pages.**



The Ugarit liturgical texts have received a good amount of attention since their discovery, often because of their significance for the Old Testament. Ugaritic liturgical texts contain word and deed, incantations and sacrifices. The Old Testament does as well, but they are more often separated, as we see cultic instructions in Leviticus 1-7 and praises and song in the psalms, for example.

The importance of these texts makes del Olmo Lete's book significant for Ugaritic and OT scholars alike. His work was originally published with CDL Press in 1999 and reprinted in paperback by Eisenbrauns in 2004. This second revised English edition brings his work up to date with the latest research. It also appends a lengthy section of "complementary notes" that gives additional commentary to various texts. This kept del Olmo Lete from crowding the page further with lengthy footnotes.

Summary

The introduction covers standard fare, such as the history of research (which is extremely helpful and orderly), a structuralist hermeneutic for cultic literature, the syntax of cultic texts (three basic types of cultic texts are cultic "records," prescriptive rituals [especially sacrificial offerings], and recited rituals [12]), sacred times, and sacred places, and types of sacrificial

rites. His sections on sacred places includes a brief but helpful summary of the archaeological finds relating to the temples of Baal and Dagan in Ugarit.

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for analyzing the texts by examining the mythological universe of Syria and the Canaanite pantheon, including the eight principal gods of the Baal Cycle and a half dozen other intermediary gods (35). The three sons of Il–Baal, Yam, and Mot–represent the three regions surrounding the earth (sky, sea, and underworld) and are the “epicentre of the pattern and of the resulting mythological conflict around” Baal (37). The predominance of Baal relates to the predominance of rain in Syria-Palestine. Useful charts are scattered throughout the chapter comparing the gods of the Baal Cycle to the gods of the Minor myths and the Hurrian pantheon in Ugarit (42-66).

The rest of the book displays del Olmo Lete’s exegetical labor. Chapters two through seven analyze, respectively, the liturgy of Ugarit, royalty in myth and cult, the funerary cult of the palace, the non-funerary palace cult, the royal liturgy of the Word (prayers and oracles), and the religion of everyday life.

Each chapter examines the main texts involved in each topic, along with full transliterations and translations. The translations are accompanied by a plethora of textual notes and then followed by an exegesis of the text. As he discusses the texts, his extensive familiarity with all the secondary literature is evident. Throughout the book are many full-page pictures of the texts under discussion. The appendix was thankfully placed where it is in order to keep the footnotes fewer than they may have been.

Evaluation

I must commend del Olmo Lete for this extensive and thorough investigation of the Ugaritic liturgy. He brings together a systematic understanding of the cult and of Ugaritic word, magic, and other means of affecting the gods. Those who want to gain an understanding of the Canaanite cult should start here.

One might question his structuralist hermeneutic that he applies throughout. Structuralism was popular in literary circles in the twentieth century, especially following the influence of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. But the idea of a deep structure that carries over between cultures, but which is expressed in various surface structures, is based on what has been shown to be faulty cultural anthropology. That is why deconstruction was an inevitable growth from structuralism, moving, for example, through Roland Barthes and finally to Derrida. Del

Olmo Lete uses a structuralist approach to learn much from the epics and myths about the culture and their beliefs, but this hermeneutic likely needs reappraisal.

The one other issue with del Olmo Lete's work, although it is not unique to him, is the amount of assumption involved in using certain texts to reconstruct rituals. To give just one example, when explaining the enthronement of the new king, he notes that it was "probably" celebrated according to the ritual in KTU 1.132; the place, "although not specified," must have been the royal palace; it "must be supposed" that the festival began at the new moon (168-172). This sort of "mirror reading," as we might call it, is frequently undertaken in biblical studies to reconstruct a historical setting, but the amount of assumption and uncertainty when reconstructing the Ugaritic cult is far weightier.

The greatest strength of the work is its close attention to philology and syntax and its systematization of the minute exegetical details into a coherent summary of the rites and liturgies. De Olmo Lete has succeeded in seeing both the forest and the trees. While much speculation is involved, the end result is a fascinating and impressive study of the Canaanite liturgy or Ugarit.

Find it here on Amazon.

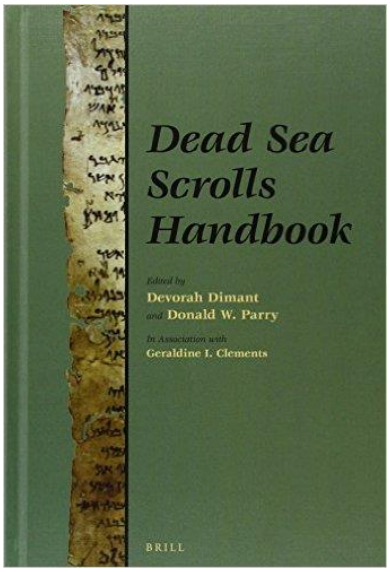
Dead Sea Scrolls Handbook, by Devorah Dimant and Donald Parry

***Dead Sea Scrolls Handbook*, by Devorah Dimant and Donald Parry (Brill, 2014), 986 pages.**

This new handbook from Brill is a unique volume that you may or may not want in your library.

Contents

Because texts are constantly being edited and readings are being better deciphered, the authors believe such a handbook is not superfluous, but supplements other textual editions already published (xix). There are no translations, commentaries, discussions of dating, or any



other extra-textual information. This handbook is “the facts ma’am, just the facts.” It contains transcriptions of the Hebrew and Aramaic (no Greek) texts. The only exception is an apparatus for 1QS, CD, and 11QTemple.

The texts are drawn from a variety of sources, so this is a sort of eclectic edition composed of other printed editions. These sources include the Princeton volumes printed by Mohr Siebeck, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* by F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, the *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, and texts prepared solely by the editors Dimant and Parry. Missing from this volume are the Greek texts and any texts that are too fragmentary to add any valuable information about the scrolls or the community. The editors indicate any fragments that have been omitted at the end of a text in brackets.

The scrolls are not arranged topically or by any other schema except the scroll numbers given by *DJD*. So the first scroll is 1Q14 (1QpMic), followed by 1QpHab, then 1Q15, and so forth. The table of contents at the beginning lists the page number for each scroll, while an appendix in the back lists the names of texts with their corresponding text number and page number.

The volume itself is well-bound, as is to be expected from Brill. Also notable is the great amount of white space surrounding the text. There is plenty of space in all four margins for note-taking if you choose to mark up your copy of the text. Since the texts are pulled from other editions (or, some being prepared by the editors), there is nothing notable about the transcriptions; they appear similar to any other transcription of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Evaluation

Would you want this volume in your library? It really depends.

First, you would only want this volume if your Hebrew is extremely proficient. Without a parallel translation, this volume would be useless to you if you cannot read the transcriptions. It may serve well as a secondary resource to check against other editions, especially where lacunas or difficult readings appear, but as a sole copy of the scrolls, it serves only the specialist.

Second, you may not want this volume if you already have other similar editions. For example, I have the Dead Sea Scrolls, morphologically tagged, on Bibleworks. That makes this Brill volume somewhat superfluous, except, as I just noted, as a secondary edition to compare questionable

readings. But even in that case, one might simply want to check high-definition photographs of the scroll under review if possible.

Likewise, if you own the *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* by F. García Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, you might not need this new volume. The *DSSSE* is only about 400 pages longer, although it is two volumes and paperback. Nevertheless, because it has narrower margins, it is able to fit all the transcriptions in the volume (ordered in the same way) along with a parallel English translation. While specialists can work through the Hebrew of the DSS with no problem, it never hurts to have another specialist's translation to compare with yours.

So would you like to own this volume? I may be selling it a bit short. But since I already own so many text editions of the scrolls, this new edition serves me only to compare my other texts with. But I hope I can say what an enormous labor this volume obviously was. The editors have created a splendid volume that will surely be helpful to many people. The only question is to whom it will be most beneficial.

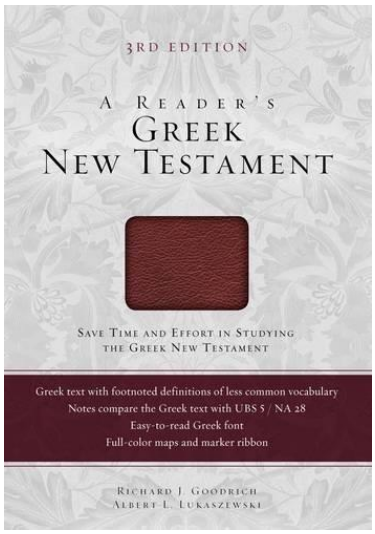
Find it here on Amazon.

A Reader's Greek New Testament, 3rd Edition, edited by Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski

***A Reader's Greek New Testament, 3rd Edition*, edited by Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski (Zondervan, 2015), 592 pages.**

What is the best way to keep up with your vocabulary? Flashcards are definitely a big help, but there's no substitute for simply immersing yourself in a language day after day. And for that, you need to choose the right Bible.

Goodrich and Lukaszewski understand this. As they note in the introduction, if you were to learn all the vocab words Mounce requires in his *Basics of Biblical Greek*, you would still be far from being able to sit down in your armchair with the Greek. if you wanted to read the Greek NT in a year, it would take 22 verses a day on average, and you would not know 3.5 words per verse, on average. At 30 seconds per word (which is really fast), you would spend 38 minutes a day in the lexicon for your daily reading (p. 8).



You should definitely learn more vocab than Mounce has in his textbook, but even if you learn down to ten occurrences based on Metzger's frequency list, you will still find many words you do not know. And that's where a reader's Bible comes in handy. With such a Bible, as long as you know your paradigms and syntax, you should be able to read through large chunks of your Bible–even in your armchair.

This *Reader's Greek New Testament* is now in its third edition. The first two were successful (I owned the first one) and many have found it useful. This new edition was spawned mostly because of the updated text editions NA28 and UBS5, which have been taken into consideration in this text. If I remember correctly from my first edition (which I no longer have), the font has been upgraded to a more appealing and sleek-looking font. It reminds me of SBL Greek but less italicized.

The text itself is based on an eclectic text that underlies the NIV translation, which was then later updated by Gordon Fee and which adopted many of the UBS variants. The result is that the text much resembles UBS5 and the spots that differ are noted in the small apparatus at the bottom of each page.

One of the greatest features of this Bible is its size. It is thin, coming in at just under 600 thin pages with a smooth imitation leather cover. These covers do tend to get bent out of shape easily, but after wearing it in it should sit closed easier (after one night of use my cover already sticks up at a 30 degree angle from the rest of the book).

In the back are four colored maps of the Holy Land in the time of Jesus, Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, Paul's early journeys, and Paul's missionary journeys. While perhaps an afterthought to some, these can be helpful references while reading in a foreign language, since being able to view an image of the geographical region being mentioned in the text might help solidify the scene better in the reader's mind.

Using the text is simple. Each vocabulary word that occurs thirty times or less in the New Testament is footnoted. The footnote gives standard information such as the lexical form, genitive endings and articles for nouns, alternative nominative singular endings for adjectives, and possible meanings. The editors typically followed BDAG in deriving the possible meanings

of the word, but also consulted other standard lexicons and listed meanings they thought most possible in the context.

The major difference between this reader and UBS's Greek reader is that the UBS reader gives parsings while this Zondervan reader does not. But the Zondervan volume wins outright on its slender size and light weight, if that's your priority. The Zondervan volume is also about 1/3 the price.

As you begin reading, as soon as you hit a word you don't know you can check the footnote for that word's meaning. As long as you can figure out the parsing from the given lexical form, and as long as you're good with grammar and syntax, you should be able to work your way through paragraphs without any outside help. This *Reader* is one of the most encouraging tools to help you retain and improve your Greek.

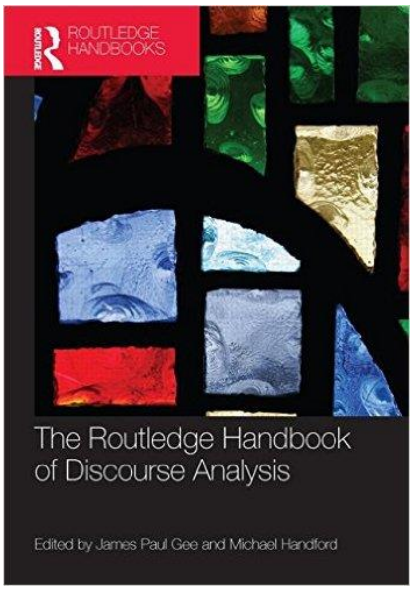
Find it here on Amazon.

The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis, edited by James Paul Gee and Michael Handford

***The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by James Paul Gee and Michael Handford (Routledge, 2012), 681 pages.**

Several handbooks on discourse analysis have been published lately, including one by Bloomsbury and one by Wiley Blackwell (review coming soon). If I had to rank them, I would rank this Routledge handbook best for non- or beginning linguists, and the Wiley Blackwell volume the best for specialists, while the Bloomsbury edition tries to straddle both worlds but falls a bit shorter in breadth of topics.

The editors include a helpful seven page introduction that situates discourse analysis within the realm of linguistics, providing several examples of language-in-use, how meaning can change given different contexts (pragmatics), and how discourse analysis fits into these different fields. This introduction is the best I have seen in a handbook to explain in a basic way what discourse analysis is.



The work itself is broad and multicultural in its approach. The six parts are approaches to discourse analysis, register and genre, developments in spoken discourse, educational applications, institutional applications, and identity, culture, and discourse. Many of the articles are similar to or nearly the same as several essays in the Wiley Blackwell and Bloomsbury handbooks, such as the essays on register, SFL, English in academia, critical discourse analysis, conversational analysis, etc.

But there is a broader treatment of register and genre, which is a helpful focus, and the section focusing on spoken discourse is also unique. Although those of us who focus on texts are not as interested in spoken discourse, it's still a phenomenon worthy of study for many reasons, among which are our professional or ministerial interactions with people–through oral discourse.

The last two parts that focus on educational applications and institutional applications betray an interesting focus. Essays include the topics of discourse and the New Literacy Studies, English for academic purposes and discourse analysis, advertising and discourse analysis, media and discourse analysis, discourse and healthcare, discourses in the language of the law, and more. This focus on application in these realms, I think, betrays a slant toward a more critical discourse analysis approach, which is the professional focus of James Gee, one of the editors. Unfortunately critical discourse analysis is not of much help for biblical scholars, unless they want to employ a Marxian hermeneutic of suspicion on documents, a hermeneutic that CDA builds on (see our brief review of Gee's book).

The final section brings in the multicultural element of the handbook, with an essay specifically on a multicultural approach to discourse studies. Other essays include those on politics, discourse geography, discourse and knowledge by van Dijk, World Englishes and/or English as a lincua franca, and more.

The essays themselves are of decent length, well enough to gain an overview of each topic. The essays then include a section "For Further Reading" that lists 3-5 books for the student to continue the study of the topic. A bibliography is also included, which is often extensive, spanning a couple large pages.

As the editors note in the beginning (and this bears out as you read through the essays), "[I]n designing this handbook, we intended it to be accessible and relevant for the widest possible audience. Discourse analysis is indeed an interdisciplinary approach, and this book should allow readers from various academic backgrounds and disciplines to understand how discourse analysis is done, and why it might be relevant to them" (6). The editors have largely succeeded in their goal.

The one complaint I continue to have with these handbooks on discourse analysis is that they do not focus much on topics that are specifically helpful for those working with classical texts, and that methodologies are rarely seen. That is, one can find essays on topics in discourse analysis, but rarely will one find any help on using a method to execute discourse analysis. One such book that does this is The Semantic Structure of Written Communication, geared specifically toward Bible translators, but it attends too much to semantics and could use a lot more attention to pragmatics and an updated edition to take into account all the advances in discourse analysis over the last 30 years.

Find *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* here on Amazon.

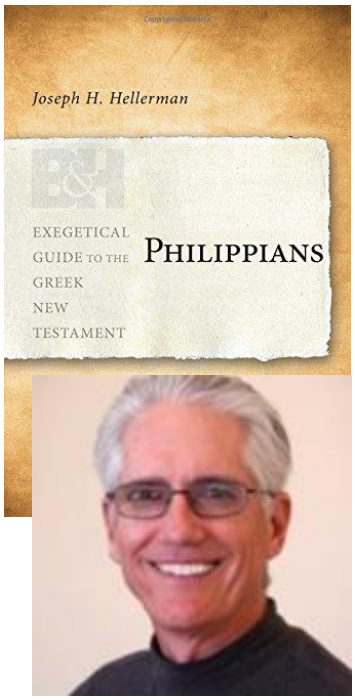
Philippians (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament), by Joseph Hellerman

***Philippians* (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament), by Joseph Hellerman (B&H Academic, 2015), 297.**

This handbook on the Greek text of Philippians is part of B&H Academic's EGGNT series, several volumes of which we have reviewed. Each volume is aimed at intermediate Greek readers and focuses on syntax, vocabulary, and grammar. But each volume is also slightly distinctive, given an author's chosen emphases.

Hellerman begins with a brief commentary introduction, concluding that Paul wrote the letter from Rome. He writes one long paragraph on aspect and *Aktionsart*, taking a position more aligned with Fanning than Porter, that aspect is the unaffected meaning and a correct

translation must consider lexical, grammatical, or other contextual features. He concludes that he will be concerned with *Aktionsart* throughout the commentary.



But I think this notion that *Aktionsart* is the final outcome of "aspect + other features" may be a bit off target. This view, which was argued at length in Fanning's monograph and has also been explained very clearly (and visually) by Constantine Campbell in his *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek*, is a popular way to treat aspect. Verbal aspect is the subjective representation of an event, while *Aktionsart* is the kind of action as it actually occurred (objectively). Fanning and Campbell essentially erode aspect into *Aktionsart* making it completely subservient to the latter. But aspect is a significant communicative device in many languages, even in English, which allows one to subjectively present an event in a certain way, regardless of the way it "actually" happened.

To give one English example, consider the following (and English encodes less aspect in its verbal structure than Greek). Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and later attacked a U.S. oil field with a submarine on February 23, 1942. So objectively, there were two attacks. But we can speak of these attacks in multiple ways. (Roughly) perfective aspect: "Japan attacked us in World War I." (Roughly) imperfective aspect: "In 1941-1942, Japan was attacking us." (Roughly) stative aspect: "We were under attack in 1941-42." Our verbal system allows us to use rough aspectual equivalents to subjectively present events for certain rhetorical effects. In Greek, if we collapse aspect into *Aktionsart*, as Hellerman does in this work, we would lose the subtleties of the biblical authors as they seek to represent object events with subjective aspectual features that give the desired rhetorical effect. I mention all of this because it plays into how Hellerman treats every verb in Philippians, and so is a significant point in assessing his work.

When assessing the book as a whole, the result is more similar to Harris' *Colossians & Philemon* than to Forbes' *1 Peter* with regard to depth of analysis (Harris' being far more in-depth and useful). Some good examples are the following:

- For the meaning of σωτηρίαν, he gives three positions, with six reasons for the first, four for the second, and three for the third, and a final paragraph with his reasons for choosing the third (58-59).

- When analyzing σώματί in Phil 1:20, he cites BDAG, NIDNTT, TDNT, H-M, Fee, Gundry, and Silva. This brief word study (only one paragraph) is deceptively packed with research (64).
- On the difficult phrase "have this mind among you, ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Phil 2:5), he cites the two main positions, whether the ἐν expresses union with Christ that is the grounds for the Philippians having Christ's mindset, or the location of the mindset as residing also in Christ (108-109). He provides five reasons for the first and two for the second, choosing the second in a small summarizing paragraph.

This sort of analysis is extremely helpful for pastors who need quick syntheses of arguments from the commentators and trustworthy judgment on these arguments. Students may also use Hellerman's analysis as a model of careful attention to the Greek text.

Hellerman's volume shares many of the other features that the EGGNT volumes have, including flow diagrams for each passage, suggestions for further reading by organized by topics that arise in each section, and brief comments about the literary makeup of each section after the flow. I still lament the inattention to wider discourse features of the NT books, which is not intended to be covered in these volumes, so one must supplement this lack with other works on discourse analysis, which you can find in our Annotated Bibliography, but especially the Philippians volume in the Semantic Structural Analysis from SIL.

As with the other EGGNT volumes, I commend this as an incredibly helpful resource for anyone preparing to preach or teach on Philippians.

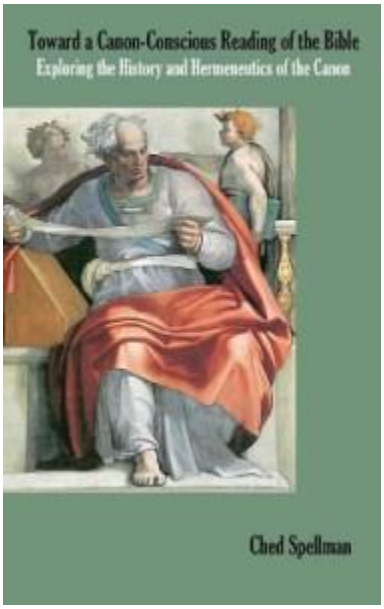
Come back next time for an interview with Dr. Hellerman about his book.

Preview or buy it here in paperback or for Kindle.

Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible: Exploring the History and Hermeneutics of the Canon, by Ched Spellman

***Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible: Exploring the History and Hermeneutics of the Canon*, by Ched Spellman (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014) 294 pages.**

Historically there has been a lamentable lack of attention among Evangelicals on the formation of the canon. This is unfortunate, writes Ched Spellman in the introduction of *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible*, because "one's understanding of the story of how the Scriptures came to be has a direct impact on how God's revelation is understood and how the Bible is interpreted" (1).



While there has been a proliferation in academic literature concerning issues of canon formation and issues of hermeneutics in recent years, rarely have the two areas been brought together into a sustained interaction. Hence, Spellman's monograph is unique in offering a rigorous interdisciplinary analysis that is exegetical, historical, and hermeneutical, demonstrating helpful interconnections between the historical and hermeneutical lines of inquiry.

The main argument of *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible* is that "contemporary interpreters of the Bible have legitimate grounds for utilizing the concept of canon as a control on the interpretive task" (3).

Chapter 1 sets the stage by defining the terms of the canon debate and recognizing the role of presuppositions. Spellman explains the primary two nuances to the definition of "canon" derived from κανών and notes that "there is an organic relationship between the two senses of the term and how their use developed and evolved in the believing community…Combining these two senses, the 'biblical canon' was and can be understood as an authoritative collection of authoritative writings" (18). He also provides overviews of the narrow and broad understandings of canon as well as the process of canon formation, concluding with five broad areas of fruitful inquiry for reshaping the boundaries of the canon discussion. One of the five areas noted at the end of Chapter 1 is the value of canon-consciousness, which is the subject of Chapter 2.

Here in chapter 2, Spellman examines both internal and external evidence to argue that a form of canon-consciousness (according to a broad understanding of canon) was at work in the biblical writers and the early believing community. Regarding the internal evidence he considers both the composition phase (the way the OT uses the OT, the NT uses the OT, and the NT uses the OT) and the canonization phase (the way biblical documents were grouped together). Concerning the external evidence he notes evidence for the shape of both the Hebrew Bible (Ben Sira) as well as the NT (Muratorian Fragment). Chapters 1 and 2 serve as the foundation on which the rest of the study is built.

After having explored the historical matters of how the canon *formed*, Chapter 3 shifts to addressing how the canon *functions.* "The notion of canon-consciousness applies here to the reader of the biblical text. Just as an awareness of canon was a factor for biblical *writers*, it can also serve an interpretive function for biblical *readers*" (101, emphases original). This chapter examines the interpretive value of a canon-conscious reading of Scripture, developing the two main levels of contextuality of the canon – mere contextuality and meant contextuality. The main difference is that the former does not deal with the notion of intention, whereas the latter does.

Chapter 4 delves into one specific line of evidence for discerning meant contextuality in the biblical canon – intertextuality. Here Spellman provides a helpful overview of the linguistic and literary roots of intertextuality and notes why it's suited to the biblical textual task despite potential pitfalls. He argues for a production-oriented approach and then provides brief overviews of intertextual quotations, allusions, and echoes. Finally, Spellman uses the book of Revelation to illustrate the value of studying biblical contextuality and intertextuality by demonstrating that it "is best interpreted in light of its compositional shape, as an integral part of the New Testament canon, and as an integral part of the Christian canon as a whole" (181).

In the final chapter of this study, Spellman explores the insights of literary and semiotic studies into the role of the reader, discussing the theological and hermeneutical characteristics of the implied reader of the biblical text as well as the matter of the real reader becoming the implied reader of the biblical text. The book ends with a concluding chapter including several appendices, one of which surveys the intertextual connections between Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 21-22.

Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible is both accessible enough for the thinking layperson and nonspecialist and robust enough (through copious and detailed footnotes) for the student and scholar of canonical issues. This monograph presents a masterful interdisciplinary study that draws together scholarly insights from canon studies, historical studies, and literary

studies to address both the historical issue of how the canon came to be and the hermeneutical question of what this means for readers of the canon.

Spellman not only convincingly argues for the presence of a robust canon-consciousness in the biblical writers and early believing community, but goes a step further than most other works on the formation of the canon by connecting it to hermeneutical issue and contending that there are legitimate grounds for using the concept of canon as a control on the interpretive task. “The hermeneutical payoff of this governing function is that the canon helps guide contemporary readers through the biblical material by limiting and generating textual connections, and also helps identify the intended audience of the Christian Bible as a whole” (217).

Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible is an extremely valuable book for Christians interested in the historical and hermeneutical matters of the Christian canon.

Find it here on Amazon.

Featured Resources

Improve your Greek parsing with this creative interactive e-book

The following is a guest post by Nate Collins *(PhD candidate, Southern Seminary), the creator of New Testament Greek Paradigms: An Interactive Reference Guide.*

When I first started learning New Testament Greek during my early grad-school days, my second-hand copy of Bill Mounce's classic grammar textbook was a constant companion. I deeply resonated with his morphological approach to learning Greek grammar in those early years, in large part because I recognized the wisdom of learning principles and patterns of word formation instead of memorizing paradigm after paradigm after paradigm. (For non-language nerds, "morphology" refers to how words are formed, often in relation to the way they are used in a particular sentence.)

After my first semester of teaching a seminary-level introductory course on Greek grammar, however, I realized that I had been operating under the assumption that teaching Greek morphology was somehow sufficient in itself, leaving no room at all for any kind of rote memorization. Like countless other life lessons, a balance between the two must be struck. In the case of learning Greek, the morphological principles themselves must be memorized, but one must also practice applying them in order to gain a deeper understanding of word formation and therefore build a lasting foundation for learning how to use the language.

In order to aid this process for students, I have developed a digital collection of noun, adjective, and verb paradigms and organized them together in a single, easy-to-use interactive ebook that is now available on the iBookstore. Furthermore, even though the resource is optimized for mobile viewing (with on-screen navigational icons and buttons that enable users to toggle between various related paradigms), the resource can also be viewed on any Apple device with iBooks installed, including desktop and laptop computers (not recommended for iPhone 4s or earlier).

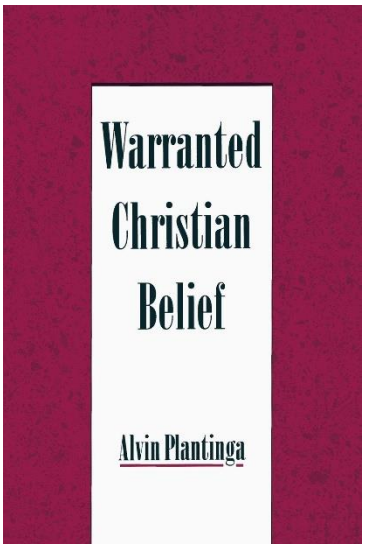
Finally, I built the collection with students in mind, who ought to—at least in my opinion—eventually learn how to reproduce paradigms on-demand. In order to make this learning process easier and more streamlined, a button at the bottom of each paradigm will temporarily hide every form on the current chart while students are trying to memorize the paradigm. If the student can't remember a particular form, he or she can simply touch the button on top of that

form and the word will reappear… and *only* that word. By keeping the rest of the paradigm hidden students can more easily force themselves to remember the other forms of the paradigm.

Biblical language study is too important to spend an entire semester (or two) learning the principles of grammar and morphology, only to forget the practical function of these principles by not mastering the process of using them. Don't shortchange the process. Learn the basics of declension endings, personal endings, theme vowels and tense formatives… and then practice using this knowledge in drill after drill after drill. Five years later, when you are neck-deep in sermon preparation and church ministry, you will be grateful for this phase of basic training.

Find it here on the iTunes store.

Summary of Alvin Plantinga's Warranted Christian Belief Published



Alvin Plantinga is well-known as one of the most important Christian philosophers of our day. Many attribute to his influence the fact that many philosophers now find it intellectually defensible to believe in God (see, e.g., Mascord's work). Even more important than that, though, is his defense of Christian belief.

In *Warranted Christian Belief*, Plantinga argues that belief in the main tenets of Christianity is warranted. By warrant, he means something similar to rationality, but a bit different. If a belief is true, whenever enough warrant is added to that true belief, it becomes knowledge. The main argument of the book is then that, if Christianity is true, then it is more likely than not warranted, in which case we can truly *know* the things of the gospel.

Part 1 clears the ground against those who say we cannot predicate about God, following in Kant's footsteps. Plantinga shows his mastery of the self-referentially incoherent argument. Part 2 clarifies the question he is pursuing by more clearly defining warrant and noting that his main objection he is answering is the "Freud-Marx" complaint. Freud's complaint is that Christian belief functions properly, but is not aimed toward truth, while Marx's complaint is that Christians

are cognitively dysfunctional. Plantinga must then argue that Christian beliefs are aimed at truth and that Christians are not cognitively dysfunctional.

Part 3 argues for the warranted nature of theistic belief and then of specifically Christian belief. He uses an "extended Aquinas/Calvin" model by which the Holy Spirit mends our broken *sensus divinitatis* and reveals to us the things of the gospel which becomes the occasion of our belief. Christian belief is therefore a properly basic belief, not drawn inferentially from anything else, and is therefore properly a foundational belief. So Plantinga builds on Thomas Reid especially to extend the foundation of basic beliefs to include the things of the gospel.

Part 4 defends against objections and defeaters, such as religious pluralism, the problem of evil, and (an especially interesting section on) historical criticism. The end result is a masterfully mounted argument that Christian belief is in fact warranted. The one caveat is that Plantinga's argument for the warranted nature of Christian belief depends on that belief being true. This is a commonly understood idea in philosophy, that epistemology depends on metaphysics; how you know depends on the nature of reality. Plantinga carefully distinguishes between the *de facto* question (the veracity of Christian belief) and the *de jure* question (warrant). He answers only the latter.

This is one of the most important books for Christians published in decades. It's certainly not the answer to everything in apologetics or even biblical studies (what book is?). But it is full of insight that could be further applied, and I think the basic outline of his argument is forceful and persuasive. Responses that I have read to his work have not been convincing to me, and Plantinga has done well to defend himself in later writings.

I have written a full summary of *Warranted Christian Belief* for Books At a Glance (see it here), which provides weekly summaries of new Christian books (3,000-6,000 word, substantive summaries) for the books you're too busy to read. These summaries are far more detailed than the summary portion of a book review, which makes them almost as useful as reading the book yourself. They charge a small subscription fee, the annual fee being the most discounted. Go check them out and read my summary! You can get one free summary to try out first if you'd like, just click the banner on the right side (your ad blocker needs to be off).

Find Plantinga's book here on Amazon.

Interviews

Interview with Joseph Hellerman, author of Philippians (Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament)

Earlier, we reviewed Joseph Hellerman's *Philippians* volume in the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series from B&H Academic. Dr. Hellerman is Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Talbot School of Theology.

We tracked him down to interview him about his book because, as a site devoted to exegesis, we wanted to know from someone who has written an exegetical volume what the fruit of such labor is. You'll find much to learn in this interview about exegesis, Greek, preparing for sermons, and the experience of studying Scripture closely in its original language.

EXEGETICAL TOOLS

These EGGNT volumes are excellent for readers trying to improve their Greek. Which types of readers do you expect to profit most from this volume, and in what ways?

JOSEPH HELLERMAN

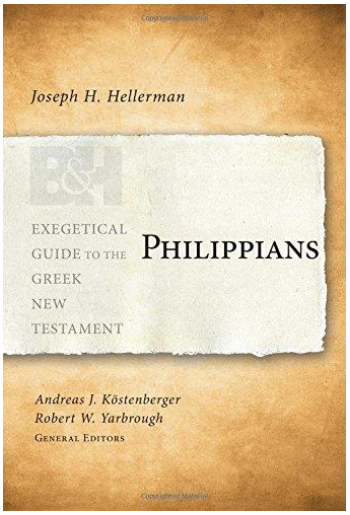
I'm not sure that improving one's Greek is at the top (or even near the top) of the objectives of the series. It was certainly not a goal of mine. Dedicated users of the EGGNT volumes will no doubt improve their Greek just by being in the Greek text and using a Greek-oriented secondary resource like EGGNT. But I have assumed that my target audience already has a relatively solid grasp of the language, namely, the ability to do a basic translation of the text, along with some recollection of the grammatical categories learned in intermediate Greek in Bible school or seminary.

ET

Did you learn much about Greek throughout the project? Anything particularly useful or helpful to remember?

HELLERMAN

I am a social historian by training (Ph.D. History, UCLA) and all my previous scholarship focused in that area (e.g., The Ancient Church as Family, Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi, When the Church Was a Family, Embracing Shared Ministry). But my teaching



assignment at Talbot is primarily in the area of intermediate Greek grammar and exegesis. For this project I reviewed most of the recent developments in Koine Greek scholarship (aspect, tense, deponency, discourse grammar, register, etc.), although, as you note in #4, below, the EGGNT series takes a rather traditional approach to the topic, so that not many of these current findings cash out exegetically in the volume that I wrote.

ET

Having researched and written this volume, what advice would you have for pastors preaching on a weekly basis as they try to work through the original language of their passages each week? Are there tips to speed up the process of translation and exegesis, or particularly helpful resources to own and use?

HELLERMAN

I am a preaching pastor (part-time, I'm in the rotation monthly), as well as a full-time seminary professor. My own approach to sermon preparation is to consult the two best commentaries in print on a passage , along with any topical/theological resources necessitated by the text. My years reading and teaching Greek give me an advantage, of course, over most full-time pastors. This, I think, is where the EGGNT volumes become very handy. Because we've packed the findings of so many secondary sources into EGGNT, it can be a "one-stop shop" for the linguistic aspect of sermon preparation. No need to turn to TDNT—virtually everything of importance that Kittel and his contributors says about Philippians is in the EGGNT volume. No need to open BDAG—both BDAG's glosses and definitions of all key terms are, again, reproduced in the EGGNT volume. This liberates busy pastors from needed to fumble around with piles of secondary source materials on their desks, so that they can focus on the biblical text itself.

ET

One thing I noted in my review is that this series focuses on the clause level, or the sentence level at most, and that there isn't much interaction with modern linguistics (I assume that's a design of the series). What do you find most helpful from modern linguistics that you think could supplement your close grammatical analysis of Philippians?

HELLERMAN

You are correct, Todd, in your assessment of the general approach of the series. However, I expended a good bit of effort at the discourse level, to connect sentence-to-sentence and paragraph-to-paragraph. I suspect that I have not do so in the kind of systematic, theoretical way that will satisfy the proclivities of the linguistic specialists in the guild, although I did draw directly upon Runge's Discourse Grammar and, especially, upon Reed's discourse analysis of Philippians. I found these two resources to be most helpful among more linguistically oriented sources. One of the most contentious areas of debate—that related to time and tense in the indicative—was a moot point exegetically (see the volume's Introduction).

ET

Are there any practical or devotional points you pulled from Philippians while working through the exegesis that were particularly memorable? Would you mind sharing?

HELLERMAN

I was impressed, once again, with Paul's single-minded passion for the gospeland for people. "Single-minded" might sound like an odd description of a person with a twofold passion like Paul's, but somehow the great apostle was able to hold the cognitive/theological and the personal/relational together in his ministry.

Thanks so much to Dr. Hellerman for taking the time to share with us about the fruits of his exegetical labor. We hope his work *Philippians* will be a monument to the church and a lesson in how the languages can fuel our knowledge of Scripture and our love for it.

Find *Philippians* here on Amazon.

Current Issues

Collation of Tributes to the Magnificent Life of I. Howard Marshall

The New Testament world lost a giant when I. Howard Marshall died on Saturday, December 12, 2015. Immediately, testimonies began popping up all over the web about ways Marshall had influenced men and women in the classroom and out of it. Since I never met Dr. Marshall but have appreciated his work, I thought I could join the tribute train by collating the testimonies of others into one place. **If you have any more, please comment below so I can add them to the post.**

Below I only wanted to collate the aspects of the tributes to Marshall that relate to his faith, Christian life, and character, since most of the tributes note his academic achievements. For reference, here are many of his books he has authored or edited, to which you could add a plethora of articles.

- New Testament Theology
- New Bible Dictionary
- Epistles of John (NICNT)
- Acts (TNTC)
- Luke: Historian and Theologian
- The Pastoral Epistles (ICC)
- 1 Peter (IVP NT Series)
- Gospel of Luke (NIGTC)
- The Origins of New Testament Christology
- Kept by the Power of God
- I Believe in the Historical Jesus
- Biblical Inspiration
- The Work of Christ
- Aspects of the Atonement
- The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters

- The Theology of Acts
- New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods
- Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology
- Exploring the New Testament, Volume 2: A Guide to the Letters Revelation
- 1 and 2 Thessalonians
- Mark

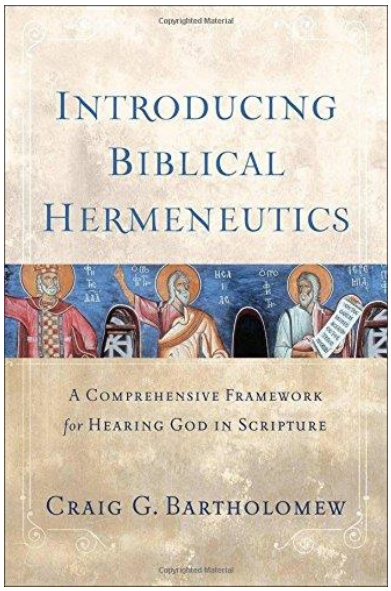
Obviously, he was prolific, but he was also a careful exegete, an able theologian, and devoted to the Scriptures. Here's what various scholars who knew Marshall had to say about his character and faith.

> *If you saw him on the street, you would have no idea that here was a person who would impact biblical studies for decades. What you saw was a believer who cared about people so much that his study showed his care. Yes, Howard Marshall was a great biblical and New Testament scholar who could tell you more about Jesus than most, but as a person he was what the Lord calls us all to be, a person who loved God and his neighbor—not just teaching about that connection but showing it. —Darrell Bock*
>
> *Space fails me to comment on Marshall's wit, his gracious investment in others, and his cooking skills. I will close by mentioning the thing which struck me most about him—his deep, genuine humility. I was inspired by his knowledge, pushed by his work ethic, encouraged by his friendliness and hospitality, but I was deeply challenged and convicted by his humility. —Ray van Neste*
>
> *I had the privilege of knowing Professor Marshall for nearly thirty years, … Professor Marshall represents, I believe, the kind of evangelical scholar that many of us hope to emulate but usually fall far short of achieving. By this I mean that he was clear in his fundamental convictions, devoted to the text as God's word, and not concerned to fulfill the agenda of others. I, and evangelicalism as a whole, will greatly miss Professor Marshall. —Stanley Porter*
>
> *This is sad news. I'm grateful for Howard Marshall's life and legacy. What a humble and godly man, dedicated to Christ and the gospel. —Roy Ciampa*
>
> *…[H]is scholarship was combined with a genuine and heartfelt piety, love for God, and love for others. He was such a kind and gentle soul, he epitomized the notion of a good Christian gentleman. Howard Marshall was the kind of man who watched his life and doctrine closely (1 Tim 4.16) and we can learn not only from his scholarship but from his example. I insist that my PhD students read Carl Trueman, "Interview with Professor*

Howard Marshall," Themelios *26 (2002): 48-53, which has some great nuggets of advice for young players from Howard. —Michael Bird*

Craig Bartholomew's Philosophy of History Drawn from the Old Testament Worldview

This year's Institute for Biblical Research's plenary speaker was Craig Bartholomew. He spoke on a biblical philosophy of history, which he draws out of the Old Testament, focusing in his talk on the view of God and history espoused in Ps 93, the first of the "YHWH *mlk*" psalms ("Yahweh reigns"). This theory comes largely out of his new hermeneutics book, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. He made five points from Ps 93:



1. History is guided by the God Yahweh. He is central to their worldview.
2. He is immanently involved in the lives of his people; the temple gives him an address on earth.
3. Yahweh is the transcendent creator.
4. Yahweh is king over history but opposed within history.
5. Yahweh is holy and everlasting but can be called upon by his people.

Drawing on the canonical reading of the Psalter, he notes how Book IV is a response to the bleak picture in Ps 89. The response to the seemingly failed Davidic line is that Yahweh reigns! The reign of God is God's activity as creator and maintainer of the universe and he is judge and savior who moves the world toward his purposes. This view of history is somewhat unique in the ANE. There is also a growth in the awareness of this true sense of history throughout the OT. The development is cumulative, with the implicit becoming explicit and not contradictory.

The OT and NT should be read together, with the entire canon shedding light on each of its parts (with Childs). If we are followers of Christ we are committed to a particular view of history. The details can be hashed over, but the big picture is clear. The OT commits us to the worldview of Yahweh being our ruler and sovereign. There is much diversity in modernity, but significantly, OT studies has emerged out of the Enlightenment. The OT worldview is

proclaimed on Sunday but a different worldview is embraced for the study of the OT. This ought not to be.

Regarding historical criticism, Bartholomew follows Plantinga's epistemology to claim he doesn't need to justify his beliefs that the OT is a legitimate witness to the past (a peek at his author index in his *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* shows a liberal use of Plantinga throughout the book). Historical criticism has made some valuable findings, but all theories are underdetermined; that is, it cannot explain all of the data. But have we become aware that historical criticism is so underdetermined that we are in a position that we must re-assess its value for the interpretation of the OT? Bartholomew believes so.

The two respondents were Sandra Richter and N. T. Wright (humorously, since Bartholomew named his presentation "Old Testament Origins and the Question of God"). Both were concerned that Bartholomew was being slippery with his terms and mixing up worldview and philosophy of history, and was not being clear on his use of the term "history," which can have multiple meanings. Bartholomew responded that he was quite aware of philosophy of history issues and of the definitions of history, and that he was using them in line with current philosophical discussions.

Richter believes further that the psalms have a worldview, a view of history that can act as the foundation for a philosophy of history, but not as a philosophy of history itself. Bartholomew conceded the point to an extent. The rest of Wright's response was criticizing Bartholomew for omitting Abraham's role in history and spending the last five minutes explaining his own view of Abraham's role in reversing the problems of Gen 1-11.

I was unaware of Bartholomew's new book before this talk, but the book looks promising as an advanced textbook (for more academically inclined schools) or as a book in a seminar on hermeneutics. Bartholomew is interdisciplinary and reminded me much of Thiselton. The table of contents of his *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* is compelling, as you can see in Amazon's Look Inside feature.

Click here to read our review of *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*. It's a truly magnificent work.

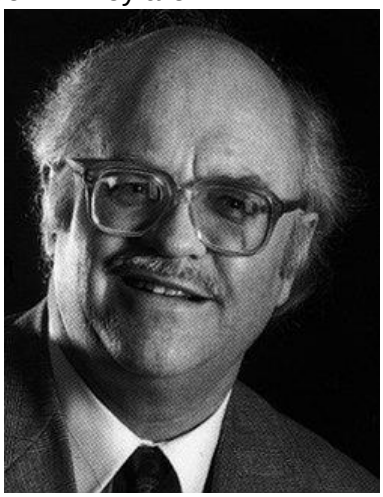
Research Resources

Murray Harris' Guide to Commentaries on John Based on their Various Strengths

The following is an excerpt from Murray Harris' exegetical guide to John's Gospel, our Book of the Week for December 14, 2015 (pp. 14-15, posted with permission, images and links added).

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

Throughout this Guide references are made to five commentaries that are written in English or translated into English and are based directly on the Greek text of John. They are:



C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.

G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John. 2nd ed. Word Biblical Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999.

R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John: Introduction, Translation, and Notes (i–xii; 1966); (xiii–xxi)*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970.

A. J. Köstenberger, *John*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John. Volume One: Introduction and Commentary on Chapters 1–4.* ET K. Smyth. Freiberg: Herder/Montreal: Palm, 1968; Volume Two: Commentary on Chapters 5–12. ET C. Hastings et al. London: Burns and Oates, 1980; Volume Three: Commentary on Chapters 13–21. ET D. Smith and G. A. Kon. London: Burns and Oates, 1982.

OBSERVATIONS ON THESE FIVE COMMENTARIES

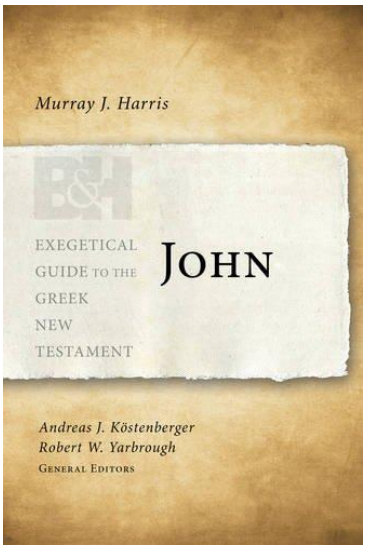
1. **The purpose and layout** of these commentaries differ greatly, but in general, of the older commentaries, Beasley-Murray is the simplest in content and style and Barrett the most

complex, with Brown closer to Beasley-Murray and Schnackenburg closer to Barrett. By church affiliation Brown and Schnackenburg are Roman Catholic, Barrett is Methodist, and Beasley-Murray is Baptist. More recent is Köstenberger (Baptist), who achieves a balance between historical, literary, and theological matters (see pp. 3–6 of his commentary).

2. **Accurate original translations** are offered by Brown, Beasley-Murray, Köstenberger and Schnackenburg, with Brown's rendering the most readable and creative of the four.

3. **Exegetical comments on specific verses** are most easily found in Barrett (verse by verse) or Brown (under "Notes").

4. **Brief comments on textual variants** are most conveniently available in Beasley-Murray (under "Notes") at the beginning of each section and Köstenberger at the end of a given unit, although the fuller Metzger's Textual Commentary remains the most authoritative treatment.



5. **Theological observations** on each section are best found in Beasley-Murray (under "Explanation"). Köstenberger wrote a sequel to his commentary, *Theology*, to which frequent reference is made throughout this volume as well and which includes thorough discussions of many significant theological themes in John's Gospel and letters.

6. **Bibliographies in various languages** are provided at the beginning of each section in Beasley-Murray and at the end of each section in Brown (see also the thematic bibliographies in Köstenberger, Theology).

7. Schnackenburg, Brown, and Barrett interact in considerable detail with the various **rearrangement and dislocation theories** about the FG and the issue of possible sources of the material in the FG and how the author may have used them. But each of these commentators readily acknowledges the hypothetical nature of the theories discussed.

References to other commentators have sometimes been included—Bernard, Bruce, Carson, Dodd, Haenchen, Keener, McHugh, Michaels, Morris, Plummer, Ridderbos, and Westcott.

Other commentaries on John's Gospel are listed in Beasley-Murray (1999) xxvi–xxvii, xcv, and there is a comprehensive chronological list of commentators in W. E. Mills, vol. IV, The Gospel of John (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1995), 363–76 of Bibliographies for Biblical

Research: New Testament Series, ed. W. E. Mills. For an evaluation of the major commentaries on John in English, using helpful symbols, see Burge 181–85. For bibliographies of general literature (in several languages) relating to the background and exegesis of this Gospel, see Beasley-Murray xxviii–xxxi, xcv–xcix (who also conveniently provides a relevant bibliography at the head of each section of his commentary); Haenchen 2:254–346; S. P. Kealy, John's Gospel and the History of Biblical Interpretation, 2 vols. (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 2002); Keener 1251–1409; Köstenberger 607–40; and also G. Wagner, An Exegetical Bibliography of the New Testament, vol. 3: John and 1, 2, 3 John (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1987); G. van Belle, Johannine Bibliography 1966–1985: A Cumulative Bibliography on the Fourth Gospel (Brussels: Leuven University, 1988), which updates E. Malatesta, St. John's Gospel, 1920–1965 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967); W. E. Mills (see above), up to 1993; and most recently S. E. Porter and A. K. Gabriel, Johannine Writings and Apocalyptic: An Annotated Bibliography (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

In spite of its erudition, E. A. Abbott's Johannine Grammar (London: Black, 1906) is not a reliable guide to the subject. On many occasions his views on particular passages are decidedly improbable, if not eccentric, and his argumentation abstruse. I have therefore chosen not to give references to his work, even where I judge his exegetical conclusions to be reliable.

Read about how you can use Harris' volume to guide you through significant exegetical issues in John's Gospel.

Also check out more of our Annotated Bibliographies.

How to Get Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals

One of the sessions at SBL in Atlanta (2015) brought together three editors of mainstream journals to discuss the process of selecting and editing journal articles for publication in their journal. Much of the process is common sense, but it was most helpful to hear the differences between the journals that were represented and their estimated statistics on article selection vs. rejection and the kinds of articles they receive. Such information may give you the edge on all the other submissions flying in.

First up was Catholic Biblical Quarterly, which, by the way, is ecumenical and not only for Catholics. They are interested in exegetical issues, with a close reading of the biblical text and related literature. The typical methodology is historical criticism, but they are open to other models. They accept 24 articles a year and last year received about 90 submissions. This included 28 in OT, 1 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 45 in NT, 6 in other areas, and 10 were rejected immediately.

They use a double blind method. If the assessment by the two readers is radically different, a third reader gets involved. The classifications for submissions is as follows: ready to go as-is (#1), good but nothing new (#2); good ideas but needs more revision (#3); not acceptable as is (#4); good article but belong in another journal (#5). Last year they accepted 19 articles, returned 11 for revision, and rejected 59.

Why are articles rejected?

1. The idea may be interesting but the development of argumentation is not adequate;
2. There is not enough interaction with secondary literature, especially in non-English works, and more so when important works have been done in other languages.

CBQ is always looking for book reviewers. If you are interested, they could use the help; find the book review editor's information on the inside cover of the journal and e-mail him or her.

Second up was Biblical Interpretation, one of Brill's journals. For them, publication is a business and they are looking for articles that fit exactly within their vision. Biblical Interpretation focuses on new methodologies in biblical studies. They prefer something that is theologically innovative. Articles should be no longer than 40 pages double-spaced. Their acceptance rate is

below 20%, so the article must be well-informed *and* clearly use a new, innovative methodology. They do not accept any rebuttals.

One piece of advice the editor gave was to "close the door to write for yourself, then open the door to write for your audience." In other words, write at first for fun, for yourself. Write something because you enjoy writing it, and don't write for an outside audience on your first draft. Once you've finished your draft, *then* start considering how best to make your argument to the outside world and edit accordingly.

Third was Journal of Biblical Literature, SBL's flagship journal. Their peer-review system is the same as CBQ's. They receive around 250 submissions per year and have a 9 month max turnaround from the time the article is submitted in exactly the correct format. The format is important and clearly specified on the website. It is of course intended for a high-level academic audience and footnotes should reflect that. Important literature in other languages should be used. They publish 60 articles a year, which means they reject around 190 of their 250 submissions, or 76%.

As I said, much of this is common sense: write for the journal's target audience, provide enough interaction with secondary literature, cover non-English languages, etc. But the statistics on high rejection rates was interesting and perhaps encouraging if you've ever been rejected by a journal. Something else to keep in mind is that extensive feedback on an article that is rejected is a good sign according to the editors; that means the reviewer believes it has promise and could be improved and published. There is more to be said about the mechanics of writing and revision, but that must await another post.

What tips for getting published would you add?

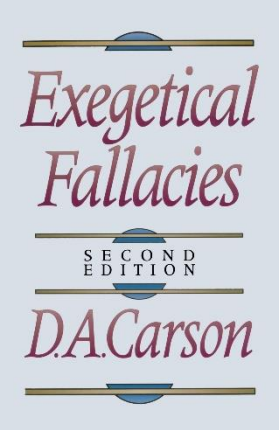
Exegetical Fallacies: Word Studies, Part 1

One of the greatest aspects of learning Greek is being able to conduct word studies. One of the worst aspects of learning Greek is also being able to conduct word studies.

The problem is that many students take enough Greek to learn vocabulary and basic grammar, but quickly forget the grammar and never work on syntax and never get a feel for the language. Their use of Greek then quickly becomes a way to mine "golden nuggets" from the text for sermon or lesson material. Unfortunately, this often results in fallacious word studies that don't

treat the word correctly in context or involve some linguistically problematic methodology for arriving at the word's meaning.

In order to combat this tendency of conducting fallacious word studies (among many other fallacies), D. A. Carson wrote *Exegetical Fallacies* (Baker Academic, 1996). This first part of this series summaries the 16 word study fallacies explained by Carson in order to ensure that these types of errors occur less and less, especially while teaching and preaching to those who don't know Greek and therefore can't check your conclusions for themselves.



I read *Exegetical Fallacies* twice and it was the best thing I ever did for my exegetical skills. If you haven't read it yet, definitely buy it and read through it at last once. Until then, this series will summarize sixteen different types of word study fallacies. You're welcome! (All are summarized from Carson's book, chapter 1.)

1. **The Root Fallacy**
    - *Definition:* The presupposition that the meaning of a given word is bound up in its shape, components, or etymology.
    - *Example:* 1 Cor. 4:1 — "So then, men ought to regard us as servants (ὑπηρετης) of Christ…" The word for servants used in this passage has been mistakenly translated as "under-rower" because of the apparent use of the prepositional prefix ὑπό meaning "under" and the root "ἐρετης" which may appear to be related to ἐρεσσω, a word for "rower" used in Homer. However, it is fallacious to derive the meaning of ὑπηρετης directly from these two components; the word does not mean "under-rower" but simply servant. (An English parallel would be deriving the meaning of pineapple from pine and apple.) Deriving word meanings in this fashion is not necessarily fallacious (as in the case of ἐκβάλλω, to throw out), but care must be taken.
2. **Semantic Anachronism**
    - *Definition:* Fallacy where a late definition of a word is read back into earlier literature.
    - *Example:* Romans 1:16 — "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power (δύναμις) of God unto salvation…." Here δύναμις may be mistakenly translated to dynamite, a later derivative of the original Greek word. This translation is fallacious because Paul would not have had the idea of "dynamite" in mind when he penned the epistle, nor would such a definition fit the context of the passage (dynamite, while powerful, destroys, but Paul is speaking of God's power in effecting salvation).

3. **Semantic Obsolescence**
    - *Definition*: Fallacy where the interpreter applies an obsolete meaning of a word.
    - *Example*: The use of the word κεφαλή in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 has been taken to mean "source" or "origin" based on standard classical lexicon definitions. However, by the time of the Biblical writing, this use of κεφαλή was obsolete; instead, the word would have been taken to mean "head" in the New Testament time period.
4. **Appeal to Unknown or Unlikely Meanings**
    - *Definition*: Fallacy where an unknown, unlikely, or esoteric meaning is applied to a given word.
    - *Example*: Continuing with the previous example, even in the standard classical lexicon, the use of κεφαλή to signify "source" or "origin" is both rare and uncertain. Therefore, even ignoring the semantic obsolescence fallacy, this particular meaning is unlikely. Its lack of attestation in the history of interpretation also suggests that a rare and uncertain meaning of a word has been applied to κεφαλή in NT contexts because of ideological reasons.
5. **Careless Appeal to Background Material**
    - *Definition*: This fallacy is similar to the appeal to unknown or unlikely meanings in that it misapplies the background of a given word, although that background may not produce an unknown or unlikely meaning.
    - *Example:* Carson's own dissertation referenced John 3:5 "water and (ἐξ ὕδατος) the Spirit." In his original interpretation, he weighed the various past interpretations and landed on the likelihood that water referred to "male semen" and therefore in context Jesus is speaking of "natural birth (water) and supernatural birth (spirit)." However, one of his students showed him that it is better to understand these two words as a fulfillment of Eze. 36:25-27. Therefore, Jesus is neither referring to multiple births in this verse (though he uses the language of being 'reborn' earlier), nor is he using 'water and spirit' as a hendiadys. He rather refers to the one birth (the re-birth) and the dual work of the Spirit in this birth – to clean (with water) and make new (with spirit).

We hope you won't make these five word study fallacies (anymore?)!

Find *Exegetical Fallacies* here on Amazon.